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Northern Underground Revisited: Finnish Reds and the Origins of British Communism

I
The 'Mystery Man'

On 26 October 1920, a man was arrested leaving the London home of Britain's first Communist MP. For months detectives had been pursuing this elusive quarry, 'known to be the principal Bolshevik courier in this country'. He in his turn had taken enormous care to escape their attentions. To contacts at the *Workers' Dreadnought* he was known only as Comrade Vie and even his nationality left undisclosed. To others, including Scotland Yard, he was known variously as Anderson, Carlton, Karlsson and Rubenstein, but also simply as the 'Mystery Man'. His real name, revealed only after several days' interrogation, was Erkki Veltheim, a native of Finland.[1]

The period of Veltheim's arrest was one of keen if not exaggerated concern as to the spread into Britain of the virus of Bolshevism.[2] The formation of a British Communist Party (CPGB), the holding of a first effective congress of the Communist International (CI) and the rallying of Labour in support of Soviet Russia, all conspired in the summer of 1920 to keep alive such hopes or fears of the coming revolutionary moment. Comrade Vie was not in this respect a reassuring figure. On him were found, as well as military readings and a budget for machine guns, two explosive documents headed 'Our Work in the Army' and 'Advice for British Red Army Officers'. Sinister international associations were betrayed by a coded note on work in Ireland and letters addressed to Lenin and Zinoviev, leaders of the new Soviet state and the Comintern respectively. For the

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authorities, Veltheim's goings-on all too clearly confirmed the exogenous origins and practices of British revolutionaries; the malcontents who, assembling in their thousands at the Royal Albert Hall just a week later, were described by Special Branch as 'consisting principally of aliens, Jews, Sinn Feiners and degenerates'.[3] That, perhaps, is not so far removed from the insistence on the 'non-English' origins of British communism of the CPGB's first academic historian, Henry Pelling.[4] Veltheim himself fits neatly into such a picture. The one historian of British communism to give him serious attention, Walter Kendall, invoked him as a conclusive proof of the foreign, and specifically Russian, influences to which Kendall traced the Communist Party's formation. The whole process was an 'artificial' one, Kendall argued, external to and imposed upon a native British left and implicitly counterposed to an organic line of development from which the latter was thus untimely ripp'd.[5] Historians more sensitive to the indigenous roots of British communism have, strangely enough, tacitly complied in this judgement in at least one respect. By ignoring or downplaying the likes of Veltheim and what they represented, they too seem to concur in the 'artificiality' of such activities and thus, for those who would reject Kendall's conspiratorial fixations, their presumed marginality to the coalescence of a communist movement in Britain. Mystery men and machine guns have had little place in social histories of British communism.

The account presented here offers a slightly different perspective. In exploring the activities in Britain of Veltheim and his Finnish-Estonian collaborator, Salme Pekkala,[6] it takes us into that 'secret world' whose precise extent and significance has figured prominently in discussions as to the degree of Moscow's domination over national communist parties. In bringing to this world some of the tools of the social historian, it nevertheless traces a picture more nuanced and contingent than certain cruder or more predetermined versions of communist history. In particular, it takes issue with the influential, meticulous but partial account of Walter Kendall in three main regards. First, the depiction of Bolshevism as an 'artificial' insemination is considered historically problematic, not because British socialists were necessarily groping spontaneously towards a Bolshevik world-view but because the circulation of people, ideas, forms of organization and even resources was long characteristic of the

socialist movement as indeed of the societies it sought to transform. As an international power, its rich demographic mix most recently enhanced by an extensive migration from Russia and eastern Europe, it would have been far more extraordinary had Britain somehow remained untouched by the crises rocking European socialism. In the course and aftermath of European war, such communications were if anything intensified, while British socialists of Russian extraction inevitably felt closely involved in events the other side of the continent. In demonizing this 'Russian influence', which, as he acknowledges, was present almost from the origins of modern British socialism, Kendall comes uncomfortably close to a discourse of 'aliens' in the body politic. Like any Special Branch rapporteur, Kendall presents Russians long settled in Britain as if they were somehow extrinsic to British society. One may prefer to view it differently. If Bolshevism, like anarchism before it, gained a foothold in Britain, that reflected at least in part the country's far greater heterogeneity, both ethnic and political, than enduring national myths or their labour movement variants may wish to acknowledge.

Of course, Bolshevism, unlike anarchism, had behind it not only the resources and authority of the first workers' state but a doctrine of centralization that came to cement Moscow's effective control. Whatever the debates as to the extent of that control in later years, it is nevertheless too simplistic to present the earliest networks of international communism simply as a web thrown out by Moscow. With civil war and blockade their lot, that would indeed be to credit the Bolsheviks with the superhuman powers they sometimes seemed to claim. That the heroes of our story, invoked by Kendall as a 'Russian influence', were not in fact Russians but Finns, was not entirely incidental to their purpose. Finland itself, as we shall see, had its own significance as a hub of communications and site of indigenous civil war. It was thus Finnish communists who sent the two emissaries and to whom, through the Comintern's Scandinavian Committee, the latter were accountable. Moreover, this committee itself, like the contemporaneous Amsterdam Bureau, had at best an imperfect liaison and understanding with Moscow.

That is to touch on the third and critical point: that the future character of the communist movement cannot simply be read off teleologically from its origins. The founding years of

communism were ones of exceptional ferment, throwing up issues and personalities that in many cases proved little more enduring than the extravagant prognoses that first defined the movement. That was especially true of the military escapades described here, which were allowed to fade even from the communists' own collective memory. The making of a communist presence in Britain was a matter of several stages in which much was refashioned or discarded as successive cohorts came and often left. By the time the CP took on a more enduring shape and leadership, which one might variously date from the mid-1920s to the early 1930s, the whiff of insurrection had long since departed. To adapt Victor Serge's metaphor, if the germs of Stalinist communism lay in its Bolshevik origins, there were many other germs present there too, and it is with some of those other germs that the present article is for the most part concerned.

II
The 'Northern Underground' Revisited

In his book *Northern Underground*, published in 1963, Michael Futrell described how, for fifty years before the October Revolution, Scandinavia and Finland provided a principal route into Russia of different forms of clandestine assistance for that country's revolutionaries. Money, agents and literature all formed part of this political contraband, along with a rarer but more sensational business in arms. Futrell's account, though not the traffic itself, concluded in 1917. 'The northern underground continued, with the same aim of revolution,' Futrell noted in a postscript, 'but revolution now in other countries, fostered by Soviet Russia.'[7]

Of no period was this more true than that immediately following the Bolshevik seizure of power. With European stabilization in the 1920s, Comintern traffic tended to flow through central Europe: Paris, Brussels and above all Berlin. Subsequently, with Hitler's suppression of German communism, Denmark and Sweden acquired a heightened importance as centres of communist activity in exile. Nevertheless, it was in the immediate post-revolutionary period that the northern underground played, at least for British revolutionaries, its most significant role. Thanks

to their vigorous and comparatively unmolested labour movements and relative accessibility from Russia, particularly in the context of the postwar blockade, the Scandinavian countries provided in these years a crucial political thoroughfare, mainly but not exclusively from East to West. As the Indian communist M.N. Roy later put it: 'Stockholm was the only western window . . . of beleaguered Bolshevik Russia.'[8]

Contacts were first formalized when, in the summer of 1919, Finnish and Swedish supporters of the Bolsheviks founded a Scandinavian Committee of the International, Norwegian adherents being admitted the following April. Apparently this committee, like the Amsterdam Bureau to which it sent funds, was at this time very far from being in the iron grip of Moscow. Only in the spring and summer of 1920 was the Scandinavian Committee formally constituted by the Comintern itself, based like its predecessor in Stockholm where it organized postal connections and the sending of personal emissaries to Western sympathizers. Campaigning primarily against the anti-Soviet blockade, it sought a broad range of contacts and even invited contributions for the Comintern press from figures like Henri Barbusse, Julian Borchardt, Herman Gorter and Joseph King of the British Independent Labour Party. Due variously to financial retrenchment, the securing of the Soviet state and the establishment of easier communications direct from Moscow itself, the committee gave up these broader activities during the spring and summer of 1921. Henceforth it was to function more narrowly as an umbrella organization for the young Scandinavian communist parties.[9]

Among the couriers to Britain were the Norwegians Axel Zachariassen, who delivered some £300 or so to Sylvia Pankhurst in 1919,[10] and Jacob Friis, who first visited Britain in 1920 and rather later carried out a full Comintern investigation of the CPGB's funding and modus operandi at the end of 1921. Quite apart from the Scandinavian committee, the Norwegian Labour Party was itself until 1923 an affiliate of the Comintern, openly involved in transmitting Bolshevik literature to figures as respectable as Ramsay MacDonald, Philip Snowden and members of the 1920 British Labour delegation to Russia. Swedish as well as Norwegian seamen were heavily involved in this traffic, and when the Norwegian authorities decided to clamp down on such movements at the end of 1920, the main

channel for such communications seems straightaway to have been diverted to Stockholm.[11] In a matter of weeks, Platon Kerzhentsev, journalist, Proletcultist and theatre critic, was appointed head of the Soviet Trade Delegation in that city, whence reports soon emerged of 'Soviet agents using Sweden as a distributing centre for Bolshevik literature, now that they had been cut off from Norway'.[12] Subsequently it was alleged that Kerzhentsev had, in view of the difficulties of direct export from Russia, approached the Danish and other Scandinavian communist parties with regard to setting up a possible European distribution centre for Bolshevik literature. Certainly, he was in regular contact with Victor Kopp, apparently the most politically active of the Soviet representatives in Berlin. Kerzhentsev's role was regarded by the British Foreign Office as 'almost entirely political' and the Stockholm delegation as 'little more than a propaganda agency'. An author of fiercely anti-British pamphlets, Kerzhentsev was allegedly acting as Moscow's point of contact with both Irish and Indian nationalists to avoid compromising its London Trade Delegation.[13] That does not seem implausible in view of the Comintern's subsequent diversion of its funding of the CPGB through Stockholm with the degeneration of Anglo–Soviet relations during the course of 1923.[14] Meanwhile in Copenhagen, the open secret of Maxim Litvinov's activities had demonstrated as well as anything the renewed importance of these post-revolutionary northern networks.[15]

If Stockholm was Russia's window to the West, Helsinki was like an ante-room to the new Soviet republic. Unlike the Scandinavian countries, Finland had before the revolution been a part of the Tsarist empire, technically an autonomous Grand Duchy but during the reign of Nicholas II subjected to increasing pressures of Russification. If its nationalist agitations against Tsarist rule could be turned just as fiercely on the Bolsheviks, for sections of the Finnish left the rather different legacy was of a common inheritance of struggle against autocracy and a common identification with the fruits of October. The singular fortunes of Otto Kuusinen, variously or even simultaneously a Finnish revolutionary, Comintern functionary and leading Soviet politician, are just the sharpest instance of that dense interweaving of political destinies. That Finland had already by 1919 had its own abortive revolution, its own civil war and its own 'White Terror',

only further lent it something of the aura of Bolshevism, but a Bolshevism perhaps more readily assimilable by western socialists.[16] It also indicated the presence of a significant national communist movement that cannot satisfactorily be encapsulated simply as a 'Russian influence'.

