

# **SOCIALIST REGISTER**

**1985/86**

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## PREFACE

This twenty second issue of the *Socialist Register* is a 'double' volume, spanning the years **1985/16**. The reason for this is that we have long wanted the *Register* to appear at the beginning rather than at the end of the year; and the only way we could do this was by 'losing' a year. However, we hope that the volume makes up, both in interest and in bulk, for the loss.

Marcel Liebman became a third co-editor of the *Register* in **1984**; and Leo **Panitch** has now become a fourth one. It is very unlikely that we shall go on adding co-editors at this rate. Leo **Panitch** has contributed to the *Register* in the past, is the author of *Industrial Militancy and Social Democracy* and other writings, and is Professor of Political Science at York University, Toronto.

Like its **1984** predecessor, this volume is mostly concerned with a single theme, namely 'Social Democracy and After'. What we present in this issue is a critical survey of social democracy in theory and practice, and an exploration of what, in socialist terms, lies beyond it. Social democracy has under various labels been the overwhelmingly predominant experience of Western labour movements, and retains that predominance today. The contributors to this volume are all highly critical of that experience but are well aware that the critique of social democracy, however necessary, is not enough, and that what is also badly needed is a careful exploration of what else is possible by way of socialist change in advanced capitalist countries with capitalist-democratic regimes. It is both to critique and exploration that the **1985/6 *Socialist Register*** is intended to make a contribution.

In the opening essay, Marcel Liebman draws a sharp contrast between social democracy in its formative phase in the decades before **1914**, and its subsequent evolution; and George Ross and Jane Jenson follow this up with a survey of the changes which have occurred since World War II in the nature of capitalism and the working class, and they discuss some of the crucial questions which these changes raise for the Left. As against those who would answer these questions in terms of the impasse of the socialist project that has allegedly been imposed by a declining working class and an orthodox Marxism, Leo **Panitch** presents a wide ranging critique, with particular reference to the Labour Party in Britain, which identifies social democracy's historical practice and continuing influence on working class politics as the critical obstacle on the Left to socialist

advance.

The following seven articles are devoted to various aspects of working class and social democratic politics in a number of countries. William Graf contributes a detailed analysis of political trends within and beyond social democracy in the German Federal Republic; and Michal Bodemann analyses the experience and ambiguities of the Green Party. On the basis of a close reading of a rich documentation, Vicente Navarro provides an important corrective to the familiar view that the American working class has been won over to 'Reaganism'; and Peter Beilharz offers a searching analysis of present trends in the Australian Left. Mark Kesselman discusses the tensions in French social democracy under Mitterrand, and Michalis Spourdalakis analyses the record of the Papandreou Government in Greece. For his part, James Petras probes some of the major political problems which arise in regard to democratic forms in conditions of acute class struggle, such as these manifest themselves in Latin America in the transition from authoritarian capitalist to liberal democratic regimes, on the one hand, and to revolutionary regimes, on the other.

The following two articles discuss the year-long miners' strike in Britain in 1984-5 and its implications for socialists. John Saville provides a detailed account of how the Thatcher Government fought this battle, and considers the response of the National Union of Mineworkers and of the Labour Party; and Richard Hyman analyses the NUM's conduct of the strike and discusses some of the main questions which are suggested by the strike to the whole labour movement.

The last seven articles discuss critical issues facing socialism today. Andrew Gamble presents an analysis of the 'Austrian' critique of socialism and discusses how that critique may be answered; and Mario Nuti proposes some ways in which economic planning can be made to work in economies in which the market still plays an important role. Frank Webster examines the problems which the 'technological revolution' presents to socialists; and Roland Lew offers a critical review of a book which has had a considerable impact on the Left since its publication in 1983, namely Alec Nove's *The Economics of Feasible Socialism*. Ernest Mandel discusses the future of the working class in the context of capitalist crisis; and Mateo Alaluf discusses the ways in which views of the working class affect political strategies. Finally, a concluding essay by Ralph Miliband and Marcel Liebman considers the kind of socialist politics that could provide an alternative to present-day social democracy.

Among our contributors, George Ross is Professor of Sociology at Brandeis University, Massachusetts, and Jane Jenson teaches Political Science at Carleton University, Ontario; and Vicente Navarro is a Professor in the Department of Health Policy and Management at Johns Hopkins University, Maryland. Peter Beilharz teaches in the Sociology Department of the Phillip Institute of Technology, Bundoora, Australia;

and Mark Kesselman is a Professor in the Department of Political Science, Columbia University, New York. Michalis Spourdalakis is at Bishop's University, Quebec; and James Petras is a Professor of Sociology at the State University of New York, Binghamton. Richard Hyman is at the School of Industrial and Business Studies, University of Warwick, and Andrew Gamble teaches in the Department of Political Theory and Institutions, University of Sheffield. Roland Lew is a Research Fellow at the Institute of Sociology, Brussels. Ernest Mandel teaches political economy at Brussels University, and Mario Nuti is Professor of Economics at the European University, Florence. Frank Webster is at the Oxford Polytechnic and Mateo Alaluf at the Institute of Sociology, Nivelles, Belgium.

We are grateful to George Ross for his very helpful suggestions in the early stages of the planning of this issue of the *Socialist Register*; to Martin Eve and Sarah Tisdall for their help in the production of this volume; to David Macey for his translations; and to our contributors for their cooperation. Once again, we must stress that neither the editors nor the contributors necessarily agree with everything that appears in the following pages.

*September 1985*

R.M.    M.L.  
J.S.    L.P.