BOOK REVIEWS

THE SEVENTH NIGHT. By LADISLAV MŇAČKO, translated from Slovak, foreword by HARRY SCHWARTZ. [*J. M. Dent & Sons.* 226 pp. 36s.]

PRAGUE'S 200 DAYS. THE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA. By HARRY SCHWARTZ. [*Pall Mall.* 274 pp. 50s.]

THE CZECHOSLOVAK CRISIS 1968. Edited by ROBERT RHODES JAMES. [*Weidenfeld and Nicolson.* 203 pp. 40s.]

WHAT else can now be done about the rape of Czechoslovakia than collecting, verifying and classifying relevant facts and submitting them to those readers of the world still free to read what they like? The authors, co-authors and publishers of the books under review should be credited with fulfilling this task impeccably. I, at any rate, have not come across any noteworthy factual error in their accounts. The authors do not hide their bias, if bias be the right word for sympathising with the Czech and Slovak peoples rather than with the Soviet invaders; but in the selection of facts, they could not be more objective and detached. In a way, this indicates their limitations. Their accounts are useful and elucidating rather than surprising. M. Mňačko's and Mr. Schwartz's narratives make redundant readings indeed, for no fault of theirs but because their story is so obvious, not only since Novotny's fall but since Munich; and this applies to a large extent to the anthology of essays published under the auspices of the University of Sussex as well, although its "selected" (really quite detailed) Chronology for 1968 and the important documents printed in verbatim translation in its Appendix are contributions of somewhat different character and no less valuable than the rest. All these will serve as sources for the historian to draw on in a future which may or may not have room and audience for presenting a comprehensive picture of the crusade of the Russian empire, under the banner of Marxism-Leninism, in Central and South-Eastern Europe.

Ladislav Mňačko, journalist and novelist (author of *The Taste of Power*, published in English and several other languages some time ago), is not only a reporter on the events in Bohemia and Slovakia but one of their heroes; he was in the front line of the Slovak intellectuals pressing for a livelier pace of liberalisation. Defying the foreign policy of the Novotny government, particularly on the Middle-East issue, he took refuge in Israel until progress towards liberty went far enough for him to return, and thus he spent the first days of Soviet occupation in Prague; but he is today in exile once again. His case, and the part played by young men like him, is typical: they are the new vintage of the *God-that-failed* species, intellectuals who, notwithstanding the bitter experiences made with the Soviet power by others, feel that by embracing "Marxism-Leninism" they see an illuminating light which is denied to the non-initiated and who, after their own disappointments, turn the whole of their passion on denouncing either the creed or its application. As a political thinker, Mňačko does not seem to be comparable in depth to his best predecessors but he is an outstandingly brave and vigorous writer, and convincingly honest. About the prospects, he is fairly pessimistic—though

not enough, I fear. He suspects (or suspected last year when he finished his book) a "dirty bargain" behind the passivity of the West: "Vietnam in exchange for Czechoslovakia"; in a way South-East Asia for Central Europe. He was not the only one to think so; the Italian Communists who were more incensed than the State Department—let alone General de Gaulle whose belittling of the invasion amounted to approval!—meant to sense a tit-for-tat between the two giant establishments, both of which were less interested in their respective ideologies than in their spheres of power. Yet, today, the United States is nearer to capitulating in Vietnam than it has ever been. Hawks are peerless in victimising their clients; no French left-winger could have abandoned his kinsmen in Algeria more unreservedly than the General brought to power by the surge for "*Algérie française*!"; and as to President Nixon about Vietnam—the final result of his peace moves is still to be seen but the idea that either he or the State Department had approached the problem with a diabolical scheme can safely be dismissed. An inter-Establishment solidarity does exist between the White House and the Kremlin but is much more due to fear, helplessness, entanglement in petty manoeuvres in and outside their countries than to deliberations.

As a Hungarian I was, of course, tempted all the time to compare the Seven or the Two Hundred Days in Prague with what I experienced in the Budapest of 1956. My countrymen were hot-headed, no doubt; and the fine men leading them, such as Imre Nagy, lacked the energy to resist their emotional pressure. The Czechs, I hoped, would avoid our pitfalls. They were certainly keen to do so. Under Dubček's leadership, they were most careful not to hurt Soviet sensibilities and not to harm Soviet interests. They have, in a word, learned the Hungarian lesson; and have learned it in vain. The thing which the Kremlin could not put up with was the hope of turning Czechoslovakia into a freely pro-Russian country from a dictatorially pro-Russian one. The moral of the story is that freedom is hated—not because it breeds capitalism, or Imperialism, or "Revancheism", or any anti-Soviet conspiracy but simply because it is freedom.

