

Labour & Trade Union Review

May - June 1990

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Thatcher's Children

- a look at why the riot
started

Americanized Labour?

Artists & Artisans

Sex & Violence

plus

Notes on the News
Letters
National Museum of
Labour History

*"There is no such
thing as society"*
Margaret Thatcher



Trafalgar Square, 31st March 1990

Thatcher's Children

The reaction of Thatcher and her cabinet to the violence at anti-Poll Tax demonstrations has been predictable. They sound like Secretaries of State for Northern Ireland have sounded for the last 20 years, looking for ever more condemnatory words and getting more and more hollow. They begin to sound like broken records, and are quite as annoying.

The same is happening about the anti-poll tax violence. And the Labour front bench has joined the chorus. After the Trafalgar Square riot it was like an auction in humbug between Waddington and Hattersley with the latter excelling himself in calling for exemplary sentences. Both he and Kinnock seem to have forgotten that there is cause and effect in social behaviour.

The cause of the riots is Thatcher's poll tax. That in turn is the product of her philosophy, which she summed up last year as meaning that there is no such thing as society.

That philosophy by a Prime Minister is a recipe and a provocation for riots. She is morally culpable for such riots and that is what the Labour front bench should be telling her in no uncertain terms. Instead they are crawling to appear well behaved and have allowed her to be the judge and jury of what constitutes good behaviour. The Parliamentary discussion on Trafalgar Square was a disgrace for Labour. The

same organisers held a totally peaceful march in Glasgow on the same day. They asked for the London march to be allowed to end in Hyde Park, and were refused. Hattersley did not know this. It is difficult to imagine that a shadow Home Secretary would have to be told this by his own back benchers in Parliament, but that is what happened.

Why was the march not allowed to end in Hyde Park? Why was there an attempt to clear everyone out of Trafalgar Square, just because a few anarchists sat down in front of Downing Street? These questions needed asking. The government should have been asked them again and again. But Hattersley was too cowed to do so.

The march in Glasgow was peaceful because there is no political vacuum in Scotland. Opposition to Thatcherism is comprehensive and varied. The same cannot be said of the England at the moment. There is a growing political and moral vacuum caused by Labour's inability to come to terms with Thatcherism. That vacuum is being filled by anarchy.

It needs to be pointed out that Thatcher has a lot in common with the anarchists - both see the state as a perversity. Anarchists at least accept society and enjoy it. Their error is to see the state as a distortion in the development of society - and anarchism tends to flourish in societies where the state is making a mess of regulating

society's development.

Thatcher is at war with society. She regards it as one undifferentiated mass, a collection of atoms - a mob, in fact. And since society is seen as an undifferentiated mass, it is to be taxed and treated accordingly. The only acceptable bonds are those of greed, money and the market.



Rioters attack a Porsche

Americanizing Labour?

Twenty years ago it was advantageous as well as exciting to be socialist. Trade Unions were the salt of the socialist earth. There was a student movement of great vitality. To do well in student radicalism was to step onto a career escalator. Jack Straw and Charles Clarke became household names while still students.

The Trade Union Leader was held in awe in those times. The Shop Steward was a symbol of raw power and was a prized object in the sexual merry-go-round. And in the relations between the student socialists and the trade union movement it was a case of heroes and hero-worshippers.

Then came the disillusionment,

precipitated by the most glorious of all the hero-figures selected for worship by the student statesmen - Arthur Scargill. In Scargill the working class was etherealised. Scargill was the Leninist Idea personified for those student radicals who knew their Lenin and who were aware of the all-too-human tendency of many working-class socialists to be 'economist'.

In Scargill the student radicals, who were now moving up through the hierarchy of the Labour Party, had a trade union leader after their heart's desire. But this ideologically perfect trade union leader proved to be a perfect foil for Thatcher. He gave her a new lease of life at the point when her social usefulness

was exhausted.

Thatcher's third term broke the heart of student socialism in the Labour Party. It did so at the moment when those who had been student socialists were assuming command in the Party. Ideology collapsed. There was no experience behind the ideology which might have enabled them to reassess the situation on a socialist basis. Their experience was limited to manipulation in the artificial world of student politics. The fall of Scargill brought about vacuums in the heads of the disillusioned worshippers. And, in the world of the late 20th century, ideological vacuums tend to be filled with American ideology.

The move to sever the organic links

For Thatcher, public life and public service is by its very nature parasitical. The public purse is there to be looted by 'entrepreneurial' individuals. Nothing else can describe the privatisation of water, electricity and other public utilities. MacMillan put it more diplomatically when he said it was selling off the family silver. But it is looting - equivalent to unlocking the doors and letting anyone who likes walk off with the family silver. A Prime Minister who has organised and encouraged such multi-million pound looting has no moral grounds for condemning the small-scale looting that some of the rioters engaged in.

In a Brecht play, one of the characters says 'why rob a bank when you can take it over?' Why loot a few shops, when you can loot large numbers of privatized utilities?

Thatcherism attempts to reduce society down to its base and basic elements. And because that is such a horrible prospect, people will fight it. People do not want the simplicity of the jungle. They want the complexity and variety of society - the hallmarks of civilization. And they want a government that caters for that.

In England, of all places in the world, government is conditional on relating to the diversity of society. The English are very law abiding - as long as they agree with the law. In the same way they love their monarchy - that is why they have bumped off more monarchs than any other people. Maybe we aint seen nothing yet!



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between the trade union movement and the Labour Party is a move to Americanize the political life of Britain.

It is a move to realise the radical individualist vision of Jeremy Bentham, which British society rejected a hundred and fifty years ago.

It is a move in accordance with the discovery twenty-five years ago, by that monstrous organ of student socialism, *The New Left Review*, that the political life of Britain was distorted by the fact that there had never been a bourgeois revolution here.

Jeremy Bentham was the least human of all British radicals. No other social reformer, bar Lenin, had as much ice in his heart as Bentham. But whereas Lenin's ideal was of a society organised as an immense factory, Bentham's ideal was of a society consisting of self-sufficient, atomised individuals, each one

absorbed in calculation of his self interest.

The Benthamites of the early 19th century, with Francis Place at their head, contributed to social progress by their campaign against the Combination Acts. The repeal of those Acts enabled trade unions to develop freely. *But that was not the object of the Benthamites.* They believed that workers only tried to form trade unions because there was a law against them. The existence of those laws caused the workers to think that trade unions were advantageous to them. When the Combination Acts were repealed, workers would quickly discover that trade unions were worthless. Each individual would then start tending to his own personal interest as a rational economic man.

According to Benthamite calculations, a repeal of the Combination Acts plus an extension of the franchise would result in

a society of atomised and self-sufficient egoists. They believed that collective bodies in society would wither away after the 1832 Reform. But it was Benthamism that withered away. And it withered largely due to the influence of the great Tory humanists, like Wordsworth, Coleridge and Carlyle, and Tory political bosses intent on getting revenge on the factory owners who had supported electoral reform, by themselves supporting social reform.

Benthamism failed in Britain, but it flowered in America. America is capitalism systematically worked out in the social sphere. America lives in 'enterprise culture'. Its principle is egoism in a framework of law. And, in order that the law should be adequate as a framework, it too operates on the principles of enterprise.

There are no functional social classes in America. There are only rich and

poor. Vigorous elements among the poor bend their energies towards making themselves rich, and the rich are always on the go to prevent themselves from becoming poor.

In America, the working class is an economic abstraction. In Britain the working class is a social fact. Successive waves of European immigrants take the idea of a socialist party to America, but the social structure of America is rejective of class parties. Class parties follow naturally from the social structure of Britain. And the trade unions are of the essence of the working class as a social fact.

When the New Left Review said that British society was distorted by the absence of a bourgeois revolution what it meant was that the social life of Britain was not an atomised reflection of market competition. When Tribune, having rejected the Bullock proposals for formalising the class structure of industry by union representation on the boards of directors, went on to declare itself hostile to 'the corporate state', the effective political meaning was that it wanted Britain to be Americanized, or Benthamized.

It would be charitable to suppose that New Left Review and Tribune made use of their grand theatrical phrases without knowing what they meant. But in any case, their activity in the late 1970s fuelled the development of Thatcherism. And Mrs Thatcher has made a valiant attempt during the past eleven years to dissolve the 'corporate state' and to make good the absence of a bourgeois revolution. (Her Poll Tax might be regarded as the ultimate measure of bourgeois egalitarianism, according to a strict equality to every individual as an atom in the market.)

It is now clear that the Thatcherite revolution has failed. British society has not ceased to exist in the form of great collective bodies.

Fay Weldon, in a recent television discussion, expressed apprehension about the rise of an 'under class'. Thatcherism has had sufficient influence to make it a genuine fear. If Britain is not stabilised through the operation of class politics and class culture, there will inevitably be an extension of a chaotic 'under class' - what in those distant times of the 1970s we all knew theoretically as the 'lumpenproletariat'.

The Labour Party must be preserved as an organic party of the working class - a party with trade union foundations.

Notes on the News

by Madawc Williams

Lithuania - carefully trodden on

Back in L&TUR No.9, I said that the small nations of the USSR had very little chance of becoming nation-states again. Not because of any of any reasons of abstract justice or morality, but because *"the Great Russians dominate the existing set-up, and would probably start a nuclear war before they would agree to let go of the non-Russian territories."*

Since then, the Russian domination of Eastern Europe has collapsed. It collapsed after Gorbachev made it clear that Moscow no longer supported the hard-liners then in power. It collapsed with a thoroughness that must scare any Great-Russian politician looking at the possibilities of a break-up of the USSR. Had they let go two decades ago, instead of invading Czechoslovakia, power in Eastern Europe would probably have passed to the left or centre-left. As things are, it has passed to the centre-right, and no one can be sure what will happen next.

Lithuania seems to have acted naively. They expected the world to react on the basis of abstract United Nations slogans about justice and legality. The world never actually has worked like that - morality is invoked only when it happens to coincide with expediency.

On March 28th, *The Independent* carried the headline *"West treads carefully on Lithuania"*. It was a headline that expressed more truth than *The Independent* could have intended. The West in effect told the Lithuanians that they were Moscow's possession, unless and until Moscow chose to let them go. No one can force the Red Army out without starting a nuclear war, and not even the most rabid Cold Warrior has the least intention of doing that. They are content to sit back and let the USSR look bad. The realities of the matter are undoubted well understood at the British Foreign Office, and Foreign Office views tend to be obliquely but faithfully reflected by *The Independent*. (It's a highly appropriate relationship - the Foreign Office often seems to be independent of the rest of the country.)

There are indeed real perils in a possible break-up of the USSR. If Armenia and Azerbaijan were two sovereign states, they would undoubtedly be fighting a war with each other.

Various other possible claims and counter-claims could have been stirred up, if Lithuania had been allowed to act unilaterally. And the force that would have to deal with this would be the Red Army, which prefers to nip the process in the bud. Gorbachev may not be fully in control of what the Red Army is doing, indeed. The Red Army has since Stalin's death been the final court of appeal in struggles within the party. The generals have no apparent wish for direct military rule, but they can and do use their influence to decide to who stays in power and who falls from grace.

Lithuania may be able to negotiate its way out of the USSR. But in trying to act unilaterally, the Lithuanian leaders may have been naive. And then again, maybe not. They have the example of Finland, that established its independence by being willing to fight for it against much stronger powers. And the example of what is being done in their country is showing the rest of Europe that Moscow can still be a dangerous neighbour.

