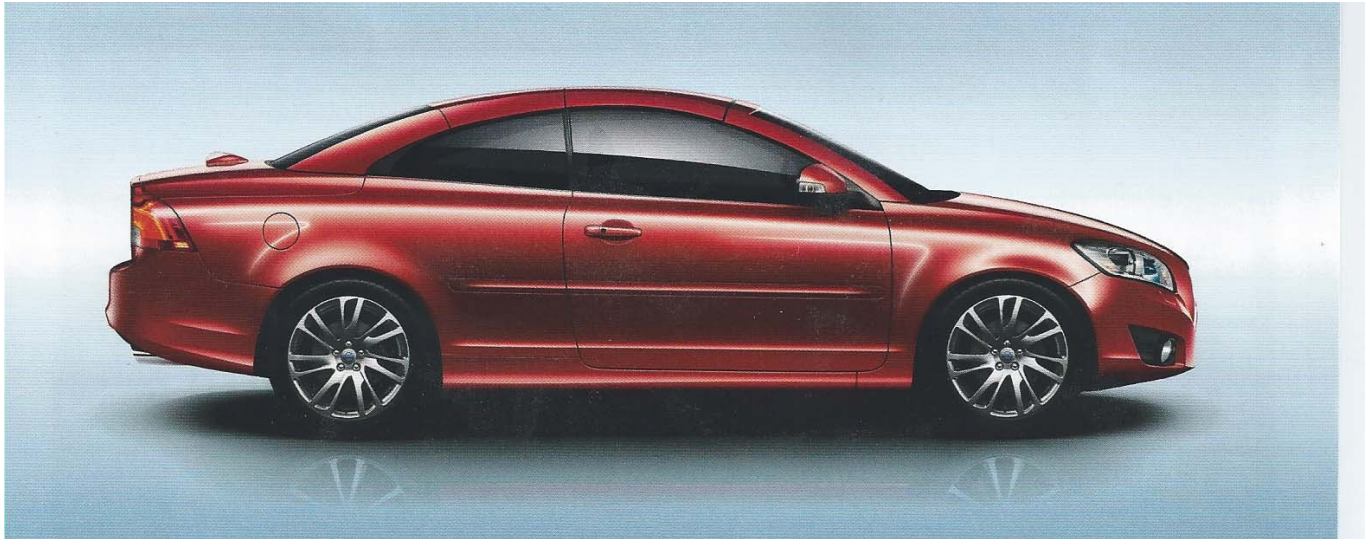


The Socialist Economic Alternatives IV (*Service or Success?*)

When considering Socialism as an alternative to Capitalism, we must NOT limit ourselves solely to the usual primary political and economic areas. Indeed, at the very heart of these two systems are also entirely different implicit social contracts as to appropriate objectives in personal behaviour between the citizen and the State, or Community at large.

They can be somewhat oversimplified as **Success** or *Service*!



SUCCESS!



Service

But, as always, we cannot take the usual conceptions of these relations to the community, as they are usually conceived of entirely within the status quo of Capitalism, and **there** produced as both correct and entirely sufficient!

And though both do occur within Capitalism, they are not entirely due to that determining system, but grow up within sub-systems as the primary concerns of conscious contributions by individuals and groups to things-as-they-are.

So, before anyone attempts any “absolute” or “eternal” definitions of these alternative approaches, we must first contrast their differing social bases and social purposes, which are constrained rather than directed by the overall system, but also elicited by the sub-systems in which they develop.

For **Success** is entirely accepting of the existing overall system. Those that dedicate themselves to it, direct their activities to constantly ascend to greater acceptance (and maybe even power) within the status quo. They realise what are the basic principles of Capitalist society, and decide, “*I can do that!*”, and can please those who currently sit higher in the “clearly accessible hierarchy”.

In contrast, **Service** is conceived of as a necessary, and often defensive, reaction to an exploiting and unfair existing system. It seeks to help those put in difficulties, who, if left to the declared systems that are supposed to be for such purposes, would in fact get something much closer to the exact opposite of what they need and maybe expect.

You do not serve a Capitalist System! You serve those losing by its existence and priorities whether of production, profit making, state responsibilities or indeed anything else determined by the continuance and necessary growth of that Capitalist system.

But clearly all such definitions are not absolutes or eternal: they are determined by the status quo, and such a forms of Service that have survived in that system could never be transferred to be the major motivations within a Socialist alternative system.

