

SOCIALISTS, SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND THE LABOUR PARTY: A REPLY TO HILARY WAINWRIGHT

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In assessing the prospects for an independent socialist party in Britain in the **1995 *Socialist Register***¹, Hilary Wainwright draws on her long and extensive experience of left politics. She has set herself an exacting task: to update Ralph Miliband's review of the progress made in creating a new political formation between **1956** and **1976**.² He envisaged a left-wing party 'able to attract a substantial measure of support and hold out genuine promise of further growth', but he concluded that after twenty years there was still nothing to show for it.

In contrast, Hilary examines the last two decades and claims that the prospects for a new party are now promising. To support this, she cites four 'very different' political developments which she thinks will combine to make this a possibility. These are the recent changes in the Labour Party and their effects on the Labour left; the rise of 'new' social movements and their new methods of organising; the collapse of the Soviet bloc and the opportunities this creates for libertarian socialists; and the increasingly international nature of politics and culture. I want to review these changes and question Hilary's reading of them: partly because I think that she makes too much of some of them; and partly because she neglects developments which, if taken into account, suggest something rather different. For these reasons, I find her often-repeated attempts to conjure up a new party unpersuasive.

My counter argument rests on the open acknowledgement that the socialist movement is in crisis – and insists that this crisis is as severe for those outside the Labour Party as it is for those who belong to it.³ Although the humanitarian case for socialism is stronger than ever and even though opportunities are emerging, the dramatic demise of Communism and the more prosaic decline of social democracy have seriously damaged the whole of the left. This is true whether we agreed with either of these dominant traditions or whether our political lives have been spent contesting some of the harm that they have done.

We also have to face the hard truth that most people in our society are

deeply hostile to what they see as politics. They are suspicious of people who peddle political ideas of whatever kind. Social and political conservatism and, in some cases, far more reactionary ideas prevail. This 'conservative culture', which inhibits any attempt to radically transform society, is partly produced by capitalist social relations. Unfortunately, social democracy and **Communism** have also reinforced social conservatism. In their different ways, they have helped to undermine the basis for socialism, in spite of the glaring social inequalities that exist. **As** a result, the political gap between radical socialists and the rest of society has become wider and deeper. For the vast majority of people, socialists are generally seen as having little or no relevance to the way that they experience or understand the world in which they live.

Sadly, sections of the radical left have contributed to this process of political isolation. Some groups mirror the worst features of the communist tradition; and some appear as archaic or simply odd. Many generate suspicion and disbelief among the relatively few people who come across them, repelling more support than they attract. Their appeal, such as it is, is often limited to idealistic but politically inexperienced young people, most of whom end up either drifting away or being driven away.

After some minimal progress, the Labour left today is also in a parlous state. Whether led by idiosyncratic parliamentarians, budding careerists or grass roots activists demanding democracy in one breath and denying it in the next, this left has an unfortunate record.⁴ Some might go so far as to describe it as tragic. By opposing one-member-one-vote, for example, the Bennite left lost the moral high ground in battling with Labour right-wingers.⁵ Many lived on the illusion that the denial of socialism by Labour leaders prevented a landslide of popular electoral support for a socialist programme. At times, futile battles were fought. Not only was the Benn-Heffer challenge for the party leadership in 1988 doomed to a massive defeat, but it exposed the Labour left as a marginal political force.⁶ It has not recovered from these blows and this has helped its opponents to strengthen their grip on the party.

Some may argue that this portrayal of the current state of the left in Britain is very negative. If so, my defence rests on the need to be brutally honest. Too often, socialists have overdosed on false optimism and this has lured them into defeat and disillusionment. We simply cannot afford to keep repeating such mistakes. I also believe that, in some respects, my remarks echo Ralph Miliband's 1976 essay in which he surveys and dismisses the organised left and calls for a new political formation. It is when he completely rejects the Labour Party that I part company with him.