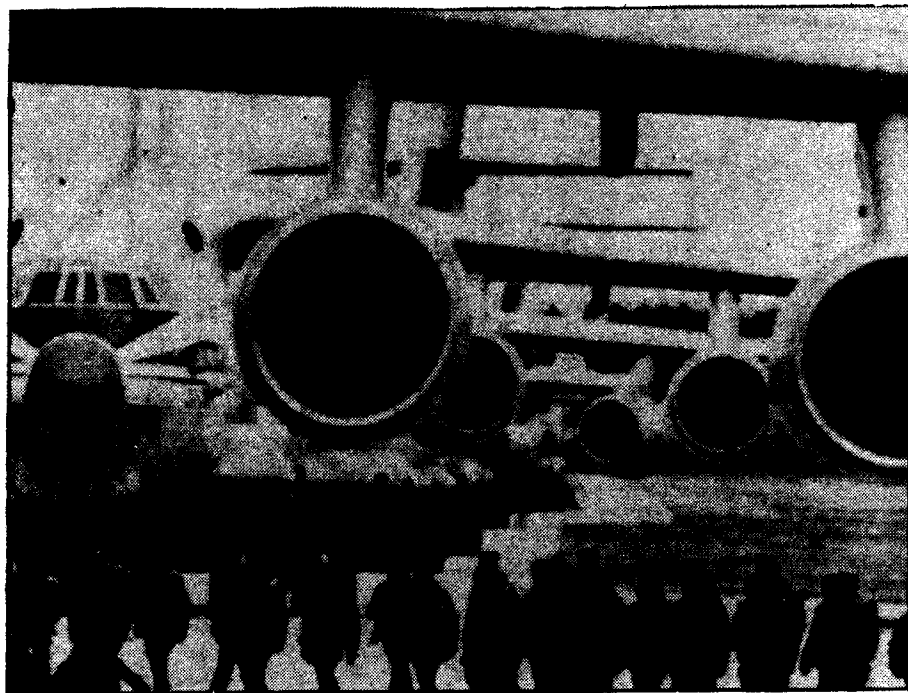
Tsar Mikhail?

Thinking about Lithuania makes me wonder just what Gorbachev is after. The state he rules has always contained an ambiguity - its official name is the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, but unofficially everyone calls it Russia.

Is Gorbachev a simple Russian nationalist, with no internationalist or imperialist ambitions? It seems to me that he could be. He recognised that Russia was losing the long cold-war struggle with the United States, and that meanwhile other powers were rising -

most notably Japan and the European Community. So he changes the rules of the game. He let go of Eastern Europe. He let Russia's Jews leave without let or hindrance, without any strong sign that he regrets their departure or opposes the popular anti-semitism that is causing them to go. (The Arabs hate him for it, but since Russia has its own oil he needn't let that concern him.) He does not exclude the possibility of letting non-Russian parts of the USSR go their own way as well, provided that Russian national interests are looked after. And while Western Ukraine has elected nationalist separatists, the part of Ukraine that was in the USSR before World War Two seems to accept the status quo.

It is the European Community that must concern him the most. Moscow has for centuries seen itself as the 'Third Rome', in succession to Byzantium, the New Rome of the Emperor Constantine. Part of this view is that there shall be no



Red Army soldiers boarding a military aircraft going to Lithuania

'Fourth Rome' - yet Brussels is showing signs of becoming one. Moreover, the 'Fourth Rome' rules a voluntary association of nations, an association that many neighbouring nations are eager to join. Even as it now is, the European Community is stronger economically than the USSR. And Eastern Europe is gravitating to it, neutrals powers may wish to join.

What can he do about it? Perhaps nothing. He probably will get the 35-power conference he has been calling for - but someone might suggest that Lithuania should also be invited, which would spoil the whole show.

Memories of Stalin

ITV recently had a big documentary about Joseph Stalin. It followed the normal line - attributing everything to his personality, and almost nothing to the nature of the Russian Empire or the events in the rest of the world during the 1920s and 1930s.

Lenin took power in 1917, convinced that capitalism was close to break-up. He was able to take power because he struck a chord with the mass of the population in the disintegrating Russian Empire. They knew that capitalism was something that had been imposed on them by foreigners, and by a ruling class that prided itself on copying foreign ways. But a strictly reactionary development didn't seem either likely or desirable. They were too westernised to wish for a return to old Russian ways, but also different enough to wish for something of their very own.

Schemes for world revolution failed to come off - but what was the alternative? Not a lot of people wanted democratic capitalism, and anyway there was good reason in the 1920s and 1930s to think that the epoch of democratic capitalism was over. 'Socialism or Barbarism' seemed the real choice. Rather, what developed was a 'barbarous socialism' that was never the less seen as the main hope of a darkening world. And it was an unlikely alliance of democratic capitalism and barbarous socialism that broke the power of Fascism.

Up until the early 1970s, the two rival world systems seemed to be very much equal competitors. But there was a crucial difference. In the West, the ruling elite has taken account of the social upheaval of the 1960s, and allowed greater openness and restructuring. In Eastern Europe and the USSR, nothing was allowed to change. In China, Mao tried to use the energies of the young to revitalise the revolution. This was a gamble for high stakes, and had it come off the world today would be a very different place. Sadly, he failed, producing chaos and leaving socialist idealism badly undermined.

As we enter the 1990s, world capitalism has done many of the things that socialists were demanding it do, or were assuming that it could not do. But socialism as a political movement is back to about its 1920s level of strength. What was built up over three decades, by Stalin in Russia and by Bevin and Attlee in Britain, was frittered away and lost over the next four decades.

I am not suggesting that what Stalin did should ever be repeated. I do say that he was successful, and that the failures were those of his successors.

Belgium - monarchical manoeuvres

Belgium has just been through an extraordinary constitutional manoeuvre. They have a set-up similar to the British one - parliament passes laws, but they also need the Royal Assent. This normally presents no problems - but in the case of a law permitting abortion, King Baudouin had ethical objections.

The solution was both simple and ingenious. The monarch stepped down for a brief period, to allow the law to be passed without him. No doubt something similar would be arranged over here, should such an *impasse* ever arise.

An Irish joke

Once again, Irish judges have used a legal loophole to stop suspected IRA men being extradited. The only surprising thing about this is that people in Britain still find it surprising.

The Irish Republic only exists because the IRA was willing to take on the British state, in 1916 and in the War of Independence. It's true that the Free State then suppressed the IRA in the Irish Civil War, using much more brutality than the British Army had ever used. But the Free State itself was run by a former faction of the IRA & Sinn Féin, the political ancestors of Fine Gael, the second largest party in the present-day state. The largest party, the present ruling party, is of course Fianna Fáil, 'Soldiers of Destiny', the part of the defeated Republican movement that was willing to work within the Free State structure. The part that was not so willing carried on and gave rise, among other groups, to the modern Provisional IRA.

The Irish Constitution - introduced by Fianna Fáil after they won elections within the Free State political structures - asserts that Northern Ireland should legitimately be ruled from Dublin. But if the Provisional IRA were to stop fighting, this claim would go into the dustbin of history, along with such things as the German claims to much of what is now Poland. So don't be surprised if Irish judges bend over backwards to find ways of not extraditing IRA men.

(Incidentally, with all the talk about the Birmingham Six, little attention has been given to the fact that the men now said to be the real bombers were suspected, were in some cases arrested

and interrogated, but were in fact released for lack of evidence.)

Stars above

As I write, the Hubble Space Telescope has not yet been safely put into orbit. Big satellites can always go wrong, and even if everything goes perfectly it will be some months before the telescope starts giving good results. But when it does, they will be *really* good.

The problem for most telescopes is air. Just as distant mountains look vague and hazy, the air spoils the image and hides some of the most interesting objects. A great deal has been seen by ground-based telescopes, thanks to a great deal of technical ingenuity. But the Space Telescope should show more. With luck, it should be able to see planets going round other suns - not something as small as the Earth, but perhaps something the size of Jupiter. More definitely, it will see very faint objects. Some of these will be totally new and unexpected. Others will be very distant and very very old, very close in time to the 'Big Bang' that began the known universe, some 10,000,000,000 or more years ago.

Whatever happens to the space telescope, other projects will tell us more about the really interesting parts of the Solar System. The Inner Solar System turned out to be fairly dull - the Moon, Mars and Venus were much less interesting than the speculations that we used to have about them. But the Outer Solar System - everything from Jupiter outwards - turns out to be much stranger and more beautiful than anyone had expected. They went well beyond what anyone had ever imagined - one more proof, incidentally, that the universe has an existence quite independent of our view of it.

Amusingly, most of the planets turned out to be quite different from the gods and goddesses they had been named after.

But two that fitted rather well were two that were only named in modern times. Uranus seems to have suffered some quite drastic misfortune at some time in the past - this was suspected even before Voyager II got a look at it, because of the strangeness of its axis of rotation. But Neptune, quite against expectations, turned out to be remarkably stormy!

The Galileo probe is on its way to Jupiter. The Space Telescope may be safely in orbit by the time you read this. And as I write, an 'intense search for a tenth planet in our solar system has narrowed down to one small patch of sky. Interesting times, indeed.

Riots - it's all the rage.

The real trouble with prisons is that they are full of criminals. Full of people who have failed to make one or other of the basic adjustments necessary to living in society. Not everyone in prison is like that, but most of them are. And they are governed and controlled by prison warders, mostly men who like the simplicities and hierarchies of rank and uniform.

British prisons put people under far too much pressure. Strangeways had a very high suicide rate. Sending men there is hardly likely to make them better people, or even to make them contented with life in prison. Britain is out of line with the rest of Europe, in terms of the numbers in prison. But the government seems happy to carry on, meanwhile saving money that is essential to the proper running of the present system.

Prisoners know that they are being unjustly treated, in terms of the generally accepted standards of society. It is probably no accident that the riot started the day after Thatcher's crazy poll tax policies had provoked a major and well-publicised riot in central London.

The loyal vultures

Back in L&TUR No.15, I said that Mrs

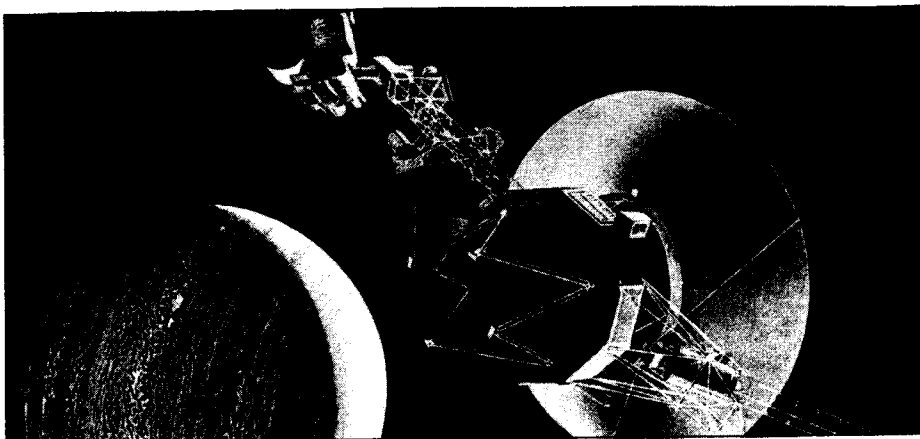
Thatcher should "beware the ideo of March". (Coincidentally, The Independent had a cartoon on just this theme on the 8th March.

My feeling now is that Thatcher will actually be allowed to carry on and lose the next election. She has refused to go quietly, and to throw her out would do great long-term damage to the party. People in the Tory hierarchy may have decided that they want no Tory equivalent of the German myth of the 'stab in the back' - the notion, so useful to Hitler in his rise to power, that Germany was not in fact on the verge of defeat when it surrendered in World War One. To dump Thatcher would leave a legacy of bitterness and accusations of betrayal. A minority would hold that Thatcher could have won back the lost ground, if only the party had stayed loyal. And the Tories would quite likely lose anyway. Far wiser, from a Tory point of view, to let Thatcher organise her own Götterdämmerung. They are not expecting Labour under Kinnock to make a big success or to last for more than one term. We at L&TUR hope that Labour will prove them wrong - but this must be a matter of hope, not reasonable expectation.

The Tories are certainly in a mess. Poll tax alone would not have done it, had the economy not been visibly going wrong. Labour councils can not be blamed for high inflation and high interest rates. Thatcher should either have let Lawson run things his way, or else replaced him much earlier. But poll tax has been a culmination of the Thatcherite way of doing things. If it loses the Tories the next election - as seems likely - she alone will bear the blame.

(Incidentally, Private Eye (April 13th) had a piece about Lord Rothschild's role in promoting poll tax, originally floated by right-wing think-tanks but widely rejected within Tory circles. Rothschild, going against what one might have expected from him, played a big part in getting the idea accepted. Private Eye does not say it explicitly, but perhaps this is the best reason so far discovered for thinking that Rothschild really was the 'fifth man', cleverer and more effective than even Philby.)