The contacts that brought Finnish couriers to Britain in 1920 seem at first to have been the product of movements in the opposite direction. In the year or two after the October Revolution there was, for those sections of the British left whose Bolshevik sympathies were as much instinctual as based on any detailed knowledge, a great hunger for information from Russia with which to contest the lurid rumours of the yellow press. That hunger was felt not just by socialists but by liberal internationalists, radicalized by the war and enthused by the Bolsheviks' breach in great-power politics and secret diplomacy. It was thus that Britain's liberal press, and specifically its more independent-minded foreign correspondents, came in the immediate postwar years to provide a crucial line of communication. A classic case was M. Philips Price, scion of an old Gloucestershire Liberal family and *Manchester Guardian* correspondent in Russia at the time of the revolution, whose cause he promoted with tremendous zeal first in Russia and then Berlin. While never actually joining the Communist Party, Price was, until his return to Britain in 1922, very much more than just a fellow-traveller.[17] Better known still, perhaps, is Arthur Ransome who, as well as providing Russian dispatches for both the *Guardian* and the *Daily News*, found time to marry Trotsky's secretary and assist in the export abroad of Russian jewels.[18]

While never of such notoriety, the *Guardian*'s representatives in Helsinki indicate just how little Price and Ransome can be regarded as mere mavericks. During 1919–20 there were three of these jobbing correspondents, none of any but the most respectable antecedents and yet all now evincing an active sympathy with both Russian and local Reds.[19] The first of them, Captain Harold Grenfell, provides an indication of how far such attitudes had spread even in official circles. Formerly British Naval attaché in Petrograd, in 1918–19 Grenfell headed the British Naval Mission in Helsinki, a position for which he was evidently fitted by some thirty-five years' loyal service. Once in Finland, nonetheless, he was reported to be working 'hand in glove with Ransome' and 'in the closest touch with all the Red

Finns', an influence reflected in the undisguised socialist sympathies of his official reports.[20] William T. Goode was another contributor to the *Guardian*. Sometime lecturer at Manchester University and principal of a London County Council teacher training college, Goode had been sent to Helsinki at the 'express & urgent request of the Foreign Office' in February 1918. Subsequently he too had disappointed official expectations when he made his way to Russia the following year, sending back the laudatory dispatches published as *Bolshevism at Work*.[21] Arthur Cotter, a philologist who like Goode had an extensive knowledge of the Finnish language and people, came into close collaboration with both Grenfell and Goode while Press Attaché to the British Legation in Finland and a lecturer at Helsinki's university and its commercial college. 'Cotter's views are broadly democratic', Grenfell wrote, recommending him to *Guardian* editor C.P. Scott, 'those of that type of Liberal who now finds himself more and more compelled towards the side of Labour'.[22] That was apparently the case with all three of them, Grenfell himself by this time having joined the Independent Labour Party (ILP). Such sympathies inevitably incurred the distrust of official circles. Grenfell was unceremoniously withdrawn from his post in May 1919, while Goode was detained in Estonia at his own government's behest on journeying back from Russia. Cotter, who failed in his own attempt to get to Russia, also found himself *persona non grata* in Helsinki.[23] Nor were theirs exceptional cases, and it was conceded by the British embassy in Helsinki that the 'majority of our official and semi-official representatives here seem studiously to avoid all other than Socialist Society'.[24]

Of these revolutionary contacts, the most important for our story were Hella Vuolijoki, *née* Murrik, and her husband Sulo. It was indeed one of the allegations against Cotter that he had abused his diplomatic position in conveying correspondence to the notorious Madame Vuolijoki. Her husband a leading left Social Democrat, Hella Vuolijoki used their home in Helsinki as a crucial meeting place and channel of communications for Bolshevik sympathizers. Here visiting Britons, Grenfell and Goode among them, mingled with influential figures on the Finnish left who impressed upon them the terror and oppression exercised by the right-wing victors in the previous year's civil war. During the three months' fighting over 8000 Reds had been executed, five times the corresponding figure for the Whites, with

a further 3600 killed in combat and 12,000 subsequently perishing in government prison camps.[25] Instincts of Bolshevik solidarity were, initially at least, therefore based as much on Finnish as on Russian experiences. 'Also there seems to be no attempt made to *understand* Bolshevism', Goode wrote to Scott before even going to Russia:

> The horrors have been great — but much of them appear inevitably in a *class* war — which is what Bolshevism — acting externally — seems to be. And in Finland, at least, Whites were as bad as Reds during the war, & far worse afterwards. Of that I have proofs.[26]

For those proofs, no doubt, Goode must have been at least in part indebted to the Vuolijokis and their guests. Grenfell too, when he excoriated the 'utterly inhuman White Terror', had in mind Finland in 1918 and the information provided him by his radical Finnish contacts.[27]

Quite as important was the assistance which the Vuolijokis and their contacts provided with travel arrangements for would-be visitors to Soviet Russia. With the new workers' state as yet unrecognized and encircled, British visas were issued only as far as Finland and the Baltic states whence any further movements eastwards required careful organization and liaison with the Soviet authorities. That, evidently, was the service which Hella provided. Among the beneficiaries, the most famous of whom was John Reed, were two figures of especial importance for this study. One was Colonel Cecil L'Estrange Malone MP, elected as a Coalition Liberal at the Khaki Election of December 1918 and initially betraying scant enthusiasm for either Bolshevism or even milder forms of socialism. Malone's background as a naval officer may have brought him into contact with Grenfell, as was certainly the case with that other pro-Bolshevik Liberal, Naval Commander Kenworthy. Through his contacts with the Sailors', Soldiers' and Airmen's Union, to be discussed later, one imagines that Malone's anti-Bolshevism must have relented considerably even before his visit to Russia in September–October 1919.[28] Certainly it was the Vuolijokis who had all his arrangements ready for him on his arrival in Helsinki. Malone returned from Russia a fervent Bolshevik sympathizer.[29]

A far more significant figure than Malone was George Lansbury, whose *Daily Herald* offices were at the centre of so

many of the rebel networks of this period. In Lansbury's world-view, sectarian divisions and ideological coherence counted for little as against the more basic and sentimental appeals of workers' solidarity. Generous, instinctive, and not without a certain ingenuous cunning, it was entirely characteristic that Lansbury should not only have reconciled his own Christian socialism with Bolshevism but even tried to project the one onto the other. In confirming the *Herald* and its editor in their pro-Sovietism, Lansbury's visit to Russia in the early months of 1920 was thus a consequential one. In this he too was assisted by Hella Vuolijoki, with whom, like Malone, he stayed both outwards and on return and from whom he received 'the same warm welcome and hospitality that this good friend has bestowed on so many of us who have travelled through Helsingfors [Helsinki] to Russia'.[30]

By 1920, in other words, links between some of the more adventurous spirits on the Finnish and British left were already well established. It was against this background that Salme Pekkala, whose sister Hella Vuolijoki's hospitality was so appreciated by Lansbury, and Erkki Veltheim, who was to be arrested at the home of born-again Communist MP, Colonel Malone, made their way to Britain. Pekkala, indeed, arrived from Helsinki only a day or two before Lansbury himself.

III
Frederique and Maud

Neither Frederique nor Maud — the *noms de guerre* used by Veltheim and Pekkala in their reports from Britain — had had before their arrival a very lengthy involvement in working-class politics. Even Pekkala, considerably the older of the two and the wife of an active Social Democrat, had played a rather restricted political role until after the fall of Tsarism. These were, it is true, tempestuous times in which experience came quickly and new ideas and sources of authority were constantly emerging. Nevertheless, it seems revealing that Pekkala apparently thought it necessary to dramatize for her British associates her actually rather sketchy background in the revolutionary movement.[31] It is just as revealing that she did so with considerable effect.

Erkki Veltheim, hardly more than a youth in 1920, had had the earlier induction into revolutionary politics. He was born in 1898

in Loviisa, a small Swedish-speaking town to the east of Helsinki where his father ran a shipping company and took an active part in the legal resistance movement against the Russians. Young Veltheim followed his father in neither trade nor politics but was drawn instead to the ideas of Social Democracy. In 1917, a year after matriculating, his studies at the University of Helsinki were abruptly curtailed by the February and October Revolutions. In Finland the resulting power struggle centred initially on the control of local police forces, with the outcome for Veltheim that in November 1917 he became a police clerk in his native Loviisa. These sharpening tensions led early the following year to the outbreak of civil war when the 'Finnish People's Deputation' of the Social Democrats proclaimed its seizure of power on 28 January 1918. In reality, the revolutionaries' authority extended only over the southern parts of the country and their forces were never equal to those of the Whites. By the beginning of May, some hundred days later, the last of the Reds had surrendered or escaped abroad, some of them to Sweden but most to Soviet Russia.

