'From the Margins to the Mainstream': A Study of the Transformation of *Marxism Today*

Submitted by

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Abstract

This thesis examines the relationship between the alternative media and the public sphere by studying *Marxism Today,* which despite being published by a marginal political organisation, the Communist Party of Great Britain, confounded expectations and rose from obscurity to national prominence as the leading magazine of the Left during Thatcherism's heyday in the 1980s.

As a rare example of a successful left periodical, *Marxism Today* provides a unique opportunity to understand how and why marginal publications may overcome the many financial, production and distribution obstacles and gain access to the mainstream. This thesis outlines the major social, political and cultural influences and practices which helped to shape MT's political and journalistic projects and five of its key ideas and themes. Its struggle for autonomy from the CP and its production history, the subjects of two individual chapters, illustrate the advantages and disadvantages of the dominant models for left periodicals.

These changes in autonomy and production were also important to MT's ability to compete in the marketplace and its success in gaining nationwide distribution and press coverage. *Marxism Today*'s access to the 'mainstream', national public sphere was also dependent upon its textual transformation from a 'journal' into a 'magazine' (eg design, format, writing style). All of these changes together helped MT succeed where most left and alternative periodicals fail transformation from a 'journal' into a 'magazine', wherein the underwent changes which, not only enabled MT to reach readers outside the CP and organised Left and gain access to the national public sphere, but also intervene in debates within the Left's (counter) public sphere.

Finally, in assessing MT's lessons for the debates over left press models and J rgen Habermas's public sphere theory, the conclusion also provides a summary of its influence upon the Labour and Communist parties.

Dedicated to the memory of my father,
John Frederick Pimlott,
1931-1993

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Glossary

Anti-Monopoly Alliance	AMA
Arts and Leisure Committee, CPGB	ALC
Broad Democratic Alliance	BDA
Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, Birmingham University	CCCS
Commission on Inner-Party Democracy, CPGB	CIPD
Commission on Party Journals, CPGB	CPJ
Communist Party of Britain (*Morning Star* Group)	CPB
Communist Party of France (Party Comuniste de France)	PCF
Communist Party of Great Britain	CP, CPGB
Communist Party of Italy (Partito Comunista de Italia)	PCI
Communist Party of the Soviet Union	CPSU
Executive Committee, CPGB	EC
Executive Committee, Sub-Committees, CPGB	ECSubs
International Socialism, SWP	ISJ
London District Communist Party, CPGB	LDCP
Marxism Today, CPGB	MT
Modern Quarterly, CPGB	MQ
National Cultural Committee, CPGB	NCC
National Party Congress, CPGB	NPC
National Student Organiser, CPGB	NSO
New Communist Party	NCP
New Internationalist	NI
New Left Review	NLR
New Socialist, Labour Party	NS
New Statesman	NSS
Political Committee, CPGB	PC
Political Sub-Committee, CPGB	PSC
Socialist Review, SWP	SR
Socialist Worker, SWP	SW
Socialist Workers' Party	SWP
Special Party Congress, CPGB	SPC
Straight Left, Straight Left	SL
Theory and Ideology Committee, CPGB	TIC
Trades Union Congress	TUC
Young Communist League, CPGB	YCL
New Social Movement	NSM
Rock Against Racism	RAR
Women's Liberation Movement	WLM

Chapter 1

Most left publications aspire to reach the general public in the mainstream from their ghettos on the periphery: despite numerous attempts, few succeed. This thesis examines one such relationship between the margins and the mainstream: *Marxism Today* (MT). It investigates the mechanisms and processes by which MT, a minor periodical, was able to gain access to the national public sphere, despite its affiliation to a marginal political organisation, the Communist Party of Great Britain (CP). Under editor Martin Jacques, MT confounded expectations during the 1980s and it was transformed from an obscure journal into the leading magazine of the British Left. This chapter will examine the current state of the literature on the left press and the key questions they raise, followed by an overview of J rgen Habermas's theory of the public sphere and finally, a description of the methods employed in researching *Marxism Today*.

I. The Left Press

Despite the greater interest in alternative media in the last twenty years,[1] studies of the 'left press[2] remain few in number.[3] The overwhelming nature of the Left's reliance on the print media[4] is inversely related to the paucity of materials dedicated to the study of the left press, even though the paper's role is integral to, and even constitutive of, left political organisations; both small and large groups can only gain recognition by publicising their arguments and print media remain the most accessible means to do so.[5] There are essentially three models for the left press that come out of this literature: Bolshevik;[6] self-managed;[7] and Comedia.[8]

Many writers identify the Leninist or Bolshevik model as the most appropriate one for the left press.[9] This model draws upon V. I. Lenin's ideas of political organisation and strategy and the experience of the Russian Bolsheviks' papers, *Iskra* and *Pravda*, as codified into the Communist International's (CI) thesis on party organisation (especially the sub-section on the Communist paper).[10] The Bolshevik model puts the paper at the

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[1] Armstrong 1981; Atton 1999; Aubrey *et al.* 1980; Berry *et al.* 1980; Croft 1998; Dowmunt 1993; Downing 1984; Duncombe 1997; Fountain 1988; Gardner 1979; Harcup 1994; Haynes 1995; Kessler 1981; Landry *et al.* 1985; Mattelart and Piemme 1980; Mattelart and Siegelaub 1979, 1983; Milam 1988; Nelson 1989; Radical Science Collective 1985; Whitaker 1981; Winship 1987.

[2] Unless otherwise specified, the left press refers only to those publications owned, operated and/or published by social democratic, socialist, Labour and Communist party organisations.

[3] Allen 1985; Birchall 1980/81, 1987; Callinicos 1985; Chippindale and Horrie 1988; Harman 1984; Hubert 1988; Khiabany 1997; McCrea 1989; Morgan 1995; Protz 1979; Richards 1997; Saville 1990; Smith 1996; Sparks 1985.

[4] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels neglected to pay much attention to communication (Aune 1994). Except for Bertolt Brecht (1930) and Walter Benjamin (1968), the Left's reliance on print media has only been challenged recently (Anderson and Goldson 1993; Downing 1984; Enzensberger 1976; Gardner 1979).

[5] Hubert 1988: 16. Though increasingly left groups are also setting up web-sites.

[6] Bambery 1996; Harman 1984; Hubert 1988; Khiabany 1997; Sparks 1985.

[7] Atton 1999; Downing 1984, 1988.

[8] Comedia 1984; Landry *et al.* 1985; McCrea 1989.

[9] Allen 1985; Birchall 1980/81, 1987; Callinicos 1985; Harman 1984; Khiabany 1997; Sparks 1985.

[10] CI 1921.

centre of the dissemination of ideas and aims of the political strategy: the paper as 'agitator', 'propagandist', and 'organiser'[11]. The revolutionary socialist paper's primary function in this context is its role as organiser: 'not, it should be noted, as adjunct to the building of an organization per se, but as an integral part in the constitution of that organisation'.[12] Party and paper are inseparable. However, arguments continue over whether the left press should focus on the most politicised or militant workers or whether they should try appealing to a broad public.[13]

The Bolshevik model benefits from clear power structures and a division of labour; it is run according to the principles of 'democratic centralism' where party membership is supposed to wield control over the paper through congresses and the executive or central committee. As a key player in the party's strategy, the paper must be subordinate to the demands of those who are not directly involved in producing the paper, such as the party congress and executive committees. The party's aims must then determine the form and content of the paper.

The most cited recent example of a Bolshevik paper is the weekly newspaper of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP): *Socialist Worker*. It helps the SWP 'co-ordinate and organise' its activities, recruit new members and spread ideas: activists sell it door-to-door, on the street and at demonstrations and festivals. During the 1970s, fierce internal debates raged over whether the paper should employ professional journalists or workers, and over who constituted its primary audience: a general public or 'politicised' sections of the working class. There was considerable internal dissension over *Socialist Worker*'s 'punk' phase when it sought to appeal to a general public of youth attending 'Rock Against Racism' gigs.[14] These debates were only resolved with changes in the direction of the paper *and* the party, demonstrating the intimate connection between political strategy and the paper. *Socialist Worker* is absolutely crucial to the SWP's success or failure and therefore, disputes over its role, audience, content, design and mode of address are also, inevitably, disputes over the party's aims.[15]

Scholarly studies of the left and alternative press have also focused on the political and intellectual or ideological contexts and their contribution to the 'battle of ideas',[16] as have literary historical approaches to 'small magazines'.[17] Most studies of the left press focus upon contextual factors to explain their successes or, more commonly, failures. Arguments are usually made that the readerships of (left and alternative) publications which reflect accurately 'the political conjuncture' will grow, without recognising that such publications will be 'ineffective without the economic means to convey any

11 Bambery 1996; Harman 1984.
12 Sparks 1985: 142-43.
13 Allen 1985; Bambery 1996; Hubert 1988; Sparks 1985.
14 Allen 1985: 228-29; Widgery 1987: 151-52.
15 Allen 1985: 231. See also Bambery 1996; Harman 1984; Protz 1979.
16 Kessler 1981; Smith 1996.
17 Eg Mulhern 1979.

insights'.[18] One of the few doctoral studies of the left press states that its purpose in examining six different papers between 1978 and 1982 is 'to examine and read the paper as a part of the political strategies and organisation necessary to the socialist transformation of society': it is not trying to assess their relationship to the market or the public sphere, but to their own political orientation.[19] Such approaches are not concerned with failure or success measured in terms of circulation levels or advertising revenues, etc.

Most assessments base a paper's success upon the degree of correspondence between its politics and and the authors' interpretation of socialism. Thus, these critiques are based upon an ideological interpretation of the historical conjuncture: contextual factors, such as political demobilisation, economic stagnation and party (in)activity, serve as the primary explanatory factors for a publication's success or failure, which is determined by the periodical's (in)ability to align its analyses with the correct form of 'socialism'. These analyses, though they are not all necessarily sympathetic to the Bolshevik model, highlight the ideological and political aspects of these periodicals, drawing upon contextual factors and issues, in explaining their failures (or apparent 'successes' for the wrong reasons).[20] It is the system as a whole which works against socialist papers, rather than *just* isolated problems with particular aspects of the marketplace (eg retail outlets, distribution).

According to these assessments, left publications must display a firm commitment to the ideology and practice of the 'revolutionary party'. *New Left Review*(NLR), *New Socialist* (NS) and *Marxism Today* (MT) are read as 'petty bourgeois' or 'academic' periodicals because their readerships are identified as limited primarily to professionals and intellectuals (the 'petty bourgeoisie'): while NLR's theoretical contributions to the class struggle were limited by its lack of an 'affective commitment' (ie links to a revolutionary organisation), the popularity of NS and MT were understood as 'reformist' moves to follow the shift to the Right in the rest of society.[21] One critique of MT was partly based upon its failure to meet the author's expectations of what topics a socialist periodical should cover.[22]

Influenced by the Leninist model of the party paper, they remain sceptical of the ability of the Left to produce popular publications that could compete in the marketplace. Yet, most left newspapers use the 'Fleet Street tabloid' as their model, including the Trotskyist SWP, which has attempted to make its paper a 'revolutionary *Daily Mirror*'.[23] None of the leading papers on the Left, including the *Morning Star* and *Socialist Worker*, could be said to be a Leninist paper, despite the professed influence of Lenin and the

[18] Landry *et al.* 1985: 27.
[19] Hubert 1988: 22.
[20] Allen 1985; Birchall 1980/81, 1987; Callinicos 1985; Harman 1984; Hubert 1988; Kessler 1981; Khiabany 1997; McCrea 1989; Saville 1990.
[21] Birchall 1980/81, 1987; Callinicos 1985; Saville 1990.
[22] Saville 1990.
[23] Hubert 1988: 853.

CI.[24] Nevertheless, these accounts neglect the more prosaic matters of distribution, press coverage, production process, and other such topics, despite their importance to a publication's survival, let alone success. Similarly, any concern for the left press' relationship with public sphere is also neglected.

The second, self-managed, model is mostly in evidence among supporters of the alternative press because it is closest to putting the producers' political beliefs into action, although not all of them are self-managed. This 'libertarian socialist' model arose in the 1960s and drew upon the ideals of collective decision-making, working by consensus, abolition of hierarchical divisons of labour and the sharing of skills and jobs, and other aspects of participatory democracy. This model is also an explicit critique of the deficiencies of the Bolshevik model, particularly as exemplified in the Soviet 'conveyor-belt' media model.[25]

John Downing's analysis of alternative and left media across a number of European countries and the USA emphasises problems of distribution, production, finance and marketing as well as ongoing debates over which audiences the alternative and left media should address, who should write for them, etc.[26] The importance of the contributions made by left and environmentalist publications to their own internal, alternative or counter public spheres has been noted.[27] It has been argued that it is important enough just for alternative media to exist so that in times of social unrest or state repression, there is a network already able to circulate information.[28] Analyses of alternative media have been primarily concerned with activity rather than 'messages and meanings', social base and networks of distribution and exhibition.

The Comedia model is named after a consultancy which promoted research into small and alternative media. It focuses on three modes that differentiate the alternative and left press from the mass press: economics; modes of production and organisation; and audiences.[29] This model calls for the appropriation of market techniques and mechanisms where possible or necessary for the benefit of the left and alternative press.[30] This model has arisen in response to both of the previous models, Bolshevik and self-managed, though it is not opposed to self-management in principle. Comedia criticised the self-managed model's emphasis on pre-figurative politics at the point of production at the expense of other facets, such as product quality, publicity, finances, expanding audiences beyond 'the ghetto', and the marketplace.[31]

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24 *Ibid.*: 839-89.
25 Downing 1980: 180-99; Downing 1984: 11-15.
26 Downing 1980, 1984.
27 Downing 1988.
28 Downing 1984.
29 Comedia 1984: 96.
30 Comedia 1984; Landry *et al.* 1985.
31 *Ibid.* Some alternative media maintain an opposition to marketplace techniques beyond any political bias against capitalism (Duncombe 1997).

Financing is one of the most intractable problems that face most, if not all, alternative and radical media. This problem has been compounded because most people working in the alternative media are interested in the editorial side, while business and financial aspects are neglected or ignored.[32] Alternative and left periodicals have often made assumptions that their views are shared by enough people to provide a large enough audience to support their publications financially.[33] However, according to proponents of the Comedia model, questions of *who* the audiences (actual and potential) are and *how* to reach them, can be addressed through marketplace mechanisms, such as distributors, market research and advertising, which have been condemned by others on the Left for their association with capitalism and threat to the 'integrity' of 'socialism'.

Financial problems are compounded by organisational ones, where a belief in pre-figurative politics ensures that enormous energies are expended in efforts to establish "islands of feminist and socialist 'good practice'".[34] The neglect of these prosaic, albeit crucial, financial and organisational issues appears to preclude the possibility of success. Despite the innovations of some left publications, such as the use of 'supporting subscribers' to provide launch capital (eg *The Leveller*, *New Socialist*), most alternative and left papers continued to be undermined at the most basic level: ensuring a sufficient cash flow for necessities and the production of subsequent issues, let alone thinking in terms of a sufficient return on investment of time, energy and resources in order to expand and reach new audiences.[35] Concerns such as these have been regarded as inappropriate or even exploitative by other radical media. These attitudes undermine their ability either to attract advertisers or reach a large enough readership to make the papers financially independent (even of advertisers).[36]

However, party publications differ from other alternative media because left parties see their papers as integral to their political work and therefore, they accept the need to subsidise their publications. Supporters of the Bolshevik model argue that advertising works against left papers, so that 'left-wing political views have to be paid for in another way': thus, organisations like the CP adopt the 'fighting fund' approach for their papers.[37] Without the organisational and financial advantages of the political party, other papers have been unable to draw sufficient financial support from the social-political milieux on whose behalf they claim to speak (eg *Red Pepper*).[38] These media need a larger market to ensure their survival within the capitalist system, otherwise they will collapse into marginal irrelevancy or bankruptcy: they have to learn to juggle 'the contradictions between commercial necessity and political ambitions' in order to survive.[39]

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32 Comedia 1984; Landry *et al.* 1985.
33 Landry *et al.* 1985: 16. See also Atton 1999; Chippindale and Horrie 1988; McCrea 1989.
34 Comedia 1984: 98.
35 *Ibid.*; Harcup 1994; Landry *et al.* 1985; McCrea 1989.
36 Atton 1999; Aubrey *et al.* 1980; Khiabany 1997.
37 Comedia 1984: 98.
38 See Khiabany 1997.
39 Comedia 1984: 96.

This larger market is also important if alternative or left publications are going to be successful, in terms of both finance and influence: occupying ground otherwise colonised by dominant media, means they will have to 'include and tolerate a far wider range of opinions' than is usual, but this would allow them to reach out to audiences beyond their own 'self-imposed' ghettos and even set the terms and parameters of debate, as well as recruiting advertising revenue.[40] Comedia proponents argue that the alternative press' audience is often an attractive one for advertisers because it is primarily composed of ABC1 consumers, well-paid and highly-educated professionals, as demonstrated in the success of *New Socialist* (NS) and *New Internationalist* (NI), although the alternative media tend to be 'embarrassed' by the social base of their publications.[41] NS sought a wider circulation beyond its base in the Labour Party, while NI reached an audience with an interest in development issues.[42] NI's circulation of 25,000 provided the magazine with considerable financial strength because it was mostly subscription-based which ensured a year's income (or two) paid upfront, with most of the money going direct to the publisher rather than having to offer discounts of around 50% of the cover price to distributors and newsagents.[43]

Contemporaneously to the CI's thesis on party organisation, Adalbert Fogarasi, a Communist intellectual, addressed three principle questions in his comparison of the capitalist and communist press, which continue to plague the left press, 80 years later: which audience; what writing style; and who should contribute.[44] The left press has continued to be divided between addressing an audience of either a mass working class public or the most militant and politicised workers. These choices will determine the paper's orientation in content, rhetoric, design, etc., and therein lies a problem with much of the socialist press: opaque prose which puts off potential readers.[45] The choice of who should contribute is not always an easy one: questions about using journalists because of their professional skills are weighed against the political commitment of the workers on the shopfloor writing directly of their experiences.[46] These issues have plagued the Left since at least the early part of this century[47] and will need to be addressed in any analysis of the left press.

Recent reassessments of the alternative press have reasserted the importance of politics over economic or market considerations, arguing that the same criteria cannot be applied to the alternative and left press that are applied to measuring the success of

[40] Landry *et al.*: 26.
[41] *Ibid.*: 15-18; Comedia 1984: 100.
[42] NI's strength was its accessible presentation of issues for people with little background knowledge.
[43] Comedia 1984: 101. Even when employing an agency, subscriptions remain the best single source of income for small periodicals.
[44] Fogarasi 1921.
[45] Aune 1994; Burgchardt 1980; Protz 1979.
[46] Fogarasi 1921; Workers' Life 1928.
[47] *Ibid.*; Aune 1994; Burgchardt 1980; Downing 1980, 1984.

mainstream or commercial media.[48] These reassessments can be divided between positions supporting the first two models. Gholam Khiabany's analysis of *Red Pepper* (RP) suggests that the Bolshevik model is still relevant for socialist groups because these papers work at cross-purposes to the market: expectations that those who support the various social movements which RP addresses does not necessarily translate into sales via the marketplace.[49] Chris Atton reassesses the 'activist-run, grassroots press', primarily publications associated with the squatting, anarchist and environmental movements, and argues that:

> collective methods of organization and alternative forms of distribution are far from mere ideological fixities; instead they spring naturally from the nature of the alternative media conceived as methods of achieving social and political action, rather than merely information resources that have no more than the 'bottom line' as their main concern.[50]

These assessments, as do those studies which promote the Bolshevik and self-managed models, assert the importance of the left and alternative publications' contributions to the *alternative* or *counter* public spheres, rather than considering the efforts made to reach a broader public via the *mainstream* or *national* public sphere.

Huw Richards's study of the *Daily Herald* is perhaps one of the few accounts which is concerned with how this newspaper of the Left fared in three different 'guises' (models of proprietorship), and which, ultimately, was unable to survive.[51] He focuses on the *Herald*'s attempts to reach a wider public without bowing to the more populist impulses of tabloid journalism and yet maintaining a balance with its role as an official organ of the Labour Party and Trades Union Congress (TUC). Most of his story focuses on the *Herald* when Labour and the TUC were the co-proprietors, 1922-30, and the tensions that arose from the contradictions between being a daily newspaper and an official paper.[52] This tension turned to confusion as the *Herald* pursued 'popular targets with elite values', as the ill-fated labour movement-sponsored paper, *News on Sunday*, did (launched and closed) in 1987; it was similarly confused editorially, not knowing if it wanted to be a down-market tabloid or a quality broadsheet.[53] The *Herald* was a commercial and financial failure but its political impact is harder to assess.[54] Its fortunes were apparently 'inversely related': newspapers which 'do well competitively invariably have a distinctive self-confident editorial identity'.[55] Another difficulty for the *Herald* was that its connections to the Labour Party and the TUC gave it an 'establishment voice' which precluded it from adopting the 'populist' style of the postwar *Daily Mirror* or its

[48] Atton 1999; Khiabany 1997.
[49] Khiabany 1997.
[50] Atton 1999: 73.
[51] Richards 1997.
[52] *Ibid.*: 5-6.
[53] Chippindale and Horrie 1988.
[54] Richards 1997: 180-81.
[55] *Ibid.*: 180, 182.

successor, *The Sun* thus, it lacked 'the priceless journalistic gift of surprise'.[56]

There are four key points that emerge from this survey of accounts of left publications. First, this area is greatly under-researched. Second, there are three models put forward as the most appropriate for the left press. Third, the reasons for the failure of left publications do vary, although they are related to the strengths and weaknesses of the different models. The problems with the papers on the Bolshevik and self-managed models are that they fail to reach out beyond 'the radical ghetto', making no concessions to reaching a broader audience by making use of the marketplace (distribution, production, etc.): this limits their appeal and audiences. The self-managed model is overly concerned with implementing its principles in its practice than with the production and circulation of its paper. These aspects of those two models account for the failure of left publications and are responsible for their continuing confinement to the ghetto.

However, the Comedia model has been criticised for being concerned with working within the capitalist marketplace and according to economic criteria which the left and alternative press are opposed to: they are not the same as the commercial press and therefore, they should not be judged according to the same criteria. Besides, many writers, sympathetic to the Bolshevik and self-managed models, also see left publications which attempt to engage in the marketplace as conforming to the dominant ideas in order to gain more sales: greater sales are not always deemed a success if they involve 'selling out' one's principles. They acknowledge that left papers fail if they lack connections to a political party, or of failing to act according to its ideology or political strategy. Finally, while the literature supports the importance of the alternative or counter public sphere and their media in contributing to the diversity of ideas and the circulation of information among, and ultimately to the survival of, social movements and small political parties, the relationship between the left press and the public sphere, 'the margins and the mainstream', remains effectively unaddressed by the literature to date.[57]

II. The Public Sphere

Habermas's theory of the public sphere provides the central framework for thinking about the relationship between alternative or left media and the mainstream, about the degree of access to the public sphere for marginalised groups. The public sphere developed during the rise of bourgeois society and the attendant social, economic, political and cultural changes in England, France and Germany during the 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries. It is an institution which comes into being whenever private individuals gather together, outside of any state or economic activity, to engage in rational-critical discussion over issues of public interest.[58] The

[56] Francis Williams cited in *Ibid.*: 5, 184.
[57] The one significant exception is, of course, Richards (1997), except the *Daily Herald* was part of a different era and of the 'mainstream' (compared to *Marxism Today*).
[58] Habermas 1974: 51.

public sphere is a 'communication structure': 'it refers neither to the *functions* nor to the *contents* of everyday communication but to the *social space* generated in communicative action'.[59] The public sphere is composed of differing levels of organisational complexity, range and communication: these range from the 'episodic publics' of cafes, public houses and street corners, to "occasional or 'arranged' publics of particular presentations and events" (eg concerts, party meetings), 'up to the abstract public sphere of isolated readers, listeners and viewers' of the mass media.[60]

People are expected to divest themselves of their own economic self-interest when they come together as citizens to debate how best to serve the public interest in governing themselves: citizens seek to ensure that neither government nor private organisations exceed their statutory authority through the exercise of informal (eg polls, demonstrations) and formal (eg elections, referenda) means. The ideal of the public sphere is that the communication of ideas and formation of opinions should be able to take place without undue state or corporate (private) influence or control. With the rise of mass societies, however, the media have largely taken over the public sphere: only if there is open access to free rational-critical debate will the public sphere function as intended.

Historically, once the individual rights of private economic competition were established, the press lost interest in furthering civil rights. The media came under the control of either state, political or commercial enterprises and their role in facilitating the public sphere was usurped in favour of vested (private) interests: thus, the media became the public sphere by simulating its operation. This 'refeudalization' of the public sphere refers to the take-over of public communication by these vested interests (professional groups, corporations), whose control of the media limits participation in the public sphere to selected groups and individuals: there are no guarantees of access or of democratic processes to impede this power (only co-operatives and trade unions have democratic processes for their internal public spheres). Often, dissenting voices are suppressed or excluded from the public sphere, and public participation in debates over governance is limited to acclamatory forms, such as choosing politician A or B, with only the appearance of rational discussion.

However, 'refeudalization' has not been as all-encompassing as Habermas had originally thought.[61] This is evident even in the 'power-ridden public spheres' of the former Soviet bloc, where a shift in power relations will take place as a result of a 'crisis consciousness' felt on the periphery, which motivates the latent, normative potential of the public sphere. The public is the 'final authority' and has to give its approval to the 'players in the arena' because 'it is constitutive for the internal structure and reproduction of the public sphere'.[62] The public sphere can only fulfil

[59] Habermas 1996: 360 (emphasis in the original).
[60] *Ibid.*: 374.
[61] *Ibid.*: 373.
[62] *Ibid.*: 364.

its function if those who are potentially affected by matters under discussion can participate in it.

Habermas's new formulation recognises that, contrary to his earlier assumptions about an ideal separation of private and public concerns, there is no 'fixed set of issues or relationships' that mark the boundary between private and public spheres: they are not easily separated because every citizen occupies positions in each (employee, consumer, etc.).[63] Problems that get voiced in the public sphere usually 'first become visible when they are mirrored in personal life experiences' in the private sphere(s) or 'lifeworld' (and from whence political action arises).[64] The 'informal contexts of communication found in the public sphere, in civil society, and in spheres of private life' feed into the mechanisms of 'institutionalized opinion- and will-formation' (media, parliament, etc.) by the communicative action of citizens; it is only when certain events or issues mobilise a majority of the citizenry that the public sphere comes closest to fulfilling its potential.[65]

The two spheres are structured 'by different conditions of communication'.[66] The civil society sphere provides the realm where citizens' experiences are turned into communicative action which feeds the political public sphere. This link ensures that the civil-social periphery's 'advantage of greater sensitivity in detecting and identifying new problem situations' feeds into the public sphere which acts as 'a warning system with sensors ... throughout society'.[67] Thus, alternative and oppositional media have an important role in raising new or neglected issues from the periphery. Many of the big issues of the 1980s, such as the nuclear arms race and ecology, were not 'brought up by exponents of the state apparatus, large organizations, or functional systems', but were initiated by "intellectuals, concerned citizens, radical professionals, self-proclaimed 'advocates'," *et al* These issues first circulated through 'newspapers and interested associations, clubs, professional organizations, academies, and universities', leading to the founding of discussion groups and citizen initiatives, which in turn contributed to the 'growth of social movements'.[68] Sometimes, it is only through the 'controversial presentation' of topics in the media that ensure that they "reach the larger public and subsequently gain a place on the 'public agenda'".[69]

The public sphere must identify problems, 'convincingly and *influentially* thematize them, furnish them with possible solutions', and amplify their threats so 'that they are taken up and dealt with by parliamentary complexes'.[70] The public

63 *Ibid.*: 366.
64 *Ibid.*: 360, 365, 352.
65 *Ibid.*: 352.
66 *Ibid.*: 366.
67 *Ibid.*: 381, 359.
68 *Ibid.*: 381.
69 *Ibid.*
70 *Ibid.*: 359.

sphere has a limited capacity 'to solve problems on its own', but it should be used to oversee the political system's processes and treatment of problems, which can deal more effectively with 'politically relevant questions' than can the public sphere.[71]

Civic organisations are those involved in 'dual politics': that is both 'offensive' and 'defensive' goals.[72] Essentially, offensive goals can be seen as those which orientate a civic group to reaching a broader audience outside their own internal public sphere: for example, social movements often raise issues which are broadly 'relevant to the entire society' and put forward alternative interpretations, solutions and criticisms.[73]

> Such initiatives are intended to produce a broad shift in public opinion, to alter the parameters of organized political will-formation, and to exert pressure on parliaments, courts, and administrations in favor of specific policies.[74]

Defensive goals can be seen as those which orientate a group towards their own supporters and similar circles but they are not limited to existing members. In addition to maintaining 'existing structures of association and public influence', they often include attempts 'to generate subcultural counterpublics and counterinstitutions, to consolidate new collective identities, and to win new terrain in the form of expanded rights and reformed institutions'.[75] However, civil society and the public sphere only afford 'limited scope for action' for 'noninstitutionalised political movements and forms of political expression' because the actual legislative and executive processes of a democracy belong to the political system.[76]

The bourgeois public sphere usually restricted access to professional journalists, government figures, experts, etc., which forced marginal groups to organise themselves into 'special interest' groups.[77] These collective organisations (eg women's movements, trade unions, political parties, etc.) and other civic groups pursuing their own interests are no longer seen by Habermas as inimical to the public good, because their circumstances had been forced upon them by their exclusion from the public sphere: indeed, he recognises their importance to the fulfilment of the public sphere's potential.[78] Habermas distinguishes between the 'loosely organized actors', who emerge from civil society, from other actors who 'appear before' the public; the latter are those who have the resources, sanctions and organisational power from the beginning, although some actors from civil society may have a high

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71 *Ibid.*
72 *Ibid.*: 369-71.
73 *Ibid.*: 370.
74 *Ibid.*
75 *Ibid.*
76 *Ibid.*: 371, 373.
77 Benhabib 1992; Fraser 1992.
78 Habermas 1996.

degree of organisational complexity, professionalism and resources.[79] Large and well-organised interest groups, who are often established in social subsystems and attempt to affect the public sphere, are vulnerable to public criticisms as to their interests or biases; those groups whose interests and power are hidden from public view, are vulnerable to losing their credibility should such backing become public knowledge.[80]

A third type are the journalists, public relations officers, *et al.*, who collect and select information and 'to a certain extent control the entry of topics, contributions, and authors into the mass-media-dominated public sphere': selection processes 'become the source of a new sort of power'.[81] Since the majority of political messages are professionally-produced by trained personnel, backed by technical and financial resources, and 'fed in via press conferences, news agencies, public relations campaigns', etc., they tend to be more successful.[82]

> Collective actors operating outside the political system or outside large organizations normally have fewer opportunities to influence the content and views presented by the media. This is especially true for messages that do not fall inside the 'balanced', that is, the centrist and rather narrowly defined, spectrum of 'established opinions' dominating the programs of the electronic media.[83]

Furthermore, Habermas also recognises the different 'strategies of interpretation' employed by audiences, which will differ from each other and from the actors' intended messages.[84]

The argument behind the press in bourgeois societies since the 1700s, has been that they inform the public in order that citizens will be able to act politically.[85] For the public sphere to function best, therefore, the press (and other media) should provide access for all groups, including the subaltern and marginalised, to ensure the full range of views are represented.

III. *Marxism Today*

Marxism Today is an example of a marginal publication, an internal party journal published by a small political party, the Communist Party of Great Britain, which gained access to the national public sphere and set the agenda for debate on the Left during the 1980s: its influence appears to have been much greater than its best circulation figures would suggest. It, therefore, offers a unique opportunity to investigate the relationship between the left press and the public sphere and the

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79 *Ibid.*: 375.
80 *Ibid.*
81 *Ibid.*: 376.
82 *Ibid.*
83 *Ibid.*: 377.
84 *Ibid.*
85 Sparks 1988.

process by which the former gained access to the latter. Such a study necessitates an examination of MT's production, distribution, press coverage, institutional relationships, editorial style, publicity, design, rhetoric, format and ideas, to determine how it gained access to the national public sphere.

The methods employed in researching this thesis involved both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The periodical was a valuable resource in itself. While secondary and tertiary sources provided the background material for the cultural, ideological, social and political influences behind MT, the CP and the labour movement, the lack of scholarly work on the CP in the 1970s and 1980s, necessitated researching primary sources from before MT's launch in 1957 right through to its demise in 1991. To understand MT's relationships with the CP and the editorial board and its transformation from a journal into a magazine, it was necessary to study party documents, minutes, committee memos, congress reports, pamphlets, journals and correspondence, as well as MT's readership, circulation and financial data, the minutes of board and staff meetings, press clippings, correspondence, design plans, etc.

To complement documentary evidence and fill in gaps, semi-structured interviews were used to 'fill in the blanks' and recapture the production and distribution processes, events, etc. These included interviews with MT's last editor, staff members, section editors, designers, an illustrator, volunteers, leading party and editorial board members (including opponents). Interviews, primary and secondary sources, etc., were cross-referenced to validate any discrepancies. Finally, this author had the opportunity to see his thesis subject matter come back to life and to observe and participate in the production, promotion and distribution of the one-off, 'comeback' issue of*Marxism Today* in October 1998.

Chapter 2

Magazines are the products of many things, such as history, time, institutions, social formations and politics. In order to account for *Marxism Today*'s origins and development, it is necessary to understand some of the larger political, social, cultural and intellectual strands which fed into MT and to which it gave voice. This chapter, therefore, sets out the various contextual influences on MT before and during Martin Jacques's editorship, 1977-91. These influences are broken down into three strands: Communist Party organisation, composition, values and politics; several of the broad intellectual currents flowing into 'Communist populism' and 'cultural Marxism'; and the institutional and social practices of 'cultural Marxism'.

I. Communist Party

The first section will examine aspects of the political influences around the party, such as democratic centralism and changed its composition. Whereas democratic centralism was a legacy of of the CPGB's adherence to Marxism-Leninism, the Gramscian 'broad democratic alliance' (BDA) was a legacy of western CPs, particularly the Italian party (PCI). The tensions that were to arise within the CPGB contributed to the development of factions which would increasingly absorb both time and resources after 1956. Between 1977 and 1991, these strands became manifest in and through MT.

Democratic centralism is central to communist organisation and political practice and it is meant to ensure that members have ultimate control over the party, but the British CP's history suggests a reality different from the theory, as the practice of other CPs confirms.[1] Under the terms of democratic centralism, the CP leadership was elected to the Executive Committee (EC) by a 'recommended list', approved and submitted by the EC to the delegates at the biennial congress. The leadership was able to ensure their continuity by hand-picking their successors, even as some representatives of different viewpoints were allowed onto the EC. Political Committee (PC) members were subsequently elected from within the EC, and in the case of the Political Sub-Committee (PCSub), these were selected from amongst the PC. This process ensured that the day-to-day running of the party was handled by an inner circle composed almost entirely of full-time party workers and elected officers, such as general and assistant general secretaries, industrial organisers, etc.

The EC usually met every second month and was an important body for discussing general policies and strategy but it was the PC or the PCSub which usually set the agenda and parameters of discussion: the EC often agreed to the decisions made by the PC and PCSub *post-hoc*. Thus, the election of members of factions to the EC would not necessarily ensure that their views would prevail unless they could secure a majority on the committee in order to obtain positions on the PC and PCSub for their supporters.[2]

[1] Eg Shore 1990: 165-70.
[2] All full-time party posts were elected by the EC only.

In the CP, 'the principle of unity ... was indissolubly linked to that of authority', which in turn was expressed through the principle of democratic centralism.[3] It was supposed to ensure that members would determine the party's general direction and policies at congress every two years, while the leadership directed the party and oversaw the implementation of congress decisions during the interval. It was important for all party bodies to follow the 'party line' as determined by congress. Though there was a range of opinions tolerated inside the CP, it was limited; any questioning of the party line was permitted only in the pre-congress discussion period. Those who failed to observe these guidelines could be disciplined or expelled. The 1957 Commission on Inner Party Democracy (CIPD) report had recommended that the party should permit some openness and discussion in the run-up to congress.

Democratic centralism enabled the leadership to maintain control through the party apparatus by ensuring that a majority of its supporters were on the recommended list, while including a few representatives of the 'traditionalist' and 'reformist' tendencies.[4] An example of the leadership's 'managerialism' can be seen in its attempt to accommodate the pressures for reform during the 1970s, by supporting changes to the party manifesto, *The British Road to Socialism* (BRS) at the 1977 congress, but then minimising any reform to party structures at the subsequent 1979 congress: to accommodate the conservative reaction *and* to maintain its own control. The more radical traditionalists and reformists became frustrated with compromise, though it is thought that this leadership style actually succeeded in keeping both wings in the party for far longer than might otherwise have been possible.[5]

Both James Klugmann and Jacques were steeped in democratic centralism which contributed to their different styles of editorship: it was evident in Klugmann's loyalty to the leadership and deference to leading members and committees and in Jacques's more 'autocratic' control over the production process. Despite their criticisms of the practice of democratic centralism, it worked to the reformists' advantage in their battles with their traditionalist opponents in 1983-85. Nevertheless, democratic centralism in practice failed to stop the emergence of factions because each one sought to promote their own interpretations of the BRS as the only, correct understanding and organised to try and win support for their positions.

The emergence of factions impacted upon MT's development as they jockeyed for positions within the party in order to secure support for their views. This was an important element in the continuing focus over the wording of the BRS; the weighing up of different phrases and the attempts to roll back changes became a barometer of the fortunes of different tendencies. Postwar factional activity can be traced back to the Sino-Soviet dispute of 1959-61, when a group of pro-Soviet traditionalists emerged to criticise the leadership's attempts to maintain relations with both parties.

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3 Samuel 1986a: 65.

4 These are defined below.

5 Callaghan 1988: 234-35.

As the 1960s unfolded, the traditionalists, backed by leading members, including ex-general secretary Harry Pollitt, became increasingly trenchant in their criticisms of party liberalisation. The CP was criticised for 'moving away from the working class': changing their newspaper's name from the *Daily Worker* to the *Morning Star*; the EC's stand over the trial of Iu. Daniel and A. D. Sinyavsky in 1966 and the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968; and the revised (1968) BRS.[6] They also attacked the leadership's attempt to attract a younger generation of intellectuals and artists with the adoption of the March 1967 EC statement on *Questions of Ideology and Culture*.[7] It did signify a shift from a party line towards a pluralism on scientific, religious, artistic, cultural and even ideological matters, justified as the application of the BRS,[8] yet appearing to validate traditionalists' criticisms of it as 'a withdrawal from real ideological struggle' which would lead to the abandonment of class struggle and, ultimately, 'class collaboration'[9]

These early expressions of dissatisfaction were by loose groupings of 'hard-liners' (factions were officially proscribed). 1971 saw the arrival of the first faction, the Party Group, which evolved out of an informal discussion group of party and non-party members.[10] It took positions on party issues, held meetings, circulated discussion papers and sought changes on policy at the 1971 Congress, but broke up the following year. Despite attacks on revisionism, the Group more closely foreshadowed the Eurocommunists with their criticisms of the CP's 'lack of theoretical rigour' in the 1968 BRS, the lack of clarity in its talk about democracy, its inability to go beyond economism and defending unions, its unwillingness to confront its own sexism and its 'lack of commitment to feminism'.[11]

Gradually, during the 1970s, the two opposing tendencies, 'traditionalist' and 'reformist',[12] took shape encompassing smaller, factional groups which became better organised and entrenched within the apparatus. The traditionalist tendency, composed of Stalinists, hardliners and conservatives, were well ensconced within the Industrial Department, as befitted their emphasis on 'class politics' and drew strength from their contacts in the labour movement. The reformist tendency, composed of Eurocommunists, Gramscians and dissident Marxists reformists, dominated ideological-political work in several specialist committees and journals, such as the Theory and Ideology Committee (TIC) and *Euro-Red*, providing the reformists with an influential intellectual base. Other

[6] Thompson 1992: 154. Monty Johnstone, a dissident, anti-Stalinist intellectual who remained in the party after 1956, spoke to the BBC about the Daniel and Sinyavsky trial with the backing of the leadership (Johnstone 1995; McLennan 1996).
[7] EC 1967: it was published in MT and as a separate pamphlet.
[8] Simon 1968; Andrews 1995a: 227.
[9] Lewis 1967a: 222; Simon 1968: 156.
[10] It included people who later joined opposing tendencies such as Beatrix Campbell, Mike Prior, Ken Gill and Mary Davis (Andrews 1995a: 230, 246).
[11] Andrews 1995a: 229.
[12] However, such terms only characterise the differences between tendencies and have been chosen in order to avoid too pejorative or sympathetic terminology (eg 'Stalinist', 'moderniser'). There were many who were in favour of democratic internal reforms but unconditional in their support for the USSR or *vice versa*.

party sections were more evenly mixed, such as the *Morning Star* and the Education Department.

The two, increasingly irreconcilable, wings began to emerge almost as separate 'parties', contributing to the CP's virtual split 'personality'. For example, two versions of Marxist theory were taught: the reformist-dominated Communist University of London (CUL) engaged in rethinking Marxist theory with the influx of the ideas of Gramsci, Althusser and others, while the theory taught in traditionalist-run summer schools and branch meetings had not moved on from Lenin's *State and Revolution*[13] The leadership, however, could retain control as long as they could rely on a majority of members, the 'centrists', to follow their recommendations and as long as the two tendencies lacked internal cohesion: the EC alternated its support between the two in order to retain both wings. For either tendency to have any hope of influencing, let alone winning control of, the party, they had to make concessions to the leadership. This division eventually undermined Gordon McLennan's 'managerial' leadership style: their tactics could not have sustained the party indefinitely, as frustration and resentment built-up which led to the loss of large numbers of party members at critical conjunctures (eg 1985, 1989).

During the 1970s, the Eurocommunists became the single most important group of reformists as they rode a wave of popularity generated by the electoral advances of western CPs, especially the PCI (it made the 'historic compromise' with the Christian Democratic Party in 1976 in preparation for entering government for the first time since 1947). The PCI's electoral success fuelled the party apparatchiks' interest in its tactics and strategy, enhancing the reformists' call for alliances. But as Gramsci's ideas spread rapidly across the Left, aided by committees, CUL seminars and journals, they achieved deeper roots than the rather short-lived example of Eurocommunist politics, which blossomed briefly.[14]

The CP's ideological divisions became clearer in the discussions of John Gollan's reassessment of the 20th anniversary of Khrushchev's 'secret speech'.[15] The reformists were angered because Gollan's thoughts demonstrated little progress since 1956, whereas the traditionalists felt that too much time was being wasted on 'old events', and still others saw it as a significant step forward.[16] The response was overwhelming and revealed an enormous range of opinion within the party over a number of critical issues, such as the USSR, Leninism and Stalin's record.[17]

[13] Andrews 1995a: 234.
[14] *Ibid.*: 237.
[15] Gollan 1976.
[16] Andrews 1995a: 238; Thompson 1992: 172. McLennan compared his predecessor's speech to Mikhail Gorbachov's advocacy of *glasnost* and *perestroika* (McLennan 1996).
[17] Callaghan 1988: 234. MT received 93 contributions alone by the closing date of September 30, but only 27 had been published in MT by December 1976; another fifteen were published in a separate pamphlet (MTEB 1976).

Eurocommunist influence spread as some adherents acquired positions within the party apparatus.[18] Tensions in a key advisory committee, the Economic Committee, attested to their growing influence, where they formulated 'some of the most advanced criticisms of the party's industrial strategy which went to the heart of the party's overall political position'.[19] Disputes over the causes of inflation found Eurocommunist economists arguing for the controversial 'incomes policy', which targetted wage demands as inflationary, and against freezing prices and import controls as demanded by the party.

After intense debates throughout the party, the fourth edition (1977) of the BRS was a compromise document.[20] It 'managed to accommodate all shades of party opinion': the term 'anti-monopoly alliance' (AMA) was replaced by the Gramscian concept of the 'broad democratic alliance' (BDA) which meant that "all the old arguments were now illustrated by reference to the 'new social movements'" (NSMs); yet, the BRS also included references to 'the superiority of actually existing socialism' and Marxist Leninism, the 'leading role of the party' and its 'commitment to democratic centralism'.[21] The BRS also showed Gramsci's influence in its notion of 'revolution as a process', although it offered 'little insight into the nature of ruling-class hegemony', and while the 'broad' definition of the working class was accepted, its 'leading role' left the nature of its relationship to the NSMs ill-defined.[22]

Dissatisfaction with the reformist trend led to the defection of 600 members and three districts who established the New Communist Party in the summer prior to congress. This move dashed conservative hopes of stopping the reformist draft manifesto. While the Eurocommunists won their victory over the wording of the new BRS, the CP passed Resolution 72, with virtually unanimous support, which acknowledged the debt to the CPSU as a 'great example and inspiration' on the 60th anniversary of the October Revolution.[23] The more experienced reformists, like Dave Cook and Jacques, were willing to make tactical compromises in their gradualist approach to change. However, a few radical Eurocommunists wanted an open confrontation with the traditionalists over the USSR but failed to force the issue.[24] The overwhelming support for this resolution is evidence of a duality within the party (and of reformist tactics) which favoured reforms *and* had a strong sympathy for the USSR.

The conservatives were unwilling to tolerate any criticism of the USSR or the CP's relationship with it, whereas the reformists felt that this relationship jeopardised the building of the BDA. Nevertheless, it was this relationship and the connections with

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[18] Eg Dave Cook, National Organiser (1975); Jon Bloomfield, Secretary of the Birmingham CP (1976); Sarah Benton, editor, *Comment* (1978).
[19] Andrews 1995a: 235. It included a number of younger, Gramscian intellectuals who contributed to Jacques's MT: Bob Rowthorn, Dave Purdy, Pat Devine, David Currie, John Grahl.
[20] Andrews 1995a: 239.
[21] Callaghan 1988: 235.
[22] /andrews 1995a: 240.
[23] *Ibid.*: 241.
[24] *Ibid.*: 237. The CPSU's highest ranking member's visit to the CP's 1977 Congress was seen as tacit support for the hardliners.

national liberation movements which made the CP's internationalism attractive to many.[25] The reformists' support grew in tandem with the increase in feminist and student CP members during the 1970s, while traditionalist support fell as recruitment through the workplace waned.[26]

Many Eurocommunists felt it was necessary to change the party's structure in line with the revised BRS. The 1977 Congress agreed to set up the Commission on Inner Party Democracy (CIPD) to investigate and report back to the next congress. However, the CIPD brought divisions amongst reformists to the surface: older reformists, such as Dave Priscott and Bert Pearce, were unwilling to support the wishes of younger Eurocommunists, like Cook and Jacques, who wanted a radical overhaul of party organisation. Priscott, for example, while supportive of the new BRS, feared that organisational changes would neutralise the party as 'an effective revolutionary force'.[27] The six Eurocommunists on the CIPD (out of 16) submitted 'alternative proposals', in addition to signing the majority report: they proposed a radical re-organisation which 'challenged the leadership's grip over the party'.[28] The leadership realigned itself with the traditionalists to defeat the alternative proposals at the 1979 Congress (supported by one-third of the vote) and Eurocommunists' influence was effectively stymied. This defeat forced reformists to begin looking for alliances outside the party.

Ironically, the CP lost its only two MPs in 1951, the year when it adopted a new programme, *The British Road to Socialism* (BRS), in which the CP 'dropped a central tenet of Leninism' and committed itself to a national, parliamentary road to socialism.[29] With fascism defeated, communist governments in Eastern Europe and former colonies gaining national independence, the balance of forces appeared to have swung against capitalism and the peaceful transition to socialism in Britain was a possibility. However, despite the greater popular appeal that the CP's commitment to cross-class alliances may have brought it, the industrial wing and the traditionalists remained committed to the shopfloor, the 'most important world': their 'strategies for British socialism revolved around encroaching on managerial prerogative and ensuring left-wing victories in elections for the shop stewards' committee and union branch'.[30]

The success of the 1930s' Popular Front strategy and the vigorous prosecution of the war effort helped to increase the CP's influence. The AMA became the basis for opposing 'state monopoly capitalism' and around which the CP hoped to establish a good working

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[25] Irene Brennan cites the CP's international connections as one of the main reasons which persuaded her to join in 1970 (Brennan 1996).

[26] This is not to be interpreted as a crude 'class determinism' because many of the reformists, feminists and students came from the same class background as the industrial recruits (see Andrews 1995a; Callaghan 1988).

[27] Andrews 1995a: 242.

[28] *Ibid.*

[29] Callaghan 1988: 224. In 1947, CP General Secretary, Harry Pollitt, said that it was 'possible to see how the people will move towards socialism without further revolution, without the dictatorship of the proletariat' (cited in *Ibid.*).

[30] Fishman 1995: 120.

relationship with the Labour Left: 'Left unity' became the basis for socialism's advance.[31] The party's failure to build an alliance with the Labour Left during the Cold War was evidence of a lack of revision of the legacy of 1956: even the changes in the BRS in 1958 and 1968 avoided dealing with the party's Stalinist past, which subsequently became the primary source of internal conflicts.[32]

In terms of ideas and strategy, Gramsci's influence proved to be decisive by 1977, when important changes were incorporated into the BRS. A pragmatic document intended to satisfy a number of constituencies and aims, the implications were never worked out nor theorised properly beyond claiming it as a 'revolutionary', 'socialist' manifesto. It committed the CP to 'a long revolution based on the broadest possible alliance of all those groups and classes objectively at odds with monopoly capital'.[33] The logic of the programme fitted into a Gramscian strategy for socialist hegemony.

The Gramscian analysis suggests that a Leninist insurrectionary strategy, the 'war of manoeuvre', which would take advantage of a period of political instability generated during a period of economic collapse, would be unlikely to succeed in western democracies because the 'values and consciousness of the populace' are deeply imbued with bourgeois beliefs through cultural forms, 'common sense', etc.[34] Gramsci provided the theoretical justification for the BRS, because the CP establishes its supremacy by exhibiting 'moral and intellectual leadership' in society, achieved through a 'war of position': the 'strategy of building broad alliances around the real interests and aspirations of innumerable and diverse social groups and classes'.[35]

By the mid-1970s, although the majority of members, centrists, were willing to follow the leadership,[36] the reformist and traditionalist wings were becoming increasingly divergent in their advocacy of differing 'conceptions of socialist politics'.[37] The traditionalists promoted the view that the CP should seek to establish its leadership of the labour movement and it should be involved in 'trade union militancy'.[38] However, the reformists argued for a more immediately realisable, 'concrete' socialism rather than some distant utopian dream, and for changes to the party's practices, institutions and culture: traditional left and labour organisations were criticised for 'reproducing the very forms of domination that need[ed] to be overcome'.[39] Reformists saw pre-figurative politics as an important element in the struggle for 'an alternative social order' to challenge bourgeois hegemony: thus, the Gramscians 'looked more favourably on those movements that seemed to subvert capitalist values' in their organisation and practice (eg feminism), than

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[31] Callaghan 1988: 224-25.
[32] *Ibid.*: 225.
[33] *Ibid.*: 226.
[34] *Ibid.*: 227.
[35] *Ibid.*
[36] There were two occasions where the leadership were nearly defeated at congress: the condemnation of the USSR's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979; the adoption of the *New Times* manifesto in 1989.
[37] Callaghan 1988: 232.
[38] *Ibid.*: 232-33.
[39] *Ibid.*: 233.

working class institutions, like the trade unions, which were seen as sexist, authoritarian and hierarchical. Such criticisms of trade unions was anathema to the traditionalists, who saw them as manifestations of the working class and, therefore, as absolutely central to social and political change.[40] These differences became irreconcilable by the 1980s.

Equally important to MT's position within the party was the CP's changing social base. The events of 1956 led to the loss of nearly one-third of party members, although there was a brief upturn in recruitment in the early 1960s. By the mid-1960s the falling membership affected the party's ability to carry out political action (not always apparent in the resolutions passed at congress); however, it was not just about numerical decline but a change in social composition and values.[41]

The fall in working class recruits after 1967 was countered by an influx of young white collar employees, professionals and students, which contrasted with an older working class membership and the differences in their attitudes and values became generational. As Marxism became increasingly popular and influential within academia during the 1970s, it became 'the arena of confrontation' where the CP competed with other socialist organisations for the first time in its history.[42] The EC switched resources to recruit students during the late 1960s and 1970s, and succeeded in gaining influence after appointing a succession of Eurocommunist student organisers;[43] previously, the CP's National Student Committee and the traditionalist student organiser, Fergus Nicholson, had preferred to work with student unions rather than with student radicals, but the EC forced Nicholson's replacement in 1972 with Dave Cook, who was closer to the radical intelligentsia. The recruitment of middle and working class students was complemented by increases in professional recruits and a *rapprochement* with older dissident intellectuals. Their absorption into the party's hierarchy was symbolised by Jacques's election to the EC in 1967.[44] Nevertheless, the industrial working class remained at the heart of CP strategy: intellectuals were expected to stick to their specialisms and leave strategic planning to the party.[45]

However, it is too simplistic to put the internal political divisions down to age: the changes in the party's social composition brought about a clash over values and attitudes. For the older generation, commitment to union activism[46] was an important part of being a Communist and it was seen as complementary to party activities: in the 1960s, Communists tended to be drawn from the respectable working and lower middle classes, primarily engineers and teachers, and were often educated in party schools: their values were loyalty, commitment, hard work, thrift, even puritanism.[47] The younger, university-

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[40] *Ibid.*
[41] Thompson 1992: 153.
[42] *Ibid.*: 146.
[43] Dave Cook 1972-74; Jon Bloomfield 1974-77; Ken Spours 1977-78; Sally Hibbin 1978-80.
[44] Andrews 1995a: 228; Jacques 1996b.
[45] Andrews 1995a: 229-30.
[46] This is not the same as the 'workerism' adopted by the revolutionary Left during the 1970s.
[47] Newton 1969; Samuel 1985, 1986a, 1987.

educated recruits, including sons and daughters of party members, were often influenced by the attitudes and values of the 1960s counter-culture and/or 'May 68' and were ill-disposed not only towards these older values, but also the ideas, activism and organisation which supported them. The older belief in 'party discipline' and sacrifice was opposed to the 'anti-authoritarianism' and 'hedonism' of youth culture (a major source of friction between YCL members and conservatives).[48] Communist students became experienced working in 'broad left' alliances with Labour and other progressive students and thus, adopted a less party-partisan approach.[49] These types of experiences shaped the new generation's sympathies for the post-Leninist interpretations of Gramsci and finding a way beyond 'class politics'. They also provided MT with both a responsive audience and a dynamic source of contributors.

Within only a decade of the start of this influx, the CP began losing members from all sides: one-quarter of its membership left between 1977 and 1981.[50] Falling membership quickened again after the 1985 Congress and yet again with the adoption of the *Manifesto for New Times*° in 1989,[51] indicating that the leadership's managerial style was no longer useful or relevant. Despite the almost uninterrupted decline in membership, this social base of intellectuals and professionals provided MT with an important constituency which helps to explain, in part, its recovery of lost sales during the same period.

If the CP can be referred to as a 'society of great friends', as it was in 1928, it gives some indication of the depths of solidarity members had for each other, even though such solidarity can also lead to intense anger and bitterness when fallouts occur, as they inevitably must. It is this depth of feeling that invariably raises similarities between the party and a religious faith: in its early years, Communism did have 'affinities to a crusading order'.[52] Loyalty, discipline, tireless activity and above all else, commitment to the cause, characterised the disposition of the Communist: 'Communism was the way, the truth and the life. Like earlier belief systems, it put forward a complete scheme of social salvation' and the USSR was the 'promised land'.[53] As Raphael Samuel has suggested, they believed that Communism was 'universalist':

> Communism like medieval Christendom, was one and indivisible, an international fellowship of faith .... Internationalism was not an option but a necessity of our political being, a touchstone of honour and worth.[54]

Marxism equipped Communist cadres with 'a mode of reasoning' which provided them 'with *a priori* understandings and universal rules - laws of thought which were both a guide to action and a source of prophetical authority': they were 'thus uniquely qualified

[48] Waite 1995.
[49] Andrews 1995a.
[50] *Ibid.*
[51] Fishman 1994.
[52] Samuel 1985: 36.
[53] *Ibid.*: 37.
[54] *Ibid.*: 39.

to act as teachers and guides'.[55] There was a sense of philanthropy or service in the work undertaken by Communists: it was 'a moral vocation as well as a political practice'.[56] However, Communists should be seen as church militants 'rather than a retreatist sect' because of their pride in 'mass activity' and 'giving a lead'.[57] The military metaphor was an apt means of visualising this struggle for a new order because Communists *were* engaged in a war: the CP's position was 'the general line'; industrial struggles were part of the 'wages front'; and intellectuals engaged in the 'battle of ideas'.[58] Yet the CP 'has seldom been confrontatist'; Samuel says that 'it has typically been circumspect, cautious in relation to its enemies, protective towards its own ranks'.[59]

John Callaghan locates the CP's decline in the 'negative process of the decay of the party's ancient virtues' which made the CP 'no longer ideologically self-sufficient' because the old truths were dropped with little debate, the moral bankruptcy of the 'old ideology' has been exposed and the USSR no longer holds any illusions for Communists.[60] Communists were renown for their organisation, unity and discipline, all of which began to unravel as their 'convictions' and sense of 'moral superiority' were undermined by the loss of certainty.[61] These changes quickened after 1968, 'assisted, paradoxically, by the revival of interest in Marxism' and the continued decline in membership and *Morning Star* circulation.[62]

II. Communist Populism and Cultural Marxism

Two important intellectual trends that contributed to *Marxism Today* were 'communist populism' and 'cultural Marxism', which represent a convergence of a number of factors, such as popular front strategy, the first New Left, Gramsci, class politics and the new social movements.[63] They represent attempts to make 'unpopular politics' popular by reaching out beyond the organised Left and building cross-class alliances. Two of MT's most important contributors, Eric Hobsbawm and Stuart Hall, are representatives of these trends.

The first trend, communist populism, developed out of the 1930s Popular Front strategy and was articulated by the Communist Party Historians' Group after 1945. The first New Left, the 'turn to Gramsci' in the 1970s and the rise of Eurocommunism all contributed to the further development of communist populism. The drive to found a 'popular politics' was part of the the move away from 'economic reductionism'[64] and 'class

[55] *Ibid.*: 40.
[56] *Ibid.*: 46.
[57] *Ibid.*: 43.
[58] *Ibid.*: 44.
[59] Samuel 1986b: 111.
[60] Callaghan 1988: 234.
[61] *Ibid.*
[62] *Ibid.*
[63] Due to neglect, this section has relied upon two useful sources: Schwarz and Mercer 1981 and Dworkin 1997.
[64] The reading off of people's objective interests from their socio-economic status.

politics' towards ideology and culture, to which intellectuals and cultural studies researchers were well-situated to contribute. The CP Historians' Group succeeded in uncovering a 'history from below' through their search for a radical tradition to which the CP could lay claim. Hobsbawm reflects the tradition of the critical Communist intellectual, shaped by the 1930s and a proponent of the Popular Front strategy of fighting 'monopoly capitalism'; a legacy too of the involvement and attention to understanding the position of past events for their currency in contemporary political struggles.

Despite the Left's suspicion of populism, the CP had to try to integrate class and 'popular' politics to 'speak as a representative of the people'.[65] There has been 'a network of alliances organised around working-class leadership or hegemony through which the people must be won for socialism': the 'people' are a broader entity than the 'working class' or the 'proletariat'.[66] The concept of the 'people' highlights forms of oppression other than class and it 'has featured most strongly in attempts to further democratic struggles' where the links between 'the people' and democracy are highighted.[67] For Lenin, therefore, the party had to be involved in both kinds of struggles: there was nothing to suggest that there was 'any ultimate discrepancy between the democratic struggle against the class exploitation of the proletariat and the struggles of the general democratic movement'.[68]

The CP historians 'were decisive in formulating within theory (... their historiography) what they saw as a communist populism'.[69] Their project 'rested on recovering the deep tradition of English popular radicalism, and linking up their own contemporary struggles to this long heritage'.[70] The past became the means by which a radical tradition of the people could be claimed for the CP (evident in the 1951 manifesto). Not only had these historians succeeded in uncovering a 'history from below' but they also sought to communicate it beyond professional historians to the people: to accomplish this task, the Group helped set up the journal, *Past and Present* (which included non-Communists).[71] Hobsbawm embodies the tradition of the Communist intellectual, shaped by the 1930s and 1940s; a legacy too of the importance of understanding the position of past events for their currency in contemporary political struggles.

During the 1930s, the CP benefitted from the rise of an oppositional culture: working class writers, socialist theatre groups and novelists, workers' film and Left Book clubs, which brought together workers and intellectuals, socialists and communists, trade unionists and social democrats, working and middle class activists: it became a 'popular front of the mind'.[72] The 1930s' Popular Front was the heroic era of Communist

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65 Schwarz and Mercer 1981: 145.
66 *Ibid.*
67 *Ibid.*
68 *Ibid.*: 146.
69 *Ibid.*: 148.
70 *Ibid.*: 148-49.
71 Dworkin 1997: 20.
72 Ben Pimlott used this phrase in 1988 in his cross-party journal, *Samizdat.*

internationalism, solidarity and a broad, popular, anti-fascist alliance to defend democracy, which culminated in the 'People's War', 1939-45. The strategy of bringing the progressive middle classes into an alliance with the working class and left parties, and with the CP playing a leading role, was influential with members, particularly Gramscians and reformists.

Communist popularity reached its apex in the mid-1940s, as the *Daily Worker* hit 100,000 sales daily and membership nearly reached 50,000, before rapidly dropping off with the advent of Cold War anti-Communism. The CP did make subsequent attempts to obtain some popularity with its involvement in the anti-horror comics campaign in 1950-51, playing on the moral panic against American comics to help increase its own image of 'Britishness'.[73]

The CP remained aloof and hostile to the first New Left (1957-62), a 'petty bourgeois' grouping,[74] despite Hobsbawm's urging that the CP would miss out on a new generation of radical thinkers and activists if it ignored the New Left: no party official, student or youth organiser had attended any of the events, which explained why the party's information was 'defective'.[75] Yet with space for critical discussion still restricted within the party, the New Left could only flourish outside it.[76]

The first New Left combined two intellectual strands. A critical Communist tradition, which included those who had left the party, such as John Saville and E. P. Thompson and their publications (eg *New Reasoner*), but remained close to CP intellectuals like Hobsbawm and Monty Johnstone. The second strand became more significant within the first New Left: it was composed of democratic socialists who were critical of the Labour Party's anti-intellectualism and corporatism.[77] Together, these two strands in the first New Left contributed to the development of both a communist/left populism and cultural studies, providing a continuity between this tradition and MT in ideas and people. In trying to find a 'third way' between Stalinism and Labourism and to avoid economism and class reductionism, cultural politics became central to the first New Left, although they did not neglect political and economic issues nor did they refrain from engaging with the Labour Party.[78]

Debates on the Left were over the *embourgeoisement* of the working class, the impact of increased affluence on workers in the 1950s, which was thought to have fractured workers' lifestyles and their class loyalties (a foretaste of MT's 'New Times' thinking).[79] During the Conservatives' long reign, the Labour Party was faced with internal debate and

[73] Webster 1988. This was to counter the popular image of Communists as foreign agents; efforts to build a 'left patriotism' would surface again after the Falklands War.
[74] Kettle 1960; Thompson 1992: 122.
[75] Hobsbawm 1958.
[76] Pitcairn 1985: 108-9; Johnstone 1995. Johnstone's attempts to have articles published were rebuffed and his appeals through the appropriate channels were to no avail, even though this process had been instituted to avoid provoking dissidents into publishing their own journals.
[77] Callaghan 1988: 226.
[78] Kenny 1995b.
[79] Eg Hall 1958, 1960, 1988a, 1989a; see also Harris 1992; McGuigan 1992; Sparks 1996.

dissension as the supporters of Hugh Gaitskell sought to revise the Labour Party's constitution and policies on issues like nationalisation, public ownership and the market, a forerunner to the changes that Tony Blair and revisionists in the Labour Party were to bring about after 1994.

The similarities in ideas revolve around finding a third way between Labourism and Stalinism; 'socialist-humanism'; 'classlessness' and the affluence of the working class; cultural politics and popular culture. There were also similarities between the first New Left and MT in the decentralised networks of New Left clubs and MT discussion groups, and in the attention to design, images and layout in their respective periodicals: *Universities and Left Review*, *New Left Review* (NLR) (1960-62), and MT (1977-91).

The New Left's criticisms of the CP's democratic centralism and the Labour Party's machinery were part of the critique of the bureaucracy of modern society and the welfare state. This group was influenced by the writings of the early Karl Marx (eg *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*): the term 'alienation' expressed what they felt. Their critique of both Stalinism and Labourism was inflected by a moral rather than an economic focus. Thompson's socialist-humanism was an attempt to set out a new ideology for this third way beyond these two paths. Even so, the New Left still did engage in a somewhat hopeful, if distant and critical, debate with the Labour Party until disillusionment set in with the failures of Harold Wilson's government after 1966. Michael Kenny points out the paradoxes which characterised the first New Left in his study:

> ... it wished to provide a new political identity for those disillusioned with the orthodoxies of socialism, yet it remained closely engaged with developments in the Labour Party; it set out to rethink orthodox socialist ideas but never abandoned socialism as a creed; and it developed an instinctive sympathy for the popular dimension of political and ideological struggle, yet was fascinated by the avant-garde and modernistic elements of British society and culture.[80]

It was the ambivalence in the cultural arena which also characterised MT. Indeed, the overlap in concerns between the first New Left and cultural studies was no coincidence because they shared many of the same contributors: Hall, Thompson and Raymond Williams.

The first New Left encouraged an engagement with democracy and a left individualism, which were highlighted in concerns over civil society and democracy, and in their tradition of hostility to statist socialism and anti-Stalinism: they "foreshadowed the argument of feminists that the 'personal is political'" and they rejected the 'orthodox models of political behaviour' on offer.[81] The New Left's emphasis on civil society was influential: it offered 'an alternative set of ideas about how the left ought to conduct its

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[80] Kenny 1995b: 198-99.
[81] *Ibid.*: 200.

political struggles and where it needed to find allies for these'.[82] The first New Left was also convinced that, contrary to the 'economism' of Stalinists and Labourists, "socialism was a *conscious* democratic movement and socialists were *made*, not born or 'given' by the inevitable laws of history or ... the mode of production alone".[83] Yet, the first New Left did not make any inroads into Labourism: it only succeeded in confirming the then political culture's anti-intellectualism. 'All the difficulties for socialist politics had been identified' by the mid-1960s: 'a conservative and corporatist working class, an anti intellectual Labourist socialist party, a tiny Communist Party, inadequate theoretical resources to begin to analyse British capitalism or to understand its crisis'.[84] These are part of the roots of MT's political project, particularly 'New Times', with its socialist individualism and commitments to democracy and civil society.

The influence of the Italian Communist intellectual, Antonio Gramsci, on parts of the British Left has been great, though the way his ideas have been taken up suggest that there are two Gramscis.[85] Some on the Left (eg Trotskyists) adopted the Gramsci of the 'factory councils', 1918-1920, whose thought and actions fit more easily within Leninist theory. Perry Anderson, for example, has sought 'to reinsert Gramsci into the tradition of Leninist and early Third Internationalist Marxism' while rejecting 'the unproblematic assimilation of his work to post-Popular Front Communism and left social-democracy'.[86]

The second Gramsci was drawn upon in two important 1970s currents which demonstrate 'a positive political and theoretical development of Gramsci's work'.[87] One was the current around the CP which peaked in 1975-77: in the 1975 and 1976 events of the Communist University of London, the Eurocommunists' victory at the 1977 Congress on the revised BRS and the appointment of reformists to *Comment* and MT.[88] The other important current was media and cultural studies, particularly the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) and the Open University's Popular Culture course (U203); "these trajectories overlapped and became intertwined, notably in the person of Stuart Hall with his work (individually or in collaboration) on ideology, moral panics, the British state, 'authoritarian populism' and the inadequacies of the traditional Left in the cultural field".[89]

This post-Leninist Gramsci was influential with reformists and amongst cultural studies lecturers and students who became important contributors to MT in the 1980s. The May '68 events made it clear that any revolutionary upheaval, either spontaneous or organised (ie the Bolshevik's 'war of manoeuvre'), was not likely to overthrow capitalism: it would be achievable only via a 'long march through the institutions', an idea which

82 *Ibid.*: 201.
83 Hall 1989c: 36 (original emphasis).
84 Harris 1992: 175.
85 Forgacs 1989.
86 *Ibid.*: 79.
87 *Ibid.*
88 Andrews 1995a: 237-43; Forgacs 1989: 79.
89 Forgacs 1989: 79-80.

fitted in with the CP's national road to socialism. This explanation gained momentum via Gramsci's 'war of position': establishing a counter-hegemonic force by demonstrating moral, social and intellectual leadership prior to gaining political control.

