COMMUNIST HISTORY NETWORK
NEWSLETTER
ISSUE 22 SPRING 2008

Welcome to Issue 22 of the *Communist History Network Newsletter* (*CHNN*) – which will be the last issue of the newsletter to be published. In March 2009, a new journal will be launched by Lawrence & Wishart: *Twentieth Century Communism: a journal of international history*. The new journal will be edited by the three current co-editors of the *CHNN* and new co-editor Matthew Worley. The existing web site of the *CHNN* (which hosts the complete full-text content of all 22 issues of the newsletter, from 1996 to 2008) will continue to be made available as an archive. News events, research updates and reports of work in progress which would previously have been covered in the pages of the newsletter will in future be publicised in the new *Twentieth Century Communism* blog which can be found at **http://c20c.wordpress.com**. Subscription information for the new journal can be found on page 7. The editors would like to thank all of the readers and contributors to the *CHNN* over the past decade, and hope that you share our enthusiasm for the new journal. We would also like to acknowledge the University of Manchester's continuing administrative and technical support for the newsletter.

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CHNN on-line:
http://www.socialsciences.man.ac.uk/chnn

Twentieth Century Communism blog:
http://c20c.wordpress.com

Lawrence & Wishart journal page :
http://www.lwbooks.co.uk/journals/twentiethcenturycommunism/contents.html

- **ALLEN HUTT PAPERS**: A collection of papers relating to the journalist and historian Allen Hutt (1901-73), and previously forming part of his personal library, was deposited in the 1990s in Miyazaki University, Japan (see International Review of Social History 42, 1997, 147-50). Listings of these materials have now been produced in English and can be consulted alongside the CPGB archives at the Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Manchester, which also holds an important collection of Hutt correspondence. The collection comprises extensive publications, typescripts, lecture notes, notebooks etc from the different phases of Hutt's career. It also includes a small but important collection of correspondence, notably with Maurice Dobb (20 items, 1926-8), Hugo Rathbone (3 items, 1925-6) and P.J. Schmidt (14 items, 1926-9). There is also some material from the 1926 General Strike including strike bulletins, the CPGB's *Workers' Bulletin* and othe circulated materials. Enquiries regarding access should be addressed to: Professor Akito Yamanouchi, Department of History, Faculty of Education, Miyazaki, 1-1 Gakuen Kibanadai-Nishi, Miyazaki 889-21, Japan.

- **CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS ON PCF AND 1956:** Proceedings of the Saint-Denis conference on the PCF and 1956 (see report by Gavin Bowd in *CHNN* 21) have been published as *Le parti communiste français et l'année 1956. Actes des journées d'étude*

organisées par les Archives départmentales de la Seine-Saint-Denis les 29 et 30 novembre à Bobigny, Paris: Départment de la Seine-Saint-Denis/Fondation Gabriel Peri, 2007. A review will appear in the first issue of *Twentieth Century Communism*.

- **CROSSING BOUNDARIES:** *Crossing Boundaries: women's organising in Europe and the Americas, 1880s-1940s*. Under this title papers have been published from a recent international colloquium at Uppsala University. Of particular interest to historians of communism are the papers by Karen Hunt ('Transnationalism in practice: the effect of Dora Montefiore's international travel on women's politics in Britain before World War 1' and Joan Sangster, 'Political tourism, writing and communication; transnational connections of women on the left, 1920s-1940s'. The editors are Pernilla Jonsson, Silke Neunsinger and Joan Sangster and the other contributors are Ulla Wikander and E. Sue Wamsley. For on-line access and ordering details, go to: http://publications.uu.se/abstract.xsql?dbid=8149

- **THE FAR LEFT IN BELGIUM AND CANADA:** Proceedings have been published from a colloquium held at the Free University of Brussels in 2005: Anne Morelli and José Gotovitch, eds, *Contester dans un pays prospère. L'extrême gauche en belgique et au Canada*, Peter Lang, 2007, ISBN 978-90-5201-309-1. Other contributors include Francine Bolle, Marc Comby, Francis Dupuis-Déri, Jacques Gillen, Jill Hanley, Rik Hemmerijckx, Alain Lemaitre, Julie Maeck, Sean Mills and Eva Schandevyl.

- **THE CPGB ARCHIVE MICROFILMING PROJECT:** The Labour History Archive and Study Centre (LHASC) in conjunction with the Communist Party Archive Trust and Microform Academic Publishers are undertaking a project to microfilm the Communist Party of Great Britain Archives. This is part of the ongoing preservation and widening access to collections undertaken by LHASC. As part of this process sections of the CPGB archive collection will be unavailable for researchers while being microfilmed. The majority of this work will take place from the 1 December 2007 and it is hoped that the project will be finished in approximately six months. However in order to be able to provide a more accurate timetable of the process a sample batch will be sent for microfilming. The following material will be unavailable for researchers beginning the week commencing 5 November for at least 2 weeks: CP/CENT/EC, CP/CENT/PC and CP/CENT/COMM. It is hoped that we will be able to ensure a quick turn around time and apologise for any inconvenience caused to researchers during this project. Any researchers wishing to use the CPGB archive are advised to continue to check the website http://www.phm.org.uk for regular updates and fuller timetables and to contact archive staff if arranging a visit.

- ***THE KICK INSIDE*:** Editor of The Rotten Elements blog Lawrence Parker has self-published a new pamphlet *The Kick Inside: Revolutionary Opposition in the CPGB, 1960-1991* which attempts to document the various 'revolutionary' factions, schisms and breakaways which emerged from within the British Communist Party within those four decades. £4.00 (plus £1.15 UK p&p), pp75. Order details from: vorzeida@yahoo.co.uk

Contents

New journal:

From the *Communist History Network Newsletter* to *Twentieth Century Communism: a journal of international history*

The *Communist History Network Newsletter* first appeared in the spring of 1996 as a means of communication for the then proliferating body of historians with interests in some or other aspect of British communist history. Its immediate origins lay in the Opening the Books conference held in Manchester in 1994, whose participants provided the network's original mailing list. Like similar initiatives elsewhere, the newsletter also reflected the stimulus to such activities provided by the opening up of communist archives; indeed, part of the rationale for the first *CHNN* was to circulate summaries of papers from another Manchester event on 'New findings from the Moscow archives'. Though the field was potentially vast, the newsletter was conceived on a modest scale. There was no concerted attempt to set historical agendas. No position was adopted regarding different approaches to communist history, nor was any contribution refused for failing to conform to any such position. Like the early bulletins of the British labour history society, the newsletter was primarily intended as a tool of communication. Its first editor's view was (and remains) that a journal specifically focusing on a communist party like Britain's would be the last word in introspection.

Despite exiguous editorial resources, and the pressure of other commitments, the newsletter has – with one or two interruptions – continued since then to appear twice-yearly. Though remaining avowedly a newsletter, not a surrogate journal, its character has imperceptibly altered over the years. One crucial step, in 2001, was the addition of a second editor, Richard Cross, who as well as bringing his expertise in communist history took in hand the launching of the online edition of the newsletter. With on-line access, much commended for its style and accessibility, came greater visibility internationally. Simultaneously, the editors' themselves began more self-consciously to register the importance of an international scholarship on communism often too little known to British and other anglophone historians. In 2002 an overview appeared of key French texts hardly noticed in English-language journals. The following year Norman LaPorte joined the newsletter as a third editor with extensive knowledge of, and contacts with, German-speaking scholars. These wider ambitions were also reflected in a number of international collaborations. Following the 'People of a Special Mould?' conference held under the auspices of the CPGB Biographical Project, papers were published in special issues of *Socialist History* and *Science & Society* and as the edited collection *Agents of the Revolution*. More recently, the *Bolshevism, Stalinism and the Comintern* collection advertised in the present issue includes several chapters translated from the German, French or Italian. That the observations on stalinisation of so eminent a historian as Hermann Weber are thus for the first time made available in English is a measure of how overdue such initiatives are.

On the basis of these experiences, the editors have decided to discontinue the *CHNN* and replace it with a yearly journal *Twentieth Century Communism: a journal of international history*. Fuller details, including the names of our international editorial advisers, can be found below, and we hope indicate the high scholarly standards, international scope and spirit of intellectual openness to which the journal is committed. Excellent publications of similar scope already appear in French and German. There are also journals in English dealing with communist (and post-communist) regimes and the experience of the Russian revolution. The rationale for *Twentieth Century Communism*, however, is that there is a need and space for a journal in English focusing more specifically on communist movements in an international and comparative context.

In launching the journal we are delighted to have the involvement of a fourth editor, Matthew Worley, one of the editors of the *Bolshevism, Stalinism* collection, well known for his writings on the inter-war labour movement. While the new journal will allow more space for interviews and

reviews of current literature, we appreciate that the *CHNN* also performed an important noticeboard function. Through the creation of a *Twentieth Century Communism* blog we hope that the journal will continue to assist in publicising events and work in progress, freed of the constraints of a twice-yearly deadline and sometimes overburdened editors. The blog is now in operation and can be found at **http://c20c.wordpress.com**

With this last issue the *CHNN* therefore comes to a close. We apologise to readers for the non-appearance of the autumn 2007 issue, which lost out to discussions around the new journal. The result is that the present issue is somewhat larger than any previous one. Like previous issues, it is circulated free of charge, for which we owe thanks to the universities of Manchester and, latterly, of Glamorgan. Notwithstanding our Kropotkinesque leanings, we regret being unable to produce the journal on the same basis. We hope however that our readers will support the initiative both through personal subscriptions, and through seeking where possible to get their libraries to take the journal. Subscription information for the new journal can be found on page 8. At the same time, the existing web site of the *CHNN* (which hosts the complete full-text content of all 22 issues of the newsletter) will continue to be made available as an archive.

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Twentieth Century Communism
a journal of international history

Communism was one of the defining political movements of the twentieth century. Viewed from different perspectives, it was at once a utopia, an ideology, a system of government, an apparatus of terror and an international political movement stretching to almost every corner of the globe. None of these aspects of its history will be overlooked in *Twentieth-Century Communism*. Nevertheless, the journal's primary concern is with communism as an international movement of unparalleled scope and cohesiveness. Since the collapse of the USSR and its satellites nearly twenty years ago, this phenomenon has given rise to a rich historical literature, informed both by the accessibility of communist archives and wider developments in social, political and cultural history.

Twentieth-Century Communism will provide an international forum for the latest research on the subject and an entry-point into key developments and debates not immediately accessible to English-language historians. Its main focus is on the period of the Russian revolution (1917-91) and on the activities of communist parties themselves. However, its remit will also extend to the movement's antecedents and rivals, the responses to communism of political competitors and state systems, and to the cultural as well as political influence of communism. *Twentieth-Century Communism* is a peer-reviewed journal of 256 pages appearing annually in March. As well as peer-reviewed research and discussion articles, it includes reviews, conference reports, key and a noticeboard section. The core of each issue will be provided by a themed section.

The theme of the first issue, to appear in March 2009, is 'Leadership cults'. Contributors will include Balázs Apor (on Rákosi); Anthony Howe (on Tom Mann); Claude Pennetier and Bernard Pudal (on Stalinism and the cult of the worker); and Tauno Saarela (on Kuusinen and Finland). There will also be an interview with Hermann Weber.

***Twentieth Century Communism*: editorial advisers:**

Aldo Agosti; Bernhard Bayerlein, Sylvain Boulouque; Geoff Eley; Jean-François Fayet; Irina Filitova; Nina Fishman; Ben Fowkes; José Gotovitch; Subhanlal Gupta; Stephen Hopkins; Edward J. Johanningsmeier; Kevin McDermott; Stuart Macintyre; Svend Rybner; Tauno Saarela; Steve Smith; Daniela Spenser; Brigitte Studer; Ronald Suny; Geoffrey Swain; Andrew Thorpe; Alexander Vatlin; Hermann Weber; Serge Wolikow.

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http://www.lwbooks.co.uk/journals/twentiethcenturycommunism/contents.html

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‘Syndicalism and Revolutionary Communist Trade Unionism in Wales and the Wider World’

On Saturday 22 September 2007, this one-day seminar was held at the University of Glamorgan. The well-attended event was held under the auspices of the Centre for Modern and Contemporary Wales and marked the second in a series of seminars held in collaboration with the universities of Manchester (Kevin Morgan) and Leicester (Steve Hopkins).

The two morning sessions were devoted to developments in Wales. The first session focussed on Emma Goldman. The filmmaker Colin Thomas, of ‘The Dragon Speaks with Two Tongues’ renown, returned an element of passion to the marriage of political convenience between Goldman and the Scottish miner and radical, James Colton, who was employed in the South Wales coalfield. Kevin Morgan (Manchester) then located Goldman’s anti-bolshevism within the context of the British left and reflected on her experience of Wales and its political culture.

In the second session, Steffan Morgan (Swansea) offered a gendered analysis of the 1984-1985 miners’ strike in South Wales in order to reflect on notions of masculinity and respectability. He was paired with Alex Gordon, a full-time RMT union official in the South Wales region, who spoke on the ‘forgotten history’ of ‘Charles Watkins and Syndicalist Railwaymen’.

The first afternoon session went on to locate the origins and development of syndicalism on a global scale. Ralph Darlington’s (Salford) anatomy of the conditions that fostered the growth of syndicalism was a wide-ranging as it was compelling, drawing examples from Britain, Ireland, the Americas and Spain. Using images of anarcho-syndicalist propaganda during the Spanish Civil War, Sharif Gemie (Glamorgan) valuably illustrated the modernist project that lay at the heart of movement in Barcelona.

The afternoon concluded with a session on North America. Edward Johanningsmeier (University of Delaware) – whose participation was made possible by collaboration between the universities of Glamorgan and Delaware – demonstrated the strong syndicalist influence on the trade-union policies of the American Communist Party (CPUSA), while locating this within the party’s relationship with Moscow. The concluding paper, by John Manley (University of Central Lancashire), assessed the role of Canadian communist Bob Haddow, in the party’s industrial policy during the Second World War.

Norry La Porte, University of Glamorgan

The Communist Party of Great Britain and Anti-Racist Politics, 1948-1981

This PhD thesis was successfully completed in December 2007 for the Department of History at Flinders University, South Australia. A copy has been sent to the Labour History Archive and Study Centre in Manchester.

This thesis examines how the Communist Party of Great Britain, as the largest political organisation to the left of the Labour Party and an influential force within the trade unions, reacted to the arrival of immigrants from the Commonwealth in the post-war period, how anti-racism was incorporated into the party's wider struggle for socialism and the practical role that the party occupied within the anti-racist movement in Britain. The scope of the thesis begins with the onset of large-scale black immigration, symbolized by the arrival of the *SS Empire Windrush* with 492 West Indians aboard at Tilbury in June 1948, through what Robert Miles and Annie Phizacklea described as 'the racialisation of British politics',[1] ending with the riots across Britain in the summer of 1981, when black and white youth reacted violently towards the institutions of the state under Thatcherism. This time frame corresponds with the shifts in the Communist Party's post-war strategy towards parliamentary democracy under *The British Road to Socialism* and through their 'Indian Summer'[2] during the industrial militancy of the late 1960s and early 1970s, before the party suffered internal schisms and declining membership in the early 1980s. The history of anti-racism and the Communist Party was the history of a potential squandered, one that had greatly diminished between the 1950s, when many black immigrants were attracted to the party due to its anti-colonial legacy, and the early 1980s, when the party was in sharp decline and the black communities were wary of labour movement that had for so long minimised the problems of racism that black Britons faced. At the heart of the division between the CPGB and black workers was the belief that racism was borne out of capitalism and that measures taken to combat racism needed to be encompassed into the wider activities of the class struggle. Despite the CPGB declaring that the interests of white and black workers were essentially the same, the party faced major problems in convincing white workers, including the party's own members, to be actively involved in the fight against racism, particularly against racial discrimination in the workplace and amongst the labour movement.

There are several factors that need to be examined in a history of the CPGB and anti-racist politics, which are focused upon in this thesis. It must be remembered that the CPGB was primarily made up of skilled and semi-skilled workers and, more so than other European communist parties, was significantly representative of the nation's working class. This is important as racism was pervasive in British society in the post-war period and racist beliefs were abundant in the working class. The Communist Party, by recruiting workers, could not be immune to some forms of racial prejudice amongst its members, but it is important to analyse how anti-racist sentiment was formed within the party and what practical effects this had upon anti-racist activities by party members.

Although the party did have an important legacy of being involved in anti-colonial and anti-fascist struggles, many of its (primarily white) members had not been involved in this sphere of party activity and during the economic boom of the post-war period, were more concerned with the 'bread and butter' issues of wage militancy and protecting workers' rights.[3] Although these trade union issues were extremely important, the problems faced by black workers were often overlooked and issues of racism were subordinated to the class struggle. The perception of racism as a construct of the capitalists to divide the working class and its eradication tied to the ideal of socialist revolution meant that combating racism was consistently neglected, not just by the CPGB, but by most sections of the labour movement and the left. The CPGB was willing to make use of its black members, but the focus of the party remained upon the issues of industrial class politics.

Just as important as the party's attitude towards 'race' and its place within the class struggle was the practical implications of the party's post-war strategy upon anti-racist activism. Outlined in the

party programme, *The British Road to Socialism*, the CPGB rejected the leninist notion of armed insurrection to achieve power, instead proposing that the transition to socialism could be achieved through parliamentary democracy. This saw the party willing to work with the institutions of the state to help build a socialist Britain, which had major connotations for the party's anti-racism, preferring to campaign for the enforcement of legislation against racial discrimination and racial violence, rather than militant anti-racist activism. The key problem that the CPGB faced in this approach was that it seemed that any positive action that the state could provide in the struggle against racism was countered by the racism that was perpetrated by the institutions of the state, such as the police, the judiciary and the Home Office. As the thesis demonstrates, this relationship with the state had an enormous effect upon the CPGB's broad-based anti-racist campaigning and its anti-fascist activities against the National Front, especially in comparison with the militant anti-fascism of the Socialist Workers Party.

Another important facet of *The British Road to Socialism* strategy and the democratic path to socialist transformation was the significance placed upon working with others to achieve socialism, though the broad popular (later 'democratic') alliance. The relative size of the Communist Party and its declared adherence to democratic principles meant that the party looked to the Labour Party and the trade unions to formulate a broad left strategy, helping to build a mass party of the working class. Dependency upon these alliances for the implementation of any major political agenda meant that most of the campaigning concerned immediate economic issues, with little practical action taken to fight racism. Most trade unions had declared on paper to fight racial discrimination, but mobilisation of white workers to help their black co-workers was very limited.

The little evidence of tangible benefits produced by the party's strategy of broad left alliances and a focus upon industrial politics saw some within the CPGB push for a re-evaluation of the party's programme. These reformers pushed for an inclusion in the party programme of the new social movements that had risen since the late 1960s, which caused much anxiety for the traditionalists in the CPGB. The discordance in the party during the mid-1970s over the continuing policy of wage militancy was given much momentum by the debate over the validity of opposition by some within the CPGB to the Social Contract, which saw the party in disagreement with its traditional allies in the trade unions and the Labour left, around which the industrial strategy centred. This saw the reformers able to promote the inclusion of wider based social movements and cultural politics as a viable alternative to the primacy of industrial militancy. The schism between the traditionalists and the reformers was solidified by the 1977 edition of *The British Road to Socialism*, which promoted the new social movements as important aspects of the struggle for socialism, stating that oppression was 'not always directly connected with the relations of production'.[4] This produced much anxiety for traditionalists in the CPGB, causing deep divisions that exacerbated the effect of an already declining membership.

By the early 1980s, the Communist Party's potential to make a significant contribution to the anti-racist movement had reduced dramatically. Despite the development of the broad democratic alliance strategy, which focused upon local community based activism and co-operation with other anti-racist and immigrant organisations, the black communities were reluctant to follow the lead of the CPGB, which had continually marginalised the issue of racism within the scope of class politics. Many of the party's industrial militants saw the promotion of cultural politics, including anti-racism, as a diversion from socialist politics and industrial activism, which furthered friction within the CPGB and detracted from practical efforts to fight racism. The rise of Thatcherism signaled great problems for the CPGB and Britain's black population, who both suffered from the increasing coercion by the State. But the CPGB were not in a position to produce any significant achievements for the anti-racist movement and the black communities, especially black youth, were more likely to be involved in direct confrontation with the state, than to look towards the left for significant anti-racist action.

In the thirty years since the beginning of large-scale black immigration into Britain, the CPGB had attempted to incorporate anti-racism within the wider struggle for socialism, with the difficult task of presenting the mainly white party as an effective organisation in the anti-racist movement. As an influential body within the trade union movement and the largest leftist party in post-war Britain, the Communist Party had the potential to be an important force in the struggle against racism. The party's anti-colonial legacy had originally drawn black activists towards the CPGB in the 1950s, but

the party still viewed the issue of racism and the problems facing black immigrants in the context of anti-colonialism. The party was slow to formulate an effective strategy against racism as the marxist ideology of the CPGB subordinated 'race' below the more immediate issues of class politics. Alongside this was a shift towards a less confrontational position of working within the capitalist state system, as outlined in *The British Road to Socialism*. This saw the Communist Party more willing to appeal to the state to fight racism, although the state itself was a fundamental and central part of institutional racism, through the police, the judiciary and the Home Office, as well as the socio-economic policies of the government. The CPGB's position on race relations changed as black activists, both inside and outside the party, expanded the concepts of 'race' and racism away from the simple construct of class organisation, alongside moves within the party by younger members and intellectuals, inspired by the new social movements, to re-evaluate the CPGB's focus on class based politics. This push for ideological and strategic reform was predicated by declining party membership and a waning of industrial influence. At the same time, the black communities were wary of the white left and the labour movement, who had for so long minimised the role of 'race' within class politics. Whatever the initial potential the Communist Party of Great Britain had within the anti-racist movement, this had been evaporated by the early 1980s, through falling membership numbers and internal divisions, a compromised view on the role of the state and the ideological position of 'class before race',[5] as well as a failure to effectively incorporate black workers into the political processes of the labour movement or to enlist white workers into the anti-racist struggle. By examining this theme of a potential squandered, this thesis addresses a gap in the cultural history of the CPGB and aims to make a significant contribution to the histories of the CPGB and anti-racism in Britain.

Dr Evan Smith, Flinders University

Notes

[1] Robert Miles & Annie Phizacklea, *White Man's Country: Racism in British Politics*, Pluto Press, London, 1984, p. 38
[2] Willie Thompson, *The Good Old Cause: British Communism 1920-1991*, Pluto Press, London, 1992, p. 160
[3] John Callaghan, *Rajani Palme Dutt: A Study in British Stalinism*, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1993, p. 285
[4] CPGB, *The British Road to Socialism*, CPGB pamphlet, London, 1977, p. 29
[5] Trevor Carter, *Shattering Illusions: West Indians in British Politics*, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1986, p. 62

Something Wicked This Way Comes: the Russian delegation at the 1931 congress

'Something Wicked This Way Comes: the Russian delegation at the 1931 congress', D. Phil. Thesis submitted September 2006, accepted October 2007, Linacre College, University of Oxford. Deposited Bodleian Library, Oxford.

The 1931 Second International Congress of the History of Science has acquired an iconic status in the modern history of science. Viewed as the genesis of the history of science as an academic discipline, the conference was organized and chaired by Charles Singer, who published widely on the history of science and sought to establish the discipline at University of Oxford and UCL. The congress has become iconic for more subterranean reasons as well.

However, the congress and the status it has acquired have never been studied or analysed historically. Its context has never been illustrated, thus leaving the meaning of the event contingent upon one's own preconceptions and the dubious wonder of historical hindsight. The presence of a significant Russian delegation (the first to attend such a conference) with important and interesting commentaries on the relationship between science, history and society makes this omission more unfortunate and has left the delegation's legacy open to misinterpretation in a 'Cold War discipline'. This work is an attempt to understand the meaning of the congress, its multiple contexts and the Russian delegation's significance. It also hopes to view the meaning of the history of science as a discourse through this historical prism.

On the first day, a Russian delegation led by Nikolai Bukharin entered the arena, having touched down at Croydon airport a few days earlier. The delegation consisted of eight scientists and politicians from Stalin's Russia and had been significantly upgraded in the weeks before the congress after the intervention of the scientific journalist and communist, J G Crowther. Crowther recognized the importance of the congress to Stalin's shifting priorities in the industrialization effort of the Five Year Plan. As an adviser on the training of Russian engineers, Crowther noted the new emphasis on seeking support and cooperation from 'bourgeois specialists' and viewed the congress as an opportunity to address the international scientific community.

The delegation reflected the domestic complexity of the transitional character of Russian society at this time. Hitherto, historians and commentators have tended to identify the delegation as marxist in politics and stalinist in tactics with no appreciation of the complicated and multifaceted social background of the group or the complexities of the messages articulated. The individual motives of the Russian delegation have been consistently underestimated in the subsequent decades so much that one commentator could claim that it was nothing more than 'Stalinist dogmatism.' However, its composition reflected the fluid and fractured political situation facing Russian science, politics and philosophy during this period.

The icons of political left and right have yielded a plethora of misinterpretation and myth that served to obscure the genuine significance and meaning of the event. While many historians viewed the congress from the perspective of the present, assuming a 'quiet meeting of historians of science' of standard academic character, its context and construction were nothing of the kind.

The philosophical motivations of Singer and the congress organizing committee were not politically radical. The congress was designed as a huge public relations exercise to launch a public intellectual movement for the history of science. Singer sought and received significant press exposure for his campaign and asked for public participation and the support of various pillars of the British establishment. This was a scientific congress devoted to enunciating the tenets of George Sarton's 'new humanism', where the history of science would rebuild a rational worldview that would support science and technology in shaping society along rational lines. The delegates were overwhelmingly eminent scientists from across the globe with members of the public also attending. Four European governments sponsored the event with the British Labour government

sending the President of the Board of Education to open with a speech at the Science Museum, London. The debates were carefully sequenced and orchestrated to demonstrate the contemporary and philosophical relevance of the history of science from its place within general historical study to the contemporary philosophical controversies in biology and physics. There was a programme of receptions at London clubs, Cambridge and Oxford colleges and the educational institutions of London.

Into this, the Russians flew to the surprise of all and the consternation of many. There followed a series of debates on the relevance of the history of science and clashes on the political and social significance of the subject between the congress 'mainstream', the British scientific left and the Russian delegation. The presence of Bukharin outraged the political right, which mobilized against him immediately through the leftovers of the 1922 movement, principally the *Daily Mail*, *Morning Post* and Conservative backbench MPs. The more radical British scientists such as Lancelot Hogben, Joseph Needham, J D Bernal echoed the politicised concerns of some of the Russians and sought to support them.

The best known of the delegates was Nikolai Bukharin, until recently the head of the Communist International and a revolutionary firmly under threat from Stalin. Bukharin retained positions associated with the Academy of Sciences, the role of science in the Five Year Plan and 'the history of knowledge'. Two scientists of international reputation, the physicist, Abram Ioffe, and the geneticist, Nikolai Vavilov attended. Neither were supporters of communism, though both held important positions in Russian science. The zoologist, Boris Zavadovsky, until recently a Deborinite 'dialectician', the engineer, Vladimir Mitkevich, a zealous Mechanist, and the economist and historian of science, Modest Rubinstein were relatively unknown. The delegation was unofficially led by a mathematician, Ernst Kolman, sent to monitor the political orthodoxy of the other Russians. Finally, an unknown philosopher called Boris Hessen, who worked in physics, Deborinite philosophy and history of science. Hessen was under suspicion for his political views and had been forced into *samo kritika* at the hands of Kolman in the months leading up to the congress. These delegates sought to engage the congress for a variety of reasons that involved the complexities of philosophy, history, science an society and their own domestic predicaments.

The intellectual controversy, the public campaign by the newspapers against Bukharin, and the arguments about politics and science appalled Singer, who saw his entire public relations strategy endangered by the Russians. He sought to silence their views and to minimize their impact on the congress, largely through threats and refusing to allow Russian papers. Needham and Hogben, both on his organizing committee, negotiated an agreement for the Russians to give their papers at a special session after the formal congress ended. The Russian delegation, recognising the danger to their own strategy of engagement with the international scientific community, rushed to translate and print their papers to be given out at this session. The subsequent publication, *Science at the Cross Roads*, proved to be of enduring interest. The paper of Boris Hessen on 'the social and economic roots of Newton's Prinkipia' and that of Bukharin on 'theory and practice' in science and philosophy remain interesting and vibrant papers that require careful examination.

The final level that reveals the unique character and timing of the congress is the social context of the event. Britain in the summer of 1931 was in the grip of a political and economic maelstrom that affected every aspect of society. The Labour government teetered on the edge of collapse as the economic crisis struck Britain. Unemployment benefit had been cut, igniting a wave of protest that gathered in intensity throughout the summer of 1931. Mass riots were reported in the major cities. The government was disintegrating as its basis of support in the Labour movement collapsed. Europe fared even worse with bank runs and mass unemployment in Austria and Germany. Hitler announced he was ready for power in Germany while India continued to rebel against the British Empire. The nadir was a matter of weeks away when Ramsey MacDonald joined with the Conservatives and the naval mutiny at Invergordon exploded. Thus, the atmosphere was taut as the congress gathered with the political left and right mobilizing as the Labour government crumbled. Bukharin arriving in London at this juncture was viewed with extreme suspicion by much of the political establishment and embarrassment by the Labour government.

The presence of the Russian delegation brought the political crisis to the floor of the Science Museum. This work analyses the streams of social context affecting the event and the political consciousness of those present.

While some of the background and environment has been analysed in previous publications, there has never been detailed examination or even recourse to the proceedings record. The most serious historical reinterpretation occurred regarding the Special Session, allegedly dedicated to the Russian delegation's papers, which witnessed the crescendo of the confrontation between the Russians, Charles Singer and the baying press campaign. This work outlines the developing controversies of the congress and an alternative account of the clash.

The themes discussed in the thesis are: the birth of the congress, its role and preparation; the social background of the Russian delegation including discussion of the individual delegates and their role in Russian events; the proceedings of the congress with discussion of the papers given and those presented afterwards in the published volumes; the special session and the confrontation between the Russian delegation and Charles Singer; an assessment of the Russian papers published as *Science at the Cross Roads*; the social environment of Britain in 1931; the subsequent fate of the Russian delegates with some notable ironies.

