A PELICAN BOOK

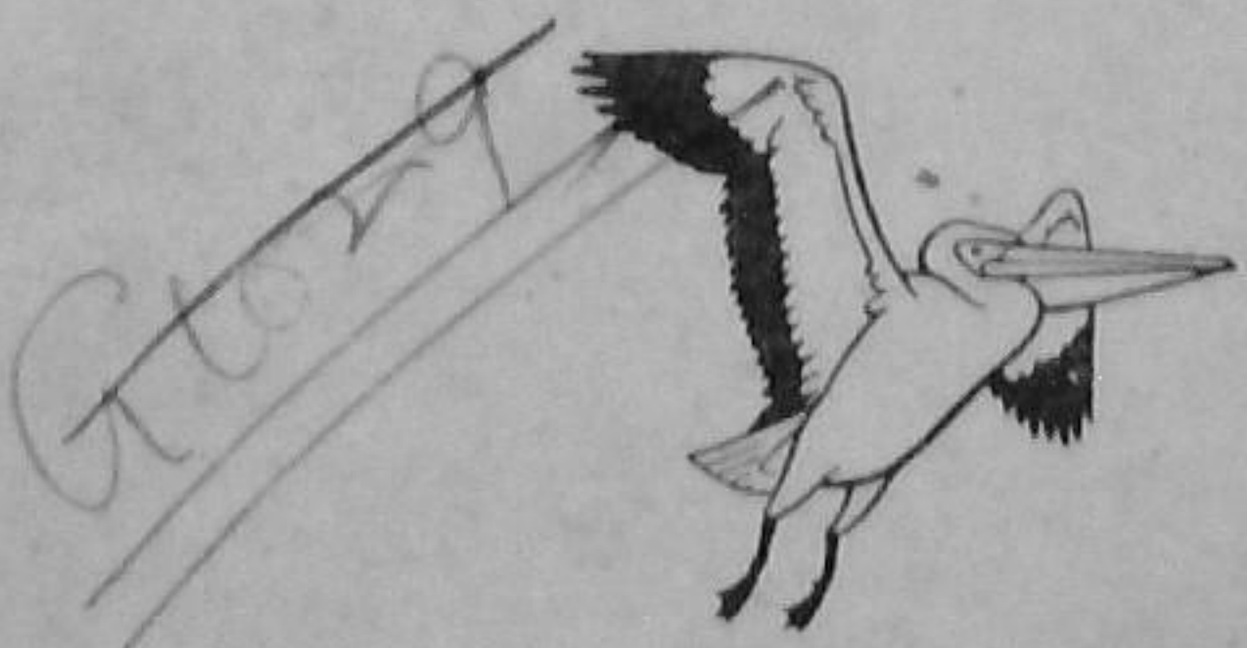
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FERDYNAND ZWEIG

The British Worker

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A social and psychological study, presenting the problems, difficulties and struggles of the ordinary man at home, at work, and in his leisure hours



A PELICAN PSYCHOLOGY

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ABOUT THIS BOOK

This is a social and psychological study of the British working man. He is described in many dimensions and from many sides and angles. He is seen at work, at home and in his leisure hours. But its characteristic feature is that he is not treated as a subject but as a personality: all his relationships are presented as personal relationships, and a number of miniature portraits of him as an individual are presented.

The book is in fact a record of the author's own experience, not an impersonal study; and has in consequence many characteristics of a social novel. The author has selected a few salient points and drawn the connecting lines between them, trying not merely to understand people but, so to say, to recreate them.

The whole idea of the book is to make ordinary men speak for themselves and present their problems, difficulties and struggles against the background of particular situations. During their whole lives men are entangled in situations, and only as a response to their situations can their behaviour, views and beliefs be understood.

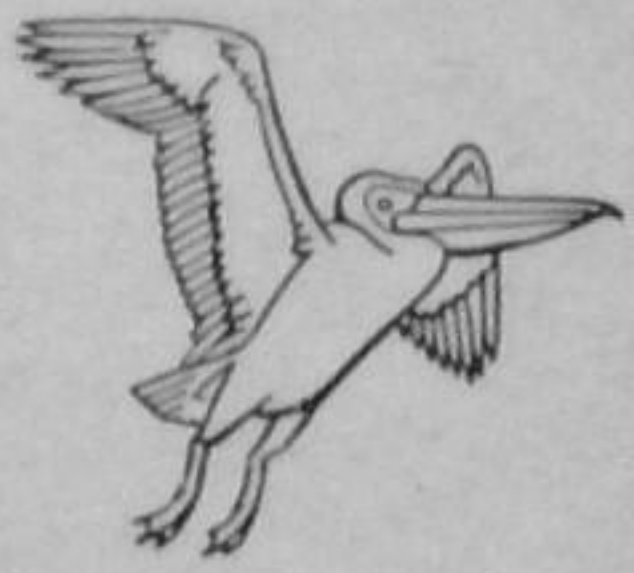
Although this is a microcosmic study, it reflects and indicates major social problems of our day which in the author's view can be fully understood only from a study of the individual in his social setting.

PELICAN BOOKS

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THE BRITISH WORKER

FERDYNAND ZWEIG



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FERDYNAND ZWEIG

The British Worker

WITH A FOREWORD

BY C. A. MACE

PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY

BIRKBECK COLLEGE

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FOREWORD

BY C. A. MACE

PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY, BIRKBECK COLLEGE

IMMANUEL KANT, the philosopher, said that we cannot know things as they really are in themselves, but only as they appear to us. This statement conveys the disturbing suggestion that *how* a thing appears depends as much upon us as upon the thing itself. Hence, it would seem to follow that, in the sense in which we most want to know, we cannot know anything at all.

These views do not now commend themselves widely to Kant's successors, but, as so often happens, an idea discarded by the philosophers may be turned to some account by the psychologists. What Kant thought to be true about knowing generally has a certain plausibility when applied to our knowledge of *persons*. It may be doubted whether we can ever know the personality of a man 'as it is in itself': we can know only the impression that he makes on others. So it comes about that any competent biographer can make an honest living by writing about a man whose biography has been written many times before. And what applies to the personality of an individual applies with equal force to social types and social groups.

What sort of person is the 'British Worker', as he is in himself? We shall never know. We can know the British worker as he appears, for example, to the economist, to the leader writer in *The Times* or to the cartoonist in *Punch*. We know, too, the British worker as he appears to the *Daily Worker*: and we might perhaps know – if only he could tell us – how he appears to *himself*. But none of these would be an account of what he *is* in *himself*.

In this book we see the British worker as he appears to one who was at first a stranger, and looked at the British industrial scene with fresh and wide-open eyes, as might perhaps a visitor from a distant planet. But, clearly, not even a visitor from Mars could gratify our wish to see ourselves as we really are, and Ferdynand Zweig is no visitor from Mars. He is an ex-professor of Political Economy from the University of Cracow, for some time adviser to the Polish Government in London, and he is a Doctor of Laws. These are alarming qualifications for the task that he has here undertaken, but Zweig is no ordinary foreigner,

no ordinary professor. He is first and foremost an honest and intelligent observer with human and simple sympathies with simple and ordinary people.

He came to this country in 1940. Someone discovered that he had a flair for getting into easy human relations and his talents were turned to account in a series of sociological inquiries. He carried out an investigation, the results of which are reported in the first of his sociological books to be published in this country – *Labour, Life, and Poverty*. Another investigation was his study of the miners, published as *Men in the Pits*. He has studied the clothing habits of London workers, the religious life of the community, the attitude of the Trade Unions to productivity, and a number of other aspects of British industrial life. In the course of these inquiries he has interviewed managers, supervisors, trade union officials, and two or three thousand workers in mining, the building industry, the hotel and distributive trades, in engineering, cotton, steel, and printing.

His methods are informal, guided by no preconceived theories, either about the facts or about 'techniques' of research. He has just talked to men at their work, in pubs and parks, at dog-racing stadiums, and all over the place. He had no set procedures, no pre-selected questions. He has just talked about the things that people were disposed to talk about. Sometimes the conversation would be but a 'brief encounter', sometimes it would last the best part of a day. He has encountered many 'industrial types'. No doubt some have slipped through his net and got away. He will no doubt catch them later.

How was it, it may well be asked, that these men were so ready to talk to a 'foreigner'? Partly, perhaps, because of the personality of the man, but there were other reasons. Surprisingly, perhaps, but on reflexion not so surprisingly, they talked to him freely just because he was a stranger. Who would not rather confess to a continental curé than to his parish priest round the corner?

Was not his limited facility in the use of the English language a serious handicap? On the contrary, it seems to have been an asset. Anthropologists who have come to this country from the Dominions have commented on the fact that workers talk to them with the greatest freedom. The Dominions do not suffer from the social stratification of linguistic habits. A sociologist or anthropologist who studies the customs of the natives of this country, but who speaks either in local dialect or with an 'Oxford

accent', is liable to be suspect. An Australian or Polish way of speaking is a sort of guarantee of impartiality. Besides, the British worker likes to explain to an Australian or to a Pole so many things which in talking to an Englishman he would take for granted. Be the reason what it may, there can be little doubt that our Polish visitor got more out of the British worker in half an hour than many of that worker's compatriots of the same or a different social status could have extracted in a fortnight.

In this book, the author has brought together into a comprehensive unity the sum-total of his impressions. He has presented *his* portrait of the British worker – or rather of the British working *man*. The British working *woman* is another story, and if rumour may be trusted the author is now turning his attention in that direction.

Can the picture be trusted? Let it be said at once that the contents of his book are – or at least it is to be hoped that they are – extremely controversial. Nearly all the matters raised are questions on which people take sides, and the game is one in which we cannot have an umpire. But nothing but good can come out of frank and free discussion – provided it is honest – and Zweig would be the first to change his views if facts are adduced to confute him.

This book should be read in the first place simply as a 'human document'. No doubt in so reading it many questions will come to the mind of the professional sociologist or psychologist. 'The British worker is bewitched by sport.' Is this, for example, the psychologist will ask, a detached and objective observation? Or here has the author looked at the British worker merely through continental eyes, and interpreted what he has seen with continental preconceptions? Or has he perhaps already assumed the spectacles of the British middle classes? Perhaps he has been all too receptive to the workers' own opinions about the working classes?

'We can never know a man as he is in himself.' Even the words we use to describe a man carry subjective implications. It makes a difference expressive of a point of view whether you speak of 'the working man' or of 'the worker', but you must describe him somehow. Surprisingly, perhaps, 'objectivity' is attained less through aloofness and detachment than through universal sympathies. One who has no deep and distinctive feelings of his own but is always strongly responsive to the feelings of others may

become, as it were, a universal organ of expression for the inarticulate. It has often been remarked that distinguished actors may be very colourless in their private personalities; and it is suggested that their freedom from marked individuality extends the range of their identification with the characters of those that they impersonate. Something of the same sort may be true of the good social observer. Certain it is that in what may here and there appear in this book to be a statement of the author's personal opinion is often an expression of identification in the interview situation. We are accordingly neither shocked nor surprised when sympathetic expression is given to the philosophy of the vagrant, the gambler, or the habitual boozer, since the author appears to be impartially receptive. He can with equal ease identify himself with the atheist or the evangelical, with the self-conscious member of the proletariat or the ambitious youth endeavouring to escape from the trammels of his class.

This is not a textbook of psychology, but in it the student will often find the pages of his textbooks come to life. Some of the most vivid passages are those that are concerned with the forces of tradition and habit. 'In the course of my inquiries I came to realize the power of habit and the extent to which our lives are governed by it. It seems to me that the formation of habits in social life should be the subject of serious research, and that every branch of social science could gain substantially from the results of such research.' This is a simple but profound observation, and in *The British Worker* material will be found for a radical revision of the classical doctrine of habit.

The traditional theory is that habits depend upon the linking of specific reactions to specific modes of stimulation, that the links are forged by repetition, and that being so forged they persist with a compelling inertia. In the exposition of this theory it is common to repeat the story of the practical joke alleged to have been played on an old soldier. The old man was carrying a bowl of soup when the joker called him sharply to attention. From 'force of habit', it is said, the soldier brought his hands briskly to his side, the bowl of soup, of course, crashing to the ground. The sequel is not recorded, but it may be assumed that everybody laughed, except the soldier. The pity of it is that *the story is not true*. Things like this do not happen. If you try the experiment on a Chelsea pensioner, the chances are in the region of a thousand to one that the joke will not come off. There is clearly something wrong with the theory it is intended to illustrate.

What is wrong is that habits are not formed simply by repetition; they are not responses to specific stimuli; they do not persist apart from the persistence of motives. The fact of repetition does not explain the habit; the habit, or whatever explains the habit, explains the repetition. 'Habits,' as McDougall said, 'are formed and maintained in the service of the instincts.' More generally they rest on inborn or acquired needs. A dose of revolting medicine can be taken daily, under the doctor's orders, for weeks or months or years, and when the doctor gives permission for the medicine to be stopped the habit is removed as easily as a pair of gloves. This is not the case with a night-cap of rum (for those who have a taste for rum). This habit may take very little repetition either to form or to maintain. An habitual reaction is a response to a total situation. Hence, as Zweig has noted among the workers, they may be easily upset by a change of 'shift'. Hence, too, as one of his kitchen-boys observes: 'If you want to slip off your bad habits, clear out, leave your home and go somewhere else.'

'The Law of Habit' has traditionally been treated as a matter of individual psychology. The observations of Dr Zweig should lead us to regard it as not less essentially a problem of social psychology both in its effects and in its causes.

There is a well-known purple passage in his *Principles of Psychology* in which William James lets himself go on the social implications of habit formation. 'Habit,' said James, 'is the enormous fly-wheel of society, its most precious conservative agent. It alone is what keeps us all within the bounds of ordinance, and saves the children of fortune from the envious uprisings of the poor. It alone prevents the hardest and most repulsive walks of life from being deserted by those brought up to tread therein. It keeps the fisherman and the deck hand at sea through the winter; it holds the miner in his darkness, and nails the countryman to his log-cabin and his lonely farm through all the months of snow; it protects us from invasion by the natives of the desert and the frozen zone. It dooms us all to fight out the battle of life upon the lines of our nurture or our early choice, and to make the best of a pursuit that disagrees, because there is no other for which we are fitted; and it is too late to begin again. It keeps different social strata from mixing. Already at the age of 25 you see the professional mannerism settling down on the young commercial traveller, on the young doctor, on the young minister, on the young counsellor-at-law. You see the little lines

of cleavage running through the character, the tricks of thought, the prejudices, the ways, the "shop" in a word, from which the man can by and by no more escape than his coatsleeve can suddenly fall into a new set of folds. On the whole, it is best he should not escape. It is well for the world that in most of us, by the age of 30, the character has set like plaster, and will never soften again.'

In the re-statement of the law of habit, recognition must be accorded to the fact that habits not only condition but are themselves conditioned by social facts. Within the complex situation to which the habitual action is the response, the most potent factors are within the group. To parody McDougall, habits are formed and maintained by the pressure of social expectations. Habits of spending, habits of saving, the habits of drinking of the 'regulars' in the pub are not private or individual modes of behaviour but 'customs'. Custom is a social habit, socially reinforced.*

All this would seem to suggest that it may be easier to educate a group than to educate an individual, to change the custom and 'culture pattern' of the group than to change the standards of value and the habitual modes of behaviour of the single member of society. This, at any rate, would seem to be what is actually happening. When education was restricted to the apex of society,

* Some of the facts relevant to a revised theory of habit have been illustrated by an experiment recently carried out by a rather gallant little group of students in a London college. They set themselves to form a habit of waking up at an awkward hour in the middle of the night. The experiment was designed to throw light upon that curious internal alarm-clock mechanism by means of which some people at least can spontaneously awake at a predetermined time. In this case, the idea was to wake up at precisely 3 a.m., to put a cross in a notebook with a record of the time, and then to turn over and go to sleep again.

A point of interest in the results of the experiment is the fact that the habit so formed (and it was formed) was of a merely temporary nature. After the experiment was concluded few cases of subsequent insomnia were recorded. Those who had completed the experiment in general found no difficulty in reverting to the normal custom of sleeping through the night. Another point should be noted (more especially by any curious reader who may wish to repeat the experiment for himself). It is not enough *privately* to will to perform the required act. Those engaged in the experiment made a public declaration of their intention, and the fact was witnessed. So the reader who wishes to repeat the

the teacher was a private tutor, but universal education tends to operate through the multilateral school and the microphone. The development of methods of 'group therapy' would seem to be an expression of a similar tendency in the field of medicine.

Social psychologists have taken the concept of 'culture patterns' to their hearts, and it cannot be long before it proves its utility to the industrial psychologist. Those who think in terms of this concept place emphasis in their explanations on custom, not on instinct, on the totality of behaviour in a complex situation, not on particular reactions to particular modes of stratification, on the influence of history and circumstances rather than on the innate determinants of conduct.

The British worker, viewed in this way, is not a peculiar species of humanity. He suffers, as we all do, from common human nature, but the ways in which this nature is expressed are the resultant of his history and his present conditions. Even the 'types' are the types of a type of culture. There is clearly a vast and rewarding field of research in defining the characteristic patterns of culture in different industries. Zweig himself has outlined some of these in his more detailed study of the miners and his study of the building industry.

But in all the sub-cultures of the several industries there is a subtle blending of tradition with three new ingredients – derived respectively from the impact of science on technology, from the industrial genius of the United States, and from the

experiment should publicly take the pledge. He should imitate 'Rudolf Somebody', the Austrian toper (cited in the pages of William James) who published a notice in the newspaper promising fifty gulden reward to anyone who should find him after a specified date in a certain wineshop. 'This I do', he proclaimed, 'in consequence of a promise which I have made my wife.' 'With such a wife', James comments, and with such determination we might safely bet on Rudolf's success in breaking his dreadful habit. The point to note, however, is that success depended not on *Rudolf's* strength of will, nor upon the character of his wife. It depended upon the social reinforcement of Rudolf's friends, and upon the grins they would have grinned if they had caught him in the wineshop. Any doubt that may attach to this story derives from the fact that the grins that would have prevented Rudolf from breaking his pledge would previously have prevented him ever from making it. Certain it is, at least, that the habits of Dr Zweig's topers are subject to the 'social reinforcement' of their fellow members in the pub population.

characteristically British middle-class humanitarian version of socialistic theory. Industries differ from one another in the proportion of the mixture. In some there is a romantic devotion to the intricate machine, in others an almost Luddite abhorrence of any kind of gadget that was not used in the Ark. In some, 'efficiency methods' are regarded with profound distrust, in others they have been accepted as though they had, in fact, come out of the Ark. The workers of every industry are in some degree 'socialistic', in a more or less rationalized form, or merely in the form of a comradely feeling for the lame or the hungry under-dog.

Culture patterns are not merely patterns of behaviour. They are also patterns of thought. Among the most promising hypotheses suggested by this work is the idea that differences in social class find their most significant expression in the proverbs, the sayings, even the clichés characteristic of different social groups. The philosophy of the British worker is 'that life is what you make it'. To 'keep smiling' is the highest duty. But every philosophy, he holds, even his own, is true only 'up to a point'. This eternal reservation may well be, as Zweig remarks, annoying to the intellectual, but it must break the heart of the fanatic.

Among the most thought-challenging passages in this book are those that touch upon differences between social classes. Members of the middle class, it is hinted, characteristically seek advancement through individual effort. Workers, not less characteristically, seek it through collective action. The middle-class employee makes personal application for promotion, seeks to increase his income by individual effort, and makes provision for security by individual saving. He makes a personal choice of the schools and careers for his children, and brings them up to have his own attitude to the future. Workers, on the other hand, look for the improvement of their standard of living to some method or other of mass-action, and for social security to the firm or the state. The fellow worker who seeks to increase his earnings above the average, beyond a certain point, or saves on principle, becomes an object of distrust.

The demand to be treated not as a 'mere number', but as an individual, is of course universal, not less among the workers than within the middle classes, but there is a sense in which the worker neither expects nor wishes to be so treated. He demands 'the rate for the job', not 'the rate for the man'. 'A fair day's work' and 'a fair day's pay' are concepts essentially collective in

their meaning. 'A fair day's work' is the amount of work which any decent member of his group is prepared to do for a fair day's pay. Lip-service may be paid to the principle 'To each according to his needs and from each according to his ability', but in practice this means 'To each according to the average needs of the group and from each according to the ability of its weakest member'. The British worker can never forget the needs of the under-dog. The under-dog could not, even if he would, benefit from lectures on the principles of prudence and of sound finance. Differences between the middle and the working classes in their attitudes to private enterprise have their roots in something which psychologically lies very much deeper than the influence of political propaganda.

The British Worker should prove an invaluable 'source book' for the student of social psychology and a little gold-mine for the research student looking for a subject for a thesis. Dr Zweig has not been concerned with theories nor with the promulgation of doctrines, but here and there, generally incidentally, hypotheses are thrown out – some of them startling almost to the point of paradox.

'The more disliked a job or the factory, the greater the resistance to change.'

'Sport occupies in the life of the worker the place previously occupied by religion.'

'Wage increases generally first lead not to a change in the pattern of expenditure but to increased expenditure in accordance with the pattern previously established.'

Interesting ideas are thrown out about the sex and family lives of the workers. (Poverty, it seems, reinforces the Oedipus complex. At least one in four single men have never bothered about women, or after the age of 30 or so lead a completely chaste life.) Further thought- and research-provoking ideas will be found in the problem of incentives. There are facts which suggest that incentive systems thought out by efficiency engineers fail to take account of the very different attitude of the workers and the middle classes both to 'security' and to money.

Professor T. H. Pear has drawn attention to the fact that the science of psychology in general is in some degree a product of middle-class ways of thinking, and no more striking example of his thesis could be found than the references which some psychologists have made to the need for 'adaptation to insecurity'.

The existence of the need is a recent middle-class discovery since it is only recently that life has become for these classes obviously insecure. The worker is born and bred in insecurity and the needed adaptation for him is part of the normal process of growth.

In Dr Zweig's notes on the worker's habits of saving, it is clear that certain principles apply in common to both earning and saving. Both would seem to be subject to the law that targets to be effective must be personal, proximate and precise. Except in times of obvious emergency, the worker does not work or save to attain impersonal, remote, or merely general objectives. He does not work to close the dollar gap by 1952, but he will work to complete his house up to the eaves by next Friday night. He will not save for the objectives displayed upon the hoardings, but he will save for his next holiday with pay, or to buy a motor bike.

All these things are suggested in an undogmatic way, and Zweig records his impressions not as an end but as a beginning for research. All the ends are loose ones, and need to be followed up; and this book will have amply served its purpose if it acts as a provocation to further inquiry in the field that he has opened up. Much inquiry is needed, for the British worker has come to stay – to stay, that is, as an object of interest to many others than the industrial leaders who look to him for production and the politicians who look to him for his vote. But though the British worker has come to stay, he has clearly not come to stay as he is. So many of the author's statements carry the qualification: 'But things in this respect are changing.' So much is this so that his book might well have carried the title: *The British Worker – in Transition.*

C. A. MACE

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

THIS study is the outcome of all the research I have done during the last three years on various aspects of life of the British worker. I found him very pleasant and sympathetic, human and friendly, co-operative and helpful, and so I thoroughly enjoyed my work.

I believe a social scientist, especially if he collects his own material, must perform two contradictory mental acts. On the one hand he has to identify himself with the people whom he interviews and describes, to lose his own individuality like an actor, or in fact any artist, does, and to think entirely on their lines. When he tries to understand the coal-miner, he must try to reconstruct in his mind his whole rhythm of life from morning to night, day after day, year after year. In fact he must become mentally a miner. On the other hand he must detach himself from his subject. If you identify yourself with the miner, your vision becomes narrow, biased, and you become too sentimental about him. So you need not only identification but also detachment, and the main difficulty is how to combine the two contradictory acts: identification and detachment.

Another important quality of the social scientist is not only the understanding of life but sympathy for the troubles and hardships of others. But I should say that this sympathy must be genuine not made up, felt inside but not expressed. This felt sympathy is at once communicated to the respondent and makes him feel that you are questioning him not for your own selfish end but for a purpose transcending your interests, and that puts the respondent at ease. I believe that social research is not only a full-scale intellectual exercise but also a personal experience, and a very satisfying personal experience, if it comes to that. The sociologists often speak about the impact of interviewers or respondents, but the impact is mutual.

My inquiry started as an economic investigation, but it turned more and more into an inquiry into human nature. Human nature has been studied by every generation. Nearly every philosopher and every man of letters has speculated on it, and still it continues to puzzle and mystify.

I must humbly admit that I am only a beginner in the study of human nature, a novice won over to it from intellectual pursuits, chiefly the study of economics. But I was absorbed and fascinated by the work, full of riddles and enigmas and pitfalls though it be.

The inquiry has convinced me that there is a very fruitful field of study on the margin, so far neglected, of three great sciences: economics, psychology, and sociology; and that by using all the equipment and knowledge already provided by those sciences we can hope to move faster in our attempts to tackle the difficult problems of human nature. In dealing with these problems we must strike a sound balance between the psychological, economic, and social aspects of men's minds and behaviour.

It has convinced me too that the student of social sciences must think of man primarily in terms of type-situations instead of a hypothetical average. I am always more interested in type-situations than in general over-all figures, and I believe that extreme cases throw an illuminating light on the whole. The average worker does not exist. Workers are divided into so many types living in different environments and situations, and each type responds and behaves in his own way. The clinical, situational approach is much more fruitful than the statistical one.

If I were asked what was the most puzzling thing which had struck me in my work, I would have no hesitation in answering that it was the fact of the deep and almost constant contradictions in the human mind and in human behaviour. These contradictions can be found in the same person, on the same subject, and at the same time. It looks if our whole life is made up of attracting and repelling forces, working all the time both in us and outside us.

I believe I have quoted in my study enough instances of objective ambivalence in men's attitudes, behaviour, and views which in my estimate covers nearly the whole field of social psychology. That ambivalence often blocks and impedes the task of the interviewer to unravel the real motives behind men's behaviour. So whenever I could I tried to concentrate on depth-exploration, and depth-exploration is for me always exploration of the past. In individual psychology depth means subconsciousness, which is biological, cultural, or personal past; in social psychology depth means the past of an individual's social relations. So I do as far as I can, what is called 'case study' in this sense that I go over the life-history of a person. Without knowing the past we don't know anything worth-while about the person—in fact about anything else. The load of the past is considerable everywhere. When I inquire about the attitude towards work I would like to know about jobs which he had before, and what was his experience in those jobs. Very often attitudes are formed in previous

jobs and transferred. Men too often carry with them the image of the bad employer in their first jobs.

Another thing which struck me was the enormous and nearly inexhaustible wealth of material which lay open to any investigator who cared to explore the mind and behaviour of men in a personal and friendly way. Every man reflects the world at large; in his mind can be seen the pattern of life around him. The world seen through his eyes is different from the world seen by another man. In the account a working man gives of his life can be seen the whole outlook of his class, and its entire background of conditions and situations.

I believe there is a great deal to be learned from very ordinary men and women. As they go about their normal work they often think seriously and deeply; and, even if thought comes hard and slowly to them, many of them think out the problems of life for themselves, basing their ideas on their own experience. Most of them are influenced very little by reading; and their opinions – linked as they are with specific facts and situations – are held tenaciously. These opinions may be rudimentary, not highly developed or wholly consistent, but they are true to life. They reflect only one side of life, but that side is well worth seeing. I hope you will believe me when I say that you can often learn more about life and labour from men at the bottom of the social ladder than you can from men at the top. Executives, civil servants, managers, or even trade union secretaries have a wider knowledge of life, but it is often a second-hand or statistical knowledge, while the men at the bottom give you real facts at first hand. True, they are small unorganized facts, but they are invaluable as raw material with which to build something larger.

When I undertook the mining inquiry, *Men in the Pits*, I talked to all grades – miners, supervisors, and managers; and in my later inquiry, *Productivity and Trade Unions*, I talked to the officials of both sides, the Employers' Associations and the Trade Unions, as well as to the men; and I often found talking to men at the bottom much more profitable than talking to men at the top. Because at the top they often told me what I could have found out from statistics, books, and pamphlets, while the men at the bottom gave me the material stored up in their own minds, and not taken at second-hand.

And in my inquiry, *Labour, Life, and Poverty*, I found the same thing among the poor. There is a depth of insight into life, into its drama and its mystery, which can be found, very often, only

in the eyes of the very poor – the beggars who are still a challenge to us in our civilized way of life.

There is something very distinctive about the study of poverty. It is impossible simply to think about it; you cannot help being moved by it, and head and heart must work together. From my own studies I can understand the statement of religious men, that the sight of the poor and the destitute helped them to revive their spiritual experiences.

In every society there are two movements in the constant exchange of ideas – one starting from the top and filtering to the bottom through books, newspapers, films, the radio, lectures, etc., and another from the bottom reaching up to the top. But while the first is strong and efficient – perhaps not enough so, but at least highly organized – the second is in every way weak and undeveloped. And it is my belief that the movement of ideas from the bottom to the top of society should be organized and given fuller expression. There are great treasures hidden in the minds of men and women at the bottom of society and too few care to dig deep enough to bring them to the surface.

I have now only to tender my thanks to those who helped me in the course of my inquiries, and these are too many to be mentioned by name. My special thanks are due to Professor C. A. Mace at whose suggestion and on whose encouragement the book was written. He also advised me in his capacity as a professional and distinguished psychologist and discussed some aspects of my study with me.

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I

GRADES OF LABOUR

THE social ladder of the working classes consists of innumerable rungs. Social and industrial levels are determined not only by the skill and grade of the job a man does, but by many other personal factors, such as health, physical strength, mental balance, age, spending habits, education, marital status, and the size of the family. The status of a man is, in fact, conditioned by the whole pattern of his way of life. Many labourers are better off and lead a better life than craftsmen, and many craftsmen fare better than foremen. And again many labourers fall into the category of casuals and vagrants although they earn a good wage. The position is changeable all the time, and a man can move from one category to another. Insecurity and fluidity are the best terms to describe the constant movements up and down in the working class. Unemployment, ill health, disability, age, constant changes of job, new company, or new expensive habits basically affect the movement. I have seen labourers earning £5 to £6, and without family responsibilities, living in hostels for a shilling a night and going in rags, saying that they cannot save enough money in one stretch to buy a decent suit, or to go into digs.

If a craftsman is passionately devoted to dog racing, even at £7 to £8 a week he will gradually slip down. If he is emotionally unstable he will wander from town to town changing jobs, accumulating experience of life but all the time going down in the social scale.

Marriage, the size of his family, the qualities and abilities of his wife will affect his status. A happily married man will be careful to keep his job and his mind is likely to be well balanced. He will make special effort at work so as

to raise the standard of comfort in his family. He will feel a stimulus to climb higher than he is at present.

But a man with a very large family will be handicapped and often crushed by excessive responsibilities. He will find himself among the poor, deprived of the amenities of life, and he might even lose his skill at his job.

On the other hand a man married to an efficient woman who contributes to the household with her own wages will better his position. I have met men who earned £12 to £15 a week, while their wives earned £4 to £6. (A male spinner can make £12 and his wife, a weaver, £5 to £6.) But even if the wife does not have a job, her work at home can make a man very comfortable. I have also met a number of married men with small families who contended that they were much better off after than before marriage.

On the whole, being married has a steadying effect on the social position of men. In my inquiries I came across a greater number of bachelors at the bottom of the social scale, especially among casuals, vagrants, unemployable or chronically unemployed men, than I did higher up. Either they do not dare to marry or they do not attract girls looking out for husbands.

The social position of a man changes with age, though not so much as might be expected. Age is both a promoting and a demoting factor.

The openings for promotion are not very numerous and they are mostly reserved for craftsmen; the big majority of men stay put where they are. Most men want to stay put; they have no wish to go higher and sometimes are even imbued with a certain sense of inferiority, and are afraid of assuming responsibility. Many times I was told of cases of an offered promotion declined by the man with the remark that he did not feel equal to the task. The sense of inferiority is very common among working-class men, who are afraid of new duties and unknown responsibilities. Very often it is from this that the unwillingness to marry arises.

The big majority of men stay put or move within their own group to jobs that are better paid by a few shillings a week, if they show loyalty, co-operation, alertness, willingness to work, and intelligence. A semi-skilled man may be put on piecework or on a machine rated a little higher than his; a craftsman will profit by getting what is called merit money, if that is allowed by the unions, or will be rated one point higher. There are certain seniority rules (automatic promotion schemes) such as those operating on the railways or in the Post Office. Similar schemes operate for production men in the iron and steel industry and for male spinners in the cotton mills, but they are few and far between, and there is a rather narrow range of promotion benefits (except in the iron and steel industry, where the promotion benefits are very attractive). On the whole a very small percentage of working men is affected by promotion schemes, although the percentage is growing and more and more progressive firms are adopting a point-rated system of promotion.

Demotion affects the vast majority of working men at a certain age. A man's strength and resilience grows less, his speed declines, and he cannot keep up with the requirements of the job. And when he loses his job in a firm he cannot find as good a job as the one he held before, and he often has to throw away his union ticket and start again as a labourer on a light job. A faceworker in the mine will go on to haulage, a craftsman in the building trade may become a night-watchman, a skilled man in the workshop may become a commissionaire on the gate, and so on.

We have seen the fluidity of the position of men in the working class, a fluidity due to many factors, many of them unforeseeable, and operating not only in the man's workshop but in his family and personal relations. Now let us glance at the social layers existing at any time in the working classes.

The bottom layer consists of a small group of chronically

unemployed men, which is often called the hard core of unemployment. Those are the unemployables, the disabled or physically handicapped, subnormal and maladjusted men, or men who are emotionally unstable or broken in health and spirit. The reasons for the existence of this class are disablement, physical defect, ill health, maladjustment, and age.

I met a disabled man, aged 32, who lost his leg in Italy, a bachelor living with his widowed father. When he works he gets 31*s*. a week pension, when out of a job £2. 5*s*. He is on a special list in the Labour Exchange and has priority for many jobs. He is out of work again and again, two or three months in, and then several months out. It is difficult, of course, for him to keep his mental balance and occupy his mind when he is out of work. He can walk for two and a half miles on his wooden leg and takes a stroll in the park, where he sits down and day-dreams.

I met another physically handicapped man, aged 34, who had lost one eye and could see very little with the other, and is earning only £3 a week for the little work he does. He is married and has one child. He lives in complete poverty, not getting a pension, and his wife is too busy with the baby to get any work. He is out of a job time and again, in spite of the fact that he is privileged under the Disabled Men's Employment Act. He struggles hard to keep his head above water, wondering, with his poor sight and the privations he and his family have to suffer, whether he was right to take so much responsibility upon himself.

A Welshman, aged about 40, single, suffering from silicosis, and able to do only a light job, was another case in point. There are always great demands for such jobs and local men with special cards have priority for them. When out of a job he returns to his family on the dole, where living with his sisters and a brother keeps him going, while in London he would starve. In London,

after paying 10*s.* 6*d.* in the hostel for bed and breakfast, only 15*s.* 6*d.* would be left for his clothes and all other expenses.

Here is a man of 40, single, now porter in a small hotel. He cannot stick at any job for long. He is of the nomadic type, moving from town to town and from job to job. He does not mind if the Labour Exchange sends him from London to Scunthorpe or Middlesbrough; he goes there for a fortnight, seeing the countryside, and then comes back or goes on somewhere else. He must be on the move all the time. He lives in cheap hostels for a shilling a night and, when the worst comes to the worst, he goes to the casual wards. The casual wards is the best way of touring the country for the poor, he says.

A different type is a man of 55, single, who, after suffering from chest troubles, is in constant ill health. Working as a sandwich-board man he earns a few shillings a day, and lives in a hostel. He cannot do a fair day's work and so cannot be offered regular employment.

In Lancashire I met a man of about 50, who complained of general weakness and a feeling of being run down. He stays at home doing all the housework, cleaning, washing, and cooking, while his wife and two girls are earning money in the cotton industry, about £11 a week altogether. When they come home, a cup of tea is always waiting for them.

We see from the small collection of cases that the bottom rungs of the social ladder are occupied by those who are unable or unwilling to give a fair day's work, and therefore cannot receive a fair day's wage. Some of them may be troublesome too, because they are prone to grievances, and their effect on the morale of others is not good. The whole class suffers badly from any slumps, and its members benefit more than anyone else from full employment.

Prominent among the men who enjoy full physical and mental strength and more or less regular employment are

the labourers. There are a large number of these in all industries. We find here:

The *light labourer* on simple jobs which are usually reserved for the elderly and for people with special priority;

The *general labourer* in the yard, før loading or unloading or mixing cement, a type in between light and heavy labourer;

The *heavy labourer* of the navvy type on jobs which require extra physical strength, a type which is disappearing fast in this country, usually employed for his strength and his capacity for really exhausting work. There is a great shortage of navvies, and a lot of them are imported from Ireland or other countries abroad;

The *craftsman's labourer*, who is the mate of the craftsman, really a semi-skilled man, who usually earns a few coppers above the general labourer's rate, although not officially; an invaluable help to his craftsman, if he is an experienced man;

The *handyman*, a 'Jack of all trades', who often knows how to handle the tools of allied craftsmen, being employed in small routine jobs under a craftsman's supervision.

This list of labourers comes mostly from the building and civil engineering industries, but they have their equivalents in many industries where they bear different names in a variety of grades adapted to their specific conditions.

One or two things can be said about labourers in general. First of all, their interest in the job is not as great as that of craftsmen, because they do not see the result of their work. Generally, however, they do not complain about the monotony of the job because they often work out of doors. They keep changing jobs and they make more use of the Labour Exchanges than any other group. In almost every industry the labourers form a very big

percentage, in some even the majority, of the turnover of labour.

I have found men who had had in their lifetime as many as twenty or thirty jobs, and who contended that it was the best part of the labourer's lot that he was not 'married to a job' as a craftsman was. The labourers' chances of promotion are practically nil, unless they are in special industries with an agreed promotion scheme and are picked out to be put on the first rung which leads to such promotion. In the main industries like engineering or shipbuilding, or building or printing, the rule is: 'Once a labourer always a labourer.' Sometimes, however, he gets a job as a semi-skilled man or on a machine. The upgrading of the labourer to the position of a craftsman, even if he takes an interest in the job and wants to study it properly, is rare, and it is opposed by most craft unions. Usually if a man enters a job as a labourer, let us say after the age of 17 or 18, he will stay a labourer or a semi-skilled man all his life. Many enlightened men in industry feel that this complete absence of any chances of promotion in this class is not right.

Most labourers are 'on time', but that does not apply to navvies or to craftsman's labourers or to handymen who are often on piecework, earning good money.

The premium on skill, as shown by the gap between the skilled man's rate and the labourer's rate, has declined since the turn of the century, and this may be regarded as a continuing trend. In the building industry the labourer before the first world war had 64 per cent of the craftsman's rate; in 1922, 75 per cent; from 1945 onward, 80 per cent. In the engineering industry the premium for skill at the beginning of this century was 50 per cent, and it is now in the neighbourhood of 15 per cent. In the printing industry the gap between the craftsman's and labourer's wage before the first world war was 33 per cent, while now it is less than 20 per cent. The same trend can be noted in the cotton industry.

This declining premium on skill is due partly to the success of popular and technical education, and to the increasing supply of skilled labour in the country, partly to the deliberate action of the trade unions to raise the bottom wage rates and to secure a living wage level; and lately it has also been the outcome of the state of full employment and the increased demand for labourers. Since the labourers' jobs, or, as they are often called, 'dead-end jobs', are not very attractive, the greater demand for labour all round provides an opportunity to escape from them.

Now we come to the next class of semi-skilled men, a class which is increasing steadily with the mechanization of labour. The mass-production methods used in some industries like engineering result in breaking up the operations and passing them on from skilled to semi-skilled labour. In the building industry, too, there are at present more men on semi-skilled work whose status comes near that of skilled men, men like crane-drivers, erectors, steel benders, shutterers, and mastic asphalters. In the coal-mining, cotton, or printing industries the percentage of semi-skilled men is also increasing. The semi-skilled man is basically a machine operator usually trained for a few weeks or months in factory schools or training departments or, more often, while working. In this semi-skilled work dexterity, care, alertness, and interest in the work are the greatest assets. Neither skill in the strict sense of the word nor physical strength are needed, but first of all the ability to stand the monotony of repetitive operations. The status of the semi-skilled men depends primarily on the difficulty of running, handling, and setting the machine, or its complexity or precision. Where the operation is strictly repetitive and the operator only runs the machine, his status will be low; where handling the machine is difficult and the machine itself is costly and requires careful handling, his status will be higher, and more so if he is able to set the machine himself. The tooling

of the machine is, of course, always the job of a skilled man – the toolmaker or skilled fitter.

The semi-skilled man is often, if not usually, on piecework and responds on the whole very well to the piecework system, because his main interest centres not around the job itself, which is mostly dull and repetitive, but around the wage-packet. If you ask a well-paid man of this type whether he is interested in his job, he will say 'Yes, because I earn good wages'.

