

is being proposed? And how is that party to operate under South African conditions?

In the short space of a review it is not possible to enter into a lengthy debate with Callinicos on many of these issues. However his statement that there has been an 'intellectual maturing of South African Marxism' (for which he quotes an assorted list of authors drawn from the school of Althusser, Poulantzas, and others), makes this reviewer wonder what kind of programme Callkinicos has in mind for the revolutionary party in South Africa. If his call leads to the formation of yet another splinter group, without roots in the country, or to a further crop of casualties, with a muddled programme to boot, this appeal from Callinicos will only set the struggle back. Much more serious thinking is necessary before a Marxist party can be formed.

B. Oswin.

LETTER

From Gavin Williams, Fellow and Tutor in Politics and Sociology, Oxford.

I am flattered that my comments in a review should be singled out for attention in your opening editorial, but rather resent it being implied that I 'once believed that there was socialism in the eastern bloc, and now warn against working class leadership.' Whether the states established in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and elsewhere are properly described as 'socialism' is a matter of definition. If they are not socialist, then socialism has yet to be put to the test. We need to know why alternative brands of socialism, or communism, will be different from what has hitherto been widely advertised under that label. I have never given support to the authoritarian regimes of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Nor do I warn against working class leadership (as opposed to claims to lead the working class). In the review you cite, I observe that 'In Europe, the organisations of the working class have historically been more committed to advancing and protecting democratic rights than have the parties of the bourgeoisie – and they have generally been more concerned to advance democracy than to bring about socialism.' And I argue that 'Socialists should be concerned to articulate a conception of socialism which gives primacy to democratic procedures, choices and accountability rather than to state planning.' Would you disagree?