

to end oppression and to bring about socialism.

James loved books, and he also loved children, and children loved him. We lived above the books in a small two-roomed flat. James even tried to negotiate for space there, but we stood firm against that idea. Sue was two, and Mike was just born, and immediately they took to James. He had this extraordinary ability to reduce his intellectual capacity to that of whatever age the child might be. He was great at pulling funny faces, communicating with strange sounds, at initiating all sorts of original games that had the children wild with excitement. Norma used to look after James, and trying to keep the house clean, with two small kids, made every day a full and exhausting one. But she loved James every bit as much as the kids did.

He was an amazing person—even his eating habits are worthy of mention. Norma used to describe him as the 'human dustbin', in that he would eat anything and as much as you could possibly serve up. You could not help but get the feeling through James and his love for grub, that the world food crisis was near.

On equal footing with the books in his bedroom was his food store. Mountains of tinned food, piles of pre-packed food, stacks of biscuits. It had to be seen to be believed. To have breakfast with James sometimes meant eating bacon in 1967 which was labelled 'eat before Jan. 14, 1964'—but he did not seem to mind the gamey taste, though some of us did counsel caution and settled for an egg that had hard boiled itself out of protest!

For readers of *Marxism Today*, this might sound a funny sort of obituary. But that's how it was with James. Never a dull moment. He was a colourful character in every sense of the word. He had a deep commitment to the working class; he just loved people, and displayed an enormous zest for living.

Above all, he was a living example of the distinct role of an intellectual in a revolutionary party. For the middle class he was an ambassador, and proved by his contribution and example the natural and essential alliance between the middle class and working class, and of the absolute necessity for this enriching alliance if we are to achieve socialism in Britain.

Finally, I would like to say a few words to today's intellectuals: I would ask them to follow the example of James Klugmann, learn from him, try to develop a humanity and

modesty, and above all learn from his ability to explain complex ideas in a way everyone can understand. It is not an academic gift learned at University, but an understanding that develops from close contact with the working class and the assimilation of a working class point of view.

Such a development would minimise James's loss to the movement, and would be something that he would have been proud to have left behind.

Goodbye, James—from a worker who will never forget you.

LAURENCE BRIGHT

The Christian-Marxist dialogue was right up James' street. Though to him Christianity was an aberration he couldn't share, there was no lack of sympathy for it. He'd done his homework with characteristic thoroughness, he knew the right kind of question to ask, and his point would be pressed firmly home, however painless he made the process seem.

Perhaps we weren't quite the right Christian group to have begun dialogue with, back in the sixties. Most of us in 'Slant' were Marxists anyway, or at least of the left, and our Christianity wasn't exactly the sort of thing you could hear thundered from Irish pulpits. But out of these private meetings came requests for public debate, usually from student groups. They ranged from small club meetings to full-scale 'missions'. I forget how many of these he and I did together; enough, certainly, for me to recognise his integrity and appreciate his skill.

James loved speaking to this sort of gathering—that was the immediately obvious thing. The Marxist approach to our subject would come across with great force, straightforwardly but with the right amount of anecdote to hold the attention. Not that he ever found holding people's attention difficult. It was easy to follow on. I could state with complete sincerity that I agreed with every word that had just been said. This didn't go down well with the kind of person for whom 'Christian' was just a longer way of spelling 'Tory' (there were always a fair sprinkling of them present, hoping to see Goliath felled) but interestingly it was usually James who afterwards received the indignant rebuttals disguised as questions. This showed him at his best. He could discover the core of need in the most aggressive or plain dotty remarks. He never gave up until at least something had got across. Everyone got the same careful treatment. He really liked people,

which is why I find it hard to suppose that anyone ever really disliked him.

That was especially plain after a meeting, at the bar or over coffee in a student's room. How he stood the smoke and heat with his bad chest I don't know, but he'd listen and he'd talk, faster and with more interjections as he warmed to the theme—'d'you understand me?'—and his laugh was infectious. No doubt he was a complex man, but to me it was his single-mindedness that came across.

This country has not experienced the straight political confrontation between Christian and Communist familiar in France or Italy. Dialogue has been no easier for that, since interest had first to be created. If a whole generation of students has grown up, not necessarily converted, but at least with a better understanding of why truth lies on the left, much of that is due to James Klugmann. My own debt to him is very real. We are all poorer for his death.

JACK COHEN

It has been my great good fortune to have worked with James in many of his most important spheres of work—originally in the student movement and latterly in Communist Party education, the Marxist-Christian dialogue and *Marxism Today*.

As Arnold Kettle has said, James was a teacher of genius. Hundreds, probably thousands of Communist Party and YCL members experienced the superb quality of his teaching at first hand. Many more, non-party people, heard him at the public lectures he gave, while Quakers, Methodists, Catholics and Anglicans made his acquaintance through the 'dialogues' in which he played such an outstanding part.

It is almost impossible to convey the flavour of a lecture by James. It was compounded of simplicity based on immense knowledge, humour, but above all on profound respect for his listeners and a deep sense of his responsibility as a Party educator. This was reflected in the meticulous care which went into the preparation of all his talks.

There is a theory that people can only concentrate on a talk for 45 minutes. James broke this resistance barrier with ease. The spell of his wit and wisdom, the vast knowledge which all felt he was sharing with them as equals, the alternation of serious exposition with jokes and stories illustrating complex ideas, riveted them all no matter how long he spoke.

He—a most brilliant lecturer—always emphasised that the task of Communist educators was not to show how clever they were, but "to help people to do things better than you could yourself . . . to release forces for the fight for socialism that are higher than your own". And he himself always practised what he preached.

He brought to *Marxism Today* the same dedication, sense of responsibility and meticulous attention to detail which marked his approach to all his many-sided and important activities. His outstanding contribution as editor and writer are well known. Space permits only brief comment on one or two other aspects.

Marxism Today had an editorial staff of only two, latterly only one and a half, and a part-time secretary. The editorial office was the smallest of rooms cluttered with books from floor to ceiling, overflowing on to the editor's desk where they joined Communist journals in many languages and mountains of precariously balanced files which threatened to collapse (and frequently did) at any moment.

Diversions at our 'editorial conferences' were processions of visiting colleagues wanting to consult him, countless telephone calls from would-be Ph.Ds wanting to discuss their theses, from undergraduates wanting advice on what to read for their subjects, from Party and other organisations wanting him to speak, enquiries from bodies like the BBC and others about the possible use of his priceless collection of prints and pictures, calls from old and new friends from all parts of Britain and the world eager to see him etc.

Yet throughout all these and many regular crises—failure of articles promised to materialise, difficulties because articles set up were either too long or too short, James, although tensed, always found a solution somehow.

As editor he was utterly opposed to any interference with what any contributor had written and would never attempt to change a word or a comma except in cases where he thought personal attacks or wounding statements were being made. Freedom for all points of view in articles or discussion was a hall-mark of our journal under his editorship.

The prestige which *Marxism Today* enjoys in Britain and throughout the world is due overwhelmingly to the way he directed it during his years as editor. It will remain a lasting and fitting memorial to one of the most outstanding and beloved British Marxists of our time.