Even in so short and convulsive a period the Reds had begun to remodel the country's local administration. It was indeed to be one of their later self-reproaches that they had thereby been diverted from the crueller necessities of armed struggle and 'iron dictatorship'.[32] In Loviisa, Veltheim was elected to the new municipal council and local revolutionary court and in March was appointed a constable in the neighbouring municipality of Pernaja. He also co-edited the local paper *Lovisa Notisblad* with an older and more experienced working-class activist, Reino Drockila. While proclaiming there the necessity of class war and world revolution, Veltheim was in reality a moderate administrator who rejected the use of terror and even attempted to investigate murders by the Reds. His attitude may have owed something to the death on the White side of his own younger brother, although such restraint would have helped him little in the vindictiveness of the war's aftermath. Fortunately, however, Veltheim, unlike most of the Red administrators, managed to escape westwards from the advancing Whites and near-certainty of reprisals. Making contact with other Finnish refugees in Sweden, he was in this way recruited as a courier by the Stockholm bureau of the Finnish Communist Party [Suomen Kommunistinen puolue or SKP].[33]

Salme Pekkala, Veltheim's future close associate, was born Salme Murrik in Estonia in 1886, the second daughter of an impoverished solicitor and bookseller. From 1906–8 Salme studied at Moscow University before working for a short time in Siberia and moving on to Finland in 1909. Through her elder sister Hella Vuolijoki, long since married and settled in Helsinki, Salme, though herself not yet active on the left, became acquainted with some of the leading personalities of the Finnish labour movement. In this way she met Eino Pekkala, a teacher, sportsman and active Social Democrat, whom she married in the spring of 1913.[34]

Nothing is known of Pekkala's thoughts during the Finnish Civil War of 1918. While her sympathies were no doubt with the Reds, neither she nor her husband participated directly and it was only in the wake of defeat that Pekkala became more closely involved with the sharpening controversies within the Finnish labour movement. Both Eino Pekkala and Sulo Vuolijoki, the latter having spent the summer interned in a government prison camp, were key figures in the left opposition then emerging within Finnish social democracy. They also maintained contact with Vuolijoki's old school friend Kuusinen, now leading the Communist Party established in Moscow by Finnish refugees in August 1918. At first the new party dismissed out of hand the traditional labour movement activities that had been found so wanting. The 'axe without an edge', Kuusinen, declaimed, had now to be resmelted as 'pure communist steel'.[35] Returning to Finland in May 1919, however, Kuusinen quickly abandoned as impracticable his original intention of organizing armed cells. Instead he cultivated links with the left opposition in the Finnish Social Democratic Party (FSDP), with Pekkala and Vuolijoki to the fore. Failing to take control of the FSDP at its December 1919 congress, these elements, with Kuusinen's approval, turned to thoughts of a new socialist party. That shift from military to political priorities was, in 1920, to have an unmistakable echo in Kuusinen's reactions to the reports from Britain of Pekkala and Veltheim.[36]

While not directly involved in these discussions, Salme did assist in Kuusinen's concealment and brought him reports of the foreign celebrities she encountered at her sister's. Their outspoken Bolshevik sympathies so encouraged Kuusinen, who felt acutely the dependence of the Finnish revolution on events

elsewhere, that in the winter of 1919–20 he thought seriously of making the trip to Britain himself.[37] Eventually, though, Pekkala must have seemed to him a more suitable person to make the journey.[38] Especially as her baggage came to include a consignment of Tsarist jewels, it may have been calculated that less suspicion would be aroused by a respectable woman traveller untainted by any notoriety.[39]

Jewels apart, the nature of Salme's mission is a little unclear. Kuusinen himself may simply have wanted first-hand information from Britain.[40] Probably it was only once en route that talks with the Finns of the CI's Scandinavian Committee, notably Allan Wallenius and Mauno Heimo, resulted in Pekkala's mission taking on a more practical, intrusive and even military character. Most likely it was also in Stockholm that her collaboration with Veltheim was agreed upon. As for Salme herself, she may have sought in London an escape both from her broken marriage and from the deadening spiritual and political climate of postwar Finland.[41] George Lansbury, at a reception held for him at Hella's as he made his way to Russia, did little to dampen down such expectations. 'He said that the "Daily Herald" was run entirely by University men', it was reported; 'he instanced several prominent members of English society who had gone over to Labour, and he said that a certain Lady-in-Waiting to the Queen was a Bolshevik "from toe to head" and had begged him to bring back an autograph photograph of Lenin.'[42] Heavily embroidered though that account may be, one can be sure that Lansbury, with his incurable optimism and finger in every left-wing pie, would not have understated the possibilities of useful work in Britain. Nor, as the Northern Road offered a possible channel of assistance for his cash-strapped paper the *Herald*, can he have discouraged a Finnish presence in London. Through its enterprising sub-editor Francis Meynell, it seems that the *Herald* had obtained support from Stockholm, and thus we can be sure the communists' Scandinavian Committee, as early as the previous autumn.[43]

IV
The Eyes of Moscow?

It is sometimes overlooked how inadequately the early Comintern was supplied with even the most rudimentary

information as to its somewhat inchoate national sections. As it took shape during the 1920s, Moscow's formidable information-gathering apparatus — its cadre files, stenograms, press digests and apparently insatiable appetite for 'reports' — was to provide the International with one of its most important mechanisms of control. Every leader had a past and every deviation, in theory at least, its incriminating record. How very different, though, the picture at the movement's inception. Cut off from normal intercourse with the outside world, the Bolsheviks nevertheless looked to the immediate formation of communist parties abroad to secure and advance their revolution. Resources and inspiration alike they provided in abundance, but for the prospects and alignments of the revolution in a faraway country like Britain they were dependent almost wholly on local sources. The flow of such information could hardly yet be systematized, while competing claimants for the Comintern's recognition made for confusing and contradictory signals. Thus were differences of ideology, organization and personality forcefully articulated in the various anatomies of the British left that arrived in Moscow. Some of course put their case in person, like Sylvia Pankhurst, a delegate to the CI's Second Congress in July 1920. Others, restricted to the written word, showed an extraordinary concern as to the Bolsheviks' susceptibility to such informed but possibly tendentious testimonies. Pankhurst's rivals, leaders of the British Socialist Party (BSP) and Communist Unity Group, thus sent their own potted version of events to Lenin himself. 'Our opinion', they warned him, 'is that for you to be prevailed upon by any artifice or subterfuge to pass an opinion which might be used in any way to hinder or prevent the formation of the Communist Party, or so to weaken it at its birth as to render it ineffective, would be disastrous to the prospects of the Communist revolution in this country, and tragic to yourself, in that your own zeal and sincerity should be used as such an instrument'.[44] Lenin as instrument is a novel and no doubt far-fetched idea. It nevertheless says something of his lack of first-hand information that even so marginal a figure as Comrade W. Leslie of the Aberdeen Communist Group was apparently granted interviews by both Lenin and Bukharin. Leslie also put together a lengthy memorandum dismissing such diverse bodies as the Clyde Workers' Committee, the 'lip-service Bolsheviks' of the BSP, the 'moderate' and opportunist pedagogy of John Maclean

and the 'Brigadier Generals, Colonels etc.' flooding into the ILP. It is interesting to note that this fastidious overview was solicited from Leslie as he passed through Helsinki.[45]

One of the objects of Pekkala and Veltheim was therefore to acquaint themselves as fully as they could with the mood and prospects of the British left, and particularly with its revolutionary elements. In this respect, theirs was the Stockholm equivalent to the much briefer mission of Mannowy for the CI Amsterdam bureau that January.[46] Arriving at the height of the unity negotiations that brought about a Communist Party, it was inevitable that their impressions and prescriptions should have been fed into these British discussions as well as their reports back across the North Sea. Nevertheless, the dialogue was more confused than a simple model of outside direction would have us believe. Even between themselves, Veltheim and Pekkala struck perceptibly dissimilar emphases reflecting their own differing experiences and inclinations. Pekkala, perhaps, was the more Leninist of them. She appears never to have questioned the importance of electoral and trade union activities and adopted a characteristic 'Bolshevik' tone in damning 'Blanquism' and extolling qualities of leadership and discipline. Veltheim, in contrast, leaned towards the ideas of the Dutch left-communist Herman Gorter, who had insisted that the West European revolution would depend far more on the workers and far less on the leadership than in Russia.[47] With the Comintern representative and BSP veteran Theodore Rothstein, the two Finns came, as we shall see, to disagree more fundamentally. Meanwhile, they were not so olympian as to avoid getting sucked into the rivalries and passions of the local movement, amongst whom, indeed, Pekkala now discovered her second husband. In the London of 1920, those neat conceptual entities of 'centre' and 'periphery' seemed at once fragmented and interlocking. The movement as yet was in a state of flux.

