DAVID GUEST: A MEMOIR

DAVID (*aged four*)

DAVID GUEST

A Scientist Fights for Freedom (1911-1938)

A MEMOIR

edited by

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INTRODUCTION

By HARRY POLLITT

THE development of David Guest from a person he himself described as " just like an elf " to a Communist soldier in democracy's ranks, dying at his post in Republican Spain, is a fascinating study in the evolution of an individual, that is in its way characteristic of similar fundamental changes taking place all over the world.

The dramatic keynote of David's development is that he touched life at so many points, and from so many sides.

He was not only the keen student and helpful understanding teacher, not only the mathematician, philosopher and musician, but a devoted Party worker, organiser, youth leader and happy warrior in the greatest epic struggle since the Russian Revolution—the struggle for a free life and democratic institutions in Spain.

The many-sided, original and daring aspects of his life and activities is the irrefutable answer to the charge often levelled against Communism that it is a rigid and inflexible doctrine and that it has a deadening effect because it is based on Marxism. But we see in this memoir how the discipline of being a Communist

and knowing how to combine the unity of theory and practice had precisely the opposite effect. It stimulated manifold energies and brought them into a synthesis which saved him from frittering away his gifts and from becoming a mere dilettante. This firm grounding in the principles of Communism unleashed new creative thoughts, brought out his qualities of leadership, and enabled him to express his personality, and use his energy to the full; and at the same time his sense of courage and conviction was strengthened, resulting in all his work in the theoretical and practical sides of life constantly taking on a more constructive character.

His was a living Marxism, permeating all his work and thought, not artificially grafted on to it; the weapon which enabled him to tackle his problems both as a teacher and as a leader of the youth and unemployed and in the last stages of his life as an armed soldier, helping to defend the British people from Fascism no less than he helped the people of Spain.

There was no rigidity, complacency or self-satisfaction in David Guest. His restless, enquiring mind, never satisfied, made him determined to test out his ideas and put his ideals into practice, and upon such a mind and such a comrade the urge to take his place, alongside other members of the Young Communist League who were fighting in Spain, was bound to be irresistible.

It is very significant that it is not the embittered failures, not the careerists and reckless political adventurers, but the flower of the youth who turn to Communism and who make the best Communists.

David Guest was no middle-class drawing-room Bolshevik who takes up Communism as "the daring thing to do at the moment," but proved to be a real comrade among the young workers of Battersea's streets and factories, as he had been among his fellow students, and was to be among fighters from all walks of life whom he found in the British Battalion in Spain.

As a child he had never known poverty, never known what it is to want a meal or look into a mother's eyes when she cannot give him bread. And yet, because of his knowledge of Communism and his own inimitable personality, he found the way in an extraordinary degree to mingle selflessly, mix, work and live with those with whom he came in contact. Because he realised the injustices of our social system, he could not be content to live on a scale beyond that of the average worker. He was able to break down barriers of class, education and upbringing, so that workers to whom a regular income and a university are a dream, accepted and looked upon David in a real sense as being one of their own. This was a tribute to his capacity for leadership and comradeship, and as Bob Gorham puts it: "He never let somebody else do it." In other words, he never asked people to do what he was not prepared to do himself, either in a school, outside a Labour Exchange or factory, or in a trench or outpost in Spain.

One of his Southampton colleagues declares: "He has left his mark on all who knew him, and that mark has now been made indelible by the manner of his death."

His friend Professor Levy reminds us of "the conflict that is raging in the souls of all that is best of the younger generation—the desire to enjoy the fruits of culture and the necessity to sacrifice oneself for its preservation."

This is true, and explains why so many of David Guest's own circle felt impelled like him to be prepared to give the greatest thing that men can give—their lives.

But, while stating this, David Guest and men of similar type would not have us be unmindful of those hundreds of other young men, labourers, dockers, railwaymen, engineers, clerks, seamen, miners and textile workers who have also made the supreme sacrifice. Men whose family circumstances make it impossible for any special Memoirs to be published about them, but who were David's comrades in life, in arms and in death, and to whose immortal memory this volume is as great a tribute as it is to those from the public schools and universities.

They have all combined to write some of the noblest pages in the history of the human race, pages which will never be dimmed or turn grey. Pages which will gain an added lustre and glory, because they show that Britain not only produced Chamberlain and his clique of Fascist supporters, but the heroes of the British Battalion of the International Brigade.

Many will say that all the sacrifice of life and effort has been in vain. There may be British homes, too, where this thought can occur as they think of hundreds of British democrats who have been killed in Spain. This viewpoint, however understandable, is not

correct. If one thing has been proved since 1933, it is that if Fascism had not been resisted, it would today be riding roughshod over the world.

The Austrians were right to resist in February 1934. The Abyssinians were right to resist in 1935. And the Spanish were right in that their resistance to Fascism was the most prolonged and glorious of all.

It did more to weaken the Berlin-Rome axis than any other struggle or event. It completely dislocated the whole international strategy of the Fascist powers. It increased the contradictions between Germany, Italy and France. It stimulated the powerful forces now manifesting themselves against Fascism in Poland, Roumania, Yugoslavia and Hungary. It strengthened the mass opposition to Fascism inside Germany, Austria and Italy, which is today a source of serious concern to Hitler and Mussolini. It awakened millions to political consciousness and recognition of the danger of Fascism, which is a reversion to barbarism, destroying every vestige of liberty, free thinking and discussion, and all forms of educational and cultural organisation, while it rules by terror and the subjection of all who dare to stand up for the rights of man.

I cannot conclude without a personal reminiscence of David Guest.

During Easter Week, 1938, I was visiting the British Battalion in Spain. I found them in a reserve position in Mora del Ebro. I had letters for David from his mother, and a greeting from his sister Angela, whom I had seen in the hospital at Mataro. At that time David was the Battalion runner, and had not been in

Spain for long. After speaking to the Battalion I was walking with him through a gulley, when I met Lewis Clive and Brazell Thomas who had just found their way back to the British comrades after indescribable experiences in escaping from Fascist territory. They were literally in rags and tatters, and their legs and arms were cut, torn and bleeding. I can see David's eyes now, as they shone with a hatred of Fascism and softened with pity as Lewis Clive shyly told me of their experiences.

David and I then went on and joined Sam Wild, Bob Cooney, Bill Rust and others at their evening meal. When it was over David was ordered to show me the way through the gulley over the hill and through the olive groves back to the Brigade Headquarters.

Across the Ebro on the mountain-sides could be seen the camp fires of the Moorish troops. Their weird songs came over with the wind, intermittent with the occasional roar of heavy guns.

At the top of the hill we were climbing there was a small cottage. The peasant owner, his wife and three children came to greet us. We took the children in our arms, and one of them clenched a little fist. The whole family cried " Salud," and we passed on. At last we reached the Brigade Headquarters, and David Guest said good-bye to us. The moon was at full. It softened the harsh outlines of the mountains, and I watched David walk away back through the fields to join his comrades.

He joined them and in the great offensive on the Ebro last summer, David was at his observation

post and was killed. And so passed from our ranks a comrade, who as he lay dying said :

" Never mind me . . . carry on . . . get the men up the hill. . . ."

Our best memorial to this gallant young leader and Communist of whom we are all so proud, and who set such an example of selfless devotion in the struggle against aggression, will be to redouble every effort to organise the united action of all the labour and democratic forces in Britain, so that we can defeat the National Government, and in its place elect a People's Government which will carry out a policy of sound advance, and in common with other democratic States really defend the peace and democracy of the world.

I

INFANCY AND CHILDHOOD

By CARMEL HADEN GUEST

" My poetical self
Is just like an elf,
Capricious and shy
He is certain to fly,
If placed on the shelf."
(*Written by* DAVID *as a child.*)

DAVID was born in the Adelphi on January 6th, 1911, in a house where the elder Disraeli had written the *Curiosities of Literature*. He was tiny and delicate at birth, but at the age of six months he was a bonny infant of average size and weight. It was then that he gave his first party to the Southwark mothers whose children attended St. George's Dispensary, where Dr. Haden Guest was Medical Superintendent. This was a pioneer school clinic, and was one of the first London County Council school clinics. It had premises at the time in a building that was formerly a public house, known as the " Bogey Hole."

The mothers presented David with a silver egg-cup and spoon. Every room in the flat was crowded

with women with nurslings in their arms and toddlers clinging to their skirts. There was plenty of talk and plenty of tea, and brand-new twins lapped up ice cream with extraordinary gusto. Everybody was lively and David gurgled contentedly with the best behaved of his guests, while the mothers paid him the greatest compliment in their power by voting him the dearest baby in the world, next to their own.

Sometimes David would be invited to baby parties given in a dressing room of a theatre where I happened to be acting. During a season of Zangwill's plays, Harold Chapin's baby gave a party at the Comedy. Proud young actresses brought their progeny, and while we were talking "shop" the venturesome infants dabbled among the powder and grease paints.

It was from Israel Zangwill that David received his first letter:

"Dear David, I am delighted to have your picture—many thanks for it—and to see how strong and beautiful you are growing. My little Peggy crowed to see you and took you up and kissed you five times. It was strange that I, too, was thinking to go off to-day to Brittany or Normandy having just finished a big piece of work, but instead I am confined with a bad cold in the head. Everybody else is well, and we are so glad that you keep your parents happy and merry, and we hope you will do so all the new year.

Your loving godfather."

Almost as soon as David could walk, he could run. There was a quicksilver quality about him, it seemed impossible for him to keep still. The nursery sofa served as a splendid spring board. Over and over

again he bounced from the head to the seat and from the seat to the floor.

By the time he was two and a half, he had a sister and brother. Angela came next to him in age and from the first he was very interested in his baby sister. One day when she was cutting her teeth and her cries had been particularly distressing, David was discovered standing on a chair beside her cot. He had seen Nannie give her a comforter dipped in glycerine, and in an effort to appease her he was solemnly emptying a bottle of the sticky liquid over the glistening face of the protesting infant.

Our family life was broken up by the upheaval of the Great War. During the first months I gladly accepted invitations for the babies to stay with relatives in the country. Gran (Mrs. Guest) lived in a delightful cottage in Buckinghamshire and Grannie (Mrs. Beauclerk) spent most of her time in Hythe. David never knew his grandfathers, for they died many years before he was born. His maternal grandfather, Colonel Goldsmid, whose early life inspired the character of George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*, organised the Hirsh colonies for the persecuted Jews in the Argentine in 1892, and was known as the " Joshua of the New Exodus."

Dr. Alexander Guest, David's paternal grandfather, went to America in his youth with the idea of liberating the Red Indians. He returned somewhat disillusioned. In later years he was much esteemed for his work as a doctor in Manchester.

David wished he could have heard more of the two ancestors on his father's side who fought against each other in the Battle of Peterloo.

In between visits to his grandmothers David returned to the Adelphi. It was during one of these short intervals, when I had been asked by a committee aiding Belgian babies to interest the author of *Peter Pan* in their work, that I had the happy idea of sending him a letter by David. Our flat in John Street faced Adelphi Terrace House, which ran the whole length of Robert Street. Barrie's flat was at the farther end of the building overlooking the river. I gave the letter to an unusually spick and span little boy, dressed in a white silk shirt and blue knickers. We walked along Robert Street and entered the corner block where we took the lift up to the top floor. From the manservant we heard that Sir James was in his study, and at my request David was allowed to go in unannounced. The door was ajar and as I waited outside I could hear Sir James ask :

" What's your name ? "

And the answer : " David Guest."

And the next question :

" Do you want to grow up ? "

A hesitating " No " from David.

There was a pause and then :

" Why not ? "

The reply came prompt and pat :

" I might look like you."

I fled, leaving my offspring to find his way back as best he could ! When he returned after a long absence all I could elicit from him was, " The man talked to

me," but he brought a letter with him in which Barrie wrote enthusiastically about the "delightful little messenger."

The last two years of the war David spent with Grannie and her husband at Hythe. The latter he called "Vere." My stepfather, Captain Beauclerk, was a sick man and somewhat irascible, but he was very fond of David, who was wise enough to play out of sight and earshot when "Vere" was in one of his "moods."

On the day I took David to stay at Hythe, we found my mother in the garden. As he ran up to Grannie, her Scotch terrier flew across the lawn and jumped up and bit him. His face was streaming with blood. I carried him into the house and attended the wound—a nasty gash that just escaped his eye. When we joined Grannie again, David let go of my hand and, before I could stop him, he had his arm round the terrier's neck and he was whispering, "You didn't mean to hurt me, did you?" The animal was licking his face as though it understood and was anxious to be friends.

But after this experience it was a great effort for David to pass a chained, barking collie on his way to school. He would bite his lip and turn very white and walk slowly past, struggling with a desire to run. After a time he entirely conquered his nervousness of strange dogs, and there was only a small scar on his eyebrow to remind him of the incident.

De Vere's house "Beausite" was situated at the top of a hill within a few minutes' walk from "Whitethorn," the house of "Toby, M.P." of *Punch* fame.

Old Sir Henry Lucy had retired and he spent the eve of his life enjoying his lovely garden, a paradise of roses, in the companionship of his devoted old wife. I have in front of me a book, inscribed in his handwriting, "To David, from his late friend Goliath. Conveyed (by request) by Henry Lucy, Hythe, 16th May, 1915."

Sir Henry had a short stocky figure and a head of longish white hair, which he wore *en brosse*, and exceedingly humorous eyes. He made great friends with David, who knew him as "Goliath." They frequently walked out together, hand in hand, David looking up at him and listening with rapt attention to Sir Henry's wonderful "nonsense stories."

While David was with his grandmother, I was organising infant welfare centres in the villages behind the Allied lines in Flanders. David's little letters to me during this time were either dictated or written by himself in a large round hand.

"My Darling Mummie,

This morning we saw a Punch and Judy show. He had a stick and was always whipping people and he struggled with a dog sometimes and a crockodile came up and took his stick away and eat it. He gave Punch a good shaking and tried to bite his nose off. We could not wait long because it was hot, and we could not go across the road because the sun was on the other side. Then we went home.

I hope you have not forgotten English and will be able to read this letter. I hope you are well and will come back to England safely.

X.X.X."

"DEAR DADDY,

I hope you are quite well. I go to school and I am quite the head of my class. There is a girl called Elizabeth there, she is so thin you can see her bones. She is much thinner than me, she is the thinnest person I have ever seen in my life.

The enemy has been here and tried to knock down Tower Bridge with bombs. A front tooth has come out. I pulled it.

Dear Daddy, I hope that I will see you soon and that you will come back quickly."

I can recall many incidents of my short periods of leave in England; an old woman trudging up a hill in Hythe with a heavy bundle on her back, and an insistent little boy going up to her and offering to carry her load that was almost as big as himself. And again David coming home terribly dishevelled after a fight for a school friend, who was being ostracised by the county children because her father was a tradesman!

I was at Hythe when the news came that my uncle had been wounded at Gallipoli; David, who was standing next to me when the letter was read out, ran into the garden. Later I found him sitting there alone, white and tense, as though the meaning of war had suddenly dawned on him.

While I was getting a home ready in London after the war the children stayed at Grannie's flat over Barkers. By this time David was nearly nine years old and a prolific reader of books and newspapers. In my mother's house he was more likely to find the *Morning Post* or *Daily Telegraph* than other papers, but his

excursions into these journals had the contrary effect to what might have been expected. When he was out for a walk in Kensington Gardens with Beerbohm Tree's nephew and his governess, at the time of a coal strike, David ran off and was discovered later perched on a rail surrounded by a gaping audience of nurse-maids and small children and a few canine pets thrown in. He was holding forth with passionate eloquence, "How would you like to work underground for twelve hours a day for twopence-halfpenny ? "

Life was very jolly for the children in our new home in Tite Street. They played in the pensioners' gardens and made up marvellous games.

Holidays were spent at the Margaret Morris Summer School or in the dunes in Flanders. When we found ourselves with nowhere to go one summer, owing to a last-minute hitch in our plans, we arranged to go to a vegetarian summer school. At this ascetic holiday centre animals were spoken of with peculiar reverence as though they were a higher creation than man, and a litter of puppies was considered of far more importance than a family of children. David must have been imbued with the atmosphere of the place, for one day after he came home, he was looking out of the school-room window at some dilapidated hencoops in the back gardens of a row of mean houses, and I heard him call, "Angela, Peter, come quick. Look, isn't it dreadful—cats and chickens living in a place that's hardly fit for humans ! "

Unfortunately David was unable to continue living in London owing to his health. Throughout his childhood he had been delicate. This may have been

due to an operation for appendicitis that I had been obliged to undergo shortly before he was born. He was therefore sent to stay with Gran at her cottage in Buckinghamshire, where he learnt basket-making from a girl in the village. When he had quite recuperated he went to his first boarding school.

II

PREPARATORY SCHOOL AND GAMES

By PETER GUEST

". . . The bell goes—that harsh, cruel, relentless sound . . ."—DAVID (*from a school diary*).

DAVID never looked back with any pleasure at his preparatory school days. He was unlike the majority of boys who are caught up in the traditions of their school and accept its character and outlook, nor would he compromise with rules and beliefs which he sensed were false. He was intensely sensitive and for him the stereotyped mob was tangible enough, it was hard on his heels. The sneers though piped were none the less real ; the discipline though futile was none the less harsh.

We shared many memories. Boys waiting to be beaten, a thousand and one ineffaceable, unpalatable details remain vividly in the mind, and above all the feeling of complete powerlessness.

David's intellectual curiosity and love of study was dismissed with customary school-boy scorn as " swotting." Another factor contributing to his isolation was

his decided political views. Greater attention was focussed on him as the son of a Socialist M.P. and he naturally came up against the rage of boys almost without exception violently anti-socialist.

In his diary he writes :

" Went back to school today in a car owing to a railway strike. I felt pretty rotten. When I arrived I was immediately jeered at and taunted nearly all the time because of my politics and spent a sad night thinking on the events of the day."

And again :

" Today it was almost as bad as yesterday. I felt pretty sick, and spent another night meditating on the miseries of the day."

Fortunately David had first-hand information to counter Tory arguments, and it soon became apparent to him that his opponents were not above distorting facts if it involved the protection of their own interests. These boys, furiously voicing the opinions of their elders, were faithful miniatures of the governing class of England. Realising that the discussions could not be academic, David made every effort to increase his practical knowledge.

He continued his studies during the holidays. His diary tells us :

" I went to a very interesting lecture on atoms and electrons. The professor gave us some idea of the size of an atom. He then gave some experiments on electrons. After the lecture I saw some exhibitions on various subjects. . . ."

" I went to see the election of the speaker in Parliament."

But his interest in science and politics did not lessen his appreciation for the normal pleasures of childhood.

" My birthday! I received a train from Angela and Peter." There are confessions too : " I got into a rage, not wanting to do my Latin for Mr. N."

During intervals of writing *Adventures of the Fieldmouse Family* he was pondering on problems of human behaviour !

Here are some examples :

" Never boast of anything that is secret."

" Be silent in trouble, unless you change the conversation."

" If you lose your temper lose it properly."

Back at school he writes :

" MY DARLING MOTHER,

Thank you very much for the books and the cherries. I thought somebody said economics was ' dry.' I find it full of life and interest.

I wish I understood more about finance. It is sometimes a bit hard to follow. . . .

Have you anything else of interest you could send along ? I mean a handy book on speaking (rhetoric) ?

With very much love."

He lectured to the Parliamentarian Society on the origin of man and the first man—an interest stimulated by H. G. Wells. And then again with elaborate notes on the Labour Party Programme. He writes :

" It is feared that if we continue our debate on the Ruhr, ill feeling may arise between some of the honourable members."

Typical of David's fluctuating moods, at one moment he expresses delight in his music lessons, at another this gloomy outburst: "Monotony—monotony—suppression—suppression—I rust—I work—I rust."

". . . I think I work harder than I ought to. Heaven knows there is nothing to do when I am not working. Sometimes I work on half-holidays as hard as I do on weekdays. Eight hours a day with one hour's loitering about doing nothing is my happy lot."

When he was ten and a half the headmaster wrote on his school report: "He has such an active brain that I am sometimes terrified."

It was about this time that he won his school cap for rugger. We were coached in cricket and football by a brilliant test-match player who remarked that it was wonderful that such a delicate little fellow as David should tackle the game so pluckily. But all the pleasure that he might have derived from rugger as a sport was spoilt by the attitude of the head. To lose a match was regarded as a disgrace. And many a night David lay awake fearing that he might "let down" the team.

He suffered agonies from chilblains and annoyance from garters!

"I haven't any garters—horrible things garters! nothing worse for the legs. H. says I'm to ask Miss B. to make me some. . . ."

Writing, and reading verse were his main consolations. In a diary he describes with great poignancy

what must have been a typical day and night. It is called " Three Days in the Life of a Dog."

" This morning Tuesday I have not really been asleep since four o'clock. I feel dog tired. How I would like to go to sleep again ! It is dark in the room. So much so that it might almost be midnight, for the light outside in the passage is considerably greater than the daylight coming through the window. It is cold out of bed. I must face the cold and become a Spartan. I shut my eyes. A few minutes pass and I hear footsteps. Someone is ascending the staircase. It is Miss B. She enters with a lighted taper and turns on the gas. A few more minutes and then the bell will go. I hear her retreating footsteps as she goes towards the other dormitories. Most of the boys around are like me also tired and hugging themselves to get what warmth they can. The bell goes. That harsh, cruel, relentless sound. . . ."

The bell went for the long-drawn-out ritual of preparatory education. Preparatory for what ? David wrote :

Truth was buried long ago,
Freedom's last forlorn echo
Whisper'd o'er the silent plain
By the breeze returned in vain.
None had heared that dying moan
Save the distant stars alone.

From morn till eve they ground your bones,
They treated you as lifeless stones
They sapped your strength and sucked your blood
And choked your reason with their mud.

Your soul they owned and filled with lies,
They heeded not your bitter cries,
To seek the truth a crime became,
They tried to quench that mighty flame.

Hypocrisy waxed great and strong,
On lies they fed the whole day long,
And growing full of all deceit
Your evil was their life and meat.

David started a game during the world war in which Angela and I joined later with our friend Anthony West. It consisted of countries, Davidia, Peteria, Angelica, and Antonia, peopled by beings of our own imagination. They were represented materially by lead soldiers. Innumerable letters, proclamations, poems, newspapers (two hundred of these survive), law books, advertisements and diplomatic correspondence, are all records of a game that absorbed every spare minute we had.

A few odd soldiers (sometimes we could get civilians but hardly any of the opposite sex, which was most unbalancing) began to develop their own personalities, and at the same time to become welded into tribal divisions, kingdoms, empires, and ultimately republics and soviets.

In these characterisations David's ability to act all types of people, for we all had to act in voice and gesture each single person under our control, found a comical outlet in the most astonishing figures. Stamina Hook, a railway porter, has been described

by Pigmæus, the Davidian poet (a miniature silver jockey), in apt lines :

Stamina Hook
Has a villainous look
But the hell in his mind
Exceeds all you'd find
In the heart of a crook.

Stamina finally lost an arm in a hacking competition against a tough Peterian, although in the fight itself we invariably suffered more pain than our soldiers. Then there was George Scout, the scientist, he still had bare knees at the age of ninety, and the ancient French king, a lusty gallant. A poem written for him was discovered by the Davidian historian. It was attributed to Pigmæus :

Written in extreme old age.

Rejoice, for now the time of youth has passed.
My soul which lately was so overcast,
Now sings and dances in the noon-day sun,
And with the birds a merry race does run,
Rejoice ! Rejoice !

'Tis not to Age we pay indemnity,
It is to youth, with his solemnity,
His sullen brow, and all his ponderous thoughts,
But gay old age, with leaping laughter sports.
Rejoice ! Rejoice !

The more we developed our people, the more we became attached to their rapidly increasing population. We grew up with them. They gave us voices for all our ideas, we in return gave them money, of silver and coloured paper, clothes of cloth patterns, gems

from Woolworth's, new faces of wax and plasticine, houses of paper, cardboard, marble and flower pots, roads and moats in back gardens. We gave them laws, sodium bombs, constitutions, treaties, vices, religions, traditions, and almost immortality. Decrepit with age, propped up with glue and match-sticks they were always with us. Only an unsympathetic tidier about the house could lose them irrevocably, or they could be hacked to powder and melted down.

Twenty years ago Teddy Tail, the mouse king of Davidia, wrote charming letters to the sailor king of Peteria. Teddy Tail was drowned in a pond (an important naval engagement against pirates).

Years later after many fruitless " crusades " for the sunken ship he was recovered whole, granted life and re-presented to the rejoicing populace. It was too late. As Pigmæus describes in a long and inspired work, the age of chivalry was dead. It was now :

> A world of trade and shops and business men,
> And petty frauds and thieving politicians,
> A world of legal men and bad physicians.
> Where wealth and riches in abundance lie
> (For those who care to grab 'em) Let them die !
> Who'd spoil our sport and take us from the sty
> In which we lie and guzzle to repletion,
> Humanity's perfection and completion.

III

ESSAYS AND VERSES

By DAVID
(*Aged 9 to 12*)

"My religion is Truth—that is the only religion. There is but one thing worshipped, and that is Truth. My God is Truth. There are no such things as Devils or Demons—they are but distorted versions of the impossible opposite of Truth."

"I will work and die for the sake of Truth."

"Music is Love and Truth."

(*From a note book.*)

AN ESSAY ON EXPLORING LARGE CAVES

(*From a school magazine*, 1923)

THERE is little more wonderful, but at the same time more fearful than exploring large caves; especially if one ventures into them alone, and with only a small lantern to light the way.

He who does this must be a man of iron nerve, with little or no imagination; otherwise the immense solitude, and the realisation that he is ignorant of what is in front of him or behind him, would drive

many a person to lose his self-control. This is an nstance.

A certain man enters a cave which has been only ately discovered, and consequently very little explored. He carries his hand lantern with him, and carelessly lights it within the entrance of the cave. He notices a very earthy smell, and sees that quite a number of large roots are sticking out at the sides of he cave. It is fairly light until he turns the first corner. Here the cave resembles a tunnel, and he proceeds about a hundred yards until it widens and urns abruptly to the left.

How big is the cave, he wonders—what was the ize of the river that must once have wended its way hrough this cavern? He could imagine it, flowing nd trickling, an insignificant rivulet coming, who knew whence, and going on its steady course until it net another river, or perhaps even the sea.

He is interrupted from his meditation by a sound which had been going on for some time, but which he had not previously noticed. It is the pit-pat, pit-pat of water as it drops from the stalactites on to the floor of the cave. Then he notices that he has come to what ppears to be the widest part of the cave; for after his it narrows, and in some places he has to stoop to void the hanging stalactites. Caves were well named he abode of dwarfs, he thinks. There are no other laces that so well suggest the picture of an old, ent-up man, with a long flowing snow-white beard, nd carrying a small lantern.

How far has he gone by now?—he wonders, again uddenly breaking away from the spell which has been

laid upon his imagination. There is no answer ; so his unsatisfied mind puts another question—how long will the lamp last ? There is still no answer, and he inwardly rates himself for not asking this when he bought it the day before. Meanwhile, he is still walking along the cave, when he suddenly becomes aware not only that it has widened into a magnificent grotto, but also that there are three passages branching off from this, evidently the main gallery—one going to the left and two to the right.

Where do they lead, he wonders. Probably they merely form part of a network of channels in which lived all kinds of strange subterranean animals. He has heard of the giant white spider, and he had been reading in the paper only that morning of a great cat-like animal which had sprung in front of explorers of a mountain cave in Europe, and dived into a deep pool. There might be a whole undiscovered subterranean fauna in the depths of this cave. Why had he ever started on this foolhardy expedition ? When the enemy was in the dark he was powerless. Let him but see what he was to fight, face to face, let him only hear it—when suddenly he hears a rustle coming from the dark roof of the cavern overhead. This instantly changes the train of his thoughts. No really dangerous animal would move like that ; it is probably merely a bat. Still, that little rustle makes him think, and with his present environment thinking is rather dangerous. He has just come to a very beautiful part of the cave, a spacious hall with white glistening pillars, and strange dark passages opening on to it from all sides. He judges there is a huge domed roof

above, too high up, however, to be lit by his lantern.

This is indeed a strange place. It is more like a dream than anything else; a nightmare. What is a nightmare? An oppressive, or paralysing, or terrifying, or fantastically horrible dream, and a haunting fear of something vaguely dreaded.

Suddenly he awakes to his position. A horrible feeling comes over him that in those dark passages are faces leering at him, faces deathly and ghastly; faces of the dead mocking their prey. He remembers that earthy smell he had noticed on entering the cavern. This might prove to be a living tomb. He dare not go back.

The feeling that white skulls, grim and awful, would crane forth their necks to see him, and skeletons would stretch out their long arms and follow him, and grab him, is for the moment overwhelming. Then he makes a great effort. He must pull himself together and retrace his steps. It is evident that he had better not proceed any further. He supposes that his nerves, usually quite strong, have been shaken by strange surroundings and eternal silence.

He turns round reassured, and carrying his lantern firmly, advances towards the gallery out of which he had come. What is it that meets his gaze? What is it that turns him petrified as if to stone? What holds his face in one stare of terror? The old, old, black and decayed skeleton of an ancient caveman; but he does not think it is of a caveman. It is sitting on the rock near the main passage through which he had come. It is grinning at him, grinning with a horrible sneer. The lamp falls from his arms. Three times he shudders

and then, as the spilt oil flares up and illuminates the skeleton, he turns round and, in a frenzy of fear, dashes through passage after passage, up and down, he knows not where, till, stumbling, he hits his head against the rock and falls unconscious.

Where is he, he wonders, when he wakes. Then gradually his memory comes back. He remembers that thrill of horror and curses himself for a fool, but not for a coward; the remembrance of that awful shock is still too vivid in his mind. He feels quite weak but struggles to his feet. His only refreshment is a chance apple in his pocket. This he eats, and tries to collect his wits.

That skeleton, of course, had unsteadied his mind. His vague fear that he had unwittingly entered a horrible nether world had been almost confirmed by it. How far he is from the great hall is doubtful. Two or three miles he estimates it to be, and in that space there might be a thousand wrong turnings. The chances are a thousand to one that he can ever get into the big hall! He accepts his fate calmly. Still, he had better make an attempt, so off he starts.

Through tunnel after tunnel he goes. Sometimes he thinks he sees a ray of light, and dashes on only to hit the wall. If he stops he is afraid of fainting with exhaustion. He goes on, on, and on. "Help!" he cries, and the walls echo and re-echo it.

Suddenly a mad fear takes hold of him. With all his strength he rushes on, and, leaping into the air, falls, falls; he knows no more; still he falls.

AN ODE TO A COOK

(*From a school magazine.* 1923.)

O thou, who in the magic of thine art,
Can stew together turnip-tops and tart
And call the mixture when it hath been done
" Crême à la tarte," or any other one
Which, in the noble language of the French
Tells to all, to every English wench
That, in the making of this goodly dish,
Spice and cream, all rare things, even fish,
Are used ; O thou, disclose to me, to me,
The secret of thy might, which all can see.
For even lords, and those that rule the land,
Perhaps the king, and all the rich and grand,
Tremble, aye, brave men cower in their fear,
When cook, her weekly " pint " of beer
Denied her, threatens in her might
To leave the house that very night.
O tell me, thou who rul'st the great,
What would be my awful fate
If, with the thoughtlessness of youth,
I ask you, with what things forsooth
Is made that dish, tomato soup ?
For to tomatoes you'd ne'er stoop—
With 'tater peelings, green pea pods,
With lengthy crowbars, iron rods
Of macaroni, probably.
But how does all this profit me ?
A base conjecture, doubtful guess—
Its use is nought to me, why, less
Than leagues of dull philosophy :
I want to know, the truth to see.
There is no way ; there is no way,
You close your eyes, you worthless clay,

And with shut eyes you mix the food
And poison us with dishes crude.
Tomato ketchup—that is made
With vinegar and eggs new laid
Or rotten, as the case may be ;
And into this you drop a pea,
An odd banana, let us say,
And what is left from yesterday—
And then you dish this horror up,
And call it what we have for sup.

Verses Written at School and During Holidays

I thought the air was full of little fairies
Who circled me around with joyous cries,
Repose thyself and listen to our singing
And we will ease thy sorrow and thy sighs.

Freedom is the joy of life
More than wine and more than wife,
Prison joys like wingless birds
Hang on time in dismal herds.

. . . . .

Rage and roar O wind !
Crash and roll O thunder !
For the rage of the wind is but life,
And the crash of the thunder its strength.

. . . . .

Upon the tossing tempest sea
That traverses my mind,
My soul lies in perplexity
Oh that I peace could find.

Oh give me peace and let me drink
From a cooling stream on the thirsty brink
Of death, and let oblivion's shade
Hide me in her sunless glade.

. . . . .

Wild and rugged mountains!
Bare and des'late plain!
Winds with bitter edges,
I have returned again.

No more in town or city
Shall I henceforth abide,
But on the edges of the storm
In future will I ride.

. . . . .

I live in the airiest vault in the sky
And I dwell with the spirit of man,
For delicately, gracefully, I soar and I fly,
And I float on the breeze when I can.

IV

LEYSIN

By Ivor Montagu

" Il serait dommage pour la science de le voir s'appliquer à autre chose." (Jean de Seze.)

Sun is believed to reinforce the delicate constitution, and for this reason David was sent to Leysin.

Do you know Leysin? You take the route that goes from Paris through the Simplon tunnel into Italy. You cross the French-Swiss frontier, you skirt Geneva lake and soon after Lausanne, just after entering the vast Rhone Valley, you get out and ascend the northern slopes.

Leysin is a cluster of huge buildings, of grey or white, and glass, festering at intervals around the winding road which straggles on the shoulders of a bowl of nodding mountains, several of them celebrated, though mostly easy, climbing peaks.

Each of the buildings fits somewhere on a scale, sliding from more or less hotel with health rules to strict and fanatical sanatorium. Each holds its victims, subject to the patent and individual regimen of its presiding medico. To these the mountain tops

must feel like warders, until released from the torments and restraints they had been forced to, they find themselves mercifully bettered in the valley world below.

David, like every other patient of spirit, was evidently irked, and beat his wings against the padded regimen. The first letter we have—clearly not his first from Leysin—deals with the awful consequences of an incautious home-sent comment on the dinner-pail.

