



Nieuwe  
**Communistische Partij**  
*van Nederland*

# **The view of the NCPN on socialism**

Theses on the lessons from the historical experiences of socialist construction in the USSR, the theoretical foundations for the development of communist society, and the possibility and necessity of socialism in the Netherlands

Central Committee of the NCPN  
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# Foreword

This document sets out the Central Committee's theses regarding the NCPN's view on socialism. More specifically, the propositions concern the lessons from the historical experiences of socialist construction in the USSR, the theoretical foundations for the development of communist society, and the possibility and necessity of socialism in the Netherlands.

These theses were put forward for discussion at the Party Conference held on Saturday 20 June 2026. In preparation for the Party Conference, the theses were discussed within the party's branches. These theses were also discussed within the branches of the Communist Youth Movement (CJB). Bearing in mind the valuable discussions that took place, the Party Conference unanimously expressed its support for the further elaboration of the party's vision of socialism on the basis of these theses.

With these theses from the Central Committee, the discussion surrounding them and the conference, the party is collectively taking the next step in developing the NCPN's view on socialism. This is an important task set by the 7<sup>th</sup> Party Congress, with a view to drafting the new party programme.

# Introduction

The Paris Commune of 1871 marked the first time in history that workers' power was established. Although it was brutally crushed, the labour movement was able to draw important lessons from it. The Paris Commune ushered in a new era: that of the proletarian revolutions.

The Great Socialist October Revolution of 1917 led to the establishment of the world's first socialist country, where the exploitation of man by man was abolished. This gave impetus to the labour movement worldwide, which secured significant rights in the 20th century, it strengthened the national liberation struggle that broke the colonial system, and it inspired more peoples to embark on the path of socialist construction. The counter-revolutions of 1989–1991 led to the restoration of capitalism in a number of countries.

The counter-revolutionary changes and the restoration of capitalism in the USSR and other socialist countries have been a great loss for the international labour movement. The counter-revolutions have also had major consequences for the Dutch working class. The gains and rights of the working class were secured through the class struggle in the Netherlands itself, but also within the correlation of forces created by the existence of the socialist countries. The disappearance of the socialist countries heralded a period of dismantling social gains and decline, economic crises and wars. In this development the exploitation of the working class is increasing ever more to enrich a handful of capitalists.

Although capitalism has managed to secure a temporary victory over the working class and socialism, this does not mean that the historical era in which we live – the transition from capitalism to socialism – has changed. It is merely a temporary step backwards, and creates the conditions for new revolutions, because capitalism is historically coming to an end. Socialism is on the agenda as the only possible and necessary step forward.

Capitalism has not always existed and will not always exist. It is faltering due to the contradictions inherent in it. On the one hand, the wealth produced by society is increasing; on the other, the standard of living of the working population is actually falling. The increasing wealth produced by the working class is concentrated, through capitalist exploitation, in the hands of a small minority, the capitalist class. There are attacks on incomes and social gains. Insecurity, poverty, exploitation, discrimination and environmental degradation are the order of the day. Imperialist wars threaten to escalate and generalize. The only way out for the future of the working class remains socialism.

These theses were drafted by the Central Committee of the NCPN for the party conference, which aims to further elaborate the NCPN's vision of socialism, in preparation for the development of the strategy and the shaping of the new party program of the NCPN at the next Congress.

The theses are divided into three parts. The first part contains theses on the lessons from the historical experiences of socialist construction in the USSR. It is important for the working class to critically study the experiences of socialist construction and to draw lessons from them, just as the labour movement did with the experience of the

Paris Commune. These lessons improve knowledge of the laws of socialist construction, thereby helping to prevent mistakes and weaknesses in the future or to overcome them more quickly.

The focus is on the USSR, the first country where the working class succeeded in establishing its own power and building socialism. For this reason, it is a logical starting point for study.

The theses on the lessons from the historical experiences of socialist construction in the USSR are an elaboration of resolution 7a of the 7<sup>th</sup> Congress of the NCPN: “The study of the history of socialist construction in the last century will be continued. The party’s assessments regarding developments in the USSR’s economy and the causes of the counterrevolution will be further elaborated, discussed, and submitted to a Conference.”

The second section contains theses on the theoretical foundations for the development of communist society. This is certainly not a “blueprint” for future society, but rather an exposition of the fundamental characteristics and laws inherent to socialist construction. These insights are partly based on the lessons from the history of socialist construction, which thus contribute to strengthening the NCPN’s vision of socialism.

The third section contains theses on the possibility and necessity of socialism in the Netherlands. We examine the most important aspects of the Dutch capitalist economy and assess the criteria that determine whether the material conditions that make socialism possible are present in the Netherlands. We also discuss the necessity of socialism in the Netherlands. Socialism offers the working class in the Netherlands a perspective, an alternative to the constant decline and threat of war under capitalism.

We approach the question of socialism from the perspective of the working class. We do not pretend to have an “impartial” approach. But we do aim for objectivity, because the labour movement has no interest in either demonizing or idealizing socialist construction. It is precisely important to acknowledge both the successes and the mistakes and shortcomings, in order to draw lessons for the future.

The methodological foundation of our approach is material dialectics and historical materialism. This also includes insights from political economy and the theory of class struggle. Priority is given to the study of the economy, particularly the relations of production. On this basis, the superstructure is studied, which also has its own dynamics and exerts influence on the economic base.

These theses of the Central Committee of the NCPN are the result of a long-term process of study and discussion. Since its founding, the NCPN has engaged with the experiences of socialist construction in the 20<sup>th</sup> century through numerous publications and discussions. In 2019, the leading bodies of the NCPN and CJB initiated a systematic study of socialist construction in the Soviet Union and China, which was extensively discussed at the time in the national bodies and in most branches of the party and CJB. On that basis, the study and discussion continued. At the 7th Party Congress in 2022, the results were summarized in the congress decisions, which simultaneously provided direction for further research. Since then, the party has made significant efforts by writing and translating a series of articles that provide insight into various aspects of

socialist construction. Many of these articles have also been published on *leesmanifest.nl* and have led to valuable discussions.<sup>1</sup>

These theses summarize the party's positions. The underlying arguments are primarily set out in the studies published in recent times. These texts also contain numerous references to the sources on which the insights set out in these theses are based. These references are not included in the theses themselves, as this is a political position rather than a research paper – for the underlying research and sources, we therefore refer you to the articles published on *leesmanifest.nl*.

Although the theses in this document are based on extensive research and detailed discussions, they are not the end point, but a basis for further study and discussion.

“On the other hand, proletarian revolutions, like those of the nineteenth century, constantly criticize themselves, constantly interrupt themselves in their own course, return to the apparently accomplished, in order to begin anew; they deride with cruel thoroughness the half-measures, weaknesses, and paltriness of their first attempts, seem to throw down their opponents only so the latter may draw new strength from the earth and rise before them again more gigantic than ever, recoil constantly from the indefinite colossalness of their own goals – until a situation is created which makes all turning back impossible, and the conditions themselves call out:

*Hic Rhodus, hic salta!*”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See: <https://leesmanifest.nl/dossiers/socialisme/>.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, 1852.

# 1. Lessons from the historical experience of socialist construction in the USSR

## 1.1 The gains of the people in socialist construction

### **1. The USSR was the first country where the socialist revolution triumphed and socialism was being constructed.**

The establishment and development of capitalism deepened the fundamental contradiction of the capitalist mode of production, between the socialization of production and the private appropriation of its results. In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, this development brought to light the necessity of communism. The *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, written by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in 1848, was the first political program based on scientific socialism, and set forth the basic principles for the first communist party.

With the Paris Commune in 1871, the dictatorship of the proletariat was established for the first time, lasting 72 days.

The victory of the Great Socialist October Revolution of 1917 led to the establishment of the Soviet republics, which united in 1922 to form the USSR. The Soviet state was the first historical experience of the consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat –a democratic state that expressed the interests of the vast majority of the population– and the construction of the socialist economy, which sets the needs of the people as the goal of production rather than the profit of a small minority. Socialist construction in the USSR resulted, for the first time in history, in the abolition of capitalist exploitation.