Gramsci's ideas pointed to the importance of ideology and culture as sites of struggle, a great boon to CP intellectuals trying to find a way beyond the reductionist Marxism of the Third International.[90] These ideas stressed the importance of intellectuals in the struggle for hegemony, a grouping which were usually allocated a secondary role to that of the working class in political and economic struggles for socialism (in both Communist and social democratic versions). This emphasis ensured a revaluation of intellectual and ideological work in the face of a pervasive, distrustful, gut-level, anti-intellectualism, which was not only evident in the Labour Party and trade unions, but also in the CP, despite Communists' belief in intellectual work and their tendency to be better read than others.[91]

The reformists had the advantage of being able to point to the PCI as a successful role model: its electoral successes impressed party apparatchiks.[92] They promoted the party's role as a co-ordinating body for the BDA: it was about engaging in ideological work, stimulating democratic opinion and seeking alliances with the aim of transforming 'democratic activity [in]to a more explicitly socialist and Marxist consciousness'.[93] Thus the CP's role 'emerges as*innovator* of strategy and theory, *unifier* of democratic forces, and the *transforming* agent of political forces'.[94]

The attempts by the first New Left to move away from economism and class reductionism in political analysis, though they did not completely neglect these areas, was indicated by their concentration on social and cultural matters, which anticipated a similar shift on the Left by the 1980s.[95] Divisions arose on the Left between those who wanted the labour movement to lead an alliance between the working class and all other progressive and democratic groups, especially the NSMs, and those who felt that the labour movement was too rigid, bureaucratic and incapable of comprehending the importance of certain, non-economic issues to women, ethnic minorities, etc. The former tended towards 'class politics', a label which indicated their adherence to the idea that the organised working class was the primary agency of social transformation, which they reasserted in reaction to the development of communist populism and cultural Marxism, which evolved out of a 'retreat from class' during the postwar period, a legacy of developments in the 1960s and 1970s.

First of all, there was the influence of those in the CP who followed the ideas of the Popular Front (PF) strategy, of uniting 'the people' around broad interests rather than around narrow (working) class interests. In the discourse of the Communists, 'the people'

[90] Callaghan 1988: 226.
[91] Hall 1997; Samuel 1985; Thompson 1992.
[92] Callaghan 1988: 226.
[93] Spours 1977: 347.
[94] *Ibid.* (original emphases).
[95] Kenny 1995b.

replaced 'the working class' as the operative phrase invoked rhetorically and the audience to which political appeals were made. The original 1930s PF strategy was to avoid the isolation of the industrial working class. Second, this intellectual strand was given an impetus from the work of the CP Historians' Group in trying to recover the suppressed radical traditions of the English people to demonstrate a continuity with the past which could be called on in the present conjuncture.[96]

Third, the CP's lack of electoral success compelled party activists to concentrate on industrial struggles: they were spurred on by the upturn in industrial militancy in 1968-74.[97] The industrial activists supported rank-and-file militancy wherever it arose. However, Eurocommunists criticised the Industrial Department and the party for their support of 'wage-militancy' and defending 'sectional interests' against the interests of the working class as a whole and they cited Lenin on the inability of 'economic' (trade union) struggles to instill a 'political class consciousness'. Debates took place in MT in the 1970s, with Eurocommunist members of the Economic Committee arguing for an incomes policy, contrary to the party line.[98] Criticisms of economism, which became stronger after Thatcher came to power in 1979, developed into criticisms of corporatism, focusing on 'the whole range of newly institutionalised union powers'.[99]

A longstanding commitment to workplace politics paid off as party members entered the middle ranks of union officialdom and eventually into the leadership of the Trades Union Congress (TUC). The strategy of alliances was advocated by party activists in organising 'broad left' fronts within trade unions to try and oust right-wing leaders, which enabled the party to have a greater impact than its numbers would otherwise suggest. Paradoxically, many of these industrial activists opposed similar approaches on the political front advocated by reformists and MT, and although the CP was on Labour s list of proscribed organisations, it was able to wield influence in the Labour Party via the unions.[100]

After the rise in industrial militancy in 1968-74, most far left groups became 'workerist', re-directing their energies into trying to recruit industrial workers and focusing their propaganda work into re-asserting the primacy of 'class politics'. The CP, however, found itself facing a contradiction between support for rank-and-file militancy and support for its members among the union leaderships. The Industrial Department (ID), a veritable 'party-within-a-party', wielded considerable influence; it could lay claim to labour's radical traditions, a heritage that Communists could be proud of. Therefore, the ID became the natural rallying point for those dissatisfied with the reformists' demands.

Labour's victory in the 1974 election, however, was a hollow victory for the Left because the government did not implement its own election manifesto, which was based

96 Schwarz and Mercer 1981.
97 Nicholson 1986: 11.
98 Devine 1974; Purdy 1974.
99 Samuel 1987: 90.
100 Thompson 1992: 134.

upon the policies of the Alternative Economic Strategy (AES), supported by both the Labour Left and the Communists. Instead, the government sought to implement the 'social contract' in order to reign in inflation by keeping wages and prices down, which the CP attacked as a 'social con-trick'![101] Increasing dissatisfaction amongst the rank-and-file led to an explosion of wildcat strikes and the 'Winter of Discontent', 1978-79.

During this period internal divisions within the CP strengthened. One side, a minority, opposed the party's 'knee-jerk' support for all wage struggles, official or not. This group argued that these actions were limited at best, promoting 'economism' and 'sectionalism'.[102]A number of party economists, including Dave Purdy, Pat Devine and Bob Rowthorn, argued that the wave of strikes in the early 1970s were a 'defensive response to the worsening economic situation and one that added to the inflationary problem' and that the Left had no 'credible solution' to put forward: they accused the AES 'of being irredeemably statist, inflationary and politically naive'.[103]The Gramscian minority also criticised the party for being unrealistic: the CP not only opposed all wage restraints but demanded at the same time increased public spending on health care, pensions, etc. But to become a leading political force, it would have had to offer 'specific socialist solutions to specific economic problems'.[104] These Gramscians reflected 'a trend within the party increasingly ready to question the traditional political and social verities within which it operated and to point to the inadequacies of its theoretical analysis'.[105]

Eurocommunists were critical of demands for planning and nationalisation, not just because they saw these approaches as unpopular, but also because these 'policies were increasingly seen as incompatible with democracy and prefigurative politics favoured by the new social movements'.[106] Only after the Conservatives won the 1979 election did 'these heretical doubts' spread from a minority of CP intellectuals to a wider audience across the Left.[107]

The growth of the new social movements and 'single issue' campaigns after 1968, such as anti-racism, feminism, gay liberation, environmental groups, etc., provided a momentum for a rapid growth in radical politics but outside the traditional Left: left political discourses only appeared capable of acknowledging their importance as an 'appendage' to the working class. These movements, however, did have certain points of reference in common; they stressed issues of an ideological, democratic and cultural nature which 'underlined the relevance of a Marxist approach that could avoid economic reductionism and accommodate the tolerant pluralism that alliance with these groups

[101] The pun was the Industrial Organiser's, Bert Ramelson.
[102] 'Economism' refers to the 'limited vision' of trade unions in their (wage) struggles for a bigger slice of the capitalist pie. 'Sectionalism' refers to groups of workers fighting for their own particular interests to the exclusion of the general interests of all workers.
[103] Callaghan 1988: 231.
[104] *Ibid.*: 232.
[105] Thompson 1992: 164.
[106] Callaghan 1988: 232; Purdy 1976.
[107] Callaghan 1988: 231.

demanded'.[108] Most Leninist organisations saw the NSMs as potential recruiting grounds rather than as allies or autonomous movements.

The NSMs were an important influence on MT demonstrating the possibilities of creating a basis for popular unity across social classes by appealing beyond narrow economic and class interests. This was signalled by the involvement of the first New Left in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Though CND began to decline by the late 1960s, its fortunes picked up again with the arrival of cruise missiles and the second Cold War in the early 1980s: it was seen as an important part of the nascent BDA because of its broad, cross-class appeal.

Feminism was also a leading influence on MT because of the example it set as a movement. Its popular appeal was built across different areas and not just around economic issues, which might be reduced to class; its activism did not rely on traditional trade union tactics (eg picketing, strikes), and feminism operated with pre-figurative forms of organisation (eg collectives). Though MT itself did not operate in a similar manner, feminism, nevertheless, provided the best example for a pre-figurative politics.

Feminism recognised that oppression was not just about economic exploitation but that it could be both internal and widespread in social and cultural realms. They highlighted the diversity of groups seeking change but who remained isolated from each other and the importance of pre-figurative forms of organisation and decision-making. Some forms of left and trade union politics were criticised for 'macho' attitudes and the silencing of women's voices. The impact of feminism did cause divisions within the socialist movement, especially between those who thought women should wait until after 'the revolution' to obtain their goals and those who saw feminist issues as integral to socialism: this latter group argued that women were equally a part of the class struggle and their issues had to be fought for simultaneously.

Socialists responded to the rise of the women's movement during the 1960s and 1970s by trying to accommodate feminists within their organisations. Although the CP hoped to expand their membership by recruiting feminists and members of other NSMs, just as other parties did, it was to prove to be more open to socialist-feminists than most left groups; Leninist groups, such as the SWP and IMG, ended up disbanding their women's sections because of conflicts over the ranking of the importance of class or gender.[109] However, such co-existence had implications for those who continued to believe in the primacy of Leninism, because 'the transmission of ideas and values was a two-way process,' to which feminists proved to be 'more than equal' and 'Leninist dogma took a battering'.[110] This contributed to furthering the gap between reformists and traditionalists.

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108 *Ibid.*: 227.
109 Segal 1991.
110 Callaghan 1988: 227-28.

In the early 1970s, a group of CP feminists linked up with non-party Marxist-feminists to start *Red Rag* (RR);[111] the leadership tried to discourage members from reading it but eventually relented and decided to publish an official party journal for women, *Link*, edited by the Women's Organiser. Although RR had been published without any consultation with the leadership, and unlike its response to *The Reasoner* in 1956, the EC tolerated RR because it enhanced the party's 'standing with broader movements'.[112] Despite the CP's openness to the women's movement, feminist intellectuals criticised its manifesto for paying inadequate attention to patriarchy, 'tokenistic' and 'economistic' references to the women's movement and not recognising the movement's autonomy.[113] They also criticised the BRS for its emphasis on labour's leading role to which the NSMs' would (ultimately) be subordinated, "the lack of self-criticism, the lack of an independent role for the CP (and its dependency on the election of a left Labour government) and the preference for 'propaganda' over serious analysis".[114] Eurocommunist intellectuals saw these moves as 'an essential contribution to the transformation of the party'.[115]

MT's engagement with and appropriation of aspects of popular culture during the 1980s reflected an attitude of 'insouciance' and anti-authoritarianism ('thinking the unthinkable'), which can be traced back to the Young Communist League's (YCL) activities a generation earlier. The rise of a restless, hedonistic generation of affluent young people, scornful of authority, actively (and publicly) seeking their pleasures generated 'moral panics'. The more politicised youth were evident in Aldermaston marches, CND and the New Left from 1958.[116] Around 1960, the YCL took a more positive attitude towards CND and many YCL'ers participated in Young CND.[117] This more open outlook, with its implicit criticism of the party's older generation and their attitudes, attracted many new YCL recruits and was welcomed by Communist university student clubs.

YCL activists recognised culture as a form and a space for a politics opposed to society's dominant values. The YCL's liberal views on sexual liberation, rock music and the legalisation of drugs during the early 1960s disgusted the party's more 'respectable' values among older members, indicating generational tensions over taste, values and attitudes.[118] This tension increased with the YCL's new recruits, including children of party members, who themselves 'were increasingly immune to Stalinist orthodoxy, having

[111] The group included Beatrix Campbell.
[112] Andrews 1995a: 230.
[113] *Ibid.*
[114] *Ibid.*: 241.
[115] *Ibid.*
[116] Hobsbawm 1958.
[117] Waite 1995: 212.
[118] *Ibid.*: 218-19. (See above.)

been influenced by the new and more critical political moods, and by such developments in youth culture as the mocking of authority and the rejection of deference'.[119]

Through an engagement with contemporary youth culture, the YCL hoped to draw out and give shape to its progressive tendencies: the Wembley branch, for example, had its own band and night club; these activities were to some extent successful, because YCL membership rose to 5,000 by 1965.[120] The YCL used the Beatles on the cover of their magazine, *Challenge*, to try and sell it outside the League. *Challenge* was also revamped, using the latest techniques in design, layout and rhetoric, to appeal to a broad, youthful audience; the YCL developed innovative recruiting tactics, such as the successful 1967 'Trend is Communism' campaign.

Many party and some YCL members were horrified by these activities. The differences that arose over style signalled more fundamental differences over politics. The YCL's critics were angered by its attempt to broaden its appeal through popular culture, signifying the loss of its 'working class essence'; they proposed that the League should function as a tighter, more disciplined vanguard of youth whereas those who were attempting to popularise the YCL's appeal argued that they should aim at 'mass work'.[121] These debates foreshadowed the 1980s debates over the 'politics of style' and 'designer socialism'.

These developments succeeded in provoking traditionalists, who tried to intervene against the YCL leadership during 1967-68. This intervention helped set the stage for subsequent factional activity, particularly among YCL traditionalists, which established 'patterns of conspiracy and open subversion of leadership decisions and political policy at branch and district level' which became increasingly common, hastening the YCL's decline as an effective political force and indicating subsequent divisions within the party.[122]

The rise of racism, especially the National Front (NF), forced a response from disaffected white and black youths, particularly during the late 1970s, when rallies, festivals, bands, concerts and the like were organised to fight fascism. The Anti-Nazi League (ANL), set up by the SWP, brought people together to fight racism and fascism through demonstrations and events. It was connected to one of the most successful campaigns in highlighting the problem and mobilising youth in large numbers was 'Rock Against Racism' (RAR); it drew upon the anti-authoritarian sensibility of punk and brought together black and white in its musical events (these combined punk, reggae and 'two-tone' bands). Though the effectiveness of RAR in stopping the NF may be difficult to measure, it demonstrated the possibility of building a popular politics by bringing different groups together through popular culture.[123]

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119 *Ibid.*: 220.
120 *Ibid.*: 218-20; Thompson 1992: 153-54.
121 *Ibid.*
122 *Ibid.*
123 Frith and Street 1992; Widgery 1986, 1987. The CP was sidelined by the ANL and by RAR's political and aesthetic tastes.

While the first New Left had attempted to develop a broader popular politics, socialist humanism and cultural politics, the second New Left, 1962-77, developed in reaction against this 'left populism'. It reacted against 'the popular politics that had dominated strategic thinking in the previous two or three decades' and the development of its Marxism was 'in favour of a harder, more narrowly defined and purist, class politics'.[124] Perry Anderson, who succeeded Stuart Hall as editor of *New Left Review*, is representative. NLR stressed:

> ... an economistic and supine working class immobilised by its incorporation in the structures of the dominant ideology.The logic of this perspective led not only to a renewed commitment to an all-embracing class analysis, but also to an affinity with vanguard politics. Socialism increasingly came to be presented in terms of leadership.[125]

NLR developed a 'tougher line' on labourism and the working class, and introduced many of the continental Marxist theorists to the English-speaking world. Its line was more sympathetic to Marxism and Leninism than the early New Left was. Though sympathetic to other struggles, the second New Left retained a belief in the working class as the primary agency of social change; during the 1980s, NLR mounted a defence of more conventional interpretations of socialism, Marxism and class analysis against MT and reformism.

III. Cultural Marxism: Institutions and Social Practices

The base for cultural Marxism that developed in Britain after 1965 coincided with the expansion of higher education. NLR and *Past and Present* were the only two outlets in the early 1960s for socialist scholars, who were isolated by a hostile university environment or in adult education work.[126] However, as higher education expanded massively, creating employment for feminist, socialist and Marxist scholars, they in turn brought internal pressures to bear on introducing Marxism into the academy. Social unrest, political disaffection and a growing counter-culture during the 1960s brought about an environment that enabled a broad, intellectual socialist culture to flourish. The expansion of political organisations, solidarity and anti-Vietnam war campaigns, women's and gay liberation were fed by and contributed to the expansion of radical, alternative papers, publishers, theatre groups, film collectives, etc. These mechanisms provided an intellectual-political nexus at the periphery of the official academic and political spheres which helped produce an intellectual socialist culture.

This culture was being supplemented by specific institutions and social practices. The development and trajectory of cultural studies[127] was an important influence on MT, most

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[124] Schwarz and Mercer 1981: 152.
[125] *Ibid.*
[126] Dworkin 1997: 125.
[127] Three of the 'grandfathers' of cultural studies, Hall, Thompson and Williams, were involved in the first New Left and theoretical developments during the 1960s and 1970s.

noticeably in an overlap in personnel between cultural studies programmes and party bodies (eg specialist committees, journals). This overlap, however, did not extend into the party's branch and workplace education where orthodox Marxism remained dominant. Cultural studies lecturers searched for a way out of the class reductionist and economistic arguments, especially in their focus on everyday life, popular culture and ideology. During the 1970s and 1980s, concerns within media and cultural studies gradually led a new generation through heterodox Marxisms, structuralism and beyond, rejecting conventional Marxist approaches. One particularly important strand which arose was 'uncritical cultural populism',[128] which saw the benefits of the market, style and consumption and rejected the Frankfurt School's 'elitism' and the economic 'reductionism' of classical Marxism.

The rise of the 'dissenting academy' in the late 1960s sparked a search for a more critical engagement with ideas, beyond teach-ins and student rallies, and led to an acknowledgement of the importance of intellectuals with two conferences: the 'Socialist Scholars' conference held at Hull University and modelled after the American version, and a CP conference on the role of intellectuals. There was a movement also to spread Marxist and critical approaches to academic disciplines by offering 'counter-courses'. One effort was the Anti-University of London which lasted several months.[129] Another was the CP's Communist University of London (CUL), which was more systematic and better organised.

The annual week-long CUL began in 1969 as a fairly orthodox Communist school insulated from the revolutionary spirit of '68.[130] It concentrated on the more conventional aspects of Marxist-Leninism during its first couple of years: it was, according to its first prospectus, 'a series of intensive courses in Marxism-Leninism, its impact and use, in the world battle of opposing social systems and ideologies'.[131] It was taught by an older generation of party workers and intellectuals and primary attention was put upon 'providing theoretical weight to immediate political issues rather than a broad examination of wider aspects of Marxist theory'.[132]

However, the CULs began to change as non-party intellectuals began to participate and it began to take on board a more heterodox approach to theory and political issues, influenced by the dissenting intellectuals who 'had grown up in and around the Communist Party - imbibing Gramsci, breaking with stalinism, taking feminism seriously', during the 1970s: this was an 'open-minded, restless, heretical and promiscuous' intellectual culture that influenced MT.[133] The increase in student, professional and white-collar recruits both contributed to the development, and was an effect, of the CULs, particularly as they became 'the most publicised aspect of the party's

[128] McGuigan 1992, 1997.
[129] Dworkin 1997: 128-29.
[130] Andrews 1995a: 237.
[131] Cited in Thompson 1992: 145.
[132] Andrews 1995a: 233.
[133] Jacques 1991/92: 28.

ideological endeavours'.[134] The annual CULs became the left forum for party and non-party intellectuals to engage in a constructive, heterodox dialogue during the 1970s.

The most successful CULs were held in the mid-1970s. By 1977, the CUL had hundreds of speakers, many of whom were neither party members nor fellow-travellers, and between 1,500 and 2,000 people in attendance.[135] MT also contributed to the CUL's success with the Lewis-Althusser exchange and debates on Marxism and Christianity, the family, youth culture and inflation. The CULs fed the intellectual culture of the CP through specialist committees and party journals.

There were two periods in the CP's history when journals, published by both the party and supporters, proliferated. The first period was brief: between 1945 and 1950, a number of publications covering social and cultural issues were published which reached non-party readers: *Our Time*, *Arena*, *Modern Quarterly*, etc. The audiences for these journals gradually dwindled as the Cold War hardened attitudes and the CP became isolated: *Modern Quarterly*'s re-launch as *Marxist Quarterly* highlights the CP's move away from a popular-front style of ideological engagement. The second period was in the mid- to late 1970s: it developed out of the expansion of the CUL and specialist committees, a revival of interest in Marxism and other ideas, and the introduction of cheap, modern office technology.

In the intervening period, however, the CP continued to publish its daily newspaper, an internal affairs bulletin, a theoretical and discussion journal, and a youth paper. There was also the CP Historians' Group's journal, *Past and Present* which included non-party contributors.[136] However, by the early 1970s, there was an expanding 'independent socialist literature', partly as a result of the party's own ideological work, which 'pointed to the paternalistic and even authoritarian shortcomings within both Labourist and Communist theory and practice'.[137]

This expansion continued during the 1970s as an incredible range of new radical publications came out of the CP, many of which developed out of the social networks established at the CULs. Many of the new journals, such as *Red Letters* and *Eurored*, adopted 'a distinctively critical and Eurocommunist stance' because they had a much greater degree of autonomy than three 'more official party publications': the *Morning Star*, *Comment* and MT.[138] Besides the CP publications, other journals were being produced at the same time, of which *Politics and Power* was perhaps the most representative: it brought radical Eurocommunist and non-party intellectuals together to create 'new dimensions within the British Marxist tradition'![139] There were a number of radical academic journals (eg *Screen*) which also developed networks of researchers outside of disciplinary or organisational affiliations.

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134 Thompson 1992: 146.
135 Andrews 1995a; Easthope 1988; Jacques 1996b.
136 Dworkin 1997: 19-20.
137 Eg Hall 1979; Hunt 1980; Prior and Purdy 1979; Rowbotham *et al.* 1979 (Callaghan 1988: 233, 243).
138 Andrews 1995a: 238-39.
139 Cited in *Ibid.*: 243.

The CP specialist committees prepared reports, ran seminars, published papers and advised the party on their areas of expertise. Many committees followed their own dynamics in which ideas were developed, to a limited extent, beyond what might be deemed acceptable: some members of the Economic Committee, for example, supported the idea of an 'incomes policy' when most of the Left unquestioningly opposed it.[140] These ideas evolved out of a combination of the political practice of holding meetings with non-party speakers with the academic practice of discussing ideas in seminars. Of equal significance, is the invitation of the public to participate in discussions at party branches over the new draft of the BRS in 1976-77.[141] MT incorporated a similar practice into its discussion groups and events. In some areas, organisers established discussion groups outside of party branches to hold meetings with MT contributors or about its ideas. The relationship between discussion groups and MT were very important to its political project.

The Left's relationship with culture is problematic for two reasons: culture is not readily assimilated into a political programme, as the meanings of cultural products tend to be ambiguous; culture's commercialisation has made it increasingly difficult to separate cultural production from the logic of the marketplace.[142] In the late 20th century, culture plays an important part in virtually every western 'post-industrial' economy. However, socialists' suspicions about the 'professionalisation' of (socialist) cultural production (eg 'designer socialism') have a history that goes back at least to the 1930s.

Though the CP's cultural record 'may prove to be one of its most enduring contributions to British life', traditionalists and reformists often reflected party divisions over the role and place of culture in political struggle.[143] These divisions were between those who saw culture as 'bourgeois' and a distraction from 'real' struggles, and those who argued that culture was an important weapon in the struggle for socialism because a socialist, proletarian culture could not wait until after 'the Revolution'. Practically, the former, 'economistic', trend was associated with the traditionalists and their focus on the 'base': primary importance was accorded to industrial issues; the latter, 'culturalist', trend was associated with the reformists who insisted that the 'superstructure' was equally important to the struggle for socialism.[144]

However, there were complications. While the traditionalists might be more sympathetic to 'socialist realism' as an appropriate cultural practice for Communists, they were not necessarily alone in arguing for a separate socialist proletarian culture, nor were they always likely to reject all 'culture' as bourgeois or believe that culture was valid only as a 'weapon'. There were some who believed that cultural producers needed 'freedom' in

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140 Andrews 1995a.

141 Although this practice was encouraged by Party Centre, the leadership forced one branch to close some of their meetings to the public (see PC 1977).

142 Gitlin 1997. It is particularly prevalent in understandings of what is or is not 'popular' in popular culture.

143 Croft 1995: 91.

144 Andrews 1995a; Croft 1995; Thompson 1992.

order to produce their art, writing, etc.[145] During the 1930s and 1940s cultural workers had strong, organic ties with the Left, but those connections were severed with the onset of the Cold War. The CP achieved mixed results with its changes in thinking on cultural issues, as the party always had an ambiguous relationship to culture, which remained a 'faultline' dividing the party right through to its demise and transformation into the Democratic Left in the early 1990s.[146]

IV. Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted particular ideological, social, cultural and political strands that contributed to *Marxism Today*'s political trajectory and cultural transformation. Even though it may be difficult to measure with any certainty the contributions of each strand and the degree to which MT was a symptom or a catalyst of these influences, their legacy is clearly evident in MT's analyses of the labour movement, Thatcherism, popular politics, popular culture and 'New Times', and in the production and circulation of MT. The social practices of the CULs, party journals and cultural studies provided the means for MT to produce its own ideas. Previous attempts to construct a 'popular road to socialism' were not as successful in reaching the general public as MT would be in the 1980s. The problems that MT faced are part of the dilemma faced by all marginal media trying to make 'unpopular' politics 'popular'.

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145 Croft 1995.

146 Morgan 1995.

Chapter 3

The publications of political parties are differentiated from those of commercial newspapers and periodicals not because the former are ideological and the latter are not,[1] but because political publications are expected to express the viewpoint of their organisation, especially those on the Marxist Left. In Leninist theory, socialist newspapers have an absolutely integral role to play in educating, organising and agitating amongst the working class. The role of a theoretical journal is primarily to establish 'the line' for a particular party by discussing issues and developing an analysis of the political conjuncture which helps guide the party's strategies. Parties adapted their publications to changing political and economic circumstances within different socio-historical contexts: the party's strength would help determine not only the number of publications it could support but also their nature. Nevertheless, as with the so-called free press , editors and editorial board members of political publications are often chosen for their ideological commitment to the publishers (ie the party). *Marxism Today*, however, represents a very special case in the history of left periodicals.

During the course of the 1980s, as MT published critiques of the labour movement and of left shibboleths, it became increasingly singled out, by critics and supporters alike, for an apparent contradiction between its title and a lack of 'Marxist' content. MT's critics in the party also pointed to a contradiction between its role, as indicated in its sub-title, 'the theoretical and discussion journal of the Communist Party', and the lack of reference to, or contributions from, the party. Thus MT came to be seen as a paradox: as a party journal it gradually moved away from its marginal status as a minor Communist publication, printed and distributed by CP enterprises, and read primarily by the party faithful, to an independent magazine, printed and distributed commercially by non-party businesses, and sold in newsagents to a non-party centre-left readership.[2] Its increasing autonomy in production and distribution followed its gradual intellectual and political autonomy from the CP, a necessary part of reaching a broader audience. However, MT became more financially dependent upon the CP despite drawing in ever larger amounts of revenue from advertising and sales during the 1980s; by 1991, the limitations of MT's name and its reliance on CP subsidies meant that in the short-term, it was unsustainable.

What is curious, though, is the willingness of the party to continue to fund MT even as it apparently deconstructed nearly every shibboleth held by Communists and thus shifted, ideologically-speaking, away from the CP: indeed, the apparent divergence between MT and the party was permitted even as the costs of subsidies to MT increased dramatically after 1986. However, in 1988-89 the CP and MT moved closer together with the discussions around 'New Times' (NT).What was the relationship between MT and the CP, such that MT was able to achieve a degree of operational autonomy from the party,

[1] Former editors often provide anecdotal evidence of the ideological interventions of newspaper owners (eg Neil 1997).

[2] This readership included Labour voters as well as Liberals and Social Democrats).

which was far greater than most publications ever achieve?[3] Its ability to operate relatively independently of the CP, did not stop the party from providing financial support, even when the CP had difficulty meeting its own financial requirements. Nevertheless, MT's move towards greater autonomy was not always smooth or peaceful. In order to understand this relationship, this chapter provides a critical narrative of the relevant political developments between the party, the editor and MT. This relationship had consequences for MT during the course of its transformation, affecting all aspects of production, distribution and finance, which are explored further in Chapter 4.

I. Open Discussion and the Party Line: Origins

There is a legacy of attempts to establish forums for party and non-party intellectuals, the publication of controversial debates over left ideas and discussions over the role of party publications, all of which can be traced to *Marxism Today*'s origins in a number of political and cultural journals of the 1940s and 1950s, either published by the CP or sympathetic to it. Four of the most important were a cultural journal, *Arena*, a theoretical monthly, *Communist Review*, a labour movement periodical, *Labour Monthly*, and *Modern Quarterly* (MQ), a 'popular front' (CP and non-CP contributors) discussion journal on the arts and sciences. The CP's Cold War isolation meant a rapid decline in circulation and income for its journals, which forced 'Party Centre[4] to rationalise its publishing programme during the 1950s.

Concern over presentation (accessibility, writing style, design and layout) was an issue well before the 'designer socialism' of the 1980s. The 1953 Commission on Party Journals (CPJ) urged all publications to try and win wider audiences by improving presentation and content, a move made all the more urgent due to the CP's financial crisis and consequent cuts in publishing. It criticised MQ for its 'remote and erudite presentation' of issues, which was more appropriate to specialist journals, and for problems with its theoretical treatment, which was due to a confusion between its two roles: as a theoretical organ articulating a Marxist (ie CP) viewpoint and as a 'popular front' vehicle for discussion between CP and non-CP scholars.[5] Consequently, MQ's rapid fall in circulation, from 7500 in 1947 to 4500 in 1953, was read as its failure to fulfil either role.[6]

The leadership wanted a journal which would promote Marxism in an environment where there was no longer any room to act as a forum for progressive intellectuals. *Marxist Quarterly* was launched in 1954 to replace MQ and *Communist Review* as 'a fundamental theoretical organ'[7] which would 'deal with current political and cultural

[3] Ironically, Jacques's autonomy superceded that of editors of the so-called 'free press' (eg Chippindale and Horrie 1992; Neil 1997).
[4] 'Party Centre' refers to the CP's national headquarters in London where the most important committees and agencies were based.
[5] CPJ 1953: 2.
[6] *Ibid.*
[7] *Ibid.*: 3-5.

issues from the standpoint of Marxism'.[8] Nevertheless, despite closely following the party line, *Marxist Quarterly* proved to be even less successful than its predecessor.[9] Anticipating the 1957 report of the Commission on Inner-Party Democracy (CIPD), the last issue in January 1957 promised that a 'new monthly journal of Marxist discussion' would be published after Easter, with longer articles on theory and shorter discussion contributions.[10]

The 1957 CIPD report pointed to the failure of party journals to play an adequate role in encouraging internal party debate on the one hand, as highlighted by John Saville's and E. P. Thompson's justificiations for publishing *The Reasoner*;[11] and yet, on the other, *Marxist Quarterly* was singled out for failing to make the party line more widely accepted *within* the CP. The journals were expected to encourage party members to engage in internal debate, which might have either prevented some of the dissent subsequently expressed or brought it to the attention of the leadership before it was too late. However, the journals also had a responsibility to promote the party line to the membership, which would either prevent or counter dissident viewpoints. The CIPD report tried to resolve these contradictory demands: that a journal should promote the party line on topical issues *and* publish opposing viewpoints. The freedom of editors *and* editorial boards to edit, which clearly involves the exercise of political judgement, had to be balanced against the leadership's (ultimate) control over all sections of the party press.[12]

The report countered the criticisms of dissidents, who had attempted to establish a forum for internal debate not censored by the leadership, by arguing that the main function of the party press was 'to advocate the policy of the Party' and therefore, there could not be an 'unrestricted right of publication of individuals and branches', though there had to be 'the maximum publication of individual views and particularly of the collective views of branches and elected leading committees'.[13] The Executive Committee (EC) was criticised for not taking a more active role in expressing its views and guiding discussion: though discussion was not meant to be 'left to take its own course without guidance', the report also suggested that guiding discussion did 'not mean limiting it'.[14]

The tensions between permitting debate and promoting policy were exacerbated by concerns over 'factional activity' as exemplified (in the eyes of the faithful), by Saville, Thompson and others.[15] Though party members could express their own views in the committees, it did not necessarily give leading members the right to express those views to other bodies lower down the party hierarchy.[16] Authors were given the right to appeal

8 Lawrence and Wishart 1953. The new journal's name made explicit its perspective.
9 It was edited by a Stalinist functionary and writer, Emile Burns. The (counter) publication of *The Reasoner* and the consequences of 1956 testify to its lack of success.
10 CPGB 1957a.
11 Thompson 1992: 102-03.
12 CPGB 1957b: 13.
13 *Ibid.*: 14.
14 *Ibid.*
15 Though Thompson *et al.* only sought to further internal debate when party journals refused to publish dissenting views.
16 CPGB 1957b: 28-30.

any decision to reject their work, though the journal was expected to indicate the reason(s) when informing the author;[17] however, such formal mechanisms did not stop critics from being excluded.[18] The party urged members to try and open internal channels of communication if these had been 'wrongfully closed' by pressurising branches and committees to re-open them. The CP argued that *The Reasoner* was not the solution because the editors had sought 'to publish a political journal dealing with inner-Party affairs and to conduct such a journal independently of the Party leadership', and such alternatives were dangerous because they not only siphoned off energies but also encouraged factional activity.[19] In a prophetic statement, the report pointed out:

> Once such a journal is established it has to have people to write for it, finance it, circulate it and read it - that is, to establish an organisation apart from that of the Party. It thereby inevitably becomes the focus of factional activity, whether its originator had that intention or not.[20]

These tensions between keeping open debate and promoting the party line re-surfaced in pre-congress discussion during 1977, and it became a constant refrain in criticisms of Jacques's editorship, even as he pointed out what functions such a journal should perform, and despite the failure of the orthodox *Marxist Quarterly*. This legacy, however, did have an effect upon at least some of the successors to John Gollan's generation of leaders, who became more willing to refrain from interfering with the rights of editors and editorial boards to decide what to publish.[21] The editorial board, which was appointed by the PC and ratified by the EC, was meant to ensure the representation of different perspectives and expertise as well as providing the CP with the means to control a publication. Ultimately, congress had the *de jure* power to change the way a journal was run.

The leadership also realised that they would have to be more cautious in treating dissent because they faced competition for a younger generation of progressive intellectuals from New Left journals: *Universities and Left Review* (ULR), *The New Reasoner* (NR), and their successor, *New Left Review* (NLR).[22] Faced with this competition, the editorial board had to have a credible intellectual presence while satisfying the leadership's desire for it to be 'very strong politically'.[23] Thus, the first MT editorial board (MTEB) included the CP's leading intellectuals, such as Maurice Cornforth, Maurice Dobb, Arnold Kettle, George Thomson and J.D. Bernal.[24] However, a distrust of 'intellectuals' and a need for 'political direction' meant that prominent party

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17 *Ibid.*: 14.
18 Johnstone 1995.
19 CPGB 1957b: 29.
20 *Ibid.*
21 McLennan 1996. This principle was reiterated by the 1979 CIPD report (CPGB 1979).
22 Klugmann 1957.
23 Klugmann was against appointing people to the board 'whose attitude is at present vacillating in order to win them over'; thus, some members of *Marxist Quarterly*'s board were excluded from MTEB (eg Jack Lindsay, Christopher Hill) (*Ibid.*: 2).
24 CPGB 1957c: 1. Bernal was the only non-party member.

workers and officials made up half the board, the General Secretary, John Gollan, became the editor and James Klugmann his assistant.[25]

II. 'The First Generation': 1957-1977

At its launch in 1957, *Marxism Today*'s declared aim was 'to promote Marxist thought over a wide-ranging field of interest and to encourage as much discussion as possible with this object in view'.[26] The new 'theoretical and discussion journal' was launched as a vehicle for a broader range of opinions from within the party and as a forum for progressive (ie non-party) intellectuals through its discussion section, *and* as the party's authoritative voice, providing the Marxist perspective on issues of the day, as its title indicated.[27] As MT continued the work of its predecessor and supported the party at a time of organisational and ideological consolidation in the aftermath of 1956, the EC decided that as a theoretical and discussion journal, MT should also publish articles that did not conform to the MTEB's opinions, including opposing viewpoints.[28] Nevertheless, in conception and practice, MT remained closely linked to the leadership through the editor and the editorial board (eg clearing topical articles for publication). MT s relatively uncontroversial, marginal role, however, is evident in the lack of attention: only three reports on MT in its first 20 years.

The first report in 1960 highlighted MT's weakness in its inadequate development of theoretical work in analysing contemporary issues.[29] The participation of leading members in MT was requested to help make the party's theoretical purpose explicit to contributors: Klugmann cited the successful example of the Marxist treatment of economic issues because of the contribution of members of the Economic Sub-Committee. Success was equated with the participation of EC members on important topics, such as the economy, labour, peaceful co-existence, democracy, the party, philosophy, history, culture and science.[30]

However, while EC members were encouraged to contribute to MT, Klugmann argued that contributors had to be 'quicker off the mark' to challenge 'bourgeois writers and thinkers' and deal with important issues as they arose: he suggested that some form of editorial should be provided in MT.[31] This new section, 'Editorial Comments', which enabled brief statements about political developments, new ideas and publications to be made, without waiting for a polished feature of 2,500-plus words, was in recognition of

[25] Gollan, however, was only a figurehead: Klugmann was the *de facto* editor (Johnstone 1995; King 1994).
[26] CPGB 1957c: 1.
[27] In 1957, Marxism was still equated with the CP's line (Matthews and Matthews 1996; McLennan 1996).
[28] *Ibid.*
[29] Klugmann 1960: 1.
[30] Debates over the future of the labour movement in the 1950s was a result of both 'the *embourgeoisiement* thesis' (affluent workers) and the 'revisionist' attacks on Labour's Clause IV.
[31] Klugmann 1960: 2.

the need to respond to current events as they unfolded.[32] The report claimed that, despite weaknesses, MT had 'done a good job'.[33]

During the second half of the 1960s, the CP began to appeal to both intellectuals and youth as part of an attempt to renew itself, especially as its main source of recruits from the skilled working class, the YCL, went into rapid decline after 1965.[34] Gains amongst university students and white collar employees helped offset the loss of working class recruits.

MT's position was gradually gaining in importance despite declining circulation[35] because of the leadership's *'rapprochement* with intellectuals who had taken a critical line in 1956 but had chosened to remain in the party',[36] the membership's changing profile and the adoption of the EC's statement on *Questions of Ideology and Culture* in 1967, which acknowledged the party's new commitment to 'pluralism' in scientific, religious and cultural matters. Political, ideological and theoretical issues became ever more important, especially as the formerly 'monolithic' ideology of 'Marxism-Leninism' could no longer be equated with the CP or the USSR, especially as the former became increasingly critical of the latter (eg 'Prague Spring'). Other events such as May '68, Vietnam, industrial unrest and the counter-culture, contributed to the new importance of politics and renewed debates over Marxism. Outside of solidarity with Vietnam and the South African people, for which the CP's international connections enhanced its position on the Left, the party was often 'outflanked' by far-left groups adopting more 'radical' positions.

These social, political and ideological challenges and circulation decline helped instigate the second report to the EC 13 years later. Klugmann's 1973 report reiterated MT's role as the CP's 'theoretical and discussion journal' which was to contribute to the party's ideology, analyse the party's 'key problems', which were of a political and economic nature, help develop 'the socialist consciousness of the working class and progressive movement and lift the level of understanding of the most active members of the Party'; despite the liberalisation on issues of culture and ideology, MT still needed 'to develop a Marxist approach'.[37] Klugmann drew upon the example of the French Communist Party which, as a mass party, could produce several journals specialising in different subjects, whereas MT was expected to encompass all of them; such a combination of diverse topics often only appealed to a part of the readership.[38]

Klugmann's editorship was not controversial because it followed the parameters set by the party; though as the CP opened up, he did help set up the Christian-Marxist dialogue in 1966. He also encouraged others to engage in critical debate with orthodox Marxist

[32] A point which undermines some criticisms made of MT's topicality (eg Callinicos 1985; Saville 1990).
[33] Klugmann 1960: 1. It had only published three items on the party out of 188 in the first 27 months.
[34] Fishman 1994; Samuel 1987: 74-75; Waite 1995.
[35] During the 1960s, circulation declined from 4,300 sales to less than 2,500, except for occasional special issues (eg 100th anniversary issue of Lenin's birth).
[36] Andrews 1995a: 228.
[37] Klugmann 1973: 2.
[38] *Ibid.*

ideas, though he was unwilling to do so himself.[39] However, Klugmann did consult with the leadership over controversial articles about political and economic issues: this policy meant that both pro-Soviet advocates and radical Eurocommunists often found themselves refused publication. Criticisms of the leadership's condemnation of the USSR's suppression of the 'Prague Spring', did not break the consensus; articles and discussion contributions reflected different viewpoints within acceptable limits.[40] By the mid-1970s, circulation had begun to pick up despite a slow but continuous decline in membership, while attempts to make improvements in presentation and increase advertising met with some success: the Communist University of London (CUL) issues (July) attracted some scholarly publishers (usually of books about Marxism). However, Klugmann had difficulties meeting these demands with minimal personnel: three days a week secretarial help for administrative tasks; Jack Cohen, a party education officer, helped with editorial and production work; and some MTEB members provided occasional editorial help.

In 1976, Gollan's reassessment of Khrushchev's 'secret speech' sparked off an intense debate over the legacy of Stalinism and 1956 which pointed to the emerging party divisions. Conservative members felt that there was no purpose in dredging up old events, which only deflected the party from fighting 'monopoly capital', and reformists argued that Gollan's article showed little advance on 1956 (only the leadership appeared to welcome it).[41] These disagreements intensified in the debates over the new draft of *The British Road to Socialism* (BRS) in the run-up to the 1977 Congress and were characterised by '[b]itter rancour and intransigent hostility' between the rival tendencies.[42] The adoption of the fourth edition of the BRS, drafted in part by Jacques and George Matthews, represented a partial victory for the reformists. One key change was the adoption of the 'broad democratic alliance' (BDA) to replace the earlier concept of the 'anti-monopoly alliance' in which the centrality of the organised working class shifted from a vanguard position to part of an 'alliance'. Reformists in turn supported the motion congratulating the CPSU on the sixtieth anniversary of the October Revolution (a few Eurocommunists opposed it).[43]

However, after the 1977 Congress, a minority grouping amongst the traditionalists remained opposed to the new BRS and conservatives and reformists struggled to gain control of branches and district committees, all of which contributed to deepening the internal rift. Jacques was closely involved in the Gramscian-Eurocommunist move to win the membership over to a new leadership which would renew the party ideologically and

[39] Jacques 1996b.
[40] Thus, as some dissident Marxists were 'rehabilitated' and published by the late 1960s, other, uncritically pro-Soviet contributions were not always deemed suitable for publication (eg Laithwaite 1968; Klugmann 1968; Carritt 1970b).
[41] Eg McLennan 1996.
[42] Thompson 1992: 172.
[43] Andrews 1995a: 241.

politically.[44] They were hopeful because of social and political developments taking place domestically and in western Europe since the 1960s, particularly the Italian CP's (PCI) electoral popularity, contributed to the popularity of Gramsci's ideas and Eurocommunism. Conventional Marxism did not offer any explanation for youth cultures, feminism, racism, etc., and the annual CUL (1969-81) provided a stimulating environment in which debates on Marxism and other ideas flourished. Out of this intellectual ferment, grew the specialist committees (eg Theory and Ideology, Arts and Leisure) and journals.[45] These reformists hoped to influence party structures and practices after the revised BRS was adopted in 1977. Their strength lay in many of the specialist advisory committees and among party intellectuals, the very people whose expertise would be needed if theory was made more central to the party's work. Their emphasis on theoretical and ideological issues was also a source of dissatisfaction with the EC's 'managerialism' and the party's orthodox Marxism.

III. 'Caution, Compromise and Communism': 1977-1983

Jacques 's selection for the recommended list for the EC in 1967 at 22 years of age made him one of its youngest ever candidates: the leadership picked him for his intelligence, capabilities as an organiser and (then) orthodox views.[46] However, his views began to change as a direct result of '1968' and its aftermath; he became part of the reformist tendency with hopes of renewing the CP intellectually and politically.[47] As part of his ambitions to become part of a new leadership, if not General Secretary, Jacques gave up his academic career to become editor in September 1977.[48] As with other full-time party officials, Jacques had to take on additional responsibilities, such as chairing committees, preparing reports, etc.

At first Jacques moved cautiously, using reports for the EC to try and persuade them of the necessity of making changes to MT, especially in permitting a theoretical journal the space to explore topical and strategic issues. Jacques's first report called for the leadership to move into a closer working relationship with MT.[49] The report identified different roles for the MTEB and the editorial collective (MTEC): the former was to meet more often in order to provide strategic thinking about the content, issues and direction while fulfilling a representative function for the regions, industry, intellectuals and cadres.

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[44] This was a sizeable grouping, but it did not include all reformists: Jacques and Monty Johnstone did not identify with the term, Eurocommunist, despite being identified with its objectives (*Ibid.*: 237, 248; Jacques 1996b) .

[45] MT's success in the 1970s can be measured by the increased attention it received in EC reports (eg EC 1971, 1977).

[46] Jacques 1996b.

[47] *Ibid.*

[48] Jacques was only appointed to the MTEB (April 1977) once he had accepted the post. An economic historian with a PhD from Cambridge University, Jacques taught at Bristol University from 1971 until 1977. He accepted the job because he believed it would be the only one that would offer him the chance of fulfilling his political ambitions (he had no interest in being a journalist) (Jacques 1996b). Jacques was the only candidate who received unanimous support from the EC (Brennan 1996; Jacques 1996b; McLennan 1996).

[49] Jacques 1978c: 5.

The MTEC was to have responsibility for production, promotion and distribution,[50] but Jacques claimed that it did not control the journal because MT was the CP's theoretical journal.[51]

One of MT's key objectives was to develop the party's political culture by establishing a closer, more concrete relationship between theoretical and practical work: raising the 'political level of our practical work while making our theoretical work more relevant to the needs, concerns and interests of our activists'.[52] He also argued that MT needed a broad remit in order to cover a wide range of issues, be interesting and carry out its role more effectively. The new format was to solve the weaknesses in presentation and expand the space available for articles and hence increase the diversity of subjects, advertising, graphics, etc.[53]

Jacques's plans for MT's first (1979) re-launch was an important part of trying to reach a broader audience of both workers and intellectuals on the Left. MT could not be 'an academic journal aimed narrowly at professional intellectuals' because that would prevent it from establishing a 'closer relationship between theory and practice': it had to 'confront theoretical issues which have a concrete bearing on the practice and perspectives of the left' (issues which feminism and social movements sought to address).[54] MT's links with the CP gave it the potential to reach both labour and new social movements, which unaligned left journals lacked, as well as providing political anchorage.

In internal party discussion and debates across the Left over recent political developments, MT had to address a combination of 'strategic questions' and 'topical political issues', which was what theoretical debate was about in 'a revolutionary party'. As a theoretical journal, Jacques argued, MT needed greater latitude to 'explore the wider context, the deeper meanings of particular problems' rather than being used to promote the party line.[55] Even MT's writing style had been marked by mistaken ideas as to what a theoretical journal was: theory was thought of 'as either the legitimation (or presentation) of the line in flowery marxist jargon, or the discussion of relatively abstruse issues with no obvious bearing on the practical tasks of the party', though the party had recently managed to break with this 'damaging conception'.[56] MT had to be an open journal with party and non-party contributors, because the CP was 'not the fount of all wisdom' and needed 'to draw together the ideas, learning and experiences of a wide range of people'; Jacques's claimed that there was even 'a substantial proportion of the readership' who were not members.[57]

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[50] *Ibid.*: 4-5.
[51] Jacques 1979e: 151.
[52] Jacques 1978c: 1.
[53] *Ibid.*: 2.
[54] Jacques 1979e: 151.
[55] *Ibid.*
[56] *Ibid.*
[57] *Ibid.*

Nevertheless, Jacques reassured the leadership that the bulk of discussion would still take place within the context of the CP's strategy and orientation, where there was still much to be 'argued over'. It was this underlying tension between permitting open discussion and promoting the party line that Jacques was negotiating over (which the 1957 CIPD report had recognised). However, there were differences between 1957 and 1979 in the political strategies and historical contexts. In the wake of 1956, politically isolated and on the defensive, the CP needed to consolidate its organisation. In 1979, Eurocommunist influence was reaching its peak within the CP, Labour was in government and the Left retained an air of confidence. This 'creative tension' lay at the heart of MT 'in its pages and in its production' as a 'major political challenge' because MT had 'to speak to and communicate with and between *different* audiences'.[58]

However, worried by the growing support for reformists and fearing a backlash from conservatives, between 1977 and 1979 the leadership backed moves to restrict reformist influence (part of their 'balancing' act).[59] Despite their attempts to balance out the rival tendencies, battles broke out for control of branches, districts and advisory committees: the London District CP (LDCP) became a centre of the traditionalist opposition.[60] The leadership refused to intervene against the traditionalists despite urging from reformists, though reformists also used the apparatus against their opponents where they had control.[61] MT's attempt to set up readers' groups was stopped by the EC because they said it could lead to 'factional activity': Jacques's critics claimed that he was trying to establish a dual power structure outside of party control.[62]

The Commission on Inner-Party Democracy (CIPD), established by the 1977 Congress, submitted a majority report signed by all Commissioners, while a set of alternative proposals was also submitted by its six Eurocommunist members. The EC agreed to keep discussion on the report confined to *Comment* and *Link*, underlining MT's isolation from internal debate.[63] However, despite the leadership's support for the BRS, they were unwilling to contemplate organisational changes to make the party more democratic and accountable to the membership, which the reformists had argued were necessary to the spirit and line of the new BRS. Approximately two-thirds of the delegates rejected the alternative proposals, which disheartened many reformists and left

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[58] *Ibid.* (original emphasis).
[59] Andrews 1995a: 239-43.
[60] Though different branches within the LDCP were controlled by different groups: eg reformists dominated Hackney and Lewisham branches.
[61] The EC, for example, resisted calls to intervene against the LDCP leadership because of allegations of abusing its power; the London Student Advisory warned that the leadership's failure to deal with the LDCP leadership and 'opponents of the BRS' would cause problems in future (Barron 1978; EC 1978, 1979a). Complaints were also made about reformists abusing their positions (eg Birmingham) (Mullen 1978; EC 1979a).
[62] The leadership only acted nine months after MT's first announcement (EC 1979c: 1).
[63] EC 1979b.

the party with a political strategy attuned to the changing times but wedded to an older, inflexible, hierarchical structure, resistant to change.[64]

Subsequently, prominent reformists found themselves voted off committees or their positions 'neutralised': Dave Cook, National Organiser, had his job description rewritten in 1979 and many of his initiatives blocked; Jacques was thrown off the PC after the 1979 Congress; Sarah Benton resigned as *Comment* editor because of the hostility of leading members.[65] This downturn in the reformists' fortunes was also affected by Eurocommunist defeats in western Europe and the loss of more than 27 percent of the membership (6,853 out of 25,293) between 1977 and 1981, including many Gramscian intellectuals.[66]

Nevertheless, there was support for MT from party centrists and leading members, such as Dave Priscott, George Matthews and Bert Pearce, who supported the new draft of the BRS but opposed organisational reform. Responding to complaints about MT, Priscott argued that it had a role in developing a British Marxist tradition, 'as per the BRS', and that the leadership should encourage those, like Jacques, attempting to do so. Since MT was 'trying to bring our theory closer to contemporary political problems', this was a 'contentious area', and while Priscott did not 'agree with everything' in MT, he argued that it was necessary to 'make more of a deep analysis of the Tory Party', etc.[67] Priscott reminded the EC of resolutions passed at congress which called for focusing on the rise of radical right-wing ideologies and their popular appeal and on the 'failure of the labour and progressive movements' to take the initiative away from the ruling class since the establishment of the welfare state.[68]

Between 1979 and 1981, Jacques concentrated on making MT a success by extending the range of contributors, advertising and distribution outlets[69] as well as working on design, layout and editorial style.[70] However, as prospects for the Left in the Labour Party increased, MT's promotion of the timely and prescient analyses of labour's decline and Thatcherism ensured the journal a prominence on the Left which was picked up by *The Guardian* during the 1980s.

MT's success helped to cultivate resentment among some party members, not least from Tony Chater and traditionalists at the *Morning Star*.[71] At the 1977 Congress, an amendment critical of Chater's editorship of the *Star* was passed despite the leadership's

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64 Andrews 1995a: 242.

65 Benton 1980; EC 1981a. Benton's efforts to improve *Comment*'s presentation were also ignored; she was isolated and lacked the political skills and personal support that Jacques had acquired through the EC (Jacques 1996b).

66 Andrews 1995a: 242-44; Callaghan 1988: 242. It was not only reformists that left the party (Brennan 1996).

67 Priscott 1980.

68 *Ibid.*

69 Chapter 6.

70 Chapter 7.

71 The *Star*'s staff reflected the divisions between traditionalists, centrists and reformists.

opposition to it.[72] This was 'a highly remarkable if not unique outcome in a CP Congress and indicative of the degree of grass roots dissatisfaction with the party's daily organ', though the subsequent report on the *Star* 'was a rather bland and anodyne document' which just encouraged everyone 'to do better'.[73] Chater, resentful of any criticisms, refused to take notice of the congress decision and circulation continued to decline as the *Star* showed no improvements in presentation or content. The outcome of the report was thus to increase the hostility felt between Chater and his critics and fuel his antipathy towards the leadership.

With no let-up in the *Star*'s decline, strong criticisms of its editorship were made in motions submitted for the 1981 Congress. MT, by contrast, went from strength to strength in presentation, design, circulation, advertising, etc., including nationwide distribution through W. H. Smith's newsagents. As MT succeeded where the *Star* failed, especially in reaching a broader audience, MT received kudos from leading officials and ordinary members alike: indeed, as the party declined, MT was to become their only success story.[74] Against Chater's expectations, this time the EC swung its support behind the criticisms of the *Star* during the debate on the motion: Chater felt betrayed and the traditionalist opposition secured a useful ally. That the traditionalists nearly succeeded in defeating the EC's stand against the USSR's invasion of Afghanistan indicates the continuing strength of feeling that some older orthodoxies retained within the CP.[75] Internal divisions sharpened and MT became increasingly the focus of the traditionalists' attacks on the CP's 'revisionism'; Jacques, nevertheless, was re-elected to the PC.

However, the traditionalists opposition was an amalgam of several groupings, of which two of the most cohesive were those fronted by the journals, *Straight Left* (SL) and *The Leninist*. SL was the first conservative faction formed in the aftermath of Labour's defeat in 1979 and it promoted its paper as a 'broad labour movement journal'.[76] *The Leninist* faction was a 'shadowy' group formed by a splinter from the NCP's youth wing in 1981 which re-entered the CP.[77] *The Leninist* was turned from a quarterly into a monthly in May 1984 in an attempt to intervene more actively in the CP. Attempts by the leadership to stop members from contributing to these journals were not always successful; the leadership reversed an earlier decision not to allow members to write for SL because it observed restrictions in its criticisms, and because of its connections with 'labour movement figures'; *The Leninist* was, however, proscribed: it promoted 'ultra-bolshevism' and denounced all versions of the BRS.[78] Although these groups opposed

72 Chater was part of the leadership and not yet allied to the opposition.
73 Thompson 1992: 174.
74 MT's success became inextricably intertwined with Jacques.
75 The traditionalists received 47% of the votes against the EC's 53%: the closest the leadership had come to being defeated at congress. The experience was only repeated once more, over the *New Times* manifesto in 1989.
76 Thompson 1992: 181-83.
77 *Ibid.*: 181-82. They operated out of a post office box number in London (A. Mitchell 1984: 5).
78 Thompson 1992: 182; EC 1981b.

many of the same things, they did not necessarily approve of each other nor agree to the same objectives beyond defeating the reformists and the leadership.

The first serious challenge to Jacques's editorship came in August 1982 from Chater and the party's Industrial Organiser, Mick Costello, when they launched a public attack over an article on trade unions. The author, Tony Lane, a sociologist and CP member, criticised some union officials 'sharing in the expense account syndrome: the franchise of perks and fiddles',[79] which he saw as part of a 'crisis of legitimacy' affecting the labour movement.[80] One critic even agreed that Lane's article was 'simply nondescript' but it was the final sections which were 'gravely offensive'.[81] Critics argued for solidarity with shop stewards and unions because of Thatcher's virulently anti-union government. However, others, including some union officials who harboured reservations about the article, argued for 'our right to be self-critical' and that Thatcherism's existence did not 'suspend this right'.[82]

Costello's attack appeared on the front page of the *Star* and it was written as if it had the EC's backing.[83] Costello used his press contacts to get the *Daily Mirror* and *The Telegraph* to pick up Lane's comments in order to help press home his attack on MT; he was able to point to the 'anti-left *Mirror*' picking up Lane's article as 'anti-working class'. Though Jacques's position looked untenable (he was worried that he would lose MT just as it was taking off), he refused to accept that he had done anything wrong and told McLennan that he would resign if the EC allowed these criticisms to stand.[84] However, as events unfolded it became clear that not only had Costello blown Lane's comments way out of proportion but also he had acted without the EC's approval.[85] The EC recognised that Chater's and Costello's actions threatened to undermine its authority and it backed Jacques fully: even though he was mildly reproached for not having 'consulted more widely' before publishing, the EC defended the editor's right 'to explore issues'.[86]

The EC was inundated with motions from party branches over the Lane affair as well as others dealing with subsidiary issues, such as the *Star*'s refusal to publish letters critical of Chater and Costello.[87] Even with the backing of one hundred delegates at the TUC Congress, Chater and Costello were unsuccessful in trying to turn the leadership against MT. Instead, they helped bring the internal divisions into the open in the run-up to the 1983 Congress. MT's critics focused on the Lane article and Roy Medvedev's article on

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79 Lane 1982: 13.

80 *Ibid.*: 11-13.

81 Foster 1982b.

82 Lanning 1982; Gardiner 1982; B. Matthews 1982. However, two critics argued for closer links between party, Industrial Organiser and MT on articles relevant to the TUC (Foster 1982a; Seifert 1982).

83 Jacques only learned of the attack after returning home from a holiday and assumed the EC had taken a decision in his absence, otherwise such public criticism of a party publication was inexplicable. Jacques had been cautious about what he published and was shocked that it had caused 'offence' (Jacques 1996b).

84 Jacques had established a personal relationship with McLennan having taught his son at Bristol; McLennan, in turn, was supportive of Jacques and MT. Jacques made his threat only known to McLennan (*Ibid.*).

85 *Ibid.*

86 EC 1982b.

87 EC 1982a: 4; EC 1982c; G. Matthews 1982.

the USSR (some suspected the Medvedev article was the primary motivation behind the Chater-Costello attack but it would probably not have mobilised as much support as playing the 'workerist' card did).[88] In one small matter, however, their attack did bring about change: the MTEB eventually agreed to the publication of a 'disclaimer', introduced in the February 1983 issue,[89] but it was a disclaimer for all articles and not just those which were not following the party line.[90]

MT, however, was under attack because it represented 'the threat of a good example': it was succeeding where the *Star* was failing, increasing circulation while the *Star*'s was decreasing, and it was doing so for all the 'wrong reasons' (according to its critics). Where traditionalists continued to argue for the centrality of the working class to 'socialist advance', MT talked about building a counter-hegemonic force by building a cross-class, popular alliance by opening up across the Left and to the social movements. MT could point to its strategy as part of the BDA, which complemented the CP's increasing openness towards women's, peace, ethnic and student groups. Between 1981 and 1983, MT and the CP initiated or became involved in a number of broad campaigns, the most important of which was the People's March for Jobs (PMJ), because it was the closest manifestation of the BDA.[91]

The beginnings of MT's media coverage enhanced its position *vis- -vis* the party, reinforced by the public events it organised from 1982. The first one, which was part of MT's promotion of 'left unity', was held in the autumn of 1982 (replacing the CULs which ended in 1981): the 'Moving Left Show' (MLS), which attracted over 1200 people from across the Left. The key debate took place between a leading member of the PCI, Giorgio Napolitano, and Tony Benn, which signalled the beginnings of a shift in MT's position. The MLS helped to establish MT as an increasingly independent player on the political stage and provoke more criticisms from traditionalists: they pointed to the first favourable press reports[92] on MT as proof of its 'questionable' politics. Three subsequent events, 'Left Alive' (1984), 'Left Unlimited' (1986) and 'New Times' (1989), attracted ever larger crowds and media coverage; equally important, however, was the numerous smaller, local events, meetings and festivals that were spun off from these national (ie London) events, such as 'Women Alive' (1986) and Gramsci events in Cardiff and Birmingham, etc.[93]

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[88] Jacques 1996b. The CPSU's International Bureau got Roy Medvedev, who was living in England, mixed up with his brother, Zhores Medvedev, who at that time was a dissident living in Moscow, and criticised the leadership for publishing an article by him (Johnstone 1995). A third article, published in the May issue, by Bob Rowthorn on western Europe and the 'common market' also raised concerns among some orthodox members because they claimed it supported Britain's membership in the EEC contrary to party policy, even though Rowthorn refuted such claims (Rowthorn 1982a, 1982b; Jacques 1982a).

[89] 'The views expressed by authors are personal and not necessarily those of the editor or editorial board' (MT 1983c).

[90] Jacques 1982c; MTEB 1982.

[91] Jacques 1981b.

[92] Rutherford 1982.

[93] Despite MT's promotion and identification with 'feminism' (especially by critics), it always remained an attachment rather than an integral element in its makeup, notwithstanding the contributions of Beatrix Campbell, Cynthia Cockburn, Tricia Davis, Suzanne Moore and others.

These all had the effect of helping to spread MT's ideas and generate local media coverage.

IV. 'Fight for Your Right to the Party ': Reaction and Realignment, 1983-1987

As internal divisions became more openly expressed after the Lane affair, it became crucial for Jacques to counter the ongoing criticisms of MT by operating at two levels to convince both the leadership and the party.[94] Though MT was gaining support for its ideas by sending contributors to speak at party meetings and producing articles for internal bulletins,[95] special conferences were introduced in 1983 to help explain MT's role to party members.[96] Jacques used the March 1983 report to the EC to justify and defend MT against its conservative critics; he drew upon the party's original rationale behind MT, which was 'to promote Marxist thought over a wide-ranging field of interest and to encourage as much discussion as possible with this object in view'.[97] This approach was easily justified as MT had succeeded in reaching its largest audience to date with sales more than doubling in the five and one-half years of Jacques's editorship, from less than 5,000 in September 1977 to 11,500 by March 1983.[98] There had been a continual rise in sales since MT's October 1981 nationwide newsagent launch despite the party's declining membership; indeed, party readership had at least held steady if not increased, and MT could claim to be the CP's best source of new recruits.[99]

He used his report to vindicate the changes he had initiated, which as he pointed out had been taken in conjunction with the party (MTEB and EC), in part because of the internal dissension which had arisen over the publication of three articles: Lane's, Medvedev's and Bob Rowthorn's article on the EEC.[100] MT's opponents attacked all three articles as promoting policies contrary to the party line. Jacques defended MT's changes, agreed to by the leadership and MTEB, on the basis that it was bringing together the theoretical and practical in its approach, and MT s success demonstrated the need for a 'flexible and open Marxist analysis' which was neither dogmatic nor jargon-dominated.[101]

Jacques claimed that MT was not only an expression of the 1977 BRS but also part of the 'creative development of the British Marxist tradition' (a party phrase which Jacques invoked to justify MT's record, sales success and controversy). This tradition could only be built upon by engaging with 'a broad range of experiences, traditions and ideas',

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94 The Chaterites were fairly successful at promoting MT as 'anti-working class' and 'anti-trade union' because it was unusual for a Communist publication to be openly 'critical': the reaction to Lane's criticisms, despite their mildness, indicates how unusual it was at the time.

95 Webster 1980, 1983.

96 Farrington 1984; Jacques 1984a.

97 CPGB (1957c) cited in Jacques 1983: 1.

98 Before 1979, only sales of special issues reached 5,000 or more: eg Gollan's assessment of 'Socialist Democracy' (January 1976 MT) which nearly sold out the print run of 7,500 copies. By 1976, the CUL had helped increase sales.

99 Jacques 1983: 6-7, 13. CP advertisements in MT attracted 83 membership applications and enquiries in the six months from October 1981 (McKay 1982), surpassing the *Star*.

100 Lane 1982; Medvedev 1982; Rowthorn 1982a.

101 Jacques 1983: 2.

justifying MT's need to reach outside the party.[102] Countering criticisms that MT had 'consistently sought to be topical', Jacques argued that the most important change since 1977 was the shift to the major political issues of the day, which meant addressing 'the concrete problems facing the Left' (SDP, unemployment, Falklands, etc.): MT's success could be seen in the debates taking place across the Left on 'The Forward March of Labour Halted?' and 'Thatcherism'.[103]

MT's transformation was justified because it had to ensure that the party would be better prepared to engage with new constituencies, which made it necessary to expand the range of contributors to include non-party authors, to broaden its appeal and enhance its quality. The breadth of MT articles drew 'more people both closer to the Party and involved them in helping to develop the strategic perspectives, analysis and understanding of our Party and the wider Left'.[104] This appeal to a broader range of contributors and audiences, of engaging in a BDA through publishing, meant 'a dialogue with forces in the first instance outside the Party on the Left, but beyond that also outside the organised Left'.[105] Since theory was 'intimately linked to action', MT had to include activists as contributors and address them as readers to try and break down the division between theorists and activists; such ambitions meant making its language, design and coverage more accessible.[106]

Jacques conceded that MT needed to publish more articles 'of a strictly theoretical character - on Marxism, the State, the economic crisis and so forth', but he stressed that MT published a wide range of viewpoints and not only views which were against CP policy, as his critics claimed.[107] It was not MT's duty to present congress resolutions and the position of the party *per se*, 'but rather in the totality of what it publishes to make clear the stance of our Party on the major issues of British and international politics'.[108] Assumptions about what a communist theoretical journal should be included the idea that it should promote the party line, as other journals do (eg the SWP's *International Socialism*). In some ways, MT was doing just that: the CP finally adopted the analyses of Thatcherism and the labour movement's crisis at the 37th Congress (three years after MT had introduced them).

MT was reaching a watershed, however, as it began moving away from the Bennite Left, a process which quickened in the disputes over the interpretation of Thatcher's second general election victory of June 1983. The consolidation of changes in design, layout, contributors and production had brought about a much heralded triumph in increased circulation and distribution, which continued to help ward off criticisms. As

102 *Ibid.*
103 *Ibid.*: 3.
104 *Ibid.*
105 *Ibid.*: 4.
106 *Ibid.*
107 *Ibid.*: 5.
108 *Ibid.*: 6.

MT's prestige rose with increasingly favourable media coverage, its critics also responded to what they saw as a move away from core aspects of Communist ideology (eg USSR, industrial working class, unions).

