

LAW AND ORDER, MORAL ORDER: THE CHANGING RHETORICS OF THE THATCHER GOVERNMENT

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Preamble

The new interest being shown by socialists in the development of a socialist and democratic, law and order policy is welcome, though **overdue**. I have tried to contribute to this project of socialist re-thinking elsewhere¹ but that is not my concern in this paper. Here I want to focus on the way in which our political opponents have popularised the law and order issue over the last decade, but to do so with the particular purpose of understanding the problems that their earlier missionary zeal has created, in terms both of the ideological and practical, strategic options now confronting the Thatcher Government. This examination of the evolution of the law and order issue will be the basis for some qualifying comments on existing left analyses of 'Thatcherism'. I also want to try and understand the implications of what has been called 'the renaissance of puritanism' in the Conservative Party in terms, particularly, of what that tells us about Thatcherism in **1986**. My concern here, will be to suggest that the dominant frame in which 'law and order' is constructed in Britain is not static and unchanging in its empirical reference—the political meaning of the term has always been heavily underwritten by the shifts of strategy adopted by the Thatcher Government. These shifts in Government policy and rhetoric are certainly to be understood as attempts on the part of the Government to connect with, and to appear to respond, to 'popular fears'. But the shifts are also important for what they tell us about the changing strength and influence of *the social forces* represented in the Thatcher Government.

As is the case with so many analyses of the present situation, we must return first to **1979**.

1979: The Promise of Order under Thatcher

The **1979** Election—the most fundamental of blows to socialists in Britain—will always be remembered, with black humour and disbelief, as an election fought and won by Thatcher's Tories in part around the slogan 'Labour isn't working', given visual emphasis on advertising hoardings throughout the country via a stark black and white image of a dole queue stretching back into the distance. But the election will also always be

remembered as the first occasion in the post-war period on which the issue of crime and social order was forcefully popularised for partisan political purposes, as a means of challenging social democracy itself, on the grounds of the alleged inability of social democratic governments to guarantee the personal security of the citizenry.

This was the election, we should recall, in which Mrs Thatcher delivered her now infamous 'Barrier of Steel' speech, at a televised campaign meeting in Birmingham on 19 May 1979.² This speech began with a scathing commentary on the presence of Labour Cabinet Ministers on picket lines outside the notorious 'free enterprise' (non-union) photo-processing plant (**Grunwicks**) in North London in 1976-7,³ and a denunciation of the critique of police behaviour towards picketers which was voiced in a subsequent parliamentary debate. In one very carefully-orchestrated and heavily ideological passage, Thatcher spelt out the quintessential position of the emergent radical right as to the inseparability of order and the 'Rule of Law':

Labour Ministers do not seem to understand their own responsibilities in the unending task of upholding the law in a free society. . . Do not they understand that when Ministers go on the picket line and when Labour back-benchers attack the police for trying to do their **difficult** job, that gives the green light for lawless methods right throughout industry? Do they not dimly perceive that their silence when confronted with flying and violent pickets carried a louder and more deadly message to every lawbreaker than any speech? . . . In their muddled but different ways the vandals on the picket lines and the muggers in our streets have got the same confused message—'we want our demands met, or else' and 'get out of our way, give us your handbag or else'.

Thatcher then reflected in anger on the 1978 Labour Party conference motions calling for greater police accountability and a 'more democratic' judiciary.

The path Labour delegates were charting on that occasion was the path to social disintegration and decay, the path to a pitiless society in which ruthless might rules and the weak go to the wall.

This enthusiastic defence of the rule of law and the strong State as the true guardians of popular interest (in contrast to the pretensions of social democrats and trades unionists) served as the rationale for Thatcher's important final rhetorical flourish:

Across that path [*i.e.* to 'social disintegration and decay'—I.T.] ***we will place a barrier of steel.*** There will be no passing that way once a Conservative Government is in **office.** [my emphasis]

There is no need here to spend much space in reminding ourselves of

the ideological work undertaken by the British radical right in the late 1970s to establish a connexion between its defence of a 'strong State' (especially an unflinching adherence to Law) and its claim to speak 'for the people'.⁴ For Stuart Hall, and for many others, the absolutely distinctive feature of Thatcherism—in that period—was the fact of being expressed as an 'authoritarian-populism'.⁵ It was this particular feature of Thatcherism that ensured, as we all now so readily understand, that its challenge to an unreconstructed, bureaucratic, inefficient and impersonal 'statist' social democracy would be innovative and influential.

But it is also important to understand that for some of the Conservative politicians who came to power in 1979 on the strength, in part, of the Thatcherite commitment to an authoritarian and populist law-and-order electoral platform,⁶ the project was not merely rhetorical or electorally-opportunistic. It is clear that the victory of 1979 represented a moment in which a fundamental social and moral reconstruction of British society was about to begin. On BBC Television's *Campaign Report* special on law and order on 20 April 1979, for example, David Howell, in his capacity then as 'Conservative spokesman on Home Affairs', was quite unambiguous in his insistence on the relationship between crime rates and the moral and social priorities of Government.

We are saying that if you have a background—a philosophy, let's say—which on the whole treats private effort and private property with some contempt and does not place the upholding of the rule of law absolutely as the highest priority then this creates an atmosphere in which you get vandalism, disrespect for the law and the vast increase in crimes which we have seen and that worries us very much indeed and worries many millions of people.

This fundamental philosophical and moral belief in the abilities of a new Conservative Government to usher in a more 'orderly' social order was also quite clear in one of the first speeches made by Leon Brittan, as Minister of State at the Home Office, given at the NACRO Intermediate Treatment conference held in Sheffield on 1 November 1979:

One primary danger facing those dealing with the crime problem, whatever function they may fulfil, is that the more common the phenomenon may become, the more it may be seen as intractable and as the normal pattern of life. It is so easy to become complacent and acquiescent and console ourselves by saying 'ah well, it is a feature of urban life; no developed nation has escaped it, and in any event it is no more than a product of an increasingly acquisitive, materialistic society'. That is a temptation we must resolutely resist.

There is no question that Brittan's remarks were directed in part, at the positions that had been adopted in the booklet circulated by the Labour Party to all its candidates in the 1979 election on *Law, Order and Human Rights*: the argument in this booklet, taken directly from

Radzinowicz and King's self-confessedly 'sceptical' and liberal approach to the control of crime in *The Growth of Crime: The International Experience*, was that 'crime' is a complex legal category, produced by differences in legal sanction over time and in different countries and amplified by the development of the more extensive size and reach of the police force and the welfare state.' In general terms, argued Radzinowicz and King and (quite fatally) on occasion the Labour Party's spokespeople, crime was not in issue on which partisan or moral feeling ought to be encouraged.⁸ This agnostic approach to questions of crime and the protection of social order was of course, quite conclusively undermined by the commitments announced by the Thatcher leadership to the re-establishment of a disciplined and by implication, 're-ordered' society. The strategic miscalculation on the part of the Labour Party was the belief that the form of social and economic order in place in Britain in 1979 (after 34 years of a mixed Keynesian economy and a 'social democratic' welfare state) continued to attract the allegiance of citizens at large, and particularly of working people.

1986: The Reality of Disorder in Thatcher's Britain

During the partisan debates on law and order during the 1979 Election, Conservative spokesmen pointed on several occasions to the 'shocking' total number of crimes known to the police (over 2.5 million) in 1978, and they also alluded to what they argued was a general post-war increase in crime—loosely connected, in their rhetoric, to the development of the welfare state.⁹ In the Tory electoral message of 1979, a restoration of penal discipline—especially via the re-empowering of the magistracy to impose heavy sentences in the juvenile courts, and the expansion of the size and the powers of the police force—was an essential first move in the elimination of crime and the retrieval of a sense of personal security for citizens as a whole.

Given the utopian commitments made by the Thatcherite spokesmen in 1979 and the early months of the first Thatcher government, it is amazing that the socialist left's critique of the Thatcher Government's actual record on crime and, especially, social disorder has been as restrained as it has. The Home Office Criminal Statistics for 1985 (released in March 1986) showed that the total number of offences known to the police in England and Wales had climbed to 3.6 million, an increase of 3 per cent over 1984 and an increase of over 40 per cent since 1979.

The general indictment of these figures was put more forcefully by the orthodox Labour leadership in early 1986 than it was by the socialist left: Gerald Kaufman observed acerbically that these crime figures showed that 'under Mrs. Thatcher, Britain had become a more dangerous and violent country'. Indeed, he added:

Every minute of the Thatcher government has brought an extra burden for the police. Every minute of the Thatcher government has brought new conflict, stress and anxiety for all the British people. (*The Times*, 14 March 1986.)

Some of the most marked increases during 1985 were indeed in the offences which cause the greatest anxiety amongst working people and the poor. The number of offences against the person rose by 7 per cent, to a total of **122,000**, and the number of robberies went up by 10 per cent over 1984, which in turn had witnessed 13 per cent more robberies than in 1983. There was also considerable attention given to the 29 per cent increase in the number of reported rapes and a 22 per cent increase in the number of drug-related offences. Several other Governmental and academic reports made it clear, in addition, that the popular *fear* of crime was at what a *Guardian* editorial (7 March 1986) called 'consistently spectacular levels'.

The Thatcher Government's response to these figures consisted in part, and unsurprisingly, in renewed calls for stern sentences by the courts and for support for the police. Mrs Thatcher spoke of being 'appalled' by the crime figures, and, in particular, by the increases in the 'barbaric' crime of rape (*The Observer*, 16 March 1986). At the 1985 Conservative Party conference, the Home Secretary, Douglas Hurd, in responding to charges made that the policing of the inner cities is too provocative, indicated that his 'own instinct, unless [he] had evidence to the contrary, will be to back the judgement of the man in charge on the spot'. Norman Tebbit, other Thatcherite elements in the Conservative Party, and some police chiefs coupled their own support for authoritarian policing and for heavier sentencing by the courts with a favourite theme—the identification of 'extremists' and 'agitators' fomenting trouble not only in constituency Labour Parties but also in the streets.

