

Book reviews

JUDITH SQUIRES, *Gender in Political Theory* (Polity Press, Cambridge, 1999), 286 pp., ISBN 0-7456-1501-5 (pb)

The closing decades of the twentieth century saw an upsurge of interest in the analysis of gender and the production of increasingly sophisticated gender theory which, as Squires demonstrates, challenges the boundaries and assumptions of conventional political theory. The mass of work on gender has not, however, produced a united body or coherent school of thought. Rather, it encompasses a myriad of perspectives and strategies which are in some cases complementary but in others deeply contradictory. The result is a set of interlocking debates, as deep-seated philosophical and methodological differences interact with more immediate political concerns, and disagreements sometimes take the form of crude opposition and sometimes of subtle interaction.

This book provides an impressively clear exposition of many of these debates which never loses sight of the complexity of the ideas involved and which shows a sound command of both mainstream and feminist political thought. Squires negotiates her way through the maze of theories and issues with the help of two organizing principles: a tripartite identification of key feminist 'frames' or 'archetypes' and a distinction between political debates and the ontological disputes that underlie them. Although she does not claim that these principles are themselves original, her well-sustained application of them is both innovative and illuminating, particularly in her demonstration of the relevance of apparently esoteric explorations of subjectivity and epistemology to more conventional political debates around equality, justice, citizenship and representation. She does, however, tend to both overstate some recent trends in feminist thought and neglect others.

The three archetypal approaches to gender identified by Squires are those of 'inclusion' (or liberal feminism), 'reversal' (or radical, maternal or cultural feminism) and 'displacement' (or postmodern or post-structuralist feminism) (p. 3). She argues that it is the third archetype which is most genuinely radical—this seeks to go beyond binary, either/or, male/female ways of thinking and to displace the apparent opposition between the first two archetypes by exploring the ways in which subjectivities are engendered. In terms of political theory, its aim is 'neither to de-gender nor to re-gender political theory, but to reveal the ways in which political theory genders' (p. 7). This political project involves a clear rejection of gender essentialism, and critics of postmodern feminism have argued that, in denying the very existence of 'woman' it is incompatible with the recognition of sexist oppression and collective action to achieve feminist goals.¹ However, Squires picks her way skilfully through this particular minefield to argue both that contesting the reification of gender can be a political goal and that this need not preclude the self-identification of women as a collective group. Indeed, she claims that this kind of gender theory can play a vital role in

distinguishing between alliances forged with liberatory intent and those imposed upon people, and in 'keeping us continually aware of the contingency of claims to group sameness and mindful of the power relations which produced the conditions of identity' (p. 73).

Squires' application of her archetypes to political debates in the second part of her book continues to favour the strategy of 'displacement' which, she argues, points a way forward beyond the dichotomous thinking that has characterized feminist as well as mainstream debates. For example, her chapter on justice combines this strategy with Brian Barry's work on first and second orders of impartiality to argue that an ethic of care can complement rather than conflict with traditional conceptions of justice. As Squires says, such attempts to free gender theory from the simple oppositions of some earlier feminist approaches represent a general trend in feminist thought. Many would also agree with her in welcoming the recent opening up of gender theory to include work on men and masculinities. However, I would argue that Squires has too easily equated the rejection of dichotomous thinking with a postmodernist strategy of displacement, and that in doing so she has over-simplified and misrepresented much recent feminist thought. Indeed, by implying a false set of oppositions (between strategies which accept or reject binary assumptions), she may herself have fallen into the trap from which she claims her approach has freed her. The problem stems in part from her original identification of just three archetypes. As she notes at an early stage, identifying a typology itself imposes a frame and is a political act, and the equation of radical with cultural and maternal feminism is certainly a political act that is fiercely resisted by many who call themselves radical feminists.² Perhaps more importantly, Squires notes but does not explore the fact that the strategies she has identified 'occlude many of the concerns central to socialist and Marxist feminisms' (p. 5). The recent publication of Lynn Segal's *Why Feminism?* shows, however, both that socialist feminism is alive and well and that it too can reject simplistic binaries, although in a somewhat different manner from that advocated by Squires. Along with important recent developments in black feminist thought and feminist work on national identity, its starting point is a refusal to isolate gender as a category of analysis or constructed identity, and to insist that 'gender binaries never exist in pristine form. Women and men are already inserted in contexts of race, class, age, sexual orientation and multiple other belongings: each with their deeply entrenched connections to power and authority, or the lack of it'.³

