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Personally, I don’t think “the left” ultimately represents much of anything coherent, but rather constitutes a historically contingent coalition of ideological positions. Bastiat and other free market folks sat on the left of the french assembly, and while we might try to claim that as part of a consistent leftist market tradition, we should be honest that one’s position in that particular revolution — much less revolution in general — is hardly indicative of very much. There are always revolutionaries who desire systems far worse than our own, and similarly there have been many broadly recognized “leftists” whose desires were utterly anathema to liberation.

It’s popular these days to paint the left and right as egalitarian versus hierarchical. But not only is this an imposed read on a far messier historical and sociological reality, but it’s honestly quite philosophically contentless. No one is particularly clear on what egalitarianism means, or even hierarchy, and many interpretations are not only mutually exclusive, they reveal supposedly identical claims as actually deeply antagonistic. Does egalitarianism mean everyone gets precisely the same wealth (however that’s supposed to be measured)? Does it mean mere legal or social equality in

the abstract realm of relations before The People or The State's legal system? Does it mean equal opportunity for economic striving or does it mean equal access to the people's grain stores? Does equality supersede all other virtues like liberty? Is it better to all be oppressed equally than to have some achieve greater freedom? I'm not being facetious. We paper over these deep issues with "well but common sense" and the wishful assumption that our comrades will come down on the minutia the same way we would, sharing our intuitions on various tradeoffs, but that's empirically not the case. We constantly differ.

People talk about "collective direct democracy" as if something being the near unanimous will of some social body constitutes an egalitarian condition. And, sure, it does under some definitions. But the moment I see some collective body trying to vote on my life I don't want to "participate" I want to chuck a bomb at it. Leftists use both the slogans "power to the people" and "abolish power" — this should be an intense red flag to everyone that completely different conceptual systems and values are at play. It's delusional in the extreme to suppose that if we sat down and talked about things we'd all end up on the same page. The assumption of panleftist solidarity or a shared common goal is a comforting lie.

The left isn't defined by some set of axioms in ethical philosophy that we can all agree on and than argue about derivations of strategy or implementation from. The left is a historical coalition thrown together by happenstance. As with revolution we tend to self-identify as the underdogs and build our coalitions from the classes we recognize as underdogs against the classes we recognize as ruling but this leads to all kinds of contortions. We are for the right to choose because women are the underdogs in patriarchy. But at the same time we're pro vegan because animals are the (sometimes literal) underdogs in human domination. Wait, do we value all living things? What counts as a discrete living thing? Do we value them equally or is the level of consciousness/sentience important? Is it the level of dependence or strain it places on an-

uniform tribes — one enlightened and one indecipherably morally corrupt — enables a sense of community that provides psychological comfort to many. To many on the left (as well as on the nationalistic etc right) a hunger for "community" is actually their *primary* motivation. When chatting at the bar it's better to not look too deep into why you both oppose capitalists lest you discover something that sunders rather than binds.

But the format of present internet technologies has had the reverse effect. Inescapable contact with The Enemy has led us to put up hostile discursive walls that naturally end up cutting out our traditional allies too, causing both right and left to fracture in desperate attempts to find purity, trustworthiness, or some kind of deeper binding. The happenstance points of unity that worked when we had little choice in who to befriend are now fracturing in all directions. This is largely a good thing, the last two decades have seen all manner of horrors lurking among our own ranks exposed. But the process that brings to light our lack of commonality with the anti-science leftist deep ecologist who wants to kill all humans is also a process that will ultimately rip "the left" to unsalvageable shreds.

This ship is sinking. And just because many of the rats are fleeing doesn't mean we shouldn't either.

other person? Suddenly the responses we have in situations with family members versus the overdogs of christianity seemingly start to come into conflict with the responses we have in situations with disabled people (underdogs!). I'm not saying there isn't a way to thread all these dynamics, to find a core ethical guide and nuanced attentive implementation — I think there is one (although my particular approach of ultimately recognizing a vast spectrum of sentience/consciousness between zygotes/nematodes and anyone remotely close to a conscious human is denounced by a number on the left as "unegalitarian"). I'm pointing out that our responses rarely arise from an ethical analysis but from instinctual responses to any appearance of an underdog. The left is rarely a philosophy, more often a coalition, with theory tacked on to serve the goals of binding that coalition together. One could easily imagine universes with different historical paths where *outlawing* abortion is a core leftist plank, seen as deeply interrelated with opposing queerphobia, patriarchy, ableism, etc. Or the left could oppose legal sanction, but support and build grassroots social and cultural sanction against abortion. (Again, for the record I'm pro-choice.)