Government spokesmen alluded, with some self-satisfaction and the single-mindedness that seemed then to be required of Thatcher's ministers, to the many measures taken in the search for law and order. Expenditure on law and order, the Conservative Party Press and Public Relations Department proclaimed on November 5, 1985, had increased by almost 40 per cent in real terms since 1979. The police force had been expanded by **13,000** since 1979, bringing the total number of officers to **159,000**, and **4,000** extra civilian staff had been taken on to reduce the time spent by uniformed police in paperwork. Police pay had been increased by 96 per cent between May 1979 and September 1984. The Police and Criminal Evidence Act of 1984 had given the police vastly extended powers of search and detention, whilst the Criminal Justice Act of 1982 had already given the courts much more extensive and flexible sentencing powers. Hundreds more young people in trouble with the law were being sent to the refurbished, and highly militarised, regimes in detention centres for

the infamous 'short, sharp shock' and in the meantime, the daily adult prison population had increased, by May 1986, to nearly 55,000 (an increase of 11,500 or 20.9 per cent in the seven years of the Thatcher Government). Nearly a dozen new penal institutions had been opened (out of 16 that were planned) to create more places for these new convict populations.

But the truth was that the calls for even more repressive sentencing, for further increases in police numbers and extensions of their legal powers, and for the identification and suppression of criminality and extremism, were wearing very thin for many sections of public opinion by the early months of 1986. So far from ushering in a more orderly society, seven years of Thatcherism had transparently and substantially exacerbated the social divisions that were already apparent in Britain in 1979. As *The Guardian* put it in an editorial comment entitled *Law*, but *very little order*:

The Government is painfully aware that, if it shouts too raucously for a great war against crime, people will start asking: what has been happening for eight years? (*The Guardian*, 7 March 1986.)

One of the telling ironies in the law and order debate that began to take shape in the wake of the release of the 1985 crime figures was that the Thatcher government, in its more defensive statements, began to make use of precisely those 'sceptical', technical arguments that had characterised the management of crime policy by the Callaghan Government of 1974-1979 (just those arguments, indeed, which had been pilloried as 'defeatist' by David Howell, Leon Brittan and Thatcher herself during 1977-9). The Home Secretary, Douglas Hurd, went to the length of issuing a statement on the 29 per cent increase in the number of rape offences, suggesting that the increase was due largely to changes in police recording practices: allegations of rape which would not previously have been included in final totals *were* now being included. Conservative opinion in early 1986 became generally much more concerned to speak of the crime rate as an artefact of a complex variety of circumstances, and indeed to speak of crime itself as being perhaps, an unavoidable phenomenon of 'modern' industrial society'. Compared with the utopian rhetoric of 1979, this was indeed, as Richard Kinsey astutely observed, an unambiguous 'U-turn in Tory thinking':

Faced with the outright failure of their policies—more police, wider police powers, tougher sentences etc.—it seems that Home Office ministers are now content to accept that crime will continue to rise and that there is little that government can do to stop or reverse the trend. There is some room for private enterprise and self-help (we are urged to buy DIY window locks and plastic tokens for our meters

and set up neighbourhood watch schemes) but, for the police, containment of the problem is the only option.¹⁹

Throughout the early months of 1986—for all the calls by Norman Tebbit and Thatcher herself for a further tightening of penal discipline²¹—establishment opinion unmistakably began to move towards a more sceptical, not to say resigned approach, to questions of law and order. As always, the shift in authoritative opinion was articulated in a subtle fashion, but the move was incontrovertible nonetheless. *The Times* (14 March, 1986) itself recognised that the content of the 1985 crime statistics was a major blow to a Government which had written 'the phrase law and order so large on its electoral banner'. However, *The Times'* leader continued:

That these figures appear after seven years of 'law and order' during which changes have been made to the criminal justice system, to police powers, and not least to the resources expended on police and prisons, does not connote the failure of the policy. What they show is that here, as in other branches of social policy, there is no quick fix.

The echoes of Radzinowicz and King, and indeed the scepticism of the Labour Party's positions of 1979, are unmistakable. I shall want to comment later in this paper on the significance of this new-found approach to crime in conservative circles. But it is important here to place these crime statistics in a broader context, in at least two distinct ways.

The first point of key importance, largely undiscussed in Conservative speeches, is that the reported increases in crime of recent years in England and Wales are substantially unparalleled in North America, and in particular in the US (where the turn to the Right has been associated with a milletarianism not unlike that of Thatcher herself). The Index of Crime in the United States actually declined in each of the four years of the first Reagan administration, by some 15.4 per cent as a whole. The number of offences per 100,000 population declined from 5,931.3 in 1980 to 5,031.3 in 1984; and violent crimes declined from 587 per 100,000 in 1980 to 539 per 100,000 in 1984. In Canada also, the crime rate has been falling steadily for three years, with about a 4 per cent reduction in the total number of criminal offences known to the police since 1981. Crimes of violence continue to increase in number in Canada, but at nothing like the rate of increase in England and Wales—and there has been a marked decline in Canada over the last three years in most offences of robbery and theft. The clear suggestion must be that *there is something distinctive about the English situation*, where crimes of both violence and theft are prominent in a veritable escalation in the overall number of crimes known to the police.

We obtain a clear indication of the distinctiveness of developments in

England by turning to other measures of social conflict and distress in the country. We have only to call to mind the quite unprecedented series of urban riots which has punctuated the period of the two Thatcher governments. A country which throughout the entire post-war period to **1979** had experienced a total of about three discrete sets of urban disturbances, (the Notting Hill and Nottingham riots of **1958**, the Mods and Rockers confrontations of **1962-4** and the Vietnam demonstrations of **1968-1970**) has since witnessed at least a dozen major riots in a period of only seven years: beginning in St. Paul's, **Bristol**, one year into the first Thatcher Government, further major insurrections **and/or** riots have occurred in Brixton (April **1981**), in Toxteth and Moss Side (July **1981**), St. Paul's again (January **1982**), Notting Hill Gate (April **1982**), Toxteth (April **1982** and July **1982**), St. Paul's once more (June **1983**), Handsworth, Birmingham (**9-10** September **1985**); Brixton (**23** September **1985**) and Tottenham (October **1985**). These riots have been **profoundly** unsettling to local residents, and they have also had a less tangible, but no less fundamental, effect on the sense of certainty and security which citizens of all classes took to be a part of living in England.

The tensions in the body politic have certainly involved large numbers of young blacks, whether as recent immigrants or second and third generation descendants of earlier waves of immigrant settlers as participants in the inner city disturbances, as well as in the increases in street crime that have occurred in many city areas. But the tensions have also found expression in a large increase in attacks on black people by white English people. In October **1981**, Leon Brittan reported to the House of Commons that there had in **1979** been **3,827** incidents of assault, robbery or other violent theft on 'victims of Afro-Caribbean or Asian appearance' (as against **2,690** such incidents in **1975**):¹² by **1986**, the Joint Campaign against Racism estimated that there had been **20,000** such racial attacks during **1985**.¹³ No separate figures are given for racially-motivated homicides, but there have been several such appalling incidents, including the fire-bombing of Asian families in their own homes. There is some debate amongst students of race relations as to whether these racial attacks should be seen as a new phenomenon for England or whether they should be thought of as a continuation of a long-standing, but little discussed, tradition of antipathy and violence towards 'foreigners'. There seems little doubt, however, that the intensity and frequency of murderous attacks on Asian and West Indian people in some parts of the country is evidence of a profound dislocation of neighbourhood and community in these localities.

Very few serious observers doubt that the extreme violence and social divisiveness that is apparent in another key aspect of English life—in and around the watching of professional soccer—is a new phenomenon, expressing some fundamental transformation in the lived social relations of young working class males. It is true, of course, that there were pitch invasions

and fighting between supporters at soccer grounds in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and it is also correct to trace many of the rituals (like the chanting and the 'taking of the ends') that are apparent in the behaviour of soccer hooligans to the early 1960s, well before the onset of the current social crisis and the Thatcher Government. What *is* new however, and certainly is coextensive with the experience of the Thatcher Government, is the form in which contemporary soccer hooliganism expresses itself (as a *hatred* of fans of opposing teams and especially subsequently to the rise of the fascist right in the 1970s, as a hatred of blacks and Jews). *Pace* those liberal anthropological accounts of soccer violence which speak of the activity of the fans as a merely *ritual* or symbolic violence, the violence around domestic soccer grounds in the early 1980s has involved at least six deaths, and in some cases (the notorious Inter-City firm, and other fighting gangs) is routinely organised around the use of razors and knives. To these perverse reformulations of the soccer fans' traditional pride in local origins has recently been added, especially in the aftermath of the Falklands War, the mindless little-Englandism that has been encouraged in the white working class in Britain both by the yellow press and by much that passes for 'comedy' in television prime-time. It is surely this history (of a post-colonial assertion of 'Englishness' and a dislike of 'foreigners') coupled with a contemporary, politically primitive and quite desperate hard working class masculinity (in a world which no longer seemed to prize the manual working class) which provides the essential explanatory context for the tragic events at the Heysel Stadium in May 1985.¹⁴

All of these developments—riot, racial assault and the escalation of soccer violence—provide sure evidence, over the above any indicators that may or may not be discernible in the criminal statistics, that this is a society caught in the midst of a deep crisis, especially with respect to the *familiar* forms of lived social order.

