

# SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVES

## Ecology and Socialism

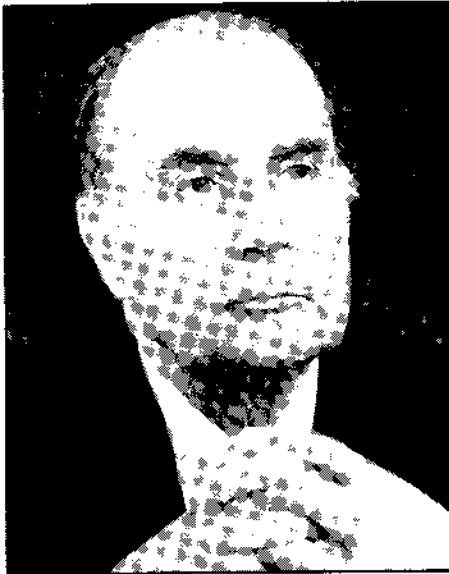
Michel Raptis on UTOPIANISM

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Eric Heffer on the PARTY

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Ken Coates on CHINA



President Mitterrand . . .



Jacques Chirac . . .

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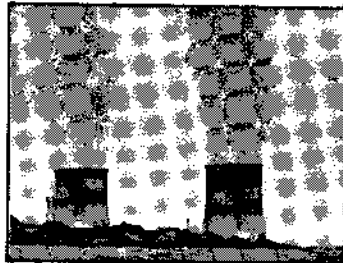
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## new alliances

British politics is clearly entering into the vital period leading up to the General Election. The Labour Party and the Trade Union movement must present a coherent radical alternative to Thatcherism, if they are to gain power. With this supposed end in view, the Labour Party-TUC Liaison Committee have recently produced a document called "New Rights, New Responsibilities". This publication attempts to lay down the informal structures of the working relations between a future Labour Government and the unions.

Yet, this document has accepted many of the basic tenets of Thatcherism without attempting to articulate any real form of radical alternative.

The real issues, revolving around the demands for popular workers' plans, the self-management of industries, extensions of common ownership and control, are noticeable only by their absence.

Several articles in this issue examine seriously the impact of the concerns and the demands of one of the new social movements; namely those of ecology. Only through the building of new alliances, from the bottom up, with such movements can Socialism still claim to be the best hope for universal political emancipation.

The spectre of Chernobyl is haunting Europe. It has had a dramatic effect upon the political consciousness of a large section of our society. Yet the TUC Conference and, presumably the leadership of the Labour Party also, seem reluctant to try and exploit the potential of this genuinely radical shift in awareness. Socialism, in turn, has much to contribute to the Green movement. For, as Raymond Williams has argued: "A Socialist economy, auditing its own real resources, can alter the calculations and relativities of all production, service and trade, taking care of its whole land and its whole people as the priority to which all economic decisions are in the first instance referred."

## transforming work

Unemployment, Kinnock stated in his central speech to conference, must be the first priority of a future Labour Government. But it is only by transforming the nature of work and labour relations, through Socialism's commitment to a whole society, rather than such as a byproduct of capitalist production that the terrible problem of unemployment can be solved.

**SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVES** will continue to argue for a radical extension of popular control over wealth and power.

## from the bottom up

Eric Heffer, in a speech given at Hampstead Town Hall, published in this issue, has made clear that Socialism's historic task is to articulate and press for these basic needs and demands, giving power back to the people, never believing it can be simply imposed from the top. Thus we must use our experience to enrich our arguments, and our arguments to make sense of our experience.

### ERRATA:

=====  
The article page 17 on the Alternative movement in France is by ALAIN LIPIETZ who is an economist with the National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS)

The interview page 13 is with FRIEDER OTTO WOLF, Green EuroMP, not Frieda...  
Apologies to both, ed.

Socialist Alternatives

## Newcastle-under-Lin?

Llin Golding was a terrible result for the Labour Party. They lost 21% of their 1983 vote (a very bad year) in a seat Labour has held for the past 67 years. The whole campaign reeked of the worst excesses of the far-right of the party.

The undemocratic machine-politics which led to the Golding selection was bad enough, yet worse was to come. John Golding refused to stay away from the election and continually bragged about his attacks on the left in the party. Golding himself revels in the "Witchfinder-General" nickname he has earned among activists. Norman Tebitt even praised Golding's "moderating" influence on Neil Kinnock! Left wing organizers were removed from the campaign which, in contrast to, for example, Chesterfield, hardly earned the name of a campaign at all. Llin was reduced to whingeing about her huge salary being revealed to the voters—and openly agreeing that she was more right wing than the Liberal candidate (a C.N.D. member).

There seems little point in supporting such candidates in any election if they merely move further and further to the right in a vain attempt to gain votes. Only by actively campaigning on the issues that affect peoples' lives and by condemning the waste of the capitalist system can real support be gained. With friends like John and Llin Golding who needs enemies? ■

## St Paul's Mk II

Police wearing riot gear on the streets of St.Pauls in Bristol—it could be 1980. Six years after the now historic riots nothing seems to have changed. Police again used a large swamping operation involving more than 600 officers. A heavy police presence is then maintained on the streets for a few days afterwards to prevent the possibility of riot. A statement from community workers and advisors protesting about the scale of the operation sounds only too familiar. "This action has irreperably damaged the relationship between the police and the community in St Pauls."



Almost identical operations at Broadwater and other areas in our inner cities give a clear insight into the police's motives and rationale. Their tactics seem designed to enflame and alienate troubled communities still further. There have been no real attempts Scarman included to solve the social problems. People will riot when they have nothing to lose. These people have nothing to lose. ■

## 56% say no.....



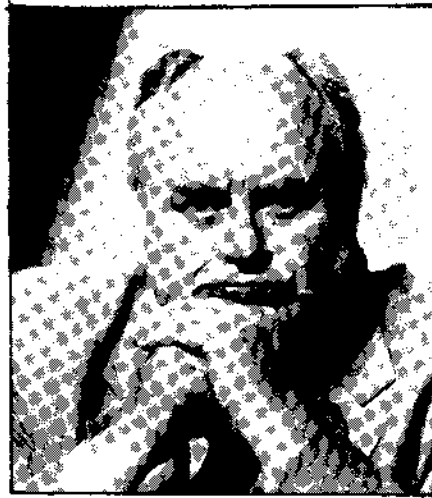
Most people in Britain want to see nuclear power phased out. According to a new opinion poll, 56% favour scrapping the nuclear programme, while only 34% support it. The majority support for a nonnuclear energy policy shows the impact of concern since the Chrenobyl nuclear reactor accident last April. A Gallup pole in March showed that only 28% favoured the ending of the nuclear programme.

Here is a great chance for the left to channel radical disquiet and anxiety over the environment and particularly the nuclear issue. Fears about the dangerous aspects of nuclear power could be translated into positive demands for greater control over our environment. ■



# T U C C o n f e r e n c e

**KEIR STARMER and ALEX HARVEY** look at this year's TUC conference and the advance of the "New Consensus".



Mr "consensus"...

For weeks this year's TUC conference was predicted in the media to be a test of Norman Willis' personal strength. In the event it provided a platform for the marketing of the delicate "consensus" articulated in the TUC-Labour Liaison Committee policy document "New Rights New Responsibilities" (launched in July). The conference contrasted with last years in both mood and subject matter; compliance replaced animosity, nuclear power and Wapping replaced miner's amnesty and expulsion of the EETPU and the teachers' dispute.

So far as nuclear power was concerned the options before the TUC were either to scrap the entire industry or to halt constructions of new power stations pending the outcome of the review in to Chernobyl. The debate centred on a stark but crucial polarity; on the one hand the principle of a nuclear-free energy policy and on the other hand the more pragmatic and traditional approach of those wishing to protect their members' interests in the industry.

The principled rationale for abandoning nuclear power was outlined by Arthur Scargill; it is not needed—coal and other energy sources (starved of finance for research) could supply Britain's energy requirements adequately,

it is not safe—despite some unions' protestations on the lines that "it could never happen here", the examples of Windscale, Three-Mile Island and now Chernobyl speak for themselves, it is not environmentally acceptable—especially in respect of the dumping of highly-active nuclear waste.

However the argument over job losses was not to be so easily won (200 power workers had been demonstrating outside the conference all day). With 140,000 threatened, Arthur Scargill, who last year was defending jobs in his industry, was charged with hypocrisy by the unions connected with the nuclear industry. It is a shame that the discussion of the motion was confined within the narrow sectionalism—"your job or mine"—so often promoted by our historical method of collective bargaining. The full motion did further propose that the General Council should enter into urgent discussions with the Labour Party to draw up an employment strategy to secure alternative work for those presently employed in the nuclear industry. A commitment to the development of alternative forms of energy could provide the base of this strategy.

The acceptance by the Conference of a statutory minimum wage is significant in three ways. Primarily it shows the basic recognition by the TUC of the formation of what John Edmunds calls, "the new servant class". Secondly it calls into question the central principle of free collective bargaining in market capitalism. Thirdly, by placing a statutory obligation on employers to provide a minimum wage, it is a real attempt to restrict the ability of capitalism, compensating for the falling rate of profit, to lower the levels of workers' pay. In one sense this proposal actually tries to confront the radical changes of the last seven years. The decline of traditional manufacturing industry with its strong union membership and organisation has been accompanied by a rise in the service industries. This has led to a greater use and exploitation of women and part-time workers with little or no protection from trade unions. The vote for the statutory minimum wage is an admission of the unions inability to organise and defend this emerging servant class through its traditional means of collective bargaining. Yet paradoxically on the very same day the TUC re-affirmed its faith in collective bargaining.

This central debate highlights the unions continued confusion over their relation with the state. In one sense it can be seen as a return to neo-corporatism in that it places an onus on the state to protect workers' interests; in another sense it can be seen as a further extension of the floor of rights which have been generally accepted as legitimate ground rules for the collective bargaining process.

Overall the consensus position adopted at this year's conference leaves these emerging questions of collective bargaining unanswered. Furthermore, due to the inability of the Left to articulate its own responses, it has provided an opportunity for the centre-right to consolidate its position in the TUC. ■

# Don't Play by Tory Rules!



Eric Heffer puts the case for a Labour Party committed to bold socialist policies rather than spending all its time in pointless witch-hunts.

Let me make one thing absolutely clear, the Campaign Group of MPs, and certainly I, do want to see a Labour Government elected at the next General Election.

We want to see a Labour Government based on a Socialist programme which will do what it says—which will reverse Tory policies and repeal Tory legislation, especially anti-trade union legislation, which will end the counter revolution carried through by Mrs. Thatcher and the Tory Government, which will tackle unemployment—understanding it as a product of capitalism, takes back into public ownership the industries privatised, a Government which will build houses for rent—on a big scale—and rebuild the economy with investment publically controlled and which will set us clearly on the socialist path—a path which for some years has been interrupted and diverted.

The danger today is that some in the movement—some in high places—believe you can win elections by stealth and by accepting the ground rules set by the Tories, by retreating from socialist policies—by being more concerned with image than content.

They believe that instead of uniting the Party around clear socialist policies and objectives, Labour should compromise on policy—that it should retreat and fudge issues. They believe success is gained by attacking sections of the Left which will, they hope, placate our political enemies. The truth is, once you do that, our opponents want more.

Our political enemies are never satisfied. They would only be satisfied if Labour repudiated socialism altogether.

It may work for a short time, although even that is doubtful. It has certainly proved not to be an attraction to Labour supporters at Newcastle-under-Lyne—that by-election has made the point for us. The Liberal candidate was a CND supporter and picked up the votes which we should have got. Right wing policies—right wing attitudes do not pay off.

If people think that we are little different from the SDP/Liberal alliance, then they vote for them—they certainly do not vote overwhelmingly for us. I hope that this lesson is clearly taken on board, and if not, we must make sure that it is. The Party does not win votes if it is not bold.

We did not lose the last election because our policy was too bold, too socialist, but because of the split away from the Party by the right wing, by those who created confusion by forming the SDP and because of the divisions which were shown up during the election itself. I believe the TV spectacular of Jim Callaghan lost millions of votes because of his attack on our defence policy.

The fact is that there is a retreat on policy. There are policies being developed which are wrong. They must be halted and changed.

The document "New Rights—New Responsibilities" regarding industrial relations has some positive parts to it, but they are overshadowed and lost sight of by the legal proposals on ballots and the establishment of a tribunal. What the Movement is being offered is a type of "In Place Of Strife" which was rejected by the Movement in 1969.

That document also had some good material in it, but that too was spoiled by the legal proposals.

The Left on the NEC did not approach this question in a negative way. We put forward positive proposals which would have changed the document. Apart from one amendment, the others were all rejected. We wanted the ILO Convention 87 added. It was defeated. We wanted "closed shops" to be clearly written in. It was defeated. We wanted all employers to have to recognize and negotiate with trade unions. That amendment was defeated. We wanted the clause on the legal tribunal deleted. Our effort was defeated.

## **“The Party does not win votes if it is not bold.”**

To-day, I am afraid that some on the NEC cannot see the wood for the trees. Since last year's Party Conference we have seen a number of good comrades expelled from the Party, supporters of the paper "Militant", but also non-Militant supporters. We have seen a number of parties suspended and the trend continues.

Comrades in Liverpool who carried out Labour Party Conference policy—this cannot be stressed enough—and who are faced with surcharges, bankruptcy and disqualification from office, have been expelled, and others are faced with expulsion.

The Party is going back to the days of the Proscribed List, of the expulsion of and the disbandment of groups because they are supposedly "A Party within a Party".

We heard that cry when Sir Stafford Cripps and Nye Bevan were expelled before the Second World War and when the Socialist League was disbanded. We heard it during Gaitskill's days when the Bevanites were threatened and again Nye Bevan faced expulsion. Now we hear it again.

Good comrades who have fought and are fighting for socialist policies should not be expelled. They should be supported, especially those who carry out Conference policy as the Liverpool comrades did.

## **“Good comrades who have fought and are fighting for socialist policies should not be expelled.”**

The Liverpool Councillors and the Lambeth Councillors are in the tradition of the Poplar Councillors of 1919–1924, Councillors who went to prison fighting for the working class. They fought for the unemployed, the poor and for a real redistribution of wealth.

The interesting thing is that in the Municipal elections of 1922, Labour's vote in Poplar was 51.5% whereas in London as a whole it was an average of 36.4%.

In Liverpool and Lambeth Labour's vote was also high. In Liverpool despite the statements of Labour leaders suggesting corruption a high vote was maintained.

In March 1923, Charles Key, one of the Poplar Councillors, writing in the London Labour Chronicle, said, "The Labour Movement has had to face the question which sooner or later, nationally and locally, the whole Movement will have to answer. 'You now have the power—what are you going to do with it?'"

It is a good question. We are often told today; "Don't rock the boat, don't question, don't criticise. Let's get the power first."

It is an understandable point. We all want Thatcher out. We want Labour in power. But we want the power to change society, to begin to abolish capitalism, to abolish unemployment and poverty, to give our people decent homes to live in, good education, to work for peace, to end racism and sexism, to ensure that class society is ended once and for all and where production is for use, not for profit.

We want a genuine redistribution of wealth. We want equality. We want in fact Socialism!

The words of George Lansbury should be recalled. He said and Liverpool could be substituted for Poplar, "The attack on Poplar is the direct result of Poplar's endeavour to do things that others only talk about. It is the whole question of whether the Labour Movement means business. Are we going to attempt to carry out what we say on the platform or are we to be sidetracked by considerations of Statemanship?"

What Lansbury said then is applicable in the Party today. Last year's Party Conference carried excellent resolutions:-

1) it called for more public ownership as well as taking back into public ownership the industries which have been privatised. 2) it called for the phasing out of nuclear power and for the use of other energy sources. 3) it called for a campaign to get rid of nuclear weapons and bases, a campaign not yet vigorously fought for. Today, after the Libyan raid we should get rid of all U.S. bases, nuclear and non-nuclear, and if that means we cannot remain in NATO then so be it. Neither should we save money on nuclear weapons only to build up so-called conventional weapons. 4) the Conference called for all anti-trade union legislation to be repealed, and that the miners who were sacked and those in prison should be reinstated. Despite the opposition from the platform, that was a correct decision. We should be as tough in assisting our people as Mrs. Thatcher has been in helping hers.

Let me finally say a few words about the Party.

The Party at Walworth Road has been reorganised. That is acceptable if it really improves the socialist cutting edge of the Party; but if not, then it is unnecessary. Incidentally, we no longer have an International Department, as such, and that, in my view, is wrong.

Good organization goes hand in hand with policies. But organization alone does not win elections or lead us to socialism.

## **“The problems of socialism cannot be solved except by socialist answers.”**

We have seen that in Spain where we have a Government led by Felipe Gonzales, but it has not taken Spain very far along the socialist road. There is a great deal of image building, but not much socialist policy in Spain. Before being elected, Gonzales was against NATO, but when in office, he opposed getting rid of the NATO bases.

We should ensure that nothing like that can happen here. The problems of socialism cannot be solved except by socialist answers. Let us not shrink from the socialist task before us. The alternative to socialist policies will be total disaster. ■

## PALESTINE

HARRY CURTIS

At a time when the Palestinian's struggle seem to be lacking a strategy of its own caught as it is between the Syrian hammer and the Jordanian anvil, the results of a comprehensive opinion poll conducted in the Occupied Territories by the Jerusalem newspaper "Al Fajir", the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and the American newspaper, "Newsday" make a most interesting read.

The first lesson of the poll was that, for all the failures and lack of tangible results in the past 20 years, 77% of the Palestinian population still favour the establishment of a democratic non-racial state in all of Palestine. However, conscious of the long struggle ahead, 50% favour the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the Occupied Territories-West bank and Gaza strip-alongside Israel as an interim solution. This clearly shows that in spite of the brutally oppressive regime imposed by the Israeli occupation forces (over 50% of the Arab population said they or their immediate families had been subject to violence or threats) the national feeling is stronger than ever among the Palestinian population.

This poll also revealed how attached the Palestinian people were to their hard won independence from reactionary Arab states only to anxious to capture the Palestinian cause to serve their own little interests. The best indication of this is the overwhelming support the population of the occupied territories still grant to Arafat as a symbol of Palestinian self-determination and independence. On the other hand, only 2% favour the joint



In the name of safety

Palestinian-Jordanian solution he's been trying so hard to pull together. Another indication of the Palestinian's dedication to their independence is their overwhelming support for the armed struggle as "the best way to solve the Palestinian problem". Historically, it is the armed struggle that allowed the Palestinian masses and its representative to free themselves from the yoke of the Arab regimes and put an end to the brutal oppression they suffered as defenceless refugees parked in camps. No Palestinian is in danger of forgetting the bitter lesson of the Sabra and Shatila massacres.