" DEAR MOTHER,

The curtain is rising again on the second act of this drama. A crisis is approaching. I (the hero, author and recorder combined) have got into a fix entirely due to my foolishly not being very clear in a letter I sent to you. They don't mix the dessert, they merely mix (or used to mix) the two meat courses. The only real objection being that food piled up on a plate is at the least repulsive and the results of the mixture are hardly appetising. They never serve the older boys like this, there seems to be a system here by which, if logically carried out, babies would be fed on straw, and centenarians would live in palaces.

Don't trouble yourself about this affair. It is not worth your time. I have a feeling of intense satisfaction in seeing how this is running like a novel. Being the unlucky hero as well as the author I am in the position to say that the glow of super-realism hangs over every word and movement in the drama. But for the fact of the scorching blinding sun I would be positively enjoying my time here. As it is I am far from miserable. Let us continue with the course of the events now working themselves out. Directly your letter was received (don't get alarmed, it comes all right in the end) I was universally considered by the staff a liar.

A pathetic incident was added (calculated to bring tears to the eyes of the most hard-hearted audience). There is a very sweet-faced ' sister ' upstairs who sometimes comes down and sees us. Although she had very seldom seen me, she was evidently fond of me and used to call me ' jeune homme.' Today she came downstairs and greeted me by the usual appellation. When she had done this she asked for David, and I said that I was that boy. She could scarcely believe me and uttered ' non ' as a protest. Afterwards, however, she saw that this was so. I must have been painted rather blackly ! . . .

When the crisis came I told one of the sisters the true narrative of these events and although I was not very plain or explicit I hoped that she understood me, and that within the space of twenty-four hours my name will be cleared. Incidentally everything would be better if I had my English-French dictionary !

I am very happy and contented in spite of all this. It would be a kind of millennium if it wasn't for the sun and for my not having enough time for work. I am going to tackle the doctor on whether I can't work during silence. By the way it is extraordinary how a term away from school affects one's view on life and things in general. I am so much more happy than I was before. . . .

I may say that I am very fond of M. de Seze,* and that we get on perfectly. If I know nothing else (having forgotten it) I at least hope to know a little maths when I get to Oundle.

* A newspaper article, a free flight, and a commission for a story about the journey enabled me to take David to Switzerland. He was anxious to have some lessons in mathematics. Before leaving him I made inquiries and heard of a brilliant young scientist who was having a cure for war injuries. This was de Seze. At first he was reluctant to take a pupil but consented to give David a trial. Later David visited de Seze at his home in Laval.—C. H. G.

With very much love,
I hope you are getting on well with the election."

At another time he writes :

" De Seze has lately made a discovery in the theory of elasticity which has to do with bridge-building. . . . His theory exposes a fallacy in the current theory, and may explain why certain bridges have collapsed."

The next letters show him characteristically settling down. The regulations are not popular, but ways and means of work are being found. Only newspapers—don't we know that disturbing parcel of newspapers from home, coming at unexpected times and shattering our routine, for it has to be rushed for like a drug ?—exacerbate the exile by reminding him that he has missed aiding his father in the election fight. To his mother again all of these :

" Thank you very much for the batch of newspapers. . . . Owing to the time taken up by the sun-cure and silence I am unable to do as much work as I like. I am forcibly neglecting Latin, History, English. The only lesson I do thoroughly is maths. There is so little time during which I can do work that apart from my work with M. de Seze, sometimes I get less than an hour by ordinary daylight. I am afraid that I shall have to use my ' exercise time ' for working although I do not want to.

The latest rule is that none of the children are allowed to see the gentlemen on the premises so that my companionship is confined to a circle of six boys, with not all of whom it is possible to make intelligent communication. This after I had already become friendly with two patients, one an Irishman from Cork and Dublin (who had read an

article by Daddy), the other an Englishman. It is most annoying.

In spite of all this I am feeling quite happy."

But :

" DEAR MOTHER,

Your conduct is disgraceful ! Quite disgraceful ! Do you hear me ? Yes . . . I should hope so ! ! In future I expect you to send me my newspapers not *once* a fortnight, but once a week. Please remember that, and don't dare to send me newspapers at odd intervals, one every ice age. But this is not all. Do you know that in my latest batch of newspapers all I got were two *Punches* and a pre-war (I mean pre-election—they are both distant events of the past) *New Statesman*. In future less *Punches* and more news ! In my next batch I expect a *Daily Herald* or two and a few decent papers. What the hell's going on ? "

In exile besides newspapers newcomers are an event.

" DEAR MOTHER,

Thank you very much for the papers and the pyjamas. Another Pole has come. He is very revolutionary ! ! !

He comes of a revolutionary family who were in Russia till 1918 and is very fond of Russia. He was a student at a university in Warsaw for a year and then went to Vienna for six months. He had Communist friends who are at present imprisoned in Warsaw. Altogether he is very agreeable. We have very interesting talks.

A very amusing encounter took place between him and the mother of the anti-Semite the other day. All arose out of my contending to her that Poland was in a barbarous condition. The Polish lady was most indignant. I was informed of the following facts as unanswerable proof of civilisation.

'In Poland there are as many people in the road at two o'clock in the morning as at midday ! ! ! '

'Nobody sleeps more than one hour in the night ! '

'The towns are full of theatres ! '

Well, all I can say is, if this is true, London and Paris look to your laurels. After that the discussion died out, but was revived by the advent of the new student, Mr. P——ski—note a real ski. He repeated his story to the Polish lady who promptly flew off into a fit and uttered something like the following: 'Ecs ! Ocs ! Kcs ! Prr. . . . ! ! ! ! She was most uncomplimentary !

By the way I have forgotten to tell you the most important event of last week. Ivor came and saw me on his way to visit Ernst Toller. We were allowed to go to the cinema together. I was very pleased at seeing him.

I am getting on very well with M. de Seze. I have done some elementary calculus and we are now about to embark on the Mathematical Theory of Atoms, that part of chemistry that is really interesting to me. . . .

I trust in getting a mitigation of my present circumstances from the doctor—who is after all a very nice fellow."

I remember David very well at Leysin. I called for him and we clambered up over the slippery turf and stood below the pines with the twilight and the snow peaks above. The December frost was beginning to make the grass crackle and still more slithery for our climb down.

What did we talk about? I was twenty, he was thirteen. At that time there is a gulf. And yet we had so much, perhaps it wouldn't be exact to say "in common," but mutual respect that we used to seek each other out. Not a common interest in the same things but perhaps a common way of looking at things.

A topic would be raised, perhaps I made the pace most, a remark or two, and that finished it.

Speech is used so much for explanation. We frantically repeat the same sentiment again and again in a different formulation, desperate lest exactly what we mean should be misunderstood. But when two people have the same outlook, they needn't say much. Their comment requires no repetition. It is taken as a judgment, reflected and chewed over for acceptance or to discard at a later convenience. Conversation with David could be like that. His eye always had a twinkle, he never seemed bored, but alertly amused at everything. And yet as the tiniest boy, when at six years old staying with his grandmother I used to see him, he had extraordinary gravity that made it a matter never of *telling* him, but of recommending him. The consideration and the decision were his own. From childhood he fitted together the pattern of his own behaviour.

What were our interests? Switzerland was an adventure for both of us. The air was cool and keen. The cinema in those days in Central Europe was reflecting the uncertain experiment of our surroundings. His parents had each visited the Soviet Union, and I was longing to.

Next morning I went on to visit a young Cambridge acquaintance in Montana whose life was despaired of, and who had he died then would have died an historian. But he recovered. Fantastic coincidence in retrospect—it was Dr. Tudor Hart, who went to Spain and served, tough and unscathed, through two years of war as a surgeon. Toller, too, run to earth in

the Excelsior at Berlin after a chase through Lugano and Schoenbrunn, struggled vitally for Spain. It was he who pressed the plan for Governments to grant their surplus food products for relief in Spain: humanitarian rather than realist-revolutionary, he could not survive its failure. . . . But no, it was not coincidence that this piece of earth became the focus for us all.

David continued to enjoy his mathematics. The regard for his teacher was reciprocated. De Seze wrote several times to Mrs. Guest showing his interest in his pupil. Before David left De Seze sums up his impressions in a letter which at its face value might sound like an effort to please a parent, yet it was by no means the only occasion that the boy evoked the same response in his teachers. He begins:

" MADAME,

David part ce soir. Je m'étais beaucoup attaché à lui et j'éprouve une véritable tristesse à le voir partir; il est resté si gentil et si simple malgré son intelligence hors ligne!

J'ai parlé un peu avec lui de la profession qu'il exercera plus tard. Une si belle intelligence réusserait certainement dans la science pure et je suis convaincu que David y continuerait ce qu'ont fait Kelvin, Rutherford, Thompson, Soddy, etc. Vous voyez que je vise haut pour lui. Mais on rencontre si rarement des enfants aussi bien doués! . . . N'a-t-il pas déjà retrouvé *tout seul* la loi de périodicité de Mendeleieff en chimie?

De Seze goes on to be worried. With so live an

interest in so many things he might even do well at something more lucrative. But mathematics would lose by it.

" Il serait dommage pour la science de le voir s'appliquer à autre chose.

Ne voyez pas dans ces paroles, Madame, de l'indiscrétion, mais seulement la marque du très vif intérêt que je porte à David.

JEAN DE SEZE.

Leysin, 1924."

" Il serait dommage "—but was it? David would have held that science itself will benefit from that social transformation that, liberating the talent of all mankind, will enable scores where now are single individuals to do the work he might have done. And it was to advance that transformation that David " s'appliquait à autre chose."

V

OUNDLE

1925-1927

By RONALD OGDEN

> "I can learn more from my book than from the lesson, sir."—DAVID.

WHEN David went to Oundle it was still in the process of recovery from the shock of the death of Sanderson two years before. After a brief interregnum under the senior assistant master, a new head master had been appointed in the person of Mr. Kenneth Fisher, formerly science master at Eton. The school was thus going through a state of transition from the revolutionary state of flux in which it had always existed under Sanderson to a more formal consolidation and lining up with the other public schools.

Sanderson's best-known contribution to the practice of education in this country is his introduction of the practical study of science and education into the "public school" curriculum. Hitherto science had generally been looked upon as an "extra" and had been sketchily and boringly taught. Sanderson, with

his belief that the boy is more important than the subject (a comparatively new idea in the 1890's) recognised the necessity of teaching science in such a way as to stimulate a boy's imagination and make use of his innate creative ability. Wherever possible, for instance, he let boys do original research. He believed that boys learnt better by doing things for themselves, finding out for themselves, than by having things shown them.

As David never dated his letters home it is difficult to assign dates to the following extracts, but they are as far as possible in chronological order.

" At the inauguration ceremony three weeks ago I sang ' Spearmint.' It was quite a success."

The ceremony he speaks of was one of those minor barbarities of school life whereby new boys were required to sing a song before the assembled house.

David's intellectual development was in many ways far ahead of that of the average boy of his age. His personality, as I remember it, exhibited a rather impish and provocative sense of humour, mixed with a wide knowledge and interest in a remarkable range of academic subjects, as well as in contemporary social conditions. He shocked the master's wife, in whose house he was lodging, with his advanced opinions on social questions. When arraigned before authority for a supposed breach of school discipline he stated that a certain line of conduct was " against his principles." " Principles indeed," was the reply, " at your age you have no business to have any principles."

A pompous prefect was once heard saying : " Guest is not the type of person we want here." Sanderson, on the contrary, who knew all about him had said : " I am looking forward to having him at Oundle."

Naturally he did not take kindly to public school life, which at its best is largely conventionalised, if not by the masters by the boys, and usually both.

I do not think he was persecuted at Oundle. He was such an astonishing person, so glaringly original, that people were too amazed at him to persecute him. His effrontery completely took their breath away. The first time a prefect sent him on an errand he remarked quite casually : " Sorry, I'm going to the library to read," and off he went with the dumbfounded prefect staring after him.

During a class when a master suddenly pounced on him and asked what he meant by reading, he answered without a tremor, " Because I can learn more from my book than from the lesson, sir," and he got away with it.

David disliked games on the whole, especially cricket.

" I am feeling very tired nowadays," he wrote home in the summer term. " We have to get up at 6 o'clock. I work (or play that horrible game cricket) all day long."

He played " rugger " with dash and courage but not much science.

Although David's real bent lay in the direction of mathematics he won the Junior History Prize in his first term with little difficulty. The subject was Oliver Cromwell. Unfortunately his essay appears to

have been destroyed. It would be interesting to compare it with his later views.

" I enjoyed my week in workshops because I had very little prep to do and could read Oliver Cromwell," wrote David before the exam. Apparently he occupied himself with more congenial tasks during these periods.

In another letter he writes :

" I am going to speak on the dole at one of our forthcoming debates, so I would like some literature on the subject. The debate will be towards the end of the term. I have been elected to the committee of the prep-room Debating Society (politics excluded). What an honour ! "

It was not customary for new boys to join in the debates until they had been at Oundle a year, but David ignored this usage. The seniors at Grafton began by regarding this breach with amused tolerance and ended by taking a certain pride in the debating ability of this unusual youngster.

The school magazine notices of the debates only consist of a few sentences and give little idea of the speeches. In one we find :

" Motion : *That the dole is a Necessary Evil.* Mr. Guest, in a maiden speech, mentioned the road scheme, by which, in a few weeks, the unemployed on whom it had been tried had reached a standard of efficiency 90 per cent. of that of skilled workmen. He justified the Welsh carpenter (mentioned by another speaker as having made a profit of 3s. a week by remaining idle) on the grounds that he probably had a large family."

Parents often took part in these debates if they happened to be visiting Oundle, which sometimes redounded to the offspring's pride and sometimes to his shame.

An industrial magnate from the Midlands who was horrified at the " bolshevism " he had listened to from David was overheard to say, " That boy's a danger to the school." This parent is quoted in the school magazine as having " relieved " the house by telling them that their wives could no longer be sold, which he considered a mark of progress !

The first term David was put in the upper classical fifth form. Here are some extracts from his letters :

" I am bored stiff with most of my lessons. I have been moved up in Maths to C3b, but am doing very easy stuff. I work to such a pitch that I am utterly exhausted and yet Mr. —— had the audacity to say ' You're quite an able creature, Guest, but the last thing in laziness. . . .' "

Discussing the question of going over to the science from the classical, he wrote :

" I don't really want to specialise in anything. I am interested in mathematics, science and literature and yet apparently I shall not be allowed to indulge this taste but shall be forced to specialise in one subject at the expense of all the others. At present I have no idea of what I had better do. I feel of a Micawberish turn of mind waiting till something turns up. Just now one fact I am sure of is—that I hate practical engineering very nearly as much as I detest Latin. Of other things I am not certain."

The question was solved in the following autumn when he wrote home :

"I have arrived here all right. I am in Shell (an intermediate form on the Science side) and wonder of wonders I have been put in the highest mathematical set I can possibly get into at present. The work already promises to be very interesting, but the people in Shell have just come over from the Classical side and don't know much about chemistry or physics; they will begin from the beginning. I think I shall have a fairly enjoyable term although the orderlies (Oundle for fags) are subject to numerous pains and penalties. . . .

The idea of proving the existence after death by mathematics is nothing new. Mendelssohn, the musician's father, endeavoured to prove the 'Immortality of the soul.' . . ."

Staying with school friends one holidays about this time he wrote:

"I am having a glorious time. They've asked me to stay till Friday so that I'm having a whole fortnight here. I've never had such a wonderful holiday. When I begin to work again no obstacle will stand in my way. It will be like the tempest blowing with thunder and lightning through some insignificant forest."

In December of 1925, Mr. Fisher wrote to Dr. Haden Guest to say that he had awarded David an exhibition on account of his excellent work during the year.

After we left Oundle we occasionally argued and corresponded on questions of philosophy and psychology. The last time I saw David was shortly before he went to Spain. His personality seemed to me to have changed. The provocative impishness had given place to a charming cordiality. By chance

I had just been dining with some old members of the Oundle History Sixth and his name had come up in connection with his triumph in the History Prize.

I think he had made his decision to fight and that the change I saw in him was due to it. It was as if some inner problem had been resolved, as if the decision had acted as a kind of catalyst of the emotions.

VI

GÖTTINGEN

1930-1931

By MAX BLACK

> "If truth and happiness were incompatible I should choose truth out of sheer inner necessity."
> (*In a letter from* DAVID.)

BEFORE Hitler came into power the University at Göttingen was one of the world's greatest centres of mathematical teaching and research. For David, at that time keenly interested in mathematical philosophy, it had the special attraction of being the home of the famous mathematician Hilbert, whose contributions to the more philosophical aspects of mathematical method were of the highest importance.

The undergraduate reading mathematics at Cambridge in his first year has usually little knowledge and less interest in a subject so recondite as mathematical philosophy. That David should have been so attracted by it is in keeping with the intellectual precocity which was one of his most striking characteristics.

Letters written from Cambridge in his first year of

residence show that he found time to attend lectures on philosophy in addition to his regular classes for the mathematical tripos.

" I am attending a course of lectures and ' Conversation Classes ' in philosophy given by the great Wittgenstein. Professor Moore goes to his lectures, which is very amusing because Moore was the teacher of Bertrand Russell, and Russell the teacher of Wittgenstein. The conversation class is in the nature of a debate. I never felt so pleased with myself as when I chipped in for the first time and he said, ' Precisely, you are quite right.' Of course he doesn't *always* say this."

But David's passionate and sincere interest in the most abstract of studies was only one side of him, as his friends soon found out. The next quotation gives a glimpse of what he was like in those days : a head fermenting with ideas. The more docile of his contemporaries had been taught to keep intelligence and pity in separate compartments ; one sort of attitude for the mathematical theory of functions, another for the crying injustice of the political system. But David must have been a difficult person to keep in blinkers :

" I am very busy at the moment. My head is going round in a whirl of politics, philosophy and mathematics. I have no desire whatever to think about politics but I cannot get it out of my head. At the moment I am absolutely tormented by a desire to express my views and to clarify them. The stimulus was provided by an unfortunate meeting with an old Oundelian—T. of King's College—and three of his conservative friends. We went straight into fiery argument about everything and especially about Imperialism. The basis of our differences is really ethical but so far

as I can see they refuse to admit the existence of such considerations—everything being determined by rigid economic laws—my point of view being in the words of S. ' sentimental bunk.'

This is really a philosophical error, but of course they have a system of ethics, although an unconscious one, and their whole attitude is determined by the things they value. Their political ideal seems to be a sort of Feudal Industrialism, the destinies of the human race in the hands of a few trusts and combines. They are curiously oblique to the reality of human suffering (due to ' inevitable ' economic laws) and also to the nature of human needs. They have a strange double set of arguments. Sometimes they will argue from the more sentimental basis of ' Honour and Glory,' at other times from the point of view of the standard of living. When these view-points are incompatible they choose the most suitable one. Thus it boils down to this. They have a given set of beliefs to defend, for which they unconsciously manufacture plausible reasons ; but when these beliefs are examined they are simply and purely class beliefs. They are such as to justify the present position in the world of those that hold them—that is all.

I have often tried to banish this sort of political philosophy and work only at maths—but it's quite impossible. I am haunted by the ugliness and vulgarity of our modern civilisation, discouraged from work by a sense of futility and wretchedness and a fear utterly damping to creative work, that whatever I do will be destroyed.

. . . You see I am very occupied now. The foolish subject of politics I will chase from my head, only returning to it when I have time to go properly into matters afterwards. But music and philosophy will continue to take up my time which mathematics desires to claim. I only wish I was not troubled by ethics or religion, call it what you

will. But I cannot help feeling that the ordinary agnostic position is a very unsatisfactory one. And yet by no stroke of imagination can I think myself as being brought to believe any traditional religion. The desire for truth is my strongest impulse: If truth and happiness were incompatible I should choose truth out of sheer inner necessity."

In Cambridge, the contradiction between an ideal of the disinterested pursuit of knowledge for its own sake and a society heading rapidly for war and the negation of freedom and liberty, could still, in 1929-30, be kept well out of sight. The "left-wing" undergraduates of the labour club wrangled endlessly, in an atmosphere bristling with points of order, whether adherence to a socialist programme would not destroy their society's "freedom of thought." But in a German University town, even as long ago as 1930, signs of decay, premonitions of impending collapse, were as real as the armed policemen in the streets. Stuffy relics of a pre-war bourgeois paradise still abounded; bowings and scrapings in the street, songs of praise after meal-time in the *Pension* (hands clasped as in Auld Lang Syne, fatuous chorus of "Gesegnete Mahlzeit"). Oh, that *pension*:—

"Woodenheaded, the dullest people that God spewed forth when sick. I feel as though I were all enclosed in an intolerable heavy thick atmosphere, warm and stifling. All work is impossible and a heavy somnolence has settled on me. A people of wooden density have made everything thick, vague, blurred. They talk—has Herr G. gone on his journey? Oh, is he going to-morrow? And when will he return? I saw Frau Dr. S. this morning—she sends her greetings to you. Thank you. Is it still raining? I'm

afraid so. Perhaps it will clear up later on. Perhaps. Let's hope so. Have you seen Dr. G. lately? . . . reels and reels of this unroll every day, the thick treacly stuff is crammed down my throat. I feel helpless and weak as though drugged. No ray of light to break the uniform grey—no keen metallic edge to cut through the wood. Nothing but a play of wooden facts, a mechanical throwing about of the ball of conversation, passing joylessly and listlessly a hundred times through the same meaningless motions. Faces, munching and chewing, staring vacantly."

But one could always escape to the University and hope that the vigour of its intellectual life was more characteristic of what was to survive in Germany. To David the organisation of academic studies abroad with its freedom from petty restrictions was very attractive.

"Every enquiry I made elicited the same kind of response, e.g. 'Examinations!—Oh, we don't have them here! . . . Of course I know that in England it is different . . . etc,' and I always get the impression that they were proud of their superiority to us in intellectual liberty."

Behind the façade of intellectual liberty, however, one soon began to discover other forces: active discrimination against Jews (the works of Heine had been expunged from the University library even at that early date)—provocation and bullying by the "National" minded students—a foretaste of later horrors:

"One sees too much of the Fascists—called National-Socialists here. Night after night they march out singing their military and rather terrifying songs and I hear they are in an enormous majority in Göttingen. This seems almost inconceivable to me—used to the politics of an

English University. In Cambridge for instance the majority is Socialist or lib-lab. There is quite a fair minority of conservatives but they are mostly people who do not take much interest in politics—they wear the club-tie and attend dinners—in a few words: the conservative club is recruited from the nearest boathouse—but here they are the foaming militarists who have learnt nothing and forgotten nothing. Two students who left here belong to that faction—and night after night they go out after 10 p.m. reeling home in a disgusting condition at 3 a.m. Most of the students still fight and have their faces horribly mauled and scarred. They really think it is beautiful, which is a sign of utter depravity. . . . In Germany both devils and angels are free."

The mock-medievalism of the students' "corps" who demonstrated their bravery by rubbing salt into duelling wounds was an incongruous accompaniment to the mathematical lectures of some of the finest representatives of European culture. But Göttingen in 1930 bristled with such contrasts. The superb mathematical and physical institute, where David spent much of his working days, built with American endowments, contained the most up-to-date library, the finest mathematical machines and one of the best staffs in the world.

"Everything is more efficient and organised than at Cambridge. For instance in my last lecture on Function Theory (which is too damned physical for me! applications to hydrodynamics and all that sort of thing) the lecturer suddenly wanted to show some lantern slides of streaming motion. He turned a switch and to my amazement fourteen blinds automatically came down and plunged the room into darkness except for the lantern. Even the blackboards

are queer. The lecturer turns a handle and they roll up, exposing a fresh surface to write on."

This model of what a University Institute should be was full to bursting with a crowd of poverty-stricken students. For them there were no prospects except unemployment: they were ripe for Nazi propaganda.

It must not be supposed that David spent all his time in drawing political conclusions from his surroundings. In between working hard at mathematics and German, and arguing with great persistence about philosophical questions, he found time to play and hear much music. He attended a Madrigal Society in the town. Here he introduced English Madrigals—also rounds and canons and translated them into German which he described as " verdammt schwer." He had animated discussions on music and was much amused at the patronising attitude of a fellow-student who, after praising Byrd and Purcell, claimed that they owed their inspiration entirely to the great German composer Bach. " Unfortunately it doesn't always work out that way," David retorted, " as it happens these English composers pre-deceased the great German master."

The block flute was another musical diversion—and to listen to his prentice efforts was a test of friendship few failed to pass. But it was difficult to escape the political situation for long and David's views were steadily becoming more radical.

" Here in Germany one has a glimpse of the future that seems to face all European countries—and I think that the German elections have given the keynote to European

politics for the next twenty years. The fascists in one bound multiply their strength ten-fold to become the second largest party in the state, the Communists increase considerably but not so much, and the Social Democrats decrease, though still remaining the largest party. There are of course certain special features in the German situation. They are paying a huge war debt assessed on the assumption that Germany is solely guilty of the war, and a great part of it goes to supporting the French Army (larger today than in 1913) which has enjoyed trampling on them during the last ten years . . . the only possible comparison being the German occupation of Belgium during the war. It is for this reason that so many moderate, mild-looking Germans support the National-Socialists known as Nazis or Fascists, for this party is pledged to debt-repudiation. It is also pledged, as you may have read, to Anti-Semitism—and some of its leaders have threatened a pogrom.

The party's economic policy is almost entirely dictated by Anti-Semitism, and would seem to be socialistic only as far as the property of Jews is concerned. Hitler recently made a speech in which he talked of 'heads rolling in the sand' and apparently if he gets power 'traitors of 1918' —the unfortunate people who signed the peace treaty— will simply be court-martialled and shot. The Nazis are far more reactionary than the old regime was before the war. The *Berliner Tageblatt*, which used to correspond to *The Times* in England, has more or less become their official organ, and in it you will read leading articles gravely and pompously arguing the need for anti-semitic policy. . . .

If I were not a consistent pacifist, I should certainly have joined the Communist party. For I am sure that the economic problems of the world—and all other problems too—can only be solved by drastic change along Communist lines."

A significant aspect of David's keen perception is to be found in a letter where he analyses Rothermere's support of Nazism.

" We have to ask ourselves why so rabid a Hun-eater as Rothermere should sponsor—or at any rate have dealings with—so violent a German Nationalist as Hitler—whose motto is ' We won't pay the debts forced on us by the Versailles treaty.'

Remember the *Daily Mail's* old slogans ' Make Germany pay,' and ' Hats off to France.' But the answer is not far to seek. Rothermere admits it—and it is typical of the utter change in the very nature of world politics since the war. There is a horrible fear abroad in the world that the Russian experiment will succeed. Most disquieting statistics have recently been published e.g. in the *Manchester Guardian*, showing the extraordinary success of co-operative and collective farming.

In spite of all sorts of initial difficulties, one of the chief of which was the great slaughter of animals by the kulaks, the collective farms with fewer horses than were formerly possessed by their individual members have produced considerably more than the corresponding number of peasants produced formerly. About 30 per cent. of the farming is now collective. In a few years perhaps 80 or 90 per cent. will be collective. And this will solve for the first time in Russia's history her food problem (at least fundamentally, i.e. as far as harvests are concerned). Once this is achieved the Communists can afford to go easy over industrialisation—even a relative failure of the five-year plan would not matter so much. In fact one would then be able to say that the chief difficulty of the reconstruction of Russia on socialist lines had been solved—that the foundations had been laid on which it would be possible to erect the complete building without any other drastic

discontinuous sort of change. It is this nightmare which is frightening reactionary elements all over Europe. What are their petty squabbles to the menace of a rising Socialist country proceeding from better to better in the middle of a decaying poverty-stricken Europe? There is only one way of destroying this menace—to de-bolshevise Russia by force of arms—whether in the name of a Holy Crusade or what-not, and that I fancy is the idea which Lord Rothermere in alliance with Herr Hitler, Marshal Pilsudski, Signor Mussolini and the next central European dictator, hopes to achieve."

In passage after passage of his letters one sees a steady ripening of his socialist convictions:

"I firmly believe that the contradictions of the present system all result from the moral contradiction at the bottom of it—that people have to have two sets of values, one for business and one for ordinary life, and I see no future along these lines, except possibly a robot future of a kind too horrible to imagine. . . .

In the long run the argument between socialism and Capitalism is precisely the argument which has run through the whole course of human history—may we, without impiety to the Gods, use our intellect? May we obtain control of our environment and of our destiny—or should we humbly be content to live like the other animals without too much thinking."

But at this time the conflict between David's pacifism and socialism was still unresolved.

"I wish I could be completely communist, but there I am, a lily-livered pacifist and, moreover, an absolutely drastic revolutionary. . . . I can only look on at the drama which is unfolding itself with intense interest and

concern, backing the communists more or less against all the people who oppose them. . . ."

David wavered more and more in his pacifism.

". . . A horrible blast of realism is displacing all the romance of politics. I find myself arguing intensely for or against pacifism—and I am afraid that my virgin pacifism has a little worn off. I do not regard death as the worst of evils, though God knows bloodshed is horrible enough. . . ."

In 1931, David suddenly became a witness of the realities underlying a police state. He had gone to Braunschweig on Easter Sunday with some communist friends in order to attend a youth demonstration. His mother received the following telegram:

" Released after fortnight imprisonment as a communist. Ignore stupid letter.* Written pass police censorship. All's well end's well."

The full story is best told in David's own words when he wrote home after his release.

" On arrival at Braunschweig we found that the demonstration was forbidden, but resolved in spite of that to make a protest march. I will not trouble you with details—which however vivid and interesting would take at least one hundred pages of this kind of paper—but eventually 472 people were arrested and I was included in the number. For two days we were kept in a huge prison for politicals near Braunschweig; and then on Tuesday I was removed together with two Dutch boys and came before the ' Untersuchungs-Richter ' in Braunschweig. This man, a character out of a Russian novel—was plainly a Nazi. Before my

* The letter referred to never arrived.

own astonished and horrified eyes he took evidence, utterly false, which had already been given against me, and fu ther falsified it, so as to make me the leader and agitator responsible for the whole demonstration !

" I was thrown into ' Untersuchungshaft '—rigorous imprisonment with solitary confinement—to be left there at the pleasure of the Richter. At first I hadn't an idea of what was happening to me. Then I asked the jailor how long I could legally be kept there without a trial. He replied, ' Six months.' I tried to write a letter to you but everything I wrote came under Police Censorship and a week afterwards my letter was returned by the Police who said I must write in German. All this time I was in solitary confinement, pacing up and down my cell, with nothing to do—not even allowed a pencil and paper to write with and brooding on the prospect of years of imprisonment. This was no baseless fantasy, for I have seen friends convicted on false evidence, and I know what harsh sentences of imprisonment are given to those who have a responsible part in Communist demonstrations. But it was when my letter to you was returned that the full horror of my position—the Sacco-Vanzetti touch came to me. I realised that I and the two Dutch boys were pawns in a political game, the desire to describe the Communist movement as alien and outlandish, always instigated by foreigners.

I was caught up in a frame-up of reds—helpless against a monstrous, legal conspiracy. . . . One of my friends has been sentenced to a year's imprisonment for blasphemy ! I learnt this from his poor wife whom I met in the street yesterday. At present in Germany any Communist is liable to imprisonment without trial for any period up to 6 months at the arbitrary will of the police. They have only to find some flimsy piece of evidence and then he is arrested until they find time to examine it. . . . I shall

never get myself into danger again so long as I live! or at least only on very *urgent matters of principle.*

FREEDOM!"

While David was in prison he scribbled some notes in a diary which he concealed in his pocket. The following are some extracts:

". . . I caught sight of two of my Göttingen friends and gave the Communist signal 'Rot Front.' Immediately a policeman pulled me into the procession with a 'You come along too,' and I was marched through the town to the prison where I began writing this little chronicle. After waiting in the rain and cold in the yard for some time our names were taken. Then we waited in the hall for about half an hour until the three police lorries were ready to take us off to the state prison which is a great building about half an hour's ride from the town. On our arrival at the prison we were escorted by a well-armed guard into our new apartment and advised to come along 'quietly.' Almost all the people in the room were proletarians. In fact the Communist party is overwhelmingly proletarian with a sprinkling of higher mathematicians, etc. Quite a number of people arrested had little or nothing to do with the demonstration. The police simply cleared out whole pubs, and rounded up people in entire streets. Many women and girls were arrested. In this room there are three young boys 15 and 16. . . .

Last night the dormitory was entertained by obscene stories which brought back my school days—except that every now and again we were hushed into silence by shouting and rows from distant cells. The police seem to be having a difficult job with some of our tougher Red Guardists. Three shots rang out into the night. Again silence. In the morning we rose and dressed early (5.30)

and sang the International before the door of our cell. Soon we were let out and filed into the day room w[h]ere I am now writing.

In a cell near here there are 84 prisoners all together. Probably the people who were making the row last night. We passed them this morning going to the day room.

I feel better today though I couldn't eat much of that awful bread for breakfast. Just now a police guard is reprimanding us for singing 'Auf zum Kampf.' Viva, viva la musica! Yesterday we were stopped singing the great Revolutionary Hymn, 'Look at that man he stands firm as an oak, tomorrow he may lie in the dust.'

. . . My memory flags due to the pressure of new sensations. I forgot to say I was carefully searched for weapons and my pen-knife was removed. I will not say much about the sanitary arrangements. They are very primitive. All day so far the conversation has been about yesterday's events. How each person was arrested and what he will say before the gericht. . . .

I have a headache and am very very tired. It appears I was lucky to escape a beating. A comrade has just told me that when he and his friends were arrested they were taken into a room by the police who disarmed them and then drew their batons and beat them about. . . . Sleep in prison. . . . It is now 7 a.m. approximately. The novelty of prison has worn off by now. I shall be very glad to be free.

Oh Freedom!

8.30 a.m. As I'm rather bored I'll write a few poems for a change.*

9 a.m. Have been informed that we may not get out till tomorrow. The second time we have been cheated with false promises. Some comrades kicked up a tremendous

* These poems were taken away from him in prison.

row—much shouting. They are unemployed and must go to the exchange to-morrow to register themselves. Otherwise they get nothing for a week.

Will now continue further with poems satirical and political.

9.30 a.m. a guard suddenly appeared and asked for 'Gu-est.' I was to go immediately to Braunschweig. Today we may possibly come before the 'Schnell Gericht' —possibly no. . . .

