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PLEBS



1926:

What will it bring for Labour ?

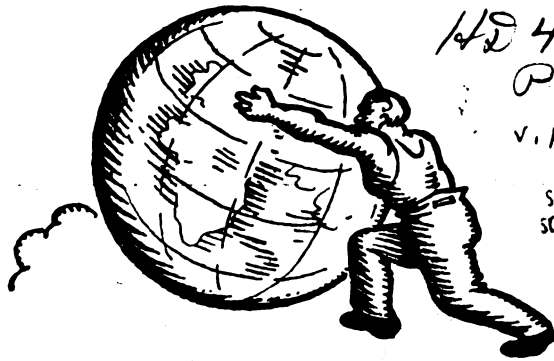
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The PLEB POINT of VIEW

WE had to go to press last month too early to make any comment on the Communist trial and sentences. We can make our comment now—in the form of a New Year message to Plebs. We believe that the trial is of vital significance to the whole Labour movement, and not least to that section of it which is actively interested in Independent Working-Class Education.

The Communist leaders were tried for “seditious libel.” What we all, and especially we I.W.C.E.ers, need to remind ourselves of, is that all real working-class thought and action must, if it be worth anything at all, be “seditious” in the eyes of the ruling-class. Our primary aim, the aim to which all our education is directed, is to change the existing order of society. The first aim of the possessing class is to preserve it. *And it is the possessing class which decides what is, and what is not, sedition.*

There is no absolute or permanent definition of sedition. Its “content” changes with the development of society and according to the forms in which the class-struggle expresses itself. It was “seditious” a century and a quarter ago—when “Jacobin” was the bogey-word that frightened the exploiters—to meet in public or private to discuss the Rights of Man. At that time, too, and for some years later, it was “seditious” for working men and women to meet to discuss ways and means of so organising their fellows as to enable them to make some stand against the damnable horrors and tyrannies to which Industrialism subjected them. Later still, it was “seditious” for the Chartists to demonstrate in favour of political reforms.

The particular kind of activity branded as “seditious” changes ; but always it is in essence the same thing—a challenge to the existing order of society. If the Labour Movement means anything at all, it means such a challenge. And only to the extent that it earns and keeps the title of “seditious” from its class enemies is it realising its own aims.

Let us face up to the fact that, unless our own educational work, in the eyes of the class which exploits our fellows, is “seditious propaganda,” it is not worth while. Let us see to it that we redouble our efforts during this coming year. Our job is to make discontent and resentment of oppression articulate—and *conscious*. Let us get on with that job, and take comfort from the fact that

HE WILL BE A SMART POLICEMAN WHO CAN ARREST
THE SPREAD OF IDEAS !

J. F. H.

1926

What will it bring for Labour ?

In the short articles which follow various aspects of the problems immediately confronting the Labour Movement are dealt with by writers whose standing in the Movement gives their views a special interest. We shall welcome discussion of any of the questions here briefly treated.

THE FIGHT AGAINST FASCISM

NO serious working-class leader can ignore the new developments of the class struggle which are opening out in Britain to-day.

With increasing momentum the British bourgeoisie is leaving behind the basis of liberal democracy. Class justice is becoming open and unconcealed. The State machine is more and more openly concentrating on the function of organising the class struggle and suppressing the workers. The State is entering into open alliance with semi-legal and illegal organisations of capitalist violence. These organisations are spreading rapidly with official assistance, are able to drill and arm openly, etc. At the same time the full force of law is used against working-class propaganda.

All this is shaking the faith of the workers in capitalist democracy, and opening their eyes to the real character of the struggle in front, more than any propaganda could do. The British bourgeoisie would not act in this way, if they were not compelled by events. The decay of British Capitalism is reaching a point which is driving them to this plane of open struggle. They cannot afford to go on with liberal temporising, particularly after the warning signs of "Red Friday" and Scarborough. They are out to deliver a smashing blow to the working-class movement in 1926.

For this reason Fascism and the growth of Fascism needs to be calculated on as a certainty by the working-class movement.

Fascism is the policy of Capitalism in decay. Mussolini has defined very clearly the social rôle of Fascism :

"I took action which was illegal, but there was no other way of introducing a new force into a political class which was utterly worn out."

"Introducing a new force into a worn out class"—that is the rôle of Fascism. The attempt of Fascism is to *revivify dying*

A 2

Capitalism by artificial means. For this reason Fascism has no social future ; Fascism has no economic policy, no solution for the problems of Capitalism (Mussolini is as much a mere American bailiff as Luther) ; Fascism is only of tactical importance in the period of transition.

When Capitalism is strong, then the State machine is sufficient ; under its ægis the working-class movement can be tolerated and even absorbed : there is no room for Fascism. This was the case in pre-War Britain.

When the working class is strong, and follows the straight line of revolutionary advance, seizing the moment of capitalist weakness to carry through the working-class revolution, then again there is no room for Fascism. This is the case in Soviet Russia.

But when Capitalism is in decay, when the social order is weakening and the State machine is not sufficient, when the working-class movement has grown to reach the question of power, but is paralysed by reformist leadership and democratic illusions, then is the period of Fascism. Capitalism seizes on the situation of social unrest and disorder to carry through its own "revolution," and prolong its power. The very discrediting of Parliamentary institutions and the existing State, the discontent and instability of the middle class, all these signs of capitalist weakening are actually exploited by Capitalism—when the working class fails to lead—to give Capitalism a further lease of life. This is the present situation in Western Europe—in Italy yesterday, in France to-day, in Britain to-morrow. The success of these attempts depends on the division of the working class as an effective revolutionary force. Fascism is the illegitimate child of Social Democracy. Against the working class as a united revolutionary force Fascism can do nothing.

Fascism is thus not an isolated question or problem confronting the working class, but part of the whole working-class struggle. The answer to Fascism is the united front of the working class. Reformism, or the illusion of Capitalist Democracy, has no answer to Fascism, because it can only appeal to Capitalist Democracy and the Law. But to appeal to Capitalist Democracy and the Law is to appeal to the bourgeoisie at the very moment when the bourgeoisie is abandoning these and itself organising Fascism.

To answer the new forms of the capitalist attack, the working class will have to free itself from the illusions of Capitalist Democracy and unite on a programme of class struggle. Against the economic offensive of Capitalism, against Class Justice and against Fascism, the only defence of the workers lies in their own strength. This requires a united revolutionary programme of preparation for the coming struggle, such as will face clearly the issues in front and organise the whole strength of the working class. In such a programme,

and in the agitation for the coming struggle, all Left Wing workers can unite, and help to build up the working-class power which can defeat Fascism.

R. P. DURR.

THE IMPERATIVE NEED FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION UNITY

IN spite of the adverse decision of the International Federation of Trade Unions in regard to the proposal for a conference with the Russian T.U. for the purpose of setting the pace in the direction of establishing real international Trade Union Unity, I feel, with every day that passes, that the active desire for unity is rapidly growing amongst the working class in all countries. In Europe, particularly, is this the case. The condition of the Trade Union Movement in Czecho-Slovakia in relation to the capitalist and reactionary forces is compelling the workers there to think in terms of international unity. Then the position in the Balkan States—the monstrous oppression to which the workers are subjected in Bulgaria, Hungary, Roumania, and other places—is making the workers conscious of the fact that only an aggressively powerful international Trade Union movement will be strong enough to help them in their difficulties. This is equally, indeed more emphatically, the case in regard to Italy, where the Fascist Dictatorship is deliberately grinding to the dust every vestige of working-class organisation. The position in France, where the Trade Union movement is hopelessly broken up and divided amongst three national federations, makes the call for unity imperative. In France there is a growing Fascist menace. In France, also, since the war, millions of Polish and other emigrants have been infused into the working class, besides the 100,000 workers from other parts who are now working inside the Luxembourg frontier. The influence and unifying power of a Trade Union International is more needed to-day in France than any other great European country. And thousands of French workers are increasingly realising this fact. In Germany, too, the conditions are particularly favourable for the advocacy and promotion of international unity. As far as the Scandinavian countries are concerned, they are unanimously in support of the policy pursued by the British and Russian Trade Union movements. The position of the Russian Unions is the same to-day as it was when outlined before the Trades Union Congress on two occasions, and as it has been expressed in the many public statements made by themselves and in the joint statements of the British T.U. General Council and the Russian T.U. General Council. Objective conditions are more favourable now

than they ever were, and subjectively the broad masses of the workers are moving towards the goal. One felt that even those who opposed the calling of a conference at Amsterdam realised that it was only a temporary obstacle put in the way of the workers coming together.

Sooner or later the world's workers will call those who opposed the conference to answer for what they have done. To use the bogey of Russian interference at a time like this—a nonsensical bogey in all conscience—is nothing less than criminal. The workers' economic conditions are everywhere in a sad and parlous state. Wages are being lowered, working conditions are being degraded, capitalist tyranny in the factories and workshops is becoming more ruthless and domineering. In the European countries—even in Britain—the Fascist elements are growing and hardening their forces—openly threatening to do in those countries what has been done in Italy. In spite of the many pacific declarations, pacts and treaties, we know, everybody knows, that every country in Europe is energetically and enthusiastically turning itself into a military arsenal, gathering unto itself the impedimenta of war, experimenting with poison gases and every imaginable lethal weapon. The danger of war is more real to-day than it was in 1914, potentially infinitely more deadly and ghastly in its horrors and destruction. The men who oppose international Trade Union unity in times like these must be either recklessly criminal or poor blind fools. Of this I am certain—the workers of all lands want industrial unity. In my recent visit to America I addressed, in the principal cities of the United States and Canada, fifteen great and enthusiastic meetings, tremendous demonstrations. I gave them the call we are making for the consolidation of the world's Trade Union forces. And everywhere the warmest unanimous approval was expressed.

I am confident that, during 1926, a Conference will be held, and that definite progress will be made in building up the World Power of the working class.

A. A. PURCELL, M.P.

PARLIAMENT IN 1926

EACH Parliament is like a fresh hand of cards dealt after the shuffle of a General Election. You play that hand according to the cards you hold. The dominant factor in the present Parliament is the Tory Majority of 215 over every possible combination. Only those who have tried to work in such conditions can have any idea of their deadening effect. Nothing seems any good. Every fight is lost before it is started. Members grow indifferent. To those who come into contact with the terrible poverty in the distressed areas, our impotence is heart-breaking.

But such a situation brings its own reaction. In every local Labour Party, people are demanding action. Liverpool's block votes may expel Communists, but everyone is asking, "And what now?" The so-called Ginger Group in Parliament has tried to let in to the stuffy atmosphere of the House of Commons that wind from the country. Instead of submitting to the inevitable it has demanded that the Parliamentary Party shall expose this Rich Man's Government for the conspiracy that it is. Even if it lasts its full term this Parliament is but a momentary incident in the great class fight. The Group's idea is to use every known means of procedure to drag class issues on to the floor of the House, and when these means are exhausted, invent new ones.