The gap in wages between the semi-skilled and the skilled man is small, amounting in a great many cases to about 10 per cent. When on piecework the semi-skilled man may earn even more than the skilled because the skilled pays more attention to craftsmanship and avoids scamping his work. Upgrading of semi-skilled men to the position of craftsmen is rare, and the semi-skilled man moves only in the same semi-skilled class from one machine to another where he can earn a little more.

Next we come to the class of craftsmen or skilled men. They cover a large range of crafts and have a traditional status of their own. In some industries, like building and civil engineering, all craftsmen are paid the same rates whether they are bricklayers or carpenters or joiners, but in most, for example engineering and shipbuilding, printing and cotton, each craft has its own rate, the rate often being dependent on traditional differences and on the union strength, in conjunction with changes in the labour market. In fact we could make a long list of crafts with a differing order of status and rates. Some are relatively low rated, while others, like toolmakers, electricians, and patternmakers, are highly valued. Some crafts, especially in the building industry, get a small tool allowance for the upkeep of hand tools which the men have to provide for themselves, while other crafts have no such allowance.

The craftsmen are 'married to the job', but more to the craft than to the industry or firm. An electrician can work in five or six industries, an engineering mechanic in ten or

fifteen, a plumber can work in building, shipbuilding, iron and steel, gas-works, electrical works, engineering, and many other industries. Even bricklayers can work in several industries. But it is true to say that craftsmen stay longer in a given industry than labourers or semi-skilled men, and that there is a smaller turnover of labour among them in given firms. They see the results of their work, they take a greater interest in their jobs, and they have a greater responsibility than labourers.

In fact most craftsmen develop a pride in their jobs, trades, and unions. They often form strong and exclusive unions. They have served their apprenticeship, which is now on the average about five years long, while in former times it used to be longer, up to seven years in some crafts. They form strong defences against the dilution of skill, scamped work, or the swamping of their labour market by cheap labour, competition of other crafts (demarcation rules), and often against the mechanical inventions which can undermine their skill by easing or simplifying the task. They develop a strong solidarity and often deprecate piecework as endangering that solidarity. For the same reason many craft unions exclude multiple rates for craftsmanship of different grades. In the building trade not only have all the crafts a single rate, but grading among members of the same craft is not allowed. Everyone must have one and the same rate whether he is a first-class or a third-class craftsman, which means that no merit money should be accepted by anyone. However, in many industries, such as engineering or printing, merit money is not only allowed, but even encouraged by the unions, and many progressive engineering firms have developed a grading scheme of their own with two, three, or even four grades dependent on skill, time of service, and other qualities in the craftsmen.

The chances of promotion of craftsmen are greater than those of labourers, but even so they are not very great. The great majority of craftsmen over 25 stay put, their wage

moving upwards by only a few shillings and sometimes going down.

The craftsmen, although rated higher than the semi-skilled men, often make less than the machine operators who are on piece. Very skilled men, like toolmakers, electricians, pattern-makers, or plumbers, are rarely on piece-work, because here the quality of work counts and a man cannot be encouraged to hurry, especially if the quality of work shows only some time later on, as it does in the case of plumbers or electricians.

The upper stratum of the working class is formed by the supervisory grades, the position of which corresponds to that of N.C.O.s in the Army. There is a slow passage from craftsmen to the managerial grades. A *leading hand* is still only a craftsman who can help others when they are in trouble and often sets the pace and gives an example of steadiness and high quality in his work. A *chargehand* has about 10 to 12 men under him, although he is still working among them most of the time. A *subforeman* in a large gang may be supervising all the time, while in a small gang he will still occasionally be working with his men. Then comes the foreman; and then the general foreman for the whole department or shop, or departmental manager. In various industries they have various names, and even in the same industries the terms vary. Their position is ambiguous; they are regarded as junior executives by the management and as one of themselves by the workers. This ambiguity is best shown in the composition of Joint Consultative Committees. They have no official representation on those committees because the management regards them as one of themselves and refuses to accept them on the workers' side. Their role is a difficult one. They have to command the confidence of both sides. If a foreman loses the respect of his gang, he ceases to be a foreman, and if he has not the confidence of the manager he will not be able to keep his position for long. 'He must be a sort of a diplomat,' a chargehand put it to me. He must be able to

sell the management's point of view to the workers, and vice versa.

For many reasons his position has recently been weakened. The personnel officer or labour manager has deprived him of some of his duties, including, in most cases, the right to sack a man. In many places the shop steward circumscribes his position from the other side. During the war, especially, some of the functions of the foremen passed to the shop stewards, and this change is only gradually being reversed. Very often he has to appeal to the union officer to help him to keep discipline, especially in regard to time-keeping and absenteeism. The Joint Consultative Committees, on which he is not represented, often surprise him with decisions about which he is the last to be informed.

His status has declined also in regard to wages or salaries. He is not an hourly rated workman, but has a weekly or fortnightly salary, but the gap between the craftsman's earning and his own is very small. Sometimes he earns only a few shillings a week more, and sometimes, when the craftsman is on piecework, he earns the same or even less. His reward is mainly in the greater security of his employment and the greater physical ease of his work.

His position has been radically changed by conditions of full employment. The big stick has been taken away from him and instead he has to use his charm and a smile. If that comes to him naturally, all the better. If it does not, his job is very difficult.

2

INDUSTRIAL TYPES

EVERY industry breeds its own type of man. Of course in any single industry there are innumerable individual differences between the various jobs and the various men, their grades, tools, machines, standard of intelligence, co-operation, loyalty, diligence, and so on; but often there is also something they have in common which singles them out from men in other industries. A coal-miner is altogether different from a mechanic, a builder has very little in common with a steel-worker, a printer with a cotton worker.

Before we try to define what is the common thread which binds men of a single industry, let us glance at the types of men and jobs in certain industries, starting from coal-mining.

There is a great variety of jobs in the mines, both below and on the surface. Faceworkers and others below ground embrace the coal-getters (whether they are called hewers, fillers, loaders, strippers, or stall-men), then cutters, borers, shotfirers, face rippers and other rippers, packers, drawers-off, pan-turners or beltmen, and in some districts putters. They form between 20 and 40 per cent of all men employed in the colliery, the percentage being dependent on the degree of mechanization in the mine, the distance of the coal-faces from the shaft, the size of the plant on the top, and especially on the screening of the coal.

Then come the datal workers or the day-wage-men, who include both the craftsmen and labourers on the maintenance service below ground and the haulage men.

Finally come the bankmen working on the surface, including both skilled men and labourers. There are a

number of skilled jobs such as wheelwrights, sawyers, wagonwrights, saddlers, boiler-smiths, turners and fitters, clip repairers, electricians, painters, patternmakers, tin-smiths, moulders, plumbers, farriers, masons, and brick-layers. But the majority of bankmen are labourers who are often elderly men, or men broken in health or disabled on compensation money and now drawn from those who were formerly employed below ground.

All these categories have varying wage levels, status, prestige, and often attitude to work. But in spite of this, they all have something in common, especially if we exclude the ancillary grades of labour on the surface. They all live in closely-knit communities where there is a strong projection of the group on the individual. Their life is firmly circumscribed by pit conditions. The pit and the village control their habits and rules of conduct; hence the strong desire to escape in their leisure time from the narrowness of the group.

The miner feels intensely and sharply, has violent loves and hates, sees everything as black or white, distinguishing few shades in between. Men here are good or bad; there is nothing intermediate. Like his own life, the miner is full of contrasts, and in his work he moves from one atmosphere into its opposite almost without transition.

Also characteristic of him are his quest for justice and fair play, his strong class consciousness, his strong sense of solidarity, and especially of union solidarity, his long memory, his proneness to grievances, his great generosity and eagerness to help, his interest in rescue work, his great sense of independence, a suspicion against men on the top who want to get something out of him for nothing, and his liking for pastimes which could bring air, light and colour into his life.

Miners often loathe the pits, but only talk about them. Mining is in fact not only a job but a vocation, with a thrill and passion about it which has in it a marked ambivalence. They love and hate their jobs, and the pit often

has a fascination for them, especially if they are 'born and bred' to the mines. And a saying you can often hear in mining villages is: 'Once a miner, always a miner'.

Now take the building operatives. You have here navvies, general labourers, craftsmen's labourers, handymen, and craftsmen of many descriptions, such as bricklayers, carpenters, plumbers, masons, plasterers, and asphalt workers.

Labourers often form the floating population in the industry, but there are a great many labourers who stick to it for good. Most of the craftsmen stay in the industry permanently, although there are some who leave for shipbuilding, engineering, iron and steel, the furniture industry. Many a man has followed his father, and I have met 'brickies' whose families had worked in the industry for many generations. One 'bricky' told me: 'My grandfather, my father, and I have built hundreds of houses, but there was never a house for us.'

The builders do not live in closely-knit and isolated communities as the miners do, but they too have a certain common way of life. They have to move from site to site and even from town to town, so they often develop certain nomadic traits which are seen particularly in navvies and general labourers. Builders have always suffered from the unsettled nature of their work. When a particular job is finished, the building operative is laid off for a while and has to change his boss. He develops no loyalty to an employer, and, if he has any, it is loyalty to a foreman more than to a firm. When he has a bad employer, he often transfers his bad opinion to a new employer, and approaches him with suspicion. He is always afraid that he will work himself out of a job, because he cannot see a new one waiting for him when the present work is finished. He has not, at any rate, the automatic continuity of a factory worker's job. This partly explains his traditional objection to piecework. His industry is often swamped with cheap labour, often brought over from Ireland;

hence his strong insistence on one rate for the job, and his dislike of merit money.

He suffers great discomfort in bad weather, losing part of his wages and only recently has been guaranteed a 32-hour week. He likes the outdoor life and the fresh air, often saying that he could not stand the stuffy air of a factory. He is more independent than a factory worker as regards supervision, because close supervision is often impossible on an isolated site. He works in small gangs under the chargehand or the gangman (labourers' supervisor) or under a foreman. He is impressed by the creative character of his job; and feels that he is taking part in a long process of constructing something durable and valuable to the community, which will survive him for many years.

Building is a vocation, just as farming is; it is one of the oldest vocations and so very traditional in its processes; I believe even more so than farming.

Now take the iron- and steel-workers. Their jobs are innumerable. We find among them melters in the melting shops, rollers and assistant heaters in the rolling mills – where the metal is made into various shapes by working it back and forth between heavy rollers – blast-furnacemen, coke oven-workers, blacksmiths, joiners, electricians, fitters, boilersmiths, patternmakers, constructional engineers, bricklayers, and many other craftsmen, ancillary workers, stocktakers, etc. But all the jobs can be classed under three categories: (1) production or process men, (2) maintenance men, and (3) labourers in the yard or in the finishing sections of the industry.

They also develop certain common characteristics, but this applies more to the production men than to the ancillary workers who form the floating population. They often live in closely-knit communities, as they do in Corby, or in Ebbw Vale, Swansea, Middlesbrough, Rotherham, or Scunthorpe. They have always belonged to the best-paid workers in the country, and for this reason the employers can always pick and choose their men, although

not as much now as they used to. They take great pride in their work, knowing that the strength of the country depends largely on their output. There is a strong team spirit, as all their basic operations are done by team work. The teams generally compete with one another, and the steel industry is one of the very few industries where a competitive spirit still prevails amongst the workers. Steel-works are so large that they form whole towns on their own. The men work with dirty materials, noxious fumes, and high temperature, and often under dangerous conditions. They need an enormous amount of liquid, and this they often take in a great many pints of beer every day. 'No steel without beer', I was told. Ninety per cent of them are regular pub-goers, and perhaps 2 or 3 per cent are teetotallers. The steel-worker describes himself as a 'hard working, hard drinking, and hard swearing man'. 'We have a good heat on', a melter told me, 'and keep running a drop off.' Everything a man handles is hard and hot. The job is definitely not monotonous, and the glare from the furnaces has a sort of fascination. He is machine-minded, and has no prejudice against new machines; he is alert and courageous, and makes a very fine soldier. 'He is the chap that Britain's foundation is laid on', I was told by the managers. He must, of course, be physically strong, because he has a heavy job to do. He is easy-going, and his unions are most conservative in outlook. The workers are promoted through age, and are subject to a strict seniority rule which applies to teams on furnaces, and there is a great disparity between the wages of long- and short-service men. The industrial relations are good, and during the last fifty years there has been hardly a single strike in the steel-works. The seniority rule turns a job into a valuable asset, so a strike or a dismissal becomes a severer penalty than it is anywhere else.

Now let us take the engineering industry. This is really a collective name for thirty different industries such as the general heavy and the general light industry, marine

engineering, construction and repair of motor cars and buses, aircraft, wagons and locomotives, bicycles, constructional engineering, machine-tool industry, plastics, telephones, electrical engineering, and so on, and with a labour force of approximately three million workers. The multiplicity of crafts, skills, and jobs is amazing: fitters and turners, moulders, patternmakers, foundry workers, electricians, sheetmetal-workers, coppersmiths, plumbers, woodcutting machinists, heating and domestic engineers, scalemakers, draughtsmen and toolmakers, machine operators with varying degrees of skill on automatic, semi-automatic, or handset types of machines, and finally ancillary workers of different types. The rungs of the ladder of skill are very numerous, but the chief are: (1) toolmaker, (2) turner and fitter, (3) machine setter, (4) setter-operator, an operator who sets his own machine, (5) capstan operator who uses his own gauges, (6) machine-minder. The main classes of workers are the skilled mechanics, who in 1938 still formed 51 per cent of over-all labour, with the semi-skilled men 36 per cent and the labourers 13 per cent. Each class shows a type of its own, but they all have certain common characteristics derived from their conditions, especially if the two upper categories of workers are taken into account and the ancillary workers are left out of the picture.

They are the factory workers in the strictest sense. They work in factories of varying sizes from small establishments, of anything under fifty men, to giant works of twenty thousand men; but the majority of them are in factories employing from several hundred to a couple of thousand men. Thus they work mostly in large groups and are in constant touch with one another. They were the first to develop the shop stewards movement, and to adopt the machinery of joint consultation. They are the children of the machine age, practical mechanics used to dealing with machines, liking machines, and trying to keep up with technical developments. Their work is often

very noisy and dusty, but not dirty. They like to work in overalls and are the typical overalled men. They do not need great physical strength and use brains more than brawn in their work.

They are business-like and adaptable, and their unions have no wish to put in unreasonable claims for the men, knowing that an industry dependent on the international market must be highly competitive to be able to offer them employment. They have no objection against piecework as the builders often have, saying that piecework frees them from detailed supervision and gives them a sense of partnership in the industry. And in fact most operatives in the engineering industry, about 70 per cent, are at present on straight piece rates, or bonuses or 'lieu rates' (bonus-like payments). They are less influenced by fear of unemployment than are the workers in many other industries, because the engineering industry is dynamic and highly progressive, and they have always seen new departments springing up in their factories. They have no bitter memories such as workers have in the traditional contracting industries. They have no objection to merit money, as the building workers have.

Engineering workers take pride in their jobs, and regard themselves as the vanguard of the working classes. They consider themselves free from the prejudices of the working class, and from its sense of inferiority; they are matter-of-fact in outlook, they mix with others freely and do not live in closely-knit communities.

Let us now turn to the cotton workers in two important sections of the industry, spinning and weaving. The cotton workers are predominantly female, but many of the card-room workers, mule spinning workers, and some of the workers in the weaving sheds, are male. Here we are concerned only with the male workers who form the skilled grades of workers, such as strippers and grinders in the cardroom, mule spinners, loom overlookers, tape-sizers, warehousemen, twisters and drawers, cloth overlookers,

warpdressers, or weavers on automatic looms. Thus we see a great variety of crafts, skills, and grades, each with its own arrangements, usually controlled by the unions, for apprenticeship and entry, and with its own customs and traditions of work, which are jealously guarded.

But all these grades, crafts, and skills in both sections of the cotton industry have certain common characteristics, which in many respects are the antithesis of those in the engineering industry.

The cotton workers live in closely-knit communities. Before the war in some towns in Lancashire they made up a quarter of its insured population, in other towns like Oldham and Rochdale a third, and in Nelson the majority of the population. They work mostly in small or medium-sized mills and weaving sheds, which are mostly old-fashioned and traditional, and sometimes backward in amenities and in working conditions.

The industry used to be the chief contracting industry, and the memory of long queues outside the mill gates waiting for work still haunts most cotton workers. They have long memories, and the distress they suffered in the past, especially in the thirties, plays a big part in their behaviour. Parents are not keen to send their children to the mill, in spite of the fact that conditions have improved considerably in recent years.

They are not very technically minded, and show a certain prejudice against modern machinery, which, however, is disappearing. They are eager to keep to their traditional ways of doing a job and their traditional standards of performance, such as the 'four looms to a weaver system'.

They have developed small local unions, which are eager to preserve their independence, and provide a personal service for their members.

Although spinning and weaving have long ceased to be domestic crafts, you can still feel in them something of the atmosphere of a home industry, especially in the

weaving sheds. From this comes the tradition of piecework which prevails in the industry. Factory discipline has never been enforced in the mills to the same extent as it has been elsewhere.

Now let us have a glance at the printers. The workers in printing houses also have a great variety of crafts and skills; hand and machine compositors, printing-machine managers or machine-minders and their assistants, monotype casters, stereotypers, bookbinders, lithographic printers, lithographic artists, engravers, process workers, press telegraphists, press photographers, correctors of the press, warehousemen, paper workers, etc. But there are certain characteristics common to all printers, especially if we concentrate on the production men and exclude the ancillary workers.

They are above the average in intelligence, are more intellectual than other workers, and have more artistic interests. They come nearer to the black-coated worker than any other industrial type. They move slowly, with a certain dignity, and take pride in their jobs. They work mostly in small establishments and have a personal relationship with the boss. Out of 8000 printing houses, 5000 employ less than 10 people and there are a number of family establishments where a man works with his family as it was done a hundred years ago. The gulf between the operatives and the boss is less unbridgeable than in other industries. Many master printers started as employees, and this upward movement is still frequent, since not a great deal of capital is involved in the opening of a small printing house.

The printer's crafts are ancient; they enjoy special privileges and are anxious to keep them, and to protect the trade from scamped work, from dilution of skill, and cheap labour. The entry into the craft is carefully watched, perhaps more carefully than in any other industry.

They have developed very strong unions, with what is often nearly 100 per cent membership, which have

practically a closed-shop policy in some areas. Some of the unions still keep something of the character of the medieval guilds, with their emphasis on the friendly society work, on keeping the high standard of the craft, and on exercising control of entry into the craft.

The unions are not only trade organizations but also professional and social associations. Nowhere else will you find so great a concern about protecting the high standards of a craft as in the printing industry, a concern which often exceeds the interest of the employers themselves. From this springs the resistance against piecework or bonus system, or any other form of redeployment of labour. They often develop strict lines of demarcation between crafts and jobs. The process of selection of boys is strict. Entry to the industry is often by means of intelligence tests and examinations in English and arithmetic, and family relationship to a printer is often an asset. The strength of the union lies in the Chapels, a shop-floor organization with a Father of the Chapel at the head who has large powers as the legal representative of the workers. The name of 'Chapel' again indicates the ancient character of the union.

Such examples show that among workers industrial types do exist. The types are formed by collective consciousness and experience, by the history and present conditions of the industry and the living conditions it offers, by industrial relations, by the requirements of the job in terms of physique, mentality, and intelligence. Different kinds of men are attracted by different industries and each perpetuates its type in its methods of recruitment and selection.

Nearly every industry breeds its own type, evolving its own 'ideal type', a kind of model worker most suitable for the particular industry. The workers tend to conform to this ideal both in the interests of the industry and in their own interests. The more closely they conform to it, the better will their performance be and the happier they will

feel in the industry; and that means better industrial relations, less need for supervision, and a smaller turnover of labour.

This process of selection goes on from both sides, the selection of workers by management and selection of industries by workers; and there are requirements even stronger than the wills of the parties concerned. A nervous, highly-strung man will not be able to stand the work in the pits; he will soon get 'nystagmus' and give up the job. Such a man working down the pit will feel the roof closing in on him. A man who cannot stand the heat, the noise, and the fumes, and who has not a strong physique, cannot work in the steel industry. Only a man of a certain intelligence will be accepted as a compositor. Only a smart man with good manners will be accepted as a waiter or a butler.

The managers and the foremen know what they want, they have in mind a certain ideal type of worker and try to reconcile their actual labour with this ideal type. Some firms have adopted special tests for simple jobs; for instance men who are too intelligent are not accepted for repetitive jobs, as they will not stay in them.

In selecting an industry for himself the worker has in his mind an image of the work, and at least a vague idea of the industrial requirements. He knows something of the exertions he will have to make and the rewards and compensations he will receive. The human atmosphere which is the result of good industrial relations plays an important part in these images the worker has in his mind; and the closer the actual conditions come to the images he has made of them the better it is for all.

Where are those images most likely to be accurate? – Where the fathers are already in the industry, and, knowing the characters and abilities of their sons, can judge whether they are suited for its requirements. And the boy himself knows the conditions in the industry, having absorbed from his father at an early and formative time of life some of the qualities which are needed to make the job

a success. In some difficult industries, like coal-mining, being 'born and bred' to the industry is in itself an invaluable asset, although this inherited liking for the job is becoming increasingly rare, as most fathers discourage their boys from going down the pit.

But in all cases it is extremely important for everyone, even for those 'bred and born' to the mines, to have a choice of occupation, and no one, even the boy who ultimately wants to take up this career, feels happy if he has no other choice presented to him. A miner who has taken up mining without having any other choice may feel disgruntled for no other reason but this, saying that he has been compulsorily recruited to the pits like a Bevin Boy.

It is as important to provide an adequate industrial choice for the workers as it is to provide an adequate selection of the right types of men to be leaders of industry. It is bad for the industry and for the men concerned if one of the choices is left out or very restricted.

In this respect there are marked differences between geographical regions. In some areas like South Wales, or South Yorkshire or Durham, lads have very little choice, while in other areas the industry itself has little choice and has to accept for some jobs boys who are in fact very little suited to them.

The process of selection on both sides is far from perfect, and on both sides there is a marked need for further improvement, particularly in the services of the Labour Exchange, in vocational guidance and in information services for entrants.

3

REGIONAL TYPES

THERE are many regions which breed their own types of men. These men are moulded by the natural environment, the location of industries, their conditions of work and industrial relations, the facilities for hobbies, the density of population, the standard of living, their history, their customs, and their habits. In every region the pressure of the past influences the people living there, and does something to mould their present way of living.

I know of no country in which you can find such a great variety of industrial regions in such a small area as you can in the British Isles. Sometimes in a single county you will find more than one industrial region. It is very difficult, of course, to draw a boundary line round a particular region, because the change from one to the next is often so gradual as to be almost imperceptible.

The North-East Coast of England forms one industrial region, South and West Yorkshire another. North and South Staffordshire have their own regional characteristics; so have North, South, and West Wales, the industrial areas of Scotland, the Black Country, Lancashire, and the East Midlands. The South-West (Somerset, Devon, and Cornwall) has a different pattern from the South-East (Southampton and Portsmouth). A detailed study of all these regional types would amply repay the immense labour it would require from research students in the areas.

When I made the inquiry reported in *Men in the Pits* I moved freely from place to place and I was struck by the enormous richness of types among the miners. What a world of difference there is between the Cumbrian miner and the 'Taffy', as the Welsh miner is called, or between

the 'Geordie', as the Durham miner is called, and the 'Nottingham lambs and Derbyshire rams', or the 'Cloggy' as the Lancashire miner is called, and the Kentish miners or the 'Staffs' (North Staffordshire men).

Many factors are responsible for regional differences. First we have the depressed areas. It makes a world of difference whether a man is born and bred in a depressed area or not. Bitter memories get a hold on the mind. The most enterprising part of the population has emigrated in large numbers into more fortunate areas; and those who did not were left to brood over their grievances. Relations between management and men in those areas, especially when there is a narrow industrial choice, are often more difficult than they are in other areas.

Now we come to the distinction between highly urbanized and congested areas and rural areas. Take London for instance. First there is an enormous labour market, with a great variety of jobs to choose from, but with the emphasis on service industries and light industries. There is a constant influx of workers into London from all areas, especially of those who think themselves smart and want to make a little extra. 'Only a fool couldn't make a pound a week extra in London just by fiddling,' a builder told me. Here we find a large number of vendors and barrowmen. London workers are quick-witted, and when they are aiming at a high output their speed is probably greater than that of countrymen. Life is more varied and men are less governed by habit than they are in country places. Distances to and from work are often great and the time and expense of travelling are a nuisance. In London very few men lunch at home, while in the country most men take their midday meal with their families and rows of bicycles are always seen streaming home at midday. Family life is weaker in London, because of the many attractions and amusements outside the home. Personal relationships are poorer than they are in the country, partly because of the distances and partly because of out-

side attractions and the faster tempo of life. A man's relationship with his employer is less personal too. He can always get a job somewhere else, while in the country he has to keep his job because the choice of jobs is small. In London men are hardly ever in touch with one another after work. They do not like their sports clubs and recreation clubs to be at their place of work, because they often have a long journey home, while in a country place there is no successful business without its sports club. In London the emphasis is on passive amusements, while in country places it is on active recreations, mostly sports. In London very little cricket is played, and there are few bowling greens, while in the country both games are played enthusiastically. Dog racing plays a big part in the London workers' leisure time, while in the country horses are more popular than dogs.

The other outstanding contrast is between North and South. The worker in the North is like a hardy plant born and bred against the background of a hard industrial struggle. He has been moulded and selected by the industry for its own particular needs. He knows the requirements, the rigour, and the discipline of industry. On the whole he is completely divorced from the land and from farm life; he is more class conscious, and determined to fight for his rights. What is called the 'industrial proletariat' *par excellence* is known in the North, but there is little of it in the South.

When you come to the South-West, even to places with a large agglomeration of several thousand industrial workers, you find yourself in a different atmosphere, one of ease and contentment. The workers are less class conscious, they are less divorced from the land, they still have farmers' pastimes. Everyone knows everyone else and there is still a personal relationship with the employer.

An outside observer who spends a short time in a region often finds its distinct way of life blurred and difficult to discern. But it becomes a poignant reality for those who

are transplanted from one region to another. In fact it is as difficult, if not more difficult, to transplant a fully-grown man from one region to another as it is to transplant a fully-grown plant from one soil to another.

The most successful transplantations are those of whole communities, whose ways of life can be carried on as before. I have seen this transplantation in practice – a village of Scottish workmen in Corby transplanted by the great steel firm, Stewart and Lloyd; and a Scottish mining village near Coventry.

Where single adult workmen are transferred, they are rarely satisfied to the full; they often think longingly of their homes. The turnover of labour among men sent by the Labour Exchange from one place to another is often enormous, and some firms lose as much as 50 to 60 per cent of the men transferred to them in the first four weeks. I have rarely met a man satisfied with his new setting. A Londoner transferred to a country place would say: 'I hate being here, the people are so narrow-minded and interfering. I am bored stiff. There is no life at all.' And a country man transferred to London would say: 'I hate being in this crowded place where everybody treads on other people's corns, where everyone's in a rush, no one gives a damn for anyone else. And that constant noise makes me sick.'

But even a man transferred from one country place to another would complain bitterly about his lot. I remember a Yorkshireman from the Middlesbrough area who had settled in Lancashire complaining: 'The whole atmosphere is so different from the North-East Coast. The pub life is gayer there, people have more spending money and spend it more freely. And the conventions of life are stronger in Lancashire than anywhere else. Here you are being censored all the time, but nobody cares what you do in Middlesbrough.'

I met a Devon taxi-driver married to a Birmingham girl who told me his feelings and observations. 'I can't

reconcile myself to the ways of the Black Country. All they talk about is money. We don't talk so much about money in Devon. They are industrialized through and through. Their minds have become mechanized and they have no real hobbies.'

A Yorkshireman who works in the South gave me his view about his mates in an engineering shop. 'They are easy-going chaps, too soft for my liking. They haven't been through bad times like we had. They live in a holiday resort and are affected by the holiday mood. We are hardy plants and life in our places is grim and grey.'

I have no wish to identify myself with these opinions; they are quoted here simply to prove that the ways of life in different regions are distinct, and that their distinctions are strongly felt by those who have been transferred to them. They all provide proofs, if proofs were needed, that man is moulded by social forces into a pattern which is not easily remoulded. There is no need for me to say that strangers coming to a new place are still looked on as 'foreigners' after thirty-odd years. 'You must live in this village for forty years', a Derbyshire man told me, 'before you are accepted as one of them.'

The richness of regional types is enhanced by the differences in ethnical characteristics as well. Irishmen, Welshmen, and Scots have each a chapter of their own in British industrial industry.

'But you know,' a personnel manager told me, 'they behave differently at home from the way they behave anywhere else. To know the true Scotsman you have to study him in Scotland, and to know a Welshman you have to study him in Wales. When you transplant a man he is apt to behave differently and he may clash with the local men. Give me a local man, any day.'

'Why is that?' I asked.

'There are many reasons', he said. 'First, most men don't like leaving their homes and looking for work somewhere else, so they have a grievance on that score. Then

they are not so well housed, they often live without their families and have few friends. Anyway, their personal relationships are not so satisfying. They don't know the customs and ways of the place, and on that score too they may be disliked by the locals. They do not develop much loyalty to the new locality and intend to leave as soon as they can. Whenever you talk to an Irishman, the first thing he tells you is that he is going home when he makes enough money.'

The Irishmen I met were mostly labourers; there were few craftsmen among them. The reason for that may be that they mostly came over here as grown men, and that there is not so much opportunity for apprenticeship in Ireland, because there is not much industry there. They worked mostly in the building and civil engineering industries, or in motor transport. Some were barmen and kitchen hands. The Irish like outdoor jobs and avoid factories if they can. These over here are mostly bachelors or men who have left their families in Ireland, and go home nearly every year on their annual holiday. They are religious men, nearly all of them Catholics, and the great majority go to Mass every Sunday. They are very historically minded; those who read at all often told me that they liked history books. They like talking on historical themes, too, and they often start at the time of Queen Elizabeth. They are great talkers, in fact, and some of them look on conversation as their great hobby. How many Irishmen are there, I wonder, among the Hyde Park speakers and listeners? They describe themselves as plucky and brave and fiery. When they talk about Ireland they praise it because it is their own country, but they admit that the standard of living and of education is low, and they often complain about their Irish fellow workers and say that they are prone to quarrels among themselves. English workmen often refer to the tendency to undercut wage-rates by using imported Irish labour to lower wages; but this is largely a thing of the past. They often stay out of

the unions, and when they do join they are often very critical of them.

They live together and move in crowds, and the Irish quarters are often described as slummy. Employers praise them highly; especially as navvies in civil engineering and building. But they are not regarded as steady workers, or as eager to keep a job with one employer.

I also met a great many Welshmen both in South Wales and in England. They are highly praised in Wales as excellent, hard-working men, very co-operative, loyal, and reliable, but away from home they are less highly praised. They had to leave their homes in hundreds of thousands looking for work during the Great Depression. Their characteristics are the result of a mixture of ethnical and industrial influences. For years they lived in a depressed area, with a narrow industrial choice. There was hardly anything for the Welsh worker to choose outside coal, steel, or the tinplate industry. Nearly every village depended on a single large firm, mine, or steel-works. The Welsh live in narrow isolated villages, with all around them their beautiful hills spoiled by the ugly industrialism of the valleys, with the dust and fumes, the dumps of wire and wheels and broken timber, and their bleak houses. Every observer speaks of a certain emotionalism in the Welsh workers and of a certain dichotomy in their mental make-up. You do not need to be a sociological observer, even, to find that out. It is enough to listen to the intonation of their voices and the way they rise sharply and fall with a rhythm of their own. The Welsh workers whom I met had many cultural interests, especially where singing and music are concerned. Even in Hyde Park you can often hear an excellent Welsh choir on a Saturday. As I listened, once, to one of those choirs I fully understood what a discerning Irish observer had told me about the Welsh. 'You know, their minds are deep, there is always something in them that eludes you. But the keynote to them is sadness and melancholy. Our songs are fiery and

gay, but theirs are full of sorrow and of care. The Welsh are also more submissive than we are. We are more of a fighters' race.' Nearly all those I met had been to Sunday School and Chapel and had an interest in religious problems, although not all of them were believers. They value personal relationship highly and they stick together, forming their own circles of friends. When one of them is in trouble or has to go home without means, he is helped by a collection.

Some of the employers whom I asked about Welsh workers in England told me: 'They are good workmen but you must know how to handle them. The best thing is to put a Welshman as supervisor over them. You have to praise and cajole them; you can't ever bully them.'

The Scottish workers whom I met in England were of an altogether different type. They were mostly in the engineering industry or in hotel work or on the railways. They came here not because they could not find work in Scotland, but because they wanted higher wages. They are smart and confident men with a great sense of responsibility and propriety, and feel strongly about moral values. 'That is just and that is unjust', you often hear them say. They are rather solemn and serious-minded and tend to hold their own opinions against the crowd; and their outlook is more individualistic than most workmen's, even when they profess to be socialists.

Their standard of intelligence is high, and they take a great interest in promotion. They want to get on, and often think of setting up a small business of their own. The old cliché about the thrifty Scotsman who knows the value of money is, I believe, fundamentally true, although I also met restless men among them and great boozers, too, who drank away their wages; but these were exceptional. They took a great interest in education and learning and read much. They had a great sense of irony and a sharp wit. They spoke little about themselves and were restrained in the opinions they expressed.

Scottish workers are praised for their great hospitality, and they mix freely with the English. They are born leaders and often take a lead as union secretaries and shop stewards. They live very clean lives, and have a great consideration for women. Speaking of promiscuity, they say that 'it isn't fair on the girl'.

English workers are not very keen on discussing ethnical characteristics, and any question on the subject is apt to be answered with a snub. They decline to apportion praise or blame. The opinions most frequently expressed are: 'There are good and bad in every class and in every nation' or 'They are not very different from ourselves. Ordinary chaps are more or less the same everywhere.'

In this country foreigners encounter very little prejudice. From the European volunteer workers, who have recently come to this country and who, naturally, have their own distinctive characteristics, I rarely heard complaints about unfair treatment. They complain more of indifference than of antagonism. 'You get a smile,' they often say, 'but nothing much else. We are just left to ourselves.'

Tolerance is often paid for by isolation, and many foreign workers confess that over here they feel like autumn leaves tossed by a cold wind.

4

THE YOUNG WORKER AND THE OLD

AGE differentials are extremely important in any social or psychological study of the worker. The attitude to work, spending and saving habits, hobbies and pastimes, a man's opinions, and his outlook on life – all these depend largely on age. Any social study, then, based on a sample which does not correspond to the representative age structure of the community, is bound to fail from the outset. The age differentials are even more important in the times of transition, where large-scale changes are taking place and new customs are being formed.

There are four main stages in the worker's life – adolescence, later youth, middle age, and old age.

The adolescent goes into industry at present at the age of 15 or so, either as an apprentice or learner, or else he goes into a blind-alley job. One general remark can be made about working-class adolescents: that nearly all of them prefer working to being at school. I rarely met a boy who said that he would rather stay on at school. Probably being at work gives him a greater sense of emancipation and independence, and of usefulness to his family. He usually gives his wage-packet to his mother, getting back from her his pocket-money for fares, meals out, and recreation. His main activities outside his work are making models, sports of all kinds, dances, youth clubs, and cinemas. Apart from the cinema, the emphasis is on the active recreations, like soccer, rugger, cricket, model-making, and so on.

The time between 15 and 17 is a most critical age and decides the young man's whole future. The decisive point is whether he is apprenticed to a craft or supervisory grade or not. If he fails to be apprenticed, he is left, in the great

majority of cases, in the labourers' or at best in the semi-skilled men's ranks for life. He will be upgraded only in the most exceptional cases. Most industries have developed their own apprenticeship schemes, and some businesses even have their own schemes for selecting, training, and supervising the apprentices. A willing boy can in most cases rely on help and advice, but the main thing is that he must show the spirit of self-improvement. If that is lacking, he will be soon left behind. It is literally true for him that 'life is what you make it', although it depends partly on what other people can do for him. Apprentice-ship means often some sacrifice on the part of parents, and some cannot afford it, saying that the game is not worth the candle, since at present there is little difference be-tween craftsmen's and labourers' wages.

The age between 15 and 17 is also the most critical age because in it permanent habits are formed in work and leisure. The transition between a school and a factory is beset with many pitfalls. The contrast is often too great for a boy to bridge it in any constructive way. One man told me how he acquired the habit of drinking, which ruined his family and his own life. 'At first I didn't like drinking,' he said, 'but I was teased by my mates and called a baby tied to my mother's apron-strings. So I wanted to show them that I could be as manly as they were.' Ridicule is the biggest sledge-hammer to make a new man conform to the prevailing pattern of life and the atmosphere of his workplace. I often met teachers who complained bitterly that their protracted work of education had fallen to pieces in a few months of factory life. 'I could have cried,' one teacher told me, 'when I saw the boys I had been so fond of, and who had been so promising, after six months in a factory. Their language, their behaviour, and their opinions had all changed so much that all my work seemed to have been undone in that short time.'

I agree with his opinion that boys in their first months in a factory need special protection. This they should get

from a youth officer or a carefully chosen and experienced worker who could help their efforts to keep straight, and protect them from abuse or mishandling.

These first years of factory life are the foundation of all the success and happiness of later years. A boy will pick up good habits of work or bad habits. He will either persevere in his course and improve all round or go down in every way.

When I talked to the boys I found much that was worth recording. They complain that nobody understands them or is willing to understand them by putting himself in their shoes. 'The real trouble is we don't understand ourselves,' an 18-year-old boy in a cotton mill told me; 'it's because we change so quickly. I don't believe in getting help from anyone else; everyone has to work out his own salvation, because our problems look different every day of the year. But what is most important is that people should be tolerant and patient and criticize us in a constructive way, helping us for the future, not badgering us about the past.'

Another thing about them is the general distrust they feel. They discuss their troubles only with people they like and in whom they have confidence.

Youth supervisors, then, must be chosen very carefully. Boys do not like to be patted on the head or patronized; they like to be treated as equals, and treated sincerely. The best way to help them, they told me, is to give them the confidence to settle their own problems.

The position of apprentices has grown worse in the last few years because of compulsory service in the Armed Forces. Their interest in the job is weakened by the fact that they have to join up and do not know whether they will want to come back. They often develop new tastes and get new ideas about the work they want to do; or they want to settle in a new place, having found new friends there, or a girl. Apprentices can have their National Service deferred, but a number of boys, craving for adventure,

have no wish to make use of this privilege. When they come home after their time in the Forces, they feel restless at first, and it takes time before they settle down properly; but most of them say that the Army life has broadened their outlook on life and has been an education for them.

This change from Army to civilian life is again a very critical period in a man's life, whatever his age, and I have seen many who could not stand up to the strain of new responsibilities. Many of them change their jobs and their whole way of life when they get home. The greatest challenge is to men who had an easier and better life in the Forces than they had before they joined up, and who cannot reconcile themselves to the hard life they are getting back to. These are the men the supervisors have in mind when they say that some ex-Service men expect an easy life and feel they have won the right to it by their war service. But again we must remember that too long a service in the Forces, as many of them had during the war, forms habits in them which are not easily broken when they leave.

The youth gradually acquires the mentality of the adult worker. Changes are, of course continuous and the shades of change are imperceptible, but clear contrasts may be seen between a man in his twenties and a man in his fifties. Call the young man 'George' and the older man 'Peter'.

When you ask George whether he saves any money he will tell you that he has at least twenty or thirty years before he need think about saving. 'I may be dead tomorrow' is his attitude to saving. He does not care about security as much as Peter does. He will generally choose a highly paid job in preference to a secure one. George is more interested in his welfare rights than Peter is. He will expect to find all the welfare services which he got used to in the Army. He will expect a clean job, or, where that is impossible, a locker to keep a change of clothes, and a shower.

The differences in the mentality of the two are also shown in their way of dressing, which will be dealt with separately. George is well turned out, while Peter pays little attention to his clothes. George spends perhaps twice as much as Peter does on his clothes. He likes dances and cinemas and shows, and these all need a good appearance, while Peter is primarily a pub-goer.

George will take out his girl or his wife, but Peter will move almost exclusively among his mates.

George is an active sportsman; he plays football or cricket, or billiards, while Peter only watches games, and if he plays any actively, it is bowls or cards, or darts in the pub.

In the workshop George for various reasons shows much less interest in his job than Peter does. He has so many interests outside the job, first of all in his sports, which are the main outlet for his surplus energy, while the job is simply to provide cash for his main interests. Then, too, he may be looking for a house for his family or may be having trouble with his wife or his child or his girl, while Peter's life is more stable.

