

# Labour & Trade Union Review

July - August 1990

No.18

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## Facing the Future?

Europe

Mad Cow Disease

Nazi warcrimes

Sweden's Economy

plus

Bazoft & Investigative  
Journalism

Good Souls and Greedy Atoms

Notes on the News  
N.U.P.E publications  
Music - The Hapy End  
Bertrand Russell

"Looking to the  
Future"

- and ignoring  
the past!



## "Looking to the Future" - and ignoring the past!

If good intentions could win elections then Labour's **Looking to the Future** would guarantee victory at the next election. It has everything and yet it has nothing.

The essential fact about it is that it accepts the groundrules laid down by Thatcherism. The market decides. It may be tamed somewhat - but it rules. It is not ruled. Thatcherism has broken the spirit of the Kinnockite Labour Party. Now it is a case of anything you can do I can do better. Kinnock in power would be Thatcherism without Thatcher - Thatcherism with a human face.

This creates an immediate credibility problem, because the electorate accepts a division of labour in politics. Labour politicians are considered best at pursuing socialist policies and the Tories best at pursuing capitalist policies. If Thatcher has failed to make capitalism a success by her policies it is most unlikely that Kinnock would succeed where she has failed. It should not be forgotten that Thatcher came to power by staking out as clearly as possible a different world view and therefore different policies to Labour. And she was admired precisely because she gloried in being a fundamental alternative.

Kinnock hopes to be successful by doing the opposite.

This agreement on fundamentals means that the next election will be decided on frivolous issues. The conflict will degenerate into debating points and personalities.

The marvellous P.R. men around Kinnock have tried long and hard to come up with a "big idea" to counter Thatcherism. By their own admission, they have failed.

Why did it not occur to them that an issue like full employment, for example, might be the big idea they needed?

Full employment should appeal to all sections of society, especially with the growth of the underclass. (Or lumpen proletariat, as unreconstructed Marxists call them.) The underclass is making more and more people feel very uncomfortable. Together with the NHS, the Welfare State and Public Ownership it provided the social underpinning of post-war Britain.

The call for full employment would highlight the moral alternative that Labour could and should provide to

Thatcherism.

Why does nothing like this appear in **Looking to the Future**? We would suggest that it's not there because the present leadership has forgotten (if it ever knew) how to fight on real issues. They know that a policy of full employment would also be full of problems. It causes inflationary pressures, creates complacent and powerful unions, and is open to abuse by slobbish sections of the working class. It is difficult to maintain, and to do so means that the workforce must take more and more responsibility for the organisation of production. It means a policy for incomes, profits and wealth.



All of these are the problems of socialism, and socialists should be only too eager to tackle them. Moreover, we have had some past experience of the problems caused by full employment. They were the problems of the 1960s and 1970s.

Labour wants to draw a veil over that period. But those problems were the problems of socialist success and not the problems of any sort of socialist failure. Labour had become the natural party of government because it had won the moral high ground in post-war Britain by the success of the post-war underpinning

mentioned above. It lost that ground, and therefore elections, because it could not develop and build on those successes.

The Tories have turned the 1970s into a bogey for Labour. The present leadership cannot cope with it, and therefore the bogey gets bigger and bigger.

But Labour cannot in effect disown its past, because that means self-abasement, and the electorate has no respect for parties that behave like that. Labour must take off from where it left off. But to pose the problem is only to highlight how unlikely that is to happen under Kinnock & Co. How much easier it is to leave everything to market forces and let the devil take the hindmost.

The lack of a "big idea" also means internal problems for the party. Without it, discipline can only be maintained in the most negative way. Different tendencies and vested interests become automatically threats. Their potential cannot be put to productive use. Militant, the Unions, the Party Conference, as well as large elements of the Parliamentary Party become problems that have to be neutralised by every means possible. The vision of a hundred flowers blossoming becomes a vision of a hundred weeds spoiling the pretty little garden on display. The campaign against Militant is particularly obnoxious because Militant is raw working class politics that has always existed in the Party and has hitherto been developed to constructive ends.

The result of all this is that a large vacuum is developing in the left or progressive half of the political spectrum. The Tories by contrast are doing their traditional job of containing all on the right half and to their credit have just decided to civilise a new batch of political primates, the Ulster Unionists.

The Labour Party is becoming more and more exclusive to the leadership. That way lies disaster sooner or later, at or some time after the next election.

# Notes on the News

by Madawc Williams

## Electoral struggles

With the collapse of the Russian hegemony in Eastern Europe, a new pattern is taking shape. Not so much a rejection of socialism, as a reassertion of national identity.

Romania and Bulgaria have been described as 'out of line', because they elected parties based on the old Communist parties. A lot of commentators have also been surprised at the way the party has kept popular support in Russia itself, and in those territories of the USSR that were in the Soviet Union before World War Two.

Nationalism seems to be the key. Bulgarian nationalism has never been particularly anti-Russian; the Turks were the big foes. Ceaucescu, despite monstrous errors in his later years, was never a Russian puppet. Even in Czechoslovakia, a survival of socialist feeling has kept the Communist Party as the main opposition with a respectable 13% of the vote. (Slovak separatists did not do well - the two parts of Czechoslovakia may go separate ways in the long run, but not just yet.)

Further afield, the people of Peru have opted for a descendant of Japanese immigrants as president. It is in part a bit of self-assertion by Peru's Indians, to vote for someone who looks like them, but also has the prestigious association with rich and powerful Japan. Latin America has fallen far behind all the other parts of the world that were reshaped by Europeans, mainly because of a combination of Catholic power and a rather parasitical ruling class derived from Europe. It would be excellent if this pattern were now to break down.

## Boris the Bad?

Every Soviet leader since Stalin has left the USSR with both less prestige and less relative power in its cold-war competition with World Capitalism. I never really expected Gorbachev to be an exception. But I have been surprised at the way he has turned a bad position into rapid and total defeat.

Not everyone has yet noticed that the USSR has lost the Cold War. George Bush is being very polite about it, Western leaders in general are wise enough not to hold any victory parades. A die-hard faction in the USSR's leadership might yet seize power and do a

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lot of damage - even cause World War Three just when everyone thinks the danger is totally gone. So the Soviet Empire is being dismantled with great tact and politeness. But dismantled it will be.

Gorbachev's greatest error was the same as Khrushchev's - to talk as if almost anything was possible, and at the same time to clamp down on most of what did occur. The signs are that he understands very little about politics outside the closed world of the Communist Party hierarchy. This too has been a feature of every Soviet leader since Stalin - a fatal weakness in the system that Lenin and Trotsky designed and that Stalin set on a solid basis. Western leaders learn their trade in competitions with rival would-be leaders for public support. If they are not good at it to begin with, they soon learn. They have a rough and ready idea of what large masses of ordinary people are

likely to do, if left to themselves. The products of the Communist Party hierarchy seem to have no idea.

Except for Boris Yeltsin. He was tossed out of the hierarchy by Gorbachev, a misfortune that turned into an astounding piece of good luck. He was ideally placed, in the heart of Russia, known to the public but not a part of the hierarchy. He learned real politics. Yeltsin can see that the game is lost, as far as being a superpower is concerned. Also that the system of state planning is too corrupt and inefficient to be revived. What he seems to be aiming for is a peaceful integration of Russia with the world market, with the other nationalities of the USSR set free to do whatever they want, and with ordinary Russians protected against a squeeze in their already low living standard while the economy is reorganised.

It's quite a come-down from what was once possible. But it's the best prospect

left, after several decades of bungling by the Soviet hierarchy. And once the world market has created a more or less peaceful and prosperous world, socialism can be put back on the agenda, East and West.

#### Israel & Palestine - a downward spiral

I sometimes wonder if Yasser Arafat isn't secretly controlled by some hard-line Zionist faction. Certainly, he has a positive genius for throwing away real chances in the search for illusory victories.

Arafat had a unique chance to detach America from Israel. A young Israeli who seemed to have been fed up with life in general brutally murdered several inoffensive Palestinians at a bus stop. A hard-line right-wing government was shaping up in Israel. But what did he do? Posture at international conferences, where everyone else was happy to posture in ways that would lead to no concrete or definite result. Dither over the issue of a planned terrorist attack on an Israeli holiday beach, so that Israel's friends in the United States have a perfect pretext to drop peace negotiations at a time when Israel looked quite capable of spoiling things by rejecting some moderate proposal for land for peace.

The whole issue of Iraq's alleged poison gas missiles or superguns shows just what a fool Arafat is. For a start, he should have realised and strongly pointed out that anything that lands on the territory of Israel will kill Palestinians as well as Jews. He could have gained some good public relations by declaring that such uncivilised weapons should never be used. He could and should have been able to work out that Iraq is not actually going to do anything to Israel, given that Israel could almost certainly hit back with nuclear weapons. In point of fact, Iraq has never done very much in any of the Middle Eastern wars. And the only possible ally in a war against Israel is Syria, Iraq's most bitter enemy.

What will probably happen now is a brutal crushing of the Palestinian revolt, with the various Arab states saying much but doing little or nothing. Arafat will continue to posture at every available opportunity, and things will go from bad to worse.

#### Fairchildren

Early in June, the death occurred of Robert Noyce. You probably haven't heard of him, but what he did had a big effect on the world - and was one of the reasons why the capitalist world market won out over Leninism.

Noyce was one of the electron

engineers hired by William Shockley, co-inventor of the transistor, to exploit the invention commercially. Deciding that Shockley didn't understand how to succeed as a businessman, he and some of his colleagues left to found a company that they called Fairchild. He later left that company too, to found Intel, the company that invented the microprocessor and is still very important in the industry. In hiving off he was very typical of the electronic pioneers - indeed the companies founded by defectors from Fairchild have been very important, and people refer to them jokingly as the 'fairchildren'.

Why should this matter, to anyone who isn't an electronics buff? Because no similar process was allowed to happen in the USSR. There, the top experts thought that valves were the main things, that transistors would never be very important. And then when they did accept that the transistor had its points, they were too slow to adapt. Even though the USSR was interested in computers from the very beginning, its computer and consumer electronics industry fell far behind. And that messed everything else up.

There is no reason why a planned socialist system should not allow bright young people with innovative ideas to go out and try to do better than their elders. Indeed, under Stalin this was in some cases allowed. But under Brezhnev, the whole thing stagnated, with people sitting on top of their own bureaucratic hierarchy for decades and decades, stopping anything that didn't fit their own idea of what was proper. Now, it's too late.

#### Ancient light

The Hubble Space telescope is now in orbit, being fine-tuned for its serious work. Already, it's been able to show that a particular blob of light that seemed to be one star is actually two. Other, more interesting discoveries should soon be made.

Hubble will be able to see objects that are very old and far away. Since light travels at a finite speed, the light from very distant objects is almost as old as the universe itself. Nothing was quite the same then; galaxies were still being formed. Many puzzles should be answered, many new questions raised.

Meanwhile, theorists are working on the notion that our universe might have 'budded off' from some much larger super-universe or multiverse. Also that our own universe might be creating baby universes even now, in some special regions of space. Such a process could

not be directly observed, but Hubble might give us valuable clues, tell us if the truth is this or something even stranger.

#### Racism in London

A late comment on the local elections back in May. The 'Islamic Party' totally failed to get large numbers of Muslim votes, thankfully. And a look at votes in multi-member wards in Hackney shows a small but consistent 'racist vote' of about 5% to 10%. That is to say, candidates whose name indicated that they were Black or Asian got that much less than colleagues in the same party. It's much what I'd have expected - a small but persistent degree of prejudice in what is essentially a racially integrated borough.

An even more belated comment - back in March a survey by the now-abolished Inner London Education Authority showed some interesting figures for the school performance of various ethnic groups. It is normally assumed on the Left that differences are due to white racism. But there were profound differences between groups that most white people could barely tell apart and would be very unlikely to treat differently. Africans (excluding Arabs) did much better than children of Caribbean origin. Indians did better than any other ethnic group, and Pakistanis almost as well, but Bangladeshis had the lowest average score of all. The difference, most probably, is due to different cultures and attitudes to school.

#### Shopping in the Fourth Green Field

The Republic of Ireland is in breach of two separate international agreements in regard to its treatment of Northern Ireland. On the one hand, it is in breach of the Helsinki Agreement by not recognising the existing border as legitimate *de jure* as well as *de facto*. On the other, it restricts cross-border shopping, despite a ruling by the European Court of Justice.

The Helsinki Agreement tidied up the vexed question of European boundaries, some of which have changed five or six times during the 20th century, most of which are open to some sort of challenge. The rather arbitrary and partisan lines drawn by the USSR in Eastern Europe are accepted as final simply because the alternative is endless quarrels and quite possibly war. Yet the Republic of Ireland still keeps up the claim to Northern Ireland, the 'fourth green field', legitimising the objective of the IRA even while condemning its

methods. Somehow 'anti-imperialism' justifies ignoring both international law and the wishes of the majority Protestant population. (And it isn't even clear that a majority of Catholics want to be ruled from Dublin. They vote for the SDLP, which does want it, but if the question were put directly they might well vote no. In referenda they have mostly abstained.)