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Regional Membership Figures for the Communist Party of Great Britain, from 1945 to 1989

Membership figures for British political parties are notoriously difficult to come by, and notoriously inaccurate when acquired. This is partly because most parties have had a heavily decentralised structure with (until recently) no proper central membership records; partly because (as with the Conservatives) membership has often had a very vague definition, wavering between those who attended social functions to those who were committed party workers; partly because (as with the Labour Party) the issue of membership has been substantially complicated by cash quotas for affiliation, in which (at times) many more members than actually existed were paid for by affiliated organisations, as organisations dug into their pockets to support the party financially (and sometimes to buy influence), even when numbers on the ground were thin; and partly because the information has always been politically sensitive, affecting the credibility of parties, so they have been tempted to exaggerate and to obfuscate the numbers they allowed into the public domain.

Fortunately for its historians, the Communist Party, in this as in so much else, was different. Every year, a substantial organisational effort was made to sell membership cards for the following year. In a process more akin to a powerfully-driven direct-marketing organisation than a political party, local branches were required to report the successes of their efforts, to measure achievement against targets and quotas, to examine attainment against previous years' totals, and on occasion to submit exhaustive, carefully cross-tabulated returns showing the break-down of card-sales by length of membership, by industry or occupation, by gender, and by trades-union affiliation. Members were not only counted, they were nurtured; carefully managed, educated and advanced in the party via summer schools and by personal mentoring if they showed political promise.

Thus, CPGB membership reports are likely to have been accurate – because the card-sales campaign was so central to the organisational life of the party, because the up-to-date status of membership cards was checked at every party meeting, because the figures were not compiled for anyone else's use, or for public consumption (though total figures were released), and perhaps above all because the party actually seemed to care about its members and to value them, far more than did its established larger competitors. Many of the reports from membership campaigns have been preserved – sometimes in hand-written format, but usually typed-up and tabulated. Data exist both in the form of the hand-written returns from the districts to the centre, and in the form of summary reports for the central leadership.

This research note reports the simplest possible analysis of the very rich material that the party collected – that is, a break-down of the membership, by place and by numbers, over the period between 1945 and 1989. Much more data is available (and indeed we have transcribed some of the early analysis of membership by industry, not reported in this note, and would be happy to supply this to anyone who is interested). But so far as we have been able to determine, even the basic regional analysis of membership numbers that we present here has not been published before. Since it is time-consuming to generate, and may be of general use to other historians, it seemed sensible to release it as early as possible (not least, so that others do not have to duplicate our work), and to point others to the files in which the data are available.[1] We are not historians of the Communist Party and do not ourselves seek to draw conclusions – though, as will be seen, we have been unable to resist the temptation to speculate, at the end of this note.[2]

To understand the form in which our data is presented, it is important to know something about the way membership information was originally collected and analysed by the party. The Communist Party was split by geographical districts, and card-sales reports normally took the form of a break-down, by each district and in total, of an estimate of the previous year's membership at some fixed date, and a continually-updated report on how many cards had been sold to members this year, compared to that previous total. This process of updating sales took place between January and (usually) late November, often with as many as six reports being produced during the year. But while the sales figures were updated, the previous year's benchmark remained static, until

some new total membership figure replaced it. It is hard to tell the frequency with which this was done because there is not a complete run of data, but it seems to have happened at least annually, and occasionally on a six-monthly basis. Prior to the advent of computing, updating these figures was a laborious task and could not be undertaken continuously (and, indeed, the totals compiled by the party contain occasional arithmetical errors); and in any case, because card sales took place throughout the year, the decision about when to fix the total membership figure must always have been arbitrary. Partly to avoid spurious fluctuations in our own report due to reporting-date choices (and partly because of the years for which data happen to be available), in this note we have therefore chosen to report biennial rather than annual membership totals.

The other difficult issue is one of geography. Communist Party districts varied enormously in size and importance ('Devon and Cornwall' vs. 'Scotland', for example). Districts were also split, or merged, from time to time. Without some sort of simplification, longitudinal studies of party membership would be impossible. What we have done in this note is to combine smaller districts into relatively consistent geographical units (so, for example, all the 'Midlands' districts have been grouped together). What this does not take account of is (a) whether the physical boundaries of districts with the same names were changed from time to time, and (b) occasions when some (but not all) members in one district (such as the East Midlands) were reassigned to a different place entirely (such as London). However, although this means that some inaccuracies must exist, we do not believe that they are sufficient materially to affect the overall picture; and the disaggregated original data are available, on request from the authors.

Thus, the broad picture available from our research is as follows:

(a) Membership up to and including 1957 (using original geographical terms)

Figure 1. 1945 Data

1945 Communist Party Membership Totals	
London	14,417
Kent	1,063
Sussex	390
Hants & Dorset	800
East Anglia	585
W.of England	1,154
Devon	410
Tees-Side	467
North-East	1,121
Yorkshire	2,889
Lancashire	4,568
North West	459
Midlands	2,529
E.Midlands	2,135
S.E.Midlands	1,416
S.Midlands	874
Scotland	7,441
Wales	2,567
Overall	45,285

Figure 2. 1955 Membership Data, and change from 1945.

1955 Communist Party Membership Totals			
London	8,867		
W. Middlesex	1,375		
Surrey	1,359		
S. Essex	1,031	**Difference**	***Change %***
Former 'London'?	*12,632*	-1,785	*-12%*
Kent	913	-150	*-14%*
Sussex	416	26	*7%*
Hants. & Dorset	406	-394	*-49%*
East Anglia	317	-268	*-46%*
W. of England	679	-475	*-41%*
Devon & Cornwall	178	-232	*-57%*
Tees-Side	287	-180	*-39%*
North East	668	-453	*-40%*
Yorkshire	2,152	-737	*-26%*
Lancs. & Chesh.	3,029	-1,539	*-34%*
North West	171	-288	*-63%*
Midlands	1,675	-854	*-34%*
E. Midlands	1,207	-928	*-43%*
S.E. Midlands	600	-816	*-58%*
S. Midlands	397	-477	*-55%*
Scotland	5,629	-1,812	*-24%*
Wales	1,292	-1,275	*-50%*
Overall	32,648	-12,637	-28%

Figure 3. 1957 Data, and change from 1955

Membership Totals, and Percentage Change, 1955-1957	**1955 Totals**	**1957 Totals**	Change 1955-1957
London	8,867	5,686	-36%
W. Middlesex	1,375	1,077	-22%
Surrey	1,359	1,057	-22%
S. Essex	1,031	878	-15%
Former 'London'?	*12,632*	*8,698*	*-31%*
Kent	913	796	-13%
Sussex	416	347	-17%
Hants. & Dorset	406	393	-3%
East Anglia	317	233	-26%
W. of England	679	535	-21%
Devon & Cornwall	178	107	-40%
Tees-Side	287	232	-19%
North East	668	586	-12%
Yorkshire	2,152	1,841	-14%
Lancs. & Chesh.	3,029	2,576	-15%
North West	171	n/a	n/a
Midlands	1,675	1,356	-19%
E. Midlands	1,207	899	-26%
S.E. Midlands	600	478	-20%
S. Midlands	397	306	-23%
Scotland	5,629	4,735	-16%
Wales	1,292	1,232	-5%
Overall	32,648	25,350	-22%

Please note: There are great discrepancies in the three columns given for London in 1957 in the raw data, but the figures reported here seem the most credible, given the proportion of losses reported in other regions, where fewer discrepancies exist.

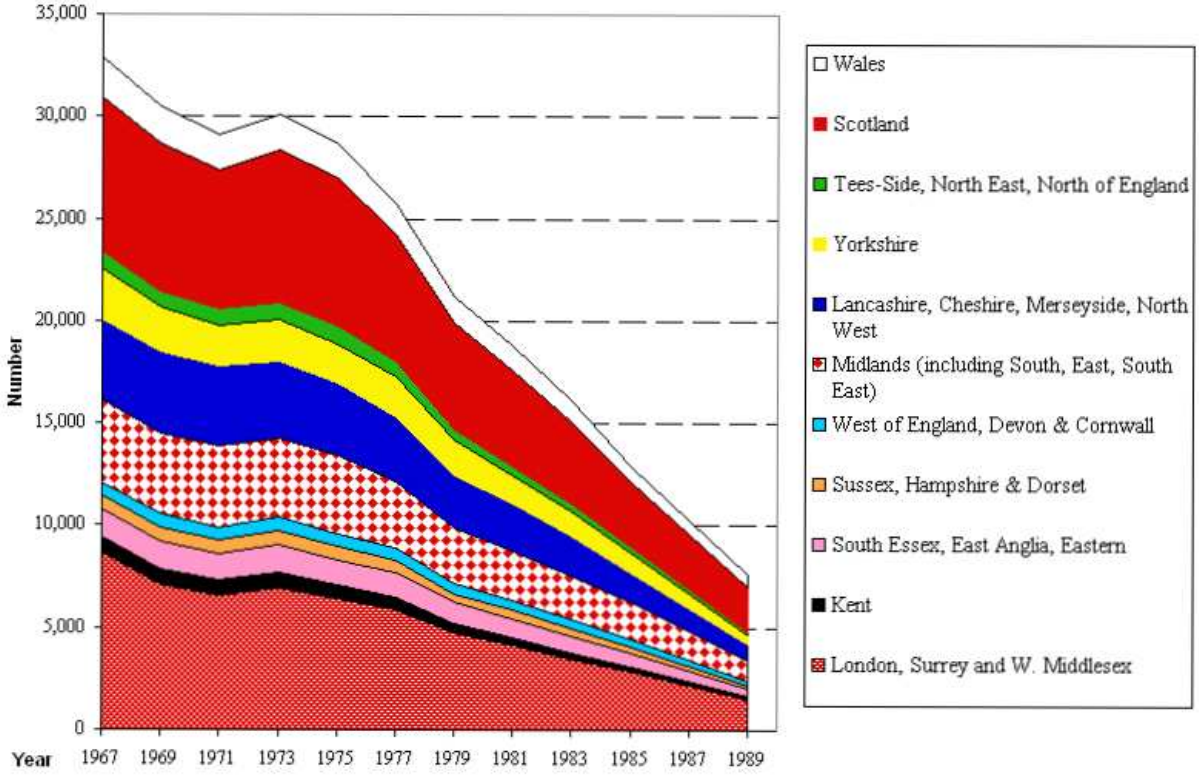
(b) Biennial Sample from 1967 to 1989, by simplified geography.[3]

Figure b1. Membership totals, 1957-1989, from Card Sales reports.

Communist Party Membership by Simplified Geography, 1955-1989												
	1957	Feb-67	Oct-69	Jun-71	Jul-73	Jul-75	Jul-77	Jul-79	Jul-81	Jul-83	Nov-85	Jul-89
London, Surrey and W. Middlesex	7,820	8,701	7,110	6,552	6,923	6,435	5,912	4,774	4,120	3,478	2,830	1,493
Kent	796	692	750	740	747	625	585	442	415	330	262	132
South Essex, East Anglia, Eastern	1,111	1,375	1,348	1,342	1,386	1,248	1,189	1,020	923	826	651	374
Sussex, Hampshire & Dorset	740	684	704	656	669	654	599	439	401	354	324	188
West of England, Devon & Cornwall	642	612	650	604	659	629	607	523	480	445	379	224
Midlands (including South, East, South East)	3,039	4,107	3,948	3,949	3,901	3,825	3,266	2,707	2,400	2,140	1,828	989
Lancashire, Cheshire, Merseyside, North West	2,576	3,893	3,948	3,951	3,715	3,552	3,177	2,556	2,337	1,924	1,406	817
Yorkshire	1,841	2,486	2,223	2,000	2,034	1,903	1,903	1,752	1,392	1,249	1,020	470
Tees-Side, North East, North of England	818	832	765	771	861	891	764	477	409	356	310	163
Scotland	4,735	7,527	7,226	6,781	7,431	7,205	6,180	5,210	4,701	4,003	3,146	2,200
Wales	1,232	1,962	1,789	1,789	1,771	1,730	1,545	1,321	1,234	1,003	756	545
Channel Isles	0	45	39	39	37	33	46	38	36	26	43	20
TOTAL	**25,350**	**32,916**	**30,500**	**29,174**	**30,134**	**28,730**	**25,773**	**21,259**	**18,848**	**16,134**	**12,955**	**7,615**

While it is possible to see membership trends, and the importance of different geographical areas, from these figures, it is perhaps easier to grasp them quickly if the figures are presented in a graphical form (see below). The data have been presented in two ways – first, as an area graph (which shows the relative size of each geographical area, but also the overall size of the Party's membership), then as an indexed series in which the relative performance of all the different geographical areas is compared, by setting their 1967 membership level to 100 in each case, and plotting changes relative to that base for subsequent years.

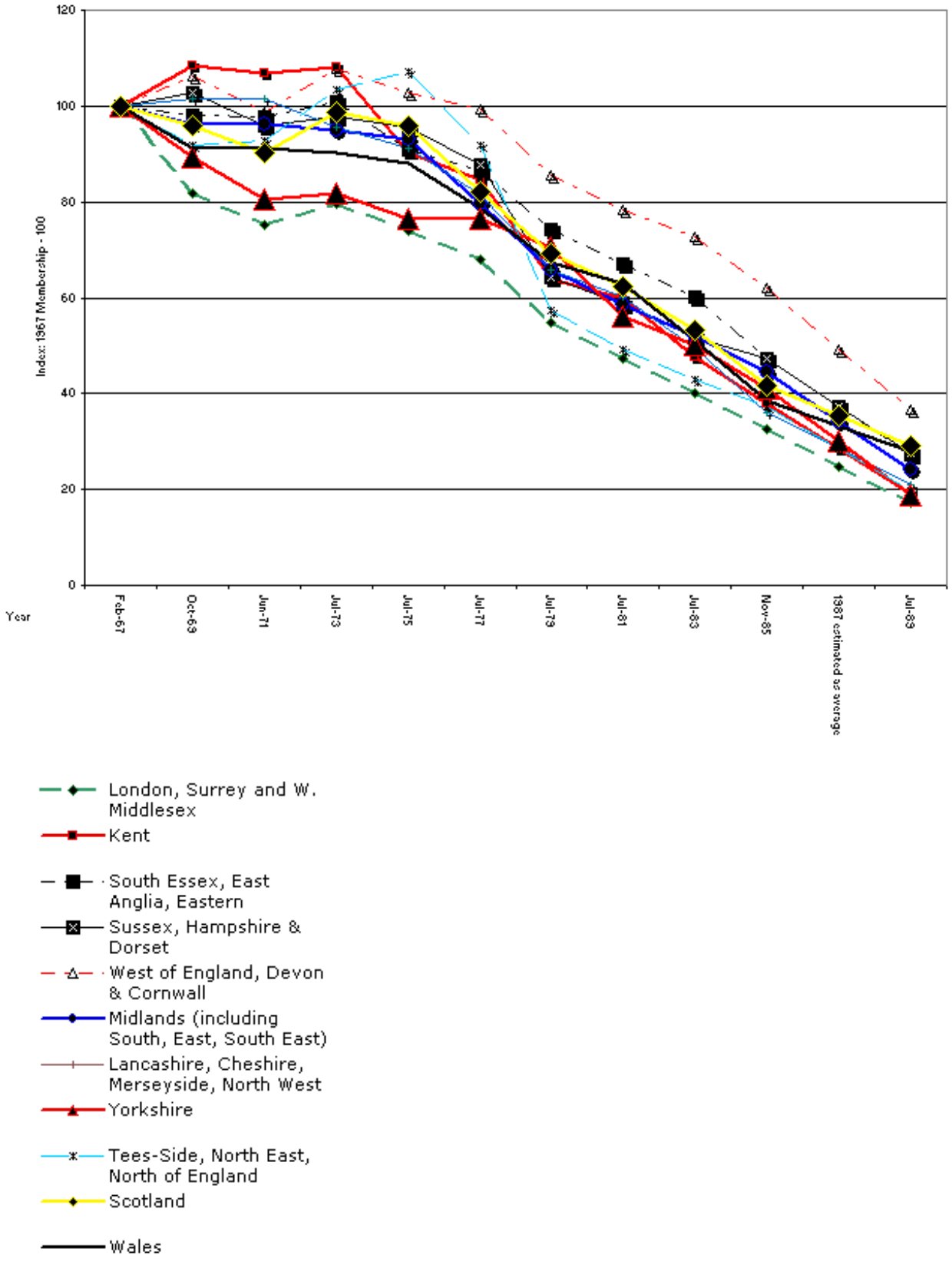
Figure b2. Membership Totals, biannual sample, by simplified geography: trends



Source: membership campaign returns (some undated, handwritten) sampled bi-annually. CPGB Archive, CP/CENT/ORG/19/03

From b(2) it can be seen that, perhaps surprisingly, Party membership held up relatively well until the mid 1970s, despite the aftermath of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, but fell sharply thereafter, just as (it might be thought) the Party's influence in British national politics was increasing. From b(3), below, another rather counter-intuitive result emerges; namely, that the decline was relatively consistent across all the Districts in which the Party had members – largely irrespective of their size, their level of organisation, or the extent to which they were engaged in larger political struggles. Indeed, some well-organised districts (such as Yorkshire and London) started to lose members relatively early; while the tiny number of members in Devon, Cornwall and the West of England held on resolutely until much nearer the end.

Figure b3. Index of CPGB Membership, by geography, 1967-1989 (1967=100)



Source: CP Membership campaign returns (some undated, handwritten), sampled biennially: CP Archive (Manchester) CP/CENT/ORG/19/01-04.

Concluding Remarks

Without further investigation, it is impossible to draw conclusions from these figures. But it is tempting to speculate. One speculation is this; that the decline in membership figures after the mid-1970s may have been largely generational. The fall does not seem to have related directly to political events (like 1968 – or even, in the long term, 1956); but it could be credibly explained by mortality. If many members had joined in the 1930s and early 1940s (aged, perhaps, in their early twenties),[4] and if that group represented the core of the loyal membership of the party, the sad truth is, that by 1975, it is actuarially probable that they would have started to die, in increasing numbers. Given mortality rates for manual workers, who made up much of the party's core membership, especially in the large industrial districts, a sharp decline in membership in those areas could have been accounted for by mortality alone, especially for men aged 65 and over. (If, by contrast, many of the doughty Cornish and Devonian members were drawn from middle-class groups such as teachers, with higher life expectancies, the relative out-performance of the West Country in terms of membership retention, might also be partly explained.) Similar patterns – though this is not an analogy that would have appealed to the party – can be seen in the 1970s' sales figures for soap-powders, where old brands (adopted by consumers early in their married lives) were, by 1976, dying along with their loyal users.[5]

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Harold Carter is working on the changing political economy British cities between 1945 and the present day; he is especially interested in the political and social impact of fifty years of social-democratic intervention in housing and planning, in the context of de-industrialisation. As part of this project he has written detailed histories of Southwark and of Sheffield, and he is currently working on the rise of the left in Sheffield before 1984. Gabriel Silkstone-Carter is writing on the role of the Communist Party in the 1972 Miners' Strike in Kent. They would be very interested to hear from anyone with information (especially personal reminiscences) relating to these topics.

Notes

[1] All our sources are loose documents in the box CP/CENT/ORG/19 (folders /01 to /04), in the Communist Party Archive in the People's History Museum Manchester. There is an un-sourced part typed and part handwritten document, in folder 19/04 of that box, which gives annual membership totals for the party but no regional breakdown; these totals cross-check with the figures we report. The maximum divergence between the two totals is 5% of the total membership (in 1957), and the figures for other years agree closely. On 10 occasions the divergence is 2% or less, and on two others it is 3%.

[2] We have also reported numerically, though not graphically, three bench-mark years (1945, 1955, and 1957) because rather comprehensive data are available for those years (and we would like to draw attention to them), and because 1945 in particular represented a strong year for party membership (presumably, partly reflecting the popularity of the USSR as a wartime ally, and partly reflecting the continuing political activity of the CPGB at a time when Labour Party activism was muted by the exigencies of war).

[3] In the graphs, 1987 has been inserted as an average of 1985 and 1989, since no data were available in the file for 1986, 1987, or 1988. The graphs are available in coloured-in form (which is easier to read) in the online version of the *Newsletter*.

[4] Party membership peaked, at 56,000, in 1942, according to the unsourced document in file CP/CENT/ORG/19/04, which we have no reason to believe to be inaccurate.

[5] Author's notes; presentation by Proctor and Gamble Ltd, Newcastle, 1975.

Monty Johnstone (1928–2007)

Monty Johnstone was a communist activist and thinker, for whom the study of history was not so much an end in itself, as an integral part of his political and intellectual activities. From the time he first joined the Young Communist League in the early 1940s, he took marxist and leninist ideology very seriously. However, he did not read the classics in a merely theological way; he looked also at the historical background and context of communism's basic texts. In addition, he developed an intense interest in the history of the Communist Party and the wider international communist movement. His facility with French and German, and later with the Russian language, assisted him greatly in this.

Monty's distinctive approach emerged after the crises of 1956 and Khrushchev's partial revelations about Stalin. He took the view that, on the one hand, the world communist movement still represented the only political force capable of moving humanity from capitalism to socialism, and that therefore it was necessary to remain within it. He retained his CPGB card and remained actively involved in party work. On the other hand, he rejected the communist tradition of uncritical adulation of certain leaders, parties and states in favour of a more nuanced approach. With his familiarity with party history, he also appreciated that there was nothing sacred, or eternal, about the party line at any given moment.

In the 1960s, when Monty's views were not very welcome in CPGB publications, he was particularly involved with the 'new left'. He contributed to *New Left Review* and subsequently *Socialist Register* on subjects such as socialism and democracy, the CPGB in the 1920s, the one-party state, and the role of Trotsky. All of these writings combined an appraisal of the past with an engagement with current politics. By the 1970s, when the pages of the CPGB's *Marxism Today* were again open to him, Monty developed his ideas within the context of ongoing CP debates. He also devoted more attention to the history of the USSR and the experience of stalinism, which remained a sensitive issue within the party.

Monty was an accomplished debater, both in print and on the platform, who enjoyed engaging with ideas rather than simply point-scoring. He was known particularly for his willingness to debate with trotskyists and others on the far left. Within the CPGB, he would argue against the neo-stalinists in the party, but those internal debates, so often rancorous and so rarely illuminating, did not give him much pleasure.

This political engagement necessarily took up a lot of time, and Monty's longer-term historical projects suffered. A PhD thesis on Marx, Engels, Lenin and Political Parties, as well as a book on 'Parties and Power in Socialist Societies', were never finished. Part of the problem was Monty's own extreme meticulousness: every fact, every quotation was rigorously checked; he was renowned for the number of footnote references in his articles.

The mendacity of Soviet official historical accounts continually exasperated Monty, and he was heavily involved in attempts within the British CP to get the CPSU to admit the truth about the Moscow Trials of the 1930s and so on. In the 1980s, he also played a major part in negotiating with the CPSU archive to provide the CPGB archive with copies of CPGB CC minutes from the 1930s held in Moscow. He spent a lot of time on the question of the CPGB's change of line, on instructions from Moscow, shortly after the outbreak of World War II, and provided keynote articles for two books on the subject.

The CPGB's two main 'historical' bodies, the History Group (now the Socialist History Society) and the party archive, both benefited greatly from Monty's involvement over the years. At various stages, his historical and linguistic expertise were put to good use in cataloguing and organising the archive's holdings.

Monty's passion for accuracy in historical writing meant that he was constantly called upon by people wishing to verify facts and dates, as well as people seeking opinions on their drafts. This was

a major factor in his decision, on moving house in 1982, not to install a telephone. Nonetheless, he was generous with his time and knowledge to any serious scholar who approached him.

The emergence of *glasnost* in the USSR under Gorbachev, and the greater historical honesty it brought, excited Monty greatly, even though he was rightly pessimistic about the USSR's overall prospects. Following the collapse of the USSR and the historical experiment it represented, he continued to rethink the Soviet historical experience. One of his last significant published articles, in 1997, wondered whether the alternative of a 'homogeneous socialist government' propounded by the left mensheviks and others in 1917 might have led to a better outcome in Russia. It was a tragedy that ill-health during his last five years prevented him from developing his ideas further.

Francis King, Socialist History Society

An interview with Monty Johnstone

This interview with Monty Johnstone was carried out by Kevin Morgan in 1999 as part of the Communist Party Biographical Project. A sound recording of the full interview, along with all other interviews carried out as part of the project, is held in the National Sound Archive of the British Library.

I was born on 20 November 1928 in Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire. My parents had lived in Scotland but came down two months before I was born. My father had been an army officer reaching the rank of major in the First World War. He was very conservative in outlook and completely non-intellectual. My mother on the other hand came from a different background. Her father was a well-known writer and journalist, John Foster Fraser, who first hit the headlines with a book *Round the World on a Wheel*. With two others he'd ridden round the world on a bicycle, where he met my grandmother when he was going through the United States; so I'm in fact a quarter American, a point which I used to stress when people accused me of being anti-American. My grandfather wrote a whole number of other books, including three on Russia; and my mother was certainly more intellectually interested, although, like most women in that position at that time, she didn't go to university. She tended to be leftish-oriented. In 1940, under the influence of Patrick Hamilton's wife, she actually came out in favour of a People's Government, whatever that meant, at the time of the People's Convention.

My mother in that part of the war was put in charge of the voluntary ambulance services and one of the women who was a volunteer ambulance driver was apparently Patrick Hamilton's wife. In 1945, when we were living in Paddington, she canvassed for the Labour Party, and as a matter of fact, I used to have much more bitter political rows and arguments wth my mother than with my father! That often happens in terms of nearness; my father was prepared to accept in a fairly tolerant sort of way my being a communist, whereas my mother disputed all the points all along the line. My father realised he couldn't do much about it and he liked the quiet life and let it stay. He was away a lot of the time. Having been in the army during the First World War, and then having retired, or whatever you do from the army, come the Second World War when he was considerably older, he volunteered and they put him in the air force. He had inherited some money from an uncle of his which he lived on basically.

I was at a preparatory school in Oxford, a place called the Dragon School, which I supposed you'd call liberal-progressive: a mixture actually of liberal-progressive and, in some of the subjects, traditional. I was there till thirteen and then subsequently I was at Rugby School where I was awarded a senior scholarship. Already when I was at the Dragon in Oxford, I joined the YCL at the age of twelve in 1941. I can recall having already been sympathetic to communism; for instance, I was very upset when the *Daily Worker* was banned in 1941, so even before the entry of the Soviet Union into the war I was sympathetic towards the communist party and communist ideas.

Clearly the whole pro-Soviet atmosphere after the Soviet Union came into the war in June 1941 did help to reinforce this, although the ideas were there before – it wasn't just a question of joining in '42-'43, in the Stalingrad period. I can even remember, it must have been in August '41, going

round sticking little communist party stickers, *Strike Now in the West!* When I joined the YCL, in the party bookshop in Hythe Bridge Street I bought the Little Lenin Library, which was designed for people who were joining the movement. It cost one and sixpence and it consisted of the *Communist Manifesto*; Lenin's *State and Revolution*; Lenin's *Left-Wing Communism: an infantile disorder*; the *History of the CPSU*, the 1938 renowned volume; and fifthly a current pamphlet of the communist party in the struggle in the national front, as it was called at that time. I remember very well, it must have been in the summer of '42, reading the *Communist Manifesto*, as I sat out in the sunshine, which I suppose I must have read dozens of times subsequently; but it made a big impression on me. As far as my CPSU *History* was concerned, I don't think at that time I read it from beginning to end; but I dipped in it, and at the same time bought Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution* with a postal order I'd had for a birthday present. So I was clearly not too rigidly party line at that time. Remember this was the war and there was a sort of heightened political interest, because everything was political or politically related in the war.

The YCL was a very lively sort of organisation. It probably exaggerated the figure, but it was claiming a twenty thousand membership and it was quite an attractive youth organisation with a political kernel to it. This was reflected in *Challenge*, which catered not only for political but also for cultural interests. Rugby was not a typical boarding school where people are kept in of the evening, so I had a fair measure of freedom, though obviously it was limited because we were meant to be in doing our homework. In the holiday period I was particularly active with the YCL groups, and then later in London when my parents moved to Paddington.

There's no doubt that the Russian alliance and Stalingrad created the basis for the exceptional growth of the communist party. But it would be wrong to see it just as a question of enthusiasm for what the Russians were doing. There was a big critical feeling about society and the desire to change things at the end of the war, and the fact that one knew that Russia had changed things radically through the revolution and seemed to be doing very well in the war seemed to be a confirmation that something was to be said for the communist system. But also the communist party at the time was concerned with developing reading and study of fundamental marxist ideas and produced a great deal of material. The biggest influence on me initially was the *Communist Manifesto* and it remained such. I read Lenin's *State and Revolution* a little bit later, when I was called up into the army at the age of eighteen. Lenin's *Left-Wing Communism* I read when I was sixteen, at the end of the war; and on the basis of Lenin's conception of the role of the communist party in relation to the Labour Party I was very critical of the communist party taking a position which had moved very much to the right. Subsequently in 1945, when the communist party came out with the Crimea line – the idea of having a Labour and progressive government including so-called progressive tories like Churchill and Eden – I was very, very critical. In fact, I was quite sympathetic to trotskyist criticisms that were made of that particular line.

I remember making a speech at a communist party meeting, probably about February/March 1945, at which a woman from Birmingham called Jessie Eden outlined the party's line and I got up and criticised this and quoted Lenin's *Left-Wing Communism*. I was dismissed by her: 'This young fellow pretends to be able to quote Lenin! He knows nothing about Lenin!' Here was I who'd been devoutly studying Lenin, I felt most put out. I was pleased when the communist party rectified this error, and I was keen when the Communist Party of the United States was reformed after having been dissolved into the Communist Political Association under Browder. But I did feel, although the Crimea line of the British communist party didn't involve the dissolution of the party in the way that Browder did, that nonetheless the kind of political premise on which the policy was based, of a long-term co-operation between capitalism and socialism, were very similar. For a whole number of years I was critical of the communist party line; right up I suppose until it began to turn to the left in '48.

There were other issues on which there were big arguments, but arguments which were accepted in the YCL, that young people did argue and have different ideas. It may be that some branches were less tolerant than others, but my own experience, particularly in the Willesden branch in London, was that I was sometimes in a minority, sometimes winning over a majority on some of the issues which I raised, including the tactics involved in fighting against the fascists, and on issues such as conscription. I was called into the army in February 1947, I think it was 6 February, and it had been arranged that I should speak in a debate of the Oxford YCL on conscription on 10 February. I had

to climb over the wall because I couldn't get through the guard post to get along to this debate. Here was I in my uniform having been called up into the army and I was speaking against conscription. The people who opposed me, or some of them, tried to make out that it was all subjective.

