

# Events, Issues, and Actions



# Events, Issues, and Actions:

*Contemporary Studies*

By

R. G. Williams

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Events, Issues, and Actions: Contemporary Studies

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The art of any propagandist and agitator consists in his ability to find the best means of influencing any given audience, by presenting a definite truth, in such a way as to make it most convincing, most easy to digest, most graphic, and most strongly impressive.

—V.I. Lenin



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## PREFACE

This book is a collection of my personal essays, from mostly the late 2010s and early 2020s, specifically on politics, contemporary politics, and the world today. It also contains some of my more analytical and journalistic political essays. The title comes from one of the essays – ‘Events, Issues, and Actions’.

The world, today, is a world of Capitalism – a world that seems impossible to change. Despite this, history and politics show that change is always possible – and always inevitable. The world does not remain static – it changes. The world is changing today. The essays here try to understand that change – and argue for a better society.

This book is a Socialist study. It is a Socialist Humanist study, in the tradition of Democratic Socialism. The essays in this book have been mostly written as an attempt to argue for a better politics for the world – specifically for a politics based on Socialism, Democratic Socialism, and Socialist Humanism. Hopefully, in the end, those sorts of politics will win out – and will achieve a better, and free world, for all.

R.G. Williams

(2025)

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

As with a previous collection of my essays, the essays in this book appear largely as they did at the time that I first wrote them. All political essays are reflective of the times in which they are written. In the interest of political honesty, I have tried to keep most of the essays as they first appeared - always arguing for a better world: a Democratic Socialist world.

(2025)

# CHAPTER I

## YOU, SOCIETY, AND POLITICS

This essay is about people and politics. It is about trying to convince ordinary people to join the Left.

Ordinary people, today, slowly but surely, are becoming more and more political. This is not an exaggeration. People, today, in the 2020s are clearly more political than they were in the 1990s and 2000s. The reason for this is relatively simple. The reality of the crisis, in our times, is making people more political. It is forcing people to realise the importance of politics – and the power of politics to change the world. The reality of the crisis, in our times, is pushing people to the Right and to the Left. This reality is producing political conflict, political struggle, and political action. The threat of climate change, nuclear war, the Far-Right, and economic crisis, is obvious to most people. I believe, very firmly, that the only solution to the crisis of our times, and the political crisis of our times, is the politics of the Left – e.g. the politics of Socialism, Socialist Humanism, and Democratic Socialism. I believe that ordinary people should join the Left, and support the Left, in order to solve the problems of our times. If you believe in the need for a better world then I encourage you to join the Left – to engage with the politics of the Left.

Most people, alive today, believe in the importance of a good and just society – the value of having a good and just society. Most people would agree we need to build a better society – due to the obvious problems of society today, with its exploitation, oppression, crises, barbarism, and wars. I believe that most ordinary people, if asked, in clear terms, would agree with the basic ideas, values, objectives, and politics of the Left. The Left believes in building a better society – for all of humanity. Specifically, the Left believes in building a society based on the freedom of all. The Left is based on the values of liberty, equality, fraternity, and solidarity. The Left believes in the value of freedom and democracy – in achieving a free and democratic society. The Left, as a political force, believes that we can achieve real freedom for all of humanity – for each and every person – through building a democratic, humanist, and Socialist society. The Left

believes that society should be run by ordinary people – by ordinary working people. The Left believes that the more equal, just, and democratic society is, the better it will be for all of humanity. I believe most people, in most societies, around the world, would agree with most of these ideas. If you agree with these ideas – then join the Left.

I believe that ordinary people can change the world. I specifically believe that ordinary people are the only people who can really change the world for the better. I believe that the overwhelming majority of the people of the world have it in their interest to change the world. I believe that if ordinary working people work together, they can change the world. Throughout history it is usually the parties and forces of the Left who have fought for expanding the power and agency of ordinary people – as opposed to the forces of reaction. The Left believes in expanding power out – to ordinary people. If you, as an ordinary person, want to change the world – then join the Left.