### **2. The achievements of socialist construction for the working class demonstrate that socialism constitutes a major step forward in social progress.**

The historical experience of building socialism in the USSR and other socialist countries shows that socialism is a higher form of organisation of the economy and society. This is despite the problems faced by the population in various periods, which were dealt with to varying degrees of success, and the shortcomings and mistakes that ultimately contributed to the counter-revolutions at the end of the 20th century. These do not detract from the social gains in the Soviet Union and the efforts made by the working class to carry out its historic task and build a new society.

Under socialism in the Soviet Union, for the first time in history, employment was guaranteed, as were free healthcare, education and other public services. Not just on paper, but in practice. Socialism brought about an unprecedented rise in living standards and promoted cultural and scientific progress. Major strides were made in the emancipation of women and minorities.

Across the world, socialism served as an example and inspired the struggle of people resisting oppression and exploitation. Socialism served as a paragon of international solidarity and proletarian internationalism. It fostered friendship between peoples in the face of imperialist competition and wars. The USSR played a crucial role in the victory over fascism and in the process of decolonisation.

The social progress brought about by socialism stands in stark contrast to the capitalist system, which is characterised by exploitation, inequality, crises and war. Despite imperialist opposition, violent interference and sabotage against the construction of socialism, the achievements and successes of the USSR and other socialist countries demonstrated socialism's potential to promote the prosperity and development of the population in a sustainable manner.

## 1.2 The socialist economy

### **3. The achievements of the USSR were the result of to the deepening of communist relations in production.**

These achievements were the result of the struggle to abolish capitalism and construct socialism. In the Soviet Union, the exploitation of man by man was abolished for the first time. For the first time, the capitalist system –in which profit is the aim of production and the economy is subject to the anarchy of the market– was abolished.

With the socialisation of the means of production, the development of central planning, the establishment of workers' control and, more generally, the construction of communist relations, the aim of production changed. Profit was no longer the aim, as in capitalism, but people and the fulfilment of their needs became the aim of production. The establishment of these communist relations in the economy enabled the population to shape the development of the economy and society collectively, consciously and in a planned manner on the basis of the needs of the population, with made the achievements of socialism possible.

### **4. Socialism is the first stage of communism and is characterised by the struggle between the old and the new relations.**

Communist relations do not take root overnight. Socialism is not an independent socio-economic formation. It is the first, immature stage of communism. Immature, because it still retains all manner of remnants of the old, capitalist society, such as commodity and monetary relations, private property in the form of individual producers (such as craftspeople who sell the products of their own labour) and group property of cooperatives. There are also contradiction that socialism inherits from the old society, such as the contradiction between executive and managerial work, the contradiction between the countryside and the city, etc.

The construction of the socialist economy therefore proceeds through the struggle for the abolition of private property, which resolves the fundamental contradiction of capitalism, and the construction and deepening of communist relations within the economy. Here, the interests of the working class and the majority of the population clash with social groups and strata that have an interest in the restoration of capitalist relations, such as the former bourgeoisie and, at the time, the former nobility, but also groups such as the intelligentsia, civil servants or sections of the labour aristocracy who had lost their privileged positions. A struggle is therefore taking place between the old and the new relations.

The establishment of workers' power after the October Revolution was thus only the starting point for the construction of socialism. Not only were they dealing with the remnants of capitalism, but they were also confronted with the ruins of the First

Imperialist World War, underdeveloped economic conditions with a lack of infrastructure and a highly stratified peasantry, and the civil war involving interventions by foreign armies. Agriculture, too, had been severely backward. In pre-revolutionary Russia, despite the formal abolition of serfdom in 1861, remnants of the feudal economy still persisted in practice, and peasants were exploited by large landowners. These circumstances had hampered the development of agricultural production. With the 'Decree on Land', the Soviet government abolished large-scale landownership in October 1917. The new workers' state was faced with a situation in which agricultural productivity was very low and spread across small-scale individual farms.

It was therefore not immediately possible to launch an offensive against all capitalist elements across the entire economy. The strategy adopted was that, initially, a strong socialist industry had to be built up. Industry made the supply of agricultural machinery possible, as well as irrigation works and other conditions for the transition from small-scale agricultural production to large-scale production, initially within the framework of cooperatives and subsequently by integrating the agricultural sector into the socialist economy.

Due to historical circumstances, the devastation of the war and the low level of development of the Soviet economy, temporary steps back had to be taken in socialist construction. This occurred with the New Economic Policy (NEP). This made a number of enterprises available for capitalists to exploit (without transferring ownership), promoted trade and organised the exchange between agricultural production and socialised industry on the basis of tax in kind, so that farmers could trade the remainder of their agricultural produce on the market. The main aim of the NEP was to provide an economic incentive for farmers to increase agricultural production, so that workers in the cities could be fed and industry could be supplied with raw materials.

The NEP meant an introduction of capitalist economic elements and thus also represented a significant concession and a considerable retreat, which the party also acknowledged. Such concessions are not an inevitable law of socialist construction, but were a necessary tactic in these specific historical circumstances.

Towards the end of the 1920s, the NEP came to an end and the 'offensive of socialism against capitalist elements' began. This was possible because, in the preceding years, the foundations had been laid for socialist industrialisation and cooperatives had already been established by peasants. Moreover, the capitalist world was in the throes of a massive crisis (the Great Depression of 1929–1933), which provided scope for launching the socialist offensive. Concessions to capitalists were withdrawn and industrialisation was continued. The collectivisation of agriculture was tackled en masse. Kolkhozes were strengthened and sovkhoz<sup>3</sup> were also developed on a limited scale. The electrification and industrialisation of production, the expansion of transport networks, and the mechanisation of a large part of agricultural production were realised. The planned economy was strengthened and achieved impressive rates of development in socialist industrial production. Soviet power successfully developed domestic production capacity across all branches of industry.

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<sup>3</sup> The kolkhoz was a transitional form between capitalist and socialist ownership, linked to central planning. The sovkhoz was socially owned.

## **5. The class struggle continues during the period of socialist construction.**

In the struggle to expand and deepen communist relations within the economy during socialist construction, the interests of the working class and the majority of the population clash with those of a minority of social strata that have an interest in strengthening private property, market forces and, more generally, capitalist relations, which find international support as long as capitalism remains intact in other countries. The class struggle therefore continues under socialism.

This is also demonstrated by the historical experience of socialist construction. Class struggle has taken place in every period, and it can also intensify during socialist construction, as happened during the offensive. Capitalist elements do not wish to 'grow into' the socialist economy peacefully, but seek to resist the deepening of socialist relations of production.

## **6. The alliance with the peasantry and the middle strata requires particular attention in the construction of socialism.**

The peasantry and the urban middle classes are indispensable allies of the working class in socialist construction. That alliance took shape in various ways.

For example, during the civil war it took the form of war communism, whereby the Soviet authorities offered the peasants land and protection against the kulaks, and the peasants supplied food for the working class in the cities. After the civil war, the NEP provided farmers with economic incentives to increase agricultural production, as they were able to trade part of their agricultural produce on the market. Following the NEP, agricultural machinery produced by socialist industry was made available, via cooperatives and state farms, to farmers who voluntarily joined.

During the offensive and collectivisation, mistakes and exaggerations were committed, such as the violation of voluntary collectivisation by local party bodies, which seriously undermined the alliance between the working class and small and medium-sized farmers.

This demonstrates the importance of the party developing a well-considered strategy for the alliance with the peasants and also other middle strata in the cities, so that they are properly involved in socialist construction, which is, after all, also in their own interest. The party must guard against adventurist positions that jeopardise that alliance, as represented in the Soviet Union by Trotsky and Zinoviev in the 1920s.

## **7. The application of capitalist 'formulas' in the socialist economy as a response to the many challenges weakened the socialist relations of production and undermined socialism in the USSR.**

After the Second World War, a new situation arose. Whilst reconstruction was taking place at a rapid pace, the innovations of that period led to a further development of social needs. In that context, real and concrete challenges in the economy came more clearly to light, such as the slow pace of applying new techniques in production, the persistence of unproductive working methods, difficulties in collecting and processing information for central planning, etc.

These circumstances called for a further deepening of socialist relations, with the development of socialist indicators and criteria for central planning, the strengthening of

workers' control and the interaction between the plan and 'bottom-up' feedback, and the curtailment of private property.