On the fascists, I think I was wrong. This was '47 and the fascists were beginning to appear on the streets and were holding meetings at Ridley Road in Hackney. The party's line was to stay away, and my line was that we should take a leaf out of the communists of 1936, clearing them off the streets – I suppose an argument not dissimilar to the SWP's line in subsequent generations. It was on two planes. There were some people who just argued theoretically, and I suppose some who just went along to break up the meetings, and some of us did both. I remember very well at Ridley Road helping to hold the site which the fascists used to hold their meetings on, holding the site overnight so that they couldn't get there, and then holding our own meeting. I spoke as a member of the YCL, although without any authorisation because it was against the line of the YCL. It meant that I was co-operating with trotskyists and so on, which should have got me into quite a lot of trouble. But in fact the idea of a very rigid, dictatorial regime is greatly exaggerated, certainly as far as most of the YCL were concerned. I'm not pretending this was a mass phenomenon, it was particularly in London where the fascists were appearing and where the whole Cable Street tradition was alive in people's minds.

Reading trotskyist material including Trotsky was not usual in the communist party. I didn't advertise the fact particularly, but I read trotskyist literature and came quite close to the trotskyists on a lot of things during the '44/'45 to '48 period. There was a guy at Rugby called Fred Gosterermann, an apprentice at a big electrical engineering firm there, who was an Austrian émigré sympathetic to trotskyist ideas who sold me *Socialist Appeal*. So I was reading quite a lot including both the stuff by Stalin and the stuff by Trotsky and by Lenin side by side. Quite apart from specifically trotskyist books, I read books which most people didn't read. I remember reading Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* though there was a fairly widespread attitude in the international communist movement; not only that you didn't read Trotsky, but you didn't read stuff like Koestler which was critical of the Soviet Union. I was interested in reading these things and testing out ideas and that sort of thing. I wouldn't say that that was particularly typical at that time. As far as I was concerned, the YCL was the place to be in; and then when I was eighteen I joined the communist party, because that seemed to be the only really viable organisation. But it was a question of changing its policy. I was working to popularise its overall ideas, and from within to change its policy to what would seem to be a more correct marxist policy. In '48 the communist party rectified its position and was self-critical, not only about the Crimea perspective, which it had been critical about already, but about the wider manifestations of right-wing policy. So from '48 basically I was at one with the communist party's policy.

For two years I was away in the army, from February 1947. I applied for a job as an interpreter, because I knew French and German and was beginning to know some Russian, and was interviewed for that and then heard nothing further. I then applied to go into the education corps and got put on a three-month training course, and after two months I was removed from the course, no reasons given. It was preceded by a situation where I was meant to be speaking in a debate in the unit critical of the British empire, and the captain in charge actually forbade me to speak. It was clear that this was a political thing that I was removed from the course and I had my sergeant's stripes removed and got put back to me being a private and sent to an ordinary unit. In the end I did get back into the education corps, helped by the fact that there were phone calls between the War Office and the colonel in charge of the course; and a couple of friends of mine were working on the switchboard at the camp and transmitted to me what the arguments were which were being used. My father also helped by getting onto people in the War Office. There had been quite a few young communists called into the armed forces who had suffered similarly, but I think I was probably the only one who actually succeeded in getting back into the bloody thing!

Eventually I was sent over to Germany. I was very interested in developments there, I spoke the language and I'd had quite a lot to do with the German anti-fascist communist émigrés in London during the war. There was in London at that time quite an active political life of anti-fascist émigrés: for instance, the Free German League of Culture in Belsize Park ran all kinds of discussions and cultural evenings and this sort of thing. I used to go along to these, and I also went

along to some of the Austrian things, because there was a Free Austrian League as well, in Westbourne Terrace. So from the summer of 1948 through until March 1949, when I was stationed in Germany, I was very active with the Free German Youth. This was the communist youth organisation; although it sought to be rather broader than that, and I was very active doing meetings for their different branches. Subsequently, when I was at Oxford a few years later, a student at the university comes up to me in a pub and says, 'You're Monty Johnstone aren't you? I know you because I was in the intelligence corps and in Hamburg I had to follow you round the places you were going to.' I managed to get away with it, probably because demob was coming up by the time that they really caught on. But it was a very interesting experience, both in Hamburg and the Hamburg area where I was stationed, where I did meetings all around in different branches and took part in the social activity and camping weekends and all that sort of thing. I'd been promoted to a warrant officer by that time.

One of the things that had got me back in the education corps was the fact that I'd had excellent reports, because I'd followed the precept that communists must be good soldiers and in Germany I was promoted to warrant officer and was in charge of two education centres, which meant it was not so easy for them to keep tabs on where I was. I knew the language and I could get into ordinary civilian clothes and at that time pass as being a Hamburg inhabitant. Subsequently I learnt in the pub in Oxford that they put a guy into the sergeant's mess which I was in, and apparently when I was leaving he used to ring through to the intelligence people's office that I'd got on such-and-such a transport to go there, and they were waiting for me in order to follow me round. So I had quite an interesting time there in Germany.

I was demobbed in March 1949 and reported to the YCL national office. Bill Brooks was the general secretary. I had an Oxford scholarship which I'd got at the end of 1946, an open scholarship in modern languages, but I wanted to get out of academia into the real world and I opted to do my military service first. So I came out of the army and had until October '49 when my university course started. I had sent the YCL some reports of what had been happening in Germany and elsewhere, and there was a YCL congress coming up, so for three months I was put to work helping to organise the congress. After this, in May 1949, I was asked to go up for three months as the midlands district organiser of the YCL based in Birmingham. Somebody had left some kind of legacy that would pay two pounds ten shillings a week, plus a party member in the university who was a chemistry lecturer giving free accommodation. My job was to help build up the YCL. Bill Alexander was the full-time party district secretary and I had very good relations with him. It meant travelling round the midlands in contact with the different branches, taking part in the different activities. Some branches I found more interesting than others. The Coventry branch was a very interesting branch which consisted of predominantly of apprentices. The weakness was the gender weakness, because there were hardly any girls. But certainly from the class composition it was excellent, because there were all these young engineering apprentices coming along to the various forms of activity.

One of the things I was particularly keen on organising were weekend camp schools. You were under canvas but there was a school held over the weekend, so you combined camping with marxist education. We did a great deal of public campaigning, speaking at meetings in the Bull Ring – these were happy days. I was working from the communist party headquarters in Dale End In Birmingham and there must have been about eight or ten full-time employees. One of the good things that used to take place was that there used to be education classes, I think every month a day was given over to classes around a particular theme. But I didn't go to that many education classes, largely because of my background of having moved around the place and that sort of thing. I also found myself giving quite a lot of education classes, this has always been a feature of the communist movement; unlike the Labour Party: education occupied an important place in the overall scheme of things.

I got a scholarship in modern languages but at Oxford I opted to study PPE: Philosophy, Politics and Economics. For my special subject I chose labour movements, but my tutor knew very little about labour movement history. But I then discovered Asa Briggs, who was giving excellent lectures, probably the only lecture I attended on a consistent basis. Cole I knew, not through the academic courses, but because there was a group in Cole's rooms every Wednesday evening at All Souls, which people on the left were invited to attend. We used to have very interesting discussions,

with Cole there sort of presiding. I wasn't in an academic relationship to Cole any more than I was to Christopher Hill, who I knew well, and whose lectures I did sometimes attend; although they were not the same courses as I was doing in PPE. I got immersed in studying on my own reading and so on rather than the formal course.

The things that were being discussed at Cole's rooms were things relating to the labour government: economic problems, political problems, questions of education – a very broad terrain. Then of course there was a great deal of discussion on the Korean War, a great deal of discussion about the Soviet Union and the nature of these states. Old G D H Cole was a very undogmatic and very unforceful character. He was there and encouraging everybody to have their say and expressing his opinions, but usually in a relatively tentative way: a very mild man. Among the communists, Christopher Hill was way above the others both in terms of his standing and the amount of contact he had. He allowed his rooms in Balliol to be used for meetings of, I think we called it the Marxist History Society; and various other events of that character. I used to see quite a bit of Christopher Hill when I was up there. He sometimes did general things in regard to marxism, then used to ask me my view on how they went over with the students.

I was elected to the party's national student committee in the September, before I'd even started as a bloody student! I then got into Oxford the next month and was put under very strong pressure, which I succumbed to, to become secretary of the party branch in November. This was the Oxford University communist party which was basically undergraduates and which at that time had about forty members. There was a separate senior branch and outside of the university there were industrial branches at Cowley and so on, and also local branches. In general the branches were pretty separate. There were some social events where we met together; and we had a meeting with Dutt in Christopher Hill's room at which there were people from both sides there. But in general they were fairly separate, although there was the question of which postgraduate student should go in. This was to become a big issue in '68, where every effort was made to break down these kind of barriers and just have one branch; but we're talking now about '49 to '52 and this had not yet developed.

I was at Christchurch, where I got the scholarship. I don't think I would have chosen it if I'd known, it had too high an admixture of old Etonians and this sort of thing. Apart from having branch meetings, like communist party branches generally did, we used to have at least one big public meeting every term. I used to try and get Pollitt to come down, but he always used to say: 'I'll send you Dutt: deep unto deep.' In addition, there was the Socialist Club which was a wider thing, communists took part in it with left Labour people and so on. Relations with Labour students were mixed. The left-wing people were in the socialist club, with whom we had good relations. With the Oxford University Labour Club relations were not too good politically. There was a communist candidate in the 1950 general election and I used to speak on street corners in the election campaign – which would not have been well looked upon by the proctors in non-election periods. But in the period of a general election they couldn't very well stop it. At the next national student conference, 1950, I was actually elected as the chair of the national student committee.

I was also very much tied up in the Oxford University Peace Council, which was formed at the height of the Korean War through a meeting of William Rees-Mogg, for the Conservative Association; Shirley Catlin, now Shirley Williams, for the Labour Club; and one or two others, and myself from the communist club. It was on our initiative that we called the thing together, and managed to hammer out the basis for an organisation to exist and be properly registered in the university. You had to have a senior member attached to your club and we had the Reverend Jesuit father Tommy Corbishley as our senior member. It wasn't like the British Peace Committee that was campaigning on a straight line with a more limited appeal. We did get out some quite good things in regard to the peace negotiations in Korea and this sort of thing.

We used to have counter-courses: marxist economics for the economics students, this sort of thing. The '68 thing challenged the university to have a different type of course, whereas we, realistically – because we're now talking about the height of the Cold War – didn't think that we were going to change the university course, but we at least wanted to prepare ourselves and the people we could influence to be able to face up to bourgeois arguments and to get a marxist understanding. We didn't call them counter-courses, we called them probably marxist education or something of that

character; but we used to have weekends and get people from elsewhere, specialists in the subjects, to come and help as tutors on these course, where we used to make a critique of the bourgeois ideas that we were being taught on the university courses.

My tutor wanted me to stay and do research but I was determined at that time to have a period in industry, that this was necessary for my serious work as a communist. I got a job in a factory called the South London Screw Company, to the amusement of my friends, and I was working there and took part in leading a strike. I always made it quite plain that I was not recommending this as an overall course, but I felt from my own point of view, since I had had and might continue to have responsibilities in the communist movement, that I needed to have this direct experience. In retrospect I'm not sure it was a particularly brilliant idea, I might have done better to have stayed and done research at Oxford. But the way I saw things at the time, I felt because I hadn't had industrial experience, if I was going to be involved in any serious communist leadership, that I needed to get that experience. If by workerism you mean a conviction that the working class is the main force and therefore working-class activities and demands have a sort of priority, that certainly did exist. But if you mean the idea that everybody would have turn themselves into a worker, this was not the widespread thing; and from what I can gather it was more widespread in the 1930s.

In fact, by the end of the year I had an urgent appeal made to me from the YCL leadership that I would come and work as assistant editor with a view to taking over the editorship of *Challenge*. I succumbed to this, so at the end of '52 I became assistant editor of *Challenge*, and the next year editor. It was a full-time job and I stayed on until '58, though the last year was part-time for lack of funds. The YCL had its offices in King Street, next door to *Challenge* on the first floor. The editor of *Challenge* was also one of the top leaders of the YCL, so one was both a journalist, if you like, and at the same time one of the leaders of the YCL doing a political job. It was fairly stressful in terms of getting *Challenge* to bed every week on a shoestring and combining with that with the political responsibilities; I used to have public meetings in different parts of the country, also visiting different branches, but at the same time, with all these different commitments, and family commitments, always the business of getting the paper to bed on a Monday. That was a real strain that other people doing full-time work didn't have.

The equivalent to the executive committee of the communist party was the national committee of the YCL; the equivalent of the political committee was the executive committee. Then there was the EC sub-committee which was the key one consisting basically of the national secretary, the national organiser and the editor of *Challenge*. The secretary was John Moss and the national organiser was first of all Dick Nettleton and than Gerry Cohen. When I first came on as assistant editor there was an editor, Sid Kaufman, who had the perspective of going to work at the *Daily Worker*, but who initiated me into the mysteries of printing and all this sort of thing, laying things out. When he went and I became editor, we had another full-time assistant editor, who's now a Labour MP, called Robin Corbett. We also had a business manager; at one time that was Bob Leeson. The circulation was round about 8,000 and sometimes lower.

There was very close co-operation between the national secretary of the YCL and the chairman of the communist party youth affairs committee, who for one period was George Matthews, and later was Bill Lauchlan, who was then the national organiser of the party. Politically of course this whole thing blew up in '56. The independence of the YCL was proclaimed very strongly as a general principle up until '56. But of course, when differences began to develop, then qualifications were made on this total independence; it meant only total organisational independence and not political independence. In '56-'57, at the height of all this business, I actually prepared a document on communist party/YCL relations in which I argued specifically why the YCL should be fully autonomous.

1956 didn't come as a bolt of the blue, it was amply prepared for by '55. In '55, Khrushchev and Bulganin made their visit to Yugoslavia and they apologised to Tito for the slanders that had been perpetrated in the previous period. Now since these so-called slanders involved the Rajk trial, the Kostov trial, the Slansky trial, it was clear that the trials themselves were being called into question; because one of the elements in those East European trials was that Tito was meant to be using people like Rajk and Kostov in order to overthrow the people's democratic regimes in these countries. If these things that were supposed to have been proved by the trials were then

repudiated, and you apologise to Tito for things which you call slanders, it inevitably meant that the trials themselves were false. This then immediately led on to another question. If these trials were false and they had a great deal in common in the whole nature of them with the Moscow trials, what about the Moscow trials? I was raising this right from June 1955 following the Khrushchev-Bulganin visit to Yugoslavia; raising it with colleagues in the YCL, the YCL leadership, more or less anybody, Klugmann and all these people. I got no satisfactory reply of course. We had to fight right through to get the communist party officially to repudiate the Moscow trials. I fought for years and years and years, and it wasn't until 1988, I think, that we actually repudiated the trials and the support for the Moscow trials.

I hadn't just accepted the East European trials for their own sake, but I was influenced by what appeared to me to be relatively plausible indictments; the Rajk thing, how he had been a young communist activist who was then arrested in the thirties, and he was recruited when he was arrested and so on – it appeared to be plausible. One's initial inclination was to try to find a plausibility in these trials, because the implication, politically, if one found no plausibility in them, was that you had to then call into question the whole of the nature of the regimes that shoot their leaders on framed-up charges. There was a correspondence I remember in the *New Statesman* regarding this, in which Dutt and various other people took part. But in general it seemed to me that things were progressing in these countries from what I understood. Obviously I looked at things greatly through much too rose-coloured spectacles, because one wanted to see these things succeed. I'd visited the GDR in 1951, when I worked for three months in Berlin in preparation for the world youth festival. Before that I was a month in Czechoslovakia at the end of 1950, because Valerie, my wife, was in a sanatorium, and with Pollitt's help I got a visa to go and stay out there for a month. I went down the mines with a student brigade; it seemed to be positive. I don't know Czech, so it was limited what I could get out of it, but as far as Germany was concerned I did know the language and it was a period of positive feelings and objectives and reconstruction and so on. So I did accept the trials at the time, and even wrote in *Challenge* justifying the Slansky trial. *Darkness at Noon*, which I'd read, was an extremely fascinating psychological study, but it was not concerned with the factual basis of the trials. It was possible to read *Darkness at Noon* as an extremely clever psychological study without seeing anything in it, because there wasn't anything in it, that could call into question the factual basis of the trials.

The secret speech was pretty shocking even though it wasn't entirely out of the blue. I found that the Yugoslav apology raised questions about the Moscow trials, though it didn't answer those questions. Khrushchev's speech answered a lot of questions in an extremely negative way. I regarded these as absolutely shattering revelations, that it was necessary to make a much deeper analysis of our whole attitude to the Soviet Union. This is what I argued in the YCL leadership and you will see reports of discussions in the YCL on this question. John Moss and Gerry Cohen, the national secretary and the national organiser, basically followed the party line, which was to try to minimise everything. There is no doubt that there was an attempt to play down the gravity of the revelations and to say, you know, 'The Russians have now revealed it all, they've shown great courage, and this means that everything's going to be alright in the future.' Another thing I was very critical of was the argument that it was all a question of the cult of personality, and we haven't got the cult any more – which they hadn't of course – therefore, nothing to worry about; which of course is nonsense. From thereon in we had the most virulent battles in the YCL leadership; not only the EC sub-committee but the EC itself, and the national committee. These struggles went on right through '56, '57, right up to the last one which I was involved in, which was the summer of 1958 with the execution of Imre Nagy. As far as I was concerned, this was just a continuation of the old stalinist practice of killing those political leaders who you disagreed with or wanted to get out of the way. But this was defended by people, not only John Moss, but also Jimmy Reid who'd been brought down as national organiser – which he doesn't like being reminded of. I was the main person, I suppose – not by any means the only person – arguing for a much more critical examination of the situation in the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries. After the 1956 YCL congress, I was nominated for the national secretaryship of the YCL against John Moss. There was a big battle in which John Moss was re-elected, I think by seventeen votes to ten, after the party came in through George Matthews, who attended the meeting in order to argue that they should put John Moss back as the national secretary. At a meeting of the YCL executive committee about that time, Johnny Gollan said, 'We're stronger than you, and if you don't comply we'll get rid of you and we'll start another YCL.'

The argument was that the YCL should follow the party. I was arguing for the complete independence of the YCL as argued for by Lenin. This was of course strongly resisted, and it was in this respect that we had this meeting in which Gollan and Lauchlan and I think George Matthews also came down in order to read the riot act. That would have been immediately after the October 1956 YCL congress, in November 1956. It was a very fraught period, because then on 4 November we had the second Soviet intervention in Hungary. We had very sharp discussions on the YCL executive committee on this whole question. We actually came out against the first intervention, but there was a majority that accepted the second intervention having said that it regarded the first intervention as having inflamed the situation, encouraging nationalists etc. My position was to oppose the first intervention and to believe that the situation had reached such a stage by 4 November, with the assassinations of communists, plus the danger of Hungary leaving the Warsaw pact and starting a whole process which could only benefit Dulles and American foreign policy, that I regrettably thought that a fire brigade operation at that stage was necessary. The YCL congress was taking place, I think it would have been 24 and 25 October, before the second intervention but after the first, so the Hungary issue was very much in the air. At YCL congresses you had a representative of the communist party and on this occasion, in view of the importance of the issue, we got Gollan, and he spoke on Hungary in his speech.

I found the background of quite a number of things that interested me in the communist party archive. In 1956 there had been a controversy about Lenin's testament. I think it was the *Statesman* had said the communist party hadn't owned up to this and Andrew Rothstein had written saying that he over the years had always written about this; and proceeded to quote about six different things that he'd written. I was working at King Street and I checked every single one of the bloody references and found that each one of them was distorted. I then wrote a letter in which I pointed this out and that we needed to face up to the truth about our past. Malcolm MacEwen, who was the features editor of the *Worker*, at that time determined the correspondence that went in, though after this they relieved him of the responsibility and put it in the hands of the editor. Rothstein went absolutely mad and the controversy continues for two or three issues until I am in called in by Dutt to haul me over the coals for having attacked Andrew, who had always taken such a courageous line, he'd actually mentioned Lenin's testament. It's true that he hadn't actually told the truth about it, but he had actually mentioned it! So I took up with Dutt all kinds of these distortions, and Dutt listened and said, 'Oh well, we always were a very pragmatic party'. What I found in the communist party archive was a letter from Andrew Rothstein to the party leadership in which he virulently protests that they've allowed such a dastardly attack to be made by me on my own party, and going on to say: in the old days, this would have been taken up by the control commission, and that analogous action should be taken at the present time. So that was obviously the background to Dutt being told that he had to call me in.

There was an invitation to send a delegation to the Soviet Union in 1957, and there was another big battle on the national committee. It was between John Moss and myself, or it could have been Gerry Cohen and myself. By one vote it came over in favour of me, however the strongest arguments were used against my leading the delegation and John Moss said they'd withdrawn the invitation. Then as it happened, a member of the national committee who was abroad in Eastern Europe [*discovered*] that they'd never withdrawn it at all! The last thing as far as I was concerned was the execution of Imre Nagy in the summer of '58. I decided that at the forthcoming congress at the end of that year there was no point in my standing again for the national committee, and John Moss heaved a great sigh of relief and immediately also indicated that he wouldn't be standing again, but he'd been prevailed upon by the party leadership to stay on so long as I was there.

I was very much exercised as to whether to stay in or leave. I worried hard and long about it; and the choice I made to stay on was based on an assumption which in the shorter and medium term seemed to be justified, but which in the longer term was probably mistaken. The assumption was that things would change for the better, not just as far as the British party was concerned, but that the Soviet Union would become democratised. I believed that the twentieth congress was the beginning of a process which would continue, and that this would have its effect on the world communist movement, including on the communist party in Britain itself, and therefore it was necessary to stay in there in order to further that particular process. After my visit to Moscow in 1957, at the Moscow Youth Festival, I was impressed that things were changing in a positive

direction and this reinforced my decision that I should stay on, although I was well aware of a lot of things still being wrong. I always retained good personal relations with the people like Christopher Hill who left, which was not a typical position as far as the party was concerned. People on *Socialist Register* like Ralph Miliband and John Saville were personal friends over the years; similarly with the *New Left Review*, people like Robin Blackburn and Perry Anderson. I was never tempted to join the trotskyists. I was much more favourable to the trotskyists in the '45 period, when the communist party made right-wing errors. By the '56-'57 period, in which the trotskyists were recruiting a certain number of people, I never felt any inclination to join them.

For a job I began lecturing in a college in South East London. Politically, I took part in some of the 'new left' events. I was blocked from having anything serious published in the party press. After the twenty-first congress of the CPSU, which Gordon McLennan was one of the delegates at, and wrote an enthusiastic article about, I contributed an article for *Marxism Today* in which I was much more critical and they refused to publish it. There was a big hoo-ha that went right up to the level of Gollan, but they still refused to publish it; whereas *New Left Review*, for instance, published my stuff. So it was an anomalous position where I was a party member but the party journals wouldn't publish my stuff, but the *New Left* and other things like *Socialist Register* did publish my stuff. I did make a point of not criticising the current policies of the communist party in *New Left Review* and so on. Historically, when I did a review of Macfarlane's book on the communist party in the 1920s, of course I was critical of the communist party's line in the 1920s; but nobody could do much about that, because that would mean that they would have to defend the third period line themselves, which they obviously couldn't do. But I made a point in the non-party press – *New Left Review*, *Tribune*, things like *Socialist Register* – of not making a specific attack on the current policies of the communist party, which denied them a handle to get me out on the basis of that. I was anxious to stay in because I still retained this perspective that sooner or later it would be possible to change. You asked what would have been my alternative if I'd been outside of the communist party. Precisely because I didn't think there was any particularly viable alternative, I stayed in. At communist party congresses I used to sometimes be a lone voice with resolutions from my own branch.

This continued until '67-'68, when I was rehabilitated in practice. A number of things happened. First of all there was the Czechoslovak business, the initiation of the Dubcek line. Alongside of that, with the imprisonment of dissidents in the Soviet Union Gollan actually made a critical comment much closer to the positions that I had taken. So I was then invited to come onto the national cultural committee of the party; I was invited to do education classes at district schools. Already in October 1967 there was a programme on Daniel and Sinyavsky on the BBC and there was a late-night line-up thing afterwards, in which I was asked to participate. Gollan had publicly criticised the condemnation of Daniel and Sinyavsky, so before I went on the programme I rang him up and said, 'Listen Johnny, are you prepared to let me say that you still hold to your position.' He said, 'Yes, I'll work out a form of words that you can work into your contribution to the programme'. The *Guardian* then published a thing referring to this and saying that they had checked with King Street and that Mr John Gollan had said that what Mr Monty Johnstone said in that programme was said with his full knowledge and approval. Well at that stage, of course, a lot of people in the communist party were saying, 'What the bloody hell is happening? This revisionist bastard who [*we*] wanted to keep away from everything is coming and making statements on behalf of the communist party leadership.' This was the beginning of a certain rehabilitation as far as I was concerned.

I could argue within the party, and did argue within the party at congresses and in pre-congress discussions. I helped to argue and got my branch to support resolutions on a whole number of issues, which included also the Sino-Soviet dispute. But I couldn't develop these things in the party press at any length until '68. After '68 that changed and they were prepared to publish the stuff; in fact they published a pretty long article of mine which ran to three issues of *Marxism Today* on socialism, democracy and a one-party state. This then initiated a big discussion in which I was attacked with bell, book and candle by all the hardliners, and then was able to reply in a subsequent issue. That went on till '72, I think, that particular discussion. The national cultural committee later became the theory and ideology committee, and I was able to play a certain role over the years.

The invasion of Czechoslovakia on 21 August 1968 actually pushed the issue right into the

foreground of communist party debate. I'd already been concerned with the Czechoslovak thing in welcoming the Prague Spring; but more particularly I happened to have been in Prague at the time when the Soviet troops arrived. Basically I was on holiday with my family, but our choice of Czechoslovakia was not entirely fortuitous. We were enthusiastic about what we'd heard of the Prague spring and wanted to see it, because it was the nearest example of the kind of democratic socialist regime that we identified as our objective in the *British Road to Socialism*. There were limitations, including of course the one party thing, because the Czechs were afraid – because of the Russians they were forced all the time to make concessions, including on allowing a multi-party regime, because this would provide another pretext for the Russians to intervene.

In fact, as we saw, the Russians didn't need that particular pretext; they intervened anyway. We were living in a flat on the outskirts of the Prague when at half past four on the morning of 21 August the neighbours woke us up and said there were tanks in the road outside; and sure enough there were. I remember very well when we were all woken up, and my son Mick, who was seven years old, looked out of the window, and there were the Russian troops, and he said, 'Dad, I thought the Russians were our friends.' It was difficult to explain! I went across the road, where there was a factory, and talked to the people there. They'd just had a meeting where they'd unanimously condemned the Russian invasion. I went into the centre of the Prague, saw the position with the Russian tanks outside of the radio and television building. The previous night I had been in the television building with Jurgy Pelican, the director of television, who was an old friend, who was arguing, not just as head of the television, but also because he was chair of the foreign affairs committee of the Czechoslovak parliament, that there was a danger of an invasion. I didn't believe him, and I tried to convince him that he was wrong. I talked to lots of people, including Russian soldiers, who were being approached also by the Czechs, talking to the Russians and giving out the leaflets: 'Why did you come? Your fathers came as liberators and you're coming to stop our development.' The ordinary Russian soldiers didn't know; nobody had told them where they were going or what the purpose was. I talked with some officers who put the line which had obviously been put over to them, that they were saving Czechoslovakia from the Americans and NATO taking over. Of course, they hadn't got any evidence at all, but one officer did actually say, 'Well, if they are mistaken in the same way that Khrushchev was mistaken, Khrushchev went and these ones will go also.'

On the third day we left Prague to come to the west and were stopped on the road by a Czechoslovak group who were still running their own radio station and I was interviewed, and I've met people subsequently who have heard the interview which I did. By this time I knew that the British party had condemned the invasion, and we'd had a meeting in the World Federation of Trade Union office with British communists who were in Prague who had also condemned this development. I got to Paris and from *L'Humanité*, by courtesy of the foreign editor, got a report through to the *Morning Star*. I then got back to Britain and was invited by many party organisations to come and speak on the Czechoslovak business. I also was asked by the YCL to write a special issue of *Cogito*, which I'd already done on Trotsky, specifically on Czechoslovakia's struggle for socialist democracy. So in general I was very much in the foreground of the party controversy around Czechoslovakia, and I've got a whole mass of correspondence.

The communist party didn't even allow itself to use the term invasion; it had to be the intervention. Whereas the YCL was open, it called it an invasion. The thing they got me to write for them, 'Czechoslovakia's Struggle for Socialist Democracy', tried to raise the whole question of the nature of socialist democracy and the reason for the Russian intervention. The communist party wasn't publishing anything of that character because they thought they would alienate people who might support them in condemning the Soviet invasion if they then added a critical note with regard to the Soviet Union. Many others of course believed that this kind of probing was very much overdue. Interestingly enough of course, some eight years later it was recognised tacitly by the EC that such a probing was necessary, when, for all its limitations, John Gollan's *Marxism Today* article on 'Socialist democracy – some problems' was published under the auspices and with the support of the executive committee.

I personally did not use the term 'eurocommunism' because I thought it was a misleading term. It so happened that many of the communist parties that agreed with this sort of line, like the Japanese, were not European; and some of the European parties represented hard lines. Even if

one accepted the term, there were different trends within eurocommunism, including one trend which wanted to go much further in rejecting the leninist heritage, and another trend that believed that a large part of the democratic elements in the leninist heritage could be saved and used. The Italians certainly were a pole of attraction; the French, less so. It is true, in '76 the French made a turn, but they made it in a completely undemocratic way and you have Marchais on the television, without any consultation, outlining a completely different approach from the one previously. Certainly they'd moved on a number of issues, but it still remained a pretty hierarchical sort of party. But the Italians certainly were very much in the vanguard of all this, along with the Spanish to some extent. There was this sort of Rome-Paris-Madrid axis of which Rome and Madrid were rather more attractive than Paris. There was a demand for more stuff on the Soviet Union of a more critical character, and the fact that Jean Elleinstein was a member in good standing of the PCF, and that therefore his book had been published with the approval of the PCF, made it easier for people who wanted this sort of more critical book to be published here, to appear that they were respectable. But by that time King Street was not against publishing those things; we're dealing now with the late 1970s, by which time you'd had the Gollan thing in '76 and so on.