What we have called 'establishment opinion' in England is increasingly recognising that the experience of life in Thatcher's England *is* one of increasing disorder and dislocation but, characteristically the same bodies of opinion try to avoid going to the roots of the 'condition of England' in 1986. *The Times* wonders whether 'the country is at some indeterminate point on a wave of violent crime' (14 March, 1986), but never tries to ground such a metaphysic firmly in material developments, particularly in the labour market. However, what has surely had an overwhelming effect on the sense of dislocation and desperation in England—out of which is produced the aggressive and nihilistic self-presentation of many of the young white males amassed at soccer grounds or the violence arraigned against young blacks in some city centre hangouts—and what surely is the obvious 'independent variable' explaining the quite distinctive and unparalleled problem of law and order in England and Wales in 1986, is the quite distinctive and unparalleled collapse of the labour marker. The funda-

mental collapse of the labour market during the first two years of the Thatcher government resulted, we should recall, in a doubling of the official rate of unemployment (from **5.3** per cent in **1979** to **10.4** per cent in **1981**). In the following four years, unemployment continued upwards, although as Government spokesmen pointed out, the *rate of increase* was less Rapid. The official unemployment rate for **1982** was **12.1** per cent; for **1983** **12.9** per cent; for **1984** **13.1** per cent and for **1985** **13.5** per cent. Up until **1986**, in the rhetoric of the inner circle of Thatcherite ministers with economic portfolios, the secular upward trend in unemployment was not only slowing; it was always about to be reversed. In this respect, the unemployment figures released in February **1986** were just as fundamental a blow to the Thatcher Government as the crime statistics released the following month. Official figures indicated that unemployment showed its worst January rise since the depths of the **1981** 'recession', and that the overall number of unemployed people in Britain had reached a new all-time record of **3,407,729** or a rate of **14.1** per cent.¹⁵ There was also further evidence to support the Central Statistical Office's conclusion, in its scrutiny of the evidence for **1985**, that 'long-term unemployment' (of more than two year's duration) was now rising more rapidly than the experience of short-term unemployment: in July **1985**, **800,000** people (**25** per cent of unemployed claimants) had been without work for more than two years.¹⁶

It is certainly not a concern of this paper to introduce discussion of the fundamental collapse of the labour market in Britain with a view to establishing an uncomplicated, economically-determinist explanation of the astonishing increases in the official rates of crime that have occurred during the course of the Thatcher Government's 'economic experiment'. Such an approach would not, *of itself*, account for the rapid increases that have occurred in crimes of violence (over and above more instrumentally-rational forms of property crime); it would not, *of itself*, explain the apparently disproportionate **increases** occurring in crimes against women, and it would not, *of itself*, explain crimes that revolve around the facts of racial division in England. Any economically-determinist approach 'to the relationship between 'the economy' and the crime rate tends to regress into a simple-minded kind of positivist social science, forgetful of the inescapable truth that official measures of economic activity and crime are always the expressions of quite heavily politicised, social definitions of what should be seen, and counted, as legitimate economic production, on the one hand, and what should be identified as serious criminal activity, on the other.

However, I do insist on there being an *indissoluble connection* between crime (as a 'real' measure of social disorder) and the general condition of capitalist economy in England. The nature of the relationship between the logic of the economy and the social conditions is an important and

longstanding theoretical query in both the social-democratic and Marxist traditions." What I want to examine in some detail in this paper is the way in which the theoretical and ideological work of both the traditional conservatives and the Thatcherite right attempt to speak about crime without any necessary reference to its structural and 'economic' significance. I want then, to identify and comment on the significance of recent shifts in the emphasis placed by Government spokespeople on law and order issues, and on the relation this bears to the Thatcher Government's economic experiment as such.

The Shifting Rhetorics of the Right

There is now quite an extensive critical and analytical literature on the ideologies, political strategies and specific policy agendas of the radical right in Britain and elsewhere;" and in addition, there has been a lively controversy in Britain over the definition of the specific phenomenon of 'Thatcherism'.¹⁹ I want to draw on much of this analysis—but my particular concern here is not to offer out a formal or an essentialist definition of the ideology or strategy of something called the 'radical right' or indeed, of Thatcherism. My concern instead is to try and explain the shifts in the forms of expression of radically conservative opinion in Britain in recent years, and in particular, the basis of the changing trajectory of the rhetorics of the Thatcher Government, particularly in respect of the issues of 'law and order' and of 'morality'.

In establishing this as my objective, I am not trying to make a direct, theoretical intervention into the ongoing debate as to the 'essential' character of 'Thatcherism';²⁰ but I do want to suggest that the Thatcherite leadership has artfully, strategically and sometimes opportunistically formulated quite different mixes of radical right thought and traditional Conservatism at different moments in the history of the two Thatcher Governments. Though there have been certain persistent refrains in governmental rhetorics from 1979 to 1986, there have also been marked shifts of emphasis. I am making a point which is well understood in respect of the Falklands War, and the sudden transformation of a Government apparently inescapably cast in the role of a heartless agent of finance capital and a purveyor of continuing social destruction, to a Government reaping considerable electoral popularity out of a jingoistic little war. But here I am concerned with the way in which an initially unambiguous emphasis on penal discipline ('law and order') has been reformulated into a rhetoric about the sources of social order in individual morality and family life, all with a view to sustaining the popularity of a radical right Government.

Most commentators on the 'new' British right of the early to middle 1970s have been at pains to identify the simultaneous presence of an authoritarian and moralistic strain, on the one hand, and a populist and apparently libertarian (or neo-liberal) strain, on the other.²¹ I do want to

suggest however, that existing socialist analysis of the British radical right, focussing on the *formal* features of the right's ideology and practices, is in danger of ignoring the *substantive* character of right-wing initiatives as an expression of the fears and anxieties, and the demands, of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois classes. In particular, I want to argue, it is important to emphasise that 'Thatcherism', if nothing else, is what I may call a *conjectural expression*, in particular, of the specific anxieties and demands of different sections of the *bourgeois class of England*²² as they evolved through the 1970s.

My concern in this essay in part is to highlight the relationship between the changing priorities of the Thatcher Government and the balance of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forces represented in and through the Government. But I want to avoid a simple-minded class reductionism. To speak of the 'bourgeois (or petty-bourgeois) class of England' is to call forth at least three distinct levels of analysis. The bourgeois class is an amalgam of social groups united only by virtue of its exclusion from the aristocracy and by virtue of its social and economic power relative to the working class and the lumpen-proletariat: within 'the middle class', especially in England, in particular, there has always been a fundamental division of interest between the commercial and non-commercial middle class. So, secondly, any attempt by the petty-bourgeois (as represented, say, via some members of the teaching profession) to claim dominance over 'English society' at the ideological level (via appeals to family, morality, tradition, etc.) may run counter to the economic interests and influence exercised by the commercial middle class and its correspondingly cosmopolitan and modernist approach to questions of morality and tradition. Talk of a unitary bourgeois ideology is forgetful of these continuing differences of interest and ideology within the middle class. Thirdly, there may be a sense in which anxieties and concerns which appear to be rooted in a specific (say, petty-bourgeois) class location can be disconnected and generalised outwards: so some of the attacks which the Thatcher Government has mounted since 1982 on 'permissiveness' and in defence of the family may be seen as deriving from petty-bourgeois social movements like Mary Whitehouse's National Viewers and Listeners Association (NVALA), but they must also be understood as connecting more or less successfully with the concerns of large sections of the so-called 'respectable working class'. There may be a sense in which petty-bourgeois ideologies can be generalised *across classes*, especially by the activity of influential social movements and intellectuals which want to generalise the concerns of particular social groups across society as a whole. In this sense, we must speak of 'class ideologies' that work independently and autonomously of their specific class 'origin', and which thereby have their *own* effectivity. I want to try, in this essay, to retain a sense of these three different aspects of the relation between social forces and ideology, in an

analysis of the shifts in Thatcher Government strategy.

The right wing conservatives who initiated a household revolution against Edward Heath in the early 1970s and eventually projected Margaret Thatcher into the leadership of the Tory Party were motivated by a mix of economic, moral and social objectives that was gaining favour within that class—over and above the mix of paternalism, mixed economy theory and traditionalism that had characterised the leadership of the Conservative Party from roughly 1951 to 1974. Andrew Gamble's classic essay on the free market economic theorists who acted as a resource for the Hayekian theme in 'Thatcherism' is important for the detailed account it provides of the role of special interest groups within the industrial and commercial middle class in the transformation of the Conservative Party's economic thinking. Particular emphasis is placed on the 'theoretical' work of the Institute for Economic Affairs, Sir Keith Joseph's Centre for Policy Studies and the National Association for Freedom.²³ This theoretical work provided a powerful ideological agenda for a range of commercial and financial interests which were increasingly feeling themselves to be hemmed in by the State, by trade unions and other corporate interests supported during both the Heath and Callaghan governments. A similar analysis of the role played in the refocusing of conservative policy and strategy into a more directly bourgeois direction by particular special-interest organisations (like the Middle Class Association and the Economic League in the early 1970s) has been provided by Elliott and McCrone.²⁴ But Elliott and McCrone place considerable emphasis on the 'moral' role played by bourgeois pressure groups (in particular, Mary Whitehouse's NVALA but also the various anti-abortion, moral rearmament and 'pro-family' organisations) in organising public and influential reaction against the 'permissiveness' of 1960s liberalism. Some care has to be taken, of course, in assessing the impact of people like Mary Whitehouse and Victoria Gillick²⁵ across the cultural terrain as a whole: Gillick *was* defeated in the High Court.²⁶ But Elliott and McCrone certainly add to the left's attempt to understand the appeal of the new right when they suggest that Thatcherism 'has given voice to the misgivings of many working class people about the changes in sexual morality and in a rhetoric ringing with phrases long familiar in chapel religion'.²⁷

Elliott and McCrone's assessment is that the social movements organised by the right against 'permissiveness' on television and other media, as well as against liberal-reformist legislation on abortion, pre-marital sexual education and contraception, have played a key part (over and above the rhetorical attacks of the radical right on the bureaucratic, inefficient and impersonal character of 'State socialism') in disconnecting some sections of the traditional working class from their familiar political representatives, the organised Labour Movement, especially inasmuch as Labour spokespeople have sometimes allowed themselves to be depicted as 'progressive'

and 'permissive' in some abstract and disconnected sense. But, much more important, I would argue, is the way in which the various anti-permissive pressure groups have been increasingly successful (and erstwhile 'enlightened' and 'progressive' Conservatives increasingly unsuccessful) in framing the social and cultural policy agendas of the organised Conservative Party as a whole.²⁶ A real sense developed in the English bourgeoisie as a whole in the course of 1970s that 'things had gone badly wrong'. It was *not* simply that there was a major economic crisis (the 'three day week') and the belief in the commercial middle class as a whole that trades unions now dictated the direction of economic policy (hence, the Conservative election slogan of October 1974 'Who Rules Britain?'). There was also a widespread feeling within the petty-bourgeois, in particular, and also the non-commercial middle class, that the foundations of a coherent, predictable and orderly life (the settled, respectable life of England) were threatened by rapid changes in public 'morality'. The suggestion must indeed be made, though I realise it is inspired more by George Orwell than by Karl Marx, that for some sections of the English petty-bourgeoisie the desire to maintain order, predictability and indeed, 'respectability' was—and is—of far more importance than any issue of economic regeneration or political principle.

