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PREFACE

The essays in this seventeenth volume of the *Socialist Register* deal with many different topics: but they share a concern to probe from independent socialist positions some of the main issues and problems which confront the Left in the world today. One of the Editors attempts to tackle the questions posed to socialists by Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, the Vietnamese intervention in Kampuchea, and other such enterprises; and we hope that this discussion will be continued in future volumes of the *Register*. John Palmer discusses the economic crisis of world capitalism and the challenges which it poses to the Left; and S.M. Miller outlines the likely points of tension in the eighties, in the United States and elsewhere. This article, and the following one by Stanley Aronowitz on the labour movement and the Left in the United States, are a necessary reminder that the American Left is part of American reality, and that its condition and prospects are a matter of crucial concern to socialists everywhere else. Jane Jenson, from her own personal experience, provides an illuminating account of the French Communist Party's encounter with feminism; and at a time of great controversy in the Labour Party, John Saville reassesses the personality and politics of Hugh Gaitskell. John Saul explains the background of Robert **Mugabe's** electoral victory in Zimbabwe and Susanne Mueller contributes an original and challenging account of the Tanzanian experience. Fred Block's essay pursues an important theme in the discussion of the theory of the state, namely the question of the state's autonomy; and Laurence Harris, in the light of some recent books on the welfare state, asks pertinent questions about the state's role in this and other spheres. The essay from Hungary by Gyorgy Bence and **János Kis** is an important document on the state of Marxism in Hungary. Finally, Peter Worsley contributes a searching critique of Immanuel Wallerstein's influential work *The Modern World-System*.

Of our contributors, John Palmer is European Correspondant of the London *Guardian*. S.M. Miller is Professor of Sociology at Boston University and Stanley Aronowitz is Professor of Sociology at the University of California, Santa **Cruz**. Jane Jenson teaches Political Science at **Carleton** University, Ottawa, and John Saul is at **Atkinson** College, York University, Toronto. Susanne Mueller is at the African Studies Centre of Boston University, and Fred Block is in the Sociology Department of the University of Pennsylvania. Laurence Harris is Senior **Lecturer** in Economics at the Open University and Peter Worsley is Professor of

Sociology at the University of Manchester. As the Introduction to their essay indicates, **György** Bence and **János** Kis are at present deprived by the Hungarian authorities of any form of scholarly employment. We are grateful to our contributors for their help but, as usual, wish to stress that the views expressed by any of the contributors to this volume are not necessarily shared by the others, or by the Editors. We are also grateful for their cooperation and help to Martin Eve and David **Musson** of Merlin Press.

We very much welcome suggestions from readers as to the kind of material we should be publishing; and we are always glad to consider offers of contributions. All correspondence and material should be addressed to Merlin Press.

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R.M.
J.S.