Yet, it would be too rash to think that the story has come to an end. It has not in Bohemia or Slovakia. Friends of mine who have visited them recently—on matters which had nothing to do with politics—testify to this in clearly unpremeditated anecdotes. "Difficulties for my being a foreigner?" a young girl told me. "Only because I was suspected of coming from Russia. The first sentence I had to learn in Czech was 'I'm not Russian, I'm English', and then they smiled." In the war of nerves between the occupiers and the occupied, the occupiers hold, of course, all the trump cards but this does not mean that they always know how to play them. Stalin and Beria and Khrushchev faltered, and though I do not say that Brezhnev will necessarily end like any of them, so much seems to be clear that he and his entourage are even more exposed to the vicissitudes of political intrigues, economic crises and military clashes than their opposite numbers in Washington.

PAUL IGNOTUS.

THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT IN BRITAIN 1900–21. By W. KENDALL. [*Weidenfeld and Nicolson.* 453 pp. 105s.]

HISTORY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN: FORMATION AND EARLY YEARS, 1919–1924. By J. KLUGMANN. [*Lawrence and Wishart.* 381 pp. 63s.]

THERE is a revolutionary tradition in the British Labour Movement, but its outstanding characteristic has been its "ifiness". If British proletarian insurgency had been synchronised with Irish nationalism in 1848 or 1866 or 1916: if James Connolly and John MacLean had been at the Leeds Convention of 1917 when the call went out for Soviets in the United Kingdom: if Easter in Dublin had coincided with October in Petrograd: if the shop stewards on the Clyde and in Sheffield had come together and had come together on something more far-reaching than "You can't touch me, I am A.S.E. . . .". The "ifs" must surely resound in the ears of the now middle-aged, faded and essentially respectable Communist Party of Great Britain. If only it had been formed, not in the Summer of 1920, but three years earlier. If only it had been present while the Labour Party was being reconstructed and before the Third (Communist) International had been formed: if it had been able to place itself at the head of the mass unrest that characterised that period, then it might have counted for something both at home and abroad.

According to Mr. Klugmann: "The Communist Party was not in any sense a foreign creation. It arose out of long struggles within Britain, answering the needs of the British working class" (p. 70). Mr. Kendall, on the other hand, argues that: "The Communist Party far from representing a culmination of a previous development represented instead a clear breach with all its principles and an attempt to divert the course of history by a bureaucratic manoeuvre" (p. 302). Neither conclusion seems warranted by the evidence.

It is difficult to understand how Mr. Klugmann expects to carry conviction. He writes as an official historian and, perhaps, his work will be treated as authoritative in Eastern Europe, but it can hardly be considered seriously here. He simply fails to give his readers a fair chance of considering what was implied by the C.P.G.B. being, from its foundation, an integral part of the Communist International. Thus, he neglects to give any adequate account of the celebrated 21 conditions of affiliation to the C.I. and simply dismisses as "anti-communist distortions" the references to them which were made by Labour leaders. Having shown a wanton disregard for the published record, he makes next to no use of the material to which he has been given privileged access in both London and Moscow. On the subject of Party finance he maintains a silence fully as profound as that traditionally associated with the Tory central office. To assert that the Communist Party was not "in any sense" a foreign creation is to diminish the role of Lenin. (No one, not even Maclean or Connolly, began to get close to the theory and practice of Democratic Centralism which was novel and alien.) It is equally to diminish Communist Internationalism: to obscure the fact that insistence upon the national character of the workers' parties had seemed the most glaring fault of the Second International. It is also to make incomprehensible the fundamental difficulty of British Communism—namely, how to reconcile the two

conflicting requirements which Lenin imposed upon it: "a complete and absolute rupture with Reformism" and affiliation to the Labour Party.