George is less satisfied with his job than Peter is. He is more anxious to find an interesting job and sets himself a higher standard of requirements. No job is good enough for him and he is anxious to learn. His dissatisfaction with the job comes primarily from the high hopes he started with, which have not so far been fulfilled. Will they be in the future? George will complain about the monotony of his work. His habits of work are not yet as firmly established as Peter's. This is seen most clearly in heavy and unattractive industries, like coal-mining or foundry work. Peter is completely used to his job, even if it is dissatisfying in itself, and he has even developed a liking for it; while George has not yet been broken in to it.

But George is not scared of losing his job, as Peter is. If Peter was out of work he might not be able to get another job, and might be out of the running for good. Besides, he

would lose his seniority or any small privileges he had acquired in his firm for his long service there. If he packs up, he loses everything and has to start from scratch.

George can easily get a job anywhere. They are all waiting for him, he thinks, and expecting a long run of service from him when they have adapted him to their own requirements. He does not have to worry about discipline, or about keeping his mouth shut, or staying in his job. When he swears about the 'blooming boss' and the 'bloody job', Peter looks around him with terror, but George retorts: 'What is there to be frightened of? I can quit to-day, if they want me to.'

Conditions of work have changed enormously in recent years and so has the status of the worker. In the labour market the boot is now on the other foot, as the workers would say. The times have gone when men were ten a penny, although no one knows how permanent this is, in spite of hopes of continuous full employment. But the fact remains that Peter had been brought up in an altogether different atmosphere from, and in a social status lower than, George's. Peter has never expected to be treated as an equal, and when the boss came along he longed for the pat on the back and stood at attention when he was spoken to. That sense of submission is still in him and he cannot help feeling it, while George knows his own status and expects better treatment.

The thirty years between the two men's ages has contributed much to the differences in the attitude of George and Peter to their work, but the fact remains that, apart from the social changes since Peter's youth, the natural contrast between George's large opportunities and Peter's lack of opportunity is of paramount importance.

You would think that bitter memories would be stronger in Peter's mind than they are in George's, but that is not true; or if it is it does not come out in conversation. These memories have been handed on to the men unconsciously by their parents; and, besides, the great slump was too

short a time ago not to be imprinted on the mind of a man George's age. War-time evacuation and service in the Forces have only strengthened the feeling of class barriers, especially where education is concerned. Outwardly at any rate, the impression I got was that a feeling of bitterness is much stronger among young men than it is among older men. But it must be taken into account that they can express themselves the more freely because they have a 'couldn't care less' spirit about their jobs, especially where the jobs are not particularly worth while, anyway.

George likes machines and wants newer and better ones, which mean less sweat for him; but Peter dislikes and distrusts machines, and all the time keeps wondering how he can avoid them. For will they not put him out of his job or demote him by making his skill useless?

Peter takes a much greater interest in his trade union than George does. When he was young Peter struggled for the defence and development of his union, but George takes it for granted as he does the furniture he is used to. The union is there all right, but he doesn't bother about it, and rarely shows up at the meetings. 'Why should I bother?' is his attitude; 'they'll manage all right without me.'

There is a certain undercurrent of antagonism between George and Peter, which is natural enough. Peter often gets easier or better rated jobs, while his need for money is not so pressing as George's. George has to bring up his family and his wife has to stay at home looking after the children, so he is often the only breadwinner in the household, while Peter is helped by his wife or by his grown-up children who pay for their keep.

When they are asked whether the conditions of the worker have improved substantially since before the war, George says 'no', while Peter says 'definitely yes'. This divergence arises not only from the fact that Peter knows pre-war conditions better than George, but chiefly because full employment means more to a family with many

people earning in it than it does to a family with one bread-winner. A young building labourer explained it to me in this way: 'The present times are a heaven-sent opportunity for grandpas and grandmas,' he said. 'They earn as much as young people because they all have the same union rates, and a family of five or six grown-ups including old men and women is very well off indeed. But look at me – I have five small children and a wife worn out with working all day, and we're as badly off as we were before the war. The real difference is a pound in family allowances, but that's not enough to keep five cats. Anyhow what I lose in my wife's wages is at least three times as much as the family allowances.'

Now let us take the next age group, an old man, Richard. His strength and speed are gradually giving way, his limbs and senses are beginning to fail him. He gets lighter and lighter jobs with less and less money. He stays longer out of a job. If he loses his job, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find another one, and the feeling of insecurity is beginning to prey on his mind. His children have left him one by one and with them have gone their wage-packets. He can no longer afford to buy cigarettes and he often turns to making his own cigarettes, systematically cutting down his smoking allowance. He can no longer afford a good booze, and restricts himself to one or two pints. Instead of a booze he goes to the cinema where he can sit a couple of hours and only spend a shilling or two. He spends hardly anything on clothes. More often than not he stays at home, or sits quietly in the park, watching other people's extravagance. His view on life becomes more and more philosophical and resigned. 'There isn't much you can do, anyhow. You have to live your life somehow, that's all. And before you know what it's all about, it's over.'

'We are born poor and we die poor' – that is more or less what Richard would think about people of his class. And a man who has been a failure all his life finds consolation

in seeing that his more fortunate friends, who earlier on did so well, have come to more or less the same end. 'Look at them,' exclaimed a former labourer and now a night-watchman sitting in his hut on the road, 'the foreman and the craftsman I worked for are doing the same now, sitting in the road like me. We are equal when we die, but our equality really starts earlier, when we are ready to go to an institution – whatever they call it now – or to get our old-age pension.'

5

THE WORKER IN HIS FAMILY LIFE

Workers make as good sons, husbands, and fathers as men of other classes; the family bond is as strong as, if not stronger than, it is in other classes; and the environment plays as big a part in their attitude to their families and in their relationships as they do anywhere else.

A young chauffeur, a former coal-miner and labourer in the building industry, who had ample opportunities of studying an upper middle-class family, gave his views on the similarities and contrasts of family life of the two classes in the following way:

'I should say the main difference is that the son of a well-to-do family expects help from his family the whole time, while a working-class son is just the opposite, and wants to be helping his family all the time. When he is a child he has to help his mother with the housework, or look after his younger brothers and sisters, and at 14 or 15 he starts helping his family by bringing home his wage-packet. A working-class family expects help from him because it cannot do without it, but a middle-class young man expects help even later on when he gets a job, or gets married, or wants to start up on his own.

'A working-class chap is trained to give all the time, so he can't grow up selfish. And if a man has been helping his family from early childhood, isn't he bound to it more strongly? Don't men feel more deeply towards people they help? And there's another reason for the stronger family bond among the working classes: their large families. We were six children in my family, but my boss has only one son. I think our family life was more varied, more colourful, and more interesting than my boss's, which must be dull because it is empty. An only child has to be kept amused all the time, but we could amuse ourselves by doing things together.'

The relations between parents and children in working-class families deserve closer study than they have hitherto

received. In my dealing with the workers I was struck by a certain frequently recurring pattern in the father and mother relations. The relationship between mother and son was warm and affectionate, often glowing with a deep sense of attachment and admiration, but the feeling of a son for his father was cold, and often hostile. I have often met men who never married because they did not want to leave their mother alone and were afraid that a wife might not get on with her. Some even contended that they could not find a girl as perfect as their mother. One man said to me: 'Why should I marry? – to come home every night and see my mother, the way my brothers do?' Another man told me: 'I haven't married because I have a strong sense of duty. I have seen my mother struggling all her life to keep us going, often washing up and ironing to the small hours, and I thought it unfair to subject any woman to such a life.'

There is no sign of the same warmth in the relationship with the father. Is it just chance, I wonder, that I met so many men, most of them young, who, when they speak of their childhood, show contempt or even hatred for their father? 'I hated my father,' they have said, 'my father was a mug and a boozer.' Some told me that they have left home after a violent row with their father. 'One day I came home late at night and my father hit me. So I gave him a good hiding and left.'

A working man, especially if he is in one of the lower grades, is often kept down and ordered about; and it is perfectly natural for him to treat others as he is treated.

'Remember the N.C.O.'s attitude to privates [a labourer said to me, with some insight]. For a long time he has been the underdog, and then finds himself on top having people to order about and shout at. He thinks that what he had to put up with is good enough for the other chap. "If I stood it, why can't he?" he says. A labourer often can't help behaving like that to his children. And, mind you, that treatment from his father is good training for a boy, because the world will treat him the same.'

How many fathers come home from their work tired, dissatisfied, frustrated, and thinking only of escaping from the family life they dread to a pub or to the dogs? And how many mothers use their husband's name as a bogy to frighten small boys? 'Just wait till your father comes home. He'll give it to you,' they say. How many mothers warn their children to keep as quiet as a mouse when the father comes home, and not bother him with anything because he is tired from his work? How many mothers give all the bacon to their husbands, and eat bread and potatoes themselves? Children are observant and notice that their father gets all the comforts and the best food. Their mother tells them that this is as it should be, because the father is the breadwinner.

Many children have seen their mother's pathetic struggle against adversity, her constant, unappreciated round of work, her sacrifices and the tears she weeps in secret, although she smiles in public. Women know that to hold their men they must be attractive, and so they try not to show them their deep sense of tragedy and frustration, and this effort makes their life still more pathetic. This cannot be hidden, either, from the eyes of little boys, whose observation is sharpened by instinctive sympathy.

All this helps to explain the bitter remarks some of the workers, especially of the lower grades, make about their fathers. But these remarks come from very young men more often than they do from the middle-aged. When the young worker grows older and brings up his own family, he understands much better how his father felt before him, and feels more sympathetic towards him. He understands that the harsh realities of his father's life were imposed on him by circumstances.

A middle-aged workman commented on this fact: 'How can anyone say he hated his father? I didn't like my father but I can't say I hated him. He used to drink, but so do I. How can anyone call it wrong if everyone does the same? He was no better and no worse than other people.'

The worker, especially in the poorer stratum of the working class, has to struggle hard to keep his head above water, and his emotional and mental balance unimpaired. This struggle sometimes prevents him from treating his children as he would like to. The mother's instincts are stronger, and are less affected by the strain of poverty.

Can it be that poverty is conducive to a warmer relation between the son and the mother than between the son and his father? The question is worth following up. Its investigation might throw much light upon the distribution of authority in the working-class family.

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Another problem deserving investigation is the relation between the sexes in the working class. Any observer of working-class communities will be struck by a certain segregation of the sexes in their leisure-time activities. It is more pronounced among the older generation than among the young one, more in the slummy than in good working-class districts, more in the North than in the South, more among the heavy labourers than among the factory workers. The phenomenon itself is receding and the older generation are used to their separate outings much more than the younger ones.

The behaviour pattern of single men was described to me by one of my respondents:

'Boys up to the age of 20 prefer their own company; from 20 to, say, 25 or 27, they are courting and going out with girls, but after that age if they haven't married, they come back to the company of their pals and stay there for life.'

What about married couples? Are there any factors which influence their common outings?

Firstly the care of children. If there are no baby-sitters, or a granny or a sister nearby, husband and wife have difficulties in arranging their common outings.

Sometimes man and wife are on different shifts, or the husband is on evening or night shift or overtime.

Money considerations play also an important part. His spending money is certainly not the horn of plenty. If his wife has no earnings of her own, and her housekeeping money is not sufficient to spare an extra shilling for pleasures, the husband must pay for common outings. And often his pocket-money is not sufficient to go round.

Also the hobbies and entertainments of husband and wife often do not coincide. She is more interested in knitting or listening to the wireless, or going out to the pictures, or when young in dancing, and he primarily in sports of all sorts, in frequenting the public-houses, or going out to racing. In young days they have had more common interests, in dancing and picture-going, in walks in the country, and cycling, but later on their interests often draw apart. And when the couple get used to spending their leisure time apart, let us say owing to the necessity to look after the children at home, the habit weighs heavily in later years.

I believe poverty, slummy conditions, unsatisfactory working conditions, and educational backwardness are somewhat conducive to a certain segregation of the sexes in their leisure-time activities. Poverty means that both partners cannot afford to pay for their outings as they would wish to. Slummy conditions drive men from their homes more frequently than otherwise. Unsatisfactory working conditions make men irritable and create a real need for more entertainments. Backward educational standards make men shy with a certain sense of inferiority, and they often avoid the other sex from fear they will have nothing to talk about.

A young man who likes flirting gave me his views on the subject: 'A flirtation is a work of art and needs intelligence and wit, which lots of men haven't got. When you're with a man you don't have to use your brain and you are perfectly at ease, but to get over the strain of sex with a girl you have to use your wits to keep the conversation going, and that is often tiring.' It is still more difficult to keep the

conversation on neutral ground so as not to get entangled.

Working-class boys generally prefer to meet girls in small groups, where the conversation can be less intimate and the atmosphere gayer and centred around games.

On the whole the manual worker does not cut a romantic figure. Anyway he is much less so than the sedentary clerical worker. I believe, that by and large he has little surplus energy left from his work and his sports. From my most intimate talks with the workers I got the impression that sex indulgence or sex obsession is rare among them. After his manual work a man's sports take up much of his surplus energy. He is not troubled by his imagination, and has a strong sense of reality to steady it.

Again I wonder: why is it that among single working men I have met such a high percentage, I believe at least one in four, who either never 'bothered' about women or who after the age of 30 or so led a completely chaste life? Many men confessed to me: 'Sex never bothered me', 'I never had any interest in sex or women', 'I have been quite happy without a woman in my life', or 'I finished with that long ago'. A few of them were effeminate, or some were emaciated and undernourished, but the majority were apparently healthy men who could still argue with me that 'sex is a very overrated business', or that 'sex is largely a matter of imagination'. Others argued that sex is a bad habit, like drinking or gambling, 'that gets a hold on you but has nothing to it'.

Were they born undersexed, emotionally or physically, or has their sex been killed by over-control exercised for too long a time? – I cannot tell. Some of those who led a chaste life felt the urge strongly but were afraid of venereal diseases. It is very little realized that the campaign against venereal diseases generates fears and terrors which often play havoc with neurotic men. Some of them contended that fear made them impotent. Invariably the undersexed man is a woman-hater. He freely advances his opinion that women are the parasitic part of the population,

twisters and cheats intent on depriving men of money and energy. 'They haven't created or invented a thing, but the whole of industry sweats for their luxuries,' he says. 'They spoil all the jobs, they corrupt men and turn them into black-marketeers. You get lots of women whenever there is easy money. They don't hang around the poor man.'

Another thing which astonishes me is that some of these men seemed to be perfectly happy and contented. They did not complain about loneliness or about the emptiness of their life, or of any disturbances of their health. Asked what was their purpose in life they would often answer: 'just to carry on', or 'to look after myself'.

I asked several of them what they would do if they won a small fortune, and the answer was often: 'I would enjoy myself, going on a journey.' 'Wouldn't you like someone to share your enjoyment?' I asked. 'Why should I?' they said. Sometimes a mother or a sister was mentioned; that was all. I believe they were strongly egoistical and narcissistic types. But I also met among them a few men with religious experiences, who sublimated their sex to a spiritual plane.

Sexlessness or chastity is often found among vagrants, and among the poorest types of labourers and casuals. Naturally they do not attract women. The down-at-heel appearance, the sense of abandonment, and the restlessness are not attractive traits; and these types suffer from a marked sense of inferiority which they often express. 'No woman would look at me', they say, or 'It wouldn't be fair to a woman to associate myself with her', or 'It wouldn't be fair to a woman, as I can't settle down', or 'To make children under my conditions would be a sin against humanity'.

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Now let us turn to the marriage bond itself. The worker's family is a functional unit of great value to him. The joining of forces in the struggle of life has nowhere greater

meaning than in workers' families. 'Bad as a woman can be it is still worse without her', is a statement you may hear from a disillusioned family man. True, the eating in cheap restaurants, the long travelling distances to work, and the mass employment of women in industry have somewhat diminished the functional value of family life in providing the comforts of life, but nevertheless it still remains high.

What my investigations brought out quite clearly was the striking differences in well-being between married men with a medium-sized family and single men. You hardly ever find a destitute man among married men who live with their families, while single men or men separated from their wives form the great majority among vagrants or the destitute. A wife, even if she does not earn money, performs valuable services and looks after the comforts of a man, adding to his sense of well-being and security. It is true that he often has to cut down his smoking or drinking or gambling, but that is mostly for his own benefit. A married man has a home and is under his own roof, while a single man moves about from digs to digs and is under the dictatorship of his landlady. If he drinks or gambles, he may go hungry, but a married man in most cases gives his wife housekeeping money which keeps him for the week. A married man keeps a better hold of himself, while the single man is handicapped by the lack of responsibility.

Breakdown is more frequent among single men than it is among married men. A married man is like a horse in harness, and a purpose in life and a strong rein is good for a man, especially if he is of a restless type. I have seen many men who suffered breakdown not only when their wives left them, but also when for any reason they have lost a sense of purpose and responsibility for their families.

Reviewing the various phases of his married life, an old engine-driver recorded a typical story:

'At the beginning things went badly. When the kids are small it is very hard. The missus has to stay at home, and this means

less earning and more spending. But when the kids grow up and they can look after each other, the missus can back you up with some cash by going out to work, especially if the family is not too big. When the children grow up and leave school, the missus usually stops working outside and the children pay their way. That is a great help and it's the best time in any worker's life. Then a man can save a bit, if he is lucky. But unfortunately that doesn't last long, and the children soon leave you, one by one. But by that time a man who is not a spendthrift should have some cash to fall back on, while the family needs and the man's own needs drop considerably. And when a man gets old, it's better to have a home, because he needs it more as he doesn't go out as often as he used to, and he has less spending money. It's true, you can't expect help from your children and it wouldn't be fair to them, as they have to struggle hard to get things going, and most men don't like the idea of getting favours from their children. But to have the company of the missus, if she is not bedridden and can do her housework, is still a great help. What a difference between a 26*s*. old-age pension in digs, or a 42*s*. pension in your home.'

I believe this is true. Reviewing the position of old-age pensioners one is struck at once by the enormous disparity between the position of single men and that of married men. Old-age pensioners on 26*s*. in digs or hostels are destitute, and their position is pitiful. They are helpless, and have a strong feeling of their own uselessness. Their existence, unless they keep on working and have strong faith or singular balance of mind, is of a purely vegetative nature, and the dominant theme of their life is: 'I couldn't care less.' Married men, on the other hand, still have the feeling that they are cared for and at the same time needed by their womenfolk. They command a greater respect in the community and among their own children.

In reviewing the differences in the position of married and single men, I would emphasize as the strongest factor in happiness: *Purposefulness in life*. If man has a purpose in life, he feels steadier, while without it he drifts and grows restless. A single man has more freedom but less purpose, and we often overrate the blessings of freedom and

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underrate those of purpose. A man gains happiness from his self-imposed duties and responsibilities.

Now, what about the breakdown of marriages among the workers? As I have said, the family is a functional unit and a worker does not wreck it lightly. He does not cut a romantic figure, and he is not allured by attractive women or by passionate love, but I believe that working-class families would stand very favourably any comparison with other classes in their marital relations. Of course, in order to make the statistical evidence comparable we should have to put down divorces plus factual separations on both sides, because cases of factual separation are much more common than cases of divorce. I met many men whose wives had simply left them without legal divorce, and the same is true of women whose husbands had left their wives. Sometimes a worker goes to another town, changes his name, and gives no sign of life. But that happens rarely, although more often now than in the past.

One man expressed his view on this subject in this way: 'Poverty keeps more homes together than love or devotion. You can see what money does to family life by looking at Hollywood actors.' He made a good point here, but there is no doubt that the spirit of give-and-take imbued in working-class men from early childhood also plays a great part in their family life.

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The problem of housekeeping money has attracted attention recently and strong views have been voiced against selfish husbands. No one will deny that such men exist, although they form a small minority. It is not always fair to condemn a man for not giving his wife enough money for the household, since there are many claims on the working man's wage-packet, especially in large towns. He has to pay fares to and from work, buy his food out, i.e. two teas and midday dinner, his working clothes and his leisure clothes, and his smokes which for him may be as necessary as food.

If he is a craftsman, he must also pay for the upkeep of his tools; if he is a trade-union member he must pay his subscription, which in some unions includes a subscription for friendly society benefits. The amusements of the family are also financed from his pocket-money. He has to save for a rainy day if he wants to assure his wife of regular housekeeping money in case of ill health or occasional unemployment. He has also to save for Christmas and the annual holiday. Finally, if he is not to be ostracized or ridiculed, he needs money to share in the recreations of his pals.

A social investigator to pass judgement on this question must know not only the distribution of the wage-packet between housekeeping and pocket-money, but also the expenses that come out of each. Once a man told me that he gave his wife £4 housekeeping money out of £4. 10*s*., but she bought him a packet of cigarettes every day and gave him 2*s*. 6*d*. a day for his food out and fares, and bought him his clothes. Usually housekeeping money is for rent, light and heat, food at home, all school meals, all clothes for the wife and the children, and her outings and the children's. Sometimes the wife saves for holidays and for rainy days. A housewife can be very hard-pressed for money even in the higher income brackets of the working class.

The distribution between housekeeping money and pocket-money follows first of all certain customs and habits. For instance Lancashire with its matriarchal institutions has different standards than the rest of the country. In Lancashire you will find a fairly high percentage of couples where the wife is the Chancellor of the Exchequer, getting the whole wage-packet of the husband.

Large cities have different standards from country places. Men in large cities keep a higher percentage of their earnings for their pocket-money, because of their higher expenses for food out and fares.

But the fact is that the distribution of the wage-packet

between the two parties cannot be tracked down to certain isolated factors, important as they may be. It is the outcome of the whole situation in which all the personal and social factors of a given family play their part. First the husband-wife and father-children relationship, then the level of wages, the size of family, the actual expenses which have to be met from the pocket-money, the number of wage-earners in the family, then the hobbies and pleasures of the father, the standard of living, the saving habits and holiday arrangements, to which both partners are accustomed – all that will be reflected in the pattern of distribution.

Men do not respond to single factors but to the whole situation, and before we know the whole situation we cannot make a guess about the pattern of distribution which we are likely to find in a family.

There is often a third part in the distribution of the wage-packet: saving, but more frequently saving is left to one or the other partner from his share.

I came across cases where the wife has also a small pocket-money allocated to her own pleasures, but that is rather exceptional.

The exact ratio in the distribution of the wage-packet practised in the working-class life is rather a matter of conjecture, because we cannot obtain sufficiently large and reliable material about such an extremely personal matter. But from what I have heard, one or two things can be noted:

Often, in spite of a rise in wages, the housekeeping money is kept on a constant level, especially if there is no pressing necessity to meet additional family expenditure.

The housekeeping money is usually related to a man's normal wages, while all extras in bonuses or overtime or occasional earnings at week-ends go for the man's pocket-money or for extras for the wife and children.

I believe I am right in saying that the higher the wage level, the smaller the percentage given to the housewife.

Of course, the wife of a more highly paid man is better off, but her husband would keep a higher percentage for his food out, his smoking, his recreations, his clothes, his cultural interests, and finally for savings and holidays. The ratio of 'Sundries' in the family expenditure, which comes mostly from the husband's pocket-money, rises with the income level. Better-paid men have more 'spending money' than their poorer pals, and the status of the worker in his social relations is first of all expressed in the amount of spending money he has.

'If you have no spending money you may as well be dead', is the common opinion of workers. Spending money means pocket-money, or free money to be spent on what a man *wants*, not on what he *needs*. 'Spending money' is the key to freedom, the freedom desired by the worker, not the freedom talked about by politicians.

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Children's contributions are another very personal and interesting subject which attracts the attention of social students. Does a worker expect some return from his children for the expenses incurred in their upbringing? I should say, on the basis of my inquiries, definitely 'yes'. It is an old tradition of working-class families to regard their grown-up children as economic assets, but with the improvement in wages and the standard of living the tradition is weakening.

I met many men whose children's contributions made them very comfortably off. The present state of full employment favours the position of a father with a number of working children, and when he has four or five working boys and girls, he can make his way very well indeed.

The children's contributions vary. The age of the boy, whether he is an apprentice or a labourer on a dead-end job, the needs of the family – these and many other personal and social factors come into it; but a few general statements may be made.

Fathers who apprentice their boys give proof that they expect very little from them. In fact fathers often have to pay the boys from their own pocket-money to keep them going, so that they do not feel ashamed when they go out with their pals who have more spending money. Otherwise the boys might refuse to go on with their apprenticeship. They would say that their pals in blind-alley jobs could afford so many things which they as apprentices could not.

The pay for his keep is at first a very high percentage of a boy's wage, but as he gets older the ratio gradually goes down. The parents are afraid that the son will leave home if he is overcharged and keep it more or less on the level of a lodger's pay. £2 a week would be more or less what an adult son in London would pay, and so would a lodger with full board.

In the case of widowed or deserted mothers the children's contributions take on a different aspect, and I have met a number of cases where mothers were kept entirely by their children.

All this proves that, even at the present day, parenthood is not such a bad investment as some people would like us to believe. The family is still an economic unit of the first order, and for the worker it has a greater functional value than for men in other classes.

6

HABITS OF MIND AND BEHAVIOUR

In the course of my inquiries I came to realize the power of habit and the extent to which our lives are governed by it. It seems to me that the formation of habits in social life should be the subject of serious research and that every branch of social science could gain substantially from the results of such research. When habits of mind and behaviour are firmly established, it is extremely difficult to dislodge them, unless a strong new habit-forming force breaks them down.

Habits of mind and behaviour are of course transferable from one person to another, from old to young, from stronger personalities to weaker ones, from people enjoying prestige to those below them, from people we love, esteem, or envy. I have seen workplaces which have established their own habits of behaviour into which newcomers fell willy-nilly. Every workplace has its own atmosphere and its own standard of behaviour established in the past and continued with slight modifications, until a strong new force comes into operation which brings about a drastic change.

Very often it is possible to change the atmosphere and standards of an establishment only by getting rid of the older men or men with a high prestige, the born leaders who are naturally followed by their mates. Many personnel managers contend that in order to change the standards you have to work on the mind of the few who are born leaders and who carry the others naturally without even knowing it.

The phrase that man is a creature of habits has nowhere a fuller meaning than in the workers' lives. One worker, who was something of a philosopher, said to me: 'Some

of my friends present a pathetic picture. They move in the same three circles, every day making the same small moves, from their homes in the slums to their workplaces, from their workplaces to the pub, and from the pub to their homes, starting next day on the same circuit, always keeping the same times, doing the same things, often saying the same things. I am no better myself. Life is repetitive, and thank God it is. It would be unbearable otherwise.'

'Once a man starts chewing tobacco in the pit,' an old miner said to me, 'he will go on doing it and won't be able to shake it off for the rest of his life.'

The force of habit is both constructive and destructive, and I have seen ample examples of both good and bad uses of this powerful process of adjustment. I met people struggling heroically to get out of a habit into which they drifted casually and playfully just for fun, people who wanted to cut down their smoking, or keep their gambling urges or their drinking habits under control. Often they succeeded for a while, but whenever they relapsed for a moment the craving increased in intensity, overran all the previous good work, and made them on balance worse off than before.

A railway porter once told me his experience in getting rid of his smoking habits which were too expensive for him: 'This is now my third year of trying. The first year I managed to stop smoking for only six weeks. The next year I managed to make it two months. This year it was three months. I do it gradually.'

People were most successful in getting rid of a bad habit when they formed a new and very attractive one, and found the two incompatible. Some bad drinkers were freed from their drinking habits by taking an interest in gambling, and some gamblers got rid of their craving for gambling by starting to drink every day.

New company is the most usual reason for changing habits, or better still new environment where a man has to re-adapt himself completely to new conditions. Sometimes

a change of working shift, let us say from day to night, does the trick in breaking a habit; for instance a regular pub-goer cannot go to a pub every night if he works at night.

'If you want to shake off your bad habits clear out altogether, leave your home and go somewhere else', a kitchen hand told me. But whenever an undesirable habit was exchanged for another, the danger was that the strength of the broken habit was transferred to the new one, because the strength of our habits is a reflexion of the whole personality.

You would imagine, as most economists and rationalists do, that everyone uses his leisure and his money under the regulating control of reason, reviewing his needs, wishes, and means, so as to get the maximum satisfaction; but this is simply not true. In fact every man has his particular bent which has been turned into a habit at a given period of his life and followed nearly blindly.

When you ask a man how often he goes to the pub, he gives you a definite answer: every day, if he is a regular, or three to four times a week if he is a semi-regular, or at week-ends if he is a week-end drinker. A man who has developed a habit of going every day to a pub will never consider going instead to a theatre, a cinema, or a dance. The idea would be alien to him and he would be puzzled by being asked to consider such a change. He would say that he did not like going anywhere else; and of course it is true, because on the dance floor or in the cinema he would be thinking about getting back to the pub with his pals. When you ask a man how many cigarettes he smokes, again in most cases he gives you a definite answer: ten or twenty or thirty a day. The variation in quantities from day to day is small, and whenever it occurs through force of circumstances he goes back to his standard. Men who smoke thirty cigarettes do not enjoy themselves more than men smoking ten; the difference is only that each of them has developed different habits.

Men who make a habit of going to dog racing become

restless when the hour strikes at which they usually go. Again certain rigid standards of attendance are developed which are kept through thick and thin.

Perhaps this is seen most clearly in the habits of the patrons of football pools. I have come across men who are extremely unlucky and have not won anything for years on the pools, and who keep filling in and sending in the coupons every week of the season. It is largely because they have done this for so many years that they cannot think of doing anything else in their spare time, and probably doing anything else would cost them more.

If you ask a miner whether he likes his job, he tells you simply: 'I am used to it', and when you ask an elderly miner why young miners often don't like their work, he says: 'They are not used to it'. The fact is that in the majority of cases even the most dissatisfying jobs become fairly acceptable through habit. This is one of the reasons why most middle-aged workmen in all industries like their jobs much more than younger men who have not adapted themselves so well to them.

The experience of supervisors is that in the majority of cases men used to certain jobs do not like changing their machines or operations, because of the additional effort needed to adapt themselves to the new ones, and also for fear that they will not be able to do as well on the new job as they did on the old. The two contradictory forces, the attraction of change and the aversion from additional effort, together with fear of the unknown, are of course operating in every individual and affecting him differently at every stage of his life. If the man feels a surplus of energy in him, accompanied by courage, he may venture to ask for a change of job, but this will always militate against the forces of habit which will need breaking down. As I have said, fear plays a great part in making a man keep to what he knows, and if he has a strong sense of inferiority, he will invariably prefer to stay put.

Habits also play an important role in keeping down the

rate of industrial progress. 'Carry on' is a slogan often heard and repeated in workplaces in regard to ways of doing things. Many observers have remarked how difficult it is to change anything in a workplace, and the more disliked the job or the factory, the more difficult it is. Often changes in operations and processes are objected to even when they bring benefit to the workers concerned. Fear and the effect of past experience play a great part here. You sometimes hear that the trade unions are responsible for that attitude, but in my opinion they do not create or foster it, they simply give it a formal expression; and of course, trade unions, strengthening the body of the workers as they do, add momentum to the industrial conservatism of the working man.

From my visits to many mines, cotton mills, iron-works, factories, and printing houses, I got the impression that industrial life is largely a struggle between progressive forces and traditional forces. There is no doubt that in regard to operations and processes the managers form what may be called the adaptive class, while the working classes present the established and traditional forces intent to keep things as they are. That is not to say that all managers are free from the drift to old routine and the customary pattern of work, but on the whole they represent the more conscious and rational elements in the industrial machine and are more eager to examine the flaws in its organization. Industry needs constant attention and adaptability to new machines, processes, materials, and tastes, and it is a function of the managers to bring the industrial machine into line with new requirements, very often contributing to the disintegration of standing social conditions, while the working classes are on their guard trying to resist these disintegrating forces. How often do we read in the reports of the trade union secretaries or shop stewards: 'That has been our custom for many years and must stay', or 'this goes against our established customs and we can't agree to it'.

Everyone is conservative in some things and an innovator in others. I would say that the working man is strongly conservative in industrial processes, in the workshop, in his union, and in his way of life, but is an innovator as regards the social framework as a whole.

There is no doubt that if the workers were not powerfully organized, the rate of industrial progress would be faster, but at the same time the degree of social disintegration would also be greater, and there would be greater social unrest. In this sense the trade unions may be regarded as the bulwark of industrial peace.

What factors make for a stronger or weaker force of habits? – Age is an important factor. For many reasons habit is less important to a young man than it is to an old one. 'You can't teach an old dog new tricks', an old miner said to me, speaking of the difficulty old men find in dealing with machines in the pits. Of course you can teach an old dog new tricks, but it takes more time and energy to do it.

Courage and hope play an important part in the forming of habits, and so does surplus energy. If a man anticipates good times ahead and is not afraid of the future, if he has the surplus energy to adapt himself, because everything new needs energy for the process of adaptation, he will crave for a change.

An under-dog with unhappy experiences behind him will stick to habits more than his more fortunate fellows, and the forming of habits has a greater functional value for him as there are often more things he dislikes in his life than there are in theirs, and he must learn to get used to them.

The dullness and narrowness, and the restrictions in the lives of the poor, tend to make them form habits. The lower the standard of living, the more repetitive the life, and to that extent the more bound it is by the rule of habit. A poor man cannot afford to change his home, his town, or his workplace. But here I have to make an important reservation. Craftsmen and clerical workers seem

to be more addicted to habits than general labourers because the former stick to their jobs, while labourers keep changing them and are often on the move.

Intelligence also plays a great part in our willingness to change habits. People with high standards of intelligence can review their habits critically and with greater understanding, and are able consciously to fight for control of their lives, which provide a greater variety of choice in the pattern of behaviour. Anyway such people try to adjust themselves and change their habits more often than the less intelligent, but whether they succeed any better is another question.

This addiction to habits often exasperates social students. Miners at many collieries before the war voted against pithead baths, although they give such obvious benefits and raise the whole standard of life in a mining village.

Many new housing estates are turned into slums in a few years because people have not changed the habits they developed in their former slum homes.

In my inquiries I have often come across marked prejudice against machines, and I must say not only on the side of workers but also from some foremen. Many men, not only in the pits but in other industries, especially in the building industry and in farming, when confronted with new machines, have such a strong bias against them that often they try to prove that they can do a better and quicker job without the machines. Many costly machines remain idle on building sites because both the men and the foremen are not anxious to make them a success. They are prejudiced against anything new.

Another example of the survival of old habits is that in the newly nationalized industries old attitudes of suspicion and apprehension still persist in spite of new conditions which make such attitudes out of date.

In the dock industry the decasualization of labour, which was a very good thing in itself, brought new institutions of labour control, which some of the dockers found it

hard to adjust themselves to and which created a certain sense of grievance.

But the strong force of habit, especially among the poor or less fortunate strata of the working classes, should not exasperate us, but, on the contrary, should give us hope and inspire us to action. It is not enough to know; to make the knowledge operative it must become a habit. Our education has become too intellectual, relying solely on ideas while disregarding the power of habit which can make for contentment and happiness. We must make use of the two processes – the forming and the destruction of habits. Contentment and happiness are largely a matter of forming good habits, and destroying habits which lead to a lack of harmony, balance, and order.

It is often objected that the forming of habits turns men into machines. This is not so. Habits drive some of our activities into the deeper levels of our consciousness and free us from thinking about them and from necessity to make decisions about them. This frees our energy for higher levels of thought and behaviour. They also help us to face the harsh necessities of life and soften in us feelings of anger, fear, and pain.

Sometimes habits give a rather unhappy proof that man can adjust himself to anything, and in this way side-track the consequences even of bitterness and evil.

7

THE PAST IN THE WORKER'S MIND

I WAS discussing this subject with a union officer in Lancashire and he told me about his own experience.

'When I was a small boy my mother got very ill one day and the doctor was sent for. And he told my father: "It's not medicine she needs but a beefsteak." There was not enough food for us all and my father didn't know that. He was a straight man and stood by his trade union principles, but this time he said to my mother: "I'll give up my principles and get more money by taking whatever comes along." But my mother had always stood by him in his fight for better conditions and this time as well she said: "Better starve than give up the fight. Your principles are my principles." I remember lying in bed and hearing them talk. I bit my fingers in despair and swore: "When I grow up I'll fight so that my children won't ever be in such an awful dilemma." And I can remember lying there in bed as vividly as if it were yesterday. We all have memories like that, memories of the injuries of the past.'

'But wouldn't it be better to forget them and start again?' I asked.

'We can't get away from them and we don't want to. We pass them on to our children so that they won't forget what we learnt.'

'But why?'

'Because a man who forgets his own story is useless to himself. Doesn't history repeat itself? Life doesn't change as much as it seems to on the face of it. Our memories are warnings to us to watch out and signposts to point out our way ahead.'

'But is it wise to attach great importance to those experiences, or to let yourself be ruled by them?'

'We try to be as practical as we can, but we have to remember that the present is only a flash compared with the past. We have to bring in our whole experience of life.'

'But that can be a great nuisance, especially where organized labour is concerned.'

'I agree. Do you know what happens when we propose some

adjustments in our union policy, saying that the employers have become co-operative and industrial relations have improved? Someone gets up and recites:

" The Devil was sick,
the Devil a monk would be;
The Devil was well,
the Devil a monk he'd be",

and the motion is lost.'

My talk with this Lancashire man shows how the past can live in the memory of the industrial worker. Of course, Lancashire is an extreme example, since it is so full of bitter memories. There, both miners and cotton workers often used to live in the same house, the husband being the pitman, while his wife and his daughters were mill girls. The pitman was often on the dole, while his wife supported him from her small earnings. But it is much the same in many other areas. 'The good old days' rarely seem good in the old men's minds.

'The funny thing is that when Britain had its large Empire and was the richest country in the world,' a trade unionist in the mining industry said to me, 'we workers were worse off than now when Britain is poor and has lost a large part of its Empire. And we hadn't much freedom either in the golden age of freedom. Can you explain that to me?'

The past does not weigh as heavily on the minds of workers in all industries, but there are some with especially bitter memories. Coal-mining is one of the worst. The poison called History perpetuates misunderstandings and suspicions which would otherwise disappear under the present new conditions. The dock industry, with its hard experience of casual labour, also has bitter memories, and so has the cotton industry, with its low wages and large core of unemployment. So it is too with the building and civil engineering industries, which employ so much casual labour.

The iron and steel industry stands out as comparatively

free from the load of bitter memories of the past. The electrical, engineering, and printing industries are also fairly though not entirely free from it. Happy industries seem to be those with no history just as happy nations are.

On the whole, the marked differences between the industrial relations of the modern industries and those of the older industries arise largely on account of this fact. The older industries, with their long tradition of suspicion and fear, are more liable to harbour grievances, and often suffer on account of the past in recruiting their labour among young people.

In my inquiries I came to realize that the past is something still alive and potent, carried on into the present by the habits and customs it engendered. It is handed down from one generation to the next just as myths and folklore are handed down, and sometimes the form it takes is purely mythological. And even more powerfully it lingers on in our subconscious mind, its images vague and, though emotional more than rational, strengthened by their very vagueness. These images deriving from collective experience form a strong though invisible bond between men.

Sometimes the managers would like to start afresh and establish friendly relations between themselves and the workers, but they often find that the atmosphere of the place is stronger than their goodwill, and that the past is too deeply ingrained to be easily removed. Good intentions are not enough; they must be kept up long enough to let them take root, and grow strong. Time cannot be hurried nor can the past be ignored.

'During the war my firm wanted to pay up to three days sick leave,' I was told by the manager of a large engineering firm, 'but the offer was opposed by the shop stewards, who contended that "there must be a catch in it somewhere; the boss wouldn't give something for nothing". Fear and suspicion have to be removed before anything can be done.'

Industrial relations do not depend entirely on the present management of a firm, but are partly the result of the past; many firms have a record of failure and disappointment in their relations with the men simply because of this. Memories are never entirely rational and cannot be removed by intellectual argument. They lie below consciousness and often work in contradiction to the facts of the present.

I remember talking to an old taxi-driver who took me to a firm in the Midlands. He warned me: 'It's a bad place, you know.' 'Why?' I asked. 'Is it the management or the conditions?' 'It has always been bad,' he said; 'it has a bad reputation.' When I got there and heard the manager complaining about lack of interest and negligence of the workers, I understood what the taxi-driver had meant. But there was nò single cause responsible for the unsatisfactory conditions, nor did the chief causes lie entirely in the present.

I often found in the attitudes and behaviour of the workers in two similar firms in the same district differences so marked that it was absolutely impossible to explain them except by the past. Every firm has its own history, and is conditioned by this history.

It is always grievances which remain longest in the memories of men. When I talked to Irishmen, I have found them the most historically minded of all workmen, and they usually started with Queen Elizabeth's time. When I talked to coal-miners, they usually started with the General Strike of 1926. The cotton workers referred to their strikes in the nineties. Some pictures are especially vivid. The miners remember picking up coal from the slag-heap when they had no coal at home; or waiting every day in the pit for a wink from the deputy that would give them a shift's work. The dockers remember waiting at their stands with other casuals for a day's work. The cotton workers remember calling at the mill gates for work. Others recall being evicted from their houses or having to leave home and look for work at a distance. It

is the memory of having to leave home that gives South Wales its present bitterness.

