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The Left represents the march of history from the past to the future. History, however, imposes its own burdens. If time has to be given over exclusively to learning from the past, events may take a course that will jeopardise the future. The future is not a burden to the Left, at least not yet.

The Left demands power for the people, and the synonym for that call is often 'State'. Marx wrote that government was nothing but a committee attending to the common concerns of the entire bourgeoisie. When a State under the rule of law can protect human rights and freedom of the individual, then its existence is justified. The basic rights and freedoms of citizens must not be violated to further class interests or enforce political decisions carried by a majority. But the State cannot always be trusted, and that is why the Left also has to be a human rights movement.

To define basic human rights, society can refer to reasonably apposite conventions and declarations. Although they limit State sovereignty in territorial terms, that is something which we can accept because we are building a Europe of motherlands and are opposed to federalism and central authority in the EU. Human rights are universal.

Many people wish to live in the realm of freedom. Freedom is a left-wing concept, be it freedom from something, freedom to do something, freedom for each person, or freedom for all. It is a right and not a privilege. Freedom is also a question of necessity and duty. The essence of freedom lies in the fact that people are largely able to determine how they act and have control over their own lives.

The reality of what was once (real) socialism was that political freedom was sacrificed to dictatorship. As a result, the Left surrendered the keys of the kingdom of freedom to non-Marxist parties, which are now offering people the personal freedom of those enslaved by the despotism of the market. Through their media, non-Marxist parties impose such pleasurable limits on freedom that people may themselves come to crave restrictions on their own freedoms and the freedoms of others.

It might be wise to distinguish between society and the economy. In each case the rationale is different. The rationale of economic (neo-)liberalism and capital is at odds with politics and for that matter political liberalism, and a capitalist's version of freedom cannot be reconciled with

the freedom of a citizen. If society fails to defend citizens in the face of market forces, the freedom of the strong over those in a weaker position can take the form of personal imperialism and may lead to totalitarianism. Even at this point in time, hidden CIA codes can be entered in every single computer, Internet program, and mobile phone, thus making it possible to monitor free citizens round the clock and intrude on their privacy. Huxley's brave new world is the here and now.

It is the task of the Left to offer society more freedom and socialist well-being and civilisation in its best interest. There has to be an alternative to capitalism, which commercialises air, water, and soil, pollutes the natural environment, and patents and copyrights the genetic inheritance of living beings and the products of intellectual or artistic creativity to be privately owned by big companies. There is no need for a third way into the 21st century, just the green leftist road to a new utopia. To achieve the latter, we need to assess the past honestly and probe into the component elements of modern capitalism.

Eduard Bernstein believed that socialism and democracy were one and the same thing, and indeed socialists ought to be democrats and advocates of peace and democracy. Only by adopting that perspective can a person be freed from the tyranny of others.

In terms of form, democracy is based on division of power. Democracy is a system in which those who wield greater power than others are chosen in general elections by secret ballot to perform their tasks for set periods. Joint decision-making to determine how power and resources are to be divided and redistributed is part and parcel of democracy. Democracy also encompasses referendums and what is called direct or street democracy. The Left regards these as important modes of democratic expression. What counts is mobilisation and action. People are welded together and into communities by a common endeavour, not by proclamations. Democracy likewise has to do with openness and transparency. We in the Nordic countries have blazed a trail in that respect and would consider it intolerable for, say, a Member of the European Parliament to fail to be forthcoming to the voters about the economic benefits deriving from his parliamentary office.

Democracy does not extend to the economy. Economic decisions are not taken jointly. Everything stems from private ownership: individuals can buy rights to exclude others from the areas covered by those rights. Private ownership is a monopoly. The worst enemy of democracy is monopoly, both of the political and of the economic kind. Therein lies the dictatorship of a given social class.

The prime mover of markets and the core of economic systems is free price formation. This is the process whereby markets come into being or not, as the case may be. Markets have existed for over two thousand years, but society's experience of planning and administrative price setting dates back only just over seventy years. The experiences are not encouraging. They have served to drive the Left into a tight corner, since people's common knowledge and ways of life militate in favour of the market. However good social security may be, the basic means of subsistence for all and reasonably priced food, medicines, and housing can be guaranteed only by the regulation brought to bear by markets.