Squires has made an important contribution to our understanding of gender in political theory. But her failure to discuss the ways in which socialist and black feminist thought might affect her conclusions means that this contribution is less comprehensive than she appears to claim and fails to address some major areas of contemporary feminist debate.

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Notes

1. See D. Bell and M. Klein (eds), *Radically Speaking*, London, 1996.
2. See T. Lania, 'On Who is Calling Radical Feminists "Cultural Feminists" and Other Historical Sleights of Hand', in Bell and Klein (eds), *op. cit.*, pp. 155–68.

3. L. Segal, *Why Feminism?*, Oxford, 1999, p. 42. On black feminist thought see, for example, M. Anderson and P. Collins (eds), *Race, Class and Gender*, London, 1995. On feminist work on national identity see, for example, A. Lutz, A. Phoenix and N. Yuval-Davis (eds), *Crossfires. Nationalism, Racism and Gender in Europe*, London, 1995.

ANDREW MORAVCSIK, *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power* (UCL Press, London, 1999; Cornell University Press, New York, 1998), 514 pp., ISBN 1-85728-192-6 (pb)

There can be no doubt that this book is a major work of scholarship on the construction and development of the European Community. Indeed, it is a masterpiece. But this does not mean that it is uncontroversial or unproblematic. Moravcsik recognizes the controversial nature of the work and labels it 'revisionist', meaning that it challenges, but does not completely reject, what he perceives to be the neo-functional/historical-institutionalist orthodoxy of EC/EU studies. Instead, he posits an intergovernmentalist explanation, albeit not of an orthodox realist kind. Moravcsik terms his position 'liberal-intergovernmentalism' and situates this within a rationalist framework which assumes unitary state behaviour. So, in essence, his work is part of what Ole Waever terms the 'neo-neo' synthesis (of realism and liberalism) in American international relations theory. Before elaborating on this some description of the impressive scope and nature of the book is required.

Moravcsik wants to explain the 'ongoing social scientific puzzle' (p. 501) that is the EC/EU, to account for nation-states pooling some of their sovereignty in regional institutions. He seeks to do this by investigating the causes and motivations behind the five 'grand bargains' or 'bundles of decisions' (pp. 1–2) that have driven European economic integration forward. In effect, Moravcsik has given us a political history of the key episodes, treaties, bargains and turning-points in the evolution of the EC/EU. Thus, he focuses on three episodes of trade liberalization and integration (the Treaty of Rome, the consolidation of the Common Market and the Single European Act) and two episodes of monetary co-operation and integration (the creation of the European Monetary System, and EMU and Maastricht). While this may appear to provide a history of snapshots, it is much more than that. This is because Moravcsik is concerned to explain the stages *before* and *after* the key bargains were made as well as the actual snapshots of the bargains. Thus, he is interested in three main stages: (a) the pre-bargaining stage of national preference formation (how and why states arrived at their national interests); (b) the phase of intergovernmental bargaining; and (c) the institutional choices made as a result of the grand bargains (to what extent and why states pooled or delegated their sovereignty). He does this by focusing in detail on France, Germany and Britain.

