February, 1923. Vol. XV. No. 2.

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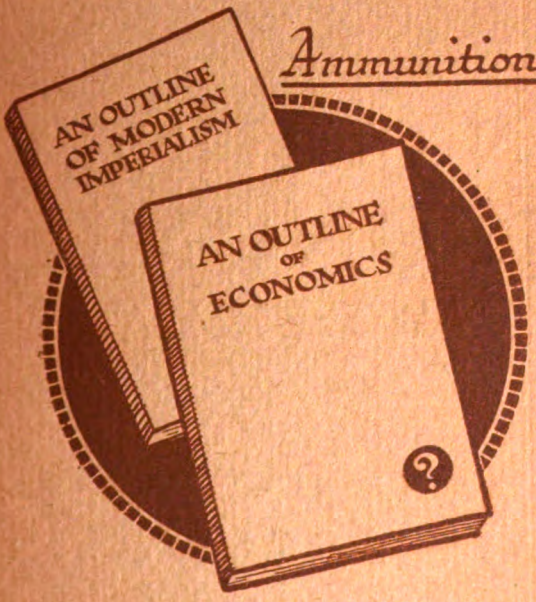

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The Organ of the National Council of Labour Colleges

THE PLEBS

I can promise to be candid but not impartial.

Vol. XV February, 1923 No. 2

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THAT'S a straight question. We want your answer—and we want it in DEEDS, not words. Half a year ago, when we increased our size to 48 pages, we took certain risks. We knew that a 48-pp. magazine would not pay its way unless (1) we got a good number of paid advertisements, or (2) our circulation went up considerably. We "banked none" on No. 1, because we knew perfectly well that capitalists with money to spend on advertising don't tumble over one another to spend it on journals expressing views like ours.

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SPECIAL SECTION ON UNEMPLOYMENT

The ECONOMICS of UNEMPLOYMENT

I.—THE MEANING OF UNEMPLOYMENT.

THE questions which this article is an attempt to answer are the following :—What is the cause of unemployment? Will that cause still be operative in a Socialist society, and can one prove that Socialism would be a cure for unemployment? What effect is the existence of unemployment having to-day on the position of the working class?

Now, there are two distinct things covered by the term "unemployment," which it is often important to keep separate. First, there is the strictly economic sense of the word—that certain workers are not employed on work for the present, because it is not expedient for them to be so employed. Second, there is the "common or garden"—human—sense in which the term is used, to denote the fact that workers are turned on to the streets to starve without means of adequate maintenance. For the sake of giving it a label of some sort, I am going to call the former "*non-employment*," and to keep the term "*unemployment*" to describe the broader fact that workers are not only not employed on work, but are thrown on the streets destitute. It does not need much explanation to show that "unemployment" is essentially a thing peculiar to a class system. It is due to the existence of a dispossessed class without means of livelihood except on the terms offered them by the master class, who "monopolise" economic property. But in a Socialist community "unemployment" will not exist, because the basis of the community will be that all workers are joint owners of communal economic resources, and therefore all have a right to "maintenance" even when there is not work for them to do.* In other words, the burden of "non-employment" will be shared equally by all, and will not fall only on the economically weakest.

But "non-employment" may exist in a Socialist society as well as in a capitalist society, as is happening n Russia to-day. "Non-employment" means an economic wastage to the extent that labour-power is standing idle; and hence the total national product will be lessened by this amount. It may be retorted that in a Socialist

* Although, of course, society will reserve the right to deprive certain people of this maintenance on the principle of "he who will not work, neither shall he eat," and it may be expedient, at any rate during the transition period, to make the level of "maintenance" lower than the full pay when on work.