The storm of abuse which has descended upon the Group from every capitalist quarter is a measure of the fear they have that the House of Commons might at some time become a *real* instrument in the hands of the workers. The tactics of this Group show the possibilities that await those who are prepared to put loyalty to the Party first, and who endeavour to win a majority within its ranks, rather than attempt to force splits and recessions. From an executive amendment to Lansbury's resolution, which amendment stated that the Party must go on as it had been doing, the powers that be shifted by stages to a resolution which expressed a good deal of what the Gingerers had asked for.

The dominant interest in 1926 will be the translating of this agreed resolution into actual parliamentary practice. The comfortable Treasury Benches must not be allowed to shove the skeleton of unemployment back behind the draperies of official phrases and nicely selected statistics. The cry of the children must be drowned neither by the Savoy Havana Band, nor by the platitudes of Stanley Baldwin.

But no House of Commons action is sufficient. Are we M.P.s really as important as we think ourselves? The job lies in the constituencies. M.P.s can only express, they cannot make, a movement. As a New Year motto for 1926 I suggest to the Plebs groups everywhere the slogan "Swing the Party—your Party—to the Left."

ELLEN C. WILKINSON, M.P.

WORKING-CLASS EDUCATION

THE N.C.L.C. has added another year to its life, a year during which it has grown remarkably in power and prestige, until it can fairly be said that so far as the Trade Union Movement is concerned, the letters "N.C.L.C." and the word "Education" are practically synonymous. The year

which has passed has seen the end of the N.C.L.C.'s career as an Ishmael, and from this time forward we accept our position as an integral part of the official Trade Union Movement with all the advantages and all the dangers inseparable from this new position.

Personally, I have never been under any misapprehension as to the risks inseparable from our alliance with the W.E.A. under the ægis of the T.U.C., but at the same time I am satisfied that the step taken during the last year was unavoidable if we were to develop our educational machine within the lifetime of those enthusiasts who have done so much to build up the N.C.L.C. But when I think of what has happened to the Co-operative Movement, and of what has happened to the I.L.P., I realise the importance of our seeing that history does not repeat itself.

It is worth remembering that the Co-operative Movement failed to appeal to the working class of this country until the Rochdale Pioneers struck the idea of selling at market prices and dividing the surplus as the dividend. This new idea made the Co-operative Movement in this country successful for the first time, but it was a success that carried in it the seed of destruction for every ideal which co-operation had stood for up to that time. Again, Socialism made no general appeal to the workers at large until Keir Hardie by a policy of compromise, brought the non-socialist element from the Trade Unions into union with the Socialists through the Independent Labour Party. In neither of these cases has the little leaven leavened the whole lump ; rather has the whole lump tended to obscure all that was best of what the Co-operators and Socialists stood for.

Let us therefore, start this New Year of the N.C.L.C. determined that while loyally abiding by our agreement with the T.U.C., we will not, under any circumstances, come weal or woe, sacrifice the principles for which we stand. By this I do not mean that we should waste any time proving that the W.E.A. are wrong. Let us devote every ounce of our energy to proving rather the eternal rightness of the N.C.L.C. ; in fact, if I were Irish I would say "Let us prove during the coming year that the 'left' is the only thing that is 'right.'" We shall have our difficulties and we shall have our fights. All the people who stand for orthodoxy and respectability in the Trade Union Movement are not yet dead, and not all those who are still alive will be easily converted to our point of view. Still much can be accomplished.

Increasingly the Unions are realising that the N.C.L.C. appeals to their members in a way that no other educational institution does, and the work which the founders of the N.C.L.C. have done in the past amongst the young trade unionists is now beginning to have

its effect as these first products of the new educational machine are taking their natural place in the front rank of organised labour.

I hope that when, in January, 1927, we look back on 1926, we shall find that the year's work has resulted in making the N.C.L.C. unmistakably the channel of education for the whole Trade Union Movement.

J. JAGGER

(General President, N.U.D.A.W.).

UNIFYING LABOUR'S COMMAND : THE GENERAL COUNCIL AND ITS POWERS

WHAT has given vitality to the growing demand in the Trade Union movement for the concentration of its power in the General Council of the Trades Union Congress? Is it not the fact that the tragic series of defeats undergone by the Trade Unions since the close of the war, in their sectional struggles with the employers, has compelled a realisation of the necessity of unity and action? The wage cuts, the lengthening of working hours, the intensification of exploitation and the growth of capitalist tyranny in the factories, mills and mines, consequent on those defeats, have made every conscious worker clearly understand that sectional fighting even with the most powerful individual Trade Union organisations, is hopeless. If the M.F.G.B., the largest numerically of the industrial organisations—and one dominating a basic vital industry—could be beaten and crushed, as it was in 1921, what chance was there for any of the smaller organisations? Obviously, the only logical next step the Trade Unions could make was to endeavour to do collectively what events had proved they could not do singly. That briefly is the position. Harsh reality, life itself, has condemned sectionalism as useless, as dead and done for, and has imposed class section by the united Trade Union movement as an imperative necessity.

We suppose, even now, some small progress will be made by the unions in an autonomous fashion. The bodies of employers in the respective industries will not be prepared, for every little thing on every occasion, to force things to an absolute crisis, and make every concession demanded the reason for a great class conflict. But every serious issue, every vital issue, particularly issues affecting the largest industries, will in my opinion, call for the united backing of the whole Trade Union and organised working-class movement generally, and will test our powers to the utmost.

We must realise that great changes have taken place. Economic progress has been going on all the while. Capitalism has been developing and concentrating. We would not be Marxists if we

did not understand that. The giant trusts and combines, the big capitalist corporations, have been growing, absorbing the smaller concerns, extending their ramifications both horizontally and vertically. The F.B.I. is in the field. When workers in a particular industry come out on strike they are immediately opposed not only by the body of employers in their own industry, but by the whole corporate power of capitalism, supported as it is by the capitalist press and the capitalist State. However large the Trade Union may be to which the strikers belong, it stands a poor chance, by itself, against the compact forces of united capitalism. Only the entire working-class movement, industrial, political, co-operative, and its other organised phases, can, by being united, conscious and purposeful, hope to cope with the situation thus disclosed. Whether we like it or not we have definitely entered into the era of actual *class* struggles.

For those reasons I say that 1926 must bring forth a further concentration of working-class power in the General Council of the Trades Union Congress. How the power will be gathered in by the Council, what organisational alterations will have to be effected, what means will have to be adopted so as to avoid undue interference with Trade Union autonomy, it is hard yet to say. These things will have to be discussed, and definite conclusions come to. Time presses. And all through 1926, in the factories and mines, in the Trade Union branches, on the Trades Councils, throughout all our organisations, the dominating slogan must be : "Organisation and Solidarity."

GEORGE HICKS

(Gen. Sec., Amal. Union of Building Trade Workers).

THE PROBLEM OF THE "UNATTACHED" SUPPORTER

A LABOUR Party canvasser tells of calling at a house in a mean street and being met by a sleepy-looking individual who steadily refused to be drawn out to vote. "No," he persisted, "I'm not going to vote. What's wrong with the workers is apathy . . . APATHY ! . . . Why, I passed a meeting at the end of this road last night and there were only six folk there—ignorance and apathy, that's what's the matter !" "Of course," said the canvasser, "you joined them and made seven." "Not me, I came home and went to bed disgusted," was the reply, and with that the door shut to a murmur of "apathy."

One wonders how many individuals are like that, disgusted and pained with the inactivity of other folk but not pained enough to rouse themselves to do some useful work themselves. 1926 would be a great year for the Labour Movement if every person who

believed in the principles we stand for decided to go out into the open, and if not to proclaim those principles from the house tops, at least to join the crowd that are working to change our theory of a decent life for all into practice.

Almost everyone knows of someone else who at one time or another has said "I haven't much time, but if you know of a job I can do for the Movement, let me know," and those of us who are busy very often forget what might be done if we set about planning how to rope in to useful work these unattached sympathisers.

Many of us forget the simple fact that our powerful organisations are built up of individuals. Especially when the machine gets as big as Parliament or the Labour Party or the T.U.C. We talk of what will be done, who is to decide this or that, what tendencies are developing, and very often we never stop to think of Tom, Dick and Harry carrying on in some districts with a small band of stalwarts, who have always done the work and who go on doing the work. Can't we get out and do some missionary work in 1926?

After all, what a Left Wing in Parliament does will only matter if the rank and file back up the action of the leaders. And we need in that rank and file everyone who supports us. There must be at least half a million people who fully realise what the Movement is out for, who take no part whatever in our activities. Some are past supporters who have dropped out through a growing sense of frustrated effort, some are apathetic, some disgusted at one leader or another, some have grown timid as the fight intensifies, some have grown tired. Can't we try to get them back? A stirring restatement of the Socialist position would hearten many—especially if that restatement was accompanied by decisive action and a uniting for work towards definite objectives. The Labour Movement must be solid to meet the attacks that are to be launched upon it. Let us keep fresh in the memory of all what happened when the Miners were threatened—how the workers closed their ranks in a way which surprised and intimidated the boss class last year.

Make no mistake, you unattached supporters of Labour, he who is not with us in 1926, inside an organisation, whether it be trade union, political party, or class conscious educational organisation, is against us.

1926 will bring many things for Labour, but if it brings into our ranks again the old fighters who have fallen by the way, the young ones who have felt timid up to now, if its events tighten up our movement and bring that unity which so many pay lip service to—then it will be a good year for the working class.

That unattached individual supporter is no support! Get rid of him!!

WINIFRED HORRABIN.

SCIENCE and ART in WORKERS' RUSSIA

DURING September there was celebrated at Leningrad and Moscow the Bicentenary of the Russian Academy of Science—an event which is an important landmark, not only for the devotees of pure science, but also in the history of revolutionary Russia. The original foundation of the Academy followed on the attempt, started by Peter the Great, to “westernise” Russia as a move in opposition to the feudal power of the Church; and it was the start of a culture separate from and opposed to the old monastic and episcopal culture. In the foundation of this new culture much had to be borrowed from abroad, especially from Germany; and as a result most of the early academicians were foreigners. But in their laboratories worked young Russian students who learned from foreign scientists and then proceeded to build a specifically Russian culture.

To-day we have a Workers' Russia which has broken with the bourgeois culture of the past, and is strong to build up a new culture, adapted to a society where all shall be workers, and leisured exploiters shall be no more. For the present, much in the way of raw material and personnel is having to be borrowed from the past. But at the same time there are being developed among the worker-students of the new generation those who will be the builders of the new culture that is to be.

Writing about this new culture in *The PLEBS* of October and November, 1920, Lunachaski protested both against the attitude of “those serious-minded ones who take no pleasure in the ‘toys’ of Art (and) will waste no time to obtain knowledge which does not bear directly upon the facts of life,” and the attitude of those “prone to declare that Socialism must destroy the old temple and build up a perfectly new one.”