This is ambitious enough in that it amounts to a history of the EC from 1955 to 1991 through an examination of three countries' preference formations, bargaining positions, and satisfaction with outcomes. This has entailed an enormous amount of secondary research into the political history of French, German and British élites and their attitudes and policies towards European integration (including numerous French and German sources). However, Moravcsik's ambition and achievement does not end with this remarkable reconstruction of EC political history. He additionally conducted a vast amount

of research into primary sources ranging from memoirs, public statements, newspaper and magazine reports ('soft' primary research) to internal government reports and 100 lengthy interviews ('hard' primary research). All this painstaking research was conducted in order to provide rigorous checking mechanisms to bolster Moravcsik's theoretical interpretation of EC integration. As indicated earlier, he wants to challenge and revise the orthodox interpretations of the EC/EU. Thus, the rigorous qualitative research was undertaken in order to be able to confirm or reject a series of hypotheses derived from Moravcsik's 'liberal-intergovernmentalist' theoretical position. So, is it convincing?

The central aim of the book is to 'explain why sovereign governments in Europe have chosen repeatedly to coordinate their core economic policies and surrender sovereign prerogatives within an international institution' (p. 1). Here we see that Moravcsik is no straightforward intergovernmentalist. He recognizes that states have 'surrendered', pooled or delegated national sovereignty. Indeed, he refers to the EC as a 'unique, multileveled, transnational political system' (p. 1). But, the development of the EC/EU into this transnational political system has come about not because of unintended consequences, spillover effects or supranational political leadership (as neo-functionalists and institutionalists have sometimes claimed) but by (a) the convergence of national interests through (b) interstate 'grand bargains' followed by (c) detailed intergovernmental negotiations leading to new supranational institutions. At each stage, national leaders, reflecting domestic political compromises (primarily of an economic nature) were the key actors. As Moravcsik claims: 'in short, the transfer of sovereignty and autonomy to supranational institutions ... was not an unintended consequence of major EC decisions; *it was their primary purpose*' (p. 492).

So, European integration came about, according to Moravcsik, because of 'rational choices by national leaders who constantly pursued economic interests' (p. 3). The outcomes reflected three factors—commercial advantage, relative bargaining power and the credibility of interstate commitments (p. 3). For each of these factors, Moravcsik meticulously investigates alternative hypotheses and explanations for European integration such as geo-political interests and/or European idealism. But, in nearly all cases under investigation, Moravcsik contends that the evidence supports his original assertions.

Much of this is persuasive. However, there are some problems. Firstly, by labelling his position as 'liberal-intergovernmentalist' and by his critique in the first and last chapters, he does seem to set himself against much of neo-functionalism and historical-institutionalism. In fact, it is not clear-cut that there is such a dichotomy between Moravcsik's conclusions and those of the institutionalists. Indeed, as implied earlier, Moravcsik's position is clearly influenced by Keohane's 'neo-liberal institutionalism' which attempts to bridge the gap between institutionalism and intergovernmentalism.

Secondly, there is the usual problem associated with intergovernmentalism (realist or liberal): that is its state-centrism. By privileging the nation-state as the dominant actor in world politics (albeit constrained by complex interdependence), Moravcsik is bound to find what he is looking for, i.e. that integration has come about because of the convergence of states' interests. But, as he is aware, 'commercial interest' has been a significant factor in European integration (p. 3) and not just the commercial interest of states. So, if the analysis started from those non-state actors furthering economic interdependence, then the answers

might be slightly different. This does not mean that states are unimportant, weak or declining; merely that they are one part of the explanation of the integration process. This would then entail investigating more than the 'two-level' games and bargains that Moravcsik is interested in.

Despite these reservations, this is a huge work of impressive scholarship full of theoretical and historical insights into the integration process. It will set new standards of rigour in EU scholarship. For those who want to construct an alternative account of European integration, Moravcsik's work is now *the* point of reference.