The satisfaction of the Palestinian's legitimate national aspirations thus remains the key to any lasting settlement in the Middle East. The findings of this study should cool the ardours of those Western diplomats and ministers eager to impose a solution over the heads of the Palestinian people and what it still

recognises as its only legitimate representative, the PLO. It should also show the likes of President Assad and King Hussein that their ambitions to reduce the Palestinian movement as merely one more card in their diplomatic game is doomed to failure in the long-term even if, for the moment, both seem to have managed to seriously split the PLO. The third lesson of this study is for the PLO leadership itself. The Palestinian people are clearly not prepared to accept any compromise that would tie their fate to that of some Arab ruler. They are also showing their impatience with a leadership more concerned with the arcanae of international diplomacy than the gritty of building the Palestinian revolution and defending its independence in the only possible way, the democratisation of the movement and the extension of the Palestinian masses' intervention and power over in the decision making processes of their political organisation, the PLO. ■



## GERMANY

The SPD seems to have decided to lose the next German elections, argues Andre Berger.

The German SPD Congress showed that the social-democrats don't want to form the next German government after the January 1987 General Elections. The first indication of this is the nomination of Johannes Rau as the SPD's candidate to the German Premiership. Rau is anything but a charismatic leader. Just before the Congress, Helmut Schmidt's ex-spokesman, Klaus Boelling declared that "Breuder Johannes" (Brother Johannes, a nickname he earned because of his strong religious convictions) was "much too much a consensus man who shies away from conflict so much that he can only fail. He's too much of a family man, Boelling went on, but he should know that his family can't come before his responsibilities on Bonn's political scene."

Secondly, the SPD is sticking by its stubborn refusal to consider any political alliance and limits itself to calls for "an alliance with the whole of the German people". The party is still aiming at an absolute majority when the latest polls indicate it would only win 40% of the seats in the Bundestag. Willy Brandt, the party chair, declared before the Congress that 40% would be a good result. This short-sighted refusal to envisage any alliance is motivated by the SPD's failure to reduce the Green's influence with the voters and exclude them from the parliamentary arena. The SPD refuses any alliance with the Greens and yet there is no other alliance open to it today.

Congress thus got drunk on the most optimistic voluntarism. Rau managed to have the delegates believe the incredible, an outright SPD victory. The social democrats have agreed on a programme of reforms; essentially one of reinjection through "ecologically sound"

investments, the gradual phasing out of the nuclear industry allowing for important investments into the new energy construction sectors.

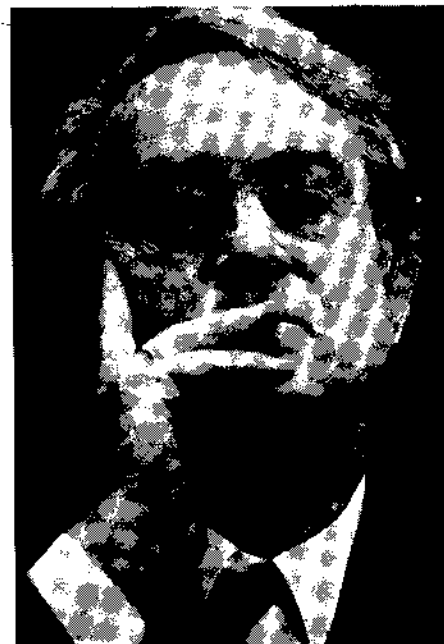
In foreign policy, the SPD is dedicated to relaunching "Ostpolitik". Although such a perspective is contrary to Reagan's cold war plans, it fits perfectly well the interests of German capital which has much to benefit from improved trade relations with the Eastern Bloc.

The SPD has also decided to renegotiate the SDI contracts and the withdrawals of Euromissiles. In the absence of any clear time-table, one wonders how the SPD intends to put such a project into practice. Reagan seems to be an insuperable obstacle and one could be forgiven to think that the SPD simply wants to wait for a Democratic victory in the US so as to put its policy in practice.

Congress also made a great display of facade unity behind its candidate Rau. The decisions taken can be seen as a slight shift to the Left as regards defence and nuclear policy although the very strong anti-NATO feeling has been swept under the carpet.

Now the Kohl government is going to go on the offensive to discredit the SPD's proposals. Kohl had a field day when he recalled that half of Germany's nuclear plants had been build under a SPD government and that the installation of Cruise and Pershing II was a result of Helmut Schmidt's direct intervention. The SPD will have a hard time proving it **really** intends to implement its new policies. Some tradeunions have also strongly protested against the closing down of the nuclear industry and nuclear industry trade unionists have called for every job lost as a result of the phasing out to be replaced. The SPD finally decided to rewrite its programme. In

1959, at Bad Godesberg, it had abandoned all reference to Marxism and the class struggle in favour of a "one nation" ideology in line with the rapid development of post-war welfare capitalism. The new programme, under the pressure of Green ideas, the new social movements and the collapse of post-war Keynesianism looks as if it will integrate the ecological and feminist dimensions of the socialist project and maybe come back to a more "fundamental" concept of socialism.



Believing the unbelievable...

This is bound to have a great influence on the whole of the social-democratic and socialist parties in Europe. In the next issue of **Socialist Alternatives**, we will look in more details at the choices facing social-democracy today. ■

## FRANCE

### KLAUS DONAT looks at the "desocialisation" of France.

The climate was hot in the French Senate when the French Security Minister declared "...we don't want France to become a dustbin." The debate wasn't around the nuclear reprocessing plant at The Hague but around the expulsion of foreigners and immigrants, who violated French law and who threatened the so-called security of the country. This is a style more akin to the National Front than to that of a minister declared a socialist senator. Group debate is characteristic of the will of the Liberal/Conservative Government to set the tone strongly. Chirac's France has no time for the nuclear security of Star Wars; it only fears the extent of immigrants and foreigners, and the individual feelings of insecurity that are supposed to result from it. Chirac has little time. The next Presidential elections will be held in 1988 at the latest, maybe even sooner if complications with the cohabitation with the socialist President should fail in the meantime. The Conservative Prime Minister is in dire need of a quick success, or at least to make a clear break with the 'French Socialists'. This is what the majority of his Conservative voters are waiting for.



It is also necessary in his strategy to become the next French President, if he wants to win against the Socialist candidate, probably Mr. Mitterand, and against the many rivals in his own camp. So far, he has had little luck with the ministry, but that has done nothing to counter his ambition. Given that Chirac can do nothing in foreign policy without Mitterand's permission, he has had to concentrate his efforts on domestic problems. So, five months after the coming to power of the Conservative Government, the right-wing paper 'Figaro' has been able to make a positive judgement on the Government, under the title 'France desocialised'. Indeed, the 'neo-liberal' break has already effected very drastic measures: privatization of 65 public enterprises and banks between now and 1991. Among those privatized are national enterprises like Renault, which was nationalized by de Gaulle in 1946. A whole series of measures in favour of capital and the wealthy, such as the ending of price controls, the abolition of the administrative review of the redundancy procedures, amnesty for those involved in capital invasions, and a whole series of measures in favour of part-time and temporary workers and 'flexibility' of work.

Thus, repressive measures in the guise of internal security, the fight against terrorists, and restrictions of the facility for entry into France of political refugees and immigrants, and the re-designing of constituency boundaries in favour of the majority parties especially the RPR that is Chirac's party. But nationalization of the main TV channel, TF1, and measures radically transforming the media landscape, so that Chirac's policies don't seem to be based on criteria of efficiency and realism but on ideological considerations based on an ideological will to emulate American Reaganomics and to replace historical Gaullism by a pure brand of neo-liberalism so as to redefine the social relations in favour of capital.

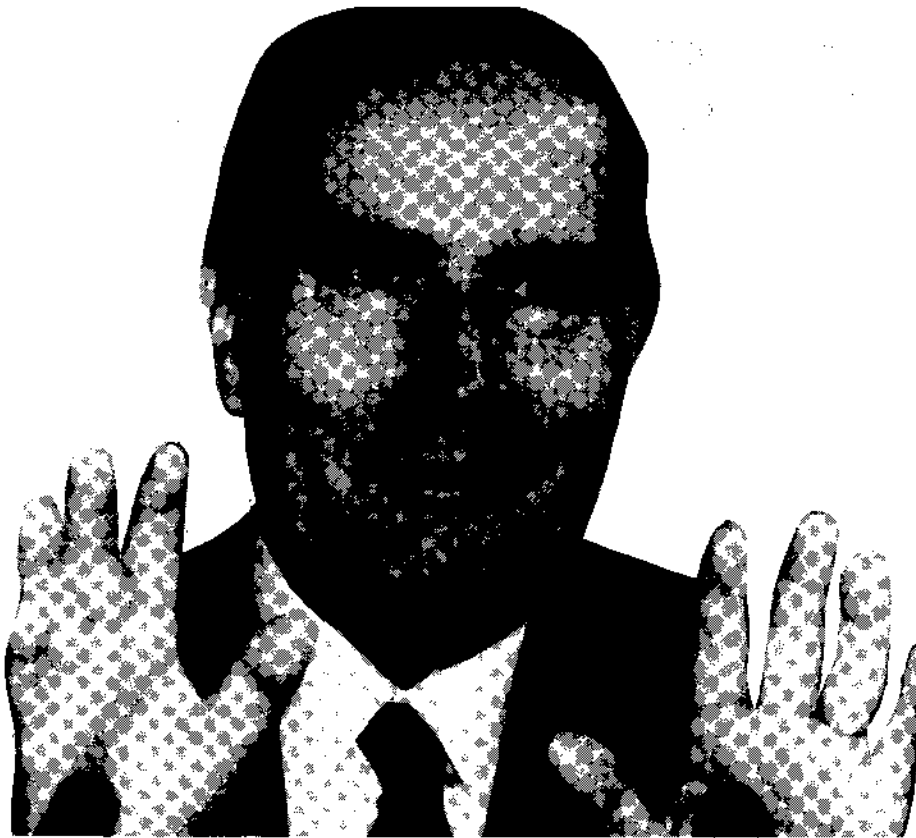
The Minister for Work and Social Security, Philip Seguin, has already declared that it is very improbable that the unemployment level will be reduced

below the 2.5 million mark. According to him, no government in any civilized country has been able to find a miracle cure to unemployment, so the French Government would have no choice than to help the creation of a second labour market in the services sector as suddenly reappeared in the States; in other words the creation of a very wide sector characterized by very poor working conditions, low wages, and short-term work contracts and and programme contracts, more rights and more power for the bosses, no work for the immigrant workers, and very little power for the workers' representatives.

But behind his recipe for minimal state intervention, which of course doesn't apply to the police and internal security, the Government has detected a vital break, not only with the policies of the Socialist Government but also with the general French political tradition itself. Not only has it destroyed the realisations of the Left, but also many Gaullist 'monuments'.

It is not that clear how far the Government will be able to go in this direction because in doing so, it might come into confrontation with parts of its own support. Chirac doesn't seem to fear the threat of mobilization by the communist-lead trade union, TGT, against privatization or massive redundancies at Renault. He is also ready to confront to rail workers head on.

The Transport Minister, Jacques Douffiagues, has said that the train drivers' working conditions are 'a remnant from the time of the steam engine'. For the time being, it is not the intentions of the government that have made the biggest impact. The main plans in the pipeline seems to be milling around the status of civil servants and also in the media industries. The Civil Service Minister, Henri de Tharatte, has just declared that the Civil Service Elite School, ENA, the municipality of highranking officials and politicians, was '...the symbol of the ever-growing state



intervention, which isn't justified any more.' The right wing MP, Briant, has proposed a bill, which won't get the chance of being debated, proposing the privatization of the news agency, AFP, which has played such a major role in the development of French culture and which is now facing very large cuts, resulting from the management agreeing to reduce the foreign language services. The

Government has also announced its intention to transform Radio France International into the official propaganda agency. A right-wing MP has even declared that the bet will be to turn the RFI journalists into civil servants.

Even if the plans for transforming the TF1 TV channel are already under way; the polls have revealed that the majority of the French population are against it.

The TF1 journalists have protested very strongly: "Under de Gaulle and Pompidou, we had been France's voice. Under Chirac, we will be the voice of the wealthy. "To want to impose on France the American economic system is nothing short of an absurdity and is nonsensical" said Mr. Vessillini, a prominent TV personality. ■



Watch out, here come Pasqua and Pandraud

# A Greener shade of Red

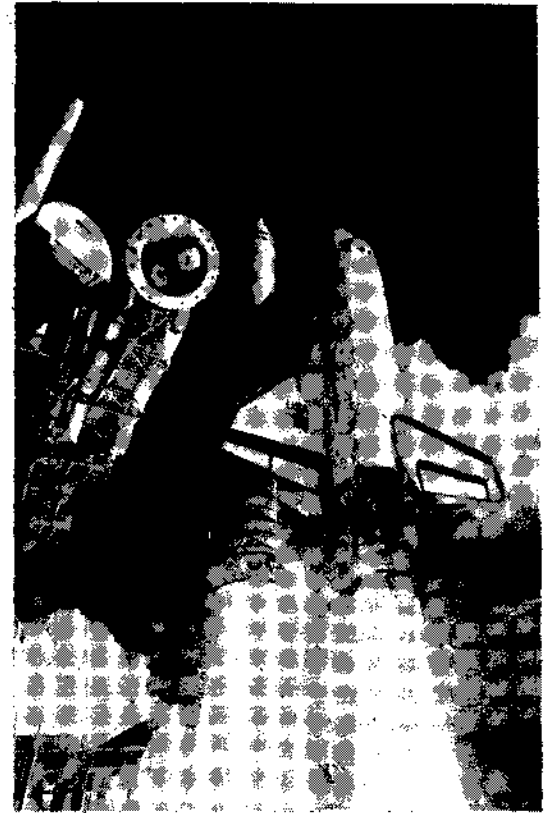
ANDRE BERGER argues that Red must be made Green and Green made Red.

Marxism has always based itself on the idea that the development of the productive forces will allow the construction of the socialist society. If, in Marx's times, this idea appeared as more of a utopia than an actual possibility, we are today faced with a different situation in which the rational and democratic use of modern technologies, the drastic reduction in working hours and the higher cultural level of the masses could allow for the building of the political project that emerged through May 68, the Prague spring and Solidarnosc, that of the self-managed Republic. This project is one for generalised social self-management in which the producers and the consumers, women, the young and all the oppressed minorities will decide for themselves on all matters concerning them. Still, as we all know, this project is today realised neither in the capitalist countries nor in the so-called "existing socialist" countries.

The productive forces are today put to a most dangerous and irrational use. With the over-arming and nuclear overkill and the extremely dangerous use of such technologies as nuclear power or in the chemicals industry humanity is today engaged in its own selfdestruction.

**"Chernobyl has shown that the development of modern technology has attained its inherent limits."**

The Chernobyl disaster must thus be replaced in this context. Chernobyl, even more than the shuttle and Titan rockets disaster has shown that the development of modern technology has attained its inherent limits. For years we have been told that the probability of a major nuclear accident was so remote that it should not be a matter for popular concern. Chernobyl proved the opposite. Today, each country is claiming that their nuclear technology and security arrangements are infinitely better than the neighbour's. We are also told that the Soviet plants are particularly unsafe. Yet, a few years back, the West-German



Progress reaching its outer limits

nuclear industry magazine branded Chernobyl (fitted with West-German built security systems) one of the safest nuclear installation in the world. All the non-sense we've been given on the real dangers of nuclear power that the only lesson there is to learn from it is that the so-called experts can't be trusted. Chernobyl showed a world over-confident in technical progress that the nuclear industry implies the greatest risks not only for a plant's workers and immediate surroundings, but for neighbouring countries too—whether or not they have a nuclear industry of their own. The Chernobyl radioactive cloud went round the world and nobody really knows the exact consequences of the resulting increase in low radioactivity in terms of cancers etc.. The Chernobyl-induced cancers might not show in the statistics but, were they to affect us or our family, they would become dramatically concrete. According to a UN study, the atmospheric tests in the 50's and 60's caused over 150,000 death by cancer. Another problem which has found no solution so far is that of nuclear waste disposal. Nor is it anywhere near finding one.

**“...the risks of nuclear production are in no way comparable to that of other industrial activities.”**



Taking populations as hostages

So, the risks of nuclear production are in no way comparable to that of other industrial activities. Nuclear is not only dangerous and expensive but it mortgages the whole future of humanity through the accumulation of nuclear waste and increased health risks—both now and in the future. It is essential to understand that humanity is today in possession of the means of its own self-destruction through arms of mass-destruction and certain industrial technologies. It means that there is no neutral technical progress. One has to introduce the additional criterion of the social usefulness of any technical advance.

**“...nuclear power is a profoundly anti-democratic industry.”**

The nuclear problem is an international one and thus requires an international struggle for the the phasing out of all nuclear installations—world-wide.

Thirdly, nuclear power is a profoundly antidemocratic industry and one inescapably linked with military ends. The full circle of nuclear production produces plutonium which is the main ingredient of atomic weapons. This military use is in fact the main rationale behind nuclear power since, in economic terms, nuclear power is not cheaper than other energy sources. To the self-managing socialist, a most important aspect is the over-centralisation nuclear power requires. The necessary protection and control of both the installation and their workforce is profoundly antidemocratic. Moreover, the intricate links between the civil and military uses of the nuclear industry, information about nuclear plants is extremely restricted. Many an incident in nuclear plants—whether in Britain, France, Germany or the USA have shown that the art of official cover-up and disinformation is as lively and strong in the West as it is in the East. It is true,

however, that, in WestGermany, the pressure of the Green movement has forced the authorities to disclose more information about the real state of the nuclear industry. Due to its organisation in very large plants, there is no way in which the nuclear industry could be democratised and is thus incompatible with self-management—all the more so as it requires a strong repressive apparatus to prevent, for example, terrorist attacks. Nuclear plants also make ideal military targets as they allow even conventional weapons to provoke catastrophes similar to that of Chernobyl. This means that the nuclear industry is the weakest link of any defence policy. Again here we find a very clear link between the civil and military uses of the atom which consists in the fact that populations are taken as hostages of a nuclear conflict as of a conventional attack on a nuclear plant. In both cases the result is mass extermination.

**“The military use is, in fact, the main rationale behind nuclear power.”**

The only way to counter this threat is the elimination of all nuclear weapons and power plants. Short of such a result, the chances for selfmanaging socialism are non-existent. The self-managed Republic will thus have to be an ecological Republic.

Technology, yes but socially useful!