community there would be no need for this "non-employment," since production would not be for profit, and hence there would be no difficulty about finding work for labour-power to do. But this is a fallacy. It neglects the fact that wastage will occur just as much if part of the community's labour-power is employed, in places and in uses, where it is *relatively* unproductive. For instance, there may be so many workers attached to the boot industry and so few attached to the cotton industry, as to mean a very great advantage to the community if workers were transferred from Northampton to Lancashire. There would be economic wastage under this bad distribution of labour-power to the extent that the total national product was less than it might be, if workers were so transferred; and maximum productivity would not have been reached, until labour had been transferred up to the point where no additional product could be expected to result from fresh transfers. For the sake of convenience, therefore, the term "non-employment" may be applied to this form of economic wastage as well; for it might happen that in this way some workers were consuming more than under the circumstances they were adding to the total product, in just the same way as if they were not working at all It is for the merely technical convenience of measuring how far labour-power is being employed in its relatively most productive uses that probably some kind of price-system, coupled with a system of costing, would be found necessary in any form of Socialist or Communist society.

The point is, therefore, that although under Socialism the economic wastage of "non-employment" may occur, the human wastage and misery of "unemployment" is peculiar to a class system. The question remains, then, how far is Capitalism more likely to fail to adjust supply to demand, and so to cause "non-employment," than a Socialist community would be?

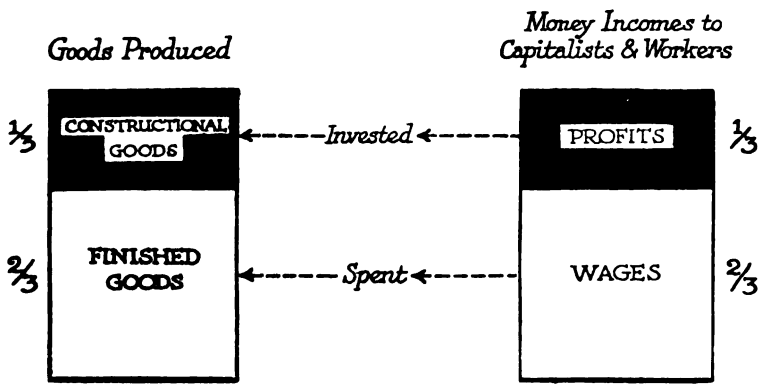
II.—CAUSES OF "NON-EMPLOYMENT."

Now, it is often argued that "non-employment" occurs under capitalism because the workers receive in wages only *part* of the total money income of the community; therefore the workers can only purchase *part* of the total stock of commodities produced. Consequently there exists a "surplus" of goods, which cannot find a market, and this results in over-production and unemployment. This is the *Under-consumption Theory.* It is not Marx's Theory, as is often supposed, although many Marxists subscribe to it. If its origin can be traced, it is attributable in a less crude form to an old French economist, Sismondi. *Forward* had a recent editorial giving this as the explanation of "crises." E. B. supported it in the January *Labour Monthly.* Somewhat similar is

J. A. Hobson's theory that unemployment is due to too much money being saved and too little money being spent. To this doctrine the Labour speakers in the House of Commons debate last session subscribed.

It is the opinion of the present writer that this whole idea of "under-consumption" is a complete fallacy, and for this reason :

It is true that profits are not for the most part spent directly on immediately consumable goods, like food and clothing. But profits, after being paid to the capitalists, are not in these days locked up in a strong box or buried in the ground. They are re-invested ; and investment of money in setting up new factories implies the purchase with the capital invested of constructional goods (*e.g.*, machinery). Thus, let us suppose that one-third of the national income goes in profits and two-thirds in wages ; and let us suppose for the sake of simplicity that all profits are re-invested. It is true that only two-thirds will be spent for the present on finished commodities ; but the other one-third will be *spent on constructional goods*. All it will mean is that national production must be distributed in the proportion of one-third industry producing constructional goods and two-thirds producing finished goods ; and there will be no necessary over-production so long as these proportions are maintained. This diagram may help to illustrate this :—



It has just been said that there will be no over-production, *if these proportions are maintained.* The point about Marx's theory of crises was that under the capitalist anarchy of production there is no guarantee that these proportions (or any other proportions) will be maintained. Writers since Marx have pointed out that there are certain definite reasons why the constructional trades always tend