“The first,” he says, “is the result of the narrow-mindedness of the *backward* section of the proletariat. The second is the outcome of the romantic sweep and self-confidence of the *advanced* section, full of energy and adventure, but still heedless of that immense and abundant inheritance bequeathed to us by former ages, an inheritance which calls for a process of sifting because it is a medley of both beautiful and ugly. . . . The proletariat must use all the nutriment of the soil tilled and dressed by a long line of ancestors.”

Says Trotsky in his *Literature and Revolution*: “The proletariat cannot begin the construction of a new culture without absorbing and assimilating the elements of the old.”

The carrying out of this very important principle is what strikes one's attention, perhaps, first of all in the cultural policy of Soviet Russia, and one thing which the Bicentenary celebrations, attended by hundreds of visitors from foreign universities and scientific institutions, showed, was the extent to which Workers' Russia is cherishing and assimilating this "inheritance" bequeathed from the past. The heads of the Academy and its various departments are the old academicians who were there before. Scientists are given every encouragement and aid to continue their researches. At Leningrad the famous Prof. Pavlov continues his researches into the inheritance of acquired characteristics in laboratories built and equipped for him by the Government. In Moscow there is the excellently equipped Institute of Biological Physics, financed by the Commissariat of Health and directed by the well-known Prof. P. Lazarev, and similar institutions such as the Microbiological Institute, the Institute of Experimental Biology, the State Venereal Institute, the Darwin Museum, the Thermo Technical Institute, the Sergiev Museum of History and Art. Art Galleries are not only preserved in excellent order, but are added to from nationalised private collections, and in many cases re-arranged to great advantage. For instance, there is the famous Hermitage at Leningrad and the Museum of New Western Paintings at Moscow—to mention only two. The former Rumiantsev Museum in Moscow is now the Lenin State Library, excellently equipped with books on every subject, and crowded with worker-students in its reading-room. Former palaces and churches, with but a few exceptions, are in excellent preservation, and are open as museums; and in the case of some of the exquisite Byzantine churches of the Kremlin, mosaics and wall paintings, formerly hidden, are being uncovered and cleaned.

As for drama and music, the old opera flourishes and is as good as or better than in Vienna. Orchestras composed of the best musicians from the Conservatoire play nightly in the public gardens in Leningrad; the First Moscow Art Theatre gave a superb performance of an historical play by Tolstoy for the Academy visitors; and the famous conductorless orchestra of 85 instruments played Scriabin's Second Symphony in the Grand Hall of Moscow Soviet House considerably better than a Queen's Hall orchestra. For a country where civil war and invasion and famine have forced the elementary "bread and butter" needs so predominantly to the fore, the "inheritance" from the past is being treasured to a quite surprising extent.

In industry generally use is being made of educated members of the bourgeoisie as experts, often receiving special non-worker salaries up to £700 a year. The managers of factories are often of this kind; and even where this is not so, bourgeois specialists are usually employed as technical advisers. In the universities, though only

Marxists may lecture on economic theory, social development and philosophy, the services of former professors are still utilised for specialised branches (e.g. in economics for money, public finance, statistics, etc.); and old professors are attached as economists and statisticians to Gosplan and the Supreme Economic Council, which govern industry, and to the Institute of Economic Research which advises the Finance Commissariat on all monetary and financial matters. Indeed, in the future even more use may be made of these "scarce" services of experts. Kamenev in a speech to the Russian Communist Party in September spoke of the lack of specialists in Russia and the need for them if industry is to develop quickly. "We must pay them," he said, "not only with a higher salary, which irritates the just feelings of the workers, but with different conditions of labour, with different hopes for the education of their children, etc." In fact, it is perhaps not an exaggeration to say that Soviet Russia knows better how to make use of experts than any other country in Europe.

But at this point the Fabian may intervene. Government by experts—at relatively high salaries; preservation of the past, not its destruction—that is what he has been preaching for the last forty years. But this interjection, of course, is merely because of his non-Marxian habit of looking only at the surface of things. The crucial point about Leninism is that it is realistic enough to know how to utilise the bourgeois expert while keeping *power* firmly in the workers' hands. The Fabian, on the other hand, merely seeks to extend the function of the official expert, while leaving the whip-hand with finance-capital and the imperialist heads of departments. Soviet Russia knows how to use the cultural heritage of the past in going "one step at a time"; but it knows also how to sever it from the bourgeois ideology with which it is so hopelessly entwined, and to use it in the moulding of a new classless culture. The "Union of Science and Labour," which was the reiterated slogan of the Academy Bicentenary, is achieved by bringing Science to Labour, not by bringing Labour, cap in hand, to receive the crumbs of bourgeois science.

How, then, is this union of Science and Labour being achieved?

First, it is being achieved through the greatly extended facilities for the masses to participate in the joys of art and literature—trade union art clubs, distribution of cheap theatre tickets to factories, etc. But this is not to be taken in the sense of "university extension" and "welfare centres," as known in capitalist England. The atmosphere of the thing is completely different, the language in which it is couched, and the psychological response to it. In the capitalist world cultural values are inevitably entwined with class values; culture is valued as a hallmark of social position; the worker is made

to see in it an opportunity for advancement out of his class. Art and literature are treated as "means of escape" from the harsh realities of life. Contemplation is elevated above action, and knowledge and theory set over against and opposed to, practice and purpose. In Russia the workers receive, not "crumbs," but their rightful heritage. Education does not raise them out of their class—those who sought culture for that end would be despised, not applauded, by "herd" opinion. Those aspects of learning are valued which have an intimate contact with the problems of the world; and that art and literature is most loved which expresses most vividly the essence of the workers' life. Moreover, education is purged of all metaphysical elements and made consistent and realistic by the unifying principle of science.

Second, there is the definite policy of eliminating the *intelligentsia* as a separate class. At present the old intellectuals are being used to the fullest extent. But every attempt is being made to prevent them from reproducing their kind. The qualities of this *intelligentsia* are well shown in much pre-war Russian literature—such as Tchekov's plays, for example—a divorce from reality, a lack of all sense of proportion and an absence of practical ability, leisured dilettantism and contempt for man in the mass. By the policy of filling the higher schools and universities with workers (at present to the extent of about 80 per cent.), often to the actual exclusion of students of bourgeois origin, by giving to students' committees increased influence, and by ensuring that at any rate the "Rectors" of universities are always Communists, it is hoped that the new generation of educated workers will really have their roots in the working class, and be *workers* first of all. Under English conditions, if a worker goes to a university, he soon finds it necessary, if he is to be successful, to adapt himself to the manners and spirit and traditions of the place; and unless he be of exceptionally obstinate character, his whole psychological "make-up" will undergo a change, and he will no longer be a worker in anything but origin. And this is the tendency and aim of all "university extension." Russia is alive to this danger, and is seeking to ensure that the so-called "brain-workers" of the future shall not be a class apart, but shall be no more separated from the mass of workers than the cotton-spinner is separated from the metal-worker because he works under different conditions.

Moreover, the expert of to-day gets a "scarcity-price" for his work, because under capitalism only the bourgeoisie can afford to get education, and educated ability is consequently scarce. Everywhere in Russia one hears the confident hope expressed among the workers that in a few years a sufficient supply of educated workers will be available to make no longer necessary the payment of any higher salary than the highest wage-grade of the specially skilled. And

already there are many of these "red directors," promoted from the workers, proud in the fact that they earn no more than the equivalent of about £200 a year, whereas bourgeois experts who work with them receive three times that amount for the same work.

Third, every possible encouragement is given to working-class creativeness in the realm of culture—giving artistic expression to the workers' life and finding new forms and media suited to that expression. The result is the provision of an incentive to *create*, and not merely to *copy* bourgeois art and literature. Hitherto most literature has concerned itself with the problems of bourgeois life ; and even when it has treated of the ploughboy and the factory "hand," it has nearly always looked at them through the *pince-nez* of a bourgeois. And when workers on rare occasions have had the opportunity to take to literature, they have usually copied the conventional style and form, substituting merely a worker-hero and a worker's parlour as scenery. This contrast between old and new is most vividly shown in the Gallery of Modern Art in Moscow, when one passes from one room where former bourgeois artists, converts to the revolution, have attempted to represent the ideas of the revolution in the old static medium—the style of Matisse or Cezanne—to the next room where the new generation of artists are seeking to represent new ideas in new forms—the epic of the revolution, the spirit of the Red Army and of collective labour depicted in strong, dynamic lines and figures which are at the same time realistic and powerfully symbolic. There is a school of young writers steeled in the revolution like Libedinsky and those from whom selections appear in the recently translated volume, *Flying Osip* (Fisher Unwin). In the new drama and theatrical production, such as the experiments of Meyerhold, there is the attempt to use and represent machine forms and machine rhythms. Literary criticism comes to have a new keynote, purposely selecting for its praise what expresses the spirit of collective labour and the theme of the conflict of social impulses, thereby helping in the birth of a new literature which shall place on the historical shelf that which dealt only in the conflict of individualist motives and breathed the old leisure-class scale of values. As yet this may be immature, transitional, and perhaps far from the ultimate culture of a classless society. But it is something strong and pulsing with life, something in the process of creation, released by the shock of the revolution ; and from it we who still stumble on the early stretches of the road can take inspiration for the humbler educational tasks which we have to fulfil.

MAURICE DOBB.

ARE YOU PUSHING THE NEW PLEBS TEXTBOOK ?

WHY the WORKERS should study HISTORY

The first chapter of Pokroffsky's "Outline of Russian History," concluded from last month. The translation is by Eden and Cedar Paul.

The essential feature of history, then, is a gradual evolution, the gradual and regular change in human society. The immediate aim of this evolution, the aim now in sight, is socialism, by which we mean that the land and all its produce, together with all instruments of production, the factories, the workshops, etc., and also all the means of transport, such as the railways, shall be transferred from the hands of the exploiting class of owners into the hands of the workers. This is the immediate aim ; but the attainment of the goal will not, of course, mean that the development of human society will have come to an end. What will happen after that, what will be the subsequent evolution of socialist society, lies beyond our ken. When the laws regulating social evolution are better known than they are to-day, it will be possible to predict the development of human society, not merely for tens of years, but for hundreds of years in advance. For our part, we need not try to look so far ahead. Let us be content to examine what is and what has been.

*Immediate Aim
of the Class
Struggle*

*Influence of
Natural
Surroundings*

We have already learned that, substantially, the development of human society depends upon the development of production ; that is to say, upon man's struggle for existence with the forces of nature ; upon his struggle to obtain food, fuel, and so on. Obviously, the forms taken by this struggle will be mainly determined by the characters of the natural surroundings. If we wish to understand the historical process, to understand the way in which history develops in this country or in that, we must first get a clear picture of the natural conditions that prevail in each.

If we examine the way in which educated and uneducated, civilised and savage peoples are distributed on the surface of the globe, we shall see that the most highly educated peoples occupy regions where the climate is neither too hot nor too cold. Conversely, the comparatively uncivilised peoples are found : either in very hot countries, where organised production is difficult ; or else in extremely cold countries. Among the most primitive stocks, those closely resembling our own ancestors of a hundred

thousand years ago, may be mentioned : on the one hand, the Eskimos, living on the shores of the Arctic Ocean, where there is practically no vegetation, and where the only way of getting food is by hunting and fishing ; and, on the other hand, the Veddahs of Ceylon, and another tropical race, the Pygmies of central Africa. In Ceylon and in equatorial Africa there is no winter, but merely an alternation between a dry season and a rainy season, both very hot.