It was thus appropriate that when Pekkala arrived in London in mid-March 1920, she by no means restricted her attention to the pro-Bolshevik left. With her she brought letters of introduction to the Webbs, Philip Snowden, Bernard Shaw and Bertrand Russell, though this she regarded as her 'spare time' activity. Probably the letters were provided either by Lansbury or by Aino Malmberg, a well-connected Finnish writer resident in London until 1918. Further introductions were provided by

Grenfell and the *Manchester Guardian*'s Evelyn Scott, and Pekkala certainly visited the Webbs and the Labour Party women's organizer Marion Phillips. She also joined the 1917 Club, attended the conference of the Women's Co-operative Guild and renewed acquaintances with Lansbury and Malone, the latter auspiciously described as a 'real man'. She also made contact with representatives of the various British left-wing groups, notably the chief antagonists in the tortuous communist unity negotiations, Theodore Rothstein and Sylvia Pankhurst. The latter was initially Salme's most important contact. Headstrong and formidable, Pankhurst had aroused the opposition of many of the British revolutionaries, doubly suspicious perhaps of a woman and a bourgeois, and the anti-parliamentarian platform of her Workers' Socialist Federation (WSF) was seen by some as a stumbling block to communist unity. She was, on the other hand, probably the best known abroad of the Bolsheviks' British supporters and it became almost routine for visiting leftists to call on her. Salme herself shared a good deal of Pankhurst's sense of revolutionary optimism and necessity, as the reports she sent back to her Finnish comrades would soon reveal.[48]

In these Pekkala conceded that the damage caused by the war was not so great in Britain as on the Continent, and even likened British living standards to those in Scandinavia. She nevertheless predicted a steady intensification of political and industrial struggle with rising living costs and falling employment. For the moment, it is true, she detected little sign of revolutionary spirit. 'The May Day demonstrations were feeble', she claimed. 'Banners and inscriptions of a revolutionary nature were conspicuous by their absence, vans carried Union Jacks and other decorations quite diametrically opposed to revolutionary thought.'[49] Conservative by-election victories only confirmed this impression. Judged by the lights of Finland, whose prewar SDP was proportionately the largest and best supported in Europe, British workers appeared almost uninterested in politics. Capitalism was fine, it seemed, just so long as 'the wages were raised every now and then and the pubs opened a bit earlier'.[50] As against this prevailing trade union outlook, Pekkala did detect certain signs of a broader and profounder discontentment. Across the country, especially in Scotland and Wales, there existed groups or just individuals with 'the right instincts of class hatred, class struggle and internationalism'. The problem,

however, was their mutual isolation, all of them 'bloody intransigent', with 'their own small journals, own small publishing houses and own small exalted band of followers'. It was the standard diagnosis of disunity from which Pekkala drew the standard conclusion of the need for a communist party. This, she buoyantly asserted, might even achieve 'small wonders' in attracting to its leadership a much broader movement.

That, as the contact with the communist unity negotiations soon demonstrated, was a statement rather of principle and aspiration than of judgement. At first Pekkala warmed especially to Pankhurst and the Workers' Socialist Federation (WSF). While not exaggerating the group's significance — 'a little bunch of Sylvia's ex-suffragette mates', she called it, 'mere bluestockings, one negro and one Italian' — Salme had high hopes of the WSF. What helped to dispel them was the realization that it was regarded elsewhere as a 'women's party that couldn't get men's respect'.[51] Nevertheless, Pekkala lost none of her respect for Pankhurst or for such similarly redoubtable figures as Melvina Walker of Poplar, one of the finest agitators and debaters she had seen in Britain. Veltheim too remained an active if mysterious presence at the *Dreadnought* offices, remembered by Claud McKay as a 'very young foreigner with a bare bland innocent face', darkly rumoured to be 'more important than he appeared to be' and eventually courting disaster through his liaison with Pankhurst's secretary.[52] The letters to leading Bolsheviks found on Veltheim at the time of his arrest were in fact from Pankhurst. The two Finns were particularly impressed by the WSF's contribution to the *Jolly George* affair in which, at the height of that summer's Soviet–Polish hostilities, East End dockers refused to load ships with munitions bound for Poland.[53] Another participant in those events was future CPGB secretary Harry Pollitt, who in his memoirs paid similar tribute to Pankhurst, Walker and their associates as 'the most self-sacrificing and hard-working comrades it has been my fortune to come in contact with'.[54] If Pollitt, then little known, figured nowhere in Salme's reports, it is nevertheless in this period that the two must have established what would later prove a fateful contact.

Larger than the WSF, and subsequently to provide the largest component of the newly founded Communist Party, was the British Socialist Party. Even the BSP was small by continental standards, however, and continued to harbour pacifist

sentiments. Moreover, it had no leader to rival Pankhurst, comprising only 'a few mediocre men'. Had it not been for the money reputedly left it by Litvinov, Pekkala reported, the BSP might even have faded away completely.[55] That was an opinion she shared with John Maclean, perhaps the fiercest critic from within the BSP of its dependence on Moscow's funding; and, like Maclean, Pekkala ascribed a baleful influence to the Russian BSP veteran Theodore Rothstein, who effectively had both the Comintern's British mandate and control of its British subsidies. The dislike between Pekkala and Rothstein was evidently mutual. Between them was a rivalry both personal and political for, incomparably better equipped though Rothstein was through long years of involvement with the British left, he and Pekkala alike regarded themselves as key actors in the reorientation of the British left. Quite apart from their different assessments of the British scene, Pekkala was alienated by Rothstein's undisguised panslavism. As the Red Army advanced on Warsaw, she recalled,

> . . . he came to explain to us the real meaning of the Polish offensive and he give us the happy news that Soviet power has resolved to take back the other border states at the same time. 'Your Finland will be one of those', he added, and his Jewish beard bobbed up and down with the patriotic joy and pride of a triumphant panslavist.

Like a number of others, Pekkala doubted whether Rothstein could even be described as a communist, seeing him rather as 'a kind of Social Democrat supporting the Bolsheviks'.

Where Pekkala differed from both Pankhurst and Maclean was in her relatively positive assessment of the ILP, the only one of the groups she felt could really be described as a party. With 35,000 members and two noteworthy journals, the *Labour Leader* and Glasgow *Forward*, the ILP had always embraced radical elements and even in 1920 retained within its ranks the 'main part of the politically interested workers'. To Pekkala it recalled the Finnish SDP before its split of 1920: dominated by a right-wing leadership and far from revolutionary on the whole, but including definite left-wing elements particularly in the industrial areas. Not content with leaving the Second International, as the ILP had decided at its Glasgow conference of April 1920, these elements also demanded affiliation to the Comintern. As for a while this became one of the dominant

questions before the ILP, its internal divisions seemed to hinge in large degree on the question of communism. Pekkala's view was that the healthy elements remained within the ILP only through lack of clear leadership, and would gravitate towards the Communist Party as soon as the latter was actually established. With the Labour Party's individual sections as yet in their infancy, Pekkala's underlying conception was thus of a split in what could plausibly be regarded as the major political component of British social democracy. In effect, it was a translation into British terms of the experience of other European countries, most obviously and directly that of Kuusinen, Vuolijoki and Eino Pekkala in Finland. As experience showed, it overestimated the strength and purposefulness of the ILP left and its practicability would in any case have required an incomparably greater degree of elasticity on the Comintern's part. Rothstein's rather different conception was of the coming together of the well-established Marxist sects, an approach which Pekkala thought likely to keep alive old rivalries and intrigues and hinder the emergence of new forces by those jealous for the leadership of the new party. Instead of a clean break and new sense of purpose and discipline, the emerging Communist Party would all too easily become a prey to inherited cliques. Inevitably Rothstein won the day, but the tension between the two approaches, actively promoted by Pekkala's future husband R. Palme Dutt, was to leave a very definite mark on the early internal battles of the British Communist Party.[56]

While not impressed with Rothstein's conduct of the unity negotiations, Pekkala was also dismissive of the anti-parliamentary Communist Party formed by Pankhurst as a sort of pre-emptive strike in July 1920. Increasingly the two Finns turned instead to the Shop Stewards' and Workers' Committee Movement as that most likely to pose a real challenge to capitalism. Partly this reflected their belief in mounting industrial crises, and partly a growing appreciation that the shop stewards' leaders were by no means restricted to a purely syndicalist outlook. Veltheim himself, moreover, even during his involvement with the Finnish Red government, had never really been much of a party man, and the shop stewards' comparable enthusiasms and hesitations may well have struck a chord. For Pekkala, disillusioned in the unity negotiations, it was the shop stewards who provided the key to the British unions and the unions which in

turn provided the key to the British labour movement. Despite her confidence as to the communists' potential support, Pekkala had no illusions as to the prospect of conquering the Labour Party politically and noted how even the ILP had, during the war, been overruled by the Labour Party's dominant trade union influences. The tighter parameters of the new Labour Party constitution were only likely to make matters more difficult still. Pekkala thus concluded that the only hope of getting hold of the Labour Party was by taking over the unions themselves or else creating new organizations to destroy their influence. In either scenario, the shop stewards loomed large.

For Veltheim and Pekkala there was thus both a political and an industrial rationale for their increasing orientation towards the shop stewards' movement, envisaged by them as providing the 'backbone' of the Communist Party. There was too an additional consideration which came closer still to their main work in Britain; for it was among the shop stewards that the two Finns found the greatest readiness to take part in their plans for underground military work.

V
Militarism and Anti-militarism

While reporting extensively on the forming of the Communist Party, Salme and Veltheim were not themselves active participants in the process. Their work until the early summer of 1920 was confined to studying literature, establishing contacts and making individual propaganda. More tangibly, they had set up an underground supply and communications route between Newcastle and Bergen, with preparations for similar connections to France and North America. Among its beneficiaries were the British delegates to the Comintern's Second Congress, held in July–August 1920, and the rather skewed congress representation of the different British groups must in part have reflected the associations and predilections of our two heroes. While it was Rothstein who urged that arrangements be made for the BSP's Tom Quelch and William MacLaine — chosen, as Salme sardonically put it, 'for their [proletarian] looks' — the industrial activists Gallacher and Ramsay were privately described by the Finns as 'representatives of our cause'. Jack Tanner and Dick

Beech, both of them confirmed anti-politicals, also took the Finnish route, not at first as congress delegates but as roving ambassadors for the rank and file. Notwithstanding their outspoken comments at the congress, contesting the generalization of Russian experiences with Lenin himself, they were to remain amongst the Finns' closest collaborators.[57]

By this time, Veltheim and Pekkala had set themselves a new task: that of establishing in Britain a Red Officers' Corps (ROC), first outlined in proposals they sent the Finnish communists around the start of June 1920.[58] The rationale they offered for this initiative was that none of the British groups properly understood what sort of organization was needed for a real revolution. Rather, they fell into one of two traps: either overlooking entirely preparations for future civil war or succumbing to 'sectarian and blanquist' ideas with a leaning to conspiracy. To educate these novitiates in serious illegal work, Veltheim and Pekkala therefore proposed setting up what they called 'a society for future red officers, or rather its embryo'. Such clandestine forms of organization would, amongst other things, provide a precaution against the likely suppression of the entire revolutionary movement such as had already taken place in the USA.