If we begin by acknowledging the political marginality of the left – and then try to understand its causes – this raises questions which Hilary does not seem to confront. Few reasons are offered to explain why, after forty

years, those who shared Ralph's desire to set up an independent left still have so little to show for it.' More importantly, she does not review the progress of those on the left who saw a way forward through the Labour Party, or provide a clear analysis of its **practice**.⁸ Such an analysis would benefit from not automatically assuming that the Labour Party is impervious to change, since this forecloses the debate before it starts.

While recognising the enormous difficulties which they faced, I believe that it is vital to examine the political perspectives of those who led, or who influenced, the Labour left. I think these perspectives were seriously flawed and resulted in the adoption of strategies and tactics which contributed to defeat. In particular, they seriously overestimated what could be achieved in the short term and underestimated the adverse political climate in which they were operating. Putting it bluntly, these lefts failed to recognise how they were losing support in the labour movement, and they neglected – or they were naive about – how the rest of society saw them and the Labour Party. It did not have to be like that. There were positive, political alternatives open to the left as some of us struggled to argue amidst the **clamour** (and sometimes amidst the abuse). Unfortunately, angered by the intense hostility coming from the parliamentary party and their allies in the media, few on the Labour left were prepared to listen. Many fondly imagined that victory was within their **grasp**.

We can learn from this history. The interests of left unity should not be used to suppress dissenting voices; this type of unity impairs the clarity of analysis needed to underpin a socialist agenda and it is likely to prove self-defeating. So where does this take us? After all that has happened in recent decades, I want to suggest that in recognising the political gap between socialists and the rest of society the left is, in effect, starting again. We can, however, ask ourselves some crucial questions. Is it possible to create a left which has the potential to connect politically with the majority of people? In particular can we reach those people who have humanitarian concerns about what is taking place in society? Where will we find them and what will we say to them?

I think it is possible to develop this kind of left but it will take time. To gain a hearing, it needs to be a left located in the political mainstream. In this way, we can begin to make links and to gain support from people: some of whom will be found in the Labour Party where membership is currently rising, some of whom will be active in progressive social movements and far more, I suspect, will be involved in neither. The latter are more inaccessible but we must seek a variety of ways to reach them. We are dealing with heterogeneous constituencies which suggests that we should use all available forums for communication, both institutional and open, and employ suitable humility in analysis and strategy to people's real

hopes and concerns. Voluntary isolation has no place in a new, assertive practice.

The Changing Labour Party

Hilary Wainwright offers a different focus. She considers that developments in the Labour Party will assist in the creation of her new political formation. She says that, under Tony Blair's leadership, the party has undergone some 'profound changes' because of its more explicit commitment to market-led economics and its lesser commitment to **public** expenditure and intervention. As a result, she notes that there is a growing discontent among party members, not restricted to the left, which will show itself should Labour win office. In her view, progress has also been made because the Labour left has learned to avoid 'beguiling short cuts' to socialism through taking control of the party's hollow structures. It is a more self-confident left than its predecessors, she claims, lacking illusions about its prospects, no longer believing that with a little more effort the party can be won to socialism.

While I hope that she is right about the Labour left no longer being tempted by apparent short cuts, I think the political scene looks rather different. It is more like a battlefield after a major defeat. The Labour left has been scattered. Some have deserted the field, others have changed 'sides', some are in a state of shock, others are polishing their bayonets, some are regrouping and many are nursing their wounds. If what remains of the left now lack illusions it may be because they also lack any clear idea of what can be done. Most are not battle-hardened soldiers **preparing** for the next sortie but people in considerable disarray. Hardly a cause for great optimism, I would suspect. In fact, the sizeable, self-confident Labour left that Hilary thinks already exists has still to be built.

