The New Left and its legacies

Michael Rustin talks to Sally Davison and Jeremy Gilbert

Part 1: A life in the New Left

SD and JG: *Could you tell us a bit about your first involvement with the New Left?*

Mike: I became involved in the late 1950s when I was still at school, a sixth-former at Kingston Grammar School. I used to read the *New Statesman*, and must have heard about the Universities and Left Review Club from its pages. So I went along to find out about it, and then found these enormous meetings - initially held in hotels and then later in a big jazz club. Raphael Samuel, Charles Taylor and Stuart Hall were in leading roles, with many other interesting and charismatic figures making appearances. It seemed to be a renaissance of the left, new and old, with speakers from the 1930s, like Wal Hannington from the Hunger Marches, and heavyweight Labour politicians like Anthony Crosland, as well as people like Claude Bourdet, from the French New Left - who talked about the Algerian war - and, at one memorable meeting, Trotsky's biographer, Isaac Deutscher. At the same time there was the emergence, or re-emergence, of a left-wing culture, in particular with the Royal Court Theatre and the documentary 'free cinema' movement, with film-makers such as Lindsay Anderson and Karel Reisz. The seven issues of *Universities and Left Review*, now archived at the Amiel Melburn Trust website, reveal an astonishing burst of intellectual energy in those years.[1] I remained involved in the New Left from then onwards. When I went from school into the RAF for National Service, I was able from time to time to go to ULR meetings. Stuart used to joke that I had arrived sometimes in uniform, though it is hard to remember such details from so long ago. Then I got to know Stuart - I used to visit the *New Left Review* office

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in Carlisle Street, and he was always welcoming to people who wanted to become involved - so when I started as a student in Oxford in 1959 I had been encouraged to think that I should try to get a New Left group of some kind going, and find some other people to work with. So I already had a link with 'the centre', so to speak. But what I actually did in Oxford was join the University Labour Club and become active there. Although I was involved there in some other New Left kinds of activity, the main idea was to bring the New Left into the Labour Club.

There was already a legacy in Oxford from when the *Universities and Left Review* group had been there, and there were also a lot of cultural activities going on. For example in my first term the Labour Club had a play-reading with Arnold Wesker - that kind of event was part of our political activity. I also fell in with a group - whose leading light was Perry Anderson - that then had control of the Oxford University magazine *Isis*. They seemed to be interested to find people who might take over from them when they left Oxford. This group were a little younger than the original ULR group. No doubt they were then observing what the early *New Left Review* was doing, but they weren't involved with it at that time. What then happened was that the proprietor of *Isis* decided that he was fed up with the group of left intellectuals who were running it, and he refused to accept their nomination for the next editor - who I think was to be James Greene. He appointed David Dimbleby instead!

I was in contact with Stuart - he visited me in Oxford - and he asked me to write a couple of small items in *New Left Review* at that time. But I was also spending time with Perry Anderson and his circle, which included Ken Trodd who went on to become an influential producer of television plays in their most radical period - including plays by Dennis Potter. Perry was an intellectually dominating figure. He urged us to read many French Marxist texts - by Calvez, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and so on. Then when the left was chucked out of *Isis* our New Left group started a magazine called *New University*, and Perry Anderson, Robin Blackburn, Paul Thompson, Tim Mason and others who later became well-known wrote for it. We translated articles by Claude Bourdet and Sartre, and produced a special issue on Cuba in 1960. The instigator at the beginning may have been me, but there was a succession of different editors, beginning with James Greene and later including Gareth Stedman Jones and Alex Cockburn. In all we produced twelve issues. One of our colleagues on *New University*, who was very active in CND, was Nigel Fred Young, and his father was our printer. We were able to produce it because he gave us credit. We also obtained local advertising, as one could

in Oxford in those days. But in the end Young senior decided, enough! That was in effect our mini version of what *Universities and Left Review* had been. It was much smaller and less significant than ULR, of course, but it had a lively mixture of culture and politics, with writers like Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, Norm Fruchter, Mike Kustow, and Albert Hunt on the cultural side.

I also became Chairman of the Labour Club through the termly rotation of offices. My election was the result of a successful contest with Peter Jay, who later became a very prominent figure - this was the high point of my political career! The Labour Club was huge then because it was at the peak of CND - 1961. We had a thousand members in the university - and there were then only six to seven thousand undergraduate students. I remember that during my period as Chair, many notables came to speak, including Harold Wilson and Hugh Gaitskell. I chaired Gaitskell's meeting, which was held in the Oxford Union. The hall was completely full, and there was also a big crowd outside, demonstrating for CND. I remember Gaitskell saying, 'thank you dear boy' for looking after him. There were some links through friends with one of his daughters, who was at the university at the time, and that probably helped relations with him. I was pleased that it was a meeting at which Gaitskell faced a lot of opposition, but which wasn't embittered. I made a point of saying that it was good the Labour Club could debate such deep disagreements! Perry and his friends thought that they were not very good at taking 'public' political roles, but that I might be able to do that.

After this I became Chair of the National Association of Labour Student Organisations, otherwise known as NALSO. So I had two or three years of a very active involvement in Labour student politics. I came to realise that the Labour Club and NALSO were seen as conveyor belt to a Labour Party political career. One Labour front-bencher who came to speak when I was chair of the Labour Club invited me to breakfast at the Randolph Hotel, and asked if I would like to be on the 'List B' of Labour candidates. This seemed to be something of a ritual induction. All the prominent Labour Party figures would come to speak without demur when we invited them. But I didn't want to be on a candidates' list, and none, or at least very few, of the group I was part of got closely involved in the Labour Party later except at a local level. We continued with our CND and New Left project, outside the Labour Party - the idea was 'one foot in and one foot out', as Stuart Hall put it. We weren't anti-Labour, we weren't Trotskyists, but we weren't

directly involved in the Labour Party either. We kept at a distance from it. Not on the grounds that this would have been 'careerist' and therefore wrong, but because we didn't feel comfortable with its milieu. I thought later that it was a pity that Paul Foot, who was a contemporary in Oxford (whom I greatly liked), and who became a Trotskyist (IS and later SWP) when he worked as a journalist in Glasgow, had not become a Labour MP, since he had so many brilliant talents to bring to that role, as well as a deep socialist commitment.

Were you part of the New Left in an organised way?

My friends weren't organised into a New Left Club or a New Left Group at university. It was more informal. The New Left provided a kind of 'alternative curriculum' for me and others. I didn't get on very well with the ways of thinking embodied in the Philosophy Politics and Economics course I was meant to be studying. Its three subjects seemed so disconnected, and the way of thinking so atomised and individualist, with the exception of the then-fashionable philosophy of the later Wittgenstein, which I found more 'human' and engaging. My capacity to study seriously had in any case been damaged by my two years of National Service, the second year of which - working as a clerk - had been extremely boring and without interest. On the other hand, being a little older than students who had come to university straight from school probably made it easier for me to take a political role there - not that I was much good at the more conventional aspect of it, like Oxford Union debates. I was rather a compulsive activist in those days. After university, political work seemed to involve a lot of trips to the Trafalgar Square Post Office with packets of envelopes to dispatch in the middle of the night.