Mr. Kendall's book is not to be dealt with in such terms. On the contrary, it must be regarded as an important contribution to British labour and political history in the first two decades of the present century. This is a work of patient scholarship by a man who is deeply immersed in his subject. Although he is sometimes repetitious, Mr. Kendall has been most successful in organising a vast amount of material which has never been adequately examined before. Not all his evidence may bear the interpretation which he wishes to place upon it, but its cumulative effect is impressive. Whereas Mr. Klugmann is a product of the Stalinist epoch in the history of the British Party, Mr. Kendall is a product of the violent reaction against it. This has an important bearing on the way in which these books are written. Stalinism carried to extreme lengths the subordination of the individual to the party apparatus. It distrusted human diversity and richness of personality. It imposed its own impoverished idiom upon the language of socialism and required that whoever wrote or spoke for the Party should sound exactly like anyone else who wrote or spoke for the Party. This has had a malign effect upon Mr. Klugmann's work, for none of his characters come to life. Mr. Kendall, by contrast, is extremely successful in evoking the colourful and often courageous men and women of the Revolutionary Movement. In particular, his book has the great merit of restoring for us the lost figure of John MacLean: the greatest personality in the tradition he describes.

Many of Mr. Kendall's conclusions will command wide assent. It is incontestable that the C.I. was an instrument of Soviet policy which imposed an orthodoxy required by those in power in Russia upon those who were struggling for power and release of the revolutionary spirit in the rest of the world. Nor can it be doubted that the C.P.G.B. greatly encouraged the deadening confusion between being "Left" and being "East". There is much to be said for the view that the British Party was a *cul de sac*: its main importance being that it weakened the socialist presence within the Labour Party. Yet Mr. Kendall is too insistent on the discontinuity between the needs and experience of the British Revolutionary Movement and the formation of the Communist Party. He himself demonstrates that there was no one in the Movement before 1920 who really faced up to the need for a revolutionary leadership which would inevitably involve a measure of "bureaucratic organisation". No one knew how to transform theoretical reflections or militant responses into revolutionary initiatives. Leninism may have been an inappropriate way of correcting this deficiency, but the deficiency was there. Again, the iron discipline and rigid centralisation of the C.I. may have been an alien experience for the British, but the War had exposed the hollow sentimentalities of the Second International and demonstrated the need for a structure of a more disciplined and effective sort. Nor is Mr. Kendall able consistently to sustain his argument that there was a "clear breach" between the new party and earlier experience. He asserts: "The revolutionary movement, before the transformation took place, had been ultra-democratic, opposed to leadership on principle, opposed to the professionalisation of the Labour Movement almost as an article of faith". But on the next page (301) he is obliged to pull himself up and recall "Hyndman's personal rule over the B.S.P." and "the S.L.P.'s slavish

adherence to de Leon". In other words, the ground had been prepared for "the cult of the Individual" and for the "disease of orthodoxy" before the Russians appeared on the scene.

Some twenty years ago Mr. E. H. Carr remarked that: "The C.P.G.B. was the product of a marriage between haphazard British initiative and strict Leninist discipline". Whether the character of the child is treated as a subject of sorrow or hilarity or scorn, its debt to both its parents must be considered. Despite his rather obsessive concern with the genetic inheritance from only one side, Mr. Kendall has written a valuable and substantial book.

ROYDEN HARRISON.

THE ORIGINS OF SOCIALISM. By GEORGE LICHTHEIM. [*Weidenfeld and Nicolson.* 302 pp. 50s. and 21s.]

THE author's intention is to provide "the student with a concise analysis of the subject and a critical introduction to the literature". The latter part of the work consists of some seventy pages of notes, and these, it is true, do afford something of a bibliography and contain several useful and illuminating insights, although presented in a somewhat inconvenient form. But Mr. Lichtheim, rightly, disclaims any intention of suggesting that this book is a brief analytical history of the Socialist movement. He says, on the contrary, that his purpose is "to clarify the origins of socialism, both as a world view and as the specific response of the workers and intellectuals to the twofold upheavals of the French Revolution and the industrial revolution". He is surely correct and wise to draw attention to both these revolutions as providing the main sources of socialism although this is not always sufficiently done in the treatment of this subject. They did provide the principal sources, and Mr. Lichtheim relates the first two parts of his book to each of them in turn. In the first he deals with the heritage of the French Revolution, with the Egalitarians, the Utopians and the followers of Saint-Simon. He goes on to give a brief account of the Socialism of the 1840s, of Blanqui, Blanc, etc.; and he then has some pages upon Proudhon.

In the second part he moves to what he calls the "critics of the industrial revolution" and these he finds in Britain. The forty or so pages which he devotes to this part of his subject are less satisfactory than is the section, of nearly twice that length, which he devotes to what he calls "German Socialism", where he places his analysis of Marx and the Marxian synthesis. That this is the best part of his study is not surprising for, after all, Mr. Lichtheim has already written other studies on this theme, such as his historical and critical study of Marxism and his examination of Marxism in modern France. This piece is brief but it is good.