Underdogism is a really dangerous approach to the world. It's a good "rule of thumb" but if you know anything about me it's that I abhor such heuristics and see them as the opposite of radical analysis. Underdogism is how you get things like zionism, leninism, poc nationalism, TERFs, SWERFs, etc. Its failures are manifold. There's a good case the left is nothing *but* underdogism — in which case fascism is almost always *leftist*. MRAs don't approach politics like a reactionary on the right side of the French Estates General, consciously seeking to preserve an established ruling structure, they see themselves as the underdogs. Sure, they're not (in almost everything besides some fringe contexts like some bits of divorce law), but fuck it they're *potential* underdogs, and that status is more than enough to reproduce much of the standard structures of underdogism.

One might interject that the problem with underdogism of the alt-right is not just their misidentification of underdogs but their hunger for power, and this is certainly broadly true (although a fraction of the alt-right actually seem less in it for power but more in it to drink outgroup/"overdog" tears). But this certainly applies to much of the left in good standing. Certainly many authoritarian leftists have hungrily latched onto underdogism as a potential ladder to power. I've met feminist writers who openly admitted to me they'd be patriarchal if they were men, or own slaves if they were antebellum rich whites.

Yes, any set of smart persons who recoil at clear instances of oppression are gonna broadly converge on a number of positions or analyses. But the way they reconcile or hold together these things may differ dramatically. Just because the left is a stable coalition in our present context doesn't mean aspects of it that seem in perfect harmony won't break in wildly different directions should certain conditions change.

I have repeatedly encountered leftists who've claim that valuing some things above other things is *hierarchical* and thus right-wing (leftism being in their minds representing something more like stoicism or buddhism). Similarly you find epistemic pluralism common in the most heads-up-their-ass sectors of left academia who think thinking some models of the world are more true than others is "unegalitarian" or even "totalitarian." It's tempting to just laugh about hippies and move on, but these sort of horrifically bad definitions of "egalitarianism" will sometimes come out of the mouths of smart people who generally have their heads on straight the moment they move to a context they're unused to.

Now I hate the NAP, but everyone laughs at the NAP these days for being "unpragmatic" and this has increasingly become tied to a casual indictment of all ethical philosophy itself. A turn that has been encouraged by the twin interrelated scourges of the modern internet far left: tankies and nihilists. This makes sense if — as per social justice — you see the point of the left to create a social

framework of etiquette and loose ideology that can bind a coalition of underdog classes together. Thus the increasing refrain of "you can't compare!" that happens whenever someone tries to tease out commonalities or contradictions between various claims, positions or planks. There is, from this perspective, no common root or unifying ethos to the left and we should not look for one lest the whole project fall apart. Philosophy, ethics, and core values or principles become the enemies, as does both methodological individualism and universalism. There are neither individual experiences nor universal ones, just relatively simplistic classes of people with incomparable experiences. And we bind them together into common cause by badgering, social positioning, poetic affective appeals, and threats of violence.

The left isn't unified by anything. Marxism is half discredited by idiocy and monstrosity and the half that survived became a wildly contradictory mess more preoccupied with obscurantism, irrationality and anti-realism to hide its own failures than getting anything done much less charting a path. Most of the concerns of the left refer to opposing mythologized superstructures that we are left flailing in the absence of or whenever their composition and behavior change. The left is, in short, utterly allergic to radicalism. Fending off its inadequacies with short puffs of extremism instead.

As social and ideological complexities compound through the runaway feedback of the information age these internal tensions and the laughably frail taping over we've done will only become more clear.

There is still hope for a radical anarchism that is willing to root its discussions of freedom and ethics concretely and explicitly. But this will necessarily involve casting off from many allies who we share some limited intuitions or momentary prescriptions with. Or at least dissolving the comforting delusions of a deep camaraderie.

The only reason the lie of "the left" has persisted for two centuries is that its grand Manichean narrative of two more or less