I believe most people believe in freedom. I also believe in freedom. Freedom is good. Freedom is especially good when it applies to everyone in society. I believe everyone should be free – every man, every woman, every child, every nationality, every race, every sex, every gender, every class, and every person. I believe that the Left stands for the freedom of everyone. By contrast the politics of the Right suggest that freedom should be limited – to only certain people, based on class, nation, sex, gender, or race. The Right has never believed in universal freedom – because it believes in hierarchy and basing society on exploitation and oppression. There is also the fact that the Right has dominated the politics of the last half-century – since the 1980s and the rise of Neo-Liberalism – so they are probably incapable of solving the crisis of our society, specifically because they mostly caused the problems of our society. If you want to be free, and are an ordinary person, then your best chance for freedom lies with the politics of the Left – not the politics of the Right – because the Left believes in universal freedom, and the Right believes in only freedom for some. If you are an ordinary person and want to be free – then join the Left.

Ordinary people, today, I believe, have a choice. They have a simple choice. They have a basic choice. They have a choice between accepting society as it is – with its crises, problems, exploitation, and oppression – or they can change it and build something better, a better society. I believe that the choice facing society, today, is the choice between Barbarism and Socialism. I believe we need to choose Socialism – and build a society

based on the freedom of all. We can achieve this if we overcome the crisis of today – specifically the crisis of Capitalism, the environmental crisis, the threat of the Far-Right, and the threat of war. We can only achieve this, however, if we build a mass movement – a mass movement of ordinary working people. People like you and I can change the world if we want. If you believe in the need for a better world – then join the Left.

(2023)

## CHAPTER II

# WHAT IS POLITICS?

This essay is about politics – about defining what politics really is.

What is politics? This is a serious question. In my view, as someone who thinks a great deal about politics, it is a very serious question. Politics is clearly important. It is serious and important. It is too important to leave simply to silly, stupid, or simplistic definitions.

What is politics? Politics is the practical struggle to change the world. Its purpose is to transform society. Political ideas help us understand, interpret, and change the world. At its core, politics is a tool – used through social struggle – to reshape society. We can use politics to build a better world, a better humanity, and ultimately, a free humanity. In the end, politics is the practical social struggle to change the world.

Politics is about freedom. It is about how to achieve, expand, and defend freedom – for human beings. All politics, in one way or another, is about how we, as human beings, can best achieve freedom – either as individuals or as a society.

Politics is about social struggle. At its simplest, politics is always about the social struggle to change society. Every form of politics, in one way or another, revolves around either transforming society or maintaining the status quo. The basic struggle in politics is based on this divide.

Politics is about people. People make politics. They make politics either to change society or to keep society as it is. All forms of politics, in one way or another, are about creating or maintaining social institutions in order to change or maintain existing society.

Politics is historical. Politics has always existed – since the emergence of human beings and human societies. All human societies engage in politics – in one way or another.



Politics, today, is a product of the 19th century. Indeed, the 19th century produced modern politics – and modern political ideas – through events like the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, and the Industrial Revolution. All modern politics, as a product of modern society, can be traced back to the social struggles which have developed, in modern society, since the 1800s.

Politics, in modern times, is also about the mass of the people – the whole of humanity. It is about the majority trying to change society. In the past, politics was often just limited to a minority – to the actions and ideas of kings, emperors, rulers, and priests. In our modern society, since the 19th century, and the rise of modern democracy, politics has usually been about the political action of the majority – the majority of humanity. Politics, in the past, was about a ruling class dictating terms to the majority. Politics, today and in the future, is about the majority using politics to free themselves, to improve society, and to build real human freedom. Politics, in modern times, is always mass politics – because the mass of the people are increasingly connected to politics, through voting and through social struggle.

Politics is about ideas. Indeed, ideas always inform politics – and social struggles. It involves the combination of ideas and struggle – political theory and political action – to change the world. Today, all politics is defined by this connection between theory and action, using both to drive social change.

Politics is about either trying to change society or keeping society as it is. This, necessarily, creates a division and a conflict in politics. The modern division in politics, since the rise of modern politics after the French Revolution, is between the Left and the Right. The Left seeks to change the world and create a better society, while the Right aims to preserve the existing social order. The Left and the Right are the two key forces in politics today.

Politics is a spectrum – a spectrum of ideas, movements, and struggles. The modern spectrum in politics is divided between the Left and the Right.

