

The major problem with this volume, however, is that it lacks the firm hand of the editor. Professor Schmitt should have established a uniform set of guidelines for the contributors. He should have insisted that the contributors analyze the issues from a national and international perspective so that the common themes would emerge more clearly. Alternatively, the editor could have written a more comprehensive introduction in which he established the common themes and demonstrated how the various contributors dealt with them. Either choice would have improved the book. The volume would also be more useful if it contained a thorough bibliography. The notes at the end of each chapter are helpful, but they do not substitute for a bibliography.

Even with its deficiencies, this volume makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of developments in the frequently forgotten European neutral nations. The essays contained in it should provoke further research into the questions raised in each of them. For, as long as there are historians, they will be gripped and challenged by all attempts to explain the First World War and its effects.

*Charles L. Bertrand*

**BUSCHAK, WILLY.** *Das Londoner Büro. Europäische Linksozialisten in der Zwischenkriegszeit.* Stichting Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, Amsterdam 1985. xiv, 359 pp. Ill. D.fl. 68.00.

The book under review is an edited version of a dissertation written in 1982 in Bochum and fills an important gap in the written history of the European socialist movement. In his introduction Buschak notes that at the beginning of the thirties many dissenting currents had split from the social-democratic and communist parties. His book describes these "intermediate" groups and especially their co-operation in the International Bureau for Revolutionary Socialist Unity, better known as the London Bureau. This political current did not survive the Second World War, which perhaps partially explains the scant attention paid to it as a specific *international* current.

There are a number of reasons why a study of this current is not unimportant. In the first place because of its original political opinions, which were very critical of the main currents of the socialist movement. These parties and groups were confronted with developments such as the growth of Stalinism, Hitler's grasp for power, the threat of a new World War and the politics of the Popular Front, and had to formulate a position on each of them. Many outstanding individuals of the socialist movement were involved in the London Bureau, including Fenner Brockway, Henk Sneevliet, Andreu Nin, Paul Frölich, Willy Brandt and Marceau Pivert. Beside the considerations mentioned by the author, one can add that research of this current can increase our knowledge of continuity and fragmentation in the workers' movement.

When the split between the Second and Third International became definite, the radicalized British Independent Labour Party, affiliated as a party to the Labour Party, stayed in the LSI (Labour and Socialist International) through the nineteen

twenties, supporting left-wing positions and arguing for the formation of a united International. At the end of the twenties other left-wing groups were formed inside the social-democratic movement in other countries. When the world economic crisis started, they were able to strengthen their position. The coalition politics of the social democrats worked as a catalyst for the development of the left-wing currents. The International Labour Community (ILC) was founded in secret in August 1930 and presented itself in public at the LSI Vienna Congress of July 1931.

The polarisation resulted in a situation in which the most important left-wing groups wound up outside the social-democratic movement. The left wing in Holland and Germany refused to stop publishing their opposition papers and formed the *Onafhankelijke Socialistische Partij* (OSP – Independent Socialist Party) and the *Sozialistische Arbeiterpartei* (SAP – Socialist Workers Party) respectively. The ILP decided to leave the Labour Party. All three parties, together with, among others, *Det Norske Arbeidersparti* (DNA) which had left the Comintern in 1923, decided to strengthen their co-operation and to support the idea of the proletarian united front. The attainment of power by Hitler resulted in a change of direction. Until then the closing of the gap which had been torn in the workers' movement had been given priority. Now the OSP and the SAP came to the conclusion that they had to work for the creation of a new International. This was the position taken by the OSP and SAP, together with the Trotskyist *Internationale Kommunistische Liga* (IKL) and *Revolutionair Socialistische Partij* (RSP) from Holland.

At the first Congress of the ILC in August 1933 fourteen organisations from eleven countries were represented there. The foundation of a new International was, however, not possible: the ILP was sharply divided and thought that the Comintern could as yet be reformed, while the DNA was reverting to social democracy. Not surprisingly the SAP alliance with Trotsky fell apart in 1934. Trotsky wanted to form a cohesive and disciplined International as quickly as possible, while the SAP wanted, through patient persuasion, to convince larger groups of the correctness of this idea.

The ILC Congress of February 1935 in Paris took place in a changed political climate. A renewal of class struggle was taking place, especially in France and Spain, and the ILC parties took a real part in it. It was decided to concentrate on an international campaign against the dangers of war. The differences of opinion had not disappeared, but compared to the last Congress there was a greater degree of unity. To reflect this the name was changed to *International Bureau for Revolutionary Socialist Unity*.

The following years, which were dominated by the Popular Front and the Spanish Civil War, showed how fragile this unity was. The parties of the London Bureau rejected the specific Popular Front policies of the communist parties, but opinions on the idea itself varied from complete rejection to critical support. On 30 October and 1 November 1936 a new Congress was held in Brussels, which was attended by one hundred and fifty delegates from twelve countries. The Spanish Civil War and the politics of the *Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista* (POUM), which had joined the Bureau, were at the top of the agenda. From then on the POUM was supported in many ways by the other parties.