I was much involved in the culture of the New Left, however, and Raymond Williams's work was particularly important to me, even though I was not reading English. I learned his first major book, *Culture and Society*, more or less by heart when I was an undergraduate.[2] It was a reading that seemed to make sense of everything. After I graduated, I decided to switch from the PPE subjects and study sociology (at the LSE) instead, because I had found the fragmentation and atomism of PPE so dry. Although I found most of the PPE curriculum unsatisfying, there were moments when the tutorial system, and the kind attention one received from tutors at New College - one of them a high Tory, Anthony Quinton, another an

iconoclastic liberal economist and Sovietologist, Peter Wiles. I was interested in the cultural dimensions of the New Left - for example in film, theatre and literature. I had also read Talcott Parsons's *The Structure of Social Action*, and found his account of sociology enthralling too. Anything to get away from the particular cast of thinking of Oxford PPE, perhaps. Raymond Williams was another 'integrator', F.R. Leavis too. One could say that Raymond provided a socialist and Parsons a sociological synthesis. The point was to be able to connect things together. Systems were what mattered. And there was another common thread in all these perspectives, which was the significance of values.

So the Labour Party at that time was sufficiently broad that you could be in the same party as Gaitskell …

Well, the Labour Club and NALSO were able to invite a wide range of speakers, major figures such as Anthony Crosland, Richard Crossman, Barbara Castle, Tony Benn, and others, including Gaitskell of course. Curiously, Harold Wilson's visit to the Labour Club was not a success, though I later thought well of him - perhaps it was just an off-day, he seemed very preoccupied. But most of those meetings and encounters were stimulating. But we also had speakers from the New Left like Edward Thompson, Stuart Hall and Raymond Williams. John Hughes, who was Principal of Ruskin College in those days, was also helpful to us: alongside Michael Barratt Brown, he had been the *University and Left Review*'s main economist. One of the memorable aspects of Raymond Williams's meetings was the way he was able to be so respectful to those who asked him critical questions. He also spoke in amazingly complete and ordered sentences, something I have never been able to do. In Oxford we were thus able to combine the New Left's intellectual and cultural range with interesting interactions with leading Labour Party figures. Richard Crossman asked us at one meeting whether we wanted to go on having a political knockabout, or if we'd like to have a serious discussion. We opted for the latter. In Oxford Labour student circles, there were two kinds of event, the larger public meetings of the Labour Club itself, and a smaller Sunday morning group - a socialist society - which had a smaller but more committed membership.

Something else that was memorable happened while Stuart Hall was editor of *New Left Review*. He took a group of people - including me - to the Labour Party

Conferences in Blackpool in 1961 and Brighton in 1962, to produce daily Bulletins to give out to the delegates. We stayed in boarding houses, and sat up for most of the nights preparing the bulletins. Stuart did most of the writing, but I did a little too. It was an intense experience. Afterwards political groups did this kind of thing at Party Conferences a lot, but I think this early *New Left Review* effort was the first time anyone had done it, in recent memory anyway. I think CND did these daily productions in subsequent years - I recall Peggy Duff being much involved in one of them.

What was it trying to achieve?

It offered a critical commentary. It was mainly Stuart's thoughts on Labour's fixes, the manoeuvring, the deployment of the trade union block vote, and the serious issues at stake. It was often very amusing. It was like a daily political journal, for one week only. The equivalent perhaps of what today might be written by a combination of John Crace and Steve Richards, a political journalist's response to what was happening on the day. (Stuart could have written a brilliant weekly political column for a newspaper.) Nuclear disarmament was the central issue then, with much at stake in terms of Conference votes, composite resolutions and the like. In those days the Conference really counted for something, deciding party policy. It was exhilarating to be part of an intervention like this, when one was very young - it was like a week's intense political apprenticeship. And it did also bring New Left ideas and perspectives into direct exchange with the Labour Party's deliberations. Nowadays, with Momentum and the World Transformed, there are dozens of 'fringe' activities like that - there have been for years, in fact. But at that time there was very little. We turned up every morning with our cyclostyled sheets - we were writing our Bulletin and producing it on one of those Gestetner machines in the middle of the night. I annoyed delegates once for being too personal about one Labour figure I wrote about, going too far. Some senior Labour and trade union figures, like Peter Shore, Jack Jones and Clive Jenkins, were interested in what the New Left was doing, and some of them stopped by to talk to Stuart.

Were there any women involved?

Well there were a few women in the Oxford Labour Club, but only a very small

proportion of students were women in the University at that time - there were just five women-only colleges, and no mixed colleges until 1974. This was an unhappy situation for many, contributing to the cerebral and dry atmosphere of the university's culture. There were few women in more than backroom roles in the New Left in its early days. Doris Lessing was an exception in the 1950s New Left, and Juliet Mitchell in the post-1962 *New Left Review.* In an event held in Oxford thirty years later to commemorate the first New Left, there was fierce criticism of its then sexism - though this attack drew on a deal of hindsight.[3] Most of the women in the early New Left, like Suzy Benghiat, Sheila Benson and Janet Hase, took mainly administrative and support roles.

It sounds as if the first New Left had some kind of organic relationship to the Labour Party. That is not normally the way people think about the New Left - they often think of it as a reaction to 1956, much of it from within the CP.

Well the New Left came out of a merger between two distinct groups - the *New Reasoner*, which was a journal of dissident Communists, and the *Universities and Left Review*, which was a production originally of Oxford University postgraduate students. *ULR*'s editors were Stuart from Jamaica, Charles Taylor from Canada, Raphael Samuel - who was from a Communist British background but was critical of it - and Gary Pearson, whose field was literature. Raymond Williams's work was of the most importance for this second group. The *New Reasoner* and ULR editors thus came from different traditions. On many issues - dissent from orthodox Communism, in theory and practice, disenchantment with Fabian social democracy, rejection of the Cold War, and a commitment to freethinking and an opening-up of socialist culture - the two groups found much common ground. However, within three years their close alliance had broken down, and *New Left Review*, the journal which they had formed from its two predecessors, in effect collapsed - after producing only nine issues.

Stuart also has written that the ULR was part of intellectual project to find new ways to think through what was going on in post-war Britain. And an important part of that was the recognition that culture was a really important source of how you tried to understand the whole social formation.

Yes, Raymond Williams had been developing a cultural critique of capitalism in his *Culture and Society* and then *The Long Revolution*, which were very important to us. Richard Hoggart was another significant figure in this way of understanding society and its politics through taking a 'democratic' view of its culture. It was Hoggart who invited Stuart to join him at Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham, where he succeeded him as its Director. There was a central cultural dimension to Edward Thompson's work too of course - *The Making of the English Working Class* is in part about the culture of the working class, and William Morris and William Blake were important points of reference for him.