MT's critiques might have encountered greater difficulty within the party except for Chater's and his allies' refusal to accept the disciplinary actions of the leadership, and despite their attempts at reconciliation.[109] Despite the uneasy relations between party leaders and the *Morning Star*, the EC initiated a campaign to increase its sales in January 1983; however, Chater and Costello were determined to carry on their campaign against MT, Jacques and the leadership. Not only did they ignore attempts by the EC and PC to meet, but Chater fanned the flames by appointing Costello as the *Star*'s industrial correspondent less than two months after his resignation from the post of Industrial Organiser and without consulting the EC. It was forced to take action against this breach of discipline: Chater, Costello and deputy editor, David Whitfield, were censured.[110] The Chater group succeeded in defeating the leadership's candidates at the annual general meeting (AGM) of the *Star*'s shareholders in June 1983; this 'hi-jacking' of the *Star* definitively soured relations between the EC and the Management Committee of the People's Press Printing Society (PPPS)[111] (the CP had been described as an 'outside body' trying to 'interfere' in the*Star*'s affairs).[112] This victory gave the Chater group confidence that they would be able to win elections to the EC at the 38th Congress.

Despite the depths of their feelings towards MT and the leadership, the traditionalists, were not united. The Chaterites promoted their version of 'class politics' based around the defence of trade unions but adopted a more sympathetic line on the Soviet bloc to attract more orthodox members, especially *Straight Left* supporters. However, SL was critical of the Chaterites for their 'opportunism' (as part of the EC, Chater and Costello had supported the EC's line on Czechoslovakia and Afghanistan).[113] The *Star* group and SL did, however, realise that they needed to work together if they were to have a chance to win: they agreed on an alternative electoral list for the EC of 42 names.[114] However, this co-operation did not even last for the duration of Congress, as both their alternative electoral list and the SL's daily publication during congress, *Congress Truth*, were denounced by the leadership.

> *Congress Truth* offended the Chaterites, who regarded it as excessive and adventurist - apart from the fact that it did not spare them either - and piously disowned as a

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[109] Thompson 1992: 185-86.
[110] EC 1983: 3.
[111] In 1946, the PPPS was set up so that the paper would survive if the party was made illegal; the EC exercised control through the election of its nominees to the PPPS Management Committee.
[112] This comment infuriated many ordinary members when they realised that 'their' paper was referring to their party as an 'outside body' (Thompson 1992: 186; see A. Mitchell 1984: 18-27).
[113] British teachers on the 1979 Anglo-East German exchange refused to send proceeds from fundraising to the *Star* because of Chater's 'Eurocommunist' and 'anti-Soviet' policies: he was part of the leadership which criticised the USSR (Taylor 1987: 4).
[114] A. Mitchell 1984: 52-57; Thompson 1992: 183, 186-87, 189.

serious breach of discipline the alternative list they had collaborated in producing, thus destroying all possibility of combining the two oppositions.[115]

Jacques had been aware of the dangers that the opposition represented and to try and pre-empt criticisms, MT published a roundtable discussion between four party members representing different views, including traditionalist, in the November 1983 issue.[116] At Congress, he admitted to a subsidy of £567 per issue, which opponents attempted to use to discredit MT despite the relatively small amount;[117] however, it was the use of non-party writers and critiques of left shibboleths that were much more controversial and led to a composite resolution on MT.[118] The motion praised MT for its design and appearance, recruitment of new members, doubling of circulation and 'its growing influence and respect on the left, in the trade union movement and amongst progressive and democratic forces' and its 'striking analyses of the current political situation', and its success was 'a demonstration of the possibilities opened to the party by a bold presentation of the ideas and approach' of the BRS.[119] Nevertheless, the motion pointed to six areas for improvement: the CP's contribution should 'be featured more consistently and in a more lively way'; more party contributors, including 'members at all levels and across a spectrum of views'; more women writers; greater coverage of feminism and black people; to maintain and develop the involvement of trade unionists; and to increase space for letters and discussion.[120] The motion reflected criticisms that MT was not permitting all views equal access and that it marginalised the party's involvement in MT.

The 1983 Congress enabled the leadership, allied with reformists and supported by "rank-and-file loyalists who ... resented the 'hi-jack' of their newspaper", to gain the upper hand, which ensured that most traditionalist opponents, including Chater and Costello, were voted off the EC.[121] The leadership and reformists combined to suspend or remove many of their opponents from the apparatus. However, though the leadership had gained the upper hand at congress, the oppositionists, representing around two-fifths of delegates, remained a potent threat to both the leadership and MT. Low-level civil war in branches heated up, except this time the EC was prepared to intervene against the traditionalists, when and where possible: it removed them from staff positions and closed down districts and branches to prevent them from sending oppositionist delegates to congress. When the LDCP Secretary died, the PC appointed a loyal party worker to the post; against traditionalist opposition the leadership closed down the LDCP s Congress in November 1984, expelling those who refused to comply (SL followers walked out with

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115 Thompson 1992: 190.
116 Jacques 1996c.
117 Such criticism ignores the fact that all party publications were subsidised to a greater or lesser degree and MT's subsidies at this point were small, especially when compared to others and taking into account its production values, distribution and public profile.
118 NPC 1983.
119 *Ibid.*
120 *Ibid.*
121 Thompson 1992: 186.

party loyalists leaving their erstwhile allies behind to face disciplinary action).[122] Other factional groups, such as *The Leninist*, were banned because their objective was 'to conduct a factional battle within the Communist Party to reverse Congress policy and to oppose the elected leadership'.[123] Feelings were intense on both sides; at one point, when rumours of an impending compromise between the leadership and the Chaterites began circulating in some of the broadsheets and magazines, one party member argued against any compromise in order to get rid of 'Stalinist hangovers'![124]

The CP's crisis and loss of control over its daily paper forced the leadership to rely on its internal monthly journal, *Focus*, as the primary means of communicating with its members; this left MT as the party's only public face which further strengthened its position *vis- -vis* the EC. Though MT continued to intervene in the debates over the significance of Labour's second electoral defeat, it did provide space for internal debates, particularly in the run-up to the 1985 Congress.[125] However, this attention to internal debate was justified on the grounds that these were similar issues facing the rest of the Left. This 'realignment of the Left' took in debates over the Labour Party's direction and was divided between the 'hard' and 'soft' (or 'realistic') Lefts.

The importance of MT's public profile and strategic interventions in left debates positioned it within the CP's public work, enhanced by continuing increases in circulation and national media coverage. The party also recognised that MT brought it 'a great deal of credit' through its intervention in, and initiation of, political debates, and because it attracted people who would not normally come to its public meetings.[126] MT appealed to a majority of the membership, not necessarily because they agreed with its analyses, but because MT represented a successful Communist enterprise.[127] Indeed, as one former Communist observed, the centrists let themselves believe that they were moving into the mainstream of public life because of MT's 'public relations success'.[128]

The pressing issue facing the EC was the *Star*'s break from the party and its refusal to abide by party decisions. The EC brought the 39th Congress forward to May 1985 to mobilise the rank-and-file to win back control of the PPPS at its AGM in June. In the run-up to congress, MT published a number of articles which were critical of the traditionalists' positions and sought to win over other party members. Both camps had sought to out-do each other in their support for the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) during the 1984-85 miners' strike, as the demonstration of solidarity with the labour movement was absolutely crucial to winning over the majority of members. Crucially, a number of leading NUM officials (and CP members), including Mick

122 EC 1984d, 1984e. Only 5 out of 31 EC members opposed Ian McKay's appointment as the new LDCP Secretary, but there were more letters protesting the EC's actions than supporting it.
123 EC 1984a.
124 Thompson 1984; EC 1984b.
125 Eg Cook 1985; Priscott 1983.
126 Temple 1984: 4.
127 Andrews 1998. There was even a tradition of loyalty between members of the same branch, even when there were disagreements over each other's ideas.
128 Samuel 1985: 18-19.

McGahey, president of the Scottish NUM, supported MT. Nevertheless, MT expressed its reservations about the failure of NUM leaders to call for a ballot on the strike and do more to win public opinion.[129]

As MT's continuing high media profile and the CP's adoption of the themes promoted through its pages angered conservative oppositionists, MT prepared an eight-page pamphlet for congress delegates which addressed criticisms and highlighted its achievements.[130] MT had to win over those who were uncertain about the magazine and its ideas, and as the majority still looked to the leadership for direction, the support of McLennan, McGahey, Betty and George Matthews, Bert Pearce and others amongst this older generation, was crucial.[131]

The oppositionists ranged from those who were 'hard-liners', who opposed the BRS and anything but unswerving loyalty to the USSR (eg *The Leninist*), to the SL Stalinists, who would abide by party discipline, but otherwise maintained a faith in the USSR as the home of 'socialist revolution' (John Foster, a MTEB member and labour historian, was a supporter), to the *Star* group, who portrayed themselves as the true inheritors of the CP's traditions and promoted working class struggles and union militancy. A number of prominent intellectuals joined with the *Star* oppositionists: Elizabeth Wilson, Angela Weir, Ben Fine, Laurence Harris and Marjorie Mayo, who jointly authored *Class Politics: An Answer to Its Critics*.[132] The CP's crisis had caught the attention of former comrades, like Irene Brennan and Raphael Samuel, other left groups, like the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) and the SWP,[133] and capitalist media: factions fed information to different media.[134]

Gordon McLennan's speech to Congress reiterated the EC's critique of the*Star* and equated criticisms of MT with 'attacking the Party itself'![135] It had become clear that friendships had broken down and McLennan had braved a lot of ill-will at meetings around Britain in the months leading up to Congress.[136] It was at the 1985 Congress that Jacques apparently came to an understanding with McLennan not to run for the post of General Secretary as long as McLennan continued to support MT against its critics.[137] McLennan denies that any 'deal' was struck; he claims that his and Jacques's political

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[129] Eg Francis 1985.

[130] MTEC 1985.

[131] Betty Matthews, George Matthews's wife, was chosen as the MT delegate to the 39th Congress. The support for MT and Jacques from leading party members like the Matthews, McLennan and Hobsbawm, was enthusiastic and practically unconditional (Hobsbawm 1997; Matthews and Matthews 1996; McLennan 1996).

[132] This pamphlet was treated by reformists as the *Star*'s 'theoretical statement' (Davis 1985: 36).

[133] Eg Birchall 1985; Callinicos 1985; A. Mitchell 1984. There was a 'spy' who volunteered at MT to feed information to the WRP's paper, *News Line* (Jacques 1996c).

[134] Brennan says that she became active again in the CP to help her former comrades amongst the oppositionists (Brennan 1996). Samuel, who had left the CP in 1956, wrote three articles for NLR which reflected upon the CP's crisis and its background (Samuel 1985, 1986b, 1987).

[135] McLennan 1985: 6.

[136] Beckett 1995: 214; A. Mitchell 1984: 31, 46, *passim*.

[137] Andrews 1995b. Nina Temple suggests that Jacques's motivation was to ensure the CP's annual subsidies, etc. (Temple 1994).

views came together and therefore they found themselves in favour of the same things.[138] Jacques could not have carried enough of the party to have defeated the oppositionists; it was only with the backing of McLennan and the leadership that they prevented the party from falling into the hands of the traditionalists. MT's success in building up a large readership and media coverage, which contributed to the CP's greater public profile, helped to justify the CP's financial support for MT.[139] For their own reasons, if not sheer necessity, McLennan and Jacques had to support each other against this opposition. Also, for party centrists to support the opposition, they would have had, not only to renounce the 1977 BRS and their most successful publication (MT), but also to reverse a tradition of loyalty to the leadership, especially when the party's very survival was at stake.

Jacques and MT supporters must have been worried by the number of amendments being put forward at the 39th Special Congress which represented a serious critique of, and an attempt to intervene in, the editorial direction of MT. Composite 19, based on nine amendments, sought to amend the principal EC resolution before Congress; it suggested that MT had moved away from Klugmann's policy of opening MT's pages 'to all trends within the party so as to encourage genuine debate, dialogue and discussion', and Jacques was accused of only permitting a 'relatively narrow political spectrum' of contributors to the features, with the rest 'relegated to the letter[s'] page or to an occasional discussion column'.[140] The motion was carried because it was acknowledged as 'legitimate criticism'. Nevertheless, Jacques's position was further strengthened in the aftermath of the expulsions of oppositionists at the Congress[141] and the confirmation of the CP's loss of its daily paper at the PPPS AGM in June 1985[142] (and the subsequent loss of members): MT became vital to the party if it was to avoid a complete slide into obscurity.

V. 'The Tail Wags the Dog': 1987-1989

By January 1987, MT's position *vis- -vis* the party was strengthened considerably by the loss of the *Star*, the defeat of conservative opponents, its public profile and intervention in left debates, and its continuing rise in circulation. With the traditionalists out of the way and the reformists in the ascendant, many of the latter began to clamour for MT to involve itself more closely with the party: both the 1983 and 1985 congresses had passed motions which, while acknowledging the gains that MT had made during the 1980s, also criticised MT for its failure to include more leading members, a wider range of contributors, more women and ethnic minority writers and a broader coverage of issues. Jacques had to maintain the support of the leadership in order to help prevent 'interference' from congress and to maintain MT's editorial and organisational autonomy.

138 McLennan says that he did not want to retire either until he had reached sixty (McLennan 1996).
139 It was not until Christmas 1987, that MT's debts, which had increased dramatically over 1986, were revealed (see Table 4.1).
140 SPC 1985.
141 The 1985 Congress confirmed the expulsions of the oppositionists: eg Chater, Whitfield, and Ken Gill (who became chairman of the TUC later in the same year).
142 The CP resolved not to take legal action against Chater *et al.* despite having 'a strong case' because they did not want a judge deciding the fate of a Communist paper (McLennan 1996).

These were necessary for MT to continue into its next phase as its project shifted from critique to 'modernisation' of the Left.

MT's critiques had become 'common-sense' but socialism had lost 'its sense of direction' and the Left had become isolated, even 'estranged from modern society'.[143] If MT's project to modernise the Left meant examining the Left as a complete entity, MT had to be 'accessible to and the property of' the whole of the left', and since it was not a magazine with a 'line' but one "of approach, of orientation ... a trajectory rather than a set 'position'"; it meant that the party should maintain its distance from the magazine.[144] In the past, MT's priorities had been traditional, but it could not and did not try to do everything: instead, MT 'seeks to occupy the political high-ground' by trying 'to set the terms of political debate'.[145] MT had recruited the 'best writers around', and it went against the grain of the Left's and the CP's dominant tradition, which worked backwards from the party line.[146] MT was not only moving away from its role as a theoretical and discussion journal, but also beginning to shift away from the BRS and the Gramscian war of position.

In identifying the key problems facing the Left, MT claimed to do so within the Gramscian tradition, though not all writers thought along the same lines. Essential to MT's appeal, Jacques claimed, were the tensions and conflicts between 'identity and pluralism': between MT's identity in its 'central tradition' and 'its defining characteristic', Marxism, and the plurality of 'contrasting views and approaches', expressed 'politically and journalistically'.[147] MT's sub-title no longer described what it had become, and though the 'discussion of theoretical issues as such' was limited, the Marxist tradition was responsible for MT's origins and its coherence and influence. MT's identity and politics were based on the oft-cited 'creative development of Marxism': 'But the object of the analysis is the political situation or conjuncture', not about some "relatively removed zone of 'ideology'".[148] This marked MT out from the others, Jacques claimed, because it 'operated at the interface of politics and theory', which enabled it to be 'a political intervention in the Left, in the Labour Party, in and of the CP, in the peace movement, in British politics more generally'; MT's approach made it 'both stimulating and disturbing, even painful, to its readership'.[149]

After reassuring his audience about MT's political position, Jacques acknowledged that he should have been clearer earlier about spelling out MT's project and the lessons it had for the CP, despite the differences between a party and a magazine.[150] However, it was MT which gave the CP 'a quite new political and ideological credibility', which

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143 Jacques 1987b: 1.
144 *Ibid.*:2.
145 *Ibid.*
146 *Ibid.*: 2-3.
147 *Ibid.*: 3.
148 *Ibid.*: 4.
149 *Ibid.*
150 *Ibid.*: 7.

opened up new spheres for the party to operate in and changed the form of public events from the 'meeting with a Party speaker or two' to events with 'a range of speakers, [and] a new type of political discussion', such as 'Left Unlimited'.[151] Jacques even suggested that the CP had 'pioneered a new conception' of the party-press relationship: the CP was the 'sponsor and publisher' of its 'theoretical and discussion journal' but that did not mean that MT was the party's public organ.[152] For Jacques, there are two elements to this: one is MT as 'a dimension of the CP's own work, a form to use and develop'; the other is 'MT as a form of politics, as an intervention which does not belong *organisationally* or *instrumentally* to the CP, but can have a presence in CND or the Labour Party or whatever'.[153] This was why Jacques argued for MT's autonomy so that it could be used by the Labour Party, CND, etc., as a basis for their meetings. However, Jacques provocatively suggested that:

> MT is a political challenge to the Communist Party, a challenge which remains largely unmet, in my opinion for political reasons. So far we have failed to explore and use the potential of MT for the CP. At the same time the CP has largely failed to learn from MT, to develop a hegemonic role rather than a somewhat sectarian and isolated one.[154]

The CP still had to work out its relationship with MT.

With the prospect of a third Conservative election victory looming, the May 1987 issue carried an article in favour of 'tactical voting': voting for the best placed candidates to maximise anti-Thatcher votes to oust the government.[155] A special EC was called to discuss MT's role because tactical voting contradicted party policy and MT was accused of 'hoisting policies' onto the party, according to Nina Temple.[156] Reformists, such as Temple, whose commitment to the CP was greater than to MT, were not against the publication of Hobsbawm's article, but felt that a contrary position should have been published alongside: thus, the EC defeated overwhelmingly a motion that it was 'an error of judgement' to have published Hobsbawm's article (4 to 24), but agreed (19 to 9) that, although the move was 'quite legitimate', there was 'imbalance in the presentation'.[157]

It is also testimony to the way in which MT could still generate controversy within the party even after the purge of leading traditionalists, and indicates the uneasiness with which MT was viewed by many. Temple, a former supporter of MT, wanted to see it brought back within the party fold because it could have played an important part in

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151 *Ibid.*: 5, 6.
152 *Ibid.*: 6.
153 *Ibid.*
154 *Ibid.*: 9.
155 Hobsbawm 1987a.
156 EC 1987a.
157 EC 1987b. Jacques's illness saved him from more serious criticisms. ME, the so-called 'yuppie flu', had a debilitating effect on Jacques for several months and he changed his approach to work and lifestyle. He was unable to oversee the production process and supervise new staff (Jacques 1996d).

promoting the ideas and approaches of a new, reformist leadership: a view echoed by others like Monty Johnstone.[158]

This uneasiness was also felt by many MT supporters as expressed in resolutions put forward for the 40th (1987) Congress. Some opposition to MT arose amongst party members who objected to the way in which MT lumped together groups as diverse as Tony Benn's followers, militant trade unionists, the *Star* group, Militant Tendency, etc., as the 'hard left'.[159]These tactics were seen as divisive and counter-productive to calls for 'left unity' by both reformists and traditionalists, but the substance of their criticisms diverged.[160] Bert Ramelson, a former Industrial Organiser and traditionalist, argued that MT had 'not been a *discussion* but a *campaigning* journal for a particular tendency', restricting 'discussion' to MT supporters, whereas others endorsed MT's 'general line and sentiment' but criticised it for its advertising (personals, expensive consumer items).[161]

The principal EC resolution introduced for discussion in the run-up to the 40th Congress included a critique of MT. It acknowledged MT's gains in circulation and influence, its success in playing 'an important role in political debate on the left' and in projecting an image of the CP as a 'powerful political and ideological influence'; the resolution also recognised MT as the principal source of new recruits to the party and MT events as among the 'most successful' of the CP's public activities. The EC suggested, however, that during the next two years, 'the magazine will need to shift its ground towards the reconstruction of the left and its perspective', because though MT's strength had been in its critiques of the problems facing the Left, 'its weakness, like the rest of the left, has been what to do about them'.[162] Therefore the EC, Jacques and the MTEB needed to discuss how to implement the decisions of the two previous congresses, 'to have more articles by leading Communists' while carrying out its task of 'modernisation'; the resolution also suggested that in discussions over a new draft of the BRS it would 'be valuable...if such articles span a wide spectrum of views' within the CP.[163]

There was also a composite motion on MT carried at Congress which expressed reservations about MT's development from reformists and centrists who wanted MT, as the CP's only successful publication, to work more closely with the party. The motion acknowledged that there were 'misunderstandings and misgivings' about its role and the areas for redress were similar to earlier resolutions: to improve coverage of labour and of black politics; to redress the imbalance of MT's Metropolitan bias by providing more space for Scotland, Wales and the regions, and 'an even broader range of contributors'. However, the motion also recognised that because MT had 'changed considerably' during the 1980s it could 'no longer be considered simply as a theoretical journal', but it was

158 Johnstone 1990.
159 Ramelson 1987.
160 *Ibid.*; Priscott 1986, 1988.
161 Ramelson 1987 (original emphasis). There was disapproval of some personal ads from some MTEB members and younger members (eg John and Field 1987).
162 EC 1987c: 7.
163 *Ibid.*

clear to the majority of delegates that it was the party's responsibility, through the EC and MTEB, to 'consider the precise definition of the journal': this was part of the membership's attempt to reassert its authority over MT.[164] The motion also called for 'close consultation' and 'better communication' between the leadership and MT to 'enhance mutual understanding', but it also stated that this process 'should in no way curb initiative'.

The 40th Congress also re-confirmed the 1985 purge of leading traditionalists and the use of the Stalinist practice of democratic centralism. It enabled McLennan and MT's supporters amongst the leadership to maintain MT's autonomy. Whereas Jacques and the reformists had complained in the past about Stalinist practices, from 1983 they benefited from its use in seeing off the opposition. Democratic centralism enabled MT and the reformists, with the EC's backing, to control the committees that prepared composite motions, lists of speakers and 'recommended' electoral lists. Though the use of democratic centralism against traditionalists may have been ignored by reformists, the conduct of the 40th Congress brought criticisms against MT's supporters from other reformists: those allowed to speak to the motion on MT either represented views strongly sympathetic to MT or 'spoke from a stance of political opposition which was, in our view, rightly marginalised by the Congress'.[165] These speakers did not represent the range of views which expressed 'concerns about the content and direction of MT' and its relationship with the EC: by polarising the debate, 'intermediate views' could be excluded and MT's autonomy maintained.[166]

The reformists were basically divided between MT's supporters and those who wanted MT to play a closer role in re-building the party, which included former Eurocommunists and dissident Marxists. Continuing internal divisions provoked further membership losses. Years of internecine struggle had left many reformists frustrated and demoralised because after fighting off the traditionalists,[167] MT refused to work more closely with the party because the CP had 'failed to learn' from MT. These members saw MT as the basis for renewal of the party. MT's success at the newsagents was dependent upon not only its distance from the CP, but also from its friends.

Despite these differences, MT and the CP began moving closer together ideologically at the end of the 1980s, which was enhanced by growing enthusiasm for the USSR's new modernising reformer, Mikhail Gorbachev.[168] This was a particularly important change after the USSR had invaded Afghanistan in December 1978 and backed the military *coup d'etat* in Poland in 1981. After the death of Konstantin Chernenko in 1985, Gorbachev had taken over, a reformer intent on changing and adapting the USSR, introducing market reforms (*perestroika*: 'restructuring'), opening up public debate (*glasnost'*: 'speaking out'),

164 NPC 1987.
165 Rodriguez 1988. The sympathetic speakers were: Doug Chalmers, Paul Hassan, Mark Perryman, Beatrix Campbell and Steve Hart: the 'critic' was Will Gee.
166 *Ibid.* See Thompson 1987.
167 Rodriguez 1988.
168 Callaghan 1993.

introducing democracy (*demokratizatsiya*: 'democratisation'), establishing peace and reducing the arms race.[169] By 1987 (and despite the disaster of Chernobyl the previous year), 'Gorbymania' had taken over the CPGB and once again one could find articles on the USSR in MT.[170] Gorbachev represented the hope that the USSR might be reformable, even though initial predictions had been less optimistic.[171] Yet by 1989, CP members faced disappointment with the problems that beset Gorbachev's reform programme, compounded by the Chinese People's Liberation Army's massacre of unarmed pro democracy protestors in Tiananmen Square and the civic revolutions in Eastern Europe. For Jacques, this was the Communist system's 'terminal crisis' which signalled the end of, not only Stalinism, but also Leninism.[172]

Social and economic changes taking place in Britain and globally began to have an impact, especially as Labour seemed unable to stop Thatcherism despite mass unemployment, de-industrialisation and its authoritarianism. Both Britain and the world seemed to be changing irrevocably under the neo-liberal agenda and 'globalisation'; the Left seemed tired and bereft of strategies to counter it. It was this awareness, charted through MT in the preceding decade, which was influencing discussions across the Left. The 'world' as captured in the 1977 BRS no longer existed: wholesale re-thinking was needed. Under pressure from the reformists, the 40th Congress called for a commission to develop a new manifesto. Crucially, it included key MT contributors such as Jacques, Beatrix Campbell and Charlie Leadbeater. The commission launched a discussion document, 'Facing Up to the Future' (FUTTF), which pointed to significant shifts in the economy, society, politics and culture: it renewed MT supporters' interest in the party.[173]

In the meantime, however, finances had become a serious threat to MT's existence. Though finances were always a matter of 'sharp exchanges' between McLennan and Jacques, McLennan argued that the party always put politics before finances: 'we could always find the money, and not from Moscow either, for a political purpose, whether conducting a campaign or a daily paper'.[174]Nevertheless, the subsequent revelation of a massive deficit of more than £43,000 at Christmas 1987, only one month after the 40th Congress, caused serious difficulties for MT: it was forced to deal with the consequent criticisms and decisions. Though complaints had been made before about subsidies, they had usually been ignored, because they were either made by oppositionists or the debts were comparable to those of the CP's Press and Publicity Department. The 1987 deficit

169 Galeotti 1997.

170 However, MT contributors on Soviet and Eastern European affairs had shifted from dissident party intellectuals to academic experts and broadsheet journalists (Chapter 6). In 1987, MT organised a satellite hook-up at the Riverside Studios, London, to watch the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution parade in Moscow.

171 Johnstone 1985a, 1985b.

172 Jacques 1989b.

173 Fishman 1994: 160-61.

174 McLennan 1996. 'Moscow gold' ended in 1979 after being reduced substantially in 1971 (Anderson and Davey 1995; Beckett 1995).

figure, however, was much greater than anything before: more than twice the previous year's loss of approximately £19,000 and nearly four times the 1985 debt.[175]

This new level of debt meant that MT could no longer ignore resentment at its disregard for previous congress decisions, although because the revelation of the 1987 deficit only came after the 40th Congress, it meant that the membership could do little until the next congress in 1989. The EC was concerned because the deficit hampered MT's cash flow: from May 1988, MT was required to report to and consult with the PC over financial issues every month in return for further subsidies. A new staff member, Julian Turner, had proved himself adept with financial matters and became the business manager, freeing Jacques from the more onerous side of publishing and allowing him to concentrate on the editorial side.[176]

McLennan addressed the MTEB in July 1988 to help MT demonstrate to the EC how it had made progress on 'specific deficiencies referred to in the resolution'![177] McLennan also urged other EC members to support MT: at a May 1988 PC meeting, he argued that MT 'must not be allowed to close'.[178]Jacques used the meeting to re-define MT's role (one of the resolution's demands), pointing out the differences between the party and a periodical and the need to be able to explore issues without having to promote a line; this was also to try and pre-empt criticisms of MT's independence and demands for party involvement. The EC seemed 'generally positive' towards MT, though Ros Brunt, a MTEB member, suggested that the board had to educate the CP about the 'reality of running a successful magazine': the differences between running a party and running a magazine and between a journal and a magazine were possible reasons for the continuing problems between the party and MT.[179] There was 'still a depressing lack of consensus on the role of MT within the party: as a platform for diversity, or as the expression of a broad political-theoretical trajectory which would challenge prevailing orthodoxy'.[180]

VI. 'From New Times to Dog Days': 1989-1991

Until 1987, Jacques had been able to sustain some disregard for congress decisions because of MT's success and internal party conflict; however, with the financial crisis, MT's future became more difficult. It forced a re-thinking of MT's relationship with the CP and its financing, despite MT's fairly autonomous public activities (and the occasional joint effort with the CP). The name posed obstacles for (potential) advertisers and readers, the CP's decline meant it was becoming a less reliable source of funding and the historic

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[175] This amount was not large by the standards of most commercial magazines. Political magazines of both Left *and* Right had financial difficulties during the 1980s: eg *New Statesman* and *The Spectator* (it is ironic that even right-wing magazines had to be subsidised during Thatcherism's hegemony). The debt for the twelve months of 1985, c.£12,000, was considerably larger than for the first twelve months of its first year of financial autonomy (eg October 1984-September 1985), at just under £5,000 (see Table 4.1). As of May 1988, MT's deficit was £43,461.00 (EC 1988b).

[176] Finances had put considerable strain on his health (Jacques 1996d).

[177] MTEB 1988a.

[178] PC 1988.

[179] *Ibid.*

[180] *Ibid.*

events of 1989 would make the Communist connection even more of a liability: MT's organisational independence, therefore, would be absolutely necessary to try and secure its financial future. This was only fully realised at the end of 1989.[181]

With internal resentment growing, Jacques had to fight for MT's autonomy by redefining exactly its role.[182] He pointed to MT's transformation as a clear indication that the critics were wrong because their criticisms were based on the old definition, when MT was read and sold mostly within the party, compared to 1988 when more than 80% of its readership were not members and it was being sold in the marketplace.[183] Thus, Jacques asked if its sub-title was any longer 'adequate' to what it had become, pointing out that MT was 'no longer a journal but a magazine', which was 'not a semantic question', although he did not discuss it further.[184] The CP and MT had to be 'more creative' about their relationship because of 'the new terrain' on which MT existed.[185]The publication of FUTTF indicated how 'perfectly compatible' MT's new role was with the CP. The document 'made a very positive contribution to the magazine's editorial dynamics', and because MT helped to promote the document, it reached many on the Left who would not normally have seen it; due to MT's reputation 'it had an immediate and greatly enhanced credibility with the media': FUTTF entered 'the bloodstream of political debate in a new way for a party document'.[186] Jacques concluded that the CP should address its relationship in terms of 'the new ground' that MT 'actually occupies'.[187]

The ideas contained in FUTTF were adopted and promoted in the launch of the *Manifesto for New Times* (MNT), published as a supplement with the June 1989 MT, which was subsequently put before the 41st Congress in November 1989. The Congress broke with old traditions in at least two respects: Jacques made the opening address to Congress instead of the General Secretary; and the delegates were given no guidance from the EC on which way they should vote. This break with tradition made it harder for Jacques and the others to win over the party to the MNT because there was a lot of disagreement over its ideas and concepts. McLennan's intervention helped to rally centrists who wanted to retain (sic) some of the CP's traditions, such as class and the role of the party (Marxism-Leninism was even retained for a short time).[188] The vote on the MNT was only the second time that Congress came close to defeating the EC: there was even an attempt to have the MNT accepted only as a 'discussion document'.[189]

Resentment of MT's autonomy ensured the passage of two critical motions at congress. One called for MT's sub-title to be 'restored to a more prominent display in the magazine even if this implies that the welcome innovation of an editorial/leader should be

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181 MTEB 1990.
182 Jacques 1988a.
183 *Ibid.*: 9.
184 *Ibid.*
185 *Ibid.*
186 *Ibid.*
187 *Ibid.*
188 Fishman 1994: 168; Thompson 1992: 203.
189 NPC 1989: 1.

expanded and developed to present the Party's view of current politics'.[190] The other, while congratulating MT on sales and its role in politics, disputed the assertion that the inclusion of two CP documents in separate issues of MT could "be said to have 'vastly improved'" the party's profile since the last congress and pointed out that even when party members participate in MT they are not identified as such.[191] The Congress noted its concern at the CP's large ongoing subsidies and called upon the EC to investigate and monitor MT's financial situation and that both parties should agree a survival plan to 'rectify the situation'.[192]

Four significant tendencies remained in the party: oppositionists, a centrist rump, MT supporters and reformists committed to some form of political organisation. Each had their own candidates to replace McLennan but both Ian McKay, the centrists' favourite, and Jacques declined to stand.[193] Only three months after Nina Temple's election as the new 'Secretary',[194] Jacques withdrew 'abruptly' from party affairs, leaving MT supporters within the party 'leaderless'.[195]

Differences over the CP's future were becoming critical to its survival; with the exception of the SL faction, which demanded 'the retention of the essential CP', most accepted that the party could not remain as it was.[196] After the 1983 Congress, SL had 'maintained a low profile, avoided confrontation with the leadership and worked patiently', assuming responsibilities in order to gain some influence within the party: SL was thought to have a majority in the London district and sizeable groupings elsewhere.[197] Nevertheless, all the traditionalists had little choice but to support the one option of 'transformation' of the party to oppose those in favour of a 'network'.

Despite MT's prominence and growth, its circulation was declining during 1988 until the New Times issues, October 1988 to January 1989, which gave it a tremendous, albeit temporary, lift; however, circulation continued its decline during 1989 and remained 'far below what might be expected'.[198] MT had to find new, outside sources of funding as the CP disintegrated. In October 1989, 'in consultation with the leadership', Jacques engaged an outside financial consultant to research MT's feasibility.[199] MT continued to pursue possible outside investors, even as the decision was reached by September that MT would have to close. The CP's decline accelerated after the 41st Congress, which meant that MT's funding would eventually dry up.

190 *Ibid.*
191 *Ibid.*: 2.
192 *Ibid.*
193 McLennan had tried to convince first Jacques and then McKay to run; however, Jacques did not want to, and McKay chose not to when Temple decided to run (Fishman 1994: 166; Thompson 1992: 202-03).
194 Temple disliked the term 'General Secretary'.
195 Fishman 1994: 168-69.
196 Thompson 1992: 205.
197 *Ibid.*: 205-06.
198 Steward 1990. Other MTEB members raised this question (MTEB 1990).
199 MT 1990b.

Internal political changes, especially the retirement of McLennan and the old EC and their replacement by Temple and other reformists, was not favourable for MT; it indicated a waning of Jacques's influence: he failed to get elected to the PC in July 1990.[200] Two PC members were appointed as EC representatives to replace Jackie Heywood and Vishnu Sharma on the MTEB as part of the ongoing consultation over financial matters.[201] The new EC had to sort out the CP's future before there was no-one left: Temple, in a classic 'managerial' move to keep both sides on board, proposed a third way between the two options: party or network.[202] The Special Congress, planned for the Spring of 1991, was moved forward to December 1990: party membership was declining faster than expected: from 10,350 in July 1987 to 7,615 in June 1989, reached 4,742 by June 1991.[203]

Jacques and Turner put to the EC three possible options for MT: close it down, which would incur substantial costs (suppliers, subscribers, etc.); reduce it to an old-style 'journal' (without colour, design, etc.); or find alternative investors.[204] These options also included keeping both an investment in, and a political association with, MT. In September 1990, the EC agreed that MT would be set up as an independent, limited company with five shareholders,[205] to take effect on 1 April 1991 and the CP would continue financing it until September 1991. It was only in September 1991 that the decision to close MT in December 1991 was taken, though preparations for a replacement continued for a year afterwards, until Jacques called it off.[206]

The majority of the remaining members wanted to keep the party, though Temple's 'twin track' proposal won out at the 42nd Special Congress. Though the delegates had voted to transform the party and Marxism-Leninism was 'finally rejected', the exact form it would take was left undecided.[207] Of all the European CPs transforming themselves, the PCI, renamed 'Party of the Democratic Left', again provided a possible model for the former Eurocommunists. The final (43rd) National Party Congress adopted the title, 'Democratic Left' (DL), and a federal, network structure.[208] Jacques and others ripped up their membership cards when the USSR's funding of the CP was revealed in November 1991: the break with the past was complete.

VII. Conclusion

[200] There were 13 positions and 31 EC members present: Jacques received 13 votes, the second lowest (EC 1990).
[201] *Ibid.*
[202] Fishman 1994: 169-71. Opponents accused each other of staying on only to secure some £3 million in assets (Thompson 1992: 206).
[203] Fishman 1994: 150-51.
[204] MT 1990b. The documents included a MORI study (MORI 1990; MT 1991).
[205] The five were: Jacques, McKay, Turner, Charlie Leadbeater and Paul Webster (MT 1990a).
[206] During the last year, Jacques and Turner sought investors to match *Guardian* funding for a new centre-left political magazine, *Agenda*. However, after Labour's general election defeat in April 1992, the focus and emphasis changed, and the idea of a more European-based, political monthly, *Politics*, took up their remaining energies until Jacques decided he was exhausted (Jacques 1996d; Turner 1998).
[207] Thompson 1992: 208; Fishman 1994: 170.
[208] By June 1993, membership had dropped to a mere 1,234.

Marxism Today's autonomy was obtained over time through a process which utilised political and personal relationships; Jacques's organisational skills and political acumen were absolutely crucial to this process. Though Jacques's high profile drew the attention of critics, his years on the EC and in party work helped establish personal and political relationships which ensured MT of party support. Jacques kept the leadership informed and justified MT's changes; the leadership for its part, was happy with MT's success and its public profile, which was in keeping with the desire that the journal would reach non-party readers. Once the traditionalists were defeated, however, MT's position became almost unassailable: Jacques became more confident in re-defining MT's role and relationship to the CP.

One of MT's two official roles, however, was to ensure internal party debate to prevent a repeat of 1956. Yet the party itself was not sure how to balance out the contradictory demands of editorial independence and promoting the party line, between reaching a large general public (even on the Left) and engendering internal debate and identity: there was some sense, though, that the party should be able to participate and help determine its direction. The 1957 CIPD Report reiterated this confusion. Even so, McLennan was also uneasy about the idea of interfering in the editorial process.[209] As defined by the 1957 CIPD Report, MT had become a 'factional journal'?[210]

MT's major successes in presentation, national press coverage and distribution and circulation, 1979-89, ensured support from the majority of party members, providing it with room to manoeuvre, politically and financially. Even as the costs increased significantly after 1987, there was a reluctance to close MT, but not only due to cost, and there was no question of removing Jacques because he was very closely tied up with its success. The Communist tradition of supporting party bodies, politically and financially, even if not in agreement with them, worked in MT's favour: as it had done with the *Star* (despite its lack of editorial flair and sales). The *Star* group's attack forced the EC and centrists into an alliance with MT and reformists, which put MT in a much stronger position *vis- -vis* the leadership. It was part of MT's success that Jacques maintained its autonomy from not only its enemies and the leadership but also from its friends, the reformists, ensuring that MT's content did not reflect internal struggles or a (changing) party line, even when MT's ideas were taken up by the party. It was MT, despite attacking left shibboleths in the 1980s, which benefited from the Stalinist practice of democratic centralism.

Despite the negative drain on energies that MT's relationship with the CP entailed during its process of transformation, and as the changing political context divided and even immobilised the Left, the party provided a useful institutional nexus for MT. It supplied human, financial and material resources as well as a political-cultural milieu which helped to promote its ideas; the network of district and branch organisations which

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209 McLennan 1996.
210 Eg CPGB 1957: 29.

operated events helped circulate its ideas nationwide. The CP's position within the labour movement ensured that MT's analyses, especially of the crisis facing the Left, would be picked up by the media: MT became renown for this newsworthy contradiction between its title and its willingness to question left orthodoxies. Yet, MT's political autonomy was only part of the struggles of its transformation; equally important were the battles to transform the production process in order that MT could make its own decisions, on the basis of its needs as a commercial periodical does. Chapter 4 investigates MT's struggles to gain control over its production process.

Fundamental to *Marxism Today*'s move from the 'ghetto' of left publishing into the mainstream were changes in editorial control, financing and production. These changes point to the tensions between the party and MT, between editorial and political autonomy and marketplace demands on one side, and the larger concerns of, and service to, the Communist Party on the other. On one level, these issues were manifested through the symbiotic relationship between commercial and political decisions: 'business' decisions became 'political' decisions, subjected to much negotiation and politicking, and these 'political' decisions impacted upon the production process and commercial performance. The left press' difficulties in gaining access to the mainstream public sphere have been in part due to a lack of financial resources, even viability, despite expenses at a fraction of commercial media costs.

It is not only financial issues that have impeded attempts by the left press to reach a wider public, but also questions of editorial leadership, institutional structures, technology and human resources. The changes in the organisation of production were important in transforming MT from a 'journal' into a 'magazine'. This chapter explores the key issues around finances, leadership styles of the two editors, the role of the editorial board, the battles over printing, typesetting and subscriptions, and the contribution of staff and volunteers. These issues highlight the tensions between the two primary models for the left press, Bolshevik and Comedia, outlined in Chapter 1.

I. 'Who Pays the Piper, Calls the Tune?': Financing*Marxism Today*

Financing political publications is subject to different considerations depending upon whether it is based within a movement or milieu, or supported by a party. Publications based within or addressing movements or milieux are often controlled and run by collectives (and occasionally individuals), and while representative of a larger group, they do not have the same kind of infrastructure and discipline that can ensure income and audience.[1] Parties have the organisational structure which can ensure the collection and distribution of resources and ideas and provide the primary audience. Since left parties openly recognise publications as an extension of their work, the issue of finances is addressed differently to that of commercial publications.[2]

> Subsidy was assumed to be necessary, and self-sufficiency was deemed desirable but unattainable. The 'fighting-fund' approach is best exemplified by the *Morning Star*'s campaigns, over the last 15 years, to keep the paper alive. It involves a recognition that, in an advertising-based press system, left-wing political views have to be paid for in another way.[3]

[1] Atton 1999; Khiabany 1997.
[2] However, even 'free market' think-tanks subsidise their publications (eg Lorimer 1993).
[3] Comedia 1984: 98.

The oppositional media's neglect of their own organisational and economic requirements limits the potential for success from the outset: very little is done in the way of market research and feedback in order to ensure sufficient interest (finance, readers, advertisers) to sustain the periodical beyond the first few issues. Attempts to rectify this situation have most commonly adopted the strategy of recruiting 'supporting subscribers', who agree to pay higher rates in order to help fund the publication (eg *The Leveller* and *New Socialist*).[4]

Published by the largest political organisation to the left of the Labour Party, *Marxism Today* was in a better situation than its equivalents across the Left because of the sheer size of the CP: during 1957-77, the party provided a potential audience of 25-35,000 members (against actual sales of between 2,500 and 4,500), as well as the funds and organisational nexus for production and distribution. MT was promoted through branches and committees and Central Books, a CP agency responsible for bookshops, a national distribution network and the subscription service.

Finances were essentially about subsidies: it was not necessary to 'break even', let alone make a profit, because publications were absolutely essential to the party's ability to act politically. This attitude was reflected in MT's status as a sub-section of the Press and Publicity Department (just one line of expenditure). The party's financial control was a 'crude form of centralisation' because anytime the editor wanted to change anything he had to get the agreement of the PC and EC: it undermined 'any sense of initiative'.[5]

The CP had benefited from 'Moscow gold', though the USSR's contribution declined substantially after 1968 before ceasing altogether in 1979. The party's property provided it with substantial assets, which were sold off when financial difficulties became critical: the King Street headquarters in central London were sold in 1980; ten years later, the party sold its centre in St. John Street, London. When necessary, therefore, the CP could still raise revenue from its substantial assets (some £3 million in 1990) which enabled it to continue subsidising various activities including MT.[6]

All party publications faced financial pressures during the 1970s as inflation added to printing costs while declining party membership meant declining income. Whatever could be done had to be done at no additional cost to the party, which explains the importance of the free help and advice provided by friends and volunteers in production and distribution.[7] Until Jacques was able to acquire greater control over MT's budget, it was difficult to initiate major changes in format, distribution, printing, etc, without lobbying the leadership. However, it eventually paid off when MT was granted a separate bank 'sub-account' of the CP in October 1984, which brought greater flexibility in planning and strategy, budgeting, and direct control over day-to-day finance.

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[4] Landry *et al.* 1985.
[5] Jacques 1996b.
[6] Thompson 1992: 206.
[7] Jacques 1996b.

Table 4.1 Annual Income and Expenditure, 1977-1991

	1978[8]	1979[9]	1982[10]	1983	1984-85[11]	1987	1989
Income	13,115.00	15,524.00	60,406.62	77,740.00	120,580.98	210,850.00	241,321.84
Expenditure	-13,761.00	-15,817.00	-70,692.22	-90,271.00	-125,515.05	-262,918.00	-292,079.62
Profit/Loss	(646.00)	(293.00)	(10,285.59)	(12,531.00)	(4,934.07)	(52,068.00)	(50,757.78)

Although MT no longer had to lobby over hiring staff or making changes to its format, any changes which affected CP enterprises, such as subscriptions and printing, still had to be ratified by the EC. Also, from October 1984, MT was responsible for costs previously paid for by Party Centre, such as office space and overheads (telephones, electricity, postage, etc.), although the CP continued to pay for 1.6 staff wages, as had been the case since 1957. Revenue generated from advertising and sales was ploughed straight back into staffing, production and distribution and MT was able to become more ambitious about its plans, whether through merchandising ventures, planning events or special issues, etc.[12]

Marxism Today was also relatively unique in the way its high production values belied its shoe-string budget. It relied on the dedication of its editor, staff and volunteers: free labour supported MT in terms of writing, proofing, editing, distribution, promotion and publicity. Finances were primarily directed towards paper, printing and typesetting, which could not be avoided, and design, artwork, photographic reproduction and covers, in order to compete on the newsagent's shelf. Further costs arose with expansion, such as distribution to the newstrade, which requires higher print-runs in order to ensure a sufficient supply for newsagents, promotions, etc.

MT's success in achieving wider distribution, circulation and press coverage only paid off after extensive efforts had been made and resources expended. For example, the first full year of Jacques's editorship and with the original format and design, printed and distributed by CP enterprises, MT's income derived overwhelmingly from sales, reached a modest £13,115 while its expenses, almost solely printing and typesetting costs, only exceeded income by nearly £650.[13] Despite a fall in circulation during the first half of the following year, and increased production costs with the move to the second format (1979-86) and changes in typesetting, etc., MT actually incurred a smaller loss: the investment in these changes ensured increased sales and hence, income. By 1982, however, despite nearly a four-fold increase in income, rising costs[14] left MT with a deficit of just over £10,000. The deficit increased somewhat more in 1983, where production and wage costs added more to MT's expenditures.

[8] EC 1980.
[9] *Ibid.*
[10] PC 1984; EC 1983.
[11] October 1984 to September 1985: the first full year when MT had its own bank sub-account.
[12] Perryman 1994b; Turner 1994.
[13] Table 4.1.
[14] One major cost was the move to full colour covers from January 1982.

Table 4.2 Finances (%) 1979-1989[15]

INCOME	1979	1983	1985	1987	1989
Newstrade		16.5	21.8	23.4	19.2
CB Wholesale		22.9	12.0	6.0	5.0
Subscriptions		14.6	28.3	25.4	29.8
Misc. Sales		1.0		1.0	
Total Sales		55.0	62.1	55.8	54.0
Advertising		40.9	32.4	40.0	37.1
Miscellaneous		4.1	5.5	4.2	9.0
TOTAL (%)		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.1
TOTAL (Pounds)	15,524.00	77,740.00	120,580.98	210,850.00	241,321.84
EXPENDITURE					
Printing		48.0	31.2	26.0	22.9
Typesetting		11.0	10.3	6.8	4.8
Design		12.0	9.0	9.3	11.6
Promotion		5.3	4.0	7.6	8.2
Distribution		--	19.3	14.8	15.6
Wages		14.4	14.9	15.9	23.3
Office expenses		8.0	5.3	12.6	7.6
Miscellaneous		1.5	6.0	7.0	5.3
TOTAL (%)		100.2	100.0	100.0	99.3
TOTAL (Pounds)	15,817.00	90,271.00	125,515.05	262,918.00	292,079.62
Balance (Pounds)	(293.00)	(12,531.00)	(4,934.07)	(52,068.00)	(50,757.78)

One of the most significant years was MT's first full year of 'independence' with its own account, October 1984-September 1985: MT's loss was less than £5,000 (though some substantial costs only arose in the last quarter of 1985).[16] Though MT's losses soon reached around £19,000 for 1986, it was only when a number of factors contributed to a serious deficit (£52,068.00) that MT's debts became a potential political liability. From 1987 until MT closed in December 1991, its annual deficits averaged well over £40-50,000, a level at which neither MT nor the (rapidly declining) CP could sustain for long.[17]

By examining the expenditures and revenues generated during the monthly production cycle, it becomes clear that in order to reach a wider audience the possibility of generating higher income also incurs additional costs above a proportional rise in unit costs and which will almost always arise before increased revenues can have an impact (and which will have a greater adverse effect on under-capitalised publications).[18] For example, almost all the costs for MT's first format (1957-79) were for printing and typesetting (virtually) text-only issues by Farleigh Press. The regular addition of photographs and graphics in the second format (1979-86) initially incurred costs of less

[15] There is no breakdown for 1979, although sales would have accounted for at least 90% of income because there was very little advertising. The figures for 1985 are for October 1984-September 1985 and do not actually include a number of costs which were only charged to MT later in 1985 (MTEB 1989c; MTEC 1983a, 1984b, 1984d, 1986a; PC 1988, 1991).

[16] These costs more than doubled the deficit (£12,000) for all of 1985.

[17] Even as the CP let MT go, it put in some £69,000 to help fund it over 18 months during 1990-91 (PC 1991).

[18] See Table 4.3.

than 10% of total expenditure, even as the proportion of images to text increased.[19] As printing and typesetting costs increased in absolute terms, they became an increasingly smaller share, in relative terms, of the total costs incurred: between 1983 and 1989 printing and typesetting dropped from 59% of costs to 27.7%; staffing costs rose from 14.4% to nearly one-quarter (23.3%); promotion nearly doubled from 5.3% to 8.2%; and a new cost, distribution, rose from nil to 15.6%.[20]

However, these costs partially disguise the massive increases that were effected in some of these areas during the 1980s. For example, promotion costs averaged per issue, rose from less than £45 in 1977[21] to just over £2,000 by 1989, and even compared against 1983, this represented a four-fold increase in six years (with a noticeable effect on media coverage).[22] But MT did not spend the same amount on publicity every month. October always exceeded other months because of a political and commercial convergence: it was always published ahead of the Labour Party conference and it is one of the most important months for magazine industry promotions. The figures for monthly expenditures for 1981-82 of £311.89 are a little misleading because that was the average for six months: MT spent £1,412.69 on promoting the October 1981 issue, the launch issue for national distribution through W. H. Smith, against an average monthly expenditure of less than £100 for the other months.[23]

Although publicity was ruthlessly exploited by MT and promotion costs played an important part in ensuring mainstream media coverage, when sales began declining in 1988 and again in 1989, it was as necessary as ever to spend money attempting, not only to win back buyers, but also to convince distributors and newsagents themselves that MT was making the effort to promote sales. If the promotional efforts fail, then obviously the added costs will only worsen the financial situation: MT's monthly sales declined from an average of 13,388 in the first half of 1988 to 10,980 in the second half of 1990 despite spending more than £24,000 on promotion in 1989 alone.[24]

MT's trade in ideas may not have been expensive, but it rarely if ever paid for writing. During the early years of MT's transformation, there was no expectation by contributors to be paid for writing, as this was a common practice for a left journal. However, such expectations changed with MT, since its high production values, voluminous media coverage and national distribution provided it with a profile that indicated a public image at odds with its financial reality. Increasingly, it became more difficult to convince potential contributors to write for nothing, especially if they were contributing to the

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[19] *Ibid.*

[20] Table 4.2. Distribution costs covered promotion to and around the newstrade (other than publicity and PR), subscriptions, packaging, etc.

[21] Miscellaneous costs does not include cross-promotional copy (MT ran advertisements in exchange for other publications to run ones for MT).

[22] Chapter 6.

[23] Table 4.3.

[24] Chapter 6. Audited figures are averaged over six months and do not show monthly fluctuations.

features section where Jacques often demanded several re-writes.[25] However, this could be offset by the political *kudos* that became attached to writing for, or being interviewed by, MT: political and cultural capital replaced financial remuneration for contributors.

Table 4.3 Monthly Averages of Income and Expenditure: Selected Years[26]

INCOME	1977	1979	1981-82	1983	1984-85	1987	1989
Newstrade		30.00	1,244.17	1,066.92	2,192.37	4,105.92	3,870.26
Central Books	872.78	1,127.00	1,904.37	1,481.16	1,201.12	1,047.67	997.02
Subscriptions				946.58	2,839.53	4,467.00	5,983.88
Misc. Sales				66.50		177.08	
Total Sales	872.78	1,157.00	3,148.54	3,561.06	6,233.02	9,797.67	10,851.16
Advertising	85.00	435.40	1,331.82	2,793.33	3,260.67	7,035.08	7,459.05
Miscellaneous			256.47	123.94	554.73	738.08	1,799.94
TOTAL	957.78	1,592.40	4,736.83	6,478.33	10,048.42	17,570.83	20,110.15
EXPENDITURE							
Printing	898.33	1,426.00	3,804.96	£3,610.00	3,262.25	5,704.92	5,583.76
Typesetting			555.52	818.00	1,075.20	1,489.17	1,157.38
Design		140.00	670.86	1,012.00	940.29	2,040.50	2,832.49
Ads artwork		10.00			314.85	433.92	631.02
Production misc.						57.33	162.78
Promotion			311.89	487.00	410.75	1,668.00	2,001.87
Distribution					2,021.33	3,242.33	3,804.71
Wages			272.50	1,083.00	1,561.62	3,478.83	5,660.01
Office expenses			403.16	600.00	558.50	2,767.00	1,838.41
Miscellaneous	44.11		98.60		314.80	1,027.83	463.52
TOTAL	942.44	1,576.00	6,117.49	7,609.00	10,459.59	21,909.83	24,339.97
BALANCE (P/L)	15.34	16.40	(1,380.66)	(1,131.00)	(411.17)	(4,339.00)	(4,229.82)

The CP paid for 1.6 FTE (full-time equivalent) staff (the editor and one secretary three days per week) for the duration of MT's existence, costs which were not included in MT's accounts. Additional staff meant the wage bill increased from 'nil' in 1977 to more than £5,600 a month by 1989. Such increases in wage costs were absolutely crucial to MT's ability to recruit ever greater amounts of advertising, secure distribution networks and outlets, expand promotion, increase editorial space and pagination, experiment in design and layout and manage large numbers of volunteers. That overall low wage costs belied MT's high production values highlights one of the few areas where alternative media retain an advantage over many of their commercial (and ideological) competitors: free labour. Nevertheless, many mundane but vital tasks would have remained undone without paid staff, particularly on the business side, including advertising revenues, processing subscriptions, circulation and distribution.

[25] Jacques 1996c; Taylor 1995; Townsend 1996. Some public figures agreed to interviews or discussions but not to *write* for MT because they were not paid (Jacques 1996d).

[26] These figures are drawn froma series of documents submitted to the PC, EC and MTEB: 1977 figures are based on the first nine months (MTEB 1978a); December 1979 (second format) is used as representative for 1979; 1981 figures are averaged from six months, October 1981 to March 1982 (PC 1984); 1983 figures are from MT Accounts for 1983 (PC 1984); 1985 figures are based upon MT's first 'independent' year, October 1984-September 1985 (EC 1986a); 1987 and 1989 figures from EC (1988a, 1990).

The financial viability of any media organisation is also dependent upon good and effective administrative structures which can compensate for the loss of experienced staff. The massive 1987 deficit was the result of a number of factors, but have been put down to Jacques's absence (due to ill-health), the loss of three of the most experienced staff, the lack of administrative procedures for controlling financial transactions and the failure to institute a proper financial system which would allow it to deal with additional ventures (eg merchandising) and staff incompetence, due to inadequate training and experience.[27]

Even though MT's budget was 'centralised' and the PC and EC were involved in agreeing to every new staff member hired, Jacques was often able to obtain what he wanted; nevertheless, sometimes it was politically expedient to hire a party member rather than another applicant.[28] All staff in the CP[29] and at MT received the same pay, regardless of skills, experience, training or responsibilities. However, in December 1988, workers at Party Centre learned that MT's advertising staff received higher wages than other party workers and complained to Gordon McLennan.[30] Julian Turner defended the move to pay advertising staff commissions on the money they brought in because of the difficulty of recruiting advertising staff on the low CP/MT wages, and to offer incentives for these staff to try and meet targets, and because commissions on income recruited was the standard way of paying advertising staff.[31] Nevertheless, with the massive debt in 1988 and under pressure from the PC to cut costs, MT made redundancies for the first time: the equivalent of six working days were cut. These were reduced even further during 1990: Jacques was reduced to three days per week; the deputy editor to four days per week; and a commissioning editor was appointed for one day per week.[32] Of all the forms of labour, professional or otherwise, there was an acceptance by the party hierarchy that design, illustration and advertising work had to be paid for.[33]

Until 1977, income was overwhelmingly generated from sales, and although it never dipped below 50% of the total income generated, there were variations within sales. For example, Central Books (CB), responsible for party distribution and bookshop sales, provided the largest single source of sales income until 1983, accounting for 41.6% of all sales (22.9% of total) income. However, as party membership declined and its networks and bookshops closed, the income generated via CB declined from 12% of total income in 1985 to a mere 5% in 1989.

Perhaps the most politically important income in MT's finances was that generated by the newstrade because of its significance for MT's public image. Despite a brief experiment with some newsagents in London's Soho in 1979, which netted £30 for one

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[27] Jacques 1988c. For example, revenue was lost because advertisers were not billed while MT paid some of its bills twice.
[28] As with the new circulation manager hired in November 1982 (Jacques 1996d).
[29] District party workers were expected to raise their own wages (Samuel 1986a).
[30] Apter *et al.* 1988.
[31] Turner 1988.
[32] In 1988, Jacques began earning money from freelance writing, such as his bi-weekly column for the *Sunday Times*.
[33] Townsend 1996.

issue, it was not until the autumn of 1981 that (national) newstrade generated significant revenue (over £1,200.00 per issue), which had more than tripled by 1987 (£4,105.92 per issue).[34] Newstrade income peaked in 1987, with 23.4% of total revenues (£49,271.00) and declined to less than 20% in 1989 (under £47,000) even though distribution and promotion costs rose, indicating that despite efforts to promote sales and the public interest generated by civic revolutions in Eastern Europe, the newstrade did not pick up.

MT had continual battles to maintain its newstrade distribution, which meant spending on promotional campaigns and other forms of support to ensure newsagents would carry it. By the late 1980s, newstrade sales declined while subscriptions picked up, with income from the latter rising from £11,359.00 to £71,806.60 over six years, 1983-89, an increase of nearly six-and-a-half times: the subscriptions' percentage of the total income doubled from 14.6% to 29.8%. Subscriptions not only bring in a greater proportion of the cover price for the publisher but they also receive it a year or more in advance. This trend has become more important to magazines in the 1990s as the pressure on shelf-space continues.[35]

'Miscellaneous income' became an important element of MT's income by 1989 when it accounted for 9% of the total. This income was from 'Friends of MT', merchandising, events and fees for article reprints, while 'miscellaneous expenditures' rose to consume nearly 5% of costs in 1987, including bank charges incurred by the deficit. MT moved into merchandising as one of its strategies for raising money and promotion. Its initial success in producing promotional material led to a merchandising off-shoot called Central Committee Outfitters. CCO was the brainchild of a couple of MT volunteers which turned out a regular production of t-shirts, filofaxes, mugs, boxer shorts, etc. (including a 'Bolshevik Chic' line of goods).[36] While this practice demonstrated that the Left could also utilise other means for promotion and increase revenues, it also provoked accusations of 'selling out'.

The 1987 debts only minimally restricted MT's ability to operate independently, even as they were forced to work more closely with the PC in order to get their financial accounts into order. Continued support for MT from key older members of the leadership was crucial in sustaining its autonomy. Though financial difficulties caused friction between McLennan and Jacques, McLennan continued to support Jacques because he was in agreement politically with its project.[37]

An important change occurred with the separation of editorial and business: Julian Turner took over MT's business side as 'managing editor[38] in 1987, enabling Jacques to concentrate on its editorial direction. Turner had the task of separating MT's finances so that it could operate independently. He also etablished a number of initiatives, such as

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[34] Table 4.3.
[35] See Logan 1996; CPBF 1996a, 1996b.
[36] There was even an attempt at a cabaret (Taylor 1995).
[37] McLennan 1996.
[38] Equivalent to the magazine industry's 'publisher'.

'Friends of *Marxism Today*', at the beginning of 1988 to help raise money to pay off debts and for future developments. Similar to 'launch subscribers' schemes, 'Friends' provided additional (low-cost) 'perks' (eg invitations to openings, special newsletters) to those willing to pay extra money at specific periods by standing order or direct debit. Within five months, when a meeting of 'Friends' was held at 'The '68 Show' in May 1988, the scheme was raising around £500 per month.[39] However, the legacy of bitter infighting meant that initiatives, such as 'Friends', generated complaints from some party members.[40]

To recoup the 1987 losses, various fundraising ventures were being undertaken, such as local MT events and standing order campaigns. In 1988-89, the promotions drive was linked to turning newstrade sales into subscriptions in order to maximise a stable income base.[41] Subscriptions increasingly became the single, most important source of income during the last four years because they provide a source of stable funding through the peaks and troughs of a magazine's annual cycle, even though it is more of a characteristic of the journal than the magazine to be subscription-based.[42] Thus, as MT matured it became increasingly dependent upon subscriptions, as in the past, except this time it was to ensure a better financial return on its sales.

Advertising has a special place amongst the Left's suspicions because it has the potential to act as a censor or to 'corrupt' the message of newspapers and periodicals which rely upon advertising for a substantial part of their income; therefore, left publications have tended to neglect it and rely upon sales (besides subsidies) as their principal means of income.[43] Alternative publications tend not to try to seek out advertising beyond that which is in line with their general political outlook or aims, nor to accept advertisements from any organisation considered to be 'politically incorrect' (eg apartheid-friendly companies). Advertisers often have little interest in reaching left readerships and are put off by the low circulation and 'aggressive' politics of the left press.[44] However, things began to change in the early 1980s when some periodicals (eg *New Internationalist*, *New Socialist*) began to attract advertising beyond radical bookshops and political groups.[45] By the mid-1980s, MT was recruiting more mainstream advertising, although there had been some non-political advertising before then.[46]

During MT's first 22 years all the advertising was either CP-affiliated, the CP's publishing company (Lawrence and Wishart) and CB, or Collet's, an independent left bookshop. Advertising was mostly display advertisements, but lacking illustrations, of

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[39] Jacques 1988b: 2.
[40] EC 1988c.
[41] MTEB 1988b.
[42] See Chapter 7.
[43] Curran 1977; Richards 1997; Williams 1980: 170-95.
[44] Atton 1999; Khiabany 1997.
[45] Comedia 1984.
[46] For example, the back cover of the October 1982 issue is an advertisement for futons.

publications by and about the USSR, the CPSU and Communist bloc, English-language journals. As sales of the July issue rose during the CUL events of the mid-1970s, MT was able to recruit some mainstream book advertising. After 1979, advertising became an increasingly important source of revenue, until 1983 when it became the single most important source (40.9%), after which it continually increased in absolute terms.[47]

It was only after Jacques was able to recruit more staff that he was able to consider a wider range of advertisers. The part-time editorial assistant had to recruit advertising as well as carry out office and production work and few staff or volunteers were interested in soliciting advertising.[48] This reluctance is not uncommon among left periodicals, since their primary reason for publishing is to promote a political viewpoint critical of capitalism (and advertising), marginalised or ignored by mainstream media. Between December 1981 and January 1986, no less than eight people held the post of advertising manager (all of whom had been left-wing, male graduates).[49] In March 1985, an additional part-time worker was hired which increased substantially the amount of advertising sold in the subsequent nine months of 1985 compared to the same period in 1984: an increase in revenue of 48% (April-June), 73% (July-September) and 41% (October-December).[50] The first quarter of 1985 had dropped in advertising revenue from the last quarter of 1984 by nearly 20%, which hastened the need to recruit the extra advertising staff, though the first quarter was probably the least profitable.[51]

MT's name also made it difficult in securing advertising even from other left-wing groups, since many would not advertise in rival journals.[52] However, this changed as MT's public profile rose through newsagent distribution and media coverage: some groups, such as the SWP and the RCP, sought to tap into an audience that they might not otherwise reach. Although trade union advertising was a new area opened up by MT since March 1986, there was a lot of political resistance to it from the unions.[53]

Besides advertisers' political orientations, there is a more prosaic concern for some advertisers: whether a publication covers interests relevant to an advertiser's business. For example, although MT had succeeded in attracting some mainstream film and theatre advertising as early as 1982, problems arose in attracting other arts advertising because many were not convinced that MT had a 'significant arts input'.[54] However, MT was able to expand its advertising revenues from local authorities, and especially the GLC: during 1985, it rose from £250 for the first quarter, to £2258 for the second and £1900 for the third.

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47 Tables 4.3, 4.4.
48 Townsend 1996.
49 MTEC 1986b: 1.
50 *Ibid.*
51 MTEC 1986a; EC 1986a.
52 Townsend 1996.
53 MTEC 1986b: 4.
54 *Ibid.*: 3. Its frequency was not ideal for many forms of entertainment.

Increased advertising meant either losing editorial space or increasing pagination, although one-off supplements absorbed some increases. MT did increase its pagination over time, with the most important months (eg October, September, March) being accorded the most pages. The rapid increase in MT's advertising space in the first half of the 1980s was not unwelcome even by the party because there had always been calls for increasing advertising revenue in other party publications (eg *Comment*, *Morning Star*).[55] However, by the mid-1980s, the staff and board members realised that MT had to devote 50% of additional pagination for advertising in order to be able to pay for continued developments.

II. 'Party-Line' or Editor's Freedom?: The Changing Style of Editorship

This section will assess the changing style of editorship in terms of its relationship to the party and the next section will do so in terms of the differences between the two editors' relationships with MT's editorial board (MTEB). John Gollan was officially appointed as MT's first 'Editor' (1957-62), for symbolic and legal reasons: as CP General Secretary (1956-75) he was expected to exhibit intellectual as well as political leadership, and the party was responsible for whatever was published in MT; James Klugmann's intellectual reputation made his appointment as 'Assistant Editor' necessary if MT was to have any intellectual credibility and to reassert the party's position on the Left and towards a new generation of intellectuals.[56] However, he was *de facto* editor.[57]

Klugmann's editorial style was quite different to that of his successor, Martin Jacques, despite similar backgrounds, albeit a generation apart. They were both party intellectuals, involved in the CP since their youth, who cultivated interest in ideas that went 'against the grain' of dominant thinking in the party: Klugmann, for example, promoted the dialogue between Christianity and Marxism during the 1960s,[58] while Jacques initiated a debate on youth culture in the early 1970s, arguing for a more progressive interpretation against the orthodox (and puritanical) criticisms.[59] Klugmann gave up a promising academic career for the (less secure and financially-rewarding) life of a party intellectual: however, he was also aware of his position as an upper-middle class intellectual in a working class party and chose not to promote debate against particular lines or policies once they had been decided.[60] However, as translated into practice, Klugmann was loyal to the 'party line' and tacked to whichever way the wind blew: for example, he wrote the 'hatchet job' on Yugoslavia when the CPSU's line shifted in 1948,[61] and a two-volume official history of the party which 'would satisfy both Moscow and those who did not believe in such a

[55] Eg EC 1977, 1979d, 1981b.
[56] Andrews 1995b; Brennan 1996; Johnstone 1995; Matthews and Matthews 1996.
[57] Gollan's lack of interest in MT is evident from his absence at board meetings (Klugmann 1976b: 3).
[58] Bright 1977.
[59] Jacques 1973, 1975a.
[60] Heinemann 1977.
[61] Beckett 1995: 116.

history'.[62] Klugmann's attitude was seen as 'political cowardice' by some,[63] but he referred to himself as a 'trimmer'.[64] Klugmann emerges as a highly intelligent but cautious editor, interested in intellectual debate but deferential to authority.