The problems in the party partly related to developments in the world communist movement, partly to the general decline in the membership of the party. The sort of things that people had hoped for in terms of the development of the party's strength, support and membership were going in the other direction; and of course the hopes that people had in terms of development of democratisation in the socialist countries were also going in the other direction. It wasn't until Gorbachev in '85 that those things began to become optimistic as far as the Soviet thing was concerned; and the Soviet thing has always been an important element in the history of the communist party. There was also a big controversy over the business of 'Labour's forward march halted', the Hobsbawm thing. The development of the communist party was never seen as being separate from the development of the labour movement. To the extent that the Labour Party and the labour movement was losing out, that certainly affected the optimism that existed in the party, although it was interpreted in different ways by different people. In general I think the problems of the labour movement in the 70s did certainly contribute to a less optimistic perspective of the communist party.

I personally was very much concerned with the whole Polish business. I think we got a two to one, or two-and-a-half to one majority, at the congress of 1982, where we criticised the calling of martial law. But it didn't necessarily mean that we approved of everything that *Solidarność* did; it meant that we opposed the suppression of *Solidarność* and the introduction of martial law. It's true there was a minority that was very much in support; but these were basically the minority who supported the Soviet Union and East European countries all along the line on everything. I was invited up to Scotland after the declaration of martial law and got very big party meetings, particularly in Glasgow and in Edinburgh, in which there was enormously strong feeling generated on the issue. It was not in my opinion a generational thing. One would need a more profound analysis of this, but on the basis of my experience and knowledge you found some of the older people being very critical and developing and moving; I can think of many cases of this. You can also think of some of the younger people who were linked with the hardliners because they thought this was being radical. So I don't think that one can categorise it generational terms.

I didn't accept as inevitable that the party was going to self-destruct, though I was well aware of the direction. I was in favour of moving to a broader sort of party which would be formed through negotiations with other left organisations; and I opposed the winding up of the communist party, because I didn't think that that was brought about by dissolving the party into an amorphous organisation like Democratic Left. The leadership was just looking for any way to change the situation, but without looking at the actual content, in my opinion, of what was involved. The Democratic Left in my opinion was launched without any clear perspective. All the expulsions and that sort of thing I thought was an expression of the general lack of perspective politically, and therefore trying to solve problems organisationally which in fact could not be solved in that kind of way. This whole plethora of expulsions, championed particularly by David Green, who was the London district secretary and subsequently left the movement anyway, seemed to me to contribute to a bad atmosphere and a lot of bickering around organisational questions which I didn't like at all. I clashed on the executive committee with Dave Green and others on this issue on numerous occasions.

At that time the communist party had five thousand members. Since that change to Democratic Left took place it has never had more than fifteen hundred members and it's gone down persistently to something like eight hundred. Therefore it was based on completely false expectations. It was the expression of (a) a frustration, because the communist party was declining in membership; (b) a completely false perspective that by jumping to Democratic Left, without any clear idea of what it was going to be and what it was going to do, that they would be able to solve this. The political position of *Marxism Today* I was completely critical of, and had argued with Martin Jacques and on the editorial board. The Green Socialist Network does attempt within Democratic Left to get the acceptance of some kind of socialist perspective. This is what the argument is in terms of this forthcoming conference.[1] The present line of the leadership basically means dissociating the organisation from socialism and even changing its designation as left because this is meant to be too limiting. I would find it impossible I think to continue as a member of such an organisation. I have stayed on *faute de mieux* with full conscience that generations of communist party members have built up reserves that stand at some two to three million pounds, that it would be irresponsible not to try to do something in order to ensure that something of the purpose to which they gave this money and accumulated these funds is protected and remains. But if in fact this conference really gets away with a situation where it completely differentiates itself from any kind of socialist perspective as something which, according to the phrase of Nina Temple, went out of the window with the Berlin wall, then I would find it impossible to remain in the organisation.

Notes

1. In December 1999, a conference of the Democratic Left agreed that the organisation would refound itself as the New Politics Network.

Ruth Frow (1922–2008)

Readers will have been saddened to learn of the death in January 2008 of Ruth Frow, co-founder of the Working Class Movement Library in Salford and a friend and contributor to the *CHNN*. Both through the library itself and through generous support for other initiatives, Ruth and Eddie made a major contribution to British labour history and will be sorely missed. Ruth was always willing to make herself available to interviewers and other researchers, and we are pleased to reproduce extracts from interviews she recorded separately with two of the *Newsletter*'s editors in 2000, along with a note of appreciation by Nick Mansfield, director of the People's History Museum.

The editors

Ruth and Eddie Frow were very important to the re-establishment of the National Museum of Labour History (now the People's History Museum) in Manchester in the late 1980s. I made it my business to visit them in my first week in the job and was rewarded with a warm welcome and consistent support for the museum from the Working Class Library during what in the early days were potentially difficult times.

In November 2003, the People's History Museum staged the exhibition *Reds! - the Story of the Communist Party of Great Britain* - the fourth in a series of shows about the main British political parties. Ruth was the natural person to open *Reds!* and she did so with a delightful and inspiring speech which combined her personal involvement with wider events, which put to shame the pale offerings from the political heavyweights who had opened the previous exhibitions in the series.

Ruth did an excellent letter of support for the People's History Museum's redevelopment scheme and we were pleased to reciprocate by supporting the Library's bids to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

She last visited the museum in April 2007 for the opening by Billy Bragg of *Battle for the Ballot - the Struggle for the vote in Britain,* our last exhibition before the redevelopment. From the back of the crowd she was heartily joining in with his impromptu unaccompanied version of the *Internationale* with which he ended his speech.

Nick Mansfield, People's History Museum

This interview with Ruth Frow was carried out by Kevin Morgan on 17 March 2000 as part of the Communist Party Biographical Project.

I was born in London in St John's Wood, which is not really in with the sound of Bow bells though I rather like to think it would be. My father was Jewish, my mother was an Irish Roman Catholic who had converted to Judaism when she married my father. I didn't know at the time and for many years afterwards but we were my father's second family – I think it was the scandal of the age. They met , so far as I know, serving tea to returning soldiers on Charing Cross station, and I was born in 1922, just after the end of the war. When I was five, just about, we moved from the flat in St John's Wood to a new house in Mill Hill, which I think had been built by a speculative builder who was a cousin of my father's, and he was anxious to get them filled up. We bought this house, a very beautiful house – well, beautiful in terms of at the time it had electricity, it had running water and so on. It was very modern for its time. That would be '25, '26, something like that. My father by that time was retired. He had been a concert pianist and when his rheumatism became too bad for him to use his hands he became a commercial traveller, travelling mainly to France, America and so on, dealing with exotic embroideries and ribbons and things like that. My mother's family was of Irish extraction. My grandfather was a horse-trainer and so far as I know trained horses for – it is the Earl of Ellesmere? – Tatton Hall in Cheshire. It was one of the big families. He was actually killed shortly after I was born from a kick from a horse he was training, he was breaking in. I never knew my father's parents, who I think had died comparatively young, because his older sister was always called Auntie Mater, because I think she brought up the family after the mother had died. Unfortunately, I never had the sense to ask anything. We knew nothing about this previous marriage of my father's whereby we had two half-sisters, until my brother in the Merchant Navy went to New Zealand and Australia during the war and found out.

So I had what you might call a middle-class, fairly comfortable upbringing. My father died when I was thirteen, leaving my mother to bring up the three of us. I was the oldest: I had a younger sister and a brother, who was the youngest. My sister died about ten years ago from cancer. My brother is still living. (*Sighs.*) He's Tory, ex-mayor of Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire county councillor, and so on and so forth, and a methodist lay preacher. We get on very well provided we only discuss the children; we don't discuss politics, religion or sex – apart from that we're alright.

If you could say anything, I imagine my father would be a mild sort of Liberal. My father sent to me to a *schul* to be indoctrinated in the Jewish religion and on the second occasion I believe I enquired when we were going to learn about Jesus Christ so he thought it was probably safer if I didn't go. I went to a private school which was run by the wife of the rector of Hendon, so it was more or less a Church of England school. There was very little religion. The only religious occasions we attended were Jewish new year and the Passover, when we were invited to, not relatives, but friends of the family. I went there on two or three occasions but that was all. In retrospect I suppose I had a fairly liberal upbringing. The school I went to, they were supposed to develop me into a young lady and they failed miserably. The academic aspect of my education was sadly lacking and, of course, as soon as I got to seventeen the war broke out; by which time I'd taken red cross training and went into hospital. I completed mt red cross training before I left school and went to hospital, where I understated my age and it took them three months to find out. So they invited me to come back when I was eighteen, but by that time I'd discovered that nursing was not for me, and I went into the air force for four-and-a-half years, taking care that I altered my date of birth as well as my age, which gave me some difficulty when I came to demob, but still that's another story.

In the air force I was involved first of all in the operations room, in the control room, Fighter Command; and then on radar, on the coast at Sandwich: what they called CHL – the radar which picked up the enemy aircraft coming in across the Channel. I volunteered in 1940, before the Battle

of Britain: I was involved in the Battle of Britain. It was wartime when it was the atmosphere that one did something towards the war, and I had no education, no training of any sort; I had my school certificate, but nothing higher. So it meant, if I had wanted to go to university, and I always wanted to be a doctor but I had no possible chance of getting on a medical course, and I'd have had to start from the beginning again, and I was in far too much of a hurry. In any case, it was a means of getting away from home and having a bit of, you know, life.

I acquired a political outlook during the war, when in the air force I met up with people who were mildly political. I remember on one occasion there was a bank clerk, one of the older people who were called up; and we used to go for walks round the countryside, and I remember saying to him, "How do you think I'd vote?" He gave some thought to it and he said, 'Hmmm, I think you'd have to be a Conservative with your background." I didn't really consider that. My conversion, as it were, came during the 1945 election, when I was married. At Sandwich I had married Denis Haines, and in order to annoy our landlady we started reading the *Daily Worker*, and we had also done quite a lot of canvassing with a bunch of miners from Betteshanger pit. So after the election we said to these ex-Welshmen, "We'd better join the Labour Party, we've been canvassing for it." (*Welsh accent.*) "Oh, you don't want to join the Labour Party. Join the Communist Party." We got in touch with the secretary of the Deal branch who was the miner at Betteshanger, he was the secretary of the union I think at Betteshanger; and we were invited to a meeting in Deal where Tommy Jackson was the speaker. Because we were new recruits and so on and so forth we were invited to tea with the miner's wife and family. We arrived, and it was a magnificent pure white tablecloth and everything laid out for a tea, and a marvellous spread of typical working-class tea things. Tommy Jackson was brought in and sat down and took his teeth out and put on the white tablecloth. Anyway, we joined the party during that meeting. It must have been during the campaign, I think, because on election day I voted in Sandwich for the Labour candidate, got on the train, rushed up to Mill Hill where I had a residential vote and voted for the communist; so I voted twice in the '45 election. Then I became pregnant (*stillborn baby*) and left the air force and we returned to London, living for a time with my mother-in-law – Dennis's mother – and then I started working at firm called Adam Hilgers, electrical something-or-others, whop were producing what at the time was high-tech electrical equipment for use in hospitals. I was in the production planning department as a progress chaser, co-ordinating production. Then I applied for emergency teachers' training, so I did a year at Adam Hilgers, which I think became in that period Hilger-Watts, and is still so far as I know part of a big combine. Then I did teacher training at Hampton emergency training college. This was '47. I did pre-college teaching for six months before my course, and my course was actually '48 to '49 – it was only thirteen months. I started teaching in the East End of London in, it must have been, '49.

Dennis had a great friend, Freddy, who in his remote youth had been a marxist of some sort, and he lent us various books. In at the stage at which we knew him he'd wandered slightly from marxism; later he became very much removed. But Dennis and I began to look at the basis of marxism. The book which finally convinced me was *What is Marxism?* by Emile Burns. That came like a flash of light to me, particularly on the religious question. I'd been slightly troubled, partly I think because of my mixed background: I didn't seem to fit anywhere. But that gave me the reason why I didn't fit anywhere. I didn't believe in any of them, and that suited me very well. [...] I was an awfully ignorant type. I never have been very intellectual: I'm an organising female. The issues of the time – the end of the war; the possibilities of unemployment; housing of course was a big issue because we were in digs and that played on our minds; getting a job. Dennis had a job to go back to because he'd been employed before the war by Hammersmith council on street lighting, and he'd become during the war an electronic engineer more or less. The job was not suitable for him with his intellectual development; he was a highly intelligent bloke. He actually continued his education, getting first his higher national, and later he went onto get his degree, but he became a BBC recording engineer. Those sort of issues of people coming back from the war and needing education were very much to the fore of our minds. But I can't remember (*any specific factor...?*) Incidentally, during my first year of teaching I got polio, which I'm certain affected my mind. It was 'bulbar polio' which is the kind that kills you, but nobody told me so I didn't know, and lived. It's paralysis of the throat: I've still got partial paralysis of the throat which is why I talk like a croaking frog. That affected my memory I'm certain, and now old age is acting on it and you ask me a question which I could probably make up the answer to, but I'm not sure...

Don't forget that this was post-Stalingrad, uncle Joe and all that. The left was on the up and up at that stage, and the Labour Party quite frankly looked a bit fuddy-duddy. It was just not for us: we were young and eager. We thought possibly the revolution could come the week after the treaty was signed. There weren't really party activities to throw ourselves into. Don't forget that most people were away in the war. We were living on the coast where you weren't (*normally*) allowed to live. Sandwich is on the Dover coast and a lot of people had been evacuated. It was only the miners in the pits and their families that were permitted to live there. The hinterland there is agricultural and not exactly what you call progressive. We must have joined the branch, I think we must have joined the Deal branch. But it wasn't exactly a hotbed of activity. In London it was different. Because by that time Dennis was applying for jobs with the BBC and so on we didn't join the Hammersmith branch, which we should have done, we joined the Fulham branch, and became semi-active with them. But they weren't exactly a hive of activity either. Within the NUT and within the teacher's group – there was a teachers' advisory group in the party – I became active in that. I suppose my main activity at that stage was in the teachers' group. It was the time of the big controversy over intelligence testing, Brian Simon's books and things like that. Then Dennis and I split up and I went to live in Fulham with Bill Wainwright and Molly and their family. They gave me a room and it was while I was living with them, they went off on holiday to a caravan where there wasn't room for me; so I went on a party school down to Hastings, which is where I met Eddie. His marriage had split, and he and Margory had decided to have separate holidays, and we discovered each other. When I went to live with Wainwrights, Bill was secretary of the British Peace Committee and he got me involved in. The way that he got me involved was that there were what you called the cultural peace groups: Teachers for Peace; Medical Association for the Prevention of War; Science for Peace; Musicians for Peace; Authors' World Peace Appeal and so on. Bill wanted a sort of a communist party liaison maintained between the party members in the groups and I was that liaison. As a result I met a lot of very interesting people who've since become knighted and famous and so on, like Dicky Doll, Sir Richard Doll, and one or two others like that. The communist influence was quite strong, but the communist membership was very small. As in so many other organisations, because the communists were organised and knew where they wanted to go, their influence far exceeded their numbers. The same can be said of trade unions and anything else. They had a very good influence, and because it was co-ordinated they were able to achieve quite a lot.

The British Peace Committee at that time I think was a proscribed organisation. I don't think any of the groups were officially affiliated because of the proscription; I'm not certain of that. I came into the peace committee work just after the big peace petition. I remember once of the first things that happened when I came north was I met Norman Wilson of Liverpool who'd got umpteen million signatures or whatever it was: 'This is our prize collector'. It was wonderful. I became national secretary of Teachers for Peace quite by accident, because my friend (*Mairie Philbert*) had to have a hysterectomy all of a sudden. I was thrown in at the deep end, because Teachers for Peace organised an international conference to which there was quite a healthy response from different countries – this is documented too – and the government in its wisdom refused to allow the delegates to land, so that they were arrested. You had eminent and aged professors arriving at Heathrow and being put into a prison cell. It was a two-day wonder. Mairie came out of hospital just before the conference. I did most of the organisation of the conference which was very good and an experience for me; and Mairie's house in Norwood was besieged by the press. When we wouldn't open the door they were climbing up the drainpipes. So this was my first thorough introduction to the paparazzi. They were incredible, absolutely incredible, even at that stage. During the Rosenberg campaign I had a quire of *Daily Worker*s to sell at Charing Cross, on the pavement outside across Charing Cross station, and an American serviceman in uniform came and knocked them out of my hand, and before I knew where I was I was surrounded by people picking them up and putting money in my – I sold a quire in about three minutes and they were giving me notes and goodness knows what. Anti-Americanism, definitely, and also resentment at treating a woman like that. This was late at night, it was getting on for midnight. Then I got involved in this Kensington. I can remember very little about that. I was reading a book very recently and it brought it back to me, I'd forgotten. I wasn't part of the squatting team, I was part of the supply team, rolling up with sandwiches and things like that. But I met a lot of interesting people. The Fulham branch, of which I was a member, was vaguely active. Of course, the party never has been violently active; active in a very genteel way.

Because I was doing the work for Bill Wainwright, dashing hither and thither around London,

meeting people in the cultural peace groups, I didn't get very involved in local activity. I was doing it after school in the evenings so there just wasn't time for much else. I honestly say I was discriminated against as a teacher. I started work in a school called Mile End Central which almost immediately moved to another, more modern building: Mile End Central was one of the oldest London School Board schools. I moved to a school which was called – it was the one where that Tory was head later. I was very fortunate: I had two party members with me on the staff and the sort of guided me into the work, and because we were three on the staff we were able to more or less operate as a branch – which was probably another reason why I didn't do a lot of local work. We had occasional discussions in the evenings, and they were very, very helpful in preventing me from making more mistakes than I might have done. I can't say I ever during my teaching career, forty-odd years, experienced anti-communism; except in the union, of course, when there was disorganised, automatic anti-communism. But even then it wasn't pronounced, it was very mild.

Eddie and I met at Netherwood, and we met on the tennis court the morning after I arrived. He saw me carry a tennis racquet in. At that stage I was quite serious about tennis. I'd been a member of the RAF tennis team and the junior Middlesex and things like that: at that stage I was a good player. By modern standards, it looks like pat-ball, it's a different matter. So I was very serious about tennis, and this man said, who'd got a tennis racquet with him, would I like a game before breakfast in the morning. There was a tennis court in the back garden. I said, yes, I'd like it. Eddie didn't know one end of the tennis racquet from the other, he'd just played pat-ball with Eric in the park. That was the only time on which we were on a tennis court together! We found out that we were both interested in books; and I think one afternoon we had a free session and we went off on the bus to Brighton, I think, and went to a bookshop. Then at the end of the course, a group of us came up to London together and went to visit Marx's grave; because we were very serious about our communism at that stage; and of course, Marx's grave at that time wasn't the atrocious thing that it is now. It hadn't got that monstrous bit of granite on it. So, to cut a long story short, Eddie said to me that the Manchester train didn't go until late in the evening. I didn't know at that stage that Manchester trains went every hour. He came back to Fulham with me. Bill and Molly and the children were still on holiday, and I cooked a bit of a meal, and while I was cooking the meal he looked at my little bookcase, it was only a little, three-foot bookcase. I'd collected mainly marxist books of scientific trend. He looked along and he said, 'These books are complementary to mine'. So of course that decided it, we had to put them together. We decided pretty rapidly that we would like to join out lives together. Eddie told me that he was married, and of course I was still married, although we were both separated. Eddie was still living at home, but not living together; not cohabiting is I think the term. So he left to make arrangements to move out, which he did, into a comrade's house in Birch Grove; and he also made arrangements for financial support for Eric, who was still at school. I'd made arrangements to get a job in Manchester. I came up, I was interviewed and I was offered a job at Ducie, in charge of the biology department – which I was totally unfitted for. Anyway, the party then stepped in and said: No, you can't do it. At the time I was secretary of Teachers for Peace and he was a national committee member of the AEU. They said, Everybody will turn round and say, look at the way these communists live etc, etc. So we were forbidden to join together in Manchester, but after much pleading I was permitted to go to Liverpool, and Eddie was permitted to visit me at weekends. So I had a hilarious year in Liverpool, which is where I lived with Joe and Olive Cope, and met little Dave on his tricycle. They were very kind to me and I did quite as lot of party work in Liverpool. I actually formed an A-bomb committee in Liverpool which was a forerunner of CND really. It was a wonderful committee, it had half the Liverpool council. I did it all on the phone; it never met. In the archive I think there's still a piece of notepaper with the most fantastic list of sponsors. It never functioned but it was part of the development of the anti-nuclear campaign. Then, on 1 January 1955, after much heart-searching I was permitted to come to Manchester and Eddie and I were able to live together.

This (*prohibition on living together*) had been done through the Lancashire district secretariat. I'm not sure that Eddie wasn't chairman of the district at the time; he was certainly chairman of the area. He was very, very active, which of course was one of the reasons for the break-up with Margory, his wife. It was all done through Sid Abbott and the district secretariat. I hadn't heard of anybody else where this happened, but I don't know if it did. We objected of course but it never occurred to us to contravene it. If the party had said that, we were nitwits enough to stick to it. I wouldn't have missed the year in Liverpool, it was a very interesting year. There's England, Ireland Scotland, Wales and Merseyside – this entirely different concept of life in Liverpool from anywhere

else. The party there was far more working-class and far more active, and the same in Manchester. When I came to Manchester, Dave Duncan was secretary of the peace committee, and almost immediately, within a month or two, he went to the north east, so I took over as secretary of the Manchester Peace Committee. The minute books are in the archive. I remember Jane Mann, who was living in Didsbury, where we first had the bottom half of Len Hayward's house, Jane Mann, who lived in the next street, told everybody in the Didsbury branch: Ruth Frow won't be active in the branch, because she's peace. So the first thing I did when I came into the branch, I suggested that I did a dues round. Everybody was shamed to the core that I was prepared to be that active. I just got involved in the normal activity, which wasn't very onerous, the odd leaflet and so on. But my main party responsibility was peace, and as secretary of the Manchester Peace Committee I got involved in, for example, organising a train to London for a peace demo. That was hair-raising. Every lunchtime at school I had to walk down to this bank at Ardwick Green, weighed down with a bag full of money, because the money came in for the train fares. God, it was murderous. I had to raise it or be personally liable for price of this bloody train!

To my horror, on the actual journey I found that most people had taken crates of beer with them: talk about hair-raising. That was another aspect of party life which I strongly disapproved of – drink. And there was an awful lot of it. We were neither of is teetotal, we just didn't drink. If we went to a wedding and had to have a glass of sherry, we did. Eddie was very against drink because he saw the corruption that it was responsible for in the trade union movement; and he was criticised strongly because he didn't in the drinking bouts in the union, particularly national committee and occasions like that. For some years Eddie and I had a function: when these big firms like ICI and so on put on events to which they invited all the activists in the unions, it was our to clutch hold of one drunk after another and sort of drag them out to the toilet before they collapsed on the floor. It was foul, it was absolutely foul. It's an aspect that I don't even like to think about. I'd never come across any edict or comment on, what shall we say, personal behaviour on the part of the party, except in connection with Eddie and me. I can remember when I was living with the Wainwrights, Bill coming in one day – because he was a chain smoker at the time; so was Molly, and I was smoking at the time actually – and he said: 'Do you know what Dicky Doll's done? He says that smoking causes cancer!' Of course, Dicky Doll at that time wasn't the great Sir Richard in charge of the cancer research place in Mill Hill. He was only a mere what-not.

In Liverpool Leo McGree helped me with the peace work, and one or two others. Once I got to Manchester, of course, Eddie helped me with the contacts and put me in touch with various convenors and so on. Johnny Tocher I met in that way because he was convenor at the time at a big firm in Stockport. I was able to use Eddie's knowledge and influence to develop the peace work. I did that for about six years I think, and then I applied for a course at the university for an advanced diploma in education, and I dropped the peace committee work. By that time it was fading, and CND had been formed. I was the first vice-chairman of CND in Manchester, which we always maintained preceded the London CND. We were involved in Lord Simon and used to go to extremely draughty meetings at Broomcroft where a little flunkey came in with a little white cap and white apron, black dress, cucumber sandwiches of minute proportions. Lord Simon unfortunately ruined Manchester CND at that stage because he provided everything. He provided an office, he paid for a full-time worker, anything we wanted. If we wanted leaflets we paid for them and so on. So the committee had nothing to fight for, it died of inertia. But of course it resuscitated itself and became very strong later, but by that time, I never left CND, I've always been a member, but I was no longer active in it.

The party was disgraceful about CND. The first Aldermaston march was accorded about a half column inch at the base of page one. The second Aldermaston march was given full coverage, but they were very, very slow in waking up to the importance of Aldermaston. I can't remember if I went on the first Aldermaston or not. Eddie and I went on two or three. The reason why I became involved in CND at the beginning was as secretary of the peace committee, nothing to do with the party. It was just that I was in that public position and naturally got involved. It was formed in the Methodist Central Hall in Oldham Street. There were twenty-five or thirty people there, just I think by public announcement, and nobody there, or very few, had had any experience of organisation whatsoever. So when they talked about raising money, and I gently suggested jumble sales and film shows and so on, they thought: My God, this woman knows all about it; and I was promptly elected vice-chairman. Donald Pennington of the university was chairman, and Lord Simon was president. I can't remember who the secretary was. She became very active later and went down to London

and became part of the national scene. It's all there in the archive. CND brought in a new wave of people; I would say particularly middle-class people; people who had been frightened of the proscription on the peace committee, the peace activity. It was given a lot of trade union support of course; and through the peace committee we were able to bring in (*to CND*) unions that had given us support and things like that. But yes, it brought in a whole tranche of new people, a lot of people. CND at the beginning rapidly developed into a mass movement.

I think I got my diploma in '61, something like that. It may have been two years or three years. I went on to do an M Ed by thesis, which was easy because I didn't see any point in doing research which would be purely academic, so I found a subject which I thought would be of some use to the labour movement. My dissertation for the diploma was on the half-time system of education, and the labour movement attitude towards it. That was published later by Eric Morten. My thesis was on the development of the labour college movement in South East Lancs. Eddie of course was a fount of wisdom in all of that because he'd been through labour college classes himself.

We lived with Len Hayward I think for about eighteen months. Then we went to visit Eddie's mother in Mablethorpe, and she had a cold and we said, 'Really, mother, don't you think it's time you lived either with June' – Eddie's sister – 'or us?' Well, June at that time was living in a caravan because the bungalow wasn't built on the petrol station that they were living in and had taken over. So she said, yes, she'd come and live with us. We hadn't any room in Didsbury, so we looked around for a house that would take her; and having found King's Road, which was accessible to Rusholme Road, which was the AEU office, the party office and Eddie's work which was in Salford, all within cycling distance – and I was teaching in Ardwick at the time, so I could cycle to Ardwick – so we set in motion buying the house. Because Eddie was vulnerable as a shop steward, he was always being chucked out of jobs – as a matter of fact he never lost his job at Ward and Goldstones – I went to get the mortgage. I went up Mosley Street from one building society to another, and in each of them they said: Have you a male guarantor? I said: 'No. Why should I have? I earn my own money, I can produce bank statements.' 'Well, you might become pregnant.' 'That's my business.' So I got more and more furious as I went up Mosley Street and when I got to the top, to the Halifax, I said; 'I want to see the manager! I want a mortgage!' 'Certainly, madam, how much do you need?' So we got the mortgage with the Halifax, but the attitude was appalling: chauvinism at its [*worst*]. So we got the house in King's Road, and we went to Mablethorpe to mother and said: 'We've got the house. When are you moving?' 'Moving?' Why should I move? I've got a garden, I've got a bungalow. No way.' So we were landed with a house. What happened then was that James Klugmann came to visit us. We were lucky in having King's Road that we had at least one spare bedroom and we could make two spare bedrooms. So all manner of people came to visit us: Willia Gallacher, Palme Dutt. We were used by the party as a hotel, which suited us fine because we loved to meet these people, and we got a lot of books through them. James came and he looked around and said, 'All this lovely wall space.' So we started to fill it up. But the basic thing was that in our Disbury flat Eddie's books had been one side of the fireplace and mine had been the other; but when we went to King's Road I had to go down to a British Peace Committee the weekend we moved and Eddie meanwhile was left with the front room full of crates, and he put the books on bookcases, mixing our libraries. So that was really, I suppose, the start of the library.

The real start of the library was when Geoff Clark, who was a historian and worked for a firm of solicitors, came up and said, 'Do you realise that your books are already of such financial value, that if you die they're going to have to be valued for probate, and presuming that you haven't got a large amount of money salted away, you're going to have to sell them to pay the death duties.' Geoff through his firm of solicitors got in touch with the charity commissioners and got us established as a charitable educational trust. We had to pay so much a year for seven years and each of those seven years we became a seventh less liable for death duties, and after seven year we were free. As a charitable trust, we didn't know at the time, but we could have got a reduction in rates. We paid the seven years that you had to pay into it, it wasn't a lot of money and we were both earning anyway. That was really when the library became a serious commitment than a hobby.

We can tell you the exact date that we became involved in the party historians' group. We'd done a paper, or produced a pamphlet I think, on Robert Owen; and because of that, it had been published somewhere in one of the party papers, we were invited to attend a historians' meeting, at the Simons' in Leicester. All the names that you know were there: Hobsbawm and so on and so forth. The party historians were never sectarian; they were never confined to the party, they always

tended to be a bit broader. Eddie gave this talk on Robert Owen. I don't think we'd perfected the scheme we followed of my reading extracts from relevant pieces. But anyway, at the end of that they thanked him very kindly and promptly tore him limb from limb. We were non-academics; we didn't know a thing about Robert Owen in Manchester except what we'd managed to cull. Our contact with the historians was extremely useful for us, for Eddie in particular, because they disclosed standards of academic research which he couldn't possibly have met with apart from through the historians; with the result that, Eddie was avid for development of himself and educating himself, and through his contact with the historians he was able to have discussion and help from many people; particularly people like John Saville, Edward Thompson, the Simons, Betty Reid – a lot of them. We were accepted into the group; we went to historians' meetings more or less from then on. They were very supportive. Later when Eddie became treasurer of the national labour history group, there was a strong academic snobbery. The day that Eddie retired as treasurer of the group, there was the question of a delegation to go to America, and Eric Hobsbawm – and I've never forgiven him for it – made a long plea that any delegation should be purely academic. They didn't thank Eddie for his, I think it was six years acting as treasurer. We've got a letter from John Halstead apologising for the discourtesy of the group because he thought it was atrocious that Eddie should have retired without any sort of public recognition. We didn't think any more of it, just their ill manners. We met academic snobbery in that group but never in the party historians. We were fairly exceptional in not being academics, but not entirely. I don't think Betty Reid was an academic. I'm not sure about Noreen Branson. The truth of the matter is I don't know, it never came up. It was what you were doing. Eddie and I would always publish whatever we submitted to any party journal or anything, *Marxism Today* or whatever; we were never turned down.

