

EDITORIAL NOTE

“No one seriously concerned with political strategies in the current situation can now afford to ignore the ‘swing to the right’,” warned Stuart Hall in 1979; “we need to discuss its parameters more fully and openly on the left, without inhibition or built-in guarantees.”¹ In the “Great Moving Right Show” Hall discusses patterns, trends, and heeds warnings amidst a strong global conservative wave: “Thatcherism” and “Reganism.” Considering our current political climate, Hall’s right-swing formula is hauntingly relevant. In his seminal article, Hall identifies trends the left should be hyper-vigilant towards: an increased model of populism, a skewed social-moral philosophy cemented in war, aggressive economic policies, and an all-front attack on academia.

The political influences on contemporary culture as it manifests into anti-intellectualism and aggressive attacks on academia, emphasise the importance of Cultural Studies—the legacy of Stuart Hall, Raymond Williams, and Richard Hoggart. Cultural Studies allows us to examine our current political environment through shared experiences and interpretations while critiquing the massification and increased regulation of its modes of production.² Hall, Hoggart, and Williams have left us with a timeless and powerful framework to help us understand our past, present, and future.

As such, the articles in this issue of *Left History* are a discussion of Cultural Studies; specifically, radical culture and the politics that shape it. Our pages reflect on literary traditions and the current political status of the left as it confronts a globalised right-wing shift. The contributors reflect on various platforms aimed at either resisting leftist opposition through aggressive regulation of academia, or absorbing and compartmentalising it. Consequently, coercive attempts at producing a symbiotic culture, one that supports right-wing populist fronts, has consistently led to a counter-culture. With an exploration of Cultural Studies’ legacy, this issue of *Left History* underscores Stuart Hall’s observations of right-wing shift patterns, Raymond Williams’ radical cultural criticisms, and Richard Hoggart’s lamentations on increased regulation of modes of knowledge production; specifically, academia.

We begin with a discussion of the transformation and challenges faced by the political labour communities in the United Kingdom, as well as the dynamics they heeded over the past half-decade. We then shift to an examination of the ideological alternate to the traditional novel exemplified by one of the founders of Cultural Studies, Raymond Williams. In our review essays segment, our contributors contemplate the historiography of the re-emergence of Hall’s “The Great Moving Right Show.” Our first essayist presents a grim retelling of the gagging of academia with special focus on the “Salaita” phenomenon. We then turn to an examination of the works of Tariq Ali, Vivek Chibber, and our own editorial board member, Vijay Prashad. Their works thematically explore the status of the right and its impact on the Global South as well as the reinvention of aggressive wealth accumulation

models. The issue concludes with an array of reviews on recent publications that either address the left as a theme, or critically engage with its methodology.

Our first contributor discusses the transformation of the labour movement in England. Lawrence Black's "Blue Labour *or* the Political History Blues?" comes at a critical time when Corbyn's leadership is making significant strides amidst an array of right-wing performances. Considering the "'Brexit' victory in the [European Union] referendum, electoral collapse in Scotland, fallout from the Chilcot Report into the Iraq War, an internal anti-Semitism enquiry and, above all, the stasis of a leader in Jeremy Corbyn," Black highlights the disparity between histories of the Labour Party within the historical narrative of United Kingdom's politics. The political history of the Labour Party reveals a not-so-pessimistic narrative and suggests a vibrant future. Were the party's post-Blair attempts at reinvigorating their status with Corbyn as leader successful? The article unravels how the Labour Party's historical narrative fits within the history of the left, specifically how *Blue* and *New Labour* are noted within the historiographies of activism and politics.

Our subsequent article discusses the literary radicalism of Raymond Williams. Ronald Paul's "Herstories: The Novels of Raymond Williams" showcases an alternative ideological literary tradition atypical of the bourgeois culture. In examining Williams's works, Paul observes a unique ideological conceptualisation of a working-class literary tradition that underscores the nexus between culture, society, and politics. Williams's seven novels reveal "the dialectical link between the systemic movements of history and their impact on individual people." Williams's influence as a feminist writer shaped some of the key concepts of Cultural Studies: feminist and working-class counter-hegemonies. The novels engaged with methodologies celebrated in Cultural Studies, and highlighted cultural practices embedded within wider systems of power. Paul applies a gendered perspective to Williams's work, showcasing "the way the personal and the political are shown to intertwine dramatically in the narratives." In doing so, the article reveals that the Williams novel positions the female character as striving for agency and recognition in what Paul dubs "herstories."

In 1998, Hall observed that "New Labour appears to have been seduced by the neoliberal gospel"³ as it began to harbour gross anti-intellectualism policies. Our review essayists demonstrate this formula in their discussion of right-wing, centrist, and neoliberal trends, and their staunch and unapologetic attacks on academia. In "Battle for the Campuses" Virginia Tilley discusses the scarlet-lettering process of those who challenge right-wing lobbying of campuses. Indeed, with numerous right-wing funded agencies whose sole aim is to highlight and black-list academics critical of the increasing coerciveness of right-wing attempts at policing higher education, academics are contemplating not just the future of leftist research, but the state of academia altogether. Tilley's discussion also sheds light on the role of the activist-academic, providing a personal account of the difficulties of navigating increased attempts at regulating academics on social media through black-

lists and right-wing groups' penetration into the campus.

Our final contributor highlights the American dominance of global capital and its impact on neoliberalism, centralism, and right-wing platforms; especially in European politics and the socio-political adjustment of the Global South. In "The Universalism of American Capitalism," Raluca Bejan highlights the common themes emerging in three works on extreme political trends. Bejan concludes that aggressive economic policies employed by the United States are the catalyst behind global shifts to the right, making centrist politics the alternative to the left within the broader context of populism.

Consider the content of this issue of *Left History*; the following pages are demonstrative of the continued importance of Cultural Studies. It is a valuable theoretical framework for assessing the impact of politics on contemporary culture. The editors of *Left History* would like to welcome Avram Heisler to our team. Avram will act as Assistant Book Review Editor.

NOTES

¹ Stuart Hall, "The Great Moving Right Show, 1979" in *Selected Political Writings: The Great Moving Right Show and Other Essays*, Stuart Hall, edited by David Featherstone, Michael Rusin and Bill Shwarz (London: Duke University Press, 2017), 179-186.

² Richard Hoggart, *The Use of Literacy: Aspects of Working Class Life* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1957).

³ Stuart Hall, "The Great Moving Nowhere Show, 1998" in *Selected Political Writings*, 289.