It is remarkable, of course, how much of the analysis, for example, of Mary Whitehouse's NVALA or, indeed, of the middle class pressure groups—arguing *inter alia* that the country was **effectively** run by trade unions—reads as if Britain by the early 1970s had *indeed* been transformed into an authentically permissive society as well as into a proletarian state. Far too much of the commentary treats the rhetoric of the bourgeois radical right *faithfully* as if this rhetoric was disinterested narrative rather than very purposive ideological work. The truth surely is that Britain was and is *very far* from being 'permissive' in some abstract and general sense: the 'permissiveness' spoken of by the radical right refers to small, but important, gains that were won in the 1960s within a society that continued to be strongly patriarchal, heterosexual, familial and hierarchical in the way in which it regulated social and sexual life in general. It is also surely the case—for all that the corporatist policies did introduce some trade union representation into the management of the economy—that Britain remained a *massively* unequal, class society that was—and still is—dominated not by trade unions but by an extraordinarily narrow (wealthy, white, male) ruling class elite. There is a sense in which some of the existing analyses of Thatcherism, emphasising as they do the way in which the Government has connected **with** popular fears, may have inadvertently underplayed the extent to which 'Thatcherism' has worked, perniciously, in the way of ideology *as traditionally conceived* within Marxism, as a *deceit* or as an articulation of a *false consciousness*.

We must avoid treating the apparently contradictory economic and

moral interests that are represented within 'Thatcherism' as abstract or formal sets of ideas that contradict only at the philosophical level (for example, the Hayekian rhetoric of the unrestricted 'free market' in all commodities and the Conservative moralists' call for repression and authoritarianism). Nor should we seek to locate these apparently contradictory themes or imperatives straightforwardly within the lower middle class, and to assert that the Thatcher Government somehow retains power whilst speaking only for the lower middle class. Such approaches to 'Thatcherism' seem to us to be excessively formal, a-historical and unpersuasive, rarely connecting to the ongoing struggle for hegemonic influence over politics and society being engaged in by the leadership of the Thatcher Government.

A recent critique by Bob Jessop et al of Stuart Hall's work on 'authoritarian populism' points in another direction. Jessop et al's concern is to argue against an excessive emphasis on the 'ideological message of Thatcherism', which these commentators believe, 'endows it with an excessively unified image'.³⁹ What is urgently required, is an analysis of 'the social basis of Thatcherism':

If we are to begin such an analysis, we must consider the appeal of Thatcher to individuals across a broad spectrum of social locations. Which aspects, if any, of the Thatcherite project, appeal to small business owners, middle-aged workers, black people, the long-term unemployed and full-time housewives? Is the impact of authoritarian populism, as mediated through a national press, nationwide radio and network, uniform across the country? . . . How do we explain the marked volatility of support for Conservative, Labour and Alliance between 1979 and 1983? . . . Are anti-statist themes as resonant in the Conservative assault on the health service as in the attack on nationalized industries? In short, if we deconstruct Thatcherism, what follows for its popular impact? And, equally, what follows for socialist strategy?⁴⁰

It is clear that the ruling classes of England have succeeded over the years in reproducing the conditions for their continuing domination through a mix of moral education and example, as well as through judicious use of the criminal law, when required, for the disposition of 'stern' justice. But we should remember the ruling classes have also succeeded, as Ralph Miliband has so insistently argued, in ensuring that the key institutions that control the dissemination of moral education and 'justice' are occupied, overwhelmingly, by 'their' people: the Civil Service, the Judiciary, the Public Schools and the Army have become symbols for many commentators on England (at home and abroad) of the absurdly unreconstructed and undemocratic form of English bourgeois society. Even at those levels of the state where recruitment from a 'broader class of people' has been allowed (as for example, in state education and policing) there has been no ambiguity, at least until the late 1960s, that the responsibility of those chosen was to help in the social reproduction of

the existing, familiar social relations (the structures of English bourgeois life).

One observation I want to make here in qualifying earlier analysis on the appeal of Thatcherism arises out of the observation that the decisive role in popularising the issue of 'law and order' during the 1970s was played out, *pace* Mrs. Thatcher and some other commentators on the left, not by 'the people' nor either by social movements (like the NVALA or abortion rights organisations) working on issues from 'outside the state'. The key role was played by organisations of people carrying out crucial authority functions *within* the English bourgeois state: in particular, local magistrates, local police chiefs, police federation representatives and senior traditional schoolteachers (particularly as organised within the National Association of Schoolmasters). The central political role performed at local level by the magistracy, appointed in a traditionally mysterious way by the Home Office on the basis of lists provided by local authorities but also on the basis of their position as local 'worthies', has been as pronounced in the late twentieth century as it was in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, and was of course very clear during the course of the Miners' Strike. The magistracy should also be remembered for the very successful campaign it conducted from the mid-1960s onwards, against the advance of liberalism in the juvenile justice system. The Children and Young Persons Act of 1969—which attempted, amongst many other objectives, to restrict the bringing of criminal charges against young people under 16 and to institute 'welfare dispositions' in place of courtroom hearings for young people—was under attack from the Magistrates Association almost from the day it came into effect, on the grounds, in particular, for its undefensible conflation of the problem of *wrongdoing* (a moral issue, involving guilt and punishment) with issues of welfare and *rehabilitation*.³¹ The advance of comprehensive education in Britain was similarly under constant attack and critique throughout the 1960s and early 1970s from those male schoolteachers and Headmasters who belonged to the National Association of Schoolmasters. In the 1971–4 period (the focus of the Birmingham School's *Policing the Crisis* study), the NAS was heavily involved in public campaigns around the level of violence it alleged was apparent in school: the campaign resulted in the introduction of special holding units in some schools and in the construction of special curricula for violent or dangerous pupils.

Throughout the early to middle 1970s, the campaigns of magistrates and NAS members around the issue of 'violent', 'dangerous' or 'delinquent youth' were repeatedly underlined and amplified by statements made by individual Chief Constables and by members of the national Police Federation on the increasing danger posed, it was alleged, by the unchecked presence on the streets of whole cohorts of hardened young criminals. In 1974, for example, in a relatively restrained lecture to the Association of

Chief Police Constables, Commander Peter Marshall of Scotland Yard's Community Relations Branch, observed that: 'we have a situation in London, echoed in Birmingham and Liverpool, not dissimilar, I believe, from New York, Chicago and Tokyo—a major social problem unresponsive to the efforts of police, social workers, courts and penal institutions. Persistent juvenile offenders are a world-wide problem.' (*The Guardian*, 19 September 1974.) By 1976, however, the youth problem called forth a much more raucous response from the Chairman of the Police Federation, Mr. Leslie Male, speaking at the federation's annual conference. Mr. Male launched what was described as a strong attack on the

gross irresponsibility of some teachers and social workers'. . . These included 'teachers who are so indoctrinated with their alien political creed that they convince kids 'that it's all the fault of the system' . . . and social workers who turn a blind eye, sometimes connive at offences committed by children in their care.

Echoing a phrase that was much in favour amongst the right's small number of intellectuals at the time, Mr. Male continued that what needed to be stressed 'until people in high places get the message. . . [is that] there are deprived children and *there are depraved children*. (*The Guardian*, 20 May 1976, emphasis added.) By 1979, police spokesmen were confidently giving notice to their own version of a moralistic and individualistic account of juvenile crime, that would never have been so openly articulated only a decade before. In May 1979, an editorial of *Police*, the magazine of the police federation, proclaimed without any qualification that: 'There is a hard core of criminals who are so dangerous that society, and their potential victims, must be protected.' The problem was 'the Act' (the Childrens and Young Persons Act) which, it insisted, was the result of 'the insidious invasion of the theorists in the realm of law-making. They were obsessed by the idea that there was no such thing as a child criminal.'

The ideological work which was undertaken by the magistracy, the NAS and by certain sections of the police throughout the 1970s was continuous and elaborate. And it was also enormously effective. An agenda for change was established which, *inter alia*, provided almost the entire framework through which journalists and programme editors interpreted the 'law and order question' in the 1979 Election itself. It also determined the choice of who would be given access by television and newspapers to speak with authority on this new and pressing public issue—to be what Stuart Hall and his co-authors called the 'primary definers'.³²

Three points need to be emphasised about this successful attempt on the part of the magistracy, the NAS and some sections of the police to popularise a right-wing 'jurisprudence' of youthful disorder during the

1970s. First, as we indicated earlier, the campaign is surely very revealing as to one of the key social bases of the Thatcher Conservatives. The appeal of 'Thatcherism' for this section of the non-commercial middle-class is certainly *not* the economic liberalism of von Hayek or Milton Friedman: for this section of the troubled middle-class (employed, we should remember, *within* the state and not by private enterprise), the problem of social order in the 1970s was not an economic problem so much as a problem of the failing legitimacy of the moral authority which this fraction of the middle class intuitively felt it had exercised in earlier post-war years. The magistracy had, of course, been quite specifically disenfranchised from its traditional roles by the Children and Young Persons Act of 1969—it was no longer able, after 1970, to sentence younger adolescents directly into institutions: the disposition of many cases of youthful delinquency having been made over to social workers. It was perhaps this particular fraction of the middle-class, the non-commercial middle class employed in positions of State 'authority', which was most aggravated by the 'liberalism' of the 1960s and which in particular, experienced the most intense resentment *vis-a-vis* the apparently unlimited hedonism of a youthful generation which, as Jock Young once put it, had not *earned* it 'through the credit card of work'.³³ They claimed that it was this unchecked pursuit of immediate gratification which, in the more difficult economic environment of the 1970s, was resulting in increases in street crime and general unruliness amongst youth, in school and in other public places.

But, secondly, I need to emphasise that this fraction of the lower, non-commercial middle class' perceptions of society were *not* necessarily without foundation.³⁴ The early 1970s *were* a period of extraordinary uncertainty in Britain by contrast both with the 1950s and 1960s. Post-war economic 'progress', and the associated social changes, had certainly unpacked for many sections of society the stable, patriarchal and hierarchical form of bourgeois family life and social order of the 1950s. And the revolution of rising economic expectations engendered by the 1960s—the promise of a people's capitalism, managed by a tripartite alliance of Capital, Labour and the State—was already being undermined, in the early 1970s, by the speedy accumulation of the many structural weaknesses in the British economy. The rise in youth unemployment with which we are now so familiar began to take shape (initially without much comment) in 1968, the first year in the post-war period in which the number of school-leavers looking for work exceeded the number of vacant positions. This posed the serious problem of unemployment amongst *whole cohorts* of working class youth for the first time this century. As the economy began to move towards 'stagflation',³⁵ a generalised sense of anxiety over the future of the familiar forms of social and economic relationships in much more precarious circumstances for British capitalism began to pervade

British society in general and the structurally-insecure lower middle class in particular. That anxiety quite obviously also played into the lives and behaviours of young people 'poor whites', in particular embracing the garb and identity of the Skinheads, took their anxieties out on local Pakistani residents, whilst working class adolescents in schools began to become much more difficult to contain (the traditional schoolteacher's promise of an 'office job' for those who could 'apply themselves' became much more difficult to sustain).