The conformity of the changing landscape of intellectual debate in MT to the party line had its corollary in the production process. After more than a dozen years of a static design, Klugmann began to implement changes which were gradual and evolutionary (and which reflected limited finances): for example, changes to MT's front cover were tried out over the course of eighteen months (September 1969 to March 1971). Klugmann's cautious style was evident even as the party opened itself up to internal discussion during the late 1960s and 1970s and MT achieved recognition amongst left scholars for the Althusser-Lewis exchange.[65] He consulted party workers and leading committees before deciding whether to publish controversial articles (or not): for example, during the 1970s Klugmann deferred to Bert Ramelson, the Industrial Organiser, on articles about 'the economy and industrial strategy'.[66] Nevertheless, Klugmann did encourage dialogue with some groups outside the party, such as progressive Christians, and his education and experience in other languages and cultures and a stint with the international students' movement ensured a strong international focus in MT.[67]

According to one former board member, Klugmann was a 'very democratic editor', drawing upon contributors and ideas suggested by others, incorporating their ideas into MT, and trying often to encourage members to write articles who might not otherwise have contributed.[68] However, these suggestions were either within the parameters of debate sanctioned by the party or they were referred to the leadership for advice.[69] The consequence of this approach led to the increasing isolation of 'hard-line', pro-Soviet members after 1968. Manuscripts reflecting these perspectives were often returned to their authors unpublished, particularly in the period after 1968 when the CP publicly criticised the Warsaw Pact 'intervention' in Czechoslovakia.[70] Though pro-Soviet articles

62 Hobsbawm 1995: 251. Hobsbawm remarked upon Klugmann's unwillingness to 'speak his mind' at a meeting with CP leaders in 1956, when Brian Pearce and Hobsbawm, on behalf of the Historians' Group, argued for the need to write a 'proper history' of the party: Klugmann 'should have had the courage to refuse' (*ibid.*).

63 Jacques speaks of Klugmann affectionately and of his willingness to encourage people like Jacques to be critical of orthodoxy, yet unwilling to do so himself (Jacques 1996b). Klugmann was active with the CP at Cambridge University during the time of Kim Philby, Donald Maclean, *et al.*, and there were rumours about Klugmann acting as a KGB recruiting agent (Beckett 1995: 85-87; Andrews 1998).

64 Johnstone 1995.

65 The exchange was between Louis Althusser and Dr. John Lewis on 'structuralist Marxism'.

66 Andrews 1995a: 237.

67 Cohen 1977; Simon 1977.

68 Brennan 1996.

69 Andrews 1995a: 237; Johnstone 1995. A party textbook on economics was pulled just prior to publication because Ramelson decided that it was 'too revisionist' (Andrews 1995a: 237).

70 After the EC's decision to criticise the USSR over Czechoslovakia, Klugmann received some articles and letters in support of the invasion, thought to represent the views of 40% of the membership. Klugmann sought the opinions of leading officials on some contributions and a letter which asserted that the 40% were being given very little space in CP publications (Klugmann 1968; Laithwaite 1968). Advice was also sought

were still published, it does highlight how Klugmann followed the 'contours' of the party line even as the space for debate opened up.

Klugmann was less an 'editor' in the terms of professional, journalistic practice. Although he did try to encourage contributors to try and write in a 'clear and limpid style' and corrected poorly written or structured articles, contributions which exceeded the word length were often simply cut in half and published over two issues.[71] In line with its ideological conformity under Klugmann, MT was more a discrete collection of articles representing different interests and sections than any kind of cohesive political or journalistic project.

Through years as a member of the EC and other party bodies (eg National Cultural Committee, Theory and Ideology Committee), Jacques developed his skills as a 'political operator'; these skills and his standing as an intellectual within the party gave him a distinct advantage over others seeking greater editorial autonomy. For example, Sarah Benton, who as editor of the internal party bulletin (*Comment*, 1978-80) did a lot to revamp its content and design, tried to move too quickly in her 'pluralistic and critical approach', which included a 'controversial account of the Party's links with Stalin', and eventually she was forced to resign because of constant interference, criticisms and a lack of support from party officials.[72] Jacques's position was more tenable because the leadership had recruited him to the EC in 1967, where he learned to 'play the game': establishing alliances and bases of support within the party.

The differences between Benton and Jacques and the leadership's subsequent responses can be attributed in part to their temperaments: Benton was characterised as 'fiery and impulsive' whereas Jacques was cautious, building support in leading committees and advisory bodies for changes before attempting anything too radical.[73] Nevertheless, the leadership sidelined Benton by taking decisions over content without even consulting her.[74] However, there were also differences in the two publications' roles: as the internal party bulletin, *Comment* was responsible for communicating EC and PC decisions, party announcements and providing space for the membership to respond; MT's function as the 'theoretical and discussion' journal, however, was specifically meant to open up space for debate and disagreement (in theory at least), and it was not seen as important or useful to the party as *Comment*.

Within a year of taking over as editor, Martin Jacques put forward his ideas on making changes to MT while calling for suggestions from the readership.[75] The changes he felt were important included changing the types and subject matter of articles and re-organising the journal's contents, format, design and layout. Jacques argued that the logic

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over responses to an article on the excesses of Stalinism and an unpublished manuscript on socialist democracy (Carritt 1970a, 1970b; Feltham 1970, 1971; Klugmann 1971; Perkins 1970).

[71] Brennan 1996; Johnstone 1995.

[72] Andrews 1995a: 243; Benton 1980.

[73] Jacques 1996b.

[74] Andrews 1995a: 243.

[75] Jacques 1978b. The October 1977 MT was the first issue edited by Jacques.

of the party's manifesto, the 1977 BRS, meant that the CP, through MT at least, should open up and address itself to the Left.

Despite lacking any background or interest in journalism, Jacques proved to be a rigorous, demanding and 'professional' editor.[76] In his drive for perfection, Jacques paid close attention to detail in commissioning articles, rewriting, revising, proof-reading, etc., which in its turn enhanced MT's authority and professional standing.[77] This was enhanced by his willingness to draw upon anyone he felt had the requisite expertise or skills, demanding the utmost from everyone including volunteers, and his ability to instill them with the confidence that they could fulfil whatever tasks they were set.[78] Contributors, who were being paid nothing for their writing, were also not exempt: they would be asked to rewrite their copy two, three or more times, though Jacques was often forced to wait.[79] 'When you're not paying them, and yet you are asking them to produce 3-4,000 words on a subject, you have to also be patient'.[80] Jacques did not rewrite articles: he briefed contributors on their topics and explained his comments on their articles, but they alone were responsible for rewriting.[81] Jacques had expectations of what the end results would be as a consequence of working their analyses out through the rewriting process, but he felt it was important that they did it.[82]

Whereas Jacques almost never published unsolicited copy, preferring to ask the 'most knowledgeable people on a subject' to contribute, Klugmann would only publish unsolicited material after it had been circulated among leading party and MTEB members. Both Klugmann and Jacques asked for contributions from the leadership, but neither was able to elicit much enthusiasm: writing for MT was seen as a lesser priority than political or industrial work.[83]

The differences in their styles of editorship can be partly equated to how they perceived their own roles within the party, an important element noted in research on the editors of trade union journals.[84] This research demonstrates that there are two types of editors: those who see themselves as union officers first and as journalists second, and vice versa. A number of the former were union officers with the responsibility for editing the union's journal and they saw the implementation and promotion of union policy as a primary aspect of their work. The other type identified themselves as journalists first which informed their function in promoting unions and their policies. Klugmann fits the

[76] This is the consensus of most staff, volunteers and board members interviewed (eg Brown 1996; Johnstone 1995; Taylor 1995; Townsend 1996).
[77] A small but significant proof-reading mistake was on the cover of the November 1977 issue signposting an article on 'The Sixteenth Anniversary of the October Revolution' instead of the sixtieth! Jacques did not want a repeat of such a mistake (Jacques 1996d).
[78] Davison 1995.
[79] Edgar 1991/92; Jacques 1996b.
[80] Jacques 1996c.
[81] Jacques 1996d. Eric Hobsbawm was the only author who was never asked to rewrite (Jacques 1996c).
[82] Jacques 1996c.
[83] Their repeated requests were often couched in terms of asking EC members to exercise 'leadership' by writing for MT.
[84] Grace 1985.

first type: he was an editor whose sense of duty and responsibility to the party (as expressed through the leadership), combined with his caution and deference, translated into a journal which did not 'rock the boat'.

Jacques, however, is somewhat harder to characterise, because during the course of his editorship, he combined aspects of both types but also made a transition from the first to the second kind of editor. Like Klugmann, Jacques was part of the leadership and was primarily interested in the party, but he wanted to change the party rather than defer to the leadership. As part of the younger, second generation of Communists,[85] Jacques was much more critical of the traditions and loyalties that Klugmann's generation held dear, which influenced his role as editor and approach to the party's shibboleths.[86] His commitment to high production values and certain editorial practices, partly borne out of the blocking of party reforms, puts him in with the 'journalist first' category.[87]

These differences in the conceptions and identities that editors have about themselves and their roles, have a corollary in the way in which mainstream journalists subscribe to a professional ideology while journalists working in left media, are more likely to place an emphasis on a commitment to a particular political ideology over adherence to such professional ideals as 'objectivity' and 'competition', because of the way such professional norms work in favour of the status quo.[88]

III. 'Means of Control' or 'Cultural Circle'? *Marxism Today* Editorial Board

Editorial boards' primary function is to oversee the editor and periodical on behalf of the organisation, and for this reason they may reflect the internal balance of power. There is an expectation that the editor and the editorial board will be in general agreement over the overall trajectory of a periodical. Though it is not a mechanism to produce a periodical on a day to day basis, it should provide strategic advice and direction for the editor and staff and act as an audience providing feedback on recent issues.[89] However, the degree to which an editor makes use of a board's suggestions may depend upon a number of factors including the editor's personality and political or professional disposition (towards the organisation), the willingness of the board to impose its will and its position within the institutional framework. Furthermore, an editorial board should lend intellectual weight to the periodical which makes its opinions authoritative. Academic editorial boards carry out the peer review process of scholarly journals, by which they ensure that articles published meet the requisite scholarly norms in content, style and presentation; similarly, editorial boards of political periodicals perform a peer review function, albeit on behalf of the party or movement (leadership), by which an

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[85] Both of Jacques's parents had been Communists (Jacques 1996b).
[86] See Samuel (1985, 1986a, 1987) on generational differences in traditions and values.
[87] Evident in his career as a free-lance writer and broadcaster since 1988.
[88] Downing 1984; Hackett and Zhao 1998.
[89] Jacques 1978c.

article's political-ideological and theoretical suitability can be assured to fall within acceptable boundaries.

MT's editorial board (MTEB) was an advisory body and the means by which the CP retained overall control over MT. The need should not be underestimated because of historical problems that had arisen around different journals that had been published either by the CP or sympathetic intellectuals and publishers between the 1930s and 1950s, including *Left Review*, *Arena*, *Marxist Quarterly* and *Our Time*.[90] During this period, disputes had arisen on these and other journals or between editors and party leaders over editorial changes and political direction. The composition of the first MTEB included some of the best known party intellectuals, such as Professors J. D. Bernal[91] and George Thomson, Arnold Kettle, Maurice Dobb and Maurice Cornforth, which enhanced MT's profile, and leading party officials, such as Emile Burns,[92] Les Burt and John Mahon, who ensured a strong ideological input as representatives of the CP's working class base to counter the 'revisionist' tendencies of middle class intellectuals.[93]

James Klugmann used the MTEB to review the three most recent issues, readers' comments and discuss unsolicited articles; the board would also discuss Klugmann's proposals for future issues as well as making suggestions about possible issues to be covered. The MTEB gradually expanded despite the passing of an older generation of intellectuals (eg Bernal, Dobb, Thomson), with new members reflecting viewpoints developing inside and outside the party, such as the women's movement, although everyone brought onto the board were party members: Klugmann brought the first two women onto the MTEB in January 1973: Irene Brennan and Betty Matthews.[94] Matthews's appointment though, like Jack Cohen's, was to effect a closer link between education and the party's theoretical and discussion journal: MT articles were used in education packs for branches and summer schools.[95]

The composition of the MTEB itself, however, can be seen as a limited response, not only to the social and political changes that began to take place in the 1960s and 1970s, but also to changes and tensions within the party. MT's role in providing 'intellectual guidance' began to give way to a greater range of debate. As Marxism's importance grew in relation to the social and political movements and industrial unrest, there was a cross-fertilisation with new ideas. The leadership tried to maintain a balance between orthodox and revisionist ideas: it opened up the party line on science, religion, the arts, ideology

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90 Croft 1995: 97-99.

91 Bernal was very closely associated with the CP but not actually a member.

92 Burns had been involved in disputes over the editorial direction of previous party journals (Croft 1995: 97).

93 After 1956, there was a suspicion that most intellectuals could not really be trusted.

94 Brennan wrote for *Link*, the CP's women's journal (Brennan 1996).

95 Matthews and Matthews 1996.

and culture after 1967, debated through MT, but retained a close eye over political and economic issues.[96]

Klugmann also tried to use the MTEB as part of the production process: primarily involving some board members on an informal and irregular arrangement for proof-reading articles and providing general advice on unsolicited manuscripts. Jack Cohen, head of the Education Department and MTEB member, provided regular help on MT. As with the production of academic journals, MT needed a long lead-time because of limited resources and the necessity of circulating unsolicited articles to leading party members to adjudicate on their suitability.

Unsolicited submissions deemed controversial were sent to leading members of the PC, EC or advisory bodies for advice in order to avoid contravening the party line. Thus, articles on trade unions and industrial relations were sent to the Industrial Department, a veritable 'party-within-a-party', which had responsibility for the CP's economic and trade union strategy and for its workplace branches.[97] When the leadership became more amenable to opening up debate, Klugmann obliged and MT reflected the move in its contents.[98] However, it could also mean closing off certain viewpoints which had once been more acceptable.[99] Klugmann was unwilling to take risks and would not defy the leadership on controversial issues, even if he supported the publication of an article as a contribution to debate. He often appealled for contributions from board members, the EC and other leading bodies, whose articles would have promoted the party line and demonstrated intellectual leadership and it would have probably meant less time spent on checking out controversial submissions.[100] By the 1970s, Klugmann was also requesting help with production in order to free up time for theoretical work, including writing the CP's history.[101]

The MTEB's functions were clearly demarcated from the daily production process in Jacques's proposals on MT's development.[102] The MTEB was to be responsible for overseeing MT's general direction and strategy, reviewing previous issues and discussing future topics, as it had been under his predecessor. Unlike Klugmann, however, Jacques did not want board members involved in the daily production process, which was to be handled by Jacques and a group of volunteers; known initially as the 'editorial working group', it functioned as MT's 'editorial collective' (MTEC) and was referred to as such.[103]

[96] The EC's (1967) statement allowed pluralism on issues of culture, science and religion because Marxist-Leninism provided no clear position and cleared the way for the party's more open attitude to new social movements and cultural questions.
[97] Eg Klugmann 1973; MTEB 1973a, 1973b.
[98] Monty Johnstone submitted articles critical of the British and Soviet CPs which were consistently refused publication until 1967 (Johnstone 1995; MTEB 1966).
[99] As in the Lysenko case (MTEB 1966).
[100] Klugmann 1960.
[101] MTEB 1973a; ECSubs 1976.
[102] Jacques 1978c.
[103] Jacques 1996b. Though Jacques retained autocratic control: he preferred to refer to MT's production process as 'collaborative' rather than 'collective'. However, the name has been adopted within this thesis for

The existence of MTEC was acknowledged, though never formally constituted; however, at his suggestion MTEC members were allowed to attend board meetings.[104] Though Jacques would utilise suggestions for contributors from both the MTEB and MTEC, he maintained total control over who and what went into the features section.[105]

Since the MTEB was appointed by the EC, it was important for Jacques to secure its agreement with the changes he envisaged for it. Nevertheless, it 'operated in a relationship of some tension' with the editor between 1977 and 1985, because of the mixture of traditionalist, loyalist and reformist members. Unsurprisingly, Jacques sought to change the composition of the MTEB during this time because of the opposition to some of his ideas from conservative members, though he also instituted more frequent board meetings (every two months) during 1978-86.[106] Three members were taken off (Bill Carritt, Nick Wright, George Wake) and five new members were selected (Hobsbawm, Bob Rowthorn, Dan Connor, Jean Gardiner, John Hoffman) with the MTEB's backing, while a further three names without board support put forward to the EC were not selected.[107] This new intake reflected both Jacques's suggestion that the MTEB had a representative function to perform and his desire for a board which would not only discuss strategic issues but do so with a more favourable disposition to Gramscian and Eurocommunist perspectives: the new intake included one industrial comrade (Connor), one feminist (Gardiner), one traditionalist (Hoffman) and two reformist (Hobsbawm, Rowthorn) intellectuals. Hoffman's inclusion reflected Jacques's caution: keeping up appearances of MTEB's representative function and ensuring that he did not alarm his opponents.

Traditionalist board members, such as Brennan, Hoffman, John Foster and Michael Seifert, became increasingly disgruntled with MT's political trajectory, feeling that it was becoming 'too one-sided' in its presentation of issues, though they acknowledged the improvements in design, format and distribution. Jacques was accused of using the MTEB to 'rubber-stamp' decisions that he and the MTEC had already taken and that the MTEB was 'a cover' for MT's role as a 'factional journal'; these criticisms intensified after the Tony Lane affair in 1982.[108] However, after the purge of oppositionists at the May 1985 Congress, Jacques was able to see through the changes in MTEB personnel he wanted: the board was subsequently able to work more closely in carrying out 'strategic thinking' for MT.[109] The list of names for the MTEB was put before the EC for discussion

this group and any documents which were produced (on production-related issues) between 1977 and 1991 and to which no author(s) can be assigned with certainty.

104 MTEB 1979a: 1.

105 Only in 1987 did Jacques finally relinquish control of just one feature per issue to the deputy editor (Taylor 1995).

106 At least one meeting per year would have to be cancelled because of a political crisis or summer holidays.

107 MTEB 1979a: 1.

108 Brennan 1996. Eg EC 1982a; Foster 1982a, 1984; MTEB 1981b; Seifert 1983.

109 Brennan says she left in 1980-81, though her name remained on the masthead until 1985; she tried to convince Seifert to leave because Jacques would only take their advice if and when he wanted to (Brennan 1996). Foster was no longer invited to board meetings after the 1985 Congress because he was among those purged (MTEB 1985a). Hoffman and Seifert were removed from the MTEB in 1986.

and the board was duly reconstituted in July 1986 in preparation for the October re-launch.[110]

The MTEB's function became more clearly strategic and advisory: its meetings were extended from an evening every two months to a day every three months. It was to 'influence and shape the longer-term direction', discussing 'ideas and themes' though it could not determine what went into MT on a monthly basis:[111] Jacques never felt constrained by any decisions taken by the MTEB.[112] The content of MT had not been seen as much of a problem until its profile became more public, particularly after its features on the Polish crisis in 1981-82 and others that questioned aspects of left orthodoxy.[113] A suggestion was also made that the MTEB should replace the Theory and Ideology Committee because it no longer functioned effectively and the board's role in 'exchanging and generating ideas' duplicated its function, and therefore, the party would make better use of its resources by putting some TIC members onto the new MTEB.[114]

The board was to be expanded to a maximum of 30, including non-CP people, and the editor and deputy editor were to become full, voting members (section editors were to be included as non-voting members).[115] In July 1986, after canvassing for names, Jacques submitted a list of 24 new names for inclusion on an expanded editorial board: these names included the first few non-CP members such as Stuart Hall, David Edgar and Robin Murray including ex-CP members like Fred Steward.[116] The new board was approved by the leadership.

The new MTEB had three key functions. One was to discuss general strategy and staff reports. Though the EC always dealt with MT's budget, the editor and staff reported to the editorial board on marketing strategies, sales figures, debts, staff changes, events, etc.: 'We shared our problems with the editorial board'.[117]The second key function was as a forum for feedback through reviewing the two or three most recent issues, with different board members taking responsibility for preparing and leading each session: all aspects were considered including content, design, etc., and how to re-dress imbalances or absences. The third key function was as a forum for bringing key people together to discuss issues around contemporary politics, culture and life. After 1986, non-party people were invited to contribute to MTEB discussions. It was through these types of discussions that the 1988 weekend seminar, 'Rethinking Socialism for the 1990s', turned

[110] Dave Priscott criticised Jacques for presenting the EC with proposals for changes to the MTEB's conception and to its composition because it would not allow the EC or other bodies to make suggestions for members (Priscott 1985a). In a personal letter to Jacques, Priscott expressed his concerns about 'rumours' that efforts were being made to promote Jacques as a 'future General Secretary' because it would affect attitudes to EC members and directives by polarising the EC into two camps (Priscott 1985b).
[111] Jacques 1986a.
[112] Brennan 1996; Jacques 1996d; Townsend 1996; Taylor 1995.
[113] Townsend 1996; Taylor 1995.
[114] Priscott 1986: 1.
[115] *Ibid.*; MTEB 1985b.
[116] Hall did not want to be the only non-party member and agreed to do it only if there were some other non-CP members invited (Hall 1997).
[117] Taylor 1995.

into MT's third big political theme: 'New Times'.[118] Thus, the new board developed into a lively, productive forum of ideas, a 'cultural circle'![119]

Although not everyone on the MTEB was in agreement, after 1986 these differences tended to be one of degree rather than entrenched opposition: most subsequent tensions on the board were productive of engagement with approaches, ideas and politics, as might take place on other editorial boards (eg 'designer socialism')![120] However, by 1987 tensions within the party emerged over MT's increasingly divergent path from the CP. Leading intellectuals, such as Dave Priscott and Monty Johnstone, voiced concerns of loyalists *and* reformists, that MT should play a closer, more supportive role of the party, since the traditionalists had been purged and the leadership was gradually being replaced.[121] Nevertheless, there were older CP intellectuals and party stalwarts who maintained unconditional support for MT, which helped persuade party members who were uncertain about the journal.[122]

The MTEB under both editorships, therefore, functioned as a forum for 'feedback' and was used to discuss strategy; both editors also limited their take-up of MTEB members' suggestions to those that were within the acceptable parameters of debate in Klugmann's case, or of MT's political project in Jacques's case (though Jacques used the board more consistently in generating and exploring ideas). However, the MTEB was also useful in supporting Jacques's proposals and ideas against opponents within the party, shifting from the body entrusted with overseeing MT on behalf of the party to one which functioned as a useful support mechanism in internal party struggles.

IV. 'Technology and Control': Printing and Typesetting

For most magazines, typesetting and printing decisions are simply 'financial' decisions about which companies based upon the quality, services, costs, etc. These types of decisions became the sites of important battles, however, in establishing MT on a more commercially viable and 'production-sensitive' footing (overcoming the limitations of older technologies and bringing in newer ones), and in establishing its and Jacques's political and editorial independence from the CP, as MT made the transformation from a 'journal' into 'magazine'. Printing MT, therefore, was as much about the editor's autonomy as it was about the production process.

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[118] Jacques 1988c; MTEB 1988a.

[119] Professor George Thomson, a MTEB member, suggested that part of the problems of previous party journals was due to the boards' failures to function as 'cultural circles' (Thomson 1957: 62). He argued that the 'cross-fertilisation' of ideas, methods and approaches was actually more to do with the integration of Marxist theory into traditional academic disciplines than with creating a truly interdisciplinary scholarly approach. When a board functions as a cultural circle then it acts as a "homogeneous group of intellectuals trained to produce regular and methodical 'literary' activity" (Gramsci cited in *ibid.*: 62).

[120] Board members Ros Brunt and David Edgar were at odds on this issue (MTEB 1989b).

[121] Priscott's dissatisfaction went back to 1982, but McLennan had convinced him to stay on board despite his reservations (Priscott 1988). Both Priscott and Johnstone addressed their resignation letters to the EC rather than Jacques or the MTEB in recognition of the EC's authority over MT (Johnstone 1990).

[122] They included reformists (eg Hobsbawm) and loyalists (eg Arnold Kettle, George and Betty Matthews) (Hobsbawm 1997; Kettle 1985; Matthews and Matthews 1996).

MT was printed for the first 29 years (October 1957 to September 1986), by Farleigh Press (FP), a CP enterprise.[123] The production routine allowed for a long lead-time for articles (of months rather than weeks or days) which enabled Klugmann to consult with leading party bodies over prospective articles and FP to typeset articles well in advance. Like older printing houses, FP had provided its own proof-readers, saving MT time and money. Despite the quality of proof-reading and printing, it was neither the most efficient means nor sufficiently flexible for producing an increasingly topical, monthly periodical.

When Jacques took over as editor in September 1977, he inherited nearly four issues worth of articles already set in hot-metal type.[124] For the first two years, Jacques relied on the older, hot-metal printing until he had MT redesigned, laid-out and formatted for its re-launch with the October 1979 issue. He went with the newer photolithography process which was better for preparing layout and more manageable than hot-metal technology where each individual letter had to be stamped out and set in rows and clamped together. Photolithography meant that copy was typed out and cut into strips and set out on sheets ('camera-ready copy') before being photographed and then printed. It was easier to layout artwork and photographs around the text (or vice versa). This was a necessary development if MT was going to make regular use of images and graphics.

The first step for the new MT was to use this new typesetting. For the 1979 re-launch, they went to an outfit called Dessett Graphics Limited. It had not been hard for Jacques to convince the leadership to allow MT to transfer its typesetting to Dessett because it was half-owned by Farleigh Press. However, in the autumn of 1981, FP decided to pull out of Dessett and Jacques was told he would have to move back to FP since it was installing new typesetting equipment. However, Jacques did not want a repeat of the hassles and problems which he had gone through already during his first two years as editor.[125] He had worked hard to get MT to the position it had achieved by October 1981: new format and design, more sections, visuals, wider distribution and increased circulation. More importantly, MT had just been launched into nationwide newsagents, W. H. Smith's, with the October 1981 issue: the pressure to meet the deadlines of mainstream, commercial distribution would be far greater than from the party's distribution arm, CB. So great were the difficulties that Jacques expected to re-encounter if he had been forced to have MT typeset again by FP, and despite the fact that he had invested so much of himself into the periodical (and was very closely associated with its success) that he threatened to resign; the threat was only made known to Gordon McLennan, CP General Secretary.[126] The

[123] MT was always published around ten days before the beginning of the cover date: eg the October issue was published in late September.
[124] Hammarling 1996. Hot-metal was (and is) more expensive: articles set in hot-metal type had to be broken up after they had been set whether they were used or not. MT had to pay FP to break up four months' worth of articles that had been typeset (*ibid.*; Jacques 1996d).
[125] For example, one major difficulty was trying to re-arrange changes in copy between MT, based at Party Centre in London, and FP in Watford, north of London, as there was only one delivery to, and one drop off from, FP per day (Jacques 1996c).
[126] It was the first of two times when he threatened to resign during his fourteen years as editor (*Ibid.*).

matter was resolved in Jacques's favour and MT moved its typesetting to Advantage Filmsetting Limited.

Behind MT's typesetting, which was done out of house between 1979 and 1989, was a thorough proof-reading of all copy, two to four times. At first Jacques used editorial board members as proof-readers until his editorial collective (MTEC) acquired sufficient volunteers. By 1980 there were usually three to four volunteers, party members who were professionals, who proof-read everything for MT, as part of their connection to the CP.[127] MT's proof-reading process was considerably more rigorous than most alternative *and* mainstream, commercial publications, including the national press.[128] Jacques's drive for perfection and effecting the best possible results with limited resources played an important role in the 'professional look' that MT acquired.

As part of Julian Turner's initiatives to make MT more cost-efficient, all typesetting was moved in-house during 1989.[129] Although MT never got to the point of doing the layout on the computer, the move to desktop publishing enabled MT to cut typesetting costs[130] (though the actual production of the proofs still had to be done by outside typesetters). While in-house typesetting speeded up the production process and ensured that staff were not having to work all hours,[131] to try and ensure that MT was ready to go to the printers by the last possible moment, all the artwork and photographs still had to be pasted in by hand right up until the very last issue.[132]

Jacques also fought an intermittent five year battle to have MT printed outside the CP from December 1981 until September 1986. The costs that FP charged MT were 'paper' charges insofar as they were costs which were incurred within the CP. The leadership tended not to be concerned with what Jacques did as long as any proposed changes would not incur costs greater than the year before. Jacques sought quotes from other printers, notably Development Workshop (DW), and used them as evidence to demonstrate that cheaper printing was available elsewhere. Reuben Falber, Assistant General Secretary with overall responsibility for all CP enterprises, reiterated certain points which explained FP's difficulties:[133] its labour costs were constant whereas DW's would increase after April 1982; it provided longer term credit, worth 'more than £1,000 p.a. in borrowing costs'; and it provided greater flexibility because it could expand MT's pagination in increments of four pages to DW's eight pages.[134]

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127 Townsend 1996.
128 *Ibid.*; Taylor 1995.
129 Taylor 1995.
130 MTEB 1988b. Initial savings in 1989 were around £300 per month (Table 4.2).
131 Although they still worked very long hours (Brown 1996; Taylor 1995).
132 Brown 1996.
133 Falber was one of the four key men who apparently knew about the 'Moscow gold', subsidies paid to the CP, 1957-79: the other three were John Gollan, David Ainley, chief executive of the *Morning Star*, and George Matthews, former editor of the *Star*. During the 1960s the subsidy amounted to around £100,000 per annum but it was reduced to £14-15,000 after 1970 and ended in 1979 (Anderson and Davey 1995: 33; Andrews 1995a: 245; Beckett 1995: 216-21).
134 Falber 1982.

At the MTEB meeting in February 1982, the board agreed that MT should switch to web offset printing 'as soon as possible in order to maintain the development that has taken place (and its viability)', which Jacques communicated to McLennan.[135] Gerry Cohen, Secretary of the London District CP, wrote to McLennan detailing their vote of 16 to 12 (and 4 abstentions) opposing any attempt by the EC to withdraw the printing of MT from FP and arguing that it was vital to maintain 'Party-owned printing facilities' and FP's viability.[136] The involvement of other groups in what would normally be a 'business' matter indicates the degree to which opponents of Jacques and MT were attempting to oppose them; however, the nearly fifty-fifty split in the LDCP leadership vote reflected the wider internal party divisions. The PC decided to maintain the printing and other arrangements as they stood until September 1982, at which point they would review them again. The PC also decided to postpone employing a full-time circulation manager until the September review, 'subject to being possible to continue with its present arrangement'.[137]

Successful enterprises were expected to pay a rebate to the party and, though FP had not made any profit in the previous two years, it had consistently paid rebates for 16 out of the previous 20 years (1964-84) 'totalling over £100,000'![138] FP argued that the loss of an important customer, such as MT, would affect the services it provided for the CP. But part of FP's problems were due to a lack of investment in technology which affected its ability to provide competitive prices and extra features. The principle of the CP having its own press had become secondary and FP had 'been vilified because it [wa]s unable to compete with some of the cheapest printers in the trade'.[139]

However, FP's prices were subjected to trying to meet the quotes provided by the competition. Jacques kept up the pressure on FP while highlighting MT's annual losses (and hence the size of CP subsidies) when submitting accounts by presenting the difference between what FP charged and what it would have been had DW or Chesham Press done the work: FP's actual charges were always higher than the quotes cited by MT. In the build up to this event, Jacques and MT lobbied for changing the printers through June and July of 1986. The disputes were over paper quality and the quotes used to negotiate against FP's charges. But the crux of the matter was not just financial or even a question of editorial autonomy, but also the changing nature of MT's printing needs. It was argued that FP was overstretched and could no longer meet MT's needs in pagination, supplements, print run, and timing, which would adversely affect MT's ability to meet growing demand.[140]

FP's response to MT's criticisms was to claim that the alternative printers cited by Jacques were unreliable, even if they provided the cheapest prices, and that MT might be

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135 Jacques 1982b.
136 Cohen 1982.
137 Woddis 1982.
138 Blatt 1984.
139 *Ibid.*
140 Jacques and Farrington 1986.

forced to go elsewhere and pay considerably higher costs for its printing.[141] FP argued that its production process, using sheet-fed machines, took no longer than the web offset printer's because FP printed MT section by section as they received the copy, usually over seven to ten days; this meant, therefore, that there was little time difference between when FP received the final copy from MT to when the magazine was ready and the three days the web offset printer needed, because MT would have to submit all their copy at once, but they would have to still allow time for pre-press operations like typesetting, which would have taken up the same amount of time.[142]

Jacques also submitted MT's outline of the issues and problems they faced and why they needed to move to a web offset printer.[143] MT was also looking to expand its print run to 28,000 for the re-launch, up from the October 1985 print run of 21,100.[144] MT had used Chesham Press for printing their supplements, such as the 'Left Alive' programme, and Jacques suggested that they could not keep on going back to Chesham Press for quotes against which FP would have to pitch its prices. FP had even agreed two years previously, in 1984, that MT was 'cheaper to print web than sheet-fed'![145] While Jacques claimed that, contrary to claims by FP, MT had been paying its bills regularly, albeit four months behind; Liz Shackleton, for FP, pointed out that few, if any, (commercial) printers would allow such a situation.[146] Nevertheless, the leadership agreed to MT's move: the October 1986 (third format) MT became the first printed by a non-party press, Birmingham Printers.[147]

The dispute did not end there. Less than two years later, a dispute about printing costs for MT event programmes resurfaced. FP raised the issue with the EC that a company, Shadowdean, had received this work over FP even though the other company's quote had been higher than FP's, a point which appeared to undermine Jacques's claims about FP. The matter was taken up by the EC and MT replied to FP's accusations but the matter remained unresolved.[148] The issue was obviously a matter of some concern for FP, when MT provided a substantial portion of its work, particularly as other work dried up, which in turn undermined its ability to invest in new technologies and remain competitive.

A homology can be discerned between the different technologies used in the production process and the respective editorial styles practiced under Klugmann and Jacques. Despite the changes in printing techniques and technology between the mid-1960s and the mid-1970s,[149] FP continued to typeset and print MT with 'hot-metal'

[141] FP, for example, cited problems with the 'Women Alive' programme which it had to sort out, which MT's printers should have done.
[142] Shackleton 1986.
[143] Jacques 1986b.
[144] A magazine needs thousands of extra copies to ensure an adequate supply to the newstrade.
[145] Jacques 1986b.
[146] Shackleton 1986.
[147] Though MT had to switch printers again when they moved from sheet-fed to web offset printing.
[148] EC 1988a.
[149] The 'Offset Litho Revolution' was an important contributory factor in the development of the alternative press during this period.

printing technology. Hot-metal printing produces clearly defined characters, analogous to MT's own position (under Klugmann) in relation to the CP at this time and its process of reviewing and discussing articles submitted for publication.

Under Jacques, MT's relationship to the CP was one increasingly of some remove from it and MT's political situation was less clearly defined, like the images of phototypesetting.[150] The phototypesetting image did not produce as clear and distinct reproduction of type as the hot-metal process; however, it provided the necessary, rapid reproduction of words without 'setting them in stone' (ie lead). Offset photolithography contributed to MT's transformation by enabling 'maximum flexibility in production': because it gave editorial control over the layout 'right up to the last minute'; the technique was easy to learn; and it was 'ideally suited economically to small radical papers', printing 1-10,000 copies, whereas 'hot-metal typesetting and the rotary letterpress, only becomes economically worthwhile on longer print runs'.[151] The new process enabled Jacques to retain greater editorial control over MT's content.

V. 'Private Enterprise or Political Commitment?': The Battle over Subscriptions

The struggle over typesetting and printing, however, was not the only ongoing struggle over MT's production and distribution. As Central Books was responsible for all elements of distribution, supplying party branches and party and independent bookshops and handling domestic and international subscriptions, any changes had to have the agreement of the PC and the EC. Each and every change in typesetting, printing and subscriptions required the extensive collection of information and data, backed by lobbying and politicking, in order to make a convincing argument for changes. Newstrade distribution, on the other hand, was not handled by CB and therefore did not represent a problem.

CB used a newly-installed computer in 1982 to try and monitor MT's subscriptions more effectively. Part of the key to a successful subscription service is to ensure that subscribers receive renewal reminders prior to their subscription lapsing and that they are cut off when subscriptions lapse or are terminated. However, MT found themselves dealing with a series of problems between 1982 and 1984:[152] subscribers being 'suspended' even though they had paid; other subscribers continuing to receive copies well after their subscriptions had lapsed; not receiving an adequate and ongoing flow of information; problems in maintaining a properly organised system for tracking and following subscriptions (this problem appeared to stem from the computer); no break-down of information in order to better target subscribers; better liaison and accounting.[153]

150 Jacques attempted to set out MT's role and relationship to the CP and the Left in a series of biennial reports to the EC.
151 Aubrey *et al.* 1980: 6.
152 MTEC 1984a. A compilation of the documents on finances, subscriptions and printing presented to the PC during this period are contained in PCSub 1984a.
153 MTEC 1983a: 1-4. MT checked out the list of lapsed and suspended subscribers sent by CB (MTEC 1984b; PCSub 1984a).

MT complained that these problems were exacerbated by CB's failure to respond to an earlier request for a meeting to solve the problems.

As with the battle over printing, the MTEC was forced to spend considerable resources and time on researching subscription services and garnering the necessary information to present to the PC and EC about the need for a better service.[154] MT did not feel that CB's responses (or lack thereof) to MT's ongoing queries and criticisms reflected a very efficient operation nor did they feel that they were taking MT's concerns seriously.

As the negotiations that were taking place in May 1984 represented a culmination of two years of disputes over subscriptions (as well as printing and finances), Jacques even threatened to resign if these changes were not enacted (as did Reuben Falber in a reverse threat).[155] However, a partial victory relieved part of the pressure upon Jacques and he felt able to move forward again: in July 1984 the EC granted MT permission to move its subscriptions to an outside agency (Punch).[156] MT began using Punch as their subscriptions agency from October.[157] When MT was dissatisfied with the service or price or income, they switched agencies without having to make extensive notes and collate data and engage in negotiations: the decision could be made and acted on quickly.

VI. 'A Little Help From My Friends': Staffing

Jacques relied upon the support of an editorial collective (MTEC) and often accepted their advice, though the 'chain of command' flowed from him downwards through the MTEC, whose members took responsibility for different realms of production and distribution. This structure facilitated Jacques's overall control while ensuring an efficient use of staff and volunteers. Though there was no question that Jacques ran MT as he saw fit, he had to rely more on his closest advisors to maintain editorial control as the number of helpers increased during the 1980s and as he suffered ill-health in 1983 and 1987; after the second bout of M.E. ('yuppie flu'), he had to slow down his pace and he shared some of his duties with senior staff (the deputy editor was given responsibility for editing one or two features per issue and Julian Turner took over the financial side).[158]

Volunteer labour is one of the single most important resources in the alternative press' budgetary repertoire. MT's transformation was produced with volunteers and unpaid and paid staff.[159] Despite frequent changes in job titles in the 1980s, there were three basic staffing areas: editorial (including office and production), advertising and design. For the

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154 *Ibid.*

155 PC 1984; PCSub 1984b.

156 EC 1984b. Counter-motions to shift this back for yet more discussion was defeated (this was a common tactic by MT's opponents, but once a vote was won, counter-motions were inevitably lost by the same proportion that the vote was won).

157 The previous year (1983), MT moved their newsagent distribution from Moore-Harness to Punch because they felt that M-H 'were not doing a satisfactory job' (MTEC 1984d: 2). Decisions over commercial enterprises could be taken much more readily than they could with CP enterprises, especially once MT had control over its own budget.

158 Jacques 1996d.

159 The notion of 'unpaid' staff is to recognise differences between volunteers who 'lend a hand' and those who take on responsibilities (Townsend 1996; Taylor 1995).

first twenty years, all three areas had been the responsibility of the editor and his part-time secretaries, the equivalent of 1.6 FTE paid staff: one full-time editor[160] and one part-time secretary working three days a week.[161] During the 1960s and 1970s, Jack Cohen, a party education officer and a friend of Klugmann, acted as his volunteer 'assistant editor', while MTEB members helped out occasionally.[162]

Production staff were few in number: Jacques occupied the only full-time editorial post for the first five years. The only other paid position at first was the three days a week editorial assistant (replacing the part-time secretaries). Besides some production and advertising work, this position involved basic administrative and secretarial tasks. Jacques established the MTEC which initially consisted of four unpaid staff overseeing key areas: Dave Triesman (Design/Books), Paul Marginson (Circulation/Promotion), Jon Chadwick (Advertising) and Colin Roberts (Production).[163] Since MT's budget was limited and all additional expenditures had to be negotiated with the EC, Jacques set about bringing in people who, ideally, were knowledgeable about magazine production or design but had to be willing to help out with basic tasks (selling advertising, proof-reading).[164] All volunteers were trained to proof-read and follow-up press releases, though they were not kept on if they did not perform well.[165]

> Volunteers had to just pitch in, and whoever had enough 'nouse' to be trusted to do something did it, and whoever didn't was given envelope-licking to do. But the sorts of things that the volunteers did were not very high-powered, but were absolutely essential to the production process in particular, which was a monthly nightmare every single month.[166]

MT had a constant need for volunteers because it used them up at 'an alarming rate'![167]

During the initial period of MT's transformation, most of the production process was handled by the MTEC. As the numbers of helpers had grown to thirty by 1984, they were organised into 'mini-collectives' responsible for different areas of work, and which would include staff, section editors, MTEB members and designers: Channel 5; Press Group; *Colour Supplement* Group;[168] business; trade union group; circulation; promotion; cover.[169] Control was maintained by having either the editor or deputy editor sit in on every group.

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160 Officially, the position of assistant editor was dropped after Klugmann took over as editor in December 1962.
161 When Jacques took over he had three part-time secretaries: one for two-days, one for one-day, and one for a few hours every week.
162 Johnstone 1995. Cohen's help was mentioned in EC reports.
163 MTEB 1978c.
164 During the late 1970s, Jacques's benefitted from the help of people like Sally Beardsley, a professional designer, and David Triesman, who had worked on the short-lived, lively, radical weekly, *7 Days* (MTEB 1978a, 1978b).
165 Jacques 1996b; Townsend 1996.
166 Taylor 1995.
167 Turner 1994.
168 This group put together MT's response to criticisms and a previous resolution in a document circulated at the 39th Congress called, *Marxism Today Colour Supplement, Congress Special*; the title an indication of MT's 'irreverent' attitude (MTEC 1985).
169 MTEC 1984c.

During the first half of Jacques's editorship, volunteers were attracted by MT's ideas and they often shared a commitment to its politics, even joining the CP if they were not already members. However, as MT's public profile and reputation rose and it acquired more *cachet*, volunteers came more out of an interest in acquiring media experience than out of any commitment to its ideas or politics.[170]

There is a drawback to volunteer labour. As long as the volunteers can be self-sufficient, supported by others or survive on welfare, then the skills and expertise they acquire can be retained for the periodical they work for, though such expertise also increases the likelihood of their finding 'mainstream' employment.[171]Jacques, though, was persuasive enough to convince key people to stay on or even to return (a valuable tool for maintaining MT's high production values).[172] Even among paid staff, commitment beyond thirty years of age was difficult to sustain because, with the pay rates well below equivalent jobs elsewhere, it was difficult to meet their personal and career needs.[173]

Some staff members who started out as volunteer section editors and were promoted to paid positions (if it was felt that they could do the job), would still have responsibility for their section: Jane Taylor continued to edit the 'Focus' section even after she was promoted into a paid staff position.[174] Others started out as staff members and ended up with voluntary duties: Townsend was editorial assistant before setting up and editing Channel Five.[175]

By 1985, MT's success meant that it had been able to expand its paid staff to five FTEs. The four full-time staff were: editor, deputy editor, advertising manager, and circulation manager. The two part-time staff were: an office/business manager employed three days per week and an advertising executive hired for two days per week; plus a freelance graphic designer was contracted for ten days per month to oversee production and layout, commission artwork and photographs, and do picture research.[176] By the spring of 1987, MT had nearly doubled its paid staff to nine FTE.[177] Part of the increased revenues from the growth in sales and advertising, was put back into hiring staff.

The production process quickened as MT graduated, step by step, from journal to magazine: finding experts, commissioning articles and artwork, researching pictures, designing covers, proof-reading, and editing. One continual difficulty was getting

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[170] Julian Turner, a Ph.D. student, volunteered because he wanted to see if he would like a career in journalism: he went on to work on the business side of *The Guardian* and *The Observer* (Turner 1994).
[171] *Ibid.*
[172] Jan Brown was persuaded to stay on as art editor after returning to for only one issue, while Taylor wanted to leave some six months before she finally did leave (Brown 1996; Taylor 1995).
[173] Jacques 1996c.
[174] Taylor 1995.
[175] Townsend 1996.
[176] MTEC 1985.
[177] Jacques 1991/92.

contributors to work to deadlines, particularly as they were not being paid.[178] Under Klugmann, contributors had been overwhelmingly party members with occasional contributions from non-members (eg to the Christian-Marxist dialogue), and as a result of the party opening up to new social movements, even drawing in non-party Marxists.[179] During Jacques's editorship, the number of non-party contributors increased, shifting gradually from the CP and labour movement to the wider Left and new social movements to mainstream journalists, scholars and Labour, Liberal, Social Democrat and Conservative contributors. From the October 1980 issue, MT increasingly was able to draw in public figures in some form, enabling it to become 'the centre of a different kind of debate ... as opposed to being predominantly intellectuals'.[180] This shift in the profile of contributors was important to MT's transformation from a journal to a magazine.[181] Jacques's initial difficulties were partly due to the absence of a 'house style' and he wanted to forge a new writing style which combined journalists' writing skills with academics' 'deeper thinking': this meant 'interventionist editing'.[182]

Under Jacques, the monthly production cycle began with one staff member leading the review meeting shortly after publication, similar to MTEB meetings except with less time for reflection, and suggestions were made for improvements, story ideas and topics. Staff were very much a part of the 'audience', as were discussion groups and the MTEB, providing feedback for MT. Magazine section editors often discussed ideas with Jacques before co-ordinating their group's work (eg discussing topics, suggesting contributors).[183] The section editor would explain MT's requirements and send copies to potential contributors if they were unfamiliar with it (before it gained national media coverage, the title did put off potential contributors).[184] Staff and volunteers were asked for their suggestions on the leading authority for a topic, and that individual would be asked to contribute. If the person asked could or would not contribute, they were asked to suggest someone who might; the collective provided alternative contacts. Journalists were often flattered to be asked and proved to be quite willing to write about their specialisms for MT, even if only because they could take a different tact: indeed, 'you could find small nests of left-wing journalists nestled in the unlikeliest of places', including the *Sunday Times*'s sports desk.[185] As production values improved and MT projected a professional magazine image, contributors began asking for money.[186]

Once Jacques indicated how many pages an issue would have (eg 32, 48, 64), the designer or art editor would begin a provisional mapping out of the running order,

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178 David Edgar (1991/92) recalls how one (unnamed) contributor always managed to find out the real deadline and hand his article in against this deadline: this was Stuart Hall (Brown 1996).
179 Eg Lindop 1971.
180 Jacques 1996b.
181 Chapter 6.
182 Jacques 1996b; see Chapter 7.
183 This was especially true for Focus because of a possible overlap of stories with features (Taylor 1995).
184 *Ibid.*; Townsend 1996.
185 Townsend 1996. This is an indication of the difficulty of trying to 'read off' contributors' political biases from their occupations (as MT's opponents did).
186 *Ibid.*

advertisements and features, in addition to the pages allocated to the different sections (over which section editors sometimes had to fight to maintain their allotted pages).[187] At that point, Jacques only had a rough idea of which articles would run, but this was enough to get advertising sales under way and for the cover to be worked out (as it would be connected to the features).[188]

Cover meetings included Jacques, the deputy editor, the designer or art editor, the cover designer (if there was someone special being brought in), and at a later point, the circulation manager was brought in to attend these meetings also.[189] Despite criticisms that MT was driven by style rather than editorial content, cover page meetings involved a lot of negotiation over what would go on the cover because of the differences between those involved in ideas, literally (ie editorial staff and writers), and those who worked with ideas visually: an idea would be agreed upon without necessarily consulting the designer(s).[190] However, the cover was seen not just, as the left press often sees it, a means to make a 'statement', but also as a 'marketing tool'.[191]

VII. Conclusion

Marxism Today demonstrates some of the benefits of combining aspects of both models, Bolshevik and Comedia, in addressing the financial, organisational and production problems facing the left press. On the one hand, MT enjoyed the advantages of being published by a political party, which meant it was assured a minimal audience and income (party subsidies ensured its survival): even its efforts in the marketplace were helped by CP organisational and financial support.[192] On the other hand, MT's experience *also* demonstrates the financial benefits that the market can offer: increased revenues paid for improvements in production, promotion, design changes, extra staff, etc.

As MT engaged in competition in the marketplace, it became more 'production-sensitive'; the improvement of production quality (eg design, new technologies) was necessary to engage in market competition and bring in greater revenues (including advertising), which helped improve the quality of the product. The changes in financing and production fed into each other in a symbiotic relationship between commercial and political decisions (an oft-cited but seldom examined relationship). However, some party members resented MT's autonomy when CP enterprises lost out to private companies, which combined with internal party strife made it difficult for MT to make certain commercial decisions without having to engage in some form of lobbying and

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187 From its first issue in 1957 until September 1981, MT was almost always 32 pages. After October 1981, pagination increased by fifty percent, from 32 to 48 pages, becoming the minimum within six months. Subsequently, pagination increased up to 64 pages plus occasional supplements.
188 Brown 1996.
189 *Ibid.*; Hammarling 1996; Perryman 1994b.
190 *Ibid.*; Minnion 1996. Jacques was not good at thinking visually and relied on those with more expertise.
191 Perryman 1994b.
192 This supports those who remain critical of the market and argue that the radical press needs subsidies (Atton 1999; Bambery 1996; Khiabany 1997).

institutional politics; all of which absorbed considerable energies of editor and staff and furthered MT's drive for autonomy.

While difficult to measure practically, an editor's leadership qualities can have a tremendous impact upon the success or failure of small periodicals. MT's success was actually a result of the publisher allowing the editor a great degree of operational autonomy, editorial and financial.[193] MT benefited from Jacques's strict overall control. Directing the periodical as he saw fit, he used all sorts of networks (of friends, volunteers, party members, *et al.*) to provide ideas, financial help or production support, drawing upon advice liberally, motivating staff and volunteers, but also lobbying board members and the leadership. MT also benefited greatly from the support of staff and volunteers. The organisational structures enabled MT to make the most of the free labour that was available which worked through various smaller collectives. Collective working practices were harnessed to benefit MT, but decisions remained the prerogative of the editor and those he appointed.

There is an important relationship between an editor's style and degree of independence, and the type of periodical that can be produced (even within financial limitations). The differing editorial styles of Klugmann and Jacques and their particular relationships with MT, the MTEB and the CP, parallel the two forms, journal and magazine, respectively. The changes to finance, organisation and the production process were crucial to MT's transformation from a journal into a magazine, all of which enhanced its ability to gain access to the public sphere, and as MT's access to the public sphere grew, so too did its public profile and the pace of transformation.

193 Jacques had arguably greater freedom to operate than most editors of the 'free press' do from the owners of their newspapers. Eg, consider the relationship between Rupert Murdoch and some of his editors (Chippindale and Horrie 1992; Neil 1997).

Chapter 5

The ideas which *Marxism Today* promoted and with which it was associated were critical to its success. These ideas are notable because they went against the accepted left orthodoxies of the time, as the responses from parts of the Left indicate. Although it is not the purpose of either the thesis or this chapter to provide an intellectual history of MT, it is necessary to outline its key ideas to better understand its reception by the national press, the Left and the CP. This chapter, therefore, describes the five key themes around which MT's political project was organised.

I. 'Forward March of Labour Halted?'

Marxism Today launched its critique of the labour movement with the publication of Professor Eric Hobsbawm's Marx Memorial Lecture, 'The Forward March of Labour Halted?', in the September 1978 issue, as the annual conference of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) took place.[1] It was only after it was published in MT, that it generated an intense debate with leading trade unionists, party activists, scholars and even a Labour MP. The Labour Party's 1979 election defeat brought the importance of Hobsbawm's thesis to the fore: it was no longer a matter of academic debate but of immediate political necessity. This marked the beginning of MT's challenge of traditional left shibboleths.

Hobsbawm's article confronted a widely-held belief on the Left that the labour movement was gaining in strength and marching inexorably forward. He argued that, to the contrary, labour and the Left were 'weak' and history was no longer progressing forward in its favour, evident in the changing composition of the working class and its declining electoral support for Labour. This thesis also challenged the dominant view on the Left that industrial militancy, often based upon the struggle for better wages, could be equated with political militancy: economic struggles could not be seen as indicating even a vague *commitment* to socialism, let alone as a foretaste of struggles for social change.[2]

In contrast to Labour's forward march from 1900 to 1950, its share of the vote declined from a high of nearly 14 million in 1951 to 11.5 million in 1979, except for a temporary hiatus in 1964-66.[3] Labour's electoral fortunes had been dependent upon the movement of voters between either the Conservative or third parties rather than winning over non-Labour voters.[4] As the composition of the working class and union membership was changing (barely half of the population was classed as manual workers in 1976 and there were more women and white collar workers than ever before), it was no longer enough for Labour to rely solely on appealing to the working class (if it ever was)

[1] Hobsbawm had originally presented his lecture in March 1978.
[2] Hobsbawm 1978.
[3] Hobsbawm 1981: 169.
[4] *Ibid.*: 177-78.

because it made up a shrinking proportion of the population and it never had voted for Labour as a whole anyway.[5]

Hobsbawm also pointed to the increasing divisions *within* organised labour, as indicated by such practices as 'sectionalism': this was when sections of the working class, particularly skilled workers, pursued their own interests irrespective of the consequences to other workers. The Left was criticised for the way they defended sectional interests 'as if they were class interests' without 'demonstrating any connection between the two'.[6] Those sections of workers able to exert the most pressure usually wound up targeting, 'directly or indirectly, the political will of the government' rather than the profitability of private employers.[7] If industrial militancy led to 'socialist consciousness' as opposed to 'trade union consciousness', than party memberships should be increasing; however, membership rolls of the two largest parties, CP and Labour, had been declining since the 1950s, which was probably true of smaller parties despite a brief upturn in the late 1960s. A high proportion of new recruits to the CP and Marxist organisations consisted of 'new socialist activists': students, white collar workers, professionals.[8] Therefore, despite the upturn in 'industrial militancy' in 1970-74, union activism was declining in the longer term and mostly taken-up in sectional wage struggles.

The earlier illusions about union militancy, encouraged by the 'winter of discontent' in 1978-79, were set aside after 1979 and replaced by a more 'dangerous set of illusions': that a Labour Party dominated by the Left and committed to a socialist manifesto would guarantee victory at the next general election because, as many on the Left believed, Labour had lost previous elections (1970, 1979) because voters felt it had betrayed its manifesto.[9] However, the crisis was not inevitable, but the failure of Harold Wilson's governments (1964-70, 1974-76) to deliver on their promises had led to a loss of 'faith and hope in the mass party of the working class';[10] people did not refrain from voting Labour because they failed to live up to their promises in office but because they had been unable to handle the economic crisis and acted in a way which was 'very nearly the opposite of what Labour voters and trade unionists expected'.[11] Thus, even as Labour's traditional electoral base was shrinking, significant numbers of this core group were alienated as a result of its policies in government: Labour had failed to achieve and maintain political hegemony 'on the basis of successful policies'![12]

The shift to the Left *within* Labour developed around trade union resistance to the Labour Government's policies in 1976-79 and led to a renewed interest in socialism, albeit mostly among political and union activists.[13] As the struggle for the Labour Party

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[5] Hobsbawm 1978: 280.
[6] Devine 1980: 12.
[7] Hobsbawm 1978: 284.
[8] *Ibid.*: 285-86.
[9] Eg Gill 1978; Costello 1979; Harrison 1979.
[10] Hobsbawm 1978: 286.
[11] Hobsbawm 1981: 178.
[12] Devine 1980: 15.
[13] Devine 1980.

intensified, Hobsbawm warned against assuming that winning positions inside the LP could be equated with gaining popular support for socialist policies amongst the public: this was an illusion 'that *organisation* can replace politics'.[14] It is not enough to have 'the most left-wing party ... if the masses won't support it in sufficient numbers'![15] Labour's loss of support from even amongst the unemployed, who were one of its natural constituencies, demonstrated that 'the ideological commitment to Labour had been undermined', and some inner London areas with high unemployment were lost to other parties including the Conservatives.[16]

The crux of Labour's electoral failures was not its inability to win over voters but to hold onto those who had been won over at previous elections. Labour's 1970 election defeat was a result of the loss of 800,000 votes they had gained at the 1966 election: it was 'the reactions of people who ought perhaps to have been Labour voters, *but no longer were*'.[17] To win power, Labour would have to build up support for its policies, which became more crucial as its share of the vote was declining, even amongst union members. Therefore, Labour had to appeal to other constituencies before it could move forward: it could only do so as a 'people's party' not as a 'class party'.[18]

By 1981, although none of the contributors to the 'Forward March' debate[19] disagreed with the essence of Hobsbawm's thesis (including the SWP),[20] there was no agreement over its implications and it led to great, tumultuous debates over Labour's future. The subsequent split within Labour, which led to the establishment of the Social Democratic Party in 1981, lent support to those arguing that Conservative electoral victories were the result of a divided opposition.[21]

II. 'Thatcherism': The Free Market and the Authoritarian State

Aware that Stuart Hall was one of the few on the Left who studied the British Right, having read *Policing the Crisis* (co-authored by Hall and four postgraduate students at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies),[22] Jacques commissioned him to write what would become, MT's second (and probably the most fiercely contested) thesis. Hall's prescient analysis of 'Thatcherism' drew upon this earlier work, and was published four months after Hobsbawm's feature and five months before the 1979 general election.[23]

Thatcherism was a political project which was to constitute a new hegemony in British politics with an agenda for the particular historical conjuncture of three trends: the

[14] Hobsbawm 1981: 173 (original emphasis).
[15] *Ibid.*
[16] Devine 1980: 16.
[17] Hobsbawm 1981: 178 (original emphasis).
[18] *Ibid.*: 175-79.
[19] Jacques and Mulhern 1981b.
[20] Jefferys 1981.
[21] The Labour Right appeared more intent on pursuing a vendetta against the Left (Panitch and Leys 1997).
[22] Hall *et al.* 1978.
[23] Hall 1979. The roots of this analysis can be traced to the joint project at the CCCS by Hall *et al.* (1978) (Barker 1992; Hall 1997).

'long-term structural decline' of the UK economy combined with a deepening world recession; the disintegration of the postwar consensus; and the "resumption of the 'new Cold War', and a Britain sliding ... into a mood of intense, bellicose, patriotic fervour".[24] In his analysis, Hall concentrated on political-ideological rather than economic aspects and on the domestic context, even though Thatcherism was seen as a 'global intervention' (an indication of its hegemonic nature).[25] Arguing against the dominant view on the Left, Hall stated that the "'swing to the Right' was not a reflection of the crisis but *a response* to the crisis": Thatcherism signalled a qualitative shift in the political leadership of the Right.[26] It was opposed to traditional One Nation Toryism and Conservative adherence to the postwar consensus (eg full employment, welfare state, Keynesianism).

Thatcherism was 'unquestionably a form of class politics, dedicated to the reconstruction and strengthening of the capitalist order'; however, it represented not just the 'old ruling class' in a new guise, but a qualitatively new 'historical bloc' dedicated to remaking society as well as restructuring the economy: a strong state and the free market.[27] Thatcherism's ruling bloc drew its support from across all social classes and articulated a 'philosophy' on all aspects of life. It was this ability to graft the 'free market' idea onto 'organic patriotic Toryism', articulating the resentment and alienation of the 'man-in-the-street' against 'big government' and trade unions, that was 'authoritarian populism'.[28] It had to disconnect the popular concerns and issues from their links to left or social democratic discourses, dismantle the postwar consensus and create a new 'common sense' around which conflicting tendencies, currents and ideas could be re-articulated into the discourse of Thatcherism. As with other ideologies, Thatcherism was never a coherent whole, but the contradictions proved to be productive.

The contradictions that constituted Thatcherism were represented through the connections with the (old) Right's political traditions, such as the proponents of the free market, supporters of the authoritarian state (eg 'hanging, law-and-order, censorship'), 'Powellism', Ted Heath's 'Selsdon Man' policies[29] and Sir Keith Joseph: these 'backwoods elements' of the Conservative Party, had always existed but had been obscured by the postwar consensus.[30] 'Powellism[31] articulated a potent mix of racism and anti-immigration appeals, calls for law-and-order and a growing hatred of 'collectivism' and the 1960s social movements.[32] These different tendencies 'all addressed populist elements and recidivist instincts inside and outside the party' which Thatcherism sought to turn into

[24] Hall and Jacques 1983a: 9.
[25] Hall 1980: 26.
[26] Hall 1979: 15 (original emphasis).
[27] Gamble 1987b: 122.
[28] Hall and Jacques 1983a: 10.
[29] Elements of Thatcherism appeared in the 'Selsdon Man' policies of Ted Heath's government, 1970-74, but were abandoned in 1972 amidst industrial unrest.
[30] Hall and Jacques 1983a: 10.
[31] Named after Enoch Powell, whose infamous 'rivers of blood' speech on 20 April 1968 attacked non white immigration.
[32] Hall 1979: 16; Hall 1980: 26.

a 'moral-political force'.[33] Thatcherism rallied these tendencies against 'the neo-Keynesians, creeping collectivists and fellow-travelling social democrats everywhere', who were to be found not only in bureaucracies, Labour and unions, but also 'lurking within the Tory Party itself'.[34] This authoritarian populism was 'an exceptional form of the capitalist state', in which all the formal aspects of representative democracy were maintained, while 'an active popular consent' was constructed around repressive measures taken by the state against oppositional groups, such as the women's movement, anti-fascist groups, etc.[35]

The Left's tendency to read off political affiliation through social class, a form of economic reductionism or 'economism', meant it could not explain why millions of workers and unionists had voted for Thatcher. The only coherence in Conservative economic policies was in their *ideological* adherence to the 'free market' philosophy of Milton Friedman and Friedrich Hayek.[36] Therefore, Thatcherism's success could only be explained by its dominance in the ideological-political realm where it disarticulated different moral, political and cultural discourses from their original sources and re-articulated them into a new 'philosophy', or common sense, in which its values became dominant.[37] The diverse elements of the New Right were constituted into a 'radical political force, capable of setting new terms to the political struggle, and effectively condensing a wide range of social and political issues under the social market philosophy, a process vital in securing hegemony for Thatcherism'.[38] A popular discourse had to be constructed which would appeal beyond the narrow economic interests that Thatcherism represented: it deployed the "discourses of 'nation' and 'people' against 'class' and 'unions' with far greater vigour and popular appeal" than Heath had managed to do in the 1970s.[39] Simply replacing Keynesianism with monetarism was not enough in itself to win votes.

However, it was the "the doctrines and discourses of 'social market values'" that provided Thatcherism with a powerful repertoire of images and ideas that resonated with the population: such as 'the image of the over-taxed individual, enervated by welfare coddling, his initiative sapped by handouts by the state' and in the image of the welfare 'scavenger' as folk-devil.[40] It also articulated people's "deep and profound disillusionment ... with the very form of social democratic 'statism' to which previous governments ... have been committed" which had grown out of people's real lived experiences as 'passive recipients' of the state: Thatcherism succeeded in identifying itself with 'the *popular* struggle against a bureaucratically centralist form of the capitalist state', while 'socialism' and the Left came to be associated with 'bureaucratic statism' in the public's eyes.[41] Thus,

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[33] Hall and Jacques 1983a: 10.
[34] *Ibid.*
[35] Hall 1979: 15.
[36] Hall 1988b: 2-3.
[37] Hall 1980: 26.
[38] *Ibid.*
[39] Hall 1979: 17.
[40] *Ibid.*
[41] Hall 1980: 27 (original emphasis).

Thatcherism was able to draw upon strong undercurrents of 'anti-statism', despite steadily strengthening the repressive powers of the judiciary and the police and eroding civil liberties. Thatcherism's contradictory nature did not adversely affect its ability to articulate undercurrents of nation, authority, standards, self-reliance, family and duty into a 'set of discourses which are then harnessed to the practices of the radical Right and the class forces' they sought to represent.[42]

The contradictions faced by social democracy in power came about because the Labour Government had to find solutions to which it could win key sections of capital, since it operates within the contract between government, capital and labour. The solutions that Labour's modernisation programme offered were inadequate because it misjudged the scale of the problem and it was involved in an attack on its own social base (the unions and the working class).[43] Labour used its 'indissoluable links' with unions 'not to advance but to *discipline* the class and organisations it represents' (which helps to explain why Labour had declined as 'a popular political organisation' after 1966).[44] The Labour governments of 1966-70 and 1974-79 used the rhetoric of the 'national interest' against the 'sectional interests' of the organised working class: it was the 'principal ideological form' in which Labour governments imposed a series of defeats on the working class.

Despite not attracting much attention initially, Hall's analysis was propagated through MT and public meetings hosted by CP branches and MT groups, and was eventually taken up in a series of debates through left journals besides MT, such as *New Left Review*, *New Socialist* and *International Socialism.* This analysis of Thatcherism was criticised because others argued that it was the same old ruling class in a new guise, except with a stronger desire to make capitalism more profitable and defeat the organised working class.[45] Another line of criticism argued that Thatcherism's electoral success could not necessarily be equated with being 'popular' because the British Survey of Attitudes showed that there had not been a significant shift from the 'social democratic consensus': that there was a marked difference in values between those held by the public and those promoted by Thatcherism. Its success was, therefore, due to divisions within the opposition: 'Thatcherism only gives the appearance of populist success because of the weakness of the opposition it faces'.[46] A third line was that Hall's analysis concentrated too much on the ideological-political and neglected the social and economic aspects of Thatcher's programme, its appeal to the economic self-interest of the upper and middle classes (eg tax and spending cuts), which it had to rely upon because of the contradictory nature of its ideology.[47]

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[42] Hall 1979: 17.
[43] Jacques 1979d: 11.
[44] Hall 1979: 17.
[45] Callinicos 1985.
[46] Curran 1985: 40. See also Curran 1984b and Kelly 1984. However, these surveys were also used to support the Thatcherism thesis (eg Bloomfield 1985a).
[47] Jessop *et al.* 1984, 1985, 1987.

The analysis of Thatcherism demonstrated that the project of the New Right was not just about the extension of the rights of capital and an attack on the welfare state and trade union rights: it set out to use political power to roll-back the 'nanny-state' and the postwar consensus on which it was built, and to replace it with another 'entirely new type of social order'.[48] It operated a total programme of reform based on a 'political struggle conducted on many different fronts at the same time, with an intellectual, a moral, a cultural and a philosophical cutting edge, as well as an economic strategy'; its success was due to 'its effectiveness in remaking public and civic life' and winning consent: it constructed a social bloc which became hegemonic.[49]

MT argued that the Left could learn how to become a hegemonic force by examining Thatcherism's methods and strategies. There were 'two immediate lessons': one was that democracy was 'no longer marginal or tangential to the struggle' but at its very heart, in which the Left had to reconstruct a popular force which was able to articulate 'the crisis to the Left ... *intrinsically*°linked with the struggle to deepen, develop and actively transform the forms of popular democratic struggle'.[50] The other lesson was that, although defensive struggles may be necessary, it would get the Left nowhere if it proposed to return to the way things were before 1979 and this meant formulating 'a new conception of socialism' not only to stop the crisis, but actually to turn it in a 'positive direction': thus, the Left had to become a 'modernising', rather than a 'conservative', force (Thatcherism's programme of 'regressive modernisation' was not the only way out of the crisis). Therefore, in order to be able to respond effectively, the Left had two practical activities to engage in: unify the working class and build an 'historical alliance' which could 'turn the tide of Thatcherism'.[51]

Since Thatcherism would not be satisfied with 'tinkering with this or that mechanism', it was not enough for the Left to rely on a defensive struggle: the Left would need to develop 'a sounder and fuller set of alternatives'?[52] The working class and other social forces were only able to stem the rightward turn for a limited period; in the end they were unsuccessful in deflecting 'the long-term and deep currents and movements towards the right'.[53] The solution, therefore, was to build a BDA around a new 'popular-democratic' (as opposed to Thatcherism's authoritarian-populist) consensus.