Today, modern politics is about the struggle between Socialism and Capitalism. Socialism is a society based on the free development of each and the free development of all. Capitalism, in the form of modern society, is a society based on the private control of the means of production, the exploitation of labour, and the accumulation of profit. The Left represents

Socialism, advocating for social change, democracy, and freedom. The Right includes Liberalism and Conservatism, seeking to maintain Capitalism and preserve the existing social order.

In the 21st century, the core conflict in politics remains the struggle between the Left and Right, between Liberalism, Conservatism, and Socialism, and over the power of mass democracy, shaped by the rise of universal suffrage and the increasing influence of the people.

The ultimate form of politics, of course, is revolution – because revolution is the ultimate way to change the world. Revolution, as defined by Marx, is the revolutionary reconstitution of society at large – the permanent transformation of society, hopefully for the better. A key form of politics is the struggle for revolution – to change society for the better. Those who oppose revolution, in society today, the counter-revolutionaries, such as the Conservatives and the Fascists, oppose revolution – ultimately because they oppose the majority of humanity being free.

We all believe we have the right politics – the correct politics to create a better world. This is what political struggle and debate is about. As a Socialist, specifically a Democratic Socialist, I know what politics I believe can create that better world: Socialism – real, humanist, and democratic Socialism. I believe in these politics. I believe these politics are true, correct, and just. I also believe that my political opponents believe the opposite. They oppose Socialism, for their own reasons – for their own interests. We all believe we are right, when it comes to our politics. The point, however, is not to simply interpret the world – it is to change it. The right politics, for human freedom, will not be decided purely by debate – it will be decided by social revolution.

What is Politics? Politics is complex – but it is also simple. It is social struggle. It is social struggle to change the world, to free the world, to make the world a better place. That is what politics is – the human struggle to change the present and the future.

(2008)

## CHAPTER III

### A NEW WORLD IS POSSIBLE

This essay is about the world today – a short survey of my own hope for a better world and for the potential of humanity in the early 21st century.

Humanity, today, stands at a crossroads – in history. It clearly has achieved wonders – and it has the ability to create more, if it wants. Over the past two centuries, since the Industrial Revolution, we have clearly made incredible progress – both in terms of how we live, how we dream, and how we act. We have created new technologies, made countless scientific discoveries, and seriously improved how we all live. We have sent human beings to the top of the highest mountain on Earth (1953) and to the bottom of the deepest ocean (1960). We have sent people beyond our planet and into the far reaches of space (1961-1969) – from the Earth to the Moon. We have achieved real wonders in health, education, and work. We have invented powerful forms of transportation, digital technology, the internet, and renewable energy. Our art, science, literature, films, and culture are clearly impressive – and clearly capture what it means to be human. Of course, humanity has suffered serious setbacks across the last two centuries, from the World Wars to the current economic crisis, but we have clearly advanced – and we can still advance today. This reality should give us hope – hope that we can advance further. Whatever task humanity sets itself – it has the potential to achieve. But despite all of this, and more, we still have so much left to achieve. In the 21st century, we have the power to make the world a better place. We have the tools, knowledge, and ability to improve life for everyone. If we work together, we could end hunger, poverty, and unfair treatment. We could create a world where everyone is free and treated with dignity. This is not just a dream – it is something we can achieve. We could build a fairer world where everyone has a good life. We could even build Socialism – a society based on the free development of each and the free development of all.

A new world is possible today. That new, possible, world is Socialism. A Socialist world would be a society based on equality, democracy, justice, and humanism. In such a world, everyone would have an equal say in the

organisation and resources of society. No one would live in poverty while others hoard unimaginable power. Every person would have access to good work, decent housing, quality education, and proper healthcare – not as privileges but as fundamental rights. Every man, every woman, every child, and every person would be free – as individuals and as respected members of society. The exploitation and oppression of the many (the working class) by a minority (the ruling class) would be ended. The working class, as the majority of society, will create an emancipated society – a society of real, total, and universal human freedom. Democracy would extend beyond elections to every aspect of life. Workers, themselves, would control their workplaces, and ordinary people would have a direct say in how society is run. Justice would no longer favour the wealthy and powerful but would treat all people fairly, regardless of their background. Above all, a Socialist world would be humanist – a society placing human dignity, freedom, and cooperation at the centre of society. Instead of exploiting people for profit, we would work together to ensure everyone can live a meaningful, fulfilling life. This vision is not utopian; it is a real and achievable future if we are willing to fight for it.