Before elaborating on this scheme, it is worth recalling the social and political context in which it was made. Nothing, at first glance, could appear more contrived or artificial than the clandestine training of British Red Army officers. Neither syndicalist, parliamentarian nor evangelical forms of socialism offered a precedent for such activities, while Britain's relative constitutional stability required no future calls to arms. The communists themselves came to be inseparably identified with a Labour movement orientation, whose moments even of adventurism or ultra-leftism were expressed rather in industrial than in quasi-military forms of action. Seemingly leading nowhere, postures of civil war have understandably appeared irrelevant to historians tracing that more rooted and recognizable presence. For official expositors of a 'British road to socialism', such clattering Bolshevik skeletons were even an embarrassment, to be kept firmly under lock and key.[59] Walter Kendall, drawn like a magnet to steel, gold and all that reeks of subterfuge, did reveal as much as the sources then available to him permitted. However, through his inadequate attention to the domestic springs of British communism, the picture he gave was of external forces

simply acting upon a passive British environment. In reality, the Cabinet papers which he combed for foreign influences also reveal a strain of home-grown insurrectionism which Kendall hardly even acknowledged. When this is taken into consideration, the aims of Veltheim and Pekkala appear more ambiguous: partly to instil a more military outlook in the British movement but also — and in fact they appear to have swung between the two — to guide the 'Blanquist' instincts they found already present into a more strategic orientation. This ambiguity, moreover, was reinforced by the rather mixed response their proposals aroused among the Finnish communists in Stockholm and Petrograd. That in itself reflected a wider international debate in which, for example, the German Communist Party congress of April 1920 had, albeit only after some considerable debate, condemned the guerrilla-style activities of Max Hölz.[60]

While lacking any such widespread movement as sprang up in Germany in the wake of the Kapp Putsch, there were in Britain at that time at least three identifiable currents of quasi-military activity, all densely interconnected. The first was the Irish war of independence, which, if Radek felt it necessary to enjoin solidarity on British communists at the Second CI Congress, was nevertheless felt by the latter as very much their own concern. There were substantial Irish communities in many British cities, and the largest of them, in Glasgow and Liverpool, were closely linked to Ireland by sea. These two cities also provided some of the strongest evidences of insurrectionist leanings on parts of the left. In Glasgow, which provided a number of the CP's earliest leaders, the liaison between nationalist and socialist elements was particularly close. Irish flags and Red flags flew together, whether to honour Sinn Fein's Countess Markievicz, chief speaker at Glasgow's 1919 May Day demonstration, or the English communist Sylvia Pankhurst, speaking at Markievicz's invitation in Dublin. The Irish Citizens' Army claimed some 8000 active supporters in the West of Scotland, and though only a minority sampled anything more than its social facilities, that was enough to cause the authorities some alarm. 'It is . . . significant', Special Branch reported, 'that many active members hold official positions in other labour bodies and have, therefore, power to aggravate industrial trouble for their own end.'[61] In April 1920 the Glasgow Trades and Labour Council held a demonstration some 4000 strong against British rule in Ireland.

One of the speakers, himself of Irish antecedents, was Colonel Malone, who urged 'that the Irish could give points to the Scotch workers in so far as they had a large and organized force and were drilled and equipped to fight for life against British rule'.[62] With him on the platform were Willie Gallacher, also to associate with Veltheim and Pekkala, and Arthur MacManus, first chairman of the Communist Party and the very personification of these linkages. Of Fenian family origins and upbringing, a one-time follower and associate of the murdered Irish socialist and nationalist James Connolly, MacManus was remembered by admirers as 'volatile and witty' and by detractors as 'a blether'. 'His Irish ancestry fired his blood with imagination and romance', remembered the communist Tom Bell. 'He was a revolutionary who always talked in the most callous fashion of fighting, a man with brains but without morals of any kind', was the contrasting but not incompatible assessment of the ILP member David Kirkwood.[63] MacManus appears to have been implicated in Britain's Red Army escapades, and this too was put down by some to his romanticism.[64] The arrest of his Sinn Feiner brother for unlawful possession of firearms suggests how little it relied on Finnish instructors to give a military turn to such sentiments.[65]

In Glasgow there were close links between Sinn Fein and the International Union of Ex-Servicemen (IUX),[66] and it was Britain's large reservoir of demobilized soldiers that provided its second possible challenge to constitutional order after the war; the 'traditions of the camp' that a century earlier had been invoked to explain the physical-force radicalism of post-Napoleonic Britain.[67] Unemployment, profiteering, inadequate war pensions and housing shortages — the whole tawdry deception of 'a land fit for heroes' — fuelled a discontent that occasionally took violent forms. During the peace celebrations of July 1919 there was looting and rioting in a number of towns, including the setting fire of Luton town hall and a similar attempt on Bilston police station in the Black Country. The political coherence of such protests, which had in any case passed their peak by mid-1920, should not of course be exaggerated.[68] Nevertheless, these broader grievances could generate an activist presence and their own ad hoc forms of organization. Based mainly in Scotland, the IUX proclaimed itself 'an out and out revolutionary socialist organization', linked with the Clyde

Workers' Committee as well as Irish nationalists.[69] Far stronger in England was the National Union of Ex-Servicemen (NUX), a body generally disposed towards constitutional methods and officially recognized by the Labour Party.[70] Even that, in 1919–20, did not preclude a certain revolutionary involvement, the clearest instance being ex-Lieutenant George Nicholson of Reading. To judge from police reports, Nicholson was the very type of the revolutionary adventurer: twice divorced, thrice a convicted felon, a veteran of the Boer War but, his tales of Gallipoli notwithstanding, a mere clerk in the last one. It says something of the times that Nicholson found common cause with the industrial rebels and associated closely with Tom Dingley, a member of the shop stewards' National Administrative Council and co-organizer of the previous year's so-called 'Slough Soviet'. When not 'attempting to waylay the Prime Minister' or addressing his own embryonic Red Army 'battalion', Nicholson found time to attend the January 1920 National Conference of Shop Stewards' and Workers' Committees. There he proposed the affiliation of the ex-servicemen to the shop stewards' movement on condition that it appoint 'a committee to consider the strategic and topographical points which would be of assistance to the activities of a revolutionary army'. Supported by Dingley and reassured by Arthur MacManus that such matters were already under consideration, Nicholson could not have been accused of sitting on the fence. 'He believed in force', he insisted:

> He believed in preaching the doctrine of brutality. It had been driven into their hearts by the people who had lived on their economic misery . . . He suggested that they should see to it that they had got adequate military staff attached to their organisation, as they proposed to indulge in revolutionary action when the time came.[71]

It was this conference that helped persuade Veltheim and Pekkala that the shop stewards' movement provided the best possibilities for illegal work, and in Scotland the Workers' Committees claimed already to be involved in 'secret arming and drilling of carefully selected workers'.[72] Nicholson himself made an understandably more guarded contribution to *Solidarity* at a time when the Finns were intimately involved with that paper.[73] Although he later seems to have faded from the scene, the existence of such militant ex-servicemen both encouraged

thoughts of a future Red Army and provided some of its self-styled future leaders.

The third stimulus to such thoughts, albeit in a rather different sense, was the vigorous movement for better pay and conditions of serving soldiers and sailors. The agitation in the Royal Navy, while also having peaked by the middle of 1920, was especially widespread. Rooted in the lower-deck benefit societies, for most of its participants this was no doubt a basic matter of workers' rights of representation, reinforced by the trade union backgrounds of many so-called 'Hostilities Only' ratings.[74] For the activists around the *Daily Herald*, which did its utmost to support this campaign, such issues were also ostensibly to the fore. However, the Sailors', Soldiers' and Airmen's Union (SSAU), established at the *Herald*'s office in March or April 1919, had more radical objectives too. It is telling that, having originated in the wartime Soldiers' and Workers' Council, it should later have associated closely with the IUX and taken office space with the BSP. The revolutionary rationale for such movements was nowhere more clearly stated than by Dave Ramsay who, at a WSF gathering in November 1919, 'said that thousands of pounds had been wasted in pamphlets, and that propaganda must now be directed towards making the Army, Navy and Police class-conscious, for a revolution would be useless unless the Army and Navy were on their side'.[75] A close associate of Ramsay's was Jack Tanner, and it is illuminating that Tanner not only spoke to similar effect of the Navy's critical significance in a crisis but also preserved in his papers prewar Navy League propaganda as to the sea-routes' indispensability to Britain's 'unvictualled ocean citadel'.[76] Both Ramsay and Tanner were to associate closely with the Finns and their way of thinking had an appreciable influence on their proposals for lower-deck propaganda. Other supporters of the SSAU were Lansbury and his fellow *Herald* journalist H.T. MacDonald; our old friend Malone, who spoke up for the lower decks in Parliament and seemingly made his first contacts with the revolutionary movement through this organization; and Naval Commander J.M. Kenworthy, another Liberal MP with a Forces' background who, like Malone, leapfrogged over the Labour Party to embrace Bolshevism.

