

REAL PROBLEMS FALSE SOLUTIONS



**S O C I A L I S T
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THE MERLIN PRESS
LONDON

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PREFACE

Real Problems/False Solutions: this theme of the twenty ninth issue of *The Socialist Register* requires a brief explanation.

With the recent collapse of so much that formed **socialist expectations** in the twentieth century, and yet at the same time with a global capitalist order which is full of severe, massive and urgent problems, we live in a period of great political confusion. In such a period it is inevitable that nostrums are advanced both on the Right and on the Left which are incapable of tackling seriously the problems they are supposed to resolve.

We conceived this volume as addressing a broad range of 'dead-end' or 'morbid symptom' responses to various aspects of the current global disorder, offering analyses of why they arise as well as a critique and corrective to them. We deliberately cast our net widely: the essays in this volume highlight important aspects of our theme in relation to environmentalism, feminism, social democracy and revolutionary socialism; and they also address real problems and false solutions as they pertain to **post-modernism**, nationalism, constitutionalism and immigration.

We would have liked to have covered more ground still, not least in relation to the manifestly false solutions advanced in the name of 'competitiveness', 'free enterprise' and 'structural adjustment' to which, as our contributors attest, so many parties and governments, international bodies like the IMF and the World Bank, and a host of ideologues and commentators have ardently subscribed, and which they have successfully pressed on countries right around the globe.

Socialists like ourselves cannot reasonably claim to have ready-made blueprint solutions for the problems of the world: the time for such presumption is long gone. But we do believe that neo-liberalism, far from solving problems, is a recipe for their aggravation, at least for the vast majority of the population in all countries where that poisonous ideology holds sway; and we also believe that the control and regulation of economic life by progressive, democratic and accountable governments is the first condition for the alleviation of the ills plaguing the men and women who

are not part of the small minority which prospers in conditions where the organising principle of social life is competition.

Our contributors range far and wide. David Harvey is Professor of Geography at Oxford University; Christopher Norris is Professor of English at Cardiff University; Marsha Hewitt is in the Department of Theology at Trinity College, University of Toronto; and Lynne Segal teaches in the School of Psychology at Middlesex University. John Griffith is Emeritus Professor of Public Law in the University of London; Michael Lowy is Research Director at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris; John Saul is Professor of Social Science at Atkinson College, York University, Toronto; K. S. Karol writes on Eastern Europe and the ex-Soviet Union for *Nouvel Observateur*, Paris; Stephen Hellman teaches in the Department of Political Science, York University, Toronto; Rudolf Meidner is a former Research Director of LO, the Swedish Confederation of Labour and is a Fellow of the Swedish Center for Working Life, Stockholm; Saul Landau is a Senior Fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies, Washington, D.C.; and Daniel Singer is the European Correspondent of *The Nation*, New York.

We are grateful to our contributors for their help, and to David Macey for his translation of K. S. Karol's essay. As usual, we must point out that neither our contributors nor the editors necessarily agree with everything that appears in the volume. We are also, once again, very grateful to Martin Eve of Merlin Press for his unflinching help.

March 1993

L.P.
R.M.