Nevertheless, production can develop in very hot countries, close to the equator—not in the lowlands, but only high in the mountains where it is quite cool. In South America, for instance, the Spanish

conquistadors found a highly educated people, the Incas, with a well developed agricultural system, artificial irrigation, and so on. This was in the region now occupied by the republic of Ecuador, at a height ranging from 6,000 to 10,000 feet above sea level. Thus it is necessary to take into

account, not merely the latitude of the place, not merely the question whether it is situated in the torrid zone or the arctic regions, for instance, but also its height above sea level—whether it is highland or lowland.

Furthermore, natural surroundings influence production in other ways than through climate. Sometimes a particular trend of production is determined by the existence of this or that useful animal. Thus, many tribes of northern Europe and Asia depend upon reindeer. These animals provide meat, hides for clothing, antlers for tools, and the like. The nomads wander from place to place with their herds of half-tamed reindeer. Sometimes a murrain will kill off the beasts, and then the tribesmen are famine-stricken, and may be completely exterminated. The same sort of relationship between men and other living creatures is found among settled and civilised folk. In western France, many of the Bretons are to this day supported by the sardine industry. Year after year, these little herrings appear in huge shoals on the Breton coast. But now and again a year comes in which there are no sardines, and for the Breton fishermen this means what a failure of the crops means to the Russian peasants.

The reader must not suppose that the influence of nature upon agriculture has invariably been exercised in the same way. People

*Nature and
Agriculture :
Forests*

change ; and, as they change, their relationship to nature changes. For example, when the Russian plains were first being settled, there were no iron tools, and for this reason the forests presented an almost insurmountable obstacle. To penetrate them was extremely difficult. The crossing of one was a great exploit, about which people would tell stories for a long time to come. The forest seemed a terrible place, full of dread monsters. In those

days, the settlers usually lived on the edge of the forest, between the woodland and the steppe. In due time, the Slavs came. They had iron axes, and cut their way into central Russia. When, to-day, in making excavations, we come across the vestiges of Slav settlements, burial grounds, and the like, we always know them instantly by the discovery of these iron axes. It was with iron axes that our ancestors hewed their way into the thickets, cut down the trees, and built villages in the clearings. Thus the forest, which had been so terrifying, became the mainstay of these early settlers ; and the first organised industry was that of the primitive lumbermen. Their first regular occupations were the gathering of wild honey (leading to bee-culture), hunting, the utilisation of the skins and the flesh of wild animals ; then came rude forestry, and stump-grubbing as a preliminary to agriculture in the cleared areas. Having cut down the trees and piled the felled timber, they burned it, the ashes furnishing a valuable fertiliser. In the soil thus enriched, they sowed corn. So it was that agricultural production became closely associated with the forest.

That is one example of the way in which the relationships between man and nature change, in conjunction with changes in the mode of human life. Another, and more familiar example, is furnished by the history of the first European settlers in North America, where the natives, the Redskins, lived solely by the chase. The scattered tribes wandered across the vast wilds, and were themselves wild. Very few of them were anything but hunters. Then Europeans made their way to America, and within two centuries the wilds, where savage hordes had roamed, became a settled country, one of the most highly civilised in the world, with a developed system of agriculture, huge factories, innumerable workshops, and thousands of miles of railways. To-day the land of the Redskins has become the United States, a country where the technique of production is more advanced than anywhere else. All these changes were due to the coming of Europeans, who brought with them European civilisation, which meant European customs and methods of work.

These are general examples. It is now our business to study the conditions peculiar to Russia, and we shall find that in the plains of eastern Europe, where the Russian peoples dwell, these conditions are very arduous. We have a long winter and a short summer. For this reason, field work can only be carried on during the lesser half of the year. In central Russia, there are but five months in which to plough, to sow, and to reap. When we turn to study the conditions under which husbandry is carried on in Germany, one of our nearest neighbours,

*Forests, Prairies,
and the Settle-
ment of America*

*Climate and
Agriculture in
Russia : and in
Western Europe*

we see that there the larger half of the year is available for agriculture, seeing that the winter lasts only five months. Still farther west, in France, on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean, climatic conditions are such that the ground can be tilled for twelve months in the year. The market gardeners in the environs of Paris raise fruit and vegetables in winter as well as in summer. Obviously, where husbandry can be carried on all the year round, the productivity of the soil will be very much greater than in a land where there is a long and severe winter. In the more favoured countries, the accumulations of wealth will go on much faster. The result is that the development of agriculture in Russia has been much slower than in Western Europe.

It was natural that so long as agriculture was the chief, almost the exclusive, occupation in Russia, the development of our people should be backward. That development was

Sea-borne Traffic quickened as soon as manufacturing industry began
in relation to the in Russia, as soon as factories and workshops
Development of appeared. For these factories and workshops
Commerce could make use of imported raw materials, as well
 as of those grown in European Russia. The cotton

used in our cotton mills comes from Turkestan or from America. In this way, commerce and industry greatly accelerate the general development of production, and make it less dependent on local climatic conditions. It is necessary to point out here that, in the matter of the development of commerce, conditions were less favourable in Russia than elsewhere in Europe. Even to-day, water-borne traffic is the most economical. The sea is much the best means of communication between the various countries. In former days, before railways existed, waterways were the chief arteries of commerce. Heavy goods were usually brought by sea. Road transport was practicable only in the case of costly wares. To a great extent, the like is true even to-day, when we compare the cost of transport by railway and by road. Every one knows that to drive two or three miles from the railway terminus to his home costs as much as to travel twenty or thirty miles by rail.

Let me repeat that, until railway development began, the only convenient and cheap means of communication was the sea. There was no other way of transporting large quantities of goods than by sea. That is why manufacturing industry and commerce flourished first in those European lands with an extensive seaboard. First of all, trade and industry began to develop in the countries enclosing the Mediterranean, such as Egypt, Syria, Carthage, Greece, Italy, and Spain. Then, with the dawn of the modern age, came a like development in Britain, an island realm, and in Holland, where much of the land is actually below sea-level, having been reclaimed from the waters. The greater part of Russia, on the other hand, is very far

from the sea. Central Russia, with which we are chiefly concerned, when we are studying Russian history, is from four to five hundred miles from the nearest coast. That is the distance to the Baltic and to the White Sea (an inlet of the Arctic Ocean, frozen throughout the winter, and therefore useless for navigation). To the southward lies the Black Sea, which never freezes, but is even farther from central Russia, being nearly seven hundred miles away. Of course there are inland waterways leading through southern Russia. There are the Dnieper, the Don, and the Volga. But we have to remember, in the first place, that they are all three icebound in winter. Furthermore, of the two that flow into the Black Sea, the most important, the Dnieper, has rapids which are a great interference to navigation. The largest of the Russian rivers, the Volga, has its exit into the Caspian, which, because of its enormous size, is usually spoken of as the Caspian Sea. But the Caspian is land-locked, is an inland lake, and therefore of comparatively little use as a means of communication with the outer world.

The consequence is that, in Central Russia, commerce and industry have developed far more slowly than in other lands. But though it was difficult to make a start, Russia, as soon as she had got over her initial difficulties, made headway rapidly, the reason being that, as soon as the first steps had been taken, there resulted a succession of remarkable advances in science and technique. Thanks to this extraordinarily rapid increase in production, it has become possible, not merely to compensate for the disfavour of natural conditions, but to achieve a real conquest over nature. As an illustration let us, before concluding this chapter, study a particular instance of such a development.

As is well known, the greater part of northern Africa, the region south and south-east of the Atlas Mountains, is occupied by the desert of the Sahara. So long as the only inhabitants were nomadic Arab tribes, agriculture was impossible except in the scattered areas, known as oases, where springs happen to bubble up. But these are few and far between. When this part of northern Africa was occupied by the French, it became practicable to apply modern engineering methods to the region. By deep borings, it was found possible to tap waters lying several hundred feet below the surface, and to obtain them by means of artesian wells. By irrigation, large numbers of artificial oases have been made, where date palms are grown, and give a plentiful yield. In that part of the world, dates are the staple food, taking the place of bread and meat as far as the Arabs are concerned. In this way, thanks to the introduction of European technical methods, the desert has been made to blossom like the rose.

*Man's conquest of
Nature : French
Colonisation of
the Sahara*

A more recent and still more remarkable instance of man's conquests over nature can now be given. Thanks to the advance of science, we are able not only to make vegetable life flourish in regions that used to be barren, but actually to create new forms of vegetable life. An American horticulturist, Luther Burbank, has produced a new species of walnut tree, which attains maturity in fourteen years, whereas the ordinary walnut takes twice as long to develop. Another of Burbank's creations is a stoneless plum; another is a raspberry cane with berries several inches long. All this, and far more, has been achieved, not through the labour of many generations, but in a single lifetime, by one man able to turn to account all the resources of modern science.

We see, then, that man is dependent upon nature, and that the march of history is sometimes quick and sometimes slow, the variations depending upon the conditions in which this or that people lives. But we see, also, that there are limits to the power which nature exercises over man. Man can measure his own strength against the forces of nature, and nature is not the first essential of that which in human society, we know as production. Nature is only the material upon which production works.

The chief motive Force of History is not Nature but Work *The first essential of production is human labour.* The more thoroughgoing this labour, the more persevering and knowledgeable it is, the more does man free himself from dependence upon nature. It is easy to foresee that in the future, when science and technique have been perfected to an extent which we can hardly realise to-day, nature will be like wax in our hands, will be something out of which we can mould whatever forms we please.

INDUSTRIALISM IN INDIA

ABSORBED in its struggle for a decent standard of living, and face-to-face with an ever-present spectre of unemployment, the British Labour Movement is being increasingly compelled to take stock of developments in other parts of the world—developments which are not only affecting the lives of millions of human beings in those particular areas, but are exerting a slow though remorseless pressure upon working class conditions in the more advanced countries.

The gospel of economic expansion, which was the peculiar heritage

of 19th Century individualism, is to-day yielding fruit in a form that the enlightened European worker can only recognise as being fraught with considerable danger to his own best interests. No longer does the East flatter the complacent vanity of the British working-man with fire-side dreams of an era of ever-increasing prosperity built upon "native" consumption of British products. The operations of modern finance, in conjunction with the insatiable greed of the capitalist class, are teaching the proletariat of Europe that the joys of factory life are not the sole prerogative of the white man. The bourgeoisie of Great Britain, having battered well upon the proceeds of capitalist enterprise at home, are to-day much more inclined to sink their accumulated savings in "over-seas" investments than at any previous time in their history. Meanwhile, the harassed British worker, scarcely able to maintain a decent standard of living for himself and his family, looks abroad and sees Japan, India and China all being rapidly drawn into the maelstrom of capitalist individualism—with conditions of work and wages that would make existence impossible in the West. Is it to be wondered at, therefore, that the word "Empire" has a nauseating significance for the European wage-earner to-day; and that the ideal of international labour solidarity is being widened to include the workers of every race, regardless of colour, race or religion?