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ASEEM PRAKASH and JEFFREY A. HART (eds), *Globalization and Governance* (Routledge, London, 1999), 338 pp., ISBN 0-415-21604-4 (hb)

Two of the most used and abused concepts in current political analysis are globalization and governance. Whilst political scientists are accustomed to using concepts which are contested, globalization and governance are, in my view, particularly problematic as the same words are used in different ways to mean different things across the social sciences. When a political scientist uses globalization does she/he use it in a way that would be recognizable to the IR brethren? Is my use of governance recognizable to a colleague in business studies, or would our business studies colleague only use it with the prefix 'corporate'? Perhaps, with these concepts, we are reliving the experience of corporatism, a concept seized upon in the 1970s to explain and analyse post-war patterns of interest intermediation and representation which was rapidly qualified with liberal-, quasi-, societal-, and so on until it eventually faded away back into pluralist theory (neo- or otherwise). Perhaps globalization and governance are destined to follow a similar trajectory? A further difficulty is the tendency to link these two concepts and integrate them into the fantasy of the Third Way.

One of the virtues of an edited collection is that it can cover diverse topics bound by a common theme, but with topics as complex and contested as these a particularly clear theme and definition is needed. Do Prakash and Hart provide this? Yes, in that they build the volume around agreed definitions; no, in that the definitions remain, in the final analysis, separate. The editors make it clear that they are not advocates of a particular perspective, which is important as the debate in IPE revolves around neo-institutionalism and the constructivist approach, and they do offer clear definitions of their basic terms. Thus, 'we define governance as organizing collective action' (p. 2) and 'the contributors to this volume have agreed to employ the term globalization to refer to a set of processes leading to the integration of economic activity in factor, intermediate, and final goods and services across geographical boundaries, and the increased salience of cross-border value chains in international economic flows' (p. 3). One is a 'political' definition, the other is 'economic' and it is significant, I think, that the economic definition is both longer and more complex than the political. The differential scale and scope of the chosen definitions reveal the volume's essential focus, as economic integration is generally acknowledged to be the most advanced aspect of globalization. Perhaps a second volume, *Governance and Globalization*, is even now in preparation.

The volume's main political concern is, therefore, how the processes of economic globalization impact on domestic and other levels of governance and how these non-international governance structures respond (or not) to globalization. In an earlier era we would have concluded that this required an extended analysis of the state and the consequent distribution of rewards and inequalities. Governance is not, of course, government. By definition governance draws our attention away from political institutions as conventionally understood, widening the political to embrace non-governmental organizations, private organizations, epistemic communities and so on. In this globalized world we are asked to look beyond government and the state but, ironically, with the triumph of capitalism after 1989 and the fall of the Berlin Wall, governance (a concept which developed from New Right thinking) points us back to the role of the capitalist state. Both globalization and governance have a core assumption—the withering away of the state—that in the face of autonomous policy networks and economic internationalization the state has no option other than to shed functions which discourage markets and to confine their interventions to facilitating the adjustment of the domestic sphere to the needs of the world economy as speedily as possible. States that refuse this role are consigned to the dustbin of history. The difficulty of this is that we have not seen a withering away of the domestic state and the world remains organized into states; indeed, in recent years new states have been created with alarming rapidity.

Although coming from different directions, both globalization and governance converge, perhaps to their surprise, on the role of the state, in particular the view that the state has lost both capacity and freedom to manoeuvre. In their different ways all the chapters in the Prakesh and Hart collection converge on 'the state of the state' question and they and their contributors are aware that despite an enthusiasm to do away with the state this is, in the final analysis, neither possible nor desirable. So what is the role of the state in a globalized world? The answer to this is, fortunately, beyond the scope of this review but perhaps we can discern in the debate over these concepts and their relationship an emerging counter-trend which argues that the state at all levels of governance is not as powerless as we were once tempted (or encouraged) to think. External economic pressures are a political reality but are mediated by domestic institutions which vary in their robustness, and different national capitalisms will react in different ways to these pressures even if they wholeheartedly accept the sovereignty of the market.

The value of this collection of essays is that it provides up-to-date explorations of current debates and thinking in the overlap between globalization and governance at a theoretical level, their empirical impact on the Westphalian state, and the progressive emergence of institutions and policies appropriate to this new world. The three sections of the book cover these debates in considerable detail and all of the essays repay careful reading, most probably by specialists in differing specialisms who have an interest in both (or either) of the concepts and wish to explore linkages and synergies. As with the other volumes in the Routledge/RIPE Studies in Global Political Economy this is a rewarding, valuable and thought-provoking collection which will retain its usefulness for some years to come.