There is no doubt that British workers have long memories, and often there is good reason for their having them. The historian may object that, in W. E. H. Lecky's phrase, a total and very common error is committed when actions of the past are judged by current moral standards, and when the facts are interpreted and judged as if they were happening to-day. But the worker may so interpret and judge them.

In his personal relations and especially where his mates are concerned, the British worker is willing to forgive and forget, but as part of a group he behaves very differently. Whenever he has to act collectively, especially if the relationship to his employer is involved, his memory is long.

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History is also responsible for the marked and often amazing differences between one industry and another, and often between one locality and another in such basic institutions as apprenticeship and entry into the industry, the wage system, manning of the machines, demarcation between crafts, and utilization of labour.

In one industry piece-rate working is an established system, accepted and encouraged by the union, and in another industry it is strongly deprecated and discouraged. And if you ask why, the only answer you get is: 'It has always been so, ours has been always a piece-working industry.' Sometimes you come across a firm which is allowed to work piecework while in all the others piecework is strongly prohibited and the only explanation you can get is: 'We have been working piecework for the last fifty years.'

In the printing industry the entry is strictly controlled by the unions, and apprenticeship is regulated by collective agreements which state the exact number of apprentices per journeyman, while in the engineering industry

there is no such ratio fixed, and the only explanation you get for this is that it has always been so.

Rational arguments play a much smaller part in collective agreements than a simple reference to the past does. You can see from all this that the best argument for doing a certain thing is that it has been done so in the past. The fact that something already exists is a prima facie case for its continuation, unless a strong force comes along to dislodge it.

Long memories and old habits are partly responsible for the considerable time-lag often observed between changes in conditions and the expected response to them. The National Coal Board, for instance, took over not only the assets of the private industry but also its former bad industrial relations, and the legacy of the past stands between them and the miners as something real and still alive, because it is deeply engraved in the miners' memories.

8

THE TRADITIONAL STANDARD OF LIVING

EVERY man would naturally say that he wanted to improve his position if he could; but not every man would mean it. I believe the great majority of men are content to stay put, and do not do anything to climb higher. Some would even still say that 'a man has no business to get beyond his station'.

Only a very small percentage of young men attend technical courses after they have finished their apprenticeship, and not all boys are apprenticed, the majority going into labouring and other unskilled or semi-skilled jobs. The resolve to get on and to rise in the social scale depends on the combination of brains, willpower, energy, family relations, company, and means. If his ability is limited or his will weak the lad will have little inclination to study in the evening; he will prefer the pub or cinema. If he has no surplus energy, he will be too tired to concentrate on anything after a day's work; if his parents are not interested in his achievements, he will get no encouragement; if his friends are of a poor type, they will influence him by their example. If he has no room to study, or if his parents have put him into a blind-alley job, he will stay where he started. Young men in their early twenties are apt to think themselves too old for any kind of further schooling, and profess to be too tired to take up extra study in the evening. They prefer relaxation to additional strain.

Another way of climbing the social ladder is by excelling in the workshop, by extra work and diligence, and by showing initiative, versatility, and foresight. But competition is not encouraged by the group. It is rather an offence against the code of accepted group morality to do

anything to show up the weaker or less efficient or less able mate, just as it is at school. 'To spoil the job' is one of the gravest offences any man can commit in the workshop.

'This man is willing to do another piece of work when he has finished his own, and that is against our principle: "one man one job",' a stereotyper in a printing house told me. 'And to think that he's always using high-flown language about working men's solidarity. Probably he talks about unity such a lot because he knows he's spoiling the job himself.'

To do anything extra and work harder than others are willing to do is regarded by most workmen as a way of undercutting, spoiling the conditions, and depriving others of their rightful share of employment.

Of course the more resourceful workmen time and again throw others in the shade, but it is not approved of in the shop or by the trade unions. A man's work should be as near the average as possible.

A third way of climbing the social ladder is by a considerable effort to save money. This means an effort of will and perseverance to keep away from pubs, sports, races, and other recreations, and to lead an austere life. Enterprising and energetic young men may say to themselves: 'I am not going to slave for a fiver all my life; I am going to set up a shop, or a bakery, or a small garage, or drive my own taxi.' But this sort of ambition is rare among young workmen, and in recent years has chiefly been seen among ex-Service men with gratuities after demobilization. Even among these it is rarely kept up for long. The attitude is definitely discouraged by the others in the group whose collective experience leads them to believe that such ambition 'leads nowhere'.

'If you are meant to be poor you will stay poor all your life,' a handyman in the building trade said to me. 'What do you mean by "if you are meant to be poor"?' I asked. – 'If you are born of poor parents and have an

average brain. You will be beaten all the time however hard you try. You can't beat the hand of destiny, I say.'

And an old taxi-driver put his views on this in the following way: 'You can't save anything worth while, during your working life, unless you give up decent living. You have to be very mean to save enough to be of real help. Then, even if you achieve your aim, what good does it do you? You break away from your class and don't earn much more. And you must have training and lots of brains to do well, which most people haven't got. I have seen taxi-owners who hardly earned more than drivers employed by a garage, and often shopkeepers don't earn more than employees. They have headaches with Inspectors of Taxes and creditors and customers. They break away from their friends and what do they gain by it? Nothing. It's all vanity and pride which starts them on the road of ambition. Better keep to your station and stay where you belong.' A decorator in the building industry, a worthy principal himself, said much the same.

This is the common attitude of the group. To climb is to break away from the group, to look down on it, and to reject its values and standards; so the group discourages social climbers. Ambition destroys the solidarity of the group and leads in the end to the dissolution and disruption of the group.

Suppose a man does cut down his drinking or gambling or smoking, and with what he saves moves into a better-class house or flat, or buys better furniture, or musical instruments, or books, or a car, or goes to concerts and theatres, or travels, or invests in the education of his children. This change in his pattern of spending changes his social status. His neighbours see that he is better dressed and behaves differently, that he lives in a better or a cleaner house. The consequence is that he is likely to lose his old friends without acquiring new ones.

To start on this road of social betterment needs a very

strong stimulus, either from outside (friends or a sweetheart) or from within the man himself. Such a stimulus is rarely provided, especially in strongly-knit communities like the mining villages or the cotton towns. The desire to conform to common habits and customs is here extremely strong, and a great pressure is exerted on people to do what is expected of them.

The increase of wages in time raises the life of whole communities, but as far as I can see these changes are very slow, and there is a considerable time-lag between the increase and the change. When a man earns more he rarely uses the surplus to change over to a different pattern of expenditure, but spends more in accordance with the same pattern.

When I stayed in mining villages I often wondered whether we did not exaggerate the impact of modern changes on our life. True, some modern inventions have entered the life of the miners, mostly cinemas and buses and, to a smaller extent, wireless. Cinemas and buses are the two most powerful factors of change in the mining villages. But even when due allowance is made for these factors, the atmosphere, the style and pattern of life in most mining villages has not changed basically for fifty or sixty years. The slummy houses are responsible for this more than anything else, because in them people live as they used to live fifty years ago. In these villages one can see how difficult it is to lift up a whole community even very slightly in one generation, how great is the weight of the past, and what large areas of the community are by-passed by modern currents of thought and conduct or by modern institutions. A collier told me: 'It took two or three hundred years to make a miner what he is; you can't expect to undo the work of centuries in a few years.'

The standard of life is also traditional in the sense that some men are not only unwilling to acquire new needs and wants, but are also opposed to any effort to earn more. Many managers report that there is a certain class of

workers who ration their performance even when on piecework, and who in consequence do not respond to positive incentives. In time of full employment, when negative incentives have largely disappeared, this presents a serious problem.

I remember an interesting and revealing talk which I once had with a woman personnel officer in an engineering factory, an intelligent and cultured person: 'Why should they hurry in their work?' she said. 'Why should a man wear himself out in work for a new tie, or a woman for a pair of nylons? What is the point of elbowing or pushing for a new car? To tread on each other's heels simply to have something new to play with – that doesn't make sense to me. I much prefer the traditional quiet ways of the British workers to rush and drive, which I don't think leads to any higher way of life or to the development of personality.'

9

THE ATTITUDE TO WORK

The attitude to work is a reflexion of the man's whole personality as much as of all the social forces operating in a community. It is both an individual and a social affair.

Every stress and strain in a worker's life is at once reflected in his work. If he is tired and depressed, he does not like his job, even if he is fond of his work at other times. 'At times you are fed up with your work' is the remark you often hear, even from those who are otherwise contented with their jobs. If a man falls out with his wife or his girl and is unhappy in himself, he develops an 'I couldn't care less' spirit in his work. 'If you are not in harmony with yourself, you cannot enjoy anything', he says.

But often men whose family and personal life is as hopeless as it can be cling desperately to their work as the last refuge. They feel better during the week than at the week-ends in which they find no satisfying life. 'I feel all right during the week, but the long empty week-ends drag', I heard from a man who wanted to escape from the anguish in his heart, an anguish arising from his personal life.

A man is not one person at home and a different person at his work, he is one and the same man. He projects his personal worries, frustrations, and fears on to his workplace, and vice versa from workplace to home. A man disgruntled in his work is of little use at home, while a man satisfied with his work is likely to have more satisfying recreations.

Which is the more important, his home life or his work, depends on the make-up of an individual, on his ambitions, his experiences in the past, his habits, and his present personal relations. The two are equally important. A man

wants to be happy in his work and in his personal relations, at home and in his recreations.

Here is a story of a skilled engineer who during the war fell in love with an A.T.S. girl and wanted to marry her. She had a small flat in her district, but there was no engineering shop there. Where he lived he had a job in his own line but there was no accommodation for them. She found a job for him in a food factory, on a machine as a semi-skilled man, and he accepted it in order to get married, hoping that in time he might move on to a skilled job. 'Do you like your present job?' I asked him. 'Yes, because it enables me to get what I want most', he said. He does his repetitive job on the machine feeling that he is doing something for his wife, and this brings him closer to her. The danger is that this feeling may in time wear out and that he may be left stranded with a dissatisfying job. This in turn may spoil his married life.

A man who is infatuated with his hobby does not mind what job he has so long as it affords him means and leisure for his recreation. To the man who takes a passionate interest in dog-racing or football or making models, the job becomes of secondary interest. Sometimes the hobby can be so absorbing that it takes his mind off his work and lowers his efficiency. This is especially the case in the dissatisfying industries. Perhaps most men believe that the function of a job, even an interesting job, is primarily to provide money for the comforts, amenities, and pleasures of life.

My worker friends often discussed with me whether a man works because he is compelled to by the necessity to make a living, or whether he works because work itself fulfils a deep urge in him, satisfies his desire for self-expression and self-assertion, and gives him a sense of dignity and self-esteem, as having a share in the community life. These discussions never had an entirely conclusive outcome. Most were inclined to think that the first proposition was truer to life, or that it was true of

themselves; but they did not deny that the second would be true if they had to choose between work and total idleness. Only men with absorbing hobbies had no doubt at all. A cheerful man with much common sense, who heard the discussion, once butted in: 'Thank God, we'll never know, because we have to work for a living anyhow, so the whole question is pointless.'

Personal experience in the past also plays a great part in the attitude to work. A man who has come down in the social scale is usually disgruntled. I met a former war-time major working as a bus conductor, and wondered whether he could be very satisfied with his job although he carried it on with dignity and courage. He had risen above the crowd, but he had had to return to it and drop one by one his newly-acquired manners and ways of life since they were useless in the environment in which he now lived.

Another man who had been an accountant in a very good position, earning a very good income, had, through an addiction to drink which he could not overcome, ended up as a kitchen porter, and he told me the whole story of sliding down in the social scale and commented on the differences between the class consciousness of the middle and the working classes. 'The basic difference between the two classes,' he said, 'in my experience anyhow, is that the middle class doesn't know what suffering is, and this accounts for its snobbishness and pride.'

It is a common experience of many labour and personnel managers that it is bad to offer small jobs to those who are used to big jobs, or unskilled jobs to those who are used to skilled jobs, or repetitive jobs to those who are very intelligent, or manual jobs to those who are used to clerical jobs. There are firms in which passing of an intelligence test at a higher level excludes a prospective employee from getting a job of a repetitive kind. A man with education and intelligence is not expected to like a repetitive job, and if he has to accept it, he is likely not only to be unsettled himself but also to unsettle others.

This is the problem in purely personal terms; now let us examine its social aspect.

In general, the attitude to work varies between grades, industries, regions, age-groups, working conditions, and pay-packets, as well as on account of industrial relations. Thus any random sample of answers to the question 'Do you like your job?' will reflect the influence of these basic factors. Certain tendencies can be noted:

1. A foreman will take a greater interest in his job and will like it more than a craftsman, and a craftsman more than a labourer.

2. A craftsman will take a greater interest in his job and often feel a pride in it, if it is not repetitive. It is often observed that a building craftsman works better on interesting new buildings, like churches, schools, and town halls, than he does on standard houses, and he also works better on new houses than he does on repair work. A man likes to use his own tools skilfully and to see the result of his own labour. Many labourers complained to me that they did not see the fruit of their labour, and that this took away the interest of their jobs. 'To play one's cards well', to use the expression of a craftsman, is a sort of self-assertion; and you can sometimes see a young craftsman carrying his tools with a slight swagger.

3. Some industries are certainly more attractive and satisfying than others. Representative samples of answers to the question 'Do you like your job?' would be very different in the engineering industry, the building industry, the cotton industry, and in mining. Engineering, generally speaking, is more attractive than building, building than the cotton industry, and the cotton industry than mining. If the industry is heavy, dirty, nerve-racking, or unhealthy, it will contain many discontented workers. What is called the 'dignity of the work' plays a great part in the men's attitude. The worker, like everyone else, must have self-esteem; if he loses that, he might as well lose his soul. Many facemen told me how the fact that they

were stripped naked at the coal-faces in deep hot mines impaired their self-esteem. If a miner is called 'just a pit-man' or 'a dough-boy', that of course does not help him to like his work. If a girl working in a mill is called just a 'mill girl', that does not help the recruitment of girls to the mill.

Manual work still suffers from its low rating in the social scale. Many men when they told me they were manual workers added with regret and inadequacy that they 'were not clever enough to make a living with their brains instead of with their hands'.

In each region the attitude towards work is affected by the wider or narrower range of choice of jobs it offers. Men who have no choice between industries, firms, and occupations and have to accept the jobs available in a particular place, are less satisfied with their work from the start than those who have had a choice. I often talked to men waiting at Labour Exchanges and I heard such complaints as: 'There is nothing here but the pits', or 'Nothing but cotton mills', or 'Nothing but building or farming'. Men who have waited long at the Labour Exchange accept the job offered them, because otherwise they would be deprived of their benefits; but in accepting it they make up their minds to quit it as soon as possible. The turnover of labour among men sent by the Labour Exchange to distant places is very great.

Others besides Bevin Boys have been compulsorily recruited to the pits, and others besides those directed there have been forced into undermanned industries – men who had no chances of anything else, and were afraid to move, or who for a hundred and one reasons had no choice but to accept what was offered.

Every improvement in methods of selection and every means that increases the range of choice will help to change a negative into a positive attitude to work.

The attitude to work is affected by age. A middle-aged craftsman will say sometimes: 'My work is my hobby', but

a young man will very rarely say this. He finds his hobbies somewhere else, and lacks the same firmly-established working habits. An ex-Service man will often feel dissatisfied in a factory, especially in the first months after demobilization.

The attitude to work in the same grade, industry, region, or age-group differs in different places on account of different working conditions and industrial relations. Cleanliness, the right temperature, good air, light, private lockers, good washing facilities, good canteens, the good repute of a firm, a genial atmosphere, friendly relations on the floor, fairness in dealing with the worker, a good foreman, and a good boss, may turn even a distasteful job into an attractive one. No one of these factors can be singled out as more important than the others. Men react to the general conditions of the work, not to any individual factor in it. Besides, good conditions and good relations go together and it is likely that in a modern up-to-date factory with good conditions, good relations will prevail, while a good management will try as far as possible to introduce good working conditions and amenities. If the worker sees that a place is run for the benefit of the employees as well as for profit, and that the management tries its best to put men at their ease and to satisfy their legitimate needs, the response will be felt immediately.

The boss can be a small tyrant who makes a place hell, or he can be a friend for whom it is a pleasure to work. But his character is of more importance in small firms than it is in large-scale works. In a large firm there are so many grades and departments of the management that a certain impersonality is almost inevitable, but even there the man with a strong personality exercises a persuasive influence. In a small establishment the owner is known to everyone and everyone working is in direct personal contact with him. A small employer with a handful of women workers once told me that he could not get the output he wanted from them in spite of the promise of a bonus; but when he

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promised to treat them in the pub after work, if the work were done properly, the response was overwhelming.

From men working in small firms I often heard phrases like: 'Our boss is a good chap, he gives a good feeling to the place', or 'Our boss is an awful man, he spreads a bad atmosphere', but I never heard this kind of remark from men in a large works.

The wage-packet is not the least important factor in the attitude to work. From what the workers say themselves it might well seem that the wage-packet is the most important factor in liking or disliking a job. When you ask a man satisfied with his job whether he likes it, you are likely to get one or both of two answers: 'I am used to it' and 'There is good money in it'. A man not satisfied with his job will tell you first of all: 'There is no money in the job'.

A man who thinks he is underpaid is disgruntled with his job. If he cannot satisfy what he regards as the legitimate needs determined by his standard of living, he will end by hating his job. 'When I go past a cinema and I can't go in, or when I pass the pub and have to keep out of it, or when I can't afford the cigarettes I've been used to, I curse my job for not being good enough to keep me, and even while I work my mind wanders,' he says. 'They expect me to work for such a little wage, I feel like a slave.'

The wage-packet also gives social significance to his job. It determines his place on the social ladder. A man does not have to be a climber not to like the idea of being at the bottom of the ladder, because that means he feels like a nonentity. And when a man has reached a certain rung in the ladder he likes to keep to it; he may not be interested in climbing farther but he is strongly averse to going down. For this reason workers feel disgruntled if the grades below them get an advance which they failed to obtain. The workers never compare themselves with those far above them, but they watch closely those who are treading on their heels or are higher up but not far from their own position.

The attitude to work is coloured by the security of the job, but not to the same extent as it is by the wage-packet. A married man with responsibility and a single man without it will respond differently. So will an elderly man and a young man, or the less and the more efficient man, a man with an inferiority complex and a man confident of his value. The response will be different in a state of full employment, and during a slump. If a man knows that he has little chance of getting a better job, then the regard for security affects his attitude; otherwise it does not mean much. A young energetic man in the building industry told me: 'I don't care a ha'penny for security, because I have found out that the most secure jobs are those which are underpaid. For a £4. 10*s*. job you can have security but a £7 to £8 job is basically insecure. Security is nearly always linked with poor pay and bad working conditions, like night shifts and long hours. The worker wants security in full employment, welfare, and the chance to choose the job he wants.'

Security was stressed as a reason for liking a job more often by men with a sense of inferiority than by men who had a sense of their value. I remember meeting an elderly man who was down and out earning only £3. 10*s*. in a gardening job. When I asked him whether he liked his job, he said at once: 'Yes, because it is secure. I don't have to worry about looking for a job.'

Security plays an important part if the job gives some special advantages unlikely to be offered anywhere else. Large firms use this factor deliberately to retain good men and to reduce the turnover of labour. They offer good conditions and a certain security subject to good workmanship and normal conditions of trade. The worker then becomes emotionally dependent on work in one and the same firm. Even conditions of full employment do not diminish his concern about keeping his job and maintaining his productivity.

The chance of promotion affects the attitude of a small

but important minority of workers. This chance of promotion attracts the best boys and colours their attitude to work, but it has little effect on the adult population. In most industries it is widely believed by the workers that 'what you are at the age of twenty-one or so you stay all through life'. Both upward and downward movements are small in amount and affect small numbers of workers.

Promotion, to have a positive effect on the attitude to work, must be absolutely fair and impartial, but in my talks with workers I often heard the remark: 'Promotion all depends on your relations, whether your family can pull strings or not. If no one backs you up, it's no use. You must be a relation of a general foreman or a junior executive to be considered.' Perhaps this view is often put forward by those who have been excluded or passed over by chances of promotion, but many observers report a tendency to favouritism in some industries. This is not true, of course, where there are seniority rules, or in places where there is a promotion scheme on a strict point system.

There is an element of hate in the most valued jobs, and an element of love in the most hated. The miners, who often hate their jobs, have at the same time a deeply-felt affection for them which is often expressed in the incessant talk about the pit. Younger men often interrupt this talk with 'Pit, pit, and pit again'.

The factor of habit clearly comes into men's feelings towards a job, and makes them like even a job they originally disliked. But the hateful thought that they are bound to a job for life is an unpleasant feature of even the most interesting job. The idea that they are doing something useful to the community, even if they do not like the job itself, may be a consolation. So, too, is the thought that even this job is better than having none at all.

The vast majority of men if asked whether they like their job will answer thoughtfully 'I suppose I do'; but their further comments are often revealing.

Some men will tell you: 'I should think so. Think about the people who have no job at all', or 'It gives me my bread and butter', or 'I am used to it now', or 'I mustn't grumble'.

Strong feelings for or against the job are less common than the combination of liking and disliking at the same time.

'I like the job but you get fed up with it at times.'

The ambivalence of love and hate is nowhere more strongly expressed than it is in the attitude to work.

10

MONOTONY IN INDUSTRY

Is Industrial Work Soul-destroying?

People who complain about monotony in industry are on the whole the same people who complain about monotony in life. I believe that complaints about monotony are more a reflexion on the worker than on his environment, and that they reflect his state of mind more than his conditions of work.

You often get a contented smile from a man doing obviously repetitive mechanical work, and sometimes a sour and disgruntled look from a man whose job provides great variety.

A man is a whole and his personality will express itself in a similar way in everything he does. A man is either bored stiff with his life as a whole or is an interesting and interested man all round. 'The most repetitive and mechanical work gives you food for thought,' said a semi-skilled man on a machine in an engineering factory, 'and you can learn a lot by applying your brains to it. If you concentrate on one small point, in time you see more and more and your powers of observation are so sharpened that you see everything more clearly and you notice more and more things which you never saw before. Soon everything becomes of interest to you.'

A man bored stiff with his life at home will suffer more from monotony in industry than a man who is happy at home or in love. The happy man will think of his wife or his girl; his heart will be warm and his mind filled with pictures of the past or of his own imagination, his thoughts while he works will be like an absorbing silent film passing through his mind. The work will be over in no time and when he leaves he will feel as fresh as he was when he came

in. But a man whose home life is dull and empty will complain bitterly about the monotony of his job, his work will seem to drag at a snail's pace, and when he leaves his workplace he will be tired out. The happy man naturally takes an interest in both his home life and his work, but if a man is happy at home it helps him a lot to get over an uninteresting job.

'The trouble is,' a supervisor in a building firm told me, 'that the war brought such an upheaval into family life and that so many men nowadays are unhappy in their home life; and that affects industrial relations.'

There is no doubt that monotony is tiring, and a man who dislikes a repetitive job will by the end of his work day be more tired than a man who does not. Repetitive work, disliked on that count, becomes more fatiguing. On the other hand, a man already worn out will suffer more from monotony than a sound and vigorous man; and a restless man than one who is steady and properly balanced. Ex-Service men who at first feel restless after leaving the Armed Forces complain about monotony more often than those who have been out of the Forces for a longer time.

'The more a man has in him, the less he will complain about monotony, while a man who plays the fool is always a grumbler,' a supervisor in a steel-works said to me.

The problem of monotony in industry has a social as well as a personal aspect.

There are two kinds of monotony in industry. One is the monotony of doing repetitive work, the other is the monotony of always working in the same surroundings. The second often occurs independently of the first; they usually exist side by side. A very wise labour manager in a light engineering factory commented on this distinction.

'I have a very interesting job indeed because I deal with human beings all the time, but all the same I suffer from monotony. Of course it's not the monotony of the work which affects me, but the monotony of coming into the same room, sitting at the same desk, and looking at the same wall. I change my room

round from time to time, but if I can't change my room, I put my desk first on the right and then on the left, and that helps me. The atmosphere of the whole factory can be terribly monotonous; it can eat into you and spoil your whole work. Look out for that, because if it really sets in people seem to get numb.

'Anyway, I have come to the conclusion that anything that helps to break this atmosphere of apathy and dullness in the factory, even heated arguments, is all to the good. I arrange for interesting people to come and talk or sing or play to the men at lunch-time, so as to give them something to think about.'

A dull atmosphere in a place of work creates a much greater problem than monotony in the work itself, although both are often combined. Not only must the job itself be interesting, but the place must be too; there must be 'life' in it, as the men would say.

There are, however, many factors which lessen the feeling of monotony.

If a job is dangerous there is no complaint of monotony. A faceman in the pit or a steeplejack or a man on demolition work does not complain about the monotony of his job. 'It's far too dangerous to be monotonous', a coalminer says.

If high speed is involved, either in the machines or in the men, men become interested in keeping up the speed. 'We have no time to be bored' men say when they work at a very high speed. Whenever there is a definite production target which is not very easily achieved, interest in the work flares up. In a car factory men on the assembly line, asked whether their jobs were not too monotonous, answered me that the job became monotonous only when the assembly line slowed up, when there were not enough orders to keep it at full speed.

Whenever the work becomes more difficult and its performance requires more thought and care, it becomes less monotonous. An understanding of the relationship of a piece of work to the production of the whole firm also helps to keep down monotony. Many employers take

pains to explain to the worker how his job fits into the whole, and how his part in it affects the whole output.

The change-over from time work to piecework lessens the monotony of work because men become more interested in their performance and eager to know how much they will be able to make. Most people on piecework whom I asked about this did not complain about monotony, and when I asked what made their work so interesting, their usual answer was: 'Making the money'. If a man sees that his boss or his foreman or any other person of repute takes a personal interest in the work he is doing, and inquires about it and from time to time gives him a word of recognition, his own interest in the work will increase. Other people's interest enhances our own interest. 'If no one seems to be interested in my job, that damps my own interest', a man says.

Jobs which entail travelling or bring men into contact with other people are rarely regarded as boring. 'I am in touch with people and that is always interesting', a bus conductor, or a roundsman, or a lorry driver would say.

Outdoor jobs are rarely regarded as monotonous by the workers, because there is something going on in front of them, there is scenery to watch or movement on the road. Builders often complain about bad weather but rarely about monotony.

Still more interesting are jobs which are partly outdoor and partly indoor. 'There is nothing better than a contrast. A job which provides a contrast can't be monotonous', a painter said to me. Teamwork jobs are hardly ever complained of as monotonous. Men on teamwork, as they are in a rolling-mill or a steel furnace, must be careful to fit in with the rhythm of the work; they are in constant touch with one another and their work is often interrupted with a joke. Human relationships give warmth and colour to their jobs. Even on machines which completely govern the speed of their movements, those jobs never become

mechanical to them, because they are humanized by their close relationship with others.

I would also add that very well-paid jobs, even if they are repetitive in themselves, lose the sting of monotony by the good money they bring in. 'If a man is satisfied with the money the job gives him, he won't complain about monotony,' was the remark of a foreman in a steel-works.

Great uniformity in the selection of men creates a certain uniformity of labour, but where the working population in a factory is mixed in regard to sex, age, place of origin, or nationality, the atmosphere is less monotonous. Departments where men work beside girls, or old men work with young men or adolescents, or locals with people from other localities or foreigners, or with one or two specially interesting men with unusual experiences of life, may have a certain tension in them, but lose the dullness of atmosphere which is often an object of complaint on both sides, on the side of labour and management.

There is no doubt that some workers on specialized repetitive jobs could teach mankind a lesson of patience, but the idea that industrial work must by its very nature suffer from monotony is far from true.

Many writers put down the feeling of restlessness and *malaise* in the working-class population to the increasing monotony of industry. The process of mechanization, specialization, and mass production makes work uninteresting and deprives us of the joy of work, displacing craftsmanship and personal accomplishment. In a mechanical age man himself becomes a soulless mechanism. Industrial work is soul-destroying, it is said.

How far does this picture hold good? I often discussed the problem with the most intelligent men among the personnel and labour officers in many industries, and the majority of them contested the validity of the picture – at least in their own industry, saying that it might apply to other industries but not to their own.

'Most people we are in touch with,' they would say,

'don't complain about the monotony of their jobs. Less than 10 per cent of the men complain about monotony. Students of sociology often make the mistake of projecting their own minds into others. They think that such-and-such a job must be deadly and soul-destroying, but that only means that they would think so if they had to do it.'

Mechanization does not necessarily mean that a job becomes less interesting. Machines are often very interesting and many people like handling them. Handling the engine of a car or an aeroplane or tinkering with a wireless set is fun, and many people prefer using a typewriter to writing by hand. Most young men prefer working on a machine to working with their hands. It can be accepted as a definite rule that factory jobs which are mostly machine jobs are definitely more popular than hand jobs like farming or building. Mechanization often develops new skills which are different from the old ones, but not necessarily less interesting. Besides, we must realize that the process of mechanization in this country has been slow for the last fifty years, and that very few basic mechanical inventions which would have displaced skill and degraded the workpeople have been introduced into industry. Mass production applies only to a few specialized industries and is still in its first stages.

Most managers believe that the weight of monotony in industry has been lessened in the last twenty or thirty years, and that there is no question of its increase. The most cogent reason they put forward is the shortening of the standard working week. Then come the tea-breaks, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon; and most industries have now two, if not official at least unofficial, tea-breaks of ten minutes each. The discipline of work and supervision have also eased up a little. Most factories in which there is no special danger of fire allow their men to smoke, and this is a very important factor in combating monotony. Factories which do not allow smoking complain about too much time wasted in lavatories.

Most industries also have entertainment and recreation clubs which arrange for the amusement of the workers even during lunch. Some factories switch on the radio programme 'Music While You Work', often with good results. The careful selection of workers for different tasks according to their psychological and physical characteristics is of course also an obvious remedy. It can be found by different tests how a man reacts to repetitional operations. Whenever you ask workmen what is the most important fact in breaking monotony they will answer, first of all shortening the hours of work, then tea-breaks which also shorten the hours, and smoking.

Some men whom I asked what the best way of combating monotony was, told me about their own personal experience: 'You have to carry on without paying attention to it and in time you will forget all about it. The more you think about getting away from it, the more you are in it.'

A review of the industries of the country does not suggest that in the majority work is dull and repetitive.

Steel. There is no mass production and few jobs which could be described as monotonous.

Building. There is little monotony on account of the outdoor work and the constant move from site to site.

Shipbuilding is very much like building, demanding a great variety of builders' and engineers' skill. Only a few jobs are really monotonous.

Coal-mining. There is little monotony there, because of the strangeness, fascination, and danger involved in the work. Only men working on the surface and some men on the roads complain about monotony.

Agriculture. Definitely not monotonous because it deals with living things and the work is out of doors.

Transport and communication. Not monotonous because there is constant movement and great variety. Only loading may be rather monotonous, but the semi-outdoor conditions relieve even that.

Distributive trades and services provide great variety and constant touch with people and cannot be described on the whole as monotonous. Of course some jobs in them, like packing, stamping, or cleaning, or work in the kitchen, are monotonous.

Printing is definitely not monotonous, and there has been little progress in mechanization in the last fifty years.

Cotton. Many jobs in this industry might be described as monotonous, but they are done mostly by women who do not mind doing repetitive work. Again, there has been little progress in its mechanization during the last fifty years.

Only factory work, which gives employment to little less than a third of the industrial population, is more or less affected by monotony on account of the repetitive and mechanical performances in it, but even there we can exclude large parts of it.

In the engineering industry, which employs more than half of all the factory workers, about half are craftsmen on skilled jobs. And there are some sections of the industry, such as the aircraft industry or constructional engineering, the machine-tool industry, the making of locomotives, scales, lifts, gas meters, telephones, and marine engineering, which do not lend themselves to mass production.

All in all, counting the repetitive and highly mechanical and uninteresting jobs in all industries, it would be a fair guess to say that at the most about a third of the working-class population in the country, as far as we can make out objectively, is affected by dull, repetitive, and uninteresting jobs. But this does not mean that about a third of the working population actually suffers from monotony of work by being bored stiff with the jobs.

Once I got a very sharp and amusing answer when I asked a man whether he believed that men were bored: 'An Englishman does not know when he is bored,' he said, 'and that is his great virtue.'

A great many writers believe that our civilization is sick, and relate this sickness to the monotony of industrial work and the increase of mechanization. But if this sickness exists it has more to do with the mechanical pastimes of men and their passive attitude to their leisure occupation than with mechanical jobs, and it has more to do with the changing pattern of beliefs and ideas than it has with changed conditions.

I do not wish to commit myself on this very vexed and complex problem, which needs a deeper study than mine, but it seems to me that the modern man has little space in which to express his personality. It is a paradox that while economic and social conditions have improved enormously during the last generation, dissatisfaction and frustration have increased as well. Is it because the demand for improvements has outstripped the speed of the actual changes or because the changes are of a psychologically dissatisfying nature, weakening personal relationships? I would not venture to decide without going deeper into the root causes of dissatisfaction. But it seems to me probable that Western civilization seems to attach an exaggerated importance to the delights of freedom, while paying too little attention to the delights of co-operation, and friendship, and partnership in something useful. People simply drift through life with no special purpose before them, while the social framework which supported them before has slackened. There is less integration of their personality in themselves and less integration in the social life in which they move. And the depersonalization of industry, which will be the subject of the next chapter, also plays a big part in the restlessness of our age, more so than monotony of work.

II

THE NEGLECTED HUMAN SIDE IN INDUSTRY

THE neglect of the human side in industry was a frequent theme of my conversations with workers of all grades. I believe I am right in saying that what is called 'Socialism' among the workers grew as a protest not only against injustice, unemployment, and the misery of *laissez-faire* industrialism, but also against the degradations of men to the position of mere instruments. The workman's sense of his complete dependence on the will of his employer, of the arbitrary treatment of his labour, and of his subjection to the dictates of profit, was felt to be more humiliating than his handicaps and adversities.

'My employer never looks at me,' a cotton spinner said to me, 'he just sees the £ s. d. I represent. For him I am manpower, not a man.'

'Men are treated here as part of the machinery and everybody knows that they are valuable pieces of machinery,' a factory engineer told me, 'but the funny part of it is that they are not studied as the machines are, and kept in good running order. No one is interested in finding out the needs and requirements of men. They are simply taken for granted.'

'There is something in factory work which is soul-destroying. You don't feel like a man, but just a number shifted here and there as the laws of profit dictate,' another factory man told me.

Capitalism and commercialism mean the same for most workers. They mean the subjection of men to the laws o profit. 'The capitalists say to the worker: "I am going to use you to get rich."' That is the quintessence of commercialism in the experience of the workers, who often

found employers offering them minimum wages and the lowest standard of working conditions, amenities, and welfare services which they could get away with. Although the atmosphere of industry has considerably improved in recent years, there are still a number of workplaces stamped with the mark of excessive commercialism, with scanty amenities or no amenities at all, where the 'labour market' approach to the worker is still prevalent. 'We buy and they sell labour, that's all' – that is still the approach in many workplaces which treat labour as a commodity on the market which undergoes the same fluctuations and changes as any other commodity.

And it is true to say that even at present there are many good-natured men who as employers believe that morals should be separated from business.

'You know business isn't charity or a club,' an employer in an engineering firm said to me, 'it's fatal to be sentimental in your work. You are being unfair to others who rely on your employment. Business is a hard struggle to make a living for others and yourself against very sharp competition.'

'Granted,' I answered, 'but is excessive commercialism good business? Isn't it true that employers who treat human beings as human beings, not as units of manpower and commodities on the labour market, get a better response from their workmen and expand their business far more than those who are all the time trying to cut the workmen's share in wages, or give them the bare minimum in amenities and conditions dictated by the laws of supply and demand?'

'Oh, yes, that is also basically true,' he agreed.

I believe that every man with experience of industrial life must admit that the human approach was always good business, and more so recently than it was in earlier times.

Personally I have found that whenever I met a very successful employer who had built up a big enterprise

almost from scratch, I was struck by him first of all as a man with a high regard for his fellow human beings, with a deep sense of service to the community, often a deeply religious man, so that I coined a phrase that religion makes for good business. The success of Quakers in industry is generally recognized as being far from accidental. However, I am willing to rewrite the sentence as 'humanity or humaneness makes for good business'. Some little unexpected signs of kindness, something beyond what is conventional to employees, good treatment, good turns in cases of need, a personal interest in the well-being of the workers and in their family and home life, sympathy and kindliness, are the most important assets in a firm, and great commercial empires have often been built on them, while meanness, excessive commercialism, and lack of a personal interest turn out to be a bad policy, and one which restricts others as well as oneself.

Successful and dynamic employers always realized the value of the human touch and its great driving power, but the average employer has discovered it only recently because of the deep social, economic, and psychological changes which have taken place in the last decade.

'The boot is on the other foot as far as the labour market is concerned. The time when workers were ten a penny has gone,' a union officer in the cotton industry commented, 'so our employers don't like to think about the labour market approach now. They try to get away from the laws of supply and demand and tell the workers that they should think of themselves primarily as citizens. "You are a citizen, not a commodity," they say, because they know that in the state of full employment the laws of supply and demand have turned against them. But the funny thing about it is that the worker hasn't forgotten the labour market idea. He knows that the laws of supply and demand have eventually started to work in his favour and he wants to make use of them.'

Another union officer commented on the same subject.

'You know the proverb that the poor copy the vices of the rich. That may be a case in point. The bosses have infected many grades of workers with the commercial or business mentality.'

I must say that the labour market idea is still deeply ingrained in the workmen's own minds and in my conversations with them it has often been referred to. The seller's market of labour, or the effect of full employment on productivity, are not the illusions of professional economists, but a reality widely known among the ordinary workers. In fact this conception was referred to more often by workmen than by employers, who in many industries contested its truth.

The separation of business morality from private morality is also familiar to the worker. A man who does not pull his weight and does not give his employer a full day's work is not regarded as dishonest, since the ethics of work do not include all the injunctions of private morality.

Many workers would say: 'My boss tries to get as much as he can for as little as he can, so why shouldn't I do the same? Business is business. He is chasing money all the time, and so am I.'

Still, there is little evidence that the business mentality in industry has been transferred to the majority of workmen; it is still a minority attitude. It affects the worker, but it has not gone deep.

From all sides we hear of the need to cultivate the human side in industry, and in fact I believe that at present more of it is heard from the employers' side than from the workers' side. The management has discovered the inadequacy of the old incentives described as 'stick and carrot', especially in the fully-employed Welfare State, and it is now on the look-out for new incentives. The leaders of industry have discovered a new dimension in industry: industrial relations. In former times they rarely paid attention to the feelings, likes, and dislikes of the men; their attitude was strongly impersonal outside and

inside the factories, and they dealt with human beings as numbers or dockets. Now they see how much can be gained by dealing with human beings as people. If anyone were to ask me what was the greatest revolution in industry since the Industrial Revolution, I would say: *The psychological revolution which is slowly taking place, the discovery of the psychological dimension in industry, the interest in the recesses of men's minds in social relations, the search for new incentives in industry.*

There is so much in industry which can be put right not by economic methods only, but by the right psychological approach. I believe that the nation which first masters and applies the laws of psychology in industry, which will give back satisfaction and happiness in work and fellowship in purely human terms as well as economic well-being, will make an important contribution not only to its own prosperity and advancement but also to that of other nations.

Once an old-age pensioner, a factory worker in his younger days, asked what in his view would be the greatest factor in improving industrial relations and productivity, gave me the following reply:

'The answer is, more humanity or humaneness in industry. Every man should be treated as a human being. In every department circles of friends should be formed with one man in charge of personal relations to relieve the strains and stresses at work and if possible outside it as well. Men would find a new interest in helping the personal problems of others. In every firm there should be a welfare officer whose job should be to look after the well-being of men. If he sees a man slacking he should come up to him and ask him about his health, or his family, or any other troubles he may have, and whether he can be of any help in putting them right. Eventually he should give him a day off if this is necessary for him to arrange things. That would create friendly relations all round and an atmosphere of confidence which would hearten everyone.'

I asked him if some of the men would not take advantage of such arrangements and his answer was: 'Only a few, I think less than 10 per cent.'

I heartily agree with him and I believe he was basically right in his estimate of those who would take advantage of a show of friendliness and help.

The depersonalization of men in industry is potentially a very big problem about which we shall hear more and more. Its gravity and pressure will be felt in time when all the mechanical forces employed in our modern society become fully operative. There is no doubt that a large-scale works is a social unit of the greatest importance which should not act as a source of disharmony and frustration.

In industry, as everywhere else, personal relationships are reciprocal. Friendliness can start from any side, but if it starts from one side it must be answered by a positive response if it is to be of lasting value.

'You know,' said a bricklayer, 'how great the force of example is. The good example must come from men in the higher places, those in authority against whom all the suspicions were always directed. A friendly atmosphere can be generated only by the managers, and they should not be easily discouraged if they see no immediate response. The load of suspicion and fear is still great and it must be lifted before any friendship is possible. Men invariably respond to genuine kindness; but they do not respond to a pose of kindness put on as a piece of good business. Working men are very good in distinguishing the genuine from the false.'