For the Capitalist System does not exist to serve its citizens in general, but very clearly to maintain that economic system to the total exclusion of any other alternative.

NOTE: As the Theory of Emergences has shown, the stability of any system, including Capitalism is down primarily to its coercive and defensive subsystems, which successfully suppress ANY alternative growing up within it. An effective network of “policeman processes” has to be in place to function primarily for such purposes. They may be claimed to be there to “serve”, but the implication that such Service is for “everybody”, is regularly exposed in every single crisis to be in fact to only serve usual the beneficiaries of the Capitalist system.

Indeed, within Capitalism it may seem that Health professionals are already dedicated to a real Service role, and charities working in many crisis situations all over the World likewise.

But that could be dangerously misleading!

Can you imagine putting the management of a crisis charity like Oxfam in charge of the National Health Service? It would be like getting those running a city Post Office to organise and run National Insurance. Charities are **not** alternatives to national or International Service Organisations. They at best are the smallest of sticking plasters on the world’s catastrophes, and at the worst are some kind of conscience salve for the over privileged or even a “left cover with a heart” for the real controlling forces of the World System of Capitalism.

And, if, as I have, you have worked with charity organisers, you will find a sizeable drive for “Success” often outweighing the development of a seemingly situation-transforming service.

Indeed, howmany Awards and Knighthoods have the “given Reason of “services to Charity”. For, many who have held high posts in such organisations actually expect to be ennobled for their “unmatchable selfless achievements”.

The point, that I am trying top make is that we simply cannot traverse any total reorganisation of Society with the conceptions and organisation formed within, and as a part of, a totally contrasting predecessor.

Let me relate the oft-recurring saga of the “*Blue-Eyed Boys*” and the “*Enemies of the People*”.

When an able, talented or extremely hard working young individual appears in an organisation, he or she is often paraded before one and all as their boss’s “Blue Eyed Boy” – the saviour or future innovator of the department or organisation.

But such an epithet is only ever appended to an underling.

He or she may retain this status as long as by being what they are, they are doing a lot of good to their superiors standing in the wider world. But, what will happen if it becomes increasingly clear that this paragon has very different motives, and has absolutely no concern for the status of his superiors at all, and is actually dedicated to those who he is really supposed to be serving – his pupils, students, patients, colleagues, employees or even customers?

For then, even if that person continues to do exactly as he has always done, he will begin to be recognised as an “Enemy of the People” and must be cut down to size, before he gets too big for his boots etc. etc.

Where do you think the term “Salt of the Earth” comes from?

It is how the Stately Home owner talks of his gardener or supervisor.

The Service involved is **only** upwards!

Service in the opposite direction becomes “Betrayal!”

To prove the point in a perhaps surprising situation, consider the Stalinist bureaucrats in Russia after the Revolution: they certainly claimed to be motivated by Service, but it was clear that they were actually driven by something closer to the need to be a “Success” in the capitalist sense. And, this has been dramatically proved to be true in how they switched to being capitalists themselves once they had acquired the previously Nationalised State Institutions for a song and “developed” them in their now decidedly “private” hands.

Now, the decline in a service approach, within the Capitalist System, must be explained. For even during our lifetimes the attitudes in many areas of Society, where service attitudes dominated, have declined markedly. Only very recently on the news there were a series of contributions on the appalling way that many old people in supposed “Care Homes” and even in hospitals are being d with very little respect, and who are greatly affected by their treatment. Needless to say, the commonest explanation by the powers that be for this was that people (i.e. you and me) don’t care any more, and therefore the obvious solution is to shame us into displaying the “right attitude” by showing up our declining attitudes on such matters. Clearly, that is rubbish, and coming from whom it does, absolutely reprehensible!

For it is clear that for an extended period, and vastly intensified in the Thatcher era, and now deepened still further by the attitudes of the Tory-Lib Dem Coalition, the insistence on what I have to label as “Success” has been elevated to the most important imperative and motivator of all people in our Society, where we are extolled to “serve” the System with selfless dedication to save us all from oblivion. To give up much that we have for a promise of “jam tomorrow”.

Yet we never did, and still don’t, need sermons from those most to blame for the current situation, telling us how we have declined, when, without any doubt, the major influence in such things were the “Success Sermons” from that very same source previously.

What we need to be clear upon is why did this selfish alternative gain such prominence in a Capitalist Society that has been around for a very long time?