It is in his dealing with the birth of socialist thought in Britain that the author is less penetrating, and it is here that we may hope that when he comes to write a fuller analytical history of the Socialist movement he may be more appreciative and instructive. For, as he well says, not only was it in Britain that the industrial revolution first developed, and here that it was in advance of both France and Germany, but it was also in the response to the problems it raised that the early British socialists contributed the main ideological sources of the socialist analysis, sources which it was left to Marx,

working in London, to develop into "a system" on good Hegelian and Germanic lines. Here it was, for instance, that the central problem was first seen. This was the problem, of course, suggested by the fact that ownership of the machines, of capital, means power, the power of control over labour and the power to reap the major part of the rewards. One corollary was certainly drawn: the workers must somehow obtain control by becoming owners of the machines. More importance, it might be suggested, should also be attached to the contribution of Thomas Hodgskin. His attack on the political economy of his day as being "studied and discussed in subserviency to the present established right of property" was surely seminal.

"No adequate explanation", wrote Hodgskin, "is given by it of the startling circumstance that, in the progress of society, landlords and capitalists . . . get a larger and larger share of the produce of industry; while labourers, as such, get a smaller and smaller share"—a principle later to be elevated into a law of historical evolution by Marx. Or, again, in discussing the instrumentality of change, it was surely Hodgskin who was the first to point to the working class as alone the means of implementing it, arguing that the middle classes were tied to the defence of the social order, and claiming too that labour must educate itself and so learn how to displace capitalists, a process which he thought had already begun. The idea too that labour was being denied its right to the whole of its product was to be found elsewhere, in, for instance, William Ogilvie's *Right of Property in Land*, as well as in James Penny, and in Hall's *Effects of Civilisation*. More too should certainly be made of the contributions of William Thompson and William King. The former's argument, contained in his *Labour Rewarded*, which is a work of early socialist analysis, was that the working class have a distinct historical role. They "are now learning their own interests and their own importance as rational beings: they will soon speak out: and thenceforward they alone will regulate human affairs, essentially their affairs". Here again, surely, is a claim and assertion that is central and that Marx was to echo, synthesise and develop into the classless society. The debt is clear. It is to be expected from the facts of the case, namely, the emergence of the industrial problem in England first, and it should be given due acknowledgment. The reader may be pardoned for feeling that the author is in this field less percipient and penetrating than might be hoped. But this is not to deny that Mr. Lichtheim is to be commended for giving a concise and useful summary.

H. R. G. GREAVES.

THE STATE IN CAPITALIST SOCIETY. By RALPH MILIBAND. [*Weidenfeld and Nicolson*. 277 pp. 45s.]

THIS is an interesting, readable, intelligent, well-documented, useful and disappointing book whose general thesis should surprise no one who has read Dr. Miliband's previous writings.

Anyone who finds it hard to understand how an intelligent, knowledgeable and humane man can possibly imagine British parliamentary democracy to be little more than an ameliorating cover for capitalist rule should read this book. So, too, should any serious student of British politics who is

unaware of the facts of social and economic inequality or of their influence upon the government and political life of the country. As a detailed Marxist interpretation of British politics this book's place is assured. But the author's avowed aim is to help remedy Marxist deficiencies in developing a "theory of the state", and it is by this test that the book must also be judged, and judged to have failed. Indeed, it is doubtful whether the argument amounts to any kind of acceptable political theory—and, by acceptable, I mean academically (not politically) acceptable.

One criticism may well be thought "political": that Marxist readers alone will be able to accept some of the assumptions of the argument. To others it will not be immediately evident, for example, that reform serves *only* to strengthen and not to alter the existing social order (unless reform is defined to exclude any significant (to whom?) change in that order); that *no* strikes or labour demands are unjustified; or that the proper end of education is to induce a state of "sustained rebelliousness". These assumptions may be valid—but not to hint at the grounds for their validation nor, apparently, to recognise that they might be called for is not merely a political shortcoming. Furthermore, in any book which claims to be concerned with theory, these are surely the points at which the difficult and interesting discussion should begin.