The workers have strong views about good-fellowship, and they always say that high positions in industry should be given to men who are not only able and capable but who, being happy in themselves, can spread happiness around them. The way to bring about a good society is to bring into positions of responsibility and prominence men who, apart from intellectual and organizational gifts, have

the precious gift of sociability and friendliness, and who can radiate happiness and contentment.

The workers often speak, too, of the need for absolute fairness and impartiality in industry. A man in an executive position has to make judicial decisions every day, if not every hour. A manager or supervisor who is suspected or accused of favouritism is finished in the eyes of his workers; it is perhaps the worst charge that can be voiced against any supervisor. One departmental manager put his view in the following way:

'By being fair to the workers you are also being fair to the management, because unfairness discredits the whole management in the eyes of the operatives. As soon as the workers have lost faith in the fairness of the management, they throw away the whole code of morality at work, and you might as well pack up the whole business. Justice has perhaps a greater value than anything else in industrial relations, but justice alone is not enough, you must be human as well.'

There are so many things which need fair treatment: the distribution of the load of work, the distribution of better-paid or lower-paid jobs in the same workshop, the distribution of overtime, the speed with which machines handled by men on piecework are repaired, and a thousand and one other things. And it is not enough that the supervisor knows he is being fair, the workers themselves must have the same conviction. The supervisor must explain to the workers the reasons for his decisions, talking their language and applying their ideas of fairness. They are often not the same as the ideas of an intellectual; there is nothing theoretical about them. They believe in equality of chances and rewards related to work, effort, and sacrifice but often within a narrow circle of their mates and grades.

Perhaps more than anything else it is important to give the worker a sense of purpose. 'What a difference there is between drifting and having a purpose,' a supervisor said

to me; 'if a man has a purpose his whole energy is directed towards it. Our present age is purposeless; anyway it appears so to many workers. A good management can give a man a sense of purpose transcending his own and the management's interest.'

I heartily agree with this. The status of the worker has risen considerably in recent years. He does not regard himself simply as a means of production, as a profit-making piece of machinery. He regards himself more as a junior partner entitled to voice his opinions on all basic issues which involve conditions of work or the prospect of employment. The workplace on which his lot depends is *his* workplace; it is a social unit of the first importance. He has acquired a new sense of his importance and he asks that his dignity shall be respected. The rules of work or the discipline of work cannot be imposed on him without consultation with him or his representative. He resents any changes imposed without the consultation of his representatives as infringement of his dignity and self-esteem and as something directed against his interests.

Many an employer has found that a consultation at an early stage with the workers' representatives on a matter which is left by right to his own discretion, is of very great benefit to the smooth running of the factory. Of course it takes an additional effort on the part of management to talk, convince, and bargain, and it often results in delays, but the difference in the final result from the course proposed by the management is in most cases very small and often worth while making. The workers feel that arrangements adopted in this way, after a thorough and genuine consultation, are not 'their' but 'our' arrangements.

This claim for consultation – consultation which was often used long ago by the most successful employers – is regarded by many as the claim for democracy in industry. But in fact its roots are less political in character than they are psychological. They are related primarily to the sense of self-respect and dignity of men. 'It's immoral,' a

carpenter said impatiently, 'that I should be ordered about by a fellow simply because he has more money, and that I should be so completely dependent on his whim. I am not his servant. The time for that has gone long ago.'

There is no doubt that autocracy in British industry belongs to the past. An employer cannot do what he likes; he must not only conform to the rules and regulations – and there is a profusion of them in the collective agreements and trade union rules – but he must also be prepared to consult his men on all basic changes in his workplace, if he wants their whole-hearted co-operation.

Since the last war the machinery of joint consultation in industry has developed in many ways, but I would say that informal consultation is as valuable as, if not more so than, the use of the formal channels of communication.

12

IDEAS OF SPORTSMANSHIP

Sport has an indescribable fascination for the British worker. It captivates his imagination, refreshes and comforts him; it gives him courage and amusement, excitement and beauty. It may sound absurd, but one could say that sport has bewitched the British worker. There is no doubt that sport forms the best redress against the routine and monotony of life and work, against the common and the ugly, against the squalor and pettiness of a worker's life and surroundings. It gives him the adventure which has disappeared from his working life, gives him something to fight for and an ideal to emulate, takes him out into the fresh air and the sun, and makes him exercise muscles which are not used in his work. Competition has disappeared almost completely from the worker's job, but in sport it still goes on full blast. It restores the atrophied parts of his body and his mind, and turns a 'lop-sided man into a whole one', as one worker put it.

'Sports are doing for men what religion once did,' said a very intelligent young man who was a good cricketer and a good thinker too. 'They help to make them whole. I don't know what would happen to our chaps without sports. They ventilate their feelings.'

It is true that sportsmanship has in modern times assumed a semi-religious value. It has certainly contributed to the formation of the ethical code of modern society. If I were asked what had most influenced the worker's code of morality, I would not hesitate to answer: Christianity and sportsmanship, but in recent years sports more than religion. 'Look at the space the newspapers give to sport, and the space alloted to religion!' exclaimed a Nonconformist indignantly. If newspapers had appeared

in the Middle Ages they would probably have given the space now allotted to sports to religious disputes and to reporting religious meetings.

The emotions engendered at sports meetings can be compared only with the emotions in earlier times at religious services. The crowds can work themselves up to a frenzy in tense moments of a match, when a championship is in the balance, or a sudden change of fortune.

The comparison with religion also holds good in another respect. Sport has an extremely strong power in drawing all classes together, as religion once had. The whole nation watches for the results of test matches or cup finals or tennis tournaments. The sociology of sport has not yet been written, but I think that if it were it should bring out its importance as a power for national unity, an importance which is probably greater in this country than it is in any other in Europe. In sport, class distinctions are replaced by distinctions of accomplishment and skill.

Of course there are some sports like sailing or golf which, by their very nature, are reserved for the well-to-do, and sports like dog-racing which are reserved mostly for the working and lower middle classes, but the majority of popular sports, like football, cricket, boxing, and horse-racing, are sports shared actively or passively by all classes. Perhaps cricket is, of all sports, the greatest mixer of classes, especially in country places, and more so in Yorkshire than anywhere else.

Sports also provide channels of escape from poor homes into a higher place in society for boys without intellectual distinction. Many working-class boys have become famous sportsmen, and sports provide the main dreams of young lads who can see no other openings apart from becoming a professional in one sport or other.

The British worker regards himself as a sportsman. He thinks of the true sportsman as the perfect man, and his whole life is built up around the code of sportsmanship.

His strong feelings about fair play and equality of opportunity are all of them based on this code.

The part played by sport can best be seen in the number of sporting terms the worker uses: 'Is it cricket?' 'The boss doesn't play ball', 'Fair play' or 'foul play', 'He is a sport', 'Keep up the ball', 'The ball is at my feet', or (in conversation) 'Always throw the ball back'.

Cricket and football but also fishing and hunting terms are most frequently used metaphorically, and an allusion to any rules of sport means an allusion to one of the deeper truths in life.

Sport in the worker's mind means first of all fairness and keeping the rules and customs which are a solid frame for fairness, and secondly the avoidance of arbitrariness and dictation. It also means fun ('he makes sport of everything'), excitement, gaiety, wit, enjoyment, achievement, informality, uniqueness, brilliance, teamwork, sociability, and loyalty. He even likes to dress in a sporty way rather than look like a townsman.

I never heard praise of anything like the paeans of praise the workers give to sport:

'I have seen men barmy on many things, but never on sports.' – 'In our football matches we give as great a welcome to other teams as we do to our local team. Sports strengthen local loyalties, but all the same they make for civility.' – 'Sport fosters the team spirit.' – 'Even if man is infatuated with a sport, it's at least harmless. You don't wrong other human beings.' – 'Sport makes a man fully human. At least he gets away from the world of money into something finer.' – 'Sport makes for manliness, self-control, and vigour. Only sport can stop the decadence of our race.' – 'A man who is good at sports will be clean and take care of his health. And taking care of one's health is the beginning of wisdom.'

One man told me how through sport he had got away from slums and from the degradation of ignorance and dirt, working himself up to a better position in life: 'When

a boy of twelve I won a short running race and realized that I could do at least one thing better than others. Then it dawned on me that I perhaps could also do other things better. That was my first step at improving myself and I left the slum.' It is not uncommon for men, who realize that they can do well in one thing, to apply their determination to other things as well.

Sporting events form an incessant topic of conversation with men not only in pubs and clubs, but also at home and at their works. A man who can forecast the result of an event is held in high esteem, as a win or a lose depends on his opinion.

It is amusing to see a politically-minded man trying to explain the political reasons why a given newspaper is more popular than another; he will be stopped at once by a realistic observer who says: 'Don't you know that this paper has a better sports page than the other, and has good forecasts on dogs and pools?' In fact no newspaper with even the highest standard in political, cultural, or news material could aspire to any measure of popularity without a good sporting page, as this is the main centre of interest. This can easily be tested in the Underground during the rush hours when the workers read their newspapers. Forecasts, results, and championships hold their attention longest.

Some firms have asked me in what way they should advertise their products for working-class customers. There can be little doubt about the answer. Use the sportsman's language, make a sporting offer, appeal to the interest in sport, and make a 'sport' of everything.

The part played by sport in the workers' life is seen sometimes in the attendance figures in industry. A test match or a cup final may cause absenteeism in mines or factories. While these matches are being played the whole attention of men is concentrated on them and there is no other topic of conversation.

The kind of interest in sport varies with age. Young

men like to take an active part in it, older men a more passive part, which means watching or betting. But in recent years even the older men have come to take an active part in sport.

Many large-scale firms, especially in the provinces, have established their own clubs, endowed with their own sports grounds with a very small, sometimes nominal subscription in the belief that these foster the team spirit and a spirit of loyalty to the firm. The heads of departments play cricket with their manual workers. They 'talk cricket' and then go to the local together. 'I don't know what we would do without our sports club. Our team is playing a team from another firm, and that fosters loyalty to our firm,' managers have told me.

There is a network of sports clubs all over the country, each one contributing its best members to teams on a higher level. Small district or firms' teams, local teams, city and county, and finally national teams all play their part in giving amusement to the masses.

'Sport plays a big part in lifting up the worker; it gives him a sense of independence and takes away his feeling of inferiority,' a man aged 59, employed at a tailor's, told me. 'But it wasn't always so. When I was young there were no sports in our lives. Working hours were long and the men were too tired to play. They had no money. All sports cost money, in the boots you wear out, if nothing else. There were no sports grounds provided by the Councils as there are now. Saturday was a working day and games were not allowed on Sunday. When I was ten, I had to help my family by earning 2*s*. 6*d*. a week. From 5 a.m. to 8.30 a.m. I worked with a milkman, from 9 to 12 and from 2 to 4 I went to school, and from 5 to 8.30 I helped the milkman again. Could you expect me to take an interest in sport? Young men of to-day have no idea what life was like forty or fifty years ago. Oh, no, there was no sport for us. Life was grim and too serious for that. We had other things on our minds.'

The class preferences for particular sports depend on what is taught at school, their cost and the scope for team-

work. Primary schools teach soccer and cricket chiefly, secondary schools cricket and rugby; and this accounts for the fact that the workers' two basic sports are soccer and cricket, apart from the North of England where rugby is also popular. Rugby is also more expensive than soccer. Sometimes it is said that rugby is too rough a game for the worker, who has enough roughness in his job. The workers cannot afford the more expensive games like tennis or golf.

Sports in which teamwork is involved are preferred. All the popular sports are games played by teams, giving scope for sociability and co-operation.

The few men who speak contemptuously of the role of sport in the workers' life are the politically minded, the religious, and the ambitious men, but they are a very small minority.

An enthusiastic *socialist* would say: 'Sports divert the working classes from the pursuit of more important things. Workers are so engrossed in their sports that they forget their political ambitions. The young men of to-day do not attend the union meetings and it is very difficult to get them interested in the socialist movement, mainly because they are too much taken up with sports. In fact nothing but sport interests them.'

A *religious man*: 'Sports are a substitute for a deeper purpose in life. Young men at present are drifting and wasting their energy. A purposeless existence seems to be given meaning by useless activities which lead nowhere. The modern gods of sport are of pagan origin and replace the true God in men's hearts.'

An *ambitious man*: 'My work is my hobby. When work and hobby go together, there is no end to the things which you can do. If a man has no ambition or if his ambition is fulfilled, he can turn to sport. I have seen so many men stay put, simply because they concentrated all their energies on sport and their work became a side line. What's wrong with the present-day man is that he thinks

too much of sport and too little of his work.'

But to the majority sport means a good life, for some an escape from drudgery and dullness, and for others an outlet for surplus energy. For many it is the only means of self-expression and self-assertion.

13

THE PUB POPULATION

'THERE are a hundred and one reasons why a man goes to a pub, but that doesn't necessarily mean that he knows the reason. He just has a feeling that he must go.' This was what an old and much-travelled pub-goer told me.

'What are the reasons?' I asked. 'First of all know,' he said, 'that everyone has to let himself go occasionally, unless he wants to end up in a lunatic asylum. If he is fed up with his job and his home life as well, as so many men are, and he has no choice but to carry on, what else can he do? You can take it from me that, although it may sound odd, pubs have saved many homes from shipwreck. And they have saved men, too, from cracking up. If you make a study of mental cases and see how many madmen were pub-goers – I mean ordinary pub-goers, not drunkards – and how many were abstainers, my guess is that you'll find a regular pub-goer has a better chance of standing the strain of life than an abstainer, unless the abstainer has some other way of letting himself go. I wish you intellectuals who know nothing about life, I mean about the misery of life, would stop complaining about the pubs. You don't know what you are talking about. If you want men to give up pubs, make life better so that people don't need to escape from the bitterness and the monotony of life.'

'But what do you mean by letting oneself go?' I asked him, not entirely understanding what he meant by it.

'We Englishmen keep a stiff upper lip,' he said; 'we don't talk much, and don't show our feelings, but that doesn't mean they aren't as strong as anyone's. From time to time we simply have to unburden ourselves. It is best, of course, to find consolation in God, but some men cannot. Some find it in love, some in sport, some in art. But for those who can't do otherwise a good booze in the pub is the last refuge. There they leave off their burdens, and fears, and disgust with life and with themselves. There they can let off steam.'

But not everyone who goes to the pub goes there to let off steam. There are all sorts in the pub world, just as

there are in the rest of life. Let me introduce you to some of the people I met. I am sure there are many other kinds of people that escaped my attention.

One elderly man recently lost his wife and felt terribly lonely. He comes every night to meet a few pals. He has not yet trained himself to drink as much as the others; he cannot exceed two pints, which he still drinks in half-pints, which to a regular seems very poor work. But it is difficult to sit over two pints the whole evening, so he is training himself to drink more, and in time he will manage as much as the regulars.

Another man who parted from his wife and daughter a year ago feels terribly restless. He hates his free time. Only in his work does he forget himself, and the long week-end seems endless. He comes here primarily to see the barman, who is friendly to him and makes him forget his life; he does not really care for beer or spirits.

There is a Welshman on heavy foundry work. He feels a great thirst in him and must have a drink every day. He could do without food, he says, but not without drink. All his mates drink heavily to replenish the sweat.

And here is an ex-farmer from Southampton, now employed as a steel erector and living in digs. He goes to the dog races regularly twice a week and after the meeting he pops into the pub for a pint or two to celebrate when he wins, or to cheer himself up when he loses.

'There are five of us in a sort of club,' another man told me; 'and we meet every night in the same pub over beer, just for a chat. Attendance is obligatory, and when one doesn't turn up he must stand the others a drink next day.' This is quite typical of 'regulars' in the strictest sense.

A very cheerful and talkative grandfather with nine married children and twice as many grandchildren comes in for a good booze on Saturdays only. It is more fun, he thinks, to have a good booze on one day than to spread it thinly over the whole week. 'There is no real stuff

nowadays, you know, it's all water,' he says. 'You need at least ten pints to get a nice warm feeling inside.'

Another elderly man comes every day with his much younger wife and their dog. They sit in the corner and have a chat with their neighbours. It is their way of relaxing.

A single man, a toolmaker who works late hours, visits the pub for a pint of beer and a smoke to 'relieve the tension' in him. 'The atmosphere of this pub is so nice,' he says. When he comes in he feels strung up, but gradually he relaxes and feels comfortable. He sits for a while in the corner and watches other people without talking to anyone.

A bus driver pops into the pub to quench his thirst at his last stop every day. It takes him ten minutes to clear two pints, and that finishes the pub for him as he has so many other recreations.

A pools promoter, a professional, comes here only to talk business. 'You can't do business without a pub,' he says. 'That's the way you do important business.'

A master painter, married, and with daughters, told me: 'On Friday nights my wife and daughters go to the cinema and I go to the pub for a game of darts. When they come out of the cinema they pop in and take me home. They have their fun and I have mine.'

Other men go to a pub for a game of dominoes. One man takes his girl because there is no other place where he can talk things over; others go when they want to pick up a girl. 'I go to a pub only at midday when I have my dinner with a pint of beer,' another man told me, 'otherwise I leave it alone. Beer is just an appetizer to me. In fact the doctor has advised me to take a glass of beer daily.' A large number of men take their meals in the pub, with snacks for lunch and supper or even substantial meals with a drink. Others take their beer as a sedative before going to bed, saying they could not sleep without it.

You see what a variety of reasons, customs, and habits

make people go to pubs. But all pub-goers have in common a wish for company and relaxation. As one man said to me: 'We don't easily make friends, but it's different in the pub. People don't mind talking to strangers here.' A drink removes the barriers between people; and when a man starts a song, and everyone joins in, it gives them all a warm feeling.

All these were normal cases, in which drinking was kept under control. There are, however, a few down-at-heel patrons of the public-houses whose drinking habits have brought them down, and often have ruined their families. Some are very distressing and tragic cases, and their life stories would make painful reading. Many of them have struggled hard all their life to break their drinking habits, trying all possible ways of curing themselves, but in vain. They have succeeded for a while and then fallen back, to a state even worse than before. The sense of defeat permeates their whole life. They know they are doomed and are heading for the gutter.

Here is a story which Chehov, Dickens, or Balzac could have made dramatic. I was sitting on a park bench with a well-educated man in his early fifties, who told me his life story.

He was a bank clerk with a good job, a good wife, and a son. He had never liked drinking, but in the 1914 war his friends in the Army teased him for being a prig, so he started drinking, and at first he disliked it. Gradually the drink got a hold of him and he grew more and more thirsty. He simply gets a lump in his throat whenever he is without a drink; he feels tense and cramped, in fact ill, and seems to have no alternative but to start drinking again. And the strange thing about it is that after a booze he tells himself 'never again' and is firmly convinced that it is easy to get away from drink. I asked him why he did not drink every day and keep his drinking within moderate limits, like many regulars who came to no harm. 'Oh, if I only could,' he answered. 'The trouble is that I can't keep

it under control. I mix beer with spirits and never finish without being flat out and then I get into trouble. I lost my bank clerk's job and all the other decent jobs I had afterwards. I spent three months in a nursing home to get cured and after that I stopped drinking for nine months. That was the longest time I ever stopped drinking. But I invariably come back through pure chance. I meet a friend who asks me to have a drink, or something else turns up, and then everything starts all over again. I moved from one bad job to another, and I am now a kitchen hand. My wife did all she could to help me but could do nothing, and now she has left me with the boy. It's not loneliness that drives me to drink but thirst, that awful thirst which I feel as a lump in my throat.'

But the thirst does not affect him so much when the pubs are closed or when he has no money. He believes no real alcoholic has ever been cured.

A minister took an interest in him and wants to help him. But is it possible to help him? Is he not one of those who are doomed by their own folly or by the devil? The minister says that there is hope for him, because he wants to change and knows what is good.

Looking into his eyes I understood his tragedy. Recently he started to gamble on dog-racing, hoping to win enough money to enable him to go abroad for a cure. He believes that a complete change in his surroundings might help to cure him. And afterwards he could resume his family life, as he longed to see his wife and son again.

'Mightn't gambling turn into a strong habit too?' I asked him.

'No, I gamble with my head, and the whole thing leaves me quite cold. It's perfectly under control.'

'Well, if it is, I hope you'll be in luck this time. There's hope for everyone. And remember your battle is not only your own. By winning it, you would help others. Everyone else who is a slave to drink would be encouraged by your success.'

Anyway up till now the man was helpless to break with his old habits. If anyone could show how a man can break old habits which threaten his whole life and happiness, he would be a great benefactor to suffering humanity.

The rule of habit is nowhere stronger than in the pub. From the pub population you get very definite answers about attendance and amounts of drink habitually taken.

Only the casual drinkers will say: 'I go from time to time', and these are not the majority. All the others answer: 'Every day', 'Three times a week' or 'On Thursday, Friday, or Saturday', or 'Only on Saturdays and Sundays' or 'Only on Sundays'. And they will also tell you the number of pints they drink if the money goes far enough.

Those who go every day, the 'regulars', form a small minority in the pub population. They are liked by the publicans for their orderliness and good behaviour, and they are the backbone of the pub population. But in fact not everyone who comes for a drink every day is classed as a 'regular' in the accepted sense. Only a man who spends a certain amount of time in the pub and drinks a fair amount can regard himself as a regular; a man who comes for a pint of beer every day and leaves after a few minutes has no claim to the title. The regulars form a standing informal club, which gives information, organizes amusements of one kind or another – singing or darts matches, or a Christmas Loan Club or a Holiday Loan Club – and which helps a man in trouble by having a collection for him.

There are more semi-regulars than regulars; these come every second or third day. Their attendance is just as regular, though not as frequent, and they prefer a concentrated to a thinly-spread enjoyment, since their money does not go far enough for them to call every day.

Finally we have the week-end drinker. His attendances vary from five a week (one on Friday, two on Saturday, and two on Sunday) to one a week, and the number of

drinks varies from one attendance to another. The pub life warms up considerably at week-ends and cools down nearly to freezing point on Monday, when men have a hangover and little money to spare.

Pub life provides such an enormous variety that it is very difficult to generalize about it. Some pubs are small places with only one bar, and some are ten times as big, with four bars or even more, a public bar, a saloon and private bar, and a smoking lounge. Some are purely local, with the air of a club about them, and some have a considerable floating population. Some are purely drinking places and some are more like fully licensed restaurants. In some the publican is a friend to his customers, while some are commercialized through and through, and simply want to promote the sale of drink by any means. Some are gay places, with music and singing in them, places where you can sit comfortably and enjoy yourself; some others are grim and there are hardly any places to sit down in them. Some of them, in bad districts, are centres of crime and prostitution, while some others are highly respectable places with a certain dignity about them.

Pub life is an integral part of the worker's life and it breeds its own type. 'You know,' a worker told me, 'the opposite ends of the pole in England are the public-school man and the public-house man; and both of them are educated for life in society.'

Many students of social conditions would like to know the percentage of the population which goes regularly to the pubs, but it is difficult to obtain any reliable figures. Some areas and occupations have stronger drinking traditions than others. Seamen, navvies, dockers, bricklayers, painters, steel-workers, foundry-workers, and coal-miners have stronger traditions of drinking than men in other jobs. Men in heavy and dirty jobs feel a real need to replenish the sweat which rolls off them and 'to clean out their insides'. Places well provided with sports grounds, dog-racing stadiums, billiards rooms, and so on have less

interest in pubs than places without them. I believe that pub life is stronger in the provinces than it is in London where there are so many other things to do. Age also plays a big part. Boys under 20 keep away from the pub, and men between 20 and 30 go rather seldom, their attendance increasing with age. The highest pub attendance is seen in the age-group between 40 and 60. After 60 again the interest in pubs falls off.

In my study of the London workers I have found that roughly speaking about 20 per cent were teetotallers or near-teetotallers, and 30 per cent casual drinkers. Only half the working population are more or less regular pub-goers. And again half of that pub population (that is, about a quarter of the working-class population) drink only at week-ends, the other half forming the regulars and semi-regulars. These figures, of course, are only very approximate.

The pub life of Britain is definitely on the decline. Drunkenness is only occasional, limited to some areas and mostly to Saturdays. Education, sports, the short hours during which the pubs are open, the high price of beer and spirits, the exclusion of children and adolescents, the closing of many pubs, the development of bus routes and other means of communication, the popularity of cinemas, holidays, and last but not least the development of working men's clubs; all have contributed to the decline of pub life. In the North of England there is strong competition to the pubs in the working men's clubs. These do not expect their members to drink continuously, but arrange competitions, have bowling greens, billiards, and games rooms for other games, arrange musical evenings over the week-ends, and so on. The pubs must adjust themselves to new conditions, improving their appearance and standards of service and keeping in touch with the general rise in the educational standard of the working-class population. They cannot ignore the profound changes taking place in the life of the common man.

Now let us hear the opinions of those who loathe the public-houses; and there are plenty of them to be found among the working classes.

The politically-minded man: 'The pub population preserves the slave mentality among the working classes. They escape from the drudgery and dreariness of life but they don't want to change it. Pubs make the workers accept the dreadful conditions of their life.'

The religious man: 'People waste their lives in the pub. Their minds and spirit are dulled. Do you know that there are men who spend their whole life between their work and the pub? They are constantly "in the smoke", as they say. Their family life is empty and so are they. And they often spend on drink what they should be spending on necessities.'

The ambitious man, the 'go-getter': 'It's so foolish to work for the benefit of the publican. My experience of life is that the harder a man works, the more easily he throws away his money. I don't want to slave for nothing. I want to get on, and the majority of pub-goers are those who are content to stay put.'

There may well be truth in all those opinions, but the last certainly has been confirmed by my investigations. Whenever I met a man who had worked himself up to the position of manager or trade union secretary or to a higher supervisory grade, I asked him at once: 'Were you a teetotaller in your young days?' and nearly always I found that he had been. If he was not a teetotaller on principle, he was so in practice, and if not during his whole life, at least when he was young, and deciding his own future.

But a very human elderly man – and in workers' language 'human' always means tolerant, friendly, and understanding – said to me: 'Let everyone be happy in his own way. It takes all sorts to make a world.' This, perhaps, is a suitable note on which to end the chapter.

14

GAMBLING AND THE BELIEF IN LUCK

THERE are a hundred and one reasons why men gamble, too. Gambling is only one facet of a man's personality and there are no two gamblers alike because there are no two individuals alike. The motives which drive a man to gambling, the strength of the hold it has on a man, the excitement it gives him, its closeness to his other interests, its effect on his life and on his family's life, are different in each case.

Gambling activities range from organized or commercialized vice to mere pastime, and from a desperate and incurable addiction to the love of a game for its own sake. At one end we find the professional spiv, the half-criminal type, who lives by his wits, and at the other end the man who treats gambling as a game for which he is prepared to put down so much and no more.

Here are some of the types I have met. First, the *professional* type, engaged mainly at the dog-racing stadiums, a man who has studied thoroughly all the intricacies of the game. He knows the peculiarities of the track in different seasons and weather conditions, he follows the results of the tracks and the performances of the runners, but first of all he keeps in touch with the trainers and owners of dogs, and with everyone else who has inside information. 'There are some fools who believe that you can beat figures by other figures,' one of these told me; 'that you can have some kind of a mathematical system of winning. But you can't beat the facts with figures; you can beat them only with inside information about the dogs and their actual chances.'

'Professionalism,' another man explained to me, 'needs money, courage, and guts. Without a fund big enough to

back you up when you need it, you can't make any headway. You must have the determination to make a lightning decision, and you must have complete self-control, so that you can stop when you have made enough to give you a living. It means you must gamble without being a gambler, that is, professionally, without any passion behind it. But it's difficult to gamble without a taste for it. It's the same with a street-walker. The most successful prostitute is non-sexy, who takes it all completely cold; the hot ones are finished after a few years.'

I met a number of men who make a living at dog-racing, each developing his own system of gambling in a dispassionate way and taking his winnings as the workman takes his wages, living very cheaply and moderately, and saving all the time. But of course not all professionals are like that. Some have great courage but no 'guts'; they do exercise self-control, and they live a life of luxury. They are out to get something for nothing, and approach the semi-criminal type.

The next type is more numerous than the professional, and backs dogs more often than horses; this is the *semi-professional*. He has not given up his job, but wants regularly to supplement his wages by attending the races. Some are lucky, some are not; some continue for a long time and some are soon out. Small shopkeepers, roundsmen, small business men, and street hawkers often belong to this class, and they often 'try their luck' in order to raise capital for their business. Often men with little money, which is not sufficient to start a business, come to the dog races to make more and lose the little they have.

The third and very frequent type is the *sporting type*, who prefers gambling to other sports because it brings in money. He keeps his stakes strictly under control. 'At least I have something for my outlay – not like the pub-goers who make the publicans rich,' he says. 'Even if I have no luck, I am in pocket from time to time. I can't be unlucky all the time, while a pub-goer has only his hangover to

show. If I gave up dogs I would have to go back to the pub and I would be worse off.'

This kind of man attends the dog or horse races regularly, but does not spend more than he can afford, and thus wreck his family life. 'I can afford it; I get a kick out of it, I would waste more money on other things,' he says. Some men at dog tracks look so contented that there seems nothing wrong with the amount of betting they do.

A large number of men of this type content themselves with betting on football pools. They fill in coupons regularly every Tuesday or Wednesday evening during the forty-two weeks' season and send them off with a few shillings, hoping for the best. Some go in for several pools, and the game itself becomes an obsession to them. I met men who spent £2. 12*s*. a week going in for five pools. But the most common outlay is a few shillings a week during the season, and a large number of men spend only a shilling a week.

'It's fun and you give yourself a chance,' is the most frequent opinion, and it is difficult not to regard this sort of gambling as an innocent and inexpensive pastime. They spend an evening filling in coupons; they have an active interest in sport, following closely the results and discussing with their friends the prospects of the respective teams on Saturday next. 'You can't get anything worth while for a shilling nowadays,' they say, 'but there you have something to look forward to and hope for.' And a man who is so hard up that he has had to give up pools complains bitterly: 'I am so hard up that I can't do even the bloody pools.'

There is no doubt that hope is valuable to everyone, and the more so to people in an unsatisfactory environment. 'I have nothing against the church leaders who fulminate against the pools,' a foreman with much experience of life told me, 'provided that they can sell the same commodity – hope – either cheaper or better. But it seems to me they can't. If a pool punter can buy hope, even in such a

diluted and trivial form, for a shilling a week, it seems to me that it isn't a bad bargain.'

'I have something to look forward to and to think about' – that is the common attitude of a pool punter, and the fact that the football pools have spread like wildfire from one end of the country to the other proves that it must satisfy a deep need in millions of men.

Then there are the *unhappy* types, of which many examples may be found among the working classes. They rarely bet on football, and not so often on horses; they are found mostly at dog races. Gambling has taken such a hold on them that they can no longer control it. Some married men keep their families short, and some single men literally starve themselves in order to gratify their passion for betting. You can see men in ragged clothes, or on a cold winter night shivering without an overcoat, men who go short of the essentials of life so that they can continue to gamble. They think about nothing else, and their whole life is controlled by it. They are as pathetic as lost children; they are unhappy in themselves and spread their unhappiness around them. They often have childish beliefs; they are always hoping, and always deeply convinced that their luck is just round the corner. 'It is so easy to make money,' they say. 'All you need is a small sum to back you up. If only I had some money, I would do well.'

It seems incredible, but it is perfectly true that some men go on believing year after year that their luck will turn. After every race they say to themselves: 'That time I lost because I didn't listen to what I knew was right. I did what that bloody paper told me. But next time it will be different.' They go on believing that this time they have made a slip but that next time they will avoid it, and all they ask is one more chance. And the belief that it is easy to make money at gambling is as firm as ever in them. Next time, of course, the slip will be of a different kind, and the same self-delusion will start all over again. And when from time to time they get a windfall, that is one

more reason for self-assurance. They live all the time in a state of emotional upheaval, alternating between hope and despair. I do not know how they stand the strain; the intensity of their love of gambling can be seen on their faces and heard in their voices when they shout to the dogs: 'Go on No. 5', 'Come on No. 2'. Poverty and ignorance certainly contribute to the prevalence of this type. An ignorant man does not see the pitfalls of the game, and, often being in desperate need of money and in a state of great emotional disturbance, he loses entirely his power of rational thinking.

If one observes the effect of gambling on this type of man, gambling seems a monstrous evil, and all the exhortations against it seem justified. But when I discussed the problem with a hotel worker, an experienced observer of the workers' life, I was given this answer: 'But excess is the curse of all human activity. Take religion – look at the abuses it has led to in the past and how many religious maniacs you find. Take love – look how many men have gone crazy or been ruined or committed suicide for love. But should we therefore prohibit religion or love? You can't help a great urge in men becoming morbid and harmful. And gambling is an old, strong urge which needs an outlet in every society, civilized and uncivilized.'

Finally we have the *occasional* gambler who has not developed any strong gambling habits, but who goes to a race one week and does not go again for another six or twelve weeks or months. Most men have passed through this stage at one time or another. 'I tried it, but I liked it too much so I have given it up,' they say, or 'I can't afford it. It is a mug's game.' For the occasional punter gambling is the easiest way to find out whether he is in luck or not.

Most, if not all, men are concerned about what they call 'luck', although the term itself eludes all definitions and covers not only many circumstances which cannot be controlled but also many which can.

The strange thing about luck is that it seems to come in runs, so that when a man is lucky at one thing he expects to be lucky at another. That is a common experience behind which a psychological principle of transference may operate. It may be partially explained by the fact that success puts us in a good frame of mind, gives us self-confidence and self-reliance. There is no doubt that luck appears to spread, since a man usually applies the confidence and courage gained by a stroke of luck beyond the sphere in which he has been lucky. I often met men who told me that success or luck in one thing gave them the self-confidence which brought them success in other completely unrelated fields, while misfortune in one thing led to misfortune in others. I heard incredible stories of persistent luck or, even more often, of misfortune which would sadden all believers in the laws which govern averages. Some men suffer a whole chain of misfortunes, all of them accidental, but, taken together, looking like the persecutions of a malignant fate; and some men have an equally strange run of good luck.

'I never say that I am lucky because I believe with the Greeks that the gods are jealous of our happiness', I was told by a young man who was very happy for a short while until his wife was suddenly taken ill and died.

'Have you noticed that when we talk of luck we always attribute it to others: "He was lucky or they were lucky."' And you often hear the proverb: 'It's better to be born lucky than rich.'

Miners believe in luck more than others. 'If you are lucky, you are as safe in the pits as at home', they say. 'If you are unlucky, you can break a leg walking slowly in the street.'

The belief in his luck gives a man a reason for self-assertion and pride, and makes him envied and praised by other people.

If a man is lucky, he tends to believe in himself and to

believe that he has a certain merit in him, unseen by others, which is being rewarded by an unseen power.

If it is known, too, that a man is lucky he will have plenty of friends and will be leader among them. 'It's better to have a lucky leader than a brainy one,' an ex-Service man who had done badly for himself told me, 'but the chances are that a lucky man will always be thought brainy, because people judge by results. If a man has lost his money in business, no one believes it was because he was unlucky, as it was in my case, but everyone thinks it was because he was a fool. I had some money when I came out of the Forces and had three unfortunate ventures, because of circumstances which I could not foresee. It was not my fault in any way, but the funny thing about it was that I began to think myself that I had lost my money through my own stupidity. Being unlucky means, in fact, being stupid. No one can help believing that, because everyone judges by results and we end up judging ourselves by results as well.'

Most workers do not believe they are lucky. They often say: 'If I was lucky I wouldn't be a worker. I was unlucky in one thing – I was born poor.' 'You must realize,' a bus conductor, himself a gambler and a man who had studied his own state of mind, told me, 'that a working-class chap is an under-dog and feels like one. He is not satisfied with present conditions, so he often escapes into a world of dreams. This world he finds in religion, socialism, or gambling. Socialism is a dream for him in society, religion a dream both for him and for humanity as a whole, and gambling is a dream for himself personally. He can't hope to save enough to get out of his dreary existence. He can't work himself up; that is open only to a very few of the best men. The only way out of the mines, or cotton mills, or foundry work, or navvy work on the road, is to win in a big way. Only in that way can he gain his real freedom.'

The other main reason for the popularity of gambling in Britain lies in the attraction of sport combined with the

element of chance. Gambling here is not simply gambling on figures, as it is, for instance, in France and other continental countries which hold national lotteries. Dice is played only by a few of the spiv type. Cards or dominoes are much less popular than they used to be. Snooker is played for money but the stakes are small; darts are played more as an accompaniment to beer than for any other reason. The Irish Sweep, since it has been declared illegal in this country, has lost considerably in popularity. The popularity of all games of pure chance has dropped considerably since the advent of pools and dog races. The worker gambles on the chances of football teams, dogs, and horses, and there is also some underhand though unimportant betting on the chances of boxers or speedway racers or tennis champions, mainly by young people.

I have already described what sport means to the British worker. If he cannot take an active part in it he can take a passive interest, and betting on sportsmen's chances is half-way to active participation. By putting a cross by the name of a football team on his coupon, a man identifies himself with the team, and feels he is almost playing with it. When the forecast he puts down in black and white proves to be right, he is almost as proud as the team itself. And when he wins he thinks himself a clever chap with a sort of sixth sense. Even if the dividend is only a small one, he still feels clever and intuitive. Sport, after all, consists in self-assertion in competition. Competition has decreased in modern society, especially among the working classes, so men seek it where they can find it.

Business men have elements of competition in their ordinary economic activities, either in their own business or on the Stock Exchange. 'They all gamble and nobody says a word about it,' workmen often say; 'the gains are not even taxed, but every church leader fulminates at even the most innocent and harmless ways of gambling. They can have their drinking-parties which cost hundreds of pounds,

but we can't even have our bloody pubs.' It is not accident that the bets on pools are called investments and the winnings dividends. Business men are investors, and so are the football pool punters. The stakes are their investments, and why not? The Stock Exchange investments can be lost, and so can theirs; on the Stock Exchange they can multiply by thousands, and so they can on the pools.

Many people believe that gambling breaks the monotony of life more than anything else. The man whose life is governed entirely by habit is more prone to engage in gambling than a man whose life has more variety in it. 'Anyway,' a good observer among workmen told me, 'I have found that the more a man stays put and the more fed up he is with his life, the more he will set his hopes on gambling. A man with the initiative to do something in life, to look for another job and change the way of his life, will be less likely to go in for gambling.' And another man confirmed him with: 'I'm sick of hearing: "If I win on the pools." People keep on and on saying it. They haven't the guts to do anything about their life, but want a shilling to do the trick for them. I tell them: "If you are fed up with your job, try something new. There might be more in you than you think, and something new may bring it out." But they are afraid of trying and leave everything to luck. Luck has become the modern idol.'

Men who are handicapped physically or in any other way are more prone to gambling than men who are physically fit and resolute, and who can take risks to improve their life.

Gambling does not belong to the realm of rational behaviour, and to explain it you must study the depths of the human mind. From both the human and the sociological point of view gambling forms one of the most exciting of man's activities. It is a form of bargaining and trading in hope.

15

HOBBIES

SPORTS, drinking, and gambling by no means cover the whole field of working-class pastimes. The range of pastimes, which are known collectively as hobbies, is enormous and satisfies a great variety of interests.

The term 'hobby' is used in more than one sense. In the widest sense it means the main attractive pursuit in life, always provided it is a source of satisfaction. Drinking and gambling in an unhappy way would not be called a hobby. Some men say 'Drinking is my hobby,' but they smile ironically as if they meant: 'I know it's not a real hobby.' It is a confession that they have no hobby, but spend their leisure indulging their bad habits. Men do not usually regard gambling on dogs as a hobby, but they may say that filling in football coupons is a hobby because it is a way of spending their leisure which they regard as satisfying.

Some people say: 'My work is my hobby', meaning that it is the main attraction of their life; or 'My family life is my hobby', meaning by it that they find the greatest pleasure and refreshment in playing with their children or relaxing at home. Others call going to the cinema or to dance halls their hobby, or watching cricket, or football, or tennis.

When you speak to working men about their hobbies you will immediately be told that 'one man's meat is another man's poison'. A man working in an engineering factory may be bored stiff and feel thoroughly dissatisfied with the work, while another man may spend his whole leisure time using the engineer's tools in making models. A carpenter may be very dissatisfied with his work while a labourer in the building trade may spend hours in wood-carving and in making wooden toys. Often I felt the bitter

irony which bound one man to a trade he hated, while another man who loved it was kept away from it. How much happier the world would be if such men could change places with one another, and if each man could choose the trade which suited him best. 'Look here,' I have often wanted to say to a disgruntled engineer for example, 'your next-door neighbour, who is a bricklayer, would be entirely happy handling your tools. Wouldn't you like to change places with him?' But any suggestion of this kind would have been impracticable except perhaps to very young men. The selection of jobs for adolescents is far from perfect and badly needs to be improved.