When we moved to King's Road we joined the Stretford party branch and we participated in the work of the Stretford branch. At one stage we were allocated Trafford Park for leafleting; we could do that between work and an evening meeting. Because Eddie had innumerable evening meetings, obviously, before he became an official. That was out leafletting zone, so we could do that. But of course we were always involved in the annual bazaar, because for a long time we were the only transport. We had a car when nobody else did. There was a wonderful group in Stretford; so good that it was more or less expelled en masse in the break-up. I think we were too close for the people who were wanting to split the party to be able to cope with.

The Khrushchev speech was a terrible shock to us. At first we said this isn't true, it's dirty tricks department again. During the Cold War there had been continual disclosures of the work of the dirty tricks department, so we just shrugged our shoulders and said, you know, it will come clear. When it didn't we just had to rethink, and it was a very great shock to us. But I think it's true to say that it shook our faith in the Soviet Union but not our faith in the party. We didn't associate our party with the situation in the Soviet Union, and to some extent we never did and still don't – I still don't. We didn't formulate it in this way at the time, but it became clear that what was going on in the Soviet Union wasn't socialism, wasn't communism, and would never have become communism. In the circumstances, it wouldn't have been possible; that would be my reaction. We had absolute faith in the Soviet Union, complete faith; and it was a terrible shock to find that what we had seen through rose-tinted spectacles was entirely different. But that didn't in any way budge use from our position so far as dialectical materialism was concerned, and the possibility of a revolutionary change in this country. Although we accepted, with reservations, *The British Road to Socialism*, we were never quite with it; not reservations strong enough to formulate them, but we thought, you know, it'll get amended as life changes the situation.

I'd never been to the Soviet Union. I went to Poland on a peace delegation in '53, which was a very interesting experience; and then Eddie and I went to Romania. I was invited as secretary of Teachers for Peace and he came as my travelling mate. That was very interesting. Poland was still on the floor in '53; the ghetto was literally rubble. The only thing that happened to me in Poland was, I think we had a mean together with the Polish peace committee before we were coming home, and there was a bloke sitting next to me who spoke a word or two of English, and and he and I were chatting, and after I got back he wrote me two letters, and it indicated a degree of dissidence, though not overtly. So I dropped him like a hot brick; at that stage I wasn't prepared to – I thought he was off-line, you know. Romania was '61, the year that Eddie was elected to the full-time position. We didn't see anything wrong. The only criticism we had was in Romania, the day before we went, we were invited to a meeting where there were quite high-ranking officials of one sort of

another, and they said, had we any criticisms to make? The only criticism we could see was that they were building two-lane roads, because at that stage there was very little motor traffic; and we said we thought that was short-sighted, they were going to need bigger roads. We weren't looking to criticise; and of course, we were on official delegations and weren't shown anything that was likely to be critical. We were blind.

I've always found it useful to be half-Jewish when I'm with Jewish people and helpful to be half-Irish when I'm with Irish people; but in actual fact I've never regarded myself as anything but a normal English woman of no particular national affiliation.

We welcomed more than accepted the more critical position adopted by the party (*at times of things like Czechoslovakia*). Once the Khrushchev report had impinged itself on our consciousness and we'd begun to think a lot about and discuss it – Eddie was my mentor, of course. Eddie did my thinking for me; that's really what I miss him for most. If anything cropped up, I would say, 'Eddie.' He knew, he had a tremendous political understanding, far more than me. We were prepared to go along. We were not prepared, ever, to be anti-party. We never deviated from our belief that fundamentally that marxism, which I always prefer to call scientific socialism – I think marxism is a misnomer and gives people the opportunity of making it into a dogma: 'Marx said', you know; whereas I considered scientific socialism to be a continually progressive political attitude. So far as I'm concerned, yes, there will be, in a longer perspective than we had hoped for, there will be a major political change. Funnily enough, the almost overnight collapse of the Berlin wall and the Soviet Union and so on, made us think that, well, possibly things could happen quicker here than we think. It was almost a hopeful sign. Harry Pollitt always ended his speeches by saying, 'It will come in my lifetime.' Well, it didn't, and it won't come in mine; but it will come, full stop.

In this brief extract from an interview carried out by Richard Cross on 9 May 2000, Ruth Frow discusses the latter years of her involvement with the CPGB and her expulsion from the party in 1985.

We formed the Trust, the Working Class Movement Library Charitable Trust, in '67, and from that time onwards we took the library collection very seriously, and we would go round, every weekend and any spare time we had, to bookshops or to comrades that we suspected of having material that might be useful. We considered that to be very much our 'party' activity. But we always participated in the branch activity. I was a member of the branch committee, which got me expelled in '86. The whole branch committee was expelled. Eddie wasn't expelled, he didn't re-register when I was expelled — but people like Alice Bates and Dorothy Watts, who had been active grass-roots comrades for years — for half a century — and to expel them was just sheer stupidity, utter stupidity. I could name a whole series of people who it was lunacy to expel. It was the deliberate break-up of the organisation. I think the break-up of the CPGB was a very successful ploy on the part of the people who wanted to see the CPGB broken up. And whether... the comrades who were involved in it were consciously doing it, and which were just being used as "cats' paws" I don't know. It will come out one day.

I can tell you how the expulsion process worked in my case... On every possible occasion, Eddie and I went off with the car and caravan collecting books. Every weekend, every holiday and so on. By '86 Eddie had been retired some years, and we just went off for the whole of the summer. By that time, I'd — had I retired? I'm not sure. Anyway, we went off for the longest possible period. So every time I came back there was a letter saying 'you have the right of appeal against expulsion', and I wrote explaining that I hadn't been at the bloody meeting anyway. I was a member of the branch committee and fully in agreement with the decision they'd taken to go ahead with the meeting [*a public meeting the district committee had ruled should not go ahead*], but I just didn't happen to be there. But in each case I was given the opportunity of going to a district — or going to the secretariat — meeting to put my case, but the time had gone by the time I got back. And the last one just said 'as you haven't appeared, you are now expelled'.

Some comrades I think, Alice Bates was one, Henry Suss was another, I can't remember the others, but there were about half a dozen them that did put in an appeal, and went down to [*the 1985 CPGB*] congress, in November I think. They were treated disgracefully. They were escorted into the hall... and they were marched to the platform, and they were listened to in absolute silence, and

they were marched out and the doors were locked behind them. It was a shameful episode, which really broke their hearts. They were loyal party members who'd gone through the procedure. But Eddie and I did not. I didn't appeal. They then wrote and asked me for my party card, so I wrote a letter, which was published in the *Morning Star*, saying that they could expel me from the party, but my party card, which I'd then held for 45 or something years, was mine — and I kept it, and I have it. I have unbroken membership.

The need to save the party, to keep the party going, was why the CPB [*Communist Party of Britain*] was formed, to 'reclaim the party', because we could see it disappearing. Don't forget that these comrades had been working together, albeit it in local branches, as a district, and people had known each other for years, at [*Morning* Star] Bazaars, the Free Trade Hall, been on May Day parades and demonstrations, and were very close comrades who saw the need to keep together, to maintain the branch name if nothing else, which is all we have done. I mean, at some stage in life, if there is a need for a communist party, or if a party is formed which is called 'the Communist Party' — it's there. It doesn't need to be the same communist party, or the same comrades in it, but the communist party has been maintained, and that was the intention of the CPB.

The emergence of *perestroika* and *glasnost* initially led to a renewal of enthusiasm. I don't think it manifested itself in recruitment particularly. I haven't the figures on that, I don't really know. Certainly, I think, everybody really hoped that that was something that was happening. Looking back I can realise that we were terribly slow to recognise and react to obvious signs. We never believed that there was anything [*seriously amiss*] going on in the Soviet Union, when there obviously was. Although, everybody knew that the whole of the politburo had been obliterated, and so on and so forth. But somehow or other we were always able to rationalise that. I don't know why. Misplaced loyalty? Which is one reason why I say I don't think we were particularly successful over the century.

The British party always was a conglomeration of individuals, obviously. And from time to time there were splits off in one way or another. There always had been schisms. It's a feature of the left — it does fragment. But I would say I don't think it was that there were simply 'two factions', and also comrades who'd remained in the Democratic Left I'm perfectly friendly with and there's never been antagonism on their part, although there has been on the part of some others. The library has been, I think, a cohesive factor, hopefully. It's also that comrades come here like bee to a honey pot. Because there isn't a district or an 'organisation' that's seen as such, a lot of people come to the library as friends and helpers and so on, because they see it as a progressive organisation.

I still have absolute confidence. No question. What annoys me most is when people talk about the Soviet Union as if it were communist, or even socialist — which it certainly wasn't — as if a socialist society would inevitably suffer the same drawbacks that that did. It's not so. We've got to find the way. In the back of my mind I've got a feeling it can't be done in huge conurbations, in huge numbers. It's got to be broken down, because it's got to be democratic. People have got to participate. And unless you have it in small enough numbers so that everybody can participate, then you don't get socialism. And if you have it in such a way that you get delegates, who are delegated; who are delegated; who are delegated, you get the 'professional delegates', who then become your professional bureaucrats.

I don't believe that the British communist party has ever been democratic — in the terms that I consider democracy. It has been centralist, yes, but not democratic centralist. I don't think that there is such a thing as 'democratic centralism'. I accept that in an illegal situation, it may be necessary to have centralism. But we're not illegal and never have been, and we shouldn't have gone along those lines. And we're still making the mistake. It was a handicap to the party, that way of organising.

Grassic Gibbon's Internationale

In an essay published in Seville in 1980, but written a few years earlier, Jessie Kocmanová (Scott) came closer than any other critic to complete approval of the characterisation of Ewan Tavendale in *Grey Granite*. Her evidence is important: she was born in Edinburgh in 1914, attended the university there in the mid-1930s, and was one of the outstanding students (and recent graduates) of differing views who supported Hugh MacDiarmid's candidature for Rector in 1936. Although she lectured at Brno University, she maintained contact with Scotland and with MacDiarmid during her vacations in Edinburgh. She wrote:

> I can recall no feeling on first reading *Grey Granite* – almost contemporaneously with the events it depicts – that there was anything unreal or improbable in his character or actions: [*Ewan*] is very much a real figure of a real time, perfectly representative of the young people of his day who believed they had indeed found a new creed, 'a stark, sure creed that will cut like a knife, a surgeon's knife' (*Cloud Howe* p210), Robert [*Colquohoun's*] last sermon; repeated by Ewan in the last pages of *Grey Granite* as he bids farewell to Chris, 'a creed as clear and sharp as a knife' (p201). [1]

'The surgeon' was an international metaphor for the communist revolutionary. In his biography of Brecht, John Fuegi quoted indirectly: 'Brecht said he felt like a surgeon whose patient leaves before an operation is completed.'[2] The occasion was when Isherwood left the dinner table because he had taken offence at the discussion around *The Good Person of Szechwan*.

In 1934 Gibbon saw the image of 'the surgeon' as positive and rendered it in his own words and with maximum effect in Colquohoun's final sermon and in Ewan's final conversation with his mother. Gibbon also made two other references to 'the surgeon' in his 'Glasgow' essay in *Scottish Scene* which was written a few months before *Grey Granite*: 'The single surgeon orating is, of course, the Communist' (p121) and 'Some day the surgeon-leaders of the hundred and fifty thousand [who live in single ends] may take that tale of Bell o' the Brae for their text.' (p125) [3]

James Barke, Gibbon's Scottish contemporary also used the metaphor in *Major Operation* (1936): 'If Dodds had performed a major operation on his stomach there, MacKelvie (and circumstance) had performed a major operation on his brain, on his mental make-up. Now society was in need of a major operation.' (p424)

The Polish writer-in-exile, Czeslaw Milosz, gives the same image to 'Gamma' with irony in *The Captive Mind* (1953) when he returns to Poland from the USSR in 1944 and reflects, 'The nation would, of course, have to undergo a major operation...'. Milosz continues: 'Gamma felt the excitement of a good surgeon entering the operating room.'[4]

In 1940 in *Darkness at Noon* Arthur Koestler saw the image differently from Gibbon and Barke. The old bolshevik Rubashov, reflects on the evening of his execution: 'One cannot heal a person mortally ill by pious exhortations. The only solution was the surgeon's knife and his cool calculation. But wherever the knife had been applied, a new sore had appeared in place of the old.'[5]

Oddly enough, the use of 'the surgeon' metaphor does not appear to have been adversely criticised. However, about the same time as Jessie Kocmanová first read *Grey Granite*, another Scottish marxist critic, Marion Nelson, who had connections with Paisley, Banff and Aberdeen, published an article in the *Canadian New Frontier* in January 1937 in which she identified several flaws in the characterisation of Ewan as a communist, flaws which other marxists (and non-marxists) have also noted. She quoted Ewan's reverie on the occasion of his visit to the house of the Communist Party organiser, Jim Trease:

> And Ewan sat and looked on and spoke now and then, and liked them well enough, knowing that if it suited the Party purpose Trease would betray him to the police to-morrow, use anything and everything that might happen to him as propaganda and

> publicity, without caring a fig for liking or aught else. So he'd deal with Mrs Trease, if it came to that... And Ewan nodded to that, to Trease, to himself, commonsense, no other way to hack out the road ahead. Neither friends nor scruples nor honour nor hope for the folk who took the workers' road; just *life* that sent tiredness leaping from the brain; that sent death and wealth and ease and comfort shivering away with a dirty smell, a residuum of slag that time scraped out through the bars of the whooming furnace of History (p183)

The nineteenth-century Italian marxist scholar, Antonio Labriola, had written: 'History is like an inferno.'[6] Marion Nelson commented: '...Ewan the communist, is something less than human. A bit of a prig, self-righteous, romantic too – seeing himself so readily in the great march of History.'[7] But neither Jessie Kocmanová nor Marion Nelson realised that Gibbon was writing within the context of some of the international communist language of the period: he did not invent it all himself. *Grey Granite* cannot be fully understood within its own confines. The three areas Ewan muses over here: the prime interests of the Communist Party; the rejection of friends (and comrades and partners), and the subjection to History, have all formed parts of the novels in different situations of other slightly later writers who were communists at one time (though they were subsequently expelled from or left the party) like Ignazio Silone, Charles Plisnier and Arthur Koestler. The references are too similar to be coincidental. What was Gibbon's stance as an author?

His authorial stance becomes clear if we consider Silone's *A Handful of Blackberries* which was published in Italian in 1952 (in English in 1953); the period is 1944.[8] Silone, who was less than a year older than Gibbon, had been a foundation member of the Communist Party of Italy, and was expelled ten years later for refusing to support the expulsion of three comrades. In *A Handful of Blackberries* Silone's main character, Rocco, who had also been a foundation member, finally leaves the party since he has become aware of the victims of stalinism and also of some victims of the group of partisans of which he had assumed command a few weeks before the Liberation. 'Be careful, Stella, don't have any illusions. Individuals don't count', says Martino to Stella, Rocco's lover, when she fears for Rocco's safety after he has left the Party (p227). 'It isn't friendship that makes the wheels of the revolution go round,' remarks Oscar, a party official, to Rocco when he interrogates him about his friendship with Martino who has been expelled for ideological deviation in exile (p102). 'Haven't you learned yet that for the Party there is no such thing as private life?' demands Ruggero, another official, when Stella refuses to let him open an envelope without Rocco's permission (p184). 'The Party is History on the march,' says Stella to Rocco. 'You know that better than I do. It was you that taught it to me. Outside the Party there is nothing. Unfortunately, history is made of suffering.' (p119)

It is remarkable that the same kind of language is being used in two different contexts. In *A Handful of Blackberries* Rocco finally leaves the party; at the end of *Grey Granite* Ewan leaves Aberdeen at the head of a contingent of the 1934 Hunger March to London where he is to be kept 'as a new organiser right in the thick' at the unlikely age of nineteen and after a party membership of less than a year. In *A Handful of Blackberries* Silone finally closes the debate on the party which he had begun in *Bread and Wine* in 1936; in *Grey Granite* Gibbon keeps it open amid the explicit criticism of some of his other characters and his implicit criticism of 'the jargons and shields of [*Ewan's*] creed...' (p202).

In Ewan's words, the earliest of the three areas to appear in *Grey Granite* is 'history making, the working class to be captured and led...'. (p45) Later, he refers to the workers as 'History's instruments'. (p83) When the workers return to Govans and Gloag Jim Trease exclaims: 'For it's me and you are the working-class, not the poor Bulgars gone back to Gowans. [...] A hell of a thing to be History, Ewan!' (p147) Finally Ewan notes that history has become: 'our master not the servant we supposed...' (p169).

James Barke was the earliest critic of this area of *Grey Granite*. Two weeks after publication (on 12 November 1934) he wrote, combining praise and adverse remarks:

> Just finished *Grey Granite* last night. Extraordinary performance despite some damned unnecessary slipshod stuff. Why the hell wont you take time? And despite some deliberate baloney (?) on the C.P. your line is admirable. And I suppose you've got your answer to the inevitable doubts re dedication [*to Hugh MacDiarmid*]. [...] Only, one

> thing I do regret – that Tavendale couldn't (and of course he couldn't) experience deep 'love' for the working class [...] understanding of historical necessity alone does it rarely.[9]

In a late paper Jack Mitchell, who taught at the Humboldt University in Berlin, strengthened his earlier criticism of Trease and Ewan's view of history expressed in 'The Struggle for the Working-Class Novel in Scotland 1900-1939', and wrote of Trease's claim 'to be History': 'Here these two are no longer communists but figures of almost Nietzschean fantasy.' [10]

The references to history are the most pervasive in the international communist language identified earlier. Gibbon did not live to see where his characterisation might be leading. However, in *Days of Hope* (1937) André Malraux wrote: 'Hernandez was beginning to learn how history is made' when his character, a Republican captain, was waiting in a group of three to be shot by the fascists in the Spanish Civil War.[11] Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* (1940), had no fewer than thirty-five references to history, including: 'History will rehabilitate you, thought Rubashov, without particular conviction. What does history know of nail-biting?'[12]

References also occur in essays. At several points in the chapter of *The Captive Mind*, 'Gamma, the Slave of History', Milosz refers to the 'logic of History':

> Even before the [*Second World*] war the members of the Union of Patriots had agreed to renounce independence for their country in the name of the logic of History. [13]

He concludes his chapter, however:

> But sometimes [*Gamma*] is haunted by the thought that the devil to whom men sell their souls owes his might to men themselves, and that the determinism of History is a creation of human brains.[14]

Perhaps Silone gives the fullest outline of the view of history represented in part in *Grey Granite* in his essay 'The Lesson of Budapest' (1956), when he disagrees with Sartre:

> In his view, a writer who is really alive cannot be for anything but progress; on the other hand, progress, in the modern era, is identified with the working class, which, in turn, 'is identified' with the Communist Party; the Communist Party, as everyone knows, 'is identified' with Soviet Russia and with the People's Republics, who of course are to be 'identified' with History. [15]

In *Hermanos!* (1969), a novel with an ironic title, William Herrick, who had been a member of the Lincoln Brigade in Spain, revisits the 1930s and quotes from a speech by Jake Starr, a history graduate, to volunteers in Saint-Denis: 'You're not going to write history, you're going to make it.'[16] The novel has several other references to history.

There were earlier references in literature. In Boris Pilnyak's 'The Tale of the Unextinguished Moon' (1926) Number One (Stalin) is given to say to the fictional Commander Gavrilov, for whom he has prescribed an unnecessary operation which leads to his death: 'It is not for us to talk about the grindstone of the Revolution, Gavrilov. The wheel of history, unfortunately, I suppose, is turned mainly by blood and death – particularly the wheel of revolution.'[17]

At the end of Victor Serge's documentary story 'The Saint Barnabas Impasse' placed and dated 'Moscow-Leningrad, September 1932' a soldier with serious facial injuries who is looking for a room, comments: 'All right, all right. We're history's manure. Let us be so knowingly.' [18]

Grey Granite contains several references to communists as 'liars'. What did Gibbon mean by 'the nonsensical lying of the Communists' in the words of Bob's interior monologue at the time of a meeting of the Duncairn League? (p81) The clue exists in the opening words of Storman's address to the meeting of the South Wales Anarcho-Communist Group in *Stained Radiance*:

> 'Comrades, the Government is on its last legs.'
>
> This was a good opening, but, saying it, he knew that he lied. A year ago he

> would not have known this. Or would it merely have been that he would not have troubled to remind himself that he knew? The legs of the Government, though rheumaticky, were stout enough. Nothing would transpire to upset it. Like a dirtbug, it squatted athwart all England, and so would continue to squat. He was mouthing revolutionary bunkum, proletarian pap.

Gibbon says much the same thing in his own words about literature in his contribution to *Left Review*. 'To say that the period from 1913 to 1934 is a decadent period is just, if I may say so, bolshevik blah.'[20]

Later in *Grey Granite* Ellen Johns describes Trease and Selden as 'liars and not to be trusted' (p120) and claims that the party is 'full of cheats and liars' (p194) but these may be generic expressions for politicians. In *Cloud Howe* Chris also refers to 'liars and cheats called Labour or Tory…' (p198).

The only instance of deliberate lying in *Grey Granite* is Ewan's suggestion that the explosion at Gowans and Gloag has been deliberately planned to test the effect of poison-gas on a crowd. Ellen protests: '…but, Ewan, you know that THAT was a lie. It was sickening of you to suggest that they let loose the gas deliberately… Ewan, it's just cheating, it's not Communism!' (p188) Marion Nelson did not refer to this area.

The charge of lying has often been made in respect of communist policy. In *Double Lives* Stephen Koch uses the expression 'lying for the truth' and the phrase is the title of the first half of the book and of a specific chapter. 'Willi [*Münzenberg*] may have honestly believed that he was lying for the truth, but he did clearly know he was lying.'[21]

One of the first instances was the lie that the Whites had taken Kronstadt led by the counter-revolutionary General Kozlovski whereas in fact the Kronstadt sailors had mutinied led by the Kronstadt Soviet. Gibbon shows that he was fully aware of the suppression of the Kronstadt Soviet in March 1921 in *Stained Radiance* (p62), but whether he was aware of the lying is unknown. Victor Serge wrote later, 'For the Party to lie to us this way was something new.'[22] But in the early years of the revolution even he was quoted as saying: 'We are obliged to lie to save what can be saved of the Revolution.'[23]

Plisnier and Silone make several references to lying. In *Memoirs of a Secret Revolutionary* Iegor, the Comintern delegate, says: 'There are higher values than the truth, comrade.'[24] Silone reports that, at a meeting of a special commission of the Comintern, the British delegate's interruption ('But that would be a lie') was greeted with a burst of laughter.[25] (It is remarkable now to note that, from the identification of a code-name in the OVRA files, Silone may have been giving information to the fascist police in Italy at the time he was a delegate to the Comintern in Moscow.)[26]

In the essay referred to above Jack Mitchell comments of the 'adventurism' of Ewan's lie about the gas explosion (and other features): 'There's no sign of the author distancing himself from his hero at these points.'[27]

The question of Gibbon's authorial stance was raised most recently by James D Young in his chapter on Gibbon and Barke in *The Very Bastards of Creation* in which he argued that Gibbon 'was really mocking and ridiculing Stalinist orthodoxy when he discussed the CPGB's idea of "the vanguard Party's" role and falsification of classical Marxism in trying to exploit working folk as "History's instruments"'.[28]

Dr Young gives a source for his references in Trotsky's speech to the Thirteenth Congress of the CPSU in May 1924 when he was under attack from Zinoviev:

> 'In the last instance the Party is always right, because it is *the only historic instrument which the working class possesses for the solution of its fundamental tasks*. […] One can be right only with the Party and through the Party because history has not created any other way for the realisation of one's rightness.'[29]

Gibbon was certainly aware of the full meaning of 'History's instruments'. Ewan had said:

'History's instruments, the workers, 'll turn to us some time – even though it's only for a sixpenny hop'. (p83) In *Stained Radiance* Gibbon had already given half of the expression to James Storman, secretary of the caricatured Anarcho-Communist Party, when he reflected of an audience: 'These folk he, a Leninist, should regard as mere instruments; once he would have so regarded them.' (239)

But Gibbon wasn't 'mocking and ridiculing Stalinist orthodoxy' merely by giving Ewan these words: he was representing it in his character. His authorial stance is not critical of stalinism. The victims of rebellions whom Ewan recollects in the Art Gallery are the victims throughout history (p73) and the victims he thinks of after he has been tortured by the police are mainly 'Communist martyrs' and not the victims of stalinism. Similarly, when Gibbon refers to the lying of the 'world's masters', he is thinking of pre-communist masters (p137). Dr Young remarks that Gibbon 'made few explicit criticisms of Stalinism…'.[30] One of these was his reference to 'the blood and iron government of Stalin' in his characterisation of Meierkhold in *The Thirteenth Disciple*.[31]

The international range of the expression 'History's instruments' is given in *Hermanos!* where William Herrick comments of his character, Cromwell Webster, whom the party wants to be a commander (against his wishes) because he is black: 'Yes, of course. Instruments of history. Willing victims of history.'[32]

How had Gibbon acquired a knowledge of this international communist language and its uses? The present writer can only give hints about his political contacts since there is little direct evidence of his conversations.

For a few months in Glasgow in 1919 he appears to have been a member of a group like the Left Communist Group of Glasgow which he describes in *The Thirteenth Disciple*.

In a letter to Naomi Mitchison (dated 10 August 1933) he claimed to have been 'thrown out of the Communist Party as a Trotskyist – while [*he*] was in the ranks of the Army, doing Communist propaganda.' But, if so, his time in the Royal Army Service Corps came to an end in March 1923.

In a letter to him from Stuart Parham (dated 7 December 1931) there is a reference to 'meetings' when they were based at RAF Kenley 1923-6. 'Dost remember the terrible & secret meetings at a shop in Croydon where congregated the Surrey Cheka complete with its spies and the nightly ritual on return to camp, "I see no ships", amplified with, "I always salutes me farver?"[34]

His head teacher at Arbuthnott recalled in an interview with Douglas F Young, author of *Beyond the Sunset* (1973), that he had been approached by the police in Stonehaven 'who had enquired about Leslie's Communist sympathies. There had been trouble in a camp on Salisbury Plain, rumblings of revolt, and the police wanted to know if Leslie could have been behind it.' Mr Gray thought he probably had been but presumably did not tell the police. This must have been after his move to Upavon on 13 March 1928. Leslie Mitchell was 'Lewis Grassic Gibbon'.[35]

Jean Baxter, dedicatee of *Sunset Song*, recorded for Ian S Munro in 1960 that on one occasion, after the Mitchells had spent a holiday at their home at Wokingham, Surrey, her husband was approached by the local superintendent of police and asked about their connection with the Mitchells: 'Evidently a check was being kept on Communists suspected of potential danger!'[36]

In 1932 Gibbon attended a meeting in London which had been called to try to form a British section of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers which had been instituted in Kharkov in 1930. He met communist writers there, including Tom Wintringham, who was later to be a commander of the British Battalion in Spain. Louis Katin, later a sub-editor on the *Daily Worker*, was a member of Gibbon's 'Twelve Club' in Welwyn Garden City.

In a letter to Eric Linklater (dated 10 November 1934) Gibbon wrote: 'Everyone insists on regarding me as a Communist except the Communist Party of Great Britain, which twice in 1931 refused my application to join.'[37] But in the letter to Naomi Mitchison, already quoted, he wrote: 'When the last Labour Government went west, I re-applied to join the Communists but they refused to have anything to do with me.'

In his synopsis for an autobiography, 'Memoirs of a Materialist', written in 1934 and projected as a filmscript, Gibbon included: 'Shots of the author and his wife as Communist agents in a general election [that of 1931].'[38] There was a communist candidate in Hammersmith North in October, 1931 when Gibbon and his wife were living at 29 Percy Road. E F Bramley received 697 votes.

One of the strongest influences may have been Mary Litchfield of whom Willa Muir wrote in a letter to Douglas F Young in November 1967:

> How far Leslie was attracted towards Communism by this time [*1933*] I cannot tell; he was certainly beginning to see Mary Litchfield fairly often, and she was a whole-hog Stalinist eager to recruit writers for the C.P. She was a very handsome Scottish teacher with a strong magnetic personality and an appetite for exercising power over other people; at one time she had confined herself to love affairs, but she was now a political propagandist. [...] Of course Leslie had been trying to absorb Communist theories & attitudes for his book 'Grey Granite', and that may have been as far as he meant to go.[39]

In his second last letter to Hugh MacDiarmid Gibbon wrote of the 'Meanings in Scotland' series which he was editing for Routledge: 'You and I, alas, are the only communists. [...] However, I imagine we'll keep the red flag flying pretty efficaciously.'[40]

John Manson

Notes

1. Jessie Kocmanova, '"A Scots Quair" and its Relevance to the Scottish Proletarian Struggle of the Nineteen-Thirties', in Francisco García Tortosa and Ramón López Ortega (eds), *English Literature and the Working Class*, Seville, 1980, 88. The references to *Cloud Howe* and *Grey Granite* are from Canongate Classics throughout.

2. John Fuegi, *The Life and Lies of Bertolt Brecht*, London, 1994, 441. Fuegi also gives a reference to an essay by Michael Rohrwasser. 'For a discussion of the metaphor of surgeon as used by Brecht and by various stalinists...'. 678-9. The present writer does not endorse Fuegi's general approach to Brecht.

3. ed. Lewis Grassic Gibbon and Hugh MacDiarmid. *Scottish Scene*, National Book Association edition, London and Melbourne, n.d.

4. London, 1980, 158.

5. London, 1959, 186.

6. Antonio Labriola, *Socialism and Philosophy*, Chicago, 1912, 109.

7. Marion Nelson, 'The Kailyard Comes to Life – Lewis Grassic Gibbon', in *New Frontier*, January 1937, 21.

8. London, 1962.

9. NLS MS26064 f.148.

10. Jack Mitchell, 'Politics and Art – Lewis Grassic Gibbon's Revolutionary Hero in the Light of Comintern Policy', in *Gesellschaftswissenschafteh-Studien: Working-Class and Feminist Literature in Britain and Ireland in the 20th Century*. Part 1, Berlin, 1990, 66. The earlier paper as published in *Zeitschrift fur Anglistik und Amerikanittik* 21, Berlin, 1973, 384-413.

11. London, 1970, 235.

12. London, 1959, 13.

13. London, 1980, 154.

14. *ibid*. 174.

