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# The PILEBS

Organ of the National Council of Labour Colleges

Monthly 4<sup>d</sup>

15th APRIL, 1928

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# THE PLEBS

*Organ of the National Council of Labour Colleges*

Vol. XX.

15th APRIL, 1928.

No. 4

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## WHAT DOES THE "PLEBS" MEAN TO YOU?

*Can we have a Summer Circulation Campaign?*

**W**E'RE sorry to have to keep on harping on an old, old subject. It can't be helped, however. Our previous appeals for prompt settlement of accounts have had some cheering results. But there are still a few laggards—folk who apparently think that Labour publications can get along all right without money.

This, let us repeat, is a delusion. Worse, it is a delusion which piles up trouble for us. We have still that little pile of debt,

incurred in the bad times during and since 1926, to struggle against; as well as our monthly bills to face. It's no fun, we give you our word, scheming how to make ends meet.

We want new readers—and prompt payments. Not for our own sakes, but for the sake of the movement. We want to increase our circulation, not reduce it, during the coming summer months. And we can do it if I.W.C.E.rs everywhere will set about

the job of pushing The PLEBS more vigorously than ever before.

Do a bit of publicity for us in your area. Show the magazine about. Let folks see it. Tell 'em what we're after. Ask 'em if we're not providing a good four penn'orth. Then collect the fourpences—and send them on.

### Those Government Grants.

The Tory President of the Board of Education, Lord Eustace Percy (brother of his Grace of Northumberland) gave the W.E.A. a certificate of harmlessness in the House of Commons on April 3! A Mr. Culverwell had put down a question asking what was the amount of the grant paid by the Board of Education to the W.E.A., and "for what purpose it was given." Lord Eustace stated that the amount paid in the financial year 1927-28 was £6,129 7s. 9d.; and in answer to the latter part of the question said that the grants were made "in respect of courses of instruction recognised under the Board's Adult Education Regulations."

Whereupon Mr. Culverwell went on to enquire whether Lord Eustace had seen the January number of the *Highway*, which contained articles by Messrs. Tawney, S. O. Davies and Varley, "and which is, in fact, simply an organ of Socialist propaganda." Lord Eustace had not seen it. But he was sure that the classes conducted under the W.E.A. (and "inspected by my inspectors") were doing "properly recognised" educational work.

Mr. Culverwell urged that it was the President of the Board's duty to consider the withdrawal of Government support to an Association capable of publishing such seditious stuff. Mr. Mardy Jones leapt in to defend the W.E.A. by enquiring whether it was not a fact that the editor of the *Highway* would be equally pleased to get articles on the coal situation from the Prime Minister or other Cabinet Ministers. Col. Woodcock urged that the greatest care should be exercised before such grants were given, because this "pamphlet" (the *Highway*, we presume) was "nothing but propaganda for Communist purposes." Lord

### HOW OUR BOOK-KEEPER FEELS



*About Secretaries with Outstanding Accounts.*

Eustace closed by agreeing that the W.E.A. classes "ought to be closely watched"—"and I have watched and am closely watching them."

The moral is one we have pointed out before. If the workers want an education which will tell them the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth about capitalist society, they will *not* patronise classes which are dependent on funds granted by a Tory Minister of Education and are inspected by his inspectors.

### Under Distinguished Patronage.

Another little item of news about the W.E.A. we glean from *Forward* of a week or two ago. Under the auspices of the Glasgow branch of the Association a meeting was held on March 23rd in the workers' canteen of Messrs. A. Stephen & Sons, Linthouse. The object was to institute a W.E.A. class or classes in the district. *Mr. A. S. M'Lellan, a director of the firm, presided.* A resolution requesting the W.E.A. to take steps to provide classes was unanimously adopted. So the chairman didn't have to exercise his casting vote in favour!

We've forgotten to mention that a University professor enlivened the proceedings with a most appropriate lecture on "Straight and Crooked Thinking."

# A "MODEL COLONY"

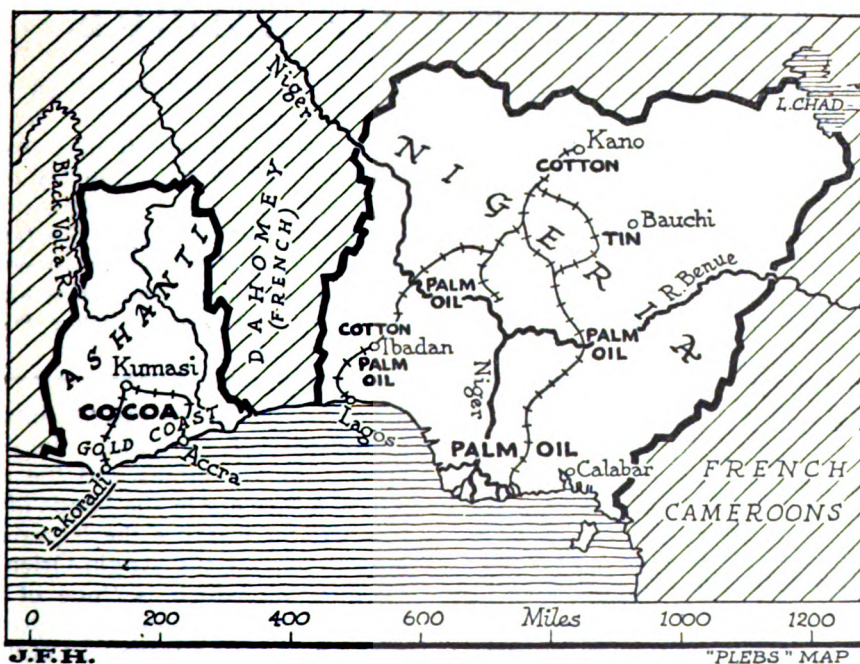
## *The Surplus Profit of British West Africa*

By H. PARSONS

**W**EST Africa in the past paved the way to fortune of many a respectable slave-selling capitalist. When British settlement came, secured at the point of the bayonet and preserved by dictatorship, the process of exploitation took on a less openly repulsive form, *but, on the other hand, has become even more intense.* The district is a storehouse for coconuts, oil and such raw materials which were essential for the soap, margarine and food combines, as well as

commodities with manufactured goods exported from Britain, what Marx called a surplus profit. This profit, which is in addition to the average rate of profit realised in capitalist production, arises from the superior technical equipment, the different level of labour power required in production. As Marx put it—

"The capitals come into competition with commodities produced in other countries with lesser facilities of production. . . To the extent that the labour of the advanced countries is here exploited as a labour of higher specific weight,



having other uses (*e.g.*, for tin-plate rolling). These are grown and collected by the African tribes that live in the palm-cocoa belts (see map).

British imperialism, quite apart from cheating and the advantages of superior organisation and market control (1), is able to extract, from the exchange of these com-

the rate of profit rises because labour which has not been paid as being of a higher quality is sold as such." (2).

Lever and Elder-Dempster.

The extraction of this super-profit is the basis of imperialist exploitation in the palm-cocoa growing areas of West Africa. The

agents of imperialism, such as the huge Niger Company (now the Lever Trust), the African and Eastern Corporation, the shipping concern Elder-Dempster (part of R.M.S.P.) reap their share (apart from the surplus got from employment of coolies, etc.). But it is, so to speak, spread over the whole imperialist class and has thus enabled them to pay somewhat higher wages to the British workers. The railwaymen, among others, whose representative, Mr. Thomas, is now playing the Labour imperialist tune in Takoradi, share in this intense exploitation of the African workers, who are literally, as in Nigeria, that "model" Colony, dying of disease brought on by starvation conditions.

Ormsby-Gore recently admitted that :  
"Broadly speaking the principal cause arrest-

Africans, whose vitality is known to be lowered by ankylostomiasis and endemic malaria."

The Governor recently confessed that tuberculosis "is reported to be increasing in the Gold Coast" (5). The "model colony" legend has a very hungry lining.

Imperialism is not, of course, content with this source of profit alone. The continual pressure to start large scale plantations is (to judge from the Ormsby-Gore Report) likely to be introduced by the Government, which is in the superior position of being able to exact what is euphemistically called "political" labour (*i.e.*, forced labour) (6).

#### Mineral Resources.

A large amount of direct investment of capital has also taken place and takes two

## THE CEMENT OF EMPIRE

*From the Viceroy to the young clerk who, at home, consumes high tea at sunset, every Englishman in India solemnly 'dresses' (for dinner). It is as though the integrity of the British Empire depended in some directly magical way upon the donning of black jackets and hard-boiled shirts. Solitary men in dark bungalows, on coasting steamers, in little shanties among the tiger-infested woods, obey the mystical imperative and every evening put on the funereal uniform of English prestige. Women, robed in the latest French creations from Stratford-atte-Bowe, toy with the tinned fish, while the mosquitoes dine off their bare arms and necks.*

Aldous Huxley in *Jesting Pilate*.

ing the natural growth of population is infantile mortality."

