



Sauce for the goose and stuffing for the gander

## Homage to Turkey

Most people think that Christmas has lost its religious meaning. Most people are wrong. Christmas is still about religion but the object of worship has changed. On December 25 millions of people will pay reverent homage to... the Turkey. Christmas just wouldn't be Christmas without the ritual that surrounds the buying, preparing and eating

## Yuletide Groove

Since the advent of recorded music the yuletide groove has proved an indispensable item in the grand repository of Christmas ritual. Such rites as the family viewing of the bumper, super-tinselled *Top of The Pops* and the sound of Bing Crosby groaning for his supper on *White Christmas* (for many years the best selling record of all time), have all added pungency to the traditional sticky cocktail of Dickensian sentiment, modern consumer-mania, and timeless excess.

Predictability is at the heart of the season, nowhere more so than in record racks offering

(especially the eating) of the Big Bird.

But as with most religions there are non-believers, converts to another way. In this case they're called vegetarians and from being a persecuted minority they are steadily growing in number and influence. My local butcher, to whom I am a stranger, reckons his turkey sales have been falling off in recent years (a bit like church attendance) and it's estimated that there are over a million non-flesh eaters in Britain today.

Why not join them this Christ-

Harry Secombe's *Golden Hour Of Christmas Favourites*, Chas And Dave's *Cockney Christmas Knees Up* or this year's choir boy wonder warbling carols. Then there will be the re-re-re-release of Ono/Lennon's *Happy Christmas War Is Over* and the strident adenoidal twang of Slade's Noddy Holder assuring you once more that 'Here it is...'

Penning an addition to the Christmas canon is an ambition nursed in the unlikeliest hearts - witness Wham's *Another Christmas*, or even Chuck Berry's *Run Run Rudolph* - though the prospect of cash registers ringing in the snow remains a powerful artistic incentive.

The accepted classic remains *Phil Spector's Christmas Record*; the likes of *I Saw Mommy*

mas? Apart from the moral, economic and health reasons for not eating meat, do you really want to sit around on Christmas Day with a stomach full of flesh while the wrecked carcass sits accusingly in a pool of congealing grease?

But what about the rest of the Christmas ritual - all those other things we put inside ourselves during the season of goodwill? Every year newspapers and magazines are stuffed full of advice on eating and drinking at Christmas. Thousands of column inches either urge us to excess or tell us how to deal with its unpleasant results. Do we need this advice? Do we need to be told that a mixture of Guinness and Advocaat will induce nausea? About as much as we need three helpings of Christmas pudding - but that never stopped anyone.

Now the curious thing about all this advice is that *everyone* reads it and *everyone* ignores it - as demonstrated by the large numbers of people rolling around full of Guinness and Advocaat on Christmas Eve. In spite of knowing this I'm going to offer my own advice. Read on and put an end to Xmas misery.

Make a list of typical Christmas fare. Go through the list and delete everything you haven't consumed since last Christmas. Say goodbye to; roast turkey, chipolata sausages, mince pies, Advocaat, British sherry, selection boxes, dates and Christmas pudding. You can eat whatever is left on the list. Plus, if you really can't resist it, one small Advocaat. Merry Christmas. ● *Brian Hill*

*Kissing Santa Claus* and *Frosty The Snowman* were never to sound the same after being fed into the Spector Wall Of Sound. The result has the Ronettes and The Crystals baying into the night while a thousand sleigh bells are jangled in the Grand Canyon.

In comparison most other Christmas concepts are patchy, unsatisfying affairs, though the Motown Christmas LP from 1964 can't help but provide some splendid moments - too bad the Jackson Five's *Santa Claus Is Coming To Town* from 10 years later isn't likewise available.

The Beach Boys surfing *Little Saint Nick* provides the only standout on their 1964 seasonal offering, and Frank Sinatra singing *Oh Little Town Of Beth-*

## Round Midnight



Moody blues at midnight

Set in the smoky jazz clubs and seedy hotel rooms of fifties Paris, Bertrand Tavernier's fictionalised bio-pic of ageing jazz saxophonist Dale Turner (Dexter Gordon) centres on the drink-ravaged musician's friendship with obsessive fan Francis (Francois Cluzet).