I said 'Good-bye' to my comrades with a last 'Rot Front!' and was escorted along with two Dutchmen to an open car waiting at the prison gate. As we got into the car with a guard of three police armed with rifles we were cautioned against resistance. 'At the least sign of trouble we shoot.'

The drive to Braunschweig was bracing but cold and it was rather amusing going through crowded streets of the town with an armed guard. It reminded one of the pictures of Czarist Russia. Anarchists driven to execution. Except of course I was not expecting the supreme penalty.

I am writing this just now in a cell in a police station which is used as a waiting room. The walls are covered with chalk signs both Nazi and Communist. In the corner of the room is a W.C. . . .

I am waiting in my cell again together with the two Dutchmen (12.15) I have just signed a statement explaining how I came to be in Braunschweig, etc. I had to be very careful to avoid giving evidence against my friends. The police try and put words in your mouth. I have to look out. Several times I had to alter a phrase or words. It seems probable that I shall be deported. Shouldn't be so very sorry.

I have just been before a magistrate. I was too astounded for words—and cannot describe properly here the interview. They seem to have got totally false police witnesses

against me and I caught him deliberately wangling words so as to make me the LEADER ! ! or one of the hief instigators of the demonstration. Apparently I may get imprisonment up to three years. (2.5) A slab of dry bread to eat but no appetite."

David was in prison a fortnight. During that time he went on hunger strike for permission to have legal aid. Finally he was provided with a clever lawyer from the Red Aid.

He arrived back in Göttingen, bringing a lump of prison bread with him, cracking jokes but obviously shaken and more serious than I had known him. He returned to England shortly after. Others will tell of the later years, his brilliant degree in philosophy at Cambridge, his work in Russia and for the workers' movement in this country. But I remember him best as he was in Göttingen eight years ago—looking at a society in decay with eyes untroubled by calculation or self-interest.

VII

HOLIDAYS

§1 The Black Forest

By *S. Hollingdale*

While David was in Germany a number of his friends planned a " Youth Hostel " tramping holiday in the Black Forest and he arranged to break his stay at Göttingen and join us.

After a day's travelling through France we arrived at the Offerberg Youth Hostel where we were to meet him.

The hours passed and no David appeared, and we had to retire to our straw mattresses without him. About half an hour after " lights out " the peace of the dormitory was disturbed by our shouts of welcome. David had arrived, after travelling all day on one of the slowest of the German " slow trains." The hostel warden, a portly disciplinarian who I am sure is now a fervent Nazi, duly exacted the fine for late arrival. His displeasure was not allayed by the cordiality with which we all greeted our beloved comrade. At length, however, silence again prevailed, only to be disturbed by muttered exclamations as David discovered that

his rucksack contained two pyjama jackets but no pyjama trousers ! How characteristic of his inattention to the trivialities of his personal comfort !

And so we began our tramp, wending our way over the thickly wooded slopes of the beautiful " Schwarzwald."

After a few days of brilliant sunshine, the weather broke in a violent thunderstorm. Thereafter we would start each morning, only to be soaked through in about the first mile, and to squelch along for the rest of the day while the clouds emptied themselves upon us in inexhaustible sheets of water. David had come without any kind of mackintosh or cape, in the thinnest of shoes and without a change of clothes. But the wetter he got, the more his intensely vital and dynamic spirit seemed to soar above its immediate surroundings. With his love of declamation he delighted to dramatise the situation as a contest between the powers of light and of darkness. At one moment he would hurl the most furious imprecations against the elements ; at another he would catalogue, with inimitable vividness and wit, an impressive list of his bodily aches and pains. In a lively letter to his brother he relates some of our adventures.

" DEAR PETER,

I am writing this to show that I am still alive after my arduous experience of the last few days. Here is a specimen day.

6 a.m. Rise—wash in mountain stream. Prepare and eat breakfast. (Black bread and butter and anything left over from supper.) Put on heavy ruck-sack and begin travels.

12. Rest after heavy climbing utterly exhausted and eat lunch. (Black bread and tomatoes, cheese, and water if such can be found. Otherwise the more ' British ' members of the party assure us that thirst goes off after a few hours.)

1. More climbing of deep ascents weighed down by dreadful loads. (Fortunately lessened in my case owing to the consumption of bread.)

4.30. Arrival in last agonies at Jugend Herberg (Youth Inn) and lay down loads—after completing fifteen miles mainly up and down mountains. If there is a swimming bath in the place we go and get refreshed in it, or else if possible we swim in the river."

And so we trudged on through Freiberg, Feldberg, Titisee and Triberg. During our walks David frequently led us in song. He taught us some of the old English madrigals and part songs that he loved so well. The party numbered eight, and disputes sometimes arose as to route or programme. As David put it in a letter :

" The party is always on the verge of a split into :

' A party ' composed of incurable athletes, and
' B party ' composed of those who prefer leisurely walking with rests while climbing. I belong to B."

David would always unite the contending factions by his infectious good humour and utter selflessness. One simply could not be petty or irritable or aggressive in his presence. The holiday was enlivened by an amusing incident which David in the letter already quoted relates thus :

" Sir William Joynson Hicks is very powerful in this district. The other day we went into the market at Waldkirch (a small town). The immodest dress of one of the girls shocked the entire population, who gazed at us with utter horror. An elderly gentleman with a white beard motioned to a policeman who approached us and ordered poor P. to return at once and change her dress. Having bought our articles we went back to breakfast and in the middle of it in walks a policeman and arrested P.! !

I accompanied her to the station (being the only person who could speak German) while the others followed and sang ' The Red Flag ' outside. We interviewed the Burgomeister, who explained that such dress (shorts instead of skirt) for women was sternly forbidden—and he advised us for our own sakes to remember this as a woman in such clothes was liable to be flogged by the enraged mob."

At length with blistered feet and carefree hearts, our holiday drew to its close. David went back to Göttingen, the rest of us returned to England. During the months that followed we often met and always our words and thoughts centred on the favourite of us all—on the one that we had left behind.

§2 SOUTHWARK

By *Alderman L. J. Styles*

I knew David from the time he was a boy and saw him grow up to manhood. Even as a child he had a shyness which seemed to make him aloof, until he gave that little smile that won you immediately. I was in close touch with his parents in political work in

North Southwark. David took a tremendous interest in it all, and I like to think that it was in these very stirring election fights, when our Socialism was so real to us, that he learnt his early political lessons which probably built up the philosophy which was so much a part of his life. During his holidays I remember taking him to one of the Southwark workhouses and also to see the waiting-room for those who were applying for relief. I was chairman of the Southwark Guardians at the time. How shocked he was at the bare grimness of that old-fashioned institution and at the hopelessness of the declining years of these veterans of industry. That waiting crowd of young and old in the relief station made a deep impression on him. He was so silent as we walked back, and hardly spoke a word when we parted. I felt that he even blamed me for administering such a cruel system. He was really shocked by the degradation and sordidness from which these victims suffered under the scale allowed by the Mond scheme.

A happy memory was a ramble in the woods around Speen in Bucks. As he conducted me through the beech trees, I was amazed at the extraordinary knowledge he had of politics even as a schoolboy. He told me with relish of the fights he had at his prep-school with boys who were almost unanimously against him in political outlook. I said that I did not think that prizefighting suited people of his build, and I remember he gave me a slow smile and answered, " At any rate they respect me now."

I heard from him from time to time, and knew that he was getting impatient with the slow progress we

were making for Socialism which he felt was the only hope of the world. When he went to Cambridge I had a remarkable letter from him. He explained at length his reasons for becoming a communist, and gave a wonderful analysis of the economic and political situation, with a fierce attack on Ramsay MacDonald. In this he almost foretold the eventual rise of Fascism in Europe. I kept the letter for some years but much to my sorrow lost it in a removal.

Later we met when he was living with his mother in Victoria Square. When I left he walked with me arguing all the way, down Victoria Street and up and down the Embankment. So vehement was he that several people looked round at us thinking we were quarrelling. He smashed argument after argument at me—until Big Ben struck midnight! This was David at his best. He left me with a smile and said, " Well Comrade, I suppose we both may be right in some ways, but you will wake up some day! "

I treasure that long acquaintance with a comrade so earnest and sincere.

§3 Something about Music

By *Miriam Stein*

What he felt instinctively as a child when he wrote " Music is Truth," David confirmed later as a scientist, when he discovered the relationship between music and mathematics.

While at school and University, and during holidays,

he treasured the moments which he could devote to practising the piano, and he would revel in the classical works of the old masters. Bach had a particular appeal for him. He often said : " I could never tire of Bach. He is so stimulating." It was a real sacrifice when urgent needs compelled him to neglect his favourite recreation.

He investigated various aspects of music, and many interesting observations resulted.

At Cambridge he was a staunch adherent of sixteenth and seventeenth century music, and extremely interested in the researches of the Dolmetsch family. Here are some comments from a letter which he wrote to a friend at the time :

" DEAR SHOENBERG,

Many people imagine that Bach (and those before him) were mere inventors of harmony and counterpoint whose works are essentially dull but may be usefully studied as exercises. It is this narrow view of music, this neglect of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, that has produced the continental superiority complex towards England. As a matter of fact some kind of harmony or counterpoint is as old as music. There is a comprehensive treatise on the subject in Arabic as early as the eighth century. And to imagine that harmony comes after melody is to know nothing about the scientific part of acoustics.

I believe that it is quite generally true that in music no pure tone ever occurs—at least this is true of the majority of instruments. The timbre or quality of a note as you probably know depends on the extent to which it is mixed up with its ' harmonics '—the octave and fifth, etc. . . . Harmony thus occurs naturally—it is not an artificial invention of man but a rearrangement of notes in ways

which unconscious experience have made agreeable to us.

Another illusion in history is that concerning the "Wohltemperierte Clavier.' Many people have an idea that the scale of equal temperament only came into use in Bach's day. As a matter of fact it was known and used—though not by *all* people—centuries earlier. A famous French composer of the seventeenth century, speaking of the fact that not all harpsichords were in tune for a certain rather unusual key in which one of his pieces was written, said that as a matter *of fact* his own *was* (i.e. equally tempered) ' but since now any one can transpose at sight into any key whatever it is not necessary to rewrite it in a different key.' How many musicians today can transpose into any key whatever ?

Another interesting feature of this music revival is the number of composers in all lands who are influenced by it ; de Falla writes for the harpsichord and apparently derives much of his inspiration from the old Spanish music . . . It provides an alternative to the ' Dissonant Brigade,' whose chief aim is apparently to put combinations of chords in print which no unsophisticated person could listen to.

I think the motto ' L'art pour l'art ' has wrought disastrous effects in music. It has come to mean ' conjuring tricks for their own sake ' with a great number of composers. Bach's definition of the object of music—' to glorify God ' whatever our private opinion about the Deity may be—is much finer. It was this idea which produced really noble music in such remote periods, although with quite simple means. Surely in music as well as in literature, complexity is to be avoided where simplicity would suffice. It is lack of vision and imagination which make people think that all the comparatively simple means have been exhausted."

For many years he was impatient about the Romantic School of Music, but later confessed that he was more " tolerant " and beginning to acquire a taste for the not-so-classical. There was no evidence, however, of reformation regarding the " Dissonant Brigade."

Community singing was another special attraction for him. He recognised songs of the labour movement as a vitalising element in the class struggle, both as propaganda and as a means of initiating the masses into the significance of co-ordination derived from self-imposed discipline, and illustrated by the fact that singers out of tune and out of time can upset the balance of a choir, a hint to anarchists that organisation has its merits ! And he realised that vital rhythm will evoke enthusiasm which can be translated into decisive action.

In the Soviet Union he was able to appreciate the effect of mass singing both culturally and physically. In the physical sphere he had a convincing story to tell.

He arrived in Moscow without a warm coat. Unable to speak the language, he could not even indulge in the warmth of ardent discussion which is so prevalent in the Soviet Union. (And that *was* a privation to David.) When he heard a group of workers singing revolutionary songs he forgot that he had been freezing and found the songs a consoling means of communication, demonstrating the universality of music.

On his return to England he was very proud to receive a letter from a publisher in Moscow notifying him of the number of roubles he would be paid for an article on philosophy. " I told them that they

could spend the money on musical instruments for the children at the school," he said.

The influence of music was evident in his speech. He had the unusual power of evoking atmosphere with poetic-musical nuance and rhythm. His style was also appropriate to the subject, ranging from quaint, vivacious, sometimes boisterous humour, to philosophical profundity.

Of the arts, poetry was a rival love to music. He often quoted Shelley and quite obviously felt an intense artistic kinship for the revolutionary poet. The pictorial arts left him unimpressed. But despite this indifference to painting, and lack of response to even the great masterpieces, he appreciated its place as a contribution to culture, and was conscious of the extent to which it could be an asset to social progress.

His theme song was ever: "Something must be done about it!" To this refrain, he would rush away from a meal or a discussion to reserve a place for an open-air meeting before the Fascists had a chance to take the pitch.

The same David determined to "get there" first with a platform, voluntarily working with a spade and shovel on the Moscow Underground station, grappling tenaciously with a mathematical problem, attacking the wreckers of democracy with his pen, applying his gifts of mimicry and satire to expose treachery, the same David peering through binoculars for Fascist guns. . . .

These variations composed his charm. Like the Bach fugue he loved so well, the fragment of the theme recurring in different forms, but consistent in

structure ; each part independent and robust, yet the whole merging with united force.

Music is evanescent—as intangible and elusive as life itself. The emotion aroused cannot be sustained, but the effect remains. We grow and gain strength by the inspiration given us in a fugue or symphony. That is what David's life has meant to his friends.

VIII

THE GROWTH OF THE STUDENT MOVEMENT

INTRODUCTION

BY M. Y. LANG

> "In the Cambridge Lyons or in the Great Court he was a small disturbing piece of black and white in that over-comfortably coloured world of intellectual and anti-intellectual self-indulgence."—C. M.

DAVID GUEST was a university student from the autumn of 1929 until the summer of 1933, a period of momentous changes affecting every sphere of social life and thought. Over five-sixths of the earth's surface there raged an economic crisis without parallel in the history of capitalism. From the Wall Street crash in the autumn of 1929 capitalist economy pursued its precipitant decline until a renewed hurricane of bank failures swept America in the spring of 1933.

Nor was it only the idol of "prosperity" which crashed in those fateful years. In the late autumn and winter of 1931-2 the Japanese seized Manchuria. A horrified world witnessed the annihilation by all the

infamous devices of modern warfare of a densely populated suburb in one of the largest commercial cities of the East. The western powers controlling the League of Nations did nothing to prevent this outrage. A year later barbarism emerged triumphant, no longer merely in the distant Orient, but in the very heart of Europe. The finest achievements of German culture were crushed under the bloody heel of Hitlerism.

No less dramatic were the details which enlivened the stark outlines of this picture, as seen through British eyes. The National Government sacrificed the most cherished traditions of British capitalism by abandoning the automatic gold standard and later the principle of free trade. Confirmed in office by disillusioned electorate, it launched its programme of economy cuts, viciously attacking unemployment relief and the services of housing, health and education. The sailors' strike at Invergordon on September 15th—two days before the Japanese militarists pounced on Manchuria; mass demonstrations in Parliament Square during the same month followed soon afterwards by protest marches and monster meetings of civil servants denouncing the cuts; a rapidly growing anti-war movement; and above all the bitter struggles of the unemployed against the means test culminating in the great Hunger March of 1932 with its fierce clashes with the police—such was the answer of the masses to the National Government. Raids on the workers' press, frequent arrests of Communist and unemployed leaders, the arraignment of veteran Tom Mann under a statute of Edward III, and the savage Meerut sentences only intensified the struggle.

Nineteen twenty-nine to nineteen thirty-three was a period of profound intellectual crisis in Britain. Like the economic crisis which was its fundamental cause, it had been steadily maturing in the preceding decade. The shock of the war, the inhuman brutality of capitalist rationalisation, and the unconscious fear of being ground between the millstones of labour and capital, had produced an atmosphere of apprehension, a sceptical mistrust of all traditional standards, and a desire to escape, among the intellectuals of the 1920's. Weakness sought compensation in subjective self-assertion. Bloomsbury warmed its sterile soul in the artificial rays of æsthetic snobbery. Moral conventions were contemptuously swept aside by the disciples of Havelock Ellis, Freud and Lawrence. Sex became the all-absorbing topic of the day. Philosophical radicalism completed its course from militant rationalism, through idealism masked as "agnosticism," to nihilistic mysticism (compare David's brilliant article on Russell and his followers in the Appendix). Economic and social theory cut adrift from reality and escaped into the roseate realism of scholastic speculation.

Thus the outlook of the British intellectuals prior to 1930 was a jumble of progressive and reactionary elements. In so far as it dethroned the idols of nineteenth century, bourgeois morality and convention, it cleared the path for a new attitude towards the realities of life. But when it cut adrift from the driving forces of contemporary society, when it denied the rational basis of thought and action and prostrated itself before the phantoms of intuition and mysticism, it allied itself to the blackest powers of the past.

The shock of 1930 struck this ill-assorted pile of grain and chaff with the force of a hurricane. It scattered the chaff to the winds and probed the vitality of the grain with the test of adversity. Small rentiers and professional men suffered severe losses of income. Students were faced with the prospect of indefinite unemployment. Dismissals and economy cuts undermined the security of the middle classes. Gone were the illusions of prosperity. All the false prophets were confounded. War and Fascism loomed ahead. To the young student of economics the contrast between a theory of capitalist "equilibrium"—which denied the very possibility of over-production—and the actual world around him became unbearable. Nor could he remain unmoved by the spectacle of the new Soviet economy arising triumphantly in the midst of decay. He was stirred to the depths of his soul when he discovered that this achievement was actually putting to the test a science of social action propounded seventy years ago, but concealed from him by a conspiracy of contemptuous silence. The philosophy student, led by the sophistry of a Whitehead or Wittgenstein to despair of the possibility even of *interpreting* reality, was electrified by the discovery that over in Russia they were actually applying a philosophy which claimed to *change* the world. The thrill of discovery gave way to the white-heat of indignation. We felt ourselves surrounded by a wall of intellectual dishonesty, ivory-tower escapism, and apologetic accommodation. We felt in duty bound to smash that wall, both for ourselves and for our fellow students. Sweeping aside the inhibitions engendered in us by the

half-truths and intellectual evasions of our training, we became inspired missionaries for a new integration of thought and action, a new science of life. Defiantly we shouted from the roof-tops :

"There is no passive attitude in politics. If one does not actively oppose a political system, then for practical purposes—if one is working in a system—one is supporting it. All men are linked together by a thousand bonds of social and economic intercourse. To talk as though these bonds were not existing, to abstract oneself from the human race and leave it to perish while one is engaged in the Higher Speculation of one of the Finer Arts, is simply *monstrous*!" (David Guest Manuscript Note—1931.)

Thus the Communist student movement was born in the invigorating storm of the 1930 crisis.

In the spring and summer of 1931 communist student groups appeared independently at Cambridge and in two London colleges.

The Cambridge Labour Club formed a study group which soon split into two camps, a reformist section which later joined the Socialist League, and a militant group which formed the nucleus of the future Communist cell. When David returned from Germany in the summer term the Communist students' group began to function in earnest. Strangely enough, first-hand experience of the intense class struggle in Germany also led to the organised appearance of Communism at the London School of Economics. A militant anti-war movement had been founded at the school in the autumn of 1930. One of the students associated with the movement went to Berlin in the following Easter vacation. When he returned

he proclaimed himself a Communist. A section of "The Internationalists" seceded and formed a "Marxist Society" and five or six of them joined the Communist Party. About the same time a group of active Communists began to function in University College, London.

So abysmal was the ignorance of Marxism in the universities, that at L.S.E., for example, a wily Russian menshevik, who had recently joined the staff, had to be flung into the breach to shield the professorial rear from the breathless onslaught of Marxism.

On the other hand Mirsky's courageous stand—his book on Lenin was published shortly after the formation of the first student groups—and the sensation it caused among the intellectuals brought a formidable reinforcement to our struggle.

For many months none of these groups knew of the others' existence (what a thrill to discover that one was not fighting alone !). But finally representatives from all three groups and from the newly-formed nucleus at Oxford met at a flat in Hampstead to thrash out the general principles of student party work. The movement was spreading rapidly in 1931-2. The famous "October Club" at Oxford was formed in the spring term of 1932 and other groups appeared in Bristol, Liverpool, Manchester and Newcastle. There was an urgent need for a national student secretariat and a special paper for students. Both were established in 1932. After a pioneering effort at Cambridge (*The Outlook*, of which three issues appeared) the first number of the *Student Vanguard* was issued in November 1932.

Student activities both inside and outside the

universities now assumed an ever more organised character. Student contingents took part in all the great working-class demonstrations of those years (David and two dons went to meet the north-eastern contingent of the 1932 Hunger Marchers and returned with them to Cambridge, proudly carrying their knapsacks). A delegation (including David) was sent to the great Anti-War Congress at Amsterdam in August 1932. Peace demonstrations were staged on Armistice Day at several colleges, foreshadowing the more spectacular events of later years. " Hands off China " Committees were set up in many universities as the Japanese attack on Manchuria developed. At the same time the protest movement against the education cuts was assuming formidable proportions, especially in the teachers' training colleges. On February 17th, 1933, a demonstration of several hundred students and teachers marched from Blackfriars Bridge to Friends House. Flaming banners lit up the grey canyon of Aldwych and Kingsway. Shouted by hundreds of voices in unison the slogan " Scholarships—not battleships " reverberated in the heart of the metropolis.

A national student conference, held as part of the wider Anti-War Conference at Bermondsey Town Hall on March 5th, 1933—a week after the Reichstag fire—marked the culmination of the first tempestuous period of Communist student work.

It was a period of frenzied action rendered vital by the thrill of intellectual discovery, a period of searching study and tireless tactical discussions, often in all-night sessions. However unshaven and dishevelled our appearance—a remnant of petty bourgeois

bohemianism which some of us found it difficult to eradicate—however ridiculous we might make ourselves in our " sectarian " fanaticism—as when we retaliated to Bertrand Russell's witticisms at the expense of Marx by calling him a " Victorian fossil " in a packed meeting of the Labour Party—we succeeded once and for all in putting Communism on the map in the universities. Equally important, we drew a number of students, small as yet, but rapidly growing, out of the sleepy academic atmosphere into the stirring reality of the working-class struggle. It was the first decisive attempt to bridge the gap between thought and action among the future technicians and professional men of this country. We made many and serious mistakes. Mistakes which in certain cases threw us back several years in the struggle. But in spite of and through these mistakes, we were forging the elements of that approach which in the succeeding period from 1933 onwards was to build up a powerful democratic movement, not only among the students, but also among the intellectuals at large, among architects, artists, writers, actors, musicians, doctors, scientists and technicians.

The basis of that approach was an iron, Marxist, discipline for ourselves, coupled with an imaginative adaptability to the outlook of those who, without the slightest stigma of intellectual dishonesty, were as yet unable to see eye to eye with us on fundamentals. Because Marxism in its widest implications is the essence of the modern scientific outlook, Communist students could not fail to realise that it was their duty, and an inescapable condition of their success,

to become the *best* workers in their own factories, the universities. They strove to make themselves the foremost students in their own subjects of whatever nature. They understood that only by demonstrating the power of Marxist analysis to solve the problems awaiting solution in any given sphere, and thus to further the advance of science, could they substantiate their claim as the intellectual vanguard of their fellow students.

But the new approach also implied a patient effort to discover those issues which are capable of stirring all honest intellectuals, whatever their philosophical, religious or political outlook, into action. These issues proved to be the affirmation that science exists for the furtherance and not for the destruction of human welfare, that man was not made for the machine, but the machine for man; the claim that art and science and culture generally, and human dignity, are worth preserving from Fascist savagery and the holocaust of war; the realisation that in a world writhing in agony along the bloody trail of Fascist aggression all who have the cause of humanity at heart must unite to preserve our heritage.

In the "Sturm und Drang" of David's student years these truths were as yet but dimly conceived by those who, like David, had drunk deepest at the limpid source of Marxist experience. But they emerged clearly and incontestibly from the struggles of a generation of student Communists, of whom David, as he survives in the memory of his contemporaries, was the symbolic figure, just as John Cornford was of the students of 1933-6, who built a glorious edifice on these foundations.

CAMBRIDGE

From Professor C. D. Broad
Trinity College,
Cambridge.

June 14th, 1932.

Dear Guest,

Hearty congratulations on your First, which I am sure was well deserved, and which is particularly gratifying with so severe and fair an examiner as Moore. You can be perfectly sure that the First represents genuine good work and not mere good luck.

I suppose you will celebrate your success in the usual way by attacking the "lackeys of the Bourgeoisie," and being locked up for it. When you are out again I hope to see you some time.

With all good wishes.

Recollections of Cambridge Contemporaries

§ (1) *Maurice Cornforth*

I first met David when he came to Cambridge in the autumn of 1929. I had arrived there at the same time, and it wasn't very long before we met. We had a common interest in philosophical subjects, especially those connected with mathematical logic. But from the very start he felt himself restricted by the narrow horizon afforded by "Part One, Mathematics." He wanted to understand the philosophy of mathematics. From the first moment you met him it was obvious what a keen, eager person he was, how he was determined to think things out for himself, and not take anything on trust.

In the same year, 1929, the Viennese philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein, also turned up in Cambridge.

Wittgenstein immediately caused an upheaval in the circles of students (and lecturers) who were studying philosophy. He proceeded to tear all our preconceived ideas to pieces. He taught that no proposition had meaning unless one could demonstrate what experiences would verify it; and everything which could not be verified (that is, most propositions which philosophers believed) he attacked as meaningless metaphysics, or as he expressed it, "nonsense."

A circle of young students very quickly gathered around him, and both David and I belonged to that circle. We used to sit at Wittgenstein's feet, drinking in his new ideas, and at the same time we argued

furiously, both with him, and with one another. This went on for a whole year.

Young intellectuals at that time were not very interested in politics. David considered himself to be a Socialist, and so did I. We were " left wing " in the sense that we believed in the necessity of the class struggle, and were highly critical of the 1929 Labour Government and of the right-wing leaders ; but we did not belong to any political organisation, and Marxism was not yet a subject which came up for serious discussion. David, as far as I can remember, was a confirmed materialist and atheist. I had some very idealist notions in my head, and once read a paper expounding them ; but David's main comment was uproarious laughter.

I did not see much of David the next year, because he went away to Germany to study mathematics and mathematical philosophy at Göttingen, where Professor Hilbert, the " formalist " mathematician, had his stronghold. It was typical of David to go off to Germany. In our discussions on mathematical philosophy in Cambridge we were always talking about the " formalists," " intuitionists," and other schools that flourished in pre-Hitler Germany. But one could not get any sense about them in Cambridge. Wittgenstein would not expound any views other than his own (since he regarded all other views as nonsensical), and the regular professors belonged to the school of Bertrand Russell.

David decided he had learned all he could for the time being in Cambridge, and that the quest for knowledge would have to be continued abroad.

He came back again in the summer term of 1931. Political events were moving swiftly at that time. The great economic crisis was well under way; the Labour Government, headed by MacDonald, Thomas, Snowden, was proving unable to cope with events, and was shortly to give way to the National Government. The political atmosphere was changing amongst the students. We were discussing politics in a practical way, and debating various ways of coping with the crisis.

David came back from Germany a convinced Communist. He had not only learned mathematics there, but had seen the working-class struggle in Germany. He marched into "Hall" with a hammer and sickle emblem prominently displayed in his coat.

I well remember too how David came into a meeting of the Cambridge "Moral Science Club" (which is the name of the students' philosophical society there) with a copy of Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*. He was bubbling over with excitement about it, and kept reading passages aloud, especially those parts which deal with a class basis of philosophy. Some of the students were rather shocked, others thought he had gone crazy, but he took no notice, and kept reading out the passages just the same. I remember this because it made a big impression on me personally. I went straight home and read the book, and thereupon decided to join the Communist Party. To this extent it was David's influence that made me join the Party. I was thinking about doing so, but his directness and enthusiasm made me quite decided.

David and I both joined at the same time, just after

the final examinations of 1931. He had met Communists in Germany, but we knew no Communists at all in England, and scarcely anything about the Party or what we ought to do. However, what we lacked in knowledge we made up in enthusiasm. It so turned out that there were about four or five other students in Cambridge who were also at that time coming to the same decision. We had never met them before, but they also joined the Party, and we decided to form a Group in Cambridge. We had two senior members of the University who had been in the Party for some time to guide us and keep us in order. And so the Communist Party was started in Cambridge.

Of the original group, David was later killed fighting for democracy and peace in Spain, two others took on jobs as District Organisers for the Communist Party, and all the rest have ever since worked actively for the Party.

One of the first things we decided to do was to try to make contact with the working class of the town, and we began to canvass with the *Daily Worker*. David played a particularly active part in this work. On one of the first canvasses his enthusiasm got him into trouble. It was near dinner-time on Sunday, and we wanted to knock off and go home, but David insisted on carrying on. He knocked on the door of a house where a railwayman and his family were just enjoying their Sunday dinner, and the railwayman chased him off, using very abusive language.

As the result of these activities we succeeded in forming a Town Branch of the Communist Party in Cambridge. This inevitably led to a division of

activities, for the membership grew in the University too, and it became necessary to form a University section which met separately. I became secretary for the town and David became secretary for the University. He was one of the most active in the University Socialist Society. His influence, his enthusiasm, and his clear and keen theoretical and practical understanding, were big factors in winning a majority of the members over to a Marxist standpoint. That society has now become a mass organisation of students, in which Communists and Labour Party Socialists are working in fraternal unity.

But although I was occupied mostly in the town, I saw a good deal of David. I had got married at the end of 1931, and we had a flat over a pawnshop in the centre of Cambridge. David used to come in after lectures to discuss the news in the *Daily Worker*. One of his outstanding characteristics was the keenness with which he would follow the news. He reacted immediately to every event in the working-class movement and in international affairs. Stirring events were going on. In Britain the workers were fighting against the economy cuts of the National Government, and in Germany great struggles were taking place, which were to culminate with the advent of Hitler to power in 1933.

David was particularly stirred by the Meerut Trial in India. He went all over Cambridge talking about the Meerut prisoners, and denouncing the Imperialist Government which had held them in prison for so long. He got a number of study groups started in different colleges in connection with the

trial, and when the savage sentences were announced his indignation knew no bounds. He moved heaven and earth to get people all over Cambridge to protest against the sentences. David was one of those who worked hardest to get the prisoners released. He showed his solidarity with oppressed people and his love of democracy then, and he was later to die fighting for the same cause.

At this time the unemployed movement was developing in Cambridge, as it was all over England. It became necessary to have some speakers who would come out openly in support of the unemployed—and this was no easy matter for us as we were afraid that the University authorities would take such activities very amiss. However, David came out and agitated for the formation of the N.U.W.M., and spoke for the unemployed. He did not care two pins for the University authorities, or his own career, or for anything except the working-class movement. (To give them their due, the University authorities never interfered with us in any way.)

What became of philosophy and the " quest for knowledge " all this time ? I think that it was during these two years in Cambridge, after he joined the Party, that David was learning to assimilate the great principle of Marx—" *Philosophers have so far only interpreted the world, our task is to change it.*" During the first of these years he read for the " Logic Tripos," which means that he specialised in mathematical and formal logic. He passed the examination with a very good first and was given a research scholarship in the Moral Sciences. The second year he went in for

Economics, but there he did not do so well. I think that " Bourgeois Economics," as taught at Cambridge, proved a bit too much even for him. We continued to study and to discuss the philosophical questions which had engrossed nearly all our time before we joined the Party. David particularly went on working at problems of mathematical philosophy. He was trying to revaluate all these problems in the light of Communism and Dialectical Materialism. But that was no easy task, and I expect he was still at it when he went to Spain. I remember his saying :

" Mathematical Philosophy will never be settled under capitalism. It requires the co-operation of a whole group of Marxists, and we haven't the opportunity to do that now ! "

One of the things David liked most was music, and in Cambridge he would often spend the evening with us listening to Bach and Beethoven.

David's personality was so alive and vivid that he will never be forgotten. He was one of those who make one proud to be a member of our great Communist Party, since he was a member of it.

His death leaves a gap in the world for those who knew him. But the cause he died for will never die.

§ (2) *David Shoenberg*

David never talked as most people do, just for the sake of keeping up a conversation, but only because he really had ideas about the topic concerned, which he wanted to impart to his listeners. It was in fact impossible to have any " small talk " with him,

for as soon as he thought his companion was talking only for the sake of saying something David would relapse into complete silence.

He came to Trinity College with very far-reaching plans for study. He had never been satisfied with the mathematical teaching at his school, since it took all the fundamental axioms for granted, and without a grasp of the fundamentals he felt he could not understand and accept the consequences properly; he hoped to remedy this deficiency at Cambridge. He found, however, that the curriculum here, too, did not provide what he wanted and so he had at the same time as keeping up with the regular examination syllabus to study the more fundamental questions for himself.

His very ambitious plan of study was first of all to master these fundamentals, then to study the mathematics based on them, then the application of the mathematics to the physical problems, and finally, the application of the physical treatment to chemistry and perhaps biology.

Actually this plan was too ambitious, although David, with his enormous enthusiasm for anything he took up, did not realise it at the time. The first step of his programme was in fact too vast a field in itself, and instead of leading to the more practical aspects, it led him to a study of the philosophical questions involved.

In order to carry out his programme of work, David planned his day according to a strict time-table, but unfortunately this did not seem to suit his temperament, and he would often have bouts of depression

and inactivity, when he would either wander about Cambridge, or else sit for hours at the piano, playing little pieces by his beloved seventeenth-century composers; such bouts would be followed by periods of intensive work often with no attention to such needs as eating and sleeping. Probably this inability to keep to a time-table was not so much a matter of temperament, but rather a reaction to the rigorous discipline of his school life, which he hated not because of its planned nature (for David was always himself a great believer in plans) but because of its stupid impersonality, the planning being done by somebody else without any regard to individual requirements, and covering activities which should have been left to the individual. Possibly it was reaction to the imposed regularity of dress at school, which made him so inattentive to his personal appearance (later he outgrew this phase).