On the other hand, the anti-war and ecological struggles need an anti-capitalist and self-managing socialist perspective. To take the example of nuclear production, it is clear that there are capitalist interests defending this type of production. These capitalists claim that the phasing out of nuclear plants would provoke a rise in unemployment. For this reason, the labour and trade-union movement have adopted a pro-nuclear stance in many countries. It is thus not enough to call for the phasing out of all nuclear plants, we have to define alternative solutions taking into account these questions and combine social and ecological concerns. The task is thus a greening of the socialist movement as well as one of injecting socialist ideas into the green movement. ■

# Here to Stay The German Greens

FRIEDA O. WOLF, Green EuroMP and member of the Green's "ecosocialist" wing discusses the role and future of the Green Party with MAURICE NAJMAN.

Maurice Najman: A lot of political analysts have lately predicted the decline of the German Green Party, and indeed its rapid rise seems to have been stopped in the past year or so. In a way one can say that Chernobyl has helped you very much; has it not helped to turn the last Green Party Conference into a major political event?

Freida Wolf: No, we are not cynical about it. The Chernobyl disaster with dramatic ecological consequences for the next thirty or forty years, is no occasion for rejoicing. We aren't trying to appear like those prophets who go around waving their fingers in the air saying "we told you so". Still, Chernobyl has raised the alarm on the irresponsible use of modern technology. In a way, Chernobyl has brought back into the calculation the future costs of all those efforts trying to re-establish Fordist productivity. Now it is clear that those costs, which will affect the lives of our children and our grandchildren will have to be taken into account. This applies to the chemical industries as well the nuclear one. At our Hagen Conference, our party has already agreed on a depolluting programme aiming to bring some order into the chemical industries, especially the chlore-hydrogen wing of it, which seems to be the worst, as well as the dioxine producing industry.

I think it's fair to say that we are back on the tracks since last December and our Hagen Conference where we agreed on a common strategy to go into the regional election battles this year in Lower Saxony and Hamburg, and later in the

coming year, the Federal Elections in January '87, which might well prove decisive for us. What is now new is the very real possibility of a radical political break in next January. In the wake of the Chernobyl affair, the Christian Democratic Government has lost the last shreds of its remaining credibility, so we might well be heading towards a radical change in the social and economic policy in Germany.

Maurice Najman: The reaction of the German people to the Chernobyl affair has been very striking. In fact, we have seen a spontaneous reaction from the depths of German society, and the Green Party has appeared as the most advanced expression of society's real concerns. This has been clearly demonstrated by the organic relationship of the German people to the Green Party, and the fact that people would get in touch with the party to know what was going on. This is a brand new phenomenon, and a most politically important one.





photo: Camera Press

Freida Wolf: Yes, all levels of the party, or local councils, or ministers in the regional parliaments have really been contacted by the population, who wanted to know all the information about Chernobyl. And the Green Party has found itself responding to the worries and concerns of the population. But to answer questions such as: "What should we do? Is it very dangerous? What are the risks for us? Should we be concerned about our own nuclear plants?" etc. The feelings run very deep. By contrast, the French population has not reacted in this way at all. Of course, it is normal when radioactivity rises by a thousand times that people should be worried. I think this reaction is the fruit of the work we have done in the past fifteen years, around the anti-nuclear fights of the 1970's, and all the campaigns we have been developing at the same time have made their way into people's minds. And I think now they have a much better understanding of the real dangers of nuclear power, even if they don't really know how to fight it. So, it is not so much a new wave of concern around nuclear power, but much more a confirmation of a concern that has been diffused throughout German society for the past ten to fifteen years. The experts who used to say that security standards at Chernobyl were so high, have discredited themselves with all their reassurances of "...not one major accident in 30,00 years." Now the accident has happened; therefore, the population's reaction has been a most rational one. In Berlin, 3,000 schoolchildren demonstrated spontaneously outside the Town Hall, after the disaster was announced on the radio. Farmers, too, faced with the destruction of their crops, have reacted very strongly to it.

Maurice Najman: In fact, this isn't the first time the population has spontaneously identified with the Green Party when some major industrial accident happens. We have seen it in Hamburg when there was a problem with the chemical plant there.

Freida Wolf: Yes, its true. We have seen it with the Boehringer plant, where there is such a massive production of dioxine. The workers' wives phoned the Green Party in Hamburg to ask for someone to come and tell their husbands that it was much too dangerous to work there and risk their lives in a plant where accidents comparable to that of "Serviso" have already happened in the fifties, and have been covered up. So, we sent our experts there, and it helped the workers realise how very dangerous the industry that they worked in was.

Maurice Najman: This surely is a new political phenomenon, where a minority party, the Green Party, in the wake of dramatic accidents, allows society to become conscious of the contradictions of industrial society, and to identify with it. That means that the Green Party is now firmly rooted in Germany's social fabric.

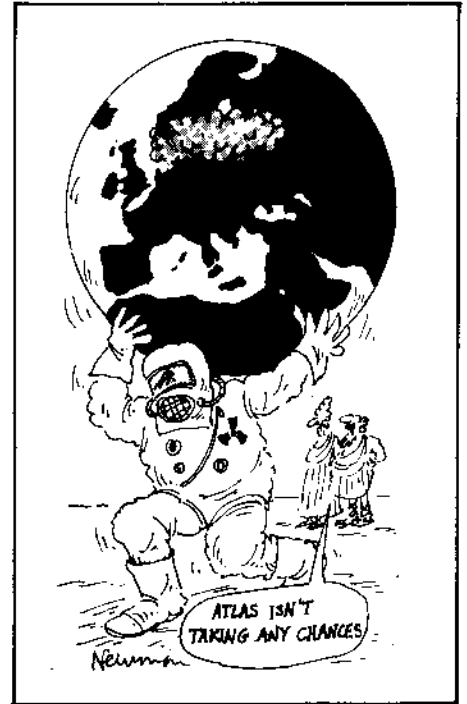
Freida Wolf:

The Green Party is not a conjunctural federation. Some of the contradictions of industrial society cannot be acomodated, and from the moment when the party succeeds in articulating these contradictions, it becomes rooted in the society. It is also a phenomenon closely linked to the young generation. It is the young people who phone us, and also women, and the young workers. You know that, as one of the members of the presidium of the SPD has said, we are the party that represents the new working class in Germany, and we are also very well implanted in the higher levels of technicians and researchers in Kreutzburg, the newest ward in Berlin. We are the second biggest party after the Christian Democrats and only two percent behind them. Of course, this does not mean that we will necessarily get a majority when these people grow older because there is the phenomenon of integration in society. But rooted as we are in at least a quarter of the generation we are certain to make progress. Moreover, whole sections of society have awakened to the real contradictions of industrial society and the party has begun to articulate that.

Maurice Najman: The foreign press has talked a lot about the radicalisation of the Green Party in the wake of the Chernobyl accident; what is your impression of this?

Freida Wolf: I do not think that you can put it like this. We have seen in recent months a tendency especially amongst the parliamentary group at the Bunderstag to concentrate on the role of expertise for the party that was epitomised by the programme for the reconstruction of the German economy proposed in March this year. There was certain lack of coordination between parliamentary work and the extra-parliamentary movement which has been slowing down a bit. But with the revival of the movement in the wake of the Chernobyl disaster this tendency has receded. Still the party's position on nuclear power for instance has not been radicalised after Chernobyl. They were always for a total phasing out of the whole industry, so we need a dual strategy to impose decisions on the state and also to shut down the plants in an orderly manner, but, needless to say, we refuse to take any economic considerations into account because we do not think that one can mortgage the future of one's children or grandchildren. Our action in this direction has gone well beyond sloganising for instance last year we proposed a bill which we called "Towards an end to the Nuclear Problem": this went hand in hand with a technical programme spelling out the concrete steps to be taken. To this end we developed a number of possible scenarios involving the revival of the coal industry energy conservation and much more rational re-cycling of very large quantities of heat produced by industry and also involving a much more ecologically sound method of production from coal powered stations. Finally in the long term the bill provided for the long term development of renewable sources of energy. In any case until the end of the nineties there will be an overproduction of energy in the whole of Europe therefore the margin is there for the phasing out of nuclear power.

This could be done without any loss of material comfort to society. Even if in practice there were a number of hiccups,



it would be utterly irresponsible not to engage in their phasing out. Short of 100% security, which the nuclear industry has not achieved, we have to stop it, if we don't want to see the Chernobyl of Western Europe tomorrow.

Maurice Najman: How do you measure the impact of Chernobyl on the German society as well as on its political world?

Frieda Wolf: The mobilisation of the population is evident. A few days ago over 40,000 people demonstrated in Bavaria, and were savagely attacked by the police, using helicopters and incapacitating gases. I think the mobilisation can only grow now, and will effect all social

*Greenpeace brings attention to the problems of acid rain by hanging banners on chimney stacks in Denmark, Austria, the Netherlands and Germany.*



An international struggle



contingents. There is a very strong demand for the Green party to provide information. Thirdly we see it in the polls. Before Chernobyl there was a slight majority in favour of phasing out nuclear power, but now 69% of the population is against nuclear, with only 26% supporting it. So there was a big impact upon popular feelings, which I think will manifest itself in a change of attitude towards the promises of a growth model based on these uncontrolled technologies. These effects are not confined only to the civil society. I don't think I'm being alarmist in saying we should re-invent a definition of an ecologically acceptable life-style, because our generation lives with a very high level of radioactivity. Even in the food we eat, we are subjected to long exposure to the radioactivity from Caesium, Plutonium and Strontium etc. and this is bound to create serious health risks—cancers, as well as genetic mutations. And of course very little is yet known of the long term effects of the Chernobyl disaster.

**Maurice Najman:** The polls also show that the share of the vote for the Green Party has increased dramatically—good news for you considering the elections are so soon. Is this just because of Chernobyl?

**Frieda Wolf:** No—the Christian Democrats have lost the confidence of wide layers of their supporters. There was a big scandal when the Chancellor admitted he had sanctioned a bomb attack on a prison so as to infiltrate undercover agents into the terrorist network. It didn't work, by the way. They justified it by saying the prison was Government property anyway, so they could do what they wanted with it! And of course this is entirely incompatible with the rule of law. So, in addition to this, Chernobyl means that the Christian Democrats will have a very hard time forcing their pro-nuclear policy on the people, especially as they are planning to build new plants and fast breeders. In opposition the Social Democrats say they won't build the fast breeders, but they appear to want to use the plants under construction. Yet in Lower Saxony we can impose the phasing out, and it will be even easier for us in Hesser. I think we are going to be a crucial force in the formation of the next Government. We will not enter into any governmental pacts unless nuclear plants are to be phased out. In Hesser, the Greens agreed to enter the Government without any guarantees for the phasing out of the nuclear industry. But it is clear now that we have the means to force the Social Democrats to make up their minds. Either they keep the co-alition and phase out nuclear plants, or keep the nuclear plants and scrap the co-alition.

**Maurice Najman:** But what is the Social Democrats reaction to Chernobyl?

**Frieda Wolf:** Well, the Social Democrats move in mysterious ways, and it takes them a long time to make their minds up. But quite a few Social Democrats are in favour of phasing out nuclear power. At the moment the Social Democrats are planning to phase out all nuclear plants by the year 2010, which means they will continue with the present programme, and evidently consider the nuclear industry as a mid-term solution. So it is far from being a radical—I'm not sure that I'll live to see the day when the Social Democrats phase out nuclear energy in Germany. It is clear that the leaders of the SPD are trying to fudge the issue and wait for the popular concern over the issue to cool down. I think this plan will backfire on them this time.

**Maurice Najman:** So what's looming for the general elections?

**Frieda Wolf:** Well, the opposition is clear for these elections. We are not voting for the Social Democrat candidate for the premiership, if he does not commit himself to phasing out the nuclear industry as quickly as possible.

**Maurice Najman:** But it looks as if there is going to be a brand new political situation after these elections. What do you think will happen?

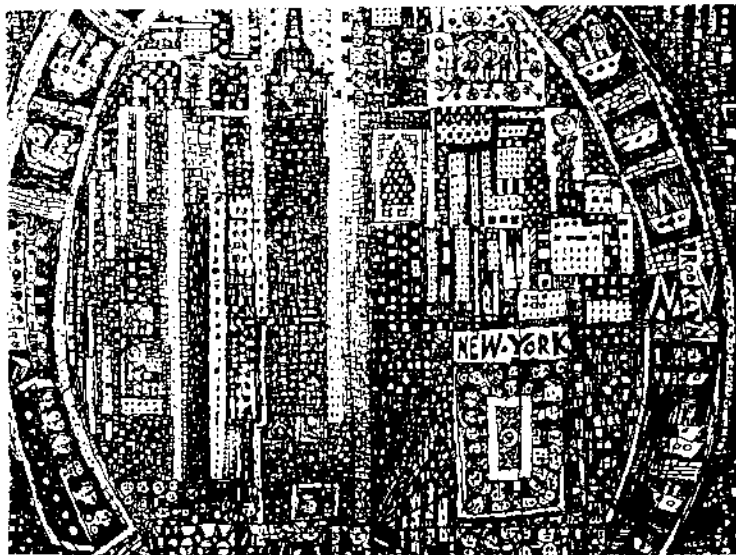
**Frieda Wolf:** Nobody knows, but according to the present estimates it looks as if the Christian Democrats are going to lose. We are now seeing a lot of divisions in the Christian Democrats, and many of them are trying to place themselves as alternative candidates against Kohl. But whatever they do, I don't think they have any chance of winning again. The best they can hope for now is to limit their losses. As regards the Social Democrats, they are sticking, as I said earlier, to vague promises about the phasing out of nuclear power. As for their economic programme, it is based on new technologies and a will to preserve Germany's advance both in Europe and at a global level. The Social Democrats are trying to be all things to all people, by having both a very progressive social policy and



an "ecologically sound" one. But there seems to be a contradiction between an ecologically sound economy and the will to be so aggressive in the world market.

Maurice Najman: Will the Greens get over 10% of the vote?

Frieda Wolf: I'll keep on the safe side and say that we are likely to get 8% of the vote, but of course we are always squeezed out by the Social Democrats, who are going to say that the choice is between them or the right. So that will cost us a few votes. But if we have 7% it will be a very good result. And maybe, depending on the election campaign, if the Social Democrats get 42%, and the Christian Democrats the same or a bit less, then we could hold the balance of power. The only way the Christian Democrats could hold onto their majority is if the Free Democratic Party could hold onto more than 5% of the vote, but according to recent trends, this looks very unlikely, even if the Christian Democrats vote for them as they did this time.



As regards the Social Democrats, they said they are going for an absolute majority, but this impossible. There won't be any new majority over the house. That means there won't be any new majority without a radical change in politics, because it is essential to us that we don't agree to support a policy which is only a little better than the one we have now. That would be disastrous for our support in the German population.

Maurice Najman: All this puts the question of the red-green alliance back on the agenda. The debate is two-fold. It concerns both the Greens and the Social Democrats. It looks as if the danger of such a perspective is well understood by the Social Democrats, and they are now formulating a new policy, which does not oppose the Green Alternative, but rather seeks to articulate it to their own perspectives.

The new SPD General Secretary, Peter Glotz, in a recent document, calls for an alternative block, by which he actually means that the SPD on its own could be at the base of such a block.

Frieda Wolf: I think there is a distinction to be made here. The great majority of the German Social Democrats have got one strategic objective, which is to get rid of the

Greens; and they have almost openly admitted that they were willing to lose the elections if that would rid them of us. But after Chernobyl, this option seems to be closed. So they will now have to re-think their strategy very closely. What Glotz said fits this perspective exactly: if you look at the general principle declarations, there is a kind of inventory of ideas. Even in their economic programme, you find a move from the reparation of damage done to the promotion of the environment's preservation, and preventative measures. But we should submit all this to a finer analysis, I think; whereas we are advocating an integrated economy, he speaks of founding it on the ecological cycles, which is a good indication of what he really means. Glotz says that technological development is like a part of nature in a way, and all we should do is develop compensating mechanisms so as to avoid the incompatibility of material production with ecological imperatives. This can be seen in their concrete economic proposals, in which the only production sector they see as needing re-structuring is transport, and even there they don't attack the monopoly of individual cars, but only want to adapt it with better regional transport. As regards the energy sector, they only want relative de-centralisation, which is good but they also want to compliment the nuclear programme for the next fifty years. In a word, instead of proposing to dismantle the most dangerous parts of the productive apparatus, they are merely proposing to build more layers of it, so as to protect it slightly better. There is also a very big gap in the SPD's arguments—they don't seem to be concerned about the defence sector at all. And of course they don't even begin to mention the reconversion of the arms industry.

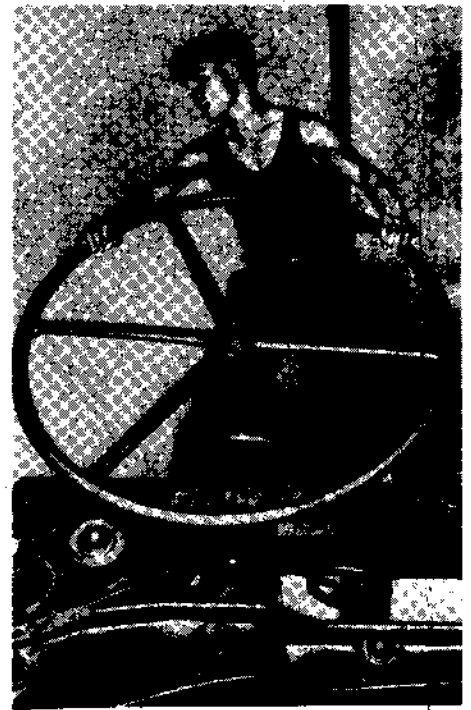
Maurice Najman: Don't you think, though, that nowadays the SPD's and the Green's premises are the same? I say this because here you have an SPD leader who is really taking into account ecological ideas, and accepting the whole transformation of society in that he is responding to the strategic question in a way which prevents any return to Keynesian policies. Therefore how, in such a situation, can an alternative block be developed, and take the progressive cause into the 21st century? If the SPD really takes this line, it really looks as if there is no role left for the Green Party, but that of a spur which has broadly integrated ecological concerns, and which has definitely broken with its old strategies and programme.

Frieda Wolf: I think this is a very French way of reading it, because the French tend to think that whatever is said is a reality. I think we should underline the fact that the Social Democrats have no support whatsoever with, for example, the 35 years olds. So your description is more a sign of the hegemony we have imposed upon the whole progressive movement.

Maurice Najman: But surely everyone is part of this realignment, because of the end of the Fordist and Taylorist modes of production?

Frieda Wolf: But the Greens want another alternative, and a very different change from what Glotz is proposing. If we really look at the great political questions, not just the ideological ones, which are the nuclear industry, the chemical industry and NATO, then on all these questions, he is clearly on the other side. So therefore, I think there will still be a role for the Green Party well into the 21st century. ■

# Building the Alternative in France



The building of an alternative movement in France (one with hegemonic ambitions, in the Gramscian sense of being capable of presenting a different future to the nation) implies, at the very least a definition of what the "alternative" is. I will thus start by this definition before moving on to consider its potentialities as a political force.