15. Ignazio Silone, *Emergency Exit*, London, 1969, 136.

16. London, 1969, 37.

17. Boris Pilnyak, *Chinese Story and Other Tales*, Norman and London, 1988, 166.

18. Victor Serge, *Le Tropique et le Nord*, Montpellier and Paris, 1972, 158 in my translation.

19. Lewis Grassic Gibbon, *Stained Radiance*, London, 1930, 239.

20. *Left Review*, London, Vol.1, 1934-5, 179.

21. Stephen Koch, Double-Lives: Stalin, *Willi Műzenberg and the Seduction of the Intellectuals*, London, 1995, 28.

22. Victor Serge, *Kronstadt '21*, Solidarity, London, n.d., 2.

23. Victor Serge, *Revolution in Danger*, London, 1997, vii.

24. Charles Plisnier, *Memoirs of a Secret Revolutionary*, London, 1938, 211.

25. Ignazio Silone, *Emergency Exit*, London, 1969, 72.

26. Dario Biocca, *Silone: La doppia vita di un italiano*, Milan, 2005, illustration between pages 176 and 177.

27. See note 10 above, 61-2.

28. James D Young, *The Very Bastards of Creation*, Glasgow, 1996, 227.

29. Isaac Deutscher, *The Prophet Unarmed*, London, 1970, 139.

30. *The Very Bastards of Creation*, 236.

31. James Leslie Mitchell, *The Thirteenth Disciple*, London, 1931, 86.

32. London, 1969, 141.

33. NLS Acc. 5885.

34. NLS MS26064 f.52v.

35. Dr Young's record of the interview with Mr Gray, conducted on 11 October 1967, is quoted by permission.

36. NLS Acc. 4760 f.4.

37. NLS Acc. 10282/1 (part).

38. NLS MS26060 f.41.

39. Again quoted by permission.

40. NLS MS26066 f.37.

Reviews

Gidon Cohen, *The Failure of a Dream. The Independent Labour Party from Disaffiliation to World War II,* I.B. Tauris, 2007.

This account of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) in the 1930s begins with an outline of the party's history during the seven years between leaving the Labour Party and the outbreak of war. The second chapter looks at the disaffiliation itself and the remaining chapters – apart from the conclusion – are thematic, covering aspects ranging from membership and organisation, relationships with the Communist and Labour parties, and the ILP's international involvements. This structure has both merits and drawbacks. On the positive side we get to view the party from a number of different angles and in varying perspectives; but inevitably, especially given the short period that the book covers, there is a lot of repetition with the same events, groupings and individuals turning up in the different contexts.

The ILP's crucial role in the foundation of the Labour Party meant that up until the end of the First World War it had functioned as the main vehicle for individuals to participate in the larger party, locally and nationally. The introduction of constituency parties by the post-war constitution of the Labour Party threatened to make this role redundant and presented the ILP with a dilemma over where it should be going and what its relationship should be with the larger entity. But it is difficult

to entirely go along with Cohen's characterisation of it as developing in the direction of a 'think tank' in the 1920s under the chairmanship of Clifford Allen. It was surely much more than this. For a start, it was much bigger than most organisations designated in this way today. It was more than five times the size of the CPGB at the time of disaffiliation in 1932 as we are reminded in the very first sentence of the introduction.

Cohen rejects the view that disaffiliation was simply an act of 'insanity'. But he is clear that most ILPers would have preferred to remain affiliated and that the majority of members who supported disaffiliation came to this position with the greatest reluctance. As late as the beginning of 1932, the year of the breach with Labour, six of the nine ILP divisions, accounting for about 80 per cent of the membership, voted to remain affiliated to Labour at their meetings preceding the party's national conference. Yet within a quite short period thereafter the decision to disaffiliate was taken, with the result that about a third of the membership departed. So, why, if there was so much reluctance to part company with Labour and so much opposition to doing so, did the delegates to the crucial conference resolve on disaffiliation?

There were groupings, notably the 'Revolutionary Policy Committee' formed the previous year, which had their own reasons for supporting disaffiliation; but Cohen is clear that the key role was played by the conflict over the standing orders of the Parliamentary Labour Party. This went back to 1929 after a period when the more militant ILP MPs, notably Maxton, had been fierce left-wing critics of the Labour leadership and, from the latter's point of view, had signally failed to display the loyalty it expected from its parliamentary supporters. Incompatible decisions by both parties were then taken. The ILP for its part resolved that all ILP MPs and candidates should formally undertake to support the policies determined by its conferences while the Parliamentary Labour Party introduced new standing orders which precluded MPs from voting against the decisions of the PLP. This might have seemed something that concerned mainly the ILP parliamentary group; but when at by-elections and subsequently the general election of 1931 Labour failed to endorse ILP candidates – nineteen of them at the general election – resentment and anger were widespread among their supporters.

Nevertheless, at the regular ILP annual conference in 1932 delegates voted against immediate disaffiliation and resolved by a very large majority to re-open negotiations with Labour on a compromise solution for the standing orders conflict. This was, says Cohen, 'a victory for the politics of Micawber'. Labour had already made it crystal clear that it was not prepared to give any ground at all on the question and the hope that something would turn up to rescue the ILP from its dilemma was doomed to failure. A special conference in July 1932 bowed to the inevitable and took the decision to disaffiliate. But it would have been interesting to hear a little more about exactly how the decision to call the 'disaffiliation conference' was made. And anyone could be forgiven for wondering how the Labour Party, so soon after the MacDonald defection and the disastrous 1931 election – which reduced its number of MPs from the 287 won in 1929 to just forty-six – could contemplate the loss of the ILP so calmly.

One outspoken supporter of the ILP line on the standing orders was the veteran ILPer and former MP, and indeed former minister, Fred Jowett. For him what was at issue was the electorate's right to elect MPs who would honour the pledges made during the campaign – in the case of those supported by the ILP, the policies determined by the party's conference. Again, it would have been very interesting if these arguments had been explored further. Jowett had a long record as a critic of what passed for representative government going back well before the Great War. He had doggedly pursued the celebrated 'Bradford Resolution' for years and – though he served in MacDonald's first cabinet – continued to advocate the replacement of cabinet government by a committee system. His position on the PLP standing orders was closely related to his more general stance on democracy. So much is clear from Brockway's account in his biography of Jowett. How big a part did this play in ILP attitudes more generally at the time of disaffiliation?

As far as ILP membership is concerned, the book presents a more nuanced picture than the usual one of inevitable and precipitate decline. Significant fluctuations in membership were new neither to the ILP nor to other left-wing parties where, for example, the CPGB suffered a much greater percentage of loss during the first ten months of the disaffiliated ILP. What was more worrying for the ILPers that remained was that membership continued to fall by slightly larger proportions in the following two years. And as a result of serious declines in old strongholds such as Lancashire,

Yorkshire and Wales, less 'traditional' areas where membership decline had been lower came to carry a greater weight within the organisation. But the picture was not one of universal decline; some areas saw substantial new growth in membership and branches. And in elections the party achieved some modest success in some of its strongholds.

Though the ILP became more consciously orientated towards the trade union movement following disaffiliation its impact was patchy and, overall, modest. It should have done better with women. One of the features of the early ILP back in the 1890s and 1900s had been that it was far less 'masculine' in tone than its rival socialist organisations, notably the SDF. Women had played a relatively large part in its organisation at all levels and in a variety of roles, with, for example Katherine Bruce Glasier taking over the editorship of the *Labour Leader* for several key years either side of the end of the Great War. In the post-disaffiliation period there were only three women members of the NAC. Two of them, Dorothy Jewson and Jennie Lee, lasted only until 1934 and 1935 respectively, leaving Kate Spurell as the sole female member. Separate representation of women within the party, already declining in previous years, was brought to an end – with the support of the 'revolutionary' element – soon after the breach with Labour.

Another area where the impact of this wing of the membership can be seen concerned the organisation of the party. Since its inception, the ruling body – between national conferences – had been the National Administrative Council. The name was deliberately chosen to suggest that this body would not behave in the authoritarian way attributed to many, if not all, executive committees. At a time when such issues as whether the ILP should have a 'president' caused much debate and when the *Clarion,* weekly rival of *Labour Leader,* would inevitably leap on any pretensions to 'leadership' among the notables of the party and was prone to spot the slightest sign of incipient bureaucracy this was very much in accord with the times.

But in the 1930s sterner attitudes came to the fore. In 1934, against the inevitable objection of many, notably Jowett, the ILP adopted its own version of 'democratic centralism' involving the creation not only of an executive committee but also the rather sinister sounding Inner Executive. The latter was supposed to enable the party to function 'underground' should the ILP be made illegal; but by 1935 it consisted of three MPs – James Maxton, Campbell Stephen, and John McGovern – who met in a committee room of the House of Commons, rather than the Doge's Palace as the name might have led one to anticipate. It became a controversial force, accused of dictatorship, especially in relation to the 'Abyssinian crisis'. I would have welcomed more about the arguments on both sides of the 'democratic centralism' debate and the subsequent criticisms and defences of the new structure.

The key chapter of the book in explaining 'the failure of a dream' seems to be 'Divided We Fall'. It is always difficult to draw the line between productive critical debate and destructive factionalism and this was exemplified by what took place in the ILP during the years in question. Apart from those wishing to remain affiliated to the Labour Party who helped form the Socialist League, there were at least three distinct groupings pulling in very different directions. The Revolutionary Policy Committee's notion of a 'revolutionary' policy did not correspond to the interpretation of other would-be revolutionaries in the party. It stood among other things for closer co-operation with the communists, nationally and internationally: an approach which seemed to flourish for a couple of years and then become untenable after events in Spain, above all in Barcelona, put the two organisations at loggerheads. Soon after the RPC left *en masse* to join the CP. In the meantime, unimpressed by the progress being made by the RPC, the CPGB had infiltrated both the ILP's youth movement and the ILP itself. The CP's central committee set up a Committee for Affiliation to the Comintern within the ILP. Those who had been ILP members in 1920 and 1921 must have recalled the attempts of the 'Left-Wing of the ILP' to secure the party's affiliation to the Third International. But this time the ILP also attracted the attentions of trotskyists in the shape of the 'Marxist Group'.

Moves in these directions were opposed by a 'Unity Group' – whose title was not of course intended to be ironic, though much of it left to form the Independent Socialist Party in 1934. The group was committed to 'ethical socialism'. It would have been good if this had been explored more fully, though Cohen does supply some interesting examples of the related social activities of the party. To some extent at least the ILP by the 1930s had become a sort of residuary legatee of much of the pre-leninist radical left, including aspects of the *Clarion* movement, the guild socialists, the syndicalists and perhaps even the old SDF as well as the ILP's 'traditional' features. Its opponents within the

party represented the more recent trends which we are now more familiar with from other, wider, contexts.

There is a great deal of fascinating detail and helpful insights in this book. But one might wish that important elements, notably the move towards 'democratic centralism' and the nature of 'ethical socialism', had been unpacked and explored a little more. One final frivolous thought: was this book the first, or perhaps the only, academic study published in 2007 to cite work (on Maxton) by the current British Prime Minister?

Ian Bullock

Allison Drew, *Between Empire and the Revolution. A Life of Sidney Bunting, 1873-1936* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2007), pp304, ISBN 978 1 85196 893 0, hb.

Not many South African readers – and even fewer British readers – know who Sidney Bunting was, and why he deserved a biography. But they should. For Bunting was one of the people who turned South Africa into what it is today. It may seem strange to say this about somebody who was a leader – not even *the* leader – of a tiny political party which in his time was not even represented in parliament; it was not even a major pressure group in the streets either. Yet, both it and Bunting played a formidable role in shaping the future.

In 1915, together with a handful of colleagues who had split away from South Africa's Labour Party, Bunting founded the International Socialist League – one of only two socialist organisations in the world to denounce the 'imperialist' war, the other one being the bolsheviks. In July 1921, together with a number of comrades, Bunting founded the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) and became its first treasurer. In 1922 Bunting represented the CPSA at the fourth Comintern congress in Moscow, which the party joined immediately after its birth.

Uniquely amongst his comrades, Bunting saw the importance, for the future of his party, of attracting Africans into its ranks. Long before the Comintern, in 1927, mandated the slogan of an 'independent native republic' as the CPSA's goal, Bunting made African membership and the relations between black and white party members a big issue within the CPSA. The problem of solidarity – or the lack of it – between the white working class and the black proletariat remained his pain and his main preoccupation right until the end of his political career. Little in his early life indicated that he might one day end up preaching communism in illiterate rural Thembuland – for most of his compatriots and contemporaries just 'darkest Africa'. Nothing forced him to take this cause. But he did.

Sidney Bunting was born in 1873 to a family of successful and well-off Wesleyan liberals. His father, Percy Bunting, a lawyer, journalist and politician, was an admirer of Gladstone, with whom he became close in the senior politician's later years. From his early childhood Sidney was exposed to the debates and pursuits of London's leading liberal intellectuals. He 'soaked up' discussions around the dinner table and accompanied his father in some of his election campaigns. He went to St. Paul's School, London, where he became an exemplary student, interested in history and classics and doing wonderfully well in Latin. He also played music – a passion that remained with him until the end of his life. He went on to read classics at Magdalen College, Oxford, winning prizes and awards. But, crucially, he narrowly failed to be elected to a fellowship at the college.

Sidney's father persuaded him to start a career as a solicitor. He ended up working for a firm in the City and travelling on business a lot. He joined the Fabian Society and became a founder-member of the Oxford University Musical Union. His life seemed uneventful and predictable, until 1900, when he volunteered to fight for the empire against the Boers – and thus got to South Africa. With the war behind him he returned to the life of a perfect English gentleman, though this time in Johannesburg: legal work, the Rand Club, the Johannesburg Musical Society. But he was mixing in Labour Party circles and by 1910 was caught up in politics. The very first strike that he observed as a politician on the left – the 1913 white miners' strike – shook his world, with its racist undertones on the one hand, and by the cruelty with which it was suppressed on the other. There was to be no going back.

Sidney occupied several leading positions in the ISL and the CPSA, working selflessly for both organisations. In order to give all his time to the party, he gave up his income, leaving his legal practice and resigning as director of a family business. One cannot say that he created a growing African following for the party single-handed, but he was the first to start this process and he contributed all his passion and talent to it. However, his reputation as a 'native lover' or 'pro-native' made his life increasingly difficult even among his comrades, let alone his relatives in London and South Africa. He fell out of favour with the Comintern because the wisdom of a 'native republic', as opposed to a 'proletarian republic', escaped him. But he bowed to the Comintern's authority and preached the 'native republic'. Perhaps his greatest achievement was his 1929 election campaign in Thembuland – part of what later became Transkei, and is now part of the Eastern Cape province. He lost the election but the campaign made a huge impact: thereafter the CPSA was known as 'Bunting's party' in this area and among broader circles of the African population. In the wake of this campaign Sidney organised the League of African Rights in order to fight against a set of new discriminatory laws just enacted.

This was against the wishes of the Comintern: Moscow wanted the African masses to fight not by petitions but by radical action. This started an anti-Bunting frenzy among the party leadership; and, although a large group of African supporters tried to fight for him, in 1931 he was expelled from the party and then even from all the party front organisations, such as the Friends of the Soviet Union. The accusations against him were nonsensical and the campaign against him truly ugly. This shattered him: the party was his life, and he firmly believed that he – or any other communist – neither should, nor could act without it. He was also left without any means of existence. His last years were terrible. It was too late to start from scratch: in 1931 he was fifty-eight. He ended up playing the viola in an orchestra to support his family, but even this was too hard as the job involved a lot of travelling. Redemption came only after his death five years later: his supporters organised a massive 'red' funeral for him, at which the left of all persuasions gathered to pay their last respects. But the party never rehabilitated Sidney Bunting: neither then, nor later.

Allison Drew has written an unbelievably detailed chronicle of Sidney's life. We learn where the family of Bunting Sr. spent its every holiday, what marks Sidney got at school, what disputes he participated in and with what result. We discover the background of his school teachers and university lecturers, and how the rooms he occupied in Magdalen looked. We learn every turn of Sidney's prolonged involvement in the family business in Natal, and virtually every detail of that business too. Then there are his writings, his speeches and his letters to his wife and sons, as well as detailed accounts of party meetings. We even learn of the behaviour of his relatives, colleagues and friends towards him at every stage of his life and his political career. Drew's list of notes takes forty pages and contains every possible relevant archival collection and book. And, despite her dispassionate style, the books sucks in the reader like a novel. It is an engaging life of an outstanding personality.

Yet, gaps remain. It is still not clear, why Sidney became a communist. There is no hint in the book that he even read any marxist literature before he joined the party. However, he was not an ordinary member: he became a knowledgeable communist, who took the idea of the party discipline to heart. He also accepted the party idea that however one debates issues within the party, organising a faction is the road to disaster. Such a change could not come about overnight, but we do not see it. Bunting as a personality remains outside the scope of this book.

The same is truer still about his wife, Rebecca Bunting. She was a powerful personality in her own right, a staunch communist and also a founder-member of the party. Drew gives a lot of details about her – even of her illnesses – yet Rebecca's persona remains even more mysterious than Sydney's. She seems to be always in his shadow.

In other words, Drew does not offer explanations, visions or guesses to the reader: she offers facts but not interpretations. She has produced an excellent biography – but the author is strangely absent.

Irina Filatova, Professor of Moscow School of Economics (Russia) and Professor Emeritus of the University of KwaZuluNatal (South Africa)

Jim Riordan: *The Last British Comrade Trained in Moscow: The Higher Party School, 1961–1963*. Socialist History Society. SHS Occasional Paper No. 23. 2007. 34pp.

Compared to the 1920s and the 1930s, little is known about the post-war practices of Soviet party education for foreign communists. Through the Soviet era, party education was the most central means in creating and maintaining ideological dependence between communist parties. Another may have been the financial support from Moscow.

In total, only a single cohort of five British attendees were trained at the post-war Higher Party School (HPS), Moscow, in the early 1960s. Professor Emeritus Jim Riordan has written his personal account on his time at the HPS. One of the others contributed by giving his diary to the author, but he did not want his name mentioned. The rest of the British ex-students kept quiet.

Riordan explains the uniqueness of his British HPS course by stressing how far it differed from the traditional lack of appreciation with theoretical marxism-leninism or the orthodox way it was taught in Moscow. This critical attitude, combined with disobedience which led to troubles with the HPS's officials, led to one British comrade being sent back home after his first year. Another reason for such low numbers of British students at the HPS, suggested by Betty Reid, was the fates of the unlucky British communists that had taken the Soviet passport during the 1930s.

'No doubt the offer was there, but it was not taken up again', says Riordan. It is hard to believe that the unsuccessful five caused the CPGB to curtail involvement with this free education programme. More information is needed to explain why the training at the HPS started in 1961, and why it did not continue. As, for comparison, the Finns remained at the HPS since they got in (1954) until the end of the 1980s – and the comrades that were destroyed in the Stalin purges of the 1930s were not counted in tens but thousands.

In Moscow, Riordan was driven to the *Vysshaya partiynaya shkola* in a black limousine. On the wall of the accommodation room, he was welcomed by an image of Stalin that was removed from there, as well as from the Lenin mausoleum, a month later. However, the Soviet students at the HPS, about the half of the total, were not able to debate politics or Soviet history, not to mention the purges: 'it was like arguing with a religious fanatic'. Riordan's pride in being there was even more questioned by ordinary Muscovites that reacted to his introductions with indifference or hostility. He had become a member of the ruling party elite.

Riordan describes the classes at the HPS as well prepared and illuminating. However, the British students could not swallow the fabricated Soviet history that they knew to be 'utter tosh'. Soon their protests had reached the Soviet Party Central Committee. After a couple of serious discussions with some British comrades they respected, the renegades promised to play according to the rules. Riordan concludes that HPS never succeeded in moulding him into a reliable soldier of revolution.

Riordan did not draw radical conclusions either but worked in Moscow for a couple of years at the Progress Publishing house. He describes the extraordinary British society in Moscow, including the members of the famous 'Oxford circle'. Riordan hints, in passing, that prolonged time in Moscow was an eye-opener, especially when he was ridiculously accused as an *anti-sovietchik* before leaving the country. Back home, he tried idealistically to explain the distortions of 'real socialism' to the British comrades who branded him, again, as a heretic. Riordan never left the Communist Party – it left him in 1991.

Because of Riordan's later academic career in Russian studies, his personal memoirs are brilliantly placed into the Soviet historical context of the time. He writes sharply, with British irony. However, I would have liked to read more details about the culture and practice of the HPS; the publication consists only of 34 pages, and it includes some other short life stories too.

Joni Krekola, University on Helsinki

Andree Levesque, *Red Travellers: Jeanne Corbin & Her Comrades* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006), 232 pp., £20.95, hardback, ISBN 9780773531253.

Having reviewed the original French language version of this book (*Scenes de la vie en rouge: L'epoque de Jeanne Corbin, 1906-1944*) in the Spring 2001 issue of *CHNN*, I'm pleased to see it translated into English as one of McGill-Queen's Footprints series. I can confirm my initial, positive response, but while the book has a new and improved title, it has been reprinted apparently with no re-editing, and I feel obliged to admit that some misspellings and inaccuracies I missed the first time around have survived translation.

Without looking too hard, I spotted trade unionist Mary McNab rendered as Mary "MacNabs" and socialist Beatrice Brigden as "Bridgens" (p151); changes in the content of the *Daily Clarion* – first published in May 1936 – are said to have happened 'by 1935' (p153), and referring to a Congress of the 'red' Lumber Workers' Industrial Union of the Workers Unity League that took place in 1931, '*Congres de l'Union industrielle des travailleurs forestiers*' (page 90 in the original version) is mistranslated as 'the forestry workers' union of the CIO' (p57). The CIO was formed in 1935.

Over all, these are minor irritants. The Footprints series aims to use the 'life stories of individual men and women who were participants in interesting events' to 'help nuance the larger historical narratives.' *Red Travellers* account of the Communist Party's struggles to make the revolution in Quebec and northern Ontario adds considerable nuance to the historiography of communism and Depression-era Canada. The final chapter on Jeanne Corbin's last struggle, against tuberculosis, is very moving.

John Manley, University of Central Lancashire

Robert Service, *Comrades: A World History of Communism*, (London: Macmillan 2007), ppxviii+570, ISBN 798-1-4050-5345-7, £25.hbk.

The communist movement of the twentieth century was a unique historical phenomenon: a militantly secular but theoretically-based and organised collective of individuals active throughout the entire world, animated (at least formally) by the common aim of overthrowing, violently or otherwise, the established states inherited from the nineteenth century or earlier, and then proceeding to the total transformation of economic and social relations – which did not of course exclude bitter internecine disputes and accusations of renegacy.

Certainly this movement deserves a lengthy and comprehensive critical history and analysis; of its ruling parties, its non-ruling parties, its relations with political friends and enemies and with society at large – but most emphatically this volume does not come into that category. It is a truly astonishing piece of work to be produced by someone of Service's reputation and qualifications. In short, it is flawed in any number of dimensions and fails altogether in its purposes.

Comrades aspires to be a narrative account of the communist movement from its earliest precursors to its debacle at the end of the twentieth century. It is, however, rattling with factual errors and gross distortions of events, of which I counted nearly seventy (leaving aside typos, minor distortions, ambiguous formulations and syntactical infelicities). It would be tedious to catalogue every one (though I would be happy to supply a full list to anyone interested). What follows therefore is a sample of the most egregious:

Wrong date for the publication of Capital (p27); Gramsci was not a Sicilian but a Sardinian (p92) and, as Seamus Milne pointed out in his *Guardian* review, he did not die in prison; Lenin did not die of a heart attack but of a stroke (p97); The Nazis' highest vote was not in November 1932, but in July, their November vote diminished markedly (p172); Churchill's government did not ban the CPGB's press, but its daily paper (p216); the Warsaw Pact is represented as existing in the late 1940s (p255) (though elsewhere the correct timing is given); the Black Sea is said due to pollution to have been dangerous to swimmers and lethal to fish (p364). The latter is perfect fantasy. I have swum in it myself (in 1987) and seen hundreds of others doing the same, watched fish being caught

there, and eaten them. There is to be sure a dead zone in the middle of the sea but this is due to its depth and high sulphur content (which may well give the Black Sea its name) and has existed from time immemorial. Peter Taafe was not the leader of the Militant group, he was a leading figure and the editor of its newspaper, but the founder and leader was Ted Grant (p400). The most startling error of all occurs on page 373 where Service writes that, 'Althusser claimed that Marx's analytical superiority lay in the scientific method and the corpus of Marx's early writings; he argued that the later corpus lacked the same rigour' – which is the exact opposite of Althusser's view.

On page 60 Service refers to Lenin receiving money from Berlin. To any reader unfamiliar with the background, the context in which this is placed – the Russian Revolution – suggests that money was supplied by the German authorities, the 'Lenin is a German spy' accusation used by the bolsheviks' enemies. That may not be Service's intention, but it reads that way (the same point reappears on p422). In reality any finance the bolsheviks received from Germany came not from the government or the general staff but from Alexander Helphand (Parvus), a socialist eccentric who financed various sorts of revolutionary enterprises.

On page 129 Service writes that skilled workers 'became – in the Marxist jargon – a "labour aristocracy" '. That may well be so, but the jargon was (is) not confined by any means to marxists but widely used by labour historians. On page 162 we learn that, 'the NKVD was not renowned for its investigative scruples, especially at times when it was under pressure to fulfil its arrest quotas'. Again, not literally untrue, but as J Arch Getty and Oleg V Naumov with massive documentation demonstrate in *The Road to Terror* (1999), the NKVD functionaries frequently rejected anonymous delations which they considered to be without foundation.

On page 312 it is pointed out that 'no communist regime (in Eastern Europe) had come to power through the ballot box' – which is indeed the case, but what is not recorded is that in the first general election following the liberation the Czechoslovak CP received the highest vote of any party and would certainly have come to undivided power if the British voting system had been in use, instead of having to content itself for the time being with the leading role in a popular front coalition government. When recounting the extreme horrors of the Pol Pot regime (to be fair he acknowledges that it was supported by the USA) Service writes that 'Cambodia had experienced continuous civil war' but omits to mention that the central cause of the Khmer Rouge ascendancy was the massive US bombing campaign in Cambodia ordered by Kissinger and Nixon.

All the errors and distortions might be regarded as trivial matters and to dwell upon them as mere quibbling, but the character and extent of these blots and blemishes is not accidental, they all tend in the same direction and taken together suggest a remarkable degree of sloppiness and inaccuracy such as to badly undermine the credibility of the volume and its depiction of the communist movement. An annoying habit is his frequent citing of his own previous books as sources, which makes it impossible to check many of his assertions without having these to hand. There appears to be a sour animus against Isaac Deutscher, with rather gloating references to the latter's mistaken estimate of the USSR's future.

As mentioned, this is a narrative history and does not pretend to a great depth of analysis, what there is of that would not be out of place in the *Readers' Digest* – indeed it sometimes makes the *Readers' Digest* appear sophisticated by comparison – particularly the case in his account of Marx's writings. It recycles the hairy chestnut of the communist movement being comparable with religious ones – I first encountered that in Bertrand Russell's *History of Western Philosophy*, published in 1946 – and though some party members certainly assumed attitudes which imitated religious devotion, to attach religious meaning to Marx's or Lenin's ideas would, if true, require another word to be invented for what we've hitherto thought of as religion. No account is taken of the importance of Lenin's 1916 pamphlet *Imperialism* (it isn't even mentioned) nor the circumstances in which the concept of 'marxism-leninism' was dreamed up.

The tone is one of relentless hostility. Scarcely any communist, revolutionary or sympathiser is introduced without a sneer, though, again to be fair, the second half of the volume is relatively more balanced and a number of the achievements of certain communist regimes are acknowledged, if grudgingly; Service's tank of bile here becomes somewhat depleted, though never entirely exhausted. The paradigm in which he places the movement is the 'totalitarian' one, well discredited some decades ago, but now experiencing strenuous efforts at resuscitation.

The entire review could be spent picking these holes, but a general critique of the volume must focus on the principles behind Service's handling of the communist movement and the states ruled by communist parties. Almost certainly, what became the standard socio-economic principle of the ruling parties and the aspiration of most others, the command economy in irremovable single-party regimes, (other parties, if permitted, would be reduced to impotence) was unviable from the start, doomed to failure and only appeared for a time to be successful on account of extraordinary historical circumstances. Nonetheless the flawed nature of that model can only be effectively judged in relation to the rival which it confronted – not merely the power of the United States, formidable though that was, but the consumer society of the first world in all its glittering attractiveness. The communist bloc did not have to collapse when it did – even under the global circumstances which existed in 1988 it could have gone on for decades longer; if challenged only by third world type economies it could have continued indefinitely. Moreover, the very existence of the communist rival and the kind of appeal which it represented played a very significant role in restraining the predatory instincts of international capital, easing labour exploitation in developed economies and permitting the long boom of the fifties and sixties to occur.

In other words, the movement can only be understood in the context of its world situation and the relentless siege to which the bloc was subjected by its enemy. Service wholly fails to address these issues in any explanatory fashion, to identify the basic project of leading western governments between 1917 and 1991; namely to repress communism wherever and whenever possible, to enter only temporary and provisional agreements with the USSR, to make life as difficult for it as they could and never to accept the states of the Soviet bloc as fully legitimate members of the international community.

It isn't that Service fails to draw attention to western crimes and massacres – he does, and in regard to one of the worst, the bloody extermination of the Indonesian communists in 1965, he cites a death figure even higher than the one generally accepted, though even in this instance there is a distortion. The attempted coup which triggered the bloodbath was not, as Service claims, a communist initiative, but staged by a group of ultra-leftist junior officers, for which the party next day incautiously and fatally expressed its approval.

These atrocities however are treated by Service as contingent to the nature of US-led western democracy, regrettable aberrations, unlike the communist ones, which, we are given to understand, must be the inevitable outcome of its defective ideology. Expressed in theoretical terms, the approach is thoroughly idealist, rather as though the fundamental drive behind US administrations was argued to come from protestant evangelism and not the concrete problems of keeping American elites enormously wealthy. That said, there is no question that communists took ideology seriously in a way that no other political movement ever did; the point is that Service only very superficially tries to relate their beliefs to the material and moral dilemmas they faced. 'Kindly Bukharin' (Service's own words) for example, is nevertheless indicted for 'condoning' violence (p478), without any attempt to investigate the reasons why he might have done so.