No intelligent appreciation of the conditions of Indian labour is possible without some knowledge of the basic characteristics of Indian society. In all discussion about the facts of Indian proletarianism the central truth ought never to be lost sight of, viz., that India in the main is an agricultural country, with a population rooted in the traditions and prejudices of immemorial rural habit, and with little or no natural inclination for urban industrialisation. Craftsmanship, in the form of hereditary occupation, has of course always held an honourable position in the scheme of self-supporting village organisations which has formed the basis of the Indian economic structure; but it has never assumed more than a subsidiary importance in the general productive activity of the country, which has always been and will, for long years to come, be (so far as one can foretell) agricultural.

Historically, it is interesting to note that the Indian craftsman has exerted a three-sided influence on the general development of the country. The sphere in which his presence has been most vitally operative has been of course the village community; where his services were in the nature of a perpetual contract to render skilled assistance to the husbandmen, in return for certain privileges and payments in kind. He also performed valuable functions (*a*) as a member of a guild of merchant craftsmen in a great city, or (*b*) as a semi-feudal servant of a Ruler or Head of a Temple. It was in these

two last capacities that the Indian craftsman has displayed that wonderful ingenuity in delicate and refined hand-work that has been among the marvels of the world for centuries.

The era of factory production commenced in India as a result of two inevitable tendencies. In the first place the phenomenal growth of population, in spite of wholesale decimation brought about by periodical famine, disease and other natural causes, has caused an increasing pressure upon the steadily diminishing opportunities of remunerative agricultural occupation. In 1890 a Famine Commission found that the number of people who turned to the soil for subsistence was far in excess of what was needed for its thorough cultivation ; and this tendency has been on the up-grade ever since. In 1891 it was estimated that 61 per cent. of the population lived through agricultural pursuits. By 1901 this proportion had increased to 66 per cent. ; and the figures during two succeeding decades were still rising, being 71 per cent. in 1911 and 73 per cent. in 1921. This factor, taken in conjunction with the increasing impoverishment of the soil due to inefficient farming methods and the general backwardness of the agriculturist, explains the tremendous urge towards city-life which is one of the most characteristic features of Indian conditions to-day.

In the second place, the helpless condition of Indian handicrafts before the onslaught of machine-made Western goods which the opening of the Suez Canal brought in its train gave birth to a widely shared belief in local industrialisation which was steadily pursued from two very opposite ends by certain groups of people in India as well as outside it. On the one hand, far-sighted European entrepreneurs, realising the enormous exploitable possibilities of raw products found in close proximity to cheap labour, determined to reap as speedy a harvest as they could from the insatiable desire of the peoples of the East for textile manufactures and from the needs of the West for certain classes of goods in which Indian raw materials played the chief part. These people of course had their counterparts among similar types of Indians ; but there were other people belonging to the soil of India who from the best of motives desired a rapid expansion of the industrial system in the country. This latter type of Indian thought has found very significant expression in the various Industrial and Fiscal Commissions which have from time to time been inquiring into the economic resources and needs of the people.

Some idea of the earlier industrial growth of the country can be gathered from the fact that the proportion of wholly or partly manufactured exports to total exports, which was only 8 per cent. in 1879, rose to 22 per cent. in 1907-08.

The following table will show the growth of factory population between the years 1892 and 1920 :

Year.	Men.	Women.	Boys.	Girls.
1892 ..	254,336	43,592	16,299	2,589
1920 ..	986,367	184,922	55,503	11,933

Between the years 1905-06 and 1919-20 the following development was recorded in the number of factories and mills : (a) the total number of establishments controlled by the Factories Act rose from 1,545 to 3,523; (b) cotton mills grew from 217 to 258 ; (c) jute mills rose from 39 to 76 ; and (d) woollen mills grew in capacity from 719 looms and 27,387 spindles to 1,385 looms and 47,020 spindles. During the same period coal production rose from 8,417,739 tons to 22,628,637 tons ; and the exports of Indian manufactures advanced in value from about 36 crores of rupees to about 102 crores of rupees.

This phenomenal growth in industrial development has caused India to be recognised as one of the eight chief industrial countries of the world, and entitled thereby to claim a seat upon the Executive of the International Labour Organisation centred in Geneva. In spite of this, however, it is true to say that India is still largely an agricultural country with a population deeply rooted in the soil ; and it is one of the difficult problems of a very novel situation to try and reconcile the deficiencies of agricultural mediævalism with the clamant demands of modern industrialism.

One of the outstanding difficulties of the Labour situation in India arises from the agricultural urge of the factory worker. Being a ruralist at heart he rarely regards his sojourn in productive enterprise as permanent. Consequently he is always on the trek between his village, where he usually leaves his family when dire necessity drives him to the city in search of employment, and the centres of industrialism. Being migratory, he is very difficult to organise ; and very apt to put up with any amount of hardship and inconvenience in order to obtain the little pittance which will enable him to get back to his own village soon. Thus the rampant evils of overcrowding are able to flourish in India in a manner scarcely believable to Western minds. Over 66 per cent. of the inhabitants of Bombay city are housed in one-room tenements, the average number of occupants of which is over four persons. The infant mortality in this city was estimated to be 556 per thousand births in 1920 ; and it was stated that in the industrial parts of the city the density of population extends from 300 to 500 per acre, and even reaches the record figure of 700 per acre in certain parts.

Up till quite recently the crying scandals of interminable hours of work and shameless exploitation of female and child labour distinguished the growing industrial system of India. In 1881 the first Factories Act was passed in the country ; but all that it sought to enforce was a minimum age limit of seven years for the employment

of children, who could be worked up to a maximum of nine hours a day! Since then, largely as a result of pressure from outside, various curtailments of the sacred right of employers to treat their workers as cattle have come into operation.

To-day, as a result of the Conventions passed at the Washington Conference of the International Labour Organisation, India has adopted the 60 hour week, which was prescribed as the standard for Asiatic Countries as against the 48 hour week adopted for Europe. At present no child under the age of twelve can be employed in a factory; and up to the age of fifteen it enjoys the status of a half-timer. The maximum period for which a child can be employed during a single day is 6 hours, and an adult 11 hours. No female or child worker can be employed at night. In the case of mines, the 54 hour week has been adopted for underground-workers; and there is a total prohibition against the employment of children below the age of thirteen. The question of eliminating female labour from mining work altogether is also under consideration.

The question of Indian wages, again, is something which has caused the deepest heart-searching. The problem is one which requires the most careful study and cannot be regarded apart from the whole economic fabric of the country. The fact that the average daily earnings of full-time male operatives in the Bombay mills (representing the best paid section of the Indian working class) amounted to only Rs. 1—5—6 (about 2s.) a short while ago gives food for serious thought; and explains how it is that the Indian worker is almost always terribly in debt and in the clutches of the money-lender.

The exigencies of space will not permit one to deal with trade union development, social insurance, health, education, maternity benefits, recreation and other aspects of this growing problem of Indian industrialization. One trusts, however, that sufficient data has been recorded here to stimulate readers of *The PLEBS* to take increased interest in the lives of their fellow-workers of the East, and—what is the special object of this article—to make them more ready to stretch out a helping hand to those toilers in the tropics who are just beginning to be aware of the worst features of capitalistic exploitation.

PHILIP COX.

“RELEASE THE TWELVE”

J. F. H. will be glad to loan to any comrades who can make use of them about 20 lantern slides comprising portraits of the twelve Communist comrades now in prison (snapshots taken at Plebs Summer School, press photographs, etc., etc.) and cartoons dealing with the trial and verdict. Write J. F. H., c/o PLEBS Office.

THIS VIEW—AND THAT

Here are more parallel extracts from a school textbook ("The Making of the Modern World," Vol. IV.) and the new PLEBS textbook "An Outline of European History." They serve to illustrate the difference between the working-class view of history and that which the ruling class seeks to inculcate in its schools and universities.

1848 in France

The abdication of Louis Philippe left France at the mercy of a mob of Paris workmen. These people, headed by the poet Lamartine, by Louis Blanc, a prominent socialist, and a few other noisy politicians, proceeded on February 27th, on the site of the Bastille, to proclaim the Second French Republic, and to set up a provisional Government to manage the affairs of the country pending the election of a new National Assembly.

The provisional Government at once began to put its socialistic theories into practice. For the national colours it substituted the red flag . . . and on the ground that everyone had the "right to labour" it established national workshops where, within a few weeks, 170,000 men were each drawing two francs a day for doing nothing.

The Paris Commune

In March, 1871, the excitable populace of Paris, fearing an attempt to re-establish a monarchy, organised a *commune* like that of 1792, and rose in revolt. For two months the commune maintained its grip on the capital. . . . Not till May 24th, did the Government's troops fight their way into the city.

The Government showed no mercy to the rebels. Hundreds were summarily executed. But strong measures were necessary; and Louis Adolphe Thiers, who had been called to the head of affairs, courageously applied them. To this "grand little old man," a statesman who stood above party and faction, the French owe a very big debt. . . .

November, 1917.

In 1789 and 1790, the French Revolution followed an eminently

1848 in France

Louis Philippe fled to England. . . . Amid the confusion a Provisional Republican Government was set up, consisting chiefly of politicians who had the wit and intriguing ability to put themselves there. . . . The Government entrusted an anti-Socialist Marie, with the execution of the decree promising work for all on Louis Blanc's plan. . . . They had two perfectly clear objectives. The first was that the scheme should fail. It was essential that it should crash, and Louis Blanc's Socialism be discredited. The second was that the workers enrolled in the "National Workshops" should become a political army attached to them, and so checkmate Blanc's influence. . . . By failing to supply work for the men to do, the Government secured that the workshops should fail.

The Paris Commune

Paris, in the chaos ensuing after defeat in the Franco-Russian War, had actually experienced a seizure of power by the workers—the Paris Commune of 1871—and a brief period of rule under workers' State.* But the Commune was brutally suppressed in blood, and this for a time gave a setback to the growth of Socialism.

*Details must be sought in Marx's *Civil War in France*. (Wherein Thiers is described as follows:—"Thiers, that monstrous gnome, had charmed the French bourgeoisie for half a century, because he was the most consummate intellectual expression of their own class corruption.")

November, 1917.

In the Soviets, the war-weary soldiers and starving workers lost faith

rational course. It subsequently became a violent movement, because a few fanatics contrived to get control. The same thing happened in the case of the Russian Revolution.

In 1917 the peoples of Russia fell under the influence of a small group of extremists, led by a certain Vladimir Lenin. This man—a German agent, backed by German gold—was an exponent of Communism, the most advanced form of Socialistic creed. . . .