Given the claim to the North, you might have expected Dublin to welcome any and all cross-border links. But cross-border shopping costs the exchequer money, given that the Republic has a much higher rate of VAT. When it comes to putting their money where their mouth is, the Dublin politicians fall down.

The whole matter of the 'fourth green field' is a matter of hypocrisy, for everyone except the IRA, who are at least prepared to die for it. That's why it was good to see the Tory Party put up a candidate in a recent Northern Ireland by-election. True, they didn't get many votes - but at least voters got a chance to vote for or against the party that governs them. Labour, even though it will govern Northern Ireland if it wins the next election, still refuses to put up official Labour Party candidates or even to allow people living in Northern Ireland to join the party.

With extended postal voting, people all over the world will get the chance to vote for one of the two parties with a chance of forming a government. Except in Northern Ireland. And then politicians over here ask why people over there won't be reasonable!

#### A good European?

"Dull was it in that dawn to be alive". That would be a more fitting comment on the first issue of Robert Maxwell's *The European* than the Wordsworth original that they quoted in their editorial. And did the editorial writer not remember that Wordsworth's feeling of bliss noticeably failed to last, so that within a decade he was backing Pitt in the war against France?

This time round, European unity has a much better chance - mainly because it is being done by a number of nations working in harmony, rather than one nation trying to impose its notion of a United Europe on everyone else. But I doubt if *The European* will have any large part in it.

As a weekly in English, it is in competition with *The Economist* - which briefly ran a series of ads, saying things like "*In the global village read the local paper.*" They seem to have stopped bothering. *The European* has

little of substance to say about anything, and anyone who wants to look beyond their own nation and region will want to know about more than just Europe.

#### Vis-à-Vis

Another odd publishing phenomenon, and one more likely to last, is the vulgar comic magazine *Viz*. It seems to be selling more than 900,000 copies per issue - well ahead of the *Beano*, that came second with 400,000.

*Viz* has been described as a new phenomenon. Actually, it is a resurgence of a very old tradition of vulgar cartoons. Anyone who visited the British Museum's exhibition on the French Revolution, or who knows the cartoons of that period from some other source, will realise just what a venerable tradition it is. English humour has been mainly scatological for at least the past 200 years. It's dull and silly, but it shows no signs of going away.

#### 071 for the wings of a dove

You used to have to dial 01 for London if you lives outside it, and nothing at all if you lived in it. Now you have to dial 071 (sometimes), or 081 (sometimes) or for those living in London just the old code (sometimes) or 071 (sometimes) or 081 (sometimes).

What's the logic behind all this? London needed more numbers that were possible with the six digits following the old 01. There seem to have been sound technical reasons for splitting the existing code, rather than adding an extra digit. The numbers have a logic, the first three for the exchange, the last three for the phone itself.

So why not split it by exchange number, say 071 for all exchanges up to and including 500, and 081 for the rest? Or maybe at some number higher or lower than 500, to keep an even split. That would have meant one number to learn, from which all 01 numbers could be simply turned in to 071 or 081.

The actual system is a split between inner and outer London. Except that it isn't. The dividing line is arbitrary, and in some cases splits up single exchanges. And anyone living anywhere in London can get an 071 London, for just a small fee.

And that's probably the reason for the whole thing. Play on the deep snobbery of the English. Also on the reasonable concern by shops and small businesses that an 081 code will be seen by customers as equivalent to dwelling in the outer darkness. Lots of fees. Much hassle for customers - but not for the sort of customers who might defect to

Mercury, the only possible alternative. Nice for shareholders - and why should a privatised company care about anything else? They can even be sued for not making as much money as possible for shareholders, what they do to their customers is another matter.

#### Rail no-way

The Channel Tunnel was supposed to have been a showpiece for private enterprises, doing what would normally be the job of the state and doing it better. What a joke!

At every stage, it it has been obvious that the Tunnel did not make sense in normal profit-making terms. It needed a great deal of government arm-twisting to keep it going. Almost certainly, it was sold at an absurdly low estimate of costs, just so that Mrs Thatcher could be fooled into thinking that something that was definitely socially necessary could also work in terms of private profit.

But now the notion of a partly private and partly subsidised fast rail link has been dropped. As far as links to London go, normal public investments in the railway system will probably fill the gap. But the absence of a fast link to London also spoils the possibility of fast links on from London to the rest of the country. It will feed into the whole process whereby the South-East gets far more people and buildings than it wants or can cope with, while large parts of the rest of the country go downhill for the lack of such connections.



Thankfully, whatever else Labour gets wrong, we can trust that John Prescott as Minister of Transport will see that the fast links do get built. Only much later than they should have been.



## Europe right or left

**Michael Alexander argues for a positive attitude to the European Community. The Left is better placed than the Right to take advantage of democratic federal politics.**

There is an old joke about people who, when opportunity knocked, would complain about the noise. The Labour Party and the left generally is full of people who do exactly that - find specific and detailed reasons why any particular progressive reform must be rejected, as not up to their standards of what a *proper* reform would be.

Most Labour Party people do not reject the basic desirability of a united Europe. But the actual and serious possibility of Labour supporting the European integration that is happening all around us is rejected, in favour of other possibilities that are not actually on the political agenda, and which would be much easier to achieve if the European Community as it now is were to be integrated.

It is said that Europe would take away our economic autonomy. What economic autonomy? Labour in the 1960s found that it was helpless against the 'gnomes of Zurich'. While Britain remains part of the global economy, *we have no autonomy in economic matters*. Benn & Co. were at least serious in proposing that Britain go for a siege economy. (Though in the light of the recent collapse of similar set-ups in Eastern Europe, we must be very glad indeed that Labour never took that option.)

Why should I care if a European Bank took over from the Bank of England? I do not recall that the Bank of England ever asked for or took any notice of my wishes or the wishes of the public in general. I've never even been sure quite what the different options - fiscal relaxation, tight money or whatever - would amount to in practice. Economists say that they know exactly what each of them will mean, but they say totally different things. Three economists, 4.178 opinions!

Given that *all* Europeans have a common interest in having the economy prosperous, economic matters are a natural matter for centralisation. The European Community, with or without Eastern Europe, would be enough of an economic superpower to reshape the world economy.

Doubtless there would be conflicts of interest. How far do we help the Third World, and is some of the 'help' not help at all? There would also be regional conflicts, the peripheries against the centre. But these divisions would logically cut across existing national

frontiers, and should be allowed to do so.

One problem with getting involved in European politics is that no European party system exists. But that should not be a reason for Labour holding back. How the hell is it supposed to develop, if Labour isn't a part of it? The Left is certainly better placed than the Right. The Christian Democrats and the British Tories find it hard to get along because of their very different roots - Christian Democracy being based on a moderately right-wing form of Roman Catholic values. Labour and the other Socialist parties in Europe should find that they have rather more in common.

We in the United Kingdom have one major advantage, shared only with the Republic of Ireland. We are native speakers of English, which has become the common world language. English may or may not merit such a position, but it has essentially achieved it. Chinese has rather more native speakers, but is little known outside of China, and can not even be properly expressed except in Chinese ideograms. French could and perhaps should have been the world language, but it has been losing ground for the past couple of centuries. Common daily practice has made English the natural language for a Brazilian to talk to a German, or a Japanese to talk to a Pole.

The European Community as it now is shows every sign of becoming a successful multi-national state, an equal association of many different nationalities. No such thing has been formed in modern time. No such thing has even existed before, unless one counts predominantly-German Switzerland. Actually bringing it off must be the highest priority. The second priority must be making the Community as socialist as possible. Including other states outside the present twelve would also be fine, but should come third behind the other objectives. Nothing serious can develop on an international basis while nation is set against nation by the structure of the nation-state.

It is of course much easier and more pleasant to argue for impossible goals, than to back goals that have a sporting chance of being realised. One is spared the mess and imperfection that is bound to be part of any real-world development such as a Federal Europe. The net effect of setting impossible goals is to preserve the *status quo* - although those

who do this can and do say, quite sincerely, that the *status quo* is not at all what they want. Not Federal Europe, but 'true internationalism' - and if it all falls back to squabbling nation-states, that wasn't what we wanted, was it?

Incidentally, the nation-states of Eastern Europe would not be that hard to fit in, provided that some or all of them want this. The gap in incomes is not so large. Czechoslovakia is richer than Portugal. But it's no disaster if they opt to stay out, as Norway, Sweden and Switzerland have. These countries have opted to stay out of the European Community - and have of course not been reduced to economic vassals or suppliers of raw materials as a result. Austria is a similar case, except that its position as a neutral between NATO and the Warsaw Pact helped to keep it out of the European Community, and it may now choose to join. As for the rest of the world, only Turkey could be fitted in at present, or for the foreseeable future. The Arab states of the southern Mediterranean might choose to join in at a later date, forming a European and Mediterranean Community, the largest unit short of a world federation that might prove viable. And then again they might want something else. Who knows?

The best way to help developing countries would be to work within the European Community to change the terms of trade. For instance, stop protecting the European sugar and garments industries - though this would have a large social cost. The socialist way to do this would be to share the costs of social disruption equally between all citizens of the entire community.

In the 1970s, the Labour Left decided to put all its energies into getting Britain out of the European Economic Community (as it then was). A few of us said at the time that this was crazy, that building socialism in Western Europe was likely to be much easier than building it in Britain. The chances of doing this in the 1970s was thrown away - as was the prospect of workers control. People complained about the noise when opportunity knocked. We have new chances for the 1990s - chances to win, or chances to throw it all away again. Positive Europeanism is the best way to win.

# Mad, bad and dangerous to eat

The saga of 'Mad Cow Disease' looks set to run and run. Angela Clifford points out that such disasters follow logically from Thatcherite ideology. And Michael Alexander looks critically at the science behind the matter.

## 1) MAD COWS AND TORIES

At the moment it looks increasingly likely that large amounts of taxpayers' money are going to be spent in compensating farmers for slaughtering diseased cattle suffering from BSE (Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy). While Labour have been criticising Tories on general health grounds they have not pointed out the contradictions in their ideology that such compensation involves. Let us examine the Thatcherite process of reasoning.

Ten years ago Thatcherism came into power on a programme of cutting back the 'nanny' state and letting the market do its work. All Government Departments, including the Department of Agriculture, had their staff cut back over several years. State-financed agricultural research was pared down on the basis that farmers should pay for such research.

(After Salmonella, BSE and several similar scares, it should be now be clear that taxpayers, as food consumers, have as strong an interest as farmers in such research. But that is another story.)

As well as cutting research, various state controls were cut back, including the control of the composition of animal feeds, which was relaxed eight years ago. The theory behind all this dropping of public controls and withdrawal of publicly funded services was that the market would supply the deficiency. The market would decide what feeds were good to give animals, the market would encourage farmers to fund research, etc.

The market has now done its work. Private research has not replaced public. Moreover, the market has brought about a crisis, first in egg production and now in beef products. This happened because people became aware of a health hazard and stopped buying the products. So far so good.

What is supposed to happen then is that huge numbers of the producers of the unwanted goods go bankrupt. Capital and labour move from producing unmarketable goods to producing marketable goods. There is a healthy shake-up of the market. While money flees from the producers of eggs and chickens, it accrues to the producers of alternatives. They are able to expand

production and develop their products.

If the Tories remain true to the ideology on which they came to power, they would have viewed the bankruptcy of the egg producers a year ago, and of beef and dairy farmers now, with disinterested complacency. The market hath given, and now the market is taking away.

But that did not happen with egg producers, and will not happen with the dairy farmers. The Tories will quietly drop the classical liberal theory and silently use interventionist socialist practice to compensate the producers. By doing this they will thwart the proper operation of the market.

*"...various state controls were cut back, including the control of the composition of animal feeds, which was relaxed eight years ago."*

Incidentally, Marx's Capital - all of it - is very useful in describing how the market works; it is an invaluable tool for socialists. There is no equivalent work on interventionist socialism. The 19th century German Social Democratic movement did a lot of work on the subject, which is little known here, but which was used by Bismarck in creating his *Wohl-fahrt Staat* (Welfare State).

It is quite probable that, in the end, far more tax-payers' money will be spent by the Tories in compensating farmers than was ever saved by de-restriction and cutting back in the Department of Agriculture. Moreover, the compensation money is negatively spent, in that it finances the destruction of animals, whilst the money spent in financing research and such-like activities of the Department of Agriculture was positively spent, contributing to the sum of human knowledge and to the social organisation of agriculture.