That is one example. Service is never able to penetrate the actuality of what made communists tick, to get inside their heads, particularly among the non-ruling parties, where membership seldom offered great material rewards and indeed usually debarred communists from enjoying any such thing. His closing chapter, 'Accounting for Communism' might be expected to address such matters but signally fails to do so. It does not account for communism, but instead is a (relatively accurate) summary of the faults and shortcomings of the communist regimes and the reasons why they were disliked by their publics. It has nothing to say about the communist movement elsewhere. In his concluding sentences Service writes that 'Communism also infected other movements for the transformation of society' (p481). The metaphor is revealing, and he goes on to compare communism to a virus. He then concludes – if not by identifying the bolshevik regime with all forms of subsequent tyranny (even the Taliban), by suggesting that at least it provided the precedent. *Comrades* is a spectacularly missed opportunity and a singular failure of historical imagination.

Willie Thompson

Sobhanlal Datta Gupta. *Comintern and the Destiny of Communism in India, 1919-1943. Dialectics of Real and a Possible History*, Calcutta: Seribaan, 2006. xxii + pp329, ISBN: 8187492171.

This is the first book-length attempt to consider the implications of the newly available archival material for the Comintern's policy towards India. Its main sources are the documents obtained by Professor Datta Gupta and his colleagues from RGASPI and other Moscow archives in 1995, which have been published in Purabi Roy et al. (eds), *Indo-Russian Relations 1917-1947: Select Documents from the Archives of the Russian Federation* (2 vols, The Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1999-2000). These are in the main drawn from the 495/68 and 495/68a series on the Communist Party of India, supplemented by the papers of the Indian Commission (495/42), the Eastern Secretariat (495/154), the Kuusinen Secretariat (495/16) and the papers of the Comintern congresses and plenums. For the book under review, Professor Datta Gupta also uses the papers of the CPGB – which at times had formal responsibility for Indian work – both in Moscow and Manchester and the material collected by Horst Krueger in Berlin.

The result is a massively authoritative account of Comintern policy towards India. Each twist and turn – and there are lots of these – is carefully explained with detailed reference to the original sources, and to past and emerging historiography. It is hard to see how, as an account of Comintern policymaking, it could have been done with greater care or thoroughness. As well as the series of chronologically-structured chapters tracking the policies, there is also an introductory chapter providing a valuable overview of the recent historiography of the Comintern, and another offering the fullest account yet of the careers and fates of the Indian revolutionaries in Moscow.

The main lines of the argument may be already familiar to readers of the *CHNN*. They were summarised by Professor Datta Gupta in a paper he gave at a conference in Manchester in 2002 which was summarised in issue 13.[1] What the new material shows, he suggests, is that the official Comintern line was always questioned by alternatives: voices of 'dissent and difference, resistance and protest' which it marginalized or eliminated, but which still left traces in the archival record. For example, the familiar ultra-leftism of M N Roy in the early 1920s was contested by other positions, such as those of the Indian Revolutionary Association based in Tashkent and the Berlin group dominated by Virendranath Chattopadhyaya. Both of these groups thought, contra Roy, that a functioning Communist Party in India was still a distant prospect, and that a working alliance with bourgeois nationalism was desirable or necessary for the present. It is also clear that in 1930-31 there were, within the Comintern, multiple perspectives on the meaning and value of Gandhian civil disobedience. Even after the elimination of alternatives within the Comintern organisation, alternative strategies were argued for in India, especially over the correct relationship to be adopted to the Congress Socialist Party in the late 1930s, to Gandhian *satyagraha* and the civil disobedience movements of 1940-41, to the mass anti-imperialist revolt of August 1942, and to the Pakistan question. Some, perhaps most, of these alternative visions were known about in broad terms from earlier accounts. But the detailed arguments they contained are new. Readers who want to follow the detail can do so by reading *Indo-Russian Relations*, which reproduces most of the documentation in full, while using *Comintern and the Destiny of Communism* as an explanatory guide to the debate.

However, the purpose of the book is not only to uncover these forgotten voices but also to ask 'what could have possibly happened in history had these alternatives been known and given a trial'. The book's counter-factual arguments are ambitious. They do not merely ask whether the Comintern might have produced a different line towards India or the other colonised countries, but whether the Comintern might, under different conditions, have been a different kind of organisation altogether, one truer to its initial leninist design, or less Russified, or less monolithic. In proposing this counter-factual, Professor Datta Gupta wants to challenge the dominant perspectives on Indian communism in India itself, which he argues is 'still heavily dominated by the spirit of Stalinism' and unreceptive to the flow of revisionist accounts of the work of Comintern since the opening of the Russian archives. It is 'not yet prepared', he suggests, 'to see its own face in the mirror of history'.

There are four key moments at which it is suggested that this alternative structure and these alternative perspectives might have made a positive difference. The first was at the birth of Indian communism, when alternative strategies to those of M N Roy, all of them less hostile to Congress

and less optimistic about the prospects for an autonomous communist party, were squeezed out. The second moment was after the Sixth Congress when the potentially fruitful experiment with Workers and Peasants Parties was choked on the orders of Comintern. The third moment came with the move away from sectarianism in 1934-35, when confusion over whether 'class against class' had or had not been superseded meant that the CPI was slow to adjust to the new geometry of the popular front and remained wracked by sectarian quarrels for too long. The fourth moment came in 1942, when the CPI became dangerously isolated from the nationalist movement at the very moment when the latter was preparing for its greatest push against imperialism: the Quit India movement.

The historical account the book gives of the debates at each of these moments is detailed, nuanced and convincing. However, the strong form of the counter-factual claim – not simply that other things were argued for, but that they could have worked better – is not defended in detail or at length. The alternatives are allowed to speak in their own words rather than analysed in depth, and their feasibility therefore remains a matter for speculation. There is also, perhaps unavoidably, some remaining mystery over exactly why each of the alternatives was dismissed. The pattern of forces at each of the four key moments is arguably very different. It is too simple, and out of line with the complex historical exposition offered in earlier chapters, to lay the blame entirely at one door. The Workers and Peasants Parties, for example, were being criticised from multiple directions before Comintern pulled the plug. True, the Comintern created confusion in refusing to admit where 'class against class' had gone wrong, but the CPI had arguably become a self-sustaining producer of sectarianism by this point. The CPGB too, which Professor Datta Gupta suggests usually acted as the Comintern's agent in Indian matters, invariably to poor effect, deserves a more mixed verdict. There is plenty of evidence of its failure to make an issue of India, even when it was handed one on a plate as it was over the Meerut prisoners. But much of that evidence comes from the auto-critiques of the CPGB itself, and from the carping of its political opponents. This suggests a more complicated explanation of the difficulties than simply the Eurocentrism of the party, real though this doubtless was.

So the book does, as Professor Datta Gupta hopes, succeed in its aim 'to make the documents speak'. Whether the documents are sufficient to provide a 'mirror of history' into which Indian communism can gaze for certainty seems more doubtful. But this is to say no more than that the book is a provocation to think harder about the paths taken and not taken by communism in India.

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Notes

1. Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, 'The Comintern and the Hidden History of Indian Communism', paper delivered at The Comintern and the Colonies: A Communist History Network seminar, Manchester, November 2002, *CHNN*, No 13: http://www.socialsciences.manchester.ac.uk/chnn/CHNN13HHI.html

A century of writing on the IWW, 1905-2005

An annotated bibliography of books on the Industrial Workers of the World

Compiled by Steve Kellerman

Dedicated to U. George Thompson

The *CHNN* editors express their thanks to Steve Kellerman and the IWW Boston General Membership Branch for permission to reproduce this bibliography.

A. General Works (arranged chronologically by publication date)

IWW. *Proceedings of the First Convention of the Industrial Workers of the World*. New York: New York Labor News, 1905. 616 pages. Reprinted by Merit Publishers, New York, 1969. Stenographic record of the founding Convention. Speeches by Haywood, Fr. Hagerty, DeLeon, and others. Gives a good idea of the thinking of the people who founded the IWW.

Brissenden, Paul F. *The Launching of the Industrial Workers of the World*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1913, 82 pages. Reprinted by Haskell House Publishers, New York, 1971. Monograph on the founding of the IWW with emphasis on the unions and radical groups which coalesced to that end. Brissenden incorporated much of this material into his 1919 history of the IWW (see below).

Brooks, John Graham. *American Syndicalism: The IWW*. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1913, 264 pages. Reprinted by AMS Press, New York, 1969. Popular description of the IWW for the general public recently become aware of the Wobs. Proposes social reforms to steal the thunder of the industrial unionists.

Ebert, Justus. *The Trial of a New Society*. Cleveland: IWW Publishing Bureau, [1913], illus. 160 pages. The first half is an account of the 1912 Lawrence strike and the second half a description of the frame-up trial of Ettor, Giovannitti, and Caruso and of the general strike that insured their freedom. Ebert participated in or observed the events he describes.

Smith, Walker C. *The Everett Massacre: A History of Class Struggle in the Lumber Industry*. Chicago: IWW Publishing Bureau, [1917], illus. 302 pages. Describes the rise of the Timber Trust and the workers' efforts at self-defence as the background to the astonishingly brutal reign of terror in Everett in 1916 and the wholesale murder of IWW members attempting to exercise their right of free speech.

Brissenden, Paul F. *The IWW: A Study of American Syndicalism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1919, 438 pages. 2nd edition, 1920. Reprinted by Russell & Russell, New York, 1957. The pioneering work in IWW historiography. Describes in detail the founding of the IWW and subsequent internal struggles up to 1916/17 as well as the great organizing drives, strikes, free-speech fights, etc. Tends to see events from the point of view of the headquarters office rather than the rank-&-file. Well written and generally sympathetic.

George, Harrison. *The I.W.W. Trial: Story of the Greatest Trial in Labor's History by One of the Defendants*. Chicago: IWW, [1919], 208 pages. Reprinted by Arno Press, New York, 1969. The great 1918 Chicago IWW frame-up trial, told largely through quotations from the trial transcript. Shows the brilliance of Vanderveer's defense and exposes the

emptiness of the government's case. This book was circulated as part of the class war prisoner defence effort.

Chaplin, Ralph. *The Centralia Conspiracy*. Seattle: IWW, 1920, illus., 80 pages. Reprinted by Work Place Publishers, Austin [1971]. Describes the 1919 events and conveys the full horror of the attack on the Wobbly hall, the mutilation and lynching of Wesley Everest, and the subsequent frame-up trial.

Gambs, John S. *The Decline of the IWW*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1932, 268 pages. Reprinted by Russell & Russell, New York, 1966. Attempts to bring Brissenden's work up to 1931. Mechanical in its analysis and superficial in its understanding of the subject. Falls far short of Brissenden but still contains useful information on the period.

Thompson, Fred. *The IWW: Its First Fifty Years*. Chicago: IWW, 1955, 203 pages. A chronicle-style general history. Presents the IWW's understanding of its past. A valuable addition to the literature.

Kornbluh, Joyce L. *Rebel Voices: An I.W.W. Anthology*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1964, illus., 419 pages. Reprinted by Charles H. Kerr Co., Chicago, 1988 with new introduction and essays. Wonderful collection of IWW graphics, songs, journalism, theory, poems, etc. with introductory material by Kornbluh. Probably the best single book on the IWW.

Foner, Phillip S. *History of the Labor Movement in the United States - Volume 4: The Industrial Workers of the World, 1905-1917*. New York: International Publishers, 1965, 608 pages. A good general history of the IWW to 1917, written from a communist perspective. Foner has found a wealth of information by consulting contemporary newspapers as well as the documentary sources. He repeatedly criticizes the IWW for failure to participate in politics and other 'errors' and is often sloppy in recording facts.

Renshaw, Patrick. *The Wobblies: The Story of Syndicalism in the United States*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1967, illus. 312 pages. Reprinted by Ivan R. Dee, Publisher, Chicago, 1999. A very readable popular history by British journalist Renshaw, ending with WWI. Includes a 20-page postscript on IWW activity outside the United States which most other historians ignore.

Turner, Ian. *Sydney's Burning*. Melbourne: William Heinemann Ltd., 1967, illus., 254 pages. 2nd edition by Alpha Books, Sydney, 1969. History of the WWI arson frame-up of twelve prominent Australian Wobblies. The 1916 Sydney show trial of 'The Twelve' was the centrepiece of the government's attack on the IWW. Turner employs a clever organization; the material is presented in the order in which it reached the contemporary public.

Tyler, Robert L. *Rebels of the Woods: The I.W.W. in the Pacific Northwest*. Eugene: University of Oregon Books, 1967, 230 pages. An area history which concentrates primarily on lumber workers. Unremittingly hostile towards the IWW; portrays members as primitive fanatics in the grip of a mass delusion. The subject deserves a better treatment.

Conlin, Joseph R. *Bread and Roses, Too: Studies of the Wobblies*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1969, 165 pages. A collection of six essays by Conlin on various aspects of IWW history. Tends to over-intellectualise and tries to force events and ideas into rigid and artificial categories. The chapters on violence and the IWW and on the IWW-Socialist Party alliance are worthwhile.

Dubofsky, Melvyn. *We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World*. Chicago: Quadrangle, 1969, illus., 557 pages. '2nd edition' by University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1988. Abridged edition, Joseph A. McCartin, ed., University of Illinois, 2000. General history of the IWW which claims to be the standard work on the subject. Flawed in that Dubofsky views history as the work of 'leaders', the masses of workers being inert and, in the case of Wobblies, in the grip of an enervating 'culture of poverty'.

Werstein, Irving. *Pie In the Sky: An American Struggle, the Wobblies and their Times*. New York: Delacorte Press, 1969, illus., 139 pages. Nice little history written for young adults. The 'leadership' of Bill Haywood becomes tiresome and distorts the book.

Musto, Renato. *Gli IWW e il Movimento Operaio Americano*. Naples: Thelme, 1975. In Italian. Difficult to find in the U.S.

Scott, Jack. *Plunderbund and Proletariat: A History of the IWW in British Columbia*. Vancouver, B.C.: New Star Books, 1975, illus., 169 pages. Stalinist journalistic account of organizing mostly in railroad construction and lumbering. Well done but marked by Scott's usual anti-US bias.

Thompson, Fred and Patrick Murfin. *The IWW: Its First 70 Years*. Chicago: IWW, 1975, illus. 238 pages. Reprint of Thompson's great 1955 work with a supplementary chapter by Murfin.

Bock, Gisela. *Die Andere Arbeiterbewegung in den USA von 1905-1922: Die Industrial Workers of the World*. Munich: C Trikont Verlag, 1976, illus., 197 pages. History and description of the IWW which places the union in the context of the general American labor movement. In German. Contains many graphics not reproduced elsewhere.

Cahn, William Lawrence. *1912: The Bread and Roses Strike*. New York: Pilgrim Press, 1977, illus. 240 pages. All photos with captions. Edited reprint of Cahn's 1954 work *Mill Town* (section C) which leaves out almost everything from the earlier book not connected with the IWW strike.

DeCaux, Len. *The Living Spirit of the Wobblies*. New York: International Publishers, 1978, 156 pages. A retelling of the saga of the Wobblies. Very readable but marred by the distortions to be expected from a communist account. DeCaux was a Wob during the 1920s.

Conlin, Joseph R., ed. *At the Point of Production: The Local History of the IWW*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1981, 329 pages. A collection of essays by various historians on local IWW activity – not really set at 'the point'. Many of the events covered are little known outside of these writings.

Foner, Phillip S., ed. *Fellow Workers and Friends: IWW Free Speech Fights As Told By Participants*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1981, 242 pages. Excellent collection of descriptions of free speech fights, mostly from newspaper accounts by participants.

Bird, Stewart, Dan Georgakis, and Deborah Shaffer. *Solidarity Forever: An Oral History of the IWW*. Chicago: Lake View Press, 1985, illus., 247 pages. Transcriptions of the interviews from which the film *The Wobblies* was made featuring reminiscences by old-timers who participated in the great struggles of the teens and twenties. Contains much material left out of the movie but is marred by errors in transcription.

Portis, Larry. *IWW et syndicalisme révolutionnaire aux Etats-Unis*. Paris: Spartacus, 1985, illus., 150 pages. Complete description and history of the IWW which places the union in the context of the larger American labor movement. In French.

Winters, Donald E., Jr. *The Soul of the Wobblies: The I.W.W., Religion, and American Culture in the Progressive Era, 1905-1917*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985, 159 pages. A generally ridiculous book. Considers the relationship between (protestant) religion and the Wobblies on a variety of levels which rarely come into sharp focus. Employs the jargon of philosophy and sociology.

Wortman, Roy T. *From Syndicalism to Trade Unionism: The IWW in Ohio, 1905-1950*. New York: Garland Publishing, 1985, illus., 217 pages. Photo offset reprint of Wortman's 1971 doctoral dissertation covering organizing in rubber, coal, and in the Cleveland metal shops plus government repression. Poorly written but worthwhile for the chapters on Cleveland.

Miles, Dione. *Something In Common: An IWW Bibliography*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1986, illus., 560 pages. Exhaustive bibliography of the IWW by the archivist of the Wobbly collection at Wayne State University library. Contains sections on books, articles, dissertations, official documents, fiction.

Townsend, John Clendenin. *Running the Gauntlet: Cultural Sources of Violence Against the I.W.W*. New York: Garland Publishing, 1986, 341 pages. Photo-offset reproduction of Townsend's sociology dissertation which traces the roots of the boss class' pathological violent hatred for the IWW. Locates the source in the Wobs' rejection of bourgeois standards, particularly lack of respect for property.

Zanjani, Sally and Guy Louis Rocha. *The Ignoble Conspiracy: Radicalism on Trial in Nevada*. Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1986, illus., 209 pages. History of the murder frame-up of Morrie Preston and Joseph Smith, IWW militants, during the Goldfield, Nev. organizing campaign of 1906.

McClelland, John, Jr. *Wobbly War: The Centralia Story*. Tacoma: Washington State Historical Society, 1987, illus., 256 pages. History of the Centralia events of 1919. Argues that the Wobs should have announced their intention to defend the hall. Good graphics.

Tripp, Anne Huber. *The IWW and the Paterson Silk Strike of 1913*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987, illus., 317 pages. An academic history of the strike in which the reader catches only the rarest of glimpses of the silk workers; discusses only the doings of big shots. Lacks sympathy for the IWW's revolutionary purpose.

Golin, Steve. *The Fragile Bridge: Paterson Silk Strike, 1913*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988, illus., 305 pages. Sees the strike in terms of strikers' self-activity. The 'bridge' is the relationship between workers and the radical bohemians of Greenwich Village.

Salerno, Salvatore. *Red November/Black November: Culture and Community in the IWW*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989, illus., 220 pages. A multi-faceted assessment of the IWW which posits a large working- class revolutionary culture in which the union grew and to which it contributed substantially. Locates the essence of the union in its membership and their activities rather than in offices and conventions. Salerno sees the creation of community as the building of 'the new society within the shell of the old'.

Leier, Mark. *Where the Fraser River Flows: The IWW in British Columbia*. Vancouver, B.C.: New Star Books, 1990, 138 pages. In addition to offering a relatively brief history of the IWW's organizng efforts in coal mining, railroad construction, and lumber in B.C., Leier engages other historians who have worked with the same material in extensive and very worthwhile debate and examines relations between the Wobblies on the one hand and the local AF of L and the Socialist Party of Canada on the other.

Cain, Frank. *The Wobblies At War: A History of the IWW and the Great War in Australia*. Melbourne: Spectrum Publications, 1994, illus., 300 pages. General history of the IWW in Australia with emphasis on successful IWW opposition to WWI conscription and subsequent government persecution. The first chapter on IWW theory and program is pure buncombe, the rest pretty good.

Burgmann, Verity. *Revolutionary Industrial Unionism: The Industrial Workers of the World in Australia*. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1995, illus., 346 pages. Complete history and description of the Australian IWW. Arranged by topic rather than chronologically. The best book on the subject; should remain the standard work.

Salerno, Salvatore, ed. *Direct Action and Sabotage: Three Classic IWW Pamphlets from the 1910s*. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1997, illus., 121 pages. Facsimile reprints of three pamphlets by Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Walker C. Smith, and William E. Trautman on the history and application of tactics designed to hit the boss in the pocketbook.

Sellars, Nigel Anthony. *Oil, Wheat and Wobblies: The Industrial Workers of the World in Oklahoma, 1905-1930*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998, 298 pages. Very good history of the IWW in Oklahoma which mostly involved organizing migratory harvest stiffs and oilfield workers. Sellars has a good grasp of what the Wobs were trying to accomplish and is one of the few historians to discuss the union's post-WWI resurgence.

Hanson, Rob E., ed. *With Drops of Blood; The History of the Industrial Workers of the World*: *Department of Justice Investigative Files*. Bigfork, Mont.: Signature Press, [1999], 272 pages. A compendium of documents relating to the US government's efforts to persecute the IWW, 1912-1923. Much of the treatment of this subject in the history books is based upon these documents. Includes some editorial notes by Hanson.

Silvano, John, ed. *Nothing In Common: An Oral History of IWW Strikes, 1971-1992*. Cedar Rapids, Iowa: Cedar Publishing, 1999, 93 pages. Written to disprove the contention that contemporary Wobblies do not do anything; consists of a survey by Silvano of IWW organizing activities during the period covered plus eight accounts of organizing campaigns by the organizers who worked on them.

Hall, Greg. *Harvest Wobblies: The Industrial Workers of the World and Agricultural Laborers in the American West, 1905-1930*. Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2001, illus.,279 pages. History of the period when the IWW aimed for and, in places, achieved job control in the agricultural fields of North America. Hall is particularly interested in the migrant worker culture of the itinerant farmworkers and the consequences of that attachment.

Buhle, Paul and Nicole Schulman, eds. *Wobblies! A Graphic History of the Industrial Workers of the World*. London & New York: Verso, 2005, illus., 305 pages. Cartoon portrayals of events from IWW history, IWW themes and personalities by a great variety of artists. Issued on the occasion of the IWW's centennial. Includes text by the editors introducing the graphic material.

Watson, Bruce. *Bread and Roses: Mills, Migrants, and the Struggle for the American Dream*. New York: Viking, 2005, illus., 337 pages. Journalistic history of the 1912 IWW Lawrence Strike. Has more sympathy for the millworkers than for their union.

B. Biographical Works (arranged by subject)

Fry, E. C., ed. *Tom Barker and the IWW*. Canberra: Australian Society for the Study of Labour History, 1965, 39 pages. Reprinted as a pamphlet by IWW, Brisbane, 1999. Oral memoir recorded when Barker was elderly and living in London. As editor, organizer, and agitator he had been a key figure in the rise of the Australian IWW 1912-1917 and his arrest in 1916 signalled the opening of the government assault on the union.

Chaplin, Ralph. *Wobbly: The Rough and Tumble Story of an American Radical*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948, illus., 435 pages. Memoir of IWW journalist, publicist, artist, poet, and songwriter who was at the centre of IWW activity from the teens through the 1930s. Chaplin's understanding of his Wobbly years is distorted by the anti-communism of his later life.

Rosen, Ellen Doree. *A Wobbly Life: IWW Organizer E. F. Doree*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004, illus., 256 pages. A life of prominent IWW organizer Doree in the 1910s and 20s by his daughter drawn largely from correspondence in the family's possession. She uses the sparse documentation on Doree's life and work, much of it correspondence from prison, to create a portrait of a courageous and effective organizer and family member. The story is marked by sadness caused by personal loss and unjust imprisonment.

Baxandall, Rosalyn Fraad. *Words on Fire: The Life and Writing of Elizabeth Gurley*

***Flynn*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987, illus., 302 pages.** Baxandall's 72-page introduction gives her assessment of Flynn's life as well as a sketchy biography. The balance of the book consists of speeches, articles, correspondence, and poems by Flynn, including eight pieces from her Wobbly days.

Camp, Helen C. *Iron In Her Soul: Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and the American Left*. Pullman: Washington State University Press, 1995, illus., 396 pages. Gurley Flynn biography covering both her years as an IWW organizer and her career as a Communist Party luminary.

Flynn, Elizabeth Gurley. *I Speak My Own Piece*. New York: Masses and Mainstream, 1955, illus., 326 pages. 'Revised edition' published as *The Rebel Girl* by International Publishers, New York, 1973. Gurley Flynn's memoir of her years as an IWW organizer refracted through her stalinist viewpoint of later life. Describes her work in Spokane, Lawrence, Paterson, the Mesabi, etc.

_____ *Memories of the IWW*. New York: American Institute for Marxist Studies, 1977, 40 pages. Transcription of a talk given by Flynn to a college audience in 1962.

Archer, Jules. *Strikes, Bombs & Bullets: Big Bill Haywood and the IWW*. New York: Julian Messner, 1972, 184 pages. Haywood bio for young adults emphasizing violence, especially during Haywood's WFM days. An uncritical reader could easily conclude that Haywood was a brutal thug who flourished in a society of brutal thugs. Contains many errors of fact.

Carlson, Peter. *Roughneck: The Life and Times of Big Bill Haywood*. New York: WW Norton, 1983, 352 pages. Excellent and thorough. As well-rounded a portrait of Haywood as we are ever likely to see. All biography should be written like this.

Conlin, Joseph R. *Big Bill Haywood and the Radical Union Movement*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1969, illus., 244 pages. Haywood biography which presents its subject as primarily a practical unionist and skilled administrator.

Dubofsky, Melvyn. *'Big Bill' Haywood*. Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1987. 184 pages. A brief biography in which Dubofsky searches for anomaly and enigma in Haywood's life. Not particularly sympathetic to its subject; written for a British audience.

Haywood, William. D. *Bill Haywood's Book: The Autobiography of William D. Haywood*. New York: International Publishers, 1929, 368 pages. Memoir of the man who chaired the founding convention and later served as General Organizer and General Secretary-Treasurer, the Wobbly best known to the general public. Mostly authentic but some parts were obviously re-written.

Foner, Phillip S. *The Case of Joe Hill*. New York, International Publishers, 1965, 127 pages. The story of Hill's murder case from his arrest and frame-up as an obscure hobo through his frame-up and execution as a famous radical songwriter. The trial and appeals process are shown to have been a farce.

Foner, Phillip S., ed. *The Letters of Joe Hill*. New York: Oak Publications, 1965, illus. ,96 pages. The prison letters of Joe Hill plus some song lyrics and graphics.

Nerman, Ture. *Joe Hill: Mordare eller martyr*. Stockholm: Federativs Forlg, 1951. The story of Hill's 1915 murder frame-up trial. In Swedish.

Rosemont, Franklin. *Joe Hill: The IWW and the Making of a Revolutionary Workingclass Counterculture*. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2003, illus., 639 pages. Rosemont employs his encyclopaedic knowledge of all things Wobbly to explore all the ramifications of Hill's life and career. The result is a treasury of IWW history, lore, and sensibility. One of the best books on the union and on Joe Hill.

Smith, Gibbs M. *Joe Hill*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1969, illus., 286

pages. A complete biography. Smith has apparently found every bit of information that exists on Joe Hill. Good graphics.

Söderström, Ingvar. *Joe Hill: Diktare och agitator*. Stockholm: Bokförlaget Prisma, 1970; second edition, 2002. Hill biography; in Swedish.

McGuckin, Henry E. *Memoirs of a Wobbly*. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1987, illus. 94 pages. Short memoir of an IWW militant during the teens. McGuckin was active in Paterson and Akron and was a founder of the Agricultural Workers Organization. He chose not to participate in the frame-up trials of 1917-18.

Dave Roediger, ed. *Fellow Worker: The Life of Fred Thompson*. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1993, illus., 93 pages. Autobiographical material culled from a variety of sources by an IWW militant who always refused to write an autobiography. Thompson was active in the IWW from the 1920s through the 1980s during which time he occupied every position a Wobbly could hold. Necessarily uneven but always interesting.

C. Miscellaneous Works With Some Bearing on the IWW

Altenbough, Richard J. *Education for Struggle: The American Labor Colleges of the 1920s and 1930s*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990, 339 pages. Study of the IWW's Work Peoples College along with Brookwood Labor College and Commonwealth College. Not terribly sympathetic to the IWW but contains much useful information on the school.

Anderson, Nels. *The Hobo: The Sociology of the Homeless Man*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1923, illus., 296 pages. Genuine hobo-turned-sociology professor Anderson gives a grim view of what the life of a hobo was like; examines the connection between itinerant workers and the IWW.

Bruns, Roger A. *Knights of the Road: A Hobo History*. New York: Methuen, 1980, illus., 214 pages. A modern account of the hobos who flourished from the mid-nineteenth century into the 1930s; includes a chapter on the efforts of the migrant workers to organize through the IWW.

Byrkit, James W. *Forging the Copper Collar: Arizona's Labor-Management War of 1901-1921*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1982, illus., 435 pages. A local history which centres on the Bisbee Deportation of 1917. Argues that the deportation of the striking IWW copper miners marked the end of Arizona democracy and the enthronement of the copper corporation plutocracy which has persisted down to the present. Despite this, Byrkit is unsympathetic towards the IWW; sees it as a boss tool!

Byrnes Mike and Les Rickey. *The Truth About the Lynching of Frank Little*. Butte: Old Butte Publishing, 2003, illus., 126 pages. IWW organizer Frank Little was murdered by gun thugs of the Anaconda Copper Mining Company in August 1917 during a protracted struggle between the miners and the company. Amateur local historians Byrnes and Rickey recreate the story.

Cahn, Bill. *Mill Town*. New York: Cameron & Kahn, 1954, illus., 286 pages. A pictorial history of the Lawrence, Mass. textile industry, about three-quarters concerning the 1912 IWW strike and the rest being an abbreviated communist history of class struggle.

Cameron, Ardis. *Radicals of the Worst Sort: Laboring Women in Lawrence, Mass. 1860-1912*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993, illus., 229 pages. Good solid feminist history of Lawrence working women with extensive material on the 1912 IWW strike.

Cannon, James P. *James P. Cannon and the Early Years of American Communism: Selected Writings and Speeches 1920-1928*. New York: Prometheus Research

Library, 1992, illus., 624 pages. Cannon had been an active Wob from 1912 until 1919 when he joined the communist movement. He was active in the efforts of the communists to penetrate and eventually liquidate the IWW and many of his early writings illuminate this ultimately unsuccessful endeavor.

Caulfield, Norman. *Mexican Workers and the State: From the Porfiriato to NAFTA*. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1998, illus., 180 pages. Includes descriptions of IWW organizing in oil, metal mining, and textiles from 1905 into the mid 1920s. Places the Wobblies in a 'syndicalist movement' along with the Casa del Obrero Mundial, the CGT, and the PLM which was opposed by successive governments and the collaborationist unions they sponsored.