Could you say more about the role of Culture and Society *in all this? Why was it so impactful in that moment?*

We were discovering that the English literary tradition provided more resources for the understanding of contemporary society than most other areas of intellectual life at the time. F.R. Leavis and his colleagues on *Scrutiny* had a part in this, as militant and anti-utilitarian (though not socialist) cultural critics.[4] Williams shifted that critique to the left. He in effect re-wrote Leavis's celebration of the English novel, *The Great Tradition*, in such a way as to put the articulation of the experience of the working class as a crucial dimension of it. The relationships between classes were central to nearly all of Williams's work, for example in *Drama from Ibsen to Brecht*, and in *The Country and the City.* Of course, in those years the emergence of working-class 'voices', in cinema, television, popular music and other art forms, was the most vital element of British culture, and a major inspiration for the New Left. It was curious that in the atmosphere of Oxford and Cambridge universities, in particular, which were pervaded by public school attitudes, middle-class students like me who had come from grammar schools could feel an identification with these new working-class voices, against the dominant cultural establishment. Williams wrote an influential essay 'Culture is Ordinary' in a book of New Left oriented essays called *Conviction*, which served as a kind of cultural manifesto for us.[5]

Before Culture and Society *- which is often talked about as the book that put the concept of culture on the map - was 'culture' an important term for Leavis and others?*

Not only *Culture and Society* but also Hoggart's *Uses of Literacy* were important in redefining the meaning and significance of culture for the New Left. This had already been the project of Leavis and *Scrutiny*, their purpose having been to contest aristocratic and upper-class definitions of culture which were dominant within British society in the first half of the twentieth century. The *Scrutiny* conception valued morality over 'taste', and reflected a more middle-class social location - that of some emergent occupations such as school teaching. *Scrutiny* aimed to establish the study of English literature as the central discipline of an expanding educational system. They aimed to define a new concept of 'civilisation', to set against the condescension of the British upper class, the imaginative limitations of utilitarianism, and the vulgarities of commercial popular culture, as they saw it. There is an 'expressive' dimension of an emergent culture of the middle class in this period, also reflected in 'progressive' conceptions of child development and education, to which this 'Leavisite' position had some affinity. (I have argued elsewhere that the emergence of 'object relations' ideas in psychoanalysis in Britain in the post-war period is also linked to this complex of ideas.) Both Hall and Williams have acknowledged, although in critical terms, the contributions of Leavis's work to their own formation, and in more recent times Terry Eagleton has also recognised its qualities of commitment.

For the New Leftists, however, there was an elitism and disdain in the Leavis position which had to be repudiated, and more inclusive and democratic understandings of culture asserted. Richard Hoggart's contribution to the Pilkington Committee's Report on the future of broadcasting in Britain was one embodiment of that project, in its argument that broadcasters should seek to produce works of high quality in both 'popular' and 'high cultural' genres.[6] Slightly earlier, Stuart Hall and Paddy Whannel's book *The Popular Arts* also sought to democratise the ideas of quality and value.[7] But one of the lasting legacies of Leavisism was its recognition of the significance of dimensions of what sociologists called 'subjective meaning' - in dissent from reductionist kinds of economism and materialism. These 'cultural' dimensions later became central to Gramscian and Althusserian reinterpretations of Marxist ideas.

Tom Steele argues that some of the roots of this are in adult education.[8] In the pre-war period there were lots of debates within the WEA about what culture meant, and whether

the WEA should be giving working-class people access to high culture, or should be enabling working-class people to create their own culture, or recognise their own culture.

Hoggart, Williams, Thompson, had all worked in adult education. Stuart taught liberal studies for a while, working in secondary modern schools, and then in an art school. Liberal studies was a way of creating a cultural debate, of bringing issues alive for students whose social backgrounds meant they were not usually included in such discussions. Hall's essay in *Universities and Left Review*, 'Absolute Beginnings' describes his experience of this work.[9]

Did you see yourselves as having any specific affiliation to existing factions within the Labour Party?

In recent years I have supported Compass, but the tendency that I've felt most warmth towards was the politics of Livingstone and the GLC. That was the first major emergence of a New Left conception within the Labour Party. I was never very directly involved with the GLC, but I was close to people such as Robin Murray, and later Doreen Massey, who were. That was the point when we felt that there was a space for the New Left in the organisation of Labour politics. But I've nearly always been a Labour Party member, and there have been moments of hope. Polly Toynbee often reminds us that the New Labour governments did do some good things. But I haven't found involvement with my local Labour Party interesting, and I have rarely been much involved with it.

So were there any MPs who were sympathetic in an earlier period, for example who were prominent sympathisers of the CND argument at that time?

In the earlier days there was quite a distance between many Labour Left MPs and those whose politics was formed by the New Left. When we produced the pamphlet *Beyond the Freeze* in 1965, in protest against the collapse of the Labour government's economic programme after 1964, in face of pressure from the IMF, MPs who we had hoped would support us were fearful that our advocacy of devaluation would destabilise the government. Nor did the main support for the May Day Manifesto

in 1967 and 1968 (see below) come from Members of Parliament. The situation changed after 1979, when Tony Benn became the left's leading public figure.

Was there any left counter-argument inside the party to people like Crosland, who were talking about the 'affluent working class' and the need for the party to change because the working class was changing?

Those 'revisionist' positions were keenly debated, both inside and outside the party. Changing social class identifications were a major topic of debate in the field of sociology, in which I was much involved from the 1960s onwards, as well as in political commentaries. Looking back, it seems that the generation of Labour politicians from the 1950s and 1960s - Crosland, Crossman, Castle, Healey, Shore etc - were more willing and able to engage in theoretical discussions than their successors. Twitter does not lend itself to informed debates. But arguments about working-class 'affluence' and what political implications it might have were central in that period. Galbraith's *The Affluent Society* (published in 1958) and Goldthorpe and Lockwood's study of the Luton car-workers (published in 1968) were among the key texts of that time.[10] By contrast, I don't think that Stuart Hall and his CCCS colleagues' outstanding book about the breakdown of the 1970s, *Policing the Crisis* (published in 1978), attracted any comparable political attention.

What was the New Left's position on the 1964 Labour government more generally?

Even the new editors of *New Left Review* at first took a positive interest in the opportunities which Labour's campaign against the Tories seemed to be opening up at that time. There was some convergence between arguments that were being made within the Labour Party, about the structural failures of the British being the outcome of the domination of finance, imperial legacies and aristocracy, and NLR's own emergent theses about the failed British bourgeois revolution. The most influential critiques of the misdirection of British economic policy were by liberal writers such as Andrew Shonfield and Michael Shanks. One can see that Will Hutton's later arguments against financially-driven short-termism, and in favour of a 'stakeholder' model of corporate governance (ignored by Labour when it eventually came to power in 1997), were in some ways a successor to that earlier critique.