The Tories should not be allowed to get away with this ideological sleight of hand. The public has a right to know what is happening. While it is right that the government, which put the farmers into an impossible predicament, should compensate them for the consequences, it should be rigorously pointed out that, on this issue, Adam Smith has been thrown overboard, and Bismarckian Socialism put in its place.

## 2) INNOCENT UNTIL PROVEN GUILTY?

There is every sign that the 'miracle of the market' will indeed operate in the case of BSE - people will stop eating British beef. They will do so because both the official agricultural experts and



the government in general do not look like a 'nanny' state that will be careful about their interests. If ordinary people are to be expected to look after themselves, they will do so on the basis of fear, prejudice and panic. Beef producers will be put out of business, perhaps quite unfairly, simply because people feel they have to play it safe.

Experts assure us that beef is safe to eat. But these are the same experts who originally decided that it was OK to feed cattle on sheep offal - the cause of 'Mad Cow Disease', also known as Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy or BSE.

Scrapie, BSE and related diseases have an unknown cause. Some diseases are caused by bacteria, microscopic creatures that have kept the same basic body-plan since the earliest days of life on earth. Others are caused by viruses, even simpler organisms that are probably descended from genes that became independent and started perpetuating themselves rather than the organisms that they were originally a part of. Scrapie & BSE are definitely not caused by bacteria. If it's a virus that causes them, then it's an unusually small and elusive one. Another possibility is a Virino, a sort of simplified virus. The final alternative is a Prion, something similar to a virus, but even simpler -

free-living proteins with no genetic material. This last would be a very unfamiliar form of life, with properties that cannot be reliably predicted.

Scrapie is an old disease found among sheep. It is a spongiform encephalopathy - the name is simply a description of what it does. Encephalo- because it occurs inside the head, -pathy because it kills, and spongiform because it leaves the brain full of holes, like a sponge. (Doctors, and scientists in general, use Greek and Latin names as impressive but not necessarily meaningful or useful labels. If someone has a skin disease, you can tell them it is dermatitis, which means just the same but sounds much more impressive.)

Humans do suffer from a spongiform encephalopathy, known as Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease. It does not seem to be linked to eating mutton - some of its victims were life-long vegetarians. It's just one of the many puzzling diseases that kill people for no obvious cause, and no one can be definitely blamed for it. Since sheep brains used to be a popular dish, and no one seems to have caught anything from it, scrapie and sheep pose no threat to humans.

Unfortunately, the same is not true of cows. Sheep offal, including scrapie-infected brains, was processed into cattle

feed, and whatever causes scrapie was passed on in the process. But it seems to have changed in the process. Cats may be catching it from beef offal, whereas there is no evidence they ever caught it from sheep offal. Given that the disease develops slowly, the handful of cats that have so far died from it could well be followed by many many more. And mink on fur-farms in North America are definitely able to catch some sort of spongiform encephalopathy from the meat of both sheep and cattle.

**" ... sheep and cattle offal can still be fed to pigs and poultry. The ministry defends this, because experiments indicate that pigs cannot catch the disease."**

And humans? Human food is better cooked, contains less offal, is subject to stricter health checks. Moreover, even if cats can catch it, that need not mean that humans also can. But the matter remains uncertain. Since it is a disease that can lie dormant from between 18 months and 20 years, there could already be large numbers of people who have it. Thankfully, it seems certain that it cannot be passed from humans to other humans, except possibly by cannibalism. But the fatal and incurable nature of the disease means that there is good cause to worry.

(For what it's worth, I'm still eating beef when it's beef muscle tissue, recognisable chunks of meat. But not beef products like hamburgers or steak & kidney pies. And I'm feeding my cats on non-beef catfoods.)

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food seems to be making too many assumptions. Sheep are known to be able to pass on the disease genetically - the offspring of an infected mother may also have it. But the ministry maintains that this probably does not happen in cattle - thus a highly expensive and embarrassing cull of the offspring of infected herds can be avoided. On the other hand, *sheep and cattle offal can still be fed to pigs and poultry*. The ministry defends this, because experiments indicate that pigs cannot catch the disease. But, given the amount that is *not* known, it is very foolish to risk spreading the infection yet further.

This is however typical of the government's whole approach. Any established practice in industry and agriculture is to be viewed as safe until a danger from it can be proved beyond a reasonable doubt. Even when it is

proved, the cure will be delayed for as long as possible. A case is pending, in which the Tory government will be fighting against general European Community rules, and for the right to inflict shitty beaches on the British public. (Debates on the matter usually use the polite euphemism 'sewage'. But it's shit that we're dealing with, and no one should forget it.)

On Green issues, Mrs Thatcher has learned to say all the right things, but goes on doing all the wrong ones. On global warming, ozone, rain forests, water purity, it is always 'Britain', or rather the Thatcher government, that delays everything and does less than the rest of the world sees as the bare minimum.

'Innocent until proven guilty' is fine for criminal law. If it means letting ten criminals go free to avoid jailing a single innocent, that's the price that has to be paid. But to ignore ten real dangers rather than react falsely to one apparent danger makes no long-term sense at all. Yet this is in essence the Thatcher government's policy.

Both the Greenhouse Effect and the damage to the Ozone layer were suspected for a couple of decades before definite proof was found. The dangers of tobacco were suspected for a long time before people really started reacting to them -

and the tobacco companies still say the evidence is not strong enough.

Safety first must be the principle. BSE would never have spread in the first place if the official experts had not decided to make assumptions about unknown dangers. Damage to the atmosphere would have been much easier to fix if governments had reacted when the danger was first noticed.

Labour has called for a Food Safety Executive, separate from the Agricultural Ministry. There is an obvious conflict of interest in a single government department being responsible both for promoting food production and ensuring that public health is protected. And throughout the whole saga of BSE, the Ministry of Agriculture has done as little as it could, always delaying until public alarm built up.

It's not even a question of putting profits before safety. British food used to have a good reputation, but this has been wilfully thrown away for short-term profit. A working capitalist would know this - 'brand names' are a very real asset. But the ideologues of capitalism in the Thatcher administration don't seem to know it.

We must learn from events. But will Thatcher? Almost certainly not!

# War Crimes, Law and Humbug

After World War Two, a legal framework to punish Nazi war criminals was established. Just recently, an attempt to establish a similar framework for Nazi war criminals in this country has been thrown out by the House of Lords. Brendan Clifford asks if law ever had anything to do with the matter.

The dispute over the Bill to enable alleged War Criminals of World War Two to be tried in English courts as if they were bank robbers raises again the question of whether the Nuremberg Trials had anything to do with law.

Critics of the Trials at the time held that they violated the principle that there could not properly be judicial punishment of acts which were not in breach of a law existing at the time they were committed. Defenders of the Trials replied to this on the lines that the Ten Commandments were a universal law for mankind. It was an unconvincing reply at that.

A more realistic defence of the Trials would have admitted that they were not being conducted in enforcement of a pre-existing law, and argued that they were vital because they were establishing law in a sphere where it had hitherto not existed.

The victor states might legitimately have used their moral ascendancy in the world in the years after 1945 to shape the widespread revulsion against Naziism and the desire for vengeance into a system of international law.

Spinoza, the great realist philosopher of modern times, said point blank that law had no place in relations between states. Law operated within states, not between states. Relationships between states occurred in a state of nature. And in a state of nature conflicts are resolved by force.

When Napoleon left Elba in 1815 to resume his military career, Wellington issued a declaration that he had "*rendered himself liable to public vengeance.*" It would have been entirely honourable if the victorious powers had adopted a similar attitude towards the Nazi leaders and their major collaborators in 1945. Stalin - like Spinoza, a moral realist - wanted to conclude the war with an exemplary act of vengeance. But the American and British leaders insisted that it be concluded by due process of law, as if it had been an outburst of rioting. They found Stalin's moral realism distasteful. But the alternative turned out to be moral humbug.

The Nuremberg Trials debased the concept of law, not because they were held without a pre-existing framework of international law, but because they did

not lead to the establishment of a framework of international law.

Law does not begin with legislation. Legislation comes very late into the historical evolution of law.



*War Criminals All?*

Sir Frederick Maitland, the incomparable historian of English law, said that law began with the enforcement of judgments. It is in its execution that the law bites. A system of law exists when judgments are given by courts acting on some general principle and are enforced. In the first instance the law of England was a systematic expression of the will of the King - of the will of Henry II. Law began as part of government. The making of laws by a legislative assembly began a great many years later.

There would have been nothing improper about the enforcement of judgments at Nuremberg despite the absence of a prior system of international law if the Nuremberg Court had acted consistently with its pretensions, and if the principles of law enunciated at Nuremberg had been given permanence in the form of judicial institutions with effective means of enforcing judgment. But the Nuremberg Trials rendered themselves one of the greatest shams in history both by the way they conducted themselves and by the fact that the system of law to which they purported to give effect was discarded as soon as the Germans had been punished.

The Kremlin now admits responsibility for the Katyn massacre. Everybody with

any sense has known ever since the Nuremberg Trials that Katyn was a Russian massacre. It was on the charge sheet against the Germans at Nuremberg. But when it became evident that the German defendants, despite the restrictions imposed on them by the Court, would be able to demonstrate Russian responsibility, the Court was instructed to exclude Katyn from its proceedings.

The Nuremberg judges became humbugs when they took orders to omit Katyn from the proceedings in order that the German defence should not be heard, and when on the charge of conspiracy to wage war they ruled that the Germans might not submit in their defence the text of the Nazi/Soviet Treaty of 1939. Of course if they had not taken their orders the Court would have been disbanded. Stalin had no intention of being named as a war criminal in the show trials at the end of the war which he had won.

States cannot be made subject to enforceable international law, and laws which are in the nature of things unenforceable are not laws but mere opinions. In the old Kingdom of Poland, back in the 16th century, there were unenforceable fictions called laws. There were even courts which gave judgments on the basis of those laws. But the state made no provision at all for the enforcement of judgments. Law existed in complete disconnection from the power of government. If you got a judgment in your favour and the other party declined to submit to it voluntarily, your only means of having it enforced was to raise a private army and enforce it by direct action. And the other party incurred no additional punishment by resisting enforcement. Poland, which had much law but no government, was taken apart by states which had effective government though they had little law.

(There was a tendency within Thatcherism in the early 1970s which aspired to disconnect government from law in Britain. It unwittingly reproduced in fantasy the condition of things which had actually existed in Poland.)

International law is an even more vacuous thing than the Polish law of the 16th century. Its enforcement cannot

even be left to direct action by one of the parties, because in relationships between states direct action is war.

States cannot be prosecuted for crimes because they cannot be put in the dock until they are destroyed, until they have ceased to exist. Of course the leading personnel can then be put in the dock by the victorious state and treated as never having been anything but a criminal conspiracy, a Mafia. That is what was done at Nuremberg.

A standard justification of Nuremberg and of war-crime trials 45 years after the event is that such things serve as a warning to others. But it is obvious that they do not serve as a warning to others. 'Crimes against humanity' are the safest crimes to commit, because they are committed by states. The era of the Nuremberg Trials was also the era in which the United Nations was established. The United Nations decreed that the world properly consists of sovereign nation-states. It exhorted those states to abide by certain standards in their internal affairs, but it provided for no remedy in case they did not. And it is now a very serious matter indeed when a state which has the power to do so takes direct action to punish what it sees as criminal behaviour by another state. America just about managed it in Panama. But Vietnam was reprimanded for attempting it in Cambodia, and it is distinctly possible that Pol Pot will return to power because of the United Nations.

The Nuremberg trials do not serve as a warning to the leaders of states because

their lesson is that states which continue in being are a law unto themselves. And they do not serve as a warning to the citizens of states because they did not make sufficient impact in the world to be taken into consideration by citizens of states in which 'crimes against humanity' are being committed.

"Man is a political animal", according to Aristotle, meaning that human nature is determined in very great part by the individual's political environment. And the determining environment is not the ghostly thing called 'international law', but the particular state, with its actual modes of government, politics, law and culture.

Nazi Germany is abhorrent chiefly because it took in earnest and applied systematically in government in a large modern state the category of 'race' which had existed from time immemorial and which had been given pseudo-scientific development from time immemorial. Hitler recreated a Germany which had been disoriented by the Versailles Treaty. He did it through a combination of Keynesian economics and racist social conceptions. After a generation of war and social chaos he provided a stable framework of life along with a sense of adventure. He generated a great feeling of permanence in Germany. And in parts of Eastern Europe he enlisted the support of people who had had sharp experiences of Bolshevik rule - and might have enlisted a lot more support if he had been less sincere in his racist idealism.

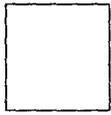
A great proportion of people everywhere are impressed by mere power and take their standards from it.

Millions of people in Germany and Eastern Europe took their standards from Nazi Germany. When a greater power prevailed and held Nazi Germany up to public detestation most of those people, given half a chance, adapted to the new order and began their lives again according to its ideals.

If a few of these are now located and put on trial in England, will that deter Iraqis from killing Kurds at the behest of Saddam Hussein?