In other areas, too, the argument stops precisely where it becomes most intellectually challenging. To take but one example, Dr. Miliband rightly calls attention to the extent to which, in a capitalist society, government action in the name of law and order or the national interest, whether in the field of foreign policy or industrial relations, is likely, in fact, to benefit "the business and investing classes". In the case of strike-breaking, he says, "the fact that [governments] have done so in the name of the national interest, law and order . . . , etc., rather than simply to support employers, has not made that intervention any the less useful to these employers" (p. 80). This is sound enough. But while he notes the possible divergence between purpose and result, he does not seem aware of the possibility of inverting his argument. Thus it would also be plausible to assert that "the facts that governments have acted on behalf of employers has not made that intervention any the less beneficial to law and order". The point is that politics is, *par excellence*, a realm of inbuilt and inescapable ambiguities; governments must maintain order, but cannot defend order in the abstract. They must therefore defend a particular order (as well as try to make it defensible). And this ambiguity would obtain whatever the particular order and whatever the form of government. At least, this is an arguable position, and one of which the book gives no hint. But only by denying that the ambiguity is inescapable can it be properly cited as a distinctive feature of "the state in capitalist society" rather than of the nature of human society and of the political. And only by an explicit and reasoned statement of that denial would the argument have been lifted to a significant theoretical level.

Comparable failures to appreciate the difference between an inherent ambiguity and a temporary "contradiction" underlie the discussion of the "contradictory nature" of voting under capitalism or the apparent assumption that there is no problem about industrial discipline and rationality except under capitalism and Stalinism. This is to duck such basic questions as the possible roles of a large electorate or labour force under any system, or of the

precise conditions under which involvement may legitimately be looked for in politics or in industry.

A further complaint must be expressed in even a short review. Mr. Miliband articulates the difficulties posed for any humane and libertarian revolutionary (as I take him to be) by the consistent tendency of "the people", the workers, to be non-revolutionary, incapable of sustaining a "genuinely socialist" party or government, and content largely to vote for their oppressors. His answer is set out in two long chapters on the "Process of Legitimation". In them, and this is my complaint, he seems to have swallowed whole the most extreme claims made (for example, by G. Almond) on behalf of the "socialisation process" implicitly interpreted to exclude experience of anything but the mass media of communication, upbringing and formal education. At the same time, moreover, he neglects the more fundamental question of the extent to which the nature of all experience, and thus of "reality", may be socially defined.

Perhaps the main reason for feeling disappointed with the book is that it offers no defence of the most fundamental points of potential disagreement. I do not believe, as Mr. Miliband seems still to do, that *politics* are capable of reduction, in however ultimate or complex a sense, to an epiphenomenal status, nor that there are *no* political imperatives which transcend particular circumstances. On the other hand, I am possibly more convinced than he is that the particular structures and roles of *governments* are influenced by particular circumstances and therefore that one must exercise great caution in generalising about the state. And one important form of that caution would be to approach the "capitalist state" by means of genuine comparisons with other states and other times, if only to avoid the heresy of, as it might be called, "parochial absolutism". One would have welcomed some discussion of these issues.

Interesting and useful as this book is, it must regretfully be compared to the work of an artisan rather than to a piece of craftsmanship; and only by the most devout egalitarian should this be interpreted as the highest praise.

GRAEME C. MOODIE.

POPULISM: ITS MEANINGS AND NATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS. Edited by GHITA IONESCU and ERNEST GELLNER. [*Weidenfeld and Nicolson.* 263 pp. 50s.]

THIS is not so much a book in the comfortable, easily digestible sense; it is a collection of essays by ten different academic authors examining a new theme and a new word—populism. What *is* populism? As the editors, Mr. Ghita Ionescu and Professor Ernest Gellner, remark, there is no doubt about its importance, but no one is quite sure what it is. Does it have an underlying unity or does one name cover a multitude of unconnected tendencies? "Can the anger of Middle American farmers against urban lawyers, the droolings of Tolstoy over muzhiks, the rationalisations of East European resentments against alien traders, and the slogans in terms of which rulers of new nations legitimate themselves and subvert liberal institutions" be given one name? Is it broadly, as the French sociologist Alain Touraine has suggested, the

result of a special social situation faced by societies where the middle social factor is weak?

Some contributors to this collection (which grew out of papers at a Conference on the subject organised by the journal *Government and Opposition* at L.S.E. in 1967) have been happier saying what it is not. But enthusiasts —such as Mr. Ionescu's own contribution on Eastern Europe proves him to be—rarely gather people together to discuss a non-concept, and so the editors' sub-title *Its meanings and national characteristics*, with the emphasis on the plural, seems like a suitable compromise to avoid slamming the door in anyone's face.

