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impossible to deal with it on the same basis as the theories of market mechanism which have existed for a few centuries. But I am convinced that this is a fertile work which can stimulate our thinking on contemporary socialism in many directions. It provides the readers with one of the best achievements in the field of the research of socialist economic systems in Japan.

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Yoshiaki NISHIMURA: *Ownership and Decision Making under Contemporary Socialism* (in Japanese), Iwanami Publishing Co., Tokyo, 1986, 303pp.

This work is composed of articles previously published. Nevertheless, it is a unified monograph in a strict sense. The aim of the work is as follows. "Social ownership is established, and on the basis of that, a planned economy is carried on. This well-known proposition of classical Marxism must be re-examined in response to the experience of contemporary socialism" (p. 1). The sphere covered by this work is "the theory of socialist ownership", or "the relations between social ownership and plan=market=democracy" (pp. 3-4).

This work has eight chapters which comprise three sections. The first section, containing chap. 1 "Marx's conception of ownership", chap. 2 "the problem of so-called 'individual ownership' ", and chap. 3 "Marx's design of socialism", is a reexamination of the theory of socialist ownership in Marxist classics. The second section, including chap. 4 "social ownership and state ownership", chap. 5 "the realities of 'kolkhoz = cooperative ownership' in the era of Stalin", and chap. 6 "the etatization of 'kolkhoz' in Soviet Union", is a critical examination of the theory of socialist ownership in the Soviet Union where the centralized system is prevailing. The third section, including chap. 7 "de-etatization and the Yugoslav economy", chap. 8 "the strengthen-

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ing of the principle of positive or negative reward according to business showings and the Hungarian economy”, is an examination of new interpretations of socialist ownership in two countries where they are seeking decentralized systems.

Having such an aim and structure, this work is one of the most outstanding studies of socialist economies. However, many points of the author’s arguments are not beyond dispute.

1

Chap. 1 “reexamines Marx’s conception of ownership from the standpoint of the theory of socialist economy”. Examining faithfully Marx’s descriptions in *Grundrisse*, the author defines ownership in general and social ownership in particular as follows. “Ownership means the person’s action connected with the conditions of reproduction as the dominant territory of his decision” (p. 12). “Social ownership means the whole social structure of decision relations where each member of society agrees with the domination to the whole means of production by a single management decision of society, and more or less is willing to be subordinated to the decision” (p. 18). In short, ownership means the social structure of “decision making”. Such an interpretation of Marx’s conception of ownership has two aims. The first aim is “to indicate that the Stalinist view of ownership is incompatible with Marx’s conceptin of ownership” and the second one is “to present a fundamental standpoint from which the old system can be criticized, which is lacking in the Stalinist conception of ownership” (p. 21).

We can, on the whole, agree with such a “starting point” of the work.

In chap. 2, the author examines the argument in our country of “what is social ownership, how we should grasp the relations between two concepts: ‘social ownership’ and ‘individual ownership’ ” (p. 25). The aim of this chapter is to ask “whether new views have the effect of implying criticism of the Soviet type of socialism” (p. 25). The characteristics of “the system and the theory of ownership under the Soviet type of centralized socialism” are (1) “the dichotomy of ownership subjects: the means of production and social ownership; consumption goods and individual ownership”, (2) “the

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tendency of identification of social (the whole people's) ownership and state ownership to the means of production", and (3) "to consider state ownership as the state monopoly in relation to the use of the means of production" (pp. 26-27). The author does not agree with the common interpretation derived from F. Engels. "First, Engels's school of common interpretation is pretty unreasonable and is hardly acceptable. Second, as to the interpretation of 'the negation of negation', a hypothesis that presupposes the simultaneous formation of two concepts: social ownership and individual ownership is more reasonable" (p. 31).

Examining some variants of new interpretations, the author does not have a decisive conclusion except one case of the view "social ownership = collective ownership" which he rejects decisively. As for the effectiveness of new interpretations as criticisms of Soviet type socialism, in his opinion, it "has large limits".

We can agree with the author's criticism of common interpretations. However, it seems to us that his own new interpretation which insists on a "double formation" of social ownership and individual ownership to the means of production is not fully persuasive. In our opinion, the identity existing between "individual ownership" which is the object of the first negation and "individual ownership" which is "reconstructed" as the consequence of the second negation consists in the fact that the possessor of the means of production and the direct producer are connected in one person. On the other hand, the difference between them consists in the fact that for the former the person is the "individual" and for the latter the person is the "society". The latter is nothing but "social ownership". The decision making in such "social ownership" is done by the "society" as an association of individual "free men". There, the "society" and the "individual" are combined with common interests, and each "individual" must be a participant in the decision making as a master. The Soviet type of centralized socialism may be criticized owing to the defect that real democratic potentialities of such "social ownership" have not been displayed fully.