'English industrialism dies again' is a recurrent theme. (David Edgerton has recently argued that its death is now almost complete, British capital having become so internationalised, which explains why the Brexiteers of the contemporary Tory Party are so uninterested in its well-being.[11])

Wilson's 1964 election campaign had articulated some sense of 'the people' versus a system of privilege, but once Labour was in office, its radicalism vanished quickly in face of external pressures. I have already mentioned *Beyond the Freeze* - this came out of a quarterly magazine called *Views*, which several of us who were identified with the earlier New Left had joined in 1964. Robin Murray, Michael Walzer (visiting for a year from the USA), Ken Trodd, Alan Dawe, Clive Barker, Graham Martin, Sean Gervasi, Margaret Rustin and I were all involved. At its beginning, *Views* had an eclectic left orientation, with an impressive range of writers, but it later took a more focused New Left direction. (Its editor, Sabby Sagall, after the closure of his magazine, became a member of the Socialist Workers Party.) But in 1967 we were all completely disenchanted with the Labour government, which is why some of us had the idea of producing first *Beyond the Freeze* and then the *May Day Manifesto*. Margaret Rustin remembers that the Manifesto idea was first hatched in our living room in Elsworthy Terrace in north London, but the decisions of Stuart Hall, Edward Thompson and Raymond Williams to take it on were the crucial decider - these three were the leading figures of the project, but they were supported by a circle of younger people: we contributed to the Manifesto and organised activities to promote and discuss it.[12] It was around this time that I resigned from the NLR board.

So was the May Day Manifesto project almost like a re-convening of the old New Left group?

In some ways - the three editors of the Manifesto were the most senior figures of the first New Left. But many of those who were involved in it were younger people, several still students. In Cambridge there was a group of postgraduates close to Raymond Williams, around the Catholic Marxist journal *Slant*, in which Terry Eagleton was prominent. Robin Murray and myself were involved from London and Brighton. Especially when the Manifesto was extended for its Penguin version in 1968, many of us were invited to contribute to it, while the writing was orchestrated by Raymond Williams.

The Manifesto was analysing and protesting against what we saw as a new engine of neo-capitalist hegemony and managerialism, but in what was still its corporatist form. Since the corporatism system then collapsed in the crisis of the 1970s, one can see that some of its analysis, and its main target, was mistaken. But it was also an inspiring project, producing a unified analysis of the entire system, in all its connected dimensions. Its joined-up-ness was what Raymond Williams most wanted to establish. The Manifesto had a significant public impact, but it was a one-off production, with (unwisely) no immediate project to further develop and publish its arguments. There were efforts to create activities around it - there was a May Day Manifesto Society, and some local groups, some of which involved members of the earlier Left Clubs. There were some community activism, in Notting Hill and in Brighton. But then came the upsurges of May 1968 and after, which were much more extensive and revolutionary than the activities around the Manifesto - although it had provided, a year earlier, a cogent analysis of the system that was then so widely rejected.

You were taken by surprise by that?

It was on a scale that we hadn't at all anticipated - but who had? The political tone was more angry and forceful than ours, in part because of its Trotskyist elements, and also because of the general euphoria of the student uprisings in France, the United States and elsewhere. Tariq Ali's brilliant slogan for *Black Dwarf* - 'We Shall Fight and We shall Win: Paris, London, Rome, Berlin', was not one that our group would ever have produced.[13] It was to an extent a matter of generations - the May Day Manifesto's authors and organisers were pre-1968 in their formation.

Phil Cohen has argued that 1968 was both the flowering of the new counter-culture and also, especially in France, the last gasp of the Leninist uprising. Those two things went on at once. Do you think the countercultural elements of 1968 came from somewhere else completely?

Well, there were many strands to it. 'The Summer of Love' in San Francisco and Leninism were not at all the same thing. 1968 was a generational revolt, another expression of which was Rock and Roll. It was fiercer in France than in Britain

because family and educational authority were felt to be more oppressive there than here, where some softening of those boundaries had already taken place. In Paris there was an upsurge of imagination and energy, inspired by Situationism and anarchism. The moment had a voltage which it did not for the most part achieve in the UK. In the United States it did, mainly because of the Vietnam War.

For me, this period coincided with my taking on more responsibilities at the North East London Polytechnic (from 1992 the University of East London), where I have worked since 1964. Margaret Rustin and I also had two daughters, in 1971 and 1975, and this combination of work and family responsibilities led to my withdrawing to a degree from political involvements. I came to feel that there had been a period of relative freedom, extending through student life and for a few years beyond, which was closing down, and that I was not alone in experiencing this practical constraint. My political beliefs and commitments to a degree became focused within my work in the Polytechnic, where I and colleagues were involved in what can now be understood as a process of 'institution building', with what I and others thought of as a progressive agenda.[14] Because the poly was a new institution, in significant ways, it created many opportunities for innovation. I also became involved with psychoanalysis in this period, both personally and intellectually. As the *New Left Review* article mentioned later makes clear (see note 35), I thought that psychoanalysis, and the work of the Tavistock Clinic (which was and is within the NHS), had both an ethical and a 'political' dimension too. I have worked in the psychoanalytic field ever since that time, although I did not train as a psychoanalyst or psychotherapist. I have believed this work to be consistent with my broader social beliefs. To a degree, both for myself and others at the time, psychoanalysis also provided a resource for reflecting on the complexities and difficulties of political involvements, in both personal and political terms. I think an interest in psychoanalysis brings for many people a deepening of political understanding, rather than a turning-away from commitments.

One initiative which we later developed at North East London Polytechnic, in partnership with the journal *Free Associations* (whose editor was the late Bob Young), and with the participation of colleagues from the Tavistock Clinic, was a memorable series of Conferences called *Psychoanalysis and the Public Sphere*, held between 1986 and 1996. These were a context for reflections and debates on politics and psychoanalysis. This development was part of a 'radicalisation' of

intellectual agendas which occurred in many academic and professional fields in those times, giving rise to the birth of numerous new radical journals.

I became re-engaged politically in response to Thatcherism, which seemed to be placing so much that was of value at risk. At this time I became involved again with *New Left Review*, years before I was asked to re-join its editorial Board in 1993. In 1985, Verso published my book *For a Pluralist Socialism*, which attempted to set out programmatic positions for a possible return of Labour to office.

So what else was going on in the early 1980s? Were you working with Doreen and Stuart at that time? Were you part of the group they were in for a while, hanging around with Ken?