During the 1950s, however, market-oriented views (*tovarniki*) gained influence. The view that the market could play a neutral role in socialism and could even be used to develop socialism had already emerged in the 1920s and 1930s, but this view was successfully countered within the party at the time. The fact that these views gained influence after the Second World War, was linked to the party insufficiently managing to further develop the political economy of socialism and to elaborate solutions to real problems in a direction that deepened socialist relations in production, even though the material conditions were ripe for this. The internal development of the party was also a significant factor in this: many of the party's cadres had been killed during the Second World War, whilst in the same period millions of new members joined its ranks and relatively less attention had been paid to inner-party education due to the priorities of the war.

The 20th Congress, which took place in 1956, marked a significant turning point in this shift towards introducing market elements into the socialist economy, a trend that was continued in the 1960s and 1970s, particularly with the Kosygin reforms, and later in the 1980s.

Solutions to the problems and challenges were increasingly sought in the reintroduction of market elements, the use of commodity and money relations, the weakening of the link between enterprises and central planning, and the strengthening of the role of capitalist indicators and criteria such as profit in the economy.

The gradual introduction of capitalist 'recipes' into the socialist economy of the USSR weakened the communist relations within the economy, such as social ownership, central planning, workers' control, etc. In doing so, it also weakened the development of the communist attitude towards labour, which is based on these relations and which is undermined by the strengthening of commercial and money relations in the economy, which in turn encourage individualism, self-interest and competition. In this way, market reforms and capitalist 'recipes' undermined socialism and the developmental dynamics of the socialist economy.

## **8. The introduction of market elements created the economic conditions for the counter-revolution.**

Through the reintroduction of market elements, direct trade between enterprises outside the central planning, the strengthening of the role of bonuses and material incentives, and the expansion of the black market that thrived on these market elements, the differentiation in income and wealth gradually increased. This differentiation took place between, but above all within, enterprises, where it took the form, amongst other things, of a sharpening of the contradiction between executive and managerial labour.

Among a small proportion of farmers and kolkhoz administrators, as well as among some enterprise managers, a social stratum emerged that was essentially able to appropriate a share of the social product. This individual interest clashed with the social interest. They had an interest in legalising the wealth they had accumulated so that it could be legally deployed as capital in production. This created the most important economic condition and driving force for the counter-revolution: a social stratum with

an interest in the restoration of capitalism. This was further facilitated by the policies of the 1980s, in particular the laws which, from 1987 onwards, legalised capitalist property relations in the economy and accepted various forms of ownership.

**9. The construction of socialism and the expansion of communist relations require a struggle to abolish the market and all capitalist elements in the economy.**

The market existed in the USSR as a remnant of the capitalist mode of production, and the law of value applied in the socialist economy to the extent that commodity production still existed. For example, part of the kolkhoz's produce was collectively owned and intended for sale, and so these were commodities.

During the 20th century, opportunist theories were developed in the USSR and other socialist countries which are at odds with Marxist political economy, speaking of 'socialism with a market', 'market socialism', 'socialist commodity production', 'socialist market economy', etc. In all their various forms, these theories boil down to viewing the market and planning as two 'neutral' means, both of which could be employed in both capitalism and socialism. The market is thus no longer seen as a remnant of capitalism that must be combated, curtailed and ultimately completely abolished in the course of socialist construction –always to the extent that the material conditions for this are met– but as a feature of socialism itself, which can not only be maintained but even expanded. This is closely linked to the misconception that a state-owned enterprise is equivalent to a socialist enterprise, whether it operates through central planning or through the market.

The entire historical course of socialist construction in the USSR, however, has confirmed the positions of Marx, Engels and Lenin, who emphasised that the market and socialism are incompatible. After all, socialist, social ownership does not merely mean that an enterprise is, in formal legal terms, state-owned.

Socialist production means directly social production, in which the productive forces mobilised by an enterprise are allocated through central planning, whilst workers' control is exercised over the elaboration and implementation of that plan, with the aim of satisfying social needs. Socialism is direct social production precisely because the social character of labour and the social utility of the products are clear directly, and not retrospectively via the detour of the market. The contradiction between private labour and social labour, which underlies commodity production, does not arise, and so there is no question of value or the law of value. These are categories from the political economy of capitalism that no longer apply.

Reality is far more complex, because during the construction of socialism all manner of remnants of capitalist relations of production still exist, including market forces with commodity and money relations, forms of private and group ownership, etc. It is, however, important to understand the antagonistic relationship between the remnants of the old, capitalist relations and the new socialist relations. In the USSR and other socialist countries, the theory that there would be a non-antagonistic relationship here, or even that socialism is a form of commodity production because the market was seen as a neutral, eternal economic category, was the main theoretical starting point in the political economy of the opportunist and ultimately counter-revolutionary tendency.

## 1.3 The socialist state

### **10. The USSR was a workers' state, which represented the interests of the working class and the vast majority of the population.**

The dictatorship of the proletariat, which first emerged in the Paris Commune in 1871, was first consolidated with the victory of the Great Socialist October Revolution. The revolutionary organs of power of the Soviet state had emerged from the workers' movement and the revolution. With the overthrow of bourgeois power, the population took matters into its own hands through these organs and began building a new economy and society.

The economic base and superstructure form a dialectical unity, in which the economy is ultimately decisive. The social character and class content of the state as the dictatorship of the proletariat is a prerequisite for, and at the same time determined by, the social character of ownership under socialism.

The establishment of communist relations of production following the overthrow of bourgeois power enables the population, through its state organs, to shape the development of the economy and society collectively, consciously and in a planned manner, based on social needs.

The class character of the Soviet state was expressed, among other things, in the rights it entrenched for workers and the population, but also in specific rights relating to the emancipation of women and minorities. Rights that were often entrenched for the first time in history, and often at a constitutional level. But more importantly, these rights did not merely exist on paper; they were also realised in practice because the Soviet state built the necessary facilities so that everyone could actually exercise their rights.

The historical development of the superstructure within socialist construction thus also demonstrates socialism as a higher form of organisation of the economy and society. But this is also illustrated by the real problems and shortcomings, since any decline in the functioning of the dictatorship of the proletariat was accompanied by a decline in the involvement of the masses and in economic development.

### **11. The dictatorship of the proletariat must rely on the active participation of the working class in the exercise of power.**

Socialist construction relies on the initiative, will, responsibility, enthusiasm and discipline of the workers. Therein lies the strength of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The dictatorship of the proletariat is proletarian, socialist democracy, and can only function as such when it is based on the active participation of the working class in the exercise of power. The dictatorship of the proletariat can only fulfil its duty in the class struggle if the masses are broadly involved in making, implementing and monitoring decisions; if they actively embrace the goals and direction of central planning, which they themselves shape.

That is why it is of great importance to facilitate the active participation of the working class in the exercise of power, through education, cultural development, political education, the reduction of working hours, and substantially functioning organs of power.

The fact that the organs of power must function substantially –at all levels, from local organs up to the national central organs– means that it is not merely a matter of formally holding periodic, free elections of representatives. It is also about substantive general meetings of workers at the base, where the possibility of criticising decisions and their implementation is facilitated, where higher bodies are held to account, are monitored, and representatives can be recalled if they no longer fulfil their position satisfactorily, and where bureaucratic attitudes or arbitrary behaviour of officials can be combatted.

Shortcomings in workers' control and the involvement of workers in the exercise of power led to inefficiencies and ineffectiveness in the economy, which manifested in the waste of productive forces, bureaucratic working practices and other economic problems. Such shortcomings alienated the main productive force, namely labour, from production and central planning. This undermined socialist construction, for workers' control is a communist relation of production that is inextricably linked to social ownership and central planning.

The dictatorship of the proletariat therefore requires that the subjective factor –the workers– be not passive spectators but protagonists in the political activity for social liberation. Herein lies, after all, the essential difference between bourgeois parliamentary democracy –which in all manner of ways actually excludes the masses from effective participation in governance– and proletarian democracy.

## **12. The core of workers' power lies at the base.**

In the early years, elections in the USSR took place mainly through the production unit. In cases where this was not possible, such as for civil servants, students, pensioners, people unfit for labour, etc., they were held at the workplace, the educational institution or in the neighbourhood. So the elections mainly took place at the workplace where the workers' collective is organised, where workers hold meetings, take decisions and elect and monitor their representatives. The production unit thus formed the electoral unit and the basis of the workers' state.