Again he speaks as follows :

"The main cause of this very high mortality would seem to be the malnutrition of both mothers and babies and the continuance of barbarous superstitions in connection with childbirth."

The addendum hardly affects the remarkable admission. He refers to the fact that :

"In South-East Nigeria the native methods of agriculture are still so primitive that the existing diet is quite inadequate to provide the stamina necessary to withstand the attacks of disease." (3)

Another authority (4) admits that while the Government's sanitary campaign

"has improved the efficiency of Europeans. . . . it has done little to raise the efficiency of the

forms. The first is the exploitation of the gold-fields of Ashanti, the manganese mines, the tin mines and the coal mines. These mines are in the hands of imperialist groups; for instance the Nigerian tin combine is part of the Anglo-Oriental Mining Corporation which is "one of the largest alluvial tin producers in the world. . . and already controls a large part of the Empire's tin industry," with mines in Burma, Malaya and Cornwall (7).

The coal production is already large enough to supply Nigerian needs with something over for bunkers. The wages paid, 9d., 1/- to 1/6 a day, and the long hours, are a menace to miners everywhere.

The second flow of investment has been through the Government itself (8). The

Government builds and owns highways, railways, ports, coal mines, etc. It has raised over 37 millions for the Gold Coast, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone. Takoradi cost £3,305,000 (the contractors are Sir Robert McAlpine) though the whole policy of urbanisation in connection with the harbour (with the nicely-segregated areas) will cost much more.

**Making a Proletariat.**

The significance of this Government action is manifold. The Government can use forced labour on its tasks and (even if it does not) its action dislocates the tribal arrangements and sets up a landless proletariat. The 4,000 odd natives who got jobs at Takoradi (under 63 Europeans) (9) will now be looking for jobs. Further, to pay the enormous loans high taxation is necessary. Taxation is levied on a sort of income tax basis on the peasant producers. In the Gold Coast the revenue per head is £1 19s. 8d. (10). Direct taxation rose from £299,000 in 1914 to £681,760 in 1925. "Truly," as one imperialist historian remarks, "the black man's burden is becoming heavier" (11).

The necessity of finding money for taxation (together with the general disintegrating effects of the transition to a money economy) are further means of breaking up the peasant workers' independence.

In this process the Right Hon. J. H. Thomas takes his part. Sir Gordon Guggisberg, late Governor, was able to claim (12) that Takoradi is

"a creature of coalition" — Conservative, Liberal, Labour, all have shared in this contribution to the harbours of the Empire."

The African workers must look at this missionary of Labour imperialism and wonder if all British workers wear dress clothes, or whether they are willing to join with them in the common fight against exploitation.

**NOTES.**

1. Knowles, Director of Agriculture, gives indication of these in an official publication *Agricultural Conditions on the Gold Coast*.

2. *Capital*, Vol. III, Chap. XIV. para. v., quoted in the controversy between Burns and Rathbone in the *Communist* (March, April, August, Septem-

ber, October, 1927) to which we may refer for a full analysis of this question in reference to West Africa.

3. Ormsby-Gore speech before Geographical Section of the British Association and also *Times* (14.7.26).

4. McPhee, *Economic Revolution in British West Africa*, a School of Economics Study.

5. Address by Governor Slater opening 1928-9 session of Legislative Council.

6. See L.R.D. *British Imperialism in West Africa* for a full study of this development.

7. *Stock Exchange Gazette* (9.3.28). See L.R.D. above for an analysis of the profits and wages paid.

8. "The Governors of the four West African colonies are all singularly sympathetic to commerce." Chairman of African and Eastern Corporation *Financial Times* (4.4.1928).

9. *Souvenir of Opening of Takoradi Harbour* in which J. H. Thomas appears in "Takoradi's Scroll of Fame" above the Prince of Wales!

10. Address above.

11. *Nigeria Under British Rule*. Sir Wm. Geary (1927).

12. *Times* (3.4.1928).

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# "DEVELOPING" A COLONY

## *Some Facts About British Guiana*

By J. F. HORRABIN

ON March 13th last, the British Guiana Bill passed its third reading in the House of Commons. The Bill may be described briefly but accurately as a measure designed to make that Colony safe for plutocracy. Potentially a very valuable possession, British Guiana has been losing money for several years. Eighteen months ago a Commission was sent out "to consider and report on the economic condition of the Colony, the causes which have hitherto retarded and the measures which could be taken to promote development." The Commission's chief recommendation was that the financial administration and control should be taken out of the hands of the partly-elected council (called the Combined Court) which has hitherto been the responsible body, and transferred to the Crown officials, *i.e.*, to the Imperial Government. British Guiana had not reached a very advanced stage of democracy (at the last election there were about 11,000 voters out of an adult male population of some 86,000); but now, in the interests of "safe" finance, paternal government from Whitehall (or Throgmorton Street) is to take the place of even this small measure of democratic control.

British Guiana, in fact, is to be developed as an Imperial asset. The following facts and figures about it are largely drawn from the Commission's Report.\*

\* Cmd. 2841, April, 1927, 2/6 net.

### Undeveloped Resources.

The Colony, the only British possession on the mainland of South America, has an area slightly larger than that of Great Britain, with a population of just over 300,000—or less than half that of Manchester. It consists of the former Dutch colonies of Demerara, Essequibo and

Berbice, ceded to Britain in 1814 (after the Napoleonic wars) and amalgamated in 1831. Nearly 90 per cent. of its area is tropical forest—as yet practically unexploited. Along the coast (marked by the word SUGAR in our map) is an alluvial belt, comprising about 6 per cent. of the total area, to which cultivation is as yet almost entirely confined. "On this alluvial belt, below sea level or within tidal influence, the capital of the Colony, its staple industry [sugar], and the bulk of its population have been situated since the days when it belonged to the Dutch."

As an economic proposition, British Guiana has in the past meant—sugar. But the development of large-scale plantations, with a plentiful labour supply, in other parts of the world, and the growth of the beet-sugar industry in Europe, led to a decline. In the earlier days, the Guiana plantations were worked by black slave labour. When abolition came, an effort was made to ensure a labour supply by the importation of indentured labourers from India (the indentured system was itself abolished in 1917). As a result of these facts the population is extraordinarily mixed. Over 40 per cent. of the total population consists of Indians; nearly 40 per cent. are blacks, the descendants of slaves; Europeans, other than Portuguese, form 1.11 per cent. of the total; Portuguese, 3.08 per cent. The original inhabitants of the area now number 9,000 odd—3 per cent. of the total.

### The "Plantocracy."

Concentration on the sugar industry led, say the Commissioners, to "a plantocracy, or government of sugar, by sugar, for sugar, inevitably tending to restrict development in other ways." The real



reason for the change of government secured by the Bill which has just passed Parliament is obviously the emergence of other interests—who want more security for their investments than the old order promised them.



There is, for example, the new bauxite industry (bauxite is the basic material of aluminium). "This industry has made gratifying progress since it was first started in 1916 by a Canadian Company under the control of the Northern Aluminium Company of America." The value of the exports of bauxite has risen from £12,078 in 1921 to £184,654 in 1925; and "further developments are in view as a strong British syndicate has been formed to take part independently in the exploitation of the bauxite deposits."

The production of gold has declined considerably during the past thirty years. On the other hand the diamond output has increased by more than 100 per cent. since the war. The timber resources are vast; and a great part of them lie near to a navigable river "where ocean-going steamers

could load for export." "The development of the interior," the Commissioners remark, "presents itself as a timber proposition"; and they go on to urge "the adoption of a policy attracting private capital by means of large land agents or other concessions."

### Loans Needed.

Two urgent necessities of the Colony, from the point of view of economic development, are railway development and harbour development. Both of these, again, mean concessions or contracts to financial syndicates or companies. Guiana needs money—loans. And the City (not to mention Wall Street) having doubtless demanded guarantees, a capitalist Government has hastened to make such constitutional changes as will reassure the financiers. As the Commissioners observe:—

The Colony will have to consider the question of finding its indebtedness. . . which now amounts to £1,200,000, by means of raising a loan on the London market. . . The financial position disclosed in an examination of the last seven annual budget statements reveals a state of affairs which may well render the raising of a loan in London difficult and expensive, and it would not be surprising if expert advice proves the necessity for postponing such an operation until the Colony can show a balanced budget, with effective control by Government over taxation.