Befriended, supported and encouraged by Francis, Dale lays off the booze, plays some gigs at the now legendary Blue Note club, and starts composing and recording again. Tavernier's free-flowing narrative, and the blue-grey tones of Bruno de Keyzer's photography evoke the sweaty intensity of the live gigs, and testify to the eloquence of the largely non-verbal communication between Dale and Francis - theirs is a friendship forged out of a mutual love for jazz music.

But you don't really need to know anything about jazz to appreciate the film: you just need eyes to see, ears to hear, and a heart to feel. Because *Round Midnight* hits just the right note every time. ● *Nigel Floyd*

*lehem* is a little like Norman Fowler wishing those on the dole a happy Christmas; scarcely credible. Frank is better sipping a Martini on *Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas*.

Personally I'll settle for the oddball cool yule of Babs Gonzales *Be Bop Santa* from 1955 with its lines about a santa dressed in red cashmere dispensing Dizzy Gillespie records and books on jive. For the other side of the Christmas story - those in the manger, not in the inn - Victoria Spivey's *Christmas Morning Blues* from 1926 remains the saddest story you'll hear on record, and also the best sung.

They really don't make 'em like that anymore. ● *Neil Spencer*

## Beware the Bulls

The Boxing Day walk is a firmly-rooted tradition in our household – a cure for the glutony of the day before and a preparation for the excesses still to come. Like the weather (hail, rain, snow or sun) the route varies, but is usually in Wharfedale, in the Yorkshire Dales national park near Grassington.

The walk starts at Burnsall and in the first half-mile we cross 11 stiles, mostly gap-stiles in ancient stone walls marking the boundaries of one-time strip-farming. We've hardly crossed the first couple of stiles when someone has the binoculars out and is making wild assertions about the species on view. Last time it was a grey wagtail.

A bit further on we pull up a hill with wonderful long views of Upper Wharfedale opening up, and a small copse on the right – this time it's blue tits. A bit further on it's field-fares with Great Whernside and Buckden Pike in the distant background.



Miles and miles of stiles

## Christmas Bazaars

As a child growing up in a Lincolnshire village in the 1950s, a crucial ritual in the anticipation of Christmas was the Christmas bazaar: weeks of painful making of intricate and useless sewn objects; queuing up on the day in the cold outside the hall; doors opening in a rush to reach the best stalls first.

It marked the final moment in a lengthy social process, entirely conducted by women, which centred on the production and exchange of food, clo-

Just before we drop down into the beautiful village of Linton (village green complete with, of all things, an astrolabe; and a pub with smashing grub) we avert our eyes from the view of Wharfedale's greatest eyesore, the lunar-looking quarries near Kilnsey.

A couple of pints later we are off to reach the river at the footbridge by Linton Falls. This area is inhabited by the greediest and most quarrelsome ducks in Yorkshire. Throw them a crust and they will entertain you for a good 10 minutes.

From this point on the walk follows a beautiful, peaceful stretch of riverside. Whenever I set foot on it my pleasure is mixed with a deep resentment that there are still too many stretches of this beautiful river where landowning and farming interests prevent public access.

Near Hebden the path crosses the river on a swaying pedestrian suspension bridge and returns to Burnsall via the spectacular viewpoint of Loup Scar, where the river drives a curving course through high limestone cliffs.

Back at Burnsall we have covered a total of nearly eight miles including 29 stiles which must be something like a record for the distance. The birds I've never counted! Bulls, happily, we've never met on this particular walk, though recent government legislation does allow some bulls into fields crossed by public rights of way.

The day over, we are refreshed in body and mind, ready to tuck into the cold turkey and finish off the Xmas pud. ●

Dave Priscott

thing and domestic items within the community.

The bazaar also has a place in socialist traditions. For women especially, bazaars offer a means both of displaying skills and of getting a bargain outside the network of capitalist consumer relations.

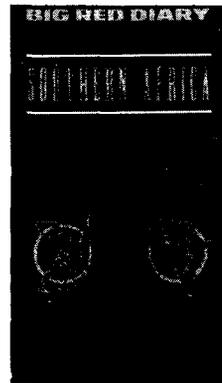
Sentimentalised and outworn sign of women's domestic virtue or part of popular celebration and ritual? The Christmas bazaar for me evokes, in however distorted a form, a glimpse of a set of relationships of which I am no longer a part, but which I want to value as one possible image of a women's socialist culture. ●

Rosemary Betterton

## 1987 Diaries

When I was young, part of the ritual of Christmas was always buying my grandmother her *Boots Scribbling Diary*, so that she could record the weather, the market price of calves and who married who.