The amendments to the constitution in 1936, which replaced the production-unit-based electoral assemblies with geographical constituencies, weakened workers' control. In light of the successes achieved in socialist construction and the reduction in the contradictions inherited from capitalism, it was concluded that 'further democratisation' would be possible. Based on this reasoning, there was a shift from the production unit as the electoral unit to geographical constituencies. This weakened the masses' involvement in the political process and the interaction between the base and the higher organs of power, as it objectively increased the distance and made it more difficult to monitor, and possibly recall, representatives.

With the weakening of socialist relations of production following the 20th Congress of the CPSU in 1956, we see a growth in social differences based on income and position on the one hand, and the sharpening of the contradictions between individual and collective interests on the other. A trend can be observed whereby workers' control is weakening even further. This was evident, for example, in the reduced participation of workers in the Soviets, the organs of workers' power.

This not only encouraged inefficiencies and ineffectiveness in the economy, but also hindered the involvement of the masses in the political process, as well as the

relationship and interaction between the base and the higher organs of power, as it objectively increases the distance and complicates the control over and possible recall of representatives.

The core of workers' power must therefore lie at the base, within the production unit, service, educational institution or neighbourhood. From there, higher bodies are elected and monitored on a sectoral or geographical basis.

### **13. The socialist state is the dictatorship of the proletariat, and retains its class character until the withering away of the state.**

When opportunism gains the upper hand in the party, we see that the party begins to pursue economic policies aimed at weakening socialist elements and strengthening capitalist elements. This, in turn, has further influence on the party's elaborations concerning the superstructure. In 1961, at its 22nd Congress, the CPSU arrived at the incorrect conclusion that the dictatorship of the proletariat had come to an end and that there was now a 'all-people's state', that is to say, not a workers' state but a state of the entire population. The CPSU arrived at this assessment because it believed that there was no longer an internal class enemy, as capitalist exploitation had been abolished.

However, the possibility of a restoration of capitalism still lies latent in the 'birthmarks' of the old society. In particular, remnants of commodity and monetary relations and forms of group ownership in the economy, but also the contradictions that socialism inherits from capitalism –such as those between town and country, between physical and mental labour, and between executive and managerial labour– make the class struggle necessary. Ideological and cultural remnants also play a role. The theory of the 'all-people's state' failed to recognise the possibility that capitalism might regain the upper hand in the USSR, not only through external but also through internal developments. The need to continue fighting this consistently was thus underestimated.

Moreover, the 'all- people's state' approach focuses solely on the repressive function of the workers' state, and underestimates the creative and educational role that the dictatorship of the proletariat plays in building the new, communist relations in the economy and society. It is the proletariat, as the only truly revolutionary class, that can combat the capitalist remnants in society, under the leadership of the communist party. The necessity for the socialist state to act as the dictatorship of the proletariat is therefore inherent in this. The proclamation of a 'all-people's state' therefore inherently conflicts with the role of the state under socialism and stands in contrast to the position developed by Lenin, Marx and Engels, which held that the dictatorship of the proletariat is necessary until the complete abolition of classes and the withering away of the state.

### **14. Socialism and imperialism cannot coexist peacefully, for there is no such thing as peaceful imperialism.**

The USSR always sought to ensure peace wherever possible. Tens of millions of people lost their lives as a result of the fascist invasion of the USSR. In the wake of the horrors of the Second World War, the people of the USSR yearned for peace. The line of 'peaceful coexistence' partly reflected the desire for peace in the Soviet Union. This line was developed in the post-war period, to some extent at the 19<sup>th</sup> Congress in October 1952, but mainly at the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CPSU in 1956.

Imperialism continued to make plans to bring about counter-revolution in the USSR and the newly established socialist countries.

Socialist countries defend peace. But the policy of 'peaceful coexistence' as formulated by the CPSU created the idea that, in the long term, imperialism could peacefully accept the existence alongside it of forces that had broken through global imperialist domination. Imperialism itself embodies a drive for expansion, including into new markets and towards cheap labour. Through 'peaceful co-existence', the CPSU thus essentially also undermined the collective, Marxist-Leninist understanding of the economic nature of imperialism. This line thus weakened the Soviet Union's vigilance towards imperialism and, moreover, essentially amounted to a revision of revolutionary lessons and an underestimation of imperialist strategy against socialist states and workers' movements.

**15. The theoretisation of the USSR's diplomatic ties with certain countries led to illusions regarding the class nature of those countries.**

The USSR maintained good relations with many countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America that had waged a successful national liberation struggle against colonialism. In some countries, the national liberation struggle turned into a socialist revolution, as in China, Vietnam and a number of other countries. In other countries, capitalism persisted and the bourgeoisie of that country remained in power. The USSR made a tremendous contribution to the development of these countries in the form of economic support and solidarity against imperialist aggression.

Under this post-war correlation of forces, there were countries that maintained good relations with the USSR and thus withdrew somewhat from the influence of the US and Western Europe or opposed their influence, such as Egypt, Syria, Indonesia and India. However, a misconception also arose that these countries were undergoing a kind of socialist or 'non-capitalist' development and that the bourgeois governments or the bourgeoisie in those countries should be supported by the labour movement.

This assessment was linked to reformist theories regarding the possibility of a parliamentary road to socialism, which exerted a strong influence particularly after the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CPSU. It was also linked to theories in which the contradictions between capitalist states –which always contain elements of dependency and inequality and are inevitable within the imperialist system– were not correctly analysed.

A socialist country will develop economic and diplomatic relations with other countries, including capitalist countries, for economic as well as strategic and tactical reasons. However, these diplomatic choices should not be theorised.

A capitalist country may establish ties due to specific historical circumstances, the correlation of forces, the influence of the labour movement, tactical considerations of the ruling class, or other reasons. But this does not alter the class character of that country, which is ultimately determined by the relations of production within a country and not by diplomatic ties or the correlation of forces. The laws of the class struggle are in force, and in every country only the working class can bring about socialist construction through revolution; leadership cannot be left to the national bourgeoisie.

## 1.4 The role of the Communist Party in socialist construction

### **16. The Communist Party must be capable of further developing the theory of Marxism-Leninism and the practice of socialist construction in order to address the issues that arise in the course of socialist construction.**

If the communist party does not succeed to develop the theory and resorts to bourgeois 'solutions' to the problems arising in socialist construction, this creates scope for opportunist views. If opportunism is not refuted in a timely and thorough manner, it develops into a counter-revolutionary force. The counter-revolution in the USSR demonstrates that it is possible for the communist party to lose its revolutionary character and itself become the vehicle of the counter-revolution.

Despite the earlier internal struggle against opportunism, a right-opportunist line gained the upper hand in the CPSU from the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress onwards, with a profound impact on the party's ideological and organisational cohesion. Furthermore, social differentiation within the USSR and the still-existing commodity and monetary relations strengthened the material basis for opportunism and the influence of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forces. Although consistent communists resisted this opportunist course of the party, they failed to prevent the victory of the counter-revolution.

These developments were facilitated by external factors, such as imperialist pressure, economic competition, ideological subversion, as well as strategic problems and contradictions within the international communist movement.

Problems in the CPSU's strategy, including the opportunist turn following the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress, do not detract from the socialist character of the USSR. Although the communist relations of production were weakened, they were not completely dismantled until the period immediately preceding the counter-revolution, with the measures taken in the late 1980s. Unnuanced, metaphysical positions, in which the USSR has been wrongly characterised as 'state capitalist' or 'social-imperialist' since the 1930s or 1950s, are unfounded and reinforce bourgeois anti-Soviet propaganda.

### **17. Despite the many differences between countries, a revolutionary strategy remains necessary.**

Since its 20<sup>th</sup> Congress, the CPSU has supported a 'diversity of forms of transition to socialism', thereby advocating the possibility of a transition to socialism via the bourgeois parliament. This strategy already existed within a number of communist parties which, under the guise of certain 'national circumstances', saw the possibility of a parliamentary path. This line found expression in various opportunist theories, both right-opportunist and left-radicalist, which denied the need for a revolutionary strategy under the guise of national circumstances. Examples include Eurocommunism<sup>4</sup>, which

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<sup>4</sup> Eurocommunism denies the necessity of a dictatorship of the proletariat and advocates a reformist strategy, but it also introduced explicit anti-Sovietism into the communist movement. Eurocommunism led to the bourgeoisification and, in some cases, even the dissolution of many communist parties, as in the Netherlands.

was particularly influential in Europe, and Maoism<sup>5</sup>, which was influential in Asia, amongst other places.