My expectation is that there will be another challenge to Thatcher this autumn, but that it will do little better than the previous one. Heseltine and other 'loyal vultures' will stay fairly quiet, and let events work themselves out. Thatcherism will be allowed to self-destruct. After that - who knows?



Gently smiling jaws?

Jack Lane argues that Gorbachev is following an old Russian tradition of grand gestures that usually fail to come off. But his plans for a 35-nation conference could disrupt the European Community, and are certainly intended to do so.

Gorbachev is preoccupied with his internal problems at present. His basic solution to these problems is to acquire more power for himself, and to downgrade the party in favour of the state machine. This will only exacerbate his problems.

Gorbachev has made the same mistake as Khrushchev. He assumes that there is a repressed urge amongst the Russian masses to be like the West. That it is simply a matter of lifting the lid and directing the vigour of the society towards a free market bourgeois future. The awful truth is that Russians react to being driven, not led, and the only dynamic forces that exist are the various nationalisms. The party was the only political force that could transcend and mediate these nationalisms. The authority of the state alone will only heighten the conflicts.

The grand dramatic gesture that Gorbachev specialises in has a long tradition in Russia. The Tsars went in for it in a big way. Alexander II became the darling of all radicals with his plans and promises for democracy in Russia in the early 19th century. But his plans collapsed when Poland, at that time split between Russia, Prussia and Austria, decided to take a hand in its own future.

Nicholas I freed the peasantry from serfdom in 1861. And he did it overnight. It did not quite succeed. Another Tsar spent some time in prison because of his concern for the inmates. However the numbers did not noticeably lessen afterwards.

Gorbachev is in keeping with this tradition. For example, he announces a multi-party system, and his henchmen then explain that there has always really been a multi-party system if you looked closely enough because there have always been different opinions and tendencies within the Party. So much for multi-party systems.

All major political parties arise out of civil wars or revolutions. American and European experience shows this. Parties that deserve to be called such will only come about in Russia in the same way. In other words they will arise despite Gorbachev and not through his patronage.

Even though he has enough on his plate with Russia, Gorbachev will no doubt continue his international schemes.

The biggest of these is his proposal to sponsor a Pan-European 35-nation conference. The hype about this is likely to start soon, and it is worth considering why he is doing it at all. No doubt the media as well as most political leaders will be true to form and accept his every pronouncement at its face value. First and foremost it will be sold as being in some way necessary for peace in Europe - a reliable way to get people to stop thinking.

The fact is of course that Europe is already at peace, and the only dangers to peace are the various non-peaceful developments that Gorbachev has started. His claims to be a peacemaker need to be taken with a large pinch of salt. His contribution to peace has been his acknowledgement of defeat in the Cold War. Promoting peace because you have lost a war is not exactly proof that you are some sort of pacifist. Gorbachev is smarting under this defeat and is resourceful enough to find other ways of

regaining the initiative in the world similar to that which Russia had in the Cold War era. To do that he has adopted a who-dares-wins attitude and is prepared to pull the house down. He destroyed the cold-war pattern of Europe. And he is determined to be the architect of the house that is built on the ruins.

The development towards a politically integrated Europe has been one of the main factors in deciding the Cold War in favour of the West. And Moscow has always been very conscious of this and has done its best to prevent it. Gorbachev has faithfully continued this policy, but he realises that more imaginative ways are needed to disrupt the process. The tactic is to appear to be more European than the Europeans who have built up the Community.

So he becomes the Pan-European and plans a bigger agenda than that of the European Community. The crucial element is that it entails the disruption and destruction of what exists. All grand schemes like Pan Americanism, Pan Arabism, Pan Africanism etc involve the promotion of one particular nation at the



My way forward for Europe

expense of others. A Pan-Europeanism would be no different. The European Community is being built by 12 free nations, and not at any nation's expense. Moscow could never be the focus of such a development. After 70 years of the Soviet Union, it seems that the non-Russian nations want only to leave as quickly as possible.

Lenin called Tsarist Russia 'the jailer of nations'. But when the Tsarist jail fell apart, he built a new Leninist one and put most of them back into it. Stalin recovered the remaining escapees, all but Poland and Finland.

Moscow could never be the focus of an enlarged European Community. It can have a variety of relationships with other nations, from outright suppression to killing them with kindness. But a free alliance is never on the agenda. Moscow does however fully appreciate the value of sheer size. It is therefore naturally envious of a neighbour that shows every sign of just growing and growing. And if you can't beat them you had better join them. Or else pretend that you will join them, and get people to focus on grand schemes that have less and less substance the more they are pursued.

Gorbachev must be very encouraged by developments so far. He has played the German card, exactly as Moscow was

doing in the 1950s, with predictable results. This is a nice softening-up process for his European plans. He must be hopeful that Europe as a whole will become obsessed and preoccupied with its divisions and its nationalisms, rather than with what it has in common or the virtues of continuing integration of the European Community.

Gorbachev could be very successful in Britain in particular. He already has Thatcher in his pocket, and he could resurrect all the Left's antagonism to Europe. What a coup - to have both the Left and the Right on your side.

This is already happening. Ken Coates is a dyed-in-the-wool opponent of the EEC and European integration. He is now an MEP and boasts in *Tribune* (March 16th) of his grand plans to have the European Parliament and the Supreme Soviet meeting together regularly because "they were doing similar things." And surprise surprise, Mr Sheverdnadze is very impressed and a "Vadim Zagladin offered a careful four-point programme for its realisation." And Coates is very impressed that the Russians are so impressed.

Coates has a great record in messing up good causes. He personifies the Left that has lost all ability for practical reform and is forever promoting fine but

unrealistic schemes.

Coates was the leading light in the *Institute for Workers Control* during the 1960s and 1970s. His moment of truth came in 1977 when the Bullock proposals were published. This practical opportunity for an advance into a new era for the movement was scoffed at by Coates & Co. and was counterposed to the pure idea of workers control.

Kinnock took his cue from Coates. Left and right combined and Bullock was killed off. That opened the door for Thatcherism. Thanks a lot, Ken.

Let us hope that Kinnock has learned some lessons, and that he will not join Coates in his latest fantasy. Let us hope that Kinnock will concentrate on making the European Parliament a real parliament to serve Europe and the Labour movement.

A prize for statesmanship should be awarded to the first political leader who tells Gorbachev to take a running jump into the Black Sea when he states his plans for the 35-nation conference. More timid spirits could go along, agree that war is bad, peace is good, the sky is blue although it is sometimes grey, and meanwhile press on regardless with integrating the European Community.



Labour's Cromwell?

Labour Rebuilt - The New Model Party. By Colin Hughes and Patrick Wintour.

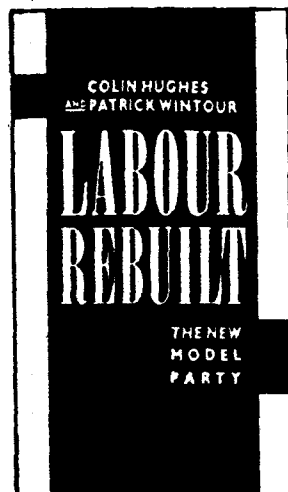
Reviewed by Jack Lane.

This book gives a blow by blow account of the transformation of the Labour Party's image over the past two years. It promotes the Kinnockite view of the Labour Party and politics generally. This gives serious cause for concern.

The Herculean job that has been done has been in large part a reinventing of the wheel by the same people who had disinvented the wheel. When Kinnock makes the most tentative moves towards multilateralism it is described as almost earth-shattering, as if nobody in the Labour Party had ever made such a case before. The same applies to Europe, the 'mixed economy' etc. There is a "realisation that Labour might not have been so heavily defeated at the general election if Labour councils had been more widely popular." (p156).

These are all wonderful discoveries. But what it means is that the Labour Party might as well have no history.

The world itself hardly seems to exist before the 1987 election, and there are certainly no lessons to be learned from the 1970s. The 1970s are regarded as pre-history by these people. The only



lessons they have learned from Thatcher's 1979 victory is from the PR work involved in that victory, and the Kinnockites are transfixed by this.

Thatcher's victory was based on the electorate's experience of Labour in power for most of that decade. The electorate had utterly rejected Ted Heath's policies, in many ways the same as Thatcherism. They had given Labour a free hand at governing the country. Labour made a mess of it, because the Labour Party had no way of positively developing the Trade Union movement. The Kinnockite critique at that time would have made matters even worse.

The Trade Union issue, like defence, Europe, Ireland etc will not go away. Major issues like these take decades to resolve. They are not resolved in terms of election victories, good showings in the opinion polls, good PR tricks or anything of that sort.

Kinnock and Co. have not developed a coherent attitude towards these issues. But they can not be avoided and will return to haunt the leadership, whether Labour is in opposition or in power.



Questions of Sex and Violence

Does 'porn' lead to violence? Dan Ackroid looks at the notion, and questions the way in which various completely different types of sexually explicit material are included in or excluded from the definition of 'porn' that is said to encourage rapists.

Attila the Hun never read a comic book in his life. Torquemada, founder of the Spanish Inquisition, was a celibate monk. Rapists in prison are no more likely to be fond of pornography than other prisoners whose crimes were not sexual. Why, then, all the fuss about explicit descriptions of sex? Why the persistent confusion of sex and violence? Why does British censorship think it fine to show a maniac attacking women with an axe, but a criminal offence to show a loving couple copulating?

In the 1960s, there were signs of a more rational attitude emerging. Sexual taboos were being discarded. But there was a reaction against sixties permissiveness, and the Feminist movement in Britain and America started hurling anathemas at anyone who didn't agree with their definitions of what was proper in sexuality. Mrs Grundy is dead, long live Ms Grundy!

The Feminist movement claims to represent 50% of the human race. In fact, it is mostly a movement of the middle-class intelligentsia. Women in general are asserting themselves much more than they used to. Ideological feminists are a minority, but they are the only large body of politically active women. They can thus use the guilt feelings of men in a still largely male power structure to advance their own interests.

Women within the sex industry have been asserting themselves and trying to

advance their own interests. But the ideological feminist movement prefers to make use of them and to make propaganda out of their exploitation, while arguing against any of the measures that might improve those women's lot. This applies particularly to female heterosexual prostitution.

It would be logical to remove those laws that make it impossible for prostitutes to operate without breaking the law. Please note, *prostitution as such is not illegal*. The man who pays a woman for sex is doing nothing illegal. But as the laws are framed and interpreted, the woman will have had to do something illegal in order to advertise that she is a prostitute. No lawful form of advertising exists. There are clubs where women make themselves available for prostitution, and others where customers are merely tricked into paying absurd prices for drinks. You also get women standing about on the street, harassing passers by who may or may not be interested. You get cards offering 'massage' displayed in newsagents' windows. Much more explicit adverts, often offering very unusual sexual services, are to be found stuck on the windows of phone booths in parts of London.

The present British set-up is the most awkward, indecent and inconvenient that one could easily imagine. People who only want to use the phone find themselves faced with offers of bizarre

sex. People who are actually looking for either normal or bizarre sex can get it, but not easily or conveniently, and not necessarily when they feel an urgent need for it. (There have been cases of men who start off looking for a prostitute, and then when they can't find one going on to commit rape.)

Given that prostitution is unlikely to vanish in the foreseeable future, some rational provision should be made for it. The simplest would be to allow magazines, similar to existing pornographic magazines, where prostitutes could explicitly advertise their services. Similar to the 'Contact' magazines that already exist, in fact, except that there would be no need for pretence, and no confusion with genuine 'swingers'. With such a system, there would be no need for explicit sexual adverts in public places, no intrusion upon people who think it should all be a matter for love.

What about pornography? I would not take the doctrinaire libertarian view that no one should be stopped from doing or displaying anything. People have a right *not* to see explicit sex, if that is their choice. Some practices are anti-social and should be discouraged as strongly as possible - under-age sex, for instance, or the use of drugs. Out-and-out criminality, murder and rape, are shown far too often and far too freely. (An alien judging us by our television programmes might think such things much more widespread than ordinary sex.)

A simple principle to apply to pornography would be *if it is legal to do, it is legal to show it being done*. The principle of what is *offensive* or *indecent* should be dropped completely. There are too many different opinions on the matter. Hard-line Muslims, for instance, are offended by the ordinary standard dress of British women, and consider it very indecent.