In all this, the wishes, or the well-being, of the mass of the population of the Colony—the workers, black and brown—come in for no consideration whatsoever. The Commissioners (though one of them was a Fabian) have nothing to say either about their wages or their conditions of life. "Theirs but to do—and die." Meantime, the business of securing a more intensive exploitation of them and the other "resources" of the Empire must go on.

## TEN SHILLINGS

will book a place at either  
of the N.C.L.C. Summer  
Schools.

# THE OFFICE ROBOT

*How the "White Collar Brigade" is Exploited*

By ELLEN WILKINSON, M.P.

**F**ACTORIES and workshops have enjoyed legislative protection for a century. Hours and conditions in shops have been regulated, however inadequately, since 1912. Office workers almost alone remain without any safeguards provided by Parliament. The average manual worker assumes that the clerk has a soft job because he goes to work in a clean collar, and sits down all day. The 'bus driver on a snowy morning will glance enviously through the windows of apparently snug, warm offices. But in actual fact the conditions under which many clerks are working to-day are appalling and are growing worse.

Not only in the city of London, but in every big industrial town the pressure on those few acres where it is the convention to believe that business can only be done is so great that clerks are huddled together without any consideration for cubic air space or ventilation.

## The Factory Worker's Advantages.

A factory employer, even under the present thirty years-old Acts, must give 250 cubic feet of space to each worker, must provide adequate ventilation, and reasonable lighting and temperature. He must see that the walls are periodically white-washed, that there is a supply of pure drinking water, and that the sanitary accommodation is adequate and in good working order. None of these conditions need be fulfilled by an employer of clerks.

In connection with the Party's "Offices Regulation Bill," which I introduced into Parliament before Easter, I made an investigation of certain offices in London. Some of them were underground, using artificial light all day; in one or two cases they were little more than damp, dark cellars. I

found five girls and two men working with hardly room to sit down in a cubicle that had no outside ventilation, only a window into another room.

Many of the offices I saw were appallingly dirty, the walls never having been whitewashed or papered for years. One solicitor seemed to be quite proud of the filthy condition of the piles of papers that were lying about. He appeared to think that this witnessed to the old-established nature of his firm, like the cobwebs on old wine bottles.

## The Influx of Women.

In the absence of regulation, the coming of women into the city has not, in many cases, led to the necessary structural alterations to permit of separate sanitary conveniences. Some local authorities make this requirement, but very large numbers don't. It is usually the owners of the buildings rather than the employers of the girls who are to blame. The Offices Regulation Bill would allow the tenant to complain to the County Court if he was required to do the alterations, so that the onus may be placed on the landlord. As things are, the landlord may receive high rents for a rookery, and the clerks have to put up with unspeakable sanitary conditions.

It may be said that these are bad instances, but that the new office buildings are sweeping away the worst of these horrors. While, of course, the new buildings are a definite improvement, many of them, in the absence of any law to the contrary, are providing underground rooms and cubicles with no outlet to the fresh air. I visited a huge office building not far from Kingsway which has magnificent marble staircases, but in which many clerks neither see daylight nor breathe air fresh from the

open during the whole of their working day.

### Grim Figures.

These conditions in so sedentary an occupation react disastrously on the health of the workers. The official mortality statistics tell an ominous tale. Out of 180 occupational groups, commercial clerks come one hundred and twenty-ninth down on the list. Only 51 occupations are unhealthier. Their death rate is nearly double that of the groups at the top of the list. One-third of these deaths are attributable to phthisis and diseases of the respiratory system. The risk of contagion in these close quarters is terrible. One consumptive clerk may infect all those working near him in the still, foetid air. Nervous diseases account for 122 out of every thousand deaths.



UNDERGROUND WORKER

The Offices Regulation Bill of the Labour Party is an attempt to deal with the roots of these dreadful conditions. It would prevent any underground room being used as an office unless so used before the passing of the Act. Any such room would have to get a certificate from the local authority before it could continue to be used. Other clauses provide that the office must be kept free from any effluvia from drains or other nuisances; adequately ventilated, lighted and warmed; and a supply of pure drinking water must be available. Five hundred cubic feet of air space must be allowed to each person. If the office is under-

ground or used at night this must be increased to one thousand cubic feet. There must be separate sanitary accommodation, one to each fifteen of either sex or part thereof. Where fifty or more girls are employed a rest room must be provided.

This Bill would not make office conditions ideal, but it would enforce the barest minimum of health and decency already guaranteed to other workers. In spite of the general sympathy shown in the House of Commons to the first reading of the Bill (sympathy is cheap, and there's always lots of it at Westminster) the Tory Whips have given instructions that the further progress of the Bill is to be blocked. It will get no farther than a first "sympathetic hearing" unless there is considerable agitation in the country.

### Organise !

The N.U.D.A.W., the National Union of Clerks, the Shop Assistants, and the other unions catering for clerical workers have done much to improve wages where the employees are organised, but trade unionism in this profession is notoriously weak. No trade is more easily blacklegged. And behind the fierce struggle between the workers themselves is the sinister shadow of the machine. A visit to any Business Efficiency Exhibition makes one wonder how much longer any clerks at all will be employed. Elmer Rice's terrible play, *The Adding Machine*, shows to what robots modern clerks are being reduced. Legislation through a Labour Government can do something, but the real solution lies in the organisation of the clerks themselves.

---

A new edition of Kropotkin's *Conquest of Bread* (Vanguard Press, 2/9 post free) is welcome. The book is perhaps not so well known as the same author's *Fields, Factories and Workshops* or *Mutual Aid*. It is as readable as each of these famous books. If it could be put into the hands of the multitude whose outlook is entirely determined by the conditions of the moment it would have a salutary effect by revealing at least some of the possibilities in a reconstructed society. It has many references to a favourite theme of Kropotkin's that the ideal form of activity for humans is a happy combination of manual and intellectual work.

C.B.

# AN ICONOCLAST

## *Ibsen's Onslaught on the Conventions*

By ERNEST JOHNS

ON March 20th, the capitalist press of Britain celebrated the Ibsen centenary with glowing eulogies of the great dramatist. When *Ghosts* was first produced in London, in 1891, it was greeted by the critics with a chorus of hysterical and indecent abuse. "Muck-ferreting dog" was one of the politer phrases applied to the author; his supporters were denounced as "lovers of prurience and dabblers in impropriety, who are eager to gratify their illicit tastes under the pretence of art."

The curious student of bourgeois manners may find many further examples of this type of criticism reproduced in Shaw's book *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*. This is the reception a great revolutionary artist may expect from the "cultured" Philistines of a capitalist society. The critics were instinctively right, as respectable citizens, in hating and fearing the work of Ibsen on sight, for no man has done more to shatter accepted ideas and conventional morality, both in the theatre and in the world outside.

### Early Poverty.

Son of a bankrupt business-man in a small provincial town, apothecary's apprentice, and struggling student at Christiania, Ibsen passed his youth in an atmosphere of poverty and unsuccess. Then a series of historical and legendary dramas gained him a certain national recognition; and after the grant of a small pension in 1864 had given him security, he commenced to produce the work on which his reputation rests. The dramatic poems *Brand* and *Peer Gynt* gave him European fame, but it was the series of social dramas, starting with *The Young Men's League*, in 1869, that made his name a challenge to the powers of orthodoxy throughout the world, and it is with these that Socialist students of Ibsen are chiefly concerned.



HENRIK IBSEN.

It is a suggestive fact that the period during which these plays were written almost coincides with a revolutionary struggle which stirred Norwegian society to its depths. From 1870 to 1884 the democratic *Storting* was rendered impotent by the exercise of the royal veto and power of appointing ministers, in the interests of reactionary feudal landowners, until in the latter year the democratic forces were at last successful in securing a reform of the constitution. We may well suppose that the economic movement which expressed itself in this prolonged and bitter political tussle was not without its influence upon the sociological plays of Ibsen.

In *Rosmersholm* the political ferment itself plays an important part. The bitterness with which the "apostate" aristocrat and cleric Rosmer is assailed by his one-time friends, and the unscrupulous methods by which they drive him to his tragic end, are typical of the treatment meted out by the propertied classes to those of their number who cross over to the enemy.

*An Enemy of the People* portrays the consternation of respectable Liberal democracy at anything more thorough than mere "reform." Dr. Stockman, finding that the famous baths, upon which depends the prosperity of the town, are infected with typhoid, determines to expose the scandal at all costs. He soon discovers that even the most progressive elements join the conspiracy to silence him. They are quite ready for any mild preventive measures or improvements, but as Stockman maintains his contention that the only safe course is to scrap the existing baths and build new ones, he is denounced as an enemy of the community. In this play Ibsen is replying by analogy to the resentment aroused by his criticism of social conditions and established conventions. *Pillars of Society* had scarified commercial respectability, *A Doll's House* had sneered at the sacred ideals of bourgeois marriage, *Ghosts* concentrated all his hatred and contempt for the cheap veneer of capitalist morality into one great tragedy.