This tendency towards various variants of reformism eventually gained the upper hand in many parties. It essentially involved a revision of the lessons of the revolutionary experience of the October Revolution and a reformist, social-democratic strategy. The united strategy of capitalism against the socialist states and the workers' movement in the capitalist countries was underestimated. At the same time, the strength of the socialist system was overestimated and the possibility of counter-revolution underestimated.

It is important to take national circumstances into account, but they must not serve as a pretext for denying the general laws of the class struggle. An understanding of the general laws of the class struggle is indispensable and a prerequisite for correctly grasping the specific particularities in each country and each period, and for developing the appropriate strategy and tactics there.

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<sup>5</sup> Maoism, named after Mao Zedong, combines various opportunist ideas, ranging from left-wing radicalism to right-wing opportunism. We can only touch on this briefly here, but in practice Maoism often advocates far-reaching cooperation with the 'national bourgeoisie' on the one hand, whilst at the same time adopting a sectarian line at various points, whereby, for example, the leading role of the Communist Party is denied or downplayed.

## 2. Theoretical foundations for the development of communist society

### 2.1 The laws governing the communist mode of production

**18. Communism** is a socio-economic formation that arises objectively in the course of the historical development of society. It is a classless society. The means of production and the products belong to society. There is no exploitation of man by man.

Communism presupposes a revolutionary, qualitative transformation not only of economic relations but of society as a whole. It is therefore impossible and nonsensical to draw up a 'blueprint' for communist society. That would amount to speculation, as it concerns a future that will be shaped under conditions fundamentally different from those of our present society.

Scientific socialism does, however, enable us to identify certain general core characteristics and laws that characterize communism. These are objective laws, independent of human will and consciousness. They express the social relations of cooperation and joint effort among workers who are liberated from exploitation.

The laws governing the communist mode of production do not provide an exhaustive description of future society. They do, however, outline the historical direction of social development, although we cannot predict the specific forms these objective laws will take.

**19. The fundamental economic law** of communism, which determines the purpose of production, is the satisfaction of ever-growing social needs, or production for the extensive satisfaction of social needs.

Social needs do not merely increase in quantity, but also develop qualitatively in dialectical connection with the development of the productive forces and society. The ability to meet the needs of the population ever more effectively is therefore also something fundamentally different from economic growth under capitalism, where profit is the objective.

**20. Communist relations of production** are based on **social ownership**. The private ownership that characterised capitalism and other exploitative societies is abolished, and the means of production and the products are owned by society as a whole. The results of production cannot be privately appropriated.

**21. The central planning** of the economy is a fundamental principle of the communist mode of production, which gives expression to the union of labour power with the means of production within the framework of social ownership. The direct producers consciously plan, on the basis of the fundamental economic law (the aim of satisfying the expanding social needs), how the productive forces are distributed across different branches of production; what and how much is produced and of what quality, and do so on the basis of the fundamental economic law: the aim of meeting society's increasing needs.

Central planning, as well as workers' control and other communist relations of production, are also necessary in order to produce according to needs, as this makes it possible to consciously take this into account. The plan is dynamic and adapts to changing reality. The anarchy of production that characterised capitalism has been abolished.

The national or overarching multi-year plans, which formulate the general medium- and long-term development goals, are merely one aspect of the plan. Central planning is concretised and specified within every sector and every enterprise, in which the workers are closely involved. But central planning also means that every economic transaction, such as the allocation of means of production and the distribution of consumer goods, takes place within the framework of the plan, and thus not via the market.

**22.** In central planning, sector 1 (the production of means of production) is given priority over sector 2 (the production of consumer goods) in the economy. This is necessary for **socialist accumulation**; the expansion of production for social welfare, in accordance with the fundamental economic law of the communist mode of production. After all, the development of sector 1 is essential to ensure the consistent development of sector 2 in the long term.

**23.** Central planning goes hand in hand with **workers' control** over production. The direct producers, who collectively shape the plan, also monitor its implementation. They provide bottom-up feedback, seek ways to improve efficiency and quality, whilst shortcomings and unproductive or bureaucratic working practices are corrected.

**24.** Within the framework of communist relations of production, production and labour become **directly social**. This means that, from the outset, labour is directly part of social labour. The allocation of the labour force is determined and planned in advance on the basis of social needs. The social utility of labour is no longer confirmed indirectly and retrospectively, that is, via the market.

The contradiction between private and social labour, which underlies commodity production, is thus abolished. Communist production is therefore not commodity production, and the product of directly social labour does not take the form of a commodity. After all, the products are not intended for exchange, and so the law of value is invalid.

Central planning takes into account the labour time expended in the production process to meet social needs. This is, however, different from the socially necessary labour time which, according to the law of value in the context of commodity production, forms the measure for the exchange of equivalents.

**25.** The **communist attitude towards labour** is a communist relation of production that arises on the basis of directly social production, the reduction of working hours, the all-round development of workers, and the cultivation of a communist consciousness. Labour becomes a creative activity and a necessity rather than an obligatory means of survival.

One aspect of this attitude is **communist emulation**. Workers strive collectively to achieve and exceed the set targets, and also to outdo one another, not at the expense of others as in capitalist competition, but in order to advance society as a whole.

The social contradictions that underlie class differentiation in society are resolved. These include the **contradiction between intellectual and manual labour**, which has now mainly taken the form of the **contradiction between executive and managerial labour**, as well as the **contradiction between town and country**.

**26.** The distribution of the national product is determined by the principle of **from each according to their ability, to each according to their needs**.

**27.** Communism leads to the **withering away of the state**. Since there are no longer any classes to oppress, there is no longer any need for an apparatus of oppression by one class against another. The organisation and administration of society, including the planning and control of the economy, become a technical and organisational matter in which the workers are involved from the bottom up. The organisation of society thus loses its political character as a result of socialist construction, which takes place in a planned and deliberate manner. Hence the proletarian state withers away. It is not 'abolished' or 'destroyed'.

## 2.2 Socialism as the first stage of communism

**28. Socialism is the first stage of communism.** It is not an independent socio-economic formation, but it is communist society that is still immature, undeveloped and not yet fully realised.

The same laws that characterise communist society also permeate socialism. Thus, the same fundamental economic law applies, and socialism features social ownership, central planning, prioritisation of sector 1 over sector 2 for socialist accumulation, workers' control over production, and labour that is directly social.

At the same time, however, socialism is characterised by the persistence of remnants of the capitalist society from which it emerged. Victory over these remnants is necessary in order for the communist laws, which are already at work under socialism, to let them come into their own.

Socialism is therefore characterised by the struggle between the new, communist relations and the remnants of the old, capitalist relations.

This struggle does not take place spontaneously. The working class plays a decisive role in it as a subjective factor. That is why socialism is characterised by the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is established through the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie's power and the establishment of the political power of the working class.

The socialist revolution begins with this overthrow and the establishment of workers' power, which socialises the concentrated means of production and thereby creates a fundamental prerequisite for socialist construction. However, the revolution is not limited solely to the working class's seizure of political power and the possible transitional period during which the victory of the revolution is secured. It also encompasses the ongoing socialist construction and further socialist development towards developed communism. A process in which not only the economy but the whole of society undergoes a revolutionary transformation.

**29. Property relations under socialism** initially include, alongside socialist state ownership, cooperative collective ownership and small-scale private ownership. Under

socialism, not all the conditions for the complete abolition of classes are directly in place. The abolition of private capitalist ownership of the concentrated means of production and their socialisation is merely a starting point for the construction of communist relations.

Cooperative group ownership, where there is no exploitation by a private owner and which is also linked to central planning, serves as a transitional form in the transformation of small-scale private ownership into direct social production. The integration of small farmers into cooperatives takes place on a voluntary basis. The motive is to promote agricultural production and reduce production costs through collective land cultivation, the provision of modern agricultural machinery, technical support and the development of infrastructure. Although central planning regulates cooperative production, it remains a form of group ownership that reproduces commodity and monetary relations and which must ultimately be overcome and integrated into directly social production.

The transition to a classless, communist society requires the abolition of all private property (including group ownership) and the socialisation of the entire production.