After the GLC was abolished in 1986, there was a mainly ex-GLC group that met in Doreen Massey's house - it was called the Ariel Road Group. It members included Doreen, Robin Murray, Michael Ward, Vella Pilay and myself. From time to time Ken Livingstone, who became MP for Brent in 1987, came along. He was friendly to us, and said he enjoyed our discussions. At one point, we asked him if he would like us to become a kind of 'think tank' for him. The idea was that we would write papers with him, which could go out under his name. He rejected our offer. He found it difficult, I believe, to find a useful role for himself as an MP, and did not enjoy being in Parliament. Having failed to be adopted as the Labour candidate for Mayor of London in 2000, he did remarkably well to become elected Mayor as an independent candidate. Some of his former associates at the GLC had contact with him in his new role as Mayor, but those were not as close as they had been. The Ariel Road group was one of the incubators of *Soundings*, after the two years in which Doreen and I had both been members of NLR's editorial board.

You were also around the debates that started to centre around Marxism Today *for example. And you were critical of some of their ideas.*

I didn't write for MT, though I was very engaged with its debates, for example in discussions with Robin Murray and Stuart Hall. I was very sympathetic to Murray's Post-Fordism theses, but was critical of some of MT's later 'New Times' ideas. I thought they had become too critical of 'old left' positions, since I thought remaining

connected with existing Labour institutions was politically essential. *Marxism Today's* critique of the old left gave some unintended legitimacy to the New Labour Third Way programme's rejection of those positions, even though this was not at all MT's intention, and Hall and Jacques became fierce critics of New Labour when it came into office. I wrote an article putting this view ('The Trouble with New Times'), which was first published in *New Left Review* 54, before being republished as a chapter in Hall and Jacques own book, *New Times* in 1989.[15]

From the 'other side', so to speak, I also felt very critical of the leadership of the Miner's Strike in 1984-5, believing that such a strike, called in the early summer, against a fully prepared and vengeful government, could not succeed. I was in the United States for most of its duration, and so was not involved in the activities surrounding it. I admired Jimmy Reid and the few others who, against the grain of left-wing opinion, were willing publicly to criticise Scargill's leadership of the strike.

Also from this 'other side' I was critical in the 1980s of Bennism and its push for control over the Labour Party. I saw no prospect that a party leadership consisting of Michael Foot and Tony Benn could conceivably win an election in Britain in the 1980s, and was therefore opposed to Benn's campaign against Healey for the deputy leadership. The dire situation had of course been provoked by Labour's failure in office, between 1974 and 1979, in which Healey had been a key figure - though I believed that the catastrophe of Thatcher's victory might have been avoided had Wilson not been forced by illness to retire in 1976. (Contingencies like these can have a large part in political outcomes - think also of Gordon Brown's failure to call an election when he became prime minister in 2007.) I had more confidence in Livingstone's project at the GLC, and other city-based initiatives, than in the Labour Party in its national role, since the GLC seemed able to mobilise new ideas and publics. There was similar optimism at that time regarding the role of city mayors in Italy.

What about the Socialist Society? Were you involved in that?

To some extent. The Socialist Society was in some ways an off-shoot of the GLC. Its committee used to meet at County Hall. Who was involved? Among others, Ralph Miliband, Tony Benn, Hilary Wainwright and the other authors of *Beyond the Fragments*. Its aim was to bring together different elements of the left, from within

and outside the Labour Party, as the first New Left had done. There were local 'socialist societies' too, as in Islington, which, through helping get Corbyn selected and elected as MP in 1983, had a role in the rise of the Corbynist left in the Labour Party today. Earlier, the May Day Manifesto had given rise to a 'National Convention of the Left', chaired by Raymond Williams, and supported by the Communist Party. This had a related unifying purpose but was very short-lived.

However what these initiatives revealed was the persistent difficulty in maintaining viable forms of organisation on the left outside the structure of a political party. The Labour Coordinating Committee, Compass and Momentum have all been attempts to create entities which are autonomous yet also seek to influence developments within their Labour Party.[16] It remains to be seen how far the last of these will succeed. Sometimes there seemed to be a trade-off between the fluidity and open-mindedness of democratic left and New Left groupings and their organisational weakness, in comparison with Trotskyist groupings whose single-mindedness seems to assist in their durability.

The main context of my political thinking since 1995 has been *Soundings*, and its associated initiatives such as the *Kilburn Manifesto*.[17] The first *Soundings* editorial, written by Doreen Massey, Stuart Hall and me, was a restatement of a New Left position, undogmatic and pluralist in its approach, but linked to its reformist Marxist origins.[18] It is something that this tradition has survived, and is still able to produce ideas and projects that engage with present times.

Part II The New Left Review after 1962

What happened after 1962, when the old group around NLR collapsed and Stuart resigned?

I was at university in my final year while the break happened, and I didn't take part in the discussions. I heard about some of it through my American friend Norm Fruchter, who lived in England at this time and who was Stuart's editorial assistant. There had been rows on the editorial board about Stuart's direction of *New Left Review*, which reflected the differences between the traditions of the two journals which had merged to create it - the dissident Communist or ex-Communist Party northern-based *New Reasoner*, whose leading figure was Edward Thompson, and the Oxford-based *Universities and Left Review*, which had a more metropolitan and 'modern' orientation.

After Stuart resigned, there was a transitional double-issue, edited by Raphael Samuel, Dennis Butt, Gabriel Pearson and Perry Anderson, whose prime mover, I believe, was Raphael Samuel. But then the Editorial Board felt obliged, partly for reasons of financial exigency, to hand over the editorship of the review to Perry Anderson, who had a very different conception of its purpose and role.

Was there a more or less complete change of personnel at that point?

The change in personnel took a little time, though Perry set his stamp on the journal and its agendas from the beginning. Perry essentially appointed his own editorial board, from his circle, and later recruited other capable people, like Anthony Barnett (in 1966) and Fred Halliday (in 1969) who were attracted to his project. Two of us who had been close to NLR as it had been (though we had not been Board members) joined the new board, namely me and Alan Shuttleworth. The idea was that there would then be some continuity between the old board and the new. But from the start it was clear that the new group had a different project. They perhaps had us on the board because they knew us from Oxford, we'd been around with them. But I realised before long that I didn't feel comfortable in the new group. At that point they were pursuing heavy-duty continental Marxist theory - and I was hearing, probably from Stuart and Edward and others, that they disparaged what the Review had previously been doing - its more 'popular' ideas about working with 'ordinary people' (a term they questioned) and being engaged with day-to-day politics and popular culture. I was also out of sympathy with some of their political positions, for example their 'Third Worldism'. They didn't have much time for Richard Hoggart, though Raymond Williams was a different matter.[19] In fact, in the disputes about the take-over of the journal, Williams's decision to go along with the new editorial arrangements, without however joining the Board, was important in giving them legitimacy. They regarded Williams as intellectually significant too, and in 1979 published the edited transcript of a long interview with him. Perry and his group also disowned the Left Clubs, and made visits to NLR's editorial office by appointment only. It was a completely different atmosphere than previously, somewhat chaotic as it had then been. So I felt out of place, and also, in truth, intellectually out of my depth. I came to think that the idea that one could be a useful link between the old and the new editorial groups was unrealistic. However, looking back at the early issues of NLR under Perry Anderson's

editorship, one can see that Alan Shuttleworth and I were able to commission some articles from earlier contributors, and that there was some willingness to continue to engage with 'local' political issues. Of course before long Perry Anderson and Tom Nairn produced their important and challenging articles on Britain's 'failed' bourgeois revolution, and thus diminished prospects for socialism;[20] and Anderson then engaged in the memorable published polemics with Edward Thompson which came about in response to their theses.[21]

Were the New Left Clubs already starting to fade at that time?

