

Study Guide for *Anarchism or Socialism?* by Joseph Stalin

First Edition

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Introduction

Anarchism or Socialism? by Joseph Stalin is one of Stalin's landmark Marxist-Leninist documents, clarifying—by literally using anarchist theory—how anarchism is inherently antithetical to Marxism, and how anarchism is a counter-revolutionary ideology. While many potential readers may be immediately repulsed by the author due to neoliberal propaganda, it must be noted that we as Marxist-Leninists are *supposed* to critique other Marxist-Leninists while also *not* dogmatically discarding actually useful theory.

Joseph Stalin provides incredible contributions to Marxism-Leninism, both writing theory from his own observations, and serving as a good teacher in that he demonstrated an excellent ability to both summarize and reinforce existing Marxist-Leninist theory, much alike Vladimir Lenin was able to do with the works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels before him.

As new terms come up in the document that may be unfamiliar or have experienced lingual drift, they'll be clarified for their individual sections. Additionally, to encourage reading the document rather than seeking summaries, key takeaways for different sections will be presented as questions for the reader to answer, allowing them to seek the answers themselves and come to a greater understanding of the document.

This is unfortunately due to the fact that—while being somewhat viable as onboarding to reading Socialist theory, assuming someone is actively encouraged to learn and possibly assisted in doing so (as opposed to berated)—summarized Socialist theory significantly waters down the original documents and will only provide a rudimentary understanding.

The headings beyond this point in the document will simply denote the relevant sections of *Anarchism or Socialism?*

Introduction (Unlabeled)

Important Context:

- Socialism has since fractured into many more major trends, each one—bar idealism, which predates Marxism—having its roots in revisionism. During Stalin's tenure, there were only three primary tendencies of note. Unfortunately, the previously dying trend has become the most explosive trend in the 21st century.
- Also see: *The Poverty of Philosophy* by Karl Marx.

Key Takeaways:

- What is the ideology of the bourgeoisie? What is the ideology of the proletariat?
- What were the three observed trends during Stalin's time?
- Is the size of a movement more relevant than its doctrine? What should be done about this? (Note: In relevance to the modern day, what could happen to a counter-revolutionary movement if the theory repudiating it was cut out from public consciousness?)
- What is the key distinction between Marxism and anarchism?

Section 1: The Dialectical Method

Important Context:

- From here onward, these sections will break apart into unlabeled subsections. These will be directly labeled in this study guide with contextual titles.
- There's an oddly phrased section in here wherein Stalin states, "[The transformation of quantity into quality] is shown in biology by the theory of neo-Lamarckism, to which neo-Darwinism is yielding place." This is either inverse to what Stalin actually meant, or Stalin misunderstood the distinction between them. Lamarckism was a philosophy which predated Darwinism, with the theory that individual decisions could change the evolutionary line, i.e. that a blacksmith which performs hard labour that causes large muscle development would result in a more muscular child.

However, this isn't how evolutionary changes occur—they instead occur in response to evolutionary pressures. For large muscle development to occur, random mutations for larger muscle development must repeatedly occur in successive generations which prove to be more advantageous for the species as a whole, naturally selecting for large muscles by longer survival and greater propagation.

(Notably, as humans have reached a stage wherein disadvantages are solved using technology—for example, poor vision being solved with glasses, rather than selecting for people with better vision—this has provided a bizarre change in the primary evolutionary advantage being further development of the human brain, which is in turn affected by oxygen and nutrition intake and efficiency (for example, mental health is significantly affected by gut flora).

Unfortunately, this has led to a drastic increase in eugenics, most recently in the form of,

"designer babies," (which, in itself, promotes ableism, racism, and sexism) and most commonly in the forms of ableism, racism, and genocide, which is an erroneous response to human technological progress, and must be relentlessly combated by Communist social progress.)

Neo-Darwinism, while technically referring to a combination of ideas between Malthus (who unfortunately completely misunderstood a large population in an area with less than enough resources leading to increased competition, leading to increased evolutionary development (for example, Darwin's observation of the Galapagos ground finches), bizarrely applying this to human societies—despite capitalism having a noticeable overproduction of commodities—and arguing for eugenicist population control; the correct concept of competition is the only portion largely derived, whereas his eugenics were discarded), Darwin (similarly, Darwin's racism was discarded), and Mendel, is sometimes used interchangeably with Darwinism, rather than referring to specifically the 20th century version.

Neo-Lamarckism wasn't a clearly defined ideology, but instead scattered writings attempting to revive and reinforce Lamarckism, but quickly fell apart due to a lack of evidence. Contextually, this meant that Lamarckism was yielding to Darwinism, not vice versa.

Key Takeaways:

- Why is Marxism's ideological worldview called dialectical materialism?
- What is dialectics? How does this relate to the class struggle? What is metaphysics?
- What are the two forms of social movement? How do these work?

Subsection 1: How do the anarchists look upon the dialectical method?

Key Takeaways:

- How do anarchists attempt to critique Marx's ideology through Hegel? How does this contrast with Marx's actual views of Hegel?
- Why are anarchists metaphysicians? Why does this render their critique of dialectics nonsense?
- What is the distinction between Hegel's metaphysics and Hegel's dialectics?
- What is an example of dialectics in regards to a democratic republic? What about the eight-hour day? (Note: Can you think of another example yourself?)
- How does the anarchists critique of the dialectical method render the anarchist philosophy contradictory?