III. 'Popular Politics'

Marxism Today stressed that the Left had to learn from both the failure of the labour movement and Thatcherism's success, especially since the latter was able to mobilise a cross-class bloc in support of its programme. This meant the Left had to re-think both agency and strategy in order to avoid the limitations of class-based politics; since the

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[48] Hall 1994: 170.
[49] *Ibid.*: 170-71.
[50] Hall 1980: 28.
[51] *Ibid.*
[52] *Ibid.*: 26.
[53] *Ibid.*

working class was in a process of decline and recomposition, it was not in a position to win power on its own and, therefore, it had to build a counter-hegemonic alliance to defeat Thatcherism (Gramsci's 'war of position'). There was considerable resistance to these ideas and their implications from parts of the Left and MT became the object of their criticisms. MT's attempt to re-dress this problem of agency and strategy provides the basis for the third theme to be examined: 'popular politics'.

This search for a new popular politics, however, was not a new development for the British Left, as Chapter 2 points out, the traditions of Communist populism and cultural Marxism had seen attempts by the CP and the New Left to appeal outside of the traditional working class, nor was it out of line initially with thinking on the Left. Indeed, if Thatcherism's attacks on the postwar settlement had forced the intellectual Left to move from its abstract, theoretical critiques of monopoly capitalism and bureaucracy into a political defence of the welfare state and living standards, then MT argued that it also had to articulate a politics which would have a broader appeal because it was not only working class standards that were under threat. Until June 1983, the Left was united behind extending the postwar settlement: state ownership, redistributive policies and demand management of the economy. However, rival interpretations of Labour's disastrous 1983 electoral showing divided the Left over the appropriate course of action: either to proselytise more energetically for a 'socialist' programme (eg Labour's 1983 manifesto), or to adopt a programme with popular appeal beyond the interests of one class, even if it meant abandoning 'socialism'*per se*.

If the working class is to lead the counter-hegemonic bloc, it has to be able to articulate the interests of the other social and class forces (the 'national-popular') with its own class ('economic-corporate') interests.[54] A common programme around only working class interests is not enough because:

> a class cannot achieve national leadership, and become hegemonic, if it confines itself only to class interests; it must take into account the popular and democratic demands and struggles of the people which do not have a purely class character, that is, which do not arise directly out of the relations of production.[55]

MT sought a politics which would broaden the Left's appeal beyond the 'converted' to ordinary people: its notion of popular politics drew upon an older legacy of communist populism and the Gramscian-influenced idea of the 'broad democratic alliance' (BDA).[56] Therefore, it was necessary to question traditional beliefs which had constrained the Left's thinking: attempts to argue for staying in the European Economic Community (EEC), against further nationalisation, for council house sales, etc., were often denounced as a 'betrayal' or 'revisionism'.

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[54] Simon 1982: 23.
[55] *Ibid.*: 23, 42-45.
[56] The 1930s Popular Front offered an historical precedent substantiating the BDA's appeal (eg Cook 1985; Hobsbawm 1983b, 1985; Priscott 1983).

For much of the Left, Communist or not, the existence of 'actual existing socialism' was a legacy which they had to deal with because the Left was seen as 'undemocratic'.[57] The ideologues of Thatcherism and the New Right ruthlessly propagated the idea that 'socialism' and 'democracy' were mutually opposed concepts during the late 1970s and 1980s; the Left faced an up-hill struggle to re-assert the link between the two.[58] For Eurocommunists and Gramscians, democracy was a key aspect in the conception of the popular-democratic struggles to establish a counter-hegemony against Thatcherism.[59] This emphasis on democracy came out in debates over 'socialist democracy' and more importantly, in the way the 'new social movements' (NSMs) were to be co-equals with the organised working class in the BDA (and not submit to its 'leadership'). This idea of democracy, however, changed as the fortunes of the Left and the NSMs changed.

For the Left in the late 1970s and early 1980s, democracy connotated 'participative democracy', demonstrating the influence of the women's movement and libertarian socialism with its criticisms of (state, party and union) bureaucracies and evolving as coalitions shifted and the Left was split over strategy. The common use of 'democracy' was gradually accepted by much of the Left; it became a byword for supporting Neil Kinnock's leadership and attacking 'sectarians' within the Labour Party (eg Militant Tendency). Democracy of the people was countered to intra-party democracy, something which Hobsbawm ignored in his critiques of Labour after 1983.[60] MT's articulation of democracy was part of a desire to reach people beyond the Left and it was an integral part of its analysis of popular culture during the 1980s.

The word 'democratic' was the most important in the BDA: it was both a 'metaphor and [a] password'.[61] The CP was only one of the contributors to building a 'popular democratic' consciousness alongside the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), the women's movement, etc. The BDA was the key idea underlying the popular politics promoted by MT. It eschewed class struggle and sought to build an alliance which would reach beyond the working class to the constituencies represented by the NSMs: people who were basically oppressed in the 'anti-democratic structures at every level and in every sphere of society'.[62] Campaigns, such as CND, the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) and Rock Against Racism (RAR), demonstrated the potential of broad coalitions around issues which appealed across class, gender, region and ethnicity. Their appeal went beyond 'narrow' workplace issues and these movements often used more imaginative tactics than the traditional Left's demonstrations and rallies. While the NSMs were considered equal partners with the labour movement, the 'best-organised and most-

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[57] Cook 1981; Hunt 1985.
[58] Communist discourse used these terms together (ie 'socialist democracy') which denoted a different type of government to western democracies.
[59] Hunt 1980.
[60] Panitch and Leys 1997.
[61] Thompson 1992: 172.
[62] *Ibid.*

politically advanced sections of the working class' had the best capacity to unify and lead the BDA because of their experience in responding collectively to daily exploitation.[63]

Although the working class was still 'pivotal' to the BDA, the alliance was not just for the benefit of the working class or its 'representatives' (CP, Labour) and it was also clear that the alliance would include groups which did not have clear socialist goals (the shift away from economism).[64] The massive rise in unemployment during 1979-81 furnished the CP with the chance to put the BDA into action: the People's March for Jobs (PMJ), Jacques's brainchild, was a month-long march in the spring of 1981 by a broad coalition promoting full employment as the top priority. Though the PMJ was organised by the unions, 'the only force with the experience, strength and capacity to bring off such an initiative', it appealed to the people as a whole and not just to the economic-corporate interests of the organised working class: 'it was an object lesson in popular, non-sectarian politics'.[65] To have a broad appeal meant making it as inclusive as possible: unions, churches, ethnic organisations, local authorities, cultural agencies, etc. The PMJ was the realisation of the BDA in practice; and its success was contrasted with Labour's unemployment marches, which were seen as primarily party events meant to appeal to the unions.[66] This showed a new way of responding to Thatcherism because it had rendered many of the old methods ineffective.[67]

The counter-hegemonic strategy meant prioritising the building of popular alliances and winning public opinion over engaging in sectional industrial struggles. Strikes, especially after the 'winter of discontent', were seen as evidence of 'undemocratic' union power alienating public opinion and it did not materialise into political support. Therefore, it was vital that the labour movement took on board such a strategy, especially since the industrial working class was declining in size and importance and its traditional methods were being rendered ineffective through legislation and the mobilisation of public opinion (ie authoritarian populism).

The Miners' Strike (1984-85) was notable for the lengths to which the state went to defeat the miners: it exposed the Conservative government's authoritarianism. It also exposed the divisions on the Left over the conduct of the strike. Despite MT's support for the miners and the NUM, it did criticise Arthur Scargill and the NUM leadership for not holding a ballot and doing more to win over public opinion. It was argued that a 'potentially permanent anti-Thatcher alliance' was being built through the support groups and campaigns, which demonstrated the greater importance of the women's and peace movements (and even the churches) than most unions.[68] However, the miners' strike did not mean the end of MT's coverage of labour movement affairs, but it did indicate the

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63 Cook 1981: 132.
64 Cutler *et al.* 1978: 358. The BDA also sought to include Scottish and Welsh nationalist parties, which had gained ground during the 1970s.
65 Jacques 1981b: 6.
66 The organisers resisted Labour's attempts to do the same with the PMJ (*Ibid.*).
67 *Ibid.* However, only two years later, the second PMJ ended in chaos as different groups turned on each other.
68 Francis 1985: 14.

degree to which union leaders appeared unwilling to 'modernise' and deal more effectively with 'public opinion' and the media.[69] The ambulance and health-workers' protests in 1988 received much more favourable coverage because of different tactics which helped to mobilise public support for their cause.

Alliances had different connotations for Labour and for the CP. MT's focus on the rise of the SDP/Alliance in the early 1980s confirmed their view that Labour was losing the battle for public opinion the more the Left exerted influence in the party. "Within the Labour Party 'alliance' is seen primarily in electoral terms, and only infrequently on the Left as a question of class and social forces as it is in the CP".[70] This explains the 'outraged' responses to MT's writings on building an anti-Thatcherite alliance but had little similar effect within the CP: for the former, the issue was about 'elections' and whether an alliance should be struck with the SDP/Alliance and Liberals; for the latter, however, it was about class and the NSMs.[71]

'Municipal socialism' was another area in which MT saw the possibility for building a counter-hegemonic force, as the PCI's experience had demonstrated. Labour's record in government demonstrated a deep-seated resistance to popular democratic forms of control because of its reliance on the mechanisms of parliamentary democracy (eg passing resolutions, changing laws).[72] The problem with Labour was its failure to mobilise public support for its objectives: it relied instead on party supporters being elected onto local councils. Labour should have attempted to build a 'mass politics' as a necessary, countervailing force to Tory propaganda from the national press.[73]

There was one notable example of municipal socialism during the 1980s which provided MT with an alternative to Labour's managerial politics. The Greater London Council (GLC) under Ken Livingstone, 1981-86, was *the* example of connecting the 'older forces of reform' with the NSMs.[74] It was a combination of old Labour (party activists, trade unions) working with the new social movements to produce a truly popular government in County Hall opposite Westminster and chose to legislate into action an agenda set by the NSMs: it represented virtually the Left's only popular alternative to Thatcherism. The GLC s 'Fares Fair' campaign to make public transport cheap and available to all throughout London demonstrates how it was possible to articulate concerns which resonated across all its constituences: white working class, women, ethnic groups, etc.[75] The GLC's campaign against its abolition was another example of the way in which it was able to appeal across social, ethnic, gender and other

69 The majority of trade unions have since changed (Davies 1999).
70 Cook 1985: 27.
71 *Ibid.*
72 Leonard 1979.
73 Cook 1985: 28.
74 Hall 1994: 171.
75 *Ibid.*: 172-73.

differences with an incredible degree of success.[76] The GLC pioneered 'a new relationship between power and the people'.[77]

At every level, the Left's activities became primarily 'locked within Labour Party structures' because they had little 'organic connection to extra-parliamentary forces and struggle'.[78] The Left mistook internal victories over the Right as 'the successful popular projection of socialist policies' to the public, but these were not 'the mass campaigning politics that can involve ordinary people'.[79] The net effect of this form of politics was provided by the examples of the so-called 'Loony Left' London boroughs of Lambeth and Brent. While these councils' policies may have been right, the means by which they tried to implement them, particularly as these local authorities were also subjected to a massive negative propaganda campaign by the Conservative press, were misguided because they did not seek to explain and promote their policies to the local people who had voted for them.[80]

Whereas the GLC promoted equal opportunities and chose to make itself an 'enabling' body rather than acting as an administrative bureaucracy, Labour councils were criticised for using administrative methods instead of political ones; they 'use the power of the town hall to short-circuit the toil of creating a new consciousness'.[81] The problem with Labour is that it did not know how to act as a party: mobilising public support for its actions. Thus, perfectly sound policies, like Brent's anti-racist strategy, look like a local council defending its prerogatives in hiring and firing who it wants.[82] The problem is learning to use 'active' politics and this requires 'consciousness-raising' (ideological) work.

Despite the contradictions and paradoxes that surround MT, it is clear that the WLM and feminism influenced MT and provided a working model of popular politics for the BDA.[83] The feminist movement during the 1970s and 1980s was decentralised in its operations, with a plethora of small groups organised around different issues and they combined economic, ideological and personal issues: there were campaigns for equal pay at work, women's refuges and raising awareness on male attitudes. While both feminists and socialists had a lot to benefit from the overthrow of Thatcherism specifically, and capitalism and patriarchy more generally, their goals were not seen as necessarily being the same: feminists demanded the right not be seen as a 'single issue' campaign because patriarchy "is not just an 'issue' but a fundamental contradiction in society".[84]

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[76] Campbell and Jacques 1986; Curran 1987; Hipkin 1984.
[77] Hall 1984a: 20.
[78] Cook 1985: 27-28.
[79] *Ibid.*: 28.
[80] Campbell 1987.
[81] *Ibid.*: 13.
[82] *Ibid.*: 11-12.
[83] MT's relationship with feminism was uneasy, but attempts were made to redress the gender imbalance in staffing, contributors, etc.
[84] Davis 1981: 22.

Whereas most left groupings saw the WLM as a recruiting ground, the CP was more open and respectful of its autonomy.[85] Many CP feminists were closely associated with the Eurocommunists and expressed an equal commitment to both feminism and socialism. Feminist analyses and demands were a key ingredient in MT's break with the advocates of 'class politics', even though feminism was never fully integrated into MT's editorial content or politics. The role of working class institutions within the BDA, seen as having the necessary experience and resources for leading social and political struggles, was questioned. Feminists felt that issues affecting women were of equal importance to those affecting the (male) working class and they did not believe that deferring to (male) union leaders would provide the solution to their problems. Women's liberation was part of the same working class movement, others (including reformists) countered, saying that they all wanted the same ultimate goal, 'human liberation'.[86] Yet the accent on 'human liberation' worked in reality as 'male liberation': a party activist remembered that, since 1949 she had "loyally tried to 'put political struggle before my sex', until I found this only reinforced men's paternalistic attitudes".[87]

Feminists pointed to problems with the patriarchal practices of trade unions and not just those of capitalist organisations. MT published feminist criticisms of the dominant masculine attitude of trade unions and the Left around issues of 'low pay, lack of opportunity and conflict between paid work and domestic responsibilities'.[88] Patriarchal institutions, capitalist and socialist, were criticised for sidelining these issues from the mainstream of industrial relations. Trade union leaders were criticised for seeing women's issues as supplementary demands on employers: maternity leave and equality at work were usually the first demands to be dropped during negotiations because they were not seen as 'universal'.[89] For many on the Left, women's inequality would be rectified through class struggle. 'Euro-feminists' argued that while women's struggles were part of class struggles, they could not be reduced to a secondary concern of class struggle. It is not only the case that 'women's liberation is an integral and not a marginal ingredient of the class struggle', but that a whole range of 'special campaigns, specific policies, positive discrimination and an autonomous women's movement are essential': trade unions must 'practice what they preach'; she warns that it is 'all too easy' to give up on fighting for 'positive, innovative policies' when the labour movement is under attack and to remain defensive about existing rights.[90]

MT criticised the Left's reassertion of the economic as the determinant 'in the last instance', which in effect privileges a class analysis and politics over other forms and approaches, as sidelining issues around racism, sexism and homophobia. Stuart Hall

[85] *Ibid.*; Cook 1981; Thompson 1992.
[86] Priscott 1979: 62.
[87] P. Mitchell 1984: 51.
[88] Cousins 1980: 11.
[89] *Ibid.*; Davis 1983.
[90] Cousins 1980: 11; Davis 1981.

pointed to the need to confront these very issues, which 'social traditionalists'[91] were not willing to confront; he attacked 'social traditionalism' which had survived into the late 20th century: because socialists kept to a narrow definition of the 'political', they did not notice how the old social and sexual 'ranks and bonds' continued to work in the crevices of society.[92] Hall argued that it had 'a deep and profound hold inside' the socialist and labour movements and the working class, and that it continued 'to feed, inside the minds and consciousness and allegiances of working people': such a 'socialism' would 'not transform society'.[93]

However, the reformists were aware that such an approach would require them to be self-critical about their 'dogmatism, orthodoxy and the maintenance of power groups'.[94] It also meant moving beyond both working class organisations and NSMs to ordinary citizens. MT's promotion of rethinking the Left's attitudes towards certain issues and groups normally excluded from its agenda, was a key part of this reflexive, self-critical move to try and re-connect the Left with ordinary citizens and their concerns over issues such as crime and education.[95] Readers were warned that the concerns of parents over education and the working class over crime were real and not necessarily just an expression of reactionary sympathies. Critics saw such rethinking as an attempt to make MT 'popular' rather than as an attempt to address legitimate concerns ignored by the Left. Thus, MT argued that the Left had to develop a popular politics by promoting the concerns of all the different constituencies of the BDA, which meant taking into consideration and even adopting commitments which the Left was otherwise uncomfortable with. It also meant actively *acting* as a party and *mobilising* public support.

IV. Popular Culture

Marxism Today's engagement with popular culture was an important part of its political and journalistic projects, especially in its ambitions to articulate a popular politics. It was to meet the 'people' where they were, rather than attempt to articulate a politics around a mythical 'proletariat' or avant-garde 'agit-prop'. Concern over the 'popular' meant examining popular culture. Indeed, MT provided one of the primary sites of political engagement and dissemination of cultural studies outside the academy; MT extended its notion of popular culture to include the anthropological as well as the literary-aesthetic definitions of culture. The influence of the CCCS and cultural studies is evident in the profiles of many of MT's leading contributors: Hall, Rosalind Brunt, Richard Dyer, etc.[96] Indeed, during the 1980s MT's contributions began to loosely favour

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91 'Social traditionalists' are not necessarily the same traditionalists as those on the consservative wing of the CP.
92 Hall 1982: 17.
93 *Ibid.*: 17-18.
94 Davison 1985a: 48.
95 Eg Kinsey 1986; McRobbie 1987.
96 Brunt, Dyer and Ian Connell also contributed regularly to a television column in *Comment*.

a 'cultural populist' approach,[97] a logical progression out of the twin influences of cultural Marxism and Communist populism, the first New Left,[98] and which reflected the different set of values of the 1960s generation.[99] (The debate over the radical potential of youth culture initiated by Jacques in 1973,[100] generated mostly negative responses.)[101]

MT's cultural coverage was distinctive from the dominant approaches on the Left, which had been wary of the ideological influence and escapism of popular culture. The influence of Marxism and critical theory during the 1960s and 1970s, led to a series of debates over the 'culture industries' and Marxism and aesthetics. The avant-garde came to occupy the privileged position in cultural politics for the intellectual Left, in which 'immanent critique' and experimentation were given precedence over 'accessibility' and 'popularity'.[102] However, the trajectory of both MT and cultural studies shifted in the 1980s towards the 'popular'.

Despite a tendency for a conventional understanding of politics which dominated the features section at times, MT played an important role in the dissemination and political application of cultural studies (as a method): the field went through a massive expansion in higher education in the 1980s. Hall's analysis of Thatcherism demonstrated the potential of cultural studies methods.[103] Importantly, the reappraisal of the influence of the dominant ideology was, ironically, preceded by a necessary emphasis on the 'political-ideological', after its neglect by the Left which usually assumed political loyalties through socio-economic status. The market came to be seen as having some legitimacy because people not only gained pleasure but also co-opted popular cultural artefacts for their own use.[104]

MT's search to find and meet the people on their own ground, to find them where they were, rather than merely attribute certain beliefs or 'false consciousness' on the basis that they 'consumed' the dominant ideology through the artefacts of popular culture, meant engaging with the ways in which those popular culture products were used or held meanings (or not) for the 'people'. Cultural studies research demonstrated that the people as audiences were able to discriminate and 'read between the lines' of the capitalist media and popular culture, which directly challenged traditional Marxist beliefs in the dominant ideology. Thus, Marxist critiques and terms were gradually rejected during the course of the 1980s by most of the academic Left. These views and terms (eg 'false consciousness')

[97] MT's coverage drew out the political connections which were often lacking in 'uncritical cultural populist' approaches (McGuigan 1992).
[98] The early NLR, 1960-62, edited by Hall, had interviews with jazz musicians next to articles on Soweto, a precursor to the political-cultural mix achieved by MT two decades later (Andrews 1995a; Hall 1997; Kenny 1995a, 1995b).
[99] Waite 1995.
[100] Jacques 1973.
[101] Eg Boyd 1973; Cornelius 1974; Costin 1974; Fauvet 1974; Filling 1974; Mills 1974.
[102] Roberts 1990: 66.
[103] *Policing the Crisis* also demonstrated the potential of social science work for making political interventions: the book had begun as a leaflet for a campaign to free three youths arrested in Birmingham (Hall 1997).
[104] An early expression of divisions on the Left over the market was the debate over public service broadcasting (Connell 1983; Garnham 1983).

were seen as not only reflecting biases about the 'people' (equivalent to the conservative mass society critics, who feared not just the 'mob' but democracy itself), and the belief that the mass media were responsible for Labour's electoral failures came to be seen as an unsatisfactory explanation and also undemocratic (and increasingly untenable after 1983): it demonstrated an inability on the part of the Left to acknowledge its mistakes and blame the 'people' instead. It was also part of the rejection of the political economists' emphasis on media ownership. After the 1983 general election, many on the Left began to stop 'blaming the media' (eg 'mystification') and looked for other explanations of Labour's poor performance.[105]

During the 1980s, the concept of ideology became problematic: it became unacceptable to dismiss workers, blue or white collar, for 'false consciousness' when they voted for the Conservatives. Marxism no longer appeared to offer explanations and was gradually sidelined as a method in cultural studies as other theories, such as post-structuralism and postmodernism, gained currency.[106] The concern with attributing ordinary people and the working class with 'false consciousness' was that it appeared to be elitist and undemocratic. In the early 1980s, MT's focus on popular culture was largely ignored by much of the Left, which preferred to be mired in a 'residual economism'.[107] Once these concepts were rejected, only Gramscian hegemony theory to explain people's beliefs without succumbing to elitist or vanguardist pretensions.[108] MT recognised that in order to reach the people, the Left would have to rethink their policies, attitudes and values; the New Right, by contrast, appeared to have inflected 'common sense' with their ideas and values (the very essence of hegemony).

The establishment of 'Channel Five' in the October 1981 issue was a significant move because it was not only a case that culture had remained a side-line in most left papers, but that most restricted their focus to high culture, particularly books. MT demonstrated a commitment to analysing all aspects of culture, from the mundane and everyday, such as street-style and plastic, to forms of high art, such as opera and painting. Making culture an integral part of the magazine had been new for the Left at the time, but by the end of the decade culture had become an important part in every left periodical (except for Leninist papers). 'Channel Five' was both a means to attract advertising*and* a demonstration of the BDA in action.[109] For example, the interview with David Yip, star of the 'Chinese Detective', highlighted issues around race, the Left and acting. These interviews, reviews, analyses and commentaries drew out the links between culture and politics.

The debates over style and 'designer socialism' in the mid-1980s were merely the most obvious symptoms of a crisis in the shifting relationship between the Left and popular

105 Eg Jacques 1984a.
106 Bennett 1990: 19; Hall 1988a, 1988b.
107 Bennett 1986: 6.
108 The only other approach was the 'marketplace of ideas'.
109 Davison 1985b; Townsend 1984. A good example is the April 1985 issue (see Chapter 7).

culture. It was a debate essentially about the accessibility and popularity of socialism; the Left's neglect had been first articulated by Hall in January 1984.

> The Left's resistance to cultural change is reflected in our everyday practices and languages. The style of propaganda, party political broadcasts, of much educational and agitational material locks us into very traditional and backward-looking associations. Our political imagery is even worse in this respect.[110]

MT's criticisms brought home the problems with the language and imagery of the Left. Many on the Left retained a 'nostalgia' for the language and imagery of the 1920s and 1930s and lacked relevance for the 1980s. (It partly acounts for the success of MT's 'Bolshevik chic' in 1986-87.) The 1960s counter-cultural Left, however, was different because it had appropriated 'the language, imagery and technologies of the present' and these intellectuals were a key sector which the labour movement needed to bring on side and 'harness to a popular political project'![11] Many of this radical intelligentsia became part of the force behind and audience of the new Channel 4, launched on 2 November 1982.

An important part of Thatcherism's appeal was to represent people's aspirations in language and imagery which were tied to the Right's values and attitudes. The Left could learn from this and articulate a 'popular socialist politics' providing they understood people's aspirations and re-articulated them into a popular and accessible socialist discourse.[112] As Hall explained:

> A labour movement which cannot identify with what is concrete and material in these popular aspirations, and expropriate them from identification with the private market and private appropriation, will look, increasingly, as if it is trapped nostalgically in ancient cultural modes, failing to imagine socialism in twentieth century terms and images, and increasingly out of touch with where real people are at.[113]

Although the reasoning could appear to elide consumerism with popularity, the Left's lack of engagement with, not only people's material aspirations (goods and services), but also 'attitudes and practices', was all-pervasive![14] Sports, health and fitness are examples of areas of popular interest which touch upon goods, services, attitudes and practices that the Left has traditionally neglected.[115]

An indication of the shift in MT's (and the Left's) popular cultural politics is evident in the first half of the 1980s, in the move from support for RAR, with its close

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110 Hall 1984a: 20.
111 *Ibid.*
112 See Hall 1981.
113 Hall 1984a: 20.
114 *Ibid.*
115 Hall and Jacques 1986. For some responses: Beresford 1986; Coulter 1986; Lestor 1986; Palmer 1986; Wright 1986.

associations to the Anti-Nazi League, to Band-Aid and Red Wedge. RAR was an overtly political, street-level movement, with a radical message which brought together black and white bands, and even if the majority of the fans were 'white' and already 'converted' to the anti-racism message, its importance should not be discounted.[116] However, as RAR faded from the scene, MT and some on the Left recognised that Labour had to revamp its approach to the media and popular culture, especially as Labour had failed to appeal to first-time voters in the 1983 election.

MT was interested in the ways in which the 'Live Aid'-type spectacles, sparked by the 1985 famine in Ethiopia, demonstrated the ways in which broad coalitions could be mobilised around general concerns.[117] The Aid 'mega-events' were designed to elicit public sympathy as well as moneys for the Third World. MT argued that these events were not merely self-serving spectacles for rock stars and celebrities but were actually positive developments which could take place outside of narrow political interests because they were able to articulate anti-Thatcherite emotions (eg caring and compassion) and introduce development and aid issues to large numbers of people who would normally be left 'untouched' by campaigns or news programmes. A later event, 'Sport Aid', was singled out for its participative manner: anyone who wished to, could contribute by watching or participating in local events anywhere in the world.

V. 'New Times'

Out of the combination of the pursuit for a popular democratic politics and a series of analyses of a rapidly changing world, came the 'New Times' project. It grew out of a weekend seminar, 'Rethinking So c ialism for the '90s', in May 1988. As discussed above, two earlier theses had dealt with complementary aspects of the crisis (rise of the Right, crisis of the Left), and as a result of these analyses, MT attempted to construct a popular-democratic politics on the terrain of popular culture. Nevertheless, the Left failed to articulate a popular-democratic discourse which could replace labourism.[118] According to MT, the Left could only solve this crisis by developing the 'correct analysis', which had to take into account the important economic, social and cultural changes in Britain and around the world, otherwise it would have to leave Thatcherism's 'regressive modernisation' to dominate the new terrain. Thus, New Times had to attempt to go beyond conventional left analyses to construct a cohesive, wide-ranging theoretical analysis which could explain the global changes in the economy, society and culture.

The Left had proved incapable of stopping the Right, which had been able to rearticulate people's concerns and desires into support for its project. However, MT admitted to mistakenly conflating Thatcherism with the world it 'claimed to represent and aspired to lead', which made Thatcherism appear omnipotent.[119] Thus, if it could 'prise

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[116] Frith and Street 1992; Widgery 1986, 1987.
[117] Hall and Jacques 1986.
[118] Harris 1992: 183.
[119] Hall and Jacques 1989a: 15.

Thatcherism and that world apart' and develop 'a new politics of the Left, a politics beyond Thatcherism, which [could] give a progressive shape and inflexion to New Times', it would be able to establish itself as a hegemonic force, as Thatcherism had done ten years earlier.[120] MT saw their efforts around New Times as 'a dramatic achievement of bringing coherence to a chaotic situation and transforming despondency into a new direction'.[121]

This phase was perhaps the most innovatory because of its attempt to supersede the Left's more conventional thought and acknowledge how much society had changed as a result of, not just Thatcherism, but also the restructuring of global capitalism, new technologies and changes in consumption. It also meant a recognition that the terrain on which the Left would have to engage with the Right had shifted, permanently. New Times was an attempt to modernise the Left's politics, updating its analysis of social, economic and cultural factors. This period marks a break in MT's ideas from its connection to the BRS, and the influence of post-Fordism and postmodernism.

The MT articles[122] represented 'an attempt to rethink Marxism in the face of economic, cultural and political changes which are seen as having outrun the analytical capacity of conventional Marxism';[123] NT writers tried to 'expand the means of analysis available' and develop a vocabulary which could help explain these changes.[124] Though these changes were seen as important, they did not represent an 'epochal shift', as in the transition from feudalism to capitalism, but a transition 'from one regime of accumulation to another, within capitalism, whose impact has been extraordinarily wide ranging'.[125] New Times charts the shift away from the public sphere to business culture and consumerism and individual choice reflected in the two great changes of the 1980s: the rise of the market and of civil society.[126] These can be seen in the emphasis on citizenship, 'socialist individualism', the politics of identity and the decentralisation of power, the use of marketing and new technologies, and the politics of consumption. This included an emphasis on areas which had traditionally been regarded sceptically by the Left, such as Europe, consumerism and the politics of identity.

The most important concept in 'New Times' was 'post-Fordism'. Although post Fordism was a term that was applied to the changing organisation of the workplace, production process and product in the shift from the mass production of assembly lines which epitomised Fordism, NT writers used the term to signal other important changes beyond the factory gate, as Gramsci had used 'Fordism' to signal equally significant changes in culture and society in the early 20th century. Whereas Keynesianism was associated with Fordism, mass production, centralisation of state and capital, the mass

120 *Ibid.*: 15-17.
121 MTEB 1988b: 6.
122 Reprinted in Hall and Jacques 1989b.
123 Clarke 1991: 155.
124 Hall 1989a: 125.
125 *Ibid.*: 127.
126 MTEB 1988b: 6.

over the individual, post-Fordism connotated decentralisation of organisation and production, differentiated products, quality circles and individual control in the workplace, and the primacy of consumers over producers. 'Flexible specialization' demonstrates the way capitalism responds, not just to its own needs but also to people's needs, to survive. The decentred nature of post-Fordist production was extolled, not only in articles on Benetton (the exemplar of post-Fordism) but also in areas which were the concern of sociology and cultural studies: leisure, shopping and media production.

However, with the passing of Fordism, it was argued that there was no longer any room for state intervention in the economy, as the global reach of capital and the rise of the 'free market' appeared to render the nation-state incapable of economic intervention during the 1980s. This was clear from the 'crisis of restructuring' of British industry in the early 1980s to which Keynesianism offered no solutions: thus the widespread disavowal of Keynesianism, which left both the Centre and the Left without an economic strategy.[127] It was the re-discovery of market socialism, therefore, that became an important middle way between planning and the unrestrained forces of free market capitalism.

Despite its stress on new technologies, post-Fordism promotes skilled labour as a central asset in production, not machinery. This accentuates the importance of education and training and on local bodies acting as 'enabling bodies', which meant that the Left could play an active role by promoting 'adult education inside and outside the workplace' (although it leaves the workplace to the employer and puts much of the emphasis on the individual).[128] The GLC's Enterprise Board was an enabling body rather than an administrator of local industries during the 1980s, and it provided a means for incorporating popular participation in economic planning and restructuring.[129] It was this combination of infrastructure, training and planning on a decentralised scale that was seen as being best suited to meet local needs, such as full employment.[130]

Post-Fordism has 'a broader social and cultural significance' because the term signifies the 'greater social fragmentation and pluralism' taking place alongside, and as a result, of economic restructuring. There is the breaking down of traditional social identities based upon the workplace and the weakening of class solidarity; a new subjectivity is offered in their place where identities are created through 'the maximisation of individual choices through personal consumption'.[131] MT's call for a new 'socialist individualism'[132] to be at the heart of a new left politics was an important shift in thinking about the individual and the collective, which would account for the pluralism and diversity of modern life and recognise the need for individual rights, both constitutional and consumer, to be protected and extended. Two reasons for this thinking were the fragmentation wrought by the 'free

[127] Murray 1985.
[128] *Ibid.*: 49.
[129] *Ibid.*
[130] *Ibid.*: 50.
[131] Hall 1989a: 118-19.
[132] Leadbeater 1989a.

market' which threatened society's cohesiveness and the imposition of the poll tax against the wishes of an overwhelming majority of the population demonstrated how increasingly authoritarian, centralised and remote the Conservative government had become.

Thus, the old form of social democratic and corporatist politics, of party and state (and which were based upon static notions of class), could no longer provide the basis for a politics that could defeat Thatcherism and deal with new times. This meant a shift from the BDA to a new type of alliance based upon 'unity-in-difference'![133] This idea

> represents an advance ... because it recognises the need for unity around common concerns whilst also understanding that the basis for unity is not homogeneity but a whole variety of heterogenous, possibly antagonistic, maybe magnicently [sic] diverse, identities and circumstances.[134]

The politics of identity as it became known has since been criticised for fragmenting the opposition and denigrating the importance of class, the workplace and economic struggles.

This forced the Left to reassess the role of the state which had traditionally been seen as the means to help people. Whereas the Left at least had traditionally looked to the state as the means for implementing a redistributive form of social justice, it was felt necessary to move the focus onto the importance of the individual's rights asserted *against* the state. The concept of the 'empowering state', where rather than suppressing individual differences into a collective whole, the state would open 'the way for individuals and groups to pursue their own purposes' was presented as 'a new kind of socialist individualism': its central feature is the empowerment of individuals to replace collective self-interest.[135] In addition, New Times stressed not only individual rights but obligations as well.[136]

The role of the market was recognised in the heightened importance of consumption in the consumer-led economic boom of the late 1980s. The 'retail revolution' led the new service sector with the introduction of its innovations in retailing, such as 'just-in-time' distribution. Niche-marketing or the segmented consumer profile are key terms by which people were targetted by different businesses. This was further evidence of the way in which 'changing class relations' and the cultural impacts of feminism and the recession were having an effect.[137]

MT did not want to leave the 'politics of prosperity' to the Right.[138] But it was not just about spending power: 'It goes hand in hand with a *cultural* vision of lifestyle and social identities'.[139] Thatcherism's potency was in its championing of 'the values of

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133 Brunt 1989: 158.
134 *Ibid.*
135 Wright 1996: 132.
136 Hall and Held 1989; Leadbeater 1990.
137 Saville 1990: 41.
138 *Ibid.*
139 Mort and Green 1988: 30.

individualism, difference, autonomy and choice' but it was an individualism based upon selfishness and greed: an 'atomistic individualism'![140] To counter this success, and in these changing times, the Left had to change its thinking and offer an alternative: a 'social individualism'.[141] Bringing the individual into the Left's political thinking with 'lifestyle politics', identity and a move away from old class-based certainties, should not be seen as merely a resurrection of an old form of liberal pluralism.[142] Yet, changes were taking place in British politics through campaigns around issues of real concern to the 'individual' (eg Charter 88, Anti-Clause 28 Campaign). MT saw the 'reinstatement of the individual as the centre of analysis' as one of the principal shifts in focus for the Left.[143]

However, this shift to the individual did not mean that there were no forms of solidarity. While 'feminisation' of the workforce brought about the 'death of institutionalised class consciousness', there was a 'new class consciousness expressed in militant self-help'.[144] The clearest example of the connections between changes in global production, social fragmentation and forms of political struggle was the campaign against Union Carbide's proposed move to Livingston in Scotland because of their disaster in Bhopal, India. Livingston's example as one, progressive model of a 'New Times Town' could be contrasted with another model, Basingstoke, nicknamed 'Thatchergrad'.[145]

The shift to the individual was clearly manifested in the limitations and problems of the mass party, even within the realm of electoral politics. The political party had its origins in the Fordist age of mass production: it demanded loyalty and was based on taking over and commanding the state to effect change. On the one hand, there was a loss of faith 'in the party, in the state, in politics itself - and in the masses'; on the other, the fragmentation of identity could not be accounted for within the traditional mass party, which meant changing the way political parties and democracy were conceptualised.[146]

One of the central political consequences of post-Fordism, was the need for the Left to take consumption on as a central part in their programme.[147] The Left had traditionally concentrated on the politics of production (eg people as workers) which MT criticised: it was necessary for the Left to take consumer aspirations seriously, especially as the nature of work (or its lack) was changing. Consumption played an equally important part in people's lives: this development was equally important in cultural studies as 'cultural populism' gained ascendancy over political economy and Marxism.[148] Jacques argued that the Left only talked about 'basic provision and access'. The Labour Party:

140 Leadbeater 1989a: 148.
141 *Ibid.*
142 McRobbie 1996: 241-43; Hebdige 1989; Mort 1989. See also Rustin 1994: 90.
143 MTEB 1988b: 6.
144 Campbell 1989: 293, 294.
145 *Ibid.*: 294.
146 Benton 1989: 337-38.
147 Murray 1985: 48.
148 McGuigan 1992, 1997.

> should be decisively in favour of a culture of consumerism, but one where access to it is not denied by the poverty of an underclass. If consumption now looms so large, then society has an obligation to ensure that everyone has access to certain social resources.[149]

The new socialist politics must recognise consumer aspirations in order to become successful.[150]

Environmental movements, were seen as a new, but fundamentally important, arena of interest and conflict which demonstrated the convergence of individual and collective values. Their core values are about humanity and the long-term sustainability and harmony of the planet as opposed to the narrow, short-term industrialism of Left and Right.[151] Green politics turned consumption into as important an arena of conflict as production: consumption was a sphere where people as individuals and as collectivities could have an impact: through the marketplace, green consumers can force businesses to supply environmentally-friendly goods. Green consumerism also appealed across political divisions. Therefore, green politics offered the possibility of reaching beyond the traditional divisions of Westminster-based, party politics, although concern was nevertheless also expressed that green politics 'sat very uncomfortably with New Times'.[152]

VI. Conclusion

This chapter outlined the key themes which established *Marxism Today* as an important intellectual force on the Left. MT's engagements with the Left's traditional beliefs and political practices helped move it beyond the old party ties and its themes covered areas of interest to constituencies outside the labour movement: peace campaigners, women, cultural activists, environmentalists, blacks, municipal socialists, students, journalists, gays and lesbians, etc. MT's coverage (and the reactions it provoked) highlighted the Left's isolation from popular culture: the issues raised in the debates over popular culture and cultural populism on the Left during the 1980s shared not just ideas but also personnel. These themes were important for the changes in left politics and the media interest they elicited, as will be explored in the next chapter.

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149 Cited in Saville 1990: 39.
150 Mort and Green 1988.
151 Steward 1989: 70.
152 MTEB 1988b: 7.

Chapter 6

Despite being the largest party to the left of the Labour Party, the CPGB had been excluded from the 'Debate of the Decade', a debate between various left groupings, in March 1980.[1] The debate neglected the 'manifest decline of the Left in British politics' during the 1970s, ignoring key elements in the analyses of 'Forward March of Labour Halted' and Thatcherism.[2] This changed during the course of the 1980s, when *Marxism Today*, not only began setting the agenda for debate across the Left, but also became the focus of national media attention. What was unusual about MT, was that it appeared to move into a high profile, public role in the national media, particularly newspapers. How and why was MT able to achieve its position within the national public sphere which so many other left periodicals attempted, but failed, to do?

There are usually two explanations offered for MT's apparent success, neither of which offer much evidence beyond what they assume is the most obvious (because they are writing for an audience with similar political beliefs). For example, while critics see MT as 'selling out' the working class or the Left, which is attributable to its 'petty bourgeois' social base and/or 'Stalinist' affiliation,[3] supporters assume it is the inevitable outcome of 'an assessment of the balance of political forces in Britain today' and a willingness to rethink left orthodoxies.[4] Both of these explanations are 'short-cuts' which rely simply upon their own ideologies to explain both *why* and *how* MT gained access to the national public sphere, without any examination of the *process* of how it occurred.

The left press has essentially two tasks: that of maintaining a (counter) public sphere for the Left; and that of attempting to gain access to the (national) public sphere. The first task is presenting ideas and engaging in debate with supporters and others on the Left, in labour and new social movements, etc.; and it may also involve attempting to recruit new members. The second task is about the left press intervening in public debates and putting forward their own ideas and analyses to the general public: 'agitate, educate, organise'. While most of the left press may contribute to the maintenance of the (counter) public sphere of the Left, few are able to move out into the mainstream (national) public sphere, where access is controlled by 'gatekeepers' (capitalist and state media).

To understand MT's success, therefore, this chapter examines the different mechanisms for the distribution and circulation of its ideas; the processes by which different groups were brought in, either as contributors or readers; the ways in which MT promoted itself and publicised its ideas. National press coverage will be examined for the ways in which MT's ideas and writers were taken up within the national public sphere by

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[1] Campbell 1980. CP membership numbered 20,599 in 1979, four to five times greater than the SWP's, the next largest socialist party.
[2] *Ibid.*: 116.
[3] Callinicos 1985; Saville 1990.
[4] Bloomfield 1985a, 1985b.

the 'quality press'. This chapter explores the usefulness of market mechanisms for the left press.

I. Distribution and Circulation

The examination of distribution and circulation provide an important starting point for understanding how MT gained access to the public sphere and the significance of its sales figures. The advocates of the market and the capitalist press argue that newspapers are 'subjected to the equivalent of an election every day': the number of papers sold indicates the degree to which their views are literally bought by the people. Thus, *The Sun*'s popularity amongst the working class revolves around the degree to which its four million plus buyers (an estimated 10 million readers) agree with its sexist, racist, homophobic, jingoistic, xenophobic views.[5] However, popularity is not necessarily the same as influence: this is where differences in the makeup of audiences is critical. The *Financial Times* (FT) is influential because, although its circulation is less than ten per cent of *The Sun*'s, its readership is composed mostly of people from the highest socio-economic strata and includes leaders of industry and policy-makers (it therefore, costs advertisers more than *The Sun*). The possibility that the market might actually impede access for other views is ignored: the small circulation of the left press is 'explained' as a reflection of the 'unpopularity' of their views.

The left press acknowledges that its reach is circumscribed because of distribution problems which explain the difference between actual circulation and potential readership.[6] The problem may be that the rationale behind marketplace distribution may affect the ideas in alternative and left papers: newstrade distributors act as 'censors' because they refuse to distribute radical periodicals with small circulations.[7] Yet left critics do not see distribution as compromising the principles of left papers in the same way that advertising is thought to. Ideally, the Left wants to see their publications distributed as widely as possible without making any concessions in their beliefs.

Competing left papers view their circulation as evidence of their ideas' popularity and influence against their rivals, but still recognise the constraints imposed by the capitalist marketplace. Nevertheless, small circulation does not indicate whether their ideas are 'correct' or not. For example, MT's circulation was significantly less than rivals *New Socialist* (NS) and *New Statesman* (NSS) in the first half of the 1980s, yet more was made of MT's public profile than either periodical and it was ultimately more influential. MT's monthly circulation peaked at some 17-18,000 copies each for two exceptional issues (October 1988, January 1989), although its average varied between 9-11,000 issues per month in the early 1980s to around 13-14,000 copies at the end of the decade.[8]

[5] Curran and Sparks 1991; McGuigan 1992: 174-85.
[6] See Khiabany 1997.
[7] Berry *et al.*'1980; Cooper *et al.* 1980.
[8] There can be considerable variation in sales between individual months and a six month average.

All alternative publications face the very difficult problem of distribution. Without being able to reach a readership, via post, street sales, newsagents, etc., a periodical will not be viable for long. Yet left papers often oppose the marketplace precisely for the demands placed upon them by (capitalist) distribution agencies and retail outlets, while companies have refused to distribute radical periodicals for legal reasons and more recently for reasons of space and turnover (ie profitability).[9] As with printing, subscriptions and distribution were initially handled by a party enterprise, Central Books (CB), which distributed all party publications to both radical and party bookshops and to the party. MT was also sold at CP events, in university bookshops and on campuses: its articles were sometimes included in education packs for party schools.[10] Different means of distribution have consequences for the way a periodical should look and *vice versa*: papers sold on the street use short, simple headlines in large, bold type, whereas MT had to compete with other magazines for attention on newsagent shelves.

Changes in distribution enabled MT to expand its circulation substantially during the 1980s, and both of these developments were consequences of MT's engagement with the marketplace and its transformation from a 'journal' into a 'magazine'.[11] An assessment of distribution is necessary in determining the success of MT's transformation in increasing circulation and to understand the extent to which its ideas reached beyond those who bought the periodical.[12] Obviously, increased circulation generates increased revenue from more sales and advertisers (attracted by larger audiences): both should contribute to making the periodical more financially stable. Audited circulation provides advertisers with the information about a periodical's reach: it enabled MT to upgrade its advertising rates when its circulation increased. A more diverse readership reached via newsagents should also attract a broader range of advertisers.

Distribution was not a problem for the CP as long as its journals were addressed to an internal audience. However, when the membership began to decline, so too did its potential audience and future income: any expenditure on improvements could not have guaranteed recovering costs, unless they could convince party members who were not otherwise buying the periodical, to do so. Thus, the future of its journals depended upon the CP's future: declining membership proved too much for other journals during the 1980s (eg *Comment*, *Communist Focus*).

However, it was not only the declining readership that forced MT to try and reach a broader audience outside the party, but also the leadership which had blocked the Eurocommunists' gains at the 1979 Congress and limited MT's room for manoeuvre.[13] These developments, combined with the slow but steady increase in sales and a gradual

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[9] See Berry *et al.* 1980: 39-52; CPBF 1996a, 1996b; Logan 1996.

[10] Occasionally, an issue generated extra interest, such as the 20th anniversary issue of '1956' (January 1976) which sold out its print run of 7,500 (an extra 2,000).

[11] Chapter 7.

[12] Estimates vary between an average of 3 and 3.5 readers per magazine.

[13] Dave Cook told Jacques that the best thing he could do with MT was 'to keep sending it onwards and upwards, and then no one would be able to argue with that' (Jacques 1996b).

expansion of outlets (independent bookshops and a few newsagents)[14] after the 1979 re-launch, instilled confidence. The first significant increase in sales though only came after a trial agreement with WH Smith's in 1980, which brought an increase in revenues, publicity and press coverage.

MT benefitted from sympathetic contacts. Jacques had never considered selling MT via newsagents because of his background in academia and the party: 'the world of political ideas rather than journalism'.[15] Although WH Smith's did not distribute radical magazines at that time, Chris Hill, a CB representative, and Jacques eventually persuaded WH Smith's that MT 'wasn't the political rag that they thought it might be and that there were enough names attached to it'.[16] The importance of *how* MT was perceived had to be addressed; they drew attention to editorial content and public figures (eg Tony Benn) which demonstrated that it was 'serious' rather than 'scurrilous'. With the October 1980 issue, MT was given a three month trial run in six London outlets: three in railway stations and three in central London.[17] As sales soared, the trial period was extended, the area was expanded to thirty newsagents in London, staff and volunteers checked outlets to make sure that MT was properly displayed and the newsagents stocked. MT, however, was advised to hire a proper distributor for nationwide distribution rather than trying to organise the deliveries themselves.[18]

MT's first newsagent distributor, Moore Harness, started with the October 1981 issue which was launched in newsagents nationwide. The sub-title, 'the theoretical and discussion journal of the Communist Party', was removed from the outside cover, a particularly symbolic move since MT was carrying two exclusive topical interviews: one with the Polish Prime Minister, Mieczyslaw Rakowski, and the other with his opponent, Lech Walesa, the leader of *Solidarnosc*, the independent trade union. Such 'news' features (exclusives, topical) and media coverage ensured that MT would be taken 'seriously'![19] With national newsagent distribution, sales nearly doubled.

However, despite such auspicious beginnings, MT's nationwide launch had been overshadowed one month earlier by the launch of Labour's first (and only) 'theoretical journal' and its main rival during the first half of the 1980s, *New Socialist*, which was the first periodical directly influenced by MT. It is important to consider briefly the example of NS because it points to the limitations in the Left's thinking about political journals and Labour's suspicion of ideas and intellectuals. Launched at a time when the Labour Left appeared to be in the ascendant, NS, like MT, had a role to promote debate: they shared writers and co-sponsored debates. NS had to fight for resources from Labour because its proprietors had a limited understanding of the role of an intellectual magazine: Labour

[14] A couple of newsagents in Soho, London, sold MT in the autumn of 1979.
[15] Jacques 1996b.
[16] Townsend 1996.
[17] Webster 1980.
[18] Jacques 1996b; Townsend 1996. After MT had a distributor, the circulation manager still had to go around with trade representatives to convince newsagents to take it.
[19] Press cuttings helped promote MT to newsagents and distributors.

only put up £1,400, but it was supplemented by an additional £25,000 raised by NS itself; the editor had to convince the leadership to allow NS to publish bi-monthly instead of quarterly and to be distributed through newsagents instead of bookshops.[20] The leadership's limited vision of what was possible (and lack of interest) would have confirmed expectations of limited distribution and audiences, if NS had not made its own efforts.

NS benefitted from being launched at the peak of the Labour Left's influence and it occupied a position within the Labour Party which MT could never do. At the time, MT could not hope to attract the same amount of interest because the CP was a marginal force in the 1980s. There was considerable overlap between writers on both MT and NS during its first four years: they also jointly sponsored meetings, etc.[21] NS's production schedule and distribution strategy was vindicated by its first Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC) audited circulation figures of 27,324 for January-June 1982, nearly three times MT's figures of 9,599 (NS's first issue sold over 40,000).[22] However, as the figures in Table 6.1 illustrate, NS's slow decline dipped sharply after 1984, whereas MT's continued to move upwards gradually for most of the decade. This rise was not as steady as hoped and in October 1986 MT was re-launched in an attempt to put MT 'decisively above the 15,000 mark', by securing an additional 2,000 sales per month.[23] However, only one six-month audit ever surpassed the mark (July to December 1988), as did a few individual issues (eg October 1988, January 1989). By 1989, MT's sales started to decline from which it never recovered.

To some extent, the weekly NSS became a competitor, especially after it took over *New Society* in 1988 and attempted to incorporate a stronger social-cultural mix.[24] However, NSS was a different periodical from MT, and its decline through the 1980s indicated a loss of its readers due possibly to the fracturing of the public sector middle class, which had constituted its primary audience during NSS's heyday in the 1960s.[25] At the end of 1988, the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) launched its monthly magazine, *Living Marxism,* which was a worry to MT because of possible 'trade confusion' around their names but not in terms of ideas or approach. Its emergence forced MT to reassess its marketing strategy and to seriously re-consider a name change.[26]

After MT was launched in 1957, drawing in the readers of its precursor, *Marxist Quarterly,* its circulation fluctuated between 3,000 and 5,000 sales for the first two decades, though there is no correlation between membership and readership fluctuations.[27] During MT's first five years, for example, while party membership grew its

[20] McCrea 1989.
[21] Eg Curran 1984b.
[22] Lawrence 1982.
[23] Jacques 1986b.
[24] MTEB 1988a.
[25] Howe 1995.
[26] MTEB 1989a.
[27] Table 6.1.

circulation remained relatively constant, around 4,000 (including exports to Communist countries).[28] After 1962, James Klugmann had to work against a steady drop in membership, although between 1967 and 1977, party composition was changing with the influx of intellectuals, a group more disposed towards MT and other CP journals: the move towards more open debate inside the party after 1967 also helped.[29] As a result, MT's circulation started to climb back towards 4,000 and beyond by the mid-1970s aided by the interest in Marxist thought generated by the annual Communist University of London (CUL), which brought hundreds of progressive intellectuals into contact with CP journals.[30] This increase in sales also attests to changes in content and audience.[31]

Table 6.1 Periodical Circulations in Averages for Selected Years, 1977-1989[32]

	1977 (Jul-Dec)	1978 (Jul/Dec)	1979 (Jul-Dec)	1981 (Jul-Dec)	1982 (Jan-Jun)	1982 (Jul-Dec)	1983 (Jan-Jun)	1983 (Jul-Dec)	1984 (Jan-Jun)	1984 (Jul-Dec)
MT	4,843	5,033	4,976	10,255	9,599	10,018	10,598	10,978	12,043	11,882
NS	--	--	--	--	27,324	25,113	25,145	23,666	24,232	24,609
NSS	38,922	37,489	40,331	37,577	33,986	29,849	30,432	30,109	30,001	27,808

	1985 (Jan-Jun)	1985 (Jul-Dec)	1986 (Jan-Jun)	1986 (Jul-Dec)	1987 (Jan-Jun)	1987 (Jul-Dec)	1988 (Jan-Jun)	1988 (Jul-Dec)	1989 (Jan-Jun)	1989 (Jul-Dec)
MT	13,153	13,798	14,023	13,715	14,195	13,927	13,388	15,649	14,254	13,208
NS	17,273	17,382	16,491	16,102	13,011	--	--	--	--	--
NSS	29,006	28,375	26,129	25,865	29,442	25,374	--	--	--	--

The figures in Table 6.2 indicate that MT had reached the limit of the CB's distribution network by 1981 within the CP, a consequence of its declining importance. However, CB distribution was still important because of increased bookshop sales, primarily to non-party readers. National newsagent distribution almost doubled sales in the first month: 4,152 copies of the October 1981 MT were sold through newsagents out of 9,255 sales (44.9%). Over three-quarters of the first issue (77.1) had been sold via party branches and bookshops, which dropped down to by the October 1981 issue to less than half (40.2%), although they had increased in absolute numbers (3,718), eventually peaking with the March 1983 MT (4,900).[33] Nevertheless, it was clear that party sales were declining: figures for 1979 and 1980 indicate that party sales accounted for about half of all sales and began to decline as membership fell, especially after the internal struggles of 1983-85; by March 1986, they had fallen to nearly half of the October 1981

28 The USSR began taking 300 copies in January 1960, but China's imports of 400 were curtailed after the Sino-Soviet split (Klugmann 1960).
29 Andrews 1995a: 226-27, 233, 243.
30 *Ibid.*: 233-34, 238-39.
31 *Ibid.*; Johnstone 1995.
32 ABC supplied the figures for MT 1984 (Jan-Jun) to 1990 (Jul-Dec) and for NS and NSS. The other figures are based on averages of the figures cited in reports and documents discussed at MTEB and MTEC meetings (MTEB 1979a, 1981a; MTEC 1984a, 1984b): monthly averages for 1978 and 1979 are based on despatch figures (not sales) for the whole year (Jacques 1979i).
33 Table 6.1.

total. By 1989, overall sales were declining and the party literary network could no longer be relied on to help sales.[34]

Table 6.2: Distribution, Selected Issues (% of total)[35]

Date	Party Sales	Central Books[36]	Subscrip-tions	News-agents	Miscella-neous	Total
Oct. 1957		77.0%	10.0%		13.0%	4,037
May 1958		61.7%	13.2%		25.1%	4,878
Nov. 1962		55.5%	13.3%		31.1%	4,179
Jan. 1972		56.5%	24.0%		19.5%	3,302
May 1973		57.0%	22.8%		20.0%	4,095
May 1979	53.0%	11.0%	23.5%		12.5%	4,705
Sept. 1979	52.0%	11.7%	24.8%		11.5%	4,579
Oct. 1979	56.3%	11.1%	21.0%	1.6%	9.9%	5,332
May 1980	49.4%	16.0%	23.5%		11.1%	4,914
Oct. 1981		40.2%	15.0%	44.9%		9,255
Mar. 1982		43.2%	16.8%	40.0%		9,324
Oct. 1982		39.3%	18.8%	40.3%	1.5%	10,639
Mar. 1983		41.9%	21.7%	33.7%	2.7%	11,692
Oct. 1983		33.6%	22.8%	39.5%	4.1%	11,870
Mar. 1984		31.4%	26.0%	39.7%	2.9%	11,762
Oct. 1984		29.1%	27.6%	39.8%	3.5%	12,803
Mar. 1985		24.9%	29.3%	43.2%	2.6%	13,927
Mar. 1986		22.7%	30.0%	44.0%	1.9%	14,388

Subscriptions were also CB's responsibility until October 1984: they increased from 10% in 1957 to 22.8% in 1973, but later dipped in the early 1980s.[37] They continued to grow throughout the 1980s until they reached over 30% of the 14,388 sales total for March 1986. The steady increase in subscriptions indicates a stable, committed readership of between 20 and 30%: from July 1984 on, more copies were sold per month via subscriptions than CB distribution with few exceptions. Subscriptions reached new levels and became an important element in sustaining MT: although they averaged between 20 and 30% of total circulation until the mid-1980s, they only brought in 14% of total income for 1983. This was, however, rectified by 1985 when the subscription level had

34 MTEB 1989a.

35 Figures taken from: Klugmann 1960, 1973; MT 1986; MTEC 1984b.

36 This figure includes 'party sales' when there is not a separate figure listed in that column; otherwise, it represents only bookshop sales.

37 This is when Jacques complained about CB's handling of subscriptions (Chapter 4).

increased slightly but the amount of income generated nearly doubled in a higher percentage of the cover price than the newstrade.[38] By 1989, subscriptions generated more than £2,000 income per issue sold against newstrade sales.[39]

II. Publicity and Promotion

Under Jacques, MT first developed cross-media promotion with other left papers (exchanging ads), while simultaneously promoting itself within the CP (eg listings of MT's contents published in internal party circulars).[40] However, this changed as MT recruited national press coverage, which did not rely on journalists looking for a 'good story'.[41] The shift towards mainstream media coverage developed in tandem with newsagent distribution and attempts to attract 'non-political' advertising.[42]

An indication of the qualitative and quantitative changes in MT's promotional efforts can be seen through a comparison between what was possible in 1979 and 1986, as represented by the re-launches in those years. The publicity budget was approximately £250 (*Comment* and *Time-Out* were free and exchange ads were also used); advertisements were run in the following periodicals: *Tribune*, *Morning Star*, *Socialist Challenge*, *Socialist Worker*, *The Leveller*, *New Left Review*, *Spare Rib*, *Labour Weekly*, *New Statesman*.[43] The backup for this publicity was the production of a handout with a subscription form. Follow-up promotion included articles in the *Morning Star* and *Comment* plus copies sent to contacts in universities, conferences planned for 1980, stalls to be sent around to festivals, plus a press conference for the 'Left Press' on 1 October 1979. MTEC was attempting to recruit MT agents to promote the periodical to non-party bookshops (two had been recruited by June 1979): CB said they would process the orders if MT set up the contacts.[44] As this point, MT conceived of its audiences as firmly on the Left, but not just party members.

For MT's relaunch with the October 1986 issue, it ran a series of six advertisements in *The Guardian*, plus others in left periodicals (eg NSS, NS, *Tribune*, *7 Days*), women's periodicals (eg *Spare Rib*, *Women's Review*) and youth, student and cultural papers (eg *The Face*, *Manchester City Life*). In addition, they used advertisements and news stories in the trade press (eg *Newsagent*, *Media Week*), 200 posters in the London underground and another 3,000 posters flyposted in major cities such as London, Manchester, Birmingham, etc. This effort was backed up by 250,000 promotional folders with subscription information. Two events led the re-launch: a press conference attended by Jacques, Beatrix Campbell and Ken Livingstone and a party attended by over 200 people.

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[38] Table 4.2. Subscriptions offer publishers money in advance; newsagents and bookshops keep a percentage of the cover price of each copy sold whereas subscriptions are usually handled by an agency for a set fee.
[39] Table 4.3.
[40] Jacques 1979h: 1; Farrington 1983.
[41] Journalists are advised to check the alternative press for story ideas (eg Keeble 1994: 48).
[42] Jacques 1996d; Perryman 1994b.
[43] Jacques 1979h: 1.
[44] *Ibid.*

The autumn 1986 event, 'Left Unlimited', attracted 3,500, raising its public profile and increasing sales.

The CP also provided MT with a distribution network and an organisational base from which to build up circulation. Other party publications and groups also provided a means to promote MT to party members and sympathisers. Paddy Farrington, circulation manager 1983-86, worked hard to promote MT using party branches and networks (eg literature officers). More than 60 attended a national conference he organised in 1983 to recruit party activists to promote MT; they were also introduced to key speakers they could invite to meetings they organised anywhere in the UK.[45] MT bypassed the 1979 ban on discussion groups and encouraged CP groups to invite MT contributors; these local conferences, events and seminars, helped to spread its ideas outside of the large urban centres and even attracted local press coverage in places like Gloucester.[46] The party's non-financial contribution to MT's success became less important during the 1980s, especially after the 1985 Congress.

MT also made the most of its volunteers to support its publicity and promotional efforts: free labour is one of the few areas in which alternative media generally have an advantage over capitalist media. Friends, staff and volunteers helped produce and distribute press releases and do the follow-up telephone calls to journalists, editors and other media contacts.[47] However, only Jacques and senior staff, such as Sally Davison or Jane Taylor, were allowed to speak to the press on MT's behalf.

The October 1980 Tony Benn interview was the first article to be reprinted in a national newspaper, *The Guardian*, and after which, MT increased its publicity efforts: within a year, with press releases written 'for everything' and staff thinking of 'how they could reach the press with every issue'.[48] It also marked the start of a close, productive relationship between MT and *The Guardian*. All *Guardian* reprints were published on the 'Agenda' page, which was established for discussion, such as the debates on the 'realignment of the Left'. It was not so much the money that interested MT, as the promotional exposure;[49] the press cuttings helped to convince distributors that MT had enough public interest to sell copies to make it worthwhile.

The timing of press releases was important. From 1980, October issues were almost always targeted for the start of Labour's autumn conferences, with key articles reprinted on *The Guardian*'s Agenda page (during the first half of the 1980s, the September MT targeted the annual Trades Unions' Congress conference). As MT became more aware of the way in which the magazine industry operated, March issues also acquired importance for promotion. Sales of certain issues, such as December, July and August, tend to be much lower because people are buying gifts and going away on holidays, whereas

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45 Farrington 1983.

46 Places, such as Dudley, West Midlands, had groups which managed to attract 25-50 people to seminars (Perryman 1994b).

47 Townsend 1996.

48 *Ibid.*

49 Jacques 1996b.

October and March are when education and work are in 'full swing' and the weather tends to keep people indoors.

Initially, MT's small budget constrained its promotional efforts so that copies and press releases were delivered by hand to save on postage costs (voluntary labour).[50] However, by the late 1980s, MT was couriering publicity material at times. As MT's income increased, so did its promotional efforts and media coverage; public disputes inside the CP and MT's intervention in debates in the Labour Party also generated interest. Thus, as publicity picked up, so did its efforts to reach a wider readership and to generate a greater interest from political and media circles. By the mid-1980s, between one and four hundred copies of each issue of MT were sent out with different press releases, targeted at different media and specific journalists and editors.[51]

MT used more press releases than any other left periodical: on average, MT used at least two or three press releases and sometimes as many as four, five or even six different ones.[52] Political journalists might be targeted with a press release (and a copy of MT) that highlighted one of the political features, while cultural critics on the same paper would be sent a different press release promoting arts and cultural coverage. The principle that developed for composing press releases followed four basic themes in descending order of importance. The first priority was to promote the ideas and analysis contained in each issue while the second was given over to MT's interviews. The third priority was given to playing off the contradictions between MT's title and its content or images and the last priority was for promoting spin-offs (eg Central Committee Outfitters).[53]

The March 1988 issue is a typical example of MT's publicity strategy. One press release highlighted the main feature of 'Channel Five', a debate about modern architecture between Martin Pawley, *The Guardian*'s architecture correspondent, and Jules Lubbock, lecturer and architecture critic for the NSS.[54] Another press release promoted the cover feature, an 'exclusive' interview with Michael Heseltine, Conservative MP, which highlighted his views on various topics, such as Europe, industrial policy, unions, social responsibility and Mikhail Gorbachev (Heseltine was a rival and possible successor to Thatcher).[55] A third press release promoted an article by Basiro Davey, a health studies lecturer, on the 'Social Side of Cancer'.[56] There were only five items which drew upon the issue, all of which referred to the Heseltine interview: *The Guardian* reprinted it; columnists in the FT and *The Observer* wrote about it; and two short pieces in the FT and NSS mentioned it.

Less typical is the June 1989 promotion because of the CP document being issued *with* MT. From 1981, Jacques had kept MT from being too closely associated with

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[50] This was easier when Fleet Street was home to the national press.
[51] Taylor 1995. If 400 promotional copies of a total of 12,000 sales, were sent out, it was a ratio of 1 to 30.
[52] The first editor of *New Socialist* only ever prepared one press release for each issue (Curran 1997).
[53] Jacques 1996b; Perryman 1994b.
[54] MT 1988a.
[55] MT 1988b.
[56] MT 1988c.

internal CP affairs, although some concessions had been made for strategic reasons and to avoid criticisms. It was also trying to build upon a three-month promotion of the April, May and June 1989 editions by AGB Impress, MT's distributors. The publicity efforts for the June 1989 MT generated 17 news items and articles, though none dealt with the Kenneth Clarke interview[57] and seven covered the CP and its manifesto but not MT.[58] Of the remaining ten items, six were responses in the trade press to the first two press releases: two were short items on Gerrard's appointment and the other four dealt with MT 'binding on' a supplement.[59] Thus, despite all the efforts put into writing, sending out and following up press releases, there was no way of ensuring what or how much kind of coverage, if any, could be stimulated, even when carrying interviews with important public figures.

Other vehicles for promoting MT's ideas were the published collections of articles on three key themes: *The Forward March of Labour Halted?*, published in 1981 by New Left Books (NLB);[60] *The Politics of Thatcherism*, published in 1983 by the CP publishers, Lawrence and Wishart (L&W); and *New Times: The Changing Face of Politics in the 1990s*, published by L&W in 1989.[61] The suggestion for the first book had come from Francis Mulhern of NLB, and Jacques then approached L&W, but with no success.[62] L&W, however, expressed interest in publishing a collection of articles on Thatcherism. These books continued to promote the circulation of MT's ideas long after it had moved on or ceased publishing, through reviews, bookshops, public libraries and higher education courses.

III. Networks and Contributors

Distribution and circulation are not just questions of retailing in bookshops and newsagents or of shifting copies from one place to another, but also a question of social networks and contributors, which constitute complementary distribution channels and a primary audience for ideas. Throughout MT's 34 years, contributors tended to be white, middle class, university-educated men. The overwhelming majority of contributors between 1957 and 1979 were party officials and intellectuals, with contributions from the leaders of other CPs and national liberation movements and, occasionally, non-party writers.

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57 However, some earlier articles in the press highlighted Chris Ham's (1989) somewhat favourable review of the Health Secretary's proposed NHS reforms, which may have made Clarke a willing interviewee (eg Brown 1989; Massam 1989).

58 These seven items were not included in the content analysis of press coverage since there were no explicit references to MT. They were published by the FT, *Guardian*, *Telegraph*, *Independent* (twice), *Times* and *Express*.

59 Trade papers included: *Media Week*, *Magazine Week* (twice), *Retail Newsagent* (twice) and *News Trade Weekly*.

60 NLB, re-named Verso, was NLR's book-publishing arm.

61 Jacques and Mulhern 1981b; Hall and Jacques 1983b, 1989b. A fourth book, *The New Soviet Revolution* (Bloomfield 1989), was published and, though it appealed to MT supporters in the party, it was not part of its political project (Jacques 1996d).