The Russians drank in Lenin's words. In the summer of 1917, "Peace At Any Price" became their cry. . . . So the revolutionary leader achieved the purpose of his German masters. . . .

in the wavering Mensheviks and Kerenskyites, and began to vote for Lenin and the Bolsheviks. Lenin put forward the slogan "All Power to the Soviets"; and on November 7th Kerensky was overthrown and power seized by a workers' dictatorship under the leadership of Lenin, which proceeded to socialise the banks, transport and large industry. . . . The first breach in the Imperialist front had been made. Soviet Russia stood forth as the outpost of a new world.

LETTERS

MR. MACTAVISH PUTS SOME QUESTIONS
SIR,—Re your editorial comment on my letter in the December PLEBS. May I be permitted to suggest that you have no more right to ask me "what, if any, steps are being taken by our Association to prevent the use of its name by an unauthorised or unaffiliated body," than I have to ask either the Plebs League or the N.C.L.C.:—

- (a) What steps are being taken to ensure that the Editor of PLEBS verifies his statements before publishing them in an official journal of the Plebs League, or—
- (b) What steps are being taken to inform the Labour world as to why, recently, important changes in the staff of the Labour College became necessary, or—
- (c) What steps are being taken to ensure that the reason for these changes does not occur again, or—
- (d) What steps are being taken to ensure that all N.C.L.C. tutors are qualified to teach, as distinct from their capacity to lecture, or—
- (e) What steps are being taken to ensure that N.C.L.C. teachers are paid Trade Union rates and are not sweated, etc., etc.

If I concede your right to ask questions on the domestic arrangements of the W.E.A., obviously it could only be on the understanding that I have

an equal right to ask questions about the domestic affairs of the Plebs League and the N.C.L.C.

But I make no such claim, because, in my opinion, to do so would be impertinent.

Yours very truly,

J. M. MACTAVISH,
 General Secretary, W.E.A..

[Mr. Mactavish asks us a string of questions and then, by himself suggesting that they are "impertinent," tries to get us to publish them without answers. We shall not fall into his rather clumsy trap. Our answers are—

- (a) The editor of The PLEBS takes the customary steps to verify statements made in this journal; e.g., by satisfying himself of the character of his informant, or—as in the particular case which originated this discussion—by reference to appropriate documents, such as W.E.A. Annual Reports, etc.
- (b) This is a question which should be addressed to those responsible for making the "important changes" referred to—i.e., the Governors of the Labour College. They, as well as we, will, we are sure, appreciate the exquisite taste displayed in asking such a question.
- (c) Here again, only the Governors of the Labour College, and neither the PLEBS, nor the N.C.L.C., can give the information asked for.

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- (d) By his distinction between "teaching" and "lecturing" Mr. Mactavish evidently aims at showing his familiarity with modern pedagogical methods. The N.C.L.C. is also fully aware of the difference between the two methods. It is also aware of the difference between University qualifications and a capacity to teach classes of working men and women.
- (e) By its advocacy of Independent Working-Class Education, and its insistence on the need for the Labour movement itself to control and finance its own educational activities, the N.C.L.C. is taking the best possible steps to ensure that teachers will not be sweated. The fact that there are hundreds of voluntary or part-paid teachers willing in the meantime to make very real financial sacrifices for the sake of the cause they believe in may afford Mr. Mactavish the chance of scoring a debating point; but it will not, we think, convince Trade Unionists that the N.C.L.C. is in favour of "sweating."—ED., PLEBS.]

politician, the charitable donor, the college don, and the expert bureaucrat, who between them supply the money and the machinery of higher education for the people, will make every effort that this education shall be conducted on safe lines. This is done in two ways. The first is by selection and rejection of subjects, teachers and methods. . . ."

"Some genuine teaching in biology, economics and politics. . . . should play a great, perhaps a dominant, part in popular education. But if class culture is let down upon the workers there will be no such teaching. For these subjects vitally handled everywhere would generate disturbing scepticism and inconvenient demands. . . . The teaching of history is a test issue. Our standard books and modes of teaching are in large part fraudulent pretences of disinterested research, concealing everywhere a selection and suppression of subject and events. . . . To keep out 'dangerous' influences is one form of the educational policy of the masters. The other is to insert motives and atmospheres positively serviceable to their cause. . . ."

Fraternally yours,
F. CAIN.

GIBBON

J. A. HOBSON ON WORKERS' EDUCATION
DEAR COMRADE,—The following excerpts are taken from an article by J. A. Hobson, entitled "Thoughts on Working-Class Education."

"If the ruling and possessing classes, whose powers and privileges are threatened by democracy, can provide from their own intellectual factories the mental palliatives of higher education to the aspiring young men and women of the working classes, they will, by infecting the 'people' with tastes, ideas and valuations which are the decorative luxuries of a leisure and a parasitic class, poison the moral and intellectual springs of democracy. . . . The workers to whom education has been hitherto denied. . . . if they are wise. . . . will. . . . inquire why it is that the well-to-do are now tumbling over one another in their anxiety to give educational facilities to the workers. . . . Intelligent workers have always been suspicious of upper class zeal for education. . . . This suspicion has not been misplaced. . . . The class

SIR,—In the name of commonsense, I would protest against the awful trash which appears above the signature, "Eden and Cedar Paul," in your November issue. Of course, from a business point of view it is good, because a working man who has read Gibbon's splendid and exhaustive history of the rise of modern European states needs no textbooks, PLEBS or other. It is the best historical work extant, and Wells, with his nebulous Nazarene and other fallacies, bears about the same relation to Gibbon as a historian that he does to Dickens as a novelist, i.e., something like the relation of Colley Cibber to Shakespeare. The W.E.A. could not give worse advice than that of your contributors. Gibbon at a perilous time dealt knock-down blows at that Christian mythology which is the right hand of Capitalism.

Faithfully yours,

AUSTIN RUSSELL.

[E. & C. P.'s brief and not altogether respectful reference to Gibbon has

evidently touched our correspondent on the raw. But even if Gibbon were all he evidently thinks he is, there would still be a need for textbooks, as distinct from monumental works—and for textbooks written, not from the point of view of an eighteenth century bourgeois rationalist, but from the point of view of the modern working class.—ED., PLEBS.]

PURCHASING POWER PARITY

DEAR COMRADE,—At the time I inquired, I found no foreign exchange clerk in any exporting house in Manchester who used the p.p.p. theory and have met only one who even knew of it—of course I did not tour the country.

Now Phippen says my statement about business men not referring to the theory is incorrect, but the evidence he offers is a long way from carrying conviction, for he gives no specific cases of where they do use it.

If it be true, as he says, that they are not rushing to buy francs (and this coupled with rising French prices constitutes his evidence) perhaps it is because they remember what happened to German marks a while back, for surely Phippen knows that speculators buy currency to sell again at a profit and not to buy goods on their own account, so commodity prices are to them of little immediate account.

Trading houses on the other hand do not rely upon *general* price levels, these would be no use to them, but upon daily quotations as to prices and also as to exchange rates, and for calculating the latter "the ordinary rules of foreign exchange" are all they use—unless Phippen or anybody else can quote cases to the contrary. I mean direct proof, not just inference.

To explain these rules I believe the Marxian law of value when properly applied to the functions of money is quite sufficient in either normal or abnormal cases.

If the rules can be explained by the Marxian theory then we need no other. But this contains no implication, as Phippen says, that the "rules of foreign exchange" (meaning the mechanism by which the balance of trade is operated) should be cast out along with the superfluous theory, and on the same grounds. As a matter of

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fact such a thing could not be done, so I cannot see any connection in this part of his argument.

He agrees with one thing I said but brackets it with something I did not say. I would rather he had not done that for I made no mention of America, and had I wished to do so should have advanced very different views from either of those suggested.

Coming now to the core: "price" of course is the monetary expression of value. But in individual cases it may differ from value because it is an *indirect* expression. Even average prices or *general levels* of prices do not necessarily coincide with value (labour).

While Phippen and I, both using Marxian theory, are agreed that " x labour (soc. nec.) in one country exchanges for x labour in another country despite varying monetary uniforms," he thinks that the p.p.p. theory emphasises this particular fact. I differ because, since the p.p.p. is a parity between *price* levels, it is not necessarily so between *value* levels, that is labour levels, so, as far as I can see, it adds no emphasis to the value or labour equation.

So long as labour is expressed in

gold, then the gold parity remains the *only* parity no matter how much paper is issued, for throughout the recent inflation period, and notwithstanding all the talk among our own Marxists, *we never left the gold parity except in name*—to give point, we never got to pricing goods in tons, pounds and ounces of paper.

For comparing the prices of two gold using countries, the gold parity (Mint Par) does actually operate all the time, while the ordinary foreign exchange quotations provide the necessary data for calculating both the normal and abnormal differences due to trade, and also the purely nominal

differences due to each country's inflation, no matter how far the inflating proceeds.

While our comrade feels that the *labour* equation is emphasised by the p.p.p., I should say the Marxian theory fully explains this equation and needs no additional emphasis. And in any case to try to get emphasis for a *labour* equation from a parity between price levels *which do not coincide with labour* and which vary with every turn of the printing machine—the greatest of all price dislocators—does indeed strike me as useless.

Yours fraternally,

FRED CASEY.

REVIEWS

GEOGRAPHY BOOKS

Historical Geography of England and Wales. By E. H. Carrier (Allen and Unwin, 5s.).

Wales: An Economic Geography. By L. B. Cundall and T. Landman (Routledge, 6s.).

Europe's New Map. By F. J. Adkins (Noel Douglas. Cloth 2s. 6d., paper 1s.).

Here are three books containing material which will be of value to tutors and students in Economic Geography and Industrial History classes. The first and third are eminently readable, though both suffer from the lack of illustrative maps. The second, which has maps in plenty, is a work of reference rather than a book to read.

Mr. Carrier's book deals more fully with the historical geography of Britain (south of the Tweed) during pre-historic and early historic times, and down to the close of the Middle Ages, than with the modern period which opened with the Coal and Steam age. Its first section discusses the geographical factors which affected the lives and cultures of the men of the Old and New Stone Ages in this island, and carries the story on through "the Roman interlude" to the coming of the Teutons and the Norman Conquest. Sections II and III deal with the Middle Ages—the making of the shires, and the division into "hundreds," villages, boroughs, and parishes; the influence of the monasteries on agricultural development, and of local environment

on the various staple industries, and on the growth of towns. Tutors using the new Plebs History Textbook will find here additional illustrative material. The final section discusses briefly the revolutions in transport and industry which constitute the Industrial Revolution, and the further development from single towns and cities to the great economic areas, like Lancashire, Tyne-and-Tees-side, or the Clyde to-day.

It is interesting, in view of the fact that the author does not entirely achieve a bloodless impartiality in discussing the social effects of these changes, to note that an announcement appears opposite his title-page stating that "the London County Council [under whom Mr. Carrier is a lecturer] is in no way responsible for any of the opinions expressed in this book."