I find it strange that while the principle of individual responsibility is being displaced by notions of social determination of crime within the stable framework of life in Britain, an extreme version of personal responsibility is being applied in the case of some unfortunate Lithuanians whose world was turned upside-down two or three times within a period of five years in their youth.

Meanwhile there is in Dublin a great war-criminal who will die one of these years loaded with honours. I refer to Francis Stuart, a fascist novelist who made his way with considerable difficulty to Berlin in 1940 to serve the cause. He served the cause to the bitter end. And then he wrote a further series of novels explaining it all away. He is now one of the Grand Old Men of Irish letters. If this intellectual who made a gift of himself to the Nazis deserved a second chance, those Lithuanians who never had anything but a choice of evils deserve it much more.



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## Good Souls and Greedy Atoms

Walter Cobb looks at the various strange ways in which people who call themselves Christians manage to justify capitalism and the encouragement of greedy selfish behaviour. He puts a socialist alternative.

Mrs Thatcher has said that society does not exist. She has argued that the best policy is to encourage everyone to follow their own immediate personal interests - to be a greedy atom, in fact. Yet at the same time she makes a public display of her Christian faith, and as far as anyone can tell is totally sincere in it. On the one hand, people are to be greedy atoms. On the other, they are to be good souls. And she really seems to see no contradiction between the two.

This is not a personal peculiarity of Mrs Thatcher. It is a paradox that is deeply embedded in the whole development of liberal capitalism. Many people noted the split. One of the best illustrations was in Samuel Butler's *Erewhon*, where there are two banking systems, with two separate currencies. That of the 'musical banks', (official religion), is publicly praised as highly valuable, but treated as worthless in day-to-day transactions. The other banks, corresponding to the practical morality of law and commercial practice, issue the currency that people actually value. (*Erewhon* includes many good parodies, including a very clever *reducto ad absurdum* of vegetarianism.)

Despite such parodies, liberal capitalism has continued to run on two essentially separate systems of morality. Social necessity tends to be much more important than ideological purity. After all, the original Christians were a powerless sect with no ideas at all as to how society should be run, and no expectation that the question would ever arise. In this they resembled some of the extreme Protestants sects which reject the world as totally wicked and doomed to destruction. It was only when the Roman Empire started crumbling all about them that Christian bishops had to accept responsibility for running society in a world that showed no immediate signs of coming to an end.

Christianity played a part in starting liberal capitalism. Appeals to the Bible were used to undermine the authority of the Catholic Church and the old feudal order. Protestants went back to the Old Testament, with its assumption of a society of independent small producers. But when Protestant societies began evolving towards capitalism, the faith was modified to take account of this.

People were encouraged to believe that they could at one and the same time be both good souls and greedy atoms.

People assume that the ideas of *one God*, of *moral requirements that limit spontaneous human desires* and of *reward and punishment in an afterlife* naturally belong together. In fact, this need not be true at all. Religion and morality were not in the beginning very much connected. Religion was a way of appeasing powerful, dangerous and basically amoral spirits or gods. Morality was proper conduct towards ones' fellow human beings.

Later religions tried to combine these things, with mixed results. It is certainly past time to separate them.

The notion that morality can only be religious runs so deep in Western culture that even militant humanists feel the need to carefully explain how they can be moral people without believing in God. The question should be reversed. Can a

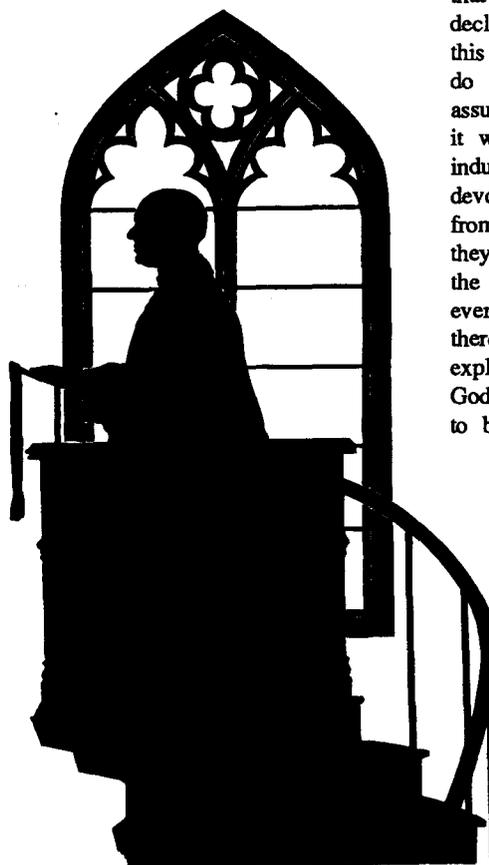
religious person, believing in infinite punishments for misbehaviour and infinite rewards for doing the right thing, be said to be truly moral even when what they do is good?

The official position is that a properly religious person will do good for love of God, and not because of fear of punishment or hope of reward. But for the benefit of the rank and file, the threats and rewards are emphasised. They are even manipulated. Disobeying the religious authorities, even for what seem pretty good reasons, is sure to end you up in hell. On the other hand a Crusade or *Jihad*, brutal warfare against people who reject the authority of your own particular religion, is a reliable path to heaven

Religion has gone into decline, because very few people today could think about heaven and hell in such a matter-of-fact and unquestioning way. When religion started to go into decline, there was a widespread fear among the ruling classes, and among people who identified with the ruling class interest, that a decline in religion must mean a decline in morality. I do not accept that this has in fact happened. People used to do the most terrible deeds with the assurance of the religious authorities that it was all OK with God. 19th century industrialists, many of whom were devoutly religious, did not feel inhibited from squeezing their workers as hard as they could, down to and sometimes below the minimum necessary for survival. For every religious authority who protested, there were a hundred who supported this exploitation and declared it pleasing to God. In practice, people are just as likely to behave decently *as an end in itself*, as to behave decently out of hope of heaven and fear of hell.

The religion of ancient Israel gave rise to three faiths - Islam, Christianity and modern Judaism. More than half the world's population follow one or other of these faiths. And all see the notion of heaven and hell as fundamental to their morality. Despite this, it is very unlikely that the ancient Israelites had any such belief.

Though I agreed with most of



Brendan Clifford's article on Multiculturalism (L&TUR 11), I think that he concedes too much to Khomeini and his ilk by saying that the idea of Heaven and Hell follow on naturally from the notion of God. The notion of heaven and hell was originally separate from monotheism. Greek paganism believed in a hell for the wicked, and (maybe) a heaven for the very good. Egyptian religion promised a pleasant afterlife for the reasonably good, and a dire underworld for the wicked or for those whose funeral preparations were inadequate.

*"As a matter of fact, the belief in life beyond the grave reached its culminating point in Egypt four or five thousand years ago, when the rich, at any rate, seemed to have spent more money in provision for their future life than for their present. To judge from what has come down to us of his writings, Moses, the Man of God, who was well versed in Egyptian religion, had no more use for a future life than for the worship of crocodiles."* ( J.B.S.Haldane, Possible Worlds.)

There is serious doubt about whether the founders of Judaism actually believed in an afterlife:

*"...the first seven books of the Bible... are full of religion and ethics, but contain no reference to human survival of death. Not did the Palmist believe in it. The dead praise not Thee, O Lord", he said, 'neither all they that go down into silence'".* (Ibid.)

Or look at the Book of Job. It has no suggestion that the good may be rewarded after death. It is the first thought that would occur to a modern Jew, Christian or Muslim who had to console a virtuous friend, but nothing at all is said of it. In the Book of Samuel, the doomed King Saul has the prophet Samuel summoned as a shade by the Witch of Endor - the dead survive, but only as vague ghosts, and with no difference between the good and the wicked. Even as late as the time of Jesus, there were many devout Jews who did not accept the notion of an afterlife.

Witness his arguments with the Sadducees. (Matthew 22.23-33.)

This problem does not apply to the Koran, of course. In the Koran, the prophets who came before Muhammed are found to be saying almost exactly the same things as Muhammed himself said. Where older religious texts say things about those prophets that contradict the Koran, this is held by Muslims to be a case of corruption and distortion of those older texts.

One can be impressed by the very high standard of personal conduct that can be seen in many Muslim countries. On the other hand, those countries also had slavery and a rigid exclusion of women from public life, before they came under Western influence. And both of these things can be justified from the Quran and the systems of Islamic law that were developed from it. Slavery is accepted as valid in many Quranic verses, and the last remnants of slavery are to be found only in Islamic countries.

(Incidentally, it is only recently that most devout Christians have been willing to speak of *Muslims*, rather than *Muhammedans*. Muslim is a decent rendering in English of what the people call themselves. Muhammedan implies that the book and the faith derives from a man, and not from God. In English usage, the two terms both go back to the 17th century - and Mussulman, no longer in use, goes back to the 16th. The persistent use of *Muhammedan*, despite the objections of those to whom it was applied, has to be considered an example of intolerance.

Anglicanism is by no means always a model of tolerance. It was insensitive of the Archbishop of Canterbury to speak of *Pharisees* when he was denouncing some of the evils of modern life. The Pharisees whom Jesus disputes with in the New Testament were the founders of Rabbinical Judaism, the variety of Judaism that survived the Roman destruction of the Jewish homeland. The original disputes were disputes between Jews. [Always assuming that the version given in the Bible is accurate - Jesus may have been much closer to the Pharisees than his later followers cared to admit.] In any case, polemics that were originally *between* Jews have been used as the basis for Christian anti-semitism over the centuries. Someone in Runcie's position should have know this and been more careful what he said.)

Science can explain the whole history of the Universe over the past ten to twenty thousand million years. The formation of the Earth, the origins of life and the origins of humanity can be understood in terms of known scientific principle

les. Some things remain mysterious - including the origin of the Universe in the Big Bang. And many scientists are religious. But the notion of a God who started the Big Bang several thousand million years ago is not quite the same as the traditional and popular notion of a God who notices it when you swear and decides whether or not your car tyre will have a puncture.

I doubt the existence of a creator-God. But the issue is basically impossible to settle. Once it is established that nothing in the known universe points to the existence of a creator-God, then there is little point in arguing with people who still want to believe in a creator. Humanism has gone into a decline precisely because the main argument has been won.

Morality should be no more than a practical system whereby human societies can operate for mutual long-term benefit. There are of course many legitimate ways to understand the vague concept of 'mutual long-term benefit'. I understand it in a socialist sense, both at a personal and a political level. But I see no clear or inevitable link between socialism and any form of belief or disbelief. In practice, people make very different links between their religious beliefs and their political ideologies. Christians, Jews, Muslims, agnostics, atheists and skeptics are distributed right across the political spectrum. And their personal conduct shows an equally wide range of good and bad behaviour.

If socialists want to get anywhere, they must relearn the basic lesson that morality is *necessary*. Nothing that is built without some firm moral purpose can be expected to be very successful, and the blatantly immoral politicking of many Labour politicians has done the party great harm. Thatcher has benefited from the fact that she clearly believes very very firmly in what she is doing - a marked contrast to the sort of poll-watching media-worshiping politician ridiculed in the BBC series *Yes Minister*. (*Yes Minister* is one of Thatcher's favourite programmes, and some people find this very puzzling!)

Doubts about the existence of God should not mean doubts about the usefulness of morality, of codes of conduct that stop each person from acting in their own immediate and short-term interests. The matter was confused in the 1960s by a general loosening of restrictions - more sexual freedom and a greater measure of informality. But this was a *change* of morality, not a breakdown of morality. Confusion spread - very few people would care to view themselves as *immoral*, but most are also unhappy at affirming that moral values are important.

The Green movement owes some of its success to being a *new morality*. It is separate from (though compatible with) the various existing religious faiths. It very much accepts the changes of sexual

(Continued on next page)

# Murder in Mesopotamia

**In the first of two articles on the implications of the execution of Farzad Bazoft, Hugh Roberts explains how the affair revealed the dangerous irrelevance in the Middle East of American conceptions of the journalist's role.**

The hanging of Farzad Bazoft was denounced by the British media as exemplifying the barbaric nature of the Iraqi state. In this, the British media are the faithful reflection of the British state as it minces and stumbles around in its seemingly endless post-imperial hangover.

In its imperial heyday, the British state undertook to govern a multitude of peoples of different cultures and levels of development. It made it its business to understand these peoples, these "lesser breeds without the law", as Kipling called them, and it unquestionably arrived at a functional understanding of them. Millions of people all over the world were brought within the ambit of British law. And so well did the British state understand these peoples that it knew when the game was up, when they could no longer be kept within the ambit of British law and had to be left to make their own law. Britain's retreat from empire was a graceful and timely affair by comparison with those of its imperial rivals. It was accomplished with a minimum of disorder and it left functional states its in wake. There was no British counterpart to France's Algerian war or Belgium's fiasco in the Congo or Portugal's wars in Angola, Guiné-Bissao and Moçambique.