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ALASTAIR IAIN JOHNSTON and ROBERT S. ROSS (eds), *Engaging China. The Management of an Emerging Power* (Routledge, London and New York, 1999), 309 pp., ISBN 0-415-20841-6 (pb)

China has come a long way from being the 'sick man of Asia' and a 'heap of loose sand'. It should not be forgotten that this is due to a substantial degree to Mao's policies—despite their high costs at times. China is now a 'big country' (*Daguo*). This is also due to Deng's policy of speeding up China's economic development, integrating the country into the international system. The question follows: how should the outside world deal with this in many ways still emerging and dissatisfied power? The answer offered in this book is: engage China. The contributors, however, offer different versions of 'engagement', depending on which country is discussed. There is no blanket answer to be found as each country discussed has its own history and present-day context, or rather national interest, with regard to China.

One problem with edited books is often the diversity of the chapters and the lack of a common thread from introduction to concluding chapter. This is not the case at all here. The first chapter by R. L. Schweller discusses in general terms the management of the rise of great powers. Throughout the book there is reference to this chapter and how the cases of, for example, South Korea, Malaysia or multilateral security institutions relate to the history and theory of engaging rising powers. The conclusion is also a model of how various chapters are pulled together with their essence made clear. Out of this a research programme is suggested which will inspire others to take up issues developed in this volume.

Indonesia, according to M. Leifer, is reluctant in its attempt to engage China since its anxieties about China's mid- to long-term intentions are too deep-seated. Indonesia wants 'to encapsulate China within the framework of a multilateral regional security dialogue in an attempt to influence its external behaviors' (p. 104). Singapore's three-pronged engagement policy tries to avoid xenophobic China (Y. F. Khong). Malaysia fears an unstable and weak China which might try to bully others in the region (A. Acharya). Japan is increasingly suspicious of Chinese motives and has shifted from 'commercial liberalism to reluctant realism' (M. J. Green, p. 172). In the case of Taiwan, H. M. Goldstein suggests that 'the engagement of the mainland has intensified rather than ameliorated the tension of the past' (p. 81). This means that the options for the countries discussed in this book range from containment via band wagoning to free riding. For the USA, however, the situation is different. Not only does it want to change China's foreign policy behaviour, but it also wants to impact China's domestic politics. This is the meaning of the term 'constructive engagement'. However, is there 'one' USA policy? Are there not several interest groups (corporations, military élites, State Department, labour movement, small businesses, human rights non-governmental organizations, religious groups) which have an impact on White House policy towards China?

M. M. Pearson emphasizes the co-operative behaviour of China in the Bretton Woods institutions and APEC. These institutions accepted China under the existing rules, rather than use engagement to achieve political goals in China, 'as markets and free trade have been shown to be compatible with a variety of political systems' (p. 209). This interpretation goes against the grain of what was

argued in the other chapters. The argument had been that enmeshing China would bring about foreign policy and domestic policy changes. The uninspired, uninspiring leaders of the CCP might want to block reforms, but street-level China is rapidly adopting the values and aspirations of a global enterprise culture in which democracy, free speech and human rights march hand-in-hand with individual advancement and social cohesion. Was it not the goal of the Bretton Woods system to spread liberal economic values which cannot be divorced from liberal political ones? This leads to another problem with this volume. There is a problem in China concerning the purpose to which its great power status should be put, except maybe over the intentions to overcome the 'century of shame and humiliation' which began with the Opium Wars. Does this mean that China has opened its economy and society on its own terms and that the ability of other countries to engage China depends on the continuing wish to engage by the leadership in Beijing rather than the outside world? It is doubtful whether China can modernize by learning from the outside world without compromising its independence in the age of globalization. This means that engaging China is indeed on the agenda. But how?