Messrs. Cundall and Landman's book on the economic geography of Wales is, as already suggested, an encyclopædia rather than a book. It is crammed with facts—physical, geological, industrial; but although they are tabulated under their various heads they are not arranged in relation to any central idea or to carry forward any general line of argument. The result is that a work of this kind is slightly inhuman; which is a pity, since the human interest of the subject is considerable. But as a work of reference this book—along with the other volumes on Eastern and North-Eastern England in the same series—deserves a place in the N.C.L.C. Tutor's Library.

Mr. Adkins, as readers of *English for*

Home Students know, is master of an easy conversational style. *Europe's New Map* is based on lectures on "the Why and the Wherefore" of the post-war changes in European frontiers, "more particularly . . . the influence of Racial and Geographical conditions as revealed in the new groupings." There are many illuminating comments on geographical factors and their relation to human history in this little book; and many vivid sidelights on history. Indeed, one feels that the book is a series of sidelights—interesting and valuable, maybe—rather than a steady beam of light on central issues. Alsace-Lorraine, for example, leads Mr. Adkins on to a useful précis of a thousand years of history, including a model biography-in-little of Charlemagne. But nowhere does Mr. Adkins mention that there was iron-ore in Lorraine, much less hint that that fact had anything to do with French aims in the Great War. He is so anxious—and so able—to link up the events of to-day with the long preceding chain of events stretching back through the centuries that he ignores those specifically modern factors which after all have entirely altered the balance of historical forces. It is as though a historian writing in the 16th century had chosen to ignore the discovery of the ocean routes, and the consequent re-arrangement of the European "scene"; and had insisted on writing as if the Mediterranean, and the Mediterranean countries, were still the centre of the world.

None the less, with these limitations, this book is well worth careful reading; and its price and readableness make this possible for worker-students.

J. F. H.

RAILWAYS

The Railways, 1825-1925. By J. T. Walton Newbold, with a Foreword by the Right Hon. J. H. Thomas, M.P. (Labour Publishing Co., cloth, 4s. 6d., paper 2s. 6d.).

For those desiring the details of the growth of transport this little book should prove very useful. Starting with a description of the way people travelled and transported goods before railways, it describes the building first of timber or iron tramways for trucks, then of canals and "turnpike" roads,



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and later of the modern railroads with their steam locomotives, closing with the epoch of international railways dominated by international finance. Many useful facts are brought together about the early inventions and the construction of the main chains of lines at home and abroad, showing their connection with expanding industry, and also about the financial interests involved in railway enterprise.

But, as a connected account and analysis of tendencies it has much less value. The book reads like notes hastily jotted down in the British Museum Reading Room, rather than a completed survey. We are presented with a disjointed mass of detail, indigested and indifferently arranged, with few guiding lines standing in relief to aid our task. And the jerkiness of the style is enhanced by the habit of writing in short paragraphs of (on the average) four lines.

Moreover, for those who knew the old Newbold, there must be surprise in reading passages like the following:— "Intellectuals and journalists who have won their laurels in Fleet Street, as well as the active spirits in South

Wales and certain other centres, more particularly, as is notorious, outside the ranks of the railwaymen, have been very free with their criticisms of the modern tendencies in the N.U.R. Yet the reason for this is clear to anyone with a grain of understanding. . . . Centralisation of control, absolutely essential as it is, has made headquarters responsible rather to the whole membership than that noisy, but numerically insignificant minority that has always appropriated to itself the authority of 'the rank and file.' . . . (The) leadership knows, better than the rank and file, . . . how easily that hard-won advantage (of recognition) might by one false move and one fatal strike be lost."

A Foreword is contributed by the Right Hon. J. H. Thomas, who underlines the author's suggestion that railway nationalisation may not be "practical politics in this country."

M. H. D.

A CRITIC OF CO-OPERATION
Co-operative Store-Keeping. By S. R. Elliott (Labour Publishing Co., 1s. and 2s. 6d.).

A readable and interesting sketch of the origins, history, and development of the Co-operative Movement. The author does not overlook difficulties confronting the movement opposed to private trading interests and productive enterprise. He expresses views in relation to many problems which will, no doubt, arouse differences of opinion, but nevertheless will have to be faced.

Admitting the general weakness and futility of the Co-operative Press our author states "Lack of economic resources, unfortunately, is not the *News'* only weakness . . . it is lacking in interest . . . even with its sectionalised editions, the *News* is failing in its endeavour to give parochial news a national import and, *being impartial but not independent, it has no point of view.*" This latter sentence, italicized by us, will have special interest for Plebeians.

The tendency of the Co-operative Movement to collaborate with the W.E.A., with the recent development of closer relations with that body, needs to be supplemented with a very much closer collaboration with the N.C.L.C. Association with a critical

body (particularly in regard to economic problems) like the N.C.L.C. cannot but help to clarify the issues and remove the movement's "most dangerous weakness—unwillingness to initiate and finance large schemes of Co-operative education. Co-operative education is not organised on the scale necessary to produce men and women capable of working out the internal problems of the Movement and its relations to other movements."

J. H.

DEATH DUTIES

The Social Significance of Death Duties.

By E. Rignano, intro. by Sir Josiah Stamp (Noel Douglas 5s.).

If any Pleb is looking for an illustration of his pet theory that two different individuals can deal with the same economic facts and produce entirely different results, he should compare the introduction to Professor Rignano's thesis with the book itself. Sir Josiah Stamp sees in some modification of the law of inheritance a means of saving the capitalist system from the envy of a proletariat to whom great inherited riches cannot much longer be justified by the theory of "thrift and abstinence." Rignano hopes by heavily graduated death duties to achieve an effective and gradual nationalisation of private capital without injuring the "delicate mechanism of economic production." He suggests that on that portion of an estate left by an individual which he had acquired by his own labour the same death duties should be levied as to-day. On any portion that had come to the deceased through a single transfer, straight from the original maker, the nation should claim 50%, and on the second transfer from the original accumulator, the nation should claim the lot. A cynical Pleb might ask, for example, whether Sir Thomas Lipton or Lord Leverhulme could really be said to have acquired their millions by their own labour; and secondly he might point out that if the workers had the power to confiscate fortunes even at second remove, they would have power to settle the whole problem by organising a Socialist State, so why take so many bites at the cherry. Professor Rignano dismisses such comments as "certain strange objections by hypercritical socialists."

E. C. W.

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Gen. Sec., J. P. M. Millar (to whom all reports should be sent)

NATIONAL Union of Textile Workers.—The Executive of this Union has now arranged its N.C.L.C. Educational Scheme which provides for free N.C.L.C. Classes, free correspondence courses, etc. Once again the heartiest thanks to those comrades who carried the matter through the Union's Conference. We hope the excellent example of the Textile Workers will be followed very quickly by other Textile Unions.

National Union of Agricultural Workers.—Under its scheme this Union is offering a number of free correspondence courses to the members while it is encouraging its branches to agree to pay 2d. per member levy in order to provide free access to local N.C.L.C. Classes. We hope that every college secretary and official will do his best to make both the above mentioned schemes a great success.

Transport and General Workers' Union.—In connection with this Union's scheme, a number of N.C.L.C. Correspondence Courses are being offered. Applications should be forwarded through the branch and area secretaries of the Union and intimation sent to N.C.L.C. Office also.

National Union of Plasterers.—In view of its N.C.L.C. Educational Scheme this Union has decided not to re-affiliate to the W.E.A. Mr. Telling, the General Secretary, is keenly interested in the scheme and continually pushes it in his journal.

Our Schemes Generally.—The N.C.L.C. and its constituent colleges now runs educational schemes for twenty-eight Unions with a membership of about 1,800,000. There are still, however, plenty of Unions to be encouraged to participate in our work, and all class students in those Unions are urged to take the first opportunity of raising the matter with Union executives and at Union conferences.

N.C.L.C. Booklet.—The booklet this year will be entitled "Education for Emancipation," and will have a cartoon cover which will considerably improve its selling capacity. The booklet will be available in January. Price 1s. 8d. per dozen, postage extra. Single copies may be had for 3d. post free. London, so far, heads the list with an order for five hundred copies.

Correspondence Courses.—Two new Correspondence Courses have recently been added to this department; one on *Esperanto*, with Mark Starr as examiner, and the other on *Local Government*, with Jean M. Thompson as examiner.

Co-operative Wholesale Society.—The C.W.S. makes, we understand, a grant of 52 guineas to the W.E.A. It makes no grant to the N.C.L.C., although the S.C.W.S. makes a grant to the Scottish Labour College (N.C.L.C. Division 10). All our Co-operative supporters will desire to put this matter right. It is a pleasure to state that Blaydon has already done its bit, as this Society's quarterly meeting carried a recommendation asking the C.W.S. to make the N.C.L.C. a grant of 52 guineas. We hope our friends throughout the country will see that other Societies follow suit.

What the Divisions are doing

Div. 1.—More classes have been formed at Chiswick, Acton and Putney and further Branch classes for Lewisham A.E.U., London Wood Carvers No. 6, and Barking A.E.U. Plebs Groups have been formed in some parts of London in order to act as propagandist committees for the classes. We should like to see more of these formed. They would be very useful in promoting I.W.C.E. generally and in securing affiliations for London Division. The Woolwich Labour College has now completed arrangements for the running of weekly lectures at the Plumstead

Radical Club. A. J. Cook will lecture on Jan. 7th. J. F. Horrabin follows with a two-lecture course on "Primitive Man," to be illustrated by N.C.L.C. Lantern Slides. Other lecturers follow, including W. Paul, W. T. Colyer, C. T. Pendrey, G. Phippen, on the various subjects dealt with by the N.C.L.C. Slides. The Plumstead Radical Club will offer two prizes for the two best essays written on any one of the subjects of the twelve lectures. This venture is being advertised extensively and a crowded hall should result. By the time this is in print the Report of the London Division for 1925 will be out. Copies of the Report may be had from the London Organiser, 11a Penywern Road, Earl's Court, S.W. 5.

Div. 2.—J. Knight has commenced a new class at Aldershot, and hopes to start a class early in 1926 at Godalming. Littlehampton Secretary writes that J. E. Mathews, the new tutor, is doing excellently. Thanks to Tom Griffin (Labourers' Union) for his support and gift of a prize for a draw for Littlehampton Class. Divisional Council met on December 5th and expressed thanks to Messrs. Knight, Schofield, Singleton, Moffatt, and Mathews for tutorial assistance. Woking Social was a great success. The College is looking forward to A. J. Cook's visit on February 19th, 1926. Wynn-Cuthbert is to conduct two week-end schools at Guildford, 20th December, and Littlehampton and Worthing 24th January. Isle of Wight will welcome J. F. Horrabin on 21st March. Special lectures on Agriculture are being arranged for Dorchester Agricultural Workers Union. The N.C.L.C. has a good supporter in their organiser, Fred James.