However, a clash developed between POUM and SAP which marked the beginning of the end of the Bureau. The POUM was optimistic about its own chances in

Spain and distanced itself from the Popular Front, in a manner which the SAP regarded as ultra-leftist. In reaction to its increasing isolation the POUM now supported the foundation of a new International, which could only be done inside the Bureau by neutralising the politically strong SAP. The SAP aimed for a policy of socialist concentration with other German socialist groups and was condemned for this at the Bureau session of August 1938. SAP decided to leave the Bureau, because they considered the discipline which had been imposed to have an insufficient political foundation.

In April 1939 the Bureau was abolished and a new International Revolutionary Marxist Centre (IRMC) was founded without the SAP and on the basis of far stricter organisational guidelines. Some time before, in August 1938, the "Internationaal Arbeidersfront tegen de oorlog" (IAF – International Workers' Front against War) had been created on the instigation of the RSAP (a union of RSP and OSP) and the Parti Socialiste Ouvrier et Paysan (PSOP). Neither IRMC nor ILC were capable of maintaining themselves during the Second World War nor did they rise from the ashes after the war. Most of the left-socialists returned to social democracy.

So much for the main thrust of the book, which is based on an impressive amount of original research in different countries. The archives of the Bureau and of the most important affiliated parties no longer exist. Buschak's research is based mainly on the IISH collections, Willy Brandt's private archives and the personal recollections of forty-five involved individuals. Buschak has chosen for a very traditional descriptive style of writing political history and concentrates on the meetings and the content of the resolutions put forward there. As a result the reader must wrestle through a forest of abbreviations and facts, making it difficult to follow the author's main line of argument. More theoretical questions are only handled briefly in the postscript. There Buschak attempts to characterise the heterogeneous left-socialist currents which existed between the World Wars. He lists the following: class struggle as a general political principle, a non-Leninist party doctrine, the necessity of conquering political power, support for the dictatorship of the proletariat as the most democratic type of state formation, criticism of the politics of both Internationals.

In view of these characteristics Buschak questions the use of concepts such as "intermediary groups" and especially "centrism" (as used by Trotsky) to understand this political current. The SAP especially is defended by him against the attacks Trotsky made on it at the time. In the postscript Buschak also gives a short explanation for the failure of the left-socialist currents to achieve any of their aims. He rightly points out that an inherent weakness existed from the moment the left-socialists broke with the social-democratic parties: only some of their supporters went along to the new parties while the number of people reached actually declined. The development of a more homogeneous internationalist current would have needed more time, as well as improvements in international co-operation. The change in the political climate which had been hoped for as a result of the Spanish Civil War, did not take place and this was a decisive factor in the general political decline. According to Buschak, all that could be done was to hold on to as many cadres as possible and so uphold the socialist spirit during the Second World War.

This does not seem to me to be a fully convincing argument. The objective factors listed by Buschak explain why the left-socialists could not achieve a political

breakthrough, but not why the entire political current disappeared from the political stage. Another question which remains is why the majority of left-socialists returned to their social-democratic roots sooner or later. Perhaps the explanation can partially be found in the way that the revolutionary politics of the left wing came into being inside social democracy. They were a reaction to the crisis of the LSI's reformism in turbulent times. It was when the chances of revolution receded and Nazism prepared for war, when it became clear in the thirties what was happening in the Soviet Union, that the way back became an attractive option. But for a more definite judgement more studies are needed of the different parties with their different backgrounds, in their own national context. In doing this work future researchers can profit from the present book.

*Wim Bot*

MANN, REINHARD. *Protest und Kontrolle im Dritten Reich. Nationalsozialistische Herrschaft im Alltag einer rheinischen Großstadt*. Campus Verlag, Frankfurt, New York 1987. ix, 413 pp. DM 58.00.

This is a tragically incomplete book. The author died in his early 30s. He wrote only a small part of chapter 6 on the persecution of non-conformist behaviour by the Gestapo; chapters 7 and 8 on the definition and punishment of non-conformist behaviour by the various nazi agencies, and on the relationship between nazi penetration of German society and the persistence of traditional structures, both remained unwritten. Chapter 5, which forms the heart of the present book, makes it clear that the missing parts would have been a major and original contribution to our understanding of the nazi regime.

Much of this chapter is based upon a systematic and comprehensive statistical analysis of a large sample of the immense quantity of records assembled by the Gestapo and the courts on opponents of the regime and on politically unreliable persons in Düsseldorf. The sheer vastness of the source materials (and the fact that some of the documentation was in a standardised form) dictated the use of a sampling method. Mann developed great expertise, both in statistical techniques, and (even more important) in learning how to derive the maximum information from sources which were often routinized and full of silences and biases. He explains his research design with great clarity and persuasiveness, but he never allowed his historical enquiry to become a prisoner of his methodology: the book consistently draws upon a wide range of secondary and other primary sources, and Mann clearly saw himself as an historian who could learn a great deal from the social sciences, rather than as a social scientist who had chosen an historical research topic.

The great advantage of beginning this highly ambitious research project with a sample drawn from the surviving 3,770 Gestapo records on citizens of Düsseldorf was that it promised to yield a *comprehensive* picture of relationships between the police and the people, a portrait of *all* forms of oppositional behaviour and attitudes, a fully detailed analysis of the workings of the Gestapo itself. Chapter 5 shows this promise well on the way to fulfilment. Out of the sample of 825 persons, 245