This leads to my main criticism of this volume. The authors overrate the power of China. Does not de Gaulle's comment on Brazil, 'it has great potential, and always will', remind one of China? After all, China did not teach Vietnam a lesson in 1979 and it is a second-rate power with no real political friends in Asia. The power of the myth of the Chinese market is astonishing—after all, the USA invests more in Columbia than in China. Engagement of China should be tempered with constraint of unwanted action. What is necessary is a policy of 'constraintment' (G. Segal) rather than simple-minded containment or engagement.

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LASZLO ANDOR and MARTIN SUMMERS, *Market Failure: East Europe's 'Economic Miracle'* (Pluto Press, London and Chicago, 1998), 209 pp., ISBN 0-7453-0886-4 (pb)

Since the late-1980s the ex-communist countries of central and eastern Europe (CEE) have undergone unprecedented economic distress and social dislocation, due to the implementation of primarily politically motivated reform programmes imposed by western institutions. This book represents a critical appraisal of the failures of neo-liberal transformation strategies from the perspective of European social democracy. Andor and Summers start with a detailed account of the neo-liberal counter-revolution since the mid-1970s and outline the global factors behind the close-to-uniform shock therapy adjustment strategies implemented in CEE: the triumph of right-wing politics in the west; the ascendancy of the neo-liberal counter-revolution over the ideals of the welfare system; the growing influence of international financial capital; and the cumulative influence of all these on the role of the World Bank and the IMF as institutions of international financial relations.

While detailing the nature, historical roots and objectives of the Bank group's stabilization and structural adjustment (SSA) policies, Andor and Summers

illuminate how these became institutionalized in a standardized system of 'world totalitarianism' under the dominance of centres of international capital, especially that of the single superpower—the USA. The discussion highlights why and how policies of 'crisis management', begun following the 1980s debt crisis, were transformed into a uniform and single tool for transforming the ailing ex-command economies. This is explained by an exploration of changes in the local, regional and international political economy during the 1980s. At the practical level, two factors colluded—western institutional pressure through the Bank group and western advisers, and the historical and continued drive in CEE for inclusion in the developed core of the global economy. Interesting in this respect is how the political economy of these two different processes and the interests behind them, those of international capital and the *nouveau nomenklatura* of CEE, together cleared the ground for the Bank group's politically motivated transformation policies.

The book provides an alternative assessment, exposing serious fallacies behind neo-liberal assumptions in prescribing a transformation strategy via price liberalization, domestic deregulation and rapid privatization. The authors analyse, *inter alia*: weaknesses in identifying both internal and external factors contributing to the collapse of state socialism; misconceptions/ignorance regarding the nature of and variations between the CEE command economies; the unidirectionality of the 'westernization' objectives which overlooked international differences in models of capitalism; the bunching of fundamental systemic problems alongside factors that expedite the collapse of command economies as a basis for prescribing economic-efficiency-centred reform policies; conflicts between the constructivist nature of reform strategy and the devout objective of state divestiture; failures of textbook economics and its role in extending the peripheralization and dependency of many developing economies via international division of labour, market subordination and a vicious circle of deflationary spiral and indebtedness. Their analysis, use of factual material, and critical politico-economic study of individual reform policy elements in CEE highlight their dreadful implications for long-term economic stabilization, recovery and growth, as well as for social welfare.

Compared with the narrow economic and textbook assumptions of the neo-liberal school, Andor and Summers introduce a real-economy perspective in the study of transformation in CEE. Of interest here is how inherited social and power structures have shaped the process of realignment locally and with external forces. This has also affected the character of individual disposition and engagement in the new post-reform environment. Moreover, the nature of privatization in CEE is depicted as a political process of redistribution and recomposition of wealth and power relations. Here, while criticizing the economic-efficiency-centred arguments for privatization and making a historical parallel with the experience in the UK, the whole process is represented as an implicit or explicit political reallocation of public assets to subsidize the urban middle class and financial conglomerates in the west and the new business class and international capital in the CEE.