**30.** Socialism has **differentiations within the working class**, such as the contradiction between manual and physical labour, executive and managerial labour, and town and country. Resolving the contradictions and differentiations within the working class in the course of socialist construction is an important prerequisite for a classless society. This does not happen spontaneously or by itself, but requires conscious and systematic political work by the workers' state.

In the process of socialist construction workers are, for example, increasingly learning to carry out both managerial and executive tasks. Socialist construction also involves the development of facilities designed to eliminate the underdevelopment of rural areas. The deepening of communist relations of production—such as central planning and workers' control—makes it possible to overcome inherited social contradictions.

**31.** In those sectors of the economy where production is not yet directly social, commodity production and, more generally, commercial and monetary relations still exist. **Individual or cooperative commodity production** is based on individual private ownership or cooperative group ownership of limited means of production.

These products are exchanged as commodities for the products of directly social production. The law of value applies in the sphere of commodity production. Its influence is limited by the operation of central planning, which determines the prices of the cooperatives' products and employs other economic instruments.

Commodity production or the market, and the commercial and monetary relations within the economy, will not disappear or cease to exist by themselves. This too requires planned and conscious political work by the workers' power.

**32.** Although some social needs are met immediately or shortly after the revolution through free public services (such as healthcare and education), under socialism the distribution of the social product is based on the principle: **'from each according to their ability, to each according to their labour'**.

Distribution takes place via 'labour income' and the 'prices' of products, which are determined by central planning. On the surface, it appears as though there is 'buying'

and 'selling', just as the market operates. However, the products of social production belong as a whole to society and are socially owned. These products are therefore not produced as commodities for exchange, but are planned and produced to meet social needs. The law of value is invalid and therefore does not regulate relations in the socialist economy. Nor is labour income, unlike wages, a payment for sold labour power, but rather proof of participation in social labour.

The measure of the labour that each person has contributed to the social product is working time, not the value that the labour produces. After all, any labour that produces use-values is useful, and there is no reduction of complex labour to simple labour, as occurs in commodity production where equivalent values are exchanged.

The distribution according to labour under socialism is not only due to the fact that the development of the productive forces does not yet allow the entire social product to be distributed according to needs, as a result of which parts of the economy cannot yet be included in the planning. Of particular importance is also that labour under socialism is still an obligation and the communist attitude towards labour is still being developed. The communist attitude towards labour is not immediately acquired after the revolution, and partly for this reason there are still manifestations of individualism, selfishness, careerism, a bureaucratic attitude, laziness and even corruption.

**33.** Under socialism, class differences and antagonisms initially persist. There is therefore **class struggle under socialism**. During the period of socialist construction, class struggle takes place under complex circumstances and, at times, adverse (international) correlation of forces and threats, such as imperialist encirclement and counter-revolutionary forces.

**34.** Given the persistence of class differences and class struggle, a state is necessary: a **dictatorship of the proletariat**. The state retains its character as a workers' state not only until the abolition of exploitation, but throughout the entire period of socialist construction until the withering away of the state with the complete abolition of all class differences.

In socialist construction, the dictatorship of the proletariat, like any state, has a repressive function in the struggle against the old relations in the base and superstructure, but also a creative and educational function in the construction of the new, communist relations in the economy and society.

**35.** The dictatorship of the proletariat is a **proletarian democracy**, which relies on the active participation of the working class.

The primary electoral unit is therefore the production unit or workplace (workers' council). School pupils, students, pensioners and other non-working sections of the population also have, as far as possible, their primary electoral unit at the base (e.g. educational institutions, etc.). There, not only are representatives elected, but substantive meetings also take place. Proletarian democracy is therefore organised directly on the work floor, where the working class controls, records and distributes production and consumption. Workers' control over the economy is not only a practical and economic task, but also a political one that falls to the dictatorship of the proletariat. It safeguards not only proletarian democracy, but also the principle of 'to each according to their work'.

All organs of power are directly and indirectly elected. The population has the right to vote and to be elected, to monitor representatives and to recall them. Representatives are accountable to and monitored by the people that elected them. All representatives at all levels are recallable at any time. State organs function on the basis of democratic centralism.

Representatives and officials continue to work alongside their elected roles as much as possible in order to remain involved in the implementation and monitoring of decisions. There is no financial benefit attached to elected positions. For the time representatives and officials devote to a function, they receive no more than their average hourly wage.

## 2.3 The subjective factor and the role of the Communist Party in socialist construction

**36.** The activity of the **subjective factor** –the working class and its party– is of vital importance during socialist construction. The involvement of the working people plays a significant role. They act on the basis of their knowledge of the objective laws of socialism and communism and drive social progress. The subjective factor acts in a conscious and systematic manner, with knowledge of the laws of socialist construction.

**37.** The growth and strengthening of **communist consciousness** is determined by the struggle to consolidate communist relations of production, the involvement of the working people in socialist construction, and the decisive role of the communist party.

**38.** It is therefore a necessity that the **communist party** possesses a high theoretical-ideological level and steadfastness. During socialist construction, new circumstances and new problems arise. The party must always be capable of further developing its theory and strategy in the face of a changing reality and of acting on that basis.

It is important that the party is able to overcome erroneous views on the basis of scientific socialism. Historical experience shows that opportunism under socialism, if not corrected in time, can develop into a counter-revolutionary force.

A healthy class composition of the party is also of great importance in this regard, which means that the leading revolutionary role of the working class – and, within it, of the industrial proletariat – must be reflected in the party's membership.

# 3. The possibility and necessity of socialism in the Netherlands

## 3.1 The criteria for the existence of the material conditions for socialism

**39.** Over the past few hundred years, capitalism has socialised production on an unprecedented scale. Millions of workers are linked together in the production process, even across national borders. At the same time, the means of production remain in private hands. This contradiction is becoming increasingly apparent in all aspects of social life. This is reflected in the intensified class struggle between the working class and the bourgeoisie, the struggle between different sections of the bourgeoisie, between imperialist alliances and blocs, and in capitalism's inability to meet the needs of the population. These are all signs that capitalism is historically out of date, and that the time is ripe for a different system: socialism. The material conditions for socialism must first be in place. To be able to know whether this is the case, we must first understand what these material conditions are.

**The main criterion for determining whether the material conditions for socialism are in place lies in the degree of development of the forces of production**, in conjunction with the extent of capitalist relations. The most important indication of the maturing of the material conditions for socialism is the significance of wage labour in the economy – the role of the proletariat. So we are talking specifically here about people who are in paid employment and are entirely dependent on their labour power. This reflects the intensification of capitalism's fundamental contradiction between the social character of labour and the private capitalist appropriation of the results of labour.

Marx wrote: "For the oppressed class to be able to emancipate itself, it is necessary that the productive powers already acquired and the existing social relations should no longer be capable of existing side by side. Of all the instruments of production, the greatest productive power is the revolutionary class itself. The organization of revolutionary elements as a class supposes the existence of all the productive forces which could be engendered in the bosom of the old society."<sup>6</sup>

Under capitalism, the socialisation of production takes place through the concentration and centralisation of capital, which goes hand in hand with the expansion of capitalist relations within the economy, and thus of wage labour. This is even more true of capitalism in its imperialist stage. Capitalism therefore creates the main condition for its own downfall. Developments under capitalism thus demonstrate that it is necessary to bring the relations of production into line with the level of development of the forces of production.

**40.** The **significance of wage labour** should not be understood as a simplistic majority-minority issue, although, as we shall see, the working class in the Netherlands

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1847/poverty-philosophy/ch02e.htm>

constitutes the majority of the working population. As Lenin pointed out: “The strength of the proletariat in any capitalist country is far greater than the proportion it represents of the total population. That is because the proletariat economically dominates the centre and nerve of the entire economic system of capitalism, and also because the proletariat expresses economically and politically the real interests of the overwhelming majority of the working people under capitalism. Therefore, the proletariat, even when it constitutes a minority of the population (...) is capable of overthrowing the bourgeoisie.”<sup>7</sup> The role of wage labour in the economy is therefore one of the most important material conditions for the possibility of socialism.