His hatred for the injustices brought about by capitalism, and in particular the oppression of the peoples of the British Empire, made him a Socialist, but his views were then not yet developed, being based more on a humanitarian approach than on a scientific analysis. It was only later that his general attitude of searching for the fundamental basis led him to Marxism.

What remains most in my memory is discussions he had with his friends. It was not only the originality of his ideas and his clear exposition of them but also his excitement and enthusiasm which made these discussions so interesting to others.

Flashback Images

§ (3) *M. T. Parker*

David's room in Trinity absolutely bare except for a large bookcase, a piano, a picture of Lenin and the famous piece of very mouldy cheese on a shelf. The long political discussions, in which David showed great eloquence. Murmurs from the less strong-minded that they were very hungry and would like a pause for a meal. David's offer to share cheese which was refused.

David walking past Christ's in the afternoon. Quite oblivious of his surroundings. Failing to notice acquaintances. Humming to himself and beating time with one hand. Obviously, from his expression, a German revolutionary song.

After a group meeting. David organising the comrades to sing revolutionary songs. Most people there had never had any experience of the wider movement, and this was a new and very thrilling experience. The meeting breaking up and small groups going their ways singing "Comrades the Bugles are Sounding."

On arrival at Trinity for a study-group meeting; David discovered playing the piano—the precise almost mechanical seventeenth-century music. His scornful attitude to the more emotional music of the nineteenth century. Appeared to be interested almost entirely in form.

Study classes on *Capital* for inquiring minds—

chapter by chapter progression through the book for months. For the first time many of the younger of us realised the really scientific nature of Communism. We did not understand half that was said, but were stimulated to go on reading. David's insistence on the sinister role of the revisionists, his polemical, almost personal attitude towards them. I, for one, could not understand much of this, but somehow felt that he was right.

§ (4) *Charles Madge*

David's concentrated zeal and logician's mind, and the single-heartedness of his politics, left a deep impression. His rooms in Trinity had a puritanism which made later dilettante Communists look pretty silly. In the Cambridge Lyons or in the Great Court he was a small disturbing piece of black and white in that over-comfortably coloured world of intellectual and anti-intellectual self-indulgence.

My introduction to Communism was through the Tyneside hunger marchers (Bob Smith was their fiery leader) who bivouacked in a school near my college. I spent a whole day with them, and it was only later that I met members of the University group, of whom David was obviously the most remarkable. Communism or near-Communism was not yet fashionable, and being a Communist meant that one was cut by former friends. At political meetings, David used to get up and speak and gesticulate at social-democratic speakers with passionate disregard of what the more conventional were thinking. His determination

undoubtedly had a big influence on those who laughed at him.

I was chosen to succeed David as Cambridge organiser but circumstances prevented me from filling that place. John Cornford took over instead. John and David were both killed in Spain. Their too short lives are a phenomenon of our time quite unlike the shortened lives of those who were killed in the Great War, because they did not perish in the confusion of Imperialist War, but with their minds made up by a logic from which there is no escape, and in a struggle of whose significance they were deeply conscious.

IX

BATTERSEA

By Fred Pateman

" He was the bane of the relieving officer's life."—F. P.

The great army of unemployed moved into action against the provisions of the new Unemployment Act in the winter of 1932-3.

David was still at the university but even Cambridge was not left untouched by that great stirring of the slumbering giant that is the British working class.

Into that sleepy town swung a column of marching men—the hunger marchers, shock troops that were destined to force the Government to postpone operation of part two of one of the most detestable Acts in our statute book.

The anger and determination of these men burned into David's heart, just as later he was to become a soldier in the People's Army in Spain, so then he became a volunteer in the army that was fighting for justice for Britain's workless millions. While the hunger marchers were in the town he was tireless in

his efforts to help them. When they had gone he was one of the most active in trying to build up a section of the National Unemployed Workers' Movement in Cambridge.

But it was after we left the University in the summer of 1933 that he had a real insight into the misery that is the fate of millions of unemployed. We went to Battersea and lived in " digs " where young working-class men were lodged. It was right in the heart of the workers' quarters—in a part of Battersea that never sleeps. All night long trains rumbled by within twenty yards of the house. Every now and again the roar of a collier's siren ripped through the night from the river less than fifty yards away. While on the other side all-night trams clattered by with their loads. Poverty had laid its hand on whole rows of houses. In the street market we could see from our window women who waited till the last thing on Saturday night to save a few coppers on their Sunday joint. The notice " relief tickets taken here " was so universal as to be unnecessary.

Here David learned things about working-class life that few who are not workers can appreciate to the full. He saw families sell their furniture stick by stick so that they could buy food. He saw families thrown into the street for the heinous crime of spending their rent money on food. He saw families refused relief without any cause.

Then it was that his anger at the capitalist system was at white heat. He joined the Battersea unemployed association and plunged headlong into that hard dirty battle with the Labour Exchange and Public Assist-

ance authorities which set a seal upon his desire to be a soldier and a revolutionary.

He was the bane of the relieving officer's life. His burning indignation at the treatment meted out to applicants refused to allow him to take " no " for an answer. He created scene after scene in the daily fight for bread.

On behalf of the unemployed association he took cases before the Court of Referees to which people have to go when the Labour Exchange manager refuses to allow them to draw benefit. The chairman of the court was also a local coroner—an irony that David did not fail to appreciate. So that an applicant refused benefit one day might have appeared as a corpse within the next few days before the same man —who of course would draw a fee for each occasion.

That same autumn David accompanied the hunger marchers ; pack on his back, grim determination in his face he marched with London's workless to the Brighton T.U.C. to demand that the leadership of the trade union movement bestir itself on behalf of the workless.

While David's wrathful determination swept him forward into action for the workless he was also learning another lesson—the lesson of disunity in the working-class movement.

Despite its great traditions the Battersea Labour Movement was torn by internal dissensions, made almost powerless by disunity. David could not understand why his intense desire to get " something done," which made him ready to sweep aside all kinds of differences, was not shared by every labour leader.

He was often heartbroken by the way the constitutionalists blocked one progressive move after the other. Still he battled on, but finally overcome by the constant strain his health broke down altogether and he was obliged to give up work for a time.

He entered on his next great political advance—residence in the Soviet Union.

X

MOSCOW

§1 Our David

By *E. Manevich*

(Principal of the Anglo-American School in Moscow)

> " Whatever happens I shall never be the same as I was, because now I know and understand what the future *must* be like. I have full confidence in the power of the working class to build that future—and I am fully prepared to take my part in the building of it."—*In a letter from* David.

He came to our school in 1933—a frail-looking young man with a shy smile. His knowledge and modest ways immediately made him popular among teachers and pupils. The children loved him and looked up to him as an authority on all subjects from physics to political economy.

It took me some time to persuade David to take the position of physics and mathematics teacher in the secondary school for English-speaking children. He was afraid that he would not be able to make the

subject interesting enough. He spent hours in preparation for lessons to the wonder of all the teachers. When asked why he took such pains to prepare for lessons when he knew the subject so thoroughly, he would answer modestly that it took time to make the material interesting and comprehensible for the children.

David was enthusiastic about the Soviet Union. The Moscow-Volga canal was in the process of being built then, and he hoped some day to come from England straight into the Moscow port by means of the Moscow Sea.

I recall an incident which shows how observant he was. Once when we first became acquainted, I invited him to our house to dinner. I lived in a Moscow suburb then—fifteen minutes' ride from the city. It was quite dark when we reached our station. The cottage was a standard one and looked exactly like a number of others situated nearby. All the way from the station we were engaged in conversation and it seemed that David paid no attention to the surroundings.

It was a cold winter day and the frost became so bitter towards evening that we persuaded him to sleep over at our house. On the morrow we invited him to come again after work. My son took him to the city and once more repeated the invitation, but he completely forgot to give David our address, neither did he tell him what train to take and where to get off. But what was worst of all David did not know a single word of Russian then!

That evening he did not come. Nor did he come to

school on the following day as we had agreed. I was very worried. The frosts were bitter and David was much too lightly dressed for Moscow weather. I was afraid that he had lost his way, knowing so little Russian. He didn't leave me his address and I didn't know where to find him.

At last, on the third evening when we were all sitting round a cheery fire and a snow-storm was raging outside, we heard a light knock at the door. I was never so surprised as when I saw David all covered with snow standing in the doorway! Even now it seems uncanny to me how he found his way on a dark night in a snow-storm.

"Well, I was once here and I took notice of the road," he answered when we expressed our wonder.

David came to live with us and we became very much attached to him. He had an excellent sense of humour. In the evenings after work we would gather around the fire and listen to his stories. He had a dramatic talent and read Shakespeare very well.

And now he is gone! But David could only have died an heroic death. His memory will always live in the hearts of his friends and comrades.

§2 A Soviet Worker

By *Frank Jackson*

An excited group of passengers stood on the upper deck as the Soviet ship passed the Kronstadt fortifications, while the roofs and spires of Leningrad rose

clearer on the horizon. During the five-day journey the passengers argued about the country most of them were to see for the first time. A number of them—including David Guest—had so far familiarised themselves with Soviet development that it seemed a visit to the country could but provide the living confirmation of all they believed.

David had only intended to have three weeks' holiday, but remained there a year. During this time much was to be acquired as well as given.

Shortly afterwards I arrived in Moscow to take up work on the *Moscow Daily News*. Before twenty-four hours were out David came bustling in to see me, thoroughly disguised in a typical padded coat and round fur-brimmed hat. His first thought was to ask if I had found a room, whether I needed anything from Torgsin stores, and what books I had brought with me. It was only later when he had helped to settle-in the new arrival, that I was able to learn what he was doing and he was able to question me on the latest happenings in England.

There was no need to ask whether he was studying Russian, for already he had obviously mastered a considerable part of that exceptionally difficult language. He was applying himself to the Herculean task of learning sufficient Russian to tackle the original current Soviet writings on mathematics and philosophy.

"How do you like it here?" I asked.

"For the first time I am really consciously happy," he replied. "I have been here two months but I might have been here for years. Socialism seems so

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natural that it becomes difficult to imagine private ownership—of shops, for example.

"Am I busy? Of course. Everybody is! Tremendously so. In fact, you'll even find it hard to ask a question in the street, everybody's so much on the move."

Wishing that he could write about the Soviet Union to all his friends in England, David had but time to send regular apologies for not doing so through his mother. In his letters home he never failed, also, to request some scientific or philosophic books.

"I don't need any money," he wrote, "*I'm earning plenty of good honest roubles.*" And again: "You really ought not to dash about and send me things. While I appreciate the spirit of it you are (1) wasting money, (2) undermining that spirit of independence which is so necessary for me to acquire. . . . You must cease to be a sort of guardian (or guardian angel) and must let me stand fairly on my feet, asking for help from my friends when I need it, but not expecting things to be done automatically for me. . . . It is not adequate excuse to say that I wouldn't look after myself. For only experience could teach me that. Here in the Soviet Union I am learning at an amazing rate and promise to return a reformed character . . . greet comrade P. from me and tell him that the Soviet Union is actually real and doesn't break when you touch it."

In the Soviet Union jobs are always seeking men to do them. So it was that Comrade Manevich, principal of the Anglo-American school in Moscow, offered David the post of mathematics and physics teacher. Laboratory facilities were not available before the school was transferred to a more suitable building,

and he exercised the greatest ingenuity in contriving experiments with the simplest means.

David began work at the school when it was passing through a transition period and the staff devoted much time to discussing the difficulties and their solutions. He always listened carefully before making any contribution and then, just at the right psychological moment, when everyone felt that all had been said, he would illuminate the problem with a few well-chosen words that usually provided the sought-for solution.

The Soviet has no use for automatons. Teachers are reminded that it is of the highest importance that every child should receive individual attention. Deana Levin, a colleague on the staff of the Anglo-American School, tells us that this method of individual approach appealed to David, who contrasted it with the " mass production " methods of schools he had known.

" The spirit in Soviet education was quite new to David. The children loved school so much that they were reluctant to leave. Lessons were over at 2.30, after which there were all sorts of activities—aeroplane modelling, music (every school has a choir and orchestra), dancing, art, engineering, nature study, cinematography. The wall newspaper was a novel feature in which the children could express themselves, and on the rare occasions when a teacher's methods did not meet with their approval a criticism would be sure to appear in the paper.

" Pupils who showed particular keenness in their school work and activities were sent to the Pioneer

Palace—a paradise for every child. There they could pursue any subject that excited their imagination. Life became a thrilling adventure."

Teachers had also far greater opportunities for development. The whole teaching world was linked up, exchanging visits and ideas, and schools where important innovations had been introduced attracted many visitors.

All the employees belonged to a school trade union. This resulted in a really democratic administration. As David said, " Where else would you find that a charwoman had a voice in the management of a school ? "

. . . . .

One day, David ruefully told me that he had lost a treatise on mathematics while on his way home. He was staying with Comrade Manevich some distance out of Moscow and travelled up to school on a suburban line. Trains, like trams, were at that time painfully overcrowded and so, rather than push his way into the coach, he rode, exposed to cold and wind, on the platform or connecting rods. He was always reading even while carrying an armful of books and papers and clinging, heaven knows how, to the swaying train. Happily books were the only casualties arising from David's lack of interest in personal comfort and safety.

Every moment was precious to him. Teaching, preparing lessons, studying Russian, reading works of Engels in the original German, and Soviet works on mathematics.

Despite his many-sided activities—or because of

them—David was able to meet a number of people and to see a fair amount of Soviet life. He even managed to visit theatres and cinemas, museums and parks. An acquaintanceship with one of the actresses prominent in the Jewish National Theatre of Minsk led to his seeing several performances at the Jewish National Theatre in Moscow, whose production of Johnson's *Volpone* particularly impressed him. The Yiddish used by the actors was sufficiently close to German for him to appreciate the plays almost to the full.

In another letter home he writes:

"The school term is ending now but we have the 'tests' (don't call them examinations!). I'm not likely to go out of Moscow for long during the vacation—at most I may take a trip to Leningrad for the mathematical congress in June. In my free time I'm working on the application of Marxism to mathematical logic.

I have met the Schutzbunders here (the three hundred who came to Moscow), and they are fine fellows. On May Day I demonstrated to the Red Square and there were the Schutzbunders, along with Dimitrov, Stalin, and everybody one could wish to see."

As summer drew to a close, a new problem began to preoccupy David's mind. How long should he stay in the Soviet Union? If he returned to England should it be for further study and research or in order to devote his entire time and energy to the working-class movement?

In October David was again on a Soviet ship looking forward to the work he would do in England with the renewed energy and confidence that Soviet

reality had inspired. The mood of depression and weariness with which he had left England less than a year before had vanished and, even in his outward bearing, there was a marked change.

Before leaving he wrote :

"I have been permanently optimistic since I came to the Soviet Union. It is almost impossible to describe how different the atmosphere here is from that of capitalism.

All the feeling of hysteria and despair that presses on you with dreadful force under capitalism has disappeared. Whatever the difficulties may be one had a deep underlying feeling of confidence and a firm belief in the future. Whatever happens I shall never be the same as I was, because now I know and understand what the future *must* be like. I have full confidence in the power of the working class to build that future—and I am fully prepared to take my part in the building of it."

XI

MARX HOUSE

By R. PAGE ARNOT
(Principal, Marx Memorial Library and Workers' School)

> "... The bourgeoisie have always denied ... the very possibility of a proletarian revolution. 'But *the world* moves all the same,' as Galileo told the inquisition. And the bourgeoisie got rather badly smashed up in Russia in spite of their scientific contempt for Marxism."—DAVID.

THE Marx Memorial Library and Workers' School, "Marx House," had been founded in 1933, the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Karl Marx. Its purpose was to provide facilities for the study of Marxism in the country where that greatest of thinkers and revolutionaries had spent the greater part of his working life.

Accordingly funds were gathered. A house was taken in Clerkenwell Green, which chanced to be the same premises in which Lenin when in London had sat and edited the first Bolshevik newspaper *Iskra* ("The Spark"—which was to light a flame). Appeals

for donations of books on history, political economy, philosophy, etc., met with a generous response. Courses of lectures on these and germane subjects were begun. Sunday evening lectures provided a forum for discussion by members of trade unions, co-operatives and political parties. Classes began to be organised in connection with trade union branches and other working-class organisations in their localities. Not only professed Marxists but many of those who were interested in the theory and practice of Marxism lent their aid to build up " Marx House."

Fully aware of the need of such an educational centre in Britain, David Guest had, in the late autumn of 1934, already decided to offer his services. His knowledge of Marxism had been reinforced by twelve months' stay in Moscow and was now remarkably wide.

His services were to be used in every sort of way : lecturing at Marx House and in educational classes round about London ; organising workers' discussion circles and acting as tutor ; conducting correspondence courses ; drawing up syllabuses of study ; working at classification of the library ; answering enquiries and helping in the dozens of other jobs that have to be done in the first year's existence of an institution of this kind. There was no one subject to which he was restricted in his educational work, for his knowledge of Marxism was general ; and so he could and did deal with all sides—both in theory and in practice. But there were certain aspects with which by his previous studies in " The Philosophy of Mathematics " he was particularly equipped to deal

as was shown by his polemic against Bertrand Russell.

He plunged into all of this, and at the same time was occupied with mathematical research in connection with the University of London, and he gave his evenings (and sometimes his days) to agitation and propaganda for the Young Communist League, in which he held a responsible position.

He proved to be an excellent lecturer, with a quite specific faculty for teaching others. This was due to his speed in thinking, the clarity of his reasoning power which was like some solvent, combined with an insight into the difficulties and confusions which could occur in the minds of his students. His own mind, it seemed, went from the abstract to the concrete. In the abstract he had what looked like an effortless mastery of problems while with each application of theory, with each experience he extended his grasp of the concrete, which he then applied as a test to theory. He hated speculation. The fiery coursers of his intellect were ever kept in harness.

This was in accord with that Marxist "unity of theory and practice" which Guest was wont to raise as the first question in his teaching of *materialist dialectics*.

David Guest was teaching in a capitalist society, where not only is there no continuity of theory and practice but where many publicists and writers have in recent times shown a strong tendency to eclectic thinking. It would be better not to call it eclectic but confusionist thinking, shown by the coexistence in their writings of sundry mutually inconsistent theories.

This was naturally reflected amongst those of his students who had read at all widely; and who then had the good fortune to be taught by him. His mind was above all critical. His function was to be a destroyer of rubbish that had got harbourage in men's minds. He was a critically-thinking Communist.

When he found one of his students or fellow-workers influenced by false theory or policy, he grappled with him and never let go until the question had been fully thrashed out. And in one sphere of dialectical thinking in physics and mathematics he was specially equipped and particularly effective. It is doubtful if the views of Sir James Jeans and Sir Arthur Eddington or Bertrand Russell and Whitehead would have attained the wide currency they did, if some fifteen years ago there had been amongst the mathematicians and physicists of Britain anyone who had a grasp or at any rate an acquaintance with the teachings of Marx and the great Marxists.

Since the congress on Methodology in the Sciences held in London in 1931, where Soviet science first swam into the ken of British men of science, there has been a considerable change.

The philosophy of Marxism is no longer completely ignored. On the basis of Marxism, *idealism* amongst men of science is attacked. From 1933 onwards David Guest (apart from his earlier Cambridge activities) was one of those who most consistently carried this attack of Marxism.

This was only to a small extent done in writing. True, it would have been easy for him to have become a frequent writer. His pungency of phrase, his powers

of imagination together with his faculty of analytical thinking were all in readiness. But to devote himself immediately to this would have meant a restriction of his activities, an abandonment of that all-sided development of thought and action at which he was bound to aim—and there were unemployed in Battersea, bad social conditions there, poverty and malnutrition. With that on his doorstep, there could be for David Guest no possibility of sitting there exclusively devoting himself to writing.

Consequently there remains of his writing not a great deal. In the case of his Marx House activities, there is a text-book, syllabuses, the answers to a correspondence course.

The greater part, Guest's activities and personality, remain in the memory of the students, his comrades and fellow-workers.

It may, however, give something of his quality to quote some of his marginal comments on essays. These are, of their nature, unconnected; and besides had to be done at full speed in the midst of other occupations, but they show something of the educationist at work—the teacher who is also a fighter.

In a correspondence course on "Dialectical Materialism" with a student who had read somewhat widely in a number of fields, and who wrote and argued at some length a number of rather brief notes and marginal comments were made between spring and autumn of 1936 by David Guest. From these we select the following:

"First the majority of your criticisms are on fundamental points around the opposition of the materialist and

idealist world conceptions. You say that you are surprised to learn that the dialectic method has need of empirical facts and is not by itself 'omni-explanatory.' But no *materialist* world conception can be. At most it can develop the correct scientific method on the basis of a concrete study of the real world. Not to realise this is to be ignorant of the *basic ideas* of dialectical materialism. Here it is my turn to be surprised. How comes it that one, who is obviously a close student of some branches of thought, should be (apparently) unwilling to make a conscientious study of the classics of Marxism-Leninism? I would plead with, beg and implore you to read *some at least* of these. If, for instance, you have read Engels' book *Ludwig Feuerbach* already mentioned—or even the famous *Theses on Feuerbach* by Marx—you would never have been 'surprised' or thought that 'the business of philosophy is the speculation of matters not investigated by science.' This is the old, bourgeois-professorial formulation against which Marx and Engels revolted in the 1840's when they said: 'The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point however is to *change* it,' and rejected all 'philosophising' *separated from practice.*

Dialectical Materialism is a way of viewing the world based on the combined sciences of Nature, History and the Human Thinking Process. It does not stand 'queen-like above the sciences' (as *Engels* explains in this book—a passage not quoted in the short extract from the *Handbook of Marxism*) but is *derived* from them. . . .

I cannot understand how you can maintain that historical materialism or rather, history conceived as a succession of class-conflicts whose root lies ultimately in the contradiction between *developing productive forces* and *social relations*, is not a *science*. The Bourgeoisie have always denied this, and above all denied the very possibility of a proletarian revolution. 'But it (the world) moves all the same,' as

Galileo told the inquisition. And the bourgeoisie got rather badly smashed up in Russia in spite of their 'scientific' contempt for Marxism."

The next letter was dated 11.5.36, and is here given in full:

"DEAR COMRADE,

Once again we return to the fray! I would much like 'to give the bourgeois ideology business a rest now and then,' but alas, why do you not give me a chance?

If you make the criterion of 'science'—that which 'is agreed by all who are qualified to consider'—then who is to sit in judgment on these 'qualified persons,' who is (so to speak) 'to examine the examiners'? And further, it is a fact that during the middle-ages and after the official spokesmen of the Church (men of great ability and learning) denied the most elementary facts of physical science and persecuted those who investigated them. But are we to maintain that physics only became 'true' after the Reformation?

In regard to the relation of dialectical materialism to philosophy I must repeat that the laws of dialectics are derived *materialistically* through a study of the world (by methods of the special sciences), and are continually checked-up on and developed by further comparison with the facts. *There is no other way ('speculative' or otherwise) of getting knowledge.* Of course, if you wish to play the 'old game' of speculative philosophy, that is your own affair. All we can do is to point out, and substantiate more fully if need be, that such philosophy is anti-scientific, unable to obtain results of any value—at best useless—at worst, positively misleading. Now what have you got to say about this?"

In the marginal comments on Lesson 3 there occurs the following:

" I am afraid I must disagree very strongly with your estimation of Greek thinkers. I do not know what you mean when you speak of the ' poverty of abstract metaphysics in Ancient Greece,' and I would strongly advise you to take a look at Hegel's *History of Philosophy* in order to see that the *many-sidedness* of Greek life was certainly reproduced in their philosophy. I must protest against the undervaluation of the *most vital elements* of Greek thought at the expense of the sentimental cult of ' Beauty ' which most of the Greek thinkers would have rejected (e.g. Plato who went so far as to banish poetry from his ideal state.)

The trouble is that the importance of the Greek contribution to thought is misrepresented because of this sentimental cult. The result is a widespread ignorance of Greek philosophy. Incidentally, one would not be quite correct in chiding Aristotle for ignorance of ' the inclusiveness of opposites,' when he wrote as follows : ' All things that come into existence in the course of nature are either opposites themselves or are compounded of opposites.' (Physics I.V.) Your estimation of mechanical materialism is correct."

Another letter during the summer of 1936 begins by a reference to Mr. Middleton Murry, who had described himself as a Marxist and goes on to deal with basic tendencies in philosophy.

" DEAR COMRADE,

I was interested to read of Mr. Murry's ' explanation ' of the confusion that centres round the meaning of *philosophical idealism*. But I think that it should be pointed out that Frederick Engels cleared up this point ' in clear unequivocal language ' *some sixty years ago* (in his *Ludwig Feuerbach and the outcome of Classical German Philosophy*),

and also that Engels' explanation had the advantage of being based on some knowledge of philosophy, and therefore of being correct. I am afraid this cannot be said of Murry's solution.

In the first place it is historically false to say that philosophical idealism 'is scientifically a dualism, and its opposite is Monism.' Petty idealists are dualists, but the most complete and thorough idealists (such as Hegel) have always been monists. The opposition between materialism and idealism does not centre round this point but essentially round the relation of consciousness to existence (or rather crudely, the relation of 'mind' to 'matter').

If we believe in one form or another that 'consciousness determines existence' we are idealists. Hegel, who believed that the material world was merely 'otherness' of the Absolute Idea was an idealist in this sense. But so are those who adopt the favourite modern point of view that sensations are the most ultimate reality we know of, and all the rest must be guesswork.

If we believe, on the other hand, that 'existence determines consciousness' we naturally try to explain materialistically the emergence of consciousness. Applied to society this view ('*Social* existence determines social consciousness') becomes *historical materialism* which alone gave the key to social evolution after the dialectical idealists had vainly tried to solve this problem.

In between those two basic tendencies in philosophy there is a *third* tendency (explained by Engels in the book mentioned) which seeks to overcome the opposition of idealist and materialist philosophy, but in fact falls between both. This philosophy frequently takes a *sceptical* form (Hume, Russell, etc.) and is always in fact (as I tried to show) the first step on the downward path towards idealism. To belittle the importance of the basic division in philosophy is another form of this tendency—(I wish you would read

this book of Engels and tell me what you think of the matter then.)

" You shouldn't take the physicists too seriously when they reduce ' cream buns ' to the ' *n*th power of minus x.' It is mostly as a result of the separation of theory from practice (and of ' mathematicians ' from ' experimentalists ') that such ideas get about—as Levy has so clearly demonstrated in the book referred to. Of course our knowledge of matter is continually being *deepened* by physical research, but the fundamental and important fact of its *objective existence* apart from being ' known ' by any mind—remains.

As to the possibility of theories which are inherently incapable of being tested practically, I would refer you to Marx's famous *Theses on Feuerbach* written 1845, contained in Appendix to Engels' book. But I would like to know what can be the meaning of a theory that cannot be practically tested.

I hope you will continue your thought-provoking essays."

These extracts, necessarily mutilated by being torn from their context of correspondence course lessons, questions and answers (which space alone would prevent reprinting), nevertheless serve to give something of the astringent and vivid manner of Guest in his teaching and argumentations.

The same quality, though in a lesser degree, appears in an article (*Karl Marx—After Fifty Years*) written by David Guest in 1933 as a polemical reply to an article by Harold Laski; and to a greater extent in the textbook on Dialectics, now being separately published.*

* J. D. Bernal, F.R.S., regards this book of David's as " the best short study of dialectic materialism that has appeared in English."

What they cannot convey, however, is the humour and laughter that was his characteristic amongst his friends, the patience which he could maintain for long enough (but not for ever—it was spiced with transient irascibility), and the unselfishness which came out in a score of ways. To go by negatives, David Guest was in body and mind the very opposite of anything fat, smug, sluggish, greasy, comfortable, or self-satisfied. His high-voltage personality in any room or gathering introduced slight but salutary discomfort; for he was not only on the alert himself but put his fellows on the alert. David Guest was a critically thinking fighter, who finally found that, as Marx had said, to the weapon of critique he must add the critique of weapons in the struggle for peace and democracy, on the battlefields of Spain.

XII

THE YOUTH MOVEMENT

By JOHN GOLLAN

" He had some guts did Dave."—A Y.C.L'er.

IN the death of David Guest the working class of this country has suffered a profound loss. Those of us who knew him well never thought he would be found in the International Brigade. Not because he lacked the spirit of the struggle for freedom; on the contrary, we knew the spirit that inspired his every action in the crusade for peace, democracy and social progress. But he wasn't at all robust and seemed unfitted for the hardship and rigour of life in the trenches.

When he spoke to me of his decision to volunteer, I may as well admit that I advised him not to go, on this account. But he was convinced, and he convinced me, that his task lay in Spain. His keen logical mind realised the significance of the Spanish struggle for independence. And for David to be logically convinced meant that he must act! He was no theoretical dilettante, but a genuine revolutionary thinker.

He had great ability as lecturer, propagandist and organiser in the Young Communist League. Despite

his exceptional talents, he was never dogmatic towards less experienced comrades.

He gained in initiative and learnt much through contact with the striving young workers. Undoubtedly this contributed to his splendid record in Spain, which was all the more remarkable in view of his concentration on mathematics, a study that appears to be far removed from the realities of the mass struggle.

In his notes he refers to the agony of speed-up; of the numerous accidents in factories caused by employing inexperienced young workers at machinery that is not even safeguarded according to law; of chromium poisoning from stainless steel, and diseases caused by dust and foul air. He is indignant at the injustice of blind alley jobs, of sacking at a moment's notice, and the strain of night work.

When the Charter of Youth Rights was first introduced with a programme which included a forty-hour week and demands for training apprentices in the employer's time, he saw it as "an immediate and living aim for all youth."

David was responsible for organising the South-West branches of the League and was later elected to the district committee. He was intensely interested in Battersea and often talked of reviving its proud tradition of struggle in which youth would play a part. He lived there with a congenial family* in a house near Clapham Common.

EDUCATION

Willie Cohen, former organiser of the London

* This was the family of his friends, the Sines.

District of the Y.C.L., tells us: "Dave's greatest contribution to the Youth Movement was education." "He produced the first syllabus of training, and an outline of an educational system for the Y.C.L., something which never existed before."

Bill Spence adds: "When David first started organisational work he was restless and impetuous. It was a constant source of surprise to me how soon he adapted himself to the practical needs of the movement. He was an outstanding educationalist; he loved the work. It was of real concern to him. His wide reading and independent thought, his connections with Marx House and Marxist thinkers brought a freshness and originality to his teaching."

Bob Cotton, a member of the Education Committee, gives further details:

"He visited the branches of the Y.C.L. and with passionate persistence urged the necessity of a planned theoretical training for youth. He rescued our political education from chaos and is responsible for our present system which is having a far-reaching influence on our movement. It was his idea that the Elementary Course should be based on the three slogans of the League:

PEOPLE BEFORE PROFITS
LIFE WITH A PURPOSE
WE FIGHT FOR UNITY

In the simplest terms he explains the reasons for the

deplorable conditions of the young workers, and that progress is only possible by united efforts.

Here are a few extracts:

". . . Twenty years ago the life of youth wasn't as difficult as today. Then there were more chances of learning a trade and getting a place.

Every youth should have the right to a job—and not just a hole, but an assured future. You go to night school? For what? It is a scramble, for most youth there is no advance. You gain skill but can't use it.

The majority leaving school don't and can't get any technical or vocational training. . . . Seventy to eighty of every hundred jobs open to youth are blind alleys. . . . The employers only want you young and cheap; in the end they use you not only to displace the older workers but to displace yourself.

What are the interests and ideals which caused us to join the Y.C.L.? At the bottom, revolt against a society which is based on the principle 'rob or be robbed, work for others or make others work for you, be a slave owner or a slave' (Lenin). Against toadying and injustice. The daily struggle has shown us the need for a policy, a purpose and an organisation to express it.

. . . The main purpose of the Y.C.L. is to end the exploitation of capitalism, to join in the creation of a classless society, to win for youth the opportunity of full and free development. . . .

What are classes? Lenin says 'Classes are that which permits one section of society to appropriate the labour of the other section. . . . The capitalist class is the owner of the means of production and employer of the working class; The working class, deprived of ownership, are forced to sell their labour power to the capitalists.' 'Class' is determined by our relation to the means of

production. In capitalist society production is not for use ; it is for profit. Capital is a means of production used in order to create a profit. We see proof of this everywhere. Huge profits are made from milk by keeping it scarce. A ' prosperous ' cotton textile industry does not mean supplying everybody with enough shirts. Capitalist prosperity is gained by *cutting down* production, scrapping plant, creating unemployment and great scarcity in shirts. The milk example shows how capitalism forces high prices. . . .

Our ' law,' morals, rule of life, serves the purpose of helping *human society* (as a whole) to rise to a higher level and to abolish the exploitation of labour. ' Our morality consists entirely of compact united discipline and conscious mass struggle against the exploiter ' (Lenin)."

Although primarily interested in education, I should say David was interested in everything. He used to complain to me how short the day was in view of things to be done. Battersea is an industrial area and the work connected with the industrial youth is immense. Knowing little about these matters from personal experience, he studied them in the practical school of trade unionism.

He was a pioneer in building up the Youth Advisory Committee System as well as Youth Sports and Social Clubs around the unions.

Among others, he was responsible for starting a " People's Bookshop " in Battersea and he joined the Shop Assistants' Union. One cannot do better than quote the opinion of one of his own trade union comrades.

From H. Berger (Chairman of the Metropolitan Council of the S.A.U.).

"David Guest was a delegate to the Metropolitan District Council of our Union. Although his manner was unassuming, one could feel a sense of strength when talking to him, which was due to the fact that he had devoted his whole life and energy to the work of helping humanity. . . .

"It would be difficult to describe the feeling of dismay that ran through our Council when we heard of his death. The people of Britain and of the world have lost one of their finest sons."

In looking over David's papers, one finds press cuttings, notes for speeches, drafts for propaganda purposes and copious extracts from debates in the House of Commons.

A passionate appeal to Youth Organisations was written by him during the Abyssinian war. He urged them to join in a demonstration on International Youth Day, "in commemoration of the anti-war struggle led by Karl Liebknecht and the German socialist youth during the Imperialist War."

"The open brutality of Fascist Italy, and the cunning manœuvring of the National Government—alike inspired by Imperialist greed—threaten to plunge the world into another war. At this hour of the 'gravest crisis since 1914' all Youth organisations have a tremendous responsibility. We have to prevent our whole generation from being destroyed in the furnace of a new World War!

