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# DISCUSSION

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## *The David Marquand Debate*

# End of a Movement

By *Julius Gould*



DAVID MARQUAND'S analysis of The Great Labour Movement has the ring of truth and authority. Labour could hardly avoid defeat in 1979.

Its central dogmas on public expenditure and the social wage were indeed antique and stale. British social democracy had degenerated into a bizarre blend of corporate practice and pseudo-proletarian ideology. Its exponents denied that extremists existed: they paraded themselves on picket lines, mouthed the empty slogans of a fusty egalitarianism, and sneered at the advocates of greater liberty and wider choice. They had triumphed in 1974 through a brazen alliance with trade union power. They lost the 1979 election because enough people in enough constituencies distrusted—yes, even hated—that power and because a winter of industrial unrest had undermined Labour's claim that it alone could stop the unions from rocking the boat.

Marquand shows, too, how the leaders of the “natural party of Government” (as its friends in the media and universities had described it) persistently obscured the central truth—that “the socialist and the social democratic positions are not merely different but irreconcilably opposed.” What is more they had refused to see that their “natural” support in the country was (with regional variations) being eroded by changes in class structure.

Marquand portrays with great verve the anti-intellectual ethos of The Great Labour Movement—how it distrusted new ideas “because it knew in its bones that worthwhile new ideas would tear it apart. . . .” If such ideas were, for

example, to justify greater private choice, private profit, and freedom from bureaucracy they would certainly outrage the guardians of the party's puritan socialist conscience. That several of those guardians are of impeccable upper-middle-class origin and are cushioned by inherited wealth simply heightens their socialist zeal—and emboldens them to burden and overtax (and, happily, alienate . . .) the affluent worker.

MANY PEOPLE—myself included—had once hoped that the tensions within the Labour Party would explode, that a change of course might come about under a resolute social democratic leadership.

But for many years now it was clearer to some of us than it was to others (perhaps, despite his intimate knowledge of these matters, even to Mr Marquand) that these hopes were ill-founded, that no social democratic leaders could cut the cord that bound them to their illiberal fundamentalist socialist allies.

We saw that in 1970. By 1974 there were further inscriptions on the political wall. We came to see that welfare state bureaucracies and high taxation were the enemies of economic growth; that the bogus “social contracts” with trade-union bosses were a passport into a stagnant corporatism; that the enemies of choice in the spheres of education and health were also seeking (by “press charters” and the like) to nibble away at the freedom of the press. We did not relish, either, the claim that trade unions, with their compulsory closed-shop membership, could on occasion picket us into chaos by using—oh happy phrase!—“legal intimidation.” We saw in such nibbling, in such claims, fresh signs of a distrust of freedom and of an indifference to the rule of law.

TO HAVE DEFEATED the nibblers is, of itself, a famous victory. But only fools would pretend that the way ahead will now suddenly be smooth or that national revival or prosperity lie just around the corner.

The international outlook is dark and dangerous. Stagflation and corporate indolence in modern Britain have very deep roots. The *bien pensants* still regret that we do not have the “hung” parliament they so eagerly predicted; the “pragmatists” believe that, in the end, nothing can or, indeed, should really change. The time has come to prove them wrong.

“Free market ideas” can help to blow away the mists of spurious income policies and social contracts. But they need to be reinforced by a real map of our changing social structure and be supported by a national sense of purpose and direction. That sense can only come from the new self-confident political centre. Labour's thrust in the

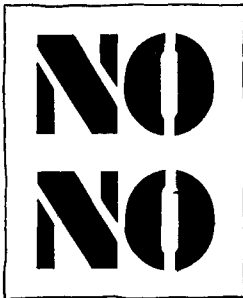
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1970s was, at one and the same time, to extend state power and, by its inefficiencies, excesses and hypocrisies, to bring the political leadership itself into disrepute.

Mrs Thatcher's task is immensely difficult and urgent. For to reconcile freedom and authority is never easy. To do so in a culture that prizes equality before liberty; in which the spring of dynamism has been broken; and in which the very idea of authority has been weakened, if not crippled, will require remarkable gifts of insight and leadership. Over the months ahead, amid the daily tribulations and crises, Mrs Thatcher needs to establish overall political confidence where now there is general cynicism—and to do it in face of an Opposition which can only reconcile its internal differences by belittling and deriding the Government's authority.