In chap. 3 the author examines "Marx's design of socialism". In his opinion, "Marx's design of future society itself is not so clear" (p. 49). That appears in "the design of association" and "the design of one country = one factory". As to the former, the problem "what principles put in order the

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plans of cooperatives" is left unsolved. As to the latter, "the division of labor in society can not be changed into one which has the same quality of the division of labor in a factory" (p. 58), and the regulation of plans, after all, needs the existence of the state" (p. 59). Thus, in the author's opinion, in the first phase of communist society, it is inevitable that "the state organ of economic administration is formed as a huge hierarchy, the regulation by the state bureaucrats (bureaucratic regulation) is dominant, and therefore, the "associate model" must be changed into an "etatist model" (pp. 59-60).

Pointing out the problems of "centralism" created in the Soviet Union by V. Lenin on the basis of Marx's design, the author shows two other types of "decentralism: the Yugoslav worker's self-management model and the Hungarian inductive market model", the common feature of which is "the abandonment of 'the design of one country = one factory' and the introduction of regulation by market which Marx denied" (p. 65). However, in his opinion, neither direction "is an easy course" (p. 66).

Marx scientifically foresaw the future society. In our view, the future society is composed of two sorts of elements. One is the common communist features and the other is special socialist features. It is true that Marx did not foresee the existence of commodity = money relations, and said nothing in fact about "the socialist state". Moreover, it is sure that Marx did not discuss sufficiently the problem of how the contradiction = dualism between the two sorts of elements can be solved under socialism. Nevertheless, Marx's contribution to scientific foresight about the future society is immortal. It is contemporary Marxists who are destined to resolve this difficult task on the basis of Marx's methodology. The experiences of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Hungary are examples fighting for the resolution.

2

In chap. 4 "the identification of state ownership and social (the whole people's) ownership" in the Soviet Union is criticized.

After an examination of the problem of "state ownership = social ownership", the author summarizes three types of criticism. "The first view, denying state ownership as the general form of social ownership under social-

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ism, and at the same time denying the totality of the society under social ownership, insists on collective ownership. The second view, maintaining the ownership by society as a whole, at the same time denies state ownership. The third view, affirming the necessity of state ownership as the form of social ownership, criticizes the common interpretation of state ownership, that is, the common identification of state ownership and social ownership" (pp. 77-78). The author definitely does not agree with the first view. The second one is treated in chap. 7. Here the third one is examined.

The third view appeared in "the discussion around the economic reform from 1965 to 1968 in Czechoslovakia". The real point of confrontation in the discussion, in the author's opinion, was not state=social ownership VS enterprise=collective ownership, but centralism VS decentralism of the planned economy connected with the problem of who grasps the right of decision-making about the management activities of enterprises" (pp. 87-88). In other words, the core of the debate was "the problem of which is more applicable to social ownership the centralistic planning system or the decentralistic planning system" (p. 89). In the case of decentralism, "a sort of divided ownership, the dual structure of social or state ownership as a higher ownership and collective ownership as a lower ownership" (p. 91) may be possible, but "it seems to me that the time is not ripe to grasp fixedly social ownership as a divided ownership" (p. 93).

As for the problem of "the determination of realities of ownership to the means of production in Soviet socialism", the author after examining some views, presents his own "hypothesis" that "under the fiction of state = whole people's (social) ownership, on the basis of the grasp of political power, the domination of the means of production by the central party = state bureaucrats (non-possessors) is going on" (p. 100).

The author's own opinion about the concrete forms of social ownership is not so clear. Our opinion is as follows. Social ownership is essentially a whole people's ownership and the subject is the "society" = "whole people". However, a single subject of social ownership does not contradict the existence of plural subjects' decision making or economic management. These subjects are the society as a whole (the state, under socialism), the collective and the individual. The economic interests of these subjects are regulated through a democratic self-management system of the whole people. The

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system contains the elements of centralism as well as of decentralism. Under socialism, as far as the state exists, social ownership must take the form and contents of state ownership, and the so-called "divided ownership" is not necessary.

As for his "hypothesis", we can not agree with it, because it is a declaration of too political a character.

In chap. 5 the author examines the gap between the realities of "kolkhoz=cooperative ownership in the Stalin era and the common views about that. He points out its two tendencies: "etatization" and "individualization". "At that time, the real contents of the 'kolkhoz=cooperative ownership' system was the subordinate relations of 'kolkhoz' members to the state, of which features took decision-making away from the 'kolkhoz', irresponsible neglect and non-economic compulsions" (p. 131).