Working men will tell you that 'without a hobby you might as well be dead'. This can easily be supported by the actual cases from life. I sometimes came across men who told me that they had no hobbies – no pub-going, no gambling, no sports, not even sex, but they were derelict and wretched. They had lost the joy of life, and were drifting through it. One middle-aged telegraphist with sad eyes told me: 'There was a time when I had lots of hobbies. I was fond of gardening. I took an active interest in my union. But now I have lost all my interests. I had domestic troubles and that started me drifting.' A man without hobbies is like driftwood in the sea.

Hobbies give a man something to love and something in which to find freedom. A working man has very little freedom and like the rest of us he must often do what he dislikes. Work is often simply something which gives him a living, something he dislikes and would not do unless he is forced to it. But in his hobbies he regains his freedom; they are often the last thing left to modern man in which he can find freedom. The working man hates, therefore, all attempts to interfere with his leisure, and treats with scorn and contempt anyone who tells him how he should or should not spend it and his money. To the intellectual, freedom means first of all freedom of thought, or freedom of political action. To the working man it means first of all

freedom to do what he likes in his leisure time, freedom from oppression at work and freedom to choose where and when he will work. But he knows that his freedom of choice of a job is often more formal than real, and that when the Labour Exchange tells him that at present there is no work in his district but labouring in the building industry, or farmwork, or mining, he has to accept what is offered him, whether he likes it or not. But in his hobbies at least he is free. Then he is served by others as he wants to be.

The worker's idea of the good life is of one divided between work and play. 'All work and no play is slavery,' he thinks; 'all play and no work futility.' When he works he serves others; when he plays they serve him. Life consists of giving and taking. 'In my work,' he says, 'I am serving others, doing as they like, giving to them. In my free time I should be served by them.'

Giving service and accepting it from others is like contributing to a common fund of service and then drawing on it. A good life consists in finding the right balance between the giving and the taking. A man who gives nothing is a waster, and treated with contempt. But a man whose life is spent entirely at work is no better than a pitiable slave.

The economist is concerned with the equilibrium of economic forces, the worker is concerned with the equilibrium between work and play. When he talks of this he brings out his first sceptical and pessimistic opinion: 'Some men have all the fun in the world and don't do a stroke of work,' he says. 'And others have all the drudgery and nothing else. Why is it?'

If in a wide sense hobbies are a man's main attraction in life, in a stricter sense they consist of some satisfying *active* way of spending leisure time. All watching of other people's activities is here excluded. Cinemas or attendance at matches will in this sense of the word not be regarded as hobbies; but sports or dancing will be.

Sports and dancing are often denied to be hobbies in the strictest sense of the word. In this strictest sense of all, a hobby consists in doing something creative or recreative with hand or brain.

The workers prefer manual hobbies to purely cultural hobbies. Reading is fairly popular with certain types of men, but serious books are read only by a very small number of the most intelligent. Of serious books biographies – especially of sportsmen – travel books, and historical books are the most popular. Technical books are read mostly by apprentices, by young men who aspire to supervisory grades, and by the higher grades of craftsmen and draughtsmen. Books on religion or socialism are read only by the few. The most widely read are books of adventure stories, detective stories, and thrillers. Love stories are much less popular, especially among young boys. Reading of light fiction and frequent cinema-going often go together.

The playing of musical instruments is another cultural hobby practised fairly often, and the practice is growing. I met a number of men who played the piano accordion, the flute, the clarinet, the saxophone, or even the piano or the violin, more often in Wales than anywhere else. Choirs, too, are very popular in some parts of the country. Dramatic societies, reading and discussion groups are other cultural hobbies, although their popularity is unfortunately not increasing at present. The study groups of the W.E.A. are little used by manual workers, and in many places the local Workers' Educational Association is supported mainly by the middle classes.

The plastic arts, drawing, painting, sculpture, engraving, and especially photography, are all practised, often skilfully, as can be seen from the workers' exhibitions which take place from time to time. One of these was the Exhibition of Art and Handicrafts by British Miners, which took place in London in October 1947 and showed the wide artistic interests of the men.

Handicrafts, like carpentry, toy-making, aero-modelling, leather-work, pewter-work, and so on, are of course much more popular than purely artistic and cultural pursuits. Some men make toys for children, some model yachts or boats, some model aeroplanes or model engines and locomotives, and some model wireless sets. The most popular single craft is undoubtedly carpentry. As one carpenter explained to me, 'It is because Jesus was a carpenter and because carpentry is taught at school.' Carpenters have expressed the view that the school curriculum depresses their trade because too many boys want to take up carpentry as a job.

Model-making and other handicrafts are taken up as hobbies mostly by labourers or clerical workers who have no opportunity of using tools in their work, and less often by those who use other kinds of tools in their work, and so expressing themselves do not feel the same need to use their hands and tools in hobbies.

Among the more active hobbies gardening holds first place. Here again it can be seen that men choose as a hobby something as unlike their normal work as possible; coal-miners or foundry workers or dockers or navvies are not generally fond of gardening because it is too heavy and often involves bending. But on the whole gardening is a popular hobby with the British workers, whenever they have a chance of following it. In slummy areas of course you cannot expect gardens to be well kept, but in the country places they are often very attractive. Since the war gardening has become much more popular than it was, and the emphasis is on vegetables rather than flowers. A working man is practical and likes to have something to show for his efforts. Gardening often brings in a little extra money, and is a very popular hobby with railwaymen, engineers, printers, and many others. Workmen are often prize-winners at garden and flower shows, and from talking to them I learned quite a lot about gardening.

Another popular hobby is the breeding or keeping of animals of all kinds. The breeding of poultry or bees is confined to the country, but in the suburbs men can breed canaries, goldfish, pigeons, or – most popular of all – dogs. Miners are particularly fond of dogs and often breed greyhounds and whippets for racing. This may be a source of extra earnings. I met men who undertake to look after animals for their owners, trim dogs, and perform all kinds of other services for animals.

I could write a whole chapter on what the working man has to say about his dogs: 'I prefer dogs to human beings. They are natural, but we can't be', and to say someone is natural is the biggest compliment the working man can give him; or 'You can trust them', he says, or 'I like talking to my dog better than I do to anyone, he can't talk back', or 'They are true friends, and won't let you down when you need them', or 'They love you in an unselfish way', or 'They are just like human beings. The only difference is they can't talk; but that makes them all the better.' Stories and films about dogs are very popular, and the working man often takes his dog to the pub. I have seen dogs drinking beer in the pub with their masters, and I have even seen some which got tight.

Fishing is another very relaxing and satisfying hobby which can also bring money; and much fishing is done not only at the sea but also on rivers and lakes. Even in London you can see signs of their real affection for animals. The Zoo is the most popular place of entertainment in London. Many workmen find feeding and watching pigeons in Trafalgar Square a very interesting pastime, and leaving tit-bits and crumbs for the birds on the window-sill is a widespread habit. The working man has a reverence for life in all its forms. Cruelty to animals disgusts him more than anything, and you may be sure that if he sees a case of it he will intervene quickly, although his principle is usually not to interfere as long as he can help it.

Some workmen have 'bread and butter hobbies', developing an extra trade in their spare time. I knew a shop assistant who acted as a handyman at week-ends, a labourer in the building trade who acted as a decorator and painter, and a clerk who acted as an attendant at a dog track two nights a week. This makes a change, and sometimes gives them the feeling of acting a part; and it gives them pocket-money for smoking, drinking, and gambling.

Collecting is very rare among the workers; even stamp-collecting is not very popular. The possessive urges of the worker are weak and certainly have no chance of being cultivated. He does not, of course, collect china, pictures, or rugs, or period silver. Even books or gramophone records are rarely collected, although I have come across a few men who did collect these things.

Hobbies often lead to a man changing his job when he acquires some new skill, and men are often more successful in these new jobs since their interest in them is deeper and more genuine than it was in their old job.

Hobbies probably express a man's whole personality more truly than work itself does, because he works through necessity, but follows his hobby through choice.

Hobbies try to bring colour into the dullness of our industrial civilization. Repetitive jobs are inevitable, but satisfying hobbies can counteract the effects of an over-mechanical life. Hobbies are the vitamins of a workman's life. The more satisfying our work and home, the less outside stimulus we need. But even to men with an ideal background to their lives, hobbies are a means of relaxation and pleasure, something which enriches their lives and also adds to their skill and self-confidence. A lack of hobbies is a very dangerous sign, and a man who loses all his hobbies should see a doctor about it.

Sometimes, however, hobbies grow in importance far beyond their proper place in life and become a substitute for work instead of a complement to it. Hobbies should

enrich life, but not fill it entirely. A man whose only interest is in his hobby is likely to be apathetic about his work.

Hobbies, like everything else, are subject to exaggeration and abuse.

16

CLOTHING STANDARDS AND HABITS

THE clothing standards and habits of the workers are a fascinating subject of study. Clothes reflect our personality and at the same time they reflect environment. Personal and social factors are too closely interwoven to be separated.

Personal factors such as age, marital status, pastimes, education and upbringing, job and income level, individual desires and values, and physiological characteristics (especially circulation), the texture of the skin and general health, may be reflected in a man's clothing habits.

A man who wants to conform to the standards of the community will dress differently from a man who is anxious to assert himself and to express his own personality. A man who wants to please others or attract women will dress differently from a man who has developed a 'don't care' spirit. A man who does not feel the cold will dress differently from a man who feels constantly cold, and a man with skin irritations will dress differently from a normal man.

Social factors also find expression in clothes. Taste, values, and desires are personal, but they are moulded, at least in part, by the social environment. The customs and standards of the group, the family, the district, of friends and work-mates, all have their influence. Advertising and salesmanship, conditions of work and opportunities for pastimes and hobbies, prices and wages, all influence our clothing standards and habits.

The first and chief distinction in clothing standards and habits is between age-groups. Young, middle-aged, and old men not only dress differently from one another, but spend a different proportion of their income on clothes.

A young single man of 20 to 25 will spend nearly twice as much on clothes as a middle-aged man of, say, 45 to 50, and three times as much as a man of 65 to 70. The clothes of a young man show a desire to attract women, to appear smart and attractive, the desire for excitement (shown in frequent changes and new clothes), and the desire for self-assertion (which has both sexual and economic sources). Those of an older man show his gregarious instincts, the desire to conform to the views and habits of the group, the need for protection from cold and rain. A young man's clothes will be varied and sometimes extravagant, while those of an older man will be more drab and uniform. You will find great difference between the age-groups, whatever garments you choose for comparison – suits, underwear, gloves, or hats. Young men will more frequently wear a complete suit of the one material, while old men will be more inclined to wear oddments. Older men wear woollen vests, while young men wear cotton or rayon or none at all. Young men often wear raincoats, and older men woollen overcoats. Most young men wear nothing on their heads; older men caps, and some middle-aged men trilbies. Young men do not like to show they are workmen in their dress, and try to conform to the standards of the middle classes, while older men are content to be taken for what they are.

The fact that a man is married affects his clothing standards and habits in many ways. 'You don't run after a bus when you've boarded it,' one man remarked cynically to me. There is no need for him to look attractive; he no longer goes to dances, and will probably not go out as often as he used to. He has less money to spend because all his clothes must be bought with his pocket-money. His clothes will be better kept, dusted, and cleaned, and greater stress will be laid on comfort and respectability than on attractiveness. The wife's taste will often play a greater part than his own. 'My wife doesn't like me to look too attractive,' a man said to me.

The clothes of the workers are not often brightly coloured, extravagant, or showy. The great majority, even of young single men, prefer quiet respectable colours, preferably blue, brown, and grey.

Leisure time activities give rise to great differences in ways of dressing. A man dresses, in fact, according to his pastimes. A regular pub-goer will dress shabbily, a football player will dress better and have a sporty look about him, a man who is fond of dancing and cinemas will be very well dressed indeed, and will keep himself smart and neat. There is no doubt that the worst dressed is the regular pub-goer: firstly because he has little money to spare, secondly because rubbing shoulders in a smoky packed bar does not help to keep clothes at their best, and thirdly because there is a tradition that shabby clothes are worn by pub-goers. Cloth caps and mufflers are worn in pubs more than anywhere else; and even the crowds at dog-racing stadiums are better dressed than the regular pub-goers, chiefly because many race-goers are middle-class men, and secondly because those who win from time to time invest their 'dividends' in good clothes.

With practice you can tell the way a man spends his evenings by the way he dresses. Whenever I met a very well-dressed young man, I was often right when I said to him: 'You are interested in dances, shows, and films', and when I saw a man who looked completely abandoned I could see that he had no hobby at all and was a drunkard addicted to gambling.

Environment plays a big part in clothing traditions and standards. A docker's clothes are quite different from those of a Park Royal engineering worker. Dockers, navvies, heavy labourers, and road workers have their own traditional standards and habits which are different from those of factory workers and engineers, although the differences in what they wear in their leisure time are growing smaller. The same can be said about the standards and habits of different districts. Slum people have their

own standards and habits, but here again the differences between them and the standards of others are less pronounced than they were.

Social status, as expressed in grades and wages, obviously determines clothing standards. Men in authority, foremen, inspectors, supervisors, black-coated workers, and men applying for better jobs have to wear better clothes than labourers, although the distinction is not as great as it used to be and is growing even smaller.

The part played by clothes in getting a job is very important. A man who is shabbily dressed becomes helpless, hopeless, and condemned to a gutter life. I remember an ex-hairdresser telling me that he could get a job if he had decent clothes. A labourer cannot find digs for himself unless he is decently dressed, and is condemned to living in hostels. The casual wards, which are now called rehabilitation centres, try to provide their inmates with suitable clothes so that they can get a job. One head of an institution in London told me that in most cases this is successful, but that a third of the men pawn or sell the clothes and when they have spent all, they come back in their ragged clothes to try the same thing over again.

All this applies primarily to clothes worn in leisure time and not to what is worn at work. That is a problem on its own and a very important one in the worker's life. The distinction between what is worn at work and what is worn at home is important in all classes, but in none so important as it is in the working class. The worker spends quite a lot on his working clothes, the wear and tear of which might be regarded as part of the cost of production. Work clothes are provided free in only a few trades such as transport and distribution which provide uniforms for their workmen. There are also firms which provide overalls and boiler-suits for their workers, but until now this has been exceptional, and more and more often the demand is heard that work clothes should be provided free by employers as part of the cost of production.

The clothing requirements of each job are, of course, different from those of every other. Coal-miners need safety boots, a large number of socks and pants, old trousers, and a jacket. The following figures were given to me by an experienced docker: 'In a year I need two pairs of boots, four pairs of trousers, six shirts, six pairs of cotton vests, and twelve pairs of socks.' Navvies, road workers, and other heavy labourers need boots, socks, and trousers most of all, but also vests, shirts, and jackets, if they have to carry loads on their backs. There are jobs in which five pairs of boots and six pairs of trousers a year are needed. Grease, oil, petrol, cement, asphalt, metal powders, starch, cotton cake, coke, coal, and fumes are all very injurious to working clothes; small accidents must be taken into account and the effect of constant handling of goods, machines, and tools. Factory workers need overalls and boiler-suits, although there are a great many who, feeling uncomfortable and tight in such garments or disliking the drab uniformity, never wear them. A man usually needs more work clothes than his worn-out home clothes can provide him with, so he has to buy them in second-hand shops or from his mates. The ability to stand hard wear is the most important consideration. Oddments of clothing are cheap and constantly replaced from the weekly wages, while leisure clothes are bought out of savings, windfalls from gambling, extras earned by overtime at week-ends, or any other occasional earnings. You often hear it said that a man who does not save has no clothes to wear in his leisure time, because in recent years they have become so expensive.

Most men have at least one best suit. Some wear their very best on Sundays and special occasions, and their second best for a change after work if they go out. 'The Sunday suit used to be a special institution, it was specially cared for and kept clean. Things are different now,' a man who worked in a tailoring business told me. Most men change at week-ends, but not all change on weekday

evenings; it depends on their jobs and on their way of spending their leisure time.

The worker's ideas on clothes are definite and highly significant.

The worker does not believe in heavy clothes. 'A lot of clothes don't make you feel warm,' is a very common opinion. He is a firm believer in fresh air and exercise. 'It isn't good for you to wear too many clothes, it's not natural,' he says. The manual worker probably has a better circulation than a sedentary worker and does not feel cold as much. An outdoor worker is often more lightly dressed than a man working indoors, because his circulation is better. 'Warmth comes from inside not from outside.' 'The more you wrap yourself up, the colder you feel. Good circulation is all that matters.' This attitude is shown in the way the majority dress. Most workmen do not wear gloves in winter, and even on frosty days I have seen a great many men on outdoor jobs handling things with their bare hands. Young ex-Service men are more inclined to wear gloves than other workers.

Most young men do not wear anything on their heads and the tendency is to drop both the cap and the trilby. 'The face and hands are meant to be uncovered, and you feel all right if you get used to it,' they say.

On very cold winter nights in January and February I have seen in working-class districts about half the men in ordinary woollen coats, a third in raincoats and mackintoshes, about a tenth without any coat at all, and the rest in sports coats and leather jackets.

Service in the Forces has a very important effect on the clothing habits of the working classes, because men get used to wearing certain garments, such as gloves, woollen overcoats, collars and ties, and woollen underwear, and they continue to wear them in civilian life. Army life helps on the whole to reduce the distinctions in clothing standards between the classes.

Lack of ostentation is another characteristic of the

workers' way of dressing. Smartness is not valued highly by the majority of them; on the contrary it is treated with suspicion. The worker thinks of a spiv as overdressed, wearing bright colours and over-padded shoulders; and a man who appears in the pub smartly dressed is taken for a 'fiddler'. The desire to conform is stronger in the working classes than it is anywhere else, and this is seen even in the way the young are dressed.

It may interest the reader to know that the best-dressed men among workers are foreigners, especially coloured workers; because by dressing well they can compensate for their sense of inferiority. I met coloured workers who spent half their wages on clothes, some spending as much as £120 a year buying enormous numbers of suits, shirts, shoes, ties, and coats, all in bright colours, and changing them constantly.

The coloured man says that a badly dressed 'blackie' is taken for a beggar. The foreign worker, such as the E.V.W., also feels the need for self-assertion, especially if he has spent a long time in a concentration camp. He does not speak the language properly and does not know the ways of the country; so that, if he wants to be taken for someone, he must at least be well dressed. Sometimes national pride comes into it. Poles, especially ex-Service men, often say: 'They mustn't think that we are a lousy lot. We must keep up our standards. A man can dress as he likes in his own country, especially if everyone knows him.'

In the clothing standards of the workers the magnitude of the social changes in the last few decades can be seen more clearly than in anything else. Here are some workers' comments on the past:

A London policeman, a thoughtful man and a great admirer of Shaw: 'Enormous progress has been made during the last forty years in every way. Before the 1914 war you could see little children, barefoot and in rags, begging from people in the street. Now they are all decently dressed and wearing shoes, and run happily around

with ice-cream in their hands. This contrast shows best the changes in the last thirty years.'

A general secretary of a mixed union of both craftsmen and labourers: 'Forty years ago our national conferences looked like crowds of beggars, and I was the best-dressed man there. Now at our meetings most men are better dressed than I am. When I compare conditions now with those forty years ago, I am very hopeful. Don't believe the pessimists who say that there is no progress. This country is a workers' paradise compared with what it was thirty years ago.'

A district secretary in a union on the north-east coast, an elderly man: 'Men in my youth were dressed in dirty rags, and when man's clothes are ragged and dirty, his mind becomes ragged too. Cleanliness and intelligence, cleanliness and good manners, cleanliness and self-respect – they all go together.'

A middle-aged workman from the East End: 'When I was young the cockney wore a muffler instead of a collar. The more respectable ones wore a paper collar on Sundays, and if they were even more respectable a dicky with a 1½*d.* collar, and paper cuffs. All these dickies and paper collars and cuffs have disappeared completely, and mufflers are worn by only a few old men. In my days you could tell a workman by his dress, even on a Sunday, but you can't now. The funny thing is that the clothes standards of the working classes have risen considerably during the time of clothes rationing, not of course because of rationing, but because of full employment and good wages. In my days most workmen bought their clothes on the hire-purchase system, or by checks from special clothing clubs or "diddle'm clubs" in the pubs; but nowadays most clothes are bought for cash, although the hire-purchase system is coming in again.'

Social distinctions in clothing standards have certainly considerably lessened in the last thirty or forty years. In fact in a Sunday crowd you can hardly distinguish the

working classes from the middle classes, especially in the age-group between twenty and thirty. The fondness for sports, and the belief in genuineness, have removed all the paper collars, dickies, and paper cuffs and they have given the working man more of a sportsman's appearance. The cloth cap, once a marked working-class feature, is disappearing except among some classes of workmen, such as navvies, heavy labourers, dockers, farmers, and road sweepers.

This tendency to drop all class distinctions in dress reveals what is going on in the worker's mind more than anything he says on the subject of class distinctions. There is no doubt that the clothing standards and habits of the working class have come considerably closer to those of the middle classes, the middle-class standards falling because of economic pressure, and the working-class standards going up.

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T. KALLUPATTI

17

'DO YOU BELIEVE IN SAVING?'

MOST workers say: 'I don't believe in saving.' This way of stating that they 'believe' in saving or do not 'believe' in it is very characteristic, and shows that the problem of saving has a deep significance for the workers' life. There are good and bad savers among them, of course, as there are in other classes, but good savers are rare and not generally liked. The urge to save may exist as much as it does in other classes, but it is often frustrated by the conditions of life and there is a very basic prejudice against it.

The conditions of life are still such that for the great majority present needs always appear far more important than future needs. A worker often finds that his savings have to be used for something; that he cannot save long enough to accumulate a useful amount. He falls ill and draws nothing but his sick pay, or he is on the dole, or he needs clothes or a piece of furniture, or his family wants a holiday, or an extra treat at Christmas, or one of his friends is in urgent need of help. But even if he is lucky all his life, he needs amusements to keep his mental and emotional balance. A man cannot simply work and save and have nothing in return; he would look on that as a form of slavery. His recreations, which are mostly costly, are not only his means of relaxing but his way of making and keeping friends. He needs friendship and enjoyment more than anything, and at present more than ever before. There are men among the working classes who do nothing but work and save, the 'born savers' who get pleasure from the act of saving as such, but they are very infrequent among the working classes.

'My brother is such a saver,' a railway worker told me. 'He lives only for his money. And he is always complaining

that he is lonely and longs for company. But who would want the company of a man like that? He hasn't married because marriage is too expensive, and he never had any girls or any men friends, because they are too expensive as well. I can't make out what point there is in his life; he might as well be dead.'

I asked some steady and reasonable men with a wide experience of life: 'What kind of man do you prefer, a man who throws away his money or a miser?' And the answer was nearly always: 'Give me a spendthrift any day. You don't realize that a miser is a vicious animal, and thank God only very few of our men are misers.'

Wealth, ambition, greed, and fear, and all that they bring with them, are hated by the workers. A miser is an anti-social creature and as such is regarded with the greatest contempt. He takes more from life than he puts in, destroying values uselessly. He is a money-grabber, and in the eyes of a workman money-grabbing is the worst of sins. A niggard is against the solidarity of the workers, treats his fellow workers with contempt, and lacks tolerance, friendliness, and contact with other people. He thinks only of himself.

The urge to save militates against the worker's basic attitude to life, with its strong concentration on the present. His frequent 'hand to mouth' existence is the result not only of hard conditions, but of his whole attitude to life. He has so much to worry about that he realizes that worrying about the future is not only useless, but harmful to him as well. A worker will often, when he talks about worry, explain that he lives in the present. He may say: 'I take life as it comes', or 'Nothing is worth worrying about', or 'Worry can kill a cat', or 'There's no such thing as to-morrow', or 'I may be dead to-morrow'. And these remarks all mean more or less the same thing. A man with little to worry him, and who can afford to go to psychologists and doctors or to take a holiday whenever he wants one, can worry without damaging his prospects in life, but

a worker who starts worrying is finished; he simply cannot stand, with the hardness of the life he leads, any such strain. A worker must take life as it comes, because so many things may happen to him that he cannot begin to insure himself against them.

'When a worker starts worrying about the future and saving for his old age, he is heading for trouble,' a railway porter told me. 'He'll try doing too much. He'll enjoy himself less, and that will tell in his work, as well as at home. But tell me,' he asked, 'when do you expect a worker to start saving, when he is young or when he is getting on?"

Age, of course, plays an important part in saving. A young man does not think about saving for his old age; he says there will be time enough for it when he is fifty; but when he reaches his fifties, his strength and earning capacity decline and he is out of work more often than before.

The workers feel their individual helplessness in making provision against the uncertainties of life, and they rely on collective arrangements to provide the security they need. Their wish for social security is an expression of their deep sense of insecurity of their life, and they achieve by collective efforts what the middle classes do by their individual efforts. The 'Welfare State' should make provision for their security, helped, if necessary, by their own compulsory contributions. A workman, living, as he does, always on the edge of disasters, cannot be relied upon to provide for himself; that should be the duty of the State and other social bodies. It is this sense of individual helplessness that is the basis of all their ideas of the brotherhood of men, and of all their collective endeavours – the trade unions, the co-operatives, the friendly societies.

And all this probably accounts for the fact that disciplined individual saving (especially saving without an immediate purpose) is looked on with suspicion. In the worker's mind pure saving, that is, saving for the sake of accumulating money, is linked with money-grabbing, which is looked on as a way of exploiting one's fellows,

socially and economically. A saver is a man who wants to desert his fellows, the worker thinks; a social climber who wants to change sides. How stupid to think he can do it! 'Have you ever seen a man who became a millionaire by saving?' he often asks sarcastically.

Saving is an anti-social act in the sense that it withdraws money from circulation, and money in circulation means jobs. The theory that 'saving puts your pals out of a job, and spending is giving them a job' is very widely held among the working classes, and it is very difficult to convince them that this is not always true. They agree that it does not hold in war-time, but say that in times of peace saving leads inevitably to under-consumption and therefore over-production. In fact the Keynesian conception of saving reflects the current ideas of the working man. A middle-class man regards the born saver as the benefactor of the society, because on his saving depends so much of his advancement and the maintaining of his position. When he loses his money he loses his position, and like a manual worker has to sell his labour power. Both the middle-class and working-class men's views on the 'born saver' are the rationalization of their own situations.

But all this applies to pure saving, not to saving as a form of deferred spending. The working man saves quite a lot, considering his low income, but mostly for a specific and not too distant object. The objectives for which a man saves are of course innumerable, and I can mention here only some of the most typical cases. I met a craftsman in the building industry who had saved as much as £300, mostly during the war, and, through a building society, bought a small cottage. He was very much in love with his fiancée, and they both saved to get married.

I met a young lorry-driver who from his £6 wage put aside £1 every week, mostly for clothes and holidays, and gave another £1 to his fiancée for the fund they were contributing to together to buy furniture when they got married. They would need, as he said, at least £80 for that.

Engaged couples saving together is a fairly frequent occurrence. 'Getting married needs money,' a railway foreman reminded me.

I met young workers who saved up to a hundred pounds for a radiogram, a television set, or a motor-bicycle. I met also men who saved in a building society for buying their own house, and also a few ambitious men who saved to set up a garage, or a bakery, or a small shop, but they were very few compared with the number who save to buy some more expensive articles in the shops, or for holidays and a better Christmas.

The four most frequent objects of saving are: to get married, to buy clothes, to have money for holidays, or for Christmas. These are enough to absorb all the savings of a young man up to the time of his marriage, and, after all, it is estimated that about 70 per cent do marry at some time of their lives. And when a man is married his capacity to save is diminished by the fact that his wage-packet is divided strictly into two – household money and pocket-money, and his savings have to come mostly out of his pocket-money.

For a married man with a home of his own the most popular objects for saving are again: clothes, holidays, Christmas, things for the children, and things for the house; and that never comes to an end. A married man has, apart from these, the need to save for a rainy day; and after more than three years on social investigations, I can say with assurance that it always seems to be a rainy day for someone in working-class homes. A married man who makes no provision for a rainy day must sooner or later go under. All the social and health services, and the dole, do not absolve a worker from the necessity to save. When he is on the dole he gets only a fraction of his normal wage – two-fifths, or sometimes even one-third of it, and still has to give his wife her housekeeping money, because food and rent must be paid for all the same. If a worker wants to lead a normal existence, he has to provide for a rainy day, and

most workers do this by keeping a certain fixed reserve on which they can fall back in an emergency. Usually the reserve is between £20 and £30, and many men discontinue saving for this purpose when they have saved this amount.

The best age for saving is the middle years of a man's life, when he is earning the best wages at his trade, when his wife is free from the need to look after the children and goes out to work, or when the children pay for their keep. A man should be able to save at that age, because the supply of money is better than it is at any other time, and the temptations of life have weakened; but many men like to make up for lost time in youth, and feel the craving for an easier life, and for the gratification of their unfulfilled desires.

Saving for old age starts relatively late in life, when the best years have gone and the wage-packets become smaller and less regular, except in the case of those who save through a superannuation scheme in their firm, trade union, or friendly society; but men who make use of these schemes are still in a minority.

Nowhere can the value of even small savings be more clearly seen than in homes or institutions for old people, where a few coppers for a smoke and a cup of tea in a café, or half a pint of beer in a pub, can make all the difference between happiness and utter misery. When I visited the institutions (former workhouses for old people) I heard the pathetic complaints of men deserted by their families and friends: 'What a fool I was to throw away my money. I could use it here.'

But this late-found wisdom is invariably painful and useless. The will to save increases with the years, but the power to save gets less. Anyway I can testify that I met excellent savers among old-age pensioners who carried on with their work, some of them saving as much as £2 a week.

But most old men, even those in their seventies, who were comfortably off through continuing at their jobs, rarely regretted wasting money in their youth. They often

said: 'You should enjoy life while you can. No amount of money can make you enjoy it when you are old and tired. What is the use of giving up pleasures to save for a time when you can't enjoy them any more? At least I have memories to fall back upon.'

The will or the lack of will to save is the expression of a man's personality, but it is modified by habit and is an important habit in itself. A man who has acquired the habit of saving in his early youth will continue to save all his life, because he feels uncomfortable, and even has a sense of guilt, if he fails to conform to his early standards of behaviour; and a man who is not used to saving from his early life will find it very difficult to start saving later on, even when he sees he is heading for trouble. Some men told me how they had made many unsuccessful attempts to start saving, because it was alien to them. My advice to all social reformers and educators who want to encourage saving is: make young people acquire the habit of saving, because if they get into the habit they will like it, they will continue it even under adverse conditions. The best savers were those whose fathers made them save as boys from their small pocket-money, and I think that penny banks in schools or for boys in factories are worth spreading.

Now what about the worker's ways of saving? They reflect the same feeling of the importance of communal effort. He prefers saving through a friendly society, trade union, or club to saving alone at home, and still less than in a bank or Post Office. He likes to know that he is supported in his saving by his fellows, and that he helps them in his turn.

I met a transport worker in a big store in London who earned £6 a week. He did not put anything aside at home or in the Post Office, but contributed to a number of voluntary insurance schemes. In his firm he paid 2*s.* 1*d.* a week for extra health insurance, which gave him the right to draw his full wages during six weeks of sickness. He paid 2*s.* 11*d.* for superannuation, and expected to get a pension

from his firm equivalent to 1*s.* a week for every year served. He belonged to a Christmas loan club into which he paid 2*s.* 6*d.* every week. He belonged to 'Mutuality', a clothing club into which he paid 3*s.* weekly and got checks with which he bought his clothes. This man made a great effort to save, in spite of the fact that he never bought any saving certificates or banked any money; but apart from the superannuation he will be no better off at the end of the year than he was at the beginning.

Sickness clubs, societies for unemployment benefits, and death and funeral clubs, clothing clubs, superannuation clubs or Salvation Army life insurance, Christmas loan clubs, holiday clubs, subscription to benevolent funds for help in financial distress, or for legal aid or removal grants, are the usual and most popular ways of saving money.

Most craft unions are not only trade organizations but friendly societies as well, and the contributions to these are as a rule larger than the subscription to the trade organization as such. Some trade unions developed into powerful insurance companies with large funds at their disposal. Some craft unions in the printing trade provide not only sickness, infirmity, and death benefits, but superannuation and retirement benefits, removal and emigration grants, legal assistance, and victimization, strike, and lock-out allowances. Some trade unions compensate a man for having casual or part-time employment.

The London Society of Compositors claims to have distributed over a million pounds in unemployment benefits during the period between the wars, apart from its funds for many other benefits, but the contribution a member pays if he wants to share in all the benefits of his union amounts in some cases, I believe, to as much as 13*s.* 6*d.* a week.

For the worker, the ideal way of saving is that which strengthens the ties within his class, and not the way which loosens them by what he regards as a futile effort to escape from one class into another.

However, there can be no doubt that the will and the ability to save as well as the ways of saving are undergoing a constant change for the better, and are tending towards the standards of the middle classes. The health service and social services are more and more relieving the worker from the most severe impact of emergencies, and the rise in wages, full employment, and the improvement in educational standards are all conducive to long-term saving.

THE WORKER IN HIS TRADE UNION

The trade unions do not mean the same thing to every worker, but for some – coal-miners, railwaymen, dockers, building-craftsmen, cotton spinners, printers – there is something sacred about them. The longer and the harder the struggle the unions have been through, the greater the sacrifice their development called for, the worse the conditions which had to be overcome, the dearer they are to their members.

The history of the trade unions is a living part of each union. It is cherished by its members, it is recorded in history books or biographies of their founders. These histories are recalled on anniversary occasions, and the stories retold at celebrations. Occasions such as the recent celebration by the Agricultural Workers' Union of the Tolpuddle Martyrs sentenced to transportation in 1834 for forming a trade union keep the memory of the past alive. The Luddite Movement and other machine-wrecking campaigns in the cotton industry belong to the distant past, but they still linger on in people's memories and contribute to the feeling of distrust and suspicion towards new mechanical inventions, which prevails in the cotton industry more than in any other.

Every union has its own character derived from the past; and has crystallized its past experience into rules and customs. The union is the greatest bulwark of industrial conservatism. 'That has been the practice of our union and it must continue.' 'That is our custom, and always has been.' 'That goes against our practice and we can't tolerate it.' These are the statements one hears time and again and reads in the union reports; and the first duty of the union officials is to defend the past against any changes put

forward by employers or by their own members. These practices are looked upon as the wisdom entrusted to them by the founders, and they are ensuring that what was won with great difficulty and sacrifice in the past shall not be lost by men without experience of suffering in the present.

The unions mean a great deal to the men, even to those who do not bother about attending their meetings or who criticize their policy or leadership. The workmen feel strongly their individual helplessness in more than one way; they could not properly formulate their demands, they would not dare to present them even if they could formulate them, and nobody would listen to them if they made demands on their own. But if they appear in the mass, and have someone who can formulate and press their demands for them, their helplessness disappears. That gives them self-confidence and self-esteem. United, they have unequalled power. A middle-class man would go to his boss alone and press for a wage increase, and the boss would listen to him and argue about it; a miner or a docker or a railwayman would never go to a boss and ask for a wage increase; the boss would think him a fool and show him out at once; the only way he can claim an increase in pay or any improvement in conditions is through his union representative.

The union is his protector against injustice; it is his brain to think for him and formulate his demands and his voice to express them. 'It's so good to feel that you have someone to back you up, that your mates are behind you,' a union man may say. The union stands in the worker's mind for justice. He will not be kicked down and ill-treated. 'If you have a good case, you may be sure that the union will stick up for you,' he says. 'The boss can't get away with any trickery. He must account for it to the union and he knows it, and that's enough to stop him.' The union gives a man not only self-confidence but the feeling that he is not simply a cog in the machine, the feeling that through his union he has a say in industry. His

union is a partner in the judicial system of the industry, there is no dictation as there used to be; no 'take it or leave it' spirit, but bargaining, in which his union represents him.

The mass organization gives the worker his individuality, his freedom, his self-esteem, his self-confidence. A middle-class man has no such experience and cannot understand it; it seems to him rather like a contradiction in terms. A worker does not lose his individuality in his trade union; it is quite the other way round. By identifying himself with the union he gains status and strength in his own eyes and in everyone else's.

The first or perhaps even the only quality which rules in the union is solidarity of its members. If union solidarity is lost, everything is lost; because left to shift for themselves the old methods would return. 'You won't get justice by sympathy, charity, or argument, only by strength,' they say, 'by the strength of the whole body of organized workers.'

The idea of the brotherhood of men is the governing idea of the unions; while the idea of fatherhood is associated with the conception of paternalism and is altogether disliked. 'All men are brethren and ought to help one another' is the motto from which sprang the friendly society work of the unions and the co-operative movement. All union members are addressed officially as 'brothers'. But the paternalism of employers is opposed; what is given as charity and not as the worker's right is not appreciated. Favours are not sought for and often not even accepted; rights are bargained for and embodied in rules and agreements, but what is given beyond that is often regarded as suspect, and the men look for a hidden catch in it.

'Stand together and win' or 'Stand by your mates whatever happens' is another motto which expresses the enormous value of class unity. 'Your mates can never be wrong if they fight the boss class, can they? They must have a grievance, otherwise they wouldn't fight,' is an unreasoned

argument which is often accepted without question when a call comes to join in a fight. It is worth while to practise that solidarity in action from time to time, even in a strike which has little practical meaning, so that it is not forgotten. Solidarity can be taught only in action and every strike is an additional experience which binds men together.

But solidarity means not only observing the whole code of union rules, the transgressing of which is punished by fines and exclusion from the unions, but complying with all the unwritten laws punishable by extensive moral sanctions. To be called a 'blackleg' or a 'scab' by his mates is something no man can in fact survive, and often if he is called one a man has no choice but to move to another place. His mates will refuse to work with him, or put him in the wrong all the time, or chivvy him and ridicule him. Besides, to be deprived of a union card is in many jobs equivalent to loss of employment.

The code of union behaviour differs from union to union, but it always contains a few general principles which can be put in this way:

The first principle is: 'Don't show up your fellow worker if he is weaker, older, or less capable or efficient than you are by working too hard, because that would lead only to general undercutting of wages and more sweat for everyone.' It is more or less the attitude of boys at a public school. A man who shows up his mates is a blackleg, a scab, or a black sheep. No one should push himself forward and climb up on the shoulders of his mates.

'Don't behave in a way that would put other men out of a job.' Accepting too many hours of overtime or consenting to work too many machines would again be blacklegging, because it would create a glut in the market and put other men out of a job.

'Don't work with a non-unionist, if you can help it' – that is another very common principle. A non-unionist gets all the advantages of union members, but has no duties and no charges. He does not observe the code of

union behaviour because it does not bind him. He undermines the position of the union. So he must be ostracized as a blackleg and, if possible, eliminated.

'Protect the labour market from swamping, i.e. don't let a skilled man's job be done by a non-skilled man, or a man's job be done by a woman or a juvenile, because that means cheapening labour and swamping the labour market. Dilution of skill always works against you, so try to keep up the standard of skill.'

Those are the four most important principles in the code of union behaviour which a good unionist must apply.

There is no doubt that the unions are very attractive organizations to belong to and the advantages of belonging to them are plain enough to the majority of workers. They have done more than anything to lift up the worker, to improve the wages and conditions of work and to make his voice heard. There are, however, things which repel him in the unions as there are anywhere else.

There are many workmen who dislike the closed shop practice, regarding this as a tyranny over the worker, especially if the closed shop practice goes with a closed union. The idea that a man has no right to work if he cannot get a union card or if his union card is taken away from him is thoroughly disliked, even among the most ardent unionists. 'But,' they say, 'it can't be helped.'

Many men feel that they are too much in the power of the union, which has embraced too big a field of their activities. Sometimes they feel like babies, coddled and talked at. 'It's good to have the protection, but it isn't pleasant to have no air to breathe,' that complaint is often heard from men whose experience with union officials has not been good. Some unions act as labour agencies which allocate the jobs to their members, and from time to time you hear grievances about this from men who have been disappointed. Union officials are only human, and they naturally prefer their friends to others.

Then there are some men who are very efficient and industrious, the so-called 'go-getters', who think that they could do better single-handed than within the unions. They feel that they could earn much more if freed from the union rules. They believe that union protection is only for the weak, and that their own chances are lowered by being evened out with those of the less efficient, less skilled, and less industrious. They believe that the unions bring down the average performance and the average wage to the standard of the least efficient, the least skilled, and the least industrious.

The unions have grown enormously in recent years, mainly by amalgamation, but also through the natural increase of their membership. At present two-thirds of all trade union members (9,114,000 in 1947) are in seventeen unions with a membership of 100,000 each and more, and about one-fourth of the total membership is in the two largest, the so-called 'omnibus' unions. The large unions have a great many advantages; they can give a more skilful and varied service to their members, and they have a greater power of bargaining for improved wages and working conditions, but their service is by their very nature more impersonal and the touch between the leaders and members less direct. From being local in scope they have become national, and so more remote from an individual centre of trouble. One of the omnibus unions comprises as many as forty industrial sections, each section really forming a union of its own; power rests with the National Executive and the National Secretary, and these cannot keep in personal touch with more than a million of its members in so many industries.

The unions have also changed their character. The times of struggle are over; theirs is the time of achievement and fruition. They have grown not only big but fat. 'Let us sit quietly and enjoy the fruits of victory' is the spirit now. They have accumulated funds which run into hundreds of thousands. For instance, in the printing industry

there are unions which have between £40 and £50 per head of their members. No risks can be taken to endanger the funds or to lose the prestige of the union.

The unions have also changed in their attitude to the employer. In the past the employer was the villain of the piece, but those times are over. In the nationalized industries the owner has disappeared completely, and in private industries he is co-operative, recognizes the union, and grants it its proper place. Many employers prefer their men organized in the union, and even encourage them to join the union, because in that way the workers can be reached and handled, and are more susceptible to arguments and reason, while in a chaotic unorganized mass the forces of irresponsibility and emotionalism come to the fore more easily. Anyway, in large-scale works, which often employ thousands of workers, there is no possibility of managing the workers individually. On the other hand the employers know that the 'take it or leave it' attitude has nowadays little chance of success since the modern worker would not stand for it. In large-scale industry there is no possibility of getting away from the unions, and many employers believe that if the unions did not exist they would have to be invented. The only thing is to know how to deal with them, but unfortunately the knowledge is not very widespread even in high quarters. You have to know the psychology of the particular union and of its class of workers, and no amount of mere generalizations or rational thinking can help you. Even goodwill is not enough in dealing with them, and an employer with less goodwill but who knows the ways of the union from his past experience will be more successful than an employer with a lot of goodwill but no experience.

The unions are at present the bulwark of industrial peace and lawfulness. With the employers' federations and associations, often within the framework of a joint industrial council, they have developed a whole code of industrial behaviour, in hundreds of rules, regulations,

and standards which are kept by both sides. In fact the unions and the employers' associations support one another in keeping up these rules. In many industries there is very close co-operation between the union secretaries and the employers, as well as between their associations. This often breeds suspicions on the part of the workers. In Lancashire you can hear an uncensored expression about the bosses and the union secretaries: 'They piss in the same pot.'

During and since the last war the position of the union leaders was made worse by the Defence Regulations, which made strikes theoretically illegal. An order introduced in July 1940 provided for the compulsory settlement by a National Arbitration Tribunal of any trade disputes. In this way any strike action was theoretically put outside the union province and the leadership often went to other hands.*

Another development of major importance is the political trend within the trade union movement. The trade unions have become not only trade organizations but also political bodies supporting the Labour Party. The leaders are supposed not only to represent their members but to support the Labour Government. This close co-operation with the Government gives them added prestige but also added duties and responsibilities.

'This close co-operation with the Government is a golden opportunity for us,' a very wise union officer said, 'but it deprives us of independence, and you know what independence means to a movement like ours. It makes us have a double loyalty. The two loyalties clash all the time and no one has yet told us how to combine them.'

The struggle within the movement is between the sectional interest, or the interest of the members, and the national interest, as seen from the T.U.C. or the Labour

* Since the time of writing a new Industrial Disputes Order was made in August 1951 revoking the war-time Conditions of Employment and National Arbitration Order.

Government point of view. Here is what the same union leader has to say about it:

'Our movement is basically a sectional movement for the benefit of small sectional interests, but now we are expected to give them up for the benefit of the nation. But can we do that without being disloyal to our members and giving up the tasks for which we are appointed? We were not meant to be public servants to guard the interests of the nation; we were appointed to protect our members and to guard and further their interests within the framework of the law. Does anyone ask the employer to have the national interest in mind instead of the interest of his firm? It is all right having the national interest in mind but we are not the right people to have it.'

Here we touch also upon a basic issue: is the union secretary a servant or a leader? There is a great deal of dispute about the nature of his office.

Some, especially young and vigorous members who may aspire to leadership themselves, argue like this:

'We don't need leaders; we are educated enough not to need them. We need representatives, officials who guard our interest and do our bidding. They have to do what they are told by the members, not what they think we should do. They are paid by us, aren't they? and get even more than we ourselves earn. If they want to do what other people tell them, they should get out and be paid by those people. But they shouldn't accept our money and work against us because other people don't agree with our demands; and they shouldn't sit in judgement on us. They are our servants, but they often behave like our masters, although they don't mind getting money from us.'

The opposite attitude is often put in the following way:

'The union secretary is not paid to do what he is told whatever his own thoughts or feelings. Because of his experience he often knows the position better than the men, who may be uninformed or unbalanced. The management of the affairs of the union is nowadays a very complex

and responsible business, needing expert and specialized knowledge. The union can be wrecked in no time by the irresponsible behaviour of demagogues.'

There is no doubt that the management of union affairs is becoming more and more complex, and that the ordinary union member may at times feel frustrated.

The present union official is altogether different from what he was a generation ago. In earlier times he had to be primarily a leader; he had to bring men together and organize the large masses of prospective members still outside the union. He was an orator, a reformer and preacher with a high moral status, a man who could inspire others. Looking at the faces of the founders of the unions in the photographs on the walls of union offices, you can see the dignity and nobility of their expression and their deep penetrating eyes full of faith and enthusiasm.

Union officers are now frequently good administrators or technical and industrial experts, who know all the rules and by-laws of social legislation, industrial relations, labour and welfare conditions, price lists and wages, the working modalities of different machines and jobs, and, above all, men who know how to bargain. The candidates for union offices often have to pass a special examination in social legislation, industrial relations, mathematics, business administration, technology of the industry concerned, and similar matters, or their business qualifications have to be examined by a specially appointed committee. The secretaries, especially those of the craft unions, are more business men than leaders, and have more to do preserving what they have got than conquering new ground.

Not only has the type of union official changed but the interests of the members in the union have changed as well. In earlier days only men actively, often passionately, interested in union affairs belonged to the union; now there are industries in which almost everyone is a union member. Not only men who are passively interested in the

union or indifferent to it, have joined, but often men who are openly hostile to it and who do not want to belong to it. This compulsory membership strengthens the union mechanically, but weakens it organically and morally.

'The unions are just taken for granted by the younger generation,' is another opinion one often hears. There is no doubt that the active trade unionist who attends the meetings and takes an interest in the affairs of his branch is less frequent now than previously, and he is less frequent among the young men than he is among the older generation. The actively interested union member is also less common among labourers who shift from trade to trade than among the craftsmen, less common among the poorly educated or selfish type than among the more educated men with high ethical standards, less common in the new industries with a normal labour record than in the industries with a long tradition of labour strife and unrest, and of course less common in unions not governed by strong impressive personalities and not providing a satisfying personal service than in the less successful unions.

The differences between the unions are enormous. Some of the main contrasts can be briefly noted under the following heads:

Labourers' unions, craft unions, one-craft and multi-craft unions, clerical and staff unions, including supervisory grades, mixed unions comprising mixed grades, omnibus unions which are inter-industrial organizations, industrial unions catering for all workers in a given industry;

Local, regional, and national unions, including amalgamations and federations;

Unions with strong political interest and purely trade organizations;

Unions which have grown into powerful insurance companies, and unions almost deprived of friendly society work;

Unions governed democratically with the officials elected periodically, say, every three years, and unions with officials elected for life who can be removed only when there is strong reason for their removal.

The union movement finds itself in the middle of great social changes, and it is still hard to say where all the changes will lead to.

The unions – as one often hears – find themselves at present in a period of golden opportunities, but are at the same time hard pressed and perplexed through looking for a way out of their great dilemma – how to combine the two loyalties, one narrow and sectional, and the other broad and national.

This calls for change and adjustment to the new situation, but there is a certain innate conservatism and traditionalism in the union machinery which, apart from vested interests, may resist these efforts at adjustment. However, British Trade Unionism was always experimental, piecemeal, varied, committed to the methods of trial and error, deprived of general theories and doctrines, and imbued with a great sense of responsibility and common sense. It has grown organically and was not shaped, moulded, or planned by anyone. And so it will continue growing and bringing forth new shoots.

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WHAT DOES A WORKER MEAN BY HIS SOCIALISM?

THE popularity of socialist ideas among the workers differs according to the industrial group, age, status, education, and upbringing.

In the coal-mines almost everyone is a socialist of one brand or the other, because there bitter memories are at their strongest. Start a conversation with the miner about his work, and he will tell you at once how it was under the capitalist system. He thinks of the capitalist system as something selfish and evil.

Hotel workers shop assistants, hairdressers, and many other workers in distributive trades – judging from those I met – form the other extreme. Among them you find a much greater tolerance for what is called capitalism and they often think of socialism as quite impracticable. A shop assistant will tell you: 'Socialism is an ideal. Ideals are all very well but you can't buy a loaf of bread or a joint of meat with them. People want cash.'

The popularity and intensity of socialist ideas varies between the young, the old, and the middle-aged. It is not uncommon to find old men saying that the business of Government would be done better by men experienced in handling money than by men without experience of busi-ness. Among middle-aged men you find the greatest en-thusiasm for socialism, while many young men show a complete indifference to political creeds.

Status also plays an important part. You find a higher percentage of convinced socialists among craftsmen than among labourers, who would often say that they care nothing for politics or for anything else. But when you come to the supervisory grades the preference for socialism

disappears, and men who have worked up to managerial grades from the bottom are very rarely socialists, or if there is any sign of it still, it is watered down to 'I believe in live and let live', or 'I believe in being fair to everybody'.

Education is also relevant to political opinion. Rough and ignorant workmen are politically indifferent, while more educated men read and think about socialism. Whether the highest degrees of education are conducive to socialism or not is a moot point, but there is no doubt that there are more socialists found among workers with a higher than average educational standard than there are among uneducated workers.

Family upbringing has also its influence. Some workmen say: 'My father was Labour, so I am', or 'What was good enough for my father is good enough for me', but this applies mostly where the father-son relationship was good and the father made a strong impression on his son.

A man's own character naturally has an effect on his opinion. A practical man would say: 'Socialism would be all right if it could work in practice. But as it is, it just means only wasting money'; a self-centred or family man would say: 'All I care about is my family; that may sound selfish, but the world would be a better place if everyone cared more about his own people and stopped worrying about everyone else'; and a 'go-getter' who thinks himself capable of working up to a better position, and thinks that State protection is not only useless but a positive hindrance to his advancement, would say: 'Socialism is just to help the lazy-bones.'

Socialist ideas have not generally come among the workpeople from outside, an artificial growth stimulated, as is often thought, by intellectuals; on the contrary, they are a genuine internal growth arising from their own needs, interests, and feelings. Often they feel handicapped, outdistanced by others, badgered by the circumstances of their lives, and as individuals entirely helpless. This is the background of trade unionism, of the co-operative movement,

the friendly society work, the social welfare work, and the movement for workers' education, all of which are impregnated with socialist ideas. As one timber porter put it to me: 'The worker is an "instinctive socialist" whether he has heard the term socialist or not.'

There are some features very characteristic of the socialist ideas and beliefs of the British worker.

There is not a shred of revolutionary feeling in British socialism. The British worker believes in gradualism; he does not want to overthrow the existing social structure. As a matter of fact he does not feel very strongly or think very often about it. He thinks about his socialism only on certain occasions, when he hears a speech or there is an election campaign. It is not, except in the case of a few more politically-minded men, a subject for private discussion: the average man is far more interested in sport than in politics. His socialism is practical, and free of fanaticism. He often says: 'I am not a socialist, I am Labour.' Labour means a slow progress in the spirit of socialism, but not socialism as an all-embracing principle of life.

The core of British socialism is trade unionism. One might even say that socialism is the general theory of trade unionism. There is no possibility at all of developing a socialist movement on its own without the trade unions. Anyone who thinks otherwise is simply a dreamer who does not know the first thing about the British workers. Many men, asked whether they are socialists, say: 'I am a trade unionist', meaning that socialism and trade unionism are for him one and the same thing.

I met quite a number of men who gave me their definition of socialism as follows: 'Socialism means defending the interests of the workers against the boss class', or ' Socialism means higher wages, shorter hours, and better conditions.' In their view the struggle of trade unionism for better conditions is the essence of socialism and a government which turns against the trade unions cannot

be socialist. This makes British socialism more practical and less doctrinaire than it might otherwise be, but often entangles it in contradictions whenever the trade unions stand for national interests.

There is also an element of scepticism in the socialist creed of the British worker. Many men would say: 'I believe in socialism up to a point. But you know, you can't nationalize everything.'

The workers' socialism is not intellectually thought out. It is not based on a theory of society or on a study of social and economic development, but on an instinctive urge to better the conditions of working men against those in command of them. The socialist theory is simply a justification of this instinctive urge, based as it is on real needs.

The workers' conception of socialism is strongly imbued with ethical and religious elements. Many men define socialism by saying: 'I believe in fair shares for everyone', or 'Socialism means fairness and justice for everyone.' British socialism is more than anywhere else an ethical or Christian socialism. Men are brothers and should help one another.

That leads me straight on to another point: internationalism. The doctrine of the brotherhood of men, the strongest doctrine among the British workers, is interpreted internationally and not nationally. 'Socialism in one nation must lead you to National Socialism. Socialism means all nations working for the common good' – this view is often volunteered by men. For many of them socialism means a system of international peace, and the view that wars are the outcome of capitalism, of struggle for markets, is very widely held.

On the whole a negative attitude against capitalism is much more usual than a positive attitude towards socialism. Talking to the workers about their socialism one is struck by the depth of the anti-capitalist feeling. Capitalism is a sort of a bogy on which everything is pinned. It is

selfishness, greed, a sink of iniquity. It is a system of servitude imposed on men without money.

But what is capitalism itself? I asked. 'It's the rule of the money-bag. I have the money, you must do what I tell you, that's capitalism' or 'It is the spirit of grab and the devil-take-the-hindmost' were characteristic answers. But capitalism in the worker's mind means the rule of the past more than the present régime.

The British worker is clear about his negative attitude to capitalism, but not very clear about the positive remedies. He is still exploring them. He knows the spirit in which the search for new institutions should be undertaken, the spirit of working for the common good rather than for individual profits; but he knows that this exploration must be undertaken cautiously, especially if men themselves are not socialists at heart.

He distinguishes between an intellectual socialist and a man who is a socialist at heart, and often says that the men in high position on the nationalized boards, who claim salaries sometimes twenty times his own, are not socialists at heart, although they may profess socialist ideas. He says that men who do not pull their weight in the nationalized industries are working against socialism. 'The funny thing is,' a railwayman once told me, 'that the more the industry becomes socialist, the less socialist the men become, and the more selfishly they behave.' That, if true, would be an important contradiction, and a limiting factor in further development.

I often asked myself: What elements in the theory of Marxist socialism appeal most to the mentality of the British worker?

There is no doubt that there are some conceptions in Marxism with which most workers would agree, without knowing whether they are professed by Marxists or not.

The idea that economic life is in a constant state of flux has a wide appeal to the worker. 'Movement and change

are of the very essence of life,' said Keir Hardie, and most workers would agree with him.

What exists to-day is not the ultimate shape of things. The world is full of imperfections, and it can and should be improved. It may take tens or hundreds of years to free the system from all its injustices and wrongs, but socialism in one way or another is bound to come as a result of evolution. It is simply the natural course of things, as men become more intelligent and educated and refuse to be exploited.

The idea that all wealth is produced by manual workers, and that all income from property is drawn from the results of labour, is very widely held among the workers, whether they call themselves socialists or not. A manual worker regards himself as a man who gives more than he gets, while others are getting more than they deserve. By producing the whole product, as he thinks he does, he produces the profit gained by it; any profit he does not get, then, is deducted from his proper wages. The average worker now watches carefully the changes in the profits of his company, and if he thinks that they have increased beyond what he regards as fair, he claims an increase in wages. The antithetical character of wages and profits (he does not think about rent and interest) is something which he feels rather than a doctrine inculcated in him.

His ideas of the class struggle are not just a theory for him but something derived from his own experience. Every small concession which he gained was obtained not through charity or argument or out of sympathy, but by the struggle of a strong organization determined to fight for his rights.

A materialistic and economic conception of history makes a great appeal to the more reflective worker. Ideas, he believes, are largely the rationalization of men's needs and interests, and whenever a theory is presented to him, he will ask himself at once whose idea it is and whose interest it serves. His strongly-felt views about hypocrisy

are an expression of this attitude. For him religious hypocrisy is only one species of a large genus. Some people defend their profit-making by quoting the Bible or speak of freedom and mean something else entirely. Hypocrisy is a frequent charge he makes against the views of others, and he often refuses to argue logically with adversaries whose needs and interests are obviously different from his own.

'Truth,' an old bricklayer advised me, 'is what benefits you and your fellow men. When you listen to a speaker ask yourself first of all: Does what he say benefit your chaps or not? The boss class feeds you with three main currents of thought: (1) sceptical ideas which will undermine your own beliefs in social betterment; (2) idealistic tripe, what you need is a road to heaven; and (3) the historical view: "It has always been so". Be on your guard. I believe in the motto "Life is what you make it", and that motto leads me to socialism.'

This chapter is not a political study. It offers only a few rough notes on the social psychology of socialist beliefs and ideas among the British workers. The subject offers a very wide field for investigation, which it would be worth while pursuing in detail.

20

THE STANDARD MEASURES OF FAIRNESS

'FAIR' and 'unfair' are words which are always on the lips of the workers. He asks for a fair day's wage and offers a fair day's work, he asks for a fair chance in his work and play and for fair treatment. He must, then, have certain standard measures of fairness.

What are these standards? First there are standards concerning his position in his group, and then standards concerning his group, with which he identifies himself, in society as a whole.

'Fair' for the worker means simply playing the game, doing what is expected of him. The expression 'Is it fair?' is shown in the equivalent phrases 'Is it cricket?' or 'Is it playing the game?' If we want to be fair we must keep the rules of the game, and do what is expected under certain conditions. The idea of fairness is linked strongly with the best customs and traditions and the best social rules. It is a social measure which is accepted by most men as binding. The strange thing about 'fairness' is that it is never defined, but all the same its application in practice provides no difficulties. Out of a hundred men asked whether a particular thing is fair or not a big majority will agree on what should be done.

It is unfair not to tip a taxi-driver or a waiter, but it is equally unfair to tip a bus conductor or a shop assistant. Tipping in the one case is fair, and in the other unfair simply because it is customary to tip a taxi-driver or a waiter, and one is expected to do so, even if the tipped man is better off than the man who tips him, while it is not customary to tip a bus conductor or a shop assistant.

'A fair day's wage' is the wage expected in the trade for

a given job. If the wage-rate is fixed by the union, it is, of course, the union rate. Otherwise it is the wage paid by a decent employer to a decent workman, which enables him to maintain his customary standard of living. No one is expected to live at a standard lower than that to which he is used.

What is a fair day's work? It is the amount of work which can be reasonably expected of a decent workman who does not hurry but who does not slack. It is a recognized standard or customary stint of work done in most cases under certain conditions. Ideas of what is customary vary, of course, a good deal. A bricklayer may be expected to lay so many bricks on an ordinary job in certain weather conditions, and a man who does less is a slacker. A carpenter does so many ordinary doors a day, and so on.

In a gang of men everyone expects to get the same chance of promotion, the same earnings, and the same amount of toil, but if there are different customs equality of treatment is replaced by customary differences between the treatment of one man or that of another. In the steel industry men in the melting-shops each gets a percentage of a joint wage – 38·5 per cent for the first hand, 20·5 per cent for the third hand, and 14·5 per cent for the fourth hand. Thus the first hand gets more than the third and fourth hands put together, and it is fair because it is customary.

In the same industry there is a strict seniority rule which enables the fourth hand to climb to the position of the first hand and the sample passer; but if a furnace becomes redundant the promoted man loses all his advantages and goes back to the original position which he occupied perhaps twenty or thirty years ago. On a new furnace if there is no other opening for him, he has to start again as a fourth hand. It often involves terrible hardships for the men, and it is very questionable whether this is sensible But it is fair, because it is governed by a custom which applies to all.

In coal-mining a faceworker has a right to work on the particular coal face which has been his for a long time, and he may exercise this right although it may be easier to work on, and he might make more money with less work than his mates on another face.

In the same room in an engineering shop a man on one machine may earn more than a man on another machine, but when the man on the more profitable machine has been there for a longer time than the other, the arrangement is accepted as fair. But otherwise in allocating the better-paid jobs the management must stick to commonly accepted rules and customs.

In a trade union a man is fair to his union if he keeps all the rules of the union and the customs of the trade; otherwise he spoils the trade for his fellows and the harm he does comes back on him like a boomerang.

What proportion of his wages is it fair for a man to give to the housekeeping? It is that which enables his family to maintain its customary standard of life; anything below that would be unfair.

You often hear it said: 'So-and-so is not fair to himself.' What does that mean? It means that a man does not keep up the standards of a good life, that he drinks or gambles too much, and thus deprives himself of the necessities and comforts of life, and comes down in the world all the time. Or you can hear: 'This man is not "fair" to his girl. He's been walking out with her for such a long time but he doesn't marry her.' It means that he is expected to marry her, and in not doing so is not complying with the customs of his group.

In a word, a man is fair if he plays the game. The patterns of a good life and of good behaviour or the rules of the game are innumerable, and we can often guess at their existence only from the judgements of what is fair. Every group has its own rules of the game, and when the judgements passed differ widely, it is mainly when members of different groups meet. Local customs are binding

upon local groups,.but when the local group merges into wider organizations the local customs are gradually replaced by district or national rules; but this does not happen without a struggle, which may last a long time. The differences in local customs are often the real obstacle to merging small local unions with larger ones, and when amalgamation takes place trouble often starts when local customs are replaced too suddenly or in a way which does not accord with other binding standards of fairness.

Where there are no special customary standards against it, every worker expects to be treated equally with his mates. Favouritism is the worst sin any manager can commit, and a foreman accused of it is finished in the eyes of his gang.

The worker as a person relates himself to the small group in which he works – to the gang he is in, or to his mates in the workshop, or to the other workers in the same category as himself, to fitters and turners if he is a fitter or turner, to carpenters if he is a carpenter; but he does not identify himself with higher grades outside his group, the managers and directors for instance. Their functions are too different for him to regard himself as belonging to their group.

The same process of identification makes him want fair treatment not only for himself but for his group. Fairness towards his group is, in fact, of greater practical importance to him than fairness to himself, because his working conditions and wages are determined by those of his whole group. Here he extends the principle he applies to himself. Fairness means that his group should be treated equally with other groups, provided, of course, that there are no customs to the contrary. Smelters in one place should have the same wage-rates as smelters in another place, unless there are special reasons why they should not, such as differences in the cost of living. If a new steel furnace is opened in a place which until now had no works of the kind, the procedure is to find out what the rates of smelters

in the same locality in other works are, or when there is no comparable plant in the immediate locality, the rates are fixed by bargaining on the basis of comparison with those of other districts. And when a completely new plant is introduced, wages are fixed by considering those paid for work in a similar plant, if there is one; and fair wages are equal to those received by the wider class of workers to which the particular group belongs. The worker watches the achievements of others in the same position and rejoices when he hears that his fellows have improved conditions, because he will claim the same benefits in due time. It would be unfair if steel-workers at Scunthorpe were far worse off than steel-workers at Sheffield. Why should they be?

The same applies to the standards of a fair day's work. If there are special local customs, they will apply, but if a new standard of work needs to be found – e.g. in the manning of new machines – comparisons are made with similar workers in a wider class. A fair day's work is the amount of work done by his mates in other departments or other works. When a worker does not pull his weight, it means that he works less than his mates. The same applies to a whole group of workers compared with other groups in the same works or in other localities.

Now, what about fairness in wages? There are wage differentials between varying ages, skills, grades, industries, and even departments, which are, of course, changeable. Those differentials are mostly regarded as fair if they conform to custom. Every trade has its own differentials, which are closely related to those of its immediate neighbourhood; and when any trade succeeds in raising its wage-rates, it is a signal for other trades to call for action to restore the former differential between them. If one grade or one trade has 10*s*. more than another, its wage would seem unfair if that differential were diminished through a wage increase in another trade. The differential in wages means an acquired and recognized status of the various

trades, and any diminution of the difference is equivalent to a lowering of status.

This principle is a considerable obstacle in wage settlements in big works, where it is known as the 'principle of spreading'. 'The trouble is,' a labour manager said to me, 'that every concession, even the smallest, spreads at once, or else produces trouble. Often we think a claim for a small wage increase is reasonable enough, and involves no great cost, because the gang of men claiming it is small; but we cannot agree to it, because we would have the whole works claiming an increase because of it. Others say: 'We used to have 5*s*. more than they did, it isn't fair for us to be deprived of it.'

This principle of spreading is often applied by the unions as a means of raising wages all round but in a piecemeal way. Craftsmen who want a wage increase achieve it in a roundabout way by getting the rates of labourers, which are the foundation of the whole wage structure, increased. If labourers get an increase, craftsmen must soon get a satisfactory rise because the differentials between the two grades must be maintained. This does not mean that the differentials between the wages of the variously skilled workmen never change; they do, on account of changes in supply and demand in the labour market, and other economic conditions. The premium for skill and supervision has diminished in the last forty or fifty years, but nevertheless custom is constantly at work to restore the previous standards whenever this is practicable.

The standards of conditions and wages in the various industries might be compared to a collective moving column. Each man advances or retreats with the rest, but the distance between one man and another, or one grade and another, is kept constant though one may occasionally advance or retreat.

The economist, with his ideas of equilibrium, should be satisfied that the wages and conditions of each group are

thus closely related with those of the rest and that there is a sort of equilibrium between the various groups. There is a strong psychological reason for this equilibrium in the workers' ideas of fairness, based, as they are, on the experiences of the past.

21

CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS

THE problem of class consciousness is much more complex than it looks on the surface. I believe we have to distinguish here between conscious class consciousness and subconscious class consciousness. Some men think about the class to which they belong and are conscious of class distinctions, duties, rights, and interests. But all men subconsciously feel and know that they belong to a special class of people with common characteristics and features which single them out from others, although they might never think about it.

Thus the class subconsciousness is much more common, and more marked than the class consciousness. It is produced by common experiences, common attitudes, behaviour, and common environment. When any member of the class is attacked from outside, at once all the other members are up in arms in common defence. The class subconsciousness sleeps but it is deep and all the time present. It is also expressed more by people's behaviour and reactions than by what they say.

The class consciousness is composed of a few distinct layers which come to the fore whenever you speak about this problem with the workers. If you ask men what they think about class consciousness, you get one of the three most typical answers:

One man will say, 'I am of and for the working class,' with an air of pride and self-assertion, which means: I stand for the rights and interests of the working class. This attitude has a touch of aggressiveness in it.

Another answer is: 'I don't believe in class distinctions. That's all nonsense. I am as good as anyone else. There is no difference between classes apart from money.' This is

the attitude of negation. It assumes a class equality, perhaps more as an aspiration than in fact.

The third typical answer runs: 'I believe I am one of those who couldn't do better. So I work with my brow instead of my brains.' This is the attitude of inferiority.

I believe the first answer would be more frequent than the rest, but which answer is given depends to a large extent on the phrasing of the question and the way of approach. Very often the worker may feel offended if you start to speak about class characteristics or distinctions and then invariably the second answer will be forthcoming.

But the three answers are not so opposed as they look at first, because there are all three elements contained in fact in the class consciousness of the workers: the elements of superiority, aspiration, and inferiority. Every individual has, of course, his own combination of the three elements, according to his own experience.

A bricklayer whose brother had worked himself up to a position of a chief accountant in a large firm strongly expressed this element of inferiority when I touched on the problem in discussion with him. A politically-minded man will almost invariably advance the first view, while a go-getter, ambitious or a good mixer, will deny all class distinctions.

But all men will agree that there should be no class distinction, and the abolition of the classes as such is an aspiration of most workers.

Now let us consider the distinguishing marks between the members of the working class and others.

Workers often speak of themselves as 'we' and of others as 'they'. Who are the 'we'? The average worker has only to look at a man to see whether he is one of them or not. He looks first at his hands, and when he sees strong horny hands, sometimes puffed up, and stained or greasy, he knows that he is one of 'us'. But if his hands are soft and obviously not used in his work, he belongs to the class of

men from the office or shop, the men who are 'they'. A working man is primarily a man who works with his hands. A Marxist would tell him that a man working in an office is also a 'worker', who sells his labour to the 'boss class', but the representative worker is not a Marxist. He would not think of an office worker as one of 'us'. He would think that the office worker had a cushy job while he was toiling and sweating. From the office come all the orders to lay him off or to put him on part time. An office man has the security of a job, being mostly on a monthly or at least a weekly salary, while he is an 'hourly rated' man.

Nowadays the worker may also have a guaranteed week of 32 or 36 hours' work, and in many industries he must be given at least a week's notice; but that is only a recent development, like the holiday arrangements. An office man always had a holiday, while he won his holidays only recently, and they are nothing like as long as those of the black-coated worker.

A leadpress cable-maker described to me what he regards as the greatest differences between a working-class chap and an 'office man' in his workplace: 'I start at 7.30 in the morning, an "office-wallah" starts at 9. He works in a collar and tie and has clean hands, and I have to dirty my hands. What he does can be rubbed out with a rubber, while what I do stays. He keeps in with the boss class. He has a full sick-wage, while I have none. He has a salary, while I am an hourly rated man. His holidays are twice as long as mine. He has superannuation, while I have none. He eats in the staff dining-room and has a better served meal, which he calls lunch, while we eat in the general dining-room and call it dinner.'

Security is one of the basic differences between the working class and the middle class, but the working man not only lacks security of employment but also of earnings. His earnings depend not only on hours of work but also on overtime, shifts, changing conditions of work, piecework,

individual and collective bonuses, the materials and the machines he handles. The security of the working man, however, in regard to both employment and earnings, is at present improving.

The working man is actually or potentially a member of a trade union. A youngster entering the trade is soon canvassed by the shop steward or other union officers and he learns that he belongs to a special class of people who earn their living by working with their hands, who have been kept down through the ages and who have to be on their guard to get fair treatment. It is true that nowadays black-coated workers often form a union too, but they are not so easily organized as the manual workers are, and there is considerable difference in the degree of organization between the two classes. The trade union movement is primarily a working-class movement.

There are also language barriers between the two classes. A working man speaks a language of his own, while the middle-class man generally speaks the King's English. This language barrier is very difficult to break and more than anything else keeps men in different classes. As soon as a man opens his mouth everybody knows to which class he belongs. In England this is the primary criterion of class membership. Children in schools run by middle-class teachers are often bilingual in that at school they speak King's English, and at home cockney or the county dialect. When they have left school, they go back entirely to their ways of speech of their class. Teachers often wonder why in spite of all their efforts most children cannot acquire the King's English. The explanation is that the number of hours spent at school is very small compared with those spent at home.

The wish of the group to keep its members within its ranks may also play its part. A child who tried to speak the King's English would be thought a snob or a social climber, who would look down on his parents and friends: that is often regarded as talking 'posh'. But if a boy in

spite of discouragement from outside perseveres and shows promise, he will go to a grammar school and, if successful there, will be lost to his class.

The workers live mostly in their own districts, in a row of dwelling-houses of a more or less standardized type. A bank clerk told me: 'We are expected to live in a better residential district than the working classes.' There are special areas which have always been working-class districts or which have been left by other classes to the workers. When an area becomes a working-class district, people of other classes gradually move out. But again the tendency to-day is to mix the two classes, and in the building programmes of public authorities the division between the classes is less marked than in the past.

Clothing standards between the classes differ also, although here again not as much as in former times. The manual worker will on week-days be clearly distinguished when he goes to work, and the difference between a man's working clothes and those he wears at home is more marked among the workers than it is among the middle class. The town worker, unless he is an invalid, would not think of carrying a walking-stick or an umbrella, and he would rarely wear gloves. When introduced he will shake or squeeze your hand and say 'Pleased to meet you' but never 'How do you do?' A handshake as a sign of welcome or simply greeting in everyday life is much oftener used in working-class life than in the middle classes.

The whole mentality of the two classes also differs considerably. The worker on the whole does not think about promotion, and his chances of promotion are slight, while the middle-class man wants to climb higher. The working-class man does not think about the future, he is strongly anchored in the present, and is of a 'happy-go-lucky' nature. He does not think much about money and no one has taught him its value when accumulated. On the whole he does not believe in saving. He might have a savings account in Post Office or Building Society, but very rarely

a cheque-book. He has a strong sense of communal living. He thinks of himself primarily as a sportsman.

The worker's attitude towards the middle classes is different from his attitude towards the upper class. He rather dislikes the middle class, especially its lower stratum with which he often comes into contact. People of the lower middle class often snub him, regard themselves as superior to him, take away his money in the shops, or order him about in the offices. These are the people who have cushy jobs, while he has to sweat. These are the climbers, while he stays put. They look at everything in terms of money, while for him money is merely a medium of exchange, not something to accumulate for its own sake.

For the upper classes, on the other hand, he has no dislike at all; often, in fact, he has admiration for them. They are, he thinks, genuine, as he is; and have not a foot in both camps, as the middle classes have. They do not climb in the world, or make their money; their position and wealth are inherited. The worker admires a man with money he has made by gambling or money he has inherited, but he does not like a man who is out to make money. The upper-class man is primarily a sportsman, like himself; he breeds horses and bets on them, the workman breeds dogs and bets on them. They both like gambling, although in different ways. They both like spending money, he in the pub, the other man in more elaborate entertainment. They are both generous and believe in giving away their money. They both dislike 'overdressing', which is more common among middle-class men.

'Who do you think came out of the war the best?' a very class-conscious telegraphist asked me. 'It was,' he said, 'the workers and the upper class: the workers, because they are used to hard conditions, and can take everything, and the upper classes because they have a high standard of education and culture.'

But the differences between the working class and middle class are becoming less pronounced. The workers'

security of employment and earning capacity are constantly improving; education is rapidly reducing the differences between the standards of the classes, and standard English is becoming more widespread, especially on account of the wireless. Manual jobs need a higher degree of intelligence than they used to, and in many industries, such as the engineering industry, the distinction between manual work and brainwork is a distinction of degree only. The classes now dress more alike than they used to, and it is becoming difficult to distinguish a workman from a black-coated worker on Sundays. The income differences between classes are also growing smaller, and many craftsmen earn more than clerks and officials. The differences in the sizes of families are diminishing as well; birth control is more and more being practised in poor homes. Council houses too are getting rid of the class barriers which formerly existed between districts.

Even the union movement is becoming less and less a working-class movement, and now embraces clerical, professional, and scientific workers, and men in supervisory grades. The distinctive features of the working classes are weakening both socially and economically, and it is interesting to note that class consciousness is at its peak at a time when the separateness of the classes is growing less pronounced.

Many, if not most, workers have a romantic idea of the rôle and functions of their class. The working class is the backbone of the country, the most hard-working and the most useful class. It comes nearest to the Biblical life, eating its bread in the sweat of its brow. It gives the community more than it takes from it. It stands for justice and fair play, for progress and social betterment.

But this romanticized idea of the working class has in it elements of inferiority. Many feel that the working class is formed by those who could not do better, because they lacked either luck or ability. Some men simply say, 'It is the under-paid, under-educated, and under-leisured class.

What is so wonderful about it? Anyway, there is nothing wonderful in belonging to it. My advice is: get out of it as soon as you can, and forget all about it.'

But there is no doubt that the working-class idea of its own virtue and importance does much to compensate for its inferior economic and social position. It is pleasant to feel that one belongs to the vanguard of justice and progress, to the giving side, to the backbone of the country, to the most hard-working and useful layer of the community. And it is true to say that without the worker there is neither wealth nor comfort, and therefore also no leisure and no culture.

Now, what about workers' ideas of patriotism?

The workers are very patriotic in practice, as they showed in the last two wars; no one gives his life more freely than the working man. But they do not like to think of themselves as patriotic, and those who use patriotic phrases are treated with suspicion as 'hypocrites' or 'a bit touched'. They are inclined to think that patriotic phrases are a way of getting something for nothing out of them or of confusing their opinions, and alienating them from the interests of their class. Patriotism is reserved almost entirely for times of emergency and war; in peace-time, patriotic phrases are regarded as traps.

'There are fifty million people to care for the country's needs, and there is only one to care for mine,' one man told me, and I think that is fairly characteristic of the workman's attitude in times of peace. But all that changes in times of emergency, and the greater the emergency the greater his readiness to give his 'blood, toil, sweat, and tears'.

22

THE QUALITIES OF THE MODEL WORKER

I ASKED a Chinese student of textiles in London, who came over recently, what virtues were most admired by his countrymen; and he replied:

'Obedience, worship of the parents, both living and dead, and a happy smile. Confucius has taught us that friendliness is the greatest virtue in men; he didn't speak about a life after death. Even when we bring bad news – say announcing the death of someone we loved – we smile. A happy smile means courtesy, friendliness, and humour. We value quiet, good-humoured people. Worship of our parents means worship of our customs, and our whole way of life; and by worshipping our ancestors we rise above our present existence. The good life is an obedient life, showing obedience to our elders and to the wise men.'

A Hindu student at the London School of Economics replied to the same question:

'A sense of duty and service. People in this country emphasize their rights, we emphasize our duties. Rights are the consequence of duties, not vice versa. We all have so many social, religious, and ethical ties which are unknown in the West. We are born indebted to our society, you are born privileged. I believe the *malaise* in the West has something to do with your emphasis on rights.'

A Negro worker from West Africa gave this as his answer:

'Respect for parents and elders, the observance of customs, and, of course, helpfulness. The man we admire most is a man ready to help others. But isn't that true in all countries? Isn't helpfulness the greatest virtue in any society? Who likes the selfish money-grabbing man? But I

would say that people in this country are more selfish than they are in ours, because we are not out for money. Greed is a rare vice among us.'

A coloured worker from the West Indies was indignant at my question: 'Men of all races want the same things. They want to eat well, be properly housed and dressed; they enjoy dancing, music, and a song. And they don't want to work too hard. The men they like best are those who can help them to achieve this.'

This small selection of opinions from foreigners in London might serve as a background for our attempt to describe the ideal model for the British worker. What are the qualities and virtues most admired by the British worker? How would the average worker like to appear?

First of all the ideal of the worker must be of a 'happy-go-lucky' nature. He should not worry about the future, and should 'take life as it comes'. He must be good-humoured, and see the funny side of everything; he must be able to laugh at his troubles and give the other fellow a smile. A prickly, critical, foul-mouthed or complaining man is avoided like the plague. A man must put others at their ease. Humour and wit are the most popular qualities; they keep men from quarrelling, and help them to relax, and a workman, who often has a strenuous job, needs relaxation as a medicine. What artists are most popular with the workers? Not musicians, or singers, or ordinary actors, but comedians. They are invited to perform at week-ends at working men's clubs, and they are always the most popular part of any show or wireless programme. Anyone who can brighten the sombre life of the working man's existence is welcome.

The model worker must be a 'good fellow'. He must be ready to do his mate a good turn. He must be not only friendly but generous; he must carry out in practice the principle 'Live and let live'. He must be happy, i.e. keep happy himself and make others happy. The worker has more emergencies in his life than anyone, and has to

rely on the help of his family and friends. The ideal worker is a sociable man who goes about in a crowd, and regards himself as part of his community, eager to give help and ready to accept it. But whenever help is given, it must never be alluded to. Reminders of a good turn done, and fishing for thanks and gratitude, are in very bad taste, and a man who is guilty of such bad taste will be finished in the good opinion of his friends.

Although the worker in his collective behaviour and attitudes, and especially in his relationship with his employers, has a long memory, in his dealing with his mates he is magnanimous and forgiving, and rarely indulges in reproaches or recrimination for what is past. That again is in bad taste.

When you ask a working man whether he is religious, you often get the answer: 'I believe in doing your mate a good turn or giving him a chance.' Good-fellowship – that is the real test of religion for the working man.

The model worker must be tolerant; this is often expressed as 'Mind your own business' or 'Don't interfere with others'. Respect other people's views and ideas, don't try to make them accept your own views, don't be superior, don't snub them, don't be a fanatic. A fanatic, in the worker's opinion, is always a man who is a little 'touched', 'cranky', 'daft', or 'barmy'. There are very few fanatics among the workers, either religious or political, but those who are are often described as 'barmy'. In the past as in the present, there have been so many people trying – often for their own advantage – to impose their ideas on working men, that the worker is very suspicious of anyone who tries it again.

But there are limits even to tolerance. The sentence 'Don't interfere with others' often ends 'as long as there is no trouble' or 'if you can help it'. If you expect trouble, if the way someone is behaving affects your own well-being or that of your mates, it is your duty to interfere, but only as much as is necessary to safeguard your own and your

mates' interest. Some people take advantage of the great tolerance of working men, and strangers or foreigners very often misinterpret it, thinking they can get away with anything unobserved. The worker is very observant; he keeps his eyes open, but says nothing. He watches a man who does not fall in with the accepted pattern of life, but he does not interfere. Often a stranger thinks he can make a nuisance of himself; then suddenly he finds he has gone too far, and finds there is nothing for him but to clear out for good.

The model worker is a sportsman, not in a physical sense but in a moral sense. He is a 'sport', he gives everyone a fair chance and expects a fair chance from others. He is fair to himself, to his family, and to his mates.

Should he be fair to his employer? Definitely yes, but only provided the employer is fair to him in wages, conditions, and his personal relations with him. If the employer is not fair to him, he does not see why he should be fair to his employer.

This sense of fairness implies a sympathetic outlook on life – sympathy for the downtrodden, for the sufferer, for the down-and-out. That goes for animals as well as people, and nothing disgusts the working man so much as cruelty to animals.

The ideal worker is loyal – particularly to his mates. He is never a 'blackleg', and does not tolerate other blacklegs in the shop; he does not show up his fellows by a higher efficiency or productivity than theirs. He is a good unionist, accepting the code of union behaviour, loyal to the members of the union and to the customs and rules of his craft.

The model worker is 'natural' or 'genuine'; he does not try to pass for somebody higher, more important than he is; he is not snobbish, flamboyant, or cunning. The word 'artificial' damns anything. If a film or a play is described as 'artificial' it means it is cheap and trivial. The worker has a deep distrust for a member of another class who poses as a workman. Socialist intellectuals are not popular

and have no great weight in the councils of the workers. They would be often described as 'not genuine'. If you are a capitalist be a capitalist, and don't pretend that you belong to the working class. The worker is very suspicious of men who condescend to him from the heights of their achievement, and he often recalls the story of the wolf in sheep's clothing.

A man who is natural should speak plainly, dress plainly, and deal plainly with others. 'Hypocrisy' is the greatest sin the worker knows of. He is very sensitive to hypocrisy, and examines anything told him for signs of a catch in it.

The ideal worker earns his living honestly by working with his hands and doing a fair day's work. If he is not hard-working he is not honest, because he must be a fiddler who lives by his wits, or a racketeer, a parasite, in fact; and a parasite, by participating in the fruits of other fellows' labour, is an enemy of the worker.

'He takes the easy way out', 'He doesn't do a stroke of work', 'He's on a cushy job' – are all expressions of censure. The workers have lately sharpened their criticism against the small number of parasites who take advantage of the workers' present wage increases.

Cleverness, smartness, shrewdness, and intelligence are not the virtues of the ideal worker, since they often lead either to breaking away from the group or to social parasitism.

The ideal worker is not boastful; never talks about his achievements, or about what he did in the Army. Under-statement is as much a characteristic of the working classes as it is of the public schools. If a worker says 'it isn't too bad' he means 'it's all right', and if he says 'I don't mind it' he means 'I like it'.

A sense of independence, with a touch of pride on the one side and of courtesy on the other, is also a common virtue, one which is very much admired. Give a man a direct order and he will be offended, and you will get a poor response. Orders must be given in the form of a

question: 'What about doing this or that?' or 'Wouldn't it be a good idea to do this or that?'

On the other hand if a man cannot do what you ask of him, even if you are a complete stranger and not his superior, he will say: 'I am afraid I cannot do it', or 'I am afraid I don't know whether that can be done'. 'I am afraid', a common phrase of courtesy, stands for 'I am afraid to disappoint you'.

A worker wants to help you, and if he cannot, he is as disappointed as you are. The answers he gives a social investigator must be weighed and interpreted in the light of his wish to please. To a positively phrased question you are likely to get a positive answer, if the worker thinks that you will be disappointed by a negative reply. He does not want to disappoint you, and if he thinks that the whole thing is not very important, he will say what he thinks is expected of him. Only later on will the misunderstanding be cleared up.

Those are the qualities of the 'Ideal Type' in the Platonic sense to which the working classes all aspire.

23

VIEWS ON LIFE AND WAYS OF EXPRESSION

THE wisdom and art of life in all its manifestations are subjects on which the worker likes to ponder and to converse. He would be justified in adopting for himself the Latin proverb: *Homo sum; humani nihil a me alienum puto* (I am a man and think nothing human does not concern me). Has life any purpose, and what is it? Do we control our fate or are we destined to go a certain way? Is there any key to personal happiness? What is the best way to improve life and 'leave it a little better than we found it'? Is man by nature good or bad, and what is the role of social environment in conditioning men's behaviour? These are some of the topics often discussed by working men.

The range of views on those topics runs from extreme realism to extreme idealism, but in all of them there is what might be regarded as a majority opinion, crystallized in certain stock phrases which come up again and again in conversation.

When examining the workers' views on life we must distinguish between different layers of value apparent in them. Not all of them have the same depth of conviction and the same significance.

Some of the views presented are purely conventional, being a repetition of proverbs, popular sayings, and precepts from the Bible and similar sources, or repetitions of views often repeated in the popular press.

Others are personal views, the generalization a man has drawn from the experience of his own individual life. Frequently they are a rationalization of what a man has actually done, or of his interests, drives, and urges, if they

are approved by his group. Sometimes their views reveal the character of a man more than anything else, showing, for instance, selfishness or ambition or greed or the desire to pass for someone of a higher status. You will sometimes hear a down-and-out labourer bring out the views of a right-wing Tory, abusing his fellow workers as lazy-bones. He is sitting in judgement on his mates, believing that he is superior to them and identifying himself with a class higher than his own. You will also hear a selfish type of man denounce the cupidity of the workers: 'I don't give a damn for other men, they are all selfish and think only about themselves.'

There is also a third category of views, thought out by the men themselves by hard thinking or study with the basis of observation in the radius of his own experience. 'That is what life has taught me,' they say. The difference between the second group and this is only that in this a man shows a greater radius of experience and a deeper penetration. It includes his personal experience and the experiences of others with whom he has come into contact.

Finally, we have purely impersonal ideas derived from the study of books, reviews, lectures, or broadcasts, which come nearer to the views of intellectuals. Those influenced in this way repeat the stuff they read, often selecting it in ways determined by their temperament and the habits of thought formed in them in childhood.

These four layers of thought may coexist in any man's mind, and in a course of conversation you may come across them one after the other. A man may start a conversation with a proverb, then tell you what he has experienced in his own life, then what he has seen in other people, and then if he is a reader he may tell you about Wells's or Bernard Shaw's views with or without quoting them.

The most valuable material for the sociologists and psychologists is found, of course, in the personal views, and the more so when the views are thought out on the basis of

what a man has observed himself. Proverbs and other sayings which are often repeated, are, although conventional, also of interest, because they show the current forces of thought in the school, at home, in the workplace, or in the press, which shape and mould men's views on life. The least interesting material is that based on evening-class study or the reading of serious books, because it is neither representative of the working class nor distinctive of it.

Views of life differ with age, social status, education, home upbringing– particularly relations with both parents –good and bad experience of life, temperament, and character. A systematic study of those factors which form men's views on life would certainly repay the great efforts which it would call for.

Here I propose to concentrate only on some aspects, especially the educational factor. It is far from true, as is often assumed, that the educational standard and the standard of intelligence among the workers is more or less even. Its range is astonishingly great, far greater than would be expected from the more or less equal schooling which as a rule ended at 14 (for the older men earlier, and at present at 15).

There are basically three widely separated intelligence and educational levels. First there is the bottom level of inferior intelligence, which is called the sub-literate type, the term meaning the illiterate, the semi-literate, and thoroughly backward. Most observers with whom I came in contact believe (and that is confirmed by my own observation) that about 20 to 25 per cent of working men could be classed as such. Men in this group never exercise their brains, and think only of the scraps of life that come their way, the daily details of their lives. The process of thought in them is jumpy and trivial; they cannot concentrate on any problem. However, not all semi-literate men, especially in the older age-groups, are of inferior intelligence. I met some semi-literate men who could hardly read a newspaper, who were very intelligent, could think

for themselves, and recount vividly their own experience of life with interesting conclusions. There are also fully literate men who read newspapers mainly for football and racing results who can be classified among this group, and who, when asked about their views of life, can hardly say more than: 'Life is just life', or 'I don't know', or 'I am not clever enough to say anything'. The reader may wonder whether the last sentence does not prove a higher intelligence, showing, as it does, a certain self-knowledge, but men who use it are often correct in their self-evaluation. The highest this class of men can produce is the repetition of some conventional phrases, proverbs, or popular sayings.

At the other end of the scale we have the top intelligence and educational stratum, men who have schooled themselves in hard and persistent thinking, who have studied literature and science and who in intelligence tests would show results as high as those of any other class. I have found such men, true philosophers of life, even among vagrants, roadsweepers, and casual labourers. This class forms another 20 to 25 per cent of the working class; and from it the trade union officials, shop stewards, and members of the welfare and consultative committees are selected. This group will give you views which are either the result of their observation or of their reading and study.

The remainder, who form the majority of the working class, belong to the intermediate level of intelligence and education. This level is on the whole pretty high and is represented in the conversation between two kitchen hands in a pub recorded at the end of this chapter.

Now let us see what are the main views on life most frequently advanced by the majority of the working class.

If you ask a working man what is his outlook on life, the most frequent reply will be: 'Life is what you make it.' It is true that this is a repetition of a proverb, but that proverb contains, I believe, the living collective experience of the working classes. The emphasis in this proverb is not so much on the positive possibilities of 'making our life' but

rather on its negative side. Whenever you dispute the truth contained in this proverb you will get the following answers: 'Yes, but can't you see that you can make a hell of your life, if you are not careful?' or 'You can mess up your life easily, if you are not on your guard.'

'You' in the proverb stands primarily for you individually, but it can also stand for your family and all those with whom you have linked your fate. 'Your wife may make your life miserable', or 'Your father or mother might have crippled your chances in life by starting you on a blind-alley job.'

'But if there is no job for you because the country is in the throes of economic depression, can you say still: "Life is what you make it"?' I asked; and here I got the broadest version of this proverb: 'Life is what you and your fellow men make it.'

'You' again means not only you individually but all your fellow men. A man is a drop in the stream of life. That is the basic attitude of the working man who sees himself as part of a greater whole, on which all social endeavours are based. 'Life is what you make it', a socialist says to his fellows; 'You can make it a hell for yourself, a life of bondage and servitude, or a life of freedom and abundance.'

It is true you can hear also two minority opinions at both ends of the scale. A man with a bad experience of life may say to you: 'Life is fate, you can't do anything against fate'; and a frivolous man may tell you: 'Life is fun, let's have fun while it lasts.' But even these would not contest the basic validity of what is accepted as the true experience of life, as expressed in the proverb I have quoted.

But when you argue with the working man: 'Well, then, if a man loses his health or his limbs or otherwise becomes unfit for work, or if a family tragedy comes on him through no fault of his own, would you say still: "Life is what you make it"? Isn't it more what your fate makes it?' – even then the working man will not go back on his basic contention but will try to bring it into harmony with the

higher compulsive forces of destiny. A chair attendant in Hyde Park with whom I argued gave me what I regard as an excellent and final formula of the working man's creed of life: 'Life is what you make of your fate.' Men are not born with equal chances; no one knows this better than the working man; but the main thing is to make the best of your chances whether they are great or small. 'You can't beat your fate but you can take the sting out of it,' the same man told me. 'Everyone must suffer, at one time or another.'

When you ask a working man what are his experiences of life, you often get the answer: 'Oh, the usual thing, ups and downs.' 'Life is a swing, but the main thing is not to lose your head.' 'And mind you, you can't relax for a minute,' a landscape gardener told me. 'You must be on your guard all the time. Weeds creep in everywhere and all the time. You could say the devil was in you and around you all the time, if you believed in the devil.'

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In the art of life the emphasis is laid more on freedom and pleasure than on work, which is often equivalent to servitude or duty. The aim of life is happiness, not perfection. Of course, the good life consists of both: freedom and duty, but with the emphasis on 'freedom'. Is not the joy of life the basis of all life? Enjoyment in all its various forms replenishes the weakened batteries of life. It gives strength and relaxation, and restores the balance affected by the stresses and strains of work and duty. There are innumerable stock phrases about this among the workers: 'Enjoy life while you can', 'Learn to enjoy life', 'Try to get the greatest kick out of life', 'Take life from the easy side', 'Life is fun and without fun there is nothing in it.' The quest for pleasure and relaxing activities is very strong indeed; it is like the quest for an elixir of life.

But perhaps the most important principle in their art of life is freedom from worry, and concentration on the

present. The collective experience expresses itself here in innumerable stock phrases like: 'Take life as it comes', 'Take the rough with the smooth', 'Nothing is worth worrying about', 'There is no such thing as to-morrow', 'Worry can kill even a cat', 'Take life day by day', 'Day come, day go', 'Make every morning a beginning of life, and every night its end', 'What is the sense of worrying, you may be dead to-morrow', 'To-morrow never comes', 'Take care of to-day, to-morrow will take care of itself.'

The next principle in the art of living is contentment by getting used to things which cannot be changed. That is not meant to be a passive acquiescence in the bad things of life, but an active adaptation to conditions which cannot be changed, anyway not from day to day. Again the collective experience expresses itself in a number of stock phrases like: 'Learn to be satisfied with what you can't change', 'Think of those who are less fortunate than you', 'Concentrate on what you have got, not on what you are missing', 'Don't pin your bad luck on others', 'Don't grow grievances and put all the blame on yourself', 'Be honest with yourself and put yourself right.'

As one man put it to me: 'If you have a half-empty glass of beer in your hand, look at the half which is filled with good stuff, not at the half which is empty. This is the secret of good life.'

Sometimes I asked men what in their views was the most important thing in life – a rather silly and too general question, but one which was meant to reveal in its answers the order of importance in their values. And the most frequent answers I got were: 'Health and a contented mind', 'Keep yourself fit and give a smile', or 'Look after yourself and don't interfere with others.' One kitchen hand expressed his view in this way: 'Good health, a principle, and a smile. A smile can carry you a long way. And by principle I mean mind your own business and don't interfere with others.' And an elderly labourer gave me his answer: 'Keep yourself fit and give a smile, a smile to your-

self and a smile to others.' And he added this piece of advice: 'But if you feel unhappy, don't stay at home and shut yourself in like a snail, but go out and mix with people. They will help you in one way or another.'

A countryman, now in London, said to me: 'Good food, fresh air, freedom from strain and worry, enough rest, and a good hobby, these will keep you fit, but unfortunately it is hard to get them in London, where the rush and noise get you down.'

The insistence on good food is very frequent and food is always an interesting subject of conversation.

Physical, mental, and moral health mean a great deal to everyone, but to a worker they mean everything. There is a basic insecurity which runs through his whole life, which can upset him and turn the balance of his mind. And the first lesson he learns is that 'nothing is worth worrying about' and 'smile even when you are unhappy'.

An elderly worker in a West End club gave me this advice: 'Have a smile and laugh even when you feel like crying. And even when you feel like dying pretend that you are fit as a fiddle and just carry on. You know the saying: "Laugh and the world laughs with you, weep and you weep alone"; that is true.'

'Just carry on' – that is another favourite phrase which often comes up in conversation on the art of living in such stock phrases: 'Don't take any notice and just carry on.' 'If you are unhappy just carry on as if nothing had happened.'

'A smile and a laugh is half the battle.' A decent man must smile at all times, even when he meets a perfect stranger. I remember how I was often greeted in the street, in the pub, or in the factory by perfect strangers with a smile and a nod.

'To be happy is not only a duty to yourself but a duty to society, because if you are miserable yourself, you make other people miserable around you,' a man on the road told me.

The workers often divide men into two types: 'Happy and unhappy types.' A happy type is a man happy in himself who makes other people happy around him. An unhappy type is a worrying, irritated man full of anxiety and bitterness who makes other people miserable. A lead-machine presser, a semi-skilled man making electric cables, told me about his experience of these men. 'They have a twisted mind with deep streaks of suspicion and jealousy, have a grievance against everybody, are often morbid, and hate themselves as much as their fellows.'

I met a number of men who fitted that description very well. One of them, who until the age of 30 had struggled with an illness contracted in early youth, told me how it ruined his life. He was unable to play any games, he had never had friends, men or girls. He was very embittered, he hated life, he hated himself and everyone around him. 'If God exists he must be a devil,' he exclaimed to me pathetically. I met another man whose father, a police-man, had died when he was two and who was brought up in an orphanage for policemen's children. He was used to being bullied, so he bullied back. He had an excellent job with good salary but he often felt frustrated and vexed in his work, and when he came home, gave vent to his feeling by knocking down his two boys and setting about his wife. A friend of his, who was his lodger, took pity on his family and once told him: 'When you feel like that and you have to knock somebody down, do it to me. I will understand.' Sometimes he went upstairs to his bedroom when he felt badly, and closed himself in and wept or stamped on the floor to give vent to his feelings. His wife soon died, and he took in as housekeeper an ordinary street-walker who finished him off for good. He had to sell his house and now lives in digs. He was an unhappy type, and could not help making people unhappy around him.

But when a worker talks about human nature (and that is a favourite theme) he will rarely describe it as bad or good, and will rarely divide men into entirely good and

entirely bad. He dislikes bogies of all kinds because they were so often held over him. An exceptional man may be evil through and through, but ordinary men are good in some ways and bad in others. Some are good fathers but make poor husbands, some are good family men all round but make poor pals or are selfish money-grabbing types who would not 'help a lame dog over a stile'. Some are bad family men and bad pals, but good workmen and good craftsmen, and so on. 'And do you believe,' a man asked me, 'that even the wisest man is wise in everything? Even Solomon was wise in some things and foolish in others.'

But good or bad men are, in the workers' view, invariably conditioned by social environment, upbringing, and situations. Again there might be exceptional men born with an evil heart, but ordinary men are bad or good according to their social or physical environment, upbringing and education, and the situations in which they find themselves. On that point you will get a big majority agreement. 'If a man is born in a slum, if his father was a drunkard, if he got his education in the street, if he was pushed into a blind-alley job, if he has learned bad habits of thinking, speaking, and working, and has learned how to spend his spare time badly, how do you expect even the best-natured man to lead a good life? The weight of conditions around him will pull him down all the time,' a union officer told me emphatically.

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The working man is a great realist, and he has great common sense. He is not governed by theories but by facts and common sense. He knows life as it is with all its harshness, its cruelty, and its constant conflicts. He rarely succumbs to wishful thinking. Anyway he distinguishes clearly between the world of facts and the world of ideas and aspirations.

The working man is a great believer in education, but

he will often say that in his experience educated men are often no better than others or that the spread of popular education has not diminished the incidence of cruelty to children or to animals.

The working man is a great believer in the equality of men but he will often say that men are in fact unequal in their equipment, abilities, urges, and habits. 'The difference between the public school educated gentleman and a public-house educated navvy,' a bus conductor, who had been a war-time major, said to me, 'is like the difference between a racehorse and a carthorse. I myself felt like a carthorse in the company of those gentlemen. You can't beat a born and bred gentleman in manners, way of speaking, behaviour, feeling, and everything, including how he wears his clothes.'

His great realism makes him distrust all ready-made formulas. Practice and common sense count much more for him than theories and doctrines. 'He is a practical man,' he says, when he wants to praise his manager.

He knows that absolute consistency up to the bitter end is the ruin of any cause; hence his 'up to a point', which is repeated time and again in all his discussions.

When you ask a worker whether religion is a good thing, or socialism or education or anything else, the most probable answer you will get is: 'Up to a point'. This phrase 'up to a point' dulls and damps any discussion with the worker and can be very annoying for the intellectual, but personally I believe that it is a concentrated way of expressing the wisdom of their experience that even the best can be turned into evil by exaggeration. The quantity can change the quality of a thing and medicine can turn into poison. The right proportion or the right balance is all that matters in life. This is why life is so difficult, because there are no ready-made formulas or rigid principles to go by, but we all must behave like a chemist with very sensitive scales. When speaking of religion the worker says: 'It's good up to a point, but religion has turned more than

one man's head.' Or when speaking of socialism, 'Socialism is all right up to a point, but you can't go against human nature,' or, when speaking of education, 'Education is good up to a point, but too much education is no good to anyone and a little is worse than nothing.'

Their most prevalent outlook on life I would describe as ethical optimism, or meliorism, often expressed in a naïve belief in the progress which will come from bettering the conditions of life and improving men. 'It is your duty to leave the world a better place than you found it,' it is said. But the worker has a great contempt for words; he wants to see action, which is all that counts with him. He could say with Goethe's Faust: 'In the beginning was the Deed.' One small deed is more valuable than a whole torrent of high-flown phrases, and an ounce of kindness is worth more than a ton of reasoning. Reason will not bring about a better world, but goodness of heart may. Knowledge never impresses the working man; small improvements in conditions and small deeds of friendliness do.

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The worker's philosophy, if we may call it that, is, as might be expected, drawn from many different sources and tempered by common sense and a great sense of reality. At the present time his interpretation of life is inclined to be materialistic, qualified by a certain idealism derived from the Bible, which still influences him, whether he accepts it or not. The scientists and writers of the last century who have influenced him most are Darwin, Marx, and Dickens. Among more modern writers probably H. G. Wells and Bernard Shaw have influenced him most, chiefly through stage, film, and broadcast productions of their works. Recently Freud has had an increasing influence. I do not mean to say that he reads Darwin or Marx or Freud, but he is influenced by them indirectly, mainly through the press, or simply from the intellectual atmosphere of our time.

From Darwin he got the idea of the struggle for existence. From Marx he got the idea that change was the essence of life and that social life shows a progressive trend from capitalism to socialism. But he would use the term 'capitalism' as condemnation more often than he would use 'socialism' as commendation. Capitalism stands in his mind primarily for selfishness, greed, and the inhuman treatment of the workers, while socialism, though good as an ideal, he still questions in practice. Dickens, probably more than Marx, was responsible for branding capitalism as inhuman. The Freudian distinction between the conscious and the subconscious is very widely applied. Workers will often tell you that a certain idea is in the 'back of their mind' although they do not think about it consciously. If, for example, you ask a man whether full employment has an effect on his productive effort, he says that if he sees men queueing for jobs outside the Labour Exchange, the picture stays in the back of his mind and, although it does not affect him consciously, it may affect his hands. Or if you ask him why some of the workers still follow restrictive practices in some trades, he says: 'The fear of unemployment is still in the back of their mind and it is difficult to get rid of it.' The term 'inferiority complex' is also widely used. The need for a psychological approach in industrial and social relations is genuinely felt and often referred to, even by simple labourers. I remember a road-sweeper who told me once that what we now need is not so much socialism as humanism; treating every worker as a human being and putting in more welfare officers with the right spirit of approach would be a greater benefit than mere nationalization. 'Although I am a socialist,' he said, 'I think that what we now need is to humanize industry, not make it more bureaucratic.'

Another man, a weaver on automatic looms, told me: 'We are civilized but not humanized. Don't talk about humanity, talk about human beings.'

From Bernard Shaw and other sources a secular religion

is spreading rapidly and its influence is increasing. It centres around the belief in Creative Evolution, in a Supreme Life Force manifesting itself in all of us, a force which tends to improve the pattern of life and which we must serve by striving after perfection.

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The language used by the worker is often vigorous, sharp, and pungent. He likes to speak in parables, and he describes abstract notions with concrete images, and there is often a joke in his phrase. When he dislikes his boss he says: 'He is a small Hitler'; and when he thinks him just he says: 'Our manager plays ball'; and when he talks about the uselessness of preaching he says: 'This "do as I tell you" stuff is no good to anyone.' About political propaganda he says: 'Oh, they want to sell it to me but I'm not interested'; and about socialists: 'They tell you "what is yours is mine, but what is mine is my own".' I asked one man what he thought about socialism and he told me: 'I don't want the moon and the stars, I just want to get about and have a loaf, and a pint of beer, and a bet on the horses.'

Proverbs are quoted again and again. In fact there is a proverb for every occasion. A Scottish labourer in London who liked to keep changing his job justified his behaviour by the proverb: 'The bees which collect the honey don't stay around the hive.' Ask about politics and the answer will be, 'Dirty business'; and about politicians, 'Everyone for himself and God for us all.'

Speaking of hot-headed idealists a man said to me: 'Don't you think we'd all feel better with some cash in our pockets instead of slogans in our mouths?' and 'Oh, these left wingers who want to work themselves up till they're as good as right wingers.'

A man criticizing the Labour Government for its middle course said to me: 'All they want to do is to repaint capitalism and make it look brighter through two pairs of state spectacles,' and the same man described the productivity

campaign and freezing of wages as a 'work more and eat less' campaign.

The British working man has often travelled widely and has a varied experience of life. Many men with whom I talked had travelled all over the world. I met road-sweepers, night-watchmen, kitchen hands, labourers, and vagrants who told me about their experiences in India, China, Burma, Australia, or Canada, where they spent time serving in the Forces or in the Merchant Navy, or in engineering work, or else had emigrated at some period to the U.S.A. That makes for tolerance and relativity of views, especially in religion and politics.

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To conclude, here is a small characteristic sample of the intelligence and reflexion of working men. It is a record of a discussion which actually took place in a pub between two young Scotsmen each of about 28, doing kitchen work in a London hotel at night, and earning about £6. 10*s.* a week, with two meals – breakfast and supper – a day. I started the discussion with a question, but after that simply listened to them, keeping them going by a remark when the discussion flagged.

Thomas was a politically and religiously minded young man who read books on history, economics, socialism, and religion, and read four daily newspapers. Peter was mechanically minded, and read only technical books and very few newspapers. They lived together and worked together; they teased one another all the time, and were always laughing. 'You can laugh at your sorrows as well as cry over them. If you can only make fun of yourself, you can never go wrong,' they told me.

The conversation ran like this:

Thomas. There is a Supreme Being, you can't get away from that. It doesn't matter what name you call it, Jehovah or Christ, Buddha or Brahma, or Mohammed. The idea of God, the need to search for God, is inside you. Every savage has it.

Peter. I believe if you take a child on a desert island without teaching him religion, he won't have any.

Thomas. That's where you're wrong. Faith is a sort of instinct, and everyone has it to a certain degree and in different forms. It's the same with conscience, it's given to you. Even the worst man has a conscience, he knows right from wrong.

Peter. I believe conscience is a social product. Society produces it by training.

Thomas. In small points yes, but not on the basic issues of life. I believe there is something inside us which teaches us to distinguish between right and wrong.

Peter. It all depends on environment. Children of bad parents get the same dirty habits as their parents from living in the gutter. A good upbringing in the formative years of early childhood makes for a better type of character.

Thomas. But you can get two different characters from the same family.

Peter. Because they had a different sort of company and pals. Company makes your character. It's all chance whom you meet. It's all force of circumstances.

Thomas. I don't deny the force of environment, but for me what's inside a man is more important, and whether he obeys his light or not. You see, I don't believe in Churches, but in obeying your conscience. To me anyone who obeys his conscience is religious, whether he believes in God or not.

Peter. To me religion, if you want to have it, is simply goodness. The symbol of goodness in man is called God. Don't you see God and Good are really the same words. I don't believe in a Supreme Being because he wouldn't want us to suffer agony and torture.

Thomas. The idea is that suffering is here to test our faith and to get the best and finest out of us, like refining gold.

Peter. I have lost my religion because I was brought up in a Catholic school and I have seen that men who pretended to be very religious were often rogues and blackguards. And I doubt whether religion produces good men.

Thomas. But you can't judge religion by hypocrites. I agree that there is a lot of hypocrisy in religion, and a lot of prejudice and ignorance, but you have to judge religion by its best followers, by the saints and prophets, who were prepared to die for their beliefs. You wouldn't be prepared to die for anything.

Peter. I wouldn't, because I don't believe in anything. When I

was in court I had to take the oath on the Bible, but I told the Judge I wouldn't because I didn't believe in God. He asked what I was willing to take an oath on. At first I said I don't know. Then I said I could take an oath on the life of my father, or my mother, or someone else dear to me. They let me off the Bible and took an ordinary oath without it.

Thomas. You see, you don't believe in anything and that's what's wrong with you. You would be happier if you did. I think man needs a belief, he must believe in something.

Peter. There were inventors who believed in their inventions, and prepared to suffer for them. Wouldn't you regard them as religious? To me men who have achieved something for humanity at great suffering to themselves are the true believers, and I prefer them to churchgoers and ministers who make a lot of noise about something they know nothing about.

Here let us part with our friends. I think that, for two young kitchen hands on night work, this little discussion showed a pretty high level of reflexion and intelligence.

24

RELIGION IN THE WORKER'S LIFE

THE worker does not talk about religion lightly or willingly. He likes to listen to others on the subject, but to get his own views on the matter out of him you have to get friendly with him and he must be sure that you will not ridicule or misinterpret what he says. You have also to advance your own views on religion first, so that he can know where he stands with you in this matter before he commits himself. By talking about his religion he is letting you read deep into his mind and into a sacred place in his soul.

Most men talk hesitantly about their religion. They say 'yes' and 'no' to the same question in different phases of the conversation, as if they were not certain of their own beliefs and were still searching after truth. And so they are, as we all are.

A man who calls himself an atheist may confess to you that when he was in a dangerous spot he went down on his knees and prayed. 'But that was a sort of habit,' he adds.

Another man may say: 'It's difficult nowadays to believe in anything. Everyone tells you something different. Some people believé one thing, and some believe the opposite. It's all so confusing. I believe in something, but what it is, it's hard to say.'

The two opposing forces constantly at work in our minds can be seen clearly battling in the worker's mind, too, when you talk to him about religion. The need for religion is nowhere greater than it is in the worker's life. He feels more than anyone else a sense of insecurity and helplessness, not only the sense of cosmic helplessness that we all feel, but helplessness all round him. He knows he will end his life worn out in body and mind, often miser-

able, poor, and with a sense of complete futility and little to show for all his struggles. 'There wouldn't be any sense in living such a life without a belief that it leads you somewhere,' you often hear religious men say. 'It wouldn't have any purpose.' The feeling of insecurity, expressed in the phrase 'I may be dead to-morrow', is constantly in the worker's mind and often on his lips when he talks about the future. More than anyone else he feels the need for transcending his own often miserable existence and the limitations of his own self for something larger, nobler, and better.

'What is the use of struggling only for yourself, if it all just ends with you? There is sense in life only if you look on yourself as part of a greater whole which goes on. I may be dead to-morrow, but the human race will go on.'

Most British workers, apart, perhaps, from the Irish and the Welsh, are unemotional, but from time to time the crises in their lives, especially in those of the lower grades, lead to an emotional expression which is perhaps stronger than it is in other classes. Emotional needs demand expression and religion still affords such expression to-day as it has done in the past. But on the whole emotional expression is neither excessive nor frequent.

Another feeling which has definitely a religious colour is the feeling that all men are brothers and should stick together. The workers have a strong sense of the brotherhood of man, a sense which is often expressed in a religious form.

I believe that the need for religion or the religious urge is perhaps greater in the worker's mind than it is in other classes, but that does not mean that the need is actually satisfied. The repelling forces which drive the worker from organized religion are also very strong, perhaps stronger in him than in other classes.

Even a religious man will often say most emphatically right at the beginning of a discussion on religion:

'You know I am not a religious hypocrite', or 'You

know, I don't believe in this "Do as I tell you, not as I do" stuff', or 'You know, religion is good, but only up to a point.'

In fact you hear even from religious men a long list of grievances againt the Churches, but which refer more to the past than to the present.

The first and capital grievance is that the Churches sided against them in their struggle against their industrial masters. 'They always preached against us,' an engineer told me, 'and the religious men were always the first to go back to work in any strike. And what did the preachers preach; "There must always be masters and men", or "The poor must always be with you". That made me realize that religion is a cloak for capitalist interests. It's true it stirs some men to strive for higher things but it is widely used to keep the masses down.'

Another man recited a hymn they used to sing in his church:

'The rich man in his castle,
The poor man at his gate,
God made them high or lowly,
And ordered their estate.'

'A hymn like that speaks for itself, doesn't it?' he said.

'But can you be surprised at that?' he continued. 'Isn't it true that if you are paid by someone, you must do his bidding. The parish ministers live on stipends allowed by their benefactors, and must keep in with the boss. And aren't the Church leaders nominated by the State?'

Another argument against religion is that the idea that life after death is more important than life on earth dissuades men from struggling to improve conditions here. 'I don't like the spirituality that implies that this world doesn't matter, that it's only a preparation for heaven,' a man in the Merchant Navy told me. 'In heaven you will get your reward. Don't bother about this life. That is an outlet for excessive emotionalism. In the West Indies and in other places, I have heard the Negro spirituals. They

still ring in my ears and haunt me when I think of them.'

The other popular view about organized religion is that it is good for children or for the old but not for a grown man in the prime of life. As one man told me: 'I would be sorry if my kiddies wouldn't attend the Church services, because it's important for forming their lives, but I don't go to church myself. I am not a hypocrite.'

It is strange that whenever the problem of religion is raised, hypocrisy is mentioned as the chief argument against the organized Churches.

Why do the workers often believe that religion can degenerate into hypocrisy? Probably because many of their bosses in the past had religious phrases on their lips, while they continued to exploit or to oppress them.

A London carpenter has put his views on this subject in the following way:

'You ask whether religion attracts hypocrites. I say certainly it does. Why? Because hypocrites are an imitation of good men. The rogues want to pass for what they are not, and since religious men are supposed to be good, they pretend to be religious, so that they can carry off their suspicious business. They will tell you: "I am a Christian. So don't tell me what I ought to do." And some even clear their conscience that way so that they can start again.'

I heard many other opinions among the workers adverse to official Churchdom, such as: 'In the past did the Churches stand for war, or for tolerance or justice? There were more wars due to religion than to lack of religion, and more persecution as well.'

'Religion divides men more than anything else, because of the innumerable Churches and their rivalry. Men without religion are more tolerant, while religious men often hate each other, if they belong to different Churches.'

I would not hesitate to describe the bulk of the British workers as religious but not church-going, as believers in God or the Supreme Being, but not in Churchdom.

The atheists who say that 'Man has created God in his

own image, not vice versa', form a small percentage; so do agnostics who say: 'But nobody came back to tell us.'

At the other extreme are the regular church-goers and deeply religious men with their own spiritual experiences for whom such experience is the most important part of their lives.

The majority of British workers certainly believe in God or, as they often say, in the Supreme Being, with or without the Bible teaching, with Christ or without, but definitely with the Christian ethics as the essence of Christianity. As a London policeman said to me: 'The Englishman does not like to show his religion and is not very fond of going to church, but that does not mean that he is not religious. You don't realize how thoroughly christianized this country is; I don't know whether there is any other country more christianized than we are.' My experience with the workers leads me to think he was right. He added: 'Even atheists accept the code of Christian morality as the rock on which their social and personal life is based. The Gospel teaching is in their bones and it is difficult to get rid of it even for an absolute non-believer like myself.'

Morally the atheist or the agnostic speaks in the same vein as the believer in God.

'Being good and helping your fellow men, that is true religion,' is their belief. As one man expressed it: 'Good and clean living – that's religion. I don't care about what people believe, but what they are and do. I have seen people whose beliefs are noble but who are rotten and behave rottenly.'

The only difference between the atheist and the believer is that the atheist says: 'I believe in man and not in God; for me God is supreme Goodness,' while a believer says: 'I believe in God and man. Love of God and love of man is one and the same thing.'

The workers are not interested in theology and you cannot make them discuss any of the theological problems which seem so important in religious literature. They

believe that the Supreme Being exists and they think that this is enough. The qualities and attitudes of this Being, they think, are beyond the comprehension of the human mind, because they wonder how a finite mind can understand the infinite. All theological disputes as far as they are concerned are simply a waste of time, topics only for daydreamers and idlers.

But they seem to have positive ideas about the religious revival which many believe will come, and the need for which is indisputable. They do not believe in religious exaltation and warn people against going too deep into religion. They often say: 'More than one man went barmy from going very deep into religion.'

As one labourer from the Ministry of Works put to me: 'Religion often preys on your mind and you find more cranks among religious men than anywhere else. They easily get unbalanced in their minds.'

Religious fanatics are an unpleasant and often pitiful sight. Religion is a system of emotional beliefs, but emotion must be tempered with reason.

The streets of the workers are infested with men who cry in a loud voice: 'I know that Christ saved me from sin and death.' Some shout as loudly as they can about their own revelations or the way they were saved and what blessings they derived from it. Speakers in parks and other public places make very few converts, if any, and act rather as a powerful warning to others. 'If religion means that, I must be on my guard, because I don't want to shout about my revelations in the park,' people feel. I believe it is true that religious experience is a very dynamic process the end of which cannot be foreseen. Religious belief and experience must be checked by our reason, otherwise it is an all-devouring process.

Another point often expressed is the need for greater unity between the Churches. 'They can't all be right,' people say. 'It's so confusing to listen to the Hyde Park talks on religion,' one patient Hyde Park listener told me.

'All those Churches are like small competitive shops trying to sell you their little wares.'

One old pensioner from the Merchant Navy told me: 'I have spent thirty years in the Navy and have been practically everywhere in the world, in India, China, Japan, Africa, and Europe. Of course religion is a profession like everything else, providing plenty of cushy jobs. Up to a point it is a good thing for restraining the masses. The weak point about it is that there are too many religions which compete with each other and they can't all be right. If there were one religion it would work for unity, but at present it works for disunity.'

I have mentioned already that the Shavian conception of religion has spread most among the more educated types of workers, i.e. the conception centring around the belief in Creative Evolution, in the supreme Life Force surging forward. This Force manifests itself in all of us and in all living creatures, tending to lift up the pattern of life; and we can serve it willingly by bettering ourselves and striving after perfection.

My impression is that the only religious revival which could attract the worker would have to make a greater appeal to reason without any very definite theological creed and with an emphasis on good works. It would need to be a religion linked with joy, as a means of strengthening and enhancing life. In the past it has been a religion of gloom instead of a religion of joy, one of fear instead of one of hope. Religion should not centre on death but should concentrate on life. It should strengthen not our sorrow but our joy. Religion should be the main organ for making life good, beautiful, and joyful. Such views are widespread.

The workers often say that 'If the Church leaders had their way the world would be too gloomy for words'. Nothing joyful would be allowed. Leaders of the Churches should study psychology and should concern themselves primarily with how to make life more enjoyable and men more cheerful, more kind, and more friendly. The view is

prevalent that the present religious institutions do not do this.

Another view often expressed about religion is that it should work more through religious men than through religious institutions. Men of high moral standards, men truly inspired, men who set a high example by their whole life, can influence others, while men who use words alone are of little use. How often is it repeated: 'It doesn't matter what people believe but what they are and do. The personality is all that counts.'

Highly religious men whom I met started their life story with an account of how they had met a man who converted them, not so much by what he said as by what he was.

This is a story told me by a lorry driver, a married man of 34, from Liverpool, with two small daughters, one aged 5 and the other 1 year old. During the war he served with the Army in quiet parts of the country, in which he saw much of life in the rectories and vicarages. In some places, he said, not one in ten went to a Church service, but there were a few places where the strong personality of a vicar made nearly everyone attend the service. When such a man read the lesson, his words took on a meaning for everyone, but in other places where the lesson was merely recited, the whole service was dead. At one time this driver worked for a railway canteen, where a railway mission arranged hymn-singing conducted by different preachers. Usually one or two men used to sing, while the others didn't bother and kept quiet. But once a layman, a fine and interesting man, came to the canteen and there was a miraculous change in the audience. The first hymn was sung by two men as usual, but the second was sung by ten, and the third was sung by everybody; and when it came to prayers, everybody prayed openly, which had never been done before. It was as if the sun had come out; and the lorry driver told me that for him it was a full revelation of what personality means.

The workers think well not only of ministers with charm

and sincerity but of those who also serve the community in their daily tasks by doing an ordinary job besides their religious work. The belief that the job of the minister and preacher should be voluntary and the Church made unprofessional is very common among workers who have strong views about cushy jobs provided by the Church organization and its link with vested interests.

Religion is a subject which fascinates the worker, because of the strong pull of the two opposite forces operating in his mind: the deep need for religion on one hand, and the strong pull of the anti-religious forces of his class at work on the other.

Religious attitudes, views, and beliefs are a fascinating and important subject to study and I regret that the scope of this book prevents me from going more deeply into the subject. The study would yield different results not only according to age-groups, town and country areas, intelligence and educational standards, but also according to the nature of the various religions. There is no doubt that the Catholics form a group of their own with very distinctive characteristics, and the same applies to some small but vigorous Nonconformist groups which consist almost entirely of devotees and religious zealots. Only the fringes of the vast and complex problem of the religious beliefs and ideas of the working man have been here touched on. This subject, too, is worth intensive study.

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In September 1939 he escaped across the Polish-Rumanian frontier: in June 1940 he was again evacuated from France. In Britain he acted as an economic adviser to the late General Sikorski and was also a lecturer to the war-time Polish Faculty of Law at the University of Oxford.

Since the end of the war he has devoted himself to the study of the British working classes. He has published studies on *Labour, Life and Poverty, Men in the Pits*, and *Productivity and Trade Unions*. Dr Zweig is also author of *The Planning of Free Societies* (London, 1942), *Poland Between Two Wars* (London, 1944), *Economic Ideas – A Study of Historical Perspectives* (New York, 1950). At present he holds a Simon Research Fellowship at Manchester University.

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