**AS UNHELPFUL AND OBVIOUS AS IT MAY SEEM**, the content of the alternative is already partially defined by its title. To say that there exists another way (of life, of work), is to break the consensus according to which there is only one possible policy varying in degrees depending on the party carrying it, that there is only one development model dictated by technological revolution and free enterprise and constrained by international competition.

To propose an alternative is a reaffirmation of the role of politics and the possibility for a community to determine its own fate. This of course implies that the community defines itself neither in national terms (the French) nor as an empirical entity condemned to "win" against the others, but as a community sharing a common understanding of what is just and good to achieve together.

In this sense, the alternative has the same ambitions as the 18th Century liberals, the radicals or the socialists of yesteryear. If, as a political force, it knows it will never represent the whole of France, it aims to present everybody with a new social "paradigm", a new approach to life in society. I personally believe the alternative is the only paradigm we can erect on the ruins of the social-democratic paradigm and in opposition to the liberal-productivist one.

To define oneself as alternative necessarily implies being opposed to something else. Plunged as we are in a crisis where "the old dies but the new is not yet born", it means defining ourselves both in relation to the "old" and to another competing "new" that also has ambitions to be a model.

The old, it's what some economists call "the fordist compromise" and some political scientists "social-democratic compromise". We know what its terms were:

**"To propose an alternative is a reaffirmation of the role of politics and the possibility for a community to determine its own fate."**

\* the organisation of production restricted to dominant groups (managers and technocrats);

\* redistribution of part of the productivity gains to the popular masses through a series of regulatory mechanisms, both contractual and legislative, in such a way that, buying power growing in proportion with productivity, full employment results;

\* this redistribution, whether it is operated by a direct wage mechanism or through the Welfare State, takes the form of money which in turn gives access to market goods.

This model, imposed by Rooseveltian or social-democratic forces was developed after 1945 on the ruins of the fascist alternative and in direct competition with the Soviet model. It has at times been run by conservative or christian-democratic forces and at others by social-democrats-with or without communist support. However, as an "hegemonic paradigm", it properly deserves the name of social-democracy.

This compromise has met its crisis from all sides: fall in the rate of return of the fordist production model, internationalisation of markets, and production destabilising national regulation, the revolt against the alienation from work, social demands for greater autonomy and growing misgivings towards bureaucratic practices.

The Left's "Programme Commun" can be seen as the most achieved and radicalised form of fordist compromise. The French Left, SP and CP, which, in the post-war period had helped the consolidation, thus became the "Fordist compromise Left". This Left, coming to power when the compromise had become economically obsolete and ideologically weakened could only fail.



Taylorism...

For want of an alternative and under the combined pressure of the Japanese and Californian myths, one part of the coalition, the SP leadership, adopted a new paradigm: the neo-liberal management of technological change. As a new paradigm in the making, and still far from having been stabilised, this model includes the following elements:

- \* an emphasis on the productivist technical-economic imperative, now elevated to the status of a "categorical" imperative, a denial of the idea that the choice of society is a matter for the democratic process to decide;
- \* a fragmentation of social identity with the enterprise taking

on a role once the preserve of the nation;

- \* a great variety in the forms of the individual integration to the workplace, ranging from pure discipline to negotiated identification and the disappearance of social individuality based on "class";

- \* massive cut backs in those administrative solidarities based on the belonging to a national community.

The flowering, from the SP through to the right, of slogans like "A France that wins" in the electoral imagination of the 1986 campaign points to a general convergence towards this model (which retains, as always, a "right" and a "left"). The CP clearly expressed its refusal to join in. But moving slogans like "above all, don't give in!", offer in truth, no perspective. Nor is this even a slogan of the "at least we will have tried" type which would be the hallmark of a young model aspiring to hegemony, but quiet simply an expression of the despair of "the old that dies" and will disappear with the last blue collar worker in the last Seine-St-Denis factory.

What does the alternative have to oppose to that? Not a rejection of technical progress, but a refusal to consider progress as a value in itself. Three themes sketch the standpoint from which to judge any "progress" and any policy; the **autonomy** of individuals and groups, the **solidarity** between individuals and groups and **ecology** as the principle of all relations between society, the product of its activity and its environment.

To the crisis of the Fordist model, the alternative opposes:

- \* a transformation of the relations between persons in the workplace and greater producers' control over their activities;
- \* reduction of the time devoted to wage labour and consequently a roll-back of market relations in consumption and leisure, to the benefit of creative activity;
- \* positive discrimination in favour of the most ecological technologies, that is in favour of the ones least wasteful of natural resources, for recycling of all waste produce by human activity;
- \* a transformation of all non-wage social relations towards the eradication of hierarchies in a feminist and anti-racist direction;



...reaching the end of its line

\* a redistribution of the national community's solidarities, from a purely monetary distribution to subsidising self-organised activities of a socially useful nature;

\* an evolution towards more "organic" and less delegated forms of grassroots democracy.

\* a questioning of the unequal relationship between national communities towards mutually benefiting relations and self-centred development.

I won't get into the details of what "alternative economics" could be, nor into those of the transition between the Fordist and the alternative model. I will limit myself to defining what the **space** for the alternative is in the present political context.

First, as a new paradigm, the alternative cannot be fitted within the right-left division specific to the previous paradigm. If the alternative, 20 to 30 years from now, becomes a "hegemonic paradigm" and political forces come to define themselves in relation to it, then it will produce its right, left and centre. But in 1986, it cannot define itself as "to the left of the Left" if by Left is meant the Fordist compromise Left./

Yet, as a model presenting itself as "progressive", the alternative self-consciously becomes a new form of what once were radicalism, socialism and communism. Its initial social base will have to regroup all the oppressed and exploited in struggle against the alienation of social relations: women, workers on the receiving end of capitalist restructuring, the unemployed, urban multi-cultural youth, "alternative" farmers, etc. It is thus in line with all previous emancipatory movements. In this historical sense, the alternative is a "new Left". All things being equal, it thus faces the same problems

socialism faced at the outset of the 3rd Republic. **External problems:** its relations to the old model's Left, be it in terms of "class against class" or "republican block". **Internal problems:** the merging of the old model's Left with those that radically oppose this model. The two type of problems are obviously linked. The German Greens, ahead as they are, are already confronting them in the debates between "realos" and "fundamentalists". They are ahead because they have had more material to confront the fundamental problem: that of the relationship between social movement and political representation.

**LET US START FROM THIS BASIC PROBLEM:** social movement and political representation. Every historical social force has first existed in practice before existing as a programme and party. Workers associations, guilds, trades unions and co-operatives have all preceded national parties and internationals. They existed before being conscious of being "socialist movements" even if, from the origin they all produced their own utopia.

A constant feature in France is the speed (and thus superficiality) with which movements develop institutional political representations. It is thus likely that the alternative movement will develop early political expressions that will disappear for lack of a real grounding in the social movement. In a way, one can say that the ecological movement has already gone through its "Amiens split" between grassroots environmentalist movements and tiny groups claiming to represent them. Similarly, the self-managing current is hardly involved in the protracted debates taking place in the trade union movement around industrial restructuring, nor is it in touch with the numerous marginal or semi-institutional experiences taking place everywhere.



**"The Alternative  
is in line with all  
previous emancipatory  
movements-  
it is a 'new Left'."**

We shouldn't see this as an freak occurrence nor a necessity. This split will persist for some time as the specifically French tendency to early institutional representation creates this "early politicisation". But we will have to try and patch up this split—indeed, it is one of the conditions for a "different politics". The alternative movement cannot exist as a truth "taken to the masses from outside by trained intellectuals", as Lenin put it. It must refuse such "political taylorism" and can only exist as a collective intellectual, necessarily federalist and organically linked with those partial experiences that will never see themselves as part of a totality. The experience of the social-democratic and bolshevik models in the labour movement seem to indicate that this is a weakness. But it could also be a strength provided that modes of regulation of this contradiction can be found. Let us be clear, in the absence of a specific political expression, the movement will turn to Rocardism or Liberalism as substitutes. Without roots, its political expressions will soon become sects.

In a way, the post-'68 leninist phase can be seen as an illegitimate expression of the first mass movement with an alternative content: May '68. This is no new phenomenon in France: part of the socialist movement originally saw itself as the Left-wing of the republican camp, the alternative movement has partially seen itself as part of the "extreme Left", ie. as the Left of the Fordist compromise's Left.

This takes us to the question of the "Green-Red" alliance. The illegitimate marxist-leninist representations produced a separatist backlash on the part of the radical movements. Feminism has no doubt been the most radical and the most effective in precipitating the crisis of leninist groups.

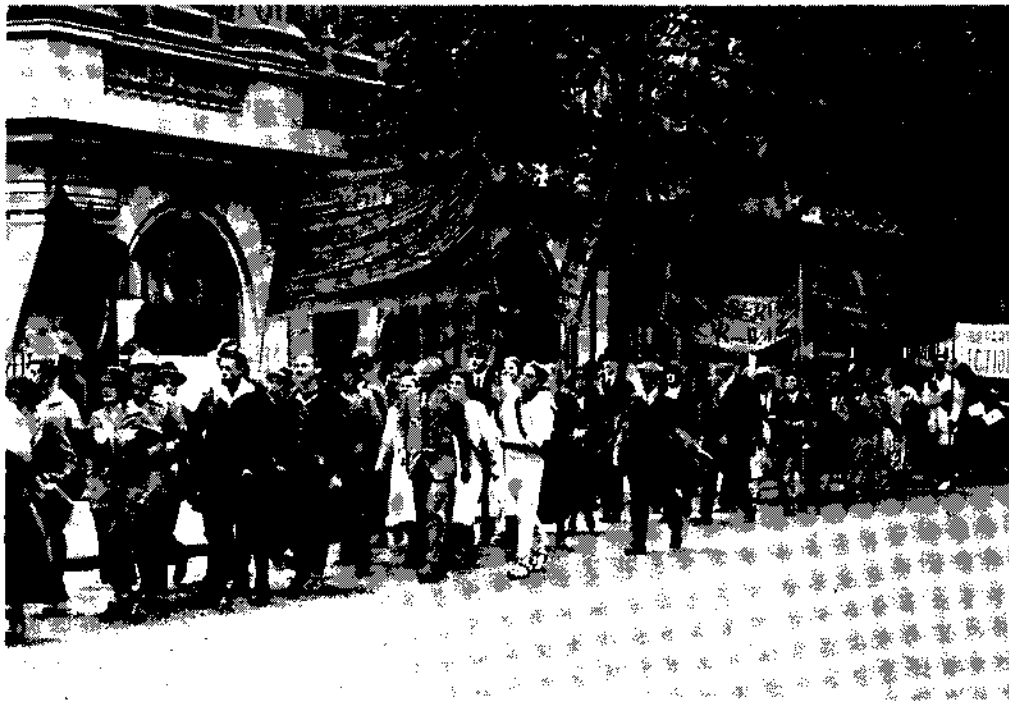
The ecological movement dispelled all misunderstandings but did it in conditions that produced an absurd polarisation in the 70's. The marxist-leninist groups increasingly retreated to an internal critique of the Fordist compromise: their exclusive struggle against capitalist social relations increasingly narrowed to a struggle for jobs and wages. Against this, ecology appeared as the rejection of the "production/consumption" cycle. This rejection led ecologists to concentrate exclusively on the human beings/nature relationship and forget all about the social relations. Opposition to the Fordist model thus tended to be restricted to a defense of a supposedly non-socialised nature. The opposition of the just fight against nuclear power and acid rain with the just fight for the defence of buying power epitomised this divorce.

The German Greens have managed, albeit partially, to breach this split. It remains to be done in France. The heirs to the far-left are slowly learning to think economic problems in terms of a rethink of the social relations through a critique of productivism. Ecology is learning to rethink it's project as essentially urban by putting the social being at the centre of what should be protected from the "destructions of progress". As regards the feminist movement—which in France led to women activists pulling out from mixed movements—it disappeared once its legislative aims had been achieved.

It is however impossible to say that its aspirations have retreated from womens consciousness to a comparable extent (unfortunately, that much can't be said of those movements that became "male only again" as a result of this pullout). Feminism still has to renegeate the alternative current. Only once this triple rethink has taken place will we be able to put the question of the unification of a "Green-Alternative", ecologist and feminist pole on our agendas.



This brings us back to the first problem I mentioned: the relations between the alternative current and the rest of the political spectrum. For the reasons mentioned, the alternative pole, whether it wants it or not, has a privileged relationship to the former period's progressive forces (ie with socialism). This relation is not necessarily external: the American Democratic Party has represented throughout its history a number of "historical compromises" and yet kept the same name. Its fragmentation in 1984 between Mondale, Hart and Jackson shows how difficult such mutations are. The point is that they all stayed in the same party.



**“...the radicals on their own cannot claim to represent a party with ambitions to become the democracy.”**

In France, things are different. Each new “progressive” expression gives rise to a new party which, feeding on its relations of rivalry and influence on its predecessors, tries to include them in its own paradigm while at the same time suspecting them of “treason” or “recuperation”. This tradition is not without its tactical advantages: the “alternative paradigm” too will produce its “moderates” and “radicals”. The point is that the “radicals” cannot, on their own, claim to represent a party with ambitions to become the majority (except in exceptional situations). That much was made clear by the McGovern experience in the American Democratic Party, or the period of relative domination of the Left on the British Labour Party. On the other hand, the co-existence between the Greens and the SPD as parts of the German opposition seems richer in political potentialities.

Let one thing be clear: the point is not to reduce a-priori the role of the alternative to that of a spur for the traditional Left. The future Green-Alternative party should not only have ambitions to hegemony but also the greatest numerical weight inside the “progressive camp”. Moreover, if it can so position itself, it should postulate for the leadership of this camp. This is the position that the French Communist Party (although it fulfilled the first two objectives) has never managed to occupy. In contrast, the Italian Communist Party can still hope to play such a role. Still, in the beginning, the “alternative pole” will necessarily play this dual role—rival and spur.

It is possible that the March 86 elections could open the way for such a situation in France. The choice will be a difficult one for the “widows of socialism” as for the CP “renovators”. Once overcome the first disheartening (which could last as long as the post-Guy Mollet recovery), they will have to choose between a strategy of “internal renaissance” in the old parties and one of building a new candidate to political representation. The experience of the PSU will naturally be much bandied about while forgetting that the Tours split eventually resulted in a bigger party than the SFIO which, reduced to the status of a microscopic group, was only saved by its fusion with a confederation of political clubs.

But let's not speculate too much in the long term. After March '86, away from the politician manoeuvres of “cohabitation”, the priority of the alternative movement will be one of elaboration, ideological unification, of reconstruction of a social project and of rooting itself in the harsh social battles looming with the return of the Right to power. There will then be of necessity co-existence between critical currents inside the “old Left” (and what's left of the extreme Left) and external alternative poles—more or less radicals, redder than green or greener than red—and there will be, hopefully, bridges between them.

The first step towards a “new way to do politics” requires a rejection of all preconceptions and sectarianisms. ■

# A D o g ' s l i f e . . .

Human liberation is only one step, socialists should also fight for animal liberation argues  
DOMINIC JOHNSON.

"...communist society...makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening..."

(Marx and Engels, The German Ideology) (1)

"We dined at a vegetarian restaurant with the enticing name, I Eat Nobody..."  
(John Reed, Ten Days that Shook the World) (2)

The animal liberation movement is now a well-established part of the British political and social scene. Membership of animal rights organisations numbers tens of thousands; dozens of militants are behind bars following raids on vivisection centres, savagely sentenced in contrast to the light treatment meted out to those animal abusers such as dog-fight organisers who are caught. Meanwhile vegetarianism and veganism increase in popularity, acknowledged by the supermarket chains who vie with each other to provide non-animal and health food. The issue of vivisection as an area of moral concern has increasingly become a subject of national debate.

The first issue of "Socialist Alternatives" called for "challenging thought rather than petrified dogma,

unorthodoxy rather than the "correct line"". This article will argue that animal liberation must now be incorporated into Marxist/socialist theory and practice, the main tenets of animal liberation being that non-human animals (hereafter "animals") should enjoy the same basic prima facie rights to life and non-harm that humans should be accorded. No doubt this assertion will be met with mirth, ridicule, hostility, or at best with cries of "Diversion". Let us not forget, however, that black liberationists, women's liberationists, gay liberationists and their supporters had to battle against similar prejudices before their demands were accepted as legitimate and progressive by socialist movements.

The notion that socialists were only interested in liberating an organised working class **as workers** has long since been discredited and ditched. Other oppressions, based on race, sex, nationality, sexuality, age, culture, disability, have been identified and campaigned against. In addition the traditional humanistic, in reality human chauvinistic, bias of orthodox Marxian socialism with its emphasis on "man" (sic) controlling nature has been undermined with the rise of ecological environmentalism - the necessity for us to **accommodate** ourselves to "nature"; to know our limitations; to conserve the finite resources of the planet; and for the primacy of sustainable as opposed to growth-oriented production.

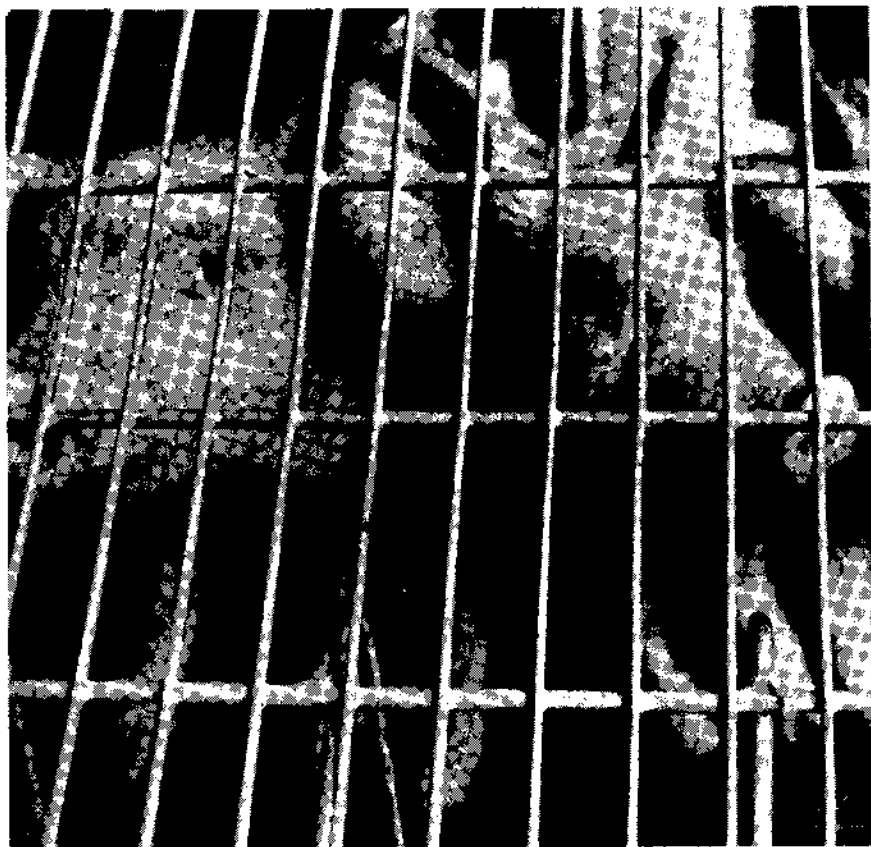
None of this has made socialism redundant, nor invalidated many of the basic precepts of Marxism. The continuation of the private profit system underpins and sustains all oppression,

and threatens the ecological destruction of the planet. Only a global socialist collectivism can provide the preconditions for an end to all oppressions and eco-suicide.