There thus already existed, by the time Veltheim and Pekkala arrived in Britain, a whole patchwork of very doubtfully

constitutional movements and activists. The implications of these movements were open to debate, not least as to whether best to concentrate on winning over existing servicemen, as the SSAU had attempted to do, or to build up among Irish and more especially ex-service contacts the nucleus of a new 'Red Army'. It may be that Veltheim and Pekkala, who never quite resolved this question even in their own minds, could in this respect have provided a clearer focus and sense of direction. They developed schemes both for lower-deck agitations and a Red Officers' Corps, and the latter itself was rather ambiguously delineated. That perhaps reflected not only their own inexperience and hesitations but the debates that must have taken place both within Britain and in their consultations with the SKP. When initially they defined their objectives, the two emissaries spoke of organizing the movement's best elements for the moment of revolutionary opportunity. The impression they gave was of an 'active revolutionary body', that, besides organizing underground propaganda and training, would have had arms with which to fight the class enemy. This impression was reinforced by their plans for a three-tier organization of national, regional and district committees, the last of these comprising some ten or twenty individuals working to instructions from above through a single district leader. That, in their ROC budget, ten each of machine-guns, revolvers, bombs and rifles were described as an 'instructional apparatus', may or may not have been reassuring.[77] In defending their proposal from its critics, Veltheim and Pekkala nevertheless insisted that they had no intention of creating 'an adventurist conspiracy' or an actual fighting organization. It was of absolute importance, their training manual warned, 'that this body of Red Army leaders does not regard itself as an independent, fighting, terroristic, or similar organization. It is not a body of plotters or riot makers, but of future Red Army leaders and officers, who act closely and loyally in line with the Communist mass movement.'[78] This ambiguity was never really cleared up, however, as they continued to speak in the same breath of both the ideological and the military training of the future communist leadership, and as their chief collaborator Malone combined their preparations with wildly inflammatory 'lamppost speeches'.[79]

It was thus that the training manual found in Veltheim's possession on his arrest included sections on drill, the use of

arms, the character of the future civil war, building of barricades, occupation of factories, and organization and equipping of the Red Army. 'We are soldiers of the International Red Army', it proclaimed. 'We shall not lay down our arms . . . before the dark night of oppression and the blood red stormy dawn of Revolution have changed it into the glorious day of Freedom and Communism.'[80] The document's general thrust was strikingly reminiscent of the ideas developed by Finnish communists both in Stockholm and at the International Military School in Petrograd from the winter of 1918–19. In that period, as we saw, the new SKP had put its whole weight behind underground military forms of struggle, ideas disseminated in Britain by the WSF.[81] Though neither Veltheim nor Pekkala had taken refuge in Russia in 1918–19, their readiness to think in military terms thus reflected fairly directly the thinking of the SKP's Petrograd leadership. It showed the resilience of such attitudes that the same leaders authorized payment to the couple of 'jewels worth half a million' in August 1920. No currency was indicated, though Pekkala later mentioned an allocation of 'about twenty thousand', evidently sterling, though without indicating that this sum had necessarily arrived.[82]

If half a million in anybody's currency was an emphatic vote of confidence, the response of Kuusinen in Stockholm was very much more equivocal, and here the SKP's own internal tensions briefly intersected with those of the British left. The particular importance Veltheim and Pekkala attached to Kuusinen's opinion is attested by their insistence that he himself should come to assist them. 'It is really a crime, if he would not come,' the latter remonstrated. 'I have given Beach [sic] instructions to bring him in his pocket over here. He will be punished if he dares to come back without him.'[83] Kuusinen's response was to express his considerable misgivings as to their project. His own thinking had changed considerably since the previous year, when his attempt to set up illegal military cells had ended in failure. In Stockholm since June 1920, he had long since determined to draw a line under the whole experience and work instead through the legal Socialist Workers' Party and official trade unions. Confirmed in such attitude by his reading of Lenin's polemic *Left-Wing Communism*, Kuusinen urged on the SKP's Petrograd leadership the abandonment of its sectarian underground line. That advice, together with Kuusinen's refusal to leave Stockholm

for Russia, produced a fierce altercation between the rival groups of exiled revolutionaries.[84]

It is not surprising, if he was prepared to take on such well-placed adversaries, that Kuusinen by no means deferred to British schemes deriving essentially from the same source. Clandestine military activities he regarded as premature almost by definition, for it was only once the authorities felt unable to prevent open meeting and drilling that such activities could attain a credible level of participation and continuity of purpose. In the meantime, they were only likely to draw scarce resources and personnel from more urgent tasks of agitation and education. While not discounting the importance of military work, Kuusinen considered that the main priority should be the politicization of serving or demobilized soldiers and sailors. More important still, though, was communist work in the unions and the Labour Party, and Kuusinen looked askance at the enthusiasm of Maud and Frederique for the British shop stewards' movement. That too may have reflected his reading of *Left-Wing Communism*, with its rebuttal of British anti-parliamentarians like Gallacher and Pankhurst, as well as his battles within the SKP. Sovietist and military forms of organization alike Kuusinen now regarded as a sectarian blind alley, and, when buttressed by the pronouncements of the Second CI Congress, such sentiments could not but have their effect on our two conspirators. Nevertheless, if they now drafted plans for more traditional forms of activity, their main concerns remained of a distinctly military character; and if Kuusinen's influence was evident in their orientation towards immediate Forces' grievances, the quixotic option of a Red Officers' Corps was by no means yet abandoned.[85]

Possibly that was because the arrests of Veltheim and Malone in late October-early November 1920 dealt a heavy blow to the intended sailors' movement. Already, a week or two earlier, Pankhurst had been arrested for carrying seditious matter, some of it by Veltheim, in the *Dreadnought*. Initially undeterred, Salme had still included their plans for unofficial sailors' committees in a long report she then sent to the SKP. Concentrating on immediate issues, these committees were to have had a similar relationship to the naval benefit societies as the shop stewards' movement did to the official unions. It was thus appropriate that the syndicalists Jack Tanner and Dick Beech, 'both ex-naval

men', were to be given responsibility for this work. Malone's role as an intermediary, however, was critical to the campaign's success. When therefore he was arrested for seditious utterances on 10 November, the shock did much to frighten off his restive but relatively unpolitical contacts. Earlier Malone had, in collaboration with the Finns, circulated a number of the benefit societies with promises to air their demands in Parliament. Now, anxious associates took care to repudiate him, egged on it seems by Lionel Yexley, editor of the lower-deck organ the *Fleet* and widely perceived as an Admiralty stooge. The result was that the Finns' proposed alternative to the *Fleet*, catering for the broader interests and grievances of the sailors but 'all of course poisoned as much as possible', seems never to have appeared. It is from the time of these arrests that the historian of the lower-decks movement traces its decline.[86]

It was the Red Officers' Corps that therefore proved the more enduring initiative. From their earliest discussions with British contacts, the two Finns had found a measure of support for their proposals in both London and Glasgow. Gallacher, Ramsay and Tanner, all of them prominent industrial activists and beneficiaries of the Finn's northern route to Russia, were perhaps the most enthusiastic. Both Ramsay and Tanner were recruited for the work, and by the end of the year the latter was reported to be 'forming classes for secret military drill among selected comrades, who will be trained to act as officers of the Red Army'. Links with the shop stewards were to be cemented by the relaunching as a weekly of Tanner's monthly paper *Solidarity*, its proposed subsidization ensuring that 'we or our representative, would have full and directive control over the editorship'.[87] Another name mentioned is that of Henry Hease, East London outfitter, pro-Bolshevik associate of Lansbury and MacDonald and future Labour loyalist.[88] Malone, whose pro-Bolshevism, Irish origins, political volatility and military experience all led in this direction, was also interested in creating a Red Army. Described by Pekkala as 'another Captain Sadoul' — the French officer who had defected to the Bolsheviks in 1918 — he offered to help put on military courses and seek out further collaborators from among the ex-servicemen. From Scotland there came the offer of another military adviser in the shape of Captain John White, the erring son of General Sir George White who had been organizing underground forces to fight in Ireland and had links

with the shop stewards' movement and IUX. At the national shop stewards' conference so passionately addressed by George Nicholson, it was White who had moved the resolution on Ireland.[89]

The arrests of Veltheim and even Malone did not bring an end to this work. Straightaway Pekkala requested of the SKP a budget of nearly £6000, of which £2415 was to be allocated to the ROC. 'This', she disarmingly noted, 'compares very favorably with the estimate for the imperialistic army for the same period viz — pound 149,000,000.0.0.' It would, however, fully have covered the wages of a secretary and six divisional organizers as well as assorted military hardware. Some at least of this funding must have been granted, for in the new year *Solidarity* came out weekly as suggested before ceasing publication entirely at the time of Pekkala's departure from the country.[90] At this time her responsibility was still as much to the SKP as to the Comintern, and there was even a hint of rivalry and calculation in this dependency. 'The shop-stewards have been promised help from the international,' she pointed out:

> . . . but nothing has yet come and it is not businesslike to stop the work for this reason. If they get the money from there directly they will pay us back but we will still have the control, because of the character of our relations to them.

No report is then available until March 1921, and though this by now was addressed to the Comintern secretary Kobietsky, the operation's Finnish origins remained unmistakeable. 'The building up of the nucleus of a military staff is going well ahead,' it claimed:

> . . . but the main thing that hampers . . . is a lack of sufficient competent instructors. Efforts are being made to remedy this & the Finnish Party has promised support. Matters would go forward much more quickly if a number of English comrades could be trained in the International Military Academy at Petrograd, & also by the dispatch to England of at least four comrades who have already qualified in the Training School.[91]

That appears not to have been agreed to, however. Two months later, with some months left on her visa, Pekkala left Britain, possibly for the Third Comintern Congress but not to return until the following year.[92] Tanner, meanwhile, left temporarily for the

USA. With their departures, the curious story of the British Red Army seems to have reached its end.