These days its more complicated. There are diaries for anglers, footballers, cooks, vicars and even one dedicated to those living in London. How do you choose?



Well red facts and stats

This year's *Tate Gallery Desk Diary* features paintings from its contemporary art collection. It's beautifully put together, almost too good to spoil by writing in.

If you want something to make you smile at work, there's the *Private Eye Desk Diary* with its cartoon a week plus assorted newspaper misprints.

Then there are the *Oxfam* and *Date Aid Desk Diaries*, full of pictures, facts and stats.

Pocket diaries for young people seem to have changed if the *Grange Hill Diary* is anything to go by. No more longest river, highest mountain, capital cities. Instead it's how to say no to drugs.

Finally we come to the 'radical' diaries. *Spare Rib* covers women in movies and has the invaluable menstrual calendar; the *British Women Artists Diary* is beautiful though the shiny paper means smudged entries.

The 1987 *Big Red Diary* is 'Southern Africa – Vistory is Certain' and it's the best of the bunch. Well designed, loads of space for notes and addresses and lots of impressive illustrations and quotes.

With all these to choose from, don't you feel boring owning a Filofax or even a *Marxism Today* Lefax. ●

Sioned Mair Richards

## Behind You!

Try some exercise over Christmas, even if it's only as much as turning off the TV and treat the children to the real magic of the theatre.

**The Pied Piper** The National Theatre. Legendary tale with magic and music performed by London schoolchildren. Details: 01 928 2252.

**The Fantastic Voyage of Uly Sinsbad** The Unicorn Theatre, London. Until Jan 14. Modern mixture of *The Odyssey* and *Arabian Nights*. Suitable for seven years upwards. Details 01-379 3280.

**Red Riding Hood** Dukes Playhouse, Lancaster. Update of folk tale with moth-eaten wolf-about-town in traditional panto style. Details: 0524 66645.

**The Boy Who Grew Too Fast** Sadlers Wells, London, Dec 11-27. Operas directed and composed by Carlo Menotti especially for young people. Overgrown schoolboy finds miracle cure but with dire consequences. Details: 01 278 8916.

**Jack and the Beanstalk** The Crucible, Sheffield. Classic pantomime with a villain to boo and a hero to cheer. Details: 0742 79922.

**The Crystal Palace and Harlequinade** The Norwich Puppet Theatre, Dec 12-Jan 31. Extra-



vaganza of pantomime and operetta under ultra-violet light. Details: 0603 629921.

**The Meg and Mog Show** The Studio Theatre, Bristol Old Vic. Dec 4-Jan 10. Failed witch is helped by faithful cat. Details: 0272 24388.

### MT's Ten Party Tapes

- *Walk This Way* – Run DMC
  - *Hard Core Hip Hop* – Mantronix
  - *Word Up* – Cameo
  - *So Cold The Night* – Communards
  - *Ain't Nothin' Goin' On But the Rent* – Gwen Guthrie
  - *Love Can't Turn Around* – Farley Jackmaster Funk
  - *Honky Tonk Man* – Dwight Yoakam
  - *Merry Xmas Everybody* – Slade
  - *Waiting For The Ghost Train* – Madness
  - *Scrapple From The Apple* – Charlie Parker
- Compiled by the MT staff



SERPENT'S TAIL 26 Westbourne Grove London W2 5RH Tel: 01 221 9347

## Labour Focus on EASTERN EUROPE

A SOCIALIST JOURNAL OF ANALYSIS AND DOCUMENTATION

has for nine years provided an unrivalled coverage of events and movements in the Second World

Issue No. 3/1986 out now:

- Voices of the Hungarian Revolution
- Chernobyl - The First Forty Days
- Thinking Big after Reykjavik. Anti-nuclear petition in East Germany. Ukrainian History. Enver Hoxha — the artful Albanian? Book reviews.
- Contributors include: Eric Heffer MP, Taras Lehkyj, Oliver MacDonald, Paul Foot, Victor Haynes, Jill Nicholls, David Pallister, György Krassó, Tamara Deutscher, Anna Paczuska.