#### "The Damned Compact Majority."

Ibsen, in private conversation, described himself as a Socialist, though he was never identified with any definite school of Socialist theory. A non-democratic strain ran through his radicalism: he trounced the demagogues and cursed "the damned compact Liberal majority," which, he said, was "always wrong." He looked forward to "a revolution in the social condition, now preparing in Europe," to be brought about "by the workers and the women"; but "mere democracy," he said, "is not enough." He stipulated "an element of aristocracy," not "the aristocracy of birth or of the purse, or even the aristocracy of intellect, but the aristocracy of character, of will, of mind." Thus he may be said to have foreshadowed in a sense certain aspects of Bolshevism.

But his chief rôle for the Socialist student is that of a destructive critic of capitalist society, the relentless foe of dead ideas. He expressed his social creed through the mouth of Mrs. Alving:—

"But I almost think we are all of us Ghosts, Pastor Manders. It is not only

what we have inherited from our father and mother that 'walks' in us. It is all sorts of dead ideas, and lifeless old beliefs, and so forth. They have no vitality, but they cling to us all the same, and we can't get rid of them. Whenever I take up a newspaper I seem to see Ghosts gliding between the lines. There must be Ghosts all the country over, as thick as the sands of the sea. And then we are, one and all, so pitifully afraid of the light."

## THE STATE

By C.L.G.

**T**HE *State*, by Franz Oppenheimer (Vanguard Press, 2/6) supplements in all but its last chapter Engels' *Origin of the State* and Lenin's *State and Revolution*. But it certainly does not supersede Engels' work or compare favourably with Lenin's in this field.

Oppenheimer's main task is to state and prove the proposition that the State originated by conquest and that the motive for conquest was the desire of the conquerors to live upon the surplus products of the conquered.

Force is the instrument which brought the State into being and force is the instrument which maintains it in existence, whether its form be slave, feudal or capitalist.

So far so true. But in his last chapter, entitled "The Tendency of the Development of the State," Oppenheimer becomes very superficial.

How will this development come about? Firstly by the elimination of the surplus labourers by "emigration." This is to deprive the capitalist of his economic hold over the worker, who will "form capital and himself become an employer" (page 285)! Secondly, by the increase of the world division of labour, which in making the national states more and more economically interdependent will eliminate war (page 281).

The only excuse for these painfully weak conclusions is that the book was written before the world war and the Russian Revolution.

For Oppenheimer the past is a history of racial and class struggles, the future a record of the statistics of emigration, and the national exports and imports! Such is "Progress" in both society and social science.

Oppenheimer sees the disappearance of the State as an organised instrument of force wielded in the interests of the exploiters of the workers. Its place is to be taken by a "Society" in which every individual will be economically and politically free. Each "Society" will enter into close co-operation internationally with all the others.

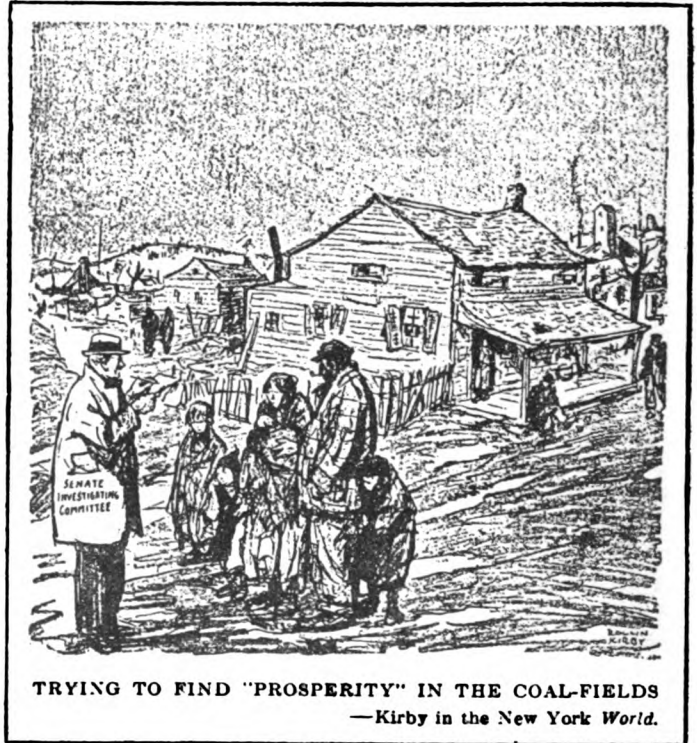
# THE MYTH OF HIGH WAGES

*An Australian Looks at America*

By JOHN HAMILTON

**D**ISTRUSTING official boosting and statistics, an Australian journalist, Mr. H. G. Adam, has been looking at America for himself,\* and the result is an illuminating document on the real social and industrial conditions of the American workers. As Mr. Adam points out, it is easy for specially conducted missions, such as have left our shores, to be completely misled as to the average conditions. One has actually to experience working in a country, or have a specially trained inquisitiveness, to draw accurate conclusions—sometimes startlingly in opposition to the popular impression. An uncle of mine, who had worked in the States, used to describe it as “hell for men and horses, but paradise for women and dogs.” Of course, he was not referring to women in industry.

My own experience endorsed this terse opinion. Comparatively high wages, which only applied to certain skilled crafts, e.g., the building industry, was more than offset by greater exploitation. One place where I was employed in Harrison, N.J., as a stone-cutter, was typical. There were three grades of payment, first, second and third, and possibly other rates below third, and it was “hell for leather” for the first grade man to have an output greater than a second man and so on. In addition, as the workers comprised many nationalities, Germans, Dutch, Scandinavian, English, Irish, Scotch, Italians (derisively



TRYING TO FIND "PROSPERITY" IN THE COAL-FIELDS  
—Kirby in the *New York World*.

called “dagoes”), American born, etc., you had national rivalry to spur on your efforts. Trade Union organisation, where it existed, was a parody.

To-day only 12 to 13 per cent. of the American workers are organised. (In Britain and Germany about 50 per cent. of the workers are organised, and in Denmark about 90 per cent.) In mass production plants organisation does not exist. Particularly before the restriction laws, one of

\* *An Australian Looks at America*, by Hugh Grant Adam (Allen & Unwin, 2/6 paper; 4/6 cloth).

the chief factors hampering organisation was the large proportion of foreign immigrants among the workers. In trade union meetings it is often found necessary to use four to six languages, and not less than twenty-five languages are used in the trade unions.

**State Boosting.**

Regarding statistics of industry, Mr. Adam says: "I would not give a snap of the fingers for so-called official statistics relating to conditions in industry. The Department of Trade and Commerce which collects and issues these statistics, is, above all, a boosting agency for American industrial methods." From his own investigations he thinks a very liberal estimate of the average wage in manufacturing industries is £6 a week for men, and £3 10s. a week for women; these wages are, however, liable to be reduced when business is slack. But it is "real" wages that matter. Judged by this basis Mr. Adam is emphatic that the standard is lower than the average Australian standard of comfort.

Not much publicity is given to the growing problem of unemployment in America. Mr. Davies, Secretary of Labour, has recently informed the Senate that at least 1,874,000 persons are unemployed, an increase of 7 per cent. in three years. The reverse of the "prosperity" medal also shows such ruthless struggles as the twelve months' strike of the coal miners of Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia. The stoppage began on April 1st, 1927, to resist a wage cut of 20 per cent. "A devastating document" is the description of the report of five Senators who went to the coal-fields as a Sub-Committee to investigate. To quote in part:

Everywhere your committee made an investigation in the Pittsburgh district, they found coal and iron police and deputy sheriffs visible in great numbers.

Everywhere your committee visited, they found victims of the coal and iron police who had been beaten up, and were still carrying scars on their faces and heads from the rough treatment they had received.

Your committee was impressed with the courage and determination of the miners to stand

up for what they believed was their due—an American wage making possible an American standard of living. . . . food was none too plentiful and was, of necessity, the cheapest that could be purchased.

Very little time was given by your committee to the economic side of this controversy, but they have every reason to believe that the coal industry generally in this country is not in a prosperous condition, and they most respectfully urge that the investigation by the whole committee be searching and severe in every detail, looking forward to some solution by legislation that will put the great coal industry of America on a reasonably prosperous basis.

**Man and the Machine.**

Many will recall the sensation created by Upton Sinclair's *Jungle*. Mr. Adam has



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an interesting chapter on Chicago's shambles. He describes "rows of grey-faced women cramming half-cooked portions of wet and steaming meat into tins." "There was not a happy face, young or old, amongst these workers—not a face that looked as if it could be happy." "The social and economic conditions that have trodden down these women are part and parcel of the conditions that make this great business possible and profitable in America."