The authors also address the issue of reintegrating CEE into the political/military and economic structures of western Europe. Here they critically highlight the illusions of joining western institutions as a means of political security and 'catching up' economically, and the consequent 'beauty contest' in CEE to

outsmart each other and impress the core of the west. The complex 'back-to-Europe' issues are explored from two perspectives. Firstly, from the angle of eastern Europe's venture to integrate into western Europe, the analysis demonstrates the practical problems emanating from the state of their economic and socio-political structures, the reluctance in the EU associated with issues of the CAP and labour movement, and the ensuing peripheral market position of the region from the workings of existing arrangements. Secondly, at the level of global political economy, the discussion maps out the conflicting regional interests of international capital (intra-NATO conflicts arising from the dominant position and interests of the USA, intra-EU conflicts both between its major powers and between them and the subordinate and less-advanced EU members) and their impact on the regional policies and process of reintegrating CEE into west European structures.

In the background of the above discussion, and by way of a parallel with the nature of the Chinese cultural revolution under Mao, Andor and Summers introduce the concept of 'market maoism' to denote the neo-liberal theoretical school and its constructivist experiment in CEE. The primary targets of this experiment are the state and attempts to 'humanize' the new CEE capitalism. This finds its theoretical substantiation in neo-liberalism's jump from a critique of communism (for its ideologically/politically driven nationalization and centralization) to an ideological dictate, via the Bank group, for imposing a strategy of speedy SSA in line with the political objectives of international capital in CEE.

There are some areas where more clarity would have been desirable. For example, it is not clear how the historical parallel between the earlier communist drive to catch-up and overtake the west and the current 'modernization' logic of system transformation can be interpreted as signs of an inferiority complex among the eastern European political élite. The reform ideal, as a path for inclusion in the developed core of the world economy, is a historical product of uneven development and is not peculiar to eastern Europe. However, its practical realization in the form of 'westernization through SSA' is a factor of real political economy involving international capital and the new business class of CEE and can hardly be regarded as a sign of an inferiority complex.

Furthermore, Andor and Summers talk about a political and economic 'naïvety' of former apparatchiks as well as a failure of CEE's intelligentsia during the last 50 years of profound changes in the west. Yet, despite its dreadful outcomes, the communist experiment started as a departure from the naked capitalism of the west. From the 1960s onwards there were several academic works proposing systemic change with emphasis on economic advance alongside a profound social orientation. Furthermore, regarding the current strategy of transition, although not widely known in the west, members of the intelligentsia have suggested measures for a phased transformation towards one or another form of a mixed economy. All such attempts were grossly labelled as neo-communist counter-revolution by dominant western circles. As for CEE government officials, they were either not interested because such changes would not benefit them, or unable to experiment with them because of the tremendous pressure from western financial capital and the emerging business class.

Overall, this book represents a stark departure from the current academic defeatism, common to both western progressive circles and those in CEE, and

challenges the theoretical and political imperatives of current global transformations.

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PAUL GREGG and JONATHON WADSWORTH (eds), *The State of Working Britain* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1999), 285 pp., ISBN 0-7190-5646-2 (hb), 0-7190-5647-0 (pb)

In this book, Gregg and Wadsworth have succeeded in bringing together an impressive array of data that will be invaluable to both academics and students across a number of disciplines. The material gathered will stimulate debate in many quarters about the nature of the world of work, for good or ill, at the end of the twentieth century. In addition, the presentation of this data is, for the most part, easily accessible to the non-statistician. The use of key points at the beginning of each chapter further enhances this accessibility. The editors also highlight a number of areas which the book does not cover and promise to address them in the future—these are identified as race, the demise of the unions, inter-generational links and small firms. If the authors are aiming to produce updates of these sets of findings on a regular basis this is also to be welcomed. They divide the book into three sections which they see as encompassing the key factors about the nature of work—they describe these as: lack of jobs; job characteristics (i.e. hours, tenure, holidays, youth and gender composition); and aspects of earnings.