A very great deal of expertise went

into governing the empire and conducting an orderly retreat from it. It is now clear that this expertise has failed to perpetuate itself. With the ending of British responsibility for foreign parts, the very remarkable knowledge of foreign parts which accumulated within a section of the British political establishment has withered and died. An earlier English attitude, popular incomprehension and dislike of foreigners, has come once more into its own and, through the medium of Thatcher's politics, in which it has dovetailed with the self-righteous and moralistic worldview of post-Vietnam America, has infected the British state, which had previously been well insulated from the populace in such matters.

At home and abroad, what Her Majesty's Government cannot understand or influence it denounces as barbaric. The killing of Bazoft was denounced as barbaric because it demonstrated British impotence. But while Bazoft was undoubtedly a victim of British impotence as well as Iraqi brutality, he was also a victim of something else altogether.

The Iraqi claim that Bazoft was a spy has been generally rejected by the British media. It is claimed, notably by his late employer, the editor of *The Observer*, that he was simply an investigative

journalist. The thesis that he was not really a journalist, and that his journalistic credentials were really a cover for espionage, has been floated here and there, in an inconclusive fashion, as a minority view. What has not been generally recognised is that the distinction between spy and investigative journalist is a distinction without a difference.

An investigative journalist is one who ferrets out secrets. These may be the secrets of an international corporation or (for those with an unusually developed death-wish) *Cosa Nostra*. But they are usually the secrets of governments. Duncan Campbell is an investigative journalist. His activities have brought him into conflict with the laws which the British state has made with a view to protecting its secrets. True, he has not been hanged, but then the British state does not hang anybody these days, not even mass-murderers. And he has not even been made to suffer in any other significant fashion for his activities because an influential element of British public opinion has regarded his activities as legitimate because it lacks a coherent idea of the state in the British context. This is because it has been infected with American ideas about such matters.

The notion of investigative

**(Continued from Page 12)**

and social behaviour that occurred in the 1960s. But it has some new moral rules - not wasting resources, preserving the world's wild places, etc. I disagree with the Green mainstream on some issues - certainly, nuclear power is feared out of all proportion to its actual dangers. One could say that it has been defined as *sinful* in the new morality: taboo to Greens just as pork is taboo to Muslims and Jews. But the basic feeling - an affirmation that we are a part of nature, in a state of mutual dependency - is valid and should be accepted by all socialists. Indeed, it has always been a part of the socialist tradition. Socialists should remember the basic lesson - systems of morality evolved, not to please a probably non-existent God, but because they were useful in the *long* term for the *whole* society. They are thus the highest

form of pragmatism, the most enlightened form of enlightened self-interest.

Leninism assumed that it was above morality. The subsequent history of Leninism indicates that this was a serious misjudgment. Trotsky arrogantly told his defeated socialist rivals to 'lie quietly in the dustbin of history'. He then got indignant when he himself was dumped into the same dustbin. He spent his years in exile explaining that it was one thing for him and Lenin to suppress the Anarchists, Mensheviks, Social Revolutionaries etc, and something quite different for Stalin to use exactly the same methods to suppress Trotsky's own supporters. And a surprisingly large number of intelligent people have believed him, with fairly disastrous results for socialism. Meanwhile, the Leninist states were unable to find a

coherent way forward from Stalin's way of doing things. Khrushchev applied exactly the same logic as Trotsky - everything that Stalin did was wrong, but when I myself do exactly the same thing I'm right.

The Labour party has the advantage of a more complex and diverse tradition. It has always had its moralists as well as its cynics and opportunists. It has also been able to include people of a great variety of religious faiths, or of no religious faith at all. The common feeling has been the desire to make a better life for everyone. There are legitimate grounds for differences on which particular policies are the best for doing this. But people should not be scared of directly stressing the *moral* case - while leaving religion as a matter of private faith.



## Discussion

journalism is an American notion. The American state is one of the wonders of the world. It is a state which functions as a state in its external relations, while being prevented from performing many of the normal functions of a state in relation to American society. The American constitution, George Bernard Shaw once observed, "was not an instrument of government; it was a guarantee to the whole American nation that it never should be governed at all" (*The Political Madhouse in America and Nearer Home*, London, Constable, 1933, page 17).

The extreme conception of liberty which underlay the original constitution of American society prompted the founding fathers to make arrangements to inhibit tyranny in the sphere of government. They have not inhibited tyranny in the economic sphere, quite the contrary, and they have allowed public opinion to exercise a capricious influence that verges on tyranny at times. But they have certainly inhibited arbitrary government. The checks and balances built into the constitution have proved very effective. They have also entailed a particular role and status for the press.

The limitation on the domestic power of government has permitted the American press a degree of independence of government its British counterpart has never possessed. And the upholding of the political arrangements which are the condition of this independence has required the press to play its part in policing the checks and balances at the heart of the system. This is the origin and explanation of a central aspect of the American tradition of journalism - the activity originally known as muck-raking.

Muck-raking is not to be confused with mud-slinging. In its origins, at least, it was not at all concerned to slander and smear. It was a matter of raking over, sifting, examining in depth and detail, the less visible activities and connections of this or that politician or cabal of politicians, especially current office-holders. It expressed the visceral conviction of American citizens that the price of liberty is eternal vigilance, their tendency to be suspicious (to the point of paranoia) of all office-holders, to subject them to intense and continual scrutiny, to demand unrealistically high ethical standards of them and to give them hell when they caught them cutting corners or with their pants down in the wrong bedroom. The activities of Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, the Washington Post reporters who investigated the Watergate affair, were a

characteristic expression of this tradition and were made possible by it.

The practice of investigative journalism is the practice of espionage in the service of an unique version of democracy which it would be more accurate to call constitutional anarchy.

By means of it American society spies on its 'state'. As such this practice is at home in America. But it has also begun, cuckoo-fashion, to make a home for itself in Britain over the last thirty years, as an integral and necessary part of the process of Americanising British society and politics at the expense of the British version of democratic government and the traditions of journalism which go with it.



Saddam Hussein

A few years ago, the fact that an essential aspect of the bleak vision of Britain's future which George Orwell outlined in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* has been realised was graphically illustrated as American jets took off from England on their mission to bomb Tripoli. As a journalist himself, Orwell foresaw that for Britain to be made into a proper part of the American empire as *Airstrip One*, it would be necessary to alter the mode of operation of its journalists in particular. His mistake was to imagine *Airstrip One* and its imperial framework, *Oceania*, as a totalitarian state on the Soviet model, instead of foreseeing that Britain would become *Airstrip One* through its colonisation by the political and economic culture of American capitalism, and that British journalists would come to conform to the American rather than the Soviet model of their role. That was a natural mistake to make in 1948, given the strength of socialism in Britain at that time and the paternalistic ethos of the BBC. But there can be little doubt that, had he lived to see it, he would have agreed with the benefit of hindsight that a necessary part of the transformation of Britain into *Airstrip One* was the Americanisation of its journalists and the disruption of public service broadcasting on which the

present government is now engaged.

This Americanisation has proceeded without difficulty because the American conception of journalism is extremely flattering to the pretensions of British journalists and they have exulted in their new-found self-importance. As a result, our Americanised journalists are now the most enthusiastic missionaries of Americanisation in spheres beyond their own, and have had an enormous impact on what for want of a better word we must call the leadership of the Labour Party, to the profound detriment of the working class interest, the socialist cause and the quality of British public life as a whole.

But it is one thing to engage in investigative journalism in America, where it is *de rigueur*, or in Britain, where the state has lost so much of its historical bearings and sense of purpose that it cannot muster the will to suppress it (although it is still allowed much less scope in the broadcasting media, which are subject to official controls, than in the privately owned press). It is quite another to go in for this sort of thing in foreign parts, in countries where the state is and knows itself to be the necessary agent of national development and guarantor of social order and consequently the arbiter of life and death for every citizen.

In investigating a reported explosion in an Iraqi defence factory, Bazoft was behaving as a spy. He was doing so both objectively and subjectively. Objectively, because he intended to get hold of and then reveal an Iraqi state secret which was bound to be of interest to states hostile to Iraq. Subjectively, because in order to get to the factory he posed as a doctor and had himself driven there by a British nurse in an ambulance. This sort of journalistic caper can be got away with in America and Britain and probably most Western democracies these days. It is suicidal in the Middle East. Has this lesson been learned by the editor of *The Observer* and his colleagues? Or, in their ignorance of and contempt for elementary realities in foreign parts, are they going to send more foolish reporters with their heads full of irrelevant role-models to obscene and unnecessary deaths? They have no right to expect clemency over there. And there is even less reason to expect Her Majesty's Government to come to the rescue.

(The second article will look at the nature of the Iraqi regime.)



# Democracy and the Communist Manifesto

In this article Madawc Williams looks at the beginnings of Marxism, and finds that a sad misunderstanding and neglect of political democracy was already there.

The *Communist Manifesto* is a famous document, the best known of all that Marx and Engels wrote. A very odd document, with a strange and seldom-told history. It is also remarkable for essentially ignoring the struggle for political democracy and constitutional rights, the main issue of the unsuccessful revolutions of 1848.

Back in 1984, I began working on a study, intended to be called *The Communist Manifesto - 1848 to 1984*. For various reasons, the work was delayed. My original discovery - that the *Manifesto* had glossed over crucial political matters - had no obvious direct implication for the world as it was then. Since then, the whole Leninist structure that existed in Eastern Europe has come unstuck. The same forces that were operating as far back as 1848 seem to have achieved a final triumph. Political democracy, mostly won after World War One and lost again in the run-up to World War Two, has been re-established and this time seems likely to last.

Tragically, socialism in those countries had become associated with a denial of that sort of freedom, and with a subservience to Russia. Thus they are, for the time being, rejecting any sort of socialism and any of the possible non-capitalist alternatives to the discredited Brezhnevite system. The fault lies not with Stalin, nor even with Lenin, but with Marx and Engels.

The *Communist Manifesto* was drafted as a working document, not an abstract statement of principles. It was intended to be used precisely as a political manifesto for a seizure of power by the Communist League. It was commissioned in 1847, in the expectation of a radical and republican revolution in Europe. It was actually printed early in February 1848, just ahead of the actual outbreak of revolution in France.

The *Manifesto* described itself as the work of "*Communists of various nationalities*". The names of Marx and Engels did not appear in the early editions. The intention was to publish it

in English, French, German, Italian, Flemish and Danish. Polish is not mentioned, although it includes comments on political groupings in Poland. Other parts of the world - Russia, for instance - were hardly looked at at all.

In the event, in 1848 it came out first in German, and then in Danish, Polish and Swedish. French, Italian and Spanish translations were made, but remained unpublished. It came out in English in 1850, and it was this English edition that was the first to give the name of the authors.<sup>1</sup> Incidentally, it anglicized them as Charles Marx and Frederic Engels.

***"In the revolutions of 1848, the struggle for democracy was the issue. But what does the Manifesto say about the matter? Astonishingly enough, it avoids it almost completely"***

The *Manifesto* was published in the name of the Communist League. It seems that the League was seriously thinking about taking power in 1847 and 1848. Marx and Engels, as its chief theorists, were delegated to improve and expand its statement of principles, as a preliminary to making a bid for power. They could not write just as they pleased, as they did in their other works. But most commentators say surprisingly little about the *Manifesto's* context.

The only serious discussion of the matter I have been able to find comes from George Sorel. Mainly on the strength of the title of his most famous work, *Reflections on Violence*, people have written him off as a nutty old terrorist. In fact he was a highly interesting character. He was part of the mental world of the Second International, which disintegrated during World War One. Remarkably enough, he has connections to all three of the successful political movements that came out of the Second International - moderate Social

Democracy, Leninist Communism, and those Socialists like Benito Mussolini who went over to the Right and created Fascism. Sorel says of the *Communist Manifesto*:

*"It has been asked if it reflected Marx's ideas well. Above all, this document seemed to have had the purpose of summing up the notions which had currency in socialist circles. Sometimes the author gets out of trouble with a play on words. Everyone is struck by Marx's embarrassment in speaking of the family and country and it is obvious that he could not express his whole thought."*<sup>1</sup>

The *Manifesto* is ambiguous about the position of women, implying that 'free love' has already been effectively established by the bourgeoisie. But I'll leave the matter aside, to be dealt with in a later article.

The *Manifesto* was one component of a scheme that failed to come off. The idea seems to have been that the existing governments of Europe would be overthrown by bourgeois revolutionaries; by democratic revolutions for parliaments and constitutions, under the leadership of the middle class. But the Communist League hoped to raise up the working class against these bourgeois revolutionaries just as soon as they had overthrown the established governments. They considered that the revolution could then be pushed well beyond anything its original leaders had bargained for.