While its relationships and dramatis personae offer a number of pointers to the future, the episode is best understood in what proved to be the exceptional context of immediate post-revolutionary upheaval. When Pekkala and Veltheim came to Britain the Comintern was far from fully centralized. Mere member parties like the SKP could thus plausibly seek to exercise some of its leadership functions, without themselves having yet attained a complete unity of purpose. That state of flux was reflected in Britain itself where rival or ill-coordinated networks of revolutionaries survived, albeit briefly, the formation of the CPGB itself. By the time of Pekkala's return to Britain, some time in 1922, that situation no longer obtained. Through the '21 Conditions' adopted at its Second Congress and organizational theses adopted at its third, the Comintern now extended a very much tighter grip over its affiliates. The CPGB too left ever less scope for inherited loose ends and attachments. By the end of 1921 its syndicalists and anti-parliamentarians had, like Gallacher and Pollitt, acceded to its disciplines or, like Pankhurst, Beech and Tanner, found themselves outside the party's ranks. It is significant and perhaps ironic that it was Kuusinen who drafted the Comintern's organizational theses, later described by Lenin himself as too Russian; and that it was Pekkala who, returning to Britain in 1922, had much to do with their comprehensive implementation by the CPGB.

In these new Bolshevik conceptions, the idea of Red Officers had no more place than Kuusinen's fleeting flirtation with left social democracy. With the CPGB's turn to mass work and tighter financial controls, the whole affair appeared at best an expensive irrelevance. One Comintern rapporteur now referred scathingly to Pekkala's 'mysterious sessions' and her acolytes' incestuous tittle-tattle. 'Personally, I've never been interested in such absurdities, but I know the results: neither in England nor in Scotland has a single worker served this military apprenticeship.'[93] Andrew Rothstein, son of Salme's old antagonist Theodore, offered the same verdict in a letter to Karl Radek:

> During the first 18 months after the foundation of the Party, partly owing to the talk of illegal work at the Second Congress, but mainly owing to excess of money in the Party, a great deal of time and money were spent on illegal work

> and organizing a 'Red Army', both of which came to nothing (and at a time when the Party was not even bothering about a single factory group).[94]

Rothstein went on to outline the greater possibilities of agitational work within the existing armed forces, and it was to this alternative conception of anti-militarist work that the CPGB now definitively turned.

None of the figures mentioned seems to have played any great role in this work. Malone and Pankhurst, in their different ways, soon made their break with communism. Erkki Veltheim, deported from Britain after a six-month gaol sentence, joined the Finnish émigrés in Soviet Russia. Avoiding the charges that awaited him should he return to his homeland, he died there, a foreign trade official, in 1935. Kuusinen, a secretary of the Comintern from 1921, survived Stalin's purges and, a mark of naturalization indeed, became a politburo member of the CPSU. Salme Dutt, as she soon became, attained no such heights, but did perform some undisclosed Comintern role in a twelve-year spell on the Continent. As sometime mentor to both Dutt and Harry Pollitt, her impact on the CPGB was far from negligible.

Perhaps one should close, though, with a name not so far mentioned. In 1920 Douglas Springhall was a young revolutionary sailor, linking up with Veltheim and the *Dreadnought* circle and kicked out of the Navy at the time of the former's arrest. He had been a key Forces contact and the author of at least one of the *Dreadnought*'s seditious articles. Subsequently, Springhall fulfilled many functions for the CPGB and Comintern and was periodically identified with lower-decks agitations, below or above board as the times required. In 1943, while the CPGB's national organizer, he sprung to sudden notoriety when convicted of spying for the Russians. That, without doubt, is an illuminating sequel. If the British Communist Party generally took a rather different orientation to that recounted here, there was clearly a durability to its clandestine inheritance too, as youthful enthusiasms now found a far grimmer focus. For the paradigmatic Springhall at least, the real Red Army now commanded the allegiance once accorded its merest apparition.

Notes

1. Finnish National Archives (FNA), Detective Central Police Archive (DCPA) personal file 1642, 'Erkki Veltheim = Anderson = Karlsson = Carlton = Rubenstein, the Mystery Man'; Public Record Office (PRO) CAB 24/114 CP 1642, 'Report on revolutionary organisations in the United Kingdom', 13 November 1920; *Times*, 27 October and 3 November 1920; Claud McKay, *A Long Way From Home* (London 1985 edn), 76–7.

2. One indication of this was the circulation to the Cabinet from 1918 of fortnightly, then weekly, 'Reports on revolutionary organisations in the United Kingdom' (henceforth RRO). While occasionally of questionable accuracy or demonstrable inaccuracy, these provide one important source for the account that follows.

3. PRO CAB 24/114 CP 2089, RRO 13 November 1920.

4. Henry Pelling, *The British Communist Party. A Historical Profile* (London 1975 edn), 15–17; Pelling's assessment is challenged by L.J. Macfarlane, *The British Communist Party. Its Origins and Development until 1929* (London 1966), 59.

5. Walter Kendall, *The Revolutionary Movement in Britain 1900–1921* (London 1969), ix–xii.

6. Then wife of the Finnish left Social Democrat Eino Pekkala, but perhaps better known by her maiden name, Salme Murrik, or her second married name, Salme Dutt.

7. Michael Futrell, *Northern Underground. Episodes of Russian Revolutionary Transport and Communications through Scandinavia and Finland 1863–1917* (London 1963), 197 and passim. For fuller studies of the relations between the Russian and Finnish labour movements prior to 1917, see the contributions of Antti Kujala and Juhani Piilonen in *Lenin ja Suomi. Osa I* (Helsinki 1987).

8. M.N. Roy, *Memoirs* (Bombay 1964), 295.

9. RTsKhIDNI (Russian Centre for the Preservation and Study of Documents of Recent History, Moscow) 510/1/1, 'Rapport über Tätigkeit des Skandinavischen Komitees der III Internationale', 16 July 1920; Allan Wallenius, 'Das Skandinavische Komitee der Komintern', 12 August 1921; RTsKhIDNI 510/1/2, 'Die Skandinavische Komission der Komm. Int.'; RTsKhIDNI 510/1/3, 'Protokol øver forhandlingarna I den Skandinaviska Kommission til Løsning af det danske Spørgsmaal'; RTsKhIDNI 510/1/1 Wallenius to Zinoviev 2 May 1920, 19 May 1920 and 4 June 1920.

10. Kendall, op. cit., 408, notes Zachariassen's belief that not the Comintern but the Finnish refugees were responsible for his mission and this, contra Kendall, seems entirely plausible.

11. PRO FO 371/6843 N/1/1/38, N159/1/38: G.R. Warner, Christiania, to FO, 31 December 1920 and translated article from *Social-Demokraten*, 30 December 1920; PRO CAB 24/97 CP 529 RRO 5 February 1920.

12. PRO FO 371/6843 N4149/1/38, Barclay to Curzon, 31 March 1921. For Kerzhentsev see Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams. Utopian Vision and the Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution* (New York 1989).

13. PRO FO 371/10481 N8222/171/38, Home Office to FO 30 November 1924.

14. PRO CAB 24/160 CP 205 RRO 7 June 1923.

15. PRO FO 371/6844 N4709/1/38.

16. One notes, for example, the comments of Rosalind Travers [Hyndman], a visitor to Finland in 1908–9. 'Talking with the Russians, I had again that feeling of extreme remoteness which I find in their books and their thoughts,' she wrote of her movements in Helsinki's revolutionary circles. 'By contrast Finnish ways of thought are a Western country, clear and comprehensible, if not familiar . . .'; *Letters from Finland. August 1908–March 1909* (London 1911).

17. See M. Philips Price, *My Three Revolutions* (London 1969).

18. Victor Loupan and Pierre Lorrain, *L'argent de Moscou. L'histoire la plus secrète du PCF* (Paris 1994), 66–8.

19. For the fullest account of British and American travellers to Russian in this period see Max Engman and Jerker A. Eriksson, *Mannen i kolboxen. John Reed och Finland* (Ekenäs 1979).

20. PRO FO 371/3740 69293, 'R' to Sinclair, Foreign Office, 5 May 1919.

21. William T. Goode, *Bolshevism at Work* (London 1920); University of Manchester, *Guardian* archives, A/G27, correspondence re Goode including C.P. Scott to Curzon, 11 September 1919. Goode described his experiences in a series of articles for the *Sunday Worker* in 1925.

22. *Guardian* archives A/G27, Goode to Scott, 25 May 1920, Grenfell to Scott, 26 May 1920; A/C85 note on Cotter.

23. *Guardian* archives A/G27, Scott–Curzon correspondence, September–October 1919, PRO FO 371/5388 754, file on Cotter, October–December 1920.

24. PRO FO 371/3740, deciphered telegram from Bell, British delegate, Helsinki, 23 April 1919.

25. The best account in English is Anthony F. Upton, *The Finnish Revolution 1917–1918* (Minneapolis 1980 edn).

26. *Guardian* archives A/G27, Goode to Scott, 13 May 1919.

27. PRO FO 371/3740 70922, Grenfell, telegram, 16 May 1919 (copy).

28. PRO CAB 24/78 GT 7195 RRO 30 April 1919 describes an SSAU meeting attended by Malone at which pro-Bolshevik sentiments were expressed by Kenworthy, the revolutionary syndicalist W.F. Watson and others.

29. See the entry on Malone by David Martin and John Saville in Joyce Bellamy and John Saville, eds, *The Dictionary of Labour Biography* vol. 7, (London 1984), 158–65. For the trip to Russia see Malone's own account, *The Russian Republic* (London 1920) and PRO FO 371/4038 144919, 145651, 152011, 152895, 154013.

30. Lansbury, *My Life* (London 1928) 227, 253–4; Lansbury, *What I saw in Russia* (London 1920).

31. For this dramatized version see especially John Callaghan, *Rajani Palme Dutt. A Study in British Stalinism* (London 1993), 41, where Salme is reported to have been exiled to Siberia, fought in the Finnish civil war, etc.

32. Otto Kuusinen, *The Finnish Revolution: a self-criticism* (London 1919), 28–9.

33. Olle Sirén. *Lovisa stads historia 1745–1995* (Lovisa 1995), 209–10; Sirén, *Pernå sockens historia III:2 Tiden ca 1870–1920. Sociala miljöer — attityder och politik — inbördeskriget 1918* (Lovisa 1996); FNA, DCPA, pf. 1462, Komissarien vid polisinrättning I Lovisa till den Landshöfvdingen I Nylands län 14 February 1920; Juhani Piilonen, *Vallankumous kunnallishallinnossa* (Helsinki 1982).