Permissiveness should cut both ways. If people are to be free to see sexually explicit material, they should equally be free *not* to see it. Tastes vary a great deal. The '*legal to do, legal to show*' principle would undoubtedly permit a great deal of material that I personally wouldn't be interested in seeing - some of which I would definitely wish *not* to see.



A typical example of the phone-booth advert.

I've no wish to see male homosexual pornography, for instance - but I accept that those who wish to see it have a right to do so.

Discussions about explicit sex are always confused by references to pornography that includes some element of violence. There could be a case for banning this specific type of pornography - just as there is a total ban in Britain on pornography depicting children or under-age teenagers. In fact, I have not heard anyone seriously argue for a ban on this specific type of pornography. Pictures of bondage or whipping - very much a minority interest - are used to shock and alarm, in order to influence people who would not be notably shocked and alarmed by mainstream porn. And two-thirds of even this limited sector is ignored. Nothing is said about the pictures of women fighting other women, or the pictures of women beating men. Only those which show men dominating women are ever discussed.

If you venture into a few Soho sex shops and see what they have on offer, you will find that:

- a) the majority of the material does not depict violence or domination of any sort.
- b) where there is violence, it is about evenly divided between men dominating women, women dominating men and women dominating other women. (And if you look over the the Gay section, you'll see various magazines depicting men dominating other men.)
- c) most of the 'violence against women' is of a trivial, fetishistic sort. You see a woman bending over a man's knee and being spanked, say. It's all made by paid models - and a lot of it's probably faked anyway. It is quite different from the sort of serious domestic violence that some women do unfortunately still suffer from. You don't see women being punched in the face or kicked in the stomach, say.

In other parts of Western Europe, more extreme material is available, showing bondage and whipping. Again, it's evenly mixed between women doing it to men, men doing it to women and women doing it to other women. Almost anyone with a strong interest in such material could take a day trip and buy as much of it as they pleased. The Customs Men do not usually block small amounts of porn for private use, so the restrictions on the British trade are fairly pointless anyway.



The late Greta Lovisa Gustaffson (Gretta Garbo)

So why do people bother protesting? Probably because the main point is to be able to protest, and to get people feel guilty. It may seem a rather senseless activity to outsiders, but those who do it no doubt find it great fun.

Feminists make their case against pornography by simply excluding that part of the evidence that does not suit them. For instance, an article by feminists Catherine Itzin and Corinne Sweet (*The Independent*, April 17 1989) places great emphasis on the small proportion of pornography which shows men dominating women. In connection with another point, the article says: "Perversely, women were occasionally used to present the magazine's contents ('Miss Sadie Stearn's Monthly', 'Susan Strong's Exclusive'), implying that women had selected and approved the material."

I was able to track down 'Miss Sadie Stearn's Monthly', and it turns out to be a magazine devoted exclusively to pictures and stories of women beating and dominating men. The article gave no hint of this - not even that such material exists. I've no idea if there really is a 'Miss Sadie Stearn', but there are women

involved at a senior level in some parts of the pornography industry. Other arguments are on a similar level.

Protests against 'porn' distract from the real struggle to complete the sexual revolution. Equality between the sexes is something that is likely to grow naturally as one generation succeeds the next. There are various coherent ways in which this process could be speeded up. But that takes serious thought - protesting against life in general is much easier, and so much more fun.

The joke is, 'feminist' ideology is actually not a female thing at all. Rather, it is a remnant of a left-libertarian ideology that was widespread in the 1960s, and has since lost favour among male radicals. The high point of this ideology was France 1968, where it was briefly one of the dominant political forces. People soon found that it was useless for getting anything done. The 'Women's Lib' movement, however, swallowed it hook line and sinker. 'Women's Lib' has since then achieved very little - it may in fact have slightly slowed and impeded the gradual process of equalisation between the sexes that was already occurring at the time.

Artists and Artisans

In *The End of Autocracy* (L&TUR No.16), Madawc Williams argued that the set-backs suffered by Marxist parties East and West had the same root cause - a feeling among far too many socialists that working people can not be trusted to build socialism, and need to have it imposed on them. Here he links this with the attitude of modernist artists - especially architects - who also like imposing their 'progressive' ideas on an unwilling majority. Except that this is unlikely to fool the *cultured anarchy* that has now developed.

In Peter Brooke's *A Carolingian Renaissance* (L&TUR No.10), I was glad to see him expose the phoniness of modern architecture. And then very sorry indeed to see him let them off the hook by saying that it was all an inevitable part of modern life. Reconsidering the matter in the light of his later articles, I now see that this was no accident. His views on architects and on Leninism are part and parcel of a single viewpoint. In one form or another it is a very widespread viewpoint, and has done great and continuing damage to the cause of socialism.

Modernist architecture is a massive outbreak of silliness and bad taste among people who should know better. The question of the social forces that fostered such silliness and bad taste is a separate question. The search for the reason should not be allowed to weaken the central point that it is silliness and bad taste. Edmund Burke in his essay on the Sublime and the Beautiful insisted that a judgment of what is and is not good taste is separate from an explanation of *why* it is good or bad taste. It would be nice to have an explanation, but people who try to find one usually get out of their depths and start talking nonsense.

(Burke even ventured into the domain of physics, and criticised Newton for having tried to explain what gravity was, rather than simply using it as an explanation for the observed movements of the planets. And on this point Burke was quite right. Newton's description of *how* gravity operates works perfectly in most cases, though on occasions we need Einstein's more complete description. But we still do not know *why* gravity exists, nor *why* it isn't stronger or weaker than it actually is. Physicists think that they are close to a unified theory that would link gravity to the other basic forces of the universe, but they have not got there yet.)

To return to the matter of architecture. I doubt if today's magnates and planners are worse men than those of the Renaissance. The princes of that era commissioned work from Leonardo, Michelangelo etc. because those were the fashionable names at the time. Nor was there any great difference between personal and corporate - a lot of the work was for church hierarchies, city corporations etc. It just so happened that the fashions of that time were promoting good work, and now they are promoting unpleasant and pretentious rubbish.



Even if the moral climate was worse, it would not excuse anyone from taking a stand for what they know to be right. After all, 'moral climates' are only a shorthand expression for the sum of individual decisions. Each good or bad decision changes it by a small but definite amount. Those architects who have gone along with a corrupt consensus *are* morally guilty. Like most morally guilty people they have a variety of ingenious excuses. These are rubbish, and should be dismissed as such.

The typical tower block is based on the crudest possible geometry, given that land is expensive and buildings must of necessity be three-dimensional. Cubes and cuboids are the simplest of all shapes to work with. Making a very tall cuboid

requires certain engineering skills; but once you've seen a few dozen such buildings, their basic lack of visual interest becomes obvious.

A few buildings have risen above it. One I would cite would be Centre Point, which dares to deviate from being strictly cuboid, and somehow manages to find beauty in what is normally a banal form. True, the underground passages at its base are perfectly disgusting concrete rat-holes. True, the circumstances of its building and letting were questionable. (But what about Versailles, or the poor Indian peasants who were squeezed to build the Taj Mahal?) I think that future generations will regard Centre Point as a very worthy addition to the great buildings of the world. It is however very much an exception.

It is not as if the 'modernist' architects did not know better. When you look at the homes they live in, and the offices where they work, it is obvious that some of them have considerable skill and good taste. But an odd sort of pseudo-intellectual snobbery impelled them to design disgusting cuboids when they worked in a professional capacity. They didn't like them, and nor did anyone else. But they had been taught that this was modern, right and proper. And they lacked the gumption to do anything else.

Theory tends to be invoked. Rather, people will find some complex metaphysical justification for doing whatever may be fashionable. Any damned fool idea can be justified by one theory or another. The basic test should be - if the products of an artistic theory *feel* wrong, even when they have ceased to be new and unfamiliar, then the theory is wrong.

Poets and painters might be justified in following some esoteric interest that only a few other artists are likely to follow or be interested in. People are free to choose what poems they read or listen to, what pictures they look at or

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have on their walls. If they have been wasting their time, it is only their own time that they have been wasting. But architecture is an inherently *public* art. Buildings are inflicted on the people who live in and around them. To justify a style that is universally despised, despite being older than most of the people now alive, takes a special sort of arrogance.

Pseudo-intellectual snobbery outweighs even the more ordinary sort of snobbery associated with royalty. Mr Charles Windsor was saying nothing that had not been said many times before, often much more clearly and by people with a much deeper knowledge of the subject. But the fact that he said it did help the ideas to circulate. And the fact that architects have mostly opposed him shows what a completely crazy state of mind they have got into.

Incidentally, I was surprised that Peter Brooke attached so much weight to Mr Charles Windsor's opinions. The Windsors are a dull, decent, well-meaning, upper-class family. They are not interesting, and they are not meant to be. It is fair enough to argue - as Brendan Clifford did in *L&TUR* No.4 - that *"the soporific of royalty has benefitted progressive movements over a long period by neutralising the elements who might have given force to reaction"*. But to talk of a 'Carolingian Renaissance', as if the monarchy was or should be a major *positive* force, is to lose all sense of proportion.

In the same article, Peter Brooke raised the matter of both artists and Anglican clergymen wishing to be 'relevant'. But he either missed or sympathises with the actual set of ideas that lie behind the nice word 'relevant'. Both artists and Anglican clergymen would like the sort of power that Catholic priests used to exert in strongly Catholic societies, and still do exert in a more limited form. This is 'relevance' in the sense that priests (or artists) do as they think fit, and also have a large influence on the habits and beliefs of the rest of the society. In just the same sense, Leninist Commissars and party bosses used to be relevant, and have now lost a great deal of this relevance.

Anglican clergymen are not 'relevant', because their church was created for no other purpose than to be a church under the control of civil society. Leninist

Commissars lost relevance when it became clear they were not in fact likely to build a socialist utopia in the countries that they controlled. (The 'news' of the methods that had been used in Stalin's time did not disconcert believers very much, for so long as the final goal still seemed possible.)

Artists are not 'relevant', because there is no reason to look to them for general social guidance - rather than to astronomers, mining engineers or any other group with special skills. Most people see artists as fellow human beings who happen to have a talent for one or other mode of expression.



Artists in the 19th century noted the decline of religion, and some of them felt that the situation was wide open for them to fill the gap. They were quite mistaken. The bulk of society was no longer willing to be governed by any of the world's religions. The old faiths were rejected, despite their venerable traditions, their subtle theology, their impressive religious and devotional art, their martyrs who had been willing to die for the faith, their large numbers of good and dedicated men. Societies that were rejecting religions that could offer so much felt not the least need to be bossed about by a bunch of confused bohemian posers.

Despite some interesting and radical notions, Peter Brooke can not fully get away from the split between refined

superior art and common mundane work. He rejects it in its conventional arty form, and then he reaffirms it in a rather more complex and roundabout form.

The common distinction between *artist* and *artisan* did not really emerge until the eighteenth century, and was only fully sorted out in the nineteenth. Raymond Williams's *Culture and Society* and *Keyword* traces how the meaning of 'art' and 'artist' changed as society developed. Peter Brooke has either not read these books, or read them without understanding anything, since they deal with many of the areas he's been talking about.

Artists, in the new sense, were invited to identify with the ruling groups. They were 'superior persons', even though most of them never became rich. Artisans, skilled workers, were relegated to the ranks of the growing mass of wage labourers. 'Artists' in the 19th century were put in a false position, and developed an ideology that increased the falseness. Artists were seen as people with superior feelings, superior souls. It was heresy to see them as fairly ordinary people who just happened to have a particular skill for expressing some of their fairly ordinary feelings in verse or story or paint or music. Radical artists were 'against the bourgeoisie'. But, with a few honourable exceptions, they did not by any means wish to be confused with vulgar artisans or workers.

Having cut themselves off from ordinary life, artists concentrated on expressing their nature as artists. But this was a pointless activity - as pointless as if a group of lorry-drivers had dropped the notion that lorries should actually transport goods, and simply concentrated on lorry-driving as an autonomous activity.

The main point about William Morris's *News from Nowhere* is not that art galleries are missing. It is that *there is no distinction between art and ordinary work*. Peter Brooke fails to understand this. He goes part-way towards desiring a breaking down of the division between work and art; and then draws back and reasserts it in a more subtle and convoluted form.