The sense of 'rupture' experienced in the early to mid-1970s was undoubtedly provoked by a sense, in both the lower middle class and the 'rough' working class, that 'the economy' (read British Capital) was moving into a much more difficult period than had been anticipated in the 1960s. But this does not in itself mean that the onset of the present crisis was *understood*, by the lower middle class working for and in the State, *as an economic crisis*. Instead, as I have suggested, the prevailing public discussion was of a crisis developing in the legitimacy of moral authority. There were various themes in the 'analysis' of this moral crisis: the disorder of the 1970s is seen, by some, as an elaborated consequence of the *unrest of the 1960s*, a theme which was emphasised by Sir Keith Joseph in a famous speech of 1974 and which was then repeated, almost word for word, by Norman Tebbit in his much-publicised Disraeli lecture of 1985.³⁶ According to Mr. Tebbit, the crime wave of late 1980s Britain was:

triggered in the era and attitudes of post-war funk which gave birth to the permissive society, which in turn generates today's violent society. . . Thus was sown the wind, and we are now reaping the whirlwind.

But it bears emphasis that Norman Tebbit's Disraeli lecture was merely one of several ideological initiatives dating, in the life of the Thatcher Governments, from 1982–83. In the aftermath of unprecedented riots of the summer of 1981, Mrs. Thatcher herself made one of the first moves towards the rearticulation of Thatcherism *as a moral rhetoric* in the various speeches she made about the need for a return to 'Victorian values'. Mr. David Howell, as Minister for Social Security, supported by Mr. Ferdinand Mount and other new right-wing intellectuals, spoke of the sanctity of family life and the contribution of family socialisation to moral order: he also, notoriously, indicated that woman's role within the family as child-minder and domestic labourer was for him, a decision of God Himself. In subsequent years, Mr. Normal Fowler's 'Review of Social Security' was indeed to give official support to the trend already under way towards the *privatisation*—i.e., within the family—of many state social welfare provisions. During 1982–83, government ministers and their supporters also began to participate enthusiastically in the

movements for censorship of video tape movies and television, as well as for a counter-revolution against the sex industry in Soho, on the specific grounds of the threat that 'permissiveness' posed to family life and, by implication, to social order.

None of this 'new puritanism' and pro-family politics was apparent, it should be emphasised, in the initial formulation of policy and rhetoric in the run-up to the 1979 General Election. One of the striking features of the Conservative Election Manifesto of 1979, and of the rhetoric engaged in during the election campaign itself, indeed, was the absence of any statement of interventionist intentions with respect to questions of personal, sexual or family morality: it was, indeed, as if the original Hayekian theology required that the free market in commodities must be allowed a completely unrestricted play, within the limits set only by a criminal law protecting existing property relationships. For all the vigorous activity of the NVALA and other petty-bourgeois pressure groups, they were unable at this time to undercut the millenarian hold of free market theory in higher government circles. In the troubled social and economic conditions of 1986, seven years into the 'Thatcher experiment', however, the political and ideological terrain is quite significantly different. In the aftermath of the developing evidence of social division and dislocation in Thatcher's Britain, even the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Sir Kenneth Newman, could be found speaking of the causes of riots as 'hanging like petrol vapour in the air' (The Guardian, 21 July 1986).

There is, however, a new moral and cultural rhetoric on the right, evinced in spokesmen like Norman Tebbit, which attempts to 'explain' present conditions of social disorder almost mystically, that is by reference to everything other than the contemporary priorities and commitments of Government and State. Other conservative ideologues, in the meantime, take the opportunity to rework and to elaborate some of the themes in Enoch Powell's infamous speeches of the mid-1960s, and to give public voice to the notion, not always so explicitly formulated, that the disorder being experienced by the English petty-bourgeoisie is a disorder resulting from the presence of alien (which is to say black) populations. There can be no question, for example, that the kind of English racism, which believes in the impossibility of a black person (immigrant or otherwise) ever becoming, no matter how concerted the effort, a free-born Englishman, is absolutely central to the practical ideology of the English judiciary, of most magistrates' benches, of most Police Chiefs and of many powerful and influential school-teachers.³⁷

The racism, the moral authoritarianism and the repressive attitudes towards working class youth of this large lower middle class population have worked, I would argue, as a kind of commonsense through which this subordinate fraction of the middle class tried, throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, to make sense of the rapid changes taking place in English

class society. It is a petty-bourgeois 'commonsense' which works in such a way, remarkably, as to silence or to downplay not only the fundamental collapse in the labour market for youth as a major structural crisis in the bourgeois order, but also to suppress discussion of the real, human effects of the disappearance of paid work for whole sections of the working class. It is also a commonsense (drawing here, like more classical, bourgeois thought, upon the assumption that white, English bourgeois, patriarchal society is the highest level of knowable civilisation) which refuses to engage in any honest examination of the murderous effects of institutionalised racism on the black communities in England³⁸ or of the increasing expressions of violence against women.³⁹

This suppression, in a petty-bourgeois 'commonsense', of the rapid structural changes taking place in social relations and their real, human effects was not, however, achieved by lower middle class professionals (the magistracy, schoolmasters, police and others) *on their own*. It is important to see how the anxious, practical commonsense of this fraction of the class has indeed, been *taken up and elaborated*, in the late 1970s and, particularly, the early 1980s by a very small number of what we may call organic intellectuals of the bourgeoisie. Some of these intellectuals (Anthony Flew, Roger Scruton and Digby Anderson) held or had held academic positions, but many more of them (Peregrine Worsthorne, Ronald Butt, Ferdinand Mount, Paul Johnson and, in a slightly different capacity—as head of a movement—Mary Whitehouse) prefer to reach a broad audience through their own, regular journalism and through ever-more-frequent appearances on the mass media. As a group, they are quintessentially middle-class but, in present circumstances, they can be seen as trying to develop an agenda for the non-commercial English middle class *as a whole*, drawing heavily on petty-bourgeois anxieties and beliefs.

Some of these new petty-bourgeois and bourgeois intellectuals have given their attention to economic questions and particularly, of course, what Ferdinand Hayek had called the monopoly powers of the trade union movement. The Institute of Economic Affairs, under the directorship of Ralph Harris and Arthur Seldon, commissioned a series of studies as to the alleged benefits across a broad front of a wholehearted pursuit of monetarist economic policies, and aggressively confronted the theoretical and methodological frameworks of all existing forms of Keynesian and welfare economics.⁴⁰ The majority of the new intellectuals of the troubled middle class however, not having a firm base in the commercial and financial middle class, have focussed by preference, especially after the establishment of the IEA's offshoot, the Social Affairs Unit, in 1981, and the *Salisbury Review* in 1982, on the development of a moralistic analysis of the troubles of English society, especially in respect of questions of race, sexuality, the family and indeed, 'law and order'. One of the main features of the moralistic analysis being developed, it should be

emphasised, is the radical avoidance of any concern with the relationship between economic conditions (and/or the structured character of social relations), on the one hand, and the 'moral character' of social life, on the other.

Much of the now quite well publicised work of the new intellectuals was anticipated, it needs to be said, by isolated right-wing commentators. In the case of law and order, the prime example was the extremely articulate and well-informed Patricia Morgan. As early as 1975, Ms. Morgan, a social worker with some thirty years' experience in the East End of London, was developing a critique in *Child Care: Sense and Fable* of what she saw as the essentially a-moral character of the child-centred psychology of John Bowlby and Dr. Benjamin Spock.⁴¹ By 1978, she had extended this critique, in a series of essays for the *Daily Telegraph* as well as in a monograph with the pointed title, *Delinquent Fantasies*, of the whole corpus of liberal, social democratic and Marxist criminology.⁴² This work was continued in an essay on rehabilitative juvenile justice Ms. Morgan contributed to one of the very first pamphlets published by the Social Affairs Unit.⁴³ Like the child-centred practices of liberal-permissive child-care, all 'progressive' criminologies were indicted for their refusal to recognise the *central problem of social order in any form of society*. Fatally, for Morgan, all these criminologies 'shortcircuit the cumbersome process of choosing, defending, transmitting and maintaining social order'.⁴⁴

Because they are articulated around a *critique* of dominant order (as repressive, unequal, sexist, racist, or whatever), it is claimed that these criminologies refuse to confront the inescapable truth that was first identified by Thomas Hobbes: 'all men, because they are born in infancy, are born unapt for society. . . . Man is made fit for society not by nature but by education'. (Hobbes, *De Cive*). Liberal and progressive criminology, like permissive and child-centred education, has refused throughout the post-war period to take on the responsibility for the transmission, by example and authority, of *moral* and *social rules*. The consequence is the production of cohorts of young people without any firm cultural moorings, and the effect of this absence of sense of cultural or cultural humility is, says Morgan, 'a matter of common report'. There was in England, in the mid-to-late 1970s:

the spread of what could be called a delinquent syndrome, a conglomeration of behaviour, speech, appearance and attitudes, a frightening ugliness and hostility which pervades human interaction, a flaunting of contempt of other human beings, a delight in crudity, cruelty and violence, a desire to challenge and humiliate and never, but never, to please; where the individual gets his way and wouldn't think or bother to get it with anything but aggression.⁴⁵

For Morgan, writing well before the onset of present 'economic experiment' and its effects, there was a firm explanation of the disorder being

experienced in the English social formation. A retreat had taken place from 'the older language of morality and legality to that of therapy and welfare' and the inescapable result was a blurring in children and youth of any clear sense of the difference of right and wrong. Coupled with the moral abstentionism of liberals were the uncritical apologetics engaged in by progressives on behalf of rebellious black inner-city youth and other sections of (what Morgan would see as) the delinquent population. According to Morgan, liberal-progressives in effect argued that 'people are entitled to take the town and their fellows apart when they encounter any of the trials of life'.⁴⁶

This is not the place to engage in a formal critical analysis of the work of Patricia Morgan, though I have no qualms in accepting that the critique advanced by Morgan of liberal 'consensus psychology' is extremely powerful and persuasive. What is disingenuous about Morgan's work is the extension of this critique to socialist thinking and writing on questions of crime and social order, and particularly, the absolute refusal on Morgan's part to address the central role that principled, firm moral critique and moral argument have played in both social-democratic writing (from Tawney through to the contemporary writing and speaking of Tony Benn) as well as in the more utopian or revolutionary socialist traditions (from Edward Carpenter through to Trotsky).

