

on the basis that they have been taught to regard coloured people as less than human;

The patience, the courage, the almost too great capacity for endurance and survival, of ordinary people everywhere, can triumph over the immeasurable horror and pain and suffering and grief that such bestial war brings;

There lies in these simple human beings a mighty reservoir of culture and industry and creative talent, held inert by capitalism and gloriously released by Socialist rebirth;

The dangers involved in allowing even the smallest risk of such a war continuing and spreading are so great that all our efforts everywhere, to insist on peace should be redoubled.

This book is, in truth, a powerful piece of anti-war propaganda, beautifully written, well told, and worthy to be read by everyone.

D. N. PRITT.

#### WORKING-CLASS NOVEL

*Betrayed Spring*, by Jack Lindsay. (450 pp. Bodley Head. 15s.)

THIS is an unusual and welcome novel about ordinary working people living ordinary lives in post-war Britain. Jack Lindsay seeks through personal experiences of three returned soldiers and their circles, to tell how the people lived and what they thought during the first years of the Labour Government elected in 1945. He passes from London to Lancashire, Yorkshire and the Tyne, with their varied industrial and local scenes. We feel the strength of the miners and the portworkers, the hope and frustration of the London squatters and the Savoy strikers, the degeneration of the opportunist trade union official.

The book is very refreshing in its closeness to the people and in the

scenes of everyday life which we feel are true because they have often happened to us. But the political discussions are not so real as the sketches of daily life. While the general impression emerges of a fading away of hopes, the clash of the two trends in the organised Labour Movement does not stand out. None of the characters had the good fortune to come into contact with Marxism, neither does the collective life of the organised movement come into the picture.

Jack Lindsay has done something very courageous and ambitious. One puts down the book with the feeling that there is more to come and with an interest in the further fate of the characters. When the author gives us people who express their politics as naturally as they do the other things, he will give us a novel which would indeed be a powerful force in the advance of our people.

JOHN MAHON.

#### NATIONALIZATION

*Problems of Nationalized Industry*, by W. A. Robson. (390 pp. Allen and Unwin. 25s.)

IN the days of Keir Hardie, Tom Mann and other political pioneers of that period the word Socialism had one clear meaning—the common ownership *and control* of the means of wealth, production and distribution and the end of Rent, Interest and Profit. But the leadership of the Labour Party, from Ramsay MacDonald to Major Clement Attlee, have so distorted the policy of the Movement that they would have us believe that we are, in fact, today living under socialism in Britain, particularly expressed in our nationalized industries—and the B.B.C.

To those who question the lavish compensation and annual Interest

paid to the former owners of nationalized industries, Professor W. A. Robson in his book says, 'We must regard the obligation to pay interest on compensation stocks as a necessary concomitant of nationalization under democratic socialism, despite its manifest disadvantages'. He then proceeds to make the astonishing statement that, 'No really satisfactory solution of the compensation problem has yet been found; and it is possible that none will ever be discovered'. (p. 291). How astounding! Has the Professor never heard of what they did in Russia in 1917?—or in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Rumania and Poland when those countries set up their Socialist Governments after the liberation from fascism?

On the subject of the composition of the boards of control in the nationalized industries he says: 'I believe we should reject the idea that the members of the Boards of public corporations should be professed socialists or adherents of the Labour Party'. (p. 94). Further, he says, 'The record of Municipal trading is quite significant. . . . It shows that some of the most successful gas and electricity undertakings were developed and operated by councils whose members were predominantly conservative, in outlook if not in name'. He rebukes those who advocate 'direct representation of the employees or their trade unions' on the Boards of nationalized industries.

He thinks the salaries ranging from £8,500 to £5,000 per year, paid to the Chairmen of these Boards are 'broadly reasonable'. In fact, he claims that they are 'well below what would be offered by commercial companies of similar magnitude'. That may be true, but

he should remember that the people do not expect the ethics of private commercialism to be the criterion in nationalized industry. High salaried men are not necessarily the most capable and efficient administrators, as the very condition of these industries prior to nationalization clearly showed. In fact, Robson himself confirms this, when, in writing about the coal industry he says that 'Nationalization . . . was adopted only after numerous other expedients to improve the economic and technological condition of the industry had been tried and failed. The elimination of private ownership was a surgical operation which had become necessary to save the life of the patient'. (p. 280).

He praises the governing boards of nationalized industries on the way they 'have taken their obligations towards organized labour with the utmost seriousness'. 'Indeed', he says, 'one of the most promising features of the situation is the fact that the boards and the chief executives have shown every sign of understanding the immense importance of the labour problem and the need to adopt a new and creative attitude towards it'. (p. 340).

As a trade union officer who has had to meet these authorities in national negotiations about wages and working conditions, I can only conclude that Professor Robson is expressing an opinion without having had any actual experience in this matter. If he had been present at any of the conflicts which I have been involved in with some of these control boards he would have realized that one of the main troubles in nationalized industry with its present set-up is, that the people at the top are very largely the same persons who previously represented private ownership and