The 21st century will be a turning point. We have the power to change things for the better. The question is whether we will use that power or allow the world to decline into further crisis and Barbarism. Each of us can help. It is up to people, people like you and me, to speak up, to fight, and to work for a better future. We have to do this. We cannot sit back and wait. We must act. Together, we can create a world where everyone is free and treated fairly. Let's get to work. Let's build a better world.

(2008)

# CHAPTER IV

## BEING A SOCIALIST IN THE 21ST CENTURY

This essay is about being a Socialist in our current century – the 21st century. What does it actually mean to be a Socialist – at this point in human history?

I am a Socialist. I have always been a Socialist – ever since I started thinking about politics. I will always be a Socialist. This means that I believe that we must build a society based on the full emancipation of humanity – a society based on the free development of each and the free development of all. I am committed and always will be committed to that vision. Nothing can break my resolve, determination or dedication. As far as I am concerned the victory of Socialism, and human freedom, is inevitable. It will be achieved – even if I do not live to see it.

Being a Socialist in the 21st century, for me, is a very simple thing. It means being a fighter for a better world. It means being committed to freedom, democracy, and humanism. As an individual Socialist, I stand firm in the belief that true progress can only be achieved when the free development of each person is intertwined with the free development of all. This vision is not merely a political ideology; it is a way of life, one that emphasises equality, democracy, and solidarity. In an age marked by inequality, environmental crises, and political division, my role as a Socialist is to fight for a world where human dignity and collective well-being come first – for the free development of each and the free development of all.

Being a Socialist, today, of course, can be quite difficult. Indeed, it is clearly challenging. Our movement is divided, very weak, and demoralised. We are clearly struggling to adapt to the politics of our times – particularly the domination of politics by the Right and the increasing threat of the Far-Right. We also still have to engage with both the successes and failures of our movement in the past – especially in the 20th century.

To be a Socialist, today, in the 21st century is, however, a great thing. We have opportunities. We have potential. We could change the world.

Indeed, we have the power, the ideas, and the ability to change the world for the better. Socialism is still a major political force in our times. We still have the real ability to create a Socialist world – a world of universal freedom. We, today, might be at one of the lowest ebbs in the history of our movement but our movement has always managed to recover. We can recover. We must recover. We will recover. We will build Socialism – no matter how difficult today or tomorrow might be.

Comrades, we can achieve Socialism. We must achieve it. We will achieve it. Let us all carry our personal red banners forward – and finally build human freedom.

(2007)

## CHAPTER V

### REAL OPTIMISM – THE LEFT AND THE FUTURE

This short essay is a study of the Left – and its vision of the future.

Politics is about the struggle to change society. In order to change society, you need a vision of a better future. Changing society, and creating the future, are the same process – a process of social struggle in order to change society and build a better world. The Left has a clear vision of the future – Socialism.

Most ideologies, and movements, have a vision of the future. It is what drives them, sustains them, unites them, and commits them to political struggle. The Left's vision of the future is very clear and very simple – a world based on Socialism, a world based on freedom, a world based on the principle of the free development of each and the free development of all. The Left's vision of the future is human freedom – through Socialism, Humanism, and Democracy, through the free development of each and the free development of all.<sup>1</sup> In order to change the world, you have to have a vision of the future. The Left struggles, now and today, in order to build a better future.

