

REVIEW OF BOOKS



The Crisis of the British Intelligentsia

FRANCIS MULHERN

THE LAST three years have seen a major shift to the right in British politics. The current terms of inner-party debate are far to the right of those on which the February '74 election was fought. Within the parliamentary Labour Party, the Left has seldom seemed feeble; and after an uncertain beginning, Thatcherism has now consolidated its hold over the Conservative Party.

Outside parliament, Thatcher openly patronises the National Association For Freedom, the organisation that brought style and respectability to the once make-shift and semi-clandestine craft of strike-breaking; and the National Front continues to grow, nourished by the social crisis, a pervasive sense of 'national' (i.e. Great British) humiliation, and spreading disillusion among traditional Labour voters. This political shift has had obvious cultural

effects. The emergence of capable and aggressive ideologues like Robert Moss (a self-styled 'political warfare specialist') and the expansion of Aims of Industry under the more ambitious title Aims for Freedom and Enterprise, are just two signs of the growing confidence and determination of the Right. But there are other signs, which warn of a more fundamental cultural disturbance. The deepening anti-Marxist bias of the *Times Literary Supplement* (the trade paper of British academia), the political and commercial dislocation of the *New Statesman*, and the hysterical anti-union diatribes of its ex-editor, Paul Johnson — these are more than topical reactions to a period of economic crisis. They are evidence, rather, of a profound politico-ideological shift, affecting a whole generation of British intellectuals and opening a new phase in British cultural life. This article will attempt a thumbnail sketch of this intelligentsia and its crisis, and

will indicate the dangers and opportunities that await the left in this new situation.

The Post-War Intelligentsia

The character of Britain's post-war intelligentsia was shaped by three related factors: 1. Its political colouration; 2. Its social tradition; and 3. The internal design of the culture it created.

1. Its outstanding political trait was its insulation from Marxism. In the first post-war decade, the powerful Leftward currents of the Thirties were blocked and reversed, and Marxism ceased to have any serious influence in the national culture. The various factors that led to the post-war decimation of the Left in British culture — most obviously, Stalinism, the Cold War, the long boom and the role of Labour — have yet to be assembled in a convincing historical analysis, but the institutional evidence speaks for itself.

The Left Book Club, which in 1939 had over 55,000 members, organised nationally in 1,500 local clubs, closed in 1948. The quarterly *Politics and Letters*, launched by Raymond Williams and others as a Left alternative to Zhdanovism, foundered after a year. The CP-sponsored journal *Arena*, whose line was fiercely anti-American national-populism, ceased publication in 1951; and shortly afterwards its companion theoretical journal, *Modern Quarterly*, also ceased to appear.

The new voice of the Fifties was *Encounter*. Sponsored by the Congress for Cultural Freedom (and covertly by the CIA), *Encounter* schooled an entire generation of intellectuals in the morality of politics 'After the Apocalypse'. 'Totalitarian' ideologies were henceforth to be shunned, and the true 'liberal' spirit upheld, in a world whose most audacious project was 'piecemeal social engineering'. *Encounter* was not only obsessively anti-Communist. The long-term effect of its 'liberal' crusade was to devalue principled political debate of any kind, in favour of a blend of incoherent reformism and comfortable disillusionment that British intellectuals had made their own by the beginning of the Sixties.

2. Political conformism was buttressed by social integration. British intellectuals have

never had a strong corporate identity: unobtrusive as a stratum, they have as a rule been virtually indistinguishable from and largely uncritical of their parent social classes.

The origins of this remarkable socio-cultural pact lie far back in English history. In its modern form it can be traced to the mid-Victorian 'intellectual aristocracy', a network of brilliant and successful families, linked by class and intermarriage, whose names — Darwin, Huxley and Strachey, to name three — appear again and again in the rolls of England's cultural elite.