Now is the time when really effective and united action against war must be organised—before it is too late."

The following is an example of the logical way in which David planned a campaign :

Battersea Youth Movement

Required.—Detailed knowledge of the position of Battersea young workers (also number of students . . . middle class youth).

1. Main Factories employing youth, conditions, social organisation.
2. Proportion of youth in distribution, conditions, extent of blind alley.
3. Organisation for youth for sports and social purposes in clubs of various kinds.
    a. Firms' organisations.
    b. Scouts, Guides, Church Youth Organisations.
    c. Semi-Independent Clubs.
4. Educational Facility—especially Technical Institutes and Evening Schools. Proportion of Youth attending.
5. Political Youth Groups. Numbers leaving school and going to work.

From Bob Gorham (Former Secretary Battersea Y.C.L.).

" To David's devoted self-sacrifice and courage in facing difficulties we owe the very existence of the Y.C.L. in our area. We were lucky to have him as a teacher. If anyone showed a particular interest in reading he would recommend suitable books. His own reading was so exhaustive that he knew the answers to all our questions and gave us clear and simple explanations. When our meetings broke up, he would be surrounded by an ever-widening group eager to consult him on any subject, ranging from whitewashing to dialectical materialism. He was able

to explain even that 'mystery' in a way that did not make us feel small and ignorant.

"Though everybody acknowledged the great superiority of his intellect, there was no more barrier between him and us than between brothers.

"Our camps at Newdigate wouldn't have been right without David. A group of us once sat round peeling potatoes. A discussion arose related somehow to helium and hydrogen. The potato peeling gave way temporarily to deep discussion. Finally David, waving an impaled potato, cleared up the argument in a few well-chosen sentences, and we finished the job enlightened and satisfied.

"We used to roar with laughter at the little sketches he sometimes gave at our socials—humorous imitations of politicians and eccentric schoolmasters.

"After a typical day's work—visiting people, writing letters, and conducting a branch meeting—he used to pick up the whitewash pail and work with the rest of the squad until two or three in the morning advertising our meetings.

"I remember one May Day particularly. He had put a good deal of energy into organising our march to Hyde Park. He marched all the way with us and after a short rest on the grass and a cup of tea, picked up the banner and carried it all the way home to Battersea.

"Whenever there was a Spanish foodship collection David was to the fore. It would have been easy for him to take a Sunday morning's rest and to let somebody else do it for a change. The point is that he *never said*, actually or in effect, 'Let somebody else do it.'"

From Dorothy Woodard (one of his closest co-workers in the Y.C.L.).

" We were very raw when David first came to organise our small groups of Y.C.L'ers. It was a discouraging job and he tackled it enthusiastically.

" His tremendous faith gave many of us new heart. He used to say, ' Well, of course, Comrades, you'll make mistakes, but when you've had some experience you'll be able to do things better.' The sight of David with his case and his plans was a sight we all came to know and to love.

" David was responsible for the first Youth Peace Parade in the area. In May 1935 he activised all the comrades in the Y.C.L. into making gas masks and stretchers and nurses' uniforms and early in June we created quite a stir with about fifty people exposing the horrors of war on a most interesting parade which finished with a meeting on Clapham Common.

" He saved us from many scrapes. At our first camp more comrades attended than were expected. There was a shortage of food. In the midst of the general confusion, David arrived. He said, ' Well, you know, responsible comrades ought not to be arguing all at once. Suppose we go and buy some more food ! ' Whereupon some of us went shopping and David set about amusing the campers by organising wrestling matches. To our great delight he started by taking off his shirt and tackling all comers. The local squire objected to the comrades singing and sent the village constable to the camp. Some of the boys thought it clever to be saucy, so Dave was found and

asked to mediate. The sight of him pacifying the police was so funny that everything was smoothed over.

" David's teaching has left us a very good basis for building up unity, and a tremendous number of comrades in the various branches of the labour movement owe their clarity to him. He showed us the dangers of Trotskyism and how it disrupts the ranks of the workers. When the Fascists and other reactionaries attacked him at meetings his pluck and clear line knocked them into tin cans.

" He encouraged us to go to a speakers' class. I remember a crowded meeting on Clapham Common where David turned to us after he had spoken and said, ' You want to speak, don't you, comrades ? Now have a try.'

" We were very shy after hearing his clever arguments, but he insisted. With much knee-knocking, one after the other got up on the platform. David was as pleased as Punch and exclaimed, ' I didn't know you could do it so well as all that ! '

" When other comrades heard of our success they said, ' If *they* can do it, *we* can.' And so they could ! Soon we were orating all over the area.

" But it wasn't only politics with us. We all enjoyed a swim so we formed a club. David said that we mustn't keep it to ourselves but ask the other Youth Organisations to join us. Of course they were only too pleased and so we scored another victory for unity when the Battersea Trade Union took it over.

" We girls had a group for gym and dancing, which we held at the ' People's Bookshop,' thanks to David, and he often rang up to ask if everything was O.K.

" It was also due to David's enthusiasm that so many of us took part in the Challenge Youth Festival. It was a wonderful rally. Girls dressed in the Spanish colours formed the flag of Spain, and hundreds of balloons with slogans were released and floated over our heads as we ran races. David joined up in some of the competitions and was as jolly over losing as if he had won a silver cup. He looked on that day with great affection and said, ' When the youth begin to march confidently and freely to demand their rights it is the beginning of the end of capitalism.' "

His services for Unity were recognised by all, as the following tributes of comrades show.

From Eric Joyce (Chairman, North Battersea League of Youth).

" We in the League of Youth owe much to David. It is true to say the whole of the leadership of the two leagues today was built up by him. Many evenings have we sat in cafés and argued until early morning on working-class policy. This work was rewarded by the success of the Y.A.C.'s meeting in aid of Spain, run by a united Battersea youth. Whatever was on, David was there, be it outdoor meetings, chalking, helping the Leagues of Youth, etc. ; nothing was too much trouble for him. When he left us the Leagues of Youth made him a presentation at a social which his mother attended, and which I feel sure was an evening few of us will ever forget.

" We feel that we have sustained a terrible loss, one which we cannot yet really understand or fully appreciate, but one that has taken us, heavy though the

price, a step nearer Unity and we know David would feel proud of that."

From Councillor W. J. Wye (Chairman, Battersea Aid Spain Committee).

" When the Battersea Trades Council, at its meeting in November 1936, decided to form a committee to recruit aid for Spain, David Guest, as delegate from the local Shop Assistants' Union, became one of its first members. The Battersea Branch of the Communist Party had held a meeting at Battersea Town Hall at which £45 had been collected, and at the first meeting of our Aid for Spain Committee, David Guest proposed that this money should be used as a basis to organise further meetings with the object of raising a sufficient sum of money to pay for a Battersea Ambulance to be sent to Spain. His proposal was agreed to and the Committee began its task.

" David Guest, fired with enthusiasm, got to work. His great ambition then became to see the ambulance on its way, and in January 1937 he astounded the Committee by interviewing the people at the Spanish Medical Aid Headquarters and making arrangements for an ambulance to be sent in the name of the Battersea Workers to the Workers of Spain, although at the time we had only collected just over £100. Ambulances were urgently needed and David was determined to see one sent from Battersea, so at the risk of treading on corns, he presented himself at the Headquarters of the Spanish Medical Aid Committee in Oxford Street one January afternoon and fixed the final screw to the plate dedicating our ambulance. He

was severely criticised by the local Committee but ably argued his reason for doing this. He said, 'Now the ambulance is sent out it will spur us on to raise the money.' He worked day in and day out, making frequent calls on me in the evenings with fresh ideas, making contact with various workshops, and prompting them to take collections. He gave us no rest—we must get the money. . . . Knowing David as I did, I was not surprised to learn soon after that he had left England to join the International Brigade in Spain.

"The comrades I am with here sink their party differences. They have one common objective, to save Spain. We need all the help you can give us. Please see that the work in Battersea does not falter. We are determined to win, we must win to save democracy for the workers.

DAVID GUEST."

(From a letter to Councillor W. J. Wye, Chairman, Battersea Aid Spain Committee.)

"The Memorial Meeting held at the Battersea Town Hall, Sunday evening, September 11th, 1938, was a real manifestation of the deep affection the people of Battersea had for him and Tom Oldershaw. Several thousand men and women, including forty members of the International Brigade, marched to the Town Hall to the slow beat of muffled drums of the South-West London Youth Band, and the North London Workers' Band. Portrait banners of David and Tom were carried by the marchers and a roll of honour bearing the names of Ralph Fox, D. Halleran, Mick Kelly and Martin Messer, other Battersea men killed in Spain.

" Battersea has seldom, if ever, witnessed so impressive a demonstration. The streets were lined with a tremendous crowd of sympathetic onlookers. The procession was nearly a mile long and it took an hour and a half to reach its destination. Both large and small halls were packed while an overflow meeting was held outside. On the main platform were representative speakers from all sections of the organised working-class movement, while two empty chairs with laurel wreaths were placed one each side of the chairman. A hundred pounds was collected for a fund for the dependants of the men of the International Brigade.

" The speeches will live for ever in the memory of those present, for both speakers and audience displayed such sincerity and devotion in paying their last tribute to these two great comrades."

From Bert Sines (a Battersea Member of the International Brigade).

" In 1936 the Fascists booked the Battersea Town Hall for a meeting which was cancelled by the Council owing to the great opposition in the locality, and for fear of a breach of the peace.

" When the anti-Fascists held a meeting in the Lower Town Hall, the enraged Blackshirts were determined to break it up. For this purpose between sixty and seventy of the worst East End toughs were imported, and the din they created outside made it impossible for the speakers to be heard.

" Without a word to anyone, David slipped out

of the hall. Before long he had secured a platform and held an outdoor meeting for the Fascist mob.

" Wondering what was the cause of the sudden silence, I went out to investigate and was amazed to find David standing there calmly hammering home fact after fact to an uproarious crowd of fist-shaking Fascists. Soon they began rowing among themselves. With one hand I supported the rocking platform and with the other I tried to push back the toughs. David carried on the meeting until the police finally dispersed the disrupters. A splendid anti-Fascist meeting was the result of David's presence of mind and resourcefulness. When he returned to the hall, he took his seat in the back quite unconcerned."

David did much personal work to influence the people to support the movement. We quote an example.

From Bill Davison :

" He changed me from an arm-chair socialist—not a highly theoretical socialist either—to a pretty active worker. He taught me, by example, that we must regard ourselves as professionals, not amateurs. Politics isn't our hobby, it's our life. Because of all this I always took him for granted as a material symbol of the movement. I remember how with glee he related that while in Russia the principal of his school led the way to the Metro with a shovel over his shoulder and how they sang songs of the workers on their way to do voluntary work. He had some guts, did Dave. . . ."

Nowhere was David's courage shown more than in Spain. I will always remember my last meeting with him. It was when I visited the British Battalion at Terrega. The Battalion was lying in reserve while the fighting was proceeding at the river. Everyone was keyed up ready to go into instant action should the occasion demand it. At the meeting I addressed we were continually interrupted by our own planes flying overhead and bombing the Fascist lines only a few miles away, and the dull explosions of the artillery shelling the Fascist lines.

I had previously asked Bob Cooney and Sam Wild how David was getting on. They were full of praise for his work and activity as they were also for his sister " Angel " as she was affectionately known everywhere.

The youth in the Battalion, of course, had their special meeting. As it was raining we lay amongst the straw in a barn lit by a candle stuck in a bottle. David wrote an account of it in *El Voluntario de la Libertad*:

" . . . It must be confessed that quite a number of comrades gatecrashed this meeting on bogus age-limit pretexts, claiming that for this purpose at any rate they belonged to the youth.

The purpose of the meeting was to answer those questions which we were asking so eagerly about the development of the youth movement in Britain. First and foremost the question of unity. What developments were taking place in the work between the Young Communist League and the Labour League of Youth? What success was attending the efforts of the newly formed Youth Peace Alliance to arouse the younger generation of Britain on the issue of Spain and Democracy?

To all these questions and many more Johnny replied with the utmost patience, and in a manner that brought the situation vividly home to us. . . . The meeting ended only as darkness drew on and we felt that a speaker who had been on the go all day ought to rest sometime. But a bit later when the camp fires were lit and comrades were singing in groups round the camp, Johnny came round to take messages home and chat with individual comrades."

David told me of the military and cultural work of the United Socialist Youth, of which he was secretary, and how they aspired to be real shock brigaders, proficient, keen and resolute. As usual, when confronted with a job like this, David gave a personal example ; he became an observer for the Battalion on an advanced outpost.

There was a youth committee of four : David as secretary, Maxie Nash of the Hackney Y.C.L., Frank Brown of the Salford League of Youth. These comrades were the finest types which our movement has ever produced. Nash was also killed on the Ebro, Frank Brown was seriously wounded, the Spanish comrade died and many others lost their lives. But the world knows that the magnificent efforts of the Republican Army, and the heroic part played by the International Brigade in this vital offensive held off Fascist attacks from the rest of Europe.

We have lost many of our best comrades in the Spanish struggle. They come from all walks of life and all sections of the movement. At one end we have comrades like Jimmy Rae of the Gorbals—one of the

best—unemployed, unpolished. If he represents one extreme, David represented the other. He was a great intellect and his knowledge of theory continually led him to practical things and it was therefore no accident that eventually he occupied the position he did in the Brigade.

Today there is not one of us who does not remember him with deep affection as well as respect. Quiet, modest, unassuming David Guest, frail in appearance, but with the heart of a lion. He epitomised Dr. Negrin's words addressed to "Internationals, dear brothers, brothers for ever" when he said farewell to the Internationals at Barcelona. Dr. Negrin said:

"You are of a fraternity which has been born on the battlefield, issue of the blood you have sacrificed and with which you have enriched our land and of the mortal remains of those who will rest for ever in Spain. . . .

"You, Internationals, came to Spain to defend our country, not on the order of any hierarchy but of your own will, to sacrifice, if necessary, that which is the most difficult of all things to sacrifice—life. You came to defend justice and right because you knew full well that here, in Spain, the liberty of the world was at stake. . . .

"You true representatives of your countries, hastened to help this people to defend their cause and to help them in the work of organisation. And this was a people which did not know its strength, and had to be helped. Today we have a powerful army, now completely Spanish, which is marching firmly and surely towards victory. . . .

"Your spirit, and the spirit of your dead, will remain for ever a part of history. The Government of the Republic knows and feels that those who have so valiantly fought at our side are truly our compatriots, and to you we say that, when this war is ended, you will have the right to demand Spanish citizenship. Thus shall honour be done to all.

"*Bon voyage*, International brothers. Continue this struggle among your peoples, that they may know the truth of what is happening in Spain, whilst our people continue your work in the firing line."

XIII

THE MATHEMATICIAN IN THE STRUGGLE

By H. Levy

(Professor of Mathematics, Imperial College of Science)

> "I could see in him the eternal conflict that tears asunder the souls of all that is best in the younger generation—the desire to enjoy the fruits of culture and the necessity to sacrifice oneself for its preservation."—H. L.

In the summer of 1931 a crowded audience of historians and scientists, interested in the history of their subject, listened with close attention to a series of papers read by delegates from the U.S.S.R., in a lecture room of the Science Museum, at South Kensington.

To the great majority of those present the standpoint consistently adopted by the speakers was a novel one, not easily grasped by a British audience of confused philosophical outlook. We were required to see scientific growth as an essential part of social development, to see the contributions of the scientists as the natural accretions to that growth as they strove

to solve the problems their society had thrown up, and so to enable us to estimate the individual scientist, no matter how eminent, in the social context in which he lived.

It was then that Hessen read his famous paper on Newton that has since served as a model for so many studies of other scientific men. The audience was a little uncomfortable; it wished to give gentlemanly attention to what these foreigners had to say; it could not believe that anything they could say would be at all significant; but at the same time it found the ideas presented to them so new and, from its point of view, so revolutionary as to make it impossible to form a judgment or to direct an intelligent attack. In short, at that particular moment, except to those of us who had already begun to think along these lines, the ideas were too novel to be absorbed, apparently too outrageous to be seriously considered or discussed. When the last speaker had finished and the time for discussion had arrived, those of us who might have spoken were temporarily tongue-tied by the difficulty of bridging the wide gap that had been disclosed between the speakers and the great majority of the audience, who so far as it was prepared to be tolerant, was silent because the ideas were too strange.

At this awkward moment a pale-faced young boy, sitting behind me, bent over and whispered in my ear:

"Do you think I ought to speak?"

"Yes," I answered immediately, "if you have something to say," secretly delighted that someone from the English side should have the courage to make

a contribution. And so this gawky lad stepped to the rostrum and quite easily, as if it were the most natural thing in the world, carried on the theme that had been expounded by " these foreigners."

In a short pointed speech he illustrated the general argument with reference to the outlook of English men of science, dealing in particular with Pearson and Russell. That was David Guest, and it was typical. At the critical moment he stepped into the breach feeling that the responsibility was his, and he carried it through triumphantly.

It is not easy for those who do not move in academic circles to visualise the forces at play in this and other situations connected with university life. The vilification of Russia that had so persistently been pursued in the National Press and that was being focused on the delegates during the congress, implied an atmosphere in which only a person who was prepared to espouse an unpopular cause and to throw his academic future to the winds would do battle. More than this; only a person of David's political understanding could appreciate that even the history of science and its discussion in that environment on that basis must make precisely the same types of demand upon his allegiance as would the more obvious major political issues. Only a person to whom the problem of poverty and the emancipation of the workers from wage slavery was a burning fire could feel called upon to make that decision and feel urged to act upon it on every occasion.

I knew David Guest as a young boy just before he went to Cambridge. I saw him at intervals through-

out his undergraduate career, and I made close contact with him during the succeeding period. On every occasion the question that was uppermost in his mind was—in what way is the work which I am doing of assistance in solving this fundamental problem? His life was a perpetual struggle in that sense, for it meant that the natural desire which he shared with every intellectual person, to explore those fields of thought that might bring him personally mental pleasure, were to be denied him or to be turned towards coping with the problems of social progress. On no other terms could he have mental peace. In dialectical materialism David Guest found just this unification, and time and again he swung back to his mathematical studies or to certain aspects of those studies, always in the effort to transform them into tools for his other problems. He was no bourgeois student in whose eyes everything was subservient to his mathematical and personal career.

In a time of comparative social quietude this would have offered no insuperable task, but David Guest lived in a period of turmoil in which the problems of today have become so acute and have penetrated so deeply as to embroil every sensitive person. With a boy of his temperament therefore it was natural that his political activities should appear to gain at the expense of his mathematical studies. The consequence was that he would spend himself for many months on end, unsparingly, on political education at Marx House, or among the unemployed, until for a sensitive soul like himself the physical and emotional strain would become unbearable. He would then return to

wrestle with philosophical errors of Bertrand Russell or to study the methods of teaching mathematics in such a way as to prevent the false idealism, latent in the orthodox approach, from poisoning the mind of the student.

I saw him in Russia where he had gone to recuperate after a particularly wearing spell. He sought me out in my hotel. Although I had not seen him for over a year, in two minutes he was deep in philosophy, translating passages for me out of a Russian work and discussing the subject of a paper he was writing for the journal *Under the Banner of Marxism* to which Lenin and so many other theoreticians had contributed.

David discussed Bertrand Russell and the Machists, the importance of coming to grips with the rising school of logical positivists in Vienna, and the ideas of Wittgenstein in Cambridge; he emphasised the danger of losing the essential parts of philosophy—those that were linked up with the day to day struggle —if one merely concerned oneself as they did, with verbal forms.

While recognising a value in the proper formulation of problems, as a good dialectical materialist he saw this as only one of the steps towards effective action. He pointed out the danger that the younger generation of scientists and philosophers might be lost to the active movement if they were side-tracked by a deficient and basically empty philosophy of this nature.

I was taken by David to see a *kolhoz*, or collective farm, about an hour's rail journey from Moscow. Fortunately, he knew exactly where to stand on the

platform so that we were able to enter the incredibly crowded train during its short halt at the station.

We visited a children's crèche situated in the centre of a wood, a swimming pool, and an open-air theatre for plays, lectures, organisational discussion and radio. It was one of the "sixth day" holidays. A young peasant who had won a bicycle as a prize for good factory work was learning to ride on a footpath. He sought desperately to remain glued at an impossible angle to the seat of his machine. Every now and again I heard the thud, as he failed. He did not utter a sound but kept on trying with amazing persistence. I gave him "a hand" before continuing my walk with David. From the hill-side we looked down on the workers who were sitting about intent on their books.

"I'd like to know what they are reading," I said.

"Let's go and look," he suggested.

It was astounding. With the exception of one old woman everybody was reading technical works on mathematics, physics, mechanics and chemistry. David remarked humorously that he might have "stage-managed" it for my benefit!

It was getting dark as we returned to the station. Three middle-aged country labourers passed us talking earnestly. A fragment of their conversation reached us. "What a change . . . don't you remember what the peasants were like a few years ago . . . ignorant and superstitious. . . . ?"

It was characteristic of David that although he had gone to Russia to recover from over-work he should have found it relaxation, not only to study philosophy and to read it in the Russian, but to teach in a school.

He was never the kind of theorist who would formulate his ideas in an abstract way in the isolation of a study, but always sought for ways to put them to the test. The meaning of this became obvious when he returned from Russia and settled in Battersea, carrying on propagandist education by running a series of classes on Marxism and establishing a bookshop. I can imagine what this must have meant in expenditure of energy knowing as I do something of his other activities.

He came to me with draft sets of lectures he was delivering on dialectical materialism, in which he was attempting to illustrate his points, not only from matter of current political importance but from many diverse fields of science.

The idea then took shape between us of working out a new approach to the teaching of mathematics on dialectical lines; of dealing with students at the early stages and for this purpose recasting the scheme of instruction, so that the successive steps in the mathematical development would show themselves as arising each out of the internal limitations and contradictions of the earlier stages.

The background in the method was a sketch of the social setting in which the mathematics developed, as efforts were made to resolve the problems of a practical nature that presented themselves at each such social period.

But it was important also to recognise that this relation between mathematics and its social background was a dialectical and changing one. Thus the relationship would not always be a severely practical one—on occasion theoretical and even abstract

problems of mathematical technique would emerge as of importance.

It became necessary to make clear how the struggle on the economic and social plane, and the confusion in that plane, were being reflected in struggles and confusions of a highly theoretical and abstract nature. In this David could bring to bear his very valuable knowledge of mathematical logic and his appreciation of the finer points around which there existed much confusion.

He took the matter very seriously, read a great deal and made copious notes. Some of the most enjoyable hours I have spent have been in discussing with him details of the projected text-book. There was one real difficulty. He found he had to rely on me for much of the practical teaching experience; and as a real dialectical materialist he could not be satisfied with confining himself purely to the theoretical aspect. I was not surprised therefore when he finally presented me with an ultimatum that he could not proceed until he had devoted more time to actual teaching. We can see how objective was his judgment and precise his self-criticism in such matters.

It was for that reason that I urged him to offer himself for a vacancy as a lecturer on mathematics at University College, Southampton.

At the time I lived in Winchester, only a few miles away, and was able to maintain contact with him while he was attached to the college.

His capacity to inspire others with something of his own enthusiasm is evident in the tributes from his friends on the staff.

The way in which David went to Spain was characteristic of his whole attitude. Having made up his mind, in spite of the attempts of certain of his friends to dissuade him, he carefully arranged all his affairs and quietly slipped off. It was not until he had actually reached the firing line that I learnt that he had gone.

A knowledge of mathematics is an asset in warfare, just as much of mathematical development has itself been evolved out of needs of war in the past. As an observer and topographer therefore, David found himself particularly useful, especially in relation to gun spotting and range finding. Moreover on the instructional side his specialised knowledge was an immediate asset to others less highly qualified than himself. It is related that at a military school some Spanish officers were trying to explain a rather complicated technical problem to a bewildered class. David came to the rescue and with a piece of chalk and a few strokes made the matter clear to the soldiers.

Even under the conditions at the front he lost no opportunity in awakening the interest of the Brigaders in the subjects in which he had specialised—philosophy and mathematics. The extent to which this was appreciated is clear from a letter from a young worker:

"A few days before we crossed the Ebro, David and I got to discussing philosophy, or perhaps it would be better to say that I had a lecture on it. I knew that David was a brilliant mathematician, but I could not see clearly the role of mathematics in philosophy. He explained it to me: Maths is not an exact science although for a general level of education

in bourgeois society it is sufficient to satisfy the average demand. But in socialist society when there are no artificial limits imposed on learning and culture, this 'inexactness' is not in keeping with the new philosophy and cannot satisfy it.

"By studying mathematics and making it the exact science it should be was preparing the way for the socialist advance.

"I am afraid that this is not very clear. I don't profess to understand the whole of the discussion despite David's patience in trying to drive it into me. . . .

"He was keen on his job and at all odd times he could be seen studying all kinds of text-books (procured I don't know how) to gain a better knowledge of his work."

David Guest and hundreds of other lads sacrificed their lives to atone for the blunders of the people at home. I could see in him the eternal conflict that tears asunder the souls of all that is best in the younger generation—the desire to enjoy the fruits of culture and the necessity to sacrifice oneself for its preservation. That such a dilemma should exist is one of the insanities of a stupid economic system.

How can one appraise a human being whom one knew so well and with whom one sympathised so closely? A rational and intelligent society would have known how to use his mental powers, his emotional fervour and his fineness of feeling. Released from the

urgent tasks thrown up for him by a feverish raging capitalism, David Guest would have made his contributions to mathematics and philosophy. If the world of science is temporarily the poorer for his going, finally it must be the richer for his struggles.

XIV

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, SOUTHAMPTON

> "I imagine that Shelley must have spoken of Eldon and Castlereagh with the same bitter contempt as that with which David used to speak of the National Government Ministers."
>
> V. de S. P.

§1 Some Memories

By V. de S. Pinto

(Professor of English Literature)

In the staff common room at University College, Southampton, I made the acquaintance of a young assistant lecturer in mathematics called David Guest. He was a slightly built young man with a stoop, a shock of very unruly dark brown hair, and peculiarly bright, piercing, humorous eyes. He attracted me from the beginning by his boyish frankness and enthusiasm, which were combined in a rather unusual way with sound judgment, much common sense and the keen, alert intelligence of a truly scientific mind. Politics were much discussed in the college at the time, and there was a great deal of debate about the news from Spain.

At meetings of the College Socialist Society, the Peace Council and other bodies, David spoke on the Spanish War, pleading for the Republican cause with passionate sincerity and great intellectual power. I was co-operating with some friends at the time in the formation of a college branch of the London University Labour Party. David supported this movement wholeheartedly, but he was very far from being a narrow party politician. He disliked the official Labour policy of political isolation, and was an ardent supporter of the Popular Front. He used to stress the importance of including in it honest and fair-minded Conservatives and Liberals as well as Socialists and Communists. He said once that he wanted a Popular Front that would extend from Lord Cecil to Harry Pollitt !

I can also remember him saying that his complaint against the " National Government " was that it was not national at all, and that what he wanted was a National Government of the left. I think I have never met anyone who *felt* so strongly with regard to political matters as David seemed to feel. Most Englishmen, even when they have very strong convictions, are placid, unemotional politicians. When David spoke of events in Abyssinia or in Spain, his voice would tremble with emotion and tears would actually come into his eyes ; it seemed as though the cause of liberty was part of the man himself, and that whenever human beings were oppressed, or whenever might triumphed over right he had received a personal injury. He often reminded me of the young Shelley. I imagine that Shelley must have spoken of Eldon and

Castlereagh with the same bitter contempt as that with which David used to speak of the National Government ministers. Pity for human suffering and hatred of cruelty and injustice were no mere comforting words to him as they are to most men, but burning and overmastering passions.

I can remember very well a meeting of the little staff labour group at Southampton to which David read a paper on Abyssinia, and I can still see him hunched up in his chair in a typically boyish attitude with his notes in his hand and his long hair falling over his eyes. The paper had been carefully prepared. He had all the facts at his finger-tips and he brought forward an imposing array of evidence to show that the western powers had really connived at Italian aggression before a shot was fired. Then he spoke of the Abyssinian troops with their primitive weapons and the unarmed peasants and their women mown down by Italian bombs and machine guns. He had the true gift of the imaginative orator, and no speaker that I have ever heard has given a more effective demonstration of the truth of Horace's advice to the tragic actor, " Si vis me flere dolendum est primum ipsi tibi." He made us see the horror of the torn and bleeding naked bodies and share his passionate indignation. On another occasion I can remember him speaking at a meeting of the " Students Peace Council " in favour of a protest against the bombings in Spain. To the audience of students he spoke in a simpler style emphasising the ease with which such a town as Southampton could share the fate of Bilbao, Madrid and Alicante.

It was generally believed at college that "young Guest" would leave us soon, and take up politics as a profession. If he had lived I believe he would have been a most effective politician because his idealism was combined with a strong sense of reality and a genuine gift for organisation.

I went for walks with him sometimes and on one of these occasions he spoke to me about his early life. I had been talking to him about my two boys and complaining of the difficulties of parents in finding good schools and also in finding out from their children whether they are really happy at school. He rather surprised me by the intense bitterness with which he spoke about "one of those horrible places called preparatory schools" (I think those were his precise words) where he received his early education. I asked him why he did not complain to his parents, and he answered rather pathetically that he never thought of complaining, and that most children never complained because they believe that all schools are the same, and that the petty tyrannies which they endure are inevitable, and part of an unalterable scheme of things.

He spoke with enthusiasm of the period which he spent as a teacher in Russia and paid a very warm tribute to education under the Soviets.

"It was necessary," he said, "to go to Russia and experience the atmosphere of hope and renewal in the schools there to realise what socialism meant." Such an atmosphere was what David needed; he was a true apostle of liberty, a revolutionary prophet. Yet, although his political convictions were ardent, he was

always courteous in argument and scrupulously fair to his opponents. Even the sternest Tories in the college could not help liking and respecting him.

When I heard he was going to Spain, I was not surprised for I knew that the Spanish tragedy had been working like fire in his blood for months. He said good-bye to me one day in the long corridor of the University College and for weeks afterwards I had the curious impression that he was still at college and that I should find him in the common room and hear his eager, boyish voice again.

I wrote to him when he was in Spain and received the following reply :

" S.R.I. 161
Barcelona
21 June 38.

DEAR PINTO,

I am taking the opportunity of sending back a letter through someone going to England, to thank you for your very heartening letter of last month.

This is a peculiar war. While for the individual soldier it is in some ways not so terrible as the great war, lacking the concentrated mass slaughter per square kilometre, yet in other ways, because of the lack of training and poor equipment (thanks to non-intervention) of the government army, we have difficulties that trained soldiers in the army of prosperous British Imperialism would find difficult to imagine. These difficulties are made up for by the extraordinary enthusiasm and good-humoured readiness to bear things of the rank-and-file soldier.

It was very kind of you to offer to send me something —one is always glad to read books here, poetry is especially popular. But I wonder if you could get any support from

our friends in the common room towards purchasing a pair of binoculars,* with which to observe the enemy somewhat better than with the naked eye! If you find this not too ambitious a project, a simple French (prismatic) compass would be much welcome. At present I have to find direction by stone-age methods.

Best wishes to all at U.C.S."

§2 David the Intellectual

By H. S. Ruse

(*Professor of Mathematics*)

David Guest was appointed a Demonstrator in Mathematics at University College, Southampton, in June 1937, and took up his duties in the following October. He left after two terms saying that he had "important business" elsewhere, but giving no indication of its nature. Evidently he did not wish to become involved in discussions about a matter upon which his mind was made up.

Early in the following term it was learnt that he had gone to Spain to fight on the Government side.

His personality quickly impressed itself upon the college. "I like your new man Guest," people said to me soon after he joined the staff, while even those who disagreed most strongly with his political opinions respected his intelligence and dialectical skill.

* The binoculars were sent to me by Professor Pinto and other members of the staff to forward to David. They arrived too late in Spain; he did not have the pleasure of receiving them. They were given to the Brigade.—C. H. G.

Intellectually he thrived in the atmosphere of free and critical discussion with which he found himself surrounded. He became the centre of vigorous arguments with his immediate colleagues about subtle points of mathematical logic, and with them and others about the political and social questions that formed his main interest. His intense devotion to philosophical and practical Communism did not, however, lead to any neglect of his work. His duties consisted mainly of lecturing upon Applied Mathematics, in the teaching of which he was particularly interested.

When I think of him now I have three main pictures of him in my mind: first, as the focus of animated political and philosophical discussions in the College Senior Common Room; second, as a lucid lecturer explaining in a Seminar in Mathematical Logic why, in common with other logicians, he thought the Dedekind Theory of Real Numbers unsound; and third, as a companion on walks in the woods near Southampton. During those walks we argued and talked. He told me humorously of occasions in which he had found himself the victim of zealous police officials at home and abroad. He was no fanatic, although a few who knew him only slightly thought him so; he had too keen a sense of humour. For the most part, however, we discussed philosophical questions which at that time seemed to me interesting though somewhat academic, but were to him of vital importance because they formed the basis of his political convictions. I betrayed a certain sympathy with the outlook of the logical-positivists. Yes, he said, he had passed through that stage too, but had

gone beyond it to Dialectical Materialism. It was a new idea to me that the latter could be regarded as an advance on the former, for it seemed that, although the logical-positivists did not perhaps go far enough in their rejection of traditional modes of thought, their general ideas were altogether more flexible, and therefore more suited to a changing world, than the rigid dogmas of the Marxists. But I spoke as an amateur and he as an expert in philosophy, so that he invariably had the best of the argument even when I remained obstinately unconvinced. These friendly and stimulating woodland conversations remain in my memory as the most vivid thing about him.

Even in the midst of war he retained his interest in abstract argument. Two days before the news of his death was published in the newspapers I received a letter from him, forwarded by his mother, who had brought it with her from Spain. It had been written a month previously, on July 5th. It began with a reference to an earlier letter (which I had never received), and went on :

" Well out here, of course, we are in the thick of it, but strangely enough there is less tension in the air than in England. And we also feel more optimistic than people seem to feel at home. Perhaps that is because we are directly in contact with the intensely living force of the Spanish people, struggling with tremendous energy against the dark forces that are threatening to crush it. Of course, one cannot help feeling at times a little irritated by the slow progress of things in England, which is mainly responsible for the tremendous sacrifices here.