Section 2: The Materialist Theory

Key Takeaways:

- What is the materialist theory? How has this applied to social development? [Note: The existence of the matriarchal stage is heavily disputed and has little evidence. The concept of this stage is largely based on the observation of family lineages being traced through mothers, and the presence of goddesses as the primary god worshipped in old religion; however, these tendencies are not exclusive to matriarchy and have been present in patriarchal societies. There is, however, a definitely noticeable increasing trend of patriarchy. This lends credence to the likely succession being primitive proto-Communism → patriarchy → slave society → feudalism → capitalism, and its future development being capitalism → Socialism (the lower stage of Communism) → Communism (the higher stage of Communism).]
- How does materialism contrast with idealism? How is idealism disproved?
- Why does the materialist theory serve as the answer to source of the history of class societies?
- How does the lag between the material base and ideal superstructure create contradictions within society?
- How does the material world create philosophy? What goal does this create for Communists, and why?

Subsection 1: What is the anarchist view of the materialist theory of Marx and Engels?

Important Context:

- Peter Kropotkin is a major anarchist philosopher whom the overwhelming majority of anarchists follow.
- The refusal of past anarchists to cite sources mirrors how modern anarchists generally refuse to read Marxist-Leninist theory in general.

Key Takeaways:

- How do anarchists attempt to debunk materialism? How does this mirror with how they attempt to debunk dialectics?
- Are anarchist critiques of Marxism in sync with each other?
- What is the error in Kropotkin's philosophy?
- Remembering what you learned from reading *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* by Friedrich Engels, does the anarchists', "critique," of Marxists being, "utopian," have any merit?
- Does Marxism actually reject elements of the superstructure?

Section 3: Proletarian Socialism

Key Takeaways:

- Why is the proletariat the key to Socialist liberation?

- Remembering how the transition of society occurs in response to industrial conditions, what class relations would occur if Kropotkin's ideology were followed? Is this progressive or regressive?
- Why does private property need to be abolished?
- Why do capitalists exploit the proletariat, and not vice versa?

Subsection 1: Future society will be a Socialist society

Key Takeaways:

- What is the key distinction of a Socialist society? What is its basis? (Note: Here Stalin is referring to The Higher Stage of Communism.)
- What is the historical backing for the development of Socialism and Communism?

Subsection 2: The development of human society and its ties to future socialist society

Key Takeaways:

- What does the development of past societies tell us about the development within capitalist society?
- What are the necessary conditions for transition into Socialism?

Subsection 3: What must the proletariat do, what path must it take in order consciously to carry out its programme, to overthrow capitalism and build socialism?

Key Takeaways:

- Is class collaboration or class struggle the path out of capitalism?
- What are some examples of preparatory class struggle? What is the decisive means of class struggle? (Note: Have the preparatory means, oftentimes led through bourgeois parliamentarianism, successfully resulted in the development of Socialism within the past 200 years?)
- What should preparatory class struggle be used for?

Subsection 4: What forms must the proletarian organizations assume?

Key Takeaways:

- Should Marxist-Leninists work within trade unions? Are these trade unions enough?

- Should a working class party be built within a bourgeois party?

Subsection 5: How do the anarchists look upon proletarian Socialism?

Important Context:

- Quixotic here refers to Quixoticism, a comedic term referencing Don Quixote, a story about a man who believed he was a knight engaging in a crusade across the country, fighting dragons and the like. In reality, he was doing things like riding around on a donkey and, "fighting," a windmill. Contextually, this means Stalin was saying that the anarchists were making up a story about something to cover up its reality, then fighting the story, i.e. strawmanning, with the implication they genuinely believe in the strawman.

Key Takeaways:

- What is the weapon of the anarchists against Marx and Engels? How is this refuted? (Note: For a more in-depth refutation of this farce, please see the Preface to the First Edition of *The Poverty of Philosophy* by Karl Marx, which was written by Friedrich Engels, and spares no detail in how absurd this claim is. Additionally, note how P. Ramus' criticism mirrors how Blair Zoń criticized someone for asking how she highlighted text.)
- Were Considerant and Marx's ideologies compatible? (Note: Is Considerant's ideology closer to Marxism, or social democracy and fascism?)

Subsection 6: The nature of anarchist, "critiques," of Marxism

Key Takeaway:

- What is the key flaw of anarchist critiques of Marxists?

Subsection 7: The first anarchist, "critique," against Marxism: Ignorance of the First and Second Stages of Communism, with a focus on, "state capitalism"

Key Takeaways:

- What is the basis of the anarchists', "critique," of Marxism?
- What is the rebuttal of its first half?
- What is the rebuttal of its second half?

Subsection 8: The second anarchist, "critique," against Marxism: Denial of the revolutionary character of Marxism-Leninism, with the assertion of it being anti-revolutionary

Important Context:

- This point is so easy to combat by reading nearly any basic works of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Vladimir Lenin, etc., that there's no need to entertain this farce. Multiple direct examples are provided in this subsection.

Subsection 9: The third anarchist, "critique," against Marxism: Denial of Marxism-Leninism as a popular movement, and the assertion that Marxists want to lord over the proletariat

Key Takeaways:

- What is the dictatorship of the proletariat? What is its purpose? What is it based on?
- How did the Paris Commune operate?