Over the next century, the social and occupational composition of the intelligentsia was significantly altered; but not so the unwritten statutes that governed its conduct. Britain's academics have remained solidly attached to their departmental smallholdings, seldom pausing to take note of goings-on over the hedge; its political and social commentators, like the loyal civil servants whom they so closely resemble, have been unrelievedly 'practical' and 'constructive' in their response to 'our' national difficulties; and in the 'quality' Sunday papers reviewers have gone on organising the leisure time of their readers in an easy conversational tone born of inner peace and a profound sense of belonging.

3. Among the most striking features of post-war British culture has been its strong bias towards literature. The origins of this bias, which lie in the complex cultural history of the inter-war period, cannot be explored here. Its main upshot was that literature came to be seen as the *de facto* moral centre of the culture, a sort of final appeal to which the lesser issues of culture and society could be referred for judgement. The values that literature embodied were those of humanity itself — 'decency', 'compassion', 'honesty' and so on — and to keep faith with it was somehow to insure one's integrity against the deceptions of the public world. This was a patent mystification, but its ideological effects were real and powerful.

Political discussion, once deprived of any 'ultimate' social meaning sank into triviality and conformism; while literature, elevated above the 'merely' political and historical,

Continued on Page IV

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From Class Society to Communism will be a reading 'must' for thousands of militants who don't just want to understand the world, but also to change it. This book, the first to be published by Ink Links is one of an autonomous series within it, chosen by the magazine *International*. It comes out in November 1977. Price £1.85 paperback; £4.50 cloth.

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Stalin's Literary Thugs

Soviet Writers Congress 1934
Lawrence & Wishart £2.75

The first Soviet Writers Congress of 1934, so the blurb tells us, was the 'culmination' of one of the richest periods of Soviet literary debate. 'Destruction' would be a more appropriate term. As the Soviet Union swung from its ultra-leftist 'Third Period' towards Popular Frontism, it became necessary to cool 'proletarian zeal' in literature in the name of a broader cultural alliance — not least because the Five Year Plan meant wooing the petty-bourgeois technicians and intelligentsia. In any case, so Stalin had decided, Russia was now entering upon 'full socialism', so talk of 'proletarian literature' was becoming redundant. On the other hand, as the Stalinist thumbscrews tightened, all critical and 'psychological' elements in literature needed to be eradicated in the name of slavishly uncritical celebration of the heroic Fatherland, yoking turgid 'realism' to euphoric 'revolutionary romanticism'. All independent literary bodies were accordingly dissolved into the Writers Congress, membership of which was compulsory for publication. And out of it grew the disastrous literary doctrine of so-called 'socialist realism', which was to stifle the least flicker of cultural criticism for decades.

This book lines up the speeches of the Congress of Stalin's literary thugs: Zhdanov, Gorky, Radek and Bukharin. It would make amusing reading if it weren't so grisly. Zhdanov gets things off to a rousing start by informing the Congress that they have the richest literature in the world, and urges writers to become (in Stalin's phrase) 'engineers of the soul'. Maxim Gorky, who as Russia's one outstanding novelist of time presumably is the 'richest literature in the world' in person, contributes a rambling account of Soviet literature, and believes that 'bourgeois literature began in ancient times'.

With the disaffected puritanism peculiar to Stalinism upbraids as 'shameless' a Russian novelist who chose as his hero 'a lascivious two-legged goat in trousers'. The ex-Trotskyist Karl Radek disinters a whole series of inferior Western writers who happen to be sympathetic to the Soviet Union, and launches his notorious attack on James Joyce, whose *Ulysses* is subtly characterised as 'a heap of dung crawling with worms'. (Radek also believes that *Ulysses* is set in 1916, an error of a mere twelve years.) In a triumph of dialectical thinking, he claims on the one hand that 'Soviet literature is the best literature in the world', and on the other hand that 'proletarian writers simply have not mastered form as yet'. Form, it seems, is something of an optional extra.