Professor Peter Wiles is one of the few contributors carefree enough to attempt a definition " that populism is any creed or movement based on the major premises that virtue resides in the simple people (who are the overwhelming majority) and in their collective traditions ". Others seem inhibited in their exposition lest they might be thought to be legally adopting a new ideological infant as a result of their collective labours. Better, they seem to say, not to raise the child at all since her parentage is clearly mixed and she might grow up to marry a Communist or a Fascist. Or that is what one takes Mr. Minogue to mean when he writes " Our business is in a sense juridical, should we legitimise a general concept of populism? " But as the editors prove by this collection there is a practical as well as a juridical question in relation to populism. Legal adoption or not, it is on the doorstep, so should one foster it?

The answer to that question for most seems to be no. The Conference at L.S.E. was no more the first Populist International than this volume is the Populist Manifesto. On the contrary it is a critical, predominantly liberal, douche of cold water squirted at anyone who might have perceived in populism a fresh young ideology to substitute for over-worked and over-embraced goddesses like nationalism, socialism or (for Professor Worsley at least) communism. If it serves no other purpose this collection of essays will show future historians of ideas that, at least up to 1969, populism is no matured idea but simply a name given to many separate notions and experiences in place and time.

The book is divided into two sections, the first is concerned with particular historico-geographic situations where varieties of populism have manifested themselves—the North and Latin Americas, Russia, Eastern Europe, and Africa. The North American strain burst out, as Professor Hofstadter tells us, in the late 1880s and 1890s; but with the alleviation of rural grievances became contained and expressed within the existing party system. At a similar period in the late nineteenth century, *Narodnichvesto* spread into Eastern Europe from Russia coinciding with, or following, agricultural problems and peasant unrest. Lenin, we learn from Dr. Walicki, saw populism as a phenomenon which emerges in different backward societies in periods of transition, reflecting the class position of the peasantry. But the word (while being espoused or rejected by groups of intellectuals with a variety of political creeds and programmes) sometimes denoted non-revolutionary publicists who advocated legal reforms in the interests of the peasantry.

This nineteenth-century European material is absorbing, in view of the search for a theory of development in contemporary " Third World " peasant societies. But John Saul's article should warn us of the little precise use as

yet made of the notion in relation to Africa. In Latin America by contrast there is a relatively sizeable middle social factor; yet populism, experienced first in the nineteenth century, is still a contemporary political force—though predominantly urban based.

The second section (with contributions from Donald Macrae, Peter Wiles, Angus Stewart, Kenneth Minogue and Peter Worsley) attempts to uncover theories of populism from the standpoint of different disciplines. All are self-consciously wary of taking a word and turning it into an ideology; understandably in view of the fragmented nature of the different populisms revealed in the essays that went before. Angus Stewart shows how we can see populism as either a system of ideas, a number of discrete historical phenomena, or as a product of a certain type, or types, of social situation. Kenneth Minogue suggests that notions of populism spring only from two brief historical episodes in Russia and North America, and therefore to talk of Ghanaian or Chinese populism "looks at first like talking of Spanish champagne—plausible but there ought to be a law against it". Professor Worsley, in a criticism of "the history of ideas" itself, seems to condemn his colleagues for what they have been all too careful not to do; that is, failing to make clear whether the pedigree traced is one explicitly visible to the bearers of the ideas themselves, or a line of descent imputed to them by historians.

These theoretical essays, because they overlap but fail quite to *fuse*, come off less well than the area studies which are simply splendidly informative. The editors regret the omission of studies on Canadian and Asian populism, and these would have heightened the interest it is true—but it is a valuable collection nevertheless. Of course, the volume is bound to be hamstrung by the multi-author form. Useful as it is, the collection adds up to no more than the sum of its parts. The balanced square meal of populism, with a beginning, a middle and an end has yet to be provided. This book gives us a range of rich *hors d'oeuvres*, some are brilliant in themselves, but many leave a gnawing desire for more when taken separately, and yet prove severely indigestible when taken with the others.

SALLY JENKINSON.

CASTRO. A POLITICAL BIOGRAPHY. By HERBERT L. MATTHEWS. [*Allen Lane, The Penguin Press.* 325 pp. 50s.]