The Left has to be able to say which matters can, in its estimation, be left to the market and which should not, and define what it means by non-market sectors. We can also call for market-driven solutions such as the 'Tobin tax' to reduce capital speculation.

Marxist theory distinguishes between value and price. Marx derived the theoretical grounds for exploitation from the labour theory of value, but this has not stood the test of time. He failed to realise that the public sector would come to account for an increasing proportion of the economy or that concrete forms of work confirming the theory of value would not be generated from services or within the family. Nature, after all, takes a different course from the one that Marx was capable of predicting. The manufacturing era no longer amounts to the whole picture of capitalism, since the information, content, and communications industries, which are hardly material-, energy-, or labour-intensive, are already significant economic sectors in our day and age. The labour theory of value does not explain how money makes money on the financial markets used to carry on electronic capitalism or how it is that the bulk of the world's funds have no real existence. Capitalism does not hinge on the value of labour, but on expectation.

The empirical world tends to disprove Marx's labour theory of value or exploitation theory, but philosophy tends to support it.

Former Communists like ourselves have advocated our own scientific world view. In our theory, however, science has not made people free, but rather promoted exploitation and subjection to the State. Marxism-Leninism was the conceptual basis of the dictatorship of the proletariat, falsifying science to serve the needs of the ruling class. It was a creed that sanctified dictatorship.

The Left should not reject science. Quite the reverse. With the aid of science we have to explain what is truth. Politics is a battle for truth. Truth belongs to everyone but is owned by no one.

Politics must be founded on science but not on any one true faith. Non-Marxists believe in a single doctrine, namely their own economic theory, as if it were economic theology: the market is held to be holy.

Marx believed that history conformed to specific laws and was consequently a dialectical process. He thought that the dialectical development of societies stemmed from changes in the forms of private ownership. He observed that conflicts were a necessary precondition for all development. His analysis of power in particular proved fruitful. Power is not merely personal, because there is also the power exercised by society, originating not from God or gods, but from private ownership of the economy. That kind of power is not at stake in elections or present-day parliamentary democracy.

Marx was wrong on some points. Ideas are not bound up solely with relations of ownership, and nor is history a deterministic process revolving entirely around classes and the class struggle, independent of human agency. Revolution was Marx's remedy to all the evils of capitalism, but the alternatives in this day and age do not amount merely to revolution or otherwise. The chaos wreaked by revolution should not be unleashed by overthrowing capitalism unless there is an understanding of what will come in its place. That last question is the one that we shall have to answer.

Marx was a wise man and now needs others to continue his work and not just to imitate and reproduce it.

Communists have always believed that the State can free society from the exploitation brought about by private ownership. However, State monopoly socialism has not proved to be a lasting pragmatic solution. If the State owns something, nobody owns it. If socialism is defined purely as joint ownership of the means of production, it is not a credible alternative to capitalism. Society collectively has bad experiences from that point of view. In their minds people associate socialism more with violence than with freedom. If politics is to be used to give people a hope of a better kind of freedom and a better life, it may be that the prospect of a new dawn should not be called socialism.

The Left has to clarify its attitude to socialism. Should we conceive it to be joint ownership of the means of production or do we have to impart new substance to the word?

Our alternative to capitalism or the corrective that we wish to establish in its place is not necessarily linked to socialism. The Left is more than socialism or Communism. It is a broadly based, diverse movement that arose at the time of the French Revolution long before socialism. There should likewise be room on the Left for those seeking a new, modern alternative to counteract the market dictatorship of global electronic capitalism. That alternative is something that we do not yet have.

What has always been good about socialism is its high regard for community spirit. What has been bad about it is its insistence on collectivism, stifling human enterprise and creativity.

What will become of us on the Left if we represent old-style socialism – or syndicalism or corporatism – without affording scope for individual creativity - or if we do not defend human rights and regard socialism merely as a creed?

Perhaps in that case we shall be like the persecuted members of the early Christian Church, who clung to their faith and through their courage brought about a situation in which Christianity has become Europe's predominant religion and its universal moral authority. The Pope or Luther may exert greater influence on our consciences than Marx, but before that happened, the Church was one of the worst tyrants in history with its wars, crusades, and persecution of those of different faiths. Do we want to go down the same road to produce the same end result?