Perry would argue that the whole project had already started to collapse when he took on the Review, and that therefore there was no point in trying to keep the Clubs and other 'outreach' work of that sort going. This was in part because of the fact that CND, in which Stuart and other Board members like John Rex, Peter Worsley and Edward Thompson had been extremely active, seemed to have passed its peak. At one period Stuart was criss-crossing the country to give talks for CND, and *New Left Review* had provided a larger intellectual agenda, in its critique of the Cold War and its advocacy of 'positive neutralism' for the peace campaign. The strength of CND in those years was important for the New Left, and there was some truth in Perry's view that both these movements were losing momentum. Another more material issue was that there was never enough organisational or financial muscle behind the earlier NLR to sustain it. So the Review did finish up, as I understand it, more or less insolvent. It was never run on a very business-like basis, and I believe the famed Partisan Coffee House, with the Review's offices upstairs above it, was a significant loss-maker - as much the enactment of a fantasy as a viable concern. In other words, the organisational side of the early New Left wasn't sustainable, despite the fertility and excitement of its political and cultural project.

Perry Anderson had a narrower conception than Stuart of what the Review could and should do, although perhaps a more realistic one than that held by the Review's original Board. Indeed one could say that both the pre-merger *New Reasoner* and *Universities and Left Review* had clearer and more workable understandings of their respective readerships and their interests than their merged journal *New Left Review* was able to achieve, partly because of differences about how editorial board members saw their intended readership. It was also said that Perry had brought a

crucial financial resource to this situation of crisis, and that this was a factor in the Board's decision to hand the journal over to him, after Stuart had resigned from what had become an untenable position for him. Anderson and his team ('équipe' they would call it) made NLR into a highly successful scholarly journal, eventually with many more international than UK readers, and with a solid base of library subscriptions from across the world.[22] They were also soon able to launch New Left Books, which became Verso, where the earlier Review had barely begun to publish books. (There had been *Out of Apathy* in 1960, published not by themselves but by Stevens and Sons.) This complementary publishing venture was extremely valuable, enabling them to undertake the translation into English of many important writings from the Marxist tradition. This 'internationalisation' of the socialist literatures available in English is probably the most important single achievement of the second and continuing phase of *New Left Review.* Another was the extent and depth of its analysis of social developments world-wide.

Where were they coming from at that point? What did they see as their overall project?

Roughly speaking, Paris is where they were coming from. *Les Temps Modernes* was a model for them. The writers Perry urged us to read - this was back in 1960 and 1961 - were largely French. Later this sense of origins and connectedness widened, as one can see from issues of NLR of the time, and from Perry's book, *Considerations on Western Marxism*, which was a critique of the cultural and philosophical 'turn' Marxism had taken in the later twentieth century, at the expense of its greater earlier attention to the dimensions of economy and class.[23] One could say that Anderson's journal helped to effect this turn, as well as providing an analysis of it. NLR continued to press its argument that the British left needed to become open to more sophisticated ideas, drawn from outside Britain. This view was widely taken up, for example by Stuart Hall and his graduate students at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, for whom Gramsci and Althusser's work became important points of reference. (Of course, the *Universities and Left Review* had been far from insular: Stuart Hall has written about how central the experience of colonialism and racism had been for him from the beginning - Suez had been one of the two crises from which the New Left was born.[24]) The Anderson-Nairn critique of Labourism was particularly critical of the limitations and philistinism of Labour's culture, noting for

example that the Labour Party even lacked a theoretical journal.

There was a vigorous response to these arguments from Edward Thompson, to which Anderson in turn responded.[25] Thompson defended - with considerable rhetorical force and wit - English radical traditions and their theoretical underpinnings, citing Darwin, Blake, William Morris and other key figures. Essentially his argument was a defence of both empiricism and imaginative literature, against what he saw as Parisian theoreticism. These exchanges were enthralling to read. Although I was no doubt emotionally identified with Thompson's positions at the time, it was clear even then that the truth in these arguments was by no means on one side. One observed later that while Thompson had castigated and even ridiculed Althusser's modelling of social systems, with its concepts of levels, instances, 'relative autonomy', and the like, some of its most important propositions later found their way surreptitiously into his own historical work. What were the assertions in Thompson's writings about the legitimating role in Britain of the system of law (which sometimes brought aristocrats to justice), if not a tacit endorsement of the thesis of the 'relative autonomy' of subordinate institutions?[26]

Thompson had a long record of polemical criticism, including of positions of which one might have expected him to take a less abrasive view. Early on, there was the critique of Stuart Hall's prescient essay, 'A Sense of Classlessness', in a 1958 issue of *Universities and Left Review* 5;[27] then there was a highly critical review of Raymond Williams's *The Long Revolution* in *New Left Review* 9 and 10, to which Williams chose not to respond;[28] and later still, at a well-attended Conference in Oxford in 1978, there was a polemical attack on Richard Johnson, Stuart Hall's successor at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, which caused considerable offence.[29] Thompson's brilliant polemics were perhaps all very well when one shared his view of their objects of attack (for example in his *Protest and Survive* and in *Writing by Candlelight*), but they brought difficulties and resentments when they were directed towards those who had admired and been inspired by his work.

How did NLR relate to Raymond Williams in its second phase?

The Review's editors were anxious to keep Williams on friendly terms. When the change in the editorial regime took place, Williams, as a member of the original

Board, was faced with a choice. He had been and indeed remained a central intellectual point of reference for Stuart Hall, as the most profound and original theorist within the New Left - as Stuart has written in his memoir.[30] What was Williams to do, when the collective he had supported in effect had collapsed? He decided that the main consideration must be the survival of the project itself, even if this had now changed direction, and he gave his support to the new editorial group, although without joining its Board.

The relationship between the Review's perspectives and those of Williams was important to Anderson and his colleagues. Their position became a 'harder' revolutionary one than Williams's, and there was a question about how these evident differences were to be negotiated. They published a somewhat parricidal attack on Williams's work by his former student Terry Eagleton (one which Eagleton later regretted). And they also set up a long interview with Williams, whose edited transcript was published as *Politics and Letters*.[31] One way of seeing that project is as an interrogation of Williams, the purpose of which was to push him intellectually towards positions closer to those of the *Review*.