American organisation and machines for mass production are wonderful, but as Kipling says—

"The things I've seen since steam and I began,  
Leave me na' doot o' the machine,  
But what about the man?"

One tremendous factor in mass production in the States is cheap electrical power. In industrial centres the average price per kilowatt is about a penny, in some cities as low as one-third of a penny. Compare these with charges in England; the *Electrical Times*, May 1st, 1924, compared the price per unit charged by six of the largest municipal and six of the largest company electricity stations in London:

The average for the Municipal stations was 2.16d. per unit.

The average for the Company stations was 3.07d. per unit.

### Where the Wealth goes.

From statistics compiled by the chief statistician of the Census Bureau of Washington we gather that while the wealth of the country during the ten-year period, 1900-1910, was increased by 60 per cent., the wages of labour during the same period showed an increase of only 22 per cent. But if we reckoned wages in terms of manufactured goods, *i.e.*, in relation to the prices that are commanded by the articles produced by labour, we would find that the average wage of the worker was 18 per cent. lower in 1910 as compared with 1900. Further, the cost of the necessaries of life had increased 40 per cent. during this

period. The U.S. Bureau of Inland Revenue estimated last year that the total national income was 90,000,000,000 dollars. Of this great national income no less than 20,000,000,000 dollars—about a quarter—goes to 450,000 people out of a total population of 117,000,000. Despite the enormous aggregate income the distribution is so inequitable that the average income of the people is below the "bottom level of health and decency."

There is no "secret" of so-called American prosperity—the prosperity of the few at the expense of the many. The United States is under-populated and contains an abundance of natural wealth. The war toll was comparatively light and there is no aftermath of a crippling financial burden. She is not beset with internal frontiers like Europe, consequently men and goods are free to go where they are most in demand. But there are some disturbing factors for capitalism. There is a declining margin of profit necessitating a corresponding increase in output; standardisation largely causes restriction to a home market; the development of instalment buying; the growing practice of manufacturers to keep down stock and the quota which restricts immigration.

Mr. Baldwin said, in 1926, "I venture to think that no trade union leader could do better service. . . . than by investigating closely what the methods are that enable the American workmen to enjoy a better standard of living than any other people in the world, to produce more, and at the same time to have so much higher wages."

Mr. Adam and others have investigated closely, and their conclusions are not likely to reconcile British workers to Fordism, company unions, and the pseudo-prosperity which means, for the American worker, a high standard of spending rather than a high standard of living. "It is made easy for him to gratify every passing want. But is it comfort to have a player-piano and be unable to pay the grocer's bill?"

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**WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE** between religious faith and the faith of a Marxian? See New Edition Psychology Text-book



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### III.—PURITANISM

By J. P. M. MILLAR

**T**HE other day an article in a London paper stated that the fashionable New York wife spends, with the approval of her husband, about £2,000 a year on dress. A somewhat similar figure could be quoted as the dress expenditure of the wife of many a London capitalist.

While the capitalist of to-day accepts such expenditure as quite natural, his ancestor of the sixteenth century held very different views. Green, the historian, tells us that the ideal wife of the merchant class was "a pattern of sobriety unto many; very seldom seen abroad except at church. When others recreated themselves at holidays and other times, she would take her needlework and say: 'Here is my recreation.'"

The early capitalists, unlike their brethren to-day or the feudal lords of medieval times, frowned on nearly all forms of pleasure. 'Work and save' was their slogan.

In medieval times holy days and pilgrimages were popular. These the rising capitalist class looked upon as a waste of time and money. Festivals, dramatic entertainments and fine clothes, which were the spice of life to those living in the Feudal period, were bitterly opposed by the early capitalists who championed what is known as Puritanism.

"Duller clothes," says Green, "came with the Puritans. Life became hard, rigid, colourless and it became intense." Bunyan, a champion of Puritanism, counted hockey and dancing as sins. Even tip-cat came under the ban. Lawyer Prynne described actors as "ministers of Satan" and theatres as "Devil's chapels."



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### Scotland's Giddy Height.

In England Puritanism began about the 1580's. As all know who have seen "Bunty Pulls the Strings" Scotland did not escape. In that country Puritanism reached its height—and a giddy height it was—in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the long catalogue of sins were absence from kirks, playing cards, dancing, playing golf on fast (holydays) days, mis-spending gear (wealth) and watering cabbage or playing bogill (hide-and-seek) about the stacks on Sundays. In St. Andrews, Johnston tells us, it was laid down that "no husband shall kiss his wife and no mother shall kiss her child on Sabbath day."

Woe to the man who committed those sins. He was not left to his own conscience. He was hailed before the kirk sessions, whose punishments ranged from ducking in foul ponds to banishments and public whipping.

In feudal times the great virtues were bravery, honour, family pride and ostentation. With the rise of Puritanism the main virtues became industry, prudence, temperance and thrift.

### The Secret.

What is the secret of this great change? The cause is not to be found in some passing whim or in the efforts of some great preacher or propagandist, but in the de-

velopment of new economic conditions giving rise to a new class with new needs.

Under Feudalism there was little sense in wholesale saving as there was practically no means of investing it. If 500 sacks of corn was all a feudal lord required, there was usually no advantage in his having 1,000 sacks for, commerce not having developed, he couldn't sell it. Moreover, under Feudalism, social status was more or less fixed so that it was impossible for the serf or the craftsmen to save up and become a lord.

With, however, the break-up of Feudalism and the rise of Capitalism, the position became quite different. The restrictions that limited the number of journeymen a master-craftsman could employ were swept away—the only limit now was the length of purse of the merchant-employer. In these early days men could become capitalists by saving and thus saving became an all-consuming passion. To buy expensive clothes or turn gold and silver into drinking vessels was obviously throwing away the opportunity of making money breed money by engaging in commerce. With the developing market of capitalism time also became money, and the rising capitalists frowned on holidays and games as being a waste of precious time. This change in mental outlook expressed itself in Puritanism, which has been well described as the religion of capitalism in its infancy.

# IS THE WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT TOO LATE?

By A BIOLOGIST.

## II.—THE BIOLOGY OF THE SUBJECT.

**I**N the first article of this series we considered the discontinuous nature of civilisation. There have been several great cultures in the past, on both sides of the Atlantic ocean, and each of these seems to have developed to its climax, become decadent and then crashed in war and conquest. These cultures did not en-

tirely disappear and the last of them, that of Greece and Rome, carried over, to some extent, into our civilisation, in so far as we have made considerable use of its literature, art, legal systems and science.

It has been suggested that, in all these cases of decadent civilisation, there was a common cause. There were extensive racial intermixtures with the result of instability and loss of qualities that had "survival

value." Now we know very little yet about human heredity, but we must pay much attention to the facts elicited by the study of animals other than man. These facts suggest that there are biological strains in any animal species; that the strains come from racial intermixture and that it is difficult (and perhaps impossible) to predict what their qualities will be when they are produced naturally. But it is known that some strains will be produced, in such circumstances, that will become dominant ones, while the others will generally tend to disappear as the results of competition. We do not doubt that these biological conclusions are true of human interbreeding. Now, throughout the world, there is at present racial intermixture on an enormous scale. New human strains are being produced and some of them are certain to become dominant ones. What will be such dominant racial strains?

We do not sufficiently realise how much of the "lower" animal still persists in man! Many formidable diseases are common to them and to him. In some ways (sexually, for instance) he shows degeneracy to a greater extent than most mammals; he is far more predatory and cruel than any other animal. But what is very significant for our discussion is that man has inherited from his mammalian progenitors the two powerful motives that dominate his present behaviour—the gregarious and property instincts—and these are far more potent in him than in any lower animal.

The human community traces back to the animal "herd," a grouping of animals determined by the gregarious instinct yet exhibiting intelligence. "Intelligence" we regard as the method of trial and error—that is, the animals that exhibit it try, at random, one method of behaviour after another until one is found that is effective. This is adopted and persists either by traditions or by inheritance. Anticipatory behaviour, based upon reasoning, has not yet been an important part of human activity—on the social side.

Both gregarious and property motives are feeble in the lower animals (for we exclude social species, like the ants, that are such

by instinct—these are not of the type of the gregarious-intelligent community). These motives have become so powerful in man that we must regard them as secondary instincts. Obviously they clash and the result is social conflict which is analogous with the mutual conflict that arises, in like manner, from the clash of incompatible "complexes." Our present phase of civilisation is now characterised by the attempt to resolve social conflict. Can men act upon predatory impulses—that is, give rise to their acquisitive tendencies and yet exhibit increasing gregariousness? Only in one way has our age attempted to do this with success: by class-groupings. *Within* an acquisitive class socialisation can occur; *outside* the acquisitive class there is the field for predatory enterprise.

