responsibility. By confusing woman's biology with her social role as carer for children, science aids, rather than alleviates, her continued oppression.

Benefits to women's bodies have undoubtedly accrued from scientific developments, but these should not be overrated, and they have been achieved at a cost. Shorter exalts medicine as the main reformatory impetus in the decline of infant mortality in the latter half of the nineteenth century, yet this decline was due more to a rising standard of living, especially improved nutrition, and to the effects of public health measures centred mainly upon improving the water supply. Even today, there is evidence that infant mortality is strongly linked with a mother's class position. Shorter plays down the effects of these economic and environmental changes upon women's health although they clearly exist in an undercurrent of evidence within the book, especially in his discussions of woman's bodily 'architecture' and of sex-determined life expectancy (Chs. 2 & 9).

It is regrettable that Shorter's tendency to deliver macho witticisms about the women's movement appears to have hampered his analytical ability. His rejoinder on page 176 that:

modern medicine has snatched from women's hands whatever hopes of autonomy and control had previously glimmered. (Shorter, 1983)

is seemingly lost under the deluge of jibes.

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Hidden Hands: Women and Economic Policies Anne Phillips Pluto Press 1983
 ISBN 0 86104 511 4 £2.50.

Published as part of Pluto's 'Arguments for Socialism' series, this book spans many socialist and feminist concerns about the world of work and women's place in it. What is more, it spans them with one hand; Anne Phillips has managed to forge a clearly stated stance of her own that draws on socialist arguments about the nature of work under capitalism as much as on feminist received wisdom about women's economic position. Few feminists would quarrel with the view that it is the *relationship* between work in and outside the home that forms the complex economic problem that women specifically have to deal with. Anne Phillips gives a concise restatement of this agreed understanding and then brings it face to face with current socialist thinking on economic policy in the shape of the Alternative Economic Strategy. What has the AES got to offer to women? Nothing in particular, she claims; it is simply a strategy for asking for more of the same kind of waged work we had before. It does not demand a change in the nature of waged work such as would take the squeeze off women poised uncomfortably between growing employment for wages and continuing responsibility for housework and children. Paradoxically, perhaps, it is through claiming that the AES cannot help women in particular that Anne Phillips points to the failures of the

AES in general. It fails to fight for an organization of work that allows workers space for their human needs. 'Work is organized as if every worker (man or woman) has a full time housewife at home. This is what we have to challenge.'

What sort of challenges to the current organization of work does the book suggest? Though the project may sound utopian, discussion of this question is in fact quite down to earth. Central to the discussion is the issue of hours of work; not only total hours in a week, but also the pattern of working hours during a day. Anne Phillips argues that, because a more equitable division of domestic work between men and women is crucial, we should look closely at ways we could change waged employment and its hours and conditions, to make this more likely to come about. At the moment, men too often work long hours of overtime while women are employed part time; both patterns need to be broken down. Another aim would be to break down the distinction between full-time and part-time work so that rights and conditions for part-timers could be brought in line with those in full-time work. This acknowledges that a lot of 'caring' work will continue to be done at home; the alternative of 'socializing' all such work — childcare and looking after old people and so on — is acknowledged to be less than ideal for many people. Aiming to break down the part-time/full-time distinction, or to achieve employment hours for men as well as women that really do fit in with school timetables and with being a consumer, are suggestions that amount to changing waged work so that it fits in with domestic work and not just with the dictates of profit. As such, they are a far cry from the sort of schemes for flexible hours and so on that are proposed by employers currently. These sound as though they are designed for workers' convenience, but actually can just mean a tightening up of the clocking-in procedure. Genuine job-sharing is miles away from the sort of 'job-splitting' scheme fostered by the government, a scheme that can result in workers having to take a part-time job when they want a full-time one and which may take people from the dole-queue — but does not benefit mothers with young children who cannot register for the dole. Through such contrasts with the present initiatives emanating from capitalist employers, the book explores what the concrete conditions for advancing towards equality in work in and outside the home might actually look like.

Who are to be women's allies in fighting for these changes? It cannot be a simple choice between the unions and the state, Anne Phillips argues. Unions are not a panacea; they have a poor record in fighting low pay; collective bargaining strategies rely on deeply entrenched hierarchies in which women are all too often at the bottom. But on the other hand, we cannot trust the state; incomes policies, for instance, have too often been used simply as a mask for cuts. For some changes, it is argued, we need the state; we need national funding for childcare for example. For other changes, we need unions. We do not have a straight choice between unions or the state, policy or struggle.

The language of policy can be seductive, and it can persuade us we have more power than we can actually wield. So what can discussions of policy contribute to the changes we want? They can, at least, build up support for change: 'Change will come when people are convinced — when they know what they want and can see it is possible. This is why policies are so important. The last few years have been rich in new proposals and feminists and socialists have been spelling out what they want. Maybe this was based on delusion, a false belief in imminent change. But it gives us a lasting legacy for political action. It helps us translate the dreams into reality, and develops a vision for the future that meets with the here and now.' This concise, lucid and gracefully expressed slender volume in itself makes just such a contribution to imagining a feminist future.

Sonja Ruehl