NLR has taken up different political positions over the course of its history since 1962, but it has also seen itself as the continuing bearer of the entire New Left tradition, to this end sometimes seeking reconciliation of earlier differences. Even the serious attention given to Edward Thompson's polemical attacks on themselves can be seen in this light, as can certainly be Verso's publication of the important collection of Stuart Hall's writings *A Hard Road to Renewal*.[32] I saw their 2019 invitation to myself to review Anthony Barnett's recent book as being somewhat in this reconciliatory light, given that Barnett had resigned in some anger from the NLR editorial board in 1983:[33] the editors may well have expected - as was the case - that my review would be broadly positive, and that the book would recall Barnett's earlier brilliant intervention after the Falklands War, *Iron Britannia*, first written as a special issue of NLR in 1982. In his review of the development of NLR in January 2000, Anderson seeks to recognise the different approaches and contributions of the early and later phases of the New Left.

Anthony Barnett was closely involved with NLR from around 1966 to the time of his resignation; and there are continuities between some of his subsequent positions - for example those he made into major practices in his founding of Charter 88 and Open Democracy - and the ideas expounded by Anderson and Nairn in the 1960s.[34]

There is a link between Barnett's belief in the central importance of constitutional reform in Britain, which he has advocated since the 1980s, and the Anderson-Nairn thesis concerning Britain's failed bourgeois revolution, and the consequent conservatism of its politics. (Nairn resigned from NLR at the same time as Barnett, along with eight other Board members, and their positions on the nature and significance of nationalism have remained close.)

It seems clear that for a long time the post-1962 NLR editors saw their project as part of an incipient vanguard - intellectuals who would play a leadership role in some sort of revolution.

One of their central beliefs was in the importance to the left of its theoretical resources. They believed the 'neo-populism' of the early New Left to have been a major weakness. One of the aims of their Review was to overcome the insularity and provincialism, as they saw it, of Britain's intellectual traditions. Anderson set out this agenda to great effect in his essays 'Conditions of English Culture', and 'A Culture in Contraflow'.[35] After 1962 NLR took up various political positions, including a version of revolutionary 'Third Worldism';[36] and from the late 1960s an International Marxist Group version of Trotskyism became dominant, in the context of the post 1968 uprisings and movements - which were supported with enthusiasm by members of the NLR group, which by now included Tariq Ali. There was an activist dimension to the work of the NLR collective at that time, for example in their involvement in the *Black Dwarf* and *Seven Days*, and in the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, which was in effect the Marxist wing of the movement against the Vietnam War in the UK. I remember how exhilarated some members of the collective were during the Grosvenor Square demonstration outside the American Embassy in 1968. But at times the Review could also engage with the more promising moments of Labourism. For example Robin Blackburn, who was editor from 1981 to 1999, was author of a major work on the potential for the social ownership of capital located in large pension funds - this could be seen as a programmatic proposal within a radical social democratic perspective.[37]

In 1993, ten years after the resignation from the NLR Editorial Board of Anthony Barnett, Tom Nairn and co, Robin attempted to reconstitute a larger editorial collective through the addition of new members (including Doreen Massey,

Kate Soper and Elizabeth Wilson), and I was also invited to rejoin the board. Our presence was no doubt intended to broaden the intellectual orientation and connections of the journal, as well as to improve the Board's gender balance, but the enlarged Board proved incapable of taking any significant initiatives, its main role being to debate, as a kind of collective referee, the acceptance or otherwise of articles submitted to the Review. These debates, with the involvement of Board members such as Peter Gowan, Ellen Meiksins Wood and Norman Geras, were often impressively well-informed and serious, and in this respect I found re-immersion in NLR's culture to be enjoyable.

However, there were tensions in the editorial group, both ideological and personal, which inhibited it from working effectively. Looking back, one can see this as arising from issues of succession. Robin Blackburn had succeeded to Perry Anderson's position as editor, but without having, at that time, his intellectual authority. The new members of the Board found themselves witnessing antagonisms which had preceded their arrival. After two years, the existing structure was overturned by an intervention from Perry Anderson and Tariq Ali. In what seemed to me reminiscent of what was known at the time in the City of London as a 'dawn raid', Anderson persuaded the original shareholders of the Review to hand over their shares to him, on the grounds that a coup was being plotted against Robin's editorship, and NLR's future thus placed at risk. The editorial board, until then the sovereign body of the review, was dissolved, and a form of authority based on shareholder ownership asserted in its stead.

I was not involved in any plots against the editor. Nor, despite his unhappy situation and the frictions within the Board, did I think there was any serious risk to his position. Norman Geras and I - as Board members believed (correctly) to have been uninvolved in antagonisms towards Robin Blackburn - were encouraged to remain connected with the Review. But given that the Board had been summarily dismissed, by means of which I strongly disapproved, I didn't wish to do this, and I declined, expressing solidarity with my erstwhile editorial colleagues.

This was the second time I had in effect resigned from NLR's editorial board, although of course on this occasion it was hardly an unforced departure. However, my inclination was to accept the situation without undue resentment, in recognition of the reality which the crisis had exposed. As a matter of fact, it seemed to me, NLR had since 1962 'belonged' to Perry Anderson and his close associates. The situation

seemed to have some similarities with that of a family business, even though its constitutive principle was a claim of shared political belief rather than descent. The review, for all its limitations, continued to do valuable work, and it seemed to me best to leave them get on with it.[38] The most positive response to the situation would be to find a new context for the political work which I and others to whom I was close wanted to do. Two years later, in 1995, Doreen Massey, Stuart Hall and I, with the support of Sally Davison at Lawrence and Wishart, and of other friends such as Robin Murray, decided to launch *Soundings*, where 24 years later this interview is appearing.

Although I have always found *New Left Review* to be an invaluable source of ideas and understanding in many fields of interest, I have rarely found its directly political interventions to be of much consequence. Its political positions have in any case been erratic - one low point, from my point of view, was in the autumn of 2004 (NLR 29) when in an editorial on the US presidential election they argued forcefully that the Democrat candidate (John Kerry) was not to be preferred to George W. Bush, even though, in his first term, Bush had declared the War on Terror and initiated the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. One factor in NLR's broad irrelevance to political debates in Britain may have been the effective internationalisation of its readership, of which British readers have long since, I believe, been a minority. The United States and elements of its leftist culture may have become more significant for the formation of its political positions at that time than anything that was happening in Britain. Perry Anderson's remark in the Foreword to his book on Europe, *The New Old World* - 'I do not regret the omission of Britain, whose history since the fall of Thatcher has been of little moment' - perhaps explains NLR's disengagement from its local British scene.[39] Regardless of what one might believe Britain's global significance to be, I have never felt removed, in terms of interest and feelings, from the place where I have always lived. *The London Review of Books*, or indeed *Soundings*, have become much more relevant locations for the analysis of British society than NLR has been for many years.