Another thing—I have by no means lost interest in

mathematical, logical and general scientific questions. I have even come to realise here more intensely than ever before what these things mean to me. But I also understand that the world in which it will be possible to secure a real all-sided development can only be won by a hard struggle—a struggle which cannot be shirked or escaped. In the most difficult stages of this struggle one gets courage precisely from a lively faith in this world of culture from which to some extent one is shut out by the circumstances of the struggle itself.

Well, I am afraid it is now getting dark, and I must give this to the ' postman,' or otherwise if I send it through the post you may never get it.

So best of all wishes, both to you and our many friends on the U.C.S. staff, and I very much hope to get the opportunity of meeting you all again."

In this note I have purposely endeavoured to give a small personal picture of David Guest the intellectual, for it was that side of him which showed up most clearly in a university setting. Of David Guest the human being little more need be said than that he made a host of friends during his short stay in Southampton, and that they remember him with affection and admiration. No one who knew him at all well could fail to like him for his kindliness and charm, or to admire him for his keen intelligence and conscientious work. When his death was announced, more than one of his friends exclaimed, " What a waste ! " Yet who knows ? He has left his mark on all who knew him, and that mark has been made indelible by the circumstances of his death.

XV

SPAIN FIGHTS FOR FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY

INTRODUCTION

By Dr. Hewlett Johnson, Dean of Canterbury

Spain, once wealthy, adventurous and prosperous, with vast dominions overseas, had sunk in the twentieth century to a third-rate power; her natural resources undeveloped, her land unirrigated and her peasantry plunged in direst poverty. The feudal ruling class were to blame.

A legitimate Spanish Government, liberal and democratic in character, containing as yet no single communist member, and seeking only such reforms as are common to all democratic lands, was elected in February 1935 and endeavoured to bring Spain into line with modern progressive states.

This government was attacked in July 1936 by a military clique allied with the reactionary feudal ruling classes. Plottings with the Italian and German dictators preceded the attack, German military planes bound for Spain being forced down in French Moroccan territory two days before hostilities began.

The dictators, indeed, gave willing and continuous aid to the rebels, supplying them with planes, guns, tanks and men, in pursuit of definite objectives;

Italy seeking possession of Majorca and eastern Spain ; and Germany desiring the Canary Islands, the Spanish frontiers which faced France, the Atlantic Ocean, Portugal and Gibraltar. These territories promised to become invaluable bases for further attacks upon the democratic nations, gravely endangering England by sea and France by land and sea. The war in Spain quickly became a foreign invasion.

A so-called but farcical non-intervention policy has deprived the Spanish Government of the weapons of defence to which by international law it was entitled, whilst leaving the rebels with undiminished supplies ; France and England strictly observing the pact and closing their frontiers ; Germany and Italy continuing to send supplies by land, sea and air. Only the governments of Mexico and the U.S.S.R. gave the Spanish Republic moral and material aid in accordance with international law, and the principle of democratic solidarity against Fascist aggression. Unfortunately Spain is as accessible by air from Germany and Italy as it is inaccessible from Russia.

For upwards of two years the Republican Government withstood what soon became a foreign invasion, by means of an army which, beginning as an unarmed, untrained, but willing citizens' militia, grew into a highly skilled, disciplined and well-led army 700,000 strong. Outnumbered six to one by planes and guns and tanks its strength lay in its soldiery, and in the national determination at all costs to resist the Fascist invaders. But the mechanical odds proved at length too great for human flesh and blood to stand.

Many lying statements alienated the sympathy which the Spanish Republic merited, and robbed it of the

help it deserved as the spearhead of democratic resistance to Fascist aggression.

There was the lie that Spain had begun a "red" *revolution; her cabinet in July 1936 contained no* member of the Communist Party.

There was the lie that General Franco had begun the war through Russian plots in Spain.

There was the lie that the Republic had banished religion and was exterminating priests and nuns and continuing to the end the prohibition of religious worship. The Basques who fought in the republican ranks were Catholics. I visited their churches and worshipped in them. A reactionary Church, allied with feudal landlords and the military clique, had indeed in many parts of Spain suffered terrible things at the hands of the infuriated people, but the excesses were perpetrated in spite of the government's will. I saw monuments such as the Cathedral of Barcelona remaining secure until damaged by General Franco's bombs.

To say that the Republican Government had "liquidated" the Catholic clergy was wholly untrue; when I visited Barcelona for the second time in August 1938 there were 2,000 priests there and no hindrance was placed by the government on the exercise of their priestly functions. On the other hand, I have in my possession the photograph of the letter written by Dr. José Maria Torrens, Vicar General of Barcelona, from his house in Barcelona on April 8th, 1938, to the President of the Basque Government giving grudging permission for Easter Mass to be said at No. 5 Calle del Pino, but adding that public worship was not authorised by his authority.

I might add in this connection that the government

helped hundreds, if not thousands, of clergy and nuns, during the deplorable and understandable chaos of the early days of the military attack, to find a refuge. Amongst the instances of this that could be given the most notable was that of Cardinal Vidal i Barraquer, Primate of Catalonia, one of the Bishops who refused to sign the Spanish Bishops' Pastoral letter in defence of the rebel régime.

Foreign soldiers fought on both sides through all the war; Germans and Italians for the rebels, and English, French, Americans, and even Germans and Italians, besides other nationalities, on the government side. The motives on either side, however, were totally different. The German and Italian troops fighting for General Franco were regulars, sent out by their respective governments; Mussolini boasted of the exploits of the Italian troops.

The International Brigade, on the other hand, who fought on the government side, were volunteers, hazarding, and in many cases giving, their lives for liberty, justice, mercy and humanity in the struggle against a Fascist menace which openly scorns international brotherhood, and despises and would obliterate the customs and institutions and practices which some of us call Christianity and others call civilisation.

For the moment these men, and the cause for which they fought, seem beaten. That is a low estimate and I believe a wholly false one. They are seed dropped in the ground, seed of immense potency, and the day will come when the things for which they died will triumph and in that triumph I, for one, am firmly convinced they will consciously share.

REASONS FOR MY DECISION. 1938

(A note found among David's papers)

Today we have certainly entered a period of crisis, when the arguments of " normal times " no longer apply, when considerations of most immediate usefulness come in. That is why I have decided to take the opportunity of going to Spain.

It is true that during my short stay at Southampton I have been able to do a certain amount of good work, and might be able to do still more. However a great deal of my time would continue to be taken up by routine mathematical work (teaching). And the very growth of ordinary political work would make it Utopian to expect to do much philosophy and mathematical logic.

Against this must be put the supreme necessity of maintaining the British Section of the International Brigade, with its prestige in both Spain and Britain. How highly the party regards this task may be seen from the many leading party and Y.C.L. comrades who have gone—comrades whose organising capacity and experience is bound to be missed in this country. Now I believe that my personal knowledge of many young comrades of the Brigade, and also, I hope, my organising ability will be of real help to the brigade. There is also the need to show that there is no division between party, " workers " and " intellectuals " over this matter, particularly in view of the large number of young workers who have gone from Battersea. Finally, I believe that the experience of the struggle will give me just those qualities of practical life that I lack.

My short experience of University life was useful. But in a world of wars and revolutions new tasks are on the agenda. Let us see that they are carried out.

IN SPAIN

THE INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE

By CARMEL HADEN GUEST

" Never mind me—carry on—get the men up the hill."—DAVID

The spring vacation had commenced and I was looking forward to seeing David. It is true that he had not mentioned his plans, but his elfin habit of appearing and disappearing unexpectedly encouraged me to listen hopefully for his footsteps and for the sound of his latchkey. Instead, a letter came ; it had been posted in London some days after he had left.

" It is difficult for me to begin this letter," he wrote, " because I know it will be painful for you. I am going away—you know where—as a result of a decision I made before the beginning of last term, which has been strengthened and reinforced by all the events since then. . . . I want you to realise that this decision has been completely realistic and unsentimental. It has certainly not been hurried, as I have had ample time to think over it. It is consistent with my work in the party and my whole development in the last six years. . . . It has required an incredible effort to concentrate on pure mathematics when the world seems on fire. By force of circumstances, and ultimately because of the impossibility of planning my individual future under capitalism, all my energies and feelings have been directed into Socialist channels.

I want you, Mother, to feel no regret at my going. Whatever happens in the short run, I face the future

calmly and optimistically because I know things will turn out as we want ultimately. Well, cheerio, I hope things will be looking a bit brighter when I see you again.

Best love."

I must confess that the thought of David's soldiering in Spain frightened me. At school he was not considered strong enough for the O.T.C. and I asked myself how he would stand the terrifically cold nights in the Pyrenees, often sleeping in drenched clothes—the want of nourishing food, and the ghastly strain of modern warfare. What about his lungs and the doctor's repeated warnings? Could his buoyant spirit triumph over his frail body?

I received a letter from Ivor Montagu, after David was killed, in which he wrote, "When I saw David at the front, I had a presentiment that he would not survive the war. Not that this was founded on anything more substantial than the realisation that one so generous as he was likely to have countless opportunities in the military world to sacrifice himself for others in little chores and dangers."

Thoughts such as these were also uppermost in my mind. During the first long night after I learnt that he had gone, and the time of strain that followed, it was only David's words that sustained me, "I want you, Mother, to feel no regret at my going." But the anxiety was still there—for the inevitable rumours were going around; rumours that Fascist snipers were hiding in the mountains to shoot the volunteers on their long and dangerous climb across the Pyrenees to join the Republican Army. Nor did the weeks that passed without news help to reassure me. Only two

of the many letters he sent to me through the post arrived. The first I received was brought by hand.

" April 1st.

DEAR MOTHER,

Well, here we are and I already feel as though I had been here for months. It has taken me only a few days to get used to a very new kind of life, and my only objection is that it is rather like going back to school. But seriously, I am more convinced than ever that I was right to come. To live at such a time as this and take part in so magnificent a struggle is the greatest honour that can fall to anybody. This is one of the most decisive battles every fought for the future of the human race, and all personal considerations fade into insignificance by the side of it.

Here in Spain one feels far more hopeful than perhaps in England for, in spite of the tremendous forces of mechanised warfare that are being thrown against us by the German and Italian fascists, one sees also the still only partially tapped resources of the Spanish people, and the weaknesses whose elimination can lead to victory, even against such odds. But of course ultimately we must break through the arms blockade and get aeroplanes. God how they are needed and would change the situation.

If only I had more time to write and it were possible to write everything as it will be after the war, there is much of tremendous interest that I could put down. The splendid German and Austrian comrades I have met in the brigade and the story of how they escaped from their countries would make a wonderful piece of history. I have just received your letter and will look at it more closely again later. I have a job to do just now. Please excuse this rather hasty scrawl.

I will write more fully later.

Best love."

I was asked whether I would allow David's letter to appear in *Challenge*. I wrote for his permission, but receiving no reply I agreed that it should go in. David's answer came after it had appeared:

"DEAR MOTHER,

I am constantly writing to you but none of my letters seem to arrive. Enclosed is a letter for Dorothy* and a terrible picture. By the way, I would rather you didn't publicise me as you suggest in your last letter. It would not be justified—I have only been on a very quiet sector yet. Now we are in a rest position; my job is observer, a kind of scout."

In the letter to the Y.C.L. comrade, to which he refers above, he writes:

"I have met a number of Party and Y.C.L. comrades I know, but, unfortunately, not one of the Battersea or S.W. comrades, for reasons which you will know from the Press. While I can't get definite reports about some, others were included in the first list given out by Franco of captured prisoners, and some are wounded in hospital. However, the spirit of the British battalion is wonderful, and we are optimistic about the outcome of the war. This spirit comes from realising the mistakes and weaknesses on our own side, whose elimination by the new Government will doubtless defeat Franco even against such terrific odds; but we are getting more aeroplanes and artillery. There is a tremendous increase in the enthusiasm of the Catalonian people to produce more armaments. But what a difference if Non-Intervention and Chamberlain were smashed!

I was very interested to hear about Battersea events. You would be surprised at the extent to which comrades

* Dorothy Woodard.

follow the situation in England and discuss local politics. Of course roles here are often reversed, comrades having shown themselves to have military ability who are not so prominent at home, and vice versa.

. . . I assure you I have had a haircut—in fact shortly after that picture was taken I had all my hair off (for reasons of cleanliness) and for a time went about looking more like a Professor than ever before. Well, now my hair's grown and I've also acquired a beret, so I look younger again, which is appropriate as I have to continue to do youth work, particularly 'political active' work. . . . I am trying the difficult job of organising the United Societies Socialist Youth of the Battalion. To combine political and military work is a job of a difficulty I think never imagined by Y.C.L.ers at home. Tomorrow I am going to a meeting with members of the United Socialist Youth. . . . Well, Dorothy, thank you for your detailed information about the local position. The comrades out here were very tickled to hear of damages being secured against the Police. By the way, I am in the same Company (Headquarters section) with John Longstaff of the Wandsworth L.L.Y., he is getting on swell. I also see Frank sometimes and of course I am in the same Company as Bert Sines and continually see him. So we have a S.W. fraction and keep well together. Just now it is getting a bit late, so cheerio!"

"DEAR MOTHER,

I wonder if you could send me my slide rule; I left this very important weapon at home. I would also like a small book on map making and surveying, hints on observation of positions, etc., all adapted for use with very primitive instruments. Finally, could you get some large scale maps of Spain (as large as possible) and send them by a reliable way since such things tend to get lost. I will write again soon when there is more news.

You will probably know more than I about the general situation in Spain. While the Fascists are still advancing, the Catalonians are throwing themselves into the struggle with amazing energy and there is every reason to expect the Fascists to be held up again and driven back. Well, it is getting too dark to write, so cheerio."

There were long intervals without news, but I had occasional glimpses of David through the letters that Bert Sines, who had served in the Great War, wrote to his wife.

"I am positive that David will make a good soldier. He is doing great work out here. Last night while on advance outpost duty who should poke his head round the foxhole, but our David, as an observer . . . Of course, there is a lighter side to things, such as lads trying on the lingo, also to see our David, proud as a peacock in our front rank on the march, rifle on shoulder, surging along to the mouth-organ music."

Letter from David to Bob Gorham.

"11 June, 1938.

DEAR BOB,

Many thanks for your letter which was very interesting about Battersea, but I am sorry you did not appear to have received my letter which I wrote to you about a month previously. However, the post is a very difficult and uncertain quantity here, for reasons which are obvious and cannot be avoided. I am specially glad to hear about the new recruits to the branches, and I hope that they will be brought into interesting kinds of activity and given the political education that will make them firm and reliable

members. The more different kinds of activity we can develop in the Y.C.L. the better, and I'm sure we should still be bold in experimenting in organisation so as to develop these activities. We should not hesitate to scrap any kind of organisation that stands in the way or has not proved a success.

I was also glad to hear that the Comrades had at last woken up to the importance of the B.Y.P.A. and the Youth Peace Alliance. I used to have a very hard job in Battersea to persuade some of our much-esteemed ' revolutionary ' comrades of the importance of this work. I will say now that the experiment of Spain shows that he who is not prepared to work for the unity of British youth along these lines is no revolutionary at all, but a mere phrase-monger and reactionary.

Over here I have been connected with the work of youth organisation in the army, being in fact responsible for the United Socialist Youth in the battalion. Of course, it is not always very easy to combine political work with definite military responsibilities, and one sometimes has to go without one's food and sleep in order to achieve this. Some day I hope to be able to give to our Y.C.L. comrades a very interesting account of how the work of the ' political activists ' (shock brigades) of the army is carried out. Meanwhile, there is some more work to go and do, so cheerio.

Best wishes to you, Bob, and to the whole Battersea Y.C.L."

" 24th May, 1938.

DEAR MOTHER,

Just another letter by Gollan to say I received the books O.K. and was very glad to get them. If you are coming out in June I should be very glad to get a good Spanish grammar, also a book known as the *Manual of Map-*

reading and Field Sketching and any more or less military books would be much welcome. Also Briggs' *Elementary Astronomy*. I am very busy just now, love.

Chocolate much appreciated. Any sweets with prolonged sucking properties would be welcome."

"DEAR MIRIAM,

Most certainly thanks for your letter and for the unity song, which I will go over again when I can get the use of a piano.

I am sitting down now taking a rest for a bit in a field and enjoying the June sunshine of Spain—though I wish it were warmer. Yes, the weather in this peculiar country is most paradoxical. It is either so hot that you almost die of thirst, or so cold and wet that you can hardly believe it is summer. But these are trivialities (except when you sleep out of doors!).

Well, just now we are in a 'rest' position and putting in some hard training. The Spanish Army takes every advantage of opportunities to complete training and recently its ranks have been swelled by large numbers of new recruits with a very high morale and discipline, but needing to acquire military knowledge. This is very rapidly attended to and I think that Franco, whose main plans have been again frustrated, will shortly get some very nasty shocks.

Our Company has just volunteered to give half our bread ration and our chocolate (our only occasional luxury) to the local children who are having a 'Fiesta,' not bad, is it? This is typical of the relations of the army and the people.

Another characteristic of the army is the educational work, particularly the work aimed at achieving universal literacy. As a 'political active' in the army, this is one of

my responsibilities, so you see I am still carrying on educational work. Even mathematics is necessary here, particularly in the work with which I am concerned, the work of observation, etc.

Well, some day, I will have very interesting stories to tell. For the present there is a lot of work to do both here and in England. Best wishes."

" Somewhere in Spain,

July 5th, 1938.

DEAR LEVY,

It was very encouraging to get your letter, and I notice what you say about the storm-charged atmosphere of England. Yes, you are quite right about the sensation of relief that one gets in Spain, where the ' downpour ' has already started. At the same time I think one can see things in better perspective and with greater optimism about the future.

Fascism is obviously throwing its main forces desperately into the struggle, regardless of cost. Much of the material sent to Spain (e.g. Messerschmidt aeroplanes) is of the most up-to-date 1938 make. The democratic forces have, as we know, been almost paralysed during this time, and have scarcely shown their potential force. Yet, what an amazing resistance has been put up to the Fascist offensive by largely isolated, scattered, democratic vanguards. It is this that gives confidence that when the issue is ultimately joined we must be successful. But at what cost, and must we pass through the World War that Chamberlain is doing his best to prepare for us ? It seems to me that it is the latter question which is now being decided by the military struggle in Spain and the political struggle in Britain. I may add that we ' Internationals ' are not at all keen to return to our countries to take part in a nice, new World War !

I have just received the instruments, prismatic compass and binoculars brought by my Mother and I must thank you for advising her about them. They are badly needed here when stone-age methods of direction-finding have sometimes to be employed. (By the way, after the war, I should be able to make some really nice practical illustrations for the textbook we are going to write.)

In your letter you speak slightingly of epsilon, but I always think affectionately of it. Indeed, quite seriously, I have never felt so much the value of abstract things, of theory seen in its proper relation with practice, than just now. Perhaps just because the atmosphere here is clearer than in England, where ever since 1931 (and in fact earlier) I have felt oppressed by the sense of approaching political storms, I think I can see things in their proper proportions. I have myself a lively and intense desire to explore whole fields of theoretical work, mathematical, physical, logical, and far beyond these when the conditions for this will become again possible. And this work, linked up with active political work, especially in those fields where I am really most effective, seems far more important to me than it did. But of course, this is not possible now. 'Today the struggle.' Yet the confidence that it will be possible some time in the future, if I survive (and if I don't, the work will be taken up by other people), gives one the strength to overcome many difficulties, is a source of tremendous and unsuspected power. It is a form of belief in the value of human life, reflected through those aspects of human activity that have affected me most deeply.

Well I don't know if these badly-expressed thoughts will convey anything to you, but they are some results of the experience of Spain and more polished expression can come afterwards. Meanwhile, the immediately important thing is to carry on the fight, and it is very heartening to know that the same fight is being carried on in England

also. As for your offer to send out technical books, etc., I will gladly accept it and meanwhile ask for any good book you know on principles of map projections, etc., also for a book on optics and optical instruments. Anything on bullet or shell trajectories and air-resistance, etc., would be interesting, although I am not directly connected yet with artillery."

" June 11th.

DEAR MOTHER,

It would certainly be splendid to see you if you can come, but don't let such a visit interfere with your work. Well, I'm still alright and in very good health. Thanks for the toffee ; I am looking forward to your parcels but they haven't yet arrived. Bert had one and shared the contents with me. I am afraid we get rather materialistic, in the crude sense, out here, but you know a bar of English chocolate means quite a lot ! . . .

Well, if you get this letter before you come, I should like you to bring some of the following articles, a small water bottle, watch, prismatic compass, knife with corkscrew attached (this doesn't mean I've taken to drink, but a knife with necessary parts is very useful). I am looking forward to seeing you or at any rate hearing from you soon. Yours with best love."

This letter came while I was in Spain, but on the day I left London I received a line asking me to bring some of the things mentioned, so I rushed out at the last minute to get them.

On the way to Barcelona I spent two nights in Paris ; from there I continued by train to Perpignan, arriving in the early hours of Sunday morning. A car took me to the frontier. The remainder of the journey I travelled quite comfortably in a military motor bus with civilians,

chiefly women and children. Barcelona had changed a great deal since the previous year, when I had been in Spain distributing milk and clothes on behalf of the "Women's Committee Against War and Fascism." It had become a war city and the people were facing the hardships and dangers with the indomitable spirit of the Madrilenos. By Monday afternoon, my permits were in order to go to the Ebro front and I was given a lift by an American journalist. It took us nearly four hours to get there as the car broke down on the way.

We passed through villages and towns, with houses flattened out by bombs, or with walls half blown away and showing the ravaged interiors. These exposed rooms accentuated the horror of aerial warfare; it was so easy to imagine the victims going about their daily tasks when they were bombed out of existence! As we passed through Falset I could see many English soldiers on the road. We went on to a small village a couple of kilometres away called Marcia, where we left my suitcases at the Cabo School (School for Corporals).

From a sentry we learned that David was at a Youth meeting. Near the Brigade headquarters we found a crowd of soldiers.

I searched round eagerly, but it was dusk and I couldn't see him in the dense mass of khaki. Suddenly a hand seized my shoulder, I was swung round and kissed. For a moment I didn't recognise the shadowy figure—he was so thin and tattered. Simultaneously we exclaimed, "David!" and "Mother!"

It was good to be with him again. David was saying, "This is my mother" and the boys were

gazing at me as though I had arrived on a magic carpet. The binoculars and compass that I had brought for him caused a sensation. They were passed from hand to hand and examined. "Isn't it fine, a prismatic compass. . . . And look, my mother's brought me these binoculars. Now we shall really be able to find the Fascist guns." They all wanted to look through the glasses.

"You must speak to my Company Commander, Lewis Clive," David said, "he's tremendously popular. I know you'll like him."

"Lewis Clive! Why, I've a bundle of letters for him." He was standing by my side, smiling down at me—a tall, bronzed young man, very handsome, with the most friendly and cheerful countenance in the world.

I had brought a copy of his book, *The People's Army*, that had just been published.

In the dark school at Marcia we unpacked my suitcase by the flicker of a cigarette lighter. Bert Sines, whose wife had sent him a parcel, was with us. When they saw the chocolates and cigarettes and Lewis received his book they were as jubilant as schoolboys.

Lewis Clive describes the day's events in a letter to a friend at home:

"*Everything has been happening in the last twenty-four hours. . . . Last night the four Labour Councillors now with the Battalion were sent for to go down to the neighbouring village to see Andre Marty. We found the place pretty lively with the Americans celebrating 'Independence Day' by a feast. Later on one of the Brigade officers said Mrs. Haden Guest was there, could we please*

find her boy who is in the company. It never occurred to me she had letters from you, but I decided to hang around just for the sake of seeing someone from home. Also her boy David had given pretty glowing accounts of her. Eventually we all met up. . . . She produced your lovely bunch of letters, cigarettes in a great handful (besides yours), a packet of chocolate and finally and utterly unexpectedly the book. What a night! . . .

We have just been sent to this company a Teniente (lieutenant) who has brought a gramophone with a lot of good music, and whenever it plays twenty soul-starved men gradually gather round."

There had been no tobacco rations for a long time and some of the men suffered intensely from a craving for a smoke. In this respect David was fortunate, for although he enjoyed a cigarette occasionally, it was no deprivation for him to be without. He took the box I brought him and later divided the contents among his company (one for each of those who yearned so desperately for a smoke).

Early next morning David walked into my bedroom in the little cottage where I was staying. We went into an orchard nearby and sat under the trees. It was wonderfully peaceful and beautiful. An old peasant passed with a small girl on a mule. A little dog on a string trotted after him. He turned round and greeted us with "Salud!" There was a feeling of real friendliness between the boys of the Brigade and the Spanish peasants.

David's sunburnt face (the skin was peeling off his nose) was as keen as ever and his eyes were sparkling, but his blade-thin body was lost in a cotton jacket sizes too large for him, and his khaki trousers were torn in many places. Bits of rope soles attached

by tapes to his ankles, was all that was left of his footgear.

He said that he had not met Angela in Spain, but he was proud of what he had heard of her work from a Comrade who had seen her with an ambulance during the Battle of Guadarrama.

I pressed him to tell me how he had fared when crossing the Pyrenees. It had been a difficult all-night climb, over terrifically steep and rugged mountains. You had to feel your way from ledge to ledge, clutching hold of the gorse ; when daylight came you were amazed that you had managed to scale such precipitous heights in the dark.

When he had reached the little town of Figueras, he had been sent by train to Albacete, and from there to the training camp for English-speaking volunteers. This was at the time when the rebels were pushing on towards the coast of Tortosa. A few days later David had been sent with others of the International Brigade to Catalonia. The train had been mounted with machine guns and every time the Fascist planes appeared the train had halted to allow the men to leap out and run into the fields for safety. The most critical moments had been the " snail's pace crossing " of the bridge at Tortosa.

They had stayed at Tarragona a day and gone on to meet the rest of the British Battalion who were in reserve, guarding the banks of the Ebro and fortifying the river bed. David's work was to locate machine-gun posts. At times, when he could not get back before dawn, he was out for twenty-four hours on end. One night he was nearly shot by his own side who had

mistaken him for the enemy, and he was only just in time to save himself by calling out, "Steady, comrades, I'm not a bloody Fascist."

From the window of a rickety hut, where the officers of the Battalion had their mess, I could see David with the other soldiers eating hunks of bread, which they dipped into a thinnish soup. In the afternoon he was given leave to be with me and he pointed out the "chibola" where he slept with four comrades. The sides of the shelter were made of stones and tree trunks and the roof consisted of branches covered with leaves which were strewn with earth.

"You must have a talk with the men," David said. We found them in the "Barranca," a picturesque valley with a background of brown hills. The men were lying on the rocky ground sheltering under the trees from the intense heat of the sun. There were many interesting faces, not a few were lean and strained; their accents showed that they had come from all parts of Britain—miners, journalists, porters, clerks, ex-soldiers, navvies, etc. A hairy six-footer with a bristling face and naked to the waist was nicknamed "The Primitive Man." "He's an artist," David whispered, "a bit of a Bohemian—finds discipline a trifle irksome." But like the rest, he was exceedingly good humoured and he muttered comically, "If only the clouds would rain tobacco! Half an hour at Woolworth's would win us the war."

The men were eager for the latest news. Why the hell couldn't the French frontier be opened at last, so

that they could get the planes and armaments they needed to end the war? I looked at the keen intelligent faces around me—what could I say? All these comrades had experienced the horrors of modern warfare—they had suffered from hunger, thirst and vermin; they might yet have to sacrifice their lives or suffer agonies from wounds. They were not conscripts—every one had gone to Spain of his own free will to wipe out the treachery of the National Government—they had answered a moral call to fight for freedom and democracy, for they knew that the victory of Franco would strengthen Fascism in Europe. I thought of the farce of Non-Intervention used as a cloak to help the rebels and the hermetically sealed frontier of France that prevented the Republic from getting arms, while Germany and Italy—these "Doves of Peace" on the Non-Intervention Committee—were pouring their army corps and war material into Spain to aid Franco; and how a star of the Cliveden set had expressed approval of the Spanish war because it was killing off so many young Englishmen of the left!

But it was not only the "hooded men of Britain," these secret "Ku-Klux-Klaners" who were using their influence to turn England into a Fascist state, there were also cowardly individuals with progressive labels who were urging that "Hitler should not be antagonised" and that we should give way to the bluff of the Dictators. "Why should we stand up for the weaker democracies," they argued, "am I my brother's keeper?"

I was oppressed by a feeling of shame as I looked

at these brave young soldiers. What message of cheer could I give them? And then I asked myself how representative was our government of the men and women of England? With relief I remembered the National Conference on Spain, convened by M.P.s of all parties, and that the Queen's Hall had been crowded from floor to ceiling with delegates from all over the country. How they had clamoured that the lying Non-Intervention should be ended and that food and arms should be sent to Republican Spain. I spoke of the conference and of the monster meeting of the Youth Movement at Olympia.

"Now you must speak to the Spanish boys," David said, and he took me to the field where they were camping. I began talking to them in Spanish, but I soon broke into English and a Mexican translated. The spirit of the Spanish youth was magnificent.

I was anxious to return to Barcelona to get some clothes for David. I lorry-hopped to Tarragona and finished the journey by train. It was crowded with peasant women, old men and children, carrying huge bundles, talking loudly and eating bits of bread which they dipped into a rancid-smelling oil. The journey lasted hours and there was no possibility of getting a seat. I arrived somewhat exhausted in Barcelona, where the sirens were sounding their warning of death.

A week later I returned to the Brigade by ambulance, bringing with me khaki shirts, trousers, a jacket and, after a diligent search, a real pair of military boots, plus nails. I saw David for a short time during the

rest interval. He sat on the ground beside me writing letters and his last article : " On the Ebro."*

Captain Dunbar, the Commandant of the Brigade, invited me to dine at the brigade headquarters ; and what a surprise and delight it was to see David sitting opposite to me and able to enjoy a good meal.

I didn't see him again until the evening, when I was driven to Marcia in the food lorry. He had asked permission to accompany me. I sat in the front with the driver ; David, Bert Sines and some other men were in the back. We waited for what seemed an age for the freight ; at last we were off. It was already dark when we reached the village. The peasant family with whom I was living welcomed us enthusiastically. The children ran around chattering, alert for " chocolate." Their mother very obligingly produced a large earthenware basin, and placed it in front of the kitchen stove. There was plenty of hot water and we left David to enjoy the improvised bath and to change into his new clothes, while Bert tried on a khaki shirt that laced up the front, and rejoiced over a parcel from home. When David was ready, we were invited to drink coffee in the parlour. We sat round the table with the old peasant, his wife and their young son in khaki.

The children were sucking sweets and were staring at the Brigaders with large, admiring eyes. It was getting late and the camp was seven kilometres away, a long weary tramp—and soldiers have to rise early.

The frugal meal was over—David put on his knapsack ; Bert shouldered a suitcase filled with canned foods from England.

* Published in *Reynolds News*.

They bade good-bye to the family and we went into the narrow, deserted village street.

David stood by me silently, and then bent down and hesitated.

I felt the hesitation hang heavily over us—he gave me a parting kiss and turned and walked away. I stood there, numbly, on the road, as though life was ebbing out of me. How many mothers, in that unhappy valiant country, have watched their sons go . . . without knowing whether . . . with fear in their hearts . . .

A few days later the Battalion went to Marcia and the following two nights they marched between twenty and thirty kilometres until they reached a dry river bed where they camped. "David's spirit and vigour were remarkable," wrote one of the boys, "he appeared less fatigued than any of us, and went out observing when he might have been resting."

The next night they marched to the Ebro. On the way David talked of the youth movement to the comrade by his side. A terrific storm broke out on their arrival, "like a raging battle of the elements."

At that time the pontoon bridge which had been built in sections was only half-way across the river. In the darkness the Spanish army began to cross in small rowing boats. The Fifteenth Brigade, following by daylight, was exposed to the Fascist planes swooping down and bombing fast and furiously—many soldiers were drowned.

The Battle of the Ebro is one of the most gallant offensives in history. Denied the guns they needed by the injustice of "Non-Intervention" the

Republican Army was swept forward by the courage of its soldiers. The Fifteenth Brigade took a short cut over the mountains towards Corbera and on the way was engaged in fighting fiercely with the Moors.

A week after I returned home I was writing to David trying to conceal the panic I was in, when I was called to the telephone by Reuters to enquire whether it was my son David Guest who had been shot through the heart.*

I think the pain of all the women who have lost their sons fighting against Fascism stabbed me at that moment. Since then I have felt linked by the closest ties to all those millions of mothers, Chinese, Abyssinian, Spanish and all the mothers of the anti-Fascist youth whose sons have died for freedom. And I ask myself, why cannot we—the inheritors of their cause—harness all our strength into a tremendous force to resist the Fascist aggressors and their supporters, to whom war means power and dividends, and flesh and blood a commodity to be poured out for their profit.

Tributes from Comrades in the Brigade

From Captain Sam Wild, the Commander of the British Battalion

. . . Early in May our battalion was in a position on the banks of the Ebro, forming a line of vigilance

* Peter Kerrigan wrote: "I have given Angel the little wallet David had in his pocket which was pierced by the bullet that killed him. Also his scarf and his copy of Virgil."

against any attempt of the enemy to infiltrate across this natural barrier. Our battalion was under strength and it needed reorganisation. I decided to take advantage of the comparative quiet to set up the framework of a properly organised unit. I sent for the battalion observer, George Buck of Nelson, and said: "It is time we got a complete observation staff. Is there anyone in the infantry companies you can suggest for a battalion topographer?" "Yes," said George, "there is Comrade David Guest, a qualified map drawer."

"O.K., let us see him."

David arrived at Battalion H.Q. I was struck by the enthusiasm of this quiet, unassuming Comrade. I sent him out with the observers to draw a panorama of the enemy's position, and he produced a splendid specimen, which convinced me that he was the man for the job.

Then came the call from the youth of Catalonia, and two divisions of volunteers from the Youth Organisations answered the call. It was fairly obvious that the reinforcements we were about to receive would be from these youth divisions. Youthful volunteers would be coming into our battalion, full of enthusiasm to stop the advance of the foreign invaders. Preparation had to be made to receive these youngsters.