In Europe there are left-wing parties which proudly uphold the tradition of the Communist movement and are working class parties. Left-wing parties have millions of voters who find it deeply offensive that the success of the class parties is being called into question in the 21st century political market-place. These views deserve respect, but it is also necessary to consider what new ground can be broken for the Left and what uncharted territory opened up to the human intellect.

What constitutes the working class today in societies in which large working communities and traditional occupations are dying out? It is difficult to say. On the Left we have always defined a *'de facto'* working class by assigning the same place in society to the poor as a whole. We have then spoken in their name, although they have not given us a mandate to do so. Subjectively, however, people whom we label working class may not perceive themselves as such.

We on the Left like to talk of progress and progressive forces. Progress can be a dangerous word if it implies justification of violence, but it also suggests a desire to innovate and reform. Is the working class invariably progressive? Can it also be a reactionary force if that which is new is unsafe and frightening?

Communism, or real socialism, as it was termed, was driven to self-destruction. What drove it to that point was not scheming on anyone's part, but purely the fact that it was beyond rescue. It collapsed for want of democracy, a free flow of information, and the rule of law, and because of the distorted planning that restricted human creativity.

Real socialism, which boiled down to State socialism and dictatorship, has a historical mother figure, namely social democracy. All left-wingers are children of the same family.

However, we should not think of tying ourselves back to mother's apron-strings, or returning to the social democratic fold, because social democracy is a concept of the past and a 20th century ideology. It is a consumer-oriented idea and to that extent destructively inimical to the natural world and the environment. Furthermore, real social democracy in Europe today is also synonymous with armaments industries, militarism, and illegal bombing. It cannot provide an alternative to capitalism. Many European social democratic parties, moreover, have shifted to the political centre and unthinkingly legitimised cutthroat market capitalism by smashing the great achievements of the Left in various countries.

In the prevailing circumstances we may find allies in those who believed in the old social democracy, the kind which European social democrats have rejected. We should likewise open up our movement to them.

But before finding the great 21st century alternative we on the Left must content ourselves with tackling day-to-day politics, or government by political means. We have to ensure that the State is on the side of the poor and kind-hearted. We have to speak of people power – or democracy. Can the concept of the Left be expressed in one word? That word is democracy.

Joint action fosters communities and community spirit. If we are not united by an idea, we should be united by action. Common ideas tend to repel rather than attract. If a common idea is to be brought into being, it will arise in joint action. We have learnt from history that ideas are

linked to the way people live. Just because there have been – bloody – revolutions, we have surely not forgotten the 19th century's foremost thinker in the sphere of social issues, namely Karl Marx. Is it the case that, without defunct real socialism, the Left would not have its present opportunities for action?

The Left is calling for work, bread, and homes as well as democracy and freedom. We do not want the slave's freedom accorded by the State monopolies of real socialism, although, even in Russia, that system offered people greater security and a higher standard of living than the current exploitative capitalism.

In Russia the Bolsheviks seized power on the back of peasant rioting, and thereafter there was no more talk of left-wing ideology, but of peace, agrarian reform, and bread. What then happened under Communism was that uncivilised people turned Marxism-Leninism into a golden calf in their own image. When present-day Russian Communists seek their support from the sacred notion of Russianism and, to build their power base, are relying on the modern counterparts of disaffected peasants, pensioners and the rural population, their possible success bears no relation to a new dawn.

The Russian Communists should nevertheless be brought into the fold of the European Left. They are an important social force in their country, and our fate is bound up with theirs. If they cut themselves off or are isolated from others, everything that we are building will also be in danger. People think that we and they are part of the same movement, and they should not be left with the possibility of halting progress.

Marx described the capitalism of his time – and indeed ours – with astonishing accuracy when he said that the bourgeoisie, in exploiting the world market, had changed all countries' production and consumption into world-wide production and consumption. Real CAPITALism, however, is different from what it was 150 years ago.

As a result of globalisation of industrial operations and financial markets, the market-driven spread of the production network beyond all bounds, the incredible inflation of the capital markets (non-Marxist economics does not seem to be addressing this subject), and the modern information, content, and mass communications industry, the power of money is being brought to bear on the world on an unprecedented scale. Globalisation, given the working patterns that it entails, is the most effective form of exploitation in world history, a system of hierarchical domination and subjection relationships in which profits and resources are distributed through

the markets to those who are well off. Capitalism is debilitating, leads to frustration, and dulls the imagination. It breeds conformism and presses consciousness into a uniform mould.

