

17. SOCIALISM IN FORMER SOVIET REPUBLICS

AYF Armenia

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the newly established republics witnessed rapid privatisation of state property and the adoption of neo-liberal economic policies. Capitalism left vast swaths of society with very little resources and endured the dangerous growth of monopolies and oligopolies.

In order to be able to address the continuously crippling problems the former Soviet republics continue to face, we, the socialist youth, believe that there is a dire need for adopting a new agenda in these countries. Presently, these countries suffer from the strong absence of social justice, a deficiency in the rule of law and an unequal distribution of wealth. The only alternative to these problems is a new social democratic framework.

We agree that socialism not only stands for basic political rights but also for economic and social rights. These include: the right to work, the right to medical and maternity benefits, the right to leisure, the right to economic security for citizens unable to work due to old age, incapacity or unemployment, the rights of our next generations to access welfare, the rights of youth to education in accordance with their abilities and the right to adequate housing. Socialism strives to abolish all legal, economic and political discrimination between sexes, between social and racial groups, between town and countryside.

Social democracy has always advocated social inclusion. The economies of these countries must function as such that each individual receives a fair share in the output of production. The economy must serve the well-being of a country's citizens. The state must provide the security for all layers of society and ensure the political rights and freedoms of all.

For socialism to flourish in these former Soviet republics, several factors need to be considered and actions to be undertaken.

- We, the socialist youth, believe that we should strive to rebuild society in freedom and through democracy. Without freedom, there can be no socialism, and socialism can only be attained through democracy.
- Every human being has a right to a life protected from arbitrary invasion by the state. Moreover, each individual should have political liberties like freedom of thought, expression, education, organization and religion which are cornerstones of social democracy. Dictatorships, autocracy or authoritarian regimes have no place in a socialist world.
- If we, the socialist youth, aim to ensure development in these former Soviet republics and for them to embrace social democracy, we need to support credible and progressive policies which enhance the well-being of all layers of society. We must change the perception where socialism is seen as a return to the Soviet totalitarian regime. We must provide a more truthful depiction of social democracy to the generations to come.
- Due to the current lack of ideological discourse in these countries, political parties are defined by their leaders as opposed to clear ideology. There is an absence of political vision and policies, which has marginalised political dialogue and has become insignificant. Socialist youth must be able to raise the political consciousness of the electorate by means of active participation in public awareness campaigns, which inform people of their rights and responsibilities and in turn help them to understand that on election day they should vote for a party's policies.

We truly believe that only socialism can facilitate true democratic debate about a society's wealth and ensure the provision of basic needs for everyone.

Let us unite, and join forces to spread true social democratic values in former Soviet republics.