The Battalion Commissar, Bob Cooney, approached Comrade Guest, and entrusted him with the necessary organising. This task he commenced immediately with the same enthusiasm and untiring energy that he always displayed in any anti-Fascist work. He became

the official leader of the youth of our battalion, the leader of the Activist movement, which proved of valuable assistance to the leadership. This movement had as its slogan, " Every soldier an Activist, every Activist a Hero ! "

Then came the great day—Republican forces were to cross the Ebro.

The nature of the attack necessitated that each Company be equipped with a competent and reliable observer. Comrade Guest went to No. 2 Company as Observer. He fell in an advanced position of his Company. He was reconnoitring the terrain for the possible means of approach to this important enemy position, which our battalion had to attack. He died as he lived, fighting against Fascism, which symbolises oppression and reaction in its worst form.

To Comrades of the Y.C.L., Sam Wild wrote :

" Having the dangerous job of observer, David showed outstanding courage and the loss of this brave Comrade is keenly felt in his battalion."

From Bob Cooney, Battalion Commissar

. . . I can best speak of David Guest's work with the Battalion. My first impression was that surely it was a mistake for one so frail to enter this terrible struggle, but the energy, intelligence and above all the courage he displayed in all his work soon marked him out as an outstanding figure in the Battalion. Alongside his military activity he laboured unceasingly in the political and cultural life of the Battalion, eventually becoming Secretary of the United Socialist Youth.

Modesty and comradeship stamped his relations with everyone, Spaniards and Internationals alike.

His life was a personal example and his death a personal loss for every member of the Battalion.

Every democrat in Britain must ask himself the question, " How many David Guests must be sacrificed before British democracy does its duty by Spain and rids Europe of the foul menace of Fascism ? "

Ralph Fox, George Brown, Wally Tapsell, Lewis Clive, David Guest—Great men all of them. We are the poorer for their going. Must the list be added to ? . . . British democracy has the answer in its hands.

From Stanley Harrison

. . . I first met David about a year ago at a C.P. conference at Southampton. . . . The big task which he had set himself at that time was the formation of a Youth Peace Council in Hampshire and he was the chief organiser of the first Congress of Youth in this district. . . . I remember how boyishly delighted he was at the concession he obtained from the Southampton University authorities to board delegates to the conference at a fee within the reach of young workers.

When in April 1938 I left for Spain to join the International Brigade, I used to think of him and wonder whether the congress was successful. Imagine my surprise when, two months later, I was with the British Battalion moving out of a base one hot afternoon and spotted David near by in the unfamiliar (for him) garb of a soldier. The first thing I said was : " Well, you're the last person in the world I expected

to meet out here." I explained that I left him in the throes of organising the congress, but what was more in my mind was that his knowledge and talents were of so much use to our movement in England that I never dreamed that he would risk everything by coming to Spain.

When the British Battalion settled down in the near base I occasionally saw David. Invariably he was busy on his political work, and this was always after a full day of military duty as an observer.

. . . In the early morning of July 25th, two hours before the British Battalion crossed the Ebro, Comrade F. Butler noticed Angela Guest, known throughout Spain as "Angel"—one of Spain's best-loved nurses—on the roadway. . . . David was formed up with the rest of the Observers. Comrade Butler called to David to point out his sister. By the time his attention was drawn she had just disappeared from view.* I can imagine how he would have liked to have a few words with her, but he placed military duty first, and never moved from the lines. . . .

. . . To me personally David's death means the end of a cherished friendship which was always heightened by the respect I had for this fearless and capable intellectual and his fight for the working class.

From Edward Smallbone

. . . it was, I think, the second day on Hill 481 and the kitchen had not yet put in an appearance.

* Comrade Butler mistook another nurse for Angela. She was at S'agaro at the time. Unfortunately she never saw her brother in Spain.—C. H. G.

Thirst was even more annoying to us than Fascists. About midday, when the sun was just doing its best to fry us on the hillside, David volunteered to go down for water. Now the nearest well, that was at all safe to visit, was at least four miles away. By being safe, I mean that it was not directly under machine-gun fire, but it was on a road which the Fascists were trying to destroy by all kinds of bombardment.

And so David loaded himself up with water bottles of all shapes and sizes, in addition to his own equipment, binoculars and compass, etc., which never left him. When he could load no more on his shoulders, either because there was no room or no straps, he slung one or two on his belt and set off.

It seemed years before we saw him trudging up the hillside again, still bristling with water bottles, but almost exhausted under the weight of water. As he came closer two or three of the boys went to meet him to relieve him of the weight, but mainly for drink. But no ! David was telling them and quite firmly too, " Yes, I know it may be your bottle, Comrade, but the whole of this supply must be for all of us—I've already given some away to the Mac-Paps."

No one had his own bottle back, until we had all had a drink. That was David.

Statement by Malcolm Sneddon (Co. 2)

Comrade Guest was carrying out his duties as observer for Co. 2 of the British Battalion.

He advanced ahead in order to observe a machine gun on top of a hill in front of us preparatory to

attacking it. Showing a great measure of courage in the calmness and quickness in which he made his observations, he returned and informed the commander (Archie Cook) that he had seen a number of Fascists in a group on the hill.

From Archie Cook

I was in charge of a section with David as observer and we had been given orders to attach ourselves to a Spanish Co. 3 which had been rather badly " cut up." Along with the remainder of the Battalion we were to advance on the Fascist strong point known as Hill 481, our section were to proceed on the extreme left of Co. 3. Over the top we go with David slightly in front. David clambers up a small ridge for observation purposes. . . . A short burst of two rounds came from an enemy machine gun. David gave one scream and collapsed. I rushed to drag him down and administer the first dressing. During this proceeding all David kept saying was " Never mind me—carry on—get the men up the hill." All this time he was quite conscious. . . . I can only repeat from hearsay that he died on the way to the sanidad.

From E. Smallbone and Frank Brooks

In spite of his protests he was taken down the hill on a stretcher immediately. As he was carried away he apologised in a weak voice for making such a noise. He died before they reached the first dressing station and lies buried close to the foot of the famous Hill 481 in the direction of Corbera.

David will take his place in working-class history with Cornford, Fox, Nathan, and countless others, whose deeds have made the British Battalion's name immortal. We shall never forget them.

BY THE BANKS OF THE EBRO

By DAVID GUEST

It is a spring night, an hour after sunset. A pale and sickly new moon swims through the clouds. Only here and there are the brighter stars to be seen.

I am lying in the reeds by the water-side, concealed as far as possible, watching, listening, waiting. Over on the other side, invisible and silent, except for occasional confused noises, a bare two hundred yards away are the trenches of the enemy. Presently the noises grow louder until at last the semi-silence is broken by a clear voice ringing out in authoritative, confident tones, " Oyez, Oyez, Rojos ! Rojos ! " " Listen, you Reds," repeated several times, but only being met with silence on the Republican side.

" And who is going to win the war now ? " " We are ! " —a chorus of shouts from our side of the river. (Cynical, brutal, coarse laughter and shouts from the Fascists.)

" Listen, you Reds," says the voice, " we have got the guns, the tanks, the aeroplanes—how can you fight us without losing ? Don't be fools, come over and join the troops of General Franco, who must win."

From our side a din of more, confused, angry shouts but suddenly these cease and give place to another voice. " How can you win, when the whole Spanish people are

against you. Traitors—who have brought in Italians and Germans to bomb our Spanish cities ! "

Loud cries greet this sally and for an instant their voice is disconcerted, but then it replies, " General Franco is saving Spain from Russian Bolsheviks, and besides, he is protecting the Church."

Next voice, " Then why does he need the Moors ? Since when have they been good Christians ? And there are no Russians in Spain anyway." So the debate goes on, a continuous wrangle—point by point, sometimes developing almost like an academic discussion, sometimes interrupted by cries and shouts.

Listening in the reeds, with head closely pressed to the ground, it seems almost incredible that I am on one of the battlefronts of Fascism and Democracy. Memories come back of street corners, oh, so familiar, in London, where rival meetings, Fascist and Anti-Fascist, will be held. The same arguments tossed to and fro ; the same efforts of Fascism, using all the methods of terrorism, enticement, corruption, bluff to win over some support from backward people. The same indignant exposure of the Fascist lies by Democrats ; it seems as though the two voices, our voice and their voice, have become symbols of the world struggle that is taking place.

Just then their voice makes a particularly sneering reference to the " Red scum " and says that the young weaklings in the Republican army dare not stand up to real men. The Spanish youth who have volunteered in thousands to make up the cream of the Republican army cannot bear this insult ; an excited young lad, shouting in reply, pokes his head just over the parapet of the trenches on the left—a shot rings out, followed by a cry. For a very short interval there is silence. But then, the magnificent song of the Spanish Youth, the " Joven Guardia,"

gets taken up and rolls from one section to another of the line of trenches.

Presently this song, fervently coming from several hundred throats, fills the air with youthful faith in victory and reduces all other voices to silence. Only the intermittent crackling of Fascist rifle fire tells us the final answer of the dark, old world to the claims of the new.

APPENDIX

COLLECTED ARTICLES BY DAVID GUEST

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MATHEMATICAL FORMALISM
1929

In his earliest paper on the Foundations of Mathematics Ramsey makes some reference to Hilbert and the Formalist School. We are there told that the Formalists regard the numbers and operations of Mathematics as " meaningless marks," and it is not by any means clear how such marks could have an application to ordinary life. Ramsey goes on to say that the Formalists have given a correct account of the Formulæ of Mathematics—they must be tautological —but have ignored its concepts, while the Russellians understood the content of Mathematics—it must be perfectly general—but have ignored its form. Unfortunately we must upset the neat balance of this comparison by insisting on what the Formalists really believe, and on what they are attempting to do.

Like the Logistic of Russell and Whitehead, the formalism of Hilbert rose as an attempt to escape from the contradictions that were found in that perfectly respectable branch of mathematics, the theory of sets of points. Russell's ideal was to find some set of logical self-evident principles from which the whole of

formal logic and pure mathematics could be deduced, and which would thus act as a firm foundation on which all present and future exact science must be built brick by brick. The primitive propositions of logic in this view must be both self-evident and *absolutely true*, for otherwise we can have no guarantee that the edifice erected on them is free from contradiction—which is the *raison d'être* of the whole method. But once this is realised the possibility of discovering such a set of primitive propositions becomes much less plausible. Historically we know that mathematicians have frequently thought they were in possession of absolute and self-evident truths when later developments have disclosed contradictions. Propositions involving the notion " class " are classic examples. Why should there be a sudden revelation of the eternal and fundamental principles of the logical universe in the year 1913 (publication of *Principia*) ? But apart from the fact that so-called self-evidence can be no guarantee of truth, why should we ever expect to be able to reach or ever utter " absolute truth." All human statements are to some extent vague—Wittgenstein notwithstanding—and contradiction seems to arise simply from this inevitable vagueness on the one hand, while to get rid of it on the other we are compelled to make our ideas and propositions more precise. But there is no limit to this process of clarifying our ideas and purging them of contradiction—if we push our deductions far enough we may come on contradiction again, and another process of purging will be required. Adopting this view we are relieved from the burden of searching for

absolute and final truth—for which thank Heaven! It always was rather a strain. And we immediately doubt the possibility of elaborating a system such as Russell has attempted in the *Principia*. We are not surprised to learn that Polish logicians have succeeded in deducing contradictions from the axioms of the *Principia*. Farewell all elaborate and final systems for ever!

But what can we make of the Formalists, for they too are attempting in some way to construct a system —though not so ambitiously as Russell. Hilbert's attitude to mathematics was undoubtedly influenced by his preoccupation with the foundations of Geometry—for it consists essentially of an extension to the whole of Mathematics of the axiomatic method fundamental in Geometry.

On Hilbert's view it should be possible to develop any branch of mathematics—formal logic included—by starting with a certain number of axiomatic formulæ and " deducing " conclusions from these by a purely mechanical process. It does not follow that the initial formulæ are " meaningless "—but during the process of deriving new formulæ from them we regard them simply as *algebraical formulæ*, to which certain mechanical rules of operation (which correspond to " deduction ") are applied. The method can only be illustrated by an example—we will take the propositional calculus, viz.

1. $X \vee X \rightarrow X$
2. $X \rightarrow X \vee Y$
3. $X \vee Y \rightarrow Y \vee X$
4. $(X \rightarrow Y) \rightarrow (Z \vee X \rightarrow Z \vee Y)$

These axioms are of course *suggested* by their logical interpretation, but " inside " the calculus no use whatever is made of this interpretation. The derivation of new formulæ of the system is carried out by means of two rules of operation, which Hilbert calls " non-formal axioms " and which must be understood in order for us " to play the game." These operations are " substitution " and " dropping a premiss." Stated formally the latter axiom simply states that if A and A→B are formulæ of the system, then B is also a formula of the system. Although this system is put forward as a kind of algebra, with certain rules by which we obtain new formulæ in the algebra we see that the formulæ do actually correspond to logical tautologies and the rules of operation correspond to ordinary process of deduction. What is accomplished in this simple case it is desired to do for the whole of existent mathematics (though it is recognised that mathematics is indefinitely extensible, so that the job can never be finished). But for such an axiom system to be satisfactory it is necessary to have proof of the consistency of the axioms—and here all the difficulty arises. For there is only one way known of proving a set of axioms consistent. We must produce a set of mental objects satisfying them. And such a set is essentially arithmetical in nature, and involves mathematical ideas of varying complexity. Hilbert has recognised this and assumes we have a certain knowledge of the finite integers—but exactly how much we are allowed to know is unspecified. At all events he agrees with the intuitionists on this point—woe betide the man who tries to define finite integer.

THE "UNDERSTANDING" OF THE PROPOSITIONS OF MATHEMATICS (1930)

I believe that there is a very important difference between the propositions of ordinary language and those of mathematics; perhaps the latter should not be called propositions at all. This difference shows itself very plainly whenever we consider the "meaning" of propositions, especially in relation to their "conceivability."

When I understand a proposition of ordinary life, e.g. "The favourite won the Derby," I can imagine and understand the contrary proposition, and can argue with a person who asserts it. But in the case of at least some propositions of mathematics, e.g. "5 is a prime" the contrary is simply inconceivable, and if an attempt is made to utter it we find on examination a mere shape or sound—nothing that deserves to be a *proposition.*

Now the question arises, is this true of all the propositions of mathematics, or is it a mere psychological accident due to the extreme simplicity of the example taken? The reason why most people are not disposed to admit this is that we can be in doubt about the truth of a proposition while appearing to understand it.

Now I am not of course denying that a mathematical proposition always has a certain significance for us, regardless of whether it is true or false. If this were not so we would never be able to search for the truth of it. But I believe that we cannot grasp an unproved proposition *as a whole*—at most we are clear about

certain *parts* of it. This can be simply illustrated by taking an example from logic.

It is generally recognised that the formula a & ā is not only false but inconceivable. It would be nonsense to talk of *understanding* the formula a & ā (a concrete proposition might well be substituted for a in this argument—also for b further on). We can no more imagine a state of affairs in which such propositions can be true than we can *jump out of our skins*.

But what about the formula $\{(a \rightarrow b) \ \& \ (b \rightarrow a)\} \ \& \ \bar{a}$? We think we *understand* this proposition as well as we understand a proposition of mathematics to which we can immediately apply a mechanical method for testing its truth or falsehood. In fact the two cases are really precisely analogous. But on examination the formula turns out to be merely a more complicated way of writing a & ā. So that if we really " understood " the proposition we would understand a & ā. Now if we are honest and a little self-critical we will admit that we do not at first understand the whole proposition $\{(a \rightarrow b) \ \& \ (b \rightarrow a)\} \ \& \ \bar{a}$, but rather we understand *parts* of it, and until we have a *proof* of the formula (supposing it a correct one) we do not see how these parts *fit together*. That is to say, we do not grasp the proposition *as a whole*, until we have a proof of it. Now I think this is true quite generally of propositions in mathematics. That is to say, we do not really understand a proposition like " 131 is prime " until we have proof of it before us, and if this proposition is true then its contradictory is inconceivable.

Admittedly it *seems* as though we could understand either of the statements " 131 is prime " and " 131 is

not prime " turning out to be true. We have a certain *process* for determining whether any given number is prime or not, and we think we can imagine this process applied to 131 with either result.

But in actual fact if we *really imagine* this process carried out, then we have the proof before us of our theorem, in the light of which it is now inconceivable that our theorem should be false. It is only when we abstract from the concrete nature of 131—when in effect we consider the proposition " x is prime "—that we can really imagine the process carried out leading to either result.

Postscript. In one way a prop: of maths (" simple " props: excepted) is on a par with empirical props:. It is false to say that props: of maths can be strictly certified, while empirical props: can at most only be rendered exceedingly probable. Just as it is always *possible* for new information to turn up to lead us to reject an empirical prop:, so it is always possible that I have made a mistake in my proof of a mathematical prop: which I will discover when I next work through it.

DEMOCRACY AND THE STATE

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Everyone knows how many differences between the revolutionary and the reformist outlook turn on the estimation of capitalist democracy. Take, for instance, the reply of the Labour Party to the proposals of the Communists for a united front. In the reply it is stated that " Political events at home and abroad

impel the British Labour Movement to reaffirm its beliefs in the fundamental principles of government." After chronicling the rise to power of Fascism " in Germany, as in Italy, Poland, Hungary, and elsewhere," it is admitted that " democratic principles have been shattered by the machine-gun—the ballot has been destroyed by the bullet ! " What conclusion do the authors of this document draw ? In the very next sentence they state : " Today, as in the past, British Labour must reaffirm its faith in democracy and socialism." And further : " It believes that a united working-class movement, founded and conducted on the broadest democratic principles, can establish a Socialist Society so soon as the workers are sufficiently advanced in political wisdom as to place their own movement in the seat of government, armed with all the powers of the democratic State."

Much might be said about this reply—which drove even the *New Statesman* to protest that political leadership could scarcely have fallen lower. But I have quoted it merely as an illustration of the reformist attitude to capitalist democracy and its State. Typical of the attitude is the opposition of " dictatorship in general " to " democracy in general," and the sublime confidence expressed in the phrase " armed with all the powers of the democratic State." The reformist accepts the " democratic State " or capitalism at its face-value—the Marxist subjects it to a destructive criticism. As the conception of the State is so much the corner-stone of revolutionary thought—and, I believe, the stumbling-block of reformism—it is worth while considering it in some detail.

Now first, what *is* the State? We must first examine the varying uses of the term "State" by different people and try to find if there is anything in common between them. If we do this I think it will be admitted that nearly all conceptions of the State have this at least in common—that some public *power* or *authority* is intended. In whatever metaphysical obscurities a given conception of the State may be wrapped there is at least this positive kernel to it. And so in what follows I shall speak of this public authority as being "the State." This public authority includes the armed forces, police, civil service, judiciary, cabinet ministers, etc., and must by no means be confused with the "society" of which it is an outgrowth.

This State has not always existed. I do not mean merely that the bourgeois State that we know today has not always existed. Of course the State was different in feudal and in classical times. But the State apparatus itself, as a distinct public power separate from the rest of society and ruling over it, was unknown in the early stages of tribal communism through which the human race passed. Then society was maintained by the "self acting armed organisation of the people," to quote Engels' phrase. When classes developed such a self-acting organisation became impossible, and the State arose as the coercive power of the dominating class. It is not accidental, or just the outcome of "specialisation of functions," that the State officials wield powers that are not entrusted to the masses. How long would a society, with the contrasts of riches and poverty of our own, continue to

exist if all had ready access to arms? The nervousness of the British Government at the end of the war, their desperate eagerness to carry through a swift demobilisation at the price of any temporary concession, show that these facts are widely recognised.

But if the State arose at the time of the break-up of society into antagonistic classes, and if, as is asserted further, one of the functions of the State is to hold that society together, to prevent its internal conflicts from breaking out into open civil war, may we not regard the State as a conciliator of classes, or at least as an impartial referee who holds the ring between them? This is the conventional bourgeois view, well expressed in a leading article in *The Times* on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of Marx's death.

According to this article the Marxist view forgets "that this same State in the last 100 years since the Factory Act of 1833—has striven hard to hold a fair balance between conflicting social forces, and to maintain at the very least, a decent minimum of national life for the poorest of the poor."

Criticism of this view can only proceed by taking these ethical concepts, "fair balance," "decent minimum of national life," and pointing to the actual state of affairs to which they correspond. Who, it may be asked, would be more likely to use such language to cover such conditions, capitalist or wage earner? And if this is the vaunted "impartiality" of the State, what of its role as a "conciliator"? In fact, the State "conciliates" an oppressed class as the R.A.F. "pacifies" a native tribe. The process looks different

according as you are on top or underneath. Since the function of the State is to maintain the principles on which the given form of society is based, it *automatically* serves the class which rules in this form of society. But this relation of the State to the ruling class goes far deeper than might be suspected.

The higher posts in the State departments, especially in those of military importance, are almost exclusively recruited from the upper classes. Among the lower officials habits of discipline and unthinking obedience are inculcated. This makes the State machine not only an instrument for ruling the society of today in the interests of capitalism, but a handle to counter-revolution to prevent the system of society being changed in any way, however " constitutional." That is why the simple faith of the reformist in his prospects, " armed with all the powers of the democratic State," is so childish. In such a contingency it would be counter-revolution that would be armed. The " democratic State " would have faded away overnight, deserted by all its leading servants as the " democratic " State of the Weimar Constitution has disappeared since the advent of Hitler.

If some of the statements I have made seem rather dogmatic, many events in both this and other countries —especially recent events in Germany—could be referred to for proof. But perhaps most instructive is the fuss that has been made recently about the police force in Britain. Lord Trenchard produced a report and the bourgeoisie got into quite a panic about it. Why ?—because the report revealed that the police force was not organised enough along those lines that

guarantee bourgeois dominance! His main proposal is the creation of an "officer class" that is to be recruited "partly from the Force itself and partly from outside the service by recruitment from the universities, public schools, and secondary schools." This "officer class," which we see will consist predominantly of non-working-class elements, is to be excluded from the Police Federation—to ensure that it does not share the outlook of the rank and file.

The Police Federation itself is to be still more strictly controlled. In his spare time the policeman is to be removed from association with the working class by the provision of "some place belonging to the Force itself where he will be able to spend his off-duty time in healthy and congenial surroundings," and thus the last requisite of the State apparatus, namely separation from the rest of society, is to be secured. It may be truly said that Trenchard's proposals illustrate almost every point in the Marxist theory of the capitalist State.

The bourgeoisie has already hinted at what will happen to "democracy" if ever their position is threatened. The *Evening News* writes:

"The moment a Socialist Government tries to lay hands on the banks or interfere with the national financial structure, out it will go on its ear."

How pathetically does the reformist fetish of "democracy" show beside this realistic attitude of the ruling class to its own constitution!

How likely it is that it will abdicate quietly if faced by a parliamentary majority that decides to confiscate its property and liquidate it as a class!

THE MACHIAN TENDENCY IN MODERN BRITISH PHILOSOPHY

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This essay is devoted to the study of a dominant tendency in modern British philosophy associated particularly with the name of Bertrand Russell. It will be shown that this tendency is a direct offshoot of the Machian philosophical movement which began to sweep across Europe and America in the latter part of the nineteenth century, and against which Lenin's book, *Materialism and Empiriocriticism*, was directed. This tendency is important because of its broad influence, extending beyond mere professorial circles to the rank-and-file scientists, the "general (mostly petty-bourgeois) public," and even the labour movement.

At the time when Lenin's work appeared, the British Machian School was in its infancy. Karl Pearson was its chief representative, and he was, as Lenin remarked, a "consistent idealist," who for that very reason had little following among scientists. It was only later that the British "realists" (as they love to term themselves) developed the necessary muddle-headedness and demagogy to acquire a serious influence in scientific circles. The outstanding representative of the British Machians, and the man with the most influence among them, is Bertrand Russell. To an examination of his philosophy the main part of this

essay will therefore be devoted, and then various other representatives of the same school will be considered as pointers, showing the direction in which the whole movement is developing.

1. *The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell*

Bertrand Russell is well aware of his philosophical ancestry, as the following quotation from *Philosophy in the Twentieth Century* shows: "Meanwhile from many directions a philosophy grew up which is often described as realism, but is really characterised by analysis as a method and pluralism as a metaphysic. It is not necessarily realistic, since it is in some forms compatible with Berkeleian idealism [only in some forms ?—D. G.]. It is not compatible with Kantian or Hegelian idealism, since it rejects the logic upon which those systems are based. It tends more and more to the adoption and development of James' view that the fundamental stuff of the world is neither mental nor material, but something simpler and more fundamental, out of which both mind and matter are constructed."

Thus we see at the outset that Russell dimly recognised the relation of the movement of which he forms part to Berkeleian idealism, but of course he is far from grasping the significance of this relation, which appears to him, as to all Machians, just an accidental feature. He also recognises his relation to William James, the American fideist, whom he calls the founder of both realism and pragmatism. James's religious bias, his desire to find a philosophical

justification of religion, are admitted by Russell. He even exposes the trick by which the pragmatists do this. " He (James) advocated pragmatism as a means of presenting religious hopes as scientific hypotheses." But of course Russell is totally unable to see that the religious leanings of his associates are the result of a fundamental tendency in philosophy, and that the differences that separate him from James are as nothing to the ties that bind them. As in the case of all muddled idealists, the petty differences between the schools, between the neo-Kantians, the pragmatists and the realists, seem to him to have tremendous importance. This whole essay in which Russell describes the contemporary schools of bourgeois philosophy, demonstrates once again how incapable are the Machians from their vacillating, inconsistent standpoint, of appreciating the fundamental divisions in philosophy.

Russell is also aware of his relation to Ernst Mach (though he seems ignorant of most of the other continental representatives of Machism), whom he speaks of as having inaugurated the movement to " Neutral Monism." " Neutral Monism " is the view already mentioned " that both mind and matter are structures composed of a more primitive stuff which is neither mental nor material. This view is suggested in Mach's *Analysis of Sensations*, developed in William James' *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, and advocated by John Dewey, as well as by Professor R. B. Perry and other American realists. The use of the word ' neutral ' in this way is due to Dr. H. M. Sheffer of Harvard, who is one of the ablest logicians of our time." It must

indeed require a logician of some ability to justify the use of the word " neutral " for a doctrine, which is as we shall see, the purest idealism !

It is very instructive to compare some of the main propositions of Russell's philosophy with corresponding statements in Mach. The parallel is often astonishingly close. Mach wrote : " Not the things (bodies) but colours, sounds, pressures, spaces, times (what we usually call sensations) are the actual elements of the world." And Russell says : " . . . the actual data in sensation, the immediate objects of sight or touch or hearing, are extra-mental, purely physical, and among the ultimate constituents of matter." Russell defends this point of view by means of clever demagogy. He pretends to agree with common sense that what it sees is physical, only it " is probably wrong in supposing that it continues to exist when we are no longer looking at it." The word " physical," he tells us, is to mean " what is dealt with by physics." Thus to say that " the actual data of sensation " are *physical*, is in fact to say that physics (and natural science as a whole) is concerned not with bodies or objects, existing outside of us and independently of our minds, but with sense-data. This is in fact the standpoint, more or less masked, which Russell adopts throughout his work.

In one of the earliest of his works Mach wrote : " The problem of Science can be split into three parts. (1) The determination of the connection of presentations. This is psychology. (2) The discovery of the laws of the connection of sensations (perspectives). This is physics. (3) The clear establishment of the

laws of the connections of sensations and presentations. This is psycho-physics." And in the *Analysis of Mind* Russell says : " We spoke earlier of two ways of classifying particulars. One way collects together the particulars commonly regarded as the appearances of a given object from different places ; this is, broadly speaking, the way of physics, leading to the construction of physical objects as sets of such appearances. The other way collects together the appearances of different objects from a given place, the result being what we call a perspective. In the particular case where the place concerned is a human brain the perspective belonging to the place consists of all the perceptions of a certain man at a certain time. This classification of perspectives is relevant to psychology, and is essential in defining what we mean by one mind." About these " particulars " we shall say more shortly. At present it should be realised that they are simply the " elements " of Mach and Avenarius. To hide the subjective idealism in his philosophy Russell has resort to the same trick which drew such withering scorn from Lenin (cf. the paragraph on the World Elements in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*).

Russell has also adopted the famous *Principle of Economy*. " But by the principle of Occam's razor, if the class of appearances will fulfil the purposes for the sake of which the thing was invented by the prehistoric metaphysicians to whom common sense is due, economy demands that we should identify the thing with the class of its appearances. It is not necessary to deny a substance or substratum underlying these appearances ; it is merely expedient to

abstain from asserting this unnecessary entity. Our procedure here is precisely analagous to that which has swept away from the philosophy of mathematics the useless menagerie of metaphysical monsters with which it used to be infested." And he characterises his whole method in a sentence which expresses more aptly than any paraphrase the essential idealism of his philosophy. "The supreme maxim in scientific philosophising is this; *wherever possible, logical constructions are to be substituted for inferred entities.*" In other words, the object of science is not to discover the entities in the real world and progressively examine their properties, to transform "things-in-themselves" into "things-for-us" as Engels put it, but its ultimate object is to provide material so that the "scientific philosopher" can construct "objects," as well as "space" and "time," out of complexes of sense-data.

Russell has one further characteristic in common with Mach and Avenarius. Like them he is more naive in his earlier work. There he gives away more completely the subjective idealist bias of his philosophy. We shall first study this in a volume of essays which appeared before the war under the title of *Mysticism and Logic*. Later we shall meet Russell (in the *Analysis of Matter*) striding forth in the company of scientists, and then we will find that his language is much more guarded, he often speaks like a materialist.

We have already quoted from *Mysticism and Logic* a number of passages which show the idealist foundation of that work. We must now revert to Russell's

theory of " Particulars." We ask pardon for quoting a rather long passage.

" The world may be conceived as consisting of a multitude of entities arranged in a certain pattern. The entities which are arranged I shall call ' particulars.' The arrangement or pattern results from relations among particulars. Classes or series of particulars, collected together on account of some property which makes it convenient to be able to speak of them as wholes, are what I call logical constructions or symbolic fictions. The particulars are to be conceived, not on the analogy of bricks in a building, but rather on the analogy of notes in a symphony. The ultimate constituents of the symphony (apart from the relations) are the notes, each of which lasts only for a very short time. We may collect together all the notes played by one instrument; these may be regarded as the analogues of the successive particulars which common-sense would regard as successive states of one ' thing.' But the things ought to be regarded as no more real or ' substantial ' than, for example, the role of the trombone. As soon as ' things ' are conceived in this manner it will be found that the difficulties in the way of regarding immediate objects of sense as physical have largely disappeared."

Thus everything depends on what these " particulars " turn out to be. It soon appears that sense-data are included among these particulars, but Russell is, for understandable reasons, not too keen on further enlightening us. In another essay he is more explicit. For " particulars " he uses the word " sensibilia," standing for " those objects which have the same

metaphysical and physical status as sense-data, without necessarily being data to any mind." Thus the door is left open for entities other than my sense-data or your sense-data. But what sort of entities are they ?

" Besides the appearance which a given thing presents to the actual spectators, there are, we may suppose, other appearances which it would present to other possible spectators. If a man were to sit down between two others, the appearance which the room would present to him would be intermediate to the appearances which it presents to the two others ; and although this appearance would not exist as it is without the sense-organs, nerves and brain, of the newly-arrived spectator, still it is not unnatural to suppose that, from the position which he now occupies, some appearance of the room existed before his arrival. This supposition, however, need merely be noticed and not insisted on." " Appearances " may perhaps exist without there being brains to perceive them. We certainly cannot fail to notice this supposition. It is the same " brainless " philosophy that Lenin already derided in the Machians.

But still more interesting developments await us. We have already learnt how Russell uses the term " perspective."

" Between two perspectives which both belong to one person's experience, there will be a direct time-relation of before-and-after. This suggests a way of dividing history in the same sort of way as it is divided by different experiences, but without introducing experience or anything mental ; we may define a ' biography ' as everything that is directly

earlier or later than, or simultaneous with, a given 'sensibilia.' This will give a series of perspectives which might all form parts of the person's experience, though it is not necessary that all or any of them should actually do so. By this means the history of the world is divided into a number of mutually exclusive biographies." All Russell's assurances that he is not "introducing experience or anything mental" are in vain. They depend on the equivocation by which, as we saw, he calls sense-data "physical." The plain fact is that Russell's "biographies" are simply disembodied spirits. If this philosophy has never been directly used as a prop for religion, the dull-wittedness of the clergymen of the Church of England can be the only reason. By means of "sensibilia" we see that all the heights of heaven and the deep pit of hell could be peopled with spirits, and the creator would have ample material left over for any new world he should desire to create. This is a strikingly "neutral" philosophy!

However we must be fair to Russell. He only says that such "biographies" might exist. He is "agnostic" about them. But he himself prefers the strictly solipsistic approach, as the following remarkable passage shows. "A complete application of the method which substitutes construction for inferences would exhibit matter wholly in terms of sense-data, and even, we may add, of the sense-data of a single person, since the sense-data of others cannot be known without some element of inference. This, however, must remain for the present an ideal, to be approached as nearly as possible, but to be reached, if at all, only

after a long preliminary labour of which as yet we can only see the very beginning." Later he says that it would give him the " greatest satisfaction to dispense with the assumption of other people's minds," and thus establish physics on a solipsistic basis ; but those—and I fear they are the majority—in whom the human affections are stronger than the desire for logical economy will, no doubt, not share my desire to render solipsism scientifically satisfactory." Thus " particulars " and " sensibilia " are only introduced because it is not yet practicable to dispense with them. But " *to render solipsism scientifically satisfactory* " is a self-confessed aim of Russell's philosophy.

No such naive confessions are to be found in the *Analysis of Matter* (1927). Russell here uses a method which he has himself exposed in Sir James Jeans (the well-known astronomer who makes theological deductions from the most recent science). " By prefacing his argument by a lot of difficult and recent physics, the eminent author manages to give it an air of profundity which it would not otherwise possess."

The first 100 pages of the *Analysis of Matter* contains a lot of " difficult and recent physics," untainted by Russellian philosophy. Then in a jump we pass from the sublime to the unutterably trivial, from the " most recent physics " to the " most recent (bourgeois) epistemology." Let us see what we are offered in this book.