Morgan's work was an anticipation of the much more abstract and dogmatic moralist criminologies that were to be articulated in the 1980s. One David Dale, in the pages of the Salisbury Review, has attempted to excoriate contemporary British socialist criminology for its continuing refusal '[to] understand and assess human behaviour in terms of objective good and evil'.⁴⁷ Caught in the dilemma of trying to excuse the criminality of the underclass and wanting to criminalise the rule-breaking of the powerful, but being unable to specify the grounds for so doing, Dale argues that socialist criminology is mired in the quagmire of moral relativism.⁴⁸ The superiority of the alternative position—a firm stance by authority on the objectivity of moral standards that are clear, commonsensical and (though this is not what is said) dominant within existing social relations—is, for Dale, quite obvious.

There are two aspects of this new lower middle-class criminology that are important for our purposes. One is the attempt to establish an absolutely and essentially moralistic account of contemporary social order. It is not even that moral default or moral failings are identified as resulting from inadequate socialisation or conditions of radical social inequality: it is that moral and immoral choice-making by individuals (the very stuff of early nineteenth century classicism) are right at the centre of the analysis. As Margaret Thatcher so tellingly proclaimed in the immediate aftermath of the Toxteth riots in the summer of 1981, 'Unemployment is no excuse'.

The other key feature of this moralistic analysis however—and here the contrast with the logic of Hayekian free market theology so beloved by representatives of the commercial middle class within the Conservative Party is absolutely pivotal—is the unmistakable pessimism that runs through the argument. Not only is man a fallen creature: because of the cultural confusions produced by state dependency, racial mix, and feminism, 'man' (*sic*) is seen to be 'falling' more frequently and more **tellingly** than he was in relatively recent times (the 1950s seem to be the unspoken reference). One could argue indeed, that this adoption of a pessimistic theology of human failings is enormously to be preferred, for the troubled petty-bourgeoisie (especially in present circumstances in Britain) to any more sociological account, for at least two reasons. Only such an abstract theology could succeed in disconnecting the present levels of social conflict and personal and moral dislocation from the immanent effects of the economic policies of Government; and only such a pessimistic set of theological assumptions could justify, philosophically, the present **ever-enlarging** use of penal discipline as a means of 'protecting' (symbolically or institutionally) the persons and property of the middle-class. Only such an unambiguous and unyielding definition of morality—with its practical connection always, to the idea of the 'respectable', 'worthy' life—could work so effectively to rationalise the resentments and anxieties felt by the lower middle-class towards the black underclass, towards independently-minded women and towards the 'bloody-minded' working class.

If this mix of moral puritanism and retributionist penal politics continues to be a key motif of the Thatcher Government in the period between now and the next election, and if indeed, this mix of moralistic themes is articulated ideologically as the primary source of the Government's claim to speak for the people, there are two enormous implications. First and foremost, we can say with some firmness that there has been a fundamental shift in the influence exercised by the various social forces (and pressure groups) within and around the Thatcher Government. Secondly, we have to begin to think what problems this new constellation of social forces, and the associated ideological trajectory of Government, poses for the socialist left, in our continuing attempt to speak as the representatives of popular, human needs and the guardians of social order operating in the universal interest.

The Rise and Fall of Hayek

The key theoretical works of Hayek, Friedman and other less celebrated right-wing ideologues who had such influence on Thatcher, Sir Keith Joseph and other prominent activists around the Conservative Party leadership during the 1970s, display five features that are absolutely central to an understanding of the trajectory of the first Thatcher Government. There are fewer clues here to the rhetoric and policy direction of the

present Thatcher Government. But we can summarise these Hayekian themes briefly below.⁴⁹

1. The overall objective is the creation of a 'social market economy'. In its purest formulation, the social market economy refers literally to the subordination of all individuals to the logic of a free market in commodities. Even individual national boundaries and individual states—in a fully-formed social market economy—would fade into insignificance by comparison with the all-embracing exchange relations of the free market place.
2. The obstacles to the creation of a social market economy in any one presently-existing society **devolve**, primarily, around the power of the state (especially social democratic states which claim ideologically, to represent the universal interest) and secondly, around the monopolistic power exercised in the market place by trade unions, which actually only represent a sectional interest. The *universal interest* requires, therefore, a confrontation with the unrepresentative, coercive power of the State and its bureaucracies, and the sectional interest and inefficient influences of the trade union and labour movement. The Miners' Strike of 1984–85 was the high-point, no doubt, for all true believers in the Thatcher Government.
3. For theorists of the social market economy, the key value is 'liberty' or 'freedom', as opposed to 'democracy' or the interests of any collectivity over and above the individual. The removal of restrictions on the economic market is important not only for the effects this can have on the economic success of business, but also for its consequences in terms of a broader attack on 'state coercion' over individuals. For Hayek, liberty is 'that condition of men in which coercion of some by others is reduced as much as possible in society'.⁵⁰ The theory of the 'social market economy', therefore, for all its misleading reference to 'the social', is actually a metaphor for the pursuit of a radically individualistic self-interest by economic entrepreneurs.
4. In Hayek's writings in particular, it is clear that the defenders of freedom and liberty in a social market economy—and the primary sources of hope and initiative for the period of transition between social democratic welfare states and the social market economy proper—are *lawyers*. The Law is central to the theory of the social market economy in at least two senses. First, and quite unremarkably to any student of the law in capitalist society, the law must provide a general framework to underwrite contracts between individual entrepreneurs, and also give predictability and certainty to the rules governing social behaviour in general (the conditions of existence of a capitalist market place). But second, the extension of law allows for the minimisation of intrusion by bureaucrats and sectional

interest in the market place—an intrusion which has resulted both in inefficiency (since the market *cannot* truly be planned and coordinated) and loss of individual liberty. Freedom and liberty are to be defended and extended, in the Hayekian vision, by lawyers and entrepreneurs, at the expense of these pretenders to democratic will, the politicians and bureaucrats.

5. A fifth and final feature of the literature of the 'social market economy', as well as the slightly more heterodox versions of monetarism which have won influence on the right in recent years, has been its unmistakably optimistic—not to say messianic—quality. Andrew Gamble summarised this aspect of the 'Hayekian' literature with his usual clarity in his 1979 essay: 'The self-image entertained by the new ideologues of the right and the band of vociferous converts and roving spokesmen for management that consort with them, is that Britain, having just passed through its watershed election, is about to experience a renaissance of liberty and the liberal society, the creation of a new national consensus by means of which the chains of collectivism will be thrown off, the trends of the past thirty years reversed, and Britain's national and economic fortunes revived.'" Anyone who doubts the messianic quality, in particular, of Hayek's works, has only to examine the language that is used to describe the character of the free market, fully realised. For Hayek, the term 'market' is to be preferred to that of 'economy' precisely because it is 'a spontaneous order or cosmos. . . fundamentally different from that arrangement or organisation originally and properly called an *economy*'.⁵¹ In this new 'cosmos', the complete total of ends cannot be known, says Hayek, and we should therefore refer to this new order in a distinctive way, as a 'catallaxy'. (*Ibid.*)

It should be self-evident that the Hayekian project, properly defined, makes enormous demands on any group, or cadre, of politicians who try to translate the theory into action. The priority attached to a market that extends beyond the nation-state bring Hayekian economic liberalism immediately into conflict with the reflex national patriotism of traditional Conservatives and the bulk of the middle class (a contradiction which was to be vividly illustrated during the course of the *Westland* controversy late in 1985). The claim that the freeing of the market forces could in good times demonstrate the *universal* benefits of market opportunities (in some of the IEA tracts, the necessary transitional period is thought to be about two years) is, of course, looking quite extraordinarily utopian in 1986. The continuing underwriting of unemployment via state expenditure on benefits by the Thatcher Government is evidence of the distance that the Thatcherites have moved from their Hayekian commitments of the late 1970s.

The emphasis that is placed, in Hayek, on individual liberty and freedom, and on the reduction of the coercive activities of the State and of the organised labour movement, has, of course, been followed through particularly with respect to the massive withdrawal of Government expenditure in support of manufacturing industry and the work of local authorities, and with respect to an enormously successful attack on the organised trade union movement. In the period between **1979** and **1982**, the Thatcher Government, moreover, appeared to want to try and extend the principles of this market liberalism throughout the body politic (there was, as I indicated earlier, no trace of the now familiar moral puritanism in the **1979** Manifesto, and no hint of any commitment to authoritarian legislation on pornography, sexual offences or any other moral issue). It seems clear now that the Hayekian programme of a transition to a full-scale social market economy does not have the same heavy purchase as it did in **1979** to **1982** on the non-commercial middle class or the non-entrepreneurial petty-bourgeoisie on whom the Thatcher Government depends for its existence.

Any serious pursuit of a populist project with an Hayekian inspiration, involving putting law and lawyers at the centre of the public sphere and popular consciousness, would certainly have required, *inter alia*, a radical reconstruction of the class-ridden judiciary and magistracy to overcome the sense of the 'law as being as alien and unrepresentative as the rules and regulations of any welfare bureaucracy. The silence of Hayek and his like on the class hierarchy embedded in the legal system speaks volumes as to the true nature of their project, and of course, there has been no attempt by the Thatcher Government to initiate any such radical reform. Instead, there has been a continual repetition of catechism on the part of many of Thatcher's ministers, to the effect that social disorder is to be countered via the imposition of the Rule of Law (as currently constituted). As we have indicated earlier however, this recital of scripture may result only in disbelief if the evidence is that the imposition of law (in the form of Special Patrol Groups, militarisation of police, expansion of the prison population and the general intensification of penal discipline) is working in the other direction (*i.e.* to produce unprecedented levels of crime and dislocated, alienated behaviour on the part of an ever enlarging underclass, and a series of quite unparalleled and violent disturbances in major British cities). There may also be a serious miscalculation, it should be said, in the Hayekian analysis when applied to Britain: specifically, the belief that the population in general, including whole sections of the middle class, is radically opposed to the discretionary economic and social power exercised by 'welfare bureaucrats' and particularly the support that they give however unevenly, to the 'less fortunate', and also the belief that the population as a whole is radically opposed to the politicisation of public debate over economic issues generally (so deplored by Hayekian market theorists).