62 Jacques 1996d; MTEB 1980.

The participation of non-party members in party debates was part of the CP's gradual opening up after 1967 to progressive social movements (though when Klugmann accepted unsolicited manuscripts they had to be passed by party officials).[63] Jacques, however, did not want MT to be seen as either an internal party journal or 'a house journal for professional intellectuals'; he wanted it to appeal to both the CP and the broad Left. However, it needed non-party writers because they would help reach out to non-party readers,[64] although they still had to appeal to party readers. Personal contacts developed through workplaces, educational establishments, public meetings, etc.: all were used to find the best contributors. There were some eight social networks[65] which supplied MT with both party and non-party contributors, including its editorial collective (MTEC), the CP, party committees and events (eg Communist University of London), higher education institutions, trade unions, research agencies, social movements, and the media.

The MTEC provided one of the most important networks: it consisted of people who helped with the day-to-day tasks, people that Jacques knew and trusted. It included (among others): Sarah Benton, editor of *Comment*, 1978-80, and later an NSS journalist; Beatrix Campbell, a socialist-feminist and party journalist, who later went to work for *City Limits*; Dave Cook, a leading Eurocommunist and party officer; David Triesman, a sociology lecturer and a former editor of the 1970s radical weekly, *7 Days*.[66] MTEC members would suggest contributors for both features and short pieces. Sally Townsend had her own mini-collective to help with production, contributors and generating ideas for 'Channel Five', which included Jon Chadwick (CP), a theatre literary manager, and Richard Dyer (non-CP), a film studies lecturer.

The MTEC's composition changed continually; by 1983, it became too big to operate as a single entity. MT had acquired an extensive list of contacts and a public profile which made recruiting contributors and volunteers much easier than before. Often volunteers were not as useful in expanding MT's networks because they tended to be young, inexperienced graduates. However, some volunteers and staff continued to offer help and advice after they left. For example, Paul Webster worked on MT in 1979-80, but continued to help over the next decade while working for the *Morning Star*, *Sunday Times* and *The Guardian*; he was a valuable source of contacts, contributors and interviewees.[67] There was a reciprocal relationship between *The Guardian* and MT because of the former's position on the Centre-Left and the latter's desire to expand its readership into this area.

Jacques also sought to recruit many of the party's leading intellectuals and officials as writers. He had had close contact with the leadership from the time of his first election to

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63 Andrews 1995a: 237. Jacques ignored unsolicited manuscripts except for Ferdinand Mount's article (Jacques 1996c).
64 Jacques 1978b: 270.
65 This term is being used to refer to both the formally constituted bodies (eg party committees and journals) and the informal personal and social networks which arise within and through organisations, institutions and events.
66 Not to be confused with the CP weekly of the same name set up in 1985.
67 Townsend 1996.

the EC in 1967. After he was appointed as MT editor, Jacques had to sit on eleven other bodies, including the L&W board, the PC and the Theory and Ideology Committee. He was also a part of a network of anti-Stalinist, Gramscian and Eurocommunist intellectuals in the party which included Bob Rowthorn, Monty Johnstone, Dave Cook, and Jon Bloomfield.

CP academics did not just have contacts with non-party lecturers and students through work. By the mid-1970s, the CULs were attracting upwards of 1500 CP and non-CP scholars, postgraduate students and activists.[68] Friendships established at the CULs were renewed at MT events and meetings during the 1980s, at academic conferences and through university and college circuits; many contributors came from particular higher education institutions, such as Manchester, Bristol, Warwick, Sheffield, Glasgow, Birmingham, Strathclyde and Cambridge universities, Open University, and the polytechnics of the City of London, Middlesex, Sheffield and Wolverhampton.[69]

There were contributors from various social movements or campaign groups: such as, feminists Eileen Phillips, Cynthia Cockburn and Susie Orbach; Harold Wolpe of the African National Congress; anti-nuclear power campaigner, Harold Immanuel; CND activists, Joan Ruddock and Jon Bloomfield. There were contributors from trade unions and research agencies who also wrote for MT: such as Chris Pond of the Low Pay Unit, who contributed both features and short pieces ('Focus'); Paul Olive, a CP member and ex-editor of *Comment*, who worked as a journalist for the National Association of Local Government Officers; and Gareth Locksley and Richard Minns, researchers at the GLC's Industry and Employment Unit.

Under Klugmann, most 'journalists' (media-related contributors)[70] were party members or working on party publications. This was extended to academics who also wrote regularly for newspapers, like John Gittings who wrote regularly on China for *The Guardian*, and Simon Frith who was a popular music critic for the *Sunday Times*, during the early years of Jacques's editorship. However, the first non-party, professional journalist contributors in 1983 and 1984 were from two leading national dailies: FT editors, Peter Riddell (politics) and John Lloyd (industry/labour); and three *Guardian* journalists, Aidan White, Victoria Brittain and Jonathon Steele. They represented the first of an increasing array of professional journalists working on national newspapers and in other media (eg BBC) who were to contribute to MT from 1983 to 1991, and who constituted an invaluable network. One of MT's most important contacts was Richard Gott, editor of *The Guardian*'s 'Agenda' page, 1978-88, who consistently published MT's October features prior to the annual Labour Party conference. Martin Kettle, the son of a leading CP intellectual and MTEB member (1957-85), Arnold Kettle, who succeeded

68 Chapter 2.
69 Jacques had studied at Manchester and Cambridge and taught at Bristol before becoming editor.
70 The terms used in this section are defined in Table 6.3, unless otherwise indicated: eg 'journalists' includes all contributors in media-related occupations.

Gott as 'Agenda' page editor in 1988, contributed articles and a column to MT while working for *New Society* and *The Guardian.*

The changes in the numbers and types of contributors helped raise MT's public profile. Under Klugmann, contributors were predominantly a mix of party officials and academics with occasional contributions from rank-and-file members, which changed under Jacques to a mix of scholars, researchers and social activists during the late 1970s and early 1980s, and increasingly journalists and non-CP activists and politicians during the mid to late 1980s. The changes in contributors were a result of MT seeking through its networks the 'best qualified' people and public figures to write on various topics, a task made easier as its public profile rose.[71] MT sought to use its media contacts to generate 'responses' (eg commissioned letters) to articles or to write short pieces for the news and cultural sections and many journalists agreed to write for MT because it gave them the opportunity to write longer, more thoughtful articles.[72]

The changes in contributor types indicates changes in the types of analysis: in the move from the 'theoretical and discussion journal' to the 'current affairs magazine', there was a shift from the scholar and analyst to the journalist and columnist, reflecting the shift from analyses of deep structural changes and long-term trends in theory and history to interpretations of current events and political developments and interviews of leading political and cultural figures. For example, of the total contributors in 1975, only 3 out of 65 were (or could be) identified as journalists (media-related occupations) as opposed to 24 academics; in 1983, the comparative figures were 40 journalists against 83 academics out of 190 contributors; in 1988, there were 123 contributors in media-related occupations against 86 lecturers and researchers out of a total of 258 contributors.[73] Thus, over thirteen years the number of media professionals contributing rises from just over 4.5% of contributors to 21% in 1983, to nearly half (48%) by 1988. By comparison, the numbers of academics (those that could be identified as researchers or lecturers) increased from 37% in 1975 to 43.7% in 1983 and slipped to 33.3% by 1988 (although it was actually a slight increase in absolute numbers). Together, the two occupations accounted for 41.5% of all contributors in 1975, 64.7% in 1983, and 81.0% in 1988.

This sample demonstrates an increase in contributors year on year, in part because of the use of different editorial formats, such as roundtables and jointly-authored articles, but more so due to the expansion of editorial space through additional pages and the enlargement of pages with each format change (1979, 1986). Of greater significance is the increase in journalists contributing to the features pages by 1988, which was the most important section, politically (Jacques exercised strict control over it). The majority of

[71] By the late 1980s, many contributors started asking to be paid because MT 'looked like it had money' (Townsend 1996; Jacques 1996b).
[72] There were 'nests of left-wing journalists in the unlikeliest of places, such as the *Sunday Times*'s sports desk' (Townsend 1996).
[73] All figures are drawn from Table 6.3.

journalists were affiliated to the leading papers of the Centre and Centre-Left: *The Guardian*, FT, *The Observer* and *The Independent.*[74]

Table 6.3[75] Breakdown of Contributors by Occupation (% of total)

Primary Occupation of Contributors	Feature Articles			Other Contributions		
	1975	1983	1988	1975	1983	1988
Academics[76]	34.2	52.6	35.2	40.7	37.5	32.3
Journalists[77]	7.9	7.7	37.4	--	30.4	53.3
CP officials[78]	44.7	5.1	3.3	33.3	0.9	0.6
Other Parties' officials	--	1.3	3.3	--	--	0.6
Trade unionists	2.6	11.5	2.2	3.7	7.1	1.2
Social movements[79]	2.6	12.8	1.1	--	10.7	3.6
Labour MPs, PPCs	--	1.3	4.4	--	2.7	0.6
Professionals[80]	2.6	3.9	8.8	11.1	8.0	3.6
Workers	--	--	--	--	0.9	0.6
MT staff	--	1.3	2.2	--	--	3.0
Misc./Unknown	5.3	2.6	2.2	11.1	1.8	0.6
TOTAL[81]	99.9	100.1	100.1	99.9	100.0	100.0
(Absolute numbers of contributors)	38	78	91	27	112	167

The nature of MT's contributors also helped to transform the journal into a magazine. By the very nature of a Marxist 'theoretical and discussion journal', much of the debates with theory involved those with the intellectual training, time and temperament to engage with them. As Klugmann's MT remained the preserve of party officials and scholars, its role, ideas and production process remained relatively unchanged. Unless otherwise indicated, MT contributors in 1975 were party members. However, by 1983, Jacques's sixth year as editor, CP affiliations were highlighted to indicate a continued presence of party contributors because of internal critics (well-known members did not always have to be identified): 20% were clearly identified as party members, two-thirds of whom contributed features).[82] By 1988, only 14% of contributors were party members, although more than half contributed to MT's features.

Changes in the types of contributors were necessary to MT's cultural transformation and its strategy of reaching out beyond the CP to the broader Left and to the public

[74] Table 6.5.

[75] Contributors' primary occupations were determined by the listing in MT, unless otherwise known. The final numbers tabulated do not indicate the numbers of contributors because some will have contributed more than once, nor do they indicate the exact number of articles because some were authored by two or more or included several participants (ie roundtables).

[76] This includes academic-related occupations, such as researchers, but not teachers.

[77] This includes all media-related occupations.

[78] The category 'CP officials' includes international CP officials and documents (counted as one 'official'). No documents were carried in 1983 or 1988, although the CP's *Manifesto for New Times* was carried in 1989.

[79] This includes representatives and employees of social movements and pressure groups, such as CND.

[80] This includes white collar employees, such as teachers and nurses.

[81] Due to rounding, numbers might not add up to 100.0.

[82] Features included four members in the roundtable discussion on the CP's future.

sphere. They correspond to changes in MT's strategy and form, even though academics made up a substantial portion of contributors consistently through all three years. MT's promotion of the 'broad democratic alliance' (BDA) strategy was integral to its attempts to reach out to a wider audience across the Left in the early 1980s is evident in the higher number of contributors from social movements, research agencies and unions participating in 1983 against 1975 and 1988. (The number of unionists and party officials can be explained partly by the 1983 roundtables: September's on the ties between Labour and the unions; November's on the CP's internal divisions.)[83] The difference in absolute numbers of party members contributing between 1983 and 1988 is minimal (38 to 36), though as a proportion it represents a decline from 20% to 14%. By 1983, there were only three more journalists than in 1975 contributing to features, but this had increased to 34 journalists by 1988.[84]

Table 6.4 Breakdown of Contributors by Political Affiliation (% of total)

Party Affiliation[85]	Features Contributors			Other Contributors		
CPGB members	100.0	33.3	23.1	100.0	10.7	9.0
Labour Party members	--	9.0	8.8	--	6.3	2.4

These shifts in the types and numbers of contributors as well as their political or social organisational affiliations reflects the shifts in MT's position over time, from party-focused discussion in 1975 to the anti-Thatcher BDA strategy of the reformists in 1983 to a more 'journalistic' orientation to politics and culture. Throughout MT's history, it published interviews with important political and cultural figures. While most contributors were party members, interviews tended to be restricted to leading figures within Communist spheres of influence. This changed gradually during the late 1970s and 1980s as MT began to address the Left rather than just the CP; left politicians, union leaders, cultural figures and social activists were willing to be interviewed by left journalists, academics or activists in order to address others across the Left. By the mid to late 1980s, interviews with leading international and domestic figures became more common and these were most likely to be secured through national journalists or internationally renown academics: Hugo Young interviewed ex-PM, Ted Heath, Stuart Hall interviewed Jesse Jackson, and Eric Hobsbawm interviewed Arthur Miller.[86]

MT had pioneered the idea that the Left had to 'take the Right seriously' by interrogating its leading propagandists and examining its ideas, such as the publication of Ferdinand Mount's critique of socialism and interviews with Conservative MPs. It should be noted that these three MPs were all 'opponents' in some way of Thatcher or aspects of

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[83] MT 1983a, 1983b.

[84] Table 6.3.

[85] CP affiliation may actually be *underestimated* because it was not always acknowledged, as party contributors were often known to CP readers: the figures given are those which have been determined as best as possible by information from all available sources.

[86] Heath 1988; Jackson 1986; Miller 1989.

her policies. MT secured interviews with leading figures because of the willingness of established journalists, such as Young or John Lloyd, to do so; some interviewees were also promised copies of the transcripts *and* a chance to make any changes to the edited version before it appeared in MT.[87]

Table 6.5 Journalists' Publications[88]

	1983	1988
Guardian	3	9
Independent	--	7
Financial Times	1	9
Sunday Times	2	--
New Statesman	2	3
Observer	--	4
Times	--	1
Times Literary Supplement	--	1
City Limits	3	6
music/style	4	3
Scotsman	--	1
Listener	--	1
Economist	--	2
BBC	1	2
TOTAL	16	49

Any journal or magazine has to establish itself in some manner in order to attract people to write for it. Often, those who write for the alternative press usually do so, not for remuneration, but out of a sense of commitment to its political, social and cultural values, and the degree to which these values diverge from the mainstream make it difficult to attract well-known commentators, or to secure interviews with notables and celebrities. MT's media links also helped launch some of its own contributors into the public arena (eg Geoff Mulgan, Suzanne Moore). Nevertheless, utilising professional journalists to gain access to interviews with public figures is useful but it also extends the privilege of those who already contribute, or have access, to the media. This has the consequence of reversing access to the national public sphere to one in which some national 'gatekeepers' gain access to address the Left in the latter's own (internal) public sphere. Thus, MT°provides these commentators with an air of legitimacy to address the Left which they might have lacked otherwise.

The journalists contributing to MT signified a qualitative shift towards the liberal and centre-left media. Six contributions in 1983 came from national newspaper journalists, by 1988 the total reached 30: a five-fold increase. These contributors came overwhelmingly from the leading centre-left broadsheets, including some of their most prominent

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87 Eg Jacques 1987a; Fosker 1991.

88 All freelance writers have been excluded. In the 1983 tallies, both *Sunday Times* and *The Guardian* include writers who are known to have two occupations: eg a lecturer and a popular music critic. However, not one of the 1988 journalists are in that position. Also, the number for a particular affiliation indicates the number of contributions rather than the number of journalists: some may have contributed more than once (although few contributed more than twice in either year).

commentators, such as Neal Ascherson (*The Observer*), Martin Walker (*The Guardian*) and Malcolm Rutherford (FT).[89] For example, Rutherford, Peter Riddell, John Lloyd, Philip Bassett and Charlie Leadbeater, who wrote nearly every article in the FT in 1986-87 which referred to or drew upon MT, also contributed to MT. The broadsheets' coverage of MT became a bridge for selected liberal and centre-left journalists, who commented on MT nationally while in turn they were given opportunities via MT to address the Left on such topics as its realignment.

The introduction of listing of contributors' backgrounds in the May 1982 issue testifies to the importance of identifying authors and their expertise to demonstrate the authoritativeness of MT's commentary: it helped to endorse its political project. Connections with the CP could be identified whenever it was felt necessary (or identified *post-hoc* for congress),[90] while the presence of professional journalists extended MT's credibility with the mainstream media and even non-party audiences (actual and potential). In seeking a wider audience and a broader range of contributors, MT acquired influence and esteem, which it would never have had if it had remained an internal party journal, although this opening up meant allowing a number of mainstream commentators access to the Left's public sphere.

IV. Discussion Groups, Talks, Events, Conferences

The increase in MT's profile and the promotion of its ideas within the CP and across the Left cannot simply be ascribed to the degree of coverage it received in the national press. Its discussion groups and weekend events were an integral element of MT's 'war of position', helping to circulate its ideas throughout the Left and to the broader public. These groups and events also acted as an 'audience-feedback' mechanism, by engaging with the readership 'in the flesh', encouraging participation in both ideas and MT, all of which no doubt helped to generate income and sales. The participatory aspect of MT was encouraged by the 'meetings culture' within which it operated, which had both a negative and a positive impact.[91]

It is not surprising that discussion groups, talks and other events played a role in MT's development as both a journal and a magazine. As a journal, MT sponsored talks as part of the process of trying to engage with other intellectuals on behalf of the CP. Klugmann gave lectures and talks, published occasional collections of MT articles as CP pamphlets,[92] and helped with preparing party educational materials. MT was always seen as a vehicle for the CP's line even if it was 'open' to discussion with others on the Left. As early as 1962, MT sponsored talks, debates and events, including the 'Forum in London',

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[89] These changes are also significant because of the subjects covered: both Ascherson and Walker are noted commentators on Eastern European and Soviet affairs respectively, and Walker, tellingly, wrote on the prospects of the 'Gorbachev Revolution' on the eve of the CPSU's Congress for MT in 1988 rather than a member of either the CPGB or CPSU (eg Walker 1988).
[90] This helped contradict criticisms about the lack of party contributors.
[91] Taylor 1995.
[92] Eg CPGB 1974.

inspired by the activities of New Left groups, and it organised a 'Week of Marxist Thought' a year later, inspired by an event held by the French CP in 1961.[93] However, none of these ever acquired anything close to the influence and prestige of either the CUL or MT events.

During the 1980s, MT established itself as *the* promoter and sponsor of discussion groups, conferences and events over and above the CP. MT's events, which began with the 'Great Moving Left Show' in 1982, were an attempt to take the best of the CUL without the connotations of either 'Communist' or 'University'.[94] The influences for this meetings culture can be traced back to the 1930s Left Book Clubs, the New Left clubs (1957-62), the Workers' Educational Association (WEA),[95] and as a practice of radical academic journals in the 1970s.[96] For example, *Screen*, a radical media education journal, extended its 'theoretical effectivity' by encouraging participation via readers' groups, events and summer schools.[97] In the pre-discussion period before the 1977 Congress, party branches were encouraged to hold public meetings on the proposed revisions to the BRS, and even though the leadership did express concerns about some speakers, many branches did open up to non-party participants during this period.[98]

The annual week-long CUL spawned a number of publications, including three collections of CUL papers.[99] By 1979, its decline (losing money and participants) coincided with the waning of the CP's influence in student politics: it was closed in 1981.[100] MT replaced the CUL with its own biannual events, the three largest of which were: the 'Moving Left Show' (MLS) in 1982 (1700 people); 'Left Alive' in 1984 (2500 people); and 'Left Unlimited' in 1986 (3500 people). Smaller events were organised and held locally, as were some events which targeted different constituencies such as 'Women Alive' in 1986 (1,000 people) and 'Gramsci 87' (on the 50th anniversary of Gramsci's death). The last major event was the 1989 'New Times' weekend.

The MLS was considered a great success and generated the first positive comments about MT in the national press: participants were described as 'open-minded', of 'moderate disposition', and not as 'myopic' as the Labour Party.[101] The second MT weekend event expanded its remit to include 'extra-curricular' activities such as 'jazz dance, jogging and rock climbing' in addition to the usual fare of political debates: a notable change in left conferences.[102] Big draws, such as the debates between Livingstone

93 Griffith-Hentges 1962; MT 1962a, 1963.
94 Townsend 1996. This was even reflected in the terminology: MT organised 'events' not 'conferences', with *activist* rather than *academic* connotations.
95 WEA included many CP and ex-CP members: eg E. P. Thompson, John Saville.
96 Chun 1993; Easthope 1988; Lemahieu 1988; Samuels 1966.
97 Easthope 1988: 233.
98 Townsend 1996; Johnstone 1995.
99 Bloomfield 1977; Hibbin 1978; Bridges and Brunt 1981.
100 Jacques 1996c.
101 Jenkins 1982; Rutherford 1982. Technically, Rutherford was not the first FT journalist to participate in an MT event: in 1962, MT had hosted a forum entitled, 'Man on the Screen: What Shall We Make of Him?,' which included the FT's film critic David Robinson (MT 1962b).
102 MT 1991/92: 18, 21.

and Campbell, and Hall and Benn, were subsequently carried in MT. The 'Women Alive' event in July 1986 was part of a strategy to attract women, a key constituency in the BDA with which MT identified itself, even if it appeared to be slow in meeting demands for more women contributors. 'Left Unlimited' was used to promote MT's third format.

However, MT was dogged by criticisms. The media criticised media celebrities, like news presenter, Anna Ford (at the MLS), for participating in MT's events, while party members criticised MT for inviting right-wing personalities, such as Victoria Gillick (in 1986), an anti-abortion campaigner. Gillick's invitation elicited complaints even from party members who were supportive of MT (eg Dave Green, London District Committee).[103] 'Left Unlimited' sparked a political intervention by Third World First (TWF) over development issues, which were becoming increasingly marginalised under Jacques: TWF distributed a leaflet in which it criticised MT for its attitude towards non-white speakers, race and development issues.[104] However, even though the EC considered the event an 'outstanding success', it lost a lot of money after only 3,500 people had shown up against a projected 5,000.[105]

An important but less high-profile part of MT's public interventions were the readers' discussion groups, which were to "assume an increasingly 'interventionist' role" and to establish "a more 'living' relationship" with both party and non-party readers![106] Although three MT readers' groups had been established by January 1979, the leadership only moved to suppress them in September 1979: traditionalist opponents suspected that this was the beginnings of a parallel network for reformists.[107] MT was therefore forced to rely on supporters in the party branch structure to host discussions, seminars and meetings, based around themes from a recent issue, arranged in colleges, town halls and other public arenas around the country.[108] Some well-organised groups were based upon local party branches, but others had to organise outside the party branches where traditionalists were in control. For example, MT groups worked with the local branches in Birmingham, Dudley (West Midlands) and Teeside, sharing members and resources, whereas in Cardiff, a local activist set up an MT discussion group because the CP branch was controlled by Stalinists.[109] MT groups were sometimes formed by party and non-party individuals in different circumstances. For example, Geoff Andrews, a mature student, was active in organising an MT group at Ruskin College and forums and regional talks, including the Cardiff forum on Gramsci (1987), a regional supplement to the national event.[110]

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103 PCSub 1986.

104 TWF suggested that a representative of an African aid agency should have been invited to represent the views of the recipients of 'Live Aid' (TWF 1986).

105 EC 1986b.

106 Jacques 1978b: 270.

107 EC 1979c.

108 Townsend 1996.

109 Andrews 1998; Jacques 1996d; Perryman 1994b.

110 *Ibid.*

As MT was transformed into a magazine, however, its sponsorship of talks and readers' groups took on a more 'factional' position, as increasingly groups were sponsored outside the CP structure, even though the traditionalists were less of a problem once they were purged from the party. This independent, de-centralised approach to participation in MT's political project was taken up by its readers, a practice most suited to those with some post-secondary education or experience of the 'meetings culture'. Unlike party-controlled groups, MT groups were set up and run by their members, and it also meant that they did not have to accept MT's ideas or themes uncritically.[111] Such independence only makes the resilience and appeal of these forms of participation stronger, while having consequences also: for example, *Screen* was influential at its peak in the mid-1970s, but as its readers' groups and summer schools declined, so to did the journal's influence, an effect which paralleled *Screen*'s much narrower concern 'with cinema and its politics' which stressed 'feminism more than socialism'.[112]

V. 'From Cadres to Constituents to Consumers'

MT's readership was and remained, like its contributors, primarily white, middle class, university-educated men and, prior to the 1980s, party members. For the first twenty years or so, the level of writing which dealt with theoretical issues and discussions required a high standard of reading and comprehension, if not actual familiarity with the ideas and concepts of Marxism-Leninism.[113] Nevertheless, there was a minority of MT readers who were working class and wanted to learn about Marxist theory and history, who became a much smaller proportion of the readership by the 1980s.[114] The influx of intellectuals into the CP (1967-77), the CULs, the upturn in industrial militancy, social movements and increased student activism during the 1970s, all contributed to a changing readership of new, primarily white-collar workers, student and intellectuals, with a critical attitude to party hierarchy and traditions.[115]

The leadership realised that MT was reaching an audience of potentially new members through newsagent distribution. Before October 1981, MT had never carried advertisements for CP membership because it had been assumed that most readers were already members.[116] The first advertisements made a simple appeal to readers, that if they enjoyed MT they may want to take it further and join the organisation responsible for publishing MT. By 1984, however, these ads began to play upon the 'iconoclastic', heterodoxic attitude for which MT was beginning to acquire a reputation.[117] Between

[111] According to a participant, one group used MT as a basis around which to organise discussions but often took a critical line on its political project (Oswald 1996). Another group focused on sexual politics because they felt MT neglected it (Rutherford 1997).
[112] Easthope 1988: 233.
[113] Chapter 7.
[114] Johnstone 1995. Impression corroborated by Gordon McLennan (1996). Such workers were not a novelty, since there is a long tradition of education on the Left, especially around the CP (eg Samuel 1985, 1986b; Thompson 1992).
[115] Andrews 1995a.
[116] Chapter 7.
[117] Some advertisements were written by MT staff (Perryman 1994b).

October 1981 and May 1982, party ads attracted 83 applications and enquiries: thus, either most readers were already members, even if they purchased MT in the newsagents instead of through their branch, or few were interested in joining, irregardless of the CP's relationship to MT.[118] Yet, MT's miniscule recruitment figures bettered all other party agencies including the *Morning Star*: a confirmation of the CP's declining appeal.

As befits the Comedia model, MT made use of market research to learn about its readers in order to better target the audience and to help sell advertising. Two readership surveys were conducted: one in 1986 by Comedia; the other in 1990 by Summertown Research Consultants (SRC).[119] These surveys are useful in providing a picture of MT readers in the second half of the 1980s, although one has to be a little cautious because these surveys depended upon people filling out the forms, which may lead to an over-representation of certain groups, such as those with the education, and it may be more representative of certain categories of readers, such as subscribers or casual newstrade purchasers. Nevertheless, as these surveys do provide a useful picture of the changing composition of MT's readers, and because of the degree of response to the second survey (around 15% of the readership),[120] together they should prove to be a fairly representative sample.

The majority of MT's readership appears to have been constituted overwhelmingly by a young intelligentsia: most would have fitted the ABC1 category (well-educated, white-collar, professional or skilled).[121] Most readers were male. Although there was a significant increase in female readers by 1990, from 15% to 25%, and constituting 28% of new readers, men predominated. While readers remained overwhelmingly young, with under 45s declining slighty from 84% in 1986 to 82% in 1990, those under 35 years declined more quickly in the same period, from 70% to 58%. Thus, nearly one-in-four readers were 35-45 year olds in 1990 (born between 1945 and 1955); these are the postwar 'baby-boom' generation, chronologically and socially, and the generation of '68, politically. Nevertheless, over half were aged below 35 years. Both this grouping and the post-war generation were more sympathetic to cultural politics, to the mix of agit-prop and rock'n'roll.

These readers were most likely to be libertarian in their attitudes towards social and lifestyle issues, interested in popular culture and to have studied at the new universities and polytechnics. Their political attitudes were shaped by opposition to the Vietnam War and support for national liberation movements and May '68 in Paris. This social grouping is the one most closely related to the 'professional-managerial class' (PMC), as designated by the US New Left's own self-reflexive analysis of its lack of impact upon the working

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118 McKay 1982.

119 The results of Comedia's 1986 survey are drawn from the summary supplied to the MTEB (1986), and the 1990 figures are drawn from the SRC report (SRC 1990): both were used for the readership profile tables.

120 1596 responses out of a circulation of an approximate circulation of 10-11,000.

121 The categories most likely to fill out survey forms.

class,[122] and one which has been identified with MT.[123] According to the US New Left, the PMC is made up of the sons and daughters of the working (and lower middle) classes, whose opportunities for social and economic advancement arose out of the expansion of post-secondary educational and the expansion of managerial, professional and technical positions, and they are subjected to the tensions and insecurity of their contradictory location in-between labour and capital.[124] This description neatly fits MT's readership profile, as will be shown below.

Education provided a nexus for the vast majority of MT's readers: either as the percentage of readers with a first or higher degree, which increased from three-in-five readers (61%) in 1986 to two-in-three (67%) by 1990, of which those with a post-graduate degree made up nearly one-in-four readers (24% to 22%); or just as students (including postgraduates) (22% to 21%).[125] Indeed, the number of respondents without qualifications declined from a mere 4% in 1986 to naught in 1990. More significant than any gains in the readership's educational background between 1986 and 1990, is its consistency to appeal to such well-educated readers: this is not surprising given the levels of complexity of the text.[126]

Table 6.6: Age and Gender (% of total)

	1986	1990
Age (Under 35 yrs)	70.0	58.0
Age (Under 45 yrs)	84.0	82.0
Male	85.0	76.0
Female	15.0	24.0

Table 6.7: Education (% of total)

	1986	1990
No Qualifications	4.0	--
First degree	39.0	43.0
Postgraduate degree	22.0	24.0

The educational and occupational profiles demonstrate that a substantial proportion of MT's readership matched the profile of the NSS's readership of university students, graduates and public sector employees; the proportion of readers employed full-time increased slightly to 55%, of which nearly two-thirds (one-third of all readers) were employed in the public sector.[127] This readership is akin to the profile of NSS and NS readers: unsurprisingly, in 1986 nearly half of MT readers also read NSS (46%) and NS (40%).[128] But the shifts in the workforce indicate a decrease of public sector employees in local government, education and health and social service areas, which have been well-represented on the Left and in unions (though 'other' public sector employees actually increased), and amongst the readerships of the Labour press (eg NSS, NS), but a near

[122] Though the term itself was disputed (Walker 1979).
[123] Harris 1992: 186-94.
[124] For other interpretations of this 'new class' or strata, see Mallet (1975) on France or Gouldner (1979) on the US.
[125] SRC 1990: 17.
[126] See Chapter 7.
[127] Tables 6.7, 6.8; Howe 1995.
[128] Table 6.11. Howe (1995) points to the decline of the public sector as part of the reason for the decline of the NSS's circulation from its peak of 100,000 in the mid-1960s.

doubling of private sector employees.[129] One result of the changes in the composition of the readership was no doubt due to the fragmentation of the public sector (ie privatization) and the rise of the information and cultural industries,[130] the latter being sensed by some critics as the association between MT's 'New Times' and 'communication professionals': "'Designer socialism' . . . really is the socialism of designers".[131]

Table 6.8: Occupation (% of total)

	1986	1990
Full-time employees	51.0	55.0
Part-time employees	6.0	8.0
Self-employed	5.0	6.0
Pensioners, disabled	5.7	6.0
Students	22.0	21.0
Unemployed	8.3	4.0

Table 6.9: Full-time Employees (% of total)

	1986	1990
Public Sector:	33.2	33.0
Education	(13.9)	(10.4)
Local Government	(7.0)	(3.3)
Health/Social Services	(5.6)	(4.4)
Other	(6.7)	(14.9)
Voluntary Sector:	3.6	---
Private Sector:	12.8	22.0

By 1990, only 31% of the sample had been readers for five years or more and 38% had only been reading MT for under two years: thus nearly 70% had not read MT before 1985. Thus, for example, the audit for July-December 1989 of 13,208 readers per issue, it would mean that only 4,094 were readers of MT from before 1985: this is a rough approximation of the higher circulation of Klugmann's editorship and indicated a substantial loss of older, CP and traditional left, readers.[132] Therefore, MT's move into the mainstream did mean losing a substantial portion of its earlier readership, not just party members, whilst gaining many other newer readers attracted by its ideas. Significantly, increases in circulation after 1985 are notable because each increase would have had to draw in enough new readers to make up for those who stopped reading MT. As the CP continued to lose members, others left because they lost their commitment to the same project or felt that MT no longer represented their ideas, particularly after the realignment of the Left between 1983 and 1986.

MT's realignment lost it CP and LP readers whilst gaining more centre-left readers. Between 1986 and 1990 there is a decline in *Guardian* readers, which was being dropped in favour of *The Independent*, which occupied a niche between *The Guardian* and *The Times*.[133] The preference for Sunday newspapers demonstrates a clear liberal and centre-left constituency: 42% of readers chose *The Observer*, 33% the *Independent on Sunday*

[129] Even if this figure includes the voluntary sector, it still represents an increase of nearly 50%.
[130] For example, the 1986 survey indicated that about 12.5% of private sector employees were employed in the media and computer industries (MTEB 1986). It is likely that this figure increased in the late 1980s in tandem with the changing profile of contributors.
[131] Rustin 1989: 311; Harris 1992: 187-88.
[132] Table 6.1.
[133] Tunstall 1996: 53.

and 25% the *Sunday Correspondent* (a short-lived, centre-left broadsheet-cum-tabloid). No-one read the *Sunday Times* or *Sunday Telegraph*. Nevertheless, this constituency demonstrates a general decline in its political commitments in two ways: those who were members of a political party (from 58% to 48%) and those choosing a second political/current affairs magazine. Despite a 5% increase in members of 'other parties' (from 2% to 7%), the total number of CP and LP readers dropped by 15% (from 56% to 41%). However, when readers were asked which parties they would consider supporting (respondents could choose more than one party), 81% said Labour, 7% SDP/SLD, 28% Greens and 22% the CP (the latter tended to be readers of MT for more than five years).

Table 6.10: Newspapers (%)

	1986	1990
The Guardian	82	76
Independent°	---	30
Financial Times	10	10
Morning Star	12	6

Table 6.11: Periodicals (%)

	1986	1990
New Statesman	46	41
New Socialist	40	13
New Left Review	19	14
New Internationalist	18	18
City Limits	18	12
Private Eye	28	19
Viz	---	16

Table 6.12: Party Members (% of total)

	1986	1990
Percentage of Total Readership	58	48
Labour Party	39	31
CPGB	17	10
Other Parties	2	7

The choice of a second magazine indicates a fragmentation of MT readers' political interests. For example, although there were three magazines which were read by more than 25% of MT's readership in 1986, NSS (46%), NS (40%) and Private Eye (28%), only NSS retained a similar level of popularity by 1990 (41%). There were notable decreases in NS (discontinued by the Labour leadership) and CL (in financial difficulty), slight decreases in NLR and Private Eye: only NI's readership remained constant. This fragmentation was reinforced by the results for newstrade readers, who were more likely to be under 25 and consider supporting non-Left parties (eg SDP, Greens): 47% of the newstrade readers who buy *every* month tend to be older, male CP members while the 28% who buy *most* months tend to be younger, students and read the FT or *The Economist*.

Between 1986 and 1990, therefore, MT readers were a mixture of primarily middle class, university-educated, male professionals and students; the overwhelmingly majority of whom were under 45 years. They tended to read the centre-left broadsheets and mostly vote Labour and many worked in the private sector. There were essentially two types of reader: an older one, who had aged with MT at least since 1981, and most likely a member of either the CP or the Labour Party; a younger one, a new MT reader, more lifestyle-oriented and interested in social and cultural issues, and more likely to be 'Green', SDP or even apolitical.

VI. National Press Coverage

A defining characteristic of *Marxism Today* was the exposure it received in the national press during the 1980s, becoming one of the best known left periodicals, reaching a broader audience than is usually possible for the left press. Such coverage, however, was not unproblematic: some critics saw it as proof that MT had 'betrayed' the Left. By analysing the national press coverage and selective use of MT, a better insight will be gained into the ways in which MT was taken up in the public sphere.[134] This section therefore proceeds from a content analysis of national press coverage (1978-91) to examine patterns, trends and topics covered, how often and by which publications. The second part involves a closer textual analysis of nearly 1,000 press clippings to determine which ideas were covered.[135] By indicating which ideas entered the public sphere via the national press, this analysis will provide a better illustration of their role in its coverage of a left periodical.

First it is important to consider the tabloids' coverage of MT because it is the more (stereo)typical of both liberal and conservative media and their attitude to the Left, including the Labour Party. Their attitude to the Left can be explained by their chauvinistic, jingoistic and (often) pro-American stance on most issues during the 1980s. In their coverage, the tabloids simplistically explained MT as a 'Marxist rag'. Even some of the coverage from the conservative broadsheets (*Daily Telegraph*, *Sunday Times*), continued to espouse similar prejudices despite the changing responses to MT from other broadsheets and even as MT itself was changing. This failure to go beyond the surface (ie the name) and lack of interest is reflected in the overall tabloid press coverage: during an eleven year period 1981-91, 'down-market' tabloids published 18 articles while 'mid market' tabloids published 47 articles.[136]

Total coverage by national broadsheets during a fourteen-year period, 1978-91, amounted to over half of the total number of press clippings in MT's file: 507 out of 961 items (52.8%).[137] Looking at the breakdown of national broadsheets' coverage, *The Guardian* accounts for nearly half of this total (45.3%) with the FT (10.7%), *The Observer* (9.9%) and *The Independent* (9%) all following well behind (*The Independent*'s

134 The national press continue to set the agenda for debate in Britain (Tunstall 1996).
135 Only those clippings which made explicit reference to MT were included in the tabulations for the content analysis; MT's ideas were being discussed also in articles without any references to MT (Table 6.13). This study was limited to MT's press clippings file, although missing articles have been included where known: however, the left press' coverage is incomplete.
136 Table 6.13.
137 *Ibid.*

share was more concentrated than either the FT or *The Observer*: it was only launched in October 1986).[138] Liberal and centre-left broadsheets[139] accounted for nearly three-quarters (74.9%) of all items which make reference to MT in some capacity. Thus, according to the quantitative breakdown of press coverage, it would appear that the newspapers most likely to cover or draw upon MT were those closest to the Left politically.

A breakdown of news clippings by the relative importance of MT to each item demonstrates that more than two-fifths of all mentions of MT in the broadsheets (43.8%), 222 items out of 507, were 'brief': anything from an event listing to a mention in a column to a short one or two paragraph news item.[140] The percentage of 'brief' references which virtually double from 23.8% of the 1984 total (10 out of 42 items) to a position of a minimum of 47% of all items from 1985 onwards. These 'brief' items may be of little (sic) consequence in promoting MT's ideas because they are so short, but they are important because they contribute to MT's public image through sheer repetition. In particular, many 'brief' references picked up on MT as a 'quirky' item, contrasting for example, contradictions between a 'Marxist' publication and the promotion of its own wine or filofaxes, or interviews with Conservative MPs, etc. These contradictions fit news values for coverage because they are 'surprising' (and 'recent'): they work against cultural expectations or assumptions about 'Marxists' and their beliefs and values![141]

The other 285 items can be seen as having some greater significance within the broadsheets that published them, even simply by the selection which acknowledges their importance over other issues or articles which have been excluded, ignored or given less coverage.[142] MT articles and excerpts reprinted in the broadsheets accounted for 43 items (8.5%) and were the primary source for 62 newspaper items (12.2%) (providing 40% or more of the content).[143] Forty-eight articles were primarily focused on MT itself (9.5%), while another 84 items (16.6%) included MT as an 'important reference' within a story, often in relation to the CP's internal political struggle.

On closer examination of national press coverage, we can see patterns emerging in the subject matter. For example, out of 507 items (Table 6.16), 118 (23.3%) concern the Labour Party and/or movement, 104 (20.5%) deal with the CP and a further 98 (19.3%) focus on MT and its events. A further 68 items (13.4%) made reference to 'General Politics', including aspects of Thatcherism, government, social movements, etc. Thus, just over three-quarters (76.5%) of the total coverage related to political matters of one sort or another, even in the briefest of references, and 320 items (63.1%) revolved around the

[138] Table 6.14.

[139] The FT is much more difficult to characterise as left or right, as it appears to permit its journalists more leeway than most newspapers: for example, some FT journalists promoted monetarism during the 1960s and 1970s, yet the FT came out in support of Labour during the 1992 election (Tunstall 1996: 358).

[140] Table 6.15.

[141] Fiske 1990: 96.

[142] Thwaites *et al.* 1994: 95.

[143] Table 6.15.

Left, the Labour movement, the CP or MT: the primary coverage was of MT's critique of the Left rather than for its analysis of Thatcherism and the Conservative government.[144]

Furthermore, the amount of coverage of subjects, sometimes significantly, depending upon the year. Coverage of MT in relation to the Labour Party/movement was greatest in the four years from 1984 to 1987 with three out of five items (59.3%), perhaps the most difficult period for the Left and the CP, marked by bitter internecine strife and debate over the re-thinking of policies and 'sacred cows'. This coincides with the period when MT became increasingly recognised for its willingness to criticise left shibboleths during 'the realignment of the Left'. Although coverage began picking up in 1982 and 1983 with 10 and 12 articles respectively, despite the political differences between reformists and traditionalists in the CP, there was still a sense of unity in supporting Benn and the Labour Left at this stage.[145] On the other hand, only 21 items (17.8%) were published in the last four years, 1988-91, indicating that the reforms taking place under Neil Kinnock and the isolation of the old Labour Left from power had made MT's interventions of less importance: many MT authors were contributing articles to other publications and MT was no longer the only place where their ideas could be read.[146]

Equally significant was that during this same period, there were more items (28) published on MT itself, pushing it ahead of Labour Party issues. However, the three years with the most items on MT, 1987-89, which overlaps with 1987, one of the last peak years for Labour coverage. This period is one in which MT was surfing a wave of international and domestic interest in its 'designer socialism', interviews with Conservative politicians and MT events: 1988 is a peak year for MT conferences and events (10 items) and interviews (16 items: one less than the coverage of CPGB/Communism). After Labour's third defeat in 1987, MT's features moved away from a narrow focus on 'Politics' and broadened out into subject matter more commonly associated with cultural politics: abortion, masculinity, consumerism, etc.[147] By late summer 1988, MT moved to promoting its project, 'New Times'.

Over half (52.9%) of the coverage of the CPGB/Communism took place between 1988 and 1990 (55 items) with the launch of 'New Times', its adoption by the CP and the collapse of Communism. The next significant year is 1985 where the fractious 39th Congress made up most of the 14 stories (13.5%). However, after the 1988 peak, overall press coverage began to ebb, despite the Eastern European revolutions in 1989-90 which drew MT into the news because of its association with the CP. This also made the play on the differences between MT's title and its contents or covers less newsworthy. National press coverage only picked up at the end of 1991 because of MT's impending closure.

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144 Other aspects were sometimes included in these articles (see notes for Table 6.15).
145 This is not to suggest that there were no disagreements within the Left at this point.
146 For example, Andrew Gamble and Stuart Hall contributed to magazines like NSS.
147 This was not the first time MT dealt with cultural politics within its feature pages.

In the last three years, most reprints were carried by *The Independent*.[148] *The Guardian*, on the other hand, reprinted only two articles in 1989-91 and did not use any MT articles as sources for news stories. Indeed, only two items used MT as a primary source in the last three years (a mere 3.2%) (although it was an 'important reference' in 29 items). In comparison, between 1982 and 1984, 34 items (54.8%) used MT as the primary or sole source of an article. It would appear that MT articles were being balanced out by other sources or were being used for background information rather than being used in whole or as a primary source. Thus, MT had ceased to be the only or primary source for those topics being discussed. This is unlikely to happen if there is only one source, as with MT's critiques of left shibboleths.

Content analysis has helped us to explore general trends and patterns of press coverage, but alone it is inadequate to explain more fully their significance; it is necessary to examine the subject matter of the items used and those left out. The three most important types of articles were the reprints, 'MT source' and 'important reference' articles, which came to a total of 189 for all broadsheets in the 14 year period, 1978-91 (37.3%). Both reprints and MT source articles, which used the magazine for providing 40% or more of the content of each item, gave MT's ideas more space than in the other types of items. (It is fairly common practice for journalists to rewrite the content of articles from other sources as a news item, sometimes adding new information.)

It does give, however, a clear indication of the importance of the article chosen for reproduction in the opinion-editorial pages, where political commentary and a newspaper's own position on the issues of the day can be made explicitly through its leaders and where selected opinions and responses will be published. This is where debate across the Left and with others is encouraged and it represents a space for intervention, albeit shaped by the newspaper's staff. As the leading centre-left daily, *The Guardian* was responsible for 30 out of the total of 43 reprints, published on its 'Agenda' page. The liberal broadsheet, *The Independent,* launched in 1986, reprinted 10. Of the remaining three reprints, one was published in the FT and two in *The Times*.

Interviews with topical individuals were popular as reprints or sources for news stories for both liberal and conservative newspapers: the first stories to be picked up were interviews with Bob Wright, left-wing union leader (used by both the Labour Left weekly, *Tribune*, and the pro-Conservative *Times*), and Benn (reprinted in *The Guardian*). The interviews were to focus on key representatives of the Labour Left, and were followed by interviews with Kinnock and Livingstone. Some MT interviews, such as the John Alderson (April 1982) and Clive Thornton (August 1984), were picked up by the Press Association for its wire stories. The interview with Alderson, Chief Constable of Devon and Cornwall, who supported 'community policing', was opposed by right-wing

148 Table 6.15.

tabloids, which also denounced him for giving an interview to a 'Marxist magazine'![149] (MT was criticised by some on the Left for carrying the interview.)[150]

A closer examination of the coverage of the conservative press[151] and of *The Guardian* will reveal the dominant themes picked up by both sides in the press. Through a comparison of the similarities and differences between right and centre-left papers it should become evident about which themes were drawn upon and which excluded or ignored.

The CP's 'reasonableness' was contrasted to Labour's 'radical extremes',[152] a notable achievement in the conservative press, considering how they otherwise ignored MT (and the rest of the left press) and its ideas. Indeed, the reaction of the conservative press was actually contradictory: many right-wing journalists still saw MT as part of the 'international Communist conspiracy' in late 1982;[153] yet by early 1984, the *Daily Telegraph* was asking if 'Professor Hobsbawm's logic alone [would] be sufficient to offset' the 'Trotskyist militant mood' that was gaining ground on the Left 'out of sheer despair'.[154] The right-wing dailies continued to express a contradictory mixture of either 'pleasant surprise' at MT's 'moderate' stance or suspicion of MT's (and the CP's) underlying motives throughout the 1980s.[155] *The Times* and *Sunday Times*, like the rest of the pro-Conservative press, were similarly schizophrenic. There were always a number of items which apparently could not get beyond a superficial interpretation of what MT's name or its publisher stood for: these items were akin to a paranoid, McCarthyite image of 1950s Stalinism. The other, more thoughtful line drew out certain aspects of MT, as in the headline: 'Clear-eyed Communists Show Kinnock the Way'.[156]

The conservative press coverage of the internal strife between 'old guard' and 'modernisers' drew upon MT as a source of information on CND and Greenham Common. MT was seen as 'the lively and unsectarian monthly', which explicitly connotates the Right's characterisations of the Left as 'sectarian', 'dour' and 'fundamentalist'![157] This sense of 'fun' about MT was also heightened by the 'jokey' commentary that developed around MT's various sideshows, such as cabarets, filofaxes, etc. The widespread coverage of MT often pointed to the contradictions between its name and the promotion of consumer durables, designer socialism or 'Yummies' ('Young, Upwardly Mobile, Marxists'), often drawn out when MT events were covered.

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149 Bond 1982; *Star* 1982a; *Express on Sunday* 1982; *Sun* 1982.
150 Eg Baker 1982.
151 It should be recognised that, while individual columnists and journalists may have represented differing views, most of the daily press moved from a position of pro-Conservative toThatcherite: for example, *The Times* and the *Sunday Times* became Thatcherite after their takeover by Rupert Murdoch (Curran and Seaton 1991: 87-89).
152 Paterson 1985.
153 CND was denounced as a 'Soviet front' because one of its leading members, Jon Bloomfield, was a contributor to MT (*Times* 1982).
154 *Telegraph* 1984a.
155 For example, see Bruce Anderson in the *Sunday Telegraph* during 1990-91 where the CP's 'Manifesto for New Times' is described as just one more attempt to 'fool' the British public.
156 Walden 1988.
157 Young 1983.

Interviews with various political figures, such as David Blunkett, Roy Hattersley, Edwina Currie and Bryan Gould were drawn upon for relevant information to either signal how much leading figures on the Left were changing: or not. For example, the Hattersley interview was cited to demonstrate that Labour was still a party for (re)nationalisation (of British Airways and BT), while the Currie interview was used to criticise her as a 'recruit to the feminist cause'.

But even as conservative newspapers drew upon MT as a source, they reflected both those who continued to see it as a left-wing 'rag' and those who argued that it represented a lesson in moderation and discipline for Labour. For example, one journalist condemns Kinnock for his association with the Marxist, Hobsbawm: guilt by innuendo; Paterson, by contrast, points out how 'large sections' of Labour were to the left of the CP, and lacked both the CP's discipline and commitment to the parliamentary road.[158] *The Times*'s political editor suggested that Benn and Arthur Scargill should 'ponder' the miners' strike roundtable published in the April 1985 MT.[159]

MT's promotion of an 'anti-Thatcher coalition' (the BDA) was also remarked upon occasionally, albeit more frequently in articles on the CP's infighting and the developments of 1989-90. By 1988, MT was being praised for having moved to the Right of the Labour Party. It was pointed out that the remedies proposed by MT (and some other left periodicals) had very little to do with 'socialism as the term has been commonly understood'.[160] It is the 'communist intellectuals' who have undergone a 'liberation of the intellect', and Brian Walden even finds himself praising them: 'I would never have supposed that I should live to praise communists for their open-mindedness, flexibility and acute perception of how capitalism is developing'.[161] He argues that the CP's 'electoral weakness is its intellectual strength' because the CP is not seeking to win over voters, they 'do not have to bow to pressure groups'.[162]

The Times reprinted only two articles from MT, whereas its sister paper, the *Sunday Times*, and its rivals the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Telegraph on Sunday*, reprinted none. The first reprint was Andrew Gamble's article (June 1985) on Thatcherism's doctrine of the 'free market and strong state', which made the Thatcher government a paradox: it was simultaneously 'opposed to state intervention and the most interventionist government of recent times'.[163] The other was Campbell's (October 1985) piece on the 'new New Left' which was coming together in support of the new Labour leadership. Also, Geoff Mulgan's 1988 article on 'weak power' was drawn upon, though not reprinted, which examined the socio-economic changes and developments in new technologies, small companies and networks as against the old Fordist system and its large (private and state) corporate bureaucracies. Jacques was even brought on to the *Sunday Times* as a biweekly

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158 Anderson 1985; Paterson 1985.
159 Jones 1985.
160 *Times* 1987.
161 Walden 1988.
162 *Ibid.*
163 Gamble 1985: 21.

columnist and an extract of his keynote address to the CP's 41st Congress in November 1989 was also published in the paper.

Since *The Guardian* was the only left-of-centre daily broadsheet during the Thatcher decade, its relationship with MT is of special significance. After Labour's 1979 electoral defeat, when it became wracked by internal struggles, *The Guardian* appeared to be anxious to distance itself from, not just the Labour Left, but also the Labour Party.[164] Managing Director, Gerry Taylor, explained *The Guardian*'s marketing strategy in *Campaign* in April 1981: 'If the newly constituted SDP really takes off, then the *Guardian* is ideally suited to champion the new party's cause as the *centre-party voice* in the 1980s'.[165] The Labour Party divisions were felt within *The Guardian*: some staff were angered by its coverage of Benn's campaign for deputy leader and were concerned that some senior staff 'were using their position to push the Alliance ticket in the leader columns'.[166] Internal CP battles became one reason for drawing upon MT; even here the two *Guardian* journalists covering the CP's internal struggles tended to favour opposing sides: Martin Linton was more supportive of the reformists, while Seumas Milne was more critical of MT and supportive of 'class politics'.

MT followed a conscious strategy of publishing important critiques of Labour and the Left , which *The Guardian* often reprinted, at the start of Labour's annual conference. The primary theme of these critiques reiterated for public debate was about the issues of the Left's crisis and the failure of Labour to recognise the social, political and cultural shifts that were taking place, especially after the 1983 defeat, to adapt to this changing socio-economic landscape and to deal with shifts in attitudes and values: Labour could no longer rely on the material interests or 'class belongingness' to automatically deliver the working class vote. Labour had to address a larger public than its traditional supporters, to focus outwards from the party and to do so it had to develop policies which had popular support: 'Change the Party, Not the Workers', 'the forward march of Labour has been not only halted, but reversed'.[167] *The Guardian* did publish responses to MT's criticisms.

A few journalists and editors in the liberal and centre-left press found similarities in the analyses put forward by MT: as Malcolm Rutherford pointed out in the FT as early as December 1982, MT's Gramscian analysis of postwar British society, 'may be surprising to readers of the *Financial Times* only because of its source'.[168] Labour could learn from 'moderate', 'open-minded' and 'sensible' types which peopled MT's events; its articles expressed 'realistic' and 'sensible' ideas.[169] Jenkins's views were an indication of the support which MT began to attract from centre-left commentators (and not only Alliance/SDP-supporters), opposed to both Thatcherite Right and Bennite Left, who

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164 Hollingsworth 1986: 37-76.

165 Cited in *Ibid.*: 16 (my emphasis).

166 *Ibid.*: 58.

167 The title and standfirst from the reprint of Hobsbawm's (1983b) 'Labour's Lost Millions' in *The Guardian* (3 October 1983).

168 Rutherford 1982.

169 Jenkins 1982. *Guardian* political columnist and SDP supporter, Peter Jenkins, who wrote these views had been a participant in the 1982 event.

urged the Left not to become bogged down in winning positions inside the Labour Party, but to try and appeal to more than Labour's traditional working class supporters. However, internal divisions hardened over the rival interpretations of the significance of the June 1983 election defeat. Hobsbawm's analyses led the realignment of the Left through *The Guardian*, with such headlines as, 'Change the Party, Not the Workers', 'Labour Must Go Forward with the Masses' and 'The Broad Attack on Thatcher'.

Of *The Guardian*'s 30 reprints, ten were articles or interviews, by or with, Hobsbawm; additional articles and interviews were produced by Campbell, Hall, Jacques and David Edgar amongst a few others. Interviews with important political figures of the Left were followed by interviews with liberal and conservative figures such as Jesse Jackson, the black US civil rights leader, David Steel, leader of the Liberal Party, and Conservative MPs, Michael Heseltine, Edwina Currie and Ted Heath.[170] These interviews were often used as sources for stories or for quotes: an interview with Arthur Scargill (April 1981) was still being cited by journalists as late as July 1990, nine years later.[171]

A good example of the way different newspapers drew upon MT's interviews and speeches is that of Benn's speech at the November 1984, MT event, 'Left Alive' (January 1985 MT). While the text was used to provide information for articles which criticised or ridiculed Benn's ideas in *The Sun*,[172] *Daily Express*,[173] *Daily Telegraph*,[174] *The Times*[175] and even the *Daily Mirror*,[176] it was only the FT article[177] which drew upon Hall's speech, published in the same issue, in which Hall criticised Benn for underestimating the scale of Labour's defeat. MT as a source also enabled the FT to position Benn as under attack from the Left ('Benn's Blueprint Attacked by Left') *The Guardian* had two pieces which drew upon Benn's speech: one was a commentary by Hugo Young on how no-one, whether Liberal Alliance, Kinnock or Bennite Left, was engaging with the ideas but merely expressing a 'blinding rage against Thatcherism'; the other was a *Guardian* editorial which pointed out how much Benn was asserting that 'there was more buoyancy, hope and confidence on the left today than at any time in the past 60 years' to the contrary of 'every piece of electoral and polling evidence'![178]

The Guardian reiterates points that MT was making: Labour had to win public opinion; it had to jettison unpopular policies and re-think how it could establish an anti-Thatcher coalition. This included lessons from the miners' strike which were drawn from a roundtable debate between CP and NUM officials, which included criticisms of the

[170] Ron Fosker (1991) suggested that Lynda Chalker, Minister for Overseas Development, should agree to MT's interview request because she would be able to check a copy of the interview before it went in the magazine, which was 'rare' and MT's position offered an opportunity that the Minister should take. It was published in the August 1991 MT.

[171] The journalists was Edward Pearce.

[172] Kavanagh 1984. MT was referred to in the article as the 'hard-Left journal'.

[173] Warden 1984.

[174] *Telegraph* 1984b.

[175] Webster 1984.

[176] Langdon 1984.

[177] van Hatten 1984.

[178] Young 1984; *Guardian* 1985a.

NUM leadership's approach and suggestions that the union should have made the winning of public opinion its central objective.[179]

What is of equal significance are the topics which were ignored despite MT's publicity and promotional efforts to circulate these other analyses and ideas. For example, most international issues, such as US interventions in Latin America and analyses of the crises in Poland (in 1982), were ignored: among the few exceptions were the Walesa interview (October 1981) and the Gulf War issue (March 1991) and, of course, commentary on the collapse of Communist regimes solicited comments from Jacques and MT because of their overt connection to the CP. The analyses of the centre-left groupings and problems were also mostly ignored by the broadsheets (although not by some of the left press which interpreted such articles as evidence of support for the Alliance/SDP). Similarly, articles on feminism and women were ignored, except where public figures were interviewed on such matters (eg Edwina Currie).

Other social issues, particularly around topics such as aids, housing, peace, apartheid, etc., were also ignored in spite of the authority that many contributors brought to these issues.[180] The national press appeared to be disinclined to use those contributors, such as Jon Bloomfield and Tricia Davis, who wrote on their areas of expertise from their positions as peace and feminist movement activists, respectively, because they were seen as 'activists' rather than 'academics' or 'analysts'.[181] This response to other social, political, cultural, economic and international issues, and the contributors which it drew from the various social movements, the press (conservative and centre-left) appears to have been primarily interested in critiques of the Left, Labour and the unions and, to a limited extent, the 'New Times' analysis. MT's interviews, such as those with David Yip, Jesse Jackson and Edwin Currie, pointed to the importance of social issues and movements, such as race and gender, traditionally neglected by most groups on the Left in the 1970s and early 1980s, and some, like Currie, even demonstrated that these groups do not necessarily belong solely to the Left.

Among the few articles which drew on MT's coverage of cultural politics and issues were the co-authored feature on the phenomena of Live Aid and Sport Aid by Hall and Jacques (July 1986), and Edgar's article (February 1988), 'When the Hardline is Right', reprinted in *The Guardian* as 'Hear the People Sing'. Hall and Jacques pointed to the importance of such a mass spectacle/movement which worked with broader human values which were explicitly opposed to Thatcherite greed and selfishness. The article questioned the Labour leadership's 'revisionist ambitions' which were not confined to dumping economic and defence policies which were deemed to have cost Labour the 1987 election, but also to ditching 'the commitment to social movements like anti-racism, gay rights, green politics and feminism which it has taken so much effort and argument to

179 *Guardian* 1985b; Wintour 1985.

180 MT sought out those contributors who were deemed to be the most authoritative on a subject (Chapter 4). It was not party officials or intellectuals who were asked to put a Marxist or Leninist perspective on the issue, as one would expect with the SWP's theoretical journal, *International Socialism*.

181 It does not mean that such people never contributed to the national press.

insert into Labour's programme', though this was due suspicions that the social movements' demands were being 'effectively hijacked' by the 'hard Left'.[182] Yet, usually these views of the social movements and cultural politics, with a few exceptions, were ignored not just by the conservative press, but by *The Guardian*, irregardless of MT's publicity efforts.

One area that all broadsheets commented on was the contradictions between their expectations and MT's contents, in terms of subject matter, interviewees, images and consumer products, and MT's exception as a left magazine, especially its intellectual respectability and success. MT provided a standard against which the rest of the Left can be measured: its apparent willingness to engage in debate with the Centre and the Right; its willingness to criticise the Left itself was particularly appealing, not so much for the criticisms as for their source.[183] 'Coming out of the pages of *Marxism Today* this has a lot more force . . . than when it emerges from the mouths of the Shadow Cabinet'.[184]

The Guardian's coverage demonstrates how the mass media, not only select and promote different ideas, but also produce consequences for the constituency from whence they come. *The Guardian* was able to intervene in debates across the Left and within the Labour Party, and its position meant it promoted articles which focused on reassessing Labour's policies in the wake of the 1983 disaster and appealing to a larger portion of the electorate: it was interpreted as a move towards the Centre. As editor of 'Agenda', Gott had recognised that Jacques and MT sought to go beyond the orthodoxies of the Left, especially after the 1983 defeat when a key target became the 'traditionalists' of both Labour and Communist parties and other 'hard Left' supporters and reprinted articles from the magazine. By 1988, however, Gott decided that there was no longer any point to producing 'Agenda' because the consensus that it had 'sought to go beyond' had been 'eroded by Mrs Thatcher and the zeitgeist'; there was no point in debating about 'socialisms' and 'liberalisms' because the 'revolutionary times' in which they were living was not a 'revolution in which the Left or the Centre take part'.[185]

Quantitatively and qualitatively, MT was drawn upon for its criticisms of the Left and the Labour Party and its policies and strategy, while contributions in other areas were usually ignored. Some journalists noticed that while MT's analysis coincided with their own, it was the latter's position as a periodical of the Left rather than a national liberal or centre-left newspaper. Since national newspapers help set the agenda for public debate, their use of MT helped extend its influence without necessarily enhancing its sales figures. Therefore, as *the* centre-left newspaper, *The Guardian* helped to promote MT as a leading player setting agendas and intervening in debates on the Left, enhancing its own position in the process and representing MT to a national audience; MT, in turn, was used selectively to support the Centre-Left against its opponents via *The Guardian*. Although

[182] Edgar 1988: 30.
[183] Paterson 1985; Rutherford 1982; Young 1985.
[184] Young 1985: 19.
[185] Gott 1988: 24.

MT gained access to the national public sphere for its ideas, it had little control over the way they were selected for, and represented to, the public. Thus, we can see that the press did not act so much as 'gatekeepers', permitting some ideas access to a wider public sphere or audience, but really as agents in their own right, helping to set the agenda for, but also to intervene in, debates on the Left. Many of MT's ideas helped strengthen the Centre-Left against the Right, but at the cost of 'the fragmentation of the Left'.[186]

VII. Conclusion

Clearly, *Marxism Today*'s access to the public sphere, as constituted by the national broadsheet press, gained it widespread exposure and raised its profile, enabling some contributors and their ideas access into mainstream media, from which most of the Left has been traditionally excluded. This access was two-fold: through national newsagent distribution, which introduced MT to new readers, while CP networks continued to supply its original readership as well as bookshops: and through seminars, meetings and local and regional events. Sometimes working together with CP branches, and sometimes on their own, MT discussion groups contributed to the dissemination of ideas and speakers. The benefits of both models, Bolshevik and Comedia, can be seen in the example of MT.

However, MT's access was also enabled by changes in the types of contributors. Although academics predominated within the first half of the 1980s alongside activist contributors, after the shift from party officials and intellectuals, it is the shift to a majority of journalists at the decade's end which is most significant. It indicates a shift towards a different constituency within the larger changes in the composition of the middle class (themselves part of larger political, economic and cultural developments): the 'PMC' or 'new class' of white collar workers and professionals is also clearly reflected in MT's readership profile. This also indicates the shift in the institutional base of intellectuals: from party organisation to universities to media.[187]

The other key aspect was the change in contributors' values and sympathies: the shift to contributors, many of whom grew up as part of the 1960s generation and imbibed the anti-authoritarian and anti-hierarchical influences of '68, were as critical of labour bureaucracies as those of the state or private companies.[188] There was no longer the deference towards labour leaders that had traditionally been found amongst Labour activists and intellectuals,[189] and increasingly unions were seen as part of the problem (in some of their attitudes towards women, ethnic minorities, green issues, etc.).[190]

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[186] Eg Rowbotham 1989. Although MT got socialist debates 'beyond a few dingy rooms' and made it face up to the changes going on in society, the cost of this move appears to be that socialist alternatives to the prevailing, socialist orthodoxies (which were being dismissed) are 'being smothered by ingenious ideological packaging' (*Ibid.*: 36).

[187] Garnham 1995.

[188] The roots of anti-statist, individualistic attitudes of both New Right and New Left can be found in the 1960s.

[189] Eg Drucker 1979.

[190] Eg Rowbotham *et al.* 1979.

While MT gained considerable national press coverage, the broadsheets were setting their own agenda to which MT contributed; it was a contribution which the exigency of the times seemed to demand (partly why the shifts in contributors). This coverage was also helped by the distribution systems of both party and marketplace, the publicity and promotional efforts of MT and its staff and volunteers, and the networks of contributors and discussion groups. Explicitly and implicitly, these mechanisms contributed to, and were made effective by, MT's transformation from a party journal into a political magazine, aprocess analysed in the next chapter.

Table 6.13: Print Media Coverage of *Marxism Today*, 1978-1991

Newspaper/Periodical	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	Totals
Broadsheets	1	--	2	8	29	40	42	64	45	64	73	45	45	49	507
Middle Market Daily & Sunday Tabloid Papers	--	--	--	2	4	--	3	1	5	18	6	3	3	2	47
Down Market Daily & Sunday Tabloids	--	--	--	2	6	--	2	--	2	3	3	--	--	--	18
Centre-Left Periodicals	--	--	--	2	7	13	15	14	5	7	3	2	1	1	70
Right Periodicals	--	--	--	1	1	3	3	2	4	2	1	--	--	1	18
Left Press	1	--	--	4	11	4	6	1	4	7	10	10	--	2	60
Trade Papers	--	--	--	--	4	--	2	4	4	6	1	23	1	1	46
Listings Magazines	--	--	--	2	4	9	7	10	5	8	1	--	6	1	53
Regional & Local Papers	--	--	--	1	5	3	2	4	1	2	4	9	1	1	33
Cultural Weeklies	--	1	--	--	--	--	2	1	--	--	--	--	1	2	7
Feminist Periodicals	--	--	--	--	1	--	--	1	--	--	--	1	--	--	3
Fashion/Style Magazines	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	2	5	3	--	--	--	10
Trade Union Periodicals	--	--	--	--	3	--	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	4
Scottish Press	--	--	--	--	1	--	1	3	1	1	18	5	--	--	30
Foreign Press	--	--	--	--	4	5	4	2	4	2	5	4	4	3	37
Miscellaneous	--	--	--	--	1	--	2	1	2	3	--	4	3	2	18
TOTAL	2	1	2	22	81	77	92	108	84	128	128	106	65	65	961

Middle Market Daily & Sunday Tabloid Papers include *London Evening Standard* and *London Daily News*.
Centre-Left Periodicals = eg *New Statesman*, *New Socialist*, *Liberator*.
Right Periodicals = eg *Spectator*, *The Economist*.
Left Press = is incomplete.
Listings Magazines includes *New Musical Express*.
Cultural Weeklies includes bi-weeklies.
Feminist Periodicals = *Spare Rib*, *Everywoman*.
Scottish Press includes Scottish listings magazines.