## 3.2 The possibility of socialism in the Netherlands

**41.** In the Netherlands, **the vast majority of the population work under wage labour**, which, as mentioned, is the key criterion for the existence of the material conditions of socialism. To illustrate: in the first quarter of 2025, 9.8 million people in the Netherlands were in paid employment, some 73.1% of the working-age population. This represents an increase of almost 7% compared to 2014. The next largest group, the self-employed (more than 1 million, or 13% of all workers), consists largely of people who are in fact part of the working class but find themselves in even more precarious, so-called ‘flexible’ employment relationships. This group is entirely dependent on offering its labour power. Around 40% of all Dutch workers are employed in larger companies with more than 250 employees, although these companies accounted for only 0.1% of all businesses in the country. Virtually all sectors are subject to capitalist economic relations.

**42.** To assess the possibility of socialism in the Netherlands, we also take a broader view of the development of the forces of production. We examine the various sectors of the Dutch capitalist economy and their interrelationships, including the development of industry, agriculture and other economic sectors. These are essential facts about the economic basis of capitalism that the socialist revolution will inherit. This is important for determining how the socialisation of various sectors can take place and what challenges will arise in the process. After all, the pace of socialist construction is influenced by what socialism inherits from capitalism.

The Netherlands possesses abundant domestic energy resources, a highly developed industry that in some areas is even at the international forefront of technological development, high-quality infrastructure, and a well-educated workforce with a high level of technical and scientific expertise. The Netherlands supplies the entire chip value chain (through monopolies such as ASML and NXP), which play an essential role in telecommunications, automation, AI, but also in warfare. The food industry, mechanical industry, chemicals, metals and textiles are also highly developed in the Netherlands. Furthermore, the Netherlands is one of the world’s largest agricultural exporters, with an export value of around 129 billion in 2025, and a leader in greenhouse and seed technology. Rotterdam is Europe’s largest seaport and a major logistics hub, as is Schiphol. The Netherlands also plays a leading role in water technology, including drinking water supply and treatment, industrial water solutions, wastewater collection

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1919/dec/16.htm>

and reuse, and in delta technology, including integrated water management, hydraulic engineering, coastal development, dredging, and so on. The Netherlands also has an extensive banking sector that exerts considerable influence on the rest of the economy and a large state apparatus employing almost 500,000 civil servants.

The Dutch agricultural sector also deserves special attention. Agriculture, a sector that is as a rule disadvantaged under capitalism, is highly developed in the Netherlands, with a high degree of mechanisation, automation and centralisation. In recent decades, this sector in the Netherlands has undergone a significant degree of centralisation. In 1950, there were 410,000 farms, whereas by 2016 this figure had fallen to just 55,000. At the same time, the average farm size increased from approximately 5.7 hectares in 1950 to 32.4 hectares in 2016. Between 1980 and 2004, the number of people employed in agriculture fell sharply: from 265,467 in 1980 to 98,900 in 2004. In this way, Dutch agriculture plays an important role in competition on the world market.

The Netherlands' high-quality industry and agriculture, together with its highly skilled workforce, are able to meet a large proportion of the Dutch population's needs. The Netherlands possesses vast reserves of natural gas and coal, and, thanks to its geographical location (few natural earthquakes, location on the North Sea), is well-suited to the use of various types of renewable energy to meet the population's need for affordable energy, with a focus on the use of renewable energy sources and minimising damage to the human environment and biodiversity. Under socialism, it would be possible to explore and develop other energy sources, such as nuclear energy and fusion energy. Thanks to the high level of technological development in the Netherlands, the transition to alternative energy sources could take place more quickly, which is also important in view of the large-scale damage to the environment and climate caused by capitalism.

The infrastructure can and must be further expanded, with public transport as a priority, supported by industry. Agriculture can support industry by providing food, and industry, in turn, can prioritise the development and production of means of production and the support of agriculture. It is only under socialist conditions that the Dutch economy can truly realise its full potential, phase out exploitative relationships and exert international influence on the existing correlation of forces.

**In summary, if we look at the productive forces, the Dutch economy has the potential to meet all the contemporary needs of the population under socialism. The economy is highly concentrated and centralised, and is more than ripe to be socialised.**

**43.** Despite the fact that the Dutch economy is relatively heavily focused on foreign trade, the construction of socialism would not mean that the Netherlands would become isolated or that the economy would lose its potential and dynamic. On the contrary, the abolition of the exploitation of man by man, the socialisation of the means of production and the introduction of socialist central planning would **unleash enormous productive forces** that remain untapped under capitalism.

For those goods that are not available within the Netherlands or that cannot be produced by the Dutch economy, trade relations will be established with other countries on the basis of mutual benefit. The Dutch economy would still produce goods that are wanted by other economies.

Trade will be possible with countries that are also building socialism – there is a high probability that a socialist revolution in the Netherlands will take place at a time when similar upheavals are occurring elsewhere.

However, trade with capitalist countries is also possible. The capitalist world is characterised by contradictions between capitalist countries, and any rift that arises can be used to play one capitalist off against another. A socialist Netherlands, decoupled from the EU and its interests, could independently conclude trade agreements with capitalist countries for various raw materials and goods.

**44.** This is not to say that building a socialist society in the Netherlands will be easy, or that we can look forward to a rosy future straight away. The Netherlands possesses crucial technologies for modern industry (e.g. machinery for advanced chip production) and plays an important role in international trade due to its geographical position as a link between the Atlantic Ocean and continental Europe, the role of the port of Rotterdam, Amsterdam's Zuidas as a financial centre, and Schiphol as an international airport for business and tourism. When socialist Netherlands no longer makes these things available to the capitalist system, there will undoubtedly be reactions from the bourgeoisie abroad. At present, it is impossible to predict the correlation of forces under which a socialist revolution in the Netherlands will take place; it is therefore important that we do not take this process lightly. Every effort must be made, both at home and abroad, to consolidate socialist power in the Netherlands and beyond. The Dutch working class and its allies, including those internationally, **will have to defend its power** against this and overcome the obstacles that are put in its way.

### 3.3 The need for socialism in the Netherlands

**45. The need for socialist construction stems first and foremost from the growing contradictions of capitalism**, which the bourgeoisie is increasingly unable to control. The capitalist system, now in its imperialist phase, can no longer meet the ever-growing needs of the Dutch working class and other sections of the population. Capitalist relations of production have become a brake on the further development of the productive forces – private property must be abolished. The growing and intensifying inter-imperialist contradictions, the attacks on the living standards of the working class and the increasing threat of war also demonstrate the necessity of socialism.

Gigantic monopolies, which play a dominant role in the economy and operate 'by plan' at various levels, produce solely for the profit of a handful of capitalists. The fact that production has become highly socialised, yet the results are privately appropriated, is a key criterion for the maturity and necessity of socialism in the era of imperialism, in which capitalism has long since lost its progressive role. The ruling class plays a regressive role at both the economic and political levels and hinders the development of the economy.

Despite the explosive development of technology with which everyone is confronted on a daily basis, such as the rise of artificial intelligence, the standard of living of the working class has actually deteriorated in recent years. Constantly rising costs, inflation, taxes and cuts to social services constitute a major attack on wages. It is therefore increasingly common for wages to be spent by the middle of the month. New technologies are not being used to improve the lives of the working class, but to increase

profits by holding the threat of unemployment over people's heads, or to carry out repression.

At the same time, the bourgeoisie is preparing for war, and heavy investment is being made in the arms industry. The working class, too, is being prepared to make sacrifices for the next imperialist war, initially from its income, but later also by being directly drawn into the violence of war.

**46. On a social and political level, the rotten nature of capitalism is also becoming increasingly clear.** In politics, there is a reactionary trend that extends across the entire bourgeois political spectrum. The growing influence of far-right forces in bourgeois politics is characteristic. Together with the liberal, confessional but certainly also the social-democratic parties, these are united in spreading reactionary, anti-communist ideas amongst the working class. The demoralisation of the working class is evident from the rise, for example, of prostitution and the spread of drugs and other addictions as an escape from the problems the working class faces in its daily life. In other ways too, such as excessive smartphone use and 'binge-watching' films and TV series, workers try to escape the total lack of meaning and appreciation under capitalism. The working class's environment and living conditions are also increasingly being undermined by environmental and climate degradation, partly due to the politics of the 'green transition' presented as a solution, whilst it is in fact a controlled devaluation of capital, but also by the shift towards a war economy.