It would be wrong, however, to suggest that the book is merely a presentation of sets of facts and figures. The editors see the book as an attempt to understand and comment upon the 'dramatic changes' that have affected the labour market over the last two decades, and to assess whether or not these events have been 'good or bad for the labour market and the individuals affected' (p. 1). These changes include: 'a tripling of unemployment, a degree of wage inequality without precedent in the last hundred years, one in five children growing up in poverty, one in two less skilled men out of work and one in five households without access to earned income' (p. 1). It is refreshing to have the parameters of a debate clearly established and assumptions that what is good for the labour market is good for the individual questioned.

Each of the contributors offers, to a greater or lesser extent, not only an interpretation and analysis of this statistical picture but also some suggested solutions. It is somewhat disappointing, therefore, that there is no concluding chapter which attempts to bring these ideas together. Nevertheless, the solutions offered tend to be in line with the 'New Labour' project and look to the Blair government's proposals such as the New Deal, Family Tax Credit and the national minimum wage to alter the major problems identified. For example, Nickell concludes that a return to what he believes were the unusually low rates of unemployment in the period 1945–75 is 'hard to imagine' and that an equilibrium rate of 5% would be a 'significant achievement' (p. 28). Gordon Brown has been very careful in references to unemployment rates, and the use

of the term 'full-employment' is almost entirely absent from his speeches on these matters.

Another concept notable by its absence from the current government's targets, action plans and visions of a 'New Britain' is re-distribution. This may seem particularly puzzling when one considers some of the evidence offered by these authors, most notably increasing wage inequality, which Burgess and Pooper believe is the most significant factor in the increases in poverty in the last two decades. They conclude that 'the widening inequality in access to work and wages underlies the massive rise in poverty in Britain over the period. In the 1980s rampaging wage increases for the better off only ended the conventional belief that economic growth would benefit all and reduce poverty.'

The 'fat cats' did extremely well during the Thatcher and Major years and there has been little from the current government that has sought to address this imbalance. Regarding low pay and its impact on poverty it is worth noting that, in his chapter, Stewart uses figures ranging from £3.50 to £4.50, well beyond the current minimum wage. The 10.5 million people who earn between £4 and £4.50 an hour have gained no benefit from this much acclaimed 'historical' leap forward. Equally, the 4.3 million who earn less than £4 per hour can take little comfort from Stewart's findings of 'strong evidence of a cycle of low pay and no pay. The low paid are more likely to be out of work in the future ... more likely to be low paid on re-entry, [and] the hypothesis that low paid jobs act as stepping stones to higher paid jobs is not supported by the evidence here' (p. 247).

In addition to these prospects, these individuals can look forward to experiencing a labour market that is more likely to place them in jobs which are not only 'low paid, part-time and temporary' (p. 4), but which also offer poorer working conditions; 41.3% of temporary full-time workers have no holiday entitlement, rising to an astonishing 73.6% if they are part-time, and even where part-time staff are permanent, 27.5% have no holiday entitlement (p. 95).

Current government proposals offer little prospect of improving this position. It is particularly worrying that they seem to look to the USA for solutions. The 'New Deal' has been criticized as nothing more than a form of workfare (see David Dolowitz, *Policy Transfer and British Social Policy: Learning from the USA?*). Equally, it can be argued that Working Families Tax Credit does not actually increase the income people receive but merely moves its source from the Social Security to the Treasury, so that it is not seen as a benefit. Not only will those in this position have to suffer the difficulties of poverty, they will be labelled as 'welfare dependent', the 'underclass' or perhaps the 'socially excluded'. All of these terms have emerged recently and all have been used to hold individuals responsible for their inability to successfully engage with the labour market and the world of work.

This book gives the reader much food for thought and one hopes that it stimulates a meaningful debate about the future direction of work, welfare and well-being in Britain.

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