In *Absolute Beginners* (*L&TUR* No.12), Peter Brooke says that *"The worker, as Ruskin and Morris had prophesied, became more and more an*

adjunct to the machine; his work became less and less valuable." This is just not true. There was a loss of skills in the first part of the industrial revolution - at least a loss of those skills like hand-loom weaving that could not match the work of a machine. But other skills in areas such as metalworking and precision engineering arose at the same time. Modern work requires an increasingly skilled and well educated workforce. Simple repetitive tasks can now be very easily done by microprocessors. But this has not led to a mass replacement of workers by robots - there is in fact a shortage of competent skilled workers. Modern technology has removed some of the worst and most soul-destroying sorts of work, and highlighted the need for humans doing various tasks - some clerical, some manual labour - that only humans can do well.

Any comparison between modern culture and the culture of the past must be made on an even basis. If the everyday objects of modern life are compared with the *best* survivals of *all* previous eras, then our age might look quite bad. But that is the wrong method. A better one might be to take an exercise book, and assign a single page to each century. On each page, write down what that century has produced, that could be judged to be of outstanding artistic or literary merit. No two people would come up with quite the same list, of course. But when anyone then made the comparisons between the pages, I am confident that they would find that the 20th century has produced a remarkably large amount of good stuff! It is only when the past is all lumped together, everything from Homer to Wagner, that we seem to have gone downhill.

Marxist socialists in the West let themselves be tempted by the apparent short cut of a dedicated Leninist party seizing power and rebuilding society from scratch. Marxists in the West had no excuse for not knowing that this was being done against the will of the majority of the population. Marxists in the West weren't happy with it, but generally felt that progress was more important than the will of the majority. And since we have no way of knowing how the world would have shaped up without the development of a strong and successful USSR between the 1920s and

the 1950s, it is hard to say if they were right or wrong. This is not the main point I am talking about in this article.

The Bolsheviks in Russia were a radical minority who were imposing their ideas on the rest of the society. That is to say, they were actually doing what the Modernist artists wished to do but could not. It is thus not surprising that writers and artists whose ideas were not in any serious sense socialist identified themselves with Bolshevism. It was not a simple relationship. The USSR was in fact to drop Modernism in favour of Socialist Realism - which was actually a form of idealised Socialist Surrealism, life as the Communist Party would have liked it to be. But the link remained, and is still not completely lost.

It was not only Bolsheviks who attracted a crowd of Modernist 'groupies'. Both Italian Fascism and the German Nazis got their share. Ezra Pound is the best known example, but Dali was happy to identify himself with Fascism, though

people have tried to play down this side of him. Then there was T.S.Eliot, who opted for a right-wing Christianity rather than for Fascism. However much people try to deny it, it's clear that there is a definitely anti-semitic feeling in some of his poems - he even wrote Jew as jew. (And, of course, he was an excellent poet despite the obnoxiousness of some of his beliefs.)

There were other options. Some artists tried to ignore the larger world about them, and some developed personal faiths. Perhaps the best of these, Robert Graves, believed in the 'White Goddess', and argued for Her existence by rearranging English translations of obscure and complex Celtic poems. There are many other examples, most of them much less interesting.

These were minority options. By far the largest number of Modernists identified with the strongest actually existing power - mainstream capitalism. For the most part, the capitalists had

TRIBUNE

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little use for them. Modernist paintings made good investments, but this was quite independent of which power-block, if any, the artist had identified with. Advertisers have in recent years made a lot of use of Modernist ideas to sell consumer goods, but this is a matter of form more than content. The one socially relevant group has been Modernist Architects. They provided a fancy artistic justification for cheap and sometimes shoddy or dangerous building methods. But they also - whatever their private beliefs - create and sustain a building style that is as suited for modern capitalism as Gothic was for medieval Catholicism.

Modernist architecture is *depersonalising* and *multinational*. Office blocks or flats look exactly the same in London, Los Angeles, Delhi, Hong Kong or Tokyo - it was in fact the first truly worldwide building style. It wiped out both local colour and a sense of community. People can form a community in a row of terraced houses, but putting them in a tower block will usually atomise and fragment them.

But time moves on. In Britain, at least, it was discovered that people put into tower blocks became so atomised and de-socialised that they were a menace to society. Instead of becoming docile wage-slaves, they were either inactive or pointlessly destructive. People needed to be given more of a sense of community, if society was to function at all.

Modernists were providing an outdated product. There was therefore a big shift of opinion away from them.

Modern capitalism can only function by persuading the workers that it looks after them better than socialism could.



This means accepting the growth of individualism among the working class, and building styles must change to reflect this. Since architects showed a reluctance to yield their cherished bland cuboids for the greater good of the whole system, the establishment shifted to supporting some of their long-time critics. And it became so much a matter of establishment consensus that Mr Charles Windsor felt it O.K. to get in on the act.

Capitalists have realised that autocratic methods are no longer efficient, while too many socialists have hung onto them. People go on trying to be autocrats, an elite imposing socialism on 'the masses', for the good of 'the masses', long after the working class has shown that it can not under any circumstances be treated as a passive mass.

Peter Brooke has had some interesting ideas. But he has basically failed to understand what is going on in the world. He proclaimed Islam on the Iranian model to be the wave of the future at about the same time that I concluded that its failure to win the Gulf war had finished it off as a world force. I think that events have borne out my analysis, and will continue to do so. Islamic extremism doesn't even seem able to win in Afghanistan - mainly because Islamic idealism comes a poor second to tribalism among the Afghans. It has also given a classic lesson in weak and destructive government in the Sudan.

Socialism can be justified on a religious basis, and very often has been. This is part of the Labour and working class tradition, and if Peter Brooke were to take this up it would be a useful contribution. In his early articles he seemed to be following such a path, but more recently he has wandered off it - or perhaps always had some separate private goal. Certainly, I can see no logical

connection between his present ideas and those of this magazine. And if he still sees one, as I suppose he must since he maintains contact with us, I'd be glad if he explained just what it was.

We live in a society that no longer has an 'elite'. It does have an excessively large number of people who consider themselves to belong to a small cultural elite. But the truth is that *general culture* has developed to a point where very large numbers of people can and do think for themselves. What we have is a *cultured anarchy*. I use this term as a deliberate challenge to Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy*, and to people nowadays who follow his ideas. (Though it must be remembered that Arnold's own work as an educationalist did contribute in the long run to bringing it into existence.)

Society today needs no 'elite' to guide it. Nor does it help to speak of 'spirituality', which can mean so many different things that it isn't much of a guide. For what it's worth, we do have very large numbers of people developing themselves in one way or another. This self-development may or may not be expressed in religious or mystical language - that's not the main point. What has increased vastly is *human potentiality*.

The development of the 'cultured anarchy' is confusing for the residual elites. Artists have been getting whimsical for more than a century. Two totalitarian systems - Moscow Leninism and Roman Catholicism - have followed a surprisingly similar pattern over the past few decades. First a questioning of established values - Khrushchev and Vatican II. Then a 'period of stagnation' - Brezhnev and Pope Paul. Then one or more short-lived successors. Most recently a dynamic new leader with an eye to the media - Gorbachev and John Paul II. The Catholic Church has the advantage of not being in direct competition with liberal capitalism,



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which has had a period of unprecedented success. But there are signs that some form of modified Leninism will survive in Russia, and perhaps also in the Ukraine and some of the other Soviet Republics. The rapid collapse of 1989 was a collapse of what was held by Russian tanks, not a sudden defection of true believers.

What the Leninist Commissars and the Catholic Hierarchy had in common was a desire to shed their more onerous responsibilities while keeping and even increasing their privileges. Representatives of 'high culture' tried that game long ago. They dropped the attempt to produce interesting and coherent works of skill, but still expected

to be admired as very special people. Only no one was fooled. It is only people within the self-styled elites who get fooled, or fool themselves, in one way or another.



POLICY STATEMENT

The Bevin Society

Aims and Purposes

The Bevin Society was set up several years ago, but lapsed as individual members became involved in other matters -- including setting up Labour & Trade Union Review. It has now been re-founded by some of its original members, and given a clearer statement of aims and objectives. We reproduce them here.

The aim of the Bevin Society is to develop a programme for the Labour Party that will make possible a comprehensive collectivist reform as the framework for a more widely based individualism.

The Bevin Society is essentially a development from a group in the Institute for Workers' Control which actually supported workers' control when it was a possibility of immediate practical politics: when it was proposed as a radical economic reform by the Bullock Committee.

The leadership of the Institute for Workers Control opposed the Bullock proposals on woolly ideological grounds, as did Neil Kinnock and most of the trade union leaders.

The 'right to manage'

The "right of management to manage" was the conservative cry of both the left and right of the Labour movement, as well as of the budding Thatcherites. But 'management' is not a detached element operating between capital and labour. Management must be an agency of capital or an agency of labour.

Conservatism, or the continuation of the status quo, was not a practical possibility in the seventies. Labour had grown too powerful to enable the existing arrangements to continue. Both the leaders and the militants of the

Labour movement lived in a fool's paradise, believing that the trade union movement could refuse to become the basis of management and yet retain the power to paralyse the management based on capital.

The status quo was doomed. The only question was whether Labour would become the basis of management, or trade union power would be weakened so that a management based on capital would again be effective. When the leaders of the Labour movement declined to enact a radical reform in the Labour interest, it was only a matter of time before a radical reaction restored the managerial power of capital.

The lost chance

If the Bullock Report had been adopted by the Labour movement it is likely that it would have become a watershed in British history comparable to the Beveridge Report (which established the Welfare State). It would have altered the framework of economics and politics, and opened up an array of new and stimulating conflicts and contradictions.

Because the Bullock Report was rejected by Labour, the Labour movement has ever since been disoriented in the face of successful capitalist reaction.

A static socialism

There were reasons of petty vested interest involved in the rejection of the Bullock Report. But much more important than these was the essentially static character of socialist ideology of all varieties in the movement. Socialism was a vaguely imagined eternal harmony, a secularised version of the state of affairs following the Day of Judgement. Some dreamed of a Leninist revolution as the means by which it would be

established, while others imagined a systematic scheme of reform through social engineering. The Bullock Report was equally unacceptable to both because it was obviously not a recipe for eternal harmony.

A similar approach would have led to the rejection of the Beveridge Report in the 1940s. And there were those on the left as well as the right who rejected it.

Recovering the dynamic

But the Labour outlook in those days was not confined to visionary dreams of a final condition of things, and to empty rhetoric following from those visions. Ernest Bevin and Clement Attlee were determined to enact the practical reforms of the day, and to develop through its conflicts while leaving eternal harmony to the metaphysicians.

The Labour movement is now in the doldrums because during the past two generations it has not developed out of the experience of that group of effective reformers who transformed the conditions of working class life when they came to power -- and who came to power because they had impressed society with their capacity for radical and realistic reform.

The Bevin Society intends to regain for the present generation the experience of the Bevin-Attlee era, and to develop out of it a capacity for thought and action in place of the slogan and the gesture which are now the stock-in-trade of the Labour leadership.

The Bevin Society is at present running on a fairly informal ad-hoc basis. If you'd like to see something established on a more formal basis, or if you'd just like a discussion, please contact us at 26 Aden Grove, London N16 9NJ

Labour, the Tories and the European Community

John Cobain looks at the options for Labour and Europe. Should we go for a Federal Union, or for some other form of internationalism?

"There will be many arguments in this House and elsewhere about the pace and direction of change in the European Community. Federal Union will find few friends among the Opposition." So said Neil Kinnock in the Debate on the Queens Speech (November 21st 1989). Federal union, its advocates say, is an idea whose time has come. And by refusing to become involved, it is argued, Britain (and Labour) risk isolation.

The Labour left has indeed been guilty of such insularity. They have called for withdrawal from the EEC, seeing it as an impediment to socialism. In seeking to retreat within 'island Britain', they have scarcely been able to disguise their mistrust of foreigners. As the future of Europe could well become one of the most important issues in the next election, it is vital that Labour does not lapse once more into such myopia.