Now the present civilisation has lessened the crudities of the exploitation of the labouring and artisan classes of past civilisations. But it presents a new feature: that of scientific industrialism which has given novel opportunities for the exercise of the predatory instinct. These we shall examine in a later article.

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# MAKING HISTORY LIVE

## *Books about Working Folk of Other Days*

By WINIFRED HORRABIN

ONCE upon a time I remember having a bitter feeling of resentment against my teachers and elders. It was on a visit to London, where I had been taken to the British Museum and the South Kensington Museum. I remember very vividly feeling that I had been cheated in some way, as if I had had my years at school in vain. It seemed to me that my teachers had hidden the fact that the earth is a marvellous and exciting thing from me, by means of a dull thing out of a book called "Geography." What could the length of a river matter against the fact that its banks were bright with flowers, or that it flowed through dense jungles or lost itself in swamps inhabited by strange beasts? "Geography" as I was taught it took all the romance out of the Amazon and Nile and left them dry statistics in a dull book.

### Dead Facts.

It was the same with something called "History." The fact that my own family tree (and everybody else's) was an intricate and exciting record of the way my ancestors got their living was never divulged. Instead, we got expurgated accounts of the doings of kings and queens and the more boring side of public life, or a string of "dates" which bore little relation to anything in one's child mind but the multiplication tables—which one hated. The British Museum and South Kensington filled me with enthusiasm for the world and for the peoples that inhabit it, with a desire to know why and how they had lived; but it also awoke that feeling of resentment I have referred to, a sort of smouldering rage that I had been fobbed off with some counterfeit article when the real one was so valuable and so easily available. To put it mildly I disliked my teachers.

Children are luckier to-day—and grown-ups, too. Here are three books\* written



One of Duke William's army cooks  
(from "Everyday Life in Anglo-Saxon, Viking and Norman Times," M. and C. H. B. Quennell)

primarily for school use, but to the keen scholar of riper years they should prove a mine of useful knowledge. And not only that, they are models upon which much of our own teaching could be based.

### How Our Forefathers Lived.

We have had many requests for advice and much discussion about "teaching methods." Here are three classic examples of the kind of thing we need. Something vivid and living, something that has its roots in the everyday life and work of the people. *Live history.*

Mr. and Mrs. Quennell write easily and simply. They tell the story of the Saxon, Viking and Norman invasions in a way that the 'star' reporter on an enterprising newspaper might envy.

\* *Everyday Life in Anglo-Saxon, Viking and Norman Times*, by M. and C. H. B. Quennell (5/- nett). *Life and Work of the People of England: The Fifteenth Century. Life and Work of the People of England: The Sixteenth Century*, by Dorothy Hartley and Margaret M. Elliott (4/6 nett; cloth 5/6 nett each). (All published by B. T. Batsford.)

"Let us imagine a band of Saxons raiding up the Thames. . . . The inhabitants of the city, warned by fugitives, fled to the west, . . . burying in wells their tools for use when they returned. The Saxons came up to a deserted town, and entering by one of the gates, wandered up and down the paved streets. . . . here was a fat land and loot undreamed of."

Then follows a description of the strangers searching houses and shops for treasure, feasting in the Roman villas, roasting oxen on the beautiful mosaic pavements, of barbarians wondering at the intricate plumbing of the Roman baths—

"Here they splashed about in the Frigidarium, and then, going outside, discovered the elaborate system of heating by fires under the hollow floors. Peering under they may have discovered some unfortunate not well enough to escape, and dragged him out to be made sport with, and then killed. Skeletons have been discovered in hypocausts, of people who hid in this way."

These were our own people, fleeing from invasion, fighting or marrying the invaders, living sheltered "serf" lives under the protection of a feudal lord or wandering as beggars and "free" men along the country roads. Our ancestors' portraits are here—every bit as exciting and much more interesting than those which hang on the walls of the rich. The story of the three successive invasions lives and moves.

The illustrations (by the authors) are just as simple and beautiful and to the point as the writing. William the Conqueror's invasion becomes something more than a



A beggar—being lucky (from "Life and Work in the Fifteenth Century.")

mere date in history when we have seen his army cooks preparing the "plum and apple" of those days, over a field kitchen.

In *The Life and Work of the People of England* the same effect is obtained by a short introductory note, followed by reproductions of contemporary pictures, illustrations to manuscripts, wall paintings, etc., which describe the life and occupation of ordinary folk.

When one has carefully studied the hundred and fifty pictures illustrating agriculture, medicine, games, building, cloth-making, furniture, town life, warfare, transport and many other things, one has not only a good working knowledge of how people lived, but is more than half-way to an appreciation of the art of the period.

We have said over and over again that our aim in teaching is not merely the accumulation of facts or the pure love of learning. To make any period in history live, so that a study of it leaves one with a sense of the continuity of life, and a realisation of the things that we have lost or gained, in a real contribution to the record of human endeavour. The authors of these three books are helping us in a good work.

#### PAMPHLETS RECEIVED.

- Russia's Disarmament Proposals.* By W. P. Coates (Anglo-Russian Parliamentary Committee, 3d.).
- Communism and Industrial Peace.* By J. R. Campbell (C.P., 2d.).
- English.* By J. L. Young (Foyle, 1/6).
- Women in Russia* (Dorritt Press, 2d.).
- The Nursery School.* By W. Hyman (Thornton & Pearson, 6d.).
- Social Insurance in the U.S.S.R.* By A. Katz (5d.).
- Trade Union Organisation in U.S.S.R.* By I. Resnikov (5d.).
- Unemployment in the U.S.S.R. and the Struggle Against It.* By A. Katz (5d.).
- Protection of Labour in the U.S.S.R.* By A. Katz (5d.).
- Red and White Terror.* By N. Krylenko (C.P., 2d.).
- The Workers' State.* By J. Stalin (Holland, 1d.).
- The Tragedy of the Weekly Slump.* By R. Fleck (Pilot Press, 3d.).
- Where is Trotsky Going?* (Workers' Bookshop, 6d.).
- Trade Union Law.* By Arthur Henderson (Ruskin College, 6d.).
- The Mining Situation: An Immediate Programme* (Labour Publications Department, 2d.).

# THE BOOKSHELF

By J. F. HORRABIN

**T**HERE is a school of modern biographers — an increasing school, thank God—who conceive it to be their first business to knock away the pedestals which tradition, piety, or class interest have erected beneath certain individuals. This is a highly important proceeding, not only because it enables the student to see the individual in question as a human being instead of a marble or cardboard idol; but much more because, once the pedestal is out of the way, one can see him as a man amongst other men—as a part of a particular historical scene. The old school tried to paint a heroic single figure, several sizes larger than life, with a background of thunderclouds or highly conventionalised mountain-tops. The new aims at something rather more like a cinematograph film, with occasional “close-ups” of the hero perhaps, but with scenes also in which he is lost among the crowd of his fellows; scenes in which the background becomes the foreground, so to speak.

A very interesting and highly readable example of this new sort of biography is *George Washington, the Image and the Man*, by W. E. Woodward (Jonathan Cape, 15/-) (Get it out of your local library.) Mr. Woodward sets with spirit about the job of hacking through the veritable jungle of laurels heaped upon his hero's not so very noble head. And at the same time he lets a good deal of cold daylight in onto the historical facts about, and the underlying causes of, the so-called American “Revolution.”

## The American Revolution.

He distinguishes between “two streams of revolutionary impulse” in the Colonies during the years preceding and following the Declaration of Independence. There was “a revolt of the proprietary class—merchants, planters, lawyers, ship-owners and distillers—against the economic and political domination of the English.”

There was also “the muscular, inarticulate rebellion of working people—small farmers and mechanics, voteless and landless—against the growing power of wealth, British or colonial.” It was the first of these that “won” in the Revolution. The planters, lawyers and shipowners might



GEORGE WASHINGTON.

perorate about men being “created free and equal”; but as Mr. Woodward remarks—

when it came to practical matters most of the patriots were not considered free or equal enough to be allowed to vote, or to have any hand in the patriotic Government. . . . The mobs that swirled through the streets of Boston and New York, setting up Liberty poles and tarring and feathering loyalists, consisted for the most part of unenfranchised mechanics and labourers. We look in vain through the whole revolutionary propagandist literature for any serious proposal to give them the right of suffrage.

Yet—irony of ironies—the slogan of the Revolution was “No Taxation without Representation”! And the planters, lawyers and shipowners not only hoodwinked the common people into demonstrating in the streets of Boston and New York, but into fighting and dying at Bunker's Hill and Brandywine and Valley Forge for the same glorious but empty phrase. They died to make the America of to-day; and what that America is Mr. Woodward drily reminds us in such a sentence as this, referring to a fort which figured in one of Washington's early campaigns:—

This outpost, afterwards held by the French and called Fort Duquesne, and then by the English and called Fort Pitt, is now held by steel millionaires and called Pittsburgh.