### SUBSCRIBE NOW

If you would like to take out a trial subscription (or renew an old one), please send cheque or postal order for £9. (3 issues) - £15 if you are a library or other multi-user - airmail rates on application - to

Labour Focus, c/o Crystal Ltd, 46 Theobalds Road, London WC1X 8NW

Single copies (£3 post free) from: LFEE,  
4 Gains Road, Southsea, Hants. PO4 OPL

## ★ ISRAEL ★ ROSA LUXEMBURG

Autumn titles

### ISRAEL: THE HIJACK STATE

by John Rose

Examines the political undercurrents beneath the bloodshed and injustice that have marked the history of Israel, taking as its starting-point Israel's self-chosen role as 'America's watchdog'. 80 pages. £1.95

### THE MASS STRIKE

by Rosa Luxemburg

The path-breaking book by the Polish revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg in which she examines the role of the mass strike in bringing the Russian revolution of 1905. A socialist classic. £1.95

### BAILING OUT THE SYSTEM

Reformist socialism in Western Europe 1944-1985

by Ian Birchall

A meticulously researched book that examines the role of social-democratic parties throughout Europe — including the British Labour Party — in defusing working-class struggle and preserving the capitalist system. 272 pages. £5.95

### HOW MARXISM WORKS

by Chris Harman

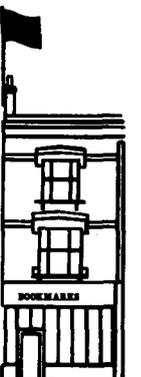
An introduction to Marxism, written in straightforward, everyday language — proving false the myth that Marxism is 'difficult' and showing it to be a set of ideas that explains the world we live in as no other set of ideas can. 96 pages. £1.95

All available from bookshops or by post from Bookmarks (add 15 per cent to cover postage)

## Bookmarks

265 Seven Sisters Road, London N4 2DE.

★ Bookmarks is a socialist bookshop in North London, just round the corner from Finsbury Park tube station. We also run a large socialist mail order service. Just drop a line for our latest booklists.





**Bookshop and  
Information Centre**

Books on peace, ecology  
& Third World issues.  
Fiction, poetry & drama  
from the Third World.

at 52 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0BB  
Telephone 01 836 2315  
Open Monday to Saturday 10-7

# Collets

129-131 Charing Cross Road ■ London WC2H  
0EQ. Tel: 01-734 0782  
Open 10.00-6.30 weekdays/10.00-6.00 Sat.

## Trotsky, Trotskyism and the Transition to Socialism

P Beilharz 208 pages  
£25 h/back  
Croom Helm

## Helping Ourselves to Power – A Handbook for Women and the Skills of Public Life

Sue Slipman  
£12 h/cover  
£4.95 flexi/cover  
Pergamon Press

## Theory of the Avant-garde

Peter Burger  
£35 h/back  
£8.50 p/back  
Manchester University Press

## Angola: Politics, Economics and Society

Keith Somerville  
£22.50 h/back  
£6.95 p/back  
Francis Pinter Ltd.

## The Sexual Perspective

Emmanuel Cooper  
£8.95 + £1.60 P&P  
Homosexuality and art in the last 100 years in the West.

## The Pink Plaque Guide to London

Michael Ellman & Frederick Roll  
£6.95

## Bearing the Word

Language and Female Experience in  
Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing  
Margaret Homans  
£18.75 h/back  
University of Chicago Press

## Women Media Crisis Femininity and Disorder

Michèle Mattelart  
£4.95 p/back  
Comedia

## Unions, Unemployment and Innovation

By Batson and Gourlay  
Price: £27.50 h/back only  
Blackwell

## On the Record Surveillance, Computers and Privacy – The Inside Story

By Duncan Campbell and Steve Connor  
Price: £7.85  
ISBN 7181 25762  
Michael Joseph

## Thatcher: Patterns of Deceit

by Tam Dalyell  
£4.95 h/back  
£1.85 p/back  
Cecil Woolf Publishers

## Socialist Register 1987; The New Conservatism in USA and Britain

Eds: Ralph Miliband, Leo Panitch and John Saville  
524 pages  
£6.50 p/back  
Merlin Press