So also, it must be said, may be the belief that everyone would want to become either an entrepreneur or a piece-work labourer on high wages in a high-pressure economic market, if only the opportunity was there.

The 'problematic' in the Hayekian project always revolved around the magic that would be weaved—after a period of transition—by the freeing of the market. What seems to have happened in Britain, however, (and some would say that this was always predictable) is that the freeing of the market forces has benefited those who have retained their existing jobs **and/or** been a part of the expanding job-sectors (especially in the south, and especially in the service industry and in micro-technology): elsewhere as is well known, the freeing of the market had had 'cosmically' catastrophic effects. The collapse in the labour market has been much more fundamental in Britain than in countries whose Governments did not pursue so metaphysical an economic policy. For the Thatcher Government to pursue the Hayekian project even further, it is clear that it would need to contemplate the assumption of repressive powers, for example in the major industrial cities in the North of England and in respect to many inner-city areas, that have not been taken up by democratic Governments anywhere (except, I might add, by Westminster with respect to Northern Ireland).

The truth is that even the Thatcher Government seems to have balked at this prospect, and that there is now a real sense of disenchantment in Conservative circles as a whole with the whole Hayekian catechism. The utopian consequences of the freeing of the market and the celebration of Law are simply not evident, especially when the Conservative Party as a whole (with its significant representation of non-commercial middle class and petty **bourgeois** interests), contemplates the present overall condition of England. What is suddenly but assuredly being re-introduced into the language, and the strategic priorities, of the Thatcher Government is the markedly less utopian and messianic, though nonetheless authoritarian and moralistic, programme characteristic of the *non-commercial* English petty-bourgeoisie.

The Long Term Effect of the Ascendancy of Moralism

Seven years ago, the victory of 'Thatcherism' posed initially but inescapably a problem for the socialist left in terms of economic strategy. We had to try and develop alternative economic politics that demonstrated, to a popular mass, that there *was* another alternative to discredited forms of Keynesianism other than the anarchic individualism of the 'social market economy'. In the face of the unflinching critique mounted by the Right on liberalism and welfarism as being ineffective in terms of ensuring social order and bureaucratically-statist in their relationship 'to the people', we began to develop much more realistic and grounded approaches to the questions of law and order, welfare and health provision and a host of

related issues. The work that was being done, on ideology and strategy, on both the right and left, had something of a millenarian quality: there was a real sense that the early Thatcher years were a period of transition—the demise of the 'Keynesian Welfare State' was assured, but the question of what would replace or transcend it was still open to political struggle.

The suggestion must now be made that the Thatcher Government has begun to vacate this particular terrain. The failure of the 'freeing of the market' to produce anticipated economic effects across the broad mass of the society, and the failure of the imposition of the Law (the 'Barrier of Steel'), are now producing perverse and contradictory responses from within the ranks of the Government. There is a real sense of the ascendancy of a non-commercial middle and lower middle class within the Party that is not in any significant way committed to the Hayekian economic experiment, and which would prefer, in some nostalgically-idealist a fashion, to see the Thatcher Government focus on the restoration of a sense of (petty-bourgeois) morality in the conduct of English life.

It may be that the later years of the second Thatcher Government will witness a significant retreat from the project of an economic revolution in Britain, and the elevation instead, of a programme for the orderly management of an economy in slow decline. Certainly this seemed to be the import, for example, of *The Times*' editorial, quoted earlier, on the need to approach questions of social order on a long-term basis. *The Times* observed that the Government should now place an emphasis on:

a cliché that needs to be awakened, more neighbourliness, perhaps a new sense of altruism that may not be easy to marry with the enterprising, go-getting temperament so vital to the economic life of the nation. (*The Times*, 14 March 1986, [emphasis added].)

Vital though 'enterprise' may be, we seem to be being told, there is clearly much to be said, in terms of social order, for the paternalism, good works and community involvement of traditional holders of social power in Britain. This is an enormously significant shift in the mood of established opinion by comparison with 1979. It is not that the ascendancy of this new puritanism, coupled with the revival of traditional themes of conservatism, could conceivably be successful in rescuing the Thatcher Government from electoral defeat. But it certainly may be the case that the new emphasis on order as connected to moral respectability could have a more general and long-term political effect: it is possible that the themes of the new moralism could be taken up in different and powerful ways by the Social Democratic Party, by some sections of the Conservative Party after the departure of the Thatcherites, and by some sections of the Labour Party itself. In the aftermath of the second Thatcher Government, after all, the new bourgeois intellectuals will still be in positions of considerable

power in the popular and national media, and the moral and cultural conservatism of traditional holders of State power (especially the judiciary and the Civil Service), the editors of the serious national newspaper press and the hierarchy of the BBC, will still be exercised influentially on the new Government, whatever its avowed political complexion. Like so much else that has been achieved by the Thatcher Government, the ideological work now being undertaken on issues of morality and social order has fundamentally reformulated the dominant political agenda in the country as a whole for some considerable time. It has done so, in part, we have to recognise, because the themes of the new moralism (like those of the law and order campaigns which accompany them) have a real appeal to large sections of both the bourgeoisie and respectable working class of England.

I cannot, in this paper, offer any of the specifics of what a new socialist programme might look like on the moral reordering of English society. Like the work now being done on socialist law and order policies, this is work which must be done in a careful and grounded way by socialists who are closely immersed in local neighbourhoods and communities, or in work around particular issues and terrains (education, the cinema, video, TV, etc.). I can be sure, however, that little is to be gained by a recital of unreconstructed but traditionally social democratic critiques of the 'acquisitive society' or by appeals to some kind of liberal but modernist, technological rationality. We have to do better and speak about the vision of a moral and social order that promises a truly human emancipation.

NOTES

I would like to thank John Clarke, Ruth **Jamieson**, Ralph **Miliband** and Leo **Panitch** for penetrating and constructive comments on this paper. The argument in this paper, and especially its conjectural quality, remains, of course, my own.

1. Ian Taylor, *Law and Order: Arguments for Socialism* (London: Macmillan, 1981); Ian Taylor, 'Against Crime and for Socialism', *Crime and Social Justice* 20 (1982), pp. 4-15; and Ian Taylor, *Crime, Capitalism and Community* (Toronto: Butterworths, 1983).
2. I have remarked elsewhere on the curious coincidence that this speech should have been delivered the evening before advertisements financed by the Police Federation appeared in all daily newspapers, issuing 'a challenge to the parties on the question of law and Order'. (Cf. Alan Clarke and Ian Taylor, 'Vandals, Pickets and Muggers: Television Coverage of Law and Order in the 1979 Election', *Screen Education* 38, [Winter 1980], pp. 99-111).
3. The non-union **Grunwick** plant, founded and owned by a prominent member of the free-enterprise pressure group, the National Association for Freedom, Mr. George Ward, employed exclusively Asian immigrant women at wages far below approved trade union rates, and was characterised by what even Richard Clutterbuck, the right-wing commentator on social order in post-war Britain,

calls 'uncompromising' and 'strict' discipline in a high pressure business atmosphere (Richard Clutterbuck, *Britain in Agony* (London: Faber, 1978)).

On several different occasions during the late 1970s, the strategically populist position of the Thatcher leadership on crime and 'law and order' was made quite abundantly clear. At the 1977 Conservative Party conference, for example, Thatcher pronounced:

'People ask me whether I am going to make crime an issue at the next Election. The answer is **no**. It is the people of Britain who are going to make it an issue.'

This was a formulation she repeated on several different occasions.

5. Stuart Hall, 'The Great Moving Right Show', *Marxism Today* 23 (1) (January, 1979); and Stuart Hall, 'Popular-Democratic Versus Authoritarian-Populism: Two Ways of Taking Democracy Seriously', in Alan Hunt (ed.), *Marxism and Democracy* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1980).
6. Evidence of the importance of a single 'issue' in influencing the outcome of elections is always controversial. But on election night itself, 4 May 1979, ITN's *The Nation Decides* carried a caption **which** declared that 23 per cent of voters had 'switched' to the Tories 'on law and order' (as compared to 26 per cent who reported they had switched over 'prices', 22 per cent 'on trade unions' and 13 per cent on 'taxation'). For further discussion of the importance of the law and order issue in the 1979 election, especially on television, see Clarke and Taylor, 'Vandals, Pickets and Muggers', *op. cit.*, and Alan Clarke and Ian Taylor, 'Law and Order Politics, Television and the 1979 Election', unpublished ms.
7. Leon Radzinowicz and Joan King, *The Growth of Crime: The International Experience* (London: Penguin, 1977).
8. The weakness of the agnostic liberal position adopted by the Labour Party on crime was **displayed** on several occasions during the election campaign of 1979, but never more dramatically than during the BBC-TV *Campaign Report* interview with Merlyn Rees MP, Home Secretary in the Callaghan administration, on 20 April 1979. The programme presented itself *as an urgent* investigation of the pressing problems of 'law and order', and it **was** unsurprising when its presenter, David Dimbleby, after a series of defensive responses by Merlyn Rees, almost dismissively posed a final and obviously entirely rhetorical question:

'So you're saying. . . we're discussing something like trying to control the weather: it's forces beyond the control of governments?'