The case for building and revitalising the Labour left rests on an argument about the continuing importance of the Labour Party in the foreseeable future. Many doubt the value of this kind of endeavour. Hilary stresses that in his **1976** essay Ralph describes Labour as being 'irretrievably tied' to reproducing capitalism. She reminds us that he claimed that it is a deeply and widely held illusion that the party can become an instrument for socialism, an illusion which holds the Labour left in 'permanent subordination'. While it is not entirely clear how far Hilary subscribes to these views, her longstanding desire for a new party – and the fact that she quotes Ralph without qualifying or questioning his remarks – suggests a close affinity with them.

In any case, I think that Ralph's approach to the Labour Party in the **1976** essay – a view which many on the left continue to uphold – was misguided. Not that I wish to make the counter claim and argue that Labour will be the agency for socialism. This only repeats a similar kind

of error. Instead, I want to argue that social democratic parties are significant because they connect with what most people see as politics – in spite of the widespread cynicism about politics. In this optic, Labour is important because it may come to hold power. If we as socialists do not relate our politics to the Labour Party then in the public's view we hardly relate to the world at all. Perhaps Ralph had something like this in mind when he writes in his final work, *Socialism for a Sceptical Age*, that the radical left's best hope in the 'relevant future' lies in strengthening the left in social democratic parties.

To put it polemically, are we trying to relate to the mass of the population, via the Labour Party, or to the movements on the 'fringe'? The answer is that we need to do both but that means both. It is not enough to go where we think the radical action is. Instead of looking to the radical fringe as the solution to the conservative core, we must focus on the core itself. We have to begin to reach out to people who hold socially conservative views, intermixed as they may be with all sorts of other ideas. This takes us back to the Labour Party because most people in the party are not radically different from those in the wider society. If we can learn to communicate with the former then we are on the way to connecting with some of the latter and vice versa.

To argue for Labour's centrality does not mean holding any illusions about its record in office. There are many accounts which show that in a crisis Labour governments abandon their initial good intentions. Trapped by their lack of radicalism, they put the material interests of capital before those of labour. Indeed, the actions and arguments of the last Labour government helped prepare the ground for the subsequent swing to the right. The Labour Cabinet often reluctantly introduced measures which the Tories later took up with a vengeance. In this way, Labour acted as the political midwife of **Thatcherism**.¹⁰ All this makes the debates in the Labour Party at such times even more important – and it will do so again. How that debate is conducted in the party, particularly how the Labour left conducts itself will be of considerable importance. What it says and does in the intervening period will also be crucial to the eventual outcome. From this perspective, those who simply anticipate the political fall-out that may result from such developments, hoping it will provide recruits to a new party, have vacated the political field.

We also have to be honest enough to recognise that Labour leaders generally reflect views that are closer to the party membership and to the wider society than ours. This means that we have to relate to the agenda which they set and respond in ways which are capable of winning a wider hearing. Labour lefts have often wrong-footed themselves by claiming that the party is being led, or misled, by a bunch of 'usurpers.'" This is a self-defeating illusion, implying that a change of personnel is really all that is

needed: that if the present leadership can be replaced by some 'real' socialists, we will be on our way. While this argument has launched many a career in the labour movement, it conveniently ignores the real political processes at work, material pressures which have transformed generations of radical socialists into cautious reformers and which first need to be understood if we are to overcome them.

This brings us to the question of how to reconstruct a Labour left in the aftermath of the Bennite debacle and the rise of New Labour – and what the new formation should be like. As I have already argued, it will be a great help if it had a clear understanding of what went wrong and is willing to learn from these experiences. Having no illusions, something which Hilary values, simply is not enough. Claiming 'we was robbed' by out-of-touch party leaders will not do. Being oppositional is, and never was, enough. There are times when head-on confrontations are necessary and unavoidable. There are times when other, more subtle and strategic skills, are needed. There are also times when it is necessary to realise that the world has moved on, that we have to move with it or be left behind.