In contrast to the intellectual nullity of Zhdanov, Gorky and Radek, Nikolai Bukharin has real claims to be an aesthete. His paper on poetry and poetics closely analyses the nature of poetic language, although its case that poetry is 'thinking in images' was

demolished by the Russian Formalists several years beforehand. Bukharin recognises the 'relative autonomy' of literature, refuses a vulgar materialism of the text, and provides some sensitive commentaries on Soviet poets. The critical style of these commentaries is strikingly reminiscent of Trotsky's *Literature and Revolution* — indeed Bukharin's judgement on the poet Alexander Blok is more or less lifted (consciously or unconsciously) from that study. The influence, needless to say, isn't acknowledged; Trotsky rates one mention in this book, but despite that doesn't make it into the index.

Alone among the contributors, Bukharin sees the importance of examining the formal elements of literature, and their complex relations to history. Criticising that 'purely nihilistic attitude to the problem of form' which 'can frequently be observed in our own Marxian ranks', he finds the link between literature and history in language itself. Another shadowy influence may well lurk behind this position — that of V.N. Voloshinov, whose *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* is one of the greatest cultural works of the period. Voloshinov, however, disappeared around the date of the Congress (presuming he wasn't a pseudonym for someone else), so it isn't entirely surprising that Bukharin makes no reference to him.

Bukharin's other strength is his candid declaration that the level of Soviet cultural development is dismally low. Refusing the crass optimism of a Zhdanov, he has the courage to admit that, compared to the literary knowledge of a Pushkin, the contemporary Soviet achievement 'could be put under a threepenny bit'. Undeterred by this stricture, the Congress went on to formally resolve that 'Soviet literature has grown into a mighty force for socialist culture'. It was this mixture of lying, self-deception and empty heroics which was to set the tone for the cultural pogroms to come.

TERRY EAGLETON



Digesting Marxist Politics

Revolution & Class Struggle: A Reader in Marxist Politics
Edited by Robin Blackburn
Fontana paperback £1.95

Despite the huge expansion of Marxist publishing, there is still a real lack of cheap paperbacks in which the best of Marxist writing is made available to a wide audience. Anything which helps to fill this gap is more than welcome, and although Robin Blackburn's new collection may not seem cheap it really is good value with 12 major articles in its 450 pages.

Blackburn's reader is in three parts. The first, 'Origins', includes Blackburn on the politics of Marx and Engels, Colletti on Lenin, Mandel on the Leninist Theory of Organization, Lowy on the National Question. The second, 'The Course of Revolution', has Colletti on Stalin, Deutscher on Maoism, Pelikan on Czechoslovakia, and Mandel on 'Peaceful Coexistence and World Revolution'. These two sections seem to me reasonably coherent; the third, 'Class

Struggle and Bourgeois Power', is more mixed, bringing us Geras on Luxemburg, Trotsky and Bourgeois Democracy, Nairn on the Labour Party, Gramsci on Workers' Councils, Milliband on Chile.

These are not then the classics, but commentaries on them balanced fairly evenly with historical analyses, culled mainly from the pages of *New Left Review*. It will be most useful to people who already have some grasp of marxist concepts — from political argument or a reading of the basic pamphlets — and wish to read more deeply into the theory and its history. It doesn't have a straightforward enough presentation of basic concepts to be useful to a real beginner.

The articles are all substantial and worth reprinting and although we can pick out particular favourites — I was pleased to see a key section of Norman Geras' book reprinted — and query one or two — Nairn is a bit outdated — the real criticisms are political. Most of the authors share Blackburn's original assumption that "Something like a third of the world's population now lives in countries where there has been a socialist revolution..." The genuine Marxist tradition often appears therefore as a critical variant of orthodox Communism.

This is one strand within Trotskyism and revolutionary Marxism today, but it is not the only one, or perhaps the most valid. In failing to show more of the alternatives within revolutionary politics today, or of the practical terrain in which they have been developed, Blackburn fails — despite the real contributions of the articles in this book — in his most important aim, "to make available a contemporary restatement and appraisal of the classical marxist political tradition?"