34. See Hella Wuolijoki, *Minusta tuli liikenainen eli 'Valkoinen varis'. Juhani*

Tervapään yksinpuheluja aikojen draamassa III (1908–1918) (Helsinki 1953) 30, 58–60; FNA, Hella Vuolikoki papers, file 44, Salme armsed, n.d. but May 1913, Salme to her parents, 2 January 1914, Salme armsad Helsingis, 10 October 1914.

35. Kuusinen, loc. cit.

36. Tauno Saarela, *Suomalaisen kommunismin synty 1918–1923* (Tampere 1996), 134–55 and passim for a full account of the origins of Finnish communism.

37. RTsKhIDNI 516/2/1919:14, Kuusinen to CC, 16 August 1919 and Veikko 55 (Ville Ojanen) to K.M. Evä, 16 December 1919; 516/2/1920:21, Veikko 55 to CC, 18 January 1920.

38. It is hard to credit the story, no doubt originating with Pekkala herself, that she came to Britain as a Comintern representative with instructions directly from Lenin; R. Page Arnot in Salme Dutt, *Lucifer and other Poems* (London 1966), 9. More likely, Salme met Lenin only in 1921.

39. See Aino Kuusinen, *Before and After Stalin* (London 1974), 19–20. However, the story that the jewels were obtained directly from Kuusinen at the Vuolijokis seems implausible.

40. See RTsKhIDNI 516/2/1920:14, Kuusinen, n.d., no addressee, late summer 1920.

41. See RTsKhIDNI 516/2/1920:14, Pekkala to unnamed comrade, n.d. but mid-May 1920.

42. PRO CAB 24/98 CP 686 RRO 19 February 1920.

43. PRO CAB 24/88 GT 8114 RRO 4 September 1919, GT 8192 RRO 18 September 1919.

44. RTsKhIDNI 495/100/11, statement of the Joint Provisional Committee of the Communist Party to Lenin, 20 June 1920.

45. RTsKhIDNI 495/100/17, W. Leslie, 'Review of Socialist & Communist Parties, England & Scotland', 20 July 1920; 495/100/27, Leslie to Lenin, 25 February 1921.

46. RTsKhIDNI 495/100/5, report dated 15 January 1920.

47. Carlson to Gott. F., 8 September 1920. Gorter's 'Open letter to Lenin' took issue with the latter's *Left-Wing Communism*, published in April 1920.

48. RTsKhIDNI 516/2/1920:14, 'Maud' (S. Pekkala) to unnamed comrade, n.d. but early May 1920; National Museum of Labour History CP/IND/DUTT/1/9, Pekkala correspondence 1920.

49. Pekkala to unnamed comrade, early May 1920. The Union Jacks would have been those decorating the Co-operative Movement's lorries, to the digust of the Left; see e.g. *Workers' Dreadnought*, 10 May 1919.

50. RTsKhIDNI 516/2/1920:14, unsigned and unaddressed letter, n.d., sent by a representative in London.

51. Pekkala to unnamed comrade, May 1920. The 'negro' was Claud McKay, the Jamaican–American poet and essayist, and the Italian was the anarchist Silvio Corio. McKay, op. cit., provides a vivid picture of the *Dreadnought* circle.

52. McKay, *Long Way*, 77, 85.

53. RTsKhIDNI 516/2/1920:14, Maud and Frederique, 'Memorandumi ja raportti Suomalaisen kommunistipuolueen edustajille III internationaalen IIssa kongressissa sisältäen tietoja Englannista'.

54. Harry Pollitt, *Serving My Time. An Apprenticeship to Politics* (London 1941 edn), 109–10.

55. 'Memorandumi ja raportti . . .'

56. See Kevin Morgan, *Harry Pollitt* (Manchester 1993), 26 ff.

57. Veltheim and Pekkala to Gylling or Sirola, 28 June 1920; 'Memorandumi ja raportti . . .'; *Solidarity*, August 1920; Tanner in *Second Congress of the Communist International: Minutes of the Proceedings* (London, 1977), 61–2.

58. 'Memorandumi ja raportti . . .'

59. Hence, of course, the omission of any mention of these activities in party memoirs and its official history by James Klugmann. Even confidential memoirs by Salme's future husband Palme Dutt, broaching as they did various inner-party secrets, drew a veil over this aspect of her work.

60. Ben Fowkes, *Communism in Germany under the Weimar Republic* (London 1984), 46.

61. *Workers' Dreadnought*, 10 May 1919; PRO CAB 24/80 GT 7305, RRO 21 May 1919, CAB 24/81 GT 7417, RRO 4 June 1919, CAB 24/83 GT 7616 RRO 3 July 1919, CAB 24/83 GT 7671 RRO 10 July 1919.

62. PRO CAB 24/104 CP 1129, RRO 22 April 1920. For Malone's Irish identity, see his reference to 'we Irish' and 'you Scotch' in a letter to MacDonald 10 April 1925; PRO 30/69 1171.

63. William Gallacher, *Revolt on the Clyde* (London 1940 edn), 26; Tom Bell, *Pioneering Days* (London 1941), 94–7; David Kirkwood, *My Life of Revolt* (London 1935), 135–6.

64. RTsKhIDNI 495/100/49, 'Jack Warner', 'La situation intérieure en Angleterre', 11 November 1921.

65. PRO CAB 24/137 CP 4164 RRO 17 August 1922.

66. PRO CAB 24/87 GT 8036 RRO 21 August 1918.

67. 'The peril and imprisonments which resulted from political movements in England in the first half of the last century were occasioned by men who had been in the army and wanted their associates to arm . . . while their plodding comrades were holding meetings, they were planning fights in the streets—declaring an hour's drill was worth a week of speeches.' George Jacob Holyoake, *The History of Co-operation* (London 1908 edn), 14, 28.

68. For one account see Stephen R. Ward, 'Intelligence Surveillance of British Ex-servicemen, 1918–1920', *Historical Journal*, Vol. 16 (1973), 179–88.

69. James Cox, *Workers' Dreadnought*, 3 January 1920; PRO CAB 24/92 CP 70 RRO 6 November 1919; CAB 24/93 CP 125 RRO 13 November 1919; CAB 24/97 CP 23 RRO 29 January 1920.

70. PRO CAB 24/96 CP 429 RRO 9 January 1920.

71. PRO CAB 24/96 CP 458 RRO 15 January 1920, CP 491 RRO 22 January 1920; CAB 24/98 CP 620 RRO 12 February 1920; CAB 24/103 CP 1039 RRO 8 April 1920; Nuffield College, Oxford, Jack Tanner papers 5/3, report of National Conference of Shop Stewards and Workers' Committees, 10–11 January 1920.

72. RTsKhIDNI 516/1920:14, report by 'Maud', n.d. but late October/early November 1920; J.R. Campbell and J.M. Messer, *Communist International*, June–July 1920, cited Kendall, op. cit., 398.

73. *Solidarity*, July 1920. An instance of Pekkala's errant spelling of Dick *Beach* suggests that she may have been assisting the paper during its editor Jack Tanner's sojourn in Moscow.

74. The fullest account is Anthony Carew, *The Lower Deck of the Royal Navy 1900–1939. The Invergordon Mutiny in Perspective* (Manchester 1981). Other sources drawn on for the SSAU are PRO CAB 24/73 GT 6976 RRO 10 March

1919, CAB 24/78 GT 7091 RRO 7 April 1919 and GT 7195 RRO 30 April 1919, CAB 24/79 GT 7254 RRO 14 May 1919, CAB 24/80 GT 7305 RRO 21 May 1919, CAB 24/90 GT 8400 RRO 23 October 1919.

75. PRO CAB 24/93 CP 125 RRO 13 November 1919.

76. Tanner papers 6/4, H.T.C.K., *Why a Supreme Fleet is Vital to **You***, London Navy League, 1909, along with other Navy League leaflets; Tanner, 'The lesson of the British betrayal', *Industrial Pioneer*, July 1921, 8–10.

77. Report by 'Maud'.

78. Cited *Times*, 20 November 1920.

79. 'What', he said of the meeting which led to his arrest, 'are a few Churchills or a few Curzons on lampposts . . .?'; *Communist*, 18 November 1920.

80. PRO CAB 24/114 CP 2063 RRR 4 November 1920.

81. E.g. Kuusinen, op. cit.

82. That would compare with the £55,000 allocation to the CPGB itself in 1920–21. RTsKhIDNI 516/2/1920:14, SKP Central Committee to SKP Stockholm Committee 21 August 1920, report by 'Maud'.

83. Report by 'Maud', late October 1920.

84. Saarela, op. cit., 209–42.

85. Kuusinen, part letter to England.

86. Report by 'Maud'; Carew, op. cit., ch. 6.

87. PRO CAB 24/94 CP 256 RRO 4 December 1919; CAB 24/114 CP 2027 RRO 28 October 1920; PRO 30/69 1172; report by Maud, late October 1920.

88. PRO CAB 24/116. RRO 2 December 1920; PRO 30/69 1172, Hease to MacDonald, 19 March 1927; George Lansbury, *The Miracle of Fleet Street. The Story of the Daily Herald* (London 1925), 113.

89. PRO CAB 24/92 CP (19) 70 RRO 6 November 1919. Tanner papers 5/3, shop stewards' conference report 10–11 January 1920.

90. Report by 'Maud'.

91. RTsKhIDNI 495/100/27, E.A. Chapman to Kobietsky, 'Report on groups of action in Britain', 24 March 1921. This supplements a full report by Pekkala which we have not yet traced.

92. Warner, 'La situation'.

93. Loc. cit.

94. RTsKhIDNI 495/100/98, Rothstein to Radek 23 June 1923.

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