Such a scheme was by no means impossible. The French Revolution had changed far more than its original leaders had ever intended to change. So indeed had the English Revolution against Charles I. Some seventy years later, Lenin would actually succeed in carrying through a two-stage revolution on much the same lines.

The trouble was, the bourgeoisie was also able to anticipate such an outcome. They too had read the history of the French Revolution, and of the Terror, and they intended to avoid another such breakdown of the established order. Marx hoped that they would blindly overthrow the old order, and be

overthrown in turn. But in fact, large sections of the bourgeoisie foresaw the danger and held back. In Germany the established order was not overthrown. In France it was in due course replaced by the conservative Napoleon III. And so forth.

In the short run, the Communist League's plans failed completely. The Manifesto itself was largely forgotten. It seems only to have been revived after a quarter of a century, with the German edition of 1872. According to Sorel, *"This document remained unknown for a long time, and when it was unearthed, an originality was attributed to it that it did not have at the time of its publication."*<sup>s2</sup>

What Marx, Engels and their associates were trying to do in 1848 was very speculative. The Manifesto says that *"Communism is already acknowledged by all European powers to be itself a power"*<sup>m1</sup>; but in fact it was not, and Marx must have known quite well that it was not. The Communist League was a small organisation, with little political power and even less military power.

It suited the various established governments to use Communism as a bogey to frighten reformers and moderate revolutionaries. It was in their interests to exaggerate its strength. The 'spectre' that was haunting Europe was not in fact very solid or material. But the Communist League, as influenced by Marx and Engels, decided to go along with the pretence, and try to turn it into a reality. In the particular circumstances of 1848, the 'spectre' could have become very powerful indeed.

Marx began as an Hegelian. He next became a Left Hegelian, and then a follower of Feuerbach before deciding that in fact he was a communist. Communism as a movement had been around for a good many years before Marx. And it was basically something that workers had created for themselves.<sup>c2</sup> Meanwhile Engels, another Left Hegelian, had made the same progression from abstract philosophy to revolutionary politics. The two of them joined forces on the way. They sorted out their philosophy in two books; *The Holy Family* and *The German Ideology*.

Marx's work took a more popular turn with *The Poverty of Philosophy*, in which he condemned Proudhon.

Proudhon chose to make use of the term 'anarchist', which up to then had only been used as a term of abuse. Marx and Proudhon had been friends, but their ideas developed in different ways. And Marx was not a man to let friendship get in the way of clarity of thought. Marx had one set of ideas, and Proudhon had another. In the long run, one or other of them had to go. And while there was a strong Proudhonist movement for a good many decades, in the end it was Marx's ideas that won out. Modern-day anarchism, even, has much more a Marxist flavour than a Proudhonist flavour.

Marx and Engels immersed themselves in the Communist League when it seemed as if real power could be won. The *Communist Manifesto* defined what the Communist League was, what it was not, and what it planned to do. And when the period of revolutions was over, and the Communist League began to fall apart, they calmly accepted this. They waited for the next crisis, and in the meantime developed and clarified their ideas.

***"Marxists since the 1950s have covered over the less fashionable of Marx's notions. They are not accepted, and they are not rejected. To do either would lead to purposeful political action. Having done neither, the various Marxist movements are now thoroughly in decline"***

The Manifesto was only a first draft for Marxism. Yet it has a clearness and precision that is admirable. As far as they could, they made it very very obvious what they were talking about.

Marx took a highly Hegelian view of history. Anyone doubting this should read Hegel's *Philosophy of History*. Though the values are different, the patterns of thought and even turns of phrase are very similar. History has a single possible course of development, a course both logical and necessary. Nations and cultures move along it at various rates - they can even stop altogether, or slip backwards. But they cannot deviate from the line of development, because nothing else is

possible.

For Marx and Engels, feudalism had replaced the slave-based systems of Greece and Rome, and Capitalism had replaced Feudalism. Now Capitalism was due to be replaced by modern Communism. History had gone that way because it could not have gone any other way. Hegelianism has a number of built-in assumptions, that Marx and Engels took over without taking a hard look at them and asking if they were true. The most significant is that there is essentially only one possible line of historical development. Stages of history might occasionally be skipped -

Marx did think that this might happen in Russia. But the very language he used was significant; if you skipped over one stage, you would of necessity find yourself in the next.

From this viewpoint, Marx could hardly reject the process of capitalist industrialisation that had torn the existing order to shreds. Capitalism had created misery and disruption for the pre-capitalist lower classes. Other radicals might see it as a massive error and distortion of life; Marx insisted that the whole process was necessary, and therefore progressive. From time to time he would express his sympathy for those who had been crushed by this process, but he never ceased to insist that it was necessary. It had created the working class, the 'proletariat', and must continue to create and enlarge this class.

*"The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of Modern Industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product"*<sup>m2</sup> And the working class, unlike all previous lower classes, would be fit and able to run society for itself and in its own interests. He liked this formula so much that he quoted it, along with a preceding sentence about the proletariat alone being really revolutionary, in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme* in 1875. Despite this, most people who call themselves Marxists fail to take it into account. They confuse *reactions against* modern industry with Marx's schema of the proletariat as the *essential product* of modern industry.

Marx insisted that the future lay with the proletariat. But the bourgeoisie was not entirely despised. On the one hand they were condemned as fit only to be

overthrown. But on the other hand their positive role was also made clear.

"The bourgeoisie has disclosed how it came to pass that that brutal display of vigour in the Middle Ages, which Reactionists so much admire, found its fitting complement in the most slothful indolence. It has been the first to show what man's activities can bring about. It has accomplished wonders far surpassing Egyptian pyramids, Roman aqueducts, and Gothic cathedrals; it has conducted expeditions that put in the shade all former Exoduses of nations and crusades"<sup>m3</sup>

"The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures there arises a world literature."<sup>m4</sup>

"The bourgeoisie, during its rule of scarce one hundred years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together. Subjection of nature's forces to man, machinery, applications of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steam-navigation, railways, electric telegraphs, clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalisation

of rivers, whole populations conjured out of the ground - what earlier century had even a presentiment that such productive forces slumbered in the lap of social labour?"<sup>m5</sup>

"To the great chagrin of Reactionists, it has drawn from under the feet of industry the national ground on which it stood. All old-established national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed. They are dislodged by new industries, whose introduction becomes a life and death question for all civilised nations..."<sup>m6</sup>

The Manifesto expresses little sympathy for most of the classes that were suffering under capitalism. It had no pity for those classes which were being destroyed by it. Thus:

"The lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shop-keeper, the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeoisie, to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class. They are therefore not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history..."

"The 'dangerous class', the social scum, that passively rotting mass thrown off by the lowest layers of the old society, may, here and there, be swept into the

movement by the proletarian revolution; its condition of life, however, prepares it far more for the part of a bribed tool of reactionary intrigue."<sup>m7</sup>

I have quoted at length just because this is the side of the manifesto that most people ignore. Stirring calls for revolution, fierce condemnation of the bourgeoisie, are the bits that everyone knows about. The full range of Marx's ideas has become obscured, the theory only partially grasped. And socialists and communists have paid the price for taking such short cuts.

Ideas that are never properly expressed cannot be applied properly. Nor can they be rejected as inadequate, if history does not match their predictions. Marxists since the 1950s have covered over the less fashionable of Marx's notions. They are not accepted, and they are not rejected. To do either would lead to purposeful political action. Having done neither, the various Marxist movements throughout the world have wasted the accumulated political power and prestige which earlier generations of Marxists had built up, and which are now thoroughly in decline.

Notes. These notes are identified by a number and a letter. The standard method is to use a single number, but I prefer to separate out related references, and have them in their logical sequence rather than the simple order of citation.

- c1 Karl Marx Frederick Engels  
Collected Works Volume 6.  
Lawrence & Wishart London 1976.  
Pages 697-699.
- c2 Ibid, page 671.
- m1 Communist Manifesto,  
introduction. Page 481 in the above  
volume of Collected Works.
- m2 Ibid. Chapter 1. Page 494.
- m3 Ibid, p487.
- m4 Ibid, p488.
- m5 Ibid, p489.
- m6 Ibid, p488.
- m7 Ibid, p494.

- s1 From George Sorel. Oxford  
University Press 1976. Page 171.  
The quote comes from Section VIII  
of Polemics on the  
Interpretation of Marxism:  
Bernstein and Kautsky,  
published in 1900.
- s2 Ibid, p171.



A Marx manuscript with some doodles by Engels

## Sweden's Economy

Martin Dolphin looks at the 'Swedish Model' and asks if it can be considered a viable alternative for socialists.

The right and left in politics have never been happy with Sweden. Most of the left have not been happy with it because it conflicted with their notion of capitalism in crisis since Sweden had managed to avoid the unemployment and inflationary problems which have beset much of the rest of the capitalist world in the 40 years from 1940 to 1980. It represents a thriving capitalism with a well-off work force and so does not fit in with the Marxist view of the world. For the right the problem was how could capitalism work so well in a country which operated a permanent incomes policy. Incomes policies, in right wing ideology, can only interfere with the signals being given by market forces and so will ignore the pressures which will eventually undermine the system.

The recent collapse of the social democratic government in Sweden has been greeted therefore with some relief by its opponents. They feel that their particular view of the world has been vindicated. In this article (the first of 2) I wish to trace the development of what has become known in the literature as the Swedish model of economic development from its origins in the early 20th century to the late 1950s. In the second article I will cover the period 1960 to the present day.

First some terminology. The SAP founded in 1889 is the equivalent of the Labour Party, the LO founded in 1898 is the Swedish equivalent of the TUC and the SAF founded in 1902 is the equivalent of the UK Employers' Federation. There had always been strong links between the LO and the SAP. The SAP saw unionisation as the main way in which the working class could be organised and so it spent its early years actively involved in unionisation which culminated in the creation of the LO as a separate organisation in 1898. The LO in turn supported the SAP in its political program by, for instance, organising a 3 day general strike demanding universal suffrage in 1902. This general strike prompted the formation of the SAF in 1902. An important fact to note about the Swedish unions is that the executives are constitutionally very powerful. In particular if a strike ballot were to be in favour of a strike the executive can choose to ignore the result. It is the final arbiter on whether there is a strike

or not.

From 1906 to 1909 there was a continual series of disputes between the LO and the SAF culminating in a general strike in 1909 in which the unions suffered a major defeat. The SAF was however unable to consolidate its economic victory politically through legislation because it was blocked by the Liberals (who were the main party) in the interests of maintaining their universal suffrage alliance with the SAP. Universal suffrage was finally achieved in 1921 but it did not result in a parliamentary majority for the SAP and so the Unions who had recovered from the 1909 defeat were forced to resort to their power in the market place to achieve their aims. The result was the highest level of strikes in the capitalist world throughout the 1920s. Now that universal suffrage had been achieved the Liberal/SAP alliance had little basis and so anti-strike legislation was finally enacted in 1928. This legislation made it illegal for strikes to take place while collective agreements were in force and set up a Labour Court to adjudicate on disputes.

Through the 1920s Sweden was in the grip of the General Depression and the SAP had no new ideas with which to combat it. In 1930, however, the social democrats became Keynesians before Keynes by proposing a publicly financed system of expansion which would take the economy out of recession. In other words they realised that capitalist economies could get into ruts from which it would take them years to emerge without the direct intervention of the State. On the basis of this policy the SAP made substantial gains in the 1932 General Election and managed by gaining the support of the Farmer's Party to implement their recovery program which proved successful and so they were able to improve their position still further in the 1936 General election (the year Keynes published the General Theory).

At this point the unions were also reevaluating their own role. Having strongly opposed the 1928 Labour Laws when the SAP was not in government, the LO decided not to demand their repeal when the SAP became the major party in a coalition government in 1932. The effects of this reevaluation can be seen in, for example, the decision by the Metalworkers Union in 1931 to sign, against a clear membership view to the

contrary, an agreement which led to reductions of 4 percent in wages and 6 percent in piece-rates. They accepted that little could be gained by striking in an industry which was already in a severely depressed state.

By contrast the workers in unions which were not subject to the pressure of international competition were pressing for substantial wage increases which were in turn increasing the cost of living of other workers. Indeed as early as 1926, "high pay in the sheltered domestic construction, printing, and food industries caused the Stockholm local of the Metal workers Union to submit a motion at the LO congress calling for solidarity-based wage policy to be carried out by a strongly centralised trade union movement with LO as the real leading central organisation and at the head of it as a strong and unified leadership" Peter Swenson, Fair Shares - Unions, Pay and Politics in Sweden and West Germany, Adamantine, 1989, P45.

The metal workers union had been following a process of wage levelling within their own industry whereby differentials between the highest and lowest paid were being reduced. The high wage demands of the Building workers was undermining their ability to continue with this process of wage levelling. In April 1933, less than seven months after SAP had taken over as a minority government, a building strike commenced which was to last for 10.5 months and to be eventually defeated by joint action by the LO, SAP and the employers federation SAF.