Table 6.14: National Broadsheet Coverage of *Marxism Today*, 1978-1991

BROADSHEETS	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	Total
Guardian	--	--	2	5	18	11	22	33	29	24	34	17	17	18	230
Financial Times	--	--	--	--	3	6	9	8	5	4	9	2	3	5	54
Times	1	--	--	3	3	2	6	10	1	4	3	2	4	1	40
Telegraph	--	--	--	--	1	1	3	3	1	5	1	5	3	1	24
Independent	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	2	13	9	3	10	10	47
Sunday Times	--	--	--	--	4	7	--	2	--	5	8	8	1	4	39
Observer	--	--	--	--	--	11	2	7	5	8	8	3	2	4	50
Sunday Telegraph	--	--	--	--	--	2	--	1	2	1	1	2	--	--	9
Independent on Sunday	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	5	6	11
Sunday Correspondent	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	3	--	--	3
TOTAL	1	0	2	8	29	40	42	64	45	64	73	45	45	49	507

Table 6.15: National Press Coverage By Article Type and/or Use, 1978-1991

BROADSHEETS	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	Total
Editorials	--	--	--	--	1	2	2	5	2	1	2	--	2	3	20
Reprints	--	--	1	1	3	1	3	8	4	4	6	2	5	5	43
MT Source	1	--	--	1	11	8	15	6	5	6	7	--	--	2	62
On MT	--	--	--	1	4	5	4	2	3	6	9	4	1	9	48
Important Reference	--	--	--	3	5	11	5	8	5	9	9	16	9	4	84
Brief Reference	--	--	1	2	4	9	10	30	23	35	34	23	25	26	222
Letters	--	--	--	--	1	4	3	5	3	3	6	--	3	--	28
TOTAL	1	0	2	8	29	40	42	64	45	64	73	45	45	49	507

Table 6.16: National Press Coverage By Subject, 1978-1991

SUBJECT[170]	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	Total
CP or Communism	--	--	--	--	4	10	7	14	4	7	17	20	19	2	104
Labour Party and Movement	--	--	1	3	10	12	18	23	11	18	9	5	6	2	118
On MT[171]	--	--	--	2	4	3	--	5	6	13	9	10	3	16	71
Culture	--	--	--	--	2	2	1	1	1	8	3	--	3	4	25
General Politics[172]	--	--	--	--	4	8	--	10	12	6	4	8	5	11	68
MT Events	--	--	--	--	3	--	2	--	7	3	10	1	--	1	27
Interviews[173]	1	--	1	3	2	3	10	2	4	7	16	1	6	11	67
Miscellaneous	--	--	--	--	--	2	4	9	--	2	5	--	3	2	27
TOTAL	1	--	2	8	29	40	42	64	45	64	73	45	45	49	507

170 The 'subject' is defined as the primary focus of the reference to MT within the item concerned.
171 This refers to items which focused on MT.
172 This refers to the area in which articles would discuss Thatcherism or intellectuals in politics, etc.
173 This is the one area in which the subject of the interview, the person is of primary importance rather than the topic.

Chapter 7

Marxism Today's move from the margins into the mainstream would have been practically inconceivable without its transformation from a 'journal' into a 'magazine'. This is not simply a case of semantics: it is about differences in political aims and audiences expressed through these cultural forms. Left publications are targeted at either a 'mass audience' (eg the working class) or a narrow one (eg intellectuals). The combination of a periodical's role and target audience should determine its format, design and writing: yet in spite of the expressed desire of many Left groups to reach a wider audience, their publications often make few concessions in format, design and layout or writing. Thus, this 'journalistic project[1] was integral to MT's political project and was part of its response to the exigency of the late 1970s and 1980s: the crisis of the Left and the rise of the Right. To gain access to the mainstream and reach a larger audience outside the party, MT made changes in the format, design and writing to convince potential non-party readers and the media to take it seriously in spite of its name and affiliation. In order to examine these changes, this chapter is broken down into five sections: format, editorial sections, writing style, rhetorical intervention and persona.

I. Format

The changes in *Marxism Today*'s format were integral to its success in gaining access to the national public sphere. Although the terms 'journal' and 'magazine' were often used interchangeably, there was an implicit, if not always explicit, understanding of the differences in format and in strategy.[2] A journal is written for a limited readership, often specialists, and can therefore draw upon a complex vocabulary and usually has few, if any, illustrations (except for tables and charts); a magazine, however, tends to be published more frequently, with a greater degree of attention to the design and visuals and usually written in a more accessible style. These differences became more obvious by the late 1970s, the recognition of which evolved from an implicit into an explicit understanding, as changes were effected in production, distribution, format, images and writing.[3]

The first format's (1957-79) small size (7.25 x 9.75 inches; 32 pages) was no hindrance to its circulation amongst the membership via the party network or by post. The two-section format of the 'theoretical and discussion journal of the Communist Party' was functional: one was for theory, the other for discussion. MT took the place of a number of journals and their functions, with primary responsibility for making the CP's theoretical work public and providing a space for party intellectuals to discuss Marxist theory and political issues. Its secondary purpose was to win over progressive intellectuals to

[1] The term is Jacques's (Jacques 1996b, 1996e).
[2] Jacques 1984b; MTEB 1983.
[3] Staff were adamant about calling MT a 'magazine' by the late 1980s (Taylor 1995).

Marxism and the CP,[4] though the layout, writing and design reveal little incentive to potential readers outside the party.

This format also fit a 'common sense' understanding of the conventions of a Marxist journal (and perhaps also contributed to this image): pages of dense prose unrelieved by photographs or advertising, set inside cover images of strikes and social unrest. The primacy of ideas is evident in the emphasis on the text and the design's functional nature. As with most journals in the 1950s and as a legacy of postwar paper rationing, MT was simply 'a medium for communicating words';[5] its format, design and layout were static because all 'editorial design was constrained by the need to conserve paper and so artistry was measured by the ability to pack the page'.[6] As long as English magazine design was dominated by literary journalism and graphic design was 'immature', the visual communication of ideas would remain undeveloped.[7]

A homology can be discerned in this relationship between the ideological status quo within the CP, Klugmann's functional editorial style, the format's static nature and the production process.[8] This authoritarian approach was reinforced by the 'hot metal' printing process which needed sufficient time and space for the preparation of articles and helped determine the first format's accessibility. The two-column grid did not permit much flexibility for integrating visuals and text nor did the page's 'boxy' shape. This steadfastness in layout and design matches the conformity to the party line and restricted parameters of debate, particularly in light of 1956 and the question of 'inner-party democracy', and reinforced by expectations as much as by editorial policy.[9] As one discussant put it:

> We accept in the *British Road* the existence of opposition parties.... [and] the possible existence of more than one trend in the Labour movement.... We couldn't possibly accept more than one trend within the Communist Party however.[10]

'Hot metal' technology, which was being superseded by photolithography, remained the determining feature of the first format: 'Even if MT was no longer being produced by hot metal, it certainly looked as though it was'.[11]

Besides its name and subtitle, the cover signposted all the articles and authors, repeated on the inside cover with information on forthcoming features, board members, etc. Editorial was simply divided between an unlabelled section of features (minimum 4,000 words) followed by responses in 'Discussion' (maximum 2,500 words). The more infrequent 'Reviews' (around 2,000 words) were usually situated in-between. Articles

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[4] Johnstone 1995; Matthews and Matthews 1996; McLennan 1996.
[5] Hammarling 1996.
[6] Owen 1991: 80.
[7] *Ibid.*: 83.
[8] Chapter 4.
[9] Chapter 3.
[10] Kelsey 1965: 125.
[11] Hammarling 1996.

were run one after the other in the sequence listed on the cover, encouraging a linear reading in the order of importance.

The first major innovation was the introduction of 'Editorial Comments' at the front of MT in July 1960. This new section was introduced because there was a need to respond more quickly to topical issues instead of waiting months for a properly formulated analysis, and for space to announce upcoming events, publications, etc.[12] The MTEB could publish its views 'on new books, progressive and reactionary, [and] ... participate in current polemics and discussions in the field of politics, culture and science'.[13] Although readers were invited to suggest topics to be covered and could even include 'a rough draft of the proposed commentary', the editor retained the right to reject anything thought 'unsuitable'![14] This provision of shorter, topical items was to encourage party members to read MT: circulation was declining even as membership was increasing.[15]

However, as the ideological parameters of debate in MT, following the CP's lead, gradually opened up from 1967, some changes followed. MT's design had begun to look staid by the late 1960s because no attention was paid to the use of white space, graphics or images and other periodicals were using new technologies and processes introduced at the time. As a journal targeted at members and distributed by post and party networks, its appearance was of little consequence. Only minor changes to typefaces and layout were introduced during this period: content took precedence over accessibility and presentation.

After experimenting with different typefaces for each article in the November and December 1969 issues, a 'new format' was adopted for the January 1970 issue.[16] The primary design innovations were: illustrated covers, variations in size and style of typefaces, and subheadings and rules. Typefaces and rules provided the only visual distinctions between editorial sections. An attempt was made to set each feature on separate pages, as if to suggest individual contributions were no longer part of a 'seamless' ideology (Communism); a whole issue was no longer quite a 'single text'![17]

The introduction of illustrated covers in 1969 was the first major innovation since 1960. (The only variety about MT's covers before 1969 had been alternating colours.) The first illustrated cover was the September 1969 special issue on 'The National Liberation Struggle' and its two-tone image of Vietnamese guerrillas. Socialist icons like Marx and Lenin were also used, as were those of students, police, demonstrations, etc., which expressed both a seriousness in terms of the content and a topicality befitting the unrest of the early 1970s. These images were also part of the standard repertoire of other left groups, which often used various icons (eg Lenin, Stalin) on their covers as signifiers of

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[12] Klugmann 1960.
[13] MT 1960: 193.
[14] *Ibid.*
[15] Klugmann 1960.
[16] Klugmann 1969: 356.
[17] Bound together, and with continuous pagination (1-384), a year's12 issues appear as a 'book' (Pykett 1990).

their politics.

Many cover images did not reproduce well and text-based covers remained fairly common until 1973. Text-only covers, however, were gradually phased out after 1973: there were only four between 1974 and 1977, though all contributions continued to be listed on the cover.[18] These changes were part of an attempt to reach a wider audience both inside and outside the party, which was fed by the growing interest in Marxism and the expansion of the academy; equally important was the ideological competition from other left groups and the alternative press.

However, despite the more frequent use of images on the cover, the inside pages remained largely the preserve of text. The few images used were only deployed as illustrations of the text, usually in articles about art or artists: captions were 'unnecessary': these visuals performed an 'ornamental' function for the article but added nothing to its meaning(s). An article on Russian painting in the February 1965 MT, for example, contained three pages of photographs without any text or captions,[19] while an article on George Grosz ten years later (February 1975) included three reproductions of his work set within the text, captioned only with their titles:[20] their meanings were already 'anchored' by the con/text.[21]

Even advertisements used images sparingly and in a similar manner. Most ads for books and journals were text-only. Back cover ads for Soviet bloc and CP publications from Central Books or Collet's (an independent left bookshop) comprised most of the advertising in the first format. Advertising varied from a half-page to a maximum of one-and-a-half pages on the inside, until 1973 when Klugmann was able to recruit commercial publishers wanting to advertise their expanding lists of books on Marxism and by Marxists: MT was reaching a niche market through the Communist University of London in the 1970s.[22] Advertising remained, nonetheless, a minor part of the journal, accounting for only two percent of space by 1973.[23]

Marxism Today's second format (1979-86) launched in October 1979 was a response to the Left's political crisis. Part of this move included addressing the concerns of the 'new social movements' (NSMs), which in 1979 were still largely neglected by the Left.[24] MT was attempting to open up space to address other readers besides party intellectuals: the 'broad democratic alliance' (BDA) of trade unionists, progressive intellectuals and political and social activists. To address this new audience, MT had to transform itself

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[18] Out of the 112 issues from September 1969 to December 1978, 31 were text-only, 2 were facsimiles of text-based posters, 38 were facsimiles and reproductions of illustrations and drawings, 8 were two-tone photographic images and the remaining 33 used photographs on their own or combined with drawings or cartoons.

[19] Niven 1965: 47, 48, 51.

[20] Watkinson 1975: 58, 59, 60. The cover carried a fourth work.

[21] Barthes 1977.

[22] Most extra advertising was for the July issue when the CUL occurred.

[23] Table 7.2.

[24] Downing 1980: 180-99.

from a party journal into a 'broad Left' magazine. It was necessary to make MT accessible to non-party readers and to persuade them to take it seriously. From 1979, all major changes in format, layout and design were introduced in the October issue (March was used sometimes to introduce minor changes). October became the largest issue because it was the most important for MT politically, published shortly before Labour's annual conference, and economically, after MT's introduction to national newsagent distribution in 1981.

Jacques had initiated the process of working out a new format, soon after becoming editor in September 1977:[25] design was 'as important as the ideas' because how ideas are presented determines MT's image, 'who reads it, how and why'.[26] The second format was bigger (8.4 x 10.75 inches) with nearly 28% more space for graphics and advertising in addition to text, though ideas retained priority as there was an increase of almost 20% in wordage: from the first format's 26,500 words per 32-page issue (840 words per page) to 31,500 per 32-page issue (980 words per page), the equivalent of one additional feature.[27] The sections were doubled to six: 'Contents' one page; 'Focus' four pages; 'Features' 20 pages; 'Discussion' four pages; 'Reviews' one and a half pages; and 'Notes' a half page. Breaking up editorial content into sections helps make it more accessible and generate expectations amongst readers to keep them coming back.[28] There is a homology between this process of 'compartmentalisation' and the BDA strategy; this process can also promote a sense of 'fragmentation': MT had to balance adding new sections to appeal to different constituencies but somehow maintain a cohesive identity and retain existing readers.[29]

To make MT more accessible, other innovations were introduced. Magazine paratextual elements, such as quotes and stand-firsts, which generally had not been used in the first format (except for the occasional standfirst introducing an unknown author), guide the reader through the text.[30] The introduction and regular use of these elements connotated a professional magazine. (There was a gradual improvement in the layout of quotes, which initially tended to be placed randomly throughout the feature articles.)

The changes in visual imagery were part of MT's attempt to attract new readers through the newsagents. These included changes to front covers and design, and the introduction of satire, cartoons and line-drawings. The back and inside front covers were used for advertising: these needed to use colour and high production values to attract advertisers and the colour enabled MT to maintain its edge against other competitors (eg NS). But it is the outside front cover which is the most important visual aspect of a periodical, though its purpose varies. Political journals have in the past used the cover as

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[25] He found MT's design a 'source of embarrassment' (Jacques 1996b).
[26] Jacques 1978b: 269-70.
[27] Jacques 1978e, 1979i; MTEB 1979b.
[28] Beetham 1990; Owen 1991.
[29] Eg Olive 1983; Taylor 1989b.
[30] Keeble 1994: 369.

a statement of their ideas, whereas commercial magazines use it as a marketing tool: for left publications, the front cover was a means for promoting their *position* rather than marketing their *product*.

The covers during the second format began connotating a 'news-magazine' by using photographs of public figures and celebrities in the news: for example, Thatcher (October 1979, July 1983), Tony Benn (October 1980, May 1982) and John Lennon (January 1981). Celebrities and public figures are used to attract readers; they also signify 'news values' and contemporaneity. MT's use of interviews and roundtables were both attempts to make editorial subject matter more accessible to its audiences via the 'personalization' of political news.[31] The following two examples demonstrate the changes in the cover's role.

The October 1980 MT was the first issue available outside of party networks and radical bookshops, via a trial run in selected London newsagents. The cover photograph of Tony Benn and Eric Hobsbawm promotes Benn's interview as the 'cover story'. Its appeal to the left-leaning browser in the newsagent is on news values (eg topicality, event, 'unexpectedness');[32] published just before the start of Labour's annual conference, this issue would have appealed to anyone interested in politics at a time when it looked as though the Left might succeed in winning control of Labour. The second appeal was to CP members and sympathisers because of the presence of Hobsbawm, a leading CP intellectual, interviewing a Labour ex-cabinet minister and leader when the CP was proscribed from affiliation to Labour.

The second format's first cultural cover was also newsworthy: as a result of his murder, the January 1981 cover carried a photograph of John Lennon with a line from one of his songs: 'A working class hero is something to be'. It played on two meanings: first, it could be read as a statement on Lennon himself, his class background and politics, which would have appealed to fans with similar politics, the 1960s generation and NSM activists; second, it also addressed party members with no interest in popular music but who would have found the line politically acceptable.[33] The story, written by sociologist and *Melody Maker* contributor, Simon Frith,[34] was short (three pages including photographs), but it had the broadest appeal of all the articles and it was the most newsworthy.[35] This cover was also a significant move for a left periodical because it signalled the beginnings of popular culture being taken seriously by the Left and it helps to explain MT's appeal to a younger, more media-savvy generation.

The combination of topical black-and-white cover photographs, format (the second format was of a similar size to the *New Statesman*), newsagent distribution and the

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[31] See below.
[32] It did not matter that the interview took place in July.
[33] This cover may have aroused enmity among traditionalists who had opposed the Young Communist League's use of Lennon on the cover of their paper during the 1960s (Thompson 1992; Waite 1995).
[34] Frith 1981.
[35] The other three features included the 'alternative economic strategy', an interview with Ted Knight, leader of Lambeth Council (London), and socialist strategy.

reprinting of articles in *The Guardian* also worked on a connotative level to contribute to MT's reputation as a 'newsmagazine' during the early 1980s. As there were very few left papers being sold in newsagents, and there were even fewer which succeeded in having dozens of articles reprinted or used as primary sources by national media, these connotations helped persuade others to take notice of MT as a 'serious' periodical, especially amongst progressive *Guardian* readers.[36]

It was also important to play down the CP link to gain access to the public sphere. For example, the October 1981 issue incorporated important changes to the cover for nationwide distribution.[37] MT's title was shifted from its position on the centre-top of the cover to the left-hand corner in order to be seen on the newsagent shelf (as magazines usually overlap one another), while its subtitle was permanently removed from the outside front cover and placed onto the contents page (and reduced in size). This issue made the most of its two news 'scoops': interviews with both the Polish Prime Minister (Mieczyslaw Rakowski) and the leader of the independent trade union, Solidarity (Lech Walesa), during the Polish crisis. These two interviews justified the word 'exclusive' across their photographs on the cover.

An early example of MT's provocative style and humour, was the April 1982 cover photograph, signposting the interview with Chief Constable of Devon and Cornwall, John Alderson: a smiling policeman is portrayed with an ice cream in each hand, under the title, 'Policing: The Cornish Approach'. (Alderson favoured 'community policing' in the aftermath of the 1981 inner city riots.) This image (instead of a policeman with a shield and truncheon) was a pun (Cornish ice cream). However, it also plays on the Right's dislike of community policing, playing on the associations of ice cream with 'soft' and 'dessert' (ie rewarding rather than punishing offenders). The reaction of the conservative press confirms this view: *The Sun* read Alderson's interview in a 'Marxist rag' as proof of the 'suspect' nature of community policing.[38] The cover also contrasted with the Left's traditional image of police (eg attacking strikers) which many read as uncritical of the police. The format change prompted one respondent to compare it unfavourably to the *TV Times*.[39] Left periodicals did *not* carry interviews with people in authority, least of all the police, and to do so with humour upset many readers' expectations.

Humour was an important tool in transforming the front cover from a statement into a marketing tool. This transition was marked by an increasing ambiguity and a less conventional didacticism in the cover images, a necessity to try and reach browsers in newsagents: an audience beyond the 'converted'. Most covers subsequently attempted to draw out the relevant news values, for example: famous individuals (vox populi on Marx, March 1983), timeliness (British on holiday, August 1983), public events (Greenham Common roundtable, February 1983) or even topical issues (apartheid, January 1983).

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36 Chapter 6.

37 Pagination increased by 50%: from 32 to 48 pages.

38 Bond 1982; *Sun* 1982.

39 Baker 1982.

Only the most important or interesting themes and authors were signposted on the cover, leaving the images relatively 'uncluttered' until the October 1983 issue.[40] More articles were subsequently listed on the cover to try and entice browsers at the newsagents, especially as divisions on the Left deepened and MT lost readers in the party.

The design after the October 1979 re-launch was an improvement on the first format, but it was still functional and not very adventurous because flexibility in laying out text and images was constrained by the two-column grid, although the larger page size did help. The integration of text and images improved as the design was upgraded and columns were increased from two to three. Between 1979 and 1981, MT tried to have at least one photograph per article and even introduced them onto the contents page.[41] These images were 'decoration': visual illustrations of subject matter. The range and type of images were increased despite limited financial resources because of sympathetic press officers and social and political activists.[42] However, as MT's income increased, it was able to invest more resources into the images and design.[43]

The move from to three- and four-column pages during the 1980s increased the flexibility to arrange text, graphics and images, and from 1981 variations of two-, three- and four-column pages also helped differentiate editorial sections. Graphics were to help 'make its content more accessible and available';[44] as were John Minnion's line-drawn caricatures of Thatcher, Norman Tebbit and others, many of which were commissioned especially for MT; these satirical and humorous images contributed to its appearance as a contemporary political magazine.[45] The change to 'offset litho' technology enabled MT to make greater use of images for all sections, including the 'Contents' page.

The growth in the use of photographs, graphs and line-drawings was aided by the cultural section, 'Channel Five', because of its subject matter it had to be '*visually* very interesting'.[46] The section editor, Sally Townsend (1981-88), organised a small collective to supply ideas and contributors. At first, 'Channel Five' was allocated only three pages because features had priority and the pressure to increase advertising cut into the remaining available space.[47] Although it took until 1984 before its success was acknowledged, MT had found a 'glaring gap' neglected by most left periodicals, which coincided with its own interests in cultural politics, a continuity with the first New Left and cultural studies, and which appealed to many of the 1960s generation who had grown up 'in' popular culture. 'Channel Five' was an integral part of increasing the appeal of the magazine to both readers and advertisers, 'broadening out the readership', and breaking

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40 The animated cover depicted Neil Kinnock as 'superman' flying to Labour's 'rescue' was a major innovation (Brown 1996; Perryman 1994b).
41 Hammarling 1996.
42 *Ibid.*
43 Chapter 4.
44 Jacques 1978b: 270.
45 Minnion 1996. Minnion was the first of a number of artists and illustrators, such as Paul Bateman, Jane Smith and Clifford Harper, hired by MT.
46 MTEC 1981: 3.
47 MTEB 1979b, 1981b.

away from other magazines' cultural coverage in focus and in writing style.[48]

The October 1986 relaunch marked the move to MT's third (1986-91) and largest format (8.9" x 11.7"),[49] where considerations of design and layout won out over economic concerns: Keith Ablitt's proposal was selected despite being considerably more expensive than the others.[50] MT's leading competitor, *New Socialist*, had hired Neville Brody for its redesign and a debate over 'designer socialism' was launched. This format demonstrates a greater degree of influence from contemporary innovations as MT's transformation into a magazine advanced. Competition for readers increased as the numbers of consumer magazines rose and newspaper supplements were expanded after 1986: the survival of monthly political-cultural magazines and 'weekly journals of opinion' was threatened.[51]

MT attempted to keep abreast of developments in new technologies and graphic design because of competition. The influence of popular culture was also becoming more apparent in its layout, design and images, as it learned from different magazines: 'style mags' (eg *The Face*), current affairs magazines (eg *The Economist*), etc. Professional magazine designers, such as Esterson and Lackersteen, who had been involved with *Crafts* and *Blueprint*, and Pearce Marchbank, who worked on *Time-Out* in the 1970s, were hired to work on covers.[52] Designers experimented with different elements of graphic design, such as 'drop caps';[53] typesetting in bold, 'quotes[54] and 'floating columns', to make the page less forbidding and draw readers in.

With the largest format, the page was divided into four columns to permit greater flexibility with visuals and text: in the features section only three were retained for the text and the fourth, 'floating' column used white space and quotes to break up the page and draw readers in. Boxes and graphics were used to make 'terminally turgid writing' and complex material more accessible.[55] Other sections used all four columns to make the most of the available space; it also differentiated the section from features.

Illustrations, graphics and photographs became more integrated with the text and the very 'fabric' of the magazine. Images were no longer just illustrations of the subject matter, but were used to add something more than what was in the text.[56] For example, the image of Joan Crawford in the Ford motorcar over the two pages of Jacques's and

48 Townsend 1984: 1.
49 The size is close to 'the most favoured' format which 'printing presses are designed to handle' (Davis 1988: 21; Brown 1996).
50 Jacques 1996d.
51 Tunstall 1996: 163-69. Saturday was turned into a 'newspaper day' in 1988. Increasingly, daily newspapers such as *The Times* and *The Guardian* (especially the G2 tabloid section) provided arenas for 'good writing' and for writing across 'semi-political' (ie socio-cultural) issues (*Ibid.*: 168-69) which MT had staked out.
52 Brown 1996.
53 'Drop Caps' are when the first letter of the first word in different sections of an article are several sizes larger than the other type.
54 Provocative or interesting excerpts are laid out in a much larger font on the page.
55 Taylor 1989b.
56 Brown 1996.

Hall's introduction to 'New Times' signified the hope and forward looking that 'modern times' had embodied for an earlier era.

It could also mean a more direct statement of ideas, an approach which fit in with the shift of covers into more of a marketing tool: however, these changes incited some readers to complain. For example, the January 1987 cover signposted the abortion roundtable with a photograph of a foetus on a sky-blue background; pro-choice readers complained that MT was playing into the hands of anti-abortionists in attracting attention by appearing controversial.[57] To reach other potential readers, MT was willing to play on the cover's ambiguities. However, it was not just a marketing ploy but rather MT's 'realistic' approach to issues 'as they are':[58] as MT art editor, Jan Brown, explained, that image of the foetus constituted what the essence of the abortion debate was about.[59] Thus, while pro-choice respondents complained about the cover, they also thought the roundtable was very good.[60] Though not every cover played with such emotional issues, the polysemic possibilities in MT covers demonstrates a willingness to risk complaints and overthrow expectations. Yet, it was the abstract covers which sold best, although it cannot be put down to the covers alone: the two best-selling issues were the October 1988[61] ('New Times' launch) and January 1989[62] ('Postmodernism' issue).[63] The greater integration of visuals and text, use of graphic design and move to four columns made MT more accessible, though ideas remained MT's primary purpose.[64]

II. Editorial Sections

As Tables 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3 indicate, MT's shift between the three formats shows a shift in priorities and changes in accessibility. The number of features remained fairly consistent during the 1980s, although as a proportion of the magazine it declined to just above one-third of the total (36.6%). This decline was clearly part of a shift towards compartamentalisation of the periodical, which explains its shift in format from a journal into a magazine: different sections allowing MT to be separated into discrete sections for easier 'digestion' by readers. However, although MT's editorial structure in 1978 was still essentially identical with that of 1958, yet less than 10 years later, it was almost unrecognisable.

The shift in topics was more pronounced by 1988, where British politics and social issues dominated as priorities for MT.[65] However, these three tables together indicate that MT's changes in topics cannot simply be read as an ideological shift *per se*. For example,

[57] Lee 1988; Wright 1988. At the time Parliament was debating a bill to restrict abortion. A majority of the board thought the cover a mistake (MTEB 1988c).
[58] See below.
[59] Brown 1996. The cover was designed by Keith Ablitt.
[60] Lee 1988; Wright 1988.
[61] Designed by Jan Brown.
[62] Designed by Esterson and Lackersteen.
[63] Brown 1996; Perryman 1994b.
[64] An example of the problems for a magazine of ideas when design dominates is the redesigned NS°in 1986.
[65] Table 7.1.

Table 7.1 indicates that there were similarities in some areas: in 1958 only 3.4% of articles focused on the CP, the same as in 1983 (3.3%); however, in 1988 there was more feature coverage of 'International CPs' than in either 1983 or 1958. The differences arise in terms of features when both international CPs and the CPGB are included: 1968 has the most coverage (29.3%), with about half that level for both 1973 (15.8%) and 1978 (14.6%); 1983 (5.0%) beats out 1958 (6.8%) and 1988 (6.6%) (Communism's crisis) for last place. If 'International Politics' is also examined, although 1983 rates high with 21.7%, when 'International CPs' is factored in, the years 1958 (31.0%), 1968 (36.6%) and 1973 (31.6%) all beat out those years under Jacques's editorship: 1978 (16.6%), 1983 (23.4%) and 1988 (14.8%).

Table 7.1: Breakdown of Feature Articles by Topic (%) in Selected Years, 1958-1988

	1958	1968	1973	1978	1983	1988
TOTAL (Number of Features)	58	41	38	48	60	61
International CPs[66]	3.4	17.1	10.5	8.3	1.7	6.6
CPGB	3.4	12.2	5.3	6.3	3.3	--
Labour Party	3.4	--	--	6.3	8.3	8.2
British Politics[67]	6.9	4.9	7.9	12.5	16.7	21.3
Industrial Relations & Trade Unions	3.4	12.2	--	6.3	5.0	4.9
Economics	12.1	--	7.9	--	1.7	4.9
International Politics	27.6	19.5	21.1	8.3	21.7	8.2
Feminism/Women	--	2.4	--	2.1	10.0	4.9
Marxism & Political Theory	13.8	7.3	13.2	18.8	3.3	1.6
Arts & Culture[68]	8.6	4.9	7.9	8.3	11.7*	6.6*
Education	1.7	--	--	2.1	1.7	1.6
Peace	1.7	2.4	2.6	--	5.0	--
Science & Technology	1.7	--	5.3	6.3	1.7	--
History	6.9	9.8	10.5	6.3	--	1.6
Social Issues, Racism, Psychology, Religion	5.2	7.3	7.9	8.3	8.3	29.5
TOTAL	99.8	100.0	100.1	100.2	100.1	99.9

The feature articles were°MT's primary content and *raison d' tre*through all three formats, even as its share of the magazine eventually shrank to less than 40% by 1988.[69] Despite doubling the number of sections with the second format, Jacques retained the emphasis on having four features (3,500 to 6,500 words) per issue, rather than expanding any other section.[70] From 1958 until 1978, the number of feature articles under 4,000 words declined from 16 to 9, while features over 4,000 words declined continuously from

66 1988 is the only year in this category which does not include any official documents or speeches.
67 For 1988, this category includes 'New Times' articles.
68 Does not include any 'Channel Five' coverage for 1983 and 1988.
69 Table 7.2.
70 Jacques 1979g, 1979i.

36 (out of 52) in 1958 to 24 (out of 60) in 1988.[71] Discussion items remained consistent under Klugmann but dropped continuously from 1978 (11) to 1988 (4 items).

Jacques identified three basic types of features, two of which he wanted to banish: 'legitimation and apologist' (eg official speeches and documents) because they would have reinforced MT's profile as an official CP channel; and 'esoteric Marxist' (eg 'dialectics of nature' debate) because they were intelligible only to a small group of intellectuals.[72] Both would have limited MT's room for manoeuvre by restricting its editorial autonomy and its appeal to non-party readers. The third type of article, the 'political analytical', provided a 'conjunctural' analysis of contemporary political, social and economic developments (eg inflation, Labour government): Jacques wanted to build upon this type because he thought its 'creative application of Marxist and Gramscian ideas to British politics' would have a broader appeal.[73]

Table 7.2 Breakdown of Editorial Contents,[74] 1958-1988

	1958	1968	1973	1978	1983	1988
Total Number of Pages	384.0	384.0	384.0	396.0	592.0	644 .0
Advertising[75] (%)	0.1	0.8	2.0	4.8	18.8	28.5
Features	76.8	60.5	68.1	72.6	49.2	36.6
Discussion/Viewpoint/Comment	17.7	17.1	18.1	5.9	1.4	0.5
Letters	--	--	--	--	1.3	3.0
Editorial Comments	--	18.5	11.8	9.3	--	--
Focus	--	--	--	--	8.1	7.5
Notes/Update/Classifieds[76]	--	--	--	--	2.0	2.5
Reviews[77] (Books)	5.3	3.1	--	7.3	5.6	4.1
Channel 5/Culture[78]	--	--	--	--	11.6	12.2
Postmark[79] (column)	--	--	--	--	--	1.4
Close-Up[80]	--	--	--	--	--	1.9
Table of Contents[81]	--	--	--	--	2.0	1.9
Totals	99.9	100.0	100.0	99.9	100.0	100.1

Two important innovations within features were roundtable discussions and interviews which were part of MT's attempts to present ideas in an accessible manner (dialogue often reads more easily than scholarly or journalistic prose). There was no need

71 Table 7.3.
72 Jacques 1996b.
73 *Ibid.*
74 These figures do not include cover pages, supplements or inserts.
75 This category includes exchange advertisements and CP and MT promotional copy.
76 Includes space for contributors' backgrounds.
77 Includes 'review articles'.
78 This includes the 18-page 'Review of 87' which focused on arts, culture and sports, but it does not include book reviews (26.5 pages) which are separated for this chart.
79 Started in the April 1988 issue; it always was a different person writing about a different place (eg Glasgow, Malaga).
80 A one-page profile of someone in the news.
81 Until the second format, the inside front cover was used as the contents page and therefore it is not part of the editorial breakdown.

for interviewees or roundtable participants to be able to write, as the dialogue was transcribed and edited. Although neither mode was completely new to MT, it was only under Jacques that they were developed and used more widely: interviewees shifted from Communists to trade unionists to politicians and other public figures.[82]

The roundtable developed in tandem with the upsurge in social movements and industrial struggles in the early 1980s.[83] At first, roundtables were attempts to bring in those normally excluded from participating in public debates because of a lack of time, skills or confidence. However, just as the types of contributors changed during the 1980s, so too did roundtable participants: from union and party members, to social and political activists and academics, to public figures (eg journalists, Labour politicians).

Table 7.3 Comparison of Selected Modes of Presentation, 1958-1988

	1958	1968	1973	1978	1983	1988
Features (Total)	52	41	38	42	61	60
Features 4,000+ words	36	26	26	33	30	24[84]
Discussion Items	27	28	28	11	6[85]	4
Reviews (Books)	5	2	1	9	24	38
Non-CP Reprints[86]	--	1	1	3	1	2
CP-related Reprints	7	21	10	7	2[87]	1
Interviews (Feature)	--	--	--	3	6	6
Interviews (C5)	--	--	--	--	9	12
Roundtables	1	--	--	--	5	6
Vox Pops	--	--	--	--	1	1

The roundtable's conversational format enabled participants to engage with each other's ideas. This display of dialogue performed a highly symbolic function in representing opposing positions, allowing readers to identify with them, and it also offered an alternative presentational mode to the feature essay. The dialogue appeared 'spontaneous', despite the selection, transcription and editing processes.[88] It was important to promote dialogue between different perspectives, if the the BDA was to have meaning and it was useful as a tactic against accusations of bias. Nevertheless, some felt that their own viewpoints were not being represented as well as others: John Hoffman, MTEB member and roundtable participant, said the roundtable on Marx (March 1983) worked very well although he felt that the 'old-fashioned Marxist point-of-view should perhaps have had more representation'.[89] When interviews and roundtables were well-received, there was pressure from readers, the CP and/or the MTEB to use these formats more

82 Table 7.3.
83 The discussion in the first issue was a roundtable in name only because contributions were summarised and written up in an essay, defeating the mode's purpose.
84 However, there was nearly an equal number of articles just under 4,000 words, indicating an achievement of greater uniformity of length (another indication of professionalism).
85 Half were published in 'Viewpoint' in November and December 1983.
86 Reprints include articles based upon talks and reports adapted for MT.
87 This includes a short statement (about 250 words) on Iran adopted at the 38th National Congress.
88 Roundtables were very labour-intensive (Taylor 1995).
89 MTEB 1983: 3.

frequently, although sometimes it was MT that over did it.[90] Roundtables and interviews, however, did not always work due to various factors (eg participants, chairing, editing), which it was not always easy to know ahead of time whether or not, they would work or provide good copy.[91]

The role of 'Discussion' in the first format was to provide a space for responses to features, though MT set out the topics to be discussed which were usually linked to party issues or Marxist theory. A topic could last for months and even years, when the editor allowed it, but it requires a stable readership, such as membership or subscription-based journals; it is not appropriate for a magazine sold via newsagents. Under Jacques, 'Discussion' was initially an integral part of MT encouraging debate and drawing in traditionalists, centrists and reformists: the longest debate took place before the second format's launch.[92] With the second format, Jacques wanted to have 'structured debates' only, clearly not wishing to open up discussion to just any topic or contributor; responses were only published for a few months after the article was initially published.[93] By 1983, however, contributions only appeared sporadically and the section was renamed 'Viewpoint' (November 1983), providing space for (as the name change connotes) individual perspectives on different issues.

'Viewpoint' was replaced by 'Comment' in October 1986, with space usually provided for one response. Rather than being seen as an integral part of the magazine, in the way in which 'Discussion' had been in the first format, 'Comment' acted like a newspaper opinion column. 'Comment' was located near the back between 'Channel Five' and 'Notes'/'Update', alongside a number of display advertisements and classifieds, marginalised, like many (but not all) of its contributors and topics.[94] Jacques indicated there was no need to give space to certain views (eg Leninists, SWP) because one knew what they were going to say.[95] 'Comment' quickly declined in importance: only six items were published in 1988 and it was subsequently discontinued.

A 'Letters' page, which had been introduced in May 1982 to provide space for (shorter) responses,[96] provided space for many viewpoints and it was expanded regularly to two full pages to accommodate additional responses during times of intense debate (eg miners' strike). The cutbacks to 'Discussion' and its successors increasingly limited MT's role in internal party discussion; instead, in belated recognition of its role change, 'Letters' was renamed 'Forum' in October 1989: it had become the primary space for discussion.

To reach readers outside the party, it was necessary for MT not to be seen as an official party channel. 'Editorial Comments' was removed because its title and position suggested that it was an expression of the CP's position: its editorial content and style

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90 Eg Jacques 1984b; MTEB 1981b.
91 MTEB 1981b, 1983, 1985a.
92 'The Forward March of Labour Halted?' (September 1978 to September 1979).
93 Jacques 1979i: 2.
94 Eg Samuel 1986b; Wainwright 1988.
95 Jacques 1988a.
96 The MTEB had been evenly divided over introducing 'Letters' since 1978 (MTEB 1981b).

implied a single, 'anonymous ... omniscient author'?[97] Its removal would ensure that there would be less need for the leadership to intervene (or to be forced to intervene by MT's opponents) if MT published anything which contradicted the party line.

The section's functions were divided into two: 'Focus' and 'Notes'. Located behind the 'Contents' page, 'Focus', which averaged two to four pages, was composed of short, news like items on recent domestic and international events and campaigns, not otherwise covered by news media but which did not require feature treatment. Ideally, 'Focus' items would be political, 'but not decisively so',*and* controversial: suggestions included the ultra-left press and monetarism.[98] Despite being one of the longest running sections under Jacques (October 1979-September 1989), there was constant debate over the appropriate style, topics and approach because of competition from the expansion of media outlets and news coverage, and the difficulties of maintaining the relevancy of 'news' items for two months (due to MT's production schedule).[99]

'Focus' items seemed to date even more quickly during the late 1980s when political and social events were unfolding rapidly. Developments in new technologies (eg desktop publishing) helped with scheduling and higher production values: reports were made more accessible through the integration of more visuals (eg maps, graphs). It was replaced in 1989 by a 'Leader' and 'Preview' (upcoming events), and new sections were added, such as 'Europhile' (column) and 'Eye to Eye' ('personality' interviewer, Beatrix Campbell). These were part of a 1980s trend towards 'lifestyle' journalism and 'personality' columnists replacing 'hard news' and political analysis (evident even in 'Notes').

The listings service of events, campaigns, publications, etc., provided by 'Notes' was seen as the connection between theory and practice: a practical 'realisation' of the BDA. It underwent a major revamp for October 1983, which included publishing contributors' names with the ads for campaigns to help maintain MT's 'distance' from various groups, especially as internal divisions were intensifying.[100] In the third format, 'Notes' took on a wider remit, moving closer to that of London listings magazines, *Time Out* and *City Limits*: it was expanded into 'Update'. An important development, it drew in new readers and extra revenue and provided a space for the re-launch of MT discussion groups (stopped by the party in 1979). The introduction of personal ads within the classifieds provoked controversy over alternative sexualities, though it was important to demonstrating MT's move away from narrow 'Political' interests.[101]'Notes' expanded from just politics, books and campaigns to include discussion groups, consumer items and leisure activities to personal ads.

However, the introduction of the 'MT Leader' in October 1989 (it was on the Eastern

97 Jones 1980; Jacques 1979i; MTEC 1978.
98 MTEB 1980: 2; Jones 1980.
99 MTEB 1988b; Taylor 1989a. Six weeks writing, editing and printing and two weeks on the news-stand (Jones 1980).
100 After the Lane affair, a disclaimer was introduced (MTEC 1983b: 1).
101 Some ads were fictitious (Perryman 1994b).

European revolutions)[102] raised the possibility of a clash between the CP leadership and MT: Jacques saw the leader as a way of intervening publicly after 'New Times'.[103] The Political Committee expressed concern after some party members complained that MT's 'editorialising' would be seen as the CP's position.[104] A discussion between PC and MTEB resolved the issue in MT's favour: the 'Leader' was continued.[105] This was the symbolical embodiment of MT's editorial autonomy, after it had been achieved politically[106] and practically.[107]

Books remained the primary focus of cultural coverage from 1957 until 1981. That MT did not have to qualify the title of its 'Reviews' section, emphasises the importance books held over the Left's ideas about culture. However, Klugmann actually published less book reviews than Jacques, plus a few reassessments of important cultural figures (eg Kipling).[108] Early problems included the lack of an organised approach in selecting books, timeliness as reviews were published long after the publication date and the inaccessibility of writing and presentation.[109]

'Reviews' was regularised after 1979 as a section which spanned the last four pages and provided a space for the exploration of contemporary issues (eg feminism, disarmament). To improve accessibility, MT sought to improve the writing style and broaden the range of publications to include non-academic, union and 'non-socialist theoretical material', and to include unionists and activists as reviewers.[110]

However, despite improvements, by 1985 there was still concern that books were being reviewed singly rather than thematically: too few reviewers able to cover numerous subjects.[111] The breadth was supposed to reflect 'all aspects of the BDA, and a wide definition of political culture' and to comment on topics not otherwise covered, but space was limited: the topics covered best were those which the 'Reviews' editor was most familiar with.[112] Although the editor attempted to avoid the 'famous name syndrome' by using activists as reviewers, she thought it made the section feel 'slightly ghettoish'.[113]

Contrary to John Saville's criticisms, Table 7.3 demonstrates that by 1988 MT actually published the most book reviews ever, even if as a percentage of the total space its share had declined (the size and number of pages had increased): of the three sample years under each editor, Jacques's first year, 1978, has more book reviews than all three of Klugmann's years combined. Saville's criticisms were based upon assumptions of what

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102 Jacques 1989b.
103 Taylor 1989b.
104 MTEB 1989c.
105 *Ibid.*
106 Chapter 3.
107 Chapter 4.
108 Dunman 1965.
109 Webster n.d.
110 *Ibid.*
111 Davison 1985c.
112 Davison 1985b: 1, 1985d.
113 *Ibid.*: 1-2.

books were appropriate for a socialist periodical to review: during the 1980s, the range of books expanded from political and historical to cultural books and literary and popular fiction.

The greatest editorial innovation in the second format was 'Channel Five'. Its importance grew as popular culture was recognised as having an important contribution to make to MT's counter-hegemonic strategy ('popular politics').[114] 'Channel Five' drew out the links between culture and politics, moving beyond the traditional separation of politics and culture found in some left periodicals (eg NSS)[115] and the Leninist view of culture as an instrument of indoctrination or liberation (eg *Socialist Review*). Seen as 'one expression of the BDA', 'Channel Five' broadened its coverage to include individual television programmes, exhibitions, fashion, etc.: culture as a way of life and an artefact.[116] When culture was taken seriously in Klugmann's MT, it was in reference to abstract concepts, such as 'freedom', or in terms of its instrumentality for class struggle![117] The influence of cultural Marxism, Communist populism and cultural studies could be seen in cover stories on cultural issues before 'Channel Five' was launched, 1977-81 (eg Lennon, sport, royalty).[118] This influence became more evident in the new section's pioneering coverage of popular culture: political-cultural criticism which took popular culture seriously without condemning it out of hand for instilling 'false consciousness' or providing 'escapist' entertainment.

'Channel Five' played a key part in transforming MT into a magazine by making it 'more accessible and attractive' to new readers and because it was also the most effective way to secure more advertising.[119] It had to be different from NSS or a Sunday broadsheet and it was not supposed to focus on high culture; *Time Out* was seen as a useful model because of its 'broad democratic approach to culture': covering everything from punk, fashion and soap opera to classical opera, art exhibitions and theatre.[120] MT's cultural overage also had to avoid too narrow a focus on a particular 'radicalised' artistic or musical subculture (eg 'Rock Against Racism').

Its name signified the democratic impulses of the BDA: 'Channel Five' not only invoked the leading medium of popular culture, television, playing upon the forthcoming Channel 4 and its remit to cater for all those ignored by the BBC-ITV duopoly. These impulses pushed MT to try and avoid the 'elitism and pretentiousness' of upmarket cultural criticism and find a unique 'style, range and approach' in 200 to 800 word pieces.[121] Sarah Benton, editor of *Comment*, 1978-80, set an example with the 'Television

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114 Chapter 5.
115 See Smith (1996) on the early NSS.
116 Townsend 1996.
117 Eg Bush 1964; Carritt 1964; Green 1973.
118 Frith 1981; Trickey 1981; Triesman 1980, 1981. See Chapter 2.
119 MTEC 1981: 3.
120 *Ibid.*: 1, 2-3.
121 *Ibid.*: 3.

Review' column (shared between three cultural studies lecturers). Jacques was advised by a friend that the cultural section should be in the 'manner of*Comment* rather than *Melody Maker*, or *Screen* or *Formations*': articles should be 'thoughtful but readable and even low-key' and he should not assume that readers were London-based, middle class socialists, feminists and ecologists.[122]

Advertising was a key element in MT's transformation from a journal into a magazine, a major source of income and visual entertainment, and a means to help address new readers. Since advertising is integral to mainstream magazines, as it absorbs a substantial proportion of space (eg 40-60%), it helps to define the appearance and even draws in browsers. Non-political, consumer advertising brought MT some legitimacy in the eyes of the magazine trade.

Advertising's importance grew during the 1980s, although initially in the second format it was still seen as an adjunct to editorial: a means to supplement MT's income and not integral to its image and identity. Only 1.75 of the 32 inside pages, near the back of each issue, were allocated for advertising at first; although with the inside front cover and both sides of the back covers brough the total to 4.75 pages in 1979. As its importance was recognised, efforts were made to recruit a broader range of advertising which enhanced MT's image; to expand editorial space and increase revenue to meet rising production and distribution costs, advertising was rapidly expanded as a significant proportion of total space: from 4.8% in 1978 to 18.8% in 1983 to 28.5% in 1988.[123] Advertising was gradually expanded throughout MT: ads were integrated into features by the mid-1980s, with whole pages set aside for ads by 1988, allowing MT to retain a visual and physical separation of advertising and editorial.

MT's recruitment of consumer and non-political advertising alarmed many. Traditionally, the Left has been suspicious of advertisers' influence because they pay for virtually all commercial media and influence the media (directly and indirectly). The covert and overt links between advertising and editorial in commercial magazines is not therefore surprising: editorial texts constitute a continuum of a 'commodity-based culture' because the editorial promotes products that are actually being advertised elsewhere within the magazine.[124] Similar links can be found in left publications, where articles or reviews (of books, plays, etc.) are placed next to related advertisements. Even MT's first issue placed an ad (from the CP's publishers) for a book next to a discussion of it.[125] Such practices are not seen as 'insidious' because there is no threat of subverting a periodical's ideology if advertisers hold similar views or there is no one advertiser (or group) which supplies a substantial part of its income. Yet the imperatives for recruiting advertising

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[122] 'A sort of lefto-cultural-studies-but-not-high-falutin'-crap-journalistic-but-not-uncritically-populist framework' (Stewart 1981: 2, 3).
[123] Table 7.3.
[124] McCracken 1993.
[125] Lawrence and Wishart 1957.

may wield a general influence over topics, interviewees, contributors, design, formats and writing styles.

III. Writing Style

It was not only the format changes that contributed to MT's access to the public sphere: it was equally dependent upon changes in the increasing accessibility *and* persuasiveness of its writing to reach and retain new readers. Accessibility is about making the writing more comprehensible for target audiences, non-party readers and journalists, which were part of MT's remit; persuasion is about MT's ability to convince these two audiences of its views, or in the case of the journalists, at least to take it seriously. Before examining the writing, it is necessary to consider briefly the two primary left perspectives on the media and journalism and the relationship between Marxism and rhetoric.

There are two basic views of the media and journalism on the Left, each associated with one of the two dominant strands of 20th century socialism. The first view, influenced by Marxism, though not restricted to Marxists, sees the media as primarily 'transmission belts' of capitalist ideology and escapist entertainment. Professional journalism is viewed as 'capitalist propaganda', the inverse of their own journalism or 'socialist propaganda'. It is also criticised for masking its bias towards the status quo under the regime of 'objectivity' where powerful institutions act as primary definers and set the agenda and capitalist ideology°and the marketplace are accepted unquestioningly.[126] Although left publications usually make their biases clear by publishing a statement of principles in each issue, MT did not have to because when it was launched in 1957 'Marxism' was equated with the CP, its ideology *and* the USSR, though its subtitle clarifies its purpose and stance.[127]

The second view, more commonly associated with social democratic and Labour-oriented media (eg *Tribune*, NSS), is critical of aspects of the media, such as ownership, rather than with journalism as a practice.[128] By the 1980s, this perspective began to prevail over the other, first with MT and then with many other left publications.

For left publications, contradictions between adopting professional journalistic practices and representing the parent bodies' policies has been most evident in those papers, such as the *Daily Herald*, which operated in the daily or weekly newspaper marketplace, where they often lacked 'the priceless journalistic gift of surprise'.[129] However, MT worked against the public's expectations ('unexpected') of a left periodical with critiques of the Left and interviews with public figures (eg bishops, Conservative MPs). Yet it was not only a question of learning new skills, but also of dealing with the media's perception of left journalism as lacking in 'attention to style' and 'clarity of

126 See Hackett and Zhao 1998: 88-90.
127 Matthews and Matthews 1996; McLennan 1996.
128 Eg Jacques 1984a.
129 Francis Williams cited in Richards 1997: 5, 184.

thought', and writing 'what activists wanted to read' (the 'perceived morality of the issue was more important than the desire to win over the uncommitted reader').[130] To work against such preudices promoted via the capitalist media, MT adopted some professional journalistic practices to persuade both media *and* public to take it seriously.

The inability of Marxist publications to attract readers outside of their own circles or those with some basic knowledge of Marxism, is partly a result of the 'Marxist view of language, ideology, and value in audience-centered terms'.[131] Marxist belief in transparency in language is related to its political praxis: Marxism is a 'science' which 'unmasks' power and makes social relations 'transparent', as opposed to capitalism which attempts to conceal the real power structures in society ('mystification'). It originated with *The Communist Manifesto* where metaphors of 'secrecy/openness and opacity/transparency' organised 'arguments about political strategy', that radicalism had 'to be "manifest"', and that it would lay 'bare [the] social reality' of capitalism.[132]This translated into a belief that it is only necessary to *show* the working class the *need* for Marxism because Marxists have assumed 'the need for revolution' to be 'self-evident, without considering that people might need to be persuaded to that belief'.[133] Such an approach was evident in MT's first format.

Marxism also provides the 'necessary psychological support for party members';[134] and it helps to maintain morale through the 'inevitability thesis[135] (ie contemporaneous defeats are only temporary aberrations as history moves inexorably towards socialism). For reasons of morale, it is 'important to feel' simultaneously under threat and on the verge of victory: Communists agitators often saw 'signs of the gathering revolution in every street demonstration and strike' to sustain people's allegiance to the struggle yet, at the same time, exaggerated the dangers in order to rouse workers to struggle.[136] Even during the disastrous Third Period, 1928-35, Marxist theory provided Communist pamphleteers with the assurance of 'ultimate triumph'.[137]The importance of ideology is clear:

> Statements of ideology must provide definition of that which is ambiguous in the social situation, give structure to anxiety and a tangible target for hostility, foster in-group feelings, and articulate wish-fulfillment beliefs about the movement's power to succeed.[138]

Communist propagandists 'did not have to invent explanations' for political and social

[130] John Lloyd cited in Chesshyre 1987.
[131] Aune 1994: 42.
[132] *Ibid.*: 34.
[133] *Ibid.*: 14.
[134] Burgchardt 1980: 382.
[135] Hirschman 1991 cited in *ibid.*
[136] *Ibid.*: 383.
[137] *Ibid.*: 380.
[138] Simons 1970: 5.

developments because Marxism 'provided a system comprehensive enough to support the convictions of the group; it answered all questions and quelled all doubts'.[139] However, Marxism has also acted as a 'moral critic' of generations of workers who chose 'social-democratic reformism instead of "socialism"',[140] which explains why its rhetoric 'doesn't so much assume that the reader agrees with what is being said, but, rather, implies that those who disagree are engaged in self-conscious heresy'.[141]

For the British CP in the 1980s, MT did not fulfil these expectations. Instead, MT promoted a more 'realistic' view of contemporary struggles, in which there was no longer the same kind of assurances of ultimate victory, and interrogated and undermined Communist and Labour orthodoxies. Nevertheless, it did offer a 'tangible target for hostility' (ie Thatcherism), which offered a focus for thinking about a strategy to achieve hegemony (MT argued that the Left could learn from their opponents). As ideological constraints loosened and MT gained greater autonomy and control over the production process, it gained greater flexibility in rhetorical strategies: 'one's ideology constrains the arguments one uses and colors [sic] the presentation of those arguments'.[142]

MT's success in gaining access to the public sphere was dependent upon textual changes which marked a shift in its accessibility over three decades. An overview of this shift is obtained through a FOG index analysis of two articles, one feature and one non-feature, per issue per year at five and ten year intervals.[143] The FOG index provides a method for determining the general level of reading comprehension required for an article.[144] The lesser the number, the lesser the level of education needed to comprehend the article: the lower figures have a greater number of short sentences and fewer complex words (three or more syllables). A figure of '10' on the FOG index is considered accessible to the 'average 15-year-old secondary school pupil', between '14' and '16' requires an average university-level education and over '18' is considered 'too difficult for newspapers'. Some benchmark figures are: *Daily Mail*: 9.5; *The Times*: 18; and tabloid newspapers, like *The Sun*, usually rate less than 9; *Socialist Review* (SWP monthly) articles average between 10 and 11.[145]

The FOG index analysis suggests a gradual, but significant, shift in MT's overall average accessibility rate between 1958 and 1988, except for 1973-1978 and despite some large discrepancies within each year's sample, the overall shift over thirty years demonstrates a significant improvement in accessibility: 18.4 to 16.0, in features; 16.8 to 15.1, in non-features. This is also supported by the increase in the total number of articles

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[139] Burgchardt 1980: 382-83.
[140] Aune 1994: 26.
[141] Edgar 1991/92: 35. Contributors were discouraged from writing in that manner (Jacques 1996b; Taylor 1995; Townsend 1996).
[142] Solomon 1988: 184; see also McGee 1980.
[143] Tables 7.4 and 7.5. Regular contributors were selected over others, although none was chosen more than once in each year.
[144] It is a method used by both scholars and journalists (Fulkerson 1993; Hennesey 1997).
[145] Hennesey 1997: 22. The SR figures are based on the author's analysis of four articles.

in the sample (out of 24 per year) which did not require any university education (ie below 14.0) over the same period: 6 in 1958, 4 in 1968, 7 in 1973, 4 in 1978, and 9 in both 1983 and 1988.

Table 7.4: FOG Index Rating for Features, 1958-1988

	1958	1968	1973	1978	1983	1988
January	23.1	19.6	23.1	16.4	25.1	17.1
February	17.7	17.6	13.2	11.5	11.3	14.5
March	16.1	16.6	17.0	16.9	11.2	20.6
April	17.3	13.2	12.4	16.6	13.3	15.9
May	17.5	25.6	16.1	17.7	14.3	11.9
June	25.4	14.8	12.8	16.6	15.0	12.3
July	18.0	18.4	18.0	15.4	15.0	18.7
August	25.2	18.0	18.1	20.3	14.2	15.9
September	18.2	19.2	17.9	20.0	16.7	16.3
October	17.1	17.0	16.4	22.8	13.3	13.6
November	8.8	11.6	21.0	16.1	20.4	20.9
December	16.7	13.4	17.8	25.6	13.1	13.7
AVERAGE	18.4	17.1	17.0	18.0	15.2	16.0

Table 7.5: FOG Index Rating for Non-Feature Contributions, 1958-1988[146]

	1958	1968	1973	1978	1983	1988
January	14.6	15.1	15.7	20.3	12.4	21.7
February	10.5	20.9	16.5	20.4	19.3	11.8
March	27.0	16.1	27.2	20.8	14.6	16.0
April	13.3	14.0	19.2	13.9	25.6	19.1
May	17.6	27.0	19.4	15.3	15.4	11.9
June	13.4	18.3	13.4	22.1	11.8	18.9
July	12.8	14.5	13.5	21.2	20.4	9.7
August	26.6	20.4	16.6	17.9	13.8	16.1
September	19.7	19.7	13.4	19.6	18.0	9.8
October	16.3	18.3	15.9	17.3	15.5	14.0
November	18.0	19.9	20.8	11.9	19.7	10.9
December	11.3	11.0	11.9	13.0	11.9	21.7
AVERAGE	16.8	17.9	17.0	17.8	16.5	15.1

[146] If no discussion contribution was available then a non-feature article was selected (eg alternately from 'Focus' and 'Channel Five'/'Culture' in 1983 and 1988).

The worst year is 1968 because its average FOG index rating is the highest for non-features and, although for features it is slightly below that for 1958 and 1978, it has the most articles above *The Times*'s rating of 18.0: 11 out of 24: 1978 is a close second with 10. 1968 included the highest number of CP-related reprints (21), more than double the next highest year, 1973 (10), contributing to the overall difficulty of MT, and restricting the accessibility of many articles to those with a university education. The decrease in accessibility from 1973 to 1978 is due to the popularity of continental theory and Eurocommunism. This influx of new ideas and concepts had to be balanced out with the desire to reach readers beyond one's supporters *and* the marketplace pressure to sell as many copies as possible.

There are clear differences in the language, writing styles and rhetorical strategies between the two editorships. These represent different approaches and different philosophies and objectives, which are necessary to investigate in order to understand the success of MT in reaching the mainstream during the 1980s. In MT's last issue, regular contributor and MTEB member, David Edgar, offered a synopsis of MT's 'style': The typical feature:

> began by identifying a left shibboleth, and then proceeded to a sober ... listing of those factors which might incline the reader to a more flexible and iconoclastic view of the matter, concluding with the statement that the Left had ignored this issue for too long (and would continue to do so only at its peril)...[147]

This approach developed out of the same tradition of dialectics that informed Marxist writing.[148] This section will concentrate on important differences in rhetorical strategies and writing styles, which aided MT's entry into the mainstream, drawing upon a few representative articles.

Although most periodicals have a 'house style', Klugmann's MT did not because it was not consciously recognised as an issue and due to the numerous translations of international CP speeches and documents.[149] This changed under Jacques because, in addition to banning most official CP items, considerable effort was expended through the production process to establish and enforce a house style.

Although Klugmann did attempt to make articles more readable, MT's writing style was not adapted to its ambitions. Readers were addressed as party members, who were expected to be familiar with Marxist concepts and interested in deepening their understanding of Marxism. No thought was given to the necessity of adapting MT's language and writing style because it was believed that anyone interested would learn whatever was necessary: 'Anglo-Marxist humanism', the party discourse, was 'a rhetoric

[147] Edgar 1991/92: 35.
[148] *Ibid.*
[149] Table 7.3.

with which any interested party members could acquaint themselves and even become conversant' (and some did).[150] It was difficult to be flexible with this rhetoric as long as the editor followed the party leadership.

MT's transformation began almost immediately under Jacques. It had to overcome 'the diversity of style and language' and 'areas of relative incomprehensibility',[151] to occupy two different spaces on the Left: one for an internal audience; the other for a broad audience of activists and intellectuals.[152] A third audience of progressives outside the organised Left was targeted by 1986. To find writers that could address all the audiences meant increasing the range of contributors (from party officers and intellectuals, to feminists, unionists and social activists, to journalists, writers and politicians) and concerns (politics, popular culture and lifestyle).

MT offered a space for journalists to write in greater depth, while academics were offered a platform to try and reach an audience outside the university. Jacques wanted writing that was 'conjunctural and strategic',[153] which meant combining the best aspects of journalism and scholarly writing. While journalists were good at writing, they were not very good at organising deeper arguments; academics, however, could organise and develop arguments and think in a strategic sense, but because they tended to write about the abstract, their writing was often not concrete enough for the general reader.[154] Academics can get away with a more obtuse writing style because, professionally, their audiences have to read their articles; journalists, however, have to be able to interest people in what they are saying.[155]

Since 'nothing destroys a magazine's claims to authority more swiftly and comprehensively than spelling mistakes ... grammatical ineptitude and sub-editing errors', scrupulous attention to detail is 'a critical part of the process of producing the right magazine'.[156] Interventionist editing, sub-editing and proof-reading were crucial to the development of MT's house style under Jacques, which helped to establish its credibility. A feature would be worked through in consultation between editor and contributor; rather than correcting the copy himself, Jacques would push the contributor to work through the article's political implications during the revision process.[157] Two leading contributors illustrate the difference in the level of input required: Eric Hobsbawm was a 'one draft writer', while Stuart Hall 'often had to work through four or five drafts'.[158]

A comparison of the lead paragraphs on the same topic, the National Health Service (NHS), written 13 years apart by the same author, illustrates differences in tone and style

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150 Fishman 1994: 157; Johnstone 1995.
151 Alce 1977.
152 Jacques 1996b.
153 Analysing the current situation with an understanding of how to move forward (*Ibid.*).
154 *Ibid.*
155 Scholars have to be careful, however, if they write accessibly (eg Cohen 1993; Gitlin 1991; Kostelanetz 1995).
156 Morrish 1996: 101, 106.
157 Jacques 1996b.
158 *Ibid.*; Hall 1997.

between the two editorships. Steve Illiffe's first piece, written in 1975, also demonstrates that by the mid-1970s some attention was being paid to drawing readers in.

> At one time or another the whole question of health care is of personal concern to us all. That alone makes it a topic worth close attention. More specifically, the current conflicts within the health service are a revealing window on to wider social and political affairs. The Marxist truism that monopoly drives even its own middle strata into alliance with the working class can be critically evaluated by a close look at the health professions; and the consequences of the Social Democrat's careful complicity with the ideology of the dominant class are charted by the progressive crisis in the National Health Service.....[159]

There is an attempt to draw the reader in by working back from the broad issue of health care in the opening sentence (the 'us' is inclusive of all, party members or not) and justifying the topic. However, the fourth sentence uses concepts which were specific to the CP: the 'Marxist truism' is only a truism for Communists.

However, the second excerpt reveals a very different style. The standfirst's short sentences set an initial breathless pace, hoping to draw the reader in: 'All hell has broken out in the NHS. It is open revolt. But where will it lead?'.[160]The introductory paragraph, working off of the standfirst, changes tact, tone and even, momentarily, topics: 'urgency' gives way to 'reflection', as the NHS gives way to the 'news'.

> Odd thing, news. Most probably babies have died waiting for heart operations before this autumn, but only recently did one catch the PM's eye. Perhaps the close attention of media lenses sharpened her vision. At long last, the NHS is turning on the government. Health authorities are threatened with legal action by their professional employees, copying mutiny from porters and cleaners. Stern surgeons, flanked (as ever) by nurses, spread petition pages for cameras, with Downing Street as the backdrop.[161]

The 1975 article's introductory paragraph is more than twice as long as the 1988 one (182 words to 79). Illiffe provides detailed descriptions of different responses, particularly of those who are not usually 'on the barricades', which helps to concretise the severity of the crisis, which acts as 'evidence'. The author sets out to explain why the present focus on the NHS is new and presents the reasons by describing the crisis' escalation since 1983. Even though his metaphors are not always imaginative (eg clinics 'whittled away'), Illiffe uses descriptions to build image upon image of 'petitions by the hundreds', 'sad stories of treatment refused' and angry protests, fleshing out each step before presenting a clear statement of his argument.[162]

This second writing style is closer to that of broadsheets: all the words, phrases and acronyms are ones readers are familiar with. This writing style is more successful

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159 Illiffe 1975: 68.
160 Illiffe 1988: 10.
161 *Ibid.*
162 *Ibid.*

'ideologically' because, as with journalism, it conveys meanings via the 'plain style' of language and writing:[163] for example, there are no discrepancies between denotations and connotations of words used in the 1988 article and those used in a centre-left broadsheet, like *The Guardian*.[164]

Contributors in the first format drew upon non-party sources, such as government and unions, scholarly research and other left publications. Although non-CP sources were used, these tended to be government and trade union statistics when it was useful in supporting the analysis in the article concerned.[165] Sometimes assertions were made but little or no proof is provided, because it is already a belief held by Communists: 'Marxist ideas cannot be ignored. Millions of words are written against them, but they continue to be a growing source of attraction to non-manual workers'.[166] Certain types of proof are more persuasive than others: unfortunately, what MT writers thought persuasive was true only for party members and not others. Communist writers have to work harder to convince non-Communists of their ideas because of long-standing biases and the negative legacy of the USSR promoted through the media.

Early in this century, socialists were warned against tendencies towards dogmatic assertions, jargon-laden rhetoric and sloganeering, advice which appears to have gone unheeded by most organisations in the 20th century, including the CPGB.[167] The consequences of belonging to 'an alienated group', however, is that these tendencies do have an important function in maintaining an organisation's identity in the face of external threats, such as those faced by the CP after 1945 and 1956: thus, Marxist rhetoric has usually been 'self-directed': orientated to solidifying group membership rather than persuading the public.[168] Solidification is the rhetorical processes 'by which an agitating group produces or reinforces the cohesiveness of its members, thereby increasing their responsiveness to group wishes': these tactics include specific words and phrases (or 'jargon'), slogans, songs and 'in-group publications'.[169] In-group publications, with names that are usually 'themselves esoteric symbols' (eg*Marxism Today*, *World Revolution*) and content that is 'likely to stress in-group symbols, stories, and biases', serve polarization and promulgation functions.[170] The solidification process dominated the early years of Klugmann's editorship, despite its other role a rational to win over progressive, non-party intellectuals.

To look more closely, two articles covering the same topic, the composition of the

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[163] Cameron 1995; Kenner 1990; Lanham 1974.
[164] A style sheet had been adapted from a copy of the *Sunday Times* (Townsend 1996). By 1988, there were more journalists than any other group contributing to MT (Chapter 6). Also, Jacques was influenced by the FT, which he had read since he was a postgraduate student (Jacques 1996d).
[165] Eg Egelnick 1964; Illiffe 1975; Pearce 1971.
[166] Egelnick 1964: 246.
[167] Fogarasi 1921; Workers' Life 1928.
[168] Burgchardt 1980: 382.
[169] Bowers and Ochs 1971: 20, 26.
[170] *Ibid.*: 26.

working class and its relationship to socialist politics, representative of the general trends in subject material,[171] written by occasional contributors, provide a useful comparison of some important differences between the writing and rhetorical styles of each editorship: Egelnick's focus is more economy-orientated, whereas McLennan draws upon social and cultural examples and trends to illustrate his perspective. First, a general sense of the differences in accessibility between the two styles is provided by the FOG index: Max Egelnick's article rates 20.4, a level which is too difficult for broadsheets, to Gregor McLennan's 14.4, a level in-between *The Daily Mail* and *The Times* (an undergraduate educational level required). Egelnick's title, 'Non-Manual Workers in the Sixties', published in August 1964, defines the article's topic at its most basic (in contrast to its FOG level). This was standard for feature titles in the first format, with declarative statements indicating subject matter: 'The Function of Film in Working Class Struggle'; 'Health Care and the Medical Profession'![172] McLennan's April 1984 article, 'Class Conundrum', not only gives some indication of its content, but it is also creative and more likely to pique the reader's interest via rhetorical devices such as sound patterning (ie alliteration), as used in other titles: 'Sixteen: Sweet or Sorry?'; 'The New Nostalgia'.[173]

Egelnick's article consists of 114 paragraphs separated into 13 sections over eight pages; the article's fragmented look is reinforced by several one sentence paragraphs of between nine and 60 words. These are used inappropriately: one idea is often separated into two or three paragraphs, a feature more common in newspapers than intellectual journals. By contrast, McLennan's article has 33, mostly long, paragraphs, with the shortest one consisting of 44 words; broken into seven sections over four pages, it also includes three quotes, two advertisements and one untitled photograph of workers: the paragraphs appear to be a little long for the second format because of narrow columns, demonstrating a contradiction between the desire for a magazine-like format and the continuance of journal-style articles.