## A Lost Left – Three Studies in Socialism and Nationalism

David Howell  
£29.95 h/back  
£8.95 p/back  
Manchester University Press

## Guerrilla Warfare

by Che Guevara  
with an introduction and case studies by Bryan Coleman and Thomas M Davies  
£7.95 p/back  
Manchester University Press

## Through the Break – Women and Personal Struggle

Eds: P McNeill, M McShea, P Tarmar  
£6.95  
Sheba Feminist Publishers Tel 254 1590

## The Threshing Floor

Barbara Burford  
£4.95  
Sheba Feminist Publishers Tel 254 1590

## Unemployment: An Economic Analysis

K G Knight  
£25 h/back  
£12.95 p/back  
Croom Helm

# FRANK CASS

## NEW BOOKS

### THE VIOLENT SOCIETY

Edited by Eric Moonman  
with a foreword by Lord Scarman  
ISBN 0 7146 3309 7 cloth £16.00  
ISBN 0 7146 4055 7 paper £7.50

### FROM 'FAIR SEX' TO FEMINISM Sport and the Socialization of Women in the Industrial and Post-industrial Eras

Edited by J. A. Mangan and Roberta J. Park  
ISBN 0 7146 3288 0 cloth £19.95  
ISBN 0 7146 4049 2 paper £9.95

### PLEASURE, PROFIT, PROSELYTISM

#### British Culture and Sport at Home and Abroad 1700-1914

Edited by J. A. Mangan  
ISBN 0 7146 3289 9 cloth £19.95  
ISBN 0 7146 4050 6 paper £9.95

### MUSIC IN EDUCATION

#### A Guide for Parents and Teachers

Malcolm Carlton  
ISBN 0 7130 0155 0 cloth £18.50  
WOBURN PRESS

### RACE AND LABOUR IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY BRITAIN

Edited by Kenneth Lunn  
ISBN 0 7146 3238 4 cloth £19.50  
ISBN 0 7146 4052 2 paper £9.50

### AN AFRICAN VICTORIAN FEMINIST

#### The Life and Times of Adelaide Smith Casely Hayford

Adelaide M. Cromwell  
ISBN 0 7146 3226 0 cloth £25.00

### WOMEN AND POLITICS IN WESTERN EUROPE

Edited by Sylvia Bashevkin  
ISBN 0 7146 3275 9 cloth £19.50

### MILITARY MARXIST REGIMES IN AFRICA

Edited by John Markakis and Michael Waller  
ISBN 0 7146 3295 3 cloth £21.00

## RELATED JOURNALS

### IMMIGRANTS AND MINORITIES

Edited by Colin Holmes, *University of Sheffield*  
and Kenneth Lunn, *Portsmouth Polytechnic*  
Three issues per year  
1987 subscription rates:  
£26.00 individual £45.00 institution

### IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY LAW & PRACTICE

Edited by Lawrence Grant  
Four issues per year  
1987 subscription rate: £45.00

## FRANK CASS

Gainsborough House,  
11 Gainsborough Road, London E11

## 1986 Christmas Crackers



### Lucky Strike

1986 was a year of recovery for the labour and trade union movement. After the disastrous TUC of 1985 we started to find a clear purpose and developed some new ways of working.

This recovery can't yet be measured in rising confidence at the workplace, which is unlikely to come before the next general election. But it can be seen in new initiatives like the GMBA-TU's flare campaign and the TGWU's attempt to make contact with its young members.

With some notable exceptions, including the print workers at Wapping, the members of Silentnight, and the thousands of health workers who continue to fight privatisation, more

### Critical Canons

Marxism. Socialism. Pluralism. These ideas and the connection between them have dominated my political reading in 1986. *Jon Elster's* comprehensive **Making Sense of Marx** (Cambridge £10.95), belies its easy-going title and sympathetic sound, but it is bound to be a major reference point in theoretical debates for some years. Coming to praise Marx, he almost ends up burying him.

A more robust and orthodox marxist book is *Ellen Meiksins Wood's* **The Retreat from Class** (Verso £6.95). She does not deal with the important tendency of 'analytical marxism' represented by Elster, but she does take to task all manner of other 'revisionists'. The message is that classical marxism is in

people seem to have written about strikes this year than have taken part in them.