The SAF was being led at this point by Gustaf Soderlund who appreciated that the SAP were here to stay and was prepared to base his policies on that fact. His political neutrality had its price. He insisted that the unions control the Building workers. At the same time the Agrarian Party which gave the SAP their majority in parliament was prepared to continue support for the SAP economic recovery program only if the Building workers could be controlled.

"Motivated by the threats of Draconian lockouts from SAF, the withdrawal of Agrarian party support for the crisis program, and government intervention, LO's representative council (... an authoritative decision-making body consisting of the leaders of each of LO's 41 unions) invoked a relatively obscure

LO statute that, in a novel interpretation, empowered it to enjoin the unions to call off the strike. The outcome was a two-pronged attack against the status quo. Not only did the construction workers have to accept 12-15 percent piece-rate reductions, far exceeding those the metalworkers had accepted in 1932, they also lost the 'free piece-work' clause that allowed decentralised strikes and negotiations on new techniques. Both irritants in construction, wage differentials and upward wage drift, were thus ameliorated. Before the strike, average hourly wages for male construction workers were more than 170 percent of the average for all male industrial workers; immediately afterward that figure dropped to about 130 percent. Engineering workers' wages remained stable at about 106 percent" Swenson P49.

This joint action by the LO, the SAP and the SAF to control what was perceived as a disruptive element in the work force was very significant. It substantially increased the moral authority of LO and showed that even powerful unions could not act without considering the effects of their actions on other workers. This joint action particularly between LO and SAF (very often at the insistence of SAF) is something which we will observe again and again.

A major Royal Commission called the Mammoth commission had been appointed by the SAP on coming into office in 1932. Its task was to find ways to improve national economic performance and material welfare for which ends peace in the labour market was seen as pivotal. The Mammoth Commission reported back in 1935. It emphasised two points: firstly that to survive economically Sweden would have to be able to compete internationally and secondly (and predicated on the former) that centralised decision making within and between unions and employers was critical. In the resort town of Saltsjobaden the SAF and the LO met to discuss the implications of the Mammoth Commission.

The Saltsjobaden agreement which was the outcome of these discussions was a major milestone in the establishment of the Swedish model. This agreement established peak-level control by LO and SAF of these affiliated bodies through two institutions: "a Labour Market Commission with three representatives from each side, for the resolution of disputes between constituent units of the two organisations. Furthermore, a Labour Market Committee was

established as a permanent negotiating and decision-making body to resolve problems in training and apprenticeship, work safety, and pensions, as well as to work out less conflict prone and economically destabilising bargaining practices throughout the economy." Swenson P51.

**"One cannot but wonder in what state the British Labour movement would be today had it copied the Swedish system 40 years ago"**

Initially the agreement was not binding on affiliated LO unions. Several high paid unions failed to sign the agreement. This loose arrangement ended in 1941 when, no doubt partly under the influence of the war, at the LO congress of that year, 320 delegates voted to revise the LO constitution giving substantially increased powers to the LO executive and representative councils. Unions could now be expelled but more important no affiliated union could call a strike involving more than 3 percent of its members without LO approval.

*"The executive board's right to participate in member union's contract negotiations was established in principle, as was its right to intervene with proposed settlements, which, if not accepted by the union, could lead to the withdrawal of LO strike support. LO could now take the initiative in the offensive use of strikes and offer financial help..."*

*"Standard by-laws were drawn up to be adopted by the forty-six constituent unions as their own. The most important feature of the by-laws made the executive leadership of the individual unions the sole authoritative body (below LO) in collective bargaining policy and conflict strategy. This provision would put an end to membership votes on wage agreements - a special source of exasperation to LO and employers during the building trades strike. From then on, such referenda could be used only as a consultative device, and thus fell into disuse by the 1970s."*

To a large extent the formal powers given to the LO executive predated any active use of those powers. It is important not to read into these events the final delineation of the Swedish model which would slowly emerge in the following two decades. We skip over the

war years and only remark that the highly centralised control of wages and prices in Sweden would have reinforced the role of the LO.

The next major milestone in the development of the Swedish model was the acceptance at the 1951 congress of the LO of the document 'Full Employment and the Trade Unions' which had been drafted by two LO economist Gosta Rehn and Rudolf Meidner. This is truly a remarkable document. One cannot but wonder in what state the British Labour movement would be today had it been able to produce a document of such substance 40 years ago. The document was produced in response to some problems which LO was facing. During the War period there had been agreement between LO, SAP, and SAF to limit wage and price increases. In the postwar period the SAP dominated government put considerable pressure on the LO to continue limiting wage increases. Thus in 1949 and 1950 LO persuaded its affiliates to accept a freeze in wages. These wage freezes were followed by a wages explosion in 1951, and again in 1952 the LO refused to recommend the governments wish for a wages freeze to its affiliates. It is against this background that the Rehn-Meidner document must be evaluated.

The Rehn-Meidner model realised that there would be problems for the LO if the economic policy pursued by the SAP government relied solely on the level of demand in the economy in order to maintain full employment. What Rehn observed was that whatever level of wage increase was negotiated by the unions could and indeed would be constantly undermined by employers in the expanding sectors of the economy who were prepared to pay whatever level of wages as was necessary to attract workers. Workers in other areas not so lucky would feel resentful and this would undermine the whole idea of central bargaining. But in addition the LO would be held responsible for something which followed basically from the actions of the employers. So the Rehn model is predicated on the assumption that wage restraint cannot work and attempting to make it work will only undermine the central power of the LO:

*"Finally, the authority of the Confederation of Trade Unions is reduced both vis-a-vis the national unions and... the community, as it has shown itself incapable of managing its wages policy. In the long run, the strain may become overwhelming and undermine the position of the trade union movement. Bearing this in mind, the trade union*

movement should make perfectly clear that it cannot and should not adopt any such unconditional responsibility for the preservation of national economic stability." (Quoted in Trade Unions in Sweden: Strategic Responses To Change and Crisis by Andrew Martin, in Union and Economic Crisis: Britain, West Germany and Sweden, George Allen & Unwin 1984, p204.)

The LO proposed a more selective type of full employment policy as one way of tackling these problems. Specifically the LO proposed that it was only worth maintaining people in employment in industries which could afford to pay a high level of wages. A principle should be established of roughly equal pay for equal work. If an industry could not afford to pay this wage then it should have no future. Workers in that industry must be retrained to move into the more profitable industries. There would of course be transitional and adjustment problems associated with all this but it would be the role of the State to handle these problems with a good welfare system and planned retraining programmes. So a full employment policy has been amended to a policy of full employment only in industries which it is worth having. The policy of equal wages for equal work was specifically designed to weed out those industries which were not worth keeping and so to hasten the process of structural change. Only in the context of such an economic policy should unions be able to accept responsibility for wage inflation. This radical strategy, which would shame the British Trade Union movement even today, was adopted by the 1951 LO congress. It is important, however, to recognise its practical political origins. It was not based on some abstract notion of the Labour Theory of Value. Rather it was motivated by the need of the LO to maintain its central co-ordinating role which would otherwise be undermined in inter-union battles.

Acceptance at congress does not mean implementation in society and it would be some years before LO proposals would be taken up not least because the SAP was to remain unconvinced as to their general value for several years. The role of the employers' federation, the SAF, is quite important in bringing about their eventual implementation. In 1952 the government called for a 3 percent limit to wage increases. LO rejected this and advised its members to negotiate for a wage increase indexed with the rate of inflation. The SAF, however, refused to let its affiliates sign separate agreements and compelled the unions to agree to

central negotiations by LO.

The final 1952 agreement was mildly redistributive: women got an increase of 10 percent and men only 8 percent but everyone would get at least ten ore per hour if the percent increases did not reach that amount. The high paid unions were not too happy with this outcome but they were outvoted by the low paid unions who were in the majority on the LO representative council. In 1953 LO recommended that its affiliates negotiating separately again should concentrate on getting improvements for the less well of workers. The general downturn in economic activity meant that little else could be done.

In 1954 and 1955 inflationary pressures began to emerge so that in 1956 the SAF again refused to allow its affiliates to sign individual agreements and insisted that the LO negotiate centrally on behalf of all unions. The LO eventually agreed on a redistributive wage deal which it put to the SAF who rejected it at which point the LO said that in that case it was not prepared to negotiate on behalf of individual unions. SAF caved in. While not liking the

redistributive trend, it was more important to have a centralised agreement. In 1957 the LO again wanted separate, industry level negotiations but again SAF wanted centralised negotiations. Another redistributive settlement was agreed.

"Within a few years, 'solidaristic' agreements laying out the distributional structure of wage increases across and within the various industry-level bargaining units became the norm, and union support for peak-level 'coordination' became a matter of course. After one interruption in 1959, when SAF successfully forced through a straight percentage increase for all unions, increasingly egalitarian agreements were reached." Swenson p.57.

And so began a series of centrally negotiated wage agreements between the LO and the SAF which would continue for almost 30 years.

In a future article we shall examine how successful they were and why they eventually broke down.

## Bertrand Russell A Political Life

Alan Ryan.  
Penguin May 1990. 226pp. £5.99.  
Reviewed by Madawc Williams.

There has been a regrettable trend over recent years for biographies to become a sort of soft-core pornography, with the sex lives of the famous - real or imagined - obscuring the original things that they were famous for.

Thankfully, not everyone writes biographies like that. This book mentions briefly the various loves of Russell's life, but concentrates on the important matters, the ideas he had. As far as I can judge, it is a very fair summary of what he thought and said at various stages in his life. Even the tricky matter of his opinion after 1945 that the USA should use its temporary nuclear monopoly to impose its will on the USSR is dealt with quite reasonably.

Alan Ryan clearly understands *political* in the better and broader sense of the term. Russell was more or less separate from party politics, but had great influence in the wider political sphere, human beings operating within and continuously changing a society. *Marriage and Morals*, published in 1929, played a large role in changing people's attitudes to sex. (It didn't all begin in the 1960s, as some people seem

to think these days.)

There are some points I would disagree with. Ryan explains how Russell "really belonged to two aristocracies... Besides being a member of the aristocracy of birth, he was a member of the aristocracy of exceptional talent" (p2). This is a point that needs to be made, in these days when even the Tory Party is run by people who can't really be said to be members of either sort of aristocracy. And he's right to mention how dedicated these strata used to be to public service. But I think he's wrong when he cites the Bloomsbury Group and the Apostles/MI5 spies as exceptions to this pattern. They were in fact examples of exactly the same thing, unorthodox and perhaps quite mistaken, but no less sincere than their more conventional rivals. And Russell, though much closer to the conventional view than Bloomsbury or the Apostles, was always working quietly and effectively to change the existing order of society.

There were also some things that were new to me. I was interested to learn that Huxley's *Brave New World* was based on a pamphlet by Russell, in which Russell outlines a seemingly rational world order and then at the end "confesses that it is all a waking nightmare.." (p135).

Anyway, if you want to know the worthwhile things about Russell, get the book.

## Turn Things Upside Down

### *The Happy End*

Cooking Vinyl: cassette COOKC 33; also available on vinyl COOK 033 and compact disc COOKCD 033.

Reviewed by John Rhys

*The Happy End* is a leftwing band with a difference. It is a 20- (or, according to some reports, 22-) piece band, with lots of saxophones and trumpets etc., which makes a great sound. The music is vigorous, innovative and above all cheerful. The range of sound is well exemplified on this latest album, which gets off to a great start with a very up-beat rendering of *The Oakey Strike Evictions*, a ballad written by Tommy Armstrong in 1889 about the evictions of miners from their homes in Oakey, near Consett in County Durham. This is not done the way it was intended 101 years ago; the lyric is set off by a jazz arrangement that hails from New Orleans. But it is certainly refreshing.

The rest of the album is a mixture. *Turn Things Upside Down*, a song by a Scottish associate of William Morris, Bruce Glasier, is less well served by a rather too slow arrangement. This is followed by Berthold Brecht's *What Keeps Mankind Alive?* from *The Threepenny Opera*, then a jazzed-up version of the ANC's national anthem *Nkosi Sikeleli Afrika*. Side One ends with *Starstruck*, the one wholly original song (written by Happy Ender Mat Fox) on offer, which is a satire on the Thatcher-Reagan special relationship based on the idea conveyed some years back by those posters parodying *Gone With Wind* ("she promised to follow him to the end of the earth; he promised to organise it").

Side Two offers four tracks: *Sailing The Seas*, which starts with a straightforward rendering of the song from the Chinese Cultural Revolution "Depend Upon the Helmsman" (i.e. follow Mao) and then reverses this idea with a second part "Don't depend upon the helmsman", because helmsmen tend to leave you up shit creek without a paddle. This is followed by *The Big Rock Candy Mountain*, written by the professional hobo and ex-Wobbly Harry McLintock, which I seem to remember hearing twenty-five years ago in a Peter, Paul and Mary version. The song is good fun, but the arrangement on this version tends to drag. Next comes

*Rhumba por Nicaragua*, a simple expression of solidarity with the Sandinistas, adapted from *Bella Cubana*, and finally the album is rounded off with Count Basie's arrangement of *The Red Flag*, which starts off as a virtual dirge, before turning into something more light-hearted and up-beat.