It is the contention of this article that animal liberation must become part of this new socialism. The fact is that animals suffer oppression, often of a terrible, cruel nature, and since socialists (should) oppose all oppressions, then socialists should actively oppose animal oppression. Of course it is a different sort of oppression to that which humans suffer, but women's oppression, for **example**, is very different to that of a male worker. This does not invalidate women's oppression.







What about their liberation?

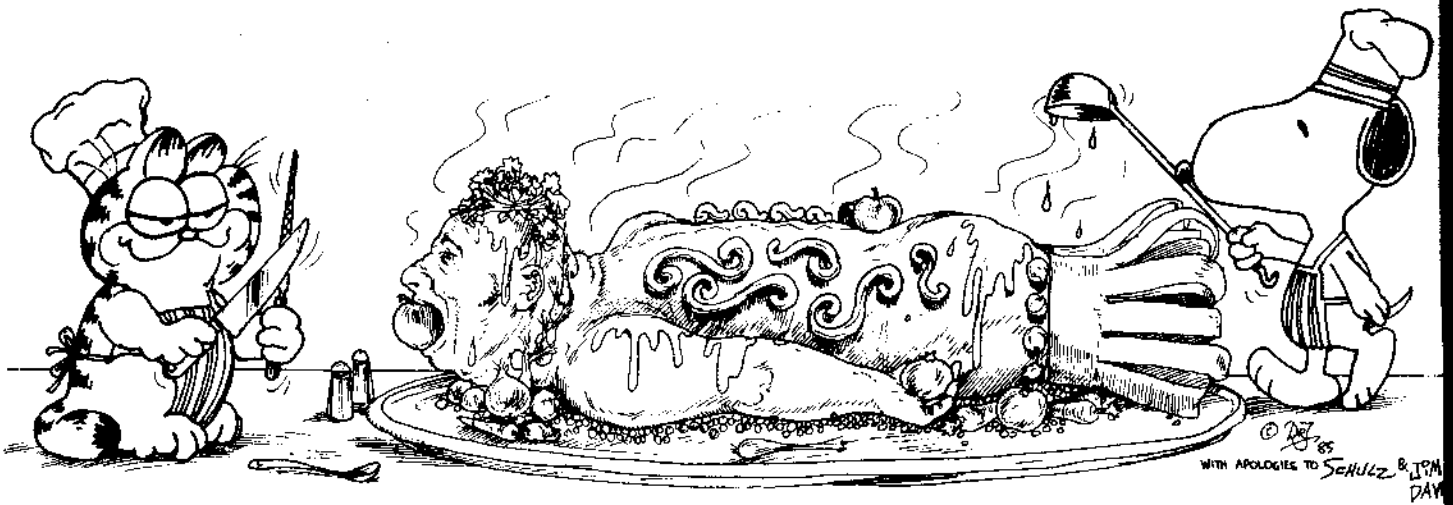
human animals. All the other speciesist practices listed above then follow.

The importance of animal oppression to the capitalist economy is also clear. Animal oppression is big business. The drugs and chemicals companies, multi-million pound oligopolies, continually foist unnecessary new drugs, chemicals and cosmetics onto the market, having killed thousands of animals in the process. The fur industry is now increasingly based on the more profitable intensive factory fur-farming system, where the animals spend their entire lives in cramped cages before being slaughtered for their skins. However the meat and dairy industry is the worst offender, at least from the point of view of the sheer number of animals involved. In the drive for maximum profitability, and hence productivity, farming systems have become increasingly intensive causing untold misery, suffering and premature death to hundreds of millions of animals every year.

Animal oppression is institutionalised in our society, along with the ideology of "speciesism", or human chauvinism, which says that since humans are more "intelligent" than animals, we can therefore by and large treat animals as we wish. This oppression, in particular the denial to animals of legitimate rights of life and non-injury, takes many forms: we eat them, having raised them in conditions of terrible cruelty; we hunt, shoot and fish them for sport; we factory-farm and snare them for furs; we poison them with cosmetics and other chemicals; we torture them in psychology labs etc. In 1985, for example, 3.25 million animals died in experiments, while over 400 million were killed, quite unnecessarily, for human food. Speciesism is an all-pervading ideology. We are indoctrinated into it from our earliest days. As children, before we are able to form an unbiased opinion on the subject, we are fed meat - animal flesh. This act of eating animals is the key to establishing our views of non-

Firstly, much medical experimentation is positively harmful to humans. Many drugs which harm humans have been prescribed safe after tests on animals (eg. Thalidomide, Opren, Depo-provera) because animals have a different metabolism to humans, while the whole ethos of animal experimentation perpetuates a drug/cure-based society instead of one based on healthy living and preventative medicine. But secondly, and more importantly, the fact is that animals are not ours to experiment on, in the same way that we would never experiment on humans without their consent, however severely mentally handicapped they were, for example, and whatever the possible benefits. Animals should have a right to life uncircumscribed by humans' quest for "knowledge". We must resolve our problems with our own devices and resources.

Many of course will argue that these factors do not add up to an animal oppression of the sort that socialists should be concerned with. It is variously argued that animals are not conscious of their oppression (or lack powers of reason generally); that animals do not organise against their oppression; or that animals cannot be allies for socialism. However oppression is not a subjective phenomenon related to one's awareness or one's ability to organise and struggle. There are many unaware, unorganised humans, utterly indifferent to socialism, but who are nevertheless oppressed, while a traditional hall-mark of socialists has been their willingness to defend those unable to defend themselves. Oppression is an **objective** phenomenon, related to one's ability to **suffer**. To be oppressed it is enough to have objective interests, which are gratuitously negated, in particular the rights not to be exploited, harmed or killed. Animals, as conscious beings, able to feel pleasure and pain, also have such interests. They have a welfare independent of our utility for them. Their lives have their own intrinsic validity. It is thus that we can speak of "animal rights". And just as we cannot justify overriding a human's rights to life and non-harm by arguing that someone else derived "pleasure" from this, so shooting, hunting, fishing, eating or killing animals for fur cannot be justified by arguing that humans derive pleasure from these activities. Animal experimentation is a little trickier because of the widespread belief that some (in particular, medical) experimentation has



brought about benefits for humans (and animals). (At the same time there are some experiments involving cosmetics, tobacco, weapons etc. which hopefully socialists would condemn outright). Nevertheless, regarding so-called beneficial experimentation two main points can be made.

All this means that a socialist policy on animal rights would include outright opposition to the following: (1) Commercial animal agriculture (eating animals and their products); (2) All use of animals in "science"; (3) Commercial and sport hunting, trapping, shooting and fishing.

Animal liberation is not a diversion from the "real struggle" in the sense that none of the various progressive struggles excludes any other, in fact they complement each other. There are many paths to socialism which will involve different campaigns against different oppressions, with different people choosing to campaign on different issues. None of these activities are invalid, and socialists should not decry those who, for whatever reason, choose to campaign around animal liberation.

What is perfectly understandable is for socialists to say that they are sympathetic to animal liberation, but that they have no time/inclination to actively campaign on this issue. But even here let us recall the words of the first "Socialist Alternatives" editorial: "Groups and parties (and individuals - DJ) fighting for socialism should, in their structure as in their practice, prefigure the type of social organisation they claim to be fighting for." There are certain vital steps which individuals who support animal liberation must take in their daily practice, and which take up next to no time. The most important of these is to boycott meat, and preferably, certainly ultimately, all animal produce (all milk and egg production, for example, involves animal oppression). In particular we must look forward to the day when meat will be banned from socialist conventions, as today we ban South African produce.

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# Not the main Breadwinners...

BRIGID BROOKS and EMMA FOOTE argue that the sexual division of labour is a major stumbling block on the road to women's emancipation.



Women workers?

Nearly two decades have elapsed since the women's movement first emerged as an influential political force, and on the surface, these years have seen the achievement of many significant advances for women. One could cite the election of Margaret Thatcher as the first women Prime Minister as one of the most obvious and tangible proofs of this progress. How is it, then, that the movement for the liberation of the majority of women seems hardly to have begun?

Popular feminism in conjunction with the rise of the meritocracy appears to have made the traditionally higher status jobs more accessible to women. But the highly publicised achievements of individual women in previously male-dominated "establishment" domains, such as Mrs. Thatcher, in the political sphere, and the likes of Laura Ashley and Debbie Moore in the business world are isolated instances. Limited to a fortunate minority only, their presence constitutes no real threat to the status quo, and serves instead to obscure the fact that the position of most women remains unchanged. Paradoxically, a closer examination of the nature of these women's achievements shows that they actually confirm rather than confront accepted sexual roles.

It is no accident, for example, that the business entrepreneurs are successful in those industries associated with traditionally "female" concerns, like fashion, cosmetics, and health care. Correspondingly, Margaret Thatcher's notoriously domineering and aggressive style of leadership is no true liberation from the conventions of "feminine" behaviour. She has merely aped the characteristics associated with "powerful" men, and in swapping one stereotype for another, has revealed the precedence she gives to such strictly defined role models. Precisely because Mrs. Thatcher is not a liberated woman who has realised her own potential, there is nothing surprising or incongruous in the fact that the first woman Prime Minister presides over a maleonly Cabinet, and advocates the Victorian view of women's natural vocation as wife, mother and home-maker.

If the position of successful upper and middle class women shows little evidence of any substantial change in conventional sexual roles, then the same is truer still of the jobs done by most working class women.

Here, the form and nature has altered even less than their "professional" counterparts over the past twenty years. For example, most part-time, temporary or home-based work is still done by this section of the population. This type of employment is badly paid, with little or no organized trade union representation, but for women who are tied to the home because of family responsibilities, it is often the only form of work open to them. Even if women can get out to work, they are mainly concentrated into what are regarded as strictly "women's jobs". This term covers a range of clerical or service jobs, or work related to household skills, such as cleaning, catering or childcare. Again, unsurprisingly enough, these are jobs with low wages and low status. As Lynne Segal argues in "Beyond the Fragments", the fact that "women's jobs" exist mainly in the lower bracket of the job market is no coincidence. The predominant idea of the natural role of women as that of housewives still prevails, and therefore those women who do take other work are not regarded as the main breadwinner of the family. Accordingly, they are expected to settle for lower pay and the work they do is somehow considered peripheral.

This mode of thinking must be challenged. As long as women are only fit for certain types of work, and that work earns them less money and standing than men's, then not only are they restricted from large sections of the job market, regardless of personal inclination, but they are kept financially dependent upon, and socially inferior to their male counterparts. Clearly, then, any real equality of the sexes is impossible without an end to the sexual division of labour.

But, it is one thing to recognise this fact, and quite another to do something about it. There are two basic options facing us for ways in which to integrate women into the complete range of employment opportunities. Firstly, we can leave the onus on individual women to redress the balance through their own volition. Yet, because social conditioning is to a large degree self-perpetuating, influencing those it represses as much as those it benefits, many women still won't, or don't, consider taking a "man's job". The minority that are prepared to set a precedent face being continually passed over in favour of male applicants, or, if lucky enough to get a place, run the risk of being harassed by their male colleagues. This is essentially the process we see in operation at present, and certainly, some progress has been made with it. However, it is possible that where women have just begun to find jobs in the male dominated sectors, their presence is tolerated at the moment on a tokenistic basis, but any attempts to achieve greater parity of numbers would be more strongly resisted. Even if this concern does not prove to be justified, this type of approach still seems destined to being laborious. Far more efficient and likely to succeed is the second option open to us, whereby the momentum necessary for overcoming sexual stereotypes is initially stimulated by legislating a comprehensive policy of positive discrimination.

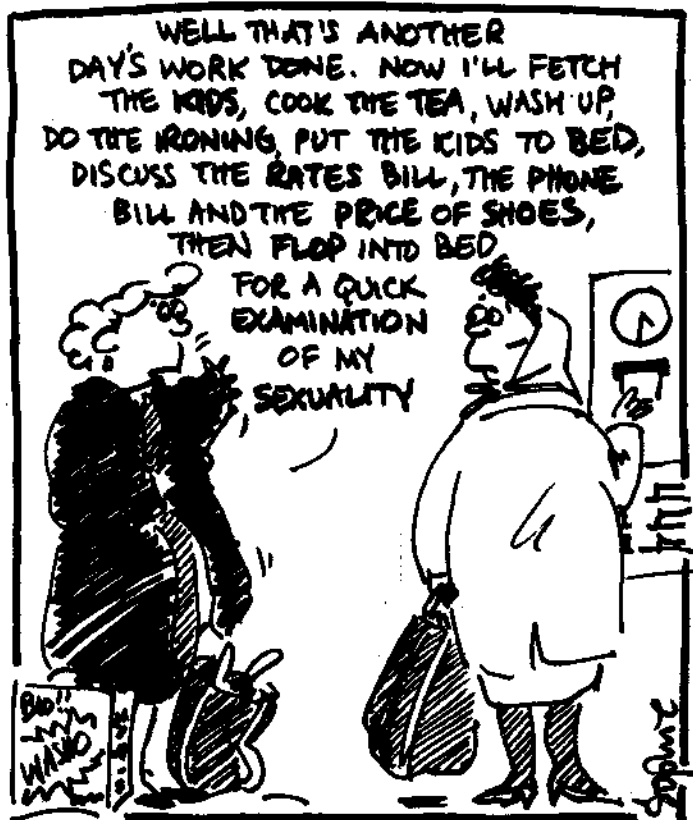
Having said all this, the opposition, in Britain at least, if not in other European countries and the States is considerable, and comes not just from those men who might be suspected of trying to protect their own privileges. Some of the fiercest opponents of positive discrimination are,

in fact, women, who resent the idea of a strategy which, because it demands different treatment for the sexes, is seemingly admitting that a difference does actually exist. But the answer to this is that, regardless of our ultimate aims, the inequality of the sexes in our society here and now is undeniable, and to try to ignore or rise above the present status quo is an evasion of the problem.

The other argument frequently used against positive discrimination is a re-working saying "two wrongs don't make a right". In other words, if it is wrong in ethical terms to discriminate against a woman on the basis of her sex, then it is just as wrong to discriminate against a man. But this argument is implying that ethical are merely abstract, sufficient in themselves, without any concrete relation to the given realities of the situation. Yet, it is impossible for the oppression of, and discrimination against women to be ended, without some corresponding readjustment in the social condition of men. If, then, we have to choose between two "unethical" actions, why should that which doesn't favour the man be somehow worse than that which attacks the woman?

Furthermore, there is one large difference in these two forms of discrimination which the above argument does not appear to take into account. The aim of positive discrimination is not to place women in a position where they can dominate men, but simply to make them equal. Although a man may lose the chance of a job because of positive discrimination, the status of his sex is not reduced by his loss. Every time a woman is passed over at an interview for a man with no greater qualifications, the whole of the female sex is under attack.

It goes without saying that a policy of sexual discrimination would present tremendous practical difficulties. If it is to be at all effective, it would need to be applied at a number of levels; not just with regards to appointments, but also training and promotion. Yet, whatever the final form of such a policy, as long as women fail to compete with men in the job market, positive discrimination is not an option we can simply afford to ignore.



# Utopia and Socialism

Far from being “unrealistic”, utopias are one of the driving forces in the struggle for socialism, argues MICHEL RAPTIS.

Historically, utopia is a creation of the imagination in times when social reality does not fit conceptual thought. Imagination acts as a means to project in the future a social vision – determined yet rejected by the present reality. From the mist of an immature and confused reality, rejected and contested by critical thought as well as the human ethical leaning towards “the absolute”, the utopian vision rises.

For this reason, no utopia is transcendent. All are historically limited and determined both by the historical past and its present environment. Imagination is a superior function of the mind which characterises the evolution of the entire being – social and biological – over and above reflexes and memories. Through imagination, the creative transformation of sense and thought data, we transcend the present and find solutions which, if they first emerge as visions and utopias, gradually acquire flesh and blood and mature into the principles of tomorrow’s reality.

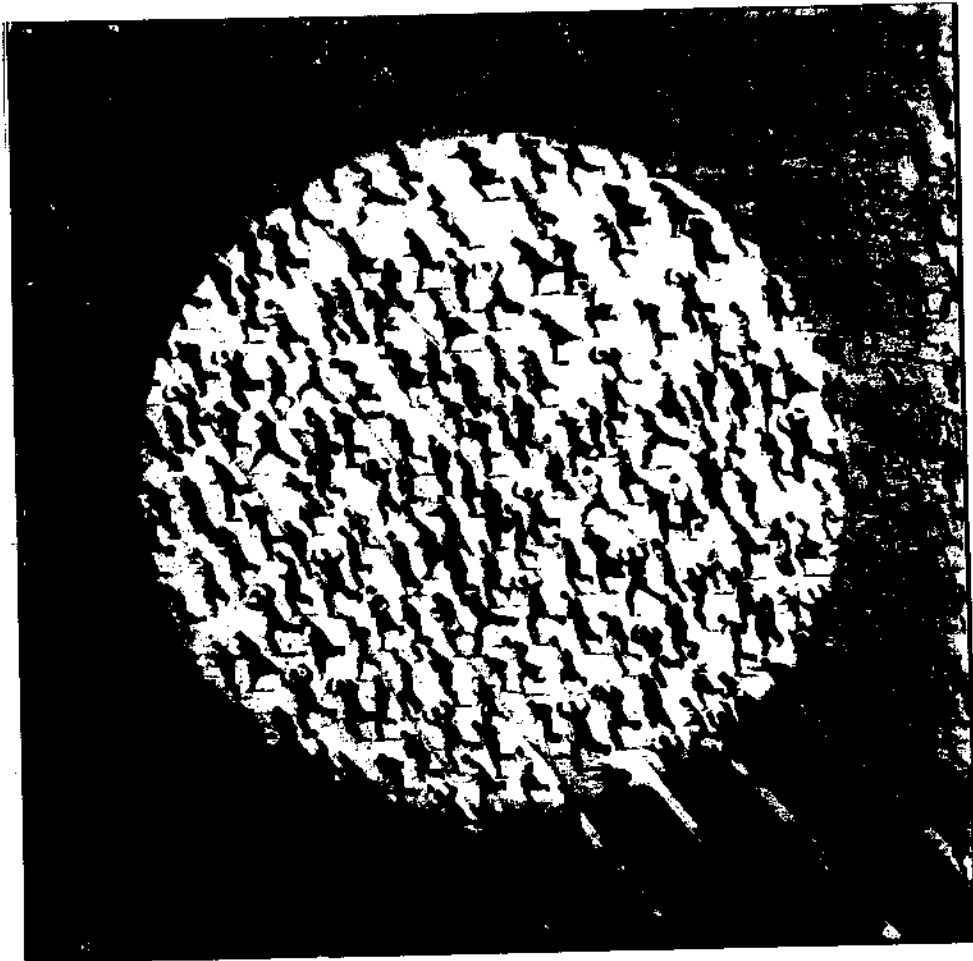
Utopia is a product of the brain’s ability to transform memories and experiences into social constructions that appear more satisfying to our judgment as well as to our ethical leanings towards the absolute. When social reality fails to satisfy us anymore, without there being the subjective and objective maturation allowing for a solution, imagination intervenes to project into the future the principles of a “better society”. By producing utopias, imagination acts as a sort of daydream feeding itself upon our critical and ethical look on social reality. Utopia is therefore not entirely detached from reality but on the contrary finds its deepest roots in it and creatively transforms the human praxis’s past experiences and memories.