Clark, Norman H. *Mill Town: A Social History of Everett, Washington, from Its Earliest Beginnings on the Shores of Puget Sound to the Tragic and Infamous Event Known as the Everett Massacre*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1970, illus., 267 pages. History of Everett which shows the mill owners' lust for profits and dominance resulting in the wholesale murder of Wobblies determined to uphold their right to organize and speak.

Connolly, James [Owen Dudley Edwards and Bernard Ransom, eds.] *Selected Political Writings*. New York: Grove Press, 1974, 382 pages. Contains some writings from Connolly's IWW and syndicalist days including the classic *Old Wine in New Bottles*.

Copeland, Tom. *The Centralia Tragedy of 1919: Elmer Smith and the Wobblies*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993, illus., 233 pages. Biography of the extraordinarily courageous lawyer Smith who advised the Centralia, Wash. Wobblies in 1919 and ended up being tried for murder along with them. Upon his acquittal he devoted the remainder of his life to working for the freedom of his imprisoned co-defendants. Smith became an ardent IWW supporter through these experiences.

DeCaux, Len. *Labor Radical: From the Wobblies to CIO, a Personal History*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1970, 557 pages. Labor journalist and publicist DeCaux hoboed around the west and edited IWW publications before moving on to become a prominent communist and CIO fakir.

Delaney, Ed. and M. T. Rice. *The Bloodstained Trail: A History of Militant Labor in the United States*. Seattle: The Industrial Worker, 1927, 172 pages. Written by two IWW piecards to educate contemporary workers to the background of the Sacco and Vanzetti executions of that year. Details repression of labour from the Molly Maguires to the Columbine Massacre.

DeShazo, Peter. *Urban Workers and Labor Unions in Chile, 1902-1927*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983, 351 pages. Between 1918 and 1927 the IWW organized waterfront, construction, and factory workers and was a major factor in the militant Chilean labor movement. DeShazo employees an institutional approach with the workers never coming into focus.

Dolgoff, Sam. *Fragments: A Memoir*. London: Refract Publications, 1986, 200 pages. Memoir of longtime IWW and anarchist militant, from the 1920s to the 1980s. Dolgoff often represented the IWW from a soapbox.

Dowell, Eldridge Foster. *A History of Criminal Syndicalism Legislation in the United States*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1939, 176 pages. A history of the laws drafted specifically to persecute the IWW. Dowell puts the blame for these laws squarely where it belongs, on the boss class. Written from a civil-libertarian viewpoint.

Engstrom, Emil. *The Vanishing Logger*. New York: Vantage Press, 1956, 135 pages. Memoir of a Wobbly rank-and-filer working in the Pacific Northwest woods, 1903-46. Describes the IWW lumberjack's life from the victorious days of 1917-18 to the decline of industrial unionism with the arrival of the piecework system and the flivver-riding home guards of the 1920s.

Evans, Raymond. *The Red Flag Riots: A Study of Intolerance*. Brisbane: University of

Queensland Press, 1988, illus., 252 pages. A study of the post-WWI vigilante and police attacks on Wobblies and Russian immigrant workers in Brisbane. The IWW remained active in Queensland after being suppressed in the rest of Australia.

Feied, Frederick. *No Pie In the Sky: The Hobo As American Cultural Hero In the Works of Jack London, John DosPassos, and Jack Kerouac.* New York: The Citadel Press, 1964, 95 pages. Essay on the hobo in selected works by London, DosPassos, and Kerouac. Contains some good insights, particularly the material on DosPassos and the Wobblies.

Foner, Philip S. *History of the Labor Movement in the United States, vols. 6,7,8 & 9.* New York: International Publishers, 1982, 1987, 1988, 1991; 254, 410, 305, 414 pages. Continues Foner's history of the IWW which he began in volume 4 (section A) into the early 1920s. In these volumes material on the IWW is interspersed with histories of other labour organizations. Follows the same format and approach as his earlier work.

Gallagher, Dorothy. *All the Right Enemies: The Life and Murder of Carlo Tresca.* New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988, illus., 321 pages. Biography of anarcho-syndicalist agitator, editor and orator who organized extensively for the IWW: Lawrence, Paterson, Mesabi, etc. The book examines at length the circumstances of Tresca's assassination in 1943.

Goldberg, David J. *A Tale of Three Cities: Labor Organization and Protest in Paterson, Passaic, and Lawrence, 1916-1921.* New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989, 276 pages. A history of the Amalgamated Textile Workers organizing campaigns and strikes of 1919; includes extensive material on earlier IWW activity in the three cities. Strong on the ethnic dimension of textile worker organizing.

Greaves, C. Desmond. *The Life and Times of James Connolly*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1961, 448 pages. Biography of the great Irish republican socialist and syndicalist who organized for the IWW while living in the US. Connolly played a major role in ridding the union of DeLeon.

Green, Archie, ed. *Songs About Work: Essays in Occupational Culture for Richard A. Reuss*. Bloomington: Folklore Institute, Indiana University, 1993, illus., 360 pages. Labour folklore essays by a variety of authors, four of which have IWW-related themes. The essays vary in quality and focus.

Green, Archie. *Wobblies, Pile Butts, and Other Heroes: Laborlore Explorations*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993, illus., 506 pages. Collection of Green's labour folklore essays which includes a fascinating chapter on the origin of the name 'Wobbly' and one on the genesis of the Alfred Hayes/Earl Robinson song 'Joe Hill' ('the Stalinist "Joe Hill"').

Green, Martin. *New York 1913: The Armory Show and The Paterson Strike Pageant*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1988, illus., 311 pages. Modern art, revolutionary industrial unionism, and the radical Greenwich Village bohemians.

Gutfeld, Arnon. *Montana's Agony: Years of War and Hysteria, 1917-1921*. Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1979, 174 pages. Chronicles the ultimately unsuccessful efforts of copper miners and other citizens of Montana to oppose the domination of the state by the Anaconda Copper company. The IWW was deeply involved in these events, particularly in organizing hard rock miners and smeltermen after Anaconda had reduced the AF of L in Butte to the status of a company union.

Hall, Covington [David R. Roediger, ed.]. *Labor Struggles in the Deep South and Other Writings*. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1999, illus., 262 pages. History of labour in Louisiana and surrounding districts. Emphasizes the IWW struggles on the New Orleans waterfront (1907-13) and the BTW's Louisiana Lumber War (1910-13) in both of which Hall was deeply involved as organizer and publicist. A 33-page selection of Hall's articles and poems is appended.

Hardy, George. *Those Stormy Years: Memories of the Fight For Freedom on Five*

***Continents*. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1956, illus., 256 pages.** Memoir of Wobbly rank-and-filer who rose to become General Secretary-Treasurer in 1921. He then moved on to be an active communist. Hardy travelled extensively and jumped right into the class struggle wherever he went.

Hawley, Lowell S. and Ralph Bushnell Potts. *Counsel for the Damned: A Biography of George Francis Vanderveer*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1953, 320 pages. Mediocre biography of IWW lawyer Vanderveer based on very limited research. Vanderveer defended the Wobblies at Everett and Centralia and in the great 1918 show trial in Chicago.

Higbie, Frank Tobias. *Indispensable Outcasts: Hobo Workers and Community in the American Midwest, 1880-1930*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003, illus., 255 pages. Intelligent study which argues that the itinerant workers sought to influence the labour market they operated in and to assert their humanity and 'manhood' through organizing into the IWW.

Holbrook, Stewart H. [Brian Booth, ed.]. *Wildmen, Wobblies and Whistle Punks: Stewart Holbrook's Lowbrow Northwest*. Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1992, illus., 313 pages. A collection of Holbrook's generally witty and colourful magazine articles on the Pacific Northwest, mostly from the 1940s and 1950s. Contains a few pieces on the Wobblies which vary in point of view and quality.

Holton, Bob. *British Syndicalism 1900-1914: Myths and Realities*. London: Pluto Press, 1976, 232 pages. The IWW was instrumental in bringing industrial syndicalist ideas and practices to Britain and helping to initiate a large and important syndicalist movement.

Jensen, Joan M. *The Price of Vigilance*. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1968, illus., 367 pages. A history of the American Protective League, the US government-sponsored vigilante organization formed from the boss class which did everything in its considerable power to smash up the IWW during the First World War in addition to persecuting German-Americans, socialists, pacifists, etc. Unfortunately gives more attention to the politicians' infighting than to details of the persecutions. Jensen is a civil libertarian.

Kimeldorf, Howard. *Battling for American Labor: Wobblies, Craft Workers, and the Making of the Union Movement*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999, 244 pages. Case studies of the Philadelphia longshoremen's unionization (1913-26) and the New York City culinary workers (c.1903-36) in support of Kimeldorf's peculiar theories regarding 'industrial syndicalism' and 'business syndicalism'. This is the first history to chronicle the IWW's efforts on the Philadelphia waterfront.

Kipnis, Ira. *The American Socialist Movement 1897-1912*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1952, 496 pages. History of the Socialist Party dealing extensively with the efforts of the SP right wing to purge the Wobblies from their party and make it 'respectable'. Their success in 1913 proved destructive to both movements.

Kohn, Stephen M. *American Political Prisoners: Prosecutions under the Espionage and Sedition Acts*. Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1994, illus., 216 pages. During World War I the U.S. government used these laws to imprison large numbers of IWW and Socialist Party members for anti-war activities and opinions. The book is based largely on Kohn's securing never before consulted government documents which detail the prosecutions and the miserable jail conditions to which the prisoners were subjected.

Kraditor, Aileen S. *The Radical Persuasion 1890-1917: Aspects of the Intellectual History and the Historiography of Three American Radical Organizations*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981, 381 pages. An examination of the IWW, the Socialist Party, and the Socialist Labor Party in which Kraditor, a renegade from radicalism herself, finds evidence to support her extreme antipathy towards reds. Argues that the radicals erred in failing to understand the true nature of American workers and comporting themselves accordingly.

Lewis, Austin. *The Militant Proletariat*. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1911, 183 pages. An influential discussion of industrial union theory and the role of the 'machine proletariat'. Lewis, as a lawyer, defended IWW cases.

Mann, Tom. *Tom Mann's Memoirs*. London: Labour Publishing Co., 1923, 278 pages. Reprinted by MacGibbon & Kee, London, 1967. Dry memoir by prominent syndicalist militant active in Britain, South Africa, and Australia who had a complex relationship with the IWW. Reveals virtually nothing of Mann's personality.

McCormack, A. Ross. *Reformers, Rebels, and Revolutionaries: The Western Canadian Radical Movement 1899-1919*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977, illus., 228 pages. Places the great IWW organizing drives and strikes in lumber, railroad construction, and harvesting in the context of a large western Canadian movement of socialism, trade unionism, and reform in the early years of the twentieth century.

Mereto, Joseph J. *The Red Conspiracy*. New York: The National Historical Society, 1920, 398 pages. A lunatic attack on radicalism which conflates socialism, bolshevism, and the IWW. Written to warn Americans of the vast radical conspiracy aiming at their subjugation.

Morray, J. P. *Project Kuzbas: American Workers in Siberia 1921- 1926*. New York: International Publishers, 1983, 191 pages. Communist account of an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to set up a workers' collective in the early Soviet Union that included many IWWs (Haywood, Tom Barker, Jack Beyer, Ruth Kennell). The effort foundered on the basic incompatibility of industrial unionism with bolshevism.

Olssen, Erik. *The Red Feds: Revolutionary Industrial Unionism and the New Zealand Federation of Labour 1908-1914*. Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1988, illus., 296 pages. The IWW played a major role in New Zealand during the period of rising labour militancy and struggle against the arbitration court system that culminated in the general strikes of 1913. However, Olssen never quite tells us what that role was.

Parker, Carleton H. *The Casual Laborer and Other Essays*. New York: Harper, Brace & World, 1920. 199 pages. Pioneering work in bourgeois sociology which seeks to describe itinerant workers in the American west. Heavily laden with value judgments. Parker was commissioned by the California government to study farm laborers in the aftermath of the Wheatland hops 'riot' and later dealt with the 'problem' of timber workers' organizing into the IWW.

Pouget, Emile. *Sabotage* (Translated and with introduction by Arturo Giovannitti). Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1913, 108 pages. Discussion of direct action tactics by CGT theorist. The best part is Giovannitti's 30-page introduction. Rare book as the original printing was suppressed by yellow socialists.

Preston, William, Jr. *Aliens and Dissenters: Federal Suppression of Radicals, 1903-1933*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963, 349 pages. The long-standing nativist hatred for foreigners and radicals coalesced during WWI with capitalists' demands that the US government attack the IWW which was organizing their workers. This resulted in wholesale abrogation of civil liberties, war-time show trials, long imprisonments, the Palmer Raids, the Deportations Delirium, and the Red Scare. Wobblies were first among the victims of these events.

Rachleff, Peter, ed. *Starving Amidst Too Much and Other IWW Writings on the Food Industry*. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Publishing Co., 2005, illus., 125 pages. Articles and a poem by T-Bone Slim, L. S. Chumley, Jim Seymour, and Jack Sheridan on various aspects of the food industry from raising livestock to dishwashing. Some satirical, some serious, some descriptive but all suggesting industrial unionism and solidarity as the solution.

Rexroth, Kenneth. *An Autobiographical Novel*. New York: New Directions, 1964, 367 pages. Reprinted by Whittet Books, Weybridge, Surrey, U.K., 1977. Memoir of older beat generation poet who was close to the IWW for decades. Good on the atmosphere of Chicago's hobohemia. Rexroth is very taken with himself.

Saposs, David J. *Left Wing Unionism: A Study of Radical Policies and Tactics*. New York: International Publishers, 1926, 192 pages. Sharply critical consideration of IWW practices. Wishes the IWW would be more like the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, an outfit long-since indistinguishable from any other AFL-CIO fakeration.

Savage, Marion Dutton. *Industrial Unionism in America*. New York: Ronald Press, 1922, 344 pages. Academic study of the subject with much material on the IWW, little of it new.

Schenkofsky, Henry. *A Summer With the Union Men*. San Francisco: Harr Wagner Publishing Co., 1918, 119 pages. Schenkofsky, a Protestant minister, spent the summer of 1917 bumming around the Pacific Northwest where he observed the IWW's general strike in timber and several other labour struggles. Unfortunately the book is marred by naïveté and superficiality.

Shea, George William. *Spoiled Silk: The Red Mayor and the Great Paterson Textile Strike*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2001, illus., 205 pages. Family memoir by the grandson of the Socialist Party mayor of Haledon, N. J. in 1913. The strike was greatly strengthened by Mayor William Brueckmann's allowing striking IWW silk workers to meet in his town when they were denied the rights of speech and assembly in their own city of Paterson.

Socialist Labor Party. *Daniel DeLeon: The Man and his Work, A Symposium*. New York: Socialist Labor Party National Executive Committee, 1919, 337 pages. Homages to DeLeon by the faithful which contain several accounts of DeLeon's and the SLP's career in the IWW, 1905- 8. Extremely partisan.

Spargo, John. *Syndicalism, Industrial Unionism and Socialism*. New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1913, 243 pages. Hostile study by a prominent yellow socialist. Sees industrial unionism as a plot to undermine the constructive programme of the Socialist Party.

Sullivan, Joseph W. *Marxists, Militants, & Macaroni: The I.W.W. in Providence's Little Italy*. Kingston: Rhode Island Labor History Society, 2000, illus., 103 pages. This monograph focuses on the large-scale organizing which the IWW undertook in Rhode Island textile shops 1912-14 and the food riots in Providence's Italian neighborhoods in 1914, known to history as the 'macaroni riots'.

Tax, Meredith. *The Rising of the Women: Feminist Solidarity and Class Conflict, 1880-1917*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1980, 332 pages. Feminist history from a Marxist-Leninist perspective that includes chapters on 'Rebel Girls and the IWW' and 'Lawrence, 1912'. Faults the IWW for 'economism'. Contains one of the best descriptions of the Lawrence strike.

Tinghino, John J. *Edmondo Rossoni: From Revolutionary Syndicalism to Fascism*. New York: Peter Lang, 1991, 239 pages. Rossoni organized for the IWW and edited the union's Italian-language newspaper before returning to Italy during WWI and subsequently joining the Fascist movement. He served as secretary-general of the Fascist labour federation, 1922-8!

Topp, Michael Miller. *Those Without a Country: The Political Culture of the Italian American Syndicalists*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001, illus., 319 pages. History of the Federazione Socialista Italiana, the organization of Italian American syndicalists which was close to the IWW for many years. It participated in major IWW struggles in Lawrence, Paterson, etc. and included many prominent in the IWW in its ranks: Carlo Tresca, Arturo Giovannitti, Edmondo Rossoni.

Tridon, André. *The New Unionism*. New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1914, 198 pages. Study of international syndicalist and industrial unionist movements by a leading syndicalist journalist. Tridon wrote on the IWW for the French press and on the CGT for the Wobbly press.

Turner, Ian. *Industrial Labour and Politics: The Dynamics of the Labour Movement in Eastern Australia, 1900-1921*. Sydney: Hale and Iremonger, 1979, 272 pages. Places the IWW in the context of the larger Australian labour movement. Friendly towards the Wobblies

but critical of their failure to respond effectively to government repression.

Williams, Vic, ed. *Eureka and Beyond: Monty Miller, His Own Story*. Perth: Lone Hand Press, 1988, illus., 112 pages. A collection of autobiographical and biographical writings about 'the Grand Old Man of Australian Labour' emphasizing the events surrounding the Eureka Stockade of 1854 and the Western Australia IWW show trial of 1916 in which Miller, at age 85, was a principal defendant.

Woirol, Gregory R. *In the Floating Army: F. C. Mills on Itinerant Life in California, 1914*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992, illus., 168 pages. Young sociologist Mills was hired by the state of California to investigate migrant worker conditions in 1914. Disguised as a hobo and with an IWW card he hit the road. Woirol has arranged his reports into a unique first-hand account of migrant life of that time.

D. Writings

Ashleigh, Charles. *Rambling Kid*. London: Faber & Faber, 1930, 313 pages. Reprinted by Charles H. Kerr, Chicago, 2004 as *The Rambling Kid: A Novel About the IWW*. Novel about a young Wobbly during the teens who follows the harvest and learns the lessons of the class struggle.

Barnett, Eugene. *Nature's Woodland Bowers in Picture and Verse*. Walla Walla: WSP Press, 1927, illus., 52 pages. Poetry and drawings by one of the Centralia prisoners.

Bird, Stewart and Peter Robilotta. *The Wobblies: The U.S. vs. Wm. D. Haywood et. al*. Brooklyn: Smyrna Press, 1980, illus., 59 pages. Stage play based on the 1918 Chicago frame-up trial of 101 Wobblies.

Chaplin, Ralph. *Bars and Shadows: The Prison Poems of Ralph Chaplin*. New York: The Leonard Press, 1922, 48 pages. 2nd rev. ed. by Nellie Seeds Nearing, Ridgewood, N.J., 1923, 63 pages. Chaplin's prison poetry, composed in Cook County Jail and the Fort Levenworth pen.

_____ *Somewhat Barbaric: A Selection of Poems, Lyrics and Sonnets*. Seattle: Dogwood Press, 1944, 95 pages. Poetry by Chaplin.

_____ *When the Leaves Come Out and Other Verses*. Cleveland: Published by the author, 1917, 55 pages. More Chaplin poetry, written in response to the war-induced hysteria of the time.

Cole, James Kelly. *Poems and Prose Writings*. Chicago: IWW, 1920, 85 pages. Posthumous collection of Cole's writings.

Cortez, Carlos. *Crystal-Gazing the Amber Fluid And Other Wobbly Poems*. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1990, illus., 55 pages. Verse by IWW writer, artist, and editor.

_____ *Where Are the Voices? & Other Wobbly Poems*. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1997, 62 pages. More poems by Carlos Cortez.

Ferguson, Royce. *Bloody Sunday*. Everett: Mouthpiece Publishing Company, 1988, illus., 74 pages. Stageplay about the Everett Massacre of 1916 and subsequent trial of the survivors.

Giovannitti, Arturo. *The Collected Poems of Arturo Giovannitti*. Chicago: E. Clemente & Sons, 1962, 220 pages. Excellent English-language poetry by Giovannitti. Introductions by Norman Thomas and Helen Keller.

Hall, Covington (Covami). *Battle Hymns of Toil*. Oklahoma City: General Welfare

Reporter, [1946], 119 pages. Poems by Wobbly organizer and writer.

_____ ***Dreams and Dynamite*. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1985, 54 pages.** Shorter collection of poetry by Hall.

_____ ***Songs of Love and Rebellion*. New Orleans: John J. Weihing, 1915.** Early collection of Hall poetry.

Hill, Joe [Barrie Stavis and Frank Harmon, eds.]. *The Songs of Joe Hill*. New York: People's Artists, 1955, 46 pages. The words and music to all of Hill's songs.

Nelson, Eugene. *Break Their Haughty Power: Joe Murphy in the Heyday of the Wobblies*. San Francisco: ISM Press, 1993, illus., 367 pages. An excellent biographical novel based on Joe Murphy's life. Nelson brings the period to life.

Pfaff, Henry J. *Didactic Verses*. Buffalo: Published by the author, 1983, 62 pages. Verse by longtime IWW militant.

Sinclair, Upton. *Singing Jailbirds*. Long Beach: published by the author, 1924. Stage play about Wobblies, based in part on the experiences of the Spokane free-speech fight prisoners and Sinclair's own experience in the San Pedro fight and in part on the need for workers' access to birth control. One of Sinclair's best works.

Stavis, Barrie. *The Man Who Never Died*. New York: Haven Press, 1951, 242 pages. Stage play about Joe Hill.

Stiff, Dean (pseud. for Nels Anderson). *The Milk and Honey Route: A Handbook for Hobos*. New York: Vanguard Press, 1930, illus., 219 pages. A humorous and more light-hearted presentation of substantially the same material Anderson covered in *The Hobo* (section C). Includes a 21-page appendix of hobo poetry and the wonderful cartoon illustrations of Ernie Bushmiller.

T-Bone Slim (Matt Valentine Huhta) [Franklin Rosemont, ed.]. *Juice Is Stranger Than Friction*. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1992, 159 pages. Selected writings by long-time idiosyncratic IWW columnist.

Varney, Harold Lord. *Revolt*. New York: Irving Kaye Davis, 1919, 416 pages. Novel by a Wobbly. Very difficult to find.

Appendix: The IWW in Fiction

The following books each have some connection with the IWW. In some the IWW or some aspect of it is the work's major focus, in others the Wobbly theme is smaller. A few of them are great works of literature; others are nearly unreadable; most fall in between. The IWW is treated positively and fairly in some; in others the treatment is mendacious, vicious, and ignorant. Many of them vary between being difficult and impossible to find; some have been reprinted.

Adamic, Louis. *Grandsons*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1935.

Albert, Bill. *Castle Garden*. Sag Harbor, N.Y.: The Permanent Press, 1996.

Anonymous. *The Straight Road*. New York: George H. Doran Co., 1917.

Ashleigh, Charles. *Rambling Kid*. London: Faber & Faber, 1930.

Bedford, Ian. *The Shell of the Old*. Adelaide, Australia: Rigby Publishing, Ltd., 1981.

Binns, Archie, *The Timber Beast*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944.

Burke, Fielding (pseud. for Olive T. Dargan). *Sons of the Stranger*. New York: Longmans, Green Co., 1947.

Chambers, Robert W. *The Crimson Tide*. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1919.

Churchill, Thomas. *Centralia Dead March*. Willimantic, Conn.: Curbstone Press, 1980.

Churchill, Winston. *The Dwelling Place of Light*. New York: Macmillan, 1917.

Colman, Louis. *Lumber*. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1931.

Dell, Floyd. *Love in Greenwich Village*. New York: George H. Doran Co., 1926.

Doe, Jane (pseud. for Bill Meyers). *Anarchist Farm*. Gualala, Calif., III Publishing, 1996.

Dos Passos, John. *The Big Money*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1937.

Dos Passos, John. *The 42nd Parallel*. New York: Harper & Bros., 1930.

Dos Passos, John. *Midcentury: A Contemporary Chronicle*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960.

Dos Passos, John. *1919*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1932.

Duffy, Joe H. *Butte Was Like That*. Butte: published by the author, 1941.

Eastman, Max. *Venture*. New York: Albert & Charles Boni, 1927.

Farnum, Mabel A. *The Cry of the Street*. Boston: Angel Guardian Press,1913.

Gambino, Richard. *Bread and Roses*. New York: Seaview Books, 1981.

Grey, Zane. *Desert of Wheat*. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1919.

Hambly, Barbara. *The Magicians of Night*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1991.

Hammett, Dasheill. *Red Harvest*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1929.

Hardy, Frank. *Power Without Glory*. Melbourne: Realist Printing & Publishing Co., 1950.

Hart, Alan. *In the Lives of Men*. New York: Norton, 1937.

Herbst, Josephine. *The Executioner Waits*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1934.

Houghton, Elgar. *The Intruders*. Seattle: Northwest Labor History Association, 1981.

Houston, Robert. *Bisbee '17*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1979.

Jackson, Jon A. *Go By Go*. Tucson: Dennis McMillan Pub., 1998.

Jones, Idwal. *Steel Chips*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1929.

Jones, James. *From Here to Eternity*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951.

Kauffman, Reginald Wright. *The Spider's Web*. New York: The Macaulay Co., 1914.

Kelley, Edith Summers. *The Devil's Hand*. New York: Popular Library, 1976.

Kemp, Harry. *More Miles*. New York: Boni & Liveright, 1926.

Levy, Melvin. *The Last Pioneers*. New York: Alfred H. King, 1934.

London, Jack. *The Iron Heel*. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1907.

Macleod, Norman. *The Bitter Roots*. New York: Smith & Durrell, 1941.

Matson, Norman. *Day of Fortune*. New York: The Century Co., 1928.

McAlister, Hugh. *Steve Holworth of the Oldham Works*. Akron: Saalfield Pub. Co., 1930.

McCaig, Donald. *The Butte Polka*. New York: Rawson, Wade, 1980.

McDermott, John R. *Joe Hill*. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1971.

Moore, Richard K. *A Loss of Freedom*. Bloomington, Ind.: 1st Books Library, 2000.

Nelson, Eugene. *Break Their Haughty Power: Joe Murphy in the Heyday of the Wobblies*. San Francisco: ism press, 1993.

Noyes, Alfred. *Beyond the Desert: A Tale of Death Valley*. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co, 1920.

Parker, Edwin Stone. *Timber*. New York: Exposition Press, 1963.

Petrakis, Harry Mark. *Days of Vengeance*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1983.

Poole, Ernest. *The Harbor*. New York: Macmillan, 1915.

Reynolds, Mack with Dean Ing. *Death Wish World*. New York: Baen Books, 1986.

Rodney, George Brydges. *Jim Lofton, American*. New York: James A. McCann Co., 1920.

Rogers, Walter and Elizabeth. *John Donar, Common Man*. New Orleans: Victory Library, 1945.

Rollins, William, Jr. *The Shadow Before*. New York: Robert M. McBride & Co., 1934.

Saxton, Alexander. *The Great Midland*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1948.

Serge, Victor. *Birth of Our Power*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1967.

Serge, Victor. *Conquered City*. London: Writers & Readers Publishing Coop., 1975.

Sherburne, James. *Poor Boy and a Long Way From Home*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.,1984.

Sinclair, Upton. *Jimmie Higgins*. New York: Boni & Liveright, 1919.

Sinclair, Upton. *The Millenium: A Comedy of the Year 2000*. Pasadena: published by the author, 1924.

Sinclair, Upton. *100%: The Story of a Patriot*. Pasadena: published by the author, 1920.

Smedley, Agnes. *Daughter of Earth*. New York: Coward-McCann, 1929.

Stegner, Wallace. *The Preacher and the Slave*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1950 (reissued in 1969 as *Joe Hill: A Biographical Novel*).

Stevens, James. *Big Jim Turner*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1948.

Straley, John. *Death and the Language of Happiness*. New York: Bantam Books, 1997.

Thorseth, Matthea. *The Color of Ripening*. Seattle: Superior Publishing Co., 1949.

Traven, B. *The Cotton Pickers*. New York: Hill & Wang, 1960 (originally published in German as *Der Wobbly*, Berlin; 1926).

Turner, George Kibbe. *The Possibilist*. Serialized in *The Saturday Evening Post*, 1/31/20-3/13/20.

VanVechten, Carl. *Peter Whiffle: His Life and Work*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1922.

Varney, Harold Lord. *Revolt*. New York: Irving Kaye Davis, 1919.

Waten, Judah. *The Unbending*. Melbourne: Australasian Book Society, 1954.

Wheeler, Richard S. *Goldfield*. Thorndike, Me.: Thorndike Press, 1995.

Afterword

Around 1995 a friend and fellow IWW member who belongs to the Socialist Party told me that a comrade of his in the mid-west wanted to read about the Wobblies and wondered what was available. I told him that I would send her a bibliography with comments, figuring that this would take 45 minutes or so. I underestimated by a couple of weeks.

The results were sufficiently to my liking that I figured I would work it up some more, making it inclusive and refining the annotations. This had the beneficial effect of making me re-read books that I had not looked at for decades and run down others that I had never read previously. It was particularly interesting finding the novels listed in the Appendix, many of them being works of exceeding obscurity.

My intention in putting this bibliography out is both to help people locate this literature and to present an industrial unionist understanding of this in contradistinction to what we get from bourgeois and establishmentarian writers who are incapable of understanding what the IWW had proposed to do and who have all kinds of peculiar axes to grind.

I hope that sections A and B are complete although I've been fooled before. I'm sure that there is material that could be added to C and D and to the Appendix. If anyone reading this knows of anything or has any other comments, I'd like to hear from you. I can be reached c/o the Boston IWW Branch.

Thanks to Fellow Workers Nancy and David Kellerman whose help allowed me to work around my total ignorance of computers sufficiently to record this stuff; to Fellow Worker Steve Ongerth for several helpful suggestions; to Gary Boyer for leads on many of the novels; to Fellow Workers Alexis Buss, Jon Bekken, and Nancy Kellerman for the final layout; and to MariAlice Wade of the Waltham, Mass. Public Library for procuring many hard-to-find items.

Since the bibliography's completion the following books have appeared:

Thompson, Fred W. and Jon Bekken. *The Industrial Workers of the World: Its First 100 Years*. Cincinnati: IWW, 2006.

Cole, Peter, ed. *Ben Fletcher: The Life and Times of a Black Wobbly* Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2007 .

Green, Archie, et al, eds. *The Big Red Songbook: 250-Plus IWW Songs!* Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2007.

Steve Kellerman, Industrial Workers of the World, Boston General Membership Branch