Musically, *The Happy End* are good fun, and a refreshing change. But as the above run-down of their menu will suggest, they play very safe politically. There's something for everybody, so long as by 'everybody' we mean everybody in the middle-class left ghetto: a nod to working class tradition, a bit of abstract revolutionism, a bit of revolutionary cynicism, Right On Nelson Mandela, the standard middle-class left fantasy about nuclear weapons, a pretty mindless attitude to what Maoism was actually about (eliding entirely the distinction between forms of radical politics relevant to somewhere like China and those relevant here and now), the middle-class left drop-out's utopia (in case you've lost track, we're up to *The Big Rock Candy Mountain*, "where the dole cheques grow on bushes", etc.), Right On Sandinistas, Up the Red Flag (what a joke).

There's little or nothing (apart from the sheer liveliness of some numbers, particularly the first) which will appeal to ordinary working people, let alone develop their political outlook. It is striking that none of this material reflects contemporary Britain (except the last, at a pinch). But it is socialist songs for now that are needed, songs that deal with what's happening now, the poll tax, the gutting of the Labour Party's vision and purpose, permanent mass unemployment, the supine 'new realism' of the unions, the collapse of politics into posturing and public relations. What is needed in the musical sphere to help British socialism get back into business is songs which deal with these issues, convey a combative attitude to it, express a vigorous spirit about it.

Can *The Happy End* get weaving on this? Re-cycling old material with new arrangements is the soft option, comrades, even if you do it well. There must be a number of songwriters among all those talented musicians and arrangers, surely? And if you are short of socialist politics for now, just keep reading the L&TUR! The more you take from us, the more British socialism will get from your music. □

### *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.

# National Union of Public Employees' publications

The following article on publications by the trade union NUPE should be of interest to all readers. It was originally published in the magazine *Gay Star*, and is reprinted here with the author's permission.

## A Fair Deal for Part-time Workers

There are 5,000,000 part time workers in Britain. They constitute one fifth of the workforce. Four fifths of them are women. They are the worst paid workers with rarely any holiday pay, pensions, bonus, overtime or sick pay.

There are different definitions of part-time work. According to the unions it is 30 hours, according to the government it is 39 hours. Many local government workers are part-timers, it is a major source of employment for women, women are the vast majority of part-timers. This sort of work has expanded as full-time work has contracted.

The UK, Benelux and Scandinavian countries have the largest number of part-time workers and also have the largest percentage of women amongst them. In the UK, 34% of all local government workers are women working less than sixteen hours per week.

Due to certain circumstances, for example the provision of school meals at particular times, part-time working makes sense for women bringing up families. It also saves employers loads of money. Part-timers tend to enjoy their work more than full-timers. This probably has to do with family responsibility - and the fact that many such jobs are self-evidently socially useful: school meals, hospital cleaning and so forth.

But part timers miss out on pay, bonus schemes, sick pay, and maternity benefits. The confidence trick described here over sick-pay is quite outrageous. Many part-time jobs are quite dangerous: handling boiling-hot food in kitchens, toxic garbage from hospitals etc.

Towards the end of this booklet there are a series of itemisations of part-time

workers' rights (and wrongs). One of these items is the European Community's Draft Directive on equal rights for part time workers. The UK government has blocked its implementation since 1981. NUPE's own Charter for a Fair Deal for Part-Timers is aimed at Government and employers (mainly local government). There is an Appendix on where to find more information.

Available to non-members at £2.

## Part-time workers

This short pamphlet, sub-titled *A NUPE Guide to Your Rights*, is beautifully designed and is as user-friendly as these things can be. It should be useful for anyone on the dole as well as part-time workers.

50p for non-members.

## Hepatitis B

This useful and well-designed pamphlet (the bilious-yellow cover has a point to make) tells us what the disease is and how to avoid its various manifestations. There are useful illustrations including three cartoons by Francis Boyle of *Tribune*.

50p for non-members.

## Equality in Health

The first thing that has to be said about this pamphlet is that, although it is beautifully produced, it is in an extremely awkward format, decidedly not user-friendly. This is a great pity, as this publication, sub-titled *A Strategy for Change*, is powerful stuff. The Health Service is being run down. Despite the fact that the present government tells us that it is spending more money 'in real terms', the decline in standards is obvious to all.

*(More money has to be spent on the increasing number of very old people, and on cures for diseases that used to be fatal. To have kept the same level of real service to those who need it would have cost only a little bit more. See Martin Dolphin's articles in L&TUR Nos. 6, 7 & 10. Ed.)*

The NUPE pamphlet covers the whole range of the Health Services (taking in race and women's health), work, working conditions and pay. One of the most important conclusions is the demand that the drug companies be brought under state control. Cogent reasons are given: the companies' tax avoidance, transfer pricing, stinging the NHS with inflated prices, spending nearly as much per year on drug promotion as on research (£180 million and £200 million)!

Practical mans are urged to bring about "public ownership of a broad base in

pharmaceuticals": the recommendation that the Public Health Laboratory Service (a body with statutory rights to enforce restrictions on the outbreak of smallpox, typhus and similar diseases) form the basis of a new national research centre under the NHS, bringing together many charitable organisations and Trusts.

It is very good and useful that a Union rooted in the health services should be making this demand. It is absurd that this thriving industry, which is so vital to the health service, was left in private hands at the setting-up of the NHS.

£2.50 for non-members.

The various pamphlets can be obtained from

N.U.P.E.  
Civic House  
20 Grand Depot Road  
Woolwich  
SE18 6SS

## More NUPE publications

As it happens, we also have the following reviews from Donna Carton.

NUPE (the National Union of Public Employees) has published, for its members, a compact, portable information pack on women's health issues. Sixteen humorously illustrated and fairly informative booklets slide neatly inside an attractive cardboard envelope.

This package sat on my desk for some time. The women in the office, attracted initially to the cover, would pick it up, thumb through the booklets, chose one that interested or concerned them, read it and return it - a sort of mini-library in the office. One day the booklet on pregnancy disappeared and didn't return. I wondered for days who was pregnant but couldn't guess. It later emerged that a woman colleague, on discovering that she was pregnant was unsure of her next step and was a little panicked. She remembered the 'mini-library', slipped into the office, removed the pregnancy booklet, gained from it enough initial information to sort out her next move.

This little episode and the rummaging of the other women through the booklets proves the convenience of the pack. Each booklet covers a separate topic and can be removed and read publicly or privately. It can then be returned or

(Continued on next page)

## Algerian complications

As we go to press, news of the remarkable victory of the radical Islamist movement in the local and regional elections in Algeria is still coming in.

The Islamic Salvation Front (*Front Islamique du Salut* - FIS) has won control of 32 of Algeria's 48 *wilayât* (regions) and 853 (55.42%) of its 1,539 communes. The FLN has come a very poor second with 14 regions and 487 (31.64%) of the communes. One of the two remaining *wilayât* (Greater Kabylia) went to the Berberist and secularist *Rally for Culture and Democracy* (RCD), the other to independents (Tindouf, on the frontier with Mauritania, Western Sahara and Morocco). The RCD also took 87

(Continued from Page 22)

swapped for another. It is simple and accessible.

The content of each booklet is light but informative. They are easy to read and the cartoon drawings in some of them are entertaining too. For example two booklets, *Sexually Transmitted Diseases* and *Infertility* give helpful, sound advice and explanation of two very serious subjects. A little comic relief, in the form of funny drawings, lightens the load.

Every booklet, I feel, is useful and very readable. *Pre-Menstrual Syndrome* for example contains a chart - a menstrual diary - which can be copied out and used. It also has a list of symptoms of menstrual syndrome (I prefer this term to *Pre-MS*) and some self-help suggestions.

The booklets, it should be stressed, should be read for what they are - guides to health matters. For any woman very concerned about any of these issues the relevant booklet is not informative enough by itself. The pack is a guide and each booklet has a list of useful contacts and addresses.

NUPE obviously feels that women's health is an important trade union issue. In the pack it identifies NUPE policy and action in the various matters.

The pack is positive and warm in its attempts to raise issues of women's health. Every woman NUPE member will find it accessible and of benefit. Non-members can purchase the pack for £2.50.

communes (5.65%) mostly in Greater Kabylia; minor parties took four, and two results have not been announced. The Communists, known in Algeria as the *Socialist Vanguard Party* (*Parti de l'Avant-Garde Socialiste*, PAGES), got precisely nowhere.

Turnout was 65%, with former President Ahmed Ben Bella calling on supporters of his *Movement for Democracy in Algeria* (MDA) to abstain. The *Front des Forces Socialistes* (FFS), led by Ben Bella's former colleague in the wartime FLN, Hocine Aït Ahmed, also boycotted the election. There were also many independent, non-party, candidates who are in a majority in 106 communes, 6.9% of the total. It should not be forgotten that 64% of the Algerian electorate have *not* voted for the FIS. If we add the abstentionist element and the votes of the RCD and the other minor parties and the Independents to the FLN's vote, there is a potential majority to block the FIS in the National Assembly elections. But this presupposes that this notional majority is mobilised effectively and, more to the point, that the remarkable victory of the FIS does not have a bandwagon effect, as it well may.

Full analysis of this development must await the figures for actual votes cast and the other crucial details of the results. But it is already clear that Algeria is entering unknown territory. The FLN took an extraordinary risk when it decided to democratise its own state and legalise the Islamist opposition. In doing this, it renounced the Ba'athist alternative, to deal with the Islamists by state terror, and appears to have gambled on a sufficiently rapid development of civil society and democratic politics to ward off the Islamist challenge. Developments between now and the National Assembly elections, which could be held as soon as September or October, may still vindicate the FLN's bold calculation. But the odds are not in favour of it.

Even a second FIS victory need not be a total disaster, however. For what is of critical long-term significance is whether the FIS will remain within the parameters of the liberal constitution introduced by the FLN in February of last year and, in particular, accept its pluralist character. If it does so, this result could be the beginning of a remarkable process whereby radical Islamism in Algeria is drawn out of the shadowy periphery of political life, where it was able to maintain its doctrinaire purity intact, and is obliged to operate on the terrain of constitutional government, pluralist

politics, and the national interest. All this would very greatly complicate the outlook and behaviour of the Islamist movement, and greatly develop popular attitudes towards it. It may not seem much to salvage from its defeat, but if the FLN should, in losing so badly to the FIS, have set in train the domestication of radical Islam by implicating it in the framework of pluralist democracy and the nation-state, it will have rendered a lasting service to the state it founded, and set a remarkable example to nationalist regimes elsewhere in the Muslim world.

At the moment, the FIS's main spokesman, Professor Abassi Madani, is making reassuring noises about respect for the constitution, while the fire in the bellies of the rank and file is being kept alight by the inflammatory rhetoric of Sheikh Ali Belhadj. It must be assumed that this is a conscious double-act, rather than a real division of opinion within the FIS leadership. They must be assumed to have very considerable political ability, and to know what they are about, until there is proof to the contrary. What this means is that the FIS will respect the constitution as long as it has to. It is up to the FLN and the other protagonists of this drama, including the army, to keep the pressure on the FIS so that it has no option but to play by the existing rules, and so help to validate and consolidate them, and postpone its dream of a thoroughgoing Islamic state *sine die*.

If this does not happen, events could take a very dangerous turn. The FLN has held nearly all of the Sahara, but lost virtually all of northern Algeria to the FIS, including all the major cities. Only two regions of northern Algeria resisted the Islamist wave: Kabylia, the main Berber-speaking region in the Atlas mountains east of Algiers (where one *wilaya* went to the the FLN and another to the Berberist and secularist *Rally for Culture and Democracy*) and the Aurès region in south-eastern Algeria, the second most important Berber region, where the FLN held five adjacent *wilayât*. Kabylia and the Aurès were the two initial bastions of the FLN in the war for independence which began in 1954. Berber Algeria has rejected the FIS, Arab and urban Algeria has gone for it in a big way. Much of the army is drawn from Berber Algeria, especially the Aurès. But some of its troops at least must be assumed to be susceptible to the Islamists' appeal. If the fledgling constitution breaks down, and the army attempts to intervene, civil war is on the cards.

Hugh Roberts

The Ernest Bevin Society

Meeting at  
The Labour Party Conference

**FULL EMPLOYMENT  
is still an issue for  
Socialists**

**Ruskin Hotel  
Albert Road  
Blackpool**

**Monday 1st October  
12.30<sub>pm</sub>**

Further information from Hugh Roberts, 081 802 9482