### 3.4 Current developments in the subjective factor in the Netherlands

**47.** The working class, which does not own the means of production and is subject to capitalist exploitation, has an objective interest in the abolition of capitalism and the construction of socialism. The working class is therefore the only **revolutionary class** that is capable of taking the lead.

However, the working class does not automatically develop class consciousness, let alone political consciousness. The prevailing ideas in a society are, in fact, the ideas of the ruling class. Moreover, the vast amount of bourgeois propaganda and the constant demonisation of socialist construction in the twentieth century have had a negative effect on the consciousness of the working class. Bourgeois propaganda reinforces the belief among the working population that capitalism is the only possible economic system. This constitutes one aspect of the negative correlation of forces between the working class and the bourgeoisie in the Netherlands.

Growing contradictions and social problems lead to frustration and discontent, and sometimes even unrest among the population. However, without political clarification, these sentiments are easily channelled in a direction that is harmless to the system.

The struggle creates favourable conditions for the development of consciousness among the working class. However, this development of class consciousness and political awareness does not happen automatically. The intervention of the communists is necessary to bring this about.

**48.** The **rate of organisation** of the Dutch working class –that is, the number of workers who is organised in the trade union– has been falling for years, a trend that is evident not

only in the Netherlands but worldwide. This decline is the result of various objective and subjective factors, the most important of which we will outline here.

Firstly, a more general negative trend has been evident since the counter-revolutions in the socialist countries. Secondly, the role of the largest trade union federations (FNV, CNV) has weakened since the counter-revolutions to the detriment of the working class, because reformist trade union policies prevail there, focusing on class collaboration rather than class struggle. The labour aristocracy that took and continues to take the lead in these trade unions –often linked to social democracy but also to confessional politics– initially waged active struggle against communist trade union politics, and following the counter-revolutions led the attacks on the rights of the working class from positions within bourgeois governments, as, for example, former FNV chairman Wim Kok did as prime minister in the 1990s.

In addition, the increased precariousness and uncertainty for working people, the use of foreign labour under precarious conditions, as well as the intimidation and repression of trade union activity by employers, are key factors contributing to the declining rate of organisation of the Dutch working class. Concrete examples of this include the banning of strikes by KLM staff and pharmacy assistants.

**49.** There is a **lack of a class-oriented trade union movement** capable of leading the working class in a confrontation with capital, rather than the politics of class collaboration pursued by today's trade unions and federations. The FNV, as the largest trade union in the Netherlands, presents itself as a passive service provider that resolves individual problems, rather than a collective organisation of struggle that demands social change for the benefit of the working class.

The FNV leadership, often made up of social democrats, is primarily concerned with securing a seat at the negotiating table in the 'polder', which means they are constantly making concessions that are detrimental to working people, as was the case with the pension legislation. As a result, the trade union enforces few demands, but mainly manages the decline that is a consequence of the capitalist system. The result is a series of toothless agreements in which fundamental deteriorations (such as uncertain pensions or excessive workloads) persist. Furthermore, there is a divide between a bureaucratic 'top' (the organisation of those employed by the trade union) and the active members.

**50.** It is essential to strengthen the union from the bottom up. The only way forward is **to strengthen a class-oriented line**, a line of class struggle, in which the power of the working people themselves and the strike as a means are central to securing improvements for the working class. This is happening to a limited extent in various sectors, such as the traditionally strong port and metal sectors, but trade unions are also being established in new, often precarious and 'flexible' sectors, such as the 'Riders Union', which organises bicycle couriers. Strikes are also taking place more frequently in general. The trade union movement is also expanding to address broader political issues such as solidarity with the Palestinian people, leading to the formation of the group Trade Unionists in Solidarity with Palestine.

**51.** The **communist party** is the only party capable of leading the working class towards a socialist revolution. This is because the Communist Party recognises the working class's capacity to seize power from the bourgeoisie and consistently fights for this as

the vanguard of the labour movement. This means that the communist party leads the revolutionary struggle against capitalism and for socialism. In the Netherlands, the NCPN fulfils this role, supported by its youth movement, the CJB, which organises young people from the working-class youth in the struggle.

**52.** In recent years, particularly since the onset of the capitalist crisis in 2008, but above all since the outbreak of the pandemic in 2020, the NCPN and CJB have experienced steady organisational, political and ideological growth, both quantitatively and qualitatively. **The party and the youth movement have been able to strengthen their political and ideological intervention in various areas** on the basis of the objectives of the 7<sup>th</sup> Congress of the NCPN and the 10<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CJB. The lack of a future under capitalism, the growing inter-imperialist contradictions and the war economy, other social issues such as the rise of fascism and reactionary views on women and minorities, or environmental degradation, and the growing distrust of the population towards the bourgeois state, create an atmosphere in which a growing, though still limited, realisation is emerging among sections of the population that an alternative is necessary.

However, this realisation is still largely channelled into bourgeois, often reactionary, directions that do not question the capitalist system, or sometimes into opportunistic directions that question, or indeed actively attack, the possibility and necessity of socialism and communism. The scale and depth of bourgeois propaganda, which disseminates bourgeois ideology, remains very strong and has a negative impact on the population. This applies in particular to anti-communism, which constitutes an obstacle to the intervention of the party and the youth movement in the class struggle. Bourgeois individualism, the withdrawal of the population from collective activities and struggle in general, the role of social media, working from home, etc., are also obstacles to the struggle of the working class, and thus to the NCPN and CJB.

**53.** The activities of the party and the youth movement focus largely on organising and supporting campaigns and activities that concern the rights of the working class and working-class youth. However, the NCPN has not yet succeeded in establishing effectively functioning workplace cells. **Its roots among the working class in the workplace are therefore still weak.** CJB branches have, however, been set up at educational institutions, though so far only at universities. This reflects the difficulties the CJB faces in organising sections of the studying working-class youth, the majority of whom are enrolled in vocational and higher vocational education programmes.

In the run-up to the 7<sup>th</sup> Congress of the NCPN, the party branches were reactivated. Many party branches now meet regularly, but are still only able to intervene actively among the working class, in workplaces, neighbourhoods and businesses to a very limited extent.

**54.** One important step that has been taken is **the organisation of inner-party education and the establishment of the Ideological Commission of the Central Committee.** Systematic inner-party education, covering the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism –including philosophy, political economy and strategy– had not taken place for a long time. The inner-party education, in which many cadres are participating, is leading to members being better equipped to confront bourgeois and opportunist ideas, thereby strengthening the awareness of the possibility and necessity of socialism-communism.

As a consequence, the party and youth organisation are better able to determine the direction our political work should take, which in turn leads to a greater impact within the labour movement.

**55.** The NCPN also took an important ideological step with the conference on imperialism and the adoption of the resolutions of the 7th Congress. **The Leninist line on imperialism** is defended, in opposition to bourgeois and opportunist views that the EU and NATO are ‘security partners’, or conversely views that portray only the Euro-Atlantic bloc comprising the US, EU and NATO as imperialist, whilst capitalist Russia is viewed as playing an ‘anti-imperialist’ role. With these insights, we also play an important role as a party within the peace movement and actively promote an anti-imperialist political line.

**56.** *Manifest* is a key means for intervention, clarification and elaboration on important issues affecting the working class. The editorial’s move towards greater professionalism, **the consistency of publication and the improvement in the quality of *Manifest*** is a significant step forward that has been taken in recent years.

**57.** The NCPN and CJB fulfil their obligations within the **international communist movement**. The regrouping and ideological, political and organisational strengthening of the international communist movement is of essential importance in this regard. The NCPN consistently participates in the meetings of the IMCWP, the meetings and political interventions of the ECA, and contributes to the ICR. The CJB participates in MECYO and in the WFDY meetings.

**58.** A major shortcoming in the party’s strategy is the lack of **a comprehensive and up-to-date party programme** that can provide direction for the struggle for socialism in the Netherlands. Although significant progress has been made in recent years –particularly in the run-up to the 7<sup>th</sup> Congress and the current efforts leading up to the 8<sup>th</sup> Congress in 2027 in analysing, for example, the role of the Netherlands within the imperialist system, and although certain issues have been set out in *Manifest* and statements, there is still a lack of a systematic political-economic analysis and a strategy for the overthrow of capitalism in the Netherlands. With these conference papers, the party is taking steps in this direction towards the next Congress and a new party programme that can formulate the strategy for the struggle for socialism in the Netherlands.