### Washington, Landowner.

And what sort of a man was the elected leader of the planters and ship-owners? Well, to begin with he didn't cut down the cherry-tree or utter those ringing words, "Father, I cannot tell a lie." That little legend, Mr. Woodward tells us, was deliberately invented by a parson-biographer. Washington was neither a very brilliant nor an exceptionally strong man. Such strength as he had lay in his exceedingly practical outlook on life and affairs, uncomplicated either by wide vision or flights of imagination. He was a landowner; and you get the essential quality of the man pretty accurately from such a sidelight as this:—

In the desperate days at Valley Forge, when the British held Philadelphia, and it seemed to most men that the American cause was slowly dying of cold and hunger, Washington wrote to John Parke Curtis, "Lands are permanent—rising fast in value—and will be very dear when our independency is established."

"Washington's mind," Mr. Woodward declares, "was the business mind. . . There are many Washingtons among us to-day. I know six or seven myself. Such men are usually found in executive positions in large-scale industrial or financial enterprises."

By a slice of luck I found, just after finishing Mr. Woodward's book, a Sunday-School life of Washington ("Splendid Lives Series") on the twopenny shelf of a second-hand bookshop. A marvellous twopenny-worth! The author harps incessantly on "the solemn reliance upon a righteous cause and an approving Providence" which animated the hero when repairing to "the post of duty and danger." "His deeply religious nature, and his unflinching trust in the Divine Will, were conspicuous all through life." So does the pious bourgeois hang haloes round the head of the successful citizen! The fact is, of course, that Washington was no more "deeply religious" than he was deeply poetical. Conventional expression apart,

his religious beliefs, so far as they can be discovered, were pretty much those of Tom Paine or any other eighteenth century deist. And even so far as the conventions were concerned, the parson of the church near Mount Vernon, of which he was supposed to be a member, had publicly to rebuke him from the pulpit for setting so bad an example to his fellow-parishioners in the matter of church attendance.

"History," declares the Sunday-School writer, "has no impressions to correct with regard to Washington." I wonder if he has read Woodward. If so, he must have had some horrid shocks.

## JOHN MACLEAN AND I.W.C.E. IN SCOTLAND

**R**EPLYING to J. P. M. Millar's article, "A Page from Our Own History," in our February issue, Joseph B. Payne writes that as early as 1906 John Maclean was conducting classes in Glasgow in Marxian Economics, "and in 1907 he taught a class on this subject at Pollokshaws, under the old Eastwood School Board, while during 1907-8 he held classes at Govan, Greenock, Burnbank, Paisley and Falkirk, the last-named class receiving considerable financial assistance from the Central Ironmoulders' Association.

"During all this time he was actively propagating the need for the establishment of a Scottish Labour College, the students attending the classes acting as the drawing power within their Trade Unions to secure the necessary financial backing of the industrial movement.

"Between 1910-11 John had a class one hundred strong in the Good Templars' Hall in the centre of Glasgow, which was soon transferred to the Central Halls in Bath Street because of the need for greater accommodation. At this time he had also organised several classes in Fife which were definitely known and spoken of as Labour College classes. In Glasgow, Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire and Stirlingshire the classes were variously known as Maclean's, Marxian, and Labour College classes, but in Fife the Labour College name held sway."

Among others of the pioneers of workers' education in Scotland, says Payne, there were "such stalwarts as Geo. Yates, Jas. Connolly and Tom Clark," of the S.L.P.; and also Jas. Macdougall (Maclean's closest friend and colleague), Matt McColl, and Hugh Guthrie.

# AMONG THE BOOKS

By  
"PLEBS" REVIEWERS

Robert W. Dunn in *Company Unions* (Vanguard Press, 2/9 post free from the N.C.L.C.) undertakes an exhaustive examination of one of the methods adopted by Big Business in its haste for rationalisation, stability, and peace in industry. This is no declamatory brochure, but a book of serious investigation with a copious supply of excerpts from the minutes of various Company Unions. The investigators are both frankly "left wingers," but the facts are in the main given without any trimmings. It will be recalled that two years ago the *Daily Mail* sent an expedition to the States to find out what was wrong with British industry. That crusade of selected "rank and filers" actually visited some of the industrial concerns that are so ably handled in this book. The "shop committees" of the Company Unions are shown on the job, and two tit-bits are the minute that deals with the feeding of cats in the mill and the complaint that the mill whistle did not blow loud enough at starting time. Spencer's Union makes this book of special interest to British Workers. F.S.

*The People's Year Book*, 1928 (Co-operative Press Agency, cloth 3/-, paper 2/-) is a very handsome volume for the price. It contains a number of valuable articles as well as sets of statistics and specialises particularly on the concentration of banking at home and abroad. Another very useful book of reference is the *American Labour Year Book* (Rand Book Store, New York, \$1.50). The American book deals with Industrial and Social conditions, Trade Unions, Labour Disputes, Labour Politics, Labour Legislation, etc., in the States, while a substantial section is devoted to Labour abroad.

*Parenthood: Design or Accident?* By Michael Fielding (Labour Publishing Co., paper 1/-, cloth 2/6). This little book on Birth Control is the most sensible, the most lucid, and the most complete work on the subject that has ever come our way, and well deserves the recommendation given it by H. G. Wells in his Foreword. Author and publishers are both to be congratulated on producing it at a price which puts sound knowledge on a vital matter within the reach of all. H.

With 6 per cent. of the world's population and 46 per cent. of the world's wealth, naturally the exploiting class of U.S.A. are anxious to keep up the rate of surplus-value and *New Tactics in Social Conflict* (Vanguard Press, 2/9 post free from the N.C.L.C.) tells us of the methods adopted. These tactics are to fit an expanding capitalism, unlike

Mondism which is applicable to a country in decline. The Symposium deals with such tactics as Labour, Banking, company unions (called capitalism with a soul) new propaganda, property ownership and control. Section 5 on American imperialism in the Caribbean with very important statistics alone is worth the money. The book can be strongly recommended as a study of how U.S.A. industrialists and international financiers want to give a "democratic facade" to their exploitation. D.W.T.

The Labour Research Department has just issued No. 20 in its Syllabus series under the title of "Modern Capitalism: Its Origin and Growth," by Maurice Dobb. This is a revised and up-to-date edition of No. 2 in the series, by the same author, which ran through two editions. It is an extremely interesting record of capitalism from the early stage up to the present, and the sections dealing with capitalism in Germany, France, Russia and the U.S.A., bring out special points which help to explain the present position in those countries. As with all L.R.D. Syllabuses, there are useful references for further reading in each subject. The price is 6d. (7d. post free, from the N.C.L.C. office).

*Why Do Workers Vote Liberal and Tory?* by J. H. Roche, is a very helpful pamphlet. It deals with the influence of capitalism on the mental growth of the worker from infancy, through school period, workshop experiences until we get the "finished product," an apathetic worker. This pamphlet is a scientific treatment of the problem of apathy. Copies can be had from 23 Cedar Street, Ashton-under-Lyne, price 3d. each, 2/3 per dozen, post paid. J.S.B.

## P's and Q's

"About the only powerful and independent ruler in Asia is the Ameer of Afghanistan, who is now visiting Europe. His friendship for the progressives of India and his willingness to co-operate with Turkey make him, with Kemal Pasha, the only real native Asiatic force opposed to imperialism. Because of his power and the peculiar character of his country and its geographical position, the Ameer will be feted everywhere. It is safe to guess that the British will try to outdo the Germans, the French and the Italians in their reception to him."

The above appeared in the *American Labor Age*. Recent events have justified the forecast up to the hilt.

The article on the Cinema by Henry Dobb in last month's PLEBS was written four months ago, and had unavoidably been held over. For this, and for the fact that it had to be cut, we owe apologies to the author, who asks us to mention that *Jeanne Ney* is now being released in this country.



# WHAT'S DOING

## *The N.C.L.C. at Work*

**T**HE following is a list of *new* affiliations obtained in March by our local colleges:— London, 5; Glasgow, 1; Bournemouth, 1. Will local committees please arrange that a note of new affiliations is sent each month? Head Office supplies a special post card for the purpose, free.

**CLOSE OF THE YEAR.**—Will every secretary please help us by seeing that the college financial report form is forwarded immediately along with the class report for the January-March Session? A speedy return of such report forms will save a lot of expensive clerical work at Head Office and also save organisers a great deal of trouble.