In chap. 6 the author continues his investigation of "the etatization of 'kolkhoz' " in the period after the war in the Soviet Union, and concludes as follows. "In recent years, the etatization of the 'kolkhoz' is becoming over-all" (p. 181). In other words, "it is wrong to say as in the case of the view on the approach between two forms of ownership that 'kolkhoz' as a cooperative is approaching a state enterprise, and cooperative ownership is approaching state ownership. This is sophistry, because there did not exist such a thing in Soviet agriculture" (pp. 181-182).

As we have seen, through chap. 5 and 6, the author denies the real existence of 'kolkhoz'=cooperative ownership, and rejects "the two forms of social ownership" and "the approach between two forms". It is true that there are such facts as the "etatization" and the "individualization". However, in our opinion, 'kolkhoz'=cooperative ownership exists in fact. The negative phenomena only show the insufficient maturity of 'kolkhoz'=cooperative ownership under each stage of its development, and its excessive subordination to state ownership. As to the approach between the two forms of social ownership, it does not mean the one-sided approach of 'kolkhoz' to 'sofkhoz'=state ownership. The process presupposes the development of both maturities.

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In chap. 7 the author examines the "Yugoslav theory of ownership".

After examining "the institutional and theoretical contents of the concept 'direct social ownership' " and "the criticism from the Soviet side to that", he shows his own opinions of the Yugoslav view and practices on many points. His conclusion is as follows. In Yugoslavia "social ownership can not be pure direct social ownership, and more or less, must have the character of state ownership, that is, social ownership mediated by the state", and "it seems to me that the eclecticism under contemporary socialism is inevitable" (p. 220). The eclecticism expresses "one of the fundamental difficulties with which contemporary socialism is confronted" (p. 220). It means that the state economic management like the Soviet type of centralism, and the worker's self-management like the Yugoslav type of decentralism, both involve essential difficulties.

We can agree with the author's positive opinion on the whole. However, the term eclecticism is not suitable. For the economic mechanism of contemporary socialism does not need an alternative but the connection of centralism and decentralism, plans and markets, administrative=directive methods and economic=indicative methods, and so on. We find the tendency to convergence between the Soviet type and the Yugoslav one of economic management inevitable.

In the concluding chap. 8, the author examines "the tendency toward the strengthening of the principle of positive or negative reward" and the unique debates concerning ownership in Hungary where centralization is going on under state=social ownership.

Pointing out "the tendency to the strengthening of the principle of positive or negative reward in enterprise management" in socialist countries, especially in Hungary, the author inquires into two problems. The first is "a reexamination of state ownership and the design of new ownership in Hungary". He notices a tendency toward a dualism of ownership, in which "state ownership in Hungary is not limited to the separation between ownership and management, and the means of production are under state ownership as well as under the ownership of all members of an enterprise, 'enterprise ownership' " (pp. 241-242). The second is "the strengthening

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of the risk share and the responsibility share in the aggravation of the managerial result on the shoulders of the members of an enterprise". His conclusion is as follows: "in the economic system of contemporary socialism, the minimization of the risk share, the responsibility share as a result of enterprise management, is built in institutionally and objectively" (p. 258).

Finally, he examines "contemporary socialism as a stabilizing system of economic life". "The economic system of contemporary socialism of the Soviet and eastern European countries (including Hungary), compared with contemporary capitalism, is more easily able to function as a stabilizing system, but more difficult to function as an efficient system of enterprise management", and moreover "the design 'markets under the leading role of plans,' is never a panacea, so its precise reexamination is needed" (pp. 263-264).

The term "the principle of positive or negative reward", the principle of remuneration according to the result is the author's creature. It is a fact that "the strengthening of "the principle of positive or negative reward" is going on. However, in our opinion, it does not necessarily lead to "the dualism of ownership" between the state and an enterprise, but leads to the pluralism of decision making subjects, that is, the decentralization of decision making.

The term "the stabilizing system of economic life" is also his creature. The term includes so many different elements that it seems to us not suitable. In essence, socialism does not pursue the stabilization of economic life as its self-purpose, and does not exclude "the principle of efficiency". A higher "standard of living" needs a higher "efficiency of enterprise management" as well as of national economic management. Nevertheless, it is a fact that under contemporary socialism "the principle of efficiency" is not functioning sufficiently. To create such an economic mechanism that involves the dynamism of higher "efficiency" is the common task of economic reform in socialist countries.

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