The issue of Europe has already wrought serious division in the ranks of the Conservative Party. It has cost Mrs Thatcher her Chancellor, and has forced the first open challenge to her leadership. Labour could be forgiven for simply relishing Mrs Thatcher's discomfort. But the major task for Labour now is to present itself as the alternative government. To do this, it must not only exploit the Conservative's difficulties. It must also present to the country a coherent alternative.

Mrs Thatcher's position is clear. She signed the Single European Act in 1987, as a means to create a common market governed, not by politicians but by uninhibited market forces. Before the European Election of June 1989 she perceived a degree of mistrust among the electorate about things European. To exploit this feeling, Mrs Thatcher proceeded to wrap herself in the Union Flag and decry 'Europe'. Her ability to block Euro cancer warnings on cigarette packets was held up as a victory for British democracy. The voters rejected her 'little Englander' approach. However Mrs Thatcher, as we know, is not one for changing her mind. She has maintained the same strategy in the hope that by 1992 and the next election 'Europe' will have regained its unpopularity.

The temptation for the Labour

movement is to look at Mrs Thatcher's position and then adopt the polar opposite - in this case Federal Union! At Bournemouth in 1988 the TUC embraced the leading advocate of Federal European Union, Jacques Delors, as a conquering hero.

In 1988 there were specific reasons for this. Defeatism was rife. Mrs Thatcher seemed to be unassailable. Eighteen months ago many were saying that it was impossible for Labour to win an election ever again. Those were the days of Tactical Voting 87 and Charter 88. Scottish socialists toyed with independence and their English and Welsh counterparts discovered Europe. Given that Ladbrookes are now placing the chances of Labour winning the next election on a par with Liverpool winning the Football league, the various schemes can therefore be dispassionately examined.

Jacques Delors promised the TUC a dream of a new European order, a social Europe. Mrs Thatcher called it "socialism through the back door". It seemed too good to be true.

What is actually being proposed is a central European bank which will control monetary policy and impose fiscal control. The Labour party is often criticised for having no policies except throwing money at problems. If the Delors plan is fully implemented then it will be denied even this simple pleasure. A future Labour government would have no worries as regards interest rates, they would be determined by the bank. The levels of taxation and their distribution too would be determined not by the Labour government but by the experts, the European bankers.

The analogy which the Federalists often quote is the United States of America. However in the USA states retain a major degree of fiscal control, greatly in excess of what is being proposed for the European states. The state legislature of Michigan has more control over its affairs than the House of Commons would have over the affairs of the United Kingdom in a Federal European Union.

It is argued that more power should be transferred from the national parliaments to the European Parliament. This

however assumes a European party system at a time when there is little sign of such a development. The Christian Democrats, the second largest grouping in the European Parliament, did not even fight the European Elections in Great Britain. To surrender a large measure of national parliamentary democracy in anticipation of a supranational parliamentary democracy as yet to be realised would indeed be a serious gamble.

Any comment on the European situation must include recent events in Eastern Europe. The collapse of Communist authority has created a power vacuum which could easily be filled by religious and petty nationalist forces. It would be unwise for Western Europeans to turn their backs on their brothers and sisters in Eastern Europe at a time of such rapid and dramatic change. The present aim of Jacques Delors is complete Economic and Monetary union as quickly as possible.

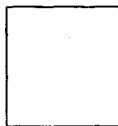
A Federal Europe with a major social dimension in place would provide an insurmountable obstacle to any further countries wishing to join from the East. Minimum wage legislation to be of any real meaning in countries like the U.K. and West Germany would be impossible to impose on countries like Poland or Turkey without creating disastrous unemployment. Already the vision of a social Europe seems to be becoming a meaningless mirage under pressure from Mrs Thatcher, and more discreetly from the poorer countries in the community such as Greece and Portugal.

Other suggestions include a two speed Community - a three tier Europe. What this means is that a Federal Europe would be surrounded by something called the European Economic Space (*sic*) in which Eastern European countries and the less enthusiastic members of the present community would be places. This would have the effect of reducing such countries to the level of suppliers of raw materials, components and fruit & vegetables to the industrial heartland of Federal Europe. As Lech Walesa said during his visit to London, "political [federal] union would be a bad thing for everyone in Europe." (Observer, December 3rd 1989.)

It is one thing to decry a Federal

Europe and the excesses of Margaret Thatcher. It is quite another to come up with a realistic alternative, capable of being sold to the British electorate. That is the task which Labour must set itself. It is my opinion that Labour must take the moral high ground rejecting the nationalism of Thatcher and the supranationalism of Federal Europe, opting instead for a true internationalism. One means of introducing internationalism into the Economic Community would be to open up membership to all countries which meet basic standards of human rights and democracy. The removal of the tariff in relation to developing countries could well be a means of promoting change.

It would be a tragedy if the opportunities now open were wasted because Western Europe turned introvert. Democracy should recognise no frontiers and socialism should respect no borders. That is the challenge which democratic socialists and the Labour party should take up. That is the way to create a coherent alternative. That is the way to beat Thatcher on Europe.



Why the Miners lost, and how they could have won

The defeat of the 1984-1985 miners' strike was taken as a sign that Thatcherism had become all-powerful. Since then, some unions have won major strikes (although others have lost them) and Thatcherism looks to be one the slide.

Back in 1984 and 1985, we said that the defeat of the strike was due to bad tactics and folly. Also that Scargill and co. had created the situation by rejecting workers control in the Mining industry when Tony Benn had both the power and the desire to give it to them.

We hadn't set up **Labour and Trade Union Review** in those days, but we did produce pamphlets. And some of them are still available:

The Miners Debate Workers Control.	75p
Thinking About the Miner's Strike	75p
The Pit Strike in Perspective	£1
Tribune and the Miner's strike	£1

Also **Bullock A-Z**, a guide to the report of the Committee of Inquiry on Industrial Democracy. Produced in 1979 by Athol Books and the North London Workers Control Group £1

All five pamphlets £4

Prices include package and postage.

L&TUR £5,000 Appeal: Why we need your money

Thanks to all those who have sent something to our appeal. But we still need more.

What we're doing is trying to shake up left wing politics - force it to shed some comfortable illusions, and develop a more adventurous as well a more realistic attitude. An attitude that will enable more of the fine old dreams of a just society to be translated into reality. Naturally, it doesn't make us popular. But it has to be done, if future generations of socialists are not to experience the same sort of heart-breaking failures that have been happening since the 1960s.

No one associated with **L&TUR** gets paid anything - except for the printer. Until recently we were able to rely on a special relationship with a printer who gave us a bargain rate. In effect, he was subsidising us out of solidarity, just as all the people who contribute hundreds of hours of unpaid labour time to **L&TUR** have been subsidising it.

Sadly, this arrangement came to an end. We now have to pay for normal commercial printing and this has doubled our costs. We were able to survive in the short run only by raising the sales price to £1.50 and considerably increasing our sales. We may or may not be able to continue to do the second of these. But, in any case, to guarantee our longer term future we need to be able to print **L&TUR** ourselves. Only in this way can we hope to keep costs to a minimum and maintain a reasonable price for the magazine.

We are therefore planning to obtain our own printing equipment, and we estimate that we could do this with £5,000. But neither **L&TUR** nor the **Ernest Bevin Society** have any financial backers. There is only one way in which we can hope to raise this money - from you, our readers. If you value what we are doing and want to see us continue the good work, you can help make this possible by sending us a donation - and please make it a

substantial one! This is definitely an emergency and we don't have much time to reach our target.

But once we have reached it, with your help, we shall be able to do many things which we haven't had the resources for in the past. As well as the magazine, we could produce pamphlets on a wide range of subjects, developing the ideas put forward in **L&TUR** in greater detail and depth. And we could publish reprints of important articles and essays by earlier socialists and trade unionists which are still relevant to the British labour movement today, but which have been forgotten and allowed to go out of print - things that people need to be told about, and won't get from anyone else but us.

We're now beginning our fourth year of operations, we've shown that we can develop our thinking, expand our sales network and improve the quality of the magazine. We have managed this without raising the sales price before now, and without asking for money from anyone. But we now need the active support of our readers. We would not be asking for it otherwise. So please send your cheques, large or small, to **Labour & Trade Union Review**, 114 Lordship Road, London N16 0QP...soon.

Evil in return

Walter Cobb accepts the view of Tory Home Secretary David Waddington that the Trafalgar Square riot was caused by 'sheer wickedness'. But the origins of that wickedness are to be found on the Tory front bench.

At a time when everyone expected the March 31st poll tax demonstration to be just another demo, several of us went to try to sell copies of *L&TUR*. We hoped to get through to a different crowd of people. We found a different crowd of people, indeed - but not one that was likely to buy copies of a serious political journal. We didn't manage many sales, and people selling other left journals seemed to be doing no better. Though a great variety of people were there, as on any demonstration, a surprisingly large number were *lumpen* and apolitical. Shouting slogans against Thatcher was all they were interested in. We even got some hostility, because we identified ourselves as a part of the broad labour and trade union movement, rather than using some lurid title like *Red Ranter* or *Socialist Headbanger*.

All of us had gone before the big trouble started, so I am in no position to add to what has already appeared in the papers - except that the police were photographing people rather more openly and publicly than they usually do. But anyone who knows London will guess that a lot of the trouble came from the place itself. Trafalgar Square is close to the centres of power, and an ideal place to feel alienated in. Hyde Park is

much better for quietly dispersing a crowd - trees and lawns tend to calm people down, and there is Speakers Corner for those who still need to let off steam.

The organisers had asked for the march to be redirected to Hyde Park, and this was refused. This point was made in the parliamentary debate, but received less attention than it deserved.

One might have expected Norman Tebbit to say "It is inconceivable that violence on such a scale was spontaneous. On Saturday, I called for exemplary sentences for those who were convicted of committing criminal acts. May I today emphasise the importance - perhaps the greater importance - of prosecuting those who planned and organised the mayhem?" Unfortunately, it was actually Roy Hattersley, Labour's Shadow Home Secretary, who said the words I've quoted. He let the government off the hook, more or less going into alliance with them against the march organisers. He didn't raise the matter of the refusal to allow the march to go to Hyde Park, and when it was raised he made too little of it.

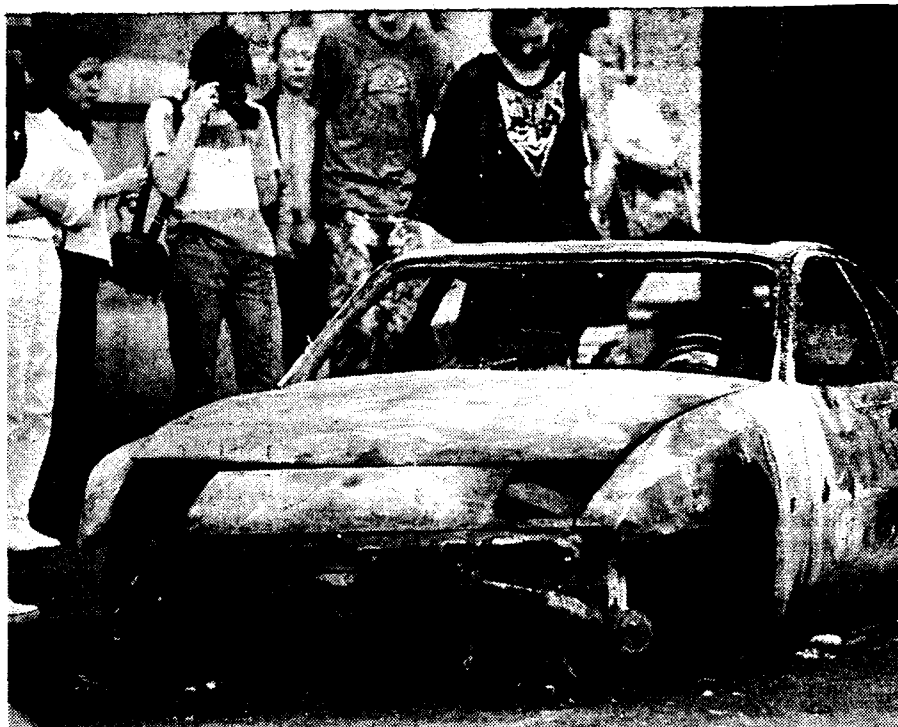
It was left to others in the debate to make the points that Hattersley should have made. Thus Dick Douglas asked the

Home Secretary "Will he compare the events in London with the peaceful rally that was held in Glasgow and remember that we in Scotland have been demonstrating peacefully against the poll tax for three years?", adding that "I have fought against violence all my life but I have also fought against injustice to the poorer sections of the population." And Tony Banks said "Is it not a fact that the vast majority of people on that demonstration were there to demonstrate peacefully... Is it not also a fact that extremists on the street need extremists in Government and that with the Prime Minister, who is sitting next to the Home Secretary, the extremists in our society have all the cause and justification that they need?"