Both articles obviously tend towards the passive voice, as with most academic writing styles, but the proliferation of dependent clauses in compound sentences intensify the awkwardness of the prose. This is especially true of Egelnick's sentences, even though they are grammatically correct. The constant repetition of particular phrases performs an important role in the solidification process and in demonstrating the 'veracity' of the analysis to party policy, but it also contributes to awkward syntax (eg 'building maximum united opposition to monopoly') and repetition (eg 'the advance to socialism' is used throughout Egelnick's article, even twice in one sentence), making the article dull and unimaginative.[174]

The qualities of effective style are essentially 'variations of the theme that language

[171] Table 7.1.
[172] Green 1973; Illiffe 1975.
[173] Cockburn 1986; Edgar 1987a.
[174] Egelnick 1964: 242. This is also true of the frequent contributors (eg Pearce 1971).

should be correct, clear, appropriate and vivid'.[175] Correctness in style means, at the most basic level, using words accurately and being grammatically correct; at a more complex level, it takes into account 'whether the speaker's words are faithful to the speaker's thoughts and to the world of facts'.[176] Clarity refers to the degree to which an author's intended meanings are conveyed accurately to the audience and this 'necessitates using words that are familiar to the audience and typically words that are specific and unambiguous': 'concrete' words.[177]

Even though leading Communists recognised nearly 70 years ago that finding 'a common language with the broadest masses', was not only necessary for 'struggling against the class enemy', but also for 'overcoming the isolation of the revolutionary vanguard from the masses',[178] they have continued to use a special vocabulary or 'jargon' which is not generally understood outside Communist circles. This is where the common usage of words is adopted, increasing MT's likelihood of access to the mainstream. Jacques avoided the worst excesses and the writing achieved greater clarity, although there could only ever be a partial shift from abstract to concrete words because abstract words are necessary in any kind of intellectual endeavour.

The most obvious differences in style between the two MTs can be found in diction. That MT's first format was written by and for Marxists is obvious: concepts such as 'petite bourgeoisie' and 'surplus value' were used, as well as more common words that were given very specific meanings, such as 'monopoly', that were often only understood by CP members. It is this 'strangeness' of Marxist discourse that distances its potential audiences: Marxism is 'a rhetoric by and for intellectuals rather than workers';[179] and as such, its terms do not appeal to those they are ostensibly meant to address.[180] This language lacked appeal even in the 1930s, when Communist pamphleteers' expressed their '[a]cceptance of violence' through martial language and 'images and metaphors of natural violence - floods, storms, hurricanes, and volcanoes', seemed to alienate non-Communists.[181] Jacques rejected much of the militaristic language and 'macho' style of classical Marxism because it did not appeal to many outside the Marxist Left, in the women's or other social movements.[182]

However, it is not always the words that Egelnick used that were necessarily difficult, but that particular word combinations or phrases signified something different from their common usage. For example:

Will monopoly win back the support of the non-manual workers and so retard the

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[175] Most authorities on style agree on these aspects: some, like Aristotle, see 'correctness' as part of 'clarity' (Cohen 1998: 37).
[176] *Ibid.*: 37-38.
[177] *Ibid.*: 38.
[178] Georgi Dimitrov cited in Hobsbawm 1984b: 10.
[179] Aune 1994: 26.
[180] Eg Kazin 1988.
[181] Burgchardt 1980: 379.
[182] Brunt 1987c; Cockburn 1988.

advance to socialism, or will there be a strengthening of the unity of manual and non-manual workers, so vital to isolating monopoly and curbing its power, thus building the broad alliance and advancing to socialism?[183]

This excerpt demonstrates that even when using concrete and unambiguous words, it was not necessarily comprehensible except to the initiated. Phrases, such as 'building the broad alliance' or 'isolating monopoly and curbing its power', often had specific meanings. The differences in McLennan's writing are readily apparent.

> Non-class issues, let me say, are eminently issues which working class people rank as important. But they are not best described as class issues, because they affect everyone regardless of class, and they are important to working people as *citizens* rather than as workers.[184]

McLennan uses concrete words also but in terms of meanings accepted through common usage, so that even if some phrases are a little awkward, such as 'working class people', they are still generally understood. His phrases are less ambiguous and abstract because they emphasise humanity ('people') over more abstract aspects, such as stratification or function ('working', 'workers', 'class'), and McLennan ascribes agency to 'working class people' (the phrase is also more inclusive because 'people' does not preclude workers' families).

McLennan's use of basic compound sentences and the active voice (in the second sentence) to convey his ideas in a simple and relatively straightforward fashion, the '1,2,3 syntax' of the 'plain style', is more convincing than Egelnick's piece.[185] The dependent clauses, abstract words and party phrases composed in the passive voice make Egelnick's piece a torturous read: in places, the meaning is unclear: exactly who is doing the 'strengthening of the unity of non-manual and manual workers' (ie workers, unions or the CP)? The problem with the rhetoric of Klugmann's MT is that agency is either the prerogative of an abstract entity (eg monopoly, vanguard party) or it remains unstated.

Egelnick's writing is grammatically awkward (eg inappropriate use of pronouns), mixes its metaphors (eg 'boundaries are narrowing between office and factory workers') and has poor syntax throughout (although there are no spelling mistakes).[186] The rigorous subediting and proofreading processes helped ensure that few spelling, syntactic and grammatical mistakes were made, a simple yet crucial aspect in conveying a periodical's authority.

Vividness is about creating images in the minds of the audience and it is an important element in good journalism.[187] Words are to be used in imaginative and non-literal ways, as with figures of speech (eg simile, metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche), which can be

[183] Egelnick 1964: 242.
[184] McLennan 1984: 32 (original emphasis).
[185] Kenner 1990.
[186] Egelnick 1964: 241. The metaphor should read: 'the gap is narrowing' or 'boundaries are disappearing'.
[187] Evans 1972; Keeble 1994.

very persuasive,[188] but can also involve a 'clear and precise vocabulary, an active grammatical structure, and evidence in the form of examples'.[189] MT's critique of the Left was enhanced by an ability to provide vivid images which were difficult to resist or refute: the strong negative reactions of sections of the Left can be explained by some degree of accuracy in these representations. For example, criticisms of 'middle class socialists' has been a lucrative ground for drawing out the contradictions between material desires and ideals and between working class conservatives and middle class socialists, at least since the 1960s. Hobsbawm and Hall penned some of the more memorable examples. In the 'Culture Gap', Hall sketches out the 'inverted puritanism' of 'middle class socialists' who:

> heaving under the weight of their new hi-fis, their record collections, their videos and strip pine shelving ... sometimes seem to prefer 'their' working class poor but*pure*: unsullied by contact with the market.[190]

Hall conveys his critique through this image which is both concrete and believable: his image of a 'straw man' is explained by providing descriptions of goods ('strip pine shelving') which help connotate attributes which will resonate with readers (perhaps, recognising their own limitations). Hobsbawm's criticisms could be equally scathing. Those on the Left, for example, who argued that Labour's difficulties were part of a painful transition from Labourism to Socialism, were likened to: 'oarsmen being congratulated on their rowing much better than ever before while the boat is being swept to the rapids'.[191] Or the image of Trotskyists as a 'rent-a-mob' in right-wing tabloids was more bitingly lampooned by Hobsbawm as, 'photo-fit hard-liners'.[192]

There was no attempt with the first format to adopt a more suitable language or rhetorical strategy to persuade people (eg 'But now we have not only the powerful rise of mass resistance to Tory attacks on wages').[193] Like the Communist pamphleteers in the 1930s, who could not take up the advice of *The Nation* to talk in 'realistic and intelligible terms' to win over the public, Klugmann's MT was constrained by ideology![194]

Under Jacques, however, MT sought to do exactly this, with most Marxist terms, including 'comrade', 'proletariat' and 'bourgeoisie', excluded. Nevertheless, despite attempts to mitigate against the use of jargon, many new writers in the first half of the 1980s still adopted a style and vocabulary which they assumed was in keeping with MT's subtitle.[195] However, it was a gradual process and some Communist rhetoric did survive, apparent even in an accomplished rhetorician like Hobsbawm. For example, Hobsbawm's

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[188] Cohen 1998; Sontag 1989.
[189] Cohen 1998: 39-40.
[190] Hall 1984a: 19.
[191] Hobsbawm 1984b: 9.
[192] Hobsbawm 1985: 12.
[193] Pearce 1971: 6.
[194] Cited in Burgchardt 1980: 381.
[195] Townsend 1984: 1.

reply to debate in March 1984 demonstrates similarities with the earlier style:

> 'Labour's Lost Millions' ... was not a call for retreat into opportunism making the best of a bad job, but a call for advance. It did not even see the broad anti-Thatcherite front which is surely essential today, as a mere defence against encroaching reaction.[196]

The awkwardness in Hobsbawm's prose is evidence that this legacy was not dispensed with overnight (eg 'retreat into opportunism', 'defence against encroaching reaction'); and despite his skills at creating vivid images, he did use clich s (eg 'making the best of a bad job'). Yet, the use of military metaphors is hard to avoid in most political writing, socialist or conservative.

Although most Marxist terms were eliminated after 1979, it did not ensure that its pages were 'jargon-free'. The continuing influence of continental theorists (especially through cultural studies) brought complex terms (eg hegemony, interpellation) into MT, which some readers found as opaque as others had found pre-1977 debates.[197] Complaints shifted from Marxist debates to Gramscian concepts, from concerns over topics to issues about language, as with the shifts in contemporary debates over representation.[198] These complaints are also an indication of the changing composition of the audience: new, non-party readers drawn in by reprints in *The Guardian* might respond negatively to older, unfamiliar terms, while new 'jargon' was more likely to provoke older, CP readers wanting the reassurance of 'propaganda'. Nevertheless, it should be noted that both editors did also receive compliments for tackling subjects often ignored by the Left and Jacques, in particular, was praised for making them accessible.[199]

Informal writing and speech patterns were more apparent in 'Discussion' items in Klugmann's MT than in the features, except for published lectures. McLennan, however, uses colloquialisms and other signs of informality to make his article more accessible to non-party readers: his interjections with pragmatic particles, such as 'you know' and 'let me say', perform four tasks: they reinforce his writing as an individual, rather than a collective, voice; they simulate dialogue, as if he is responding to hesitations or doubts being expressed, taking part in an 'exchange' with the reader; they appeal directly to a reader's feelings; and they help emphasise the 'feeling' of the writing.[200]The interjections connotate a sense of dialogue or a process of thinking through ideas, a process which by implication is open and more conducive to engagement with readers than academic or propagandistic essays. This allows potentially controversial points to be qualified as his personal view (and not necessarily MT's): 'I want to focus on the basic idea of class politics in the context of socialist strategies'; 'I have certainly not been arguing that class

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196 Hobsbawm 1984b: 11.
197 Eg Ackers 1987; Kennett 1987.
198 Ackers 1987; Alce 1977; Hadjifotiou 1984; Kennett 1987; Klugmann 1977; Knifron 1984; Lucas 1975; MTEB 1977a, 1977b.
199 *Ibid.*
200 Lakoff 1990: 227.

or class interests are no longer relevant'.[201] Clearly, there is a homology here between writing style and MT's 'seminar' practice in its discussion groups and 'meetings culture'.

McLennan's interjections also reinforce the 'reasonableness' of his view that there is something wrong with 'class politics': this was a tactical necessity because of the increasingly vociferous opposition to MT by 1984. Furthermore, his ideas come across as reasonable despite their implications for the *raison d' tre* of both the CP and Labour: if little of any consequence can be determined by 'being' working class, then for what purpose does a 'working class party' exist? Argument by degree (probability) is persuasive, particularly if one can show that which was '*less* probable has actually happened, the *more* probable case is (proportionately) much more convincing'.[202] For example: rather than say that those who believe that 'a spontaneous class politics arising from a typical kind of labour' are wrong, McLennan is *more* persuasive by suggesting that this interpretation 'is much less convincing' than it once was; or that 'The working class, contrary to popular myth on the Left, has never been intrinsically socialist. And the myth is even less true today'; 'In all probability, then, coalitions are going to have to play a greater role in political life'.[203]

The lack of imagination in much of the writing in the early MT is evident in the use of 'dead metaphors' and clich s: 'official Labour' is 'at one' with 'monopoly' because it believes that its policies must be 'watered down' to win over non-manual workers. Even when there are attempts to revive them, they often fall flat. For example, Egelnick extends the metaphor, 'delivering the goods': non-manual workers saw 'that Labour was not delivering the goods and even that deliveries had got worse'. He is trying to express that Labour was not just failing to carry out its promises but that its policies were actually worse than expected. The metaphor is not appropriate for Egelnick's purpose, which becomes obvious once one attempts to make sense of its meaning after he extends it: if Labour is 'not delivering the goods', how can they get 'worse'?[204]

Egelnick's article also demonstrates the consequences of the Marxist belief in 'showing' rather than 'persuading'. Since workers' direct experience of life under capitalism will automatically lead them to socialism, Egelnick reasons that one only has to 'show' them that socialism will meet their 'needs': 'Whoever shows, by policy and example, that there is a solution to their problems, will win their support'.[205] This form of reductionist, economic-determinist 'logic', is more about *conviction* in one's own beliefs than in any understanding of the need to *persuade* others.[206] It also dictates a mode of reasoning which neglects to explain its own evidence. Three long quotations from CP documents from 1926, 1937 and 1951 are included to demonstrate the 'correctness' of the CP's position on non-manual workers: no interpretation is offered because it is considered

[201] McLennan 1984: 29, 31.
[202] Cockcroft and Cockcroft 1992: 68 (original emphasis).
[203] McLennan 1984: 30, 31.
[204] Egelnick 1964: 245.
[205] *Ibid.*: 246, 245.
[206] Cockcroft and Cockcroft 1992: 84-85.

self-evident.[207]

Egelnick's awkward style has more to do with *reassuring* party members that MT is attempting to address non-CP readers than it has to do with actually addressing them. It is unlikely that this other audience would have been convinced by the author because there is a lack of persuasive proof for his analysis: his evidence is typical of Klugmann's MT. The hierarchy of evidence worked in an almost inverse relationship to that of the mainstream media and which, therefore, the general (news-reading) public are less likely to find convincing: (in descending order of importance) Marx, Engels, Lenin, Harry Pollitt, John Gollan and other CPGB leaders and Marxist theoreticians, CP publications and party members, trade unions and academics, and followed at some distance by government, the media and big business. These sources of proof were valid as long as MT was addressed to CP members and sympathisers; for other readers, however, these sources would not have been as convincing. Only one quote out of nine is from a 'primary definer' (government), three are from trade union officials and the remaining five are CP sources. All but one of the longest quotes (15 lines plus) are from party documents and speeches, cited uncritically as evidence to support the author's thesis and the 'correctness' of the CP.

McLennan, on the other hand, draws upon government statistics and makes reference to survey data and MT contributors (eg Hall) and themes (forward march, Thatcherism). The analysis which McLennan provides in this article is largely qualitative, discussing different interpretations and developing convincing images of his ideas or criticisms. Nevertheless, Lenin and other Communist leaders were drawn upon by other contributors, such as Hobsbawm, to help persuade CP readers to reconsider orthodoxies (such evidence became less important by the late 1980s): "'To march forward without compromise without turning from the path' - if this is said by an obviously impotent minority of workers ... then the slogan is obviously mistaken".[208]

Egelnick is not challenging the party line: in fact, he is trying to persuade party members to take on board the CP's line and overcome their prejudices against non-manual workers. However, articles which appeared to challenge the 'party line' were still well within the party's ideological parameters, though they were not above using controversy in attempting to draw readers in. For example, Jack Dunman's August 1965 reappraisal of Rudyard Kipling generated mixed reactions.[209] William Ash was adamant that the party line was 'correct': contemptuous of contrary views, he called Dunman's article 'a re estimation of imperialism'.[210] Ash reduces Kipling the author (and attendant aesthetic, cultural, social and political issues) to a mere *cypher* of British imperialism. There is little hope for open debate if differing views are seen as tantamount to betrayal: 'It is the proper

[207] Egelnick seems at a loss when introducing some quotations: introducing the 1937 resolution, for example, he writes, 'Its resolution on *Unity* contained the following words' (Egelnick 1964: 245).
[208] V. I. Lenin cited in Hobsbawm 1984b: 9.
[209] Dunman 1965.
[210] Ash 1965: 311.

task of *Marxism Today*°to help combat imperialist ideology in Britain, not to give currency to imperialist apologetics'.[211] The tone of this reply, which demonstrates a rigid unwillingness to consider other views, represents a substantial proportion of published responses in the first format.[212]

Articles in the first format usually ended up pointing out the position of the CP or the labour movement and what might happen without the Left's attention; sometimes there was a proposal about the best position for the Left to take.[213] Marxists expect to see explanations and analyses, which demonstrate their correctness by a reference to Marxist theory: 'the belief that, if you get a political line right, everything else will fall into place'.[214] This had developed under the CP's bureaucratic practices into the 'maxim' that '"once the political line is decided organisation decides all"'; political debate, subsequently, becomes secondary to the party once 'the line' is agreed.[215] This self-justificatory approach in which the analysis and strategy put forward by the party is always correct becomes tautological.

> They [the people] want an analysis of our society, a definition of the socialist alternative and the forces which can drive towards it. A study of the *British Road to Socialism* shows how effectively it meets this need.[216]

The author assumes that the CP manifesto (the BRS) will be accepted unquestioningly by the reader without recognising that non-party readers might need to be persuaded to accept such a document.

As demonstrated above, changes in writing styles were also about changes in ideology: Communist rhetoric uses Marxism 'as a philosophical underpinning and as a source of evidence,' quoting Marx and his successors as 'proof'.[217] For example, the definitions of, and proposed solutions to, political, economic and social problems depend upon the 'pervasive role of Marxist theory in their arguments', and it is safe to assume that these were not very convincing except to those already predisposed to Communist beliefs.[218] Marxist rhetoric could at least be seen as a 'distortion and exaggeration' because the means by which Communist writers sought to convince others was to draw upon a rhetoric which 'inappropriately described a world much more brutal and desolate than the one that actually confronted the majority'.[219] Proof that was acceptable to Communists and Marxists would not necessarily persuade all socialists, let alone the public. Under Jacques, MT recognised the limitations of particular beliefs which

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211 *Ibid.*: 312.
212 Eg youth culture debate: Boyd 1973; Fauvet 1974; Filling 1974.
213 Eg Hawthorn 1973; Lindsay 1958; Simon 1968. This was not unlike Jacques's MT (Edgar 1991/92).
214 Jacques quoted in Chesshyre 1987.
215 Eg Andrews 1995a: 242; Cook 1978b.
216 Pearce 1971: 9.
217 Burgchardt 1980: 380.
218 *Ibid.*: 377-78.
219 *Ibid.*: 378.

constrained the questions asked and the answers offered.

IV. *Marxism Today* as a Rhetorical Intervention

Marxism Today's success in gaining access to the public sphere was due to its ability to orchestrate an effective intervention into debates on the Left. The themes of MT's political project were promoted through its rhetorical strategy as expressed not only through the topics of the articles and the authors willing to write for MT, but also through the combination of elements throughout the magazine, including the cover, advertising, promotional copy, quotes, etc. This strategy was important in addressing the MT's primary audiences, especially during the crisis of the Left under Thatcherism. By examining a key issue, the importance of these factors to MT's success will become apparent: the April 1985 issue exemplifies MT's ability to weave these different elements together into an effective rhetorical intervention.

Symbolically, the use of a single, unidentified miner as the cover image is ambiguous: as a signifier for all miners, the image emphasises the individual over the collective. The miner's face even hints at a smile rather than anger or desperation. As pointed out in semiotic approaches to news images, it is not just the images that are chosen but those that are *not* chosen (the paradigmatic axis):[220] although the image may not have been out of place on some newsmagazines' covers, it was unusual for a left periodical given the range of choices, the intensity of the conflict (eg the 'Battle of Orgreave'), previous covers (ie June 1984 cover had Thatcher and a miner confronting each other) and the mythical status of miners in socialist folklore. There were no heroic images of striking miners on a picket line or battling police.[221]

MT approached the topic cautiously for fear of alienating large numbers of 'centrists' and the leadership. MT wanted to address those readers who were similarly disposed but had to be careful in its criticisms of the National Union of Mineworkers' (NUM) leadership because the traditionalists would have tried to use it against MT (ie as a 'betrayal' of the miners). MT was trying to reach two different audiences without alienating either one. Two features assessed the miners' strike: one was written by an historian and member of the Welsh CP, Hywel Francis, and the other was a roundtable, which included two NUM officials, who were also CP members, George Bolton and Alan Baker, chaired by Dave Priscott (EC and MTEB member). The one article provided perspective on the miners but it was the roundtable which did the most to 'voice' the views of miners' union officers and CP members. Although cautious, it too criticised the leadership of the strike.

Equally significant was the choice of words that helped anchor the meaning of the cover image. The more traditional types of responses one would expect from the Left after such an intense conflict would have included words and phrases like 'struggle',

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220 Hall 1973; Thwaites et al. 1994.

221 The closest any picture inside MT came to depicting collectivity among the miners, was that of a group of miners going to work.

'betrayal', 'fight to the finish' or 'standing fast against provocation'. Instead, the phrase, 'Down but not out' (although printed in white: a colour normally used to signify neutrality or surrender), is appropriate for the circumstances: trying to appeal to both sides. It balances those who refused to accept that the miners' had suffered a defeat with those who had been critical of the NUM leadership's prosecution of the strike. The statement encapsulates MT's 'realistic' approach in dealing with issues 'as they are', but still reflects some hope. Nevertheless, the phrase itself is sufficiently ambiguous as to be acceptable to those who refused to accept that the miners had been defeated (they preferred to call it a 'setback'). 'Down' can denotate a state of penury or depression, which given the miners' situation was also a valid description, but more overtly it connotates the progress of a fight, especially a boxing match: it recognises their defeat as (possibly) 'temporary', not a 'knock-out' blow, and even offers some, albeit limited, optimism for the future ('not out').

Hobsbawm's 'Retreating into Extremism', however, was the most important feature signposted on the cover by author and title (red on black letters connotating danger, communism, syndicalism). Other articles signposted on the cover were selected to attract as broad a readership as possible, with articles on Gorbachev, fashion, Aids and 'A Passage to India', but did not have the same immediacy, purpose or emphasis as the cover features. April was not usually an important issue, except that this one was special because the biennial CP congress had been brought forward six months to May to resolve internal divisions and reassert party control over the *Morning Star* and it was necessary to win over party members and delegates.[222]

MT had to be cautious in the run-up to congress because, even though the traditionalists' likelihood of success was increasingly remote, the conflict could sink the party *and* MT. Hobsbawm's article spearheaded MT's efforts to disarm the internal opposition. He deals explicitly with MT's role in anticipation of attacks on MT and the reformists, and launches a pre-emptive strike against the traditionalists' four key arguments, leaving 'aside simple name calling'.[223] He draws upon CP traditions as well as Marx, Lenin and R.P. Dutt in support of his analysis, which may not have convinced non-party readers so much as party members: these were the same authorities which traditionalists sought to invoke in support of their claims.

Even before one begins to read the articles in any depth, paratextual elements like titles, standfirsts and quotes, set out from the text by different size fonts, typefaces, floating columns and lines, help anchor the meanings. (Hobsbawm's feature carried a more provocative title, 'The Retreat into Extremism', in MT than the reprint in*The Guardian*,°'The Broad Attack on Thatcher'.) The standfirst on page seven initially seems more equivocal than the title: 'The Left is faced with a new and dangerous enemy ... or perhaps it isn't. The Left has to seek the broadest alliances ... or perhaps it doesn't'. However, as Hobsbawm makes clear, this is not really a choice because if the Left were

222 Organisational battles over branches and delegate selection were ongoing (Chapter 3).
223 Hobsbawm 1985: 7.

to ignore Thatcherism it would obviously be unable to offer any alternative, which is his point in the first place: there is not really a 'choice' because one cannot ignore the hegemonic force in society.

The quotes were unambiguous: 'class politics is not necessarily *good*° class politics'; 'Ken Livingstone and the House of Lords have clearly not committed themselves to a lifelong alliance'; 'building the New Jerusalem like a 1960s tower block'; and 'the ready made set of slogans chanted by photo-fit hard-liners'.[224] These quotes represent some of MT's effective use of figures of speech in creating vivid, memorable images. For example, the simile, 'building a New Jerusalem like a 1960s tower block', is used to associate the qualities of the 1960s tower block with 'socialist utopia'. The 1960s tower block was widely recognised as unpopular by the 1980s: 'socialist utopia' is equated to a tower block, which was 'built' (sic) for the working class by the middle class (who did not have to live in it). Using the 19th century phrase for socialist utopia, not only invokes the religious references (and is implicitly linked to the CP ad, 'Tablets', discussed below), but also reinforces the connotations of the datedness of 'socialism'. The simile rather neatly associates the traditionalists' programme with the 'qualities' of the tower block, the result of elitist, unrepresentative and undemocratic planning: there is the implication that their 'socialist utopia' ignores the concerns and desires of the working class.

The other two features flesh out MT's attempt to appeal to other NSMs as part of the BDA strategy: one by a CND executive member on the peace movement; an interview with Frances Morrell, leader of the Inner London Education Authority on feminism, Labour and the 'strategic united front'. The 'Viewpoint' piece includes a response from Alan Hunt, MTEB member, criticising an earlier critique of the BDA strategy. Other examples demonstrate that appeals for the BDA were not confined just to features, 'Viewpoint' and the letters' pages either. Richard Dyer's review of 'A Passage to India' opens with a reflection of the position of the term 'liberal' in the Left's lexicon and how it was once a term of abuse, but half-way through the second term of Thatcherism, 'we may need to be a little less quick off the mark about it - right now we need all the liberals we can get'.[225] Even the article on 'Minority Television' addresses a key potential constituency of the BDA: blacks and Asians.[226]

Advertising also worked thematically, with approximately one-third related to the miners' strike. Out of a total of 60 pages including the covers, 13.33 were of advertising (plus a half-page of classifieds): 23% of the total. Significantly, this included 4.33 pages of messages of support for striking miners and their families from thirteen unions, one support group and a radical theatre company (7:84). One union, NUM Scotland, thanked readers for their support of miners' families: two of three officers listed on this ad, Michael McGahey and George Bolton supported MT (Bolton also participated in the issue's miners' strike roundtable). There was even an advertisement from TASS, a union

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224 *Ibid.*: 7 (original emphasis), 8, 10, 12.
225 Dyer 1985: 42.
226 Neverson 1985.

led by Ken Gill, an opponent of MT. Clearly, this union advertising had an important and highly symbolic role as support ('proof') for MT's position, as these ads were laid out across the feature pages.[227]

Other advertising functioned as part of the BDA strategy to bring together diverse constituencies. There were 18 ads for publishers, various left, gay, Latin American, and social movement events, journals and bookshops, plays; three co-op ads were displayed next to a 'Focus' piece on co-ops. As ads provide clues to the 'synchronicity' between editorial and advertising solicited for a particular issue, the importance and relevance of the whole is clear in MT's and the CP's ads.

A full page advertisement by MT's Development Fund for 'supporting subscribers' promoted MT's 'pioneering role on the political scene' by launching 'key debates ... and the responses required of the left'.[228] This was a 'fighting fund' appeal for financial support, typical of left papers, except that MT's appeal was based upon an overt emphasis on its achievements as a magazine (new journalism style, design, new sections, sales increases, news-stands) and an implicit understanding of its politics ('broad range of writers', 'lively controversy') rather than the conventional emphasis of left papers on their political stance. The fighting fund becomes an important part for magazines wanting to establish or sustain their independence.

The CP's full page advertisement for new members had four cartoon characters carrying stone tablets up a hillside and was captioned, 'Tablets of Stone?... or politics for Britain in the 80's?'. The CP plays on the negative connotations generated by the association of religious symbols with socialism (eg 'ten commandments' for 'the belief in Unchanging Truths about the working class'),[229] to attack internal opponents (ie traditionalists) while making claims for the party as open, forward-thinking and pluralistic. The CP's critique is part of its claim to be adapting to a changing environment and favouring the development of 'a politics for the 80's', as MT claimed: the CP was hoping to associate itself with MT's 'iconoclastic' reputation to help create a new image for public consumption. However, such rhetorical tactics may not be successful because, while the negative associations might find a receptive audience amongst non-party readers, the CP's claims on its own behalf go against 'common sense' ideas of 'Communism' and, lacking anything besides MT to claim for itself, are unlikely to be persuasive.

V. 'Thinking the Unthinkable': *Marxism Today*'s Persona

Marxism Today's task was to persuade both the Left, including the Labour Party, and the national media to take its ideas seriously. Press coverage was dependent upon MT's

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[227] However, MT's attempt to establish a section on unions, 'Union Scene', lasted only a year (October 1985-September 1986).
[228] MT 1985b: 50.
[229] It is a common rhetorical tactic, to associate the qualities of opposites with each other: hence, critiques of Marxism which associate it with religion, are insulting it because Marxists use their 'scientific socialism' against the religion, the 'opiate of the masses'.

accessibility to non-Marxists (especially journalists), which was achieved through changes to its house style, rhetorical strategies and journalistic practices, as discussed above, and also on its own 'persona'. MT set itself against popular expectations of Communist and socialist magazines to reach a broad audience and the media, creating a unique persona in the process which became a selling point for MT, though not always a welcome one.[230]

By representing itself as a magazine willing to ask awkward questions about the labour movement, contradict the Left's position on various issues and look for answers outside the Left (arguing that the Left could learn from Thatcherism), that is 'to think the unthinkable', MT made itself 'newsworthy'. MT's willingness to question left orthodoxies contributed to its success in gaining access to the public sphere as journalists took the magazine more seriously, aided by MT's prescient analyses, which ensured that its ideas were picked up and circulated through the media.

At first, MT promoted itself only as a 'topical', 'informative' and 'controversial' periodical, an 'indispensable monthly read for all on the Left' (October 1980). However, as it grew in confidence, so did its self-advertisements: 'no simplistic answers to political problems, nor duck[ing] the difficult questions' (April 1982); and taking 'readers far beyond the traditional realm of socialist politics' (November 1983). By 1984, MT was promoting its agenda-setting role by promising to help subscribers 'join the mainstream of political debate' (January) and keep them 'firmly in the mainstream of today's debates' (March), which appeared plausible given that the March issue also carried MT's first national media endorsements from *The Guardian* ('Essential political reading') and *The Sunday Times* ('A bright well written glossy'). The 'Left Alive' programme in October was stamped with quotes from the FT, *Guardian* and other national newspapers extolling MT's 'open approach to socialist politics', 'beautiful production', and 'jargon-free' writing. These claims for MT's independent, iconoclastic, free-thinking image continued growing during the 1980s, fed by recognition in the national (and international) media.

However, MT's self-promotion built its persona against media representations, and the public's 'common sense' understandings, of 'socialism' and the Left. The October 1985 issue carried the most direct claims of MT's persona, which was built around explicit and implicit criticisms of the Left:

> If you expect to be told what to think - let us tell you now that you've got the wrong magazine. After all, *Marxism Today* is nothing if not open and pluralistic.... The fact is, the Left has a lot of hard thinking to do. The miners' strike, the rate-capping campaign, sexual morality, union ballots - all raise difficult questions. *Marxism Today* prides itself on facing them square on ....

MT's qualities are defined against common sense assumptions about the Left and the CP, those who 'expect to be told what to think', which tend to associate all tendencies on the

[230] See Chapter 6.

Left, including democratic socialism and labourism with communism (and the USSR). MT will not tell you 'what to think' because it 'is nothing if not open and pluralistic': the Left, by implication, is not. The Left is either deceitful or evasive because it is unwilling to face 'difficult questions .... square on': questions on the relationship between democracy and unions (eg NUM), local councils (eg rate-capping), etc.

With national distribution and press coverage raising its profile, the CP realised that MT was reaching new, non-party readers and wanted to recruit readers to the party because MT was its 'theoretical and discussion journal' which reflected 'our attractive, committed and open approach to socialist politics' (January 1982). The CP continued to try and promote itself around MT's reputation, reiterating its 'open and pluralist approach' to socialist and democratic politics, though it stopped laying 'claim' to MT by 1988. The CP's lack of success is evidence that even MT's own promotional efforts were not enough to convince more than a handful of people to buy it.[231] This self-promotion worked well in enhancing a particular representation of the Left which tied in to representations in the press. However, it was not without foundation: many criticisms resonated with the experience of socialists. MT's self-promotion was part of its attempt to present an image which would attract a broad, progressive audience. The other contribution to its persona came from MT's 'rhetoric of realism'.

MT's critique of the intransigence of the traditionalist Left focused on their unwillingness to 'confront reality' because of what that reality might reveal about the Left's inadequacies or lack of popular appeal. This 'rhetoric of realism' was a result of its efforts to win over the Left and persuade it of the need for change. MT made claims that it represented 'reality' as it was, not as the Left would 'wish it to be': at the very least, it avoided the 'triumphalism' of much socialist writing, which in light of the continuity of defeats, appeared completely 'out-of-touch', reinforcing MT's claim that the Left was unwilling to acknowledge reality. An inspirational and oft-cited couplet for MT's realism came, appropriately enough, from Gramsci: 'pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will'. Two important examples are: the disagreement over the significance of Labour's 1983 electoral defeat, Benn's positive reading did not appear as 'realistic' as MT's more pessimistic interpretation, which also struck a chord with liberal and conservative commentators; and the debates over political strategy for combating Thatcherism, where MT proclaimed its strategy as 'realistic' in contrast to groups like the SWP.[232]

As part of the rhetorical tactics to win over the undecided and defeat its opponents, MT contributors invoked 'reality' or 'realism' in practically every feature during the 1980s. The invocation of 'reality' or 'realism' was made through the recognition that to defeat the Conservatives, electorally, there was a need for an alliance and compromise. An important part of this recognition was, as Hobsbawm made clear, that the masses 'must be

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231 Other than two issues (October 1988, January 1989), MT's circulation never reached 16,000 (Chapter 6).
232 Eg Hobsbawm 1983b; SR 1983.

taken as they are, not as we should like to have them';[233] Hall pointed to the need to 'reflect the history and experience of socialism as it actually exists - with all its vicissitudes' and it had to 'ground itself in current realities'.[234]When necessary , MT invoked Lenin's realism to convince their Leninist opponents.

> *Marxism Today*°has made it its business to confront reality and suggest ways of changing it. This is what comrades should recognise as the Leninist procedure of giving concrete analysis of a concrete situation.[235]

MT's realism was always opposed to its opponents who were, by implication, 'unrealistic': the decline of Labour and other left groups was due to sticking to an 'unrealistic and speculative scenario of class interests being expressed eventually at the political level', against which McLennan called for a 'plausible socialism'.[236]

VI. Conclusion

As was pointed out in Chapter 6, MT's public profile rose partly because of increased distribution, publicity and promotion and press coverage, but at least some of that coverage was only possible because of these transformations in format, design and writing. These changes were aided by a combination of advertising, self-promotion and press commentary from 1984 onwards. MT's play on 'popular' representations of the Left, enabled MT to represent itself as 'iconoclastic' and 'realistic'. The 'realism' underlay its 'iconoclasm' because the Left did not want to 'acknowledge reality' as MT did, and in acknowledging reality, MT was willing to 'think the unthinkable' and deconstruct some of the Left's most cherished beliefs.

Contrary to the developments in media and cultural studies, where the crisis over language and representation was addressed by influential intellectual tendencies (eg post-structuralism, postmodernism), MT moved closer to the 'plain style' of writing, adopting some journalistic practices, to try and make it more accessible and persuasive: for example, establishing a house style, dispensing with Marxist vocabulary and adopting common usage. Although MT became more accessible, it remained mostly limited to those with some university education. MT's hard-won autonomy from the CP brought about a relaxation of the ideological constraints, which enabled MT to become more flexible rhetorically, and therefore, more likely to be persuasive with non-CP readers. MT broke new ground for the Left and consequently changed expectations about left cultural production.[237] Thus, Jacques's aim to establish a 'new style of political journalism' by combining the best aspects of journalism and scholarship was only partially realised

233 Hobsbawm 1984b: 10.
234 Hall 1984b: 24.
235 MTEC 1985: n.p.
236 McLennan 1984: 32.
237 Some magazines, like *Living Marxism*, have attempted to adopt MT's persona.

because, ultimately, MT was primarily about ideas rather than journalism.[238]

This chapter has demonstrated the importance of changes made in format, design and writing, in transforming *Marxism Today* from a journal into a magazine, materially and textually. This uneven, ongoing process makes MT more accessible and persuasive than ever before. These textual transformations usually worked well together, enhancing MT's intervention in debates on the Left and in gaining access to the public sphere during the 1980s. These changes were absolutely crucial in contributing to the success of MT's political project, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

238 Taylor 1995.

This thesis began out of an interest in discovering how marginal media gain access to the mainstream public sphere: *Marxism Today* was chosen because it is an exception to the rule of failure that has seen the overwhelming majority of left periodicals confined to their 'ghettos'. The success or failure of the left press has either been explained as a result of broad historical trends in society and politics, or as the result of adopting incorrect political programmes or strategies: both explanations ignore crucial, albeit prosaic, issues of production and distribution. This thesis has, therefore, concentrated principally on MT's production and distribution processes rather than its ideas because of their importance as mechanisms for intervening in debates in the public sphere. In this concluding chapter, MT's legacy will be considered in terms of its impact on the Communist and Labour parties, what it tells us about the Bolshevik and Comedia models and the relationship between the left press and the public sphere.

Epilogue

Martin Jacques began the search for backers for a successor magazine (complete with change of name purpose and format),[1] before *Marxism Today* closed in December 1991 (it was sold to the *New Statesman*).[2] Despite promises of financial support from *The Guardian* and others, the project ended a year later when Jacques decided he had had enough.[3] With MT's demise, its political and journalistic projects were carried on to some degree by at least three organisations: the think-tank, Demos, founded by Jacques and Geoff Mulgan, carried on producing ideas;[4] *Soundings*, launched in 1995 by Stuart Hall, Michael Rustin and Doreen Massey, addresses a wide range of issues, including politics, science, culture and technology, through such photographs, poetry and essays, in a periodical which combines aspects of the book, journal and magazine;[5] and 'Signs of the Times', formed out of MT's discussion groups, maintains a commitment to bringing together a broad range of opinions in public seminars, forums and events.

Nevertheless, MT was a successful left magazine because, where others have been consistently unsuccessful, it bucked the trend and secured national newsagent distribution, increased revenues substantially, expanded circulation three-fold, adopted a more accessible magazine format and writing style to reach (non-party) readers and gained access to the national public sphere. The success was a paradox: it paralleled the rise of the Right and the crisis of the Left during the 1980s and yet, succumbed to the political demise of both Margaret Thatcher and Soviet Communism.

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[1] Two magazines were planned in succession: *Agenda* and *Politics*.

[2] MT subscribers received NSS after December 1991.

[3] Jacques 1996d. Jacques was too closely tied up with MT for its successors to have been attempted without him (Turner 1998).

[4] Though Stuart Hall, whose name is on its founding board, is critical of its lack of openness to ideas from the Left (Hall 1997).

[5] Hall 1997; Hall *et al.* 1995.

MT during the 1980s represented the final triumph of two intellectual strands, communist populism and cultural Marxism, refracted through the first New Left and 1968. After 1977, MT's two primary constituencies were dissident Marxist and anti-Stalinist intellectuals and democratic socialists alienated by Labour's anti-intellectualism. The overlap between the New Left's and MT's priorities is not surprising: both sought a 'third way' between the two dominant approaches on the Left, Stalinism and Labourism, and wanted to avoid being seen as 'economic reductionists' (or worse, as proponents of 'class politics'); it also meant largely avoiding political economy and concentrating on political and ideological analyses, including the previously much-neglected realm of popular culture.[6] The connections are more overt when comparing issues of MT from the 1980s with those of *New Left Review* from 1960-62, when it was edited by Stuart Hall: here photo-essays on Soweto were laid out next to interviews with jazz band leaders.

Any assessment of MT's success and legacy must also take into account its relationship with cultural studies. The two have a remarkably similar trajectory during the period of Jacques's editorship, from the influence of Louis Althusser and, of course, Antonio Gramsci in the mid-1970s, to the almost 'celebratory' acceptance of popular culture by the late 1980s, most visibly illustrated by the overlap in personnal (eg Rosalind Brunt, Richard Dyer, Dick Hebdige, Angela McRobbie). MT's approach to the media and popular culture was a radical departure from the traditional Left's approach: it was an important and necessary development to dislodge some of the 'frozen thinking' that affected both the Left and cultural studies.[7] 'Cultural populism' was a logical outcome of MT's search for a form of popular politics through popular culture: MT's analyses of popular cultural phenomena were directed towards discovering alternative ways to reach out to the general public to break the Left's isolation. The 'uncritical cultural populist' trajectory within cultural studies found solace in interpretations of soap opera or television fiction, MT was focusing on the political effects that 'Live Aid' and 'Sport Aid' promised, such as raising people's consciousness about, and providing a means for people to express solidarity with, the developing world. On the 'political' level, MT sought to find ways to reconnect the Left with concerns and issues of ordinary people: in this area MT led the way through its reassessments of left shibboleths on such issues as crime and parents and education.[8] MT provided a platform for cultural studies approaches to be applied to contemporary examples of popular and high culture, lifestyles and the media, which no doubt contributed to its wider circulation beyond university lecture halls and seminar rooms.

Marxism Today and New Labour

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[6] There were occasional analyses of aspects of the economy in MT, but nothing which became as important as the discussion of post-Fordism in New Times (eg Murray 1985, 1989).

[7] A point acknowledged by critics of 'cultural populism' (eg Harris 1992; McGuigan 1992).

[8] Eg Kinsey 1986; McRobbie 1987.

Ten years after the launch of the 'New Times' project and nearly seven years after it had closed, *Marxism Today* returned with a special, one-off issue in October 1998, to launch a critique of the first 18 months of the first Labour Government in 18 years. This critique provided a platform for criticism of New Labour's political trajectory on economic, trade and issues from the Centre-Left to its uncritical enthusiasm for 'corporate Brittania' and neglect of issues of social justice and equality.

The process began after Labour's 1983 defeat and culminated in the 1997 election manifesto. Under Neil Kinnock, the 'hard' Left was defeated and most of New Labour's policies were put in place before Tony Blair became leader in 1994. It is clear that MT played a role in this process: Kinnock and his advisors read MT[9] and one can find New Times 'in Kinnock's introduction to*Meet the Challenge, Make the Change*'.[10] MT was able to have this effect upon the Labour Party because of the 'thinness' of its intellectual culture. Even after MT closed in December 1991, its ideas continued to 'live on' through former contributors, such as Charlie Leadbeater and Geoff Mulgan, and the think-tank, Demos: it was one of four agencies which influenced New Labour (the Institute of Public Policy Research, Charter 88, Nexus).[11]

Labour's problems were attributed to its ideological, financial and organisational reliance on trade unions and on Keynesianism as its key economic strategy, and for focusing on citizens as producers and ignoring their role as consumers.[12] The change in policy since 1983 is considerable: none of Labour's 1983 election promises to increase substantially public spending on welfare, health and education and intervene actively in the economy (increasing public ownership, shifting the tax burden to the better off and giving 'a key role for the trade unions in economic management') remain. Instead, in its 1997 manifesto, New Labour promised to stick to the Conservatives' spending plans for its first two years in government.[13]

New Labour's 'real ideological significance ... is the abandonment of Keynesian social democracy in favour of pre-Keynesian orthodoxy': it has returned to classical political economy.[14] Its current economic thinking is on a par with the earlier economic thinking of 'Old Labour', which under James Callaghan introduced monetarism![15] New Labour could not have existed without MT's contribution to the sea-change in the Left's thinking: during the 'realignment of the Left', MT cleared away most of the Left's shibboleths which provided space for debates to take place, though it was unable to promote a convincing set of alternative beliefs.[16]

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[9] Davey 1996a: 2.
[10] Elliott 1993: 215.
[11] Panitch and Leys 1997: 242-44. After Blair's victory, Mulgan joined the No.10 Downing Street Policy Unit.
[12] Foote 1997: 327.
[13] Anderson and Mann 1997: 383.
[14] Shaw 1996: 201; Foote 1997: 339-40.
[15] Coates 1996: 67-68.
[16] Sassoon 1996: 692.

Both MT and New Labour attempted 'to disengage socialism from its identification with the state and statism',[17] and develop the concept of the 'enabling state', whereby the state enables individuals to make choices they desire rather than having the state dictate them. This 'socialist individualism[18] would replace collective (class) economic self-interest at the centre of left politics, to better account for the pluralism and diversity of modern life and to protect and extend individual rights *against* the state. This was an important change of emphasis because the Left had traditionally sought to use the state to implement a redistributive form of social justice. However, whereas New Labour has accepted the Right's definition of 'the extended rights of individuals',[19] MT's strategic approach sought to build progressive alliances through the 'disarticulation of choice and freedom from their economistic and individualistic inscriptions in the rhetoric of the New Right and their rearticulation into a left vocabulary'.[20]

Both New Times and New Labour also stress individual *obligations* and not just rights: by the end of the 1980s, civil liberties and citizenship were once again back on the political agenda and MT argued that citizenship was not only about entitlements and liberties but also about responsibilities. Agreement to workfare programmes, like New Labour's 'Welfare to Work', can be found in MT.[21] The issue was one of accountability: it was not only the powerful who 'should be answerable to the powerless', but the 'powerless' also had to be accountable to each other.[22] New Labour has gone further to state that 'life on full benefit' was not an option.[23] However, MT argued that such a programme should only be supported if it 'enhances people's human capital', provides 'the means for an independent life' and 'gives both responsibility and the power to use it', and not only as a means to cut benefits or provide cheap labour.[24]

Despite the hostility to MT's re-thinking, the success of the Right during the 1980s and early 1990s gradually forced the Left to adapt to the new terrain shaped by Thatcherism and 'New Times'. However, New Labour has adapted to Thatcherism, accepting the ideological and political status quo,[25] and it has sought to appeal to existing constituencies rather than attempting to create its own. This presents problems because Thatcher had built a social bloc around which it was clear who was and was not part of her 'nation'.[26] Without a clear set of alliances and, therefore, adversaries, New Labour will find it difficult to effect the 'modernisation' of Britain when it encounters vested interests: it lacks a 'big idea' which would provide it with an organisational and ideological coherence.

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17 Wright 1996: 132.
18 Leadbeater 1989a.
19 Wright 1996: 132.
20 Clarke 1991: 159.
21 Mulgan 1990.
22 *Ibid.*: 24.
23 Labour Party 1997: 19; Blair 1996: 45-46, 146-47.
24 Mulgan 1990: 26.
25 Sassoon 1996: 706.
26 Jacques 1996a: 2; McKibbin 1996: 3-5.

MT has critiqued Blair for showing 'timidity' despite Labour's landslide election win of May 1, 1997: 'Blairism' is about preparing for a second term, rather than using its mandate to initiate any significant change in society and the economy. Jacques, Hall and others in MT have attacked Blair as the 'timid tendency' in the face of popular desires for change and for government intervention to regulate aspects of the economy. Hall and Jacques are sceptical of Blair's adulation of society's winners and his apparent lack of concern for losers.

Yet the ambiguity of the MT's wholesale rethinking of the Left's shibboleths has revealed itself in Blair's government: two core principles of the Left, equality and its correlative in the everyday world, social justice, have been sidelined. Thus, in the October 1998 issue MT has re-emphasised these issues through arguments for state intervention and regulation of the (international) economy, pointing to the dangers of globalisation and the free flow of financial capital and for the necessity of addressing issues of inequality in gender and ethnic relations. The prescient nature of Karl Marx's analysis of capitalism (though not the solutions attempted in his name) has been highlighted in the magazine from which it had been banished more than a decade before.

Devolution and constitutional reforms divide MT's contributors: some believe Blair's commitment to constitutional reform is more than 'skin-deep'. Nevertheless, MT is not suggesting that everything that New Labour stands for is somehow wrong or 'misguided': it has recognised Blair's populist style as a positive attribute and acknowledged that he has made real progress in making government less formal and appearing more accessible.

Clearly, MT has repositioned itself at the forefront of the social democratic critique of the New Labour 'modernisers' for their unwillingness to act 'decisively' to effect progressive social change, and in this MT represents a rallying point for the Centre-Left. The issue has re-positioned MT once again in the media limelight: its critique has received unprecedented coverage in the media, not least because many of its contributors are important editors, journalists and columnists themselves: Will Hutton, editor-in-chief, *The Observer*; Suzanne Moore, columnist; Jonathon Freedland, *Guardian* columnist and reporter; Anatole Kaletsky, *Times* columnist; etc. In fact, other than reprints of articles (or excerpts) by Hobsbawm, Hall and Jacques in the *Sunday Times*, *Guardian*, *Independent*, *Observer* and other publications, practically all of the favourable coverage of MT's ideas came from contributors who are already writing for the national press. Other columnists, journalists and editors, primarily from the Right, appear to have been quicker to attack MT, defending Blair and his government, though some on the Left have attacked MT for being too quick. However, MT also received coverage because it has articulated the first cohesive opposition to New Labour from the Centre-Left: the opposition from social movements and vanguard parties is seen outside the limited parameters of debate of most national newspapers.

Marxism Today and the Communist Party

For its first twenty years, *Marxism Today* fulfilled its remit as the CP's 'theoretical and discussion journal' over which the leadership exerted overall political, editorial, financial and legal control. MT played little if any role outside the party: it appealed to only 20% of the membership at best. The CP was undermined by the disintegration and eventual collapse of Communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the USSR in the 1980s, despite changes to the party and its ideology and its public criticisms of the USSR. During this period, MT became the CP's 'jewel in the crown' and yet, paradoxically, also helped to undermine it.[27]

After the Lane affair in 1982, MT became bolder in its criticisms of the traditionalists within the party and less interested in the CP's dilemma, except insofar as it depended upon CP subsidies and during the period of 'ideological convergence' over the*Manifesto for New Times* (MNT) in 1988-89. Though the party absorbed MT's energies at times, it also provided substantial support for the magazine, financially and organisationally. Party branches also provided a network for disseminating ideas via public events and seminars, while the CP provided an ideological and political platform from which to launch debates until MT had established its own reputation and discussion groups. In return, MT helped raise the party's profile and recruit new members and it provided a platform for the CP to disseminate its ideas more widely than was possible otherwise, when they coincided with MT's (ie MNT).

MT's political and editorial independence was dependent upon establishing autonomy over the production process: MT also needed freedom from the CP's decision-making structures to operate efficiently in the marketplace. Gradually, the CP enterprises which typeset, printed, distributed and sold MT were replaced by private and co-op businesses. As MT withdrew its business from party enterprises (except for bookshop distribution), it often took a major portion of their business away, undermining their ability to operate (and justify their existence) hastening their demise.

The consequences of MT's political project was the termination of the CP: its project 'only made sense, if it made sense at all, for a mass party such as the PCI'.[28] MT's idea of creating a new, counter-hegemonic force required a broad-church organisation like the Labour Party with links to trade unions, community organisations, campaigns, etc. The CP had been the largest party to the left of Labour in 1979, but it lacked the ability and resources to lead the BDA; by the late 1980s, it lacked the ability to lead any kind of campaign.[29] The one arena in which the CP had been a leading force was the labour movement (it was a training ground for union activists). The CP's 'distinctive industrial militancy' was the one element which traditionalists argued it could offer any alliance, but

[27] See Jacques 1989c.
[28] Callaghan 1988: 237.
[29] The CP was absent in the anti-poll tax campaigns except for the participation of individuals at a local level.

it was a tradition which the party moved away from after the defeat of the miners in 1985, undermining the party's standing within the labour movement.[30]

However, MT did offer the CP an alternative to its industrial connections: acting as a space for debates on the Left's future. The party's contribution to intellectual debate and ideological struggle, through its (largely overlooked) role as host for debate among left intellectuals (CULs, specialist committees and journals), does not in itself constitute a rationale for a political party: indeed, the CP suffered from the leadership's managerial style, which held it together organisationally but ultimately contributed to its 'lack of cohesion and ideological rigour'.[31] By 1985, MT had also supplanted the CP's intellectual functions: the MTEB had begun to function as a 'cultural circle',[32] helping to produce ideas and gradually supplanting bodies such as the Theory and Ideology Committee. The CP's disintegration continued, especially after the adoption of the MNT in 1989 and after it decided to drop the party structure in favour of a decentralised network in 1991.

Bolshevik Model

Marxism Today brought together two traditions on the Left: the one which aims at a general (working class) public via a popular form, such as the tabloid newspaper (eg *Morning Star* or *Socialist Worker*); and the other which addresses an internal audience of party members or intellectuals through journals (eg *Comment* or *International Socialism*). These two traditions were evident in MT during the 1980s, with its attempt to draw upon popular formats and use more accessible language and writing styles to reach new audiences while maintaining intellectual depth in the discussions of ideas. Yet MT was more than just an attempt to bring these two traditions together in one publication: it was also a hybrid of aspects of all three models outlined in Chapter 1: Bolshevik, self-managed and Comedia.

In the Bolshevik model, the party press is integral to the party: the daily or weekly paper is usually more important than the less frequent intellectual periodical. However, in the CP's case, once its daily paper had been 'hi-jacked', MT's importance for it grew, especially as MT's public profile and circulation had been growing as the *Morning Star*'s shrank. Yet these changes combined with MT's greater autonomy saw a partial reversal of the party-paper relationship: the CP became more dependent upon MT as its public face, with the party following behind the magazine.

MT exemplifies some of the benefits of the Bolshevik model. The CP provided subsidies and the organisational infrastructure to produce and distribute MT throughout the UK and abroad for its internal audience of party members, who also provided most of the contributions, until it gained wider distribution and exposure in the early 1980s. The CP ensured MT's survival by providing continuous financial support especially after 1986

[30] Callaghan 1988: 238.
[31] *Ibid.*: 237.
[32] Thomson 1957.

when it started losing £40-50,000 per year, which allowed MT to maintain its production standards, promotional campaigns and distribution commitments until it closed in 1991.

However, the CP was also a drain on MT's energies and resources, particularly during the first half of Jacques's editorship: constant battles against traditionalists and negotiations with the EC ensured that he and his staff were often preoccupied with satisfying criteria (or at least appearing to) to avoid interference or the withdrawal of subsidies. Yet to a fair degree, McLennan and many other MT supporters in the EC did a lot to help MT carry on its activities relatively free of interference, especially after the purge of opponents in 1985.

MT gained editorial confidence in its stance and identity, which is a more common feature amongst tabloids like *The Daily Mail*, and amongst Bolshevik papers.[33] While Klugmann had followed the party line, as decided through congress and directed by the EC and PC, Jacques sought to position MT and its analyses at the forefront of change on the Left and within the Labour Party. Jacques's MT acted as a 'vanguard', providing leadership through 'revelation': its analyses and strategies were put forward as the only possible (and 'correct') ones for the Left and the Labour Party. Those who disagreed often found themselves excluded from debate after a period of time and were even branded as 'sectarian'. In its actions in initiating debates in the party and across the Left, rethinking shibboleths and putting forward strategies, MT actually epitomises the Bolshevik model, although it did lead its readers away from classic Leninist goals.

Comedia

While MT did not suffer from becoming fixated upon applying prefigurative political principles in the production and distribution processes, as self-managed media have, it still benefited from the incorporation of volunteers into its workforce, which was based upon collaborative work and the sharing of knowledge, skills, responsibilities and enthusiasm, organised through collectives with responsibilities for different tasks (eg distribution, redesign). The discussion groups were often set up and run by volunteers, whose enthusiasm for MT's political project also helped to spread its ideas to a wider public. These aspects are important in the self-managed model.

Without a doubt, MT demonstrates many of the positive benefits for the alternative and left presses that the Comedia model stresses. MT increased its circulation, three-fold between 1977 and 1988 (though these figures are paltry for mainstream consumer magazines, they are impressive when compared with the circulation of most alternative and left periodicals), and its sales and advertising revenues through the market. All of the revenues were reinvested in design, staffing, production, promotion and distribution to support its efforts to expand circulation nationally, through newsagents and subscriptions, enhance its public profile and gain access to the national media.

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33 Richards 1997: 182.

Jacques's MT exemplifies more aspects of the Comedia model than the self-managed model. Jacques and his closest advisors maintained direct control over all aspects of editorial content, production and distribution. It is this division of labour and responsibility that Jacques's editorship demonstrates an affinity with the two dominant models: Bolshevik and Comedia. There were clear lines of control extending from the editor downwards, with different staff and volunteers taking on board various responsibilities to ensure that MT met its commitments.

MT overcame the distribution problems that plague the alternative and left press, managing to secure nationwide newsagent distribution in the autumn of 1981. Overcoming distributors' resistance was an important step, but it was (and remains) a constant battle: MT was under constant pressure to maintain its sales otherwise it would be forced off the shelves.[34] Thus, despite the expansion of new technologies which has enabled left papers to produce high quality, professional publications, they are still often excluded from distribution.

However, the adoption of market techniques also required changes in accessibility and presentation, which in turn required further financial investment to enable MT to make the necessary changes for newsagent distribution, promotion, etc., which in turn helped increase sales and income from advertising, and so on. MT, for example, had to ensure that it was able to reach and maintain the highest production standards possible, which required constant efforts to assess and improve the design, visuals and format and to upgrade the technology when possible. It also required much larger print runs than actual sales to ensure sufficient copies for distributors and retail outlets, and it also meant mounting promotional campaigns to support higher sales. This was a circular process which worked for MT from 1981 until 1989, when it became clear that the CP would not be able to carry on providing financial support and, with the collapse of Communist regimes, MT's name ceased to retain any kind of public or media 'cachet' (no matter how inappropriate):[35] MT had an insurmountable obstacle in its name and affiliation because despite its promotional efforts and national exposure via newsagents and press coverage, it was unable ultimately to sustain monthly sales over 15,000.

MT made good use of its market research and readership profiles to attract advertising: it demonstrated that it is possible to attract a considerable amount of advertising (including mainstream and non-political advertisers) and earn substantial revenues. MT did suffer financial problems but this was partly the result of problems with staffing and control, and partly the result of a recession (eg 1989-90) and the downward trend in magazines' share of total advertising revenues since the late 1970s.[36] It is also a reminder that financial difficulties can and do continue even after entering and achieving some success in the market.

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[34] Distribution remains as difficult an obstacle as ever: WH Smith's has decided to stop distributing over 300 small circulation magazines (CPBF 1996a, 1996b; Logan 1996).
[35] Jacques came to resent how the media often wanted to draw upon him as editor of a Communist journal to talk about Eastern Europe, etc. (Jacques 1996e).
[36] Driver and Gillespie 1993.

Although MT's primary target audience broadened in the late 1970s and early 1980s, its readership remained firmly ABC1s: well-educated professionals, white collar employees and students. Comedia argued that this was the type of audience which the alternative media could benefit from because it was the one which advertisers most wanted to reach, and it was a readership profile which Jacques's MT sought to exploit to bring in advertisers and increase advertising rates.

However, it was not just a change in audiences that differentiates Jacques's editorship from Klugmann's. Contributors shifted from party intellectuals and officials in the 1960s and 1970s to a mix of party and non-party union officials, scholars and social activists by the early 1980s. The numbers of contributors expanded again in the second half of the 1980s to take in Labour and other mainstream politicians and greater numbers of journalists and media professionals. These changes in contributors helped in MT's transformation, particularly as changes in production and distribution and in formats, design and writing styles required the kinds of skills which journalists were trained in.

To ensure reaching the mainstream, MT needed paid staff who could oversee its monthly cycle, but it could not always retain skilled or experienced staff because it could only afford low salaries. MT made the most effective use of volunteers: they were expected to produce to the highest standards, and despite a high turnover, largely did produce professional copy. MT thus also proved useful as a training ground for contributors, staff and volunteers. Many MT staff and contributors built reputations (skills and portfolios) and were recruited to work in the mainstream media as journalists, editors and columnists: Suzanne Moore (columnist, *Daily Mail*); Paul Webster (deputy editor, *The Observer*); Jane Taylor (deputy editor, *New Statesman*); Mark Perryman (freelance marketing consultant for political and sports magazines); Jacques went on to become a columnist and broadcaster.

MT helped show that it was possible to raise the standards and possibilities of left journalism in three ways. First, it largely avoided Marxist rhetoric and esoteric theoretical issues and adopted a more accessible format, language and writing style (though it was never able to dispense completely with opaque prose), which included paying attention to its persuasive techniques (eg rhetorical devices, strategies) to win over new readers outside the organised Left while convincing internal critics of its arguments. Second, MT attempted to develop and use different presentation formats for promoting ideas beside the academic essay: these included roundtable discussions, interviews, columns, profiles and short stories. Its third contribution lay in its sometimes uneven attempt to develop a distinctive house style through a combination of academic argument and journalistic writing style.

MT°also illustrates the innovation and professionalism in production, distribution and promotion which alternative and left media can achieve. Its attempt to reach an audience beyond party intellectuals was only successful once it was transformed from a journal into a magazine, with the concomitant changes in design, format and writing style. These two editorships demonstrate the contradictions facing party journals carrying out divergent tasks, such as addressing internal and external audiences: different roles for different audiences require different cultural forms. However, despite all of MT's success in transforming itself and in its achieving public profile, influence and esteem, it never freed itself of having to rely on party subsidies and its circulation remained small.

The Public Sphere

The left press has essentially two tasks: that of maintaining a (counter) public sphere for the Left; and that of attempting to gain access to the (mainstream) public sphere. The first task is presenting ideas and engaging in debate with supporters on the Left and in labour and social movements, which may also involve attempting to recruit new members. The second task is about the left press intervening in public debates and putting forward their own ideas and analyses to the general public: to 'agitate, educate, organise'. While most of the left press may contribute to the maintenance of the (counter) public sphere of the Left, few are able to move out into the mainstream (national) public sphere, where access is controlled by 'gatekeepers' (capitalist and state media):*Marxism Today* was, however, just such an exception.

The history of MT demonstrates that it is practically impossible to carry out both tasks and address two different audiences, as demanded by the functions MT was assigned in 1957. Both editors approached editing differently, concentrating on one or other of MT's two primary roles. MT's task was primarily focused on facilitating an internal public sphere for addressing party intellectuals, albeit within a limited radius of the party line. Only gradually did Klugmann's MT reach out to the (counter) public spheres of the Left and social movements after 1967, when the party opened up the parameters of debate, though with only a limited degree of success in reaching non-party intellectuals. The success was partly a result of the Communist University of London, which provided the forum for both party and non-party intellectuals to gather together to debate ideas and theories, etc., and an audience for MT.

Jacques, however, took MT's other role more seriously and concentrated on reaching out to non-party intellectuals and activists, which meant neglecting internal party discussions most of the time and allowing an increasingly wider range of opinions than had hitherto been the case. MT's early exposure to this forum was a starting point for Jacques, which he turned into a more systematic and consistent attempt to intervene in debates in the Left's public sphere, a process which was gradually expanded to address audiences beyond the Left in the mainstream, national public sphere, through the daily press. The extension of this role during the second half of the 1980s, led to the inclusion of others who had been excluded previously, such as centre-left commentators, religious figures and even Conservative MPs, and to the marginalisation or exclusion of many who had been previously included, such as former Eurocommunists, members of the Labour Left and, of course, traditionalists.[37]

[37] Brunt 1987a; Hain 1987b; Henshaw 1987; Jacques 1988a; Kartun 1987.

The relationship between the national press and MT highlights some consequences for left publications seeking access to the national public sphere. MT's ability to insert itself at the centre of left debates during the 1980s was not just due to its intensive publicity and promotional efforts: its critiques of traditional socialist and Labourist values, ideas and beliefs, were drawn upon to legitimate criticisms promoted or supported by centre-left commentators and broadsheets, such as *The Guardian*. MT assisted the Centre-Left in its ideological fight against the Right but at the expense of moving away from the Left.

MT's coverage in the national press ensured it greater influence than many other left magazines, including ones with larger circulations (eg NSS, NS). As MT's public profile and credibility rose, it was able to recruit public figures normally excluded from the left press, including those on the other side (eg Conservative MPs, police) because of the *kudos* associated with it. In turn, public figures helped interest the media in MT over other left magazines. However, the press coverage raises a question over the alternative media's rationale in representing the opinions and groups who are otherwise misrepresented in, or excluded from, the mass media. Though the combination of topical ideas and innovative publicity worked well for MT, it must be noted that its analyses were often considered controversial not because of their content so much as where they were published and/or who the authors or interviewees were.

MT also exemplifies Habermas's recently revised view of the relationship between civic organisations, such as the alternative media, and the public sphere.[38] The left press alert the public sphere to issues and problems before institutions are aware of them, acting as 'radar' for the larger society. Once alerted, the institutions of the public sphere, such as the media, amplify the issue which draws attention to it, mobilise citizens and provoke debates, all of which ultimately serve to influence the decision makers. MT's early warning system pinpointed the rise of Thatcherism and the crisis of Labour's forward march: these topics were later picked up and 'amplified' through part of the public sphere (ie the national press). However, it was primarily MT's critiques of Labour which were amplified by the national press rather than its other ideas.

This is not to underestimate MT's important influence upon the debates on the Left during the 1980s. MT, supported by *The Guardian* and others, helped initiate changes within the Labour Party which encouraged it to have a more flexible approach on a number of issues. MT provided a space for these issues to be addressed, as did *The Guardian*, and MT, in turn, provided the means for mainstream, non-left journalists and political figures to address the Left.

The relationship between the mainstream and marginal media, however, cannot be an equal one: the present structure of ownership and regulation enables powerful interests to dominate parts of the public sphere, not just restricting debates but also setting agendas. The success of MT in achieving access to the public sphere via the national press was dependent upon Habermas's third type of actor, the professional journalist or editor, who

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[38] See Chapter 1.

selects for circulation through their organisation. Nevertheless, it is clear that while alternative and left media like MT may act as an early warning system for problems, the access to the public sphere to amplify such issues remains the prerogative of key editors and journalists in the mainstream media.

It does not mean that MT intentionally sought to further the interests of the Right or others, whose interests were inimical to the Left, but it does indicate something of the motivations behind these actors' selection of MT articles for their papers which were not about promoting the 'marketplace of ideas' (ie a diversity of views). Articles, which critiqued many of the Left's shibboleths, a vital and legitimate part of the Left's counter public sphere, had greater legitimacy than articles by non-left authors because of the source and were likely to have been more persuasive with readers; these articles would also have reinforced stereotypes about the Left. Thus, there is cause for concern that the access of left and other marginal media may be restricted to only those ideas which appear to support dominant views, or that ideas which are intended for internal debate become drawn upon and used to further the aims of dominant groups or at least confirm ideas which can be located within the "centrist and rather narrowly defined, spectrum of 'established opinions'";[39] and there is a question of how much space should be provided for mainstream journalists and public figures in left or alternative media and whether such provision only disseminates and helps legitimise views in the counter public sphere which already dominate the mainstream public sphere.

Marxism Today was a qualified success: it benefited from a combination of the strengths of both Bolshevik and Comedia models, reaping the rewards of the marketplace and drawing upon the CP's financial and organisational support. Its location in the CP, ensured that its opinions on particular subjects, such as the Labour Party and the Left, would be covered by the national media, even in pursuit of the media's own agenda. However, there are two important qualifications to MT's success: it never became self-sufficient financially and its circulation remained limited. The reliance upon the party for funding despite MT's success, indicates that ideas still have to be paid for in ways other than, or in addition to, the marketplace, especially those put forward by individuals, groups and constituencies excluded from the public sphere, the mass media or institutional power. Thus, while organisations may remain a necessity in paying for and otherwise supporting views and ideas excluded by the marketplace, it is equally clear that the marketplace can be beneficial and provide opportunities for alternative and left periodicals with the right kind of editors, help and autonomy.

[39] Habermas 1996: 377.

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