MARTIN SHAW

Emotional Masochism

Sita
By Kate Millett
Virago £1.95

If you're an emotional masochist, this is your kind of book. Kate Millett, author of the pioneering *Sexual Politics*, charts the slow disintegration of her affair with Sita, a woman ten years her senior. The end of this relationship, following hard upon a nervous breakdown and desertion by her husband, must have been a deeply painful process for Millett. But somehow it's hard to maintain sisterly sympathy with an author who is so conscious while she is living a moment that it will later be immortalised in print.

Millett kept a detailed diary throughout the period covered in *Sita*, and she hasn't weeded it out, treating us to an odd mixture of profound anguish and trivial detail. Much of the action takes place at meals (cue for description of restaurant) crises always seem to coincide with the cooking of chicken. Buried in those 300-odd pages are some insights about love between women, ageing, writing and other relevant themes, but they are rarely illuminated and never synthesised. Uncomfortably close to self-indulgence, like picking old scabs off the heart.

KAREN MARGOLIS

Agnes Smedley's Lived Experiences

Daughter of Earth
By Agnes Smedley
Virago £1.95

There is a rawness to *Daughter of Earth* which makes it almost painful to

read. It is the pain of the agony of a woman raised in the Southern Union of the century, like Marie Rogers, Agnes Smedley's novel at a critical attempt to grasp the past. It is a memoir of isolation and confinement. Marie Rogers' hazy memories of her family or community



dominant recollections shed after frequent for lack of love, shame of poverty, from place to place, living from the earliest thinking forces impelled escape from this need to avoid the a woman. Before school, she had been the only possessor of her double burden of books and appreciate what Marie.

In her struggle learnt of the own experience, classes and nation way of life, first member, then as IWW, and finally Indian nationalist she bravely endured prison during W

Hating what a destiny, Marie g deny womanhood alien, an object of two marriages and men, she remains oppression. To have backstreet abort preferable to the But she could not the struggle against Her work for the ment was merely political commitment nationalism. The sion against her probably made it she could share without becoming Marie's personal demand equality in all important different from it might be able to when it comes matters, they'll be other woman. The the movement sh for — including slower than any finger at a sexual 'Shame'. Which to escape led her her flight: her w which ends the reason for its inc it has lost nor meaning.

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Neo-Centrism and the State

Marxism & Politics:
By Ralph Miliband
Oxford University Press £3.50

This book, which together with a volume by Raymond Williams launches the new OUP Marxist Introductions series, purports to make a contribution to the development of a 'Marxist tradition' of political studies of (in particular) the countries of advanced capitalism.

On the pretext that there does not yet exist a sufficient body of theory to constitute such a tradition, Miliband attempts to delimit the problematic within which it must be situated. Inevitably, however, his text touches on a number of questions which are located, as it were, at the interface between this and related problematics.

Marx, Engels and Lenin consistently emphasised, however, that the dictatorship of the proletariat, to the extent that it functions to organise the hegemony of the working class and to suppress the forcible resistance of the bourgeoisie and its allies, is no less a state than the political form which it supplants. The assertion that it is no longer a 'state proper' expresses rather the essential point that, unlike its predecessor, the constitutive function of the proletarian state is to facilitate its own eventual disappearance.

Miliband's implicit rejection of this thesis, together with his failure to acknowledge that the determinant structure of bourgeois democracy is inherently and necessarily reproductive of the 'class limitations' whose 'removal' he advocates, leads him towards the formulation of a 'revolutionary reformist' position essentially identical to that which has been propounded by, for example, by left social-democrats like Geoff Hodgson and Geoff Roberts.