## Inquest on a Coroner

*By Eric Heffer*



DAVID MARQUAND'S view (July) that the Labour Party has no future, unless it fundamentally changes its character, is incorrect. What is more to the point is that the Labour Party, particularly in Parliament, must get back to actually fighting for and carrying out its basic

socialist principles, and not get bogged down in accepting the "mixed economy" concept which in practice means the acceptance of the capitalist system.

David Marquand rejects socialism for something which he calls a "new model, libertarian, decentralised social democracy." It would have been useful had he clearly spelt out what he means by that. It could be a type of anarchism which he advocates, but it is not; because while he argues against a centralist state, he does not positively

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argue for a system of non-state socialism, as the anarchists and syndicalists do.

What he is really advocating is a liberal type of capitalism. This is clearly spelt out when he writes,

"In any case the kind of revisionism which is needed now would cut much deeper than Gaitskell's did. He was merely trying to persuade the party to abandon socialism in favour of social democracy. What is needed now is to abandon both socialism and the kind of social democracy we have known since the War, and do so in a way which would upset the old Right of the Labour Party at least as much as it would upset the Left. . . ."

David Marquand is correct in one respect, however. It is not necessarily socialism because an industry has been bureaucratically nationalised under strict centralised control. Socialism does not mean that type of State ownership. That can mean, under certain types of political systems, a State-Capitalist economy. On the other hand, socialism cannot be built without varying forms of public ownership which is essential to eliminate class society based on the ownership of industry. Personally, I believe socialism requires a wide variety of public ownership with forms of democratic management and control, and with the

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State playing a different role to that in the bureaucratic societies of Eastern Europe.

David Marquand, in rightly saying that a third ingredient in the Labour Party was the adherence of the Radicals (previously the Left wing of the Liberals), seems to imply that because of this the Labour Party's socialist and working-class base was weakened. I would argue that their adherence to the Party had the opposite effect. The Radicals usually were Republicans, and politicians who believed in colonial freedom, in world peace and international law; and they had the support of the most advanced sections of the workers in their demands. Their intellectual impact on the Party actually consolidated working-class support, and rather than weaken socialist concepts gave them a new dimension.

David Marquand's piece, therefore, contains serious flaws. Some of the points he makes, of course, have a measure of truth in them, as for example, when he says Labour leaders had a "grandfatherly complacency about the country's existing course tinged with a weary pessimism about the possibility of change. . . ." But (and it is a big but) he suggests that more changes in the Party's character have taken place than is the actual case. It is not the Party which has changed dramatically, but David Marquand—unless of course he never really understood the real nature of the Party. He argues that both Sir Harold Wilson and Jim Callaghan failed conspicuously to provide doctrinal leadership, which, he says, was badly needed by their followers. He believes, however, that the Party's lack of doctrine lies with the Party as a whole and not just with Wilson and Callaghan. That is true, because they, like most Party members, are pragmatic in their approach, and ideology has never entered into their thinking.

**T**HE REALITY of the Labour Party is that despite its middle-class Parliamentary leaders, it has always been a working-class party, based on the trade unions and never tied to any particular dogma. In that, it faithfully reflects the British

working class as a whole. There are strands of thought in the Party such as Marxism, Methodism, High Anglicanism, Humanism, Feminism and Radicalism; but its basic philosophy is simply that of support for the working class, a fact recognised by those intellectuals referred to by David Marquand who left the Liberals to throw in their lot with the Labour Party.

It is this working-class, trade-union basis which determines the fundamental attitudes of the Labour Party. In fighting the Heath Government's industrial relations legislation, the PLP did not (as David Marquand says) make itself look ridiculous, except perhaps to him and some of his friends. To trade unionists, the Party did a reasonably good job and made up for the bitter disappointment which had been engendered by *In Place of Strife*. I should like to remind David Marquand that the last Labour Government also got itself into serious difficulties only when it came out against the interests of working people, especially when it made cuts in public expenditure, leading to a rise in unemployment, and when the Government insisted on a 5% ceiling for wage settlements.