Only cheap materialists with no understanding of the human being’s spiritual dynamism underestimate the role of imagination when applied to the domain of social utopia. Imagination does not only feed on one’s endogenous dispositions to “the good”, “the beautiful”, “the better”, the “absolute”. It also feeds on ones’



**“Utopia is not entirely detached from reality...but finds its deepest roots in it.”**

thought’s theoretical critical structure. Theoretical thought is not just a reflection of the human social praxis or of objective reality. It has its own specific function which allows it a deeper understanding of reality, of nature and society and at the same time a more critical but more creative attitude towards this reality.



**“...from the moment when a mass  
'revolutionary subject' emerges,  
utopia expresses itself through this  
subject.”**

For this reason, those philosophers—whether “idealists” or “materialists”—who have particularly concerned themselves with theoretical thought or “pure reason”, have been of great help to humanity. To mention but the most important, they are Plato, Kant, Hegel.

Theoretical thought feeds imagination to satisfy the profound human ethical and esthetic disposition and because it reinforces its critical spirit. In effect, it's because it contributes to a deeper understanding of the dynamic social being; it doesn't limit itself to the static aspects of the social being but grasps both its contradictions and its movement. Consequently it allows for an understanding of the long-term tendencies which are used—consciously or not—by imagination and utopia.

It is no accident that great theoreticians should lean towards social utopia like Plato for whom the ideal Republic is a means to transcend—through imagination—the deception he feels faced with the decadence and threat of decomposition of the hellenic city of his times.

When society remains inert, when there is yet no class, lay or mass vector capable of promoting a radical social critique or radical action for the transformation of social reality, utopia becomes circumscribed to a few advanced, critical or revolutionary individuals, the likes of Prometheus, Thomas More, Campanella, Cabet, Babeuf, the utopian “socialists” Saint-Simon, Fourier, Owen, or the contemporaries Zamiatin, Orwell, etc.

Utopia can be either “optimistic” or “pessimistic” depending on the tendencies one projects into the future. But from the moment on when a mass “revolutionary subject” emerges, utopia expresses itself through this subject, especially in those moments of mass revolt, of “social revolution”. In such cases the most radical layers push the emerging revolution towards its fulfillment whereas the conservative layers try to circumscribe the revolution to the “historically possible”, which coincides with their own particular interests—material, political and cultural.

Utopia is the ideological vision of the most advanced

individuals and mass radical forces, the vision of the "base" as opposed to all its "conjunctural representations". Utopia identifies with the most radical realisation of social change, that which establishes a more "just", free, "developed", truly democratic society.

This tendency has been seen at work during the English Revolution in the XVIIth Century, the French Revolution in the XVIIIth Century and the Russian Revolution in the XXth Century. It has also been at work in all the great social upheavals in history. It was no accident that, in May '68 in France, one of the central and most mobilising slogans was "l'imagination au pouvoir", the social utopia's leit-motif.

In the secular history of utopia, the development of marxism in the XIXth Century constitutes a decisive turn. From one angle, Marx's marxism is the most daring utopia with its "socialist" and "communist" phases. Nonetheless, marxism constitutes a break with all previous forms of "utopian" socialism and all the "robinsonades" that had informed the visions of humanity's immature "prehistory".

Marx's marxism is a specific synthesis in which theoretical and "scientific" thought coexist with the ethical and esthetic inclinations towards the human's "absolute". All this is inscribed in the concrete historical process determined by the "law" corresponding to each phase of the permanent historical movement.

**"Utopia is the ideological vision of the most advanced individuals and mass radical forces."**



Marx considered he had discovered the "law" of capitalist society's economic movement. From this "scientific" theoretical standpoint, he would judge all other forms of socialism or "vulgar communism" which took no account of the concrete historical conditions, their tendencies and their contradictions, in other words, the specific law of their "functioning".

Of course, when we speak of "social laws", they should not be confused with the physical laws. We are here speaking of the tendencies that stem from an analysis of the fundamental conditions characterising each social system. One should never forget that, unlike physical objects, the social being is characterised by its neverending historical movement, its movement in time and the complexity of the influences acting on it. In the last analysis, the social being is the result of the humans taking, but also making, their own history.

The critique of social utopianism by Marx's marxism is far from being purely negative. As is the case for his critique of "anarchism", Marx emphasises the "positive" aspects of utopianism as found in the critique of bourgeois society and the quest for the individual's total liberation. Marxism has a dialectical relation to utopianism. Not only does it not totally reject utopianism's past, explains and justifies it, but it also includes it to its own perspectives. Unquestionably, there is an ethical disposition to the "absolute" to be found in marxism since its aim is not the cold material reality but society and social beings.

All the so-called "scientific materialist" conceptions are but hollow interpretations of marxism which do not take sufficient account of the specific nature of the social being—object of the marxian experimental theory. As a theory, it stems from social praxis and experience, feeds and enriches itself upon them and can be creatively and critically verified through social practice.

**“All the so-called 'scientific materialist' conceptions are but hollow interpretations of marxism...”**

The "utopian" dimension of marxism is found in its vision of "socialism" and "communism". First as regards "socialism", lower stage of "communism", it is necessary to recall that Marx in *Capital* effectively limited itself to a critical analysis of the fundamental characters of classical capitalist development and refrained from providing "recipes" for the future's cooking pans. In his *Critique of the Gotha Programme* in particular, Marx limited itself to generalities—of a fundamental interest nonetheless—regarding the transition from capitalism to socialism and the characteristics thereof.



Still a model for socialism?

Marx left it to the masses' social movement to determine—when the historical preconditions would be ripe—"socialism's" political, cultural and economic concrete content. For this reason, his method of social investigation fundamentally differs from "utopian socialism" as well as from anarchism which define and aim to build "ideal" and "perfect" societies.

Marx limits itself to the characterisation of "socialism" regime in which the "common ownership of the means of production" has replaced "private property". The ethical, esthetic and "absolute" aims of this regime is left to the superior "communist" phase. Even so, this latter phase would not be the last in humanity's historical evolution.

How does "socialism" concretely function politically, culturally and economically? This is no concern of Marx who considers that the conditions he knew—still immature for the transition—didn't allow him to conduct a serious "scientific" analysis of the question. Still, undeniably, for Marx, "socialism", as a phase preparing "communism", already contained an ethical and cultural dimension and thus could no way be simply limited to socio-economic conditions geared towards the material reproduction of a social regime that would prevent the full development of the individuals.

Rosa Luxemburg and Lenin in turn emphasised that the real content of "socialism" consists in "the mass of the work stopping to be a governed mass and starting to live and define for itself, of its own free will, economic and political life in totality" (Rosa). The point is "to ensure the well-being and free and total development of society's members" (Lenin). According to Marx, "socialism" is followed by "communism" and the suppression of classes, the state and, through the reduction of the necessary time devoted to social labour, the resulting augmentation of free time allows the individual's all-round development.

Is this mere "utopia" or the outcome of a tendency of social evolution, the result of the real social movement with its contradictions and their dynamics? Marx repeatedly explained



that his "communism" resulted from a theoretical critical analysis of capitalism which would take the following form: the regime will eventually force people to fight for the "communist solution". So the "communist utopia" appears, in the last analysis, to stem from critical theoretical thought applied to the social reality. This is helped, on the one hand by creative imagination and, on the other hand, by the masses' radical social activity. It is therefore neither a simple "vision", nor is it the result of some "mechanical law", but the outcome of a tendency at work in the present and activated by people forced to become conscious of the directions in which solution lay and to fight for them.

It is thus natural that social conservatism's attacks should concentrate particularly on the "utopianism" of Marx's marxism for his "utopianism" stems from three great wells: theoretical critical thought, creative imagination and radical social action. Conservatism is consequently faced with the task of opposing it with a "scientific" thought with claims to "objective truth" free of any compromise with esthetic, philosophical or ethical considerations. Unfortunately, the nature of social being does not allow such "positive", "cold" or "scientific" inquiries which are the hallmark of the "natural" or "positive" sciences.

Reaction against "utopia", especially that of Marx's marxism are growing today for a whole number of reasons. The main one is of course not that the so-called "scientific advances" which reinforces all the notions regarding the role of "chance" and "indetermination" in subjective intervention and the explanation of "objective reality". If all critical theoretical analysis of social reality must take into account scientific progress and adopt its methodological conclusions—in this respect the limitations encountered in their inquiries by XIXth Century theorists such as Darwin, Marx, Freud, find their explanation in the way they interpreted and were influenced by scientific progress—nothing justifies the idea that, today, Marx would have neglected a real scientific progress and refuse to adopt it to enrich its fundamentally "materialist" and "dialectical" conception of nature and society,

Using as a starting point the whole of his writings and the method he evolved, it is today possible for each "marxist" to effectively enrich with every new real scientific advance the experimental critical marxian theory and apply it to its object, social reality in its movement and its contradictions. In any case, this is the way in which we should use "marxism" today. It remains the main gnoseological instrument we have to demythify social reality and arrive to a deeper understanding of its economic, political and ideological manifestations with the aim of using it as a radical means of changing society. In any case, there is no force in the world that can stop living people from struggling for a better future in society.

All those that are trying to obliterate the human "utopian" disposition in the name of "cold", "objective" science are objectively the eternal proponents of social conservatism, the Epimetheuses of social statu-quo, characteristic of today's advanced capitalist countries.

**"...there is no force in the world that can stop living people struggling for a better future in society."**

These countries have for over ten years been plunged into an economic crisis that has reversed the vision of an international consumer's society with its ever growing levels of material wealth. This illusion had influenced the preceding decade's intelligentsia into refuting the "pessimistic" assumptions of marxist economic and social theory. This articulated itself to a growing disillusion with "existing socialism" in Eastern Europe seen as the practical outcome of marxism thus denounced as "a religion, a totalitarian ideology, rather than a scientific theory".

But the crisis is a lasting one and it invalidates bourgeois "economic science" of all shades. Moreover, it is combined with the development of new scientific discoveries and technological applications. To a marxist, this stems from capitalism's endogenous tendency towards generalised mechanisation and automation of the economy, in which fixed capital, capital's classical means of overcoming its crises, predominates.

Still, to the incurable "anti-marxist", this fact feeds their "utopia": the coming of a brave new world in which a mechanised and computerised economy ranging all the way to the provision of social services will ensure limited working hours and a level of material wealth resuming its neverending growth. What has not yet been made clear is in how long will we see an end to the international crisis and if this new Eden will be open to all or only to a few privileged countries or even, only the upper reaches of their newly developed dual society. This neo-capitalist "utopia" also seems glaringly unconcerned by the prospect of a nuclear conflict and the growing destruction of the environment.

**"The central aspect of this alternative 'utopia' is that of generalised self-management..."**

The central aspect of this alternative "utopia" is that of generalised self-management as fought for, in its most integral form to date, the Polish working class and society when they demand a "selfmanaged Republic". This idea is the same as the one that mobilised crowds in the May '68 Paris revolt and during the Prague spring.

Against this "utopia", an alternative is being developed—East and West—by the masses of advanced citizens who reject both the mechanised consumer's society and the unfreedom of the bureaucratic system and are trying—more or less consciously—to effectively increase their participation in all aspects of social life.

The success of the idea of self-management in the past 25 years—now an integral part of the programmes of a wide range of traditional Left organisations and trade unions as well as of the revolutionary Left—finds its explanation in deeper reasons. First among those is the rise in the masses' cultural level in the advanced countries and the ever more centralised nature of political—and other—power. There is a potentially explosive contradiction in such an evolution that should normally open the way for an in depth democratisation of social life. Yet it is the opposite that has happened in the capitalist regimes as well as in the bureaucratic states.

Still, it becomes increasingly clear that it is not only necessary, but also possible to submit social life to a growing control by society itself. The reason is that it is the only way to ensure the growth and the just distribution of the productivity of social labour on the basis of which there exists the possibility of a tremendous increase in leisure time which is the absolute material precondition to the allround development of the individual.

**“...it will be an integral revolution that goes much deeper than the 'class' revolution.”**

The fact that the idea of self-management has taken many different forms and expressed itself in many different ways—some of which deforming or altering it— or even that it has been presented as an utterly impractical “utopia” is not of decisive importance. Being the most radical transformation of society that would end not only economic exploitation but also the more general exploitation and alienation stemming from the hierarchical and authoritarian structure of society, it is easy to imagine how long the struggle will be and how violent and multiform the reaction. Indeed, it will be an integral revolution, that is to say a radical social change that would go deeper than the “class revolution” as understood by the “archeo-marxists”. It will be a revolution enriched, in addition to the abolition of economic exploitation, by the abolition of, for example, male domination in society. Moreover, such a revolution will take into account the ecological environment in which our social and economic life takes place, and it would aim at the foundation, right from the beginning, of an economic, political and cultural system tending towards the effective and rapid democratisation of social life placing the “total human being” at its centre.

This is the general direction social utopia is today taking. It feeds upon the new objective potentialities and the consciousness of the necessity for such a change is adopted by a high number of individuals. In this way, the framework for the “self-managed Republic” of tomorrow will come to life. We won't arrive “ex-nihilo” to an “ideal” society but we can start to develop from the beginning the economic, political and cultural bases on which the dynamics for an evolution in this general direction could arise.



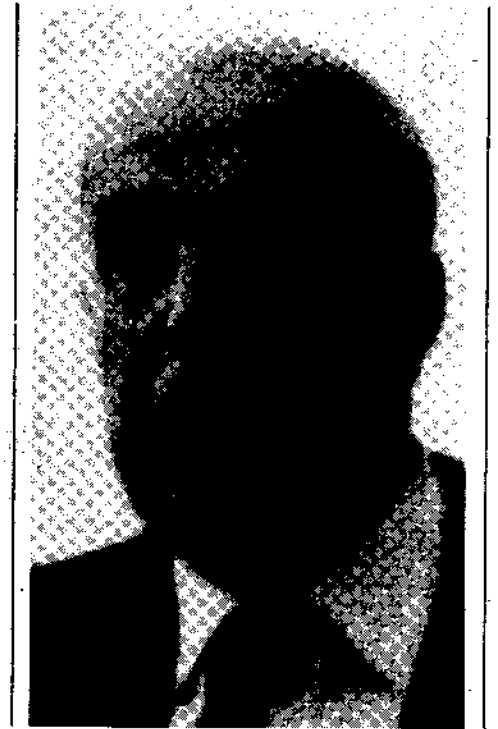
Demanding the Self-Managed republic

The problem for all the “neo-marxists”—East and West—are working on the theme of the “self-managed Republic” only content of the concept of “socialism” in our epoch know, funding their reflexions on all the past experiences have tended towards this “utopia”, how to refine more contents its political, economic and cultural content. For this reason are particularly interested by the lessons of May 68, the spring, the Polish experience, the new socio-political movement that was born out Solidarnosc and its demands for a “self-managed Republic”. They also closely study the Yugoslav experience as well as the efforts deployed towards the modernisation in the advanced bourgeois republics.

We are thus not talking about a simple reviving of “democracy” as the Russian masses tried to establish in 1917 of a complex advanced modern society in which the “revolutionary subject” is not only made up by the traditional industrial workers but also by broad new layers of workers and youth in its near-totality, by women and by the ethnic and racial minorities—by a whole society in search of the general “integral” movement. This tendency will be geared towards the search for an equilibrium between the participation of each individual in the totality of social life and society as a whole that would be satisfactory for society as well as for its individual members. This is a tendency towards the constant strengthening of democratic processes in society which could satisfy the aspirations and the conscience of each integral citizen at once free and in solidarity “with the other her/himselfes”.

What productive, self-administrating and cultural relations social relations between the individuals, between women and the men would characterise the “self-managed Republic”? This question cannot be fully answered without reference to “council democracy”. These relations must be the object of a detailed analysis grounding itself on an “experimental scientific base”, such as are found in the historical experiences of the concrete social movement of yesterday and today. With a little help from imagination.

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# Marx and Raptis

KEN TARBUCK discusses some of the issues raised by MICHEL RAPTIS's article "Redicovering Marx".

The article by Michel Raptis in the first issue of "Socialist Alternatives" raises a number of important issues. As always, Raptis is thought provoking and interesting in what he has to say. This, no doubt, accounts for his continuing troubles, not only with state authorities but also with the narrow orthodoxies of the "Trotskyist" movement, which had to reject him because it could not deal with his innovatory thinking. As someone who has not only "preached" but also practiced socialism over several decades, the contributions that Raptis makes should always be attended to closely.



Updating Marx.

I certainly agree with him when he voices his amazement at the ease with which certain writers judge and criticize Marx, often on the most cursory examination of his ideas. There have been quite a number of such people, who having been politically awakened by the events of May 1968 shot through the left movement like meteorites, glowing in the blaze of publicity from the bourgeois media, only to disappear to the far right within a few short years.

It became fashionable during the 1970's for academic Marxism to be taught at some universities. Although I participated in such teaching I remained sceptical of this method of imparting Marxism. To reduce Marxism to a subject to be taught in a class room is to run the danger of denaturing its essential methodology. Personally, I have always found that I have gained much more from Marx's writings when faced with particular problems, concrete problems to which I was seeking answers.