The future is a period of time that will come.<sup>2</sup> It is, unlike the past, a period of time where events, actions, and possibilities are still unset – and can be changed through our actions. The future can be changed – by political and social action in the present. Every political movement, in the world, understands the importance of the future – because it is in the future that social and political results can be achieved. The Left, because it is committed to building a free and better society, understands the importance of the future – because it is in the future that humanity has the best potential to actually achieve a free society, while struggling, in the present, to achieve it. The future is crucial for politics. We cannot ignore the future. We cannot ignore it because it will eventually arrive – due to how linear time works. We cannot ignore it because social and political action, today, in the present, right now, will determine what the future looks like. If we are serious about building a new, better, democratic,

humanist, and Socialist society, in the present and in the future, we need to engage with the political struggles which can shape the future. The future is not a set of settled events – it can be changed, through political action. We, on the Left, need to engage with the future – because it is in the future that we shall hopefully achieve a better humanity – a humanity of free men, free women, and free people.<sup>3</sup>

The future is not set. It can change. It can be changed. Indeed, the history of humanity shows that the future can be changed – through the reality of progress, change, revolution, and struggle. The future is not the same as the past or the present – otherwise humanity would make no progress at all, and change would be impossible. The past and the present determine the future, but the future can be different from the past and the present – due to human action. The fact that humanity does change, over time, as shown by history and by progress, means that the future can be different – it can be different to today. This means that the future, and future society, can be changed – specifically through social struggle. This also means that the future can be better – a better society, a free society. A key idea of the Left is that society, and humanity, changes. The Left believes that humanity can change – through development, through struggle, through progress. This means that the Left believes that the future can be different – it can be different to society today. If we believe in the possibility of change, and we should because humanity changes all the time, we have to believe in the possibility of a changed future – a future which is different to today. The Left believes in a certain type of future – a Socialist future. The Left believes that humanity can build a different type of future than the present-day reality of Capitalism and class society. It specifically believes that we can build Socialism – a society based on the principle of the free development of each and the free development of all.

The Left fights for the future.<sup>4</sup> It fights for a better future. It fights for a future where humanity achieves a free human society – a society based on human freedom. The Left believes in the future – and always has done. The Left believes that the best days of humanity are in the future – not in the past. The Left is the only force in politics which can say, unreservedly, that it fights for the future. Other ideologies, and movements, like the Right and the Centre, might claim that they fight for the future – but their vision of the future is always based on some vision of repeating the past. The Left, on the other hand, is completely committed to the future. The Left believes in the future – in the power of the future, in the ability of the future to build a better society and a better humanity. The Left is also the only side in politics which has a positive vision of the future. The Right



and the Centre has an ambivalent view of the future – as something to fear. The Left, however, believes in the future – in the ability of the future to be a positive future. The Left does not fear the future – it fights to build the future. The Right and the Centre always look to the past. The Left always looks to the future. The Left will always fight for the future – until the day when humanity is free.

Politics is about the future.<sup>5</sup> Politics is about struggle – the struggle for the future. Specifically, politics is the struggle to change the world. If we are to change the world, we have to have an idea, an ideal, to strive towards – an idea of the future, an ideal of the future. For the Left, that idea, that ideal, is Socialism. Socialism, specifically a society of freedom, is what the Left wants – both now and in the future. The Left struggles for Socialism – both to change the world and to create the future. Socialism will, of course, change the world, and make a better world, but it will also create the future – hopefully, a better future and a better future world. Socialism is not a utopian vision of the future – it is a practical vision of the potential of the future: the potential of a society of human freedom. The point of any social struggle should be the goal of achieving human freedom – for all of humanity. The only form of politics which can create this – both now and in the future – is Socialism. Socialism is not only the politics of the present and the future – it is the future. Socialism is not an alternative to existing society – it is the replacement of existing society. Socialism, specifically Democratic Socialism, is the only form of future which can actually create a better future – a future of human freedom.

I believe that the Left believes in the future. I believe that the Left believes in the future because it understands the need to struggle to build a better future – in order to build a better humanity. This vision of the Left can be summed up in three key ideas which shape how the Left sees the future – Optimism, Humanism, Socialism.

Optimism. The Left is optimistic about the future.<sup>6</sup> The Left believes that despite the problems and issues of humanity, such as exploitation, oppression, barbarism, war, and imperialism, humanity can build a better world. Indeed, the Left believe that humanity can overcome the common problems which undermine and destroy humanity. The Left, unlike other forces in politics, is ultimately optimistic about the future.