Like them Miliband theorises an adaptation of the concept of dual power as 'a flexible and complex network of organs of popular participation operating throughout civil society and intended not to replace the state but to complement it' (p.188). Associated with this is his untenable assertion that 'the civic freedoms which, however inadequately and precariously, form part of bourgeois democracy are the product of centuries of unremitting popular struggles' (p. 189-90).

Clearly, it is essential to recognise the substantive content of bourgeois democratic freedoms. Moreover, popular struggle undoubtedly contributed to the extension of suffrage and associated 'civil liberties'. The reality of this process must not, however, be seen in isolation from its social and institutional conditions of possibility.

The book, nevertheless, fulfills well enough the function of an introduction to Marxist political theory, although it (together with other volumes in the series) will also make an 'original contribution' to its 'intellectual discipline' cannot be regarded seriously.

PAUL BELLIS

Israeli Myths & Realities

Israel: Utopia Incorporated
By Uri Davis
Zed Press £5.00

Written by an Israeli anarcho-pacifist who has served a prison sentence for

conscientious objection, *Israel: Utopia Incorporated* provides many interesting insights into the workings of the Zionist state, the thinking of its founding elites and the structures of its main institutions (such as the Histadrut and the kibbutzim). There is also some useful material on the position of the Oriental Jews who, despite the systematic discrimination from which they suffer in 'the State of all the Jews', have traditionally constituted a reservoir of support for the worst chauvinist and militarist forces in Israel (such as Begin).

The fact, nevertheless, that there was a significant response to the recent measures taken by the Moroccan and Iraqi Jews to return to the countries of origin indicates the depth of the Zionist state's failure to solve the problems of the Oriental-Jewish population, as well as exposing once again the hypocrisy of the 'Let My People Go' campaign (after all the money spent on organising the emigration of Soviet, US, British, and Latin American Jews to Israel could be used to improve the living standards of the Oriental Jews, but that, of course, would negate the purpose of Zionism).

The shameful degeneration of the Zionist movement (even if this degeneration was inevitable, given its original premises) — the growing cynicism, the flagrant corruption of the Zionist 'Labour' bureaucracies, the militarisation of the economy, the large scale public support for fundamentalist crazies, the increasingly close relationship between Israel and South Africa



(which extends to the kibbutzim belonging to reputedly left-wing Hashomer Hatzair) is documented in considerable detail. The chapter on 'Israel and the US' explores the two dominant hypotheses (an abandonment of Israel by its imperialist protector, or heightened US-Arab tension, leading to a strengthening of the Washington-Tel Aviv alliance and perhaps even a joint offensive against the oil-producing countries) and seems to lean towards the latter view.

Davis concludes with a call for 'a socialist, multi-national, secular and democratic Republic in Palestine', but the most perfect revolutionary blueprint is useless unless you indicate, in Lasalles' words, not only the goal but also the path. How can the Palestinians use the tremendous weight they have acquired within the Israeli economy to overturn the system which exploits and oppresses them? What should be the main priorities of the Israeli socialist left which, no doubt to prove that libertarians can be just as sectarian as the terrible Trotskyists, receives no mention at all? What is to be done if some form of West Bank state does come into being? These are some of the urgent, pressing questions which Uri Davis unfortunately does not even ask. Yet it is only if they are asked, and answered, that the Palestinians will be able to escape their present plight and the Israelis will be able to live without fear of tomorrow.

ALAN ADLER

Demystifying Stopes

Marie Stopes: A Biography
By Ruth Hall
André Deutsch £5.95

In her introduction, Ruth Hall says of Marie Stopes: 'compared with her initial struggles, the activities of the women's liberation movement over the last decade appear in retrospect as mere mopping-up operations after a major battle'. By such an assessment one could equally say that Margaret Thatcher's elevation to the leadership of the Tory Party is the ultimate victory in the fight for equality.

Ms Stopes was no revolutionary. Her actions sprang from two impulses. The first was to right the wrongs she personally had suffered, and the second was to be famous. It was the first impulse which took her away from the academic field of coal search into the more popular field of sex. She married late for the time, already with a firm idea in her mind of the joys of sex, which she expounded in an unpublished book.