For the march to end in a fight with the police was, of course, totally lunatic. The poll tax is actually fairly unpopular among police officers. According to the independent magazine *Police Review*, police would sympathise with the aims of the demonstration, since "every officer will lose money as a result of the poll tax." (*The Independent*, April 6th.) It's stupid to treat the police as the enemy on an issue where there could be a large degree of sympathy. But, as I said, it was a fairly *lumpen* crowd, full of the sort of people who see the police as natural enemies.

A bunch of anarchist poseurs called *Class War* have claimed credit for the violence. Actually, they can't have had all that much to do with it. They are not an organisation with hundreds of reliable street-fighters who can be turned loose at a moment's notice. A lot of their previous efforts have flopped - notably *Stop the City*, which didn't. It will be interesting to see if anything happens to them after this latest bust-up. They seem to enjoy a strange immunity, rather as if someone very highly placed thinks that they are rather useful to the Thatcherite cause.

It has been left to Hackney Council, controlled by the Labour Left, to take effective action - they suspended 28 year-old Town Hall clerk and 'Class Warmonger' Andy Murphy, after he'd given an interview full of stupid remarks that Thatcher could conveniently denounce. Actually, I can't really support





Protests against poll tax lead to violence in the council chamber.

Hackney Council for punishing him for something that has nothing to do with his work. But it's interesting that they look for ways to get at Class War, whereas the police have somehow failed to take action against people who are blatantly doing their best to cause riots and sundry mayhem.

Class War could only flourish in the conditions that Thatcher has created. And it took the Poll Tax, and its widespread rejection by the whole society, including a large part of the Tory Party, to create the conditions for a riot. Laws that the leader of the governing party has imposed on an unwilling society just do not have the same standing as laws that the whole society has agreed to and accepted. In pushing ahead with poll tax, and various other measures, Thatcher has gone against the unwritten laws of political life - unwritten laws that have given Britain political continuity since 1688.

As I said, the rioters were not particularly nice people. Most of them

would have been on the fringes of society in almost any possible social set-up. But it has taken Thatcher, with her enthusiasm for all things American, to create something like the American underclass.

An underclass is not a nice thing. The best thing to be done with it is to abolish it, reabsorb it back into the working class. But that would mean reasonable jobs, cheap accommodation, a general attitude of social concern. The very opposite of Thatcherism, in fact.

If that does not happen, the future could be very nasty. We on the left are often tempted to idealise the victims of oppression. The fact is, while the occasional individual will be ennobled by suffering and misfortune, most people are degraded by it. As W.H.Auden put it:

*"I and the public know
What all schoolchildren learn
Those to whom evil is done
Do evil in return".*

Auden actually said this in 1939, after fleeing to America to escape World War Two. He recognised that Germany had

produced Nazism because it had been brutally treated in the Versailles peace treaty. He also recognised that just protests against an unjust treaty had turned into something decidedly evil. He had no solution - it was left to others to first destroy Nazism, and then create a Europe in which Germany could fit in as a positive force. But the observation was a shrewd one - much shrewder than anything T.S.Eliot ever came up with.

In the late 20th century, we have the means to provide a good life for everyone. People like Thatcher are determined to turn everything into a nasty rat-race instead. A rat-race will usually be won by rats. And the hopeless losers in the same race can sometimes be even more vicious, having little to lose and a lot to be angry about. So the next time Waddington or one of the other Tories starts talking about wickedness, agree with them, and then point out where the original wickedness came from.

Letters to the Editor

Nietzsche said in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* that God is dead but that His corpse is still with us and is rotting. The same may be said for the Marxism-Leninism of the past thirty years. As a great world-transforming force, Soviet Marxism effectively came to an end with the death of Stalin though it was given a new lease of life, now also finished, by its offspring in China. In this thirty years, all we had from Marxist circles in the West was the smell of the corpse. Despite every incentive they did not develop a new, vigorous Marxism independent of Leninism. It is now far too late to disassociate Marxism from Leninism as Madawc Williams wishes to do. (*The End of Autocracy*, L&TUR No. 16).

In any case, Marxism dissociated from Leninism becomes these days a rather uninspiring politics of the possible. Philosophical materialism and economic determinism can only be intellectual props for the consumer society: they have no concept of man as anything other than a consumer. It is quite possible to reduce man to the level of nothing other than a consumer. Modern capitalism has achieved it. Since the consumer is the highest idea that philosophical materialism and economic determinism can offer of man, they are obliged to gladly accept and work with capitalism once the working class is included within the orbit of the consumers. I do perform what Madawc Williams calls the 'shoddy trick' of identifying consumerism and philosophical materialism. I can see no grounds on which a philosophical materialist can possibly object to 'consumerism' so long as he himself is allowed to share in the consumption. I see nothing other than consumerism (albeit a critical consumerism - the consumerism of a *Which* reader) in any of the articles I have read by Madawc Williams. At the time Marx was writing there was a combustible mixture in the world of intelligent artisan reduced to the status of machine minder, and desperately poor proletariat. Under such circumstances purely consumerist criteria had a revolutionary potential. Today's workers are pampered wage slaves who know nothing other than the values of consumerism. They are philosophical materialists to the core and nothing of any value can be expected of them.

If we are mere creatures of economic necessity, then we have no reason for

any other than minor discontents with the shape of present day Western European societies. The flaw in philosophical materialism is that it cannot pose the question of what man is other than a mere recorder of the outside world. 'Reality' is entirely external. It lies outside and not in our experience of the outside world, which is purely 'subjective'. Materialism does not attribute any depth to our spiritual life, other than the mere spatial depth allowed by Freudian psychology - and even that is denied by the behaviourists. The world as it is in the affluent countries is quite tolerable if the spirit has no depth and is a mere passive being. The moment we realise that it has depth and that the senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch - especially the touch of our hands) have the capacity to be creative agents - to work with the world they perceive - not just passive receivers of whatever is thrown at them, we begin to recognise that the 'modern world', built on the substitution of mechanical forces for living forces, is intolerable. *Absolutely* intolerable.

Philosophical materialism is the enemy of mankind. Leninism endowed it with an attractive, though philosophically inconsistent, religious aura. That illusion has now disappeared and we are left facing the thing itself in all its hideous deformity (witness the photograph of Hong Kong in the last L&TUR). What is required now is the spirit of Brendan Clifford in his review of Christopher Hitchens' *The Monarchy*, when he says: "In my naive way I got it fixed in my head that commerce and truth were largely incompatible." (L&TUR No.16), and describes how he renounced the prospect of a lucrative column in *The Spectator* for the sake of his 'pleasure'. Such pleasure is something other than the pleasure of a consumer of a sex-machine. What is it? It is something philosophical materialism can't handle. Philosophical materialism will finally be beaten when we recognise that agriculture and furniture-making are as much to do with 'truth', and therefore incompatible with commerce, as literature - the day on which we begin to take our pleasure seriously.

Peter Brooke
Ampuis
France

L&TUR is pleased to publish a letter that was sent to Marxism Today but not published by them. We have omitted things that are specific to the editorial in Marxism Today to which the letter was meant to be a reply.

... First it was Stalin that was blamed for everything that went wrong with communism in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and the various communist parties throughout the world. Later Lenin was roped in to take his share of the blame, and now it's the Man himself Marx.

What strikes me is that there is not even a hint that in some small way, the great number of middle-class philosophers who dominated the various communist parties might have had some responsibility for the developments, and later, the continuation of the rot that set in.

In the late 1950s I attended a specially convened meeting of the N/W London advisory committee. This was an organisation of working-class trade unionists who were also members of the C.P. Out of about 100 members there were over 60 in attendance at that meeting. I was asked to move a motion which called for the setting-up of a responsible committee of the C.P. to "investigate the undemocratic behaviour of certain members of the C.P. in the E.T.U." (*The Electricians Union, then run by C.P. members, and now the EEPTU, the leading union on the right of the Labour movement. Ed.*)

The meeting was convened because a lot of working-class communist party members were opposed to the fiddling of ballots on the E.T.U. Our interpretation of Marxism told us that such behaviour was not in the interests of our class. We did not need a Gorbachev to tell us so.

The motion was fully discussed and approved with one abstention and none against. Needless to say no action was taken by the powers-that-be. And the middle-class philosophers, who were fully informed, kept silent. Later Frank Chapple and some others broke the whole story to the press, and the rest you know.

(For those who don't, the C.P. faction in charge were convicted of ballot-rigging, after which Frank Chapple, a former C.P. member, led an internal power-struggle that ousted them. Meanwhile the *Daily Worker* (now the *Morning Star*) carried a headline suggesting that they'd been acquitted -

what had actually happened was that they'd been acquitted on some additional charges. This bit of trickery was widely pointed out and widely laughed at. Ed.)

Is it going a bit too far to suggest, that if the motion by working-class communists in the late 1950s had been acted upon positively by the C.P. hierarchy, and the various London branches - which were, on the whole, dominated by middle-class communists - that glasnost and perestroika might have had their origins here in Britain in the 1950s?

If that is straining credibility a bit, there is nevertheless a very obvious question here - why was it that, a large and important organisation of C.P. trade-unionists could see the necessity for democratic reform of the C.P. while the hierarchy, including the philosophers, could only respond to their demands by attempts at cover-up or silence?

Would discussion of such questions as this not be more fruitful than all the speculation about the fallibility of individuals? If Lenin and Stalin can be held responsible for everything that went wrong then those people responsible for blocking any investigation into undemocratic behaviour by C.P. members in the E.T.U need never be called upon to account for their actions. Unless and until communists here in Britain are prepared to examine honestly the behaviour of leaders much closer to home, any talk of "a need for a renewal of socialist thinking" will be empty indeed. Perhaps adequate for trendy middle-class drawing-rooms and bars, but a hindrance to the development of socialism rather than a help.

Have you noticed, by the way, that in spite of the comings and goings of the various communist parties, the working class, here and worldwide, continues to evolve in its own imperfect way? Continuously making a response to the unceasing attacks of market economics. Imperfect the struggle may be, but nevertheless, more or less as Marx described it.

Gerry Golden
London



Presumably it is in a spirit of indignation that, in response to my letter, John Burton states (L&TUR No.16): *"Laboratory experiments are mostly carried out on specially bred lines of rats and mice - lines that would not exist at all if they were not needed for science."* Or to put it another way, small creatures with sensitive bodies are deliberately brought into existence for the sole purpose of undergoing pain and distress before being killed. (No doubt, John Burton has in mind the so-called 'Oncomouse', the first genetically engineered animal to receive a U.S. patent, which carries human cancer genes, is virtually guaranteed to develop cancer within ninety days of birth, and of which the research director of the breeding company remarked, *"There is a lot of excitement in the scientific community about transgenic animals like this"*.)

Since John Burton takes such an interest in the subject of animal experiments, he will be interested in the following figures. They are taken from the Home Office's statistics on Experiments and Procedures on Living Animals in Great Britain 1987, published in November 1989, the first set of statistics issued under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986. Among the notable facts which emerge from a comparison with the figures for 1986 are: a 67% increase in tobacco experiments, a 116% increase in experiments involving the application of substances to the eye, a 32% increase in the number of experiments on dogs for the safety evaluation of non-medical products, and, in spite of the Government's assurance that under the new Act there would be additional Home Office inspectors, a 2% reduction in the number of visits made.

Total number of procedures on animals:	3,631,393
Procedures conducted by commercial concerns:	2,229,299
(23% increase)	
Procedures on cats:	4,935
Procedures on primates:	5,078
Procedures on dogs:	10,853
Procedures on rabbits:	109,858
Procedures on rats:	866,349
Procedures on mice:	2,017,289
Reported infringements of the law:	9
Resulting prosecutions:	none.