And, the answer, which nobody has thought relevant, is the accelerating decline in the Economic System, which has had to increasingly press forward on ever larger borrowings to maintain any sort of appearance of Stability and Progress, while simultaneously reducing its home market by unemployment, where cheap foreign goods and the redundancy of workers in an increasingly computerised World, pushes inexorably in the opposite direction.

The vast increase in fictitious value of homes caused by all almost complete suspension of economic house building, and the selling off of Council Housing on a vast scale, so that I used to live in a new house costing £2,750, but now live in an only slightly improved home at a value approaching £275,000 (100 times higher). No one can possibly argue that this represents real value, can they?

But, it is one of the ways that the appearance of progress is maintained.

Why do we forget what precipitated the recession of 2008, when million of poor Americans were persuaded to take out massive (for them) mortgages, which the lenders knew that they would soon fail to keep up payments on, and informed Banks across the World what a good investment it was for them also to buy into, because when the buyer were kicked out they would have had BOTH actually paid mortgage payments AND repossession of the actual buildings. The reaction of the Class in these areas was not considered. And they soon knew how they had been conned, and somehow? By the time repossession was about to be carried out, the properties had suddenly become almost worthless.

The totally reliable investments world wide into this desperate thieving scheme precipitated that global calamity, and still persists, in a declining series of forms as the system "Returns to Value"

Indeed, even in this "advanced nation" youth unemployment in many areas approaches 20%, and as the "investors" alternate between losing Confidence and temporarily regaining Hope, the credit judges downgrade the credit-worthiness of whole countries causing the costs of borrowing to rise, and make it clear that some will NEVER be able to service their loans never mind pay them off.

Now, we DO NOT hear about this intrinsic decline and major crisis of Capitalism as such!

And the reason is that all the parties who are in a position to have *their* standpoint aired are in favour of the System. Indeed, without it they KNOW that they will be lost. They can conceive of NO alternative, which could maintain their current privileges, status and most important of all, WEALTH.

Cameron is, after all, a millionaire: is he the least concerned with the Working Class? Of course not!

But, this is not as they all insist, a temporary crisis, which will pass, and be once more replaced by "progressive stability" of the status quo when "fully functioning".

The Arab Spring following the wars by Capitalism to redirect dissatisfaction of the ordinary people of these areas, into safe "democratic" channels. And the accelerating decline of Greece (followed quite possibly by Portugal, Ireland, Italy and then the World?) is NOT solvable within the iron rules of Capitalism.

Already truly vast owings are having to be written off, and the blatant "stealing" by means of Payment Protection Insurance, that rose to precipitous heights following 2008, are having to be PAID BACK!

The issue of the personal salvation of the owning class has totally usurped any so-called social responsibility, because Chaos seems to loom, and people have been won to promises that with sufficient selfishness they at least will survive.

No, as always, if we are to be serious strivers for Socialism, we cannot afford to use the enemy's conceptions, or even those defined solely by the opposition to that system but developed entirely within it.

The case is similar to how Trades Union consciousness developed. They were wholly defined by their purely defensive role within Capitalism, and because of this always carry over two major faults when it comes to acting within Socialism.

First, they always had chances within that former system of getting "Success" by being part of a Labour Government. And secondly, their only conceivable targets were always totally contained within that system. Trades Union consciousness is always totally constrained by what it has to fight against.

That is why the leadership of the fight against Stalinism in Poland came from the Trades Union "Solidarity" led by Lech Walesa. But in Socialism, it is highly likely that the Trade Unions would have to transform into representative soviets, or similar service roles within the socialist state.

So, in defining what it is that we will be fighting for in desiring to establish Socialism, we must address the Question,

"What is meant by Service within such a system?"

And it is NOT what Kennedy called for in his line,

"Ask not what your Country can do for you, but what can you do for your country!"

That may be ideal for recruiting the youth of a capitalist country to fight and die for its continued hegemony, but that is NOT what service means in Socialism, despite what has been the case in Both Russia and China since their revolutions.

Clearly, though Service exists within Capitalism, it is never to the State. It occurs throughout Social Services, in Education, Hospitals and in local Communities, but like in a greenhouse set up against the hostile prevailing elements, such forms cannot but involve an unavoidable aberrant growth due to context. Service in Socialism must be bigger, less of a personal dedication to known others, and more an overall principle of ALL forms of organisation, so that it is consonant at all levels.

(2,289 words)