### WHAT THE DIVISIONS ARE DOING.

#### DIVISION 1.

The Tottenham Shop Assistants' Branch has started a class on Working Class History on Tuesdays at 8.30, at 7 Bruce Grove, conducted by W. Archer. With the help of the local Brass and Metal Mechanics it is hoped to start a class in Kingston. The Bermondsey Men's Co-op. Guild also intends running a summer class. An Essay Examination is being held at all classes in London during the week, April 24th to 30th. In addition to a book prize for the best writer in each class, the Divisional Council is providing a scholarship to the Divisional week school at Lancing, June 23rd-30th, to the best woman student at the examination. The Women's Scholarship fund reports one more scholarship. Tutors' classes on various subjects will be run during the summer. London N.C.L.C.ers who have had some experience in the ordinary classes should write to the London Organiser immediately. The N. Battersea Women's Section and the New Malden Women's Co-op. Guild are each sending a member to our week-end school at Newdigate, May 5th and 6th.

#### DIVISION 2.

Will all N.C.L.C.ers in Division 2 please note the change of address of the organiser to 14 Claremont Crescent, Regent's Park, Southampton? The Bournemouth College is the first to organise a week-end school for this summer. This will take place on May 12th and 13th, with the organiser and Tom Ashcroft as tutors. Guildford College have arranged for a day school with Ashcroft on the subject of "International Relations Before and After the War." The Littlehampton secretary reports: "Our social on March 12th was the most successful we have had and leaves us with a substantial balance for further N.C.L.C. activities." This class is now preparing for the annual outing to Amberley Woods. Dan Huxstep, late of Brighton College, is now lecturing at Southampton and Portsmouth. The Itchen I.L.P. have affiliated to the Soton College. New PLEBS very much liked.

#### DIVISION 3.

Southend reports an attendance of twenty at its class under K'dino Main. Maurice Dobb kept the Day School there very interested with three lectures on "The Economic Position of U.S.S.R. and British Capitalism." Wickford N.U.R. has made a welcome grant of £2 10s. to cover the attendance of its members at the local class. Cambridge class hopes to increase its members from the thirteen of the first night. Peterborough's dance brought in £2 5s. for class funds and Secretary A. S. Bools is now chairman of the No. 1 Branch of the N.U.R. Anonymous critics of the N.C.L.C. on the grounds of alleged "academism" cannot be living in the Eastern Counties to judge by the topics of our classes and schools. A lecturer on Social History was supplied to the Chelmsford Co-op. Ed. Committee on March 14th and to the Hornchurch and Goodmayes Women's Sections. J. M. Allen (Shop Assistants) is a welcome addition to the Divisional Council. Day Schools are proposed for Staines on April 22 and High Wycombe May 6th, and lectures at March on May 20th.

#### DIVISION 4.

The organiser is having to spend a good deal of time in hunting up outstanding PLEBS accounts. Will literature secretaries please help him by remitting promptly to Head Office?

#### DIVISION 5.

The Bristol L.C. held a splendid meeting and concert in Winterbourne—attendance 200. The tit-bit of the concert was the humorous sketch given by Brother Baston of the A.U.B.T.W. The work of the College in this area has contributed largely to the success experienced at the recent local elections, when the County and Parish seats were won for Labour. Com. Counsell, the class secretary, and Com. Neale are to be complimented for the work they have done for the College. To wind up the session Bristol College is organising a Social. Com. Liver, of Plymouth, is proving a most efficient secretary, and now that a College Council has been formed, it is hoped to have a real live class movement. A meeting of the Furnishing Trade workers was addressed in Barnstaple by the Organiser. Bristol East Labour Party have decided to affiliate to the local College.

#### DIVISION 6.

Birmingham College is arranging a summer tutorial class. An attempt is being made to get the Shrewsbury College established and any PLEBS readers in that district anxious to help might communicate with Organiser Barr, 3 Derwent Road, Stirchley, Birmingham. Week-end schools are being arranged for Coventry, North Staffs, Walsall and Birmingham.

## DIVISION 7.

Another college is in the process of formation at Hoyland Common, near Barnsley. Secretary, *pro tem.*, Albert Laisler, 66 Springfield Road, Hoyland Common, Barnsley. A committee has been formed and *Plebs* readers are asked to get in touch with the above Comrade. Colleges are grouping themselves together for the purpose of arranging Day Schools. In consequence in the West Riding there will be a day school nearly every Saturday during the forthcoming summer. The Divisional Week-End School will take place at Heathmount Hall, Ilkley, on September 15th and 16th. The National Secretary, J. P. M. Millar, will be one of the speakers. F. Dixon, the Divisional Chairman, will lecture on his recent visit to the Soviet Republic. The fee will be as before, 12/6 inclusive. Will all college secretaries make every effort to make the school a success?

## DIVISION 8. S.E. LANCS. AREA.

Tutors' Training Classes will be an important feature during the Summer Session; four such Classes are being held. The Manchester Students' Association has organised a ramble for Easter Monday; the Openshaw Class students arranged for a similar event for Good Friday. On April 17th a German Comrade will lecture to tutors, students and friends at the Grand Cafe, Oxford Street, Manchester, 7.45 p.m.

## LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT.

It is hoped to organise Summer Courses on Esperanto and Public Speaking. A Tutors' Training Class will be held on Wednesdays, 9 Room, Transport Building, 41 Islington, Liverpool. The Annual Delegate Meeting will be addressed by J. F. Horrabin, May 19th, Liverpool. On May 20th a Day School with Horrabin as lecturer will be held at "Selborne," Leighton Avenue, Parkgate, Ches., thanks to the hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Paul. On June 16th a Day School will be held at Penketh (near Warrington) Labour Club and a similar School on the 17th in Birkenhead. M. Dobb will be the lecturer at both Schools.

## NORTH LANCS. AREA.

A number of rambling groups have been formed by the active classes to maintain contact during the summer months. William Paul lectured at a Day School in Preston. Well over two hundred students participated in the school, and greatly enjoyed Paul's fine singing, and splendid lantern lecture. Professor Johnstone is to be the lecturer at the Annual Residential Week-End School at the Clarion Clubhouse, Clayton-1-2 Dale, which is to be held on June 16th and 17th. A Tutors' Training Class is to be held in Nelson, and if sufficient names are received one will also be arranged in Blackburn. Those interested should write to A. L. Williams, 17 Burlington Street, Blackburn.

## DIVISION 9.

Durham District College is making progress despite the conditions in the Coalfield. A Tutors' Class is being arranged. The Willing-

ton Class which has had a successful Winter Session with Com. Moran as tutor has decided to run right through the Summer. As a result of a local campaign this class has enrolled a good number of new students. Hartlepool and Stockton classes have had a successful Session. Middlesbrough finds interest in the movement being maintained. This class is going to run through the summer with Comrade Berriff as tutor on public speaking. Darlington Class has had a very successful Winter Session and a Day School is being arranged. The North-East Coast Friendly Conference of the A.U.B.T.W. has decided to pay full wages to the A.U.B.T.W. student attending the Annual Summer School from the No. 9 Division.

## DIVISION 10.

The Scottish Division is finishing its session in an unusual fashion. In some districts classes have been steadily increasing towards the end of the period, and it is to be hoped this means that the turn in spirit has come to the workers. Scotland has decided to reorganise its subdivisions in such a way that the full time organisers will be responsible for supervising the organisation of the whole area. While such an improvement is bound to make for perfection in organisation, its success depends largely on the spirit in which it is applied and if the good of the movement is kept in mind, great progress cannot fail to result. D. J. Williams, who has spent three months in Stirlingshire has a good tutors' class going in addition to the ordinary classes. Glasgow is busy preparing its summer programme and has already arranged classes and Summer Schools. Edinburgh is having its annual Conference on 28th April and is arranging a day school for the 29th. Ayrshire has 12 classes running. Tranent Comrades accepted a debate with the Economic League Flying Squad on Capitalism v. Socialism, and called on the Edinburgh College to supply a gladiator. Socialism won the day.

The removal of the N.C.L.C. office to London has necessitated J. P. M. Millar's resignation from the post of Organiser for the Scottish Division. He has been closely connected with the College here since its inception, and to his efforts the present Scottish organisation is largely due.

## DIVISION 11.

A Summer Class on Esperanto, conducted by Mr. McElgaun, and a Discussion Class have been arranged. A list of lectures available for Trade Union Branches has been circulated between C. McCrystal, J. Giddons and the Organiser.

The Organiser, assisted by D. McCallister, gave a Lantern Lecture for the Shankill Labour Party. Every effort is being made to increase the list of local affiliations.

We regret that change of occupation should deprive us of the energetic assistance of Wm. Edgar and of J. Kater.

## DIVISION 12.

No report.



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Page 19, *Marxism and History*, by J. S. Clarke  
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