MR. MATTHEWS's involvement with the Cuban revolution goes back to the heroic days of the Sierra Maestra: it was in February 1957, shortly after Fidel Castro had landed in Cuba from Mexico, that Mr. Matthews interviewed him for the *New York Times* in his guerrilla camp, and informed the United States and the world that the Cuban revolution was on its way. Less than two years later, Batista was in flight and Castro was in Havana. Since then, Mr. Matthews has often returned to Cuba and written much to help dispel the fog of ignorance, lies and misrepresentation which has shrouded the Cuban story, particularly in the United States. His sympathies are strongly on the side of the revolution and he is clear about its achievements. On the other hand, he writes as a "liberal who believes in individual and civic liberties, who dislikes dictatorship and any kind of totalitarianism"; and he is

emphatic about what he sees as the shortcomings and derelictions of the regime, and about the failings as well as the virtues of its leader. His book is not written in a spirit of spurious objectivity; it is rather an honest attempt to present the many different facets of an exceptionally complex subject. The analysis does not go very deep, and the writing is occasionally naïve ("he [Fidel Castro] had a predisposition for Marxism; it was in his nature"); nevertheless, the book is probably the most useful introductory account of the Cuban revolution so far available.

"The Cuban Revolution", Mr. Matthews notes, "is Fidel Castro's revolution"; and indeed, it is entirely likely that there would have been no landing in Cuba without Fidel; that if there had been a landing, it would have ended in failure; and that if it had not ended in failure, the revolution would have followed a radically different course. Seldom (Lenin is the only obvious parallel) has one man so decisively shaped a revolutionary struggle, or so dominated its subsequent unfolding. This is why a political biography of Castro, such as this book attempts, is also a history of the Cuban revolution itself.

A political biography of Castro, however, presents some unusual difficulties. For it must describe the development of a revolutionary practice resting upon very slender ideological foundations. Fidel's own statement in December 1961 that he had always been a Marxist-Leninist cannot be taken as more than a rhetorical flight of fancy, however the term is used. What is true is that he has always been a revolutionary, which is not necessarily the same thing. In fact, much of the complexity and fascination of Castro as a revolutionary leader is precisely that he started without any of the conventional ideological baggage of a revolutionary leader; and that, having achieved power, he went on to make an authentic social revolution—practice preceded theory. Had it not, Castro might not have made his revolution at all: after all, his orthodox Communist allies consistently believed that he was going too far too fast. Mr. Matthews spends a great deal of time—possibly with an eye to his American readers—showing that Fidel was not a Communist in the Russian or Chinese meaning of the word. This is obviously true, both in the sense that he is no one's camp follower—even his deplorable speech endorsing the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia makes this quite clear; and in the sense that he has copied no model in making his revolution or in pushing it forward. In a way, other models, and the Soviet model in particular, have served as warnings rather than as examples: one of the main reasons for Castro's attacks on old-style Cuban Communists is that they appeared to him to threaten the revolution with imprisonment in a dogmatic and bureaucratic mould wholly at variance with his own hopes for it.

Those hopes are a compound of many elements: the striving for national independence, revolutionary idealism, liberation from material want, egalitarianism, the assertion of dignity and honour (Mr. Matthews is entirely right to stress the Hispanic ingredient in the values of the Cuban revolution), solidarity with other revolutionary movements at war with imperialism. This does not amount to a fully fledged doctrine nor has Castro himself ever claimed that "Fidelismo" was a doctrine at all. On this score, as on so many others, the Cuban revolution remains in the making, a daily improvisation within a hard core of commitment, a constant innovation rather than an accomplished event. As such, it continues to pose to itself a vast array of

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questions, none of which is more important than the kind of political order it will come to create. Fidel Castro long ago rejected bourgeois democracy, on practical grounds of revolutionary necessity but also on revolutionary principle. He and his colleagues of the old guerrilla days who effectively rule Cuba proclaim socialist democracy as their alternative. But both its form and its content are on any serious assessment an alternative whose character has yet to be defined. In this sense, Castro's greatest test is yet to come. For socialist democracy requires that the Cuban revolution should cease to be Fidel's revolution; that his power and that of his colleagues should be checked, not only by self-imposed restraints, but by other-imposed ones; that his voice should not so decisively speak for the Cuban revolution; and that other, even discordant, voices should also be heard and heeded, in open debate. This is much to ask, in circumstances of extreme economic difficulties and in the shadow of a hostile United States ninety miles away. But it is also the condition on which power, which has in Cuba been used to such beneficial advantage in so many areas, may not turn into a fatal curse.

RALPH MILIBAND.