The Parliamentary Labour Party has not become more proletarianised, even in the sense that David Marquand uses the term; but it had become divorced from the views of the workers in industry. It had moved away from its proletarian base and those thinking proletarians in Parliament had to assert themselves to keep the Party to its basic principles and concepts.

David Marquand is overstating the case when he says that there was a mood in the PLP and at Party Headquarters that there was no need for ideas or intellectuals and that the Party could rely exclusively on the strong right arm of the workers. If there was such a mood, it encompassed a small minority who had little support amongst the majority. The argument about intellectuals is not a Right or Left issue. The Labour Party rightly has its intellectuals on the Right and the Left.

IT IS NOT, as David Marquand says, that some Labour MPs in the tea-room object to some of their colleagues having dinner parties, displaying middle-class tastes or values (whatever that may mean), but that they object to what is cooked up at such parties, behind the backs of the membership without open and free discussion. I think that in that section of his essay David Marquand reveals his own lack of self-confidence and a surprising inferiority complex, especially when he writes that "the clever people, the intellectuals, the claret drinkers . . . the frequenters of London clubs, the article writers and television appearers, with their glib phrases and disloyal attitudes . . . had been shown up", and that the Party felt that they were not needed.

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It is clear that that is what David Marquand personally felt; and it would seem as if that is why he left Parliament, seeking other fields of activity, where he could shine more effectively than in Parliament. I write this in sorrow, because it is sad to know that someone with such obvious ability feels that he has been rejected, and because of this builds false theories to explain those feelings.

What I find remarkable is David Marquand's loose use of terms, and his failure, since he is a distinguished historian, to put definitions into their proper historical perspective. For example, he says that the gulf between Socialists and Social Democrats is now the deepest in British politics. That statement requires some explanation. What are socialists, and why are they different from Social Democrats? What is the definition of Social Democracy as against Socialism? After all, in Britain, as in Russia and Germany, Social Democrats prior to 1917 were the Marxists, and the Austro-Marxists even after 1917 never gave up the concept of Marxism, while continuing to call themselves Social Democrats. The Socialists of the Scandinavian countries are Social Democrats and have a Right and a Left wing as does the Labour Party here. The truth is that, in Britain, the divisions are not between a mythical group of socialists and social democrats, but between those who accept a reformed capitalism and those who seek to fundamentally change society in line with Labour's constitution. Sometimes the argument is primarily about the pace at which the Party should pursue its policies.

I WOULD BE MOST interested to find out from Shirley Williams, William Rodgers, and Roy Hattersley whether (as David Marquand suggests) they feel they have more in common politically with Peter Walker, Ian Gilmour and Edward Heath, than with Tony Benn, myself and Stanley Orme, because if they do, then they really should follow Reg Prentice and join the Tory Party. Actually, I believe that David Marquand is doing them a great disservice when he says this.

It is clear from what David Marquand writes that he would like the Labour Party to follow his example and abandon all concepts of socialism. It is advice which I am sure the Party will wisely ignore. What it appears David Marquand wants is for the Party to become a sort of "Liberal"-Democratic Party, rather like the Democratic

Party in the USA. That of course has been the model which some on the Right of the Labour Party have long wanted the party to adopt. Such a Democratic Party, however, would not be the chief vehicle of radical reform as David Marquand fondly believes. It would be the other side of the Tory coin and genuine radical reforms would never really be achieved. The Labour Party *is* the Party of radical reform, and even the last Government's efforts are proof of that. Already we can see those reforms under attack and they are soon likely to be seriously weakened if not entirely killed off. Some of those reforms have greatly benefited and protected working people, and do not (as David Marquand puts it) "create new privileges for the over-mighty, undemocratic and illiberal trade union establishment." Now that Orders are being introduced into Parliament, weakening the rights the workers have gained, it is clearly not the trade-union leaders who will suffer, but those who work on the shop floor.