The bedrock of a future Labour left must be a clear commitment to genuine democracy and pluralism in its own practices, in the party and in the wider society. As I have already argued, this has not always been the case. The new Labour left must also learn how to connect with the rest of the party in a reasonable and tolerant manner. There have also been times in the recent past when this has not always been the case. It must be a left which is capable of winning respect and trust from people who do not agree with its ideas. Only then can it hope to secure their agreement in the longer term. It must be a left based on experience at the grass roots inside and outside the party, not one that is over-eager to play **follow-my-parliamentary-leader** yet again. In other words, New Labour needs a credible, new Labour left.

Social Change and Social Movements

It is not the Labour left which most appeals to Hilary, however, but the emergence of new social movements. For her, they provide the 'foundational change affecting prospects for a new political agency.' She acknowledges that these groups quickly wax and wane and that their significance is even now 'a little hazy'. She also records that they are fluid, diverse and highly localised and, while they have influenced the left, 'they are not entirely of the left.' Yet her enthusiasm for them is undimmed.

Before considering her reasons, a little more needs to be said about social movements. In the essay which precedes Hilary's, George Ross points out that those involved in such initiatives show a marked antipathy to the left because of the way that some lefts have treated **them**.¹² He adds that many 'are not socialist at all'. We can go further. In the essay which

follows Hilary's, Frances Fox Piven is concerned about what she describes as 'the tide of identity politics'.¹³ While she accepts that for some oppressed groups this has been a necessary development, she is also aware of the problems that it can create. She warns of the rise of 'hate-filled identity politics' which, she says, is partly the result of the massive dislocations of people set in motion by capitalist restructuring.

This means that we have to differentiate between the various social movements. On the one hand, some have made an invaluable, lively and creative contribution to radical politics, enlarging the meaning of politics itself – and Hilary has done much to make this known to a wider audience. On the other, there are social movements which presage a very dangerous future. Our reactions will range from welcoming some to resisting others, on the basis of their aims, methods and ethics. In Britain, we would oppose racially-motivated movements like the parents who withdrew their children from a Dewsbury school because of the preponderance of Muslim pupils. I would also want to resist separatist movements, like the campaign for single-sex education for Muslim girls. Even on 'our' side there are some that I prefer to keep at a critical distance. For example, some anti-racist groups show an enthusiasm for violence which I find deplorable.

If we take these comments as qualifying rather than questioning Hilary's enthusiasm for social movements, why does she place such faith in them? If I understand her correctly, it is not because they will give birth to a new political formation as such. Rather, it is because the socialist future is embedded in their practice in a very specific way. Unaware they are pioneering 'a new and distinctive political agency', as she puts it, in the way they organise, develop policies and mobilise new sources of power. Out of their practice will come forth a party, equipped with a political method fit for building socialism.

This strikes me as overloading them with too many expectations. Many radical movements may work in ways that empower the people involved and encourage participation. We may learn a lot from them. Organisations like CND have done this in the past without being harbingers of socialism or socialist practice. As Hilary says, some may even be models of social change that break with the mechanical ones found in some earlier socialist traditions. But there seems to be something of a gap between valuing current practices and seeing in this the makings of a new party.

My experience of recent social movements, particularly those opposing the Criminal Justice Bill, suggests a slightly less sanguine and less certain picture. This significant campaign brought together many young, unemployed people who showed great imagination and an energy which sometimes outran good organisation. They combined a sense of fun with a serious attack on the loss of civil liberties. They came into sharp conflict with the Socialist Workers Party which they felt was trying to turn its

superior material resources to its own advantage. More significantly for my argument, the activists rarely managed to break out of their social ghetto and make wider connections.

This suggests a group of people who did the best they could in the circumstances. Likewise the **motorway** protestors and kindred campaigners have shown impressive skills and ingenuity. I have no wish to belittle their activities. Whenever people struggle some amazing things can happen. This has always been the case and there are numerous examples of what people can do when trying to take greater control of their lives, historically and contemporarily. All over the world, we can find people who are undertaking activities of this kind. Yes, in such actions we get a glimpse of a different future. Yes, it may be inspiring and a source of hope. It is only when Hilary suggests that in their methods they unwittingly prefigure her new political party that I begin to differ and when she later describes them as movements for 'socialist change' I feel that she goes too far.