In 2000, at the turn of the millennium, NLR re-launched itself, and began a new numbering sequence. The first issue began with Anderson's review of the history and achievement of the Review.[40] It notes the entire change of political context in which it now publishes, enumerating its many dimensions - the triumph of neoliberalism, the eclipse of Marxism, and other factors. It continues: 'Four decades later, the

environment in which NLR took shape has all but completely passed away'. This means that: 'The only starting-point for a realistic left today is a lucid registration of historical defeat.' Anderson here described the positioning of NLR, over a long period, as the somewhat Olympian analyst and judge of the reality and potentiality of the left world-wide, in both political and cultural terms. Of course he and NLR's contributors have brought remarkable capabilities to this work. It is, however, different from the kinds of engagement of a journal like *Soundings*, which has always been rooted in its local context of publication.

Michael Rustin has been a leading figure on the New Left for more than fifty years and was a founding editor of *Soundings*, alongside Stuart Hall and Doreen Massey. He continues to play a key role as a member of the Soundings editorial collective.

Sally Davison is the convening editor of *Soundings* and **Jeremy Gilbert** is a member of its editorial advisory board.

Notes

1. *Universities and Left Review* was a journal edited by Stuart Hall, Gabriel Pearson, Ralph Samuel and Charles Taylor, which in 1961 merged with *The New Reasoner* to become *New Left Review*. The ULR archive is at: http://banmarchive.org.uk/archive_index.htm. This website also hosts archived issues of *The New Reasoner*, *New University*, *Black Dwarf*, *Seven Days* and *Marxism Today* - all of which feature in this interview.

2. Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society,* Chatto & Windus 1958.

3. Documented in *Out of Apathy: Voices of the New Left 30 Years on*, Verso 1989.

4. Recently re-reading F.R and Q.D. Leavis's book on Dickens, I have been impressed by their understanding of his great novels as profound critiques of the society they represent.

5. R. Williams, 'Culture is Ordinary', in Norman McKenzie (ed), *Conviction*, Macgibbon and Kee 1959.

6. Pilkington Report on Broadcasting, HMSO 1962.

7. S. Hall and P. Whannel, *The Popular Arts*, Hutchinson 1964.

8. Tom Steele, *The Emergence of Cultural Studies, 1945–65: Cultural Politics, Adult Education and the English Question*, Lawrence & Wishart 1997.

9. S. Hall, 'Absolute Beginnings', *Universities and Left Review* 7, 1959.

10. J.K. Galbraith, *The Affluent Society*, Hamish Hamilton 1958; J. Goldthorpe and D. Lockwood, *The Affluent Worker in the Class Structure*, CUP 1968.

11. D. Edgerton, 'Brexit is a necessary crisis: it reveals Britain's true place in the world', *Guardian*, 9 October 2019: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/oct/09/brexit-crisis-global-capitalism-britain-place-world.

12. For free-to view access to the text: www.lwbooks.co.uk/book/mayday-manifesto

13. https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/3816-we-shall-fight-we-will-win-on-the-black-dwarf-and-1968.

14. Colleagues from those days and myself are about to publish a book, *The University of East London: a Radical History* (Lawrence and Wishart 2020, forthcoming) which describes aspects of this period of development.

15. S. Hall and M. Jacques (eds), *New Times*, Lawrence and Wishart 1989.

16. Compass began as a Labour Party group but now has extended its reach and includes members from other parties. The LCC (1978 to 1998) was a 'soft left' grouping inside the Labour Party.

17. https://www.lwbooks.co.uk/soundings/kilburn-manifesto.

18. https://www.lwbooks.co.uk/soundings/1/editorial-uncomfortable-times.

19. In the relaunched NLR in 2000 ('Editorial: Renewals', *New Left Review Second Series* 1. Jan-Feb 2000), Perry was however respectful towards Hoggart's work.

20. These are republished in Anderson's book *English Questions*, Verso 1992.

21. E.P. Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory and other essays*, Merlin 1978.

22. In his 2000 editorial (see note 19) Anderson insisted on the term scholarly, rather than academic.

23. P. Anderson, *Considerations on Western Marxism*, Verso 1976.

24. S. Hall with B. Schwarz, *Familiar Stranger*, Allen Lane 2017.

25. 'The Peculiarities of the English' (1965), re-published in *The Poverty of Theory* (see note 21); P. Anderson, *Arguments within English Marxism*, Verso 1980.

26. D. Hay, P. Linebaugh and E.P Thompson, *Albion's Fatal Tree*, Allen Lane 1975.

27. E.P. Thompson, 'Commitment in Politics', *Universities and Left Review* 6, Spring 1959; S. Hall, 'A Sense of Classlessness', *Universities and Left Review* 5, 1958, recently republished in Stuart Hall, *Selected Political Writings*, Lawrence & Wishart 2017.

28. E.P Thompson, 'The Long Revolution': Part I, *NLR* 1/9 May-June 1961; Part 2, *NLR* 1/10, July-August 1961.

29. See R, Johnson, 'Thompson, Genovese and socialist-humanist history', *History Workshop Journal*, 6, Autumn 1978, and subsequent discussions in issues 7, 8 and 9.

30. *Familiar Stranger* (see note 24).

31. R. Williams, *Politics and Letters*, Verso 1979.

32. S. Hall, *The Hard Road to Renewal*, Verso 1988.

33. See A. Barnett, *The Lure of Greatness: England's Brexit and America's Trump. Why 2016 blew away the world order and how we must respond*, Unbound 2017; reviewed by

M.J. Rustin in 'Brexitannia', *New Left Review* 116, 2019. See also

A. Barnett, 'Iron Britannia' (Special Issue), *New Left Review* 134, July-August 1982.

34. Charter 88 became a joint founder of Unlock Democracy in 2007: https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/opendemocracyuk/goodbye-charter-88-new-epoch-for-democratic-resistance-has-begun/.

35. My own work was a beneficiary of this analysis. Anderson had written about the significant influence on English intellectual life of émigrés from Europe - most of it reactionary. NLR published my paper 'A Socialist Consideration of Kleinian Psychoanalysis' in 1982, in NLR 121. I argued that Klein was an example of such a theoretical influence - and in my view a progressive one.

36. See for example K. Buchanan, 'The Third World', *New Left Review* 18, 1963.

37. R. Blackburn, *Banking on Death, or Investing in Life: the History and Future of Pensions*, Verso 2002.

38. Patrick Wright wrote a well-informed account of these events in the Guardian, which can be found at http://www.patrickwright.net/wp-content/uploads/pwright-trouble-in-the-last-politburo.pdf.

39. P. Anderson, *The New Old World*, Verso 2011, ppxii-xiii.

40. See note 19; see also Stefan Collini's interesting review of NLR at 50: 'A Life in Politics: New Left Review at 50', *Guardian*, 13 February 2010: https://www.theguardian.com/books/2010/feb/13/new-left-review-stefan-collini.