Humanism. The Left believes in the future because it believes in humanism – in the power of humanity, in the agency of humanity. The Left believes that humanity has the power to actually change society – and

to change itself. This power means that human beings can change their society – and therefore change the future. The Left believes that the future can be different from the past or the present, because of the ability of human beings to change themselves and their society. The Left's optimism about the future is ultimately based on humanity itself – the creative power of human beings to build, to change, to love, to struggle, to endure, and to create – for a better future.

Socialism. The Left believes that the future will be a Socialist future – a society based on the free development of each and the free development of all. This is a positive, future-orientated, vision of humanity, politics, and society. It is a hopeful vision of the future. The struggle of the Left, today, for the future, is to build Socialism – a society which can actually achieve a better future. For the Left the only future worthy of humanity, and human freedom, will be a Socialist future – a future of Socialism, Socialist Humanism, and Democratic Socialism.

Optimism, Humanism, and Socialism define the politics of the Left. Each of these ideas are crucial for understanding the Left – and its ideas about the future. The Left is optimistic about the future. It is optimistic because it is confident that Humanism and Socialism are capable of building a new and better future. Optimism, Humanism, and Socialism are crucial to the Left. Together they make up the modern politics of the Left – in relation to the future. At the same time the Left is not utopian about the future. The Left, today, believes in a better society –not a 'perfect society'. The Left is not interested in utopian fantasies about building a 'perfect society'. Instead, the Left is interested in practically building a better society – a free society which works.

In our time, the early 21st century, it is often difficult to think of the future.<sup>7</sup> The reality of Capitalism, and the Capitalist crisis, makes thinking about a Socialist future very difficult – simply because of the power of Capitalism today. The scale and power of Capitalism, especially since the end of the Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the rise of Neo-Liberalism, destroyed much of the confidence of the Left – especially at the end of the 20th century. The reality of the environmental crisis, and the threat of war, also means that many people, especially on the Left, are disillusioned today – about the potential of humanity to actually achieve a new and better future. Of course, these ideas are powerful – and depressing – but the fact remains that humanity still has the potential to build a better society today, despite all the problems of existing society. Humanity, through its agency, still has the ability to change the world. The

Left, today, still has the power to organise, to struggle, and to change the world. The world, today, in the 21st century, is a depressing world – but it is still a world that we can change, and change for the better. We have the strength. We have the intelligence. We have the ability. We have the tools. We can change the world. We simply need the confidence, and the organisation, to do it – despite the problems of our times. We need to be confident about the future – and strive to change it.

Having a vision of the future is crucial. The Left will always need a vision of the future – of what Socialism will look like. It is crucial because we must engage with the future – whether we like it or not. Having a vision of the future is crucial in that it ensures that a political movement has something that can guide it – in strategic terms. Having a vision of the future not only gives a movement hope, about the future, but also gives it an outline of the theory and practice that it needs in order to struggle in the present – in order to create the future. Of course, dreaming about the future, in precise terms, is generally useless, but every political struggle needs a vision of what it wants to achieve – of how it will change society, of how it will win political and social power, of how it will change the world. These sorts of ideas can only really be outlined and engaged with by thinking about the future – through having a strategy to build the future. We, on the Left, have to engage with the future – because the future will come regardless of whatever happens. Struggling in the present, and struggling for the future, are one and the same, because the present creates the future.

The Left has a vision of the future – a better future. It is a vision of a free society – a free society for all of humanity. I believe that the following ideas are crucial to the Left's vision of a future humanity:

Socialism – a society based on the free development of each and the free development of all; a society based on the emancipation of the working class; a society based on the social ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange.

Humanism – a society based on human agency; a society based on human rights; a society based on real human beings.

Democracy – a society based on the majority; a society based on government of the people, by the people, for the people.

Equality – a society where all human beings share the same rights and the same responsibilities to each other, for the freedom of themselves and each other.

Solidarity – a society which is based on co-operation, love, and respect, for each and for all.

Freedom – a society where every man, woman, child, nationality, race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and person is free.

The struggle of the Left, today, is to build a better society – e.g. Democratic Socialism. It is to build a better society – a society of Socialism, Democracy, Humanism, and the free development of humanity. This struggle will be a difficult struggle – but it is vital. It is vital – especially if we want to live in a better world. We want a better world. We will build a better world.