International Developments

Another source of hope for a new party, **Hilary** claims, comes with the end of Communism. She says that the collapse of the Soviet Union has spelt the final crisis of an already confused and divided Communist Party in Britain. This has undermined attempts at social engineering from above and gives scope for the subordinate tradition of socialism from below. Exponents of the latter, she argues, have to face up to the realities of dealing with power. Again, this is only part of the picture. Arguably, what it also shows is that the widespread unease in our society about the Soviet Union, although fostered by right wing forces, was well founded. Most people became critical about the lack of democracy in the Eastern bloc and were repulsed by what they saw. They were largely unmoved by the arguments of pro-Soviet apologists. This healthy response has, nonetheless, left us with a legacy of suspicion about anything that smacks of socialism. To gain a hearing, we are going to have to prove that we are very different.

People are also aware that, as the command economy, Communism was an economic failure. This raises some tough questions about what an alternative socialist economy might look like and some equally tough questions about how we can begin to move in that direction. A heavy but exciting responsibility awaits us in working out a way towards a democratic economy. Until we do, we can hardly expect the wider society to pay us much attention. Until we have something better to offer, we cannot expect to make great progress. This is a debate which offers a lot of scope for dialogue between socialists **both inside** and outside the Labour Party.

Nothing in this process suggests to me that the end of Communism will necessarily lead towards the formation of a new socialist party, however. If

anything, its collapse has done more to poison the public mind about socialism and has made many people less inclined to listen to us. It may have persuaded some **people** that attempting to radically change **society** only makes matters worse.

Hilary also argues that national sovereignty is being contested in ways that offer new openings for the left. That may be true, but she goes further. The prospects for direct political representation for her new socialist party have increased, she says, thanks to these internal and external challenges to the British state and the parties that cleave to it. Among the examples she gives are the pressure for electoral reform coming from **Europe** and the growing importance of the European Parliament which gives greater scope to its participants.

She sees these developments combining with a self-confident left's growing disillusionment with the **Labour** Party leading towards the founding of a new party. This disenchantment is true for those inside as well as outside the party, she says, and is partly due to the dropping of 'the party's founding socialist **commitment**'.¹⁴ What we have here is speculation based on optimistic oversimplification. It is equally possible to suggest a more complex and potentially more dangerous picture. For example, electoral reform may happen. It may also give scope to forces on the right which may have a far greater potential for support than a politically isolated left. A swing to the right may be the outcome of the failure of a future Labour government. Therefore for Hilary to see in the developments simply the rise of a new socialist party could be to neglect the wider picture. For, even if it happens as she predicts, then the left could even be fighting for its political life.

But perhaps this argument takes us too far into the future. What I really wish to stress is that the gap between the left and the rest of society presents us with some immediate problems. What we do will help shape what happens and, right now, there is a pressing job to be done. It is imperative to build up the Labour left to meet these changed circumstances, as Ralph argues in his final work, It will be vital for that left to become politically credible in the wider society, in the labour movement and among progressive social movements. This must be based upon a widely-held recognition that what the left says and does is reasonable; that its political demands make sense; that it is not trying to cut comers or cheat in **any** way; and that it values and respects the work of independent political activists. Unless and until we begin to close the gap between socialists and the rest of society, then we cannot make very much of the opportunities which present themselves. Indeed, we may be at great risk.

Commitment to democracy will have to be a vital part of any reasonable left's political agenda. It can provide the basis for a broad appeal in a diverse and divided society. Who knows, it may even help us to focus on

the main enemy, which is not the Labour Party leadership, but the undemocratic class of owners and controllers of capital who run our society, regardless of who is in government. This is the greatest challenge we face – to make our socialism relevant and coherent wherever we operate. This, I would suggest, is much more important and far more pressing than investing our hopes in the formation of a new political party.