Under these conditions greater scope for action has to be created for the Left.

Entrepreneurship, or working with one's own means of production, needs to be reassessed. Self-employed occupations, and not just wage slavery, are worthy of respect. Family farming should be supported in the face of industrial production. The ecological and social counterforces operating in real capitalism, that is to say, trade unions and citizens' and alternative movements, have to be enlisted as partners. Instead of always telling others what to do, the Left should do things for itself. Many have now chosen to proceed in small steps.

The Left's perception of itself in Europe today is based on a series of shared demands having more to do with joint action than with a common ideology. Its common goals for all European countries could be:

1. comprehensive social security,
2. green leftism, in other words, action in support of a clean environment and wholesome food,
3. redistribution of work by shortening working time,
4. gender equality, and
5. opposition to racism.

Defending our cause entails an everyday battle with capitalism to break free of the thinking which has it that capital should yield the highest possible profit and subject to the lowest taxes. The goals listed above, which anyone could equate with democratic socialism, are our present-day equivalent of peace, agrarian reform, and bread.

More complicated problems are posed in defending democracy and resisting militarisation of societies – that is to say in the fight against world domination by NATO, which has turned into an aggressive alliance, and the United States. They demand greater awareness than do matters of peace, agrarian reform, and bread.

Deepening integration of the EU raises the question whether the time has come to abandon the nation and the nation-state in order to provide a starting-point for a Community identity. Speaking from the perspective of a Nordic country, my answer is no or at any rate not yet. We

do not want to give up the benefits which many generations of left-wingers worked to achieve, since to do so would only further the interests of the current capitalist class and help to sanctify the market. Neo-liberalism holds sway in the EU, and money takes precedence over people. The EU is likewise dominated by federalism, a political aspiration to replace national decision-making, the more democratic kind, with supranational decision-making of a relatively undemocratic sort. As we in the Nordic countries see it, this spells the destruction of the Left's great achievements.

The Left is an international movement, but the relationship between the national and international levels needs to be defined accurately. As far as democracy is concerned, the only recognised form is to found at national level, and not at international level. As regards equal treatment of countries, most international organisations are undemocratic in their own different ways, a point applying to the UN, the EU, NATO, the IMF, Amnesty International, Greenpeace, the International Olympic Committee, or Europe-wide political parties such as the EPP and the PES. Those of us who come from small countries do not wish to swap our distinctive national brand of democracy for the prevailing inferior international model.

When working together in the GUE/NGL Group, we shall no doubt have to determine goals which can unite us and avoid idealism that could have a divisive effect. We shall probably not find a common basis of ideas on which to found a joint European party. If, however, the European Parliament were to take a decision and started to allocate party subsidies to Europe-wide political parties, that question would have to be discussed.

We on the Left need a new, and preferably shared, understanding of capitalism for the 21st century. We must be ready to search for and find the great 21st

century alternative. We also need a common forum in which to make contact with left-wing parties from countries not belonging to the EU, since we shall otherwise be deserting potential allies or drive them into the arms of ideological rivals. We are not competing for the same voters as the Right, but social democrats and Greens are our rivals and not just our partners.

The Left should be more than a consumer movement. It needs to show solidarity with others and community spirit. Civilisation, culture, and health need to be fostered. Truth, beauty, and purity must be defended. We need to consider the fundamental issues, build castles in the air, and every now and then steal what is up for grabs.

It is not enough to demand bread, homes, or work. But unless we do so, we shall not obtain the wherewithal to build castles in the air and consider the fundamental issues.

Left-wing parties that have stood for new socialism and old working class values have recently been scoring electoral successes in Europe. But can we content ourselves with a 5% to 10% share of the vote? Can we feel satisfied when we are not battling for power and leadership? If these things are sufficient, we need not think about a new dawn. We can just go back to our ideological roots. In that event it will suffice to believe in the old truths in the same way as the early Christian Church believed in Jesus' second coming. But if all that counts is faith, will we build socialism on earth or in Heaven?