*John Lloyd* and *Martin Adeney's* analytical account of the miners' strike **The Miners' Strike 1984-5** (Routledge, Keegan & Paul, £14.95) is a powerful book. It has produced strong criticism from many who were involved in the dispute. Others, some equally involved, see the book as the definitive work on the strike. Lloyd won the Journalist of the Year Award for his coverage. If you can stand it all again it is well worth reading, and shows why Lloyd is held in such high esteem by his contemporaries.

The last word, however, for now at least, should go to the women who made such an outstanding contribution. *Joan Witham's* **Hearts and Minds** (Canary Press, £4.95) and *Vicky Seddon*, editor **The Cutting Edge** (Lawrence and Wishart, £4.95), both provide an opportunity to hear the women's story and think about what one of those involved describes as the possibility of a new kind of socialism arising from the women's experience.

good shape and that the kind of bourgeois idealism which poses nowadays as pluralistic marxism should be exposed for what it is. In some cases this critique works well: there is after all a core of materialist propositions at the centre of Marx's project which cannot be revised indefinitely without a rechristening of the ideology becoming necessary.

However, I would suggest against Wood that the historical materialist method does not always involve giving class analysis an absolute priority. And her definition of the modern working class, though strict, actually refers to a very broad group of people - those who have little else to sell than their labour power. Yet however militant we make this class analysis sound, it does not deliver all that much for specific

*Peter Hain's* **Political Strikes** (Viking, £14.95) and *Phil Bassett's* **Strike Free** (MacMillan, £10.95) are two of the more thoughtful contributions on unions and strikes.

Bassett is one of the sharpest commentators of the union scene but sometimes, as in this book, he tends to overestimate the impact the EET-PU type of business unionism will have on the future of the movement.

Hain on the other hand looks for a new unionism which retains the important principles of struggle and solidarity, but which goes beyond strikes, economism and sectional interests to a much broader political approach. He looks, quite rightly in my view, for a kind of organic change which points to the future, but also retains the important democratic principles of our past.

This organic change is part of the recovery process. It is expressed at the present time in a fairly loose, unstructured way by the new leaders on the centre left in the TGWU, Usdaw, GMBA-TU and Nupe, who between them represent over 3.5m workers, organise some of

the key industries for the future, understand and accept the need for more democracy and equal opportunities among their members, and who will make a major contribution to the labour movement in the years ahead.

In some ways their task is to take over where Jack Jones left off when he retired in 1978. In his biography **Union Man** (Collins £15), Jack explains his philosophy of giving power to lay members, extending the role of activists, making the officers more accountable, and the unions more open and democratic.

The new leaders and their members have to complete this work by making sure that women and black members have power in their unions. Then to go beyond the activists to the members, forming a truly representative, democratic partnership and participative trade union movement, where activists and members play a real part and are not relegated to the sidelines as passive observers in a world of business unionism. ●

*Tom Sawyer*

strategic and descriptive purposes. But Wood's fundamentalism is strenuous, and despite her annoying 'holier than thou' tone, less canonical marxists should not be tempted into reading it merely polemically.

Once cold war enemies, marxist and pluralist ideas have since moved closer together, especially on the nature of democracy. *Robert Dahl*, the doyen of American pluralist theory, demonstrates in his elegant and succinct **A Preface to Economic Democracy** (Polity £15.00), that pluralism has come a long way since the 1950s. No longer the apologia for the 'free West', pluralism now shares with marxism the concern to understand and remedy the socio-economic obstacles to political self-determination. Dahl doesn't quite say that capitalism is

the root of all evil, but he does argue for a radical extension of cooperative democratic organisation in the economy and an end to private control over corporate assets.

Capitalism is not the root of all democratic difficulties anyway. In democratic socialism there will be important questions of representative decision-making, levels of participation, and differences - maybe even conflicts - amongst people's public priorities and aspirations. In other words, problems associated with a pluralist personal political culture. Michael Rustin's useful collection **For A Pluralist Socialism** (Verso £5.95), helps focus the concrete issues and possibilities, ranging from PR and regional autonomy to the right to work. ●

*Gregor McLennan*