And, again, I agree with Raptis that one cannot look for precise answers to contemporary problems in Marx's writings. They are not a storehouse of instant answers to each and every problem. What Marx provides is a method and insight into avenues to be explored. But it is still amazing how many are prepared to use Marx, and other socialist classics, as a revolutionary cook-book. The mirror image of that approach is the legion who are prepared to dismiss Marx on the basis of digested half-truths, usually culled from scant real knowledge.



Crumbling dogmas

On the topic of discovering Marx, I recall what Isaac Deutscher wrote in "Reading Capital"; he pointed out that in his early youth he had attempted to read "Capital", more as an act of piety than from actual desire. Not surprisingly he found it difficult going. Yet a few years later, when he was breaking from the Stalinised Polish CP, he went back to "Capital" to assess it critically to see if the seeds of Stalinism were to be found in Marx. This time Deutscher found the reading so easy! No longer reading from duty but from necessity he found Marx clear and concise. Needless to say he was able to reject Stalinism on the basis of his reading of Marx.



## **“What Marx provides is a method and insights into avenues to be explored.”**

I am not, however, suggesting that everything that Marx wrote is easy reading, it is not, since often the ideas are complex; but that will not prevent those who are genuinely seeking clarification from harboring the ideas. But Marx cannot be divorced from the struggle for socialism. Marxism cannot be reduced to one of a number of academic subjects with which to gain pass credits. If such an approach is attempted Marxism is reduced to a form of ideology, which can be used as a weapon of oppression. As is so often the case in Soviet-type states.

Each new generation of Marxists will discover the elements of historical materialism for themselves, and in this sense it is a process of rediscovery. And, as Raptis points out, it is a life-long task.

II. Raptis raises the question of the prolonged nature of the present crisis of the capitalist economy. This crisis is evidence both of the changes in capitalism and its essential continuity. Capitalism has always been subject to cyclical crises, the chief characteristic of which has been the over-production of commodities alongside mass unemployment. Raptis points to the various elements of the crisis, over-production, falling rate of profit, increasing organic composition of capital, narrowing of markets, etc. But he fails to provide a proper evaluation of the key elements within the classical cyclical movements of the capitalist economy.

Now, whilst it is true that Marx did not live to articulate a rounded theory of crisis, merely providing suggested elements, he said sufficient for us to appreciate the role of the replacement of fixed capital within the cyclical pattern. And unless we direct our attention to this aspect we shall not be able to understand the prolonged nature of the present crisis.

Most certainly, we should acknowledge the greatly increased role of the state in capitalist economies, since say 1939 or 1945, but I assumed that any disputes on that question had been settled some years ago amongst non-dogmatic Marxists. In so far as state expenditure provides a species of in-built stabilisers it has had the effect of decreasing the amplitude of economic cycles since 1945, at least up to 1974. But, as many Marxists predicted, the intervention of the state on a large scale was only able to dampen down the cycles, not eliminate them completely, and in the end a massive slump would break out. Which it duly did.

Whilst it is true that in the USA, for example, the huge increase in arms expenditure since 1980 had counter-cyclical effects, we have to look for reasons other than arms spending here in Britain to understand the progress of the slump. Here, despite the increase in arms spending under the Thatcher government, the really significant increase in state expenditure has been in welfare payments due to the very large increase in unemployment. Thus despite all efforts to reduce state spending as a percentage of the GNP, it has actually risen since 1979. And it is this type of welfare payment which is one of the in-built stabilisers I mentioned above.

These welfare payments have had some quite different effects. Firstly by providing a level of support for the unemployed which - despite all the deficiencies - is superior to that given in the 1930's. This coupled with dispersing the unemployed physically via postal payments, staggered signing-on, etc. has prevented the emergence of a mass movement of the unemployed. Secondly it has injected large amounts of money into the economy, which was not the case in the 1930's, and thus helped to mitigate the loss of earnings by the unemployed as far as the market is concerned. Thirdly, it has helped those in employment to maintain some pressure for increased earnings, and this has been an element in the slow restructuring of capital during the present crisis.

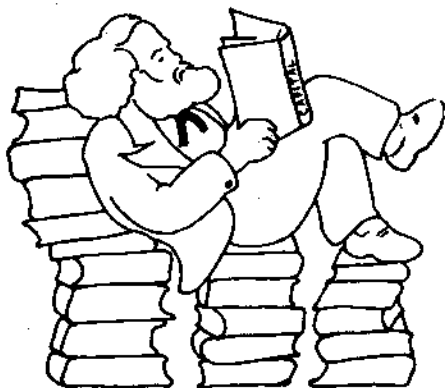
But, having said all that, it is insufficient to explain the long period of prosperity, the crisis and its length; and certainly does not provide an answer to its resolution.

If we wish to understand fully the mechanisms of capitalist equilibrium we have to go beyond those explanations which centre upon the role of state expenditure without in any way denying its importance.

I firmly believe that we have to investigate the role of all unproductive consumption and labour in the capitalist economies; this will lead us to an understanding of why the period of prosperity was so prolonged, why the crisis has dragged on for so long and the precise nature of the present long-wave of capitalist development.

Indeed it is by a reading of Marx on the conditions for equilibrium in his schemata of reproduction in Vol. II of "Capital" that it is possible to understand the role of unproductive consumption. Rosa Luxemburg advanced a critique of Marx on this aspect which has prompted numerous

Marx, well worth reading and re-reading.



contributions to a long discussion on accumulation theory, which still goes on. The nub of Luxemburg's is that: a) because of a lack of effective demand, or b) because of the rising organic composition of capital there will arise a surplus of consumer goods. Without getting bogged down in this long discussion, it is possible to say that as far as a) was concerned there was a lack of a concept periodisation as far as Luxemburg went, and as far as point b) is concerned Luxemburg's critique rests upon the highly restrictive assumption of a constant rate of unproductive consumption.

## **"...we have to investigate the role of all unproductive consumption and labour in the capitalist economies."**

Once such a highly restrictive assumption is dropped then the formal solution to the problem raised by Luxemburg is easily obtained. In other words if the rate of unproductive consumption is faster than the overall rate of growth, then the slack in demand created by the fall in the rate of increase of demand by productive workers can be taken up, and formal equilibrium becomes possible. This does not detract from the problems of realisation that Luxemburg pointed to, it merely suggests that she looked for answers in the wrong way in the wrong place.(1)

The point at issue here is that Marx's vision of the possibility of socialism is based upon the growth of productivity and hence upon the available surplus brought about by the era of modern machine-facture inaugurated by capitalism. In the present context we can say that the period of unprecedented growth and prosperity in the capitalist economies from 1945 to 1974 was partly based upon continual increases in unproductive consumption and larger sections of the labour force being engaged in unproductive tasks, and not all of the activity was directly related to the state. Therefore we have to understand the dialectical, contradictory nature of such unproductive consumption. Such consumption although always a call on surplus-value, is not necessarily at the expense of surplus-value. That is to say, if the unproductive consumption did not take place the surplus-value it comes from would not exist.

One of the debates among certain Marxists has been whether, for instance, arms production merely consumes surplus-value or does it actually produce surplus-value. My own answer is that arms production does not produce surplus-value, but - all else remaining the same - if it did not take place the surplus-value from which it is taken would not exist. In other words all such unproductive production, up to a certain point, and arms

production is a form of unproductive consumption, generates unproductive labour and hence surplus-value in other sectors of the economy.

When we come to the prolonged nature of the present crisis, its roots obviously lie in the prolonged nature of the previous period of prosperity, they form part of a long wave of development. The very fact that economic cycles were dampened down meant that large amounts of fixed capital were not devalued, as would have been the case had these cycles taken their normal course. Paradoxically at the same time monetary amortisation of capital was speeded up, leading to inflationary pressures. However, this meant that very large amounts of fixed capital not only had to be devalued in the present crisis, but much capital plant has been physically destroyed. Thus the restructuring of capital has been all the more radical because of the back-log and at the same time new micro-technology combined with robotics was waiting to come on stream. But, as pointed out earlier, the in-built stabilisers were at work in the period of recession. Such state intervention has therefore allowed the restructuring of capital, radical though it is, to be spread over a longer period than if market forces had been left to work in the classical manner.

### **“The whole international banking system is now like a house of cards...”**

The problem of inflation - endemic since 1939, only becoming acute in the 1970's - is also part and parcel of the increased role of unproductive consumption. Inflation is now a permanent feature of the world economy - including Soviet-type regimes, although there are state measures to repress it - it has no one, single cause. Inflation today arises from such varied factors as monopolisation, increased unproductive expenditure, speed up of depreciation, the greatly increased money and near money supply, the loss of a gold base for currencies. But this much can be said inflation has also been a contributory factor in the slow restructuring of capital.

The whole international banking system is now like a house of cards, and it cannot allow any one section of the international capitalist economy to be restructured via devaluing of capital too rapidly without endangering the whole flimsy edifice. It has had to juggle very adaptly to prevent a crash of much greater dimensions than that of 1929 taking place. Huge amounts of paper values, wholly realisable in the future, rest upon the maintenance of the greatly extended credit bubble. However, the possibility of such a crash is inherent in this huge amount of debt that helps keep the capitalist economy afloat.

The question of credit and debt brings me to the role of Soviet-type regimes. Firstly on their role. During the 1970's we saw a considerable increase in the indebtedness of the Soviet bloc to the capitalist world. This meant that at a time of increased crisis these countries helped to stabilise the capitalist system by offering much needed markets. China too has opened its doors, but to a much lesser extent. And Reagan, for all his anti-communist bluster, has not cut off grain supplies to the Soviet Union, so we can see that the ruling elites help to prop each other up in times of need.

As to the character of the Soviet-type regimes, I would certainly endorse most of what Raptis says about them. But I would go further. I do not see these states as having anything to do with socialism. They are exploitative systems ruled over by fairly stable castes that have most of the historical trappings of a class.



Whatever it is, it's not socialism.

They are not capitalist, state or otherwise, since many of the hallmarks of capitalism are missing. Nor are they hybrids in transition from capitalism to socialism; they have existed far too long for such an explanation to be accepted. I see them as new historical formations arising from - and being part of the reason for - the failure of socialism to triumph in the advanced capitalist countries.

Raptis in fact has hit upon a vital element in any discussion of Soviet-type regimes and the essential characteristics of socialist society when he raised the question of the division of labour and its relationship to class society. Ownership of the means of production by an exploiting class has historically been only one characteristic of the class divisions. And in capitalist society this ownership was brought to its highest level of development. It was precisely this individual ownership of the means of production



and the consequent separation of economic and state power which is one of the historical peculiarities of capitalism. However, the development of the joint-stock company has meant that the individual has largely become a corporate body today. Nevertheless, the formal separation of economic and state power remains.

But despite this historical peculiarity, we may still aver that one of the most important elements in exploitation is the division of labour, since it forms the basis for the development of property forms and state power. Division of labour thus pre-dates property forms in exploitative societies. Indeed it seems that the oppression of women is historically rooted in the division of labour.

But whatever the legal forms of property ownership, the essential determination of the distribution of income will reside with those who own the means of production and thus decide upon the division of labour. To try to assess the class nature of any society merely by its property forms is too narrow a yardstick. We have to determine the totality of relationships, and the distribution of real income to identify the inner modalities of any society. And the division of labour will help in this determination.

Thus those socialists who today praise the alleged merits of the market are arguing - indirectly - for the retention of the division of labour in the post-capitalist society. Wittingly or not they therefore leave the door open for the re-emergence of an exploitative strata, and this is why they must be resolutely opposed.

I would not deny that the abolition of the division of labour will occupy a whole historical epoch. But to deny the possibility of the abolition of the division of labour is to deny the possibility of socialism being realised. Moreover, when certain people deny the possibility of this abolition they often confuse the technical division of tasks within the productive process and the definition of people as commodity producers. That is to say they confuse the technical and social division of labour.

It was, therefore, not only correct but necessary that Raptis raised these questions in the manner that he did. The disappearance of wage labour and of the state are therefore dependent upon two essential conditions: a) the inauguration of an era of material abundance on a world scale, something capitalism has already prepared the basis for; and b) the abolition of the division of labour. And it is this second division that the whole historical development of capitalism runs counter to, but has provided the material basis for its realisation. As such, this question requires considerably more attention from socialists than is usually given.

Given the fact that Raptis has raised the question of the nature of Soviet-type regimes, I was somewhat surprised to find that he was silent on the problem of the nature of the epoch in which we live. The characterisation of Lenin of the imperialist epoch as being the highest, and final stage of capitalism is one that needs to be faced and dealt with, indicating the weaknesses and mistakes of Lenin on this question.

One of the weaknesses of the Marxist movement, or tradition, has been that it has been the prisoner of Lenin's theory of imperialism. As Raptis knows to his cost this has been at the root of many post-war disputes, but many of the participants have failed to face up to this question.

It is high time to be done with the Leninist theory of imperialism and all that it implies. We have entered a new era of capitalism, one that began after 1945. It is necessary to assemble all the evidence which is all around us and face up to the problems posed for socialists.

Far from capitalism collapsing with the loss of the colonies, it has had a period of unprecedented growth. Far from the forces of production being atrophied they have grown enormously. Far from being unable to solve the agricultural problem, capitalism has produced surpluses of food on a world scale.

## **"It is high time to be done with the Leninist theory of imperialism and all that it implies."**

Now we stand on the threshold of another long-wave of economic development. If micro-computers and robotics are introduced on the scale of, say, the electric motor, then we shall see the start of a new long wave of growth for capitalism which will transform the previously underdeveloped areas and perhaps leave some of the previously advanced centres to decay. Such questions become ever more urgent for socialists to face up to and assess the consequences for the advance to socialism.

Let me conclude by saying that I was very pleased to see Raptis directing his readers to Bukharin's "Historical Materialism". Despite the fact that it was written over sixty years ago, the book remains the clearest exposition of the Marxist method that is available. Notwithstanding the abuse that has been heaped on the work from quite diverse and ill-informed critics amongst whom was Lenin, it stands head and shoulders above previous and subsequent attempts at exposition. Bukharin's theory of equilibrium provides a coherent account of the dynamics of social breakdown and stability, something all socialists must understand if they are to untangle the present epoch in which we live. ■





# China: Tipping the Nuclear

B a l a n c e .

**KEN COATES** reviews **ROY MEDVEDEV's** latest book on China and looks at the making of a superpower..

Some of us have been waiting for Roy Medvedev's new book on **China and the Superpowers** with great impatience ever since it was first announced. Medvedev is not only a most distinguished historian of the Soviet Union, and an authoritative analyst of Stalinism: he is also a notable student of China, who began his post-graduate studies with a thesis on those characteristics of the Chinese Revolution which marked it off from the Soviet experience. As always in this book which has at last appeared, Medvedev's is a sound and moderate voice, and there are many of us who will agree with his conclusion that a Sino-Soviet detente is entirely desirable, that it is no less important to maintain and improve relations between both powers and the United States, so that we should welcome the

normalisation of relations between the richest country, the most populated country and the largest country.

Medvedev has predictably harsh words for Mao Tse Tung, even though he avoids the temptation to draw too close a parallel between the Chinese leader and Joseph Stalin. Mao's influence was surely on a profoundly deeper level than that of the Soviet *vozd*: the creation of a united and modern China out of a dog-fight of competing and atavistic warlords and regional interests is an achievement of Titans. Beyond doubt Mao was first among these.

None the less, Medvedev will find many Chinese supporters for his criticism of the later policies of the Chairman. In general it is quite clear that Medvedev supports the present leadership of the Chinese Communist Party as rational, pragmatic and forward-looking. He welcomes their new economic policy, and is optimistic about its capacity to avoid the pitfalls which affected the earlier Soviet attempt at such modes of development.

There is, in short, a great deal of meat in this sandwich, and as usual it has been prepared with consistent attention to detail. None the less, in one crucial respect, I find it wanting.



China's new tune...



In terms of international relationships this book is Hamlet without the prince. It is not possible to discuss the interaction of foreign policies between these three great powers without centering on their nuclear interactions. While Medvedev recurrently mentions these or those responses, he does not focus on the cumulative story, which, it seems to me, is absolutely necessary if we are to make sense of what otherwise seem bizarre ideological confrontations.

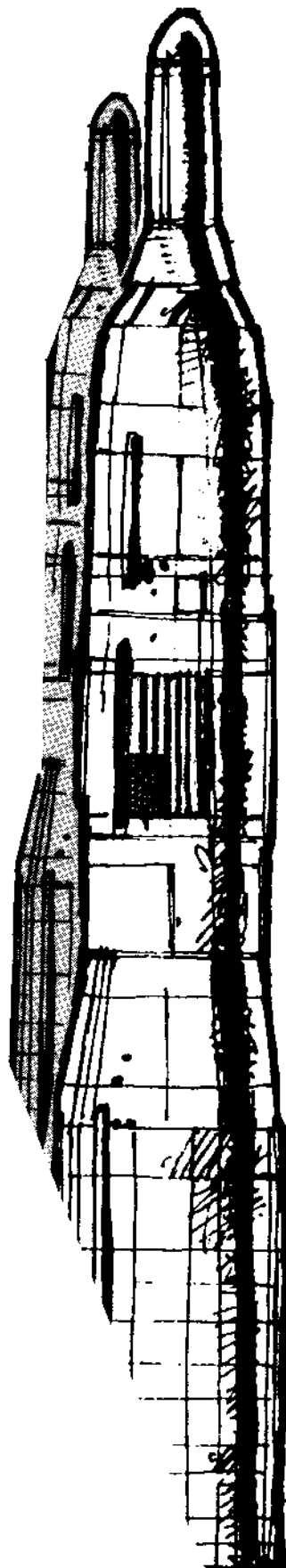
There are two elements which must be borne in mind throughout this story. First, China is the most threatened of all nations, having received more direct promises of nuclear bombardment than any other state. She has been repeatedly menaced by the United States, and has also received specific threats from the Soviet Union. Of all the warning messages ever addressed by nuclear states to their adversaries, the majority have been delivered to China. Secondly, whatever may be the apparent ideological response to all this pressure, the Chinese have maintained the most steadfast commitment to rational responses in the field of actual nuclear preparations. There has in this been considerable continuity between different Chinese Governments, which on other matters have conducted radically divergent policies. Medvedev

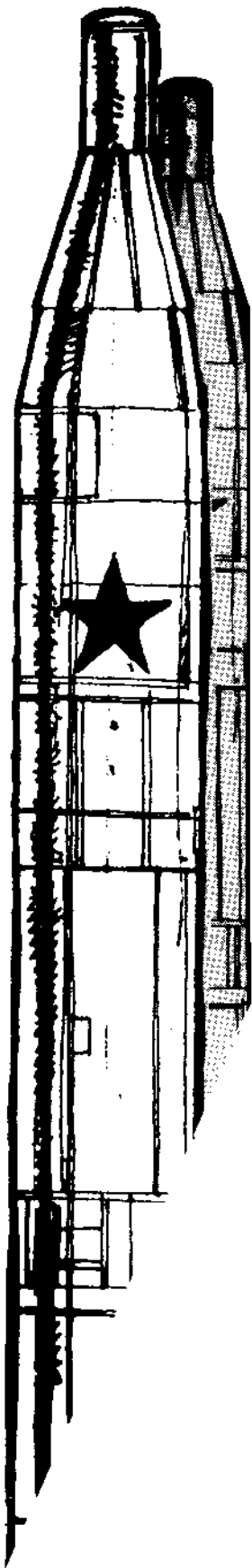


traces part of this development with some bewilderment, because he does not detect a similar flexibility in the field of foreign policy to that which is perfectly obvious in domestic and economic responses. But the context of present Chinese foreign policy seems to me to make very clear sense if we view it in the light of Chinese experience of nuclear weaponry.