The Left believes in the future. It believes in the potential of the future. It believes that the future of humanity always has the potential to build a better, Socialist, society. It clearly has hopes, dreams, and aspirations about the future – hopes, dreams, aspirations that the Right can never understand. The Left, and its vision of the future, is often dismissed. It is often dismissed as utopian. Socialism, specifically, is dismissed as utopian. This argument, in many ways, is not an argument. The Left has already shown, through the experience of the last two centuries, that it can struggle and change the world – that it can change society. The Left's objectives are not utopian. The goal of a free society, based on the free development of each and the free development of all, is not utopian. It is achievable – and will be achieved given enough time, effort, history, and struggle. The Left suffered defeats, and setbacks, in the past, but the politics of the Left, about the future, remain achievable. There is also the fact that past defeats do not automatically dictate the future. If they did then no human progress would be possible at all – either in history, society, or politics. Human beings are capable of progress – and so is the Left. The Left will eventually achieve its vision of the future – the vision of a free society. It might take time, and centuries, but the Left will eventually achieve the goal of a free society – as long as we, on the Left, struggle for it.

It is good to have good dreams about the future – about a good and better society. As long as they are practical, and effective, we always need dreams. Dreams can be crucial to the struggle for a better world – by

inspiring change. It is important to have them – as they can inspire the real struggle for social change, for a better society. What is important, in the end, is converting those good dreams into a good reality – a changed reality. The Left clearly has some dreams of a better future – and those dreams still shape its politics. In its early days, in the 1800s, the Left was quite utopian about the future. Indeed, many of the earliest thinkers of Socialism, like Owen, Fourier, and Saint-Simon, spent much of their time dreaming of a perfect future – a perfect future society. Indeed, the earliest forms of Socialism were utopian – Utopian Socialism. Despite this, the Left, today, is no longer utopian. The Left, today, is about concrete struggles, to achieve concrete change, which can produce concrete solutions to the problems of humanity. The ideas of Marx and Engels, in particular, produced this shift in the Left – the shift to practical politics, in order to build a better future. Indeed, the modern Left, since the late 1800s, has always been about practical politics – politics which can actually change the world. The Left is no longer utopian about the future – but it is optimistic. The Left is optimistic that the future can be better than the present and the past. This is a key idea of the Left – an idea which separates it from the Right, as the Right only looks to the past. The Left looks to the future – because the future can be better, if we practically struggle for it.<sup>8</sup>

In this essay I have tried not to be too concrete in my outline of a left-wing vision of the future. This is because I want to avoid utopian speculations. Speculating about the future, in very specific terms, is generally useless. We cannot know, exactly, what the future will be like. All we can know is that we are marching, quickly, towards it. We cannot know, exactly, what Socialism will look like – because that is for the working class to decide, through its struggle to build Socialism. What we can know, however, is that the Left does have an effective vision of the future – a vision based on Socialism, freedom, and the free development of humanity. The Left has a vision of the future. It is a vision of a better society – a free society.<sup>9</sup> It is not a utopian vision – it is a concrete vision. It is a vision of a free society, made up of free people. It is a vision of a democratic, humanist, and Socialist society – a society which finally achieves the free development of each and the free development of all. The Left's vision of the future is a good society – it is a free society. I believe that, in the 21st century, humanity has the means, the ability, and the intelligence, to build such a society – if we struggle for it. I believe that the Left, today, is capable of building a free society. It is up to us, in the present, to build it. Building a better future is clearly a vital task today – simply because humanity needs a better future. We must build – the future.

We must march – into the future. We make the future with every idea, struggle, and revolution that we achieve. We must make the future.

### Notes

1. K. Marx and F. Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, (1848)
2. K. Marx and F. Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, (1848)
3. E.J. Hobsbawm, *Politics for a Rational Left*, (1989)
4. E.J. Hobsbawm, *Politics for a Rational Left*, (1989)
5. E.J. Hobsbawm, *Politics for a Rational Left*, (1989)
6. A. Gramsci, *Letter from Prison* (19 December 1929)
7. M. Fisher, *Capitalist Realism*, (2009)
8. K. Marx and F. Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, (1848)
9. G. Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*, (1938)

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