Postscript: the Socialist Labour Party

'I believe that the case for a Socialist Labour Party is now **overwhelming.**'¹⁵ With this ringing declaration, Arthur Scargill, the miners' leader, made known his intention to establish a new political party. He wants it to contest every seat in the next general election. His initiative rests on the claim that the changes to Clause Four of Labour's constitution in 1995 are not only 'an unmitigated disaster' but are virtually irreversible. Labour, he says, is now almost indistinguishable from the Democratic Party in the US, the German Social Democrats and the Liberal Democrats in the UK.

Although there are some who welcome this clarion call, the general reaction from the left has ranged from indifference to hostility. Writing in *New Times*, the Democratic Left journal, Kevin Davey is scornful, describing the timing as 'absurd' given the prospects of a Labour election victory. On the support the group is attracting, he claims: 'Arthur's party is over before it has started.' "No Labour MP has signed up and the Socialist Campaign Group of MPs has given the new party the thumbs down, insisting that it is not the time to leave the Labour Party. As this essay shows I share this view, but what of those socialists who for years have been arguing for a new left? Is this what they had in mind when they claimed to see positive signs of the emergence of a left party to challenge Labour?

The answer is, apparently not. Hilary Wainwright has called for a far-reaching debate instead, making it plain that she intends to reject the Socialist Labour Party." In view of her previous arguments this is interesting. She candidly admits that Arthur Scargill has put people like her on the spot, noting that for a decade she and others have worked together 'with the long term possibility of a new party *at the back of our minds*' (my italics), but without any sense of urgency. She also notes that it has been the subject of 'hundreds of speculative meanderings over a pint'. I would suggest that there has been a little more to it than that. In 1995, for example, I had the opportunity to hear Hilary address meetings on these issues twice in one week and her contribution to the *Socialist Register* of the same year on the same subject is the reason for this article.

She also warns that Scargill's party could damage the chances of making a more effective, electoral challenge to Labour in the future. It

would be better to wait until conditions for a new alignment, based on the prospect of winning mass support, are far more **promising**. This will be when we have proportional representation and a major split in the Labour Party, she argues.

Thus, having talked up the prospects for a new party in her articles and in many speeches, she is now talking them down in response to one being established. The wishful thinking, which I questioned earlier, has been replaced by a greater realism about the conditions facing the left, but where does that leave the politics? Until the new party of the kind that she envisages can be born, it becomes something of a waiting game – waiting for proportional representation and waiting for Labour leaders in government to generate a split in the Labour Party. It ends up in political limbo: rejecting my argument that socialism can be regenerated in and around the Labour Party and from the base upwards; and rejecting the formation of a new party because of the centrality of the Labour Party. This leaves **Hilary** looking for crumbs of political comfort and, in spite of the wealth of her experience, it robs her of relevance. At a time when there are many people wanting to find ways forward, the message is blurred. At best, it seems to be suggesting that they should keep busy in the hope that in some ill-defined way this will be useful when things change for the better.

If this is the case, then it will not do. Socialist politics desperately needs to have direction itself and to be able to suggest it to others. We have to be practical visionaries offering people ways to make progress. Prolonged ambivalence is no more help than absolute certainty. So while trying to understand the complexity of the world, we must also strive to make our ideas relevant. We have to devise a living politics that makes sense to people now and which encourages them to participate in the process. That, for me, means taking commitment to the Labour Party very seriously.

So while allowing for intellectual doubt, we also have to make a commitment: to engage with political agencies that offer the prospect of some advance. It is not possible to build anything solid from the sidelines. The results of such efforts may sometimes be interesting, even entertaining, but they will also be ephemeral. Once made, our political commitment must be genuine. Anything less may suggest hypocrisy and even dishonesty to the people with whom we wish to make finks. Socialists always have to make hard choices. For, as others have said, we are forced to live in interesting times.