At the outset Russell tells us that " Physics must be interpreted in a way that tends towards idealism, and perception in a way that tends towards materialism. I believe that matter is less material, and mind less

mental, than is commonly supposed, and that when this is realised, the difficulties raised by Berkeley largely disappear." Further, " the objects which are mathematically primitive in Physics, such as electrons, protons, and points in space-time, are all logically complex structures composed of entities which are metaphysically more primitive, which may conveniently be called events." It is a matter for mathematical logic to show how to construct out of these the objects required by the mathematical physicist. Here we have the " principle of logical construction," which is Russell's form of the famous " economy principle," and here also we meet again the " particulars " or " sensibilia " which are alleged to be neutral as between mind and matter, under the new name of " events." This name, which Russell probably owes to Whitehead (as we shall see) is naturally very much more calculated to deceive the public, especially the scientific public, than the old names " particular " and " sensibile." The physicist talks of " events " in Relativity and Quantum Theory, and Russell makes them the foundation of his philosophy of physics. All this seems very " reasonable." But Russell's " events " are far from being the events of the physicist. We learn that the physical object to be inferred from perception is a group of events, rather than a single " thing." Percepts are always events and commonsense is rash when it refers them to things " with changing states." Russell suggests that a light-wave might " consist of groups of occurrences each containing a member more or less analogous to a minute part of a visual percept." This is the very same

theory of disembodied perceptions that we met with in *Mysticism and Logic*, only here it is kept much more in the background, and tends to be supplanted by another more materialist point of view. It is as though Russell became ashamed of his subjective idealism in the company of scientists, as though to gain a hearing from them he found it necessary to talk in the language of materialism.

The essential element in Russell's move towards materialism is his acceptance, though "provisionally" and with typical agnostic half-heartedness, of the causal theory of "perception." This is the view, which Russell admits to be fundamental to science, that our perceptions are caused by external objects. He contrasts this view with phenomenalism, the view that physical objects and percepts other than my own are "ideal elements" or "logical constructions." We have already seen that in *Mysticism and Logic* he originally advocated this view. Now he rejects it but maintains that "it is still logically possible to interpret the physical world in terms of ideal elements." According to the "causal theory of perception," as interpreted by Russell, our knowledge of percepts can tell us something definite about the structure of the stimuli but their "intrinsic character" must remain unknown. "The only legitimate attitude about the physical world seems to be one of complete agnosticism as regards all but its mathematical properties." Here we see very plainly how the "symbolic" distortion of materialism which was criticised by Lenin and Plekenov and Helmholtz, leads directly to agnosticism. Further, "there is no difficulty in

interpreting physics idealistically, but there is also, I should say, no necessity for such an interpretation." And " this—connection [of the material world with perceptions, D. G.]—tells us extremely little about the character of the unperceived events in the physical world. Unlike idealists and materialists, I do not believe that there is any other source of knowledge from which this meagre result can be supplemented. Like other people I allow myself to speculate ; but that is an exercise of imagination, not a process of demonstrative reasoning."

In a summary of the conclusions reached in the *Analysis of Matter*, Russell distinguishes three possible points of view, once the naive realism of common sense (that what we see is actually there as we see it) has been rejected. They are, he says, solipsism, phenomenalism, and the causal theory of perception which science adopts. Russell says that he rejects " the phenomalist half-way house." But this is by no means completely true, as we have seen, and his causal theory of perception is deeply infected with agnosticism. However, Russell feels no shame in his vacillating, inconsistent outlook. " I am a British Whig, with a British love of compromise," he once said in *Sceptical Essays*, and this " love of compromise " is reflected throughout his work. Thus in discussing and dismissing the position of solipsism in the *Outline of Philosophy* he shows that its logical culmination is " solipsism of the present moment," and he then goes on to make this very significant remark. " If we are not willing to go as far as this, there seems no reason to draw the line at the precise

point where it was drawn by Berkeley. On these grounds I feel no shame in admitting the existence of non-mental events such as the laws of physics lead us to infer. Nevertheless it is important to realise that other views are tenable." Yes, the view of Berkeley and the view of Mach are "tenable." This is the liberal doctrine of tolerance to the other bourgeois parties. But "there seems no reason to draw the line at the precise point where it was drawn by Berkeley." And no reason to draw it at the point where it was drawn by Russell, either in his earlier or his later work. What is common to all these views is that they are all on the inclined plane slipping down to mysticism and religion (solipsism, being an impossible doctrine to maintain consistently, is only the ante-chamber to fideism). And there is no reason to get on this plane. There is no reason to desert the materialist theory of knowledge of science. That is what the dialectical materialist will answer to Russell.

In estimating the social importance of Bertrand Russell we must remember that many of his books, especially his later ones, have been addressed to a very wide public, far beyond academic boundaries. Some of them, such as *Sceptical Essays* and *The Scientific Outlook*, touch philosophical questions side by side with political and economic ones. These two later books, *Sceptical Essays* in particular, reflect the growth of intellectual discouragement among the bourgeois intelligentsia, their feeling of inability to bridge the gulf between theory and practice. In *Sceptical Essays* Russell speaks of a growing lack of faith among scientists in the ultimate validity "of

scientific method, which is reinforced by genuine intellectual difficulties, which if they prove insuperable, are likely to bring the era of scientific discovery to a close." This book must have spread " sceptical poisoning," as a reviewer put it, among thousands of readers. In the *Scientific Outlook* Russell speaks of the contradiction between the theoretical confusion and uncertainty of modern science and the unceasing growth of its practical achievements. " There is here a paradox, of which possibly the intellectual solution may be found hereafter, or, equally possibly, no solution may exist. The fact is that science plays two quite distinct roles ; on the one hand as a metaphysic, it has been undermined by its own technique," and on the other as educated common sense. An unbridgeable gulf between theory and practice, that is the last word of modern bourgeois philosophy, the sign and seal of its bankruptcy.

From these intolerable contradictions bourgeois ideology, today more than ever, seeks refuge in the comfits of religion. But it is one of the strange contradictions of Russell himself, that he still retains enough hereditary Whig radicalism to reject this path most decisively. Much as his own philosophy, with a few slight twists, could be made very serviceable to religion, Russell himself will have nothing to do with it. Indeed, the few really positive moments in his work occur when he is roused to anger by some priestly impertinence, or by some particularly clumsy attempt to " reconcile " science and religion. *The Scientific Outlook* carries a chapter specially devoted to the exposure of such attempts, which contains among

other things an excellent discussion of the " Principal of Indeterminacy " in Quantum Mechanics and its alleged connection with " free-will." Here we read such passages as the following : " Sir Arthur Eddington deduces religion from the fact that atoms do not obey the laws of mathematics. Sir James Jeans deduces it from the fact that they do. Both these arguments have been accepted with equal enthusiasm by the theologians, who hold, apparently, that the demand for consistency belongs to the cold reason and must not interfere with our deeper religious feelings." Inspired by his hatred of the church, Russell even goes further ; even begins to glimpse the class conflict beneath all this ideological strife. " The reconciliation of religion and science which professors proclaim and Bishops acclaim, rests, in fact, though subconsciously, on ground of quite another sort, and might be set forth in the following practical syllogism : Science depends upon endowments, and endowments are threatened by Bolshevism, therefore science is threatened by Bolshevism ; but religion is also threatened by Bolshevism ; therefore religion and science are allies. It follows, of course, that science, if pursued with sufficient profundity, reveals the existence of God. Nothing so logical as this penetrates, however, to the consciousness of the pious professors."

But such passages are rare, or Russell would not be, as he is, the Whig-Radical-Anarchist, the determined and more or less consistent opponent of Communism.

Politically, Russell's own characterisation of himself is essentially correct. Russell, now Earl Russell,

is a Whig, the last of the great whig Russell family. His grandfather, Lord John Russell, introduced the Reform Bill of 1832 that brought the Industrial Bourgeoisie to power in Britain. But this is only half the story. During the war his opposition brought him into contact with the I.L.P. pacifist group, who also opposed it from the same purely liberal standpoint, and since then he has been in more or less close touch with Labour Party circles. Along with Mrs. (now Viscountess) Snowden and Clifford Allen (now Lord Allen of Hurtwood) he was a member of the first Labour Party delegation to the Soviet Union, which drew from Lenin the remark (cf. *Open Letter to the British Workers*) that the visit of the delegation would hasten the exposure of such leaders in Britain. Ever since this visit he has been a determined opponent of Communism, which he has misunderstood and distorted in many writings. His opposition springs inevitably and logically from his extreme petty-bourgeois individualism, and from the creed which expresses that individualism—*Anarchism*. Hatred of the State, of "power," of interference with the individual, is a leitmotif that runs through all his writings. Expressed passionately in *A Free Man's Worship* (1903) this same fundamental Anarchism recurs in Russell's latest work. Thus the latter part of *The Scientific Outlook* is largely a sermon on the evils of "Scientific Government" applied by men "Drunk with power" and "destitute of wisdom."

Faced with a world situation in which the decisive conflict between Capitalism and Socialism is approaching ever nearer, where everybody is being compelled

to take sides openly and consciously either with the proletariat or with the bourgeoisie, Russell can only flounder helplessly in between the combatants, can only repeat in politics the analogy of his (misleading) dictum in philosophy; "I am not a materialist, but I am still further from idealism."

2. *Some of the Associates and Philosophical Successors of Russell*

The marked solipsistic streak in Russell's philosophy is found in other members of the "Cambridge School," notably in F. P. Ramsey and L. Wittgenstein. For instance, Ramsey is capable of such a remark as the following: "My picture of the world is drawn in perspective, and not like a model to scale. The foreground is occupied by human beings and the stars are all as small as threepenny bits. I don't really believe in astronomy, except as a complicated description of part of the course of human and possibly animal sensation." But even less than Russell can Ramsey be accused of consistency in his philosophy, and subjectivist tendencies are sometimes mixed in his work with views that approximate to dialectical materialism (cf. especially the section on "the Logic of Truth" in his essay on *Truth and Probability*).

Wittgenstein's philosophy forms a logically coherent whole much more than that of Russell or Ramsey. As a former pupil of Russell's, Wittgenstein is in fact the continuation and logical culmination of the philosophical tendency we are studying. This has certainly been his role in England, where there can be

few "Russellians," who have not been profoundly influenced by him. All the more important is the study of his work for grasping the nature of the "Russellian" tendency.

If philosophers are to be judged by their effect on those around them and under their ideological influence, there can be no doubt of the extreme subjectivism latent in Wittgenstein. All those (including the present writer) who have at one time suffered from his influence, can testify to this. Apart from explicit statements of a solipsistic character, Wittgenstein's work shows many internal signs of extreme subjectivism. Thus in the preface to the *Tractatus Logical-Philosophicus* he says: "This book will perhaps only be understood by those who have themselves already thought the thoughts which are expressed in it—or similar thoughts. It is therefore not a textbook. Its object would be attained if there were one person who read it with understanding and to whom it afforded pleasure." And his anti-historicism, his extremely contemptuous dismissal of all past and present philosophers is part of the same tendency.

In accordance with his method in philosophy, Wittgenstein makes such statements as the following: "The world and life are one"—"I am my world (the microcosm)"—But explains that such statements, being of a "philosophical" character, cannot really be made, and therefore "What solipsism *means* is quite correct, only it cannot be *said*, but it shows itself."

This brings us to Wittgenstein's conception of the function of philosophy, being in fact quite unintelligible until this is explained. For Wittgenstein

" The object of philosophy is the logical clarification of thoughts. Philosophy is not a theory but an activity. A philosophical work consists essentially of elucidations. The result of philosophy is not a number of ' philosophical propositions,' but to make propositions clear. Philosophy should make clear and elicit sharply the thoughts which otherwise are, as it were, opaque and blurred." The whole meaning of his book (the *Tractatus*) could be summed up, he tells us, in the words, " What can be said at all can be said clearly ; and whereof one cannot speak thereof one must be silent." And the right method of philosophy would be : " To say nothing except what can be said, i.e. the propositions of natural science, i.e. something that has nothing to do with philosophy ; and then always, when someone else wished to say something metaphysical, to demonstrate to him that he had given no meaning to certain signs in his propositions."

We have here a masterly example of an undialectical philosophy, anti-historical and metaphysical to an extreme. Note, for instance, the article of faith— " What can be said at all can be said clearly," with its corollary that what cannot be said with perfect clarity cannot be said at all ! And here too we can learn how an attitude of extreme empiricism, scorning all " high falutin' " philosophy, when pushed to its logical conclusion leads to utter mysticism.

For on the one hand all past philosophy was a mere " mistake." Philosophers have misunderstood the logic of language and have imagined themselves to be making important statements when in fact " they had

given no meaning to certain signs in their propositions." This little " misunderstanding," first pointed out by Wittgenstein in his *Tractatus* in 1918, and definitely cleared up by him then (" I am therefore of the opinion that the problems have in essentials been finally solved "), was responsible for such a " trifle " as the immense labour expended in the century-old strife between the materialists and idealists on the " fundamental problem of philosophy " (Engels). Accordingly to Wittgenstein both sides in this struggle were in fact making equally meaningless statements, though some people unaccountably preferred one brand of nonsense to another !

But on the other hand, having dismissed all philosophical propositions (and similarly, propositions of ethics and æsthetics) as meaningless, Wittgenstein cannot rid himself of the feeling that the region with which they are supposed to deal does actually exist. After pushing out philosophy in its rational form through the door, he feels constrained to admit it again in an *ultra mystical* shape through the window. This he does by means of his theory of " showing." The whole of philosophy, ethics, etc., belongs to what cannot be expressed but " shows " itself. Thus : " Propositions cannot represent the logical form ; this mirrors itself in the propositions. That which mirrors itself in language, language cannot represent. That which expresses *itself* in language, *we* cannot express by language." Again, " what *can* be shown *cannot* be said." " It is clear ethics cannot be expressed." Speaking of causality he says : " If there were a law of causality, it might run, ' There are

natural laws.' But that can clearly not be said—it *shows* itself." And, " There is indeed the inexpressible. This *shows* itself; it is the mystical."

Here we come on the fundamental contradiction of Wittgenstein's work—whose extreme subjectivism makes its own *reductio ad absurdum*. If the whole of philosophy belongs to what can only be shown but cannot be expressed, if language cannot be used to communicate philosophical propositions from one person to another, there can be no possible justification for Wittgenstein's work. Even if its one object were to prove that philosophy cannot be expressed but only " shown "—this proposition itself could not be expressed but would have to " show " itself. Wittgenstein is altogether too optimistic in his preface to the *Tractatus* when he hopes there would be " One person who read it with understanding and to whom it afforded pleasure." It is inherently impossible for anyone but Wittgenstein to understand it, and it would be better if he had taken more seriously his own dictum " Whereof one cannot speak thereof one must be silent." In such a bog of solipsism, mysticism, and sheer contradiction does this child of Russellian philosophy end.

Next to Russell one of the most influential expounders of the " Philosophy of Science " in England today is A. N. Whitehead, his collaborator in the massive *Principia Mathematica*. This early collaboration was not just of a technical character. On the contrary, Russell explicitly states in the preface to " Our knowledge of the external world " that he owes to Whitehead " the whole conception of the

world of physics as a construction rather than an inference." We have already seen that Russell's whole philosophy consists of a vacillation between these two standpoints.

It is difficult to speak of Whitehead as a " Machian," for although in his earlier work he still shows certain machian tendencies he later developed into an out-and-out idealist and religious obscurantist. Whitehead's idealism is of a much more sophisticated kind than Russell's and is often masked by intolerable verbal ambiguities. We remember how Dr. Sheffer, " one of the ablest logicians of our day," used the word " neutral " to describe idealist philosophy. In this he has been altogether surpassed by Dr. Whitehead (a far abler logician, it must be said), who uses dozens of already existing words, and invents by no means a few to mean what God and Dr. Whitehead alone know. Although we have spared the reader as much as possible, there will be enough examples of this trick in what follows.

The idealist's starting-point of Whitehead will become clear from a consideration of the following statements (to be found in a relatively early work—*The Concept of Nature*, 1919); " Nature is nothing else than the deliverance of sense-awareness "; " . . . the first task of a philosophy of science should be some general classification of the entities disclosed to us in sense-perception." What kind of " entities " are meant here? We find that sense-data along with material objects and events are included among these entities. But " the ultimate fact for sense-awareness is an event," which Whitehead later calls a " *duration*,"

and is a " concrete slab of nature limited by simultaneity which is an essential factor disclosed in sense-awareness." All other entities, whether material objects, partial events, or instants of time, are essentially constructions built from these fundamental " events," which are taken as units.

This starting-point is *pure subjective idealism*. No more than in the case of Russell are these " events " (which Whitehead here speaks of long before Russell uses them in a similar way) comparable to the " events " of physics. They have a purely subjective meaning, being defined by reference to the " specious present " of an individual subject. They are only a more sophisticated variety of the " perspectives " we have already met in Russell. No wonder that with such a starting point Whitehead should already sympathise with Berkeley's polemic against matter, and should write a whole chapter protesting against the materialist's " bifurcation of nature," which reminds us of " the mass of sentimental stuff written about this re-duplication " by Bogdanov and other Machians.

Criticism of the doctrine he calls " scientific materialism," and the elaboration of an alternative " philosophy of organism," forms the main core of Whitehead's work. In *Science and the Modern World* (his chief work) he traces the development of this doctrine from its birth, together with modern science in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, up to the present moment, when (so he maintains) it has become inadequate. From the formulation of " scientific materialism " that he gives in his book it is very clear that Whitehead means " mechanical materialism." In

so far as the materialism of the earlier period of science was in fact mechanical, Whitehead is quite justified in many of his criticisms (made from the standpoint of a dialectical idealist), but he goes further and makes criticism of *this* materialism a criticism of materialism in general. What he criticises is " the fixed scientific cosmology which presupposes the ultimate fact of an irreducible brute matter, or material, spread throughout space in a flux of configurations. In itself such a material is senseless, valueless, purposeless. It just does what it does do, following a fixed routine imposed by external relations which do not spring from the nature of its being."

Dialectical materialism also criticises this " fixed, scientific cosmology " and makes some of the same criticisms. For dialectical materialism there is no " irreducible, brute matter," nor does matter follow a fixed routine imposed by external relations which do not spring from the nature of its being. But Whitehead goes further. His complaint that such a matter is " senseless, valueless, purposeless," already shows his fundamental idealist bias, that he requires a philosophy to bring " sense," " value " and " purpose " into the foundation stones of the world itself.

Such a philosophy he has tried to construct in the *Philosophy of Organism*, whose marked idealist character becomes evident once one has penetrated beneath the fog of words surrounding it. As our examination of his philosophy will show, Whitehead takes up the position of objective idealism. For Whitehead : " One all pervasive fact inherent in the very character of what is real is the transition of things, the passage one to

another." Again: "The general aspect of nature is evolutionary expansiveness. These unities which I call events are the emergence into actuality of something. How are we to characterise the something which thus emerges? The name '*event*' given to such a unity draws attention to the inherent transitoriness, combined with the actual unity." Whitehead asks how the peculiar "reality of an event in itself" can be characterised, and finds the answer in the "testimony" of the poets of the Romantic Reaction that "nature cannot be divorced from its æsthetic values." "Remembering the poetic rendering of our concrete experience, we see at once that the element of value, of being valuable, of having value, of being an end in itself, of being something which is for its own sake, must not be omitted in any account of an event as the most concrete actual something. 'Value' is the word I use for the intrinsic reality of an event. Value is an element that permeates through and through the poetic view of nature. We have only to transfer to the very texture of realisation in itself that value which we recognise so readily in terms of human life."

Here we see a most pronounced idealist at work—importing "value" into the "most concrete actual something" in nature which he calls "events." At this point we come on to the "organisms" which are to replace "matter" in this philosophy. We learn that "science is taking on a new aspect which is neither purely physical nor purely biological. It is becoming the study of organisms. Biology is the study of the larger organisms; whereas physics is the study of the smaller organisms (this unfortunate

definition will make biologists study the anatomy of stars !)

Assuming there is no infinite regress in nature the primary organism is " the emergence of some peculiar pattern as grasped in the unity of a real event." " The organism is a unity of emergent value—emerging for its own sake," " . . . the emergence of organisms depends on a selective activity akin to purpose." Thus in addition to " value " " *purpose* " has now been introduced into the fundamental units of the world. Presently we will find that it is God Almighty Himself (as the " principle of limitation ") who does the " selection."

The " philosophy of organism " consists very largely in applying the concepts, or rather language, of biology to the physical world. Thus the Darwinian " struggle for existence " is applied in an incredible vulgarised form to give the following caricature of science. " Another fact to be explained is the great similarity of these practically indestructible objects. All electrons are very similar to each other—analogously, all hydrogen nuclei are alike. It seems as though a certain similarity were a favourable condition for endurance. Common sense also suggests this conclusion. If organisms are to survive they must work together." " Any physical object which by its influence deteriorates its environment commits suicide." " Thus just as the members of the same species mutually favour each other, so do members of associated species. We find the rudimentary fact of association in the existence of the two species, electrons and hydrogen nuclei. The simplicity of the dual

association, and the apparent absence of competition from other antagonistic species accounts for the massive endurance which we find among them."

With such a philosophy it is not surprising to find Whitehead an outspoken God-builder and an ardent reconciler of science with religion. *Science and the Modern World* carries a chapter on " God " in which he is conceived as the " Principle of Limitation " and as " the ground of concrete actuality." Here Whitehead shows very clearly the place of metaphysical proofs of the existence of God within the general system of religious deception—the division of labour between priests and professors, as it were. " Nothing within any limited type of experience can give intelligence to shape our ideas of any entity at the base of all actual things, unless the general character of things require that there be such an entity."

In a chapter on " religion and science," Whitehead with cunning sophistry compares the conflict between religion and science to that between two scientific theories (e.g. " the wave and corpuscular theories of light ") and urges mutual tolerance. " We should wait ; but we should not wait passively or in despair. The clash is a sign that there are wider truths and finer perspectives within which a reconciliation of a deeper religion and a more subtle science will be found." This chapter is full of this kind of religious opium, and—symptomatic of its influence—some of it is quoted by the Webbs as a sort of " confession of faith " in their recent book on *Method in Social Science.*

Whitehead has also not left social questions untouched. His efforts in this field are fully on a par

with the Machian banalities that Lenin ridiculed in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*. A single example will suffice. "There is something in the ready use of force which defeats its own object. Its main defect is that it bars co-operation. Every organism requires an environment of friends, partly to shield it from violent changes, and partly to supply it with its wants. The Gospel of Force is incompatible with a social life. By *force* I mean *antagonism* in its most general sense." This sort of thing has been preached for many years by social-democrats, unconscious that its "philosophical" basis was the "philosophy of organism."

In his later work Whitehead has proceeded even further along the lines of religious mystification. In a book entitled *Religion in the Making* (1927) he states that "Religion is world-loyalty," and continuing the sophistry we have already noticed grounds religion on "the truth exposed in the *religious experience* of mankind," comparing them to physics which is based on "the truths disclosed in the *sense-perception* of mankind." This later work is even more obscure and incomprehensible than that which we have already met with. In places it even resembles a nightmarish caricature of Hegelian dialectics, for instance the following passage: "Accordingly, the creativity for a creature becomes the creativity with the creature, and thereby passes into another phase of itself." No purpose would be served by wading further into this idealist swamp. Sufficient evidence has been given to show the black, reactionary, face of this philosophy with which Russell has been associated, and to which

he has expressed acknowledgment for some of his fundamental ideas that find expression in his work.

In the existing conditions of capitalist crisis, when the bourgeoisie of all countries is seeking a way out through Fascism and war, and " the idea of storming is ripening in the minds of the masses," such half-way houses as " Machian " philosophy " get thrust aside as no longer useful to the bourgeoisie. Their place gets taken by ever more open and aggressive idealist philosophy, which shows its reactionary, obscurantist character as openly as the philosophy of Whitehead, which we have already considered. In England a tremendous religious drive gets launched, in which eminent scientists (of whom Jeans and Eddington are the best known) co-operate with press, pulpit, and broadcasting station to spread religious dope among the masses. But this ideological movement of the reactionary forces of capitalism is not without its counter-pole. On the contrary, at the very moment when ultra-reactionary philosophical idealism is being intensified, at the other pole particularly among the scientists who have gathered around the united front against Fascism and war (Professors Levy, Haldane, and others) there are signs of the crystallisation of a definite, conscious materialist tendency in England, the first really serious turn to materialism since the eighteenth century. The fate of this tendency in the *immediate future* is of course entirely bound up with the fate of the movement against Fascism and war, and it may well be that individuals who are now travelling with the movement will not stand the tests that lie ahead. But however this may be it would be a serious

mistake to under-estimate this tendency, to fail to see it because of the smoke-screen of reactionary idealism raised by official bourgeois philosophy today.

In fact, as already stated, the very definite materialist tendency that is developing is built entirely round the united front, and led by men who are learning from their own experience the unity of theory and practice. It is this tendency, growing clearer and more conscious with the experience of the class struggle, which will sooner or later emancipate English thought from the muddle which it inherited from the English Machists, and from the religious mysticism which is now considered to be the criterion of good form. This is not all. The materialism of Marx, Engels and Lenin will also liberate English thought from the narrow metaphysical framework which hampered it even in its best period (the seventeenth century); for now it is not a reborn philosophy of Hobbes or Locke which appears on the scene, but a "theory of the principles of modern science" and that mighty weapon of the proletarian struggle which is called dialectical materialism.

THE MARXIST AND THE IDEALIST CONCEPTIONS OF DIALECTIC (1935)

It is a common complaint against Marxism (repeated e.g. in Russell's *Freedom and Organisation*) that it applies *a priori* reasoning to the real world, that it seeks to fit the movement of history into arbitrary, pre-arranged, "dialectical" forms. In other words, Marxism is accused of idealism, more exactly–of Hegelian idealism.

In actual fact, the most complete—indeed the only *adequate* criticism of idealist dialectic ever given was provided by Marxism. Marx himself always emphasised, as in the preface to *Capital*, second edition, that : " My own dialectical method is not only fundamentally different from the Hegelian dialectical method, but is its exact opposite." The matter was explained in more detail by Engels in his chapter on " Dialectics : Negation of the Negation," from *Anti-Dühring*. After showing how Marx deduces the development from Capitalism to Communism by means of a study of history, and not on the credit of the negation of the negation, Engels gives examples of the wide field over which " the negation of the negation " is empirically found.

" What therefore is the negation of the negation ? An extremely general—and for that reason extremely comprehensive and important—law of development of Nature, history and thought. . . . It is obvious that in describing any evolutionary process as the negation of the negation I do not say anything concerning the *particular* process of development, for example, of the grain of barley from germination to the death of the fruit-bearing plant. . . . When I say that all these processes are the negation of the negation, I bring them all together under this one law of motion, and for this reason I leave out of account the peculiarities of each separate individual process. Dialectics is nothing more than the science of the general laws of motion and development of Nature, human society and thought " (p. 159-60).

It is above all necessary to understand that dialectics is a " form of development," that dialectical laws are only the most general forms of process, change,

development, found in the real world. The importance of understanding this dialectical character of reality comes when we are in possession of the " raw facts." The conclusions we deduce from them—the mould in which we try to fit them—will be greatly influenced by whether we have a dialectical or a metaphysical approach. This is seen most clearly in the contrast between the Marxist and the bourgeois interpretations of current history. It is in this sense that " Nature is the test of dialectics." Thus dialectics does *not* enable us to disperse with empirical facts, to deduce things from a logical scheme. Rather does it help us to deal with the facts when discovered (and also suggests what important facts are to be looked out for).

Idealist dialectics, on the other hand, certainly makes use of " dialectical transitions " in its reasoning, but these are purely arbitrary, of a kind which may be manufactured *ad lib.* to lead in any desired direction. The transitions in Hegel's " Logic " are often quite arbitrary, sometimes affected by mere " puns " (cf. Engels in *Marx-Engels Correspondence*). Marx and Engels wrote in the *German Ideology* a great polemic against the whole of this idealist dialectic, represented in a particularly crass form by Max Stirner. They showed how the verbal and logical tricks used by Stirner to connect various concepts (and therefore, he thought, the reality that corresponded to them) could be used to prove literally anything on earth. Idealist dialectic, which may sometimes represent in inverted form the real materialist inter-connections—the *real* dialectic—is inevitably driven in the attempt to systematise itself to the most ridiculous shifts and

schoolboy tricks, which make it a parody of any sort of dialectic (cf. *Rudas-Carritt Controversy*).

MEN OF MATHEMATICS

By PROFESSOR E. T. BELL

(*Reviewed by David Guest in the "Labour Monthly," October* 1937)

This book sets out to be a story of the lives of mathematicians over the last 200 years, not a *history* of mathematics. But in spite of its author's intentions it becomes in fact a history, and perhaps inevitably suggests the "great man" explanation of this history.

If we discount this bias there is much of tremendous interest in the story which unfolds. How few of the great mathematicians have lived up to the popular idea of the scientific recluse? Most of them were buffeted about in the social storms of their epoch, and some took an active part in these struggles. Even the absent-minded Newton, according to Bell,

"Grew up with a fierce hatred of tyranny, subterfuge, and oppression, and when King James later sought to meddle repressively in University affairs, the mathematician and natural philosopher did not need to learn that resolution and a united front on the part of those whose liberties are endangered is the most effective defence against a coalition of unscrupulous politicians" (p. 114).

Of course not all mathematicians have been on the Left, although, according to Bell, there has been a tendency in this direction. Some have held the most reactionary views, both political and philosophical,

which are typified in the galaxy of idealist-tinged *obiter dicta* which preface the book. As a contrast, how refreshing is the materialist spirit in the following declaration of Fourier, the great mathematician of the French Revolution* :

" The profound study of nature is the most fecund source of mathematical discoveries. Not only does this study, by offering a definite goal to research, have the advantage of excluding vague questions and futile calculations, but it is also a sure means of moulding analysis itself and discovering those elements in it which it is essential to know and which science ought always to conserve. These fundamental elements are those which recur in all natural phenomena " (p. 596).

In the French Revolution we can clearly trace the liberating effect of a great political upheaval on human thought. This was the time, according to Hegel, when the world was stood upon its head, when " the reasoning intellect was applied to everything as the sole reason " (Engels in *Anti-Dühring*).

It was certainly a time of the most splendid efflorescence of French mathematics. Fourier and the Convention were responsible for an important reform in the teaching of French mathematics.

" Remembering the deadly lectures of defunct professors, memorised and delivered in identical fury year after dreary year, the Convention called in *creators* of mathematics to do the *teaching*, and forbade them to lecture from any notes at all. The lectures were to be delivered standing (not sitting half asleep behind a desk), and were to be a free interchange of questions and explanations

* Not to be confused with Charles Fourier, the Utopian Socialist.

between the professor and his class. It was up to the lecturer to prevent a session from degenerating into a profitless debate" (p. 223).

If only some modern university departments would revive this method!

Perhaps it is not altogether fanciful to see in the England of the seventeenth century a like stimulating influence of revolutionary storms on creative mathematics. And something of the same sort may be found in the *Sturm und Drang* period of German history before 1848.

However this may be, such things have to be read between the lines in this book, for its author is not concerned with mathematics as "a mirror of civilisation" (to use Hogben's phrase), but only as an activity of mathematicians. This is one of the fundamental limitations of the book, as already stated.

Another limitation comes from the very character of the advanced mathematics with which it mainly deals. While Hogben's *Mathematics for the Million* is easily accessible to the general reader, and it is even possible to learn mathematics from it, the same cannot be said about this book. Critics have complained that Hogben's book deals only with mathematics before 1750. That is probably one of its great merits.

For in spite of a disarming introduction in which Bell informs us that "the basic ideas of modern mathematics, from which the whole vast and intricate complexity has been woven by thousands of workers, are simple, of boundless scope and well within the understanding of any human being with normal intelligence" (p. 19), it must be stated that the general

reader is not likely to see the *why* and *wherefore* of these ideas. There is a danger that the book will merely produce a state of " gaping wonderment," during which the reader is too stunned by unfamiliar words to realise that he is not following the argument. If this " stunning " danger can be averted the book is likely to stimulate those who have time to take a real look at modern mathematics.

The book ends, appropriately enough, with a chapter on the " Crisis " in mathematics, and the struggle that is going on between different schools over the " foundations " of the subject today.

The row began in a fight over the theory of the Infinite which Cantor had pioncered, despite fierce attacks by the mathematicians of his day, to a recognised place in the late nineteenth century world of mathematics. Right from the start, cracks and crevices were observed in this structure. Fatal contradictions appeared which seemed to endanger the whole building. Mathematicians were divided into two camps. Those who regarded the theory of the Infinite as a " disease from which mathematics had to recover " (Henri Poincaré), and those who said with Hilbert : " No one shall expel us from the Paradise which Cantor has created for us."

The latter view led to the attempt of the *formalist* school of Hilbert in Germany, and the *logistic* school of A. N. Whitehead and Bertrand Russell in England, to build mathematics on a " solid foundation." The most monumental achievement of this period was the tremendous *Principia Mathematica* of Whitehead and Russell, which appeared just before the World Crash of 1914.

In a sense, this work was the last great attempt to build classical mathematics on a completely firm and unassailable basis. For it must be realised that it was not only the newly-discovered Infinite Realms of Cantor that were at stake, the contradictions now revealed struck at the root of the whole of Classical Analysis, that is, of precisely that branch of mathematics which had been so essential in the development of Physical Science.

After the war attempts were made to " patch up " the *Principia Mathematica*, and to develop further the formalist basis of mathematics. But such " reformism " was doomed to failure. And soon we had the revolutionary challenge of the " Intuitionists," Brouwer and Weyl, demolishing whole stories of the mathematical building, and discarding venerable modes of reasoning. Finally they went to the root of the whole matter by assailing the *fundamental principle* of formal logic—the famous " law of the excluded middle "—perhaps best described as the rule of " either—or."

But what is this but the spirit of dialectics breaking through the hard shell of formal logic, within which so much scientific thought has been imprisoned in the past ! In the midst of much that is still under investigation in detail, a Marxist cannot help feeling that here vast realms of thought await a dialectical understanding. But such things cannot be proved by dogmatic assertion. The only " proof " that will satisfy, the " proof " that is so badly needed by mathematics today, is the carrying through of the *work* of clearing up its foundations. To do this would be a tremendous achievement for the dialectical materialist approach to science.