

SOCIALIST REGISTER 1990

**Edited by
RALPH MILIBAND
LEO PANITCH**

**THE MERLIN PRESS
LONDON**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	vii
= Seven Types of Obloquy. Travesties of Marxism Norman Geras	1
Marxism Today : An Anatomy John Saville	35
The Uses and Abuses of 'Civil Society' Ellen Meiksins Wood	60
Defending the Free World Terry Eagleton	85
Postmodernism and the Market Fredric Jameson	95
The Eclipse of Materialism: Marxism and the Writing of Social History in the 1980s Bryan D. Palmer	111
Statism, New Institutionalism, and Marxism Paul Cammack	147
The Welfare State: Towards a Socialist-Feminist Perspective Linda Gordon	171
Intellectuals against the Left : The Case of France George Ross	201
Derrida and the Politics of Interpretation Eleanor MacDonald	228
Should a Marxist Believe in Marx on Rights? Amy Bartholomew	244

Liberal Practicality and the US Left John Bellamy Foster	265
Intellectuals and Transnational Capital Stephen Gill	290
Why we are Still Socialists and Marxists After All This Arthur MacEwan	311
Eulogy beside an Empty Grave: Reflections on the Future of Socialism Richard Levins	328
Counter-Hegemonic Struggles Ralph Miliband	346

Preface

This twenty-sixth volume of the *Socialist Register* is devoted to the move away, **as** we see it, from earlier socialist positions on the part of **Left** intellectuals in the last decade. This trend has been particularly pronounced in regard to Marxism; but it has also involved a more general retreat from socialism conceived as a radical alternative to capitalism. The very notion of capitalism has come to be exceedingly blurred in much **Left** discourse; and the notion of a radical alternative to capitalism has been correspondingly devalued in the eyes of many intellectuals who had previously been committed to it.

There are of course many **Left** intellectuals who would say that there has been no move away at all, but an essential reappraisal of socialist positions in the light of the extraordinary transformations which have occurred in recent times, and which have created an entirely new context, so it is claimed, in which to conceive socialist change. We too believe that constant reappraisal is essential for socialism to advance. But we also believe that much of the reappraisal undertaken by **Left** intellectuals in recent years **has** marked a retreat from socialist perspectives; **and** that such a retreat is unwarranted.

The essays in this volume provide an analysis and a critique of many of the forms which the retreat has assumed; and we hope that the volume **as** a whole may play a modest part in halting the trend, and in creating an intellectual and ideological climate in the nineties very different from the climate which has prevailed on the **Left** in the past decade.

We are very grateful to our contributors for their help; and we wish to say, as usual, that neither our contributors nor the editors are necessarily committed to everything that appears in the volume. We also acknowledge with many thanks the help of Martin Eve, of Merlin Press, in producing this issue.

Norman Geras and Paul Cammack teach in the Department of Government at Manchester University; and Stephen Gill is the Harmsworth Fellow in Political Economy also at Manchester University. Ellen Meiksins Wood is Professor of Political Science at **Glendon** College, York University, Toronto; and **Fredric** Jameson is Professor of English Literature at Duke University, North Carolina. Terry **Eagleton** is a Fellow of Linacre College, Oxford; and Linda Gordon is Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin

in Madison. Bryan Palmer is in the Department of History at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario; and George Ross is Professor of Sociology at Brandels University. Eleanor **MacDonald** is in the Department of Political Science at York University, Toronto; and John Foster is in the Department of Sociology at the University of Oregon. Amy Bartholomew is in the Department of Law at **Carleton** University, Ottawa; and Arthur **MacEwan** teaches Economics at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. Richard **Levins** is Professor of Population Science at the Harvard School of Public Health, Harvard University.

John Saville has decided that the time had come for him to cease being a co-editor of the ***Socialist Register***. This is a real wrench, for he was one of the two founders of the ***Register*** in 1964, and has been closely associated with it ever since. His steadiness, lucidity and **good** sense, and his sharp political intelligence, have been of immense value through the years; and we are very grateful to him. We are glad to think that, as in the case of the present volume, we shall be able to rely on his good advice and on his contributions in the **future**.

February 1990

R.M. L.P.