Immediately after the Chinese communist forces occupied the whole country, they were faced with the outbreak of war in Korea. At one point, Medvedev tells us "...it is hard to say whether Stalin or Mao had been the prime initiator of the action". Of course, we do not have a 30-year rule which enables us to comb the Soviet or Chinese archives, but even the relatively relaxed American rules have not yet allowed us to pronounce the last word on the United States's involvement in the conflict. I am far from convinced that this war was actually stewed up in either Moscow or Peking; but this argument is not essential to this particular discussion. What is absolutely clear is that Chinese intervention became inevitable when American and allied troops probed north to the border at the Yalu river. Amid a belicose and hysterical discussion on the possibility of "rolling back communism", the United States was reaching the paroxysm of the McCarthy years. On the 30th November 1950, President Truman called a press conference to announce that he was considering a nuclear bombardment of China. As he subsequently said in his memoirs: "*In order to compel the Chinese Communists to accede to an armistice, it was obvious that if we were to go over to a major offensive the war would have to be expanded outside of Korea—with strikes against the supporting Chinese coast and similar measures ... Finally, to keep the attack from becoming overtly costly, it was clear that we would have to use atomic weapons...we dropped the word discreetly, of our intention.*"

President Truman got into trouble with his allies over this threat, and Medvedev does discuss General McArthur's later attempt to revive it, although these failed for similar reasons. Europeans were extremely cautious about provoking another war, which would have been lethal for them even if the "West" had "won" it. But none of this was to prevent President Eisenhower about the





events that led up finally to the truce in Korea, I asked him what it was that brought the Communists in to line. "Danger of an atomic war", he said without hesitation. "We told them we could not hold a limited war any longer if the Communists welched on a treaty of truce. They didn't want a full scale war or an atomic attack."

United States threats against China did not stop with the Korean truce, however. The continuing conflict between China and Taiwan brought more explicit threats in August 1954, on the question of the Tachen Islands. In 1955 and again in 1958, there were episodes which Medvedev discusses, concerning the Islands of Quemoy and Matsu. Medvedev doesn't, however, report the causes of these crises, which arose from the continued molestation of Chinese shipping, and hit and run raids on the mainland, by the forces of Chiang Kai Shek. In none of these instances of nuclear confrontation are we speaking about generalised, non-specific threats, such as conspicuous deployments or demonstrative manoeuvres. Each of them involved direct menace, and sometimes at a very high level. In the end, President Eisenhower sent the 7th Fleet to the Taiwan Strait, and announced that the US airforce had, in readiness for any eventuality, been equipped with nuclear missiles, during the Quemoy crisis. This particular Eisenhower mobilization cost a billion dollars. In the outcome there was no nuclear attack on China; but the Chinese were still unable to resume their rightful control over their own territorial waters.

The American historian, Stephen Ambrose, has summarised the overall policy of the Eisenhower administration in graphic term: "*Since it was almost his only weapon, Dulles had to flash a nuclear weapon whenever he wanted to threaten the use of force. To make the threat believable, the United States developed smaller nuclear weapons that could be used tactically on the battlefield. Dulles then attempted to convince the world that the United States would not hesitate to use them.*"

It was in this steamy period that was developed the doctrine of 'massive retaliation'.

Eisenhower himself was put on the record as saying of atomic weapons, "*I see no reason why they should not be used just exactly as you would use a bullet or anything else*". His allies remained unpersuaded. When attempts were made to issue the besieged French forces at Dien Bien Phu with tactical nukes, they were rejected, and the French surrendered instead. All this traumatic history became sloganised in a word which is indelibly written on our memory of Dulles: "brinkmanship". America had gone to the brink in achieving the Korean settlement. It wished to return there at Dien Bien Phu in 1954. It had encouraged Chiang Kai Shek to bomb mainland China in January 1953, and he continued to do so for two years, until the Chinese acquired the capacity to respond against Quemoy and Matsu. So in 1955, America went once again to the brink, and very seriously considered a nuclear attack on the Chinese mainland. "*At no other time in the cold war*" reports Ambrose, "*did the United States come so close to unleashing a preventative war*". When Eisenhower pulled Dulles back, it was, he said on 28th April 1955, because an exchange of letters with his war colleague, Marshal Zhukov, led him to believe that the Russians might restrain their allies.

If this assumption was justified, it was thus due to the helpful influence of the Soviet military capacity that tension was eased. Zhukov could only "persuade" the Chinese by putting in doubt the likelihood of Soviet reprisals in the event of any attack on them.

Later Dulles proposed a pincer movement in the same direction, to Molotov, of all people. Medvedev sees Molotov as an ally of Chinese obduracy: but Dulles secured an agreement with his Soviet opposite number, that the Americans would restrain Chiang Kai Shek if the Soviets bore down on Mao. On this basis the first US-Soviet summit became possible.

No-one will forget that during all this time China was in a close formal alliance with the Soviet Union, and the Soviet Union was a nuclear power, albeit a second-rate one. What, then, we must ask was the value of the Soviet "nuclear umbrella"?

The explanation of this question marks out the evolution of Chinese foreign policy and easily accounts for otherwise inexplicable responses. The Soviet Union lacks a Kissinger figure, who can comment intelligently, but in a fairly freeranging way, on strategic policies. Had there been such a person, understanding of Soviet policy might have been made much easier. Here, for instance, is what Kissinger wrote in 1957.

“Given the power of modern weapons, a nation that relies on all-out war imposes a fearful psychological handicap on itself.... As the power of modern weapons grows, the threat of all-out war loses its credibility and therefore its political effectiveness. Our capacity for massive retaliation did not avert the Korean war, the loss of Northern IndoChina, the Soviet-Egyptian arms deal, or the Suez crisis. Moreover, whatever the credibility of our threat of all-out war, it is clear that all-out thermonuclear war does not represent a strategic option for our allies. Thus, a psychological gap is created by the conviction of our allies that they have nothing to gain from massive retaliation and by the belief of the Soviet leaders that they have nothing to fear from our threat of it.”

Does this not perfectly describe the dilemma confronting the Soviet Government in its relations with China? And were the Chinese wrong to doubt that a Soviet Government might risk the certain annihilation of the USSR by retaliating against any American nuclear strike on Chinese cities? An alliance which could withstand this kind of pressure would be a suicide pact.



After the death of Stalin, there was some uncertainty about the question of nuclear policy towards China. On October 15th 1957, a secret agreement was reached by which the Russians undertook to provide the Chinese with “a sample of an atomic bomb and technical data concerning its manufacture”. But after the later Quemoy crisis, there were second thoughts about this issue, because the Soviet Government believed and Medvedev tends to think they were right that the Chinese were provoking an incident for reasons of their own. It is clear that Chiang Kai Shek was an adept provocateur and had a permanent interest in maintaining the highest level of confrontation between People’s China and his American backers. Therefore, Moscow cut off all direct nuclear assistance to Peking. Krushchev was attempting to promote the idea of an Asian nuclear-free zone in his discussions with the Americans, even though the Chinese were not parties to this proposal.

The Chinese thenceforth entered on a policy of self-reliance, and, exploded their own atomic bomb in October 1964.

Within the short space of three years they had progressed to the point where they were able to detonate a thermonuclear explosion on the 17th June 1967. However the Soviet “deterrent” lagged far behind American destructive capacity during the period when Chinese and Soviet interests were differentiating themselves over the issue of nuclear defence. It is transparently obvious that after the Chinese bomb tests, China lagged even further behind the Russians in effective military ability. There was no conceivable aggressive potential in the Chinese nuclear capacity then, or for that matter, even now, years later.

The Soviet Union had begun a serious peace offensive during the Presidency of Eisenhower, and this accelerated when Kennedy was elected. Although Kennedy was apparently very interested in China, the policy of the new democratic administration still hinged on the recognition of Chiang Kai Shek as the legitimate ruler of all China. The Americans were deeply scared by the possibility that the Chinese might develop their own nuclear weapons, and there is little doubt that this was a major influence in persuading them to move towards a test ban treaty with the Russians.

The Sino-Soviet border conflict in 1968 can be reported as a simple outbreak of common madness, concerning largely deserted territories which are of no practical use to anyone. Yet it followed very precisely on the endorsement by Mr. Brezhnev of a doctrine of “limited sovereignty” justifying the invasion of Czechoslovakia on August 21st 1968. This invasion and the promulgation of the “Brezhnev doctrine” were both severe threats to China. In November 1968, Mr. Brezhnev spoke to the Congress of the Polish United Workers’ Party. He reaffirmed “strict respect for the sovereignty of all countries” but insisted that it was necessary to take military



action to protect the sovereignty of a socialist country if socialism were placed in jeopardy by either external or internal hostile actions.

The United States continued throughout the Czechoslovak crisis to insist upon its commitment to detente, and Dean Rusk made a public statement denying American involvement in that country, and insisting that no action was contemplated in defence of Mr. Dubcek's Government. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the Americans were affording tacit recognition to the Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe.

Quite clearly these events were deeply disturbing for the Chinese leaders. It was perfectly evident to everyone in Peking that a doctrine of limited sovereignty must inevitably threaten China. Whoever was responsible for whichever or whatever movements to and fro along the frontier, this was the fundamental cause of conflict. And the result was the precise utterance of a Soviet nuclear threat against the Chinese.

On September 16th 1969, the London Evening News published an article by Victor Louis warning that the Soviet Union might indeed initiate a surgical strike against Chinese nuclear installations. Anti-Maoist forces, said Louis, were grouping their forces in China, and could "produce a leader who would ask other socialist countries for 'fraternal help'". The size of China was no reason for with-holding the benefits of the Brezhnev doctrine from the Chinese people, he added. Only fear of the American response provided an impediment to any such action. However the Soviets had, in turn, alerted the Americans to the possibility of an audacious re-alignment of forces. Thus it was that, in 1971, Henry Kissinger found himself in Peking, with results that everyone knows.

In 1985 there was a confusing disagreement between ex-President Nixon and Henry Kissinger on the matter of Soviet nuclear threats against China. The United States told Moscow, Nixon said, in an interview for Time Magazine, that it "would not tolerate" a move to destroy Chinese nuclear capability. It was

one of the four times he had considered launching nuclear weapons. In a statement in the Washington Post (August 11th 1985), Kissinger stated his difference of interpretation: "*With respects to China, it was my view and it was also surely President Nixon's view, that we did not wish the Soviets to destroy China. We believed that destroying China might have the same impact on the global equilibrium as destroying Europe. We would truly have sought to resist a Soviet attack on China. But we never carried it to point of nuclear planning*".

Kissinger did activate the machinery for contingency planning to work out what options the Americans might have in the event of a Sino-Soviet war. "*Collusion against China was to be the real Soviet price for a summit. It surfaced again the best spy novel tradition. Semenov encountered Smith at the Vienna opera and handed him an unsigned paper outlining the Soviet notion of an accidental-war agreement. If a nuclear "provocation" were being "prepared" by a third country, each country was to inform the other. If a provocative act took place, each party would be obliged to take retaliatory action against the offending country... we were in fact being asked to give the U.S.S.R. a free hand against China; it was a blatant embodiment of condominium.*"

From the earliest days of the border clash, Nixon had taken the view that "*We can't allow China to be smashed*".

This is a sketchy account of an event of fundamental importance. The doctrines of nuclear deterrence arose in a bi-polar world and in these traumatic events bi-polarism came to an end. The doctrines could no longer maintain their old relevance. If China's relationship with her erstwhile Soviet ally could had replicated many of the nuclear uncertainties of the Euro-American relationship, China's vastly more exposed position led to dramatic results. None the less, Europeans should not be complacent. There are strong grounds for considering this history closely, since it may be a little more relevant to European development in the future.

If the model of nuclear deterrence was damaged in this evolution, the model of

class struggle between two opposing camps was damaged even more. The collapse of solidarity between Communist Parties could not be more total than it was in this case, in which one such party was seeking the acquiescence of a major imperial power, to enable it to launch a nuclear attack against other Communists.

Mao Tse Tung and the Chinese Communist Party attracted no small reproaches from left-wing critics in the West during these years. Some even compared the meeting between Mao and Nixon with the Nazi-Soviet pact of 1939. The comparison seems absurd. The awful weight of nuclear menace made this seismic realignment necessary, and annulled "*proletarian internationalism*" for an entire generation.

Some of the events which are all too briefly described above do figure in Roy Medvedev's account, although they do not receive the centrality there which I think they must be given. None the less, the central conclusion of Medvedev's work is that there must be a detente between China and the USSR, and that both countries have everything to gain from closer co-operation. Medvedev is right to say that the world needs this detente, no less than it needs rapprochement between East and West. His book aims to undo some of the immense damage inflicted on China and the world by a previous generation of Soviet leaders. I wish it could be read freely throughout the Soviet Union, and I hope that it will be studied with the care it demands, also in China. ■



# reviews

"Where's the Justice?"

Tony GIFFORD (Penguin  
£2,95)



In the space of 120 pages, Lord Gifford, QC., ambitiously attempts to outline, criticise, and propose reformation of much of the administrative machinery of the English legal system.

The brevity and lack of depth of the book make these proposals no less realistic; the straightforward readable text avoids the usual pompous, self-congratulatory style of legal writers: commonsense ideas are not lost in a flurry of footnotes and sub-paragraphs. No prior knowledge/ 'O' level Latin is required. Those with interests to protect continue to shroud the law, a dark, impenetrable force, hieroglyphics which can only be decoded after years of intensive study (or on crossing their palms with silver). This is unnecessary and untrue. So where is the justice?

In our present system, it may arise by chance, but is certainly not guaranteed. Those that judge us are not appointed by the public that they serve, but rather by methods which have arisen by historical accident, perpetuation of the status quo, or some kind of old-boy network.

Judges are appointed by the Lord Chancellor, occasionally on the recommendation of the Prime Minister, and largely from the ranks of barristers who have kept their noses clean (will

Lord Gifford make the grade? Not through Lord Hailsham he won't...). Barristers are naturally from the upper sections of the social strata due to the necessity of private funds to pay for the training.

Magistrates are selected by Advisory Committees, bodies whose membership is undisclosed. Subject to the acceptance of the recommendation by the Lord Chancellor, the unknown body installs their choice; and because like attracts, we have perpetual motion (of?) white middle-class males, a phrase now so well known that it is an unfortunate cliché of our times.

Wipe this out, Gifford pleads; the new ideal is a Minister for Justice, along the lines of the ministries for our other national services; they are run on the basis of ministerial responsibility and accountability, so why pretend that the law has an inbuilt moral conscience—it has nothing of the sort.

Aside from the appointment of the judiciary, the Ministry would be responsible for the legal aid service, and the administration and funding of the law centres (currently in jeopardy owing to uncertainty as to who actually puts up the cash). Scrutinization by a select committee would provide the necessary safeguard.

Defunct traditions (wigs, gowns, ritualistic masonic-type dinners at the Inns of Court) which serve no purpose other than alienating the profession from the real issues involved, should be cast aside, the monopoly of the bar broken so that solicitors may appear before all the courts (avoiding the double charge payable due to this anomalous rule), and our judiciary given training and education of a comprehensive nature to enable them to understand their responsibilities before throwing their sentences arbitrarily.

Lord Gifford brings in proposals for supervision of the police, improvement of the fabric and organization of the courts' buildings and procedure, incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights onto a written constitution (a large issue for half a chapter in a small book), and changes in the barrister and solicitor professions.

Some good ideas, then. The main strength of the book is its simple

approach, and concrete proposals (realisable in the lifespan of a five year government, if willing)—this is no propaganda pamphlet to gather dust in the Ivory Towers of Academia.

The defects that exist in the system have existed for years and have not brought it to its knees yet, and unfortunately most of our legal profession are quite comfortable with them. But until action is taken to radically change the glaringly obvious faults, a lot of people will be wondering, where's the justice?  
JOHN MURRAY ■

"Shootdown"

R.W. JOHNSON (Chatto  
& Windus £10,95)

On the 31st August 1983, the Korean Airliner KAL 007 was shot down by the Soviet Union airforce. 269 people died, many of them children. Reagan and his cronies used the event expertly. The "disarmament" talks slowed down, and the arms race sped on. Few questioned the propaganda version of what occurred. One who did was R.W. Johnson, whose new book, "Shootdown" (Chatto and Windus \$10.95) has been effectively ignored (and, it seems, suppressed) by the British Press and establishment. Johnson's thesis is that the Korean "disaster" was set up by the U.S. for spying purposes. He estimates the chances of such a plane being so far off course in such an area as billions to one. The plane's wierd flight-path meant that every defence radar system over an area of 7,000 square miles was switched on. Luckily for the U.S. their satellite happened to pass overhead at exactly the right time to pick up this information bonanza! The U.S. plan couldn't lose. If the Soviets shot the plane down they had the information and the propaganda victory—if not, they still had the data—and could try it again sometime. All this makes Watergate look like a tea-party. Every top U.S. official is implicated. In America itself, the victims' relatives (over a 1000 of them) are planning a lawsuit against the U.S. Government. If this affair ever splits wide open, Johnson's book will have been vital. It should be read by everyone.  
JOHN FOOT ■

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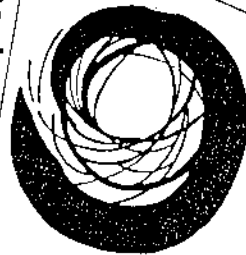
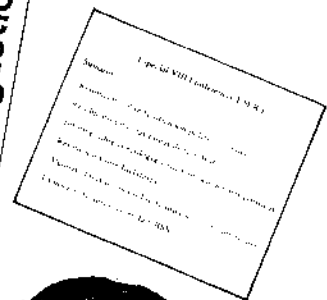


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