Many of her ideas came from reading the works of Edward Carpenter, separating his views on sexuality from his wider politics. In spite of this interest, she had been married for two years before she discovered that her husband was impotent and her marriage consummated. Appalled at her own ignorance she researched all available texts (mostly medical) and encouraged people to share with her their own sexual problems. Deciding that marital problems stemmed largely from the ignorance of men on the nature of female sexuality, in 1918 at the age of 38, while still a virgin herself, she wrote *Married Love*. It was an instant best seller.

Her primary interest in birth control was to limit the reproduction of the poor. In an article to the *Daily Mail* in 1919 she asked readers to visit the 'mean streets' and ask themselves: 'Are those puny, gaunt, blotchy, ill-balanced, feeble, ungainly, withered children, the young of an imperial race?' It was, she contended, the 'Mrs Jones' with their numerous sickly children who were destroying the race.

Ruth Hall admits to disliking this megalomaniac whose life she has so painstakingly researched. But she has done just as Stopes would have wished. She has portrayed her as a political figure of such overriding importance that her influence radically changed the position of women. In all 327 pages, Ruth Hall barely mentions the existence of a birth control movement which was gathering mass support within the labour movement. The dialogue in the left press of the time (see Sheila Rowbotham's biography of Stella Brown) ranged between those who saw birth control as a ruling class device to breed the working class out of existence and those who saw it as a crucial means of 'self-determination' for women. The birth control campaign can only have been hampered by Stopes' arrogant tirades against the breeding habits of the working class.

Certainly she was a charismatic figure and as such brought the glare of publicity to the birth control movement. But, she was so caught up in her own need for power that she refused even to help others who were facing persecution at the same time and for the same cause as her own. When Rose and Guy Aldred were prosecuted for publishing Margaret Sanger's *Family Limitation* on grounds of obscenity, she not only refused to support them, she wrote to the Public Prosecutor to say that the pamphlet was 'prurient'.

Ruth Hall's biography is critical of Stopes but only of her personal style. She makes no attempt to criticise her politically. Nevertheless, she writes so well that it would be a pity to dismiss the book entirely. The wealth of detail is fascinating and the descriptions of Stopes' attitudes to the miners strikes of the 1920's, and the breeding of revolutionaries, her surveys of the sexuality of clergymen etc. are compelling. If you need a good excuse to read it, think of it as an allegorical story on the dangers of bourgeois individualism.

ANGELA PHILLIPS

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became the warrant for complacent subjectivism. The emphasis on fiction in the review pages of the weeklies is one reflection of this mystification; the *New Statesman's* physical separation of 'politics' and 'culture' has effectively institutionalised it. Britain's post-war intelligentsia, cultivated but distrustful of ideas, socially 'responsible' but suspicious at heart of the political domain, is the living proof of its stultifying power.

The Intelligentsia in Crisis

For more than a decade this cultural contract held good. Revolts from within, staged by socially unprivileged and occupationally insecure newcomers, were deflected, co-opted or simply ignored. The new Marxist sub-culture that emerged in the early Sixties was for the most part disregarded. Over the next decade, however, all this was to change.

The real foundation of this homogenous, well-integrated and adaptable bourgeois intelligentsia was the political equilibrium established after 1945. The self-evident truths that explained its seemingly natural world were those of Keynesian economics, Fabian reformism and the British Constitution. Today, as British capital fights its way out of the worst recession in over forty years, amidst social crisis and constitutional tremors that may yet break up the old Great-British state, that 'natural' world is visibly coming apart. The current crisis has burst into this complacent Fabian universe much as proletarian insurgency and imperialist competition shattered the calm of Edwardian Liberalism — and with comparably drastic ideological effects. For the second time this century the Idea of Progress has been confounded.