Div. 3.—Slough has turned from T.U. History to Economics. Windsor is running a course in Economic Geography. So far Windsor Castle is unrepresented among the students. If only "Our Prince" would drop in to the talk on U.S. he would learn why he was sent to South America recently, where his smile is reported to have increased British investments in Argentine, Chile, Uruguay, by £12,000,000. Proximity to Eton and its dons with their usual dominance in the W.E.A. has provoked in Labour

circles a demand for real education. Norwich has had to start an additional class. Southend is also running two. Brentwood is taking the "Social Significance of the Works of G.B.S." Miss Thompson being the lecturer. Comrades Jenkins (Labour College) and Parsons and Pratt (L.R.D.) are tutoring at High Wycombe and St. Albans. Peterboro's recent class had five regular essay writers and there is a noticeable increase of written work elsewhere. Southend N.U.R. has affiliated and Hitchin N.U.R. has decided to pay the fees of all members attending local class. Special lecture "Unemployment" given to Romford N.U.R. and visits arranged to Woburn Green (8th January) and Letchworth (January 31st). The Divisional E.C. meets on 9th January. Will colleges please forward reports and matter for discussion? Is any other division or college prepared to exchange or purchase two sets of lantern slides in good condition on I.W.C.E. and Imperialism? Write Organiser Starr, 25, New Street, London, S.W. 1

Div. 4.—Comrade Griffiths has had to resign his secretaryship of the Merthyr College, as he has been successful in obtaining a scholarship at the Labour College, London. Heartiest congratulations on his success. The half-yearly meeting of the Division took place at Cardiff. With the assistance of H. Chivers it is hoped to stimulate activity in the Blackwood District. Glynneath L.C. is doing well with seven classes. A tutorial class is being arranged at Barry and the Division itself is giving very serious consideration to the question of training local tutors. A number of conferences and day schools have also been held.

Div. 5.—A new class has been started at Chard. This is the first N.C.L.C. class there and it is very promising. A Women's Class has also been formed at Devonport. Behind it is the Women's Section of the Labour Party whose members are exceedingly enthusiastic. The Divisional Council feel pleased at the two new departures—a class for apprentices in Bristol and for women in Devonport. The Secretary of Cheltenham (R. O. Scrivens) is resigning on account of ill-health. We sincerely trust his health will be speedily restored, and certainly

Head Office will miss him if he goes, as he is one of the most efficient secretaries in the South of England.

Div. 6.—This Division continues to make progress. Organiser Barr has arranged for twelve classes in Birmingham in the New Year Session. Classes have also been arranged at Walsall, West Bromwich, Dudley, Tipton, Leamington and Stourbridge. Readers of PLEBS in the other parts of the Division are urged to help in their respective districts and to communicate with Comrade Barr, 35, Tonbridge Road, Erdington, Birmingham. A Conference has been arranged for the 16th January, on I.W.C.E. to be addressed by A. J. Cook. A social and dance will be held after the Conference. A Conference and Week-end School will be held at Dudley on the 9th and 10th of January to be conducted by J. Stuart Barr. Comrades R. Dempster, A.E.U. District Delegate, and A. Lane, Organiser A.U.B.T.W., will also address the Conference. The lectures will be followed by a social evening. The following new tutors are assisting the Organiser:—Comrades Joe Roche, W. Hindle, D. Rydderch, L. H. Bunker, D. Collins and D. Murden.

Div. 7.—The Organiser attended quite a useful Conference held at Otley where a Labour College has now been formed. Two new districts, Ilkley

and Guisley, are having classes. A. J. Cook is to address a big Conference in the Division. Bradford L.C. has produced two new tutors this winter. The Division will be very busy in January with the Textile Workers Scheme.

Div. 8.—After having had addresses from J. W. Muir, National Organiser of the W.E.A. and J. Hamilton, No. 8 Divisional Organiser of the N.C.L.C., the Lancashire and Cheshire Federation of Trade Councils and Labour Parties—probably the most important body of its kind in the country—turned down by 42 votes to 22 a proposal to affiliate to both the National Council of Labour Colleges and the Workers' Educational Association and decided to support the N.C.L.C. only. Heartiest thanks for the splendid propaganda work put in by many of our supporters.

Div. 9.—R. S. Hunt, Secretary Darlington, L.C., reports that three members of the N.U.T. are now taking classes for the College. Miss S. Williams is taking two women's classes. Congratulations to the members of the N.U.T. and to the Darlington Labour College. An Educational Conference was held under the Middlesbrough East Divisional Labour Party on Saturday, 28th November. Comrades Ellen Wilkinson, M.P., J. F. Horrabin and Winifred Horrabin were the speakers. Forty-seven organi-

A GOOD RESOLUTION

**NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS I SHALL
ATTEND THE N.C.L.C. NATIONAL SUMMER
SCHOOL AT COBER HILL, SCARBOROUGH—
JULY 10th to 24th, 1926**

The Annual Meetings of both the N.C.L.C. and the PLEBS LEAGUE will be held during the School. This year the Plebs League is not running a special Summer School, but is co-operating in making the N.C.L.C. School the gathering of the year.

YOU MUST BE THERE

The fee per week (including board) is £3 3s. (College Secretaries, Tutors, Class Secretaries, etc. £3). Send your booking fee of 15s. (in part payment) to the N.C.L.C., 62, Hanover Street, Edinburgh. If you reside in London, you can hand your fee in to The PLEBS Office. The fee for a week or a fortnight may be paid by instalments. Begin now!

sations were represented by 147 delegates. A resolution was passed unanimously pledging the conference to the support of the Darlington and District L.C. The Secretary of the North Eastern L.C. reports forty classes running—a splendid record. The Sunderland Branch of the A.S.L.E. & F. has a class with an average of 35 students. Five classes are running in the Cumberland area. These classes in the new year will be carried on by local lecturers.

Div. 10.—Scotland.—Helensburgh is now part of Dumbartonshire Labour College. Thanks to the assistance of S. Walker, A. C. Bain, A. R. Stuart and other good comrades, extensive developments are taking place. Thanks to the efforts of the Fife Committee and Comrades Mitchell and Williams great improvements have taken place in Dundee, and with the aid of our enthusiasts in that city Dundee should show remarkable progress. One Dundee class has 62 students. Stirlingshire reports a new class at Polmont and a highly successful women's class. Literature sales are excellent. Comrades Bain and Deas report this to be the best session the College has had. Edinburgh has broken new ground at Linlithgow. Lanarkshire are holding monthly lectures by John S. Clarke. Both Lanarkshire and Glasgow held John McLean Memorial Meetings. J. P. M. Millar gave a lantern lecture on I.W.C.E. for the Hamilton Co-op. Society. Ayrshire classes have increased from eleven to thirteen. Sydney Walker, who has given excellent services as Secretary to the National Committee, has had to resign in consequence of employment reasons. A. Woodburn has been elected to fill the vacancy. Thanks to the efforts of the Trades Council and Comrade Michie, a successful conference for the establishment of a Labour College has been held in Dumfries. The speaker was our old stalwart Bob Holder, whose address was very much appreciated. A class is to start immediately.

Div. 11.—Ireland.—The Newry Branch of the Irish Transport Workers is affiliated to the N.C.L.C. and is having a class. A class has also been started in Derry and a provisional committee formed. It is interesting to note that the fee of the Irish Transport Workers was specially subscribed by the members. Such splendid enthusiasm is most en-

couraging. Arrangements have been made for a lantern lecture and a class in Newry.

Div. 12.—Hearty congratulations are due to Comrade James (Nottingham Sec.) and his friends for the splendid development that has taken place in N.C.L.C. work during the current winter. The Derbyshire Miners' Scheme is in full swing and the organiser has been so busy that his report has not yet arrived. A number of new class groups have been formed. By the time these notes are in print, the first half of the winter session of 1925-26 will have been completed. Reports to hand show that our work has been extended and consolidated. Some forty classes have been run in all parts of the Division. Nottingham has made a step forward; whereas it could only boast of one class last year, we now have six in the city and its environs. Comrade James, of the Sheet Metal Workers, has acted as sec. from the inception of the movement in Nottingham, and is to be congratulated on the service rendered.

The session has also witnessed the opening up of Lincoln and Grantham. In each of these towns there is an earnest and enthusiastic group of I.W.C.E.ers, whose work is sure to bear fruit.

Northampton, with Comrade Weston at the helm, has done splendidly again, whilst Wellingborough has had a very fine class, thanks to the good work put in by Comrade Drage. A class has also been commenced in Stamford. A lot of the work that has been done would not be possible if voluntary service was not so ungrudgingly given by so many workers in our movement. We are looking forward to further development and extension in the New Year.

MAPS FOR CLASSES

The following comrades are willing to supply enlarged copies of maps or diagrams to order, at a charge of 2s. 6d. each (3s. 6d. coloured), plus postage:—

- W. P. Noonan, c/o 101, Watson Street, Birkenhead.
- S. Almond, 57, Brighton Terrace, Darwin, Lancs.
- J. W. Davison, 42, Hotspur Street, Heaton, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

What PLEBS LEAGUERS are doing

WHAT will 1926 bring to the Plebs League? We have more groups and a larger membership to start the year than ever before, so let us hope that we reach in 1926 our 10,000 a month circulation for the Magazine, and a bigger and more active League organisation.

We have just sent out to group secretaries a new statement on the work and aims of the League, and the E.C. trusts that this statement will be thoroughly discussed by the groups. It is not meant to be the Law of the Medes and Persians, but merely a few guiding lines upon which local groups can base their activities. If you would like a copy, send a stamped envelope. So far they have only been sent to group secretaries.

MANCHESTER Group had a very successful meeting (over 140 present) addressed by Mark Starr. They are running a class for I.W.C.E. propagandists and finding it well attended and with every promise of being a great success. This is an excellent idea, and other groups might do well to copy Manchester's example. Very many organisations would be glad to be addressed on I.W.C.E. if speakers were available. I am sure that much good advertisement is lost by our inadequate supply of folk who can "state our case."

THORNABY-ON-TEES has been visited by myself and the Editor. While on a visit to Middlesbrough (that beautiful health resort) to a very successful I.W.C.E. conference organised by Councillor Beilby (150 delegates present) we went over to Thornaby. Nearly 100 stalwart Plebs turned out in a blizzard to attend the meeting, and we had a fine time. These talks between those of us who are working at the centre and the good comrades in the localities are one of the most "heartening" things in life. Let us have more of them.

We sometimes hear it said that our classes are no use—too theoretical, etc., so that we like to get word of some practical help that our fellows have

given the movement. NORTH BLYTH has a very active N.C.L.C. class, and during November, the secretary wrote to say that the Labour Party had won five seats in the Town Council Elections, two by students of the class, also that further victories in the Co-op. movement are expected. Well done, North Blyth!

Will anyone interested in League work in Hackney, London, write to S. Alexander, 57, Downs Park Road, E. 8. Comrade Vandome used to have quite an active little group in this neighbourhood, but since he left for "pastures new" (namely the Baltic and the Black Sea on a Russian trading boat) the group has dispersed.

One last word. Don't forget to send *reports*. They may not all get in the Magazine, but they are all very useful and may save endless time and trouble. The Plebs League group that mistakes itself for a "modest violet born to blush unseen" is mistaking its mission.

W. H.

A 4 pp.

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