The staggering scale of permitted cruelty to animals in the UK is matched by the depth of public ignorance of (or indifference to) it. The name of Jan Pallach is famous throughout the world, but how many readers of L&TUR have heard of the seventeen-year-old boy who burned himself to death in England in protest at the cruelties inflicted on animals? There can be no doubt that if this heroic act of self-sacrifice had been performed as a protest against government cuts in the education or health service budget, it would have been headline news. And how many readers of L&TUR know of the many animal welfare activists now serving prison sentences throughout the country? One of them, a member of the Animal Liberation Front (which, although the most militant animal welfare organisation, and despite its overtly aggressive stance, has never caused the slightest injury to anyone), is serving a ten-year sentence for conspiracy - and by a telling coincidence, on the very day on which he was sentenced, the perpetrator of a particularly vicious rape was committed to prison for three years.

John Burton refers to experiments involving the emotional deprivation of

baby monkeys. He regards the results as providing valuable evidence for the effects of similar deprivation in human babies. If this is so, then the similarities between the emotional needs of babies and monkeys are so close that we are forced to ask how the deliberate inflicting of such distress can be morally unacceptable in the one case but not in the other. To judge by his last paragraph, John Burton's answer would (not unexpectedly) be that human babies are higher in "the hierarchy of life", or, in other words, are more intelligent. (Curiously, he would appear to define intelligence in terms of the capacity for altruism; and on this criterion, apparently, the species which comes out tops is the one which has, sometimes unwittingly but more often deliberately, caused more destruction of the planet and all the species inhabiting it - including itself - than all the others put together.)

John Burton conceded that "animals have rights of a sort", rights, that is to say, which are to be determined by their level of intelligence and, of course, by the convenience of the more intelligent (us). Consistency requires, of course, that John Burton apply this principle to members of his own species; so we may infer that he would favour the use of the mentally disabled for laboratory experiments, as well as convicted criminals - whose lack of altruism is to be regarded as a sure indication of their low level of intelligence.

John Burton's *coup de grace* is that "anyone who refuses to recognise [that there is a hierarchy of life] should logically start defending the rights of mosquitoes, malarial parasites and the AIDS virus!" No one in the animal welfare movement would deny the existence of such a hierarchy. What places Man in his position in that hierarchy is his moral sense. The moral sense is consciousness of duties and responsibilities. Intelligence is power, and there is no power which has not been used to exploit, enslave and abuse the weaker - children, women, workers, ethnic groups... The whole issue of our treatment of animals centres on the indisputable fact that all the most complex life-forms - animals - possess both sentience and consciousness. In our dealings with life-forms which do possess these capacities, the demands of morality are inescapable. And far from asserting our superiority, we betray our humanity by denying those demands.

E. Hewitt
County Antrim

Richard Sexton (L&TUR No.16) is typical of supporters of the Palestinian cause in that he argues:

- a) That the Jewish population of Israel (or Palestine) has no inherent right to be there.
- b) That it is very unreasonable for the Israelis to act on the assumption that their neighbours are out to destroy them, either by force or by guile.

The most basic facts to remember is that the UN agreed to the setting up of a Jewish state in 1948. The Palestinians and the other Arabs absolutely refused to accept this at the time, and for a good many years afterwards. Since Palestinian politics developed precisely on the assumption that their rights were absolute, and the rights of the Jewish settlers non-existent, Israel had no choice except to treat them as enemies.

In 1987, the PLO suddenly switched over to admitting that Israel had a right to exist. This was done in a muddled and roundabout way, but it was finally done. Yet it was done only when the *Intifada* threatened to generate a new leadership among Palestinians living under Israeli occupation, a leadership independent of the PLO. The PLO had fought for the past couple of decades to prevent any settlement that would share the land between a Jewish state and an Arab one. The sincerity of their sudden conversion is thus open to doubt.

Moreover, even if the majority of the

current leadership of the PLO do sincerely accept Israel's right of existence, there is no guarantee that a future Palestinian state might not revive its claim to the whole territory. The chances of a Palestinian state - full, presumably, of returned Palestinian exiles - agreeing to co-exist peacefully seems a bit remote.

The Arabs are the only major cultural group that has *never* run a successful democracy for any long period of time. It would be splendid if this pattern changed, as has happened over the last few years in Latin America. But it has not changed yet. The Arab world is a mixture of autocratic monarchies, and republics ruled by autocrats who rule until they die or are overthrown. Black Africa, much poorer and with a diversity of peoples with very different languages and cultures, has done rather better. The predominantly black Caribbean Islanders have done better still. (Note also that the Caribbean is a case of fairly peaceful and successful mini-states.) White South Africa is only now trying to find a basis for equal co-existence, whereas Israel has been seeking it since the foundation of the state.

Possibly it was foolish to allow a Jewish state to be established in the first place. Ernest Bevin certainly thought so. People look for all sorts of deep hidden motives for his attitude - I suspect that he actually had a good anticipation of the unending problems that it would



Israelis training not to be Kurds

cause. Indeed, there was no good reason to suppose that the Jewish state would manage to hold out against the much more numerous Arabs. Just before the 6-day war, most analysts were reckoning that Israel didn't stand a chance.

The logic for establishing a Jewish state was that the *physical survival* of Jews could not be guaranteed without it. It was remembered that the world did nothing while the Jews of Germany were deprived of their rights. It was remembered - though the matter was played down - that Nazi Germany at first tried to force its Jewish population to emigrate, and turned to death camps only when it became clear that the rest of the world would not take most of them.

In any case, Israel was established. The human misery that would result from abolishing it would far exceed that engendered by keeping it in existence. Palestinians blend in easily in most Arab countries. By contrast, many European Jews had gone to great lengths to try to cease to be Jewish, and found it impossible. Jews could change their names, abandon their religion and customs, eat pork and black pudding, and yet still be regarded as 'Yids' by their neighbours.

The only chance for peace would be for the people of the West Bank and Gaza to elect their own representatives, who might be able to negotiate some sort of peace. The trouble is, such representatives would almost certainly refuse to obey the wishes of Arafat & Co. This - plus the hard-line attitudes that many Israelis hold after some four decades of continuous pressure - makes peace very hard to achieve.

International conferences provide no chance for peace at all. International conferences are places where politicians proclaim fine principles that they wish to apply to the rest of the world, but never to their own countries. What have conferences done for the Kurds, split between four states despite being as distinct a nation as any in the Middle East? What about Cyprus - still divided on the lines established by force by Turkey? Or Eritrea, locked in an endless war of secession with Ethiopia? Tibet, held by China despite the wishes of its inhabitants? What of West Irian, whose people are being thrust aside or destroyed by the Indonesians? Until some international order is established that will *actually enforce* rights to self-determination and security from war, Israel must look to its own security.

Madawc William
London

Tom Paine Defended against Michael Foot

is a pamphlet by Brendan Clifford, published by the *Ernest Bevin Society*.

It looks at Paine and Burke; how Foot misrepresents Paine's thought, why Robespierre almost had Paine executed, and why modern British politics could be considered to be based on a merger of Paine and Burke.

Available from L&TUR, 114 Lordship Road, London N16 0QP,
price £1, including postage.

Belfast Historical & Educational Association

Belfast in the French Revolution by Brendan Clifford

Why Belfast more than any other city in the British Isles felt enthusiasm for the French Revolution and participated vicariously in it; how the Vatican thwarted Mirabeau, why the Girondins failed and how Robespierre and the Mountain reconstituted the French state on an entirely new basis.

Belfast Historical & Educational Association, 1989, 148 pp., £7.50.
Available from the *Ernest Bevin Society*, 26 Aden Grove, London N16 9NJ.

New from Athol Books

The O'Neill Years Unionist Politics 1963-1969

by David Gordon

Athol Books, Belfast, 1989, 166 pp., £7.50

Terence O'Neill set out to be a new sort of Unionist leader. He succeeded. He was the Unionist politician who more than any other helped to create the present mess. This book explains how.

and

From Civil Rights to National War Northern Ireland Catholic Politics 1964-1974

by Pat Walsh

Athol Books, Belfast, 1989, 112 pp., £6

The Civil Rights movement among Northern Ireland's Catholics implied acceptance of the British connection. Somehow this changed into an IRA campaign. Somehow the SDLP became a party which found a Council of Ireland more important than the survival of Power Sharing. This book explains.

Both are available from Athol Books, 10 Athol Street, Belfast BT12 4GX,
and from the *Ernest Bevin Society*, 26 Aden Grove, London N16 9NJ.

The National Museum of Labour History



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Nicholas Mansfield BA BPhil AMA — Director

The National Museum of Labour History will shortly reopen. L&TUR is pleased to reproduce the museum's news release.

The National Museum of Labour History will open the doors of its new premises in Manchester for the first time on the May Day Bank Holiday (May 7th).

The museum is accommodated in the former Mechanics Institute building at 103 Princess Street which housed the first meeting of the Trades Union Congress in 1868.

The purpose of the museum is to commemorate ordinary people in their work, their fight to improve their lives and their struggles to survive. The museum will use its collection of banners, photographs, badges, posters, tools, regalia, paintings and everyday objects to illustrate its themes.

The period covered by the displays will range from the eighteenth century artisans to the Grunwick strikers and from suffragettes to working class Tories. The struggles of the last 200 years are illustrated through the development of different campaigns and organisations including early radicalism, chartism, the co-operative movement, the Labour Party and women's liberation movement.

The museum will also provide a permanent home for the archives of the Labour Party which includes the minutes of Labour's National Executive Committee, together with extensive correspondence from the foundation of the Party's forerunner - the Labour Representation Committee - in 1900 to the papers of the Labour Party Research Department in the 1970s.

The archives also include documents about the working class pioneers of the 1840s and papers collected by Kier Hardie's secretary in the early years of this century. The archive is also due to receive the parliamentary papers of Michael Foot.

Looking after the archive will be the

former Labour Party Archivist, Stephen Bird, who has been appointed Archivist/Librarian to the museum. As well as the Labour Party Archive, the museum holds the records of a number of Trade Union and Socialist Societies including the socialist Sunday schools, the Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers union and NATSOPA.

The official opening of the museum will be performed by Jack Jones, the former General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union, who is the Chair of the museum Trustees. Other speakers at the opening will include the Lord Mayor of Manchester, Councillor Yomi Mambu, Councillor Graham Stringer, the leader of Manchester City Council and Councillor Bernard Coyle, the Chair of AGMA (Association of Greater Manchester Authorities).

As well as archives, the Princess Street premises will provide a study room, textile conservation studio and museum galleries.

The first exhibition at the museum, opening on May 7th, will be **Brass Roots - 150 Years of Brass Bands** telling the story of the brass band movement. A number of special events including band concerts involving the Besses O' th' Barn Band are being organised in association with this exhibition.

The opening of the Princess Street premises is the first stage of the development of the museum in Manchester. The main public exhibition area will be located in the former Upper Campfield Market building in the City's historic Castlefield area. The market is at present the subject of a design feasibility study.

The museum possesses a unique collection of almost 200 Trade Union banners which will form the centrepiece

of the displays in the Upper Campfield Market. The banners require a considerable amount of conservation work which will be carried out in Princess Street in a specially constructed studio. Part of the feasibility study will involve consideration of ways in which such sensitive objects can be displayed without damage from heat or light.

Manchester City Council has committed almost £1,000,000 to the relocation of the Museum in the City. Approximately £200,000 of this money has been spent on the Princess Street building. It is hoped that the feasibility study of the Upper Campfield Market will be completed by the middle of this year and will provide information about the likely cost of the scheme and the timescale for the work involved.

Trade Unions and their districts and branches are being asked to sponsor the museum under the auspices of the TUC. Full details of this scheme will be circulated in the near future.

*For further information please contact
Nick Mansfield or Myna Trustram
061 228 7212*

The Museum is located at 103 Princess Street, Manchester M1 6DD (close to the Town Hall). It is a registered charity and is independent of any political affiliation. For a donation of £2 you will get copies of their bi-yearly newsletter.

The museum will be open Wednesday to Saturday, 10 to 5. Sunday 2 to 5. Bank Holiday Mondays 10 to 5. Closed Christmas Week and Good Friday. Open from Monday May the Seventh.

Admission Free.