The most spectacular ideological effect has been the rise of the Right. In the *TLS*, there are clear signs of an anti-Marxist mobilisation. Whereas the first *Black Paper* was shrugged off as a reactionary curiosity, the most recent found itself in the vanguard of a concerted press campaign against progressive education. The liberal social reforms of the Sixties are now threatened by powerful obscurantist currents which —

as the recent *Gay News* case shows — are prepared to overturn even the most basic bourgeois freedoms of speech and publication in pursuit of their aims. Reaction is again respectable.

The Fabian intelligentsia, sapped by years of 'reasonableness', has proved quite inadequate to the new situation. Disorientation and retreat have been its main responses. The wholesale involution of Fabian culture is manifest in the pages of its traditional mouthpiece, the *New Statesman*. The leader-writers of the *NS* have for some time now been quite unable to distinguish between a sober grasp of political conjunctures and their own spurious sense of occasion. Its main articles, zigzagging wildly from week to week, belie all residual claims to political coherence. And its reviews section is now edited by Martin Amis who, believing the front of the paper to be dominated by left-wing opinion, intends to open the back pages to writers of the contrary persuasion. Amis cannot have heard of Paul Johnson.

The evolution of this egregious publicist illustrates, with the extravagance of caricature, the new political bearings of the intelligentsia. An opponent of Castle's *In Place of Strife* in the late Sixties, Johnson now specialises in crazed polemics against the labour movement and all who, by word or deed, imperil 'civilisation' and its historic guardians, the middle class. Only one circumstance muffles his reactionary clamourings: the decline of the journal which, disgracefully, continues to tolerate him as a director and contributor. The circulation of the *NS* has plummeted in recent years, giving the strongest evidence of all that Labour's traditional intellectual periphery is now in crisis.

Fighting Back

The new situation is both dangerous and fertile. Dangerous, because despite the organisational gains of recent years, the new Marxist tendencies are not yet firmly established in the labour movement; a co-ordinated ideological assault by the Right could set them back ten years. And since the decomposition of Fabian culture is much further advanced than the decline of Labour politics, the balance of forces is likely to remain disadvantageous for some time. Fertile, because the possibilities for a Marxist intervention in the national culture are wider now than at any time since the Thirties.

Given its present composition, however, the Left is ill-prepared for defence and counter-attack. Factional divisions form one obvious hindrance; more serious in this context, however, is the curious 'division of labour' that structures the *three distinguishable formations* of the Left intelligentsia today. 1. One is overwhelmingly *theoretical* in focus; versatile and productive in their own fields, its representatives incline towards academicism and show a definite list to Stalinism in one or other of its current forms. 2. Political militancy is the hallmark of the revolutionary Left; but this is too often accompanied by dogmatism, and leads too many militants to a 'hyper-activist' distrust — mounting to anti-intellectualism — of theoretical work whose implications for 'action' are not immediately obvious. 3. The third — and largest — is best represented by London's *Time Out*: generically anti-capitalist, but with no coherent perspective to order the discrete 'issues' that concern it, this formation is most consistent in its support for radical currents in the arts.

These formations overlap in important ways, but by and large they lead separate existencies, communicating infrequently and none too fluently.

The implication of this (admittedly) crude schema is this: before the Left can mobilise its full cultural fighting strength, it must find a means of *organising it, for the first time*. Ultimately, what is needed is a new, non-denominational organ capable of centralising our resources for a sustained struggle against cultural reaction. Meanwhile, certain intermediate forms must be devised, to provide the revolutionary Left with a means of combat and of self-preparation. The question of its relevance to 'action' has already been posed and answered — by the Right.

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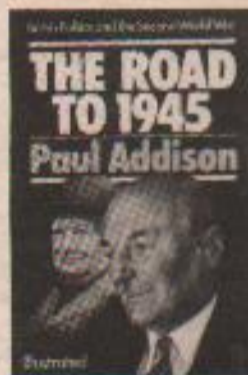
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