DAVID MARQUAND BELIEVES that Labour cannot do the job of "revising traditional welfare state social democracy" without a new Party structure. (I find this term "a new structure" very intriguing, as it is being used increasingly by Right-wing elements in the Party.) The real point is that Labour needs to do a different kind of job to that outlined by David Marquand, which it could do, with a dose of radical democratisation, so that the rank-and-file members exercise greater influence over their Parliamentary representatives and Labour Governments than ever before. In recent years, the Labour Party has had a number of prominent defectors, all of whom have ended up by supporting the Right-wing policies of the Thatcher/Joseph Government. That is something which the Party must take seriously. In conclusion, let me quote George Lansbury, as Chairman of the Labour Party Conference in 1925, when he said,

"Socialism is inscribed on our banners. . . . The ultimate end we intend to reach is simple; we intend that the land of Britain and all its resources shall be owned and used in the service of the British people."

The task before the Labour Party today is to go out and make socialists which is the very opposite to that which David Marquand proposes.



## Biofeedback

By Brian Inglis

THE TERM "feedback" first came into colloquial use among the early experimenters with radio communication, early in the century; it was defined by one of them as "a method of controlling a system by reinserting into it the results of its past performance." I do not know who first added the "bio"; but the principle is the same, and has long been recognised and exploited. The household clinical thermometer represents the most familiar example: when it registers a degree or more above 98.4 F. most of us react by trying to control the system in whatever manner past performance has recommended to us, such as taking a couple of aspirins and/or a hot whisky-and-lemon.

In the last decade, though, biofeedback has

*THIS is the second in a series of columns planned by Arthur Koestler, for which he acts as an editorial adviser; his article "Horizons in Space" inaugurated the series in the October issue. In a sense this new departure is intended as a positive contribution to the debate about "the Two Cultures" which ENCOUNTER initiated some twenty years ago, when we first published C. P. Snow's controversial Rede Lectures. It could be, however, that the new frontier does not lie between the sciences and the humanities, but on the peripheries of contemporary science itself which, in a silent revolution, has abandoned the classical view of the universe as a mechanical clockwork, has de-materialised matter, and has liberated philosophy from the strait-jacket of strict causality and determinism. This department will be mainly concerned with those border areas, from cosmology to psychology, which are of special relevance to both cultures.*

*The next contributions will be by H. J. EYSENCK on "Behaviourism & Astrology" and JOHN BELOFF on "Parapsychology."*

acquired a new meaning, and a new significance. It is not too much to say, in fact, that it is the most significant advance medical science has made since the discovery of the antibiotics; and it has come conveniently at the time when the antibiotics, owing to crass misuse, are ceasing to be effective. It has confirmed that the mind has powers over the body of a kind which orthodox medical science has long refused to accept, even when they have been demonstrated; powers which enable us to exercise a measure of control over parts of our nervous systems that were assumed to be autonomous—brain rhythms, temperature, heart-beat, blood pressure, visceral processes, and many more.

The history of biofeedback has yet to be written, and it will present somebody with an unenviable task, because there are so many strands. Many workers in different disciplines in different countries pursued research into the subject, often without being aware of what was going on elsewhere. It was only in 1969 that such awareness spread, with the holding of the first conference on the subject, and the publication of several scientific papers. One of them, "Learning of Visceral and Glandular Responses", by Neal E. Miller, Professor of Psychology at the Rockefeller University of New York, appeared in *Science* (No. 163, 1969). And as of all of the contributions made to the development of biofeedback Miller's was certainly the most startling and probably the most influential, it will serve to set the scene. (It also has a weird twist in the tail; of that, more later.)

MILLER was "a Behaviourist of the Behaviourists", working in the Pavlovian tradition with laboratory animals, demonstrating learning theory with the help of reinforcements, positive and negative, food pellets and electric shocks. As Behaviourists have notoriously tended to do, he might easily have become so fascinated by their learning ability as to lose sight of the ultimate objective of such research: improvement in the human condition. But fortunately his curiosity led him in that direction.

If rats could learn so much, Miller speculated, might they not be able to learn to—say—control their temperature? So preposterous did this notion seem at the time that, as he has since recalled, "for more than a decade it was extremely hard for me to get any students, or even paid assistants, to work seriously on the problem. . . ." But he persevered; and he found that rats *could* learn temperature control.

To sustain the traditional assumption that the autonomic nervous system is autonomous, Miller's critics searched around for a plausible explanation, settling for "skeletal muscle activity"—his laboratory rats, the implication being, must have found a way to warm themselves up by a kind of internal jogging. Or, perhaps, changes in the rats'