FOUR ESSAYS ON LIBERTY. By ISAIAH BERLIN. [*Oxford Paperbacks.* 213 pp. 15s.]

THIS book reprints with some slight revisions Sir Isaiah Berlin's *Political Ideas in the Twentieth Century* (1949), his *Historical Inevitability* (1953), his *Two Concepts of Liberty* (1958) and his less well-known Robert Waley Cohen Memorial Lecture to the Council of Christians and Jews, *John Stuart Mill and the Ends of Life* (1959). His prose marches briskly forward, heavy matter carried on short quick legs, but with sudden digressions and deft and amazing changes of tone and pace. The matter is heavy, solemn and leisurely, but the manner is brisk, witty and urgent.

Down the historical High he struts or trots, a quick and friendly word on the run with Tocqueville and Constant—a good beginning to the day; he stops for a moment to talk to Spencer with deliberate tolerance but some boredom and pity too; raises his hat to Comte, not quite cutting him dead; contrives at the next corner to talk to Hegel and Freud at once, suddenly leaving them, angry in each other's company, aware that he has gone but puzzled how; with a sideways lurch and roll down he goes into some dark *cul-de-sac* where poor Dostoevsky holds down a job as a college porter, then back to the main street—"Good morning, De Maistre, no, no too kind; but have you managed to reach agreement with Acton yet about not attending the same Church?" "Hello Schiller, my dear fellow, indeed, indeed, so beautiful and so true, but can't stop now, a thousand apologies, promised to meet Count Tolstoy for no coffee at Oxfam"—until he nearly collides with Marx, perhaps sharp and testy in what he says, "Yes, yes, I'm afraid I haven't read the last volume of *Das Kapital* yet, but tell me briefly, if you could, what is it precisely that you are trying to say?", but perfectly polite in manner, indeed inquiring softly after his boils and family, warns him solicitously against the traffic and new friends in sports cars, but then is

visibly relieved, for once, by the distractive importunities of a small cosmopolitan crowd of disputants and petitioners, *Raisonneurs*, *Idéologues*, *Intelligenz* and *Intelligensia*, to whom he throws a jolly, a cutting or a temporising word to each in his own language, before he hails Condorcet and Spinoza across the street, holding them for a second together in profound conversation, until wheeling from them too and pausing only slightly longer outside Christ Church to prove to a suspicious Coleridge and Carlyle that he has read their latest—but he has his reservations, as he remarked only that morning over breakfast at All Souls to Burke; he triumphantly completes his purposeful walk, ignoring the taunts of a rather ill-mannered mob in the Broad outside Balliol led by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Gracchus Babeuf and Tom Paine (though pausing to throw from his pockets a few life-belts and sweets in their direction), and now finally in the company of Emmanuel Kant and John Stuart Mill sweeps past the Bodleian—urging them both not to take umbrage at Popper, " He means well by you both "—and surprisingly reaches, although he appeared all the time to be going forward in a straight line and with great definiteness, the admirable enough place from which—just like Mr. Auden around one of his English lakes—he first set out. Have our eyes deceived us, is it a miracle or a natural event, or is the impression he creates of moving forward in circles really some sort of parabolic parable aimed in reproof at both Conservatives and Socialists, for he is, after all, a liberal?

But what does it matter if he doesn't appear to get anywhere? The world, after all, is round and so many who believe otherwise have, in fact, succeeded all too well in falling off it. His literary walks bestow recognition or reproof, but never punitive judgment, on a host of intelligent people, both the well-meaning and the malign, who appear either in too much of a hurry or too conceited to walk with anyone, to be going in the wrong direction, or to be—when looked at closely—standing on one leg in a thunderstorm or waiting for the last bus with their eyes shut.

Berlin's genius is for the long critical essay, and one really asks for no more—except that in this book one does get one more than the advertised four, for his remarkable Introduction is as long as any, in which, with incredible patience, tolerance and courtesy, he answers his many critics, but always with a proper and swift self-defence of left-right to the heart when once he thinks the exhibition has gone on long enough, that he has given both the apes, jackals and parasites and the lions, foxes and hedgehogs of learning sufficient dignity and display at his own generous expense. It is hardly odd that some of us enjoy being knocked down by Berlin more than being hoisted on the shoulders of the rest of the philosophical Fancy. And no one can ever accuse him of not boxing to the rules, even though even he cannot dispel some lingering uncertainty as to quite what they are.

BERNARD CRICK.