The Conservatives (and indeed the journalists who talked to them so faithfully on questions of law and order) did not devote any attention, however, to the curious (and for them, inconvenient) declines in the total number of crimes known to the police (of 3 per cent per year) in the last two years of the Callaghan Government (1977-8 and 1978-9).
10. Richard Kinsey, 'Crime in the City', *Marxism Today* 30 (5), (May, 1986), pp. 6-10.
11. Richard Kinsey, 'Looney-Tune Law and Order', *New Statesman* 24 January, 1986, pp. 12-13.
12. Zig Layton-Henry, *The Politics of Race in Britain* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1984).
13. 'Hurd set to fight race violence', *The Observer*, 27 July, 1986.
14. Non-European readers of *The Socialist Register* may need to be reminded that the Heysel Stadium in **Brussels** was the site of the European Soccer Cup Final of 1985, played between Juventus of Italy and Liverpool of England. Prior to the start of the game, a large group of Liverpool supporters on the standing terraces at one end of the stadium charged through fences separating them from fans of Juventus: in the resulting crush, a retaining wall collapsed and 38 fans, mainly

- from Italy, were crushed to death.
15. The figures quoted here are the official returns given by the Department of Employment: there have of course been three big changes in the format of the DOE 'count' since 1982, and 2 total of 15 changes altogether since November 1982. According to the Unemployment Unit, the monthly DOE count is now about 500,000 lower than it would have been if the procedures in use prior to November 1982 were still operative, counting everyone who registers rather than just those who claim benefits. (See *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 9 February–2 March 1986).
 16. Central Statistical Office, *Social Trends* 1986 (London: HMSO, 1986).
 17. Cf. *inter alia* Georg Rusche and Otto Kirchheimer, *Punishment and Social Structure* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1938); and Hermann Mannheim, *Criminal Justice and Social Reconstruction* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1946).
 18. Cf. in particular Andrew Gamble, 'The Free Market and the Strong State', in Ralph Miliband and John Saville (eds.), *The Socialist Register* 1979 (London: Merlin Press); Ruth Levitas (ed.), *The Ideology of the New Right* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986); and Peter Steinfels, *The Neo-Conservatives* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979).
 19. Cf. Stuart Hall and Martin Jacques (eds.), *The Politics of Thatcherism* (London: Lawrence and Wishart).
 20. Bob Jessop, Kevin Bonnett, Simon Bromley and Tom Ling, 'Authoritarian Populism, Two Nations and Thatcherism', *New Left Review* 147 (1984), pp. 32–60; and Stuart Hall, 'Authoritarian Populism: A Reply', *New Left Review* 151 (1985), pp. 115–124.
 21. Cf. in particular, Andrew Belsey, 'The New Right, Social Order and Civil Liberties', in Ruth Levitas (ed.), *The Ideology of the New Right* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986).
 22. I emphasise the English base of the radical right, in the full knowledge that several of Thatcher's parliamentary supporters in the Tory Party in the early 1970s represented Scottish and Northern Irish constituencies. As the 1980s progressed, however, it became clear that the rank-and-file Conservative support for the ideological mix promulgated by the leadership of the party (and, in particular, the emphasis on market economics, little-England patriotism and the unmistakable tolerance for racism) was more widespread in England than in the UK as a whole.
 23. Andrew Gamble, 1979, *op. cit.*
 24. Brian Elliott and David McCrone, 'Class, Culture and Morality: A Sociological Analysis of the New Conservatism', revised version of the paper delivered to Political Studies Association Conference, University of Manchester, dated December 1985.
 25. Victoria Gillick was a South of England housewife who in 1984 took the local health authority and education committee to court, to try and prevent the issue of contraceptives and contraceptive advice to girls under 16. She was eventually defeated in the High Court in early 1986.
 26. In a forthcoming commentary on the renaissance of puritanism in the right of the Conservative Party, John Pratt and Richard Sparks argue that 'the authentic constituency of the "moral right" is an increasingly socially marginal one, rendered progressively more so by the rapid development of technologies of communication and entertainment'. In Pratt and Sparks' view, the majority of citizens of all classes are enmeshed in, and even entranced by, the great variety of pleasures and enticements of a 'post-modern' cultural terrain. (Cf. John Pratt and Richard Sparks, 'New Voices from a Ship of Fools: A Critical Com-

mentary on the Renaissance of Permissiveness as a Political Issue', *Contemporary Crisis* (forthcoming)).

27. Elliott and McCrone, 1985, p. 29.

28. One of the most recent examples of such a special-interest group is the so-called Parliamentary Video Group Enquiry—actually a small group of Christian zealots around one Dr. Clifford Hill. The Parliamentary Video Group Enquiry has had enormous success, in the pressure it has brought to bear for censorship of videotape films, both on the Conservative Party and the senior echelons of the Home Office. I offered an assessment of the PVGE, and also a critique of the essentially libertarian and anti-censorship responses it has provoked on the left, in Ian Taylor, 'Video Violence: A Social Democratic Perspective'. Paper the Second International Television Studies Conference, London, July 1986.

29. Jessop *et al.*, 1985, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

30. *Ibid.*

31. The magistrates' campaign against the Children and Young Persons Act has been analysed in detail by Alan Clarke, *Spare the Rod, Spoil the Young Thing: The Magistrates' Association and the Reform of the Juvenile Court*, unpublished dissertation towards M.A. in Criminological Studies, University of Sheffield, 1977.

32. For detailed analysis of the overwhelming levels of access given during the television coverage of the 1979 Election to the judiciary, the police and right-wing politicians as 'experts' on 'law and order', (and the almost complete absence of social workers, progressive teachers or young people themselves), see Alan Clarke, Ian Taylor and Justin Wren-Lewis, 'Inequality of Access to Political Television: The Case of the General Election of 1979', in David Robbins *et. al.*, (eds.), *Rethinking Social Inequality* (London: Gower Press, 1982).

33. Jock Young, 'The Hippie Solution: An Essay in the Politics of Leisure', in Ian Taylor and Laurie Taylor (eds.), *Politics and Deviance* (London: Penguin, 1973).

34. Here I am very consciously distancing myself from the essentially idealist account of the youth problem (as a continuous, relatively unchanging product of ideological work by adults and/or authority) that has recently been offered by Geoff Pearson in *Hooligan: A History of Respectable Fears* (London: Macmillan, 1983).

35. Cf. Andrew Gamble, *Britain in Decline: Economic Policy, Political Strategy and the British State* (London: Macmillan, 1981), chapter 6.

36. Sir Keith Joseph, 'Britain: A Decadent New Utopia', *The Guardian*, 21 October 1974; Rt. Hon. Norman Tebbit, Lecture to Disraeli Club, 13 November 1985.

37. Perhaps the most notorious example of such a teacher, steeped in an imperialist concept of white English culture, is Mr. Ray Honeyford, the Bradford headmaster sanctified by Roger Scruton and the *Salisbury Review*. For further discussion of the 'cultural racism' of the English new right, see Gill Seidel, 'Culture, Nation and Race in the French and English New Right', in Levitas, 1986, *op. cit.*

38. I have in mind here the quite startling, continuing refusal of police and other representatives of respectable bourgeois English society, to accept that the Lewisham fire of 1981 might have been the result of a vicious racist attack by Englishmen an act of disavowal repeated on many other occasions in the wake of murderous attacks on Asian and West Indian families in their own homes. This disavowal of the effects of racism is the extreme expression of the refusal of the English middle class to recognise the quite extraordinary level of institutionalised racism that pervades everyday 'civilised' interaction in England

and which is, of course, absolutely central to the operation of immigration control, perhaps the most notorious symbol, for visitors to the UK of the **mean-spirited** and ethnocentric operation of state authority in Britain.

39. No student of the women's issues in the recent post-war period in England will ever forget the attempt of the West Yorkshire police to 'solve' the problem of the 'Yorkshire Ripper' by asking for an evening curfew on women. Much more than in North America, perhaps, where women in the post-war period have been far more successful in achieving some formal social equality with men, England remains within, both the middle and working class, a society that is organised pre-eminently around the interests of men.
40. One of the more ironic of these IEA studies, in retrospect, was the critique developed of the concept of 'social cost' in **Paretian** welfare economics by Steven Cheung, Professor of Economics at the University of Washington. The particular and technical problem addressed by Cheung is the idea that the untrammelled pursuit by an individual (**e.g. qua** capitalist) of what he judges to be his own welfare may not attend to the welfare of particular others, or of others in general. Cheung's conclusion is that **governments** cannot in principle **claim**, any more than individuals, to have greater knowledge of human needs or to be maximisers of welfare for all: individual entrepreneurs in a free market are more likely, and **have** more inducement than a welfarist Government to work for a general interest. This is one example of the kind of Bizarre Hayekian 'free market' theory which is rapidly losing favour in established opinion in late **1980s** Britain (cf. Steven Cheung, *The Myth of Social Cost*, (London: Institute of Economic Affairs, **1978**).
41. Patricia Morgan, *Child Care: Sense and Fable* (London: Maurice Temple Smith, **1975**).
42. Patricia Morgan, *Delinquent Fantasies* (London: Maurice Temple Smith, **1981**).
43. Patricia Morgan, 'The Children's Act: Sacrificing Justice to Social Workers' Needs?' in Digby Anderson (ed.), *Criminal Welfare on Trial* (London: Social Affairs Unit, **1981**).
44. Morgan, **1978**, *op. cit.*, p. **44**.
45. Morgan, **1978**, *op. cit.*, p. **13**.
46. Patricia Morgan, 'When Excuses Run Riot', *Daily Telegraph*, **18 April, 1980**.
47. David Dale, 'The Politics of Crime', *The Salisbury Review*, (October **1984**), p. **17**.
48. Dale simply asserts that the well-known attempt of the Schwendingers to ground socialist criminology in a moral argument independent of existing 'State definitions of **crime**' as 'hopelessly inadequate', (Dale, *op. cit.*, p. **13**). The charge is sustained by a quotation from Hayek, described as 'one sophisticated critic of social justice', namely his assertion that:
 'poverty, like earthquakes and plague, is undeniably unpleasant, but who should be arrested?'
- Dale, like Hayek, seems to have no difficulty in '**naturalising**' poverty and the existing arrest practices of police—by assertion—but that hardly constitutes an **in-principle** argument against the Schwendingers' 'humanistic **definition** of crime' or against a less abstract, social democratic argument for **universal** defence of all citizens from actions they could conceive as **harmful** to their well-being or interests.
49. This section draws selectively on the excellent essay, previously referenced, by Andrew Gamble, published in the *Socialist Register* **1979**.
50. F.A. Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, **1960**), p. **11**.
51. Gamble, **1979**, *op. cit.*, p. **3**.

52. F.A. Hayek, *The Confusion of Language in Political Thought* (London: Institute of Economic Affairs, 1968), quoted in James Hamilton Dunn, 'The Language and Myths of the New Right', *New Society* (5 May 1977), pp. 225-226.