NOTES

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The postscript on the Socialist Labour Party and the left was written later in response to Arthur Scargill's well-publicised proposals to set up a new party.

1. Hilary Wainwright, 'Once More Moving On: Social Movements, Political Representation and the Left', *Socialist Register*, 1995, London: Merlin Press, 1995
2. Ralph Miliband, 'Moving On', *Socialist Register*; 1976, London: Merlin Press, 1976. Several critical replies were published in *Socialist Register*, 1977.
3. I share this general perspective with members of Independent Labour Publications(ILP), formerly the Independent Labour Party (ILP). Founded in 1893, the ILP co-founded the Labour Party in 1900 and affiliated to it. The ILP left the Labour Party in 1932. after the debacle of the second minority Labour government. It returned to the Labour Party in 1975 as Independent Labour Publications, a radical publications and pressure group. For a short history of the ILP and an outline of the modern ILP, see Barry Winter, *The ILP, Past & Present*, Leeds: ILP, 1993
4. The fullest statement of the ILP's views on the Labour Party and the left in this period appears in Eric Preston, *Labour in Crisis*, Leeds: ILP, 1983. Together with the pamphlet, Eric Preston, *A Hitch Hikers Guide to the Labour Party*, Leeds: ILP, 1987, this contrasts with Hilary Wainwright, *Labour: A Tale of Two Parties*, London, Hogarth Press, 1987.
5. Interestingly, Peter Hain MP, who was a leading member of the Labour Coordinating Committee in its left-wing period, now acknowledges that it was a mistake to oppose one member, one vote.
6. The Socialist Society lent support to this venture through its involvement in the Socialist Movement which attracted relatively large crowds for a time but which lacked substance. For a critique of the Benn-Heffer campaign, see Eric Preston, 'The Charge of the Benn Brigade.' *ILP Magazine*, Leeds: ILP, summer 1988.
7. As Hilary puts it: 'It is tempting to think of this network of disparate activists as a party in waiting; in reality it is a coalition of the disenfranchised with as yet no very clear definition of its future.' *Socialist Register*; 1995, p.93.
8. Most accounts of this period are either journalistic or impressionistic. The most promising analysis is Leo Panitch, 'Socialist Renewal and the Labour Party', *Socialist Register*, 1988. Although this begins impressively, it eventually disappoints. The author seems to be trapped by his premise that Labour is 'incapable of transformation' which cuts short a detailed consideration of the left's strategy itself. Instead, we are presented with a view of the Labour Party which makes any efforts to change it futile from the outset. Can we really be so sure?
9. See Eric Preston. op cit.
10. Op cit.
11. For an example of this approach in relation to the Kinnock leadership see Eric Heffer, *Labour's Future: Socialist or SDP Mark 2?*, London: Verso. 1986.
12. George Ross, 'Saying No to Capitalism at the Millenium', *Socialist Register*, 1995, London: Merlin Press, 1995
13. Frances Fox Piven, 'Globalizing Capitalism and the Rise of Identity Politics', *Socialist Register*; 1995, London: Merlin Press, 1995
14. In fact, when the Labour Party was founded in 1900, as the Labour Representation Committee, it did not have a socialist commitment. To ensure trade union leaders' support for the new party, its aims were restricted to securing political representation for labour. It was 18 years later, at the end of the first world war and after the Russian revolution, that the party adopted its formal commitment to common ownership, the famous Clause Four. This was replaced at the 1995 party conference after Tony Blair's successful campaign to persuade party members that the text should be modernised. The new clause begins by describing Labour as a democratic socialist party.
15. Arthur Scargill, Future Strategy for the Left: A discussion paper on the consequences of the Labour Party Special Conference, April 1995, and the Labour Annual Conference, October 1995
16. Kevin Davey, 'From King Coal to Clown Prince', *New Times*, 25 November 1995
17. Hilary Wainwright, 'Not Yet, Arthur', *New Statesman & Society*, 24 November 1995