

Tendency.

As before, Crick makes a bunch of inherently dull and dour people interesting, which has more to do with his literary skills than any lilt in the slogans of the comrades. But it would take a work of literature, a modern *Darkness at Noon*, to explain the motivations of the individuals involved. How a combination of the devotion of the Moonies, the hierarchies of the Scientologists, the secrecy of the Masons, and the directness of the Mafia could motivate otherwise honest and committed people poses a moral problem of more than local relevance to the nature of socialism.

Crick's conclusion is, from an orthodox Labour view, pessimistic. The Militant's march, though faltering a little, has not yet been halted.'

Fair Enough?

Proportional Misrepresentation

Peter Hain

Wildwood House £5.95 pbk

It is good to see an opponent come forward with arguments that engage with some of the real issues raised by proportional representation, such as accountability and the role of local communities, rather than rely upon simple appeals to party self-interest.

Peter Hain deserves credit for applying himself where others believe that stony silence is the best policy. He concedes that arguments about fairness are on PR's side – an important concession in the light of Labour's attempt to claim this virtue as its own – and indicates that he is prepared to accept the 'alternative vote' in domestic elections (where votes would be transferred until one candidate has an overall majority) and the single transferable vote (STV) with multi-member constituencies in elections to the European parliament.

It would no doubt be unduly mischievous of me to suggest

But he quotes NUPE official, Tom Sawyer, as someone who'd re-examined his ideas of socialism as a result of his experiences of Militant, and Sawyer is not alone. Politically, the Tendency can only survive in a milieu in which sloganised certainty substitutes for analysis. Their testing of such simplicities to destruction has made many people reconsider their lip service to the slogans by which leftness is usually measured. The rise, for example, of Derek Hatton has shown, yet again, how a conspiratorial and democratic centralist organisation can be hi-jacked by those of less than pure motives.

In the end, Militant, by negative example, has provided a great impetus to realignment, to a redefinition of leftness. The attack on

that this might be Hain's negotiating position for a post-election discussion, where electoral reform will be one of the key Alliance demands. It will certainly have its attractions for those who have been working long and hard to achieve such a breakthrough. Alliance leaders will need to be extremely convincing when they explain why they turned it down.

Hain's argument could usefully be stripped of the guilt by association which he throws at PR, even though much of it is informative. It simply isn't reasonable to rule out a policy on the grounds that David Owen favours it, though I agree that the conversion of the SDP leadership to enthusiasm for PR is one of the most impressive of the decade.

But this is not all. Hain goes on to accuse PR of association with both corporatist stability and Israeli-like instability. In attempting to show that the whole spectrum has got it wrong, he is in danger of painting himself into a tight corner.

Stripped down, Hain's concern is firstly with the intimacy of the single-member constituency which could be lost in the monster consti-

tuencies of STV; secondly for the influence of constituency political parties which he sees as an important force for accountability, and thirdly with the unrepresentative nature of coalitions, which allow politicians, he says, to abandon manifestos with impunity. As he says, 'there is considerable merit in the argument that governments should win a majority of votes, but this should be placed in perspective.'

For myself, I am not so entranced by the romanticism of the MP as social worker, fighting mainly a geographical interest. There would be considerable advantages in enabling voters to contact a member they supported rather than (as under first-past-the-post) forcing the majority to be represented by someone they oppose. I am also looking forward to the day when there is dialogue between, as well as within, political parties, since this may force politicians to talk real politics and release them from the sterile Westminster agenda. The habit of adversarial posturing does stunt any political creativity that might be around.

A representative system which more closely reflected shifts in opinion would pro-

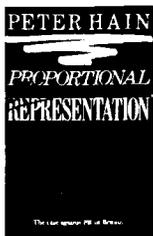
duce better government and give every incentive to politicians to build support for their positions. If a party made itself unpopular by conceding too much in order to enjoy the delights of government, as Hain assumes most would do, it would presumably pay a price at subsequent elections.

The essential political and democratic case seems to me to be clear. It rests not on fairness but on the imperatives of pluralism and the empowering of the individual voter with an equal say in the political system. Hain provides us with a final chapter which suggests a number of other reforms (such as reform of parliament and decentralisation) which are meant to put the clamour for electoral reform in the democratic shade. I can accept that some of the claims made by PR's more insistent proponents, that – it is the only route to national prosperity and so on – are rather wild. But the essential point remains, the parameters of party competition will be widened and not restricted by PR. Electoral reform has now become one of the essential preconditions for the democratic revolution that this country needs ●

centralist, non-trotskyist Left. Their slogans have all along been destructively aimed to 'expose' the 'Tribunites'. But such 'exposure' required the consent and co-operation of the victim to work. Since the witch-hunted showed their hands as heresy-hunters during their regime in Liverpool, even the short-memoried left will have difficulty co-operating. Militant may well be around for a long time, but it will be a lingering decline, as a dying force trying to live down the memories of its political debacle in Liverpool. But in its moribundity, it may remind the Left that socialism is about many things – including honesty. It depends on informed consent, not misinformed coercion ●

Ian Williams

Alan Leaman



Political Megastar

CLR James' meticulous class analysis sometimes obscures the black perspective and analysis of racism which one would expect from a man of his history and experience. But his intellect, breadth of interests and sheer longevity make CLR James one of the political megastars of this century.

CLR James, His Life and Work edited by Paul Buhle Allison & Busby £5.95 pbk. offers a fascinating collection of critiques, reviews and speculations about James' life and work. The jigsaw spans his influence and involve-



ment in African, American, European and Caribbean politics, as well as his output as a fiction and sports writer.

Indeed it's as James the cricket writer that his political analysis comes across best. **Cricket Allison & Busby** £14.95 hbk. is a collection of his writings on the subject. For James, to analyse cricket is to analyse the class nature of British society and one of the symbols of colonialism. A comment made in 1957 sums it up: 'By cricket I mean not only the game but the code connected with it'. ●

Trevor Carter

Women world-wide Women in the World: an international atlas by Joni Seager and Ann Olson Pan £7.95 pbk. gives a pretty but impressionistic view of women's lives world-wide, reducing reality to maps and numbers. Some interesting correlations emerge; seclusion and early marriages occurring in countries where there is no sex tourism or beauty queen contests.

But when women's oppressions and freedoms vary so fundamentally throughout the world perhaps any attempt to quantify and compare across cultures will provoke the banal. An example: 'high status' is attributed to women in the West, while 'unknown status' is attributed to those in the USSR.

Women in the World may be useful for highlighting some less complex points, but it is a disappointing depiction of women's many varied lives. ●

Haleh Afshar

Body Packaging

The Conran of cosmetics, Anita Roddick, founder of The Body Shop has in 10 years created one of the most successful franchise businesses of the 80s. In **The Body Shop** by G Mackay and A Corke Pan, Anita Roddick's story is told. Or as she puts it: 'Natural' products, no animal testing, no advertising, and a refusal to 'create false needs by playing on women's fears of lost beauty'.

But part of the Body Shop's success is that it plays on our distrust of the glossy sophistication of cosmetic companies, while relying on their advertising to create demand for its beauty products.

Yet environmentally concerned and successful is a great thing to be. The charm of the 'natural' is enhanced by attractive packaging, constant product development, sophisticated merchandising and creative PR - producing a dynamic retail concept with enormous appeal.

As a book **The Body Shop** won't tell you *how* it's been done - or about the 'hard' details of franchising and finance. Glossy descriptions of the business's development make it clear that Anita Roddick is a zealous entrepreneur with a superb feel for hype. It's no wonder that a book about her reads like an over-long press release. ●

Catherine Luyster

Vines and Wines

Just as winemakers are tempted to increase the alcohol level of their product by adding sugar (or worse), so wine writers too often fall into the trap of a language larded with pretentious and inappropriate adjectives. Not so, I'm glad to say, **Jancis Robinson**, best known for her path-breaking tv series on wine.

Vines, Grapes and Wines Mitchell Beazley £16.95 hbk. is, astonishingly, the first comprehensive English-language survey of the most important material element in the make-up of a particular wine - the grape variety or varieties used by the grower. Beside this, the 'south-facing slope', 'vigneron's craft' or 'flinty soil' so beloved of traditional wine writers is of minor importance.

Informatively but with a light touch, Jancis Robinson takes us through both the famous varieties which make up the great wines of France and also hundreds of lesser, but equally interesting, grape types used elsewhere in France, other European countries and wherever else wine is made and enjoyed, from China to Sussex. ●

Stephen Hayward

Child Sexual Exploitation

Judith Ennew's The Sexual Exploitation of Children, Polity Press £5.95 pbk and **Alice Miller's 'Thou Shalt Not Be Aware': society's betrayal of the child** Pluto £5.95 pbk both tackle the increasingly publicised subject of child sexual abuse. Psychoanalyst Alice Miller rightly challenges some of the basic tenets of orthodox psycho-analytic theory (such as the drive and Oedipus theories) which have dominated in a very negative way our perception and handling of sexual abuse this century. The book promises a radical reappraisal of approaches to child sexuality. But Miller's deep roots in those same psycho-analytic modes of thought, and her esoteric meandering into, among others, Kafka's psyche makes for heavy reading.

As a result some valid points, such as our reluctance to face up to the abused child's rage, lose their impact. Sadly 'Thou Shalt Not Be Aware' is destined to gather dust on the shelves of academics and psychiatrists.

Judith Ennew's The Sexual Exploitation of Children is, in contrast, succinct and informative. She covers a wide range of child sexual abuse, including prostitution and pornography, making comprehensive use of both historical and cross-cultural material.

Stressing children's position of

powerlessness within the family, Ennew makes no apologies for the fact that her book is as much about power as sex. Her argument that child sexual abuse is an extreme manifestation of prevailing social and sexual values is credible but very uncomfortable.

Contradictory views of child sexuality exist side by side in our society; we see children as total innocents, while also possessing a strong sensuality. In fact I think it is true to say that, while children have an awareness of pleasurable body sensations, to



equate this with adult sexuality is to attempt to excuse and rationalise our exploitation of them.

The Sexual Exploitation of Children raises difficult, complex questions to which there are no easy answers. Nevertheless, answers must be urgently found both to prevent the continued abuse of children and to give children the rights they so clearly need. ●

Kath Parr



A Proud Past

John Gorman's Banner Bright: An Illustrated History of Trade Union Banners Scorpion £19.50 hbk/£9.95 pbk shows the often proud, but also poignant, face of the British labour movement

past. Here the 'apostle of British socialism', Keir Hardie, is born aloft by the miners of Heworth colliery. Made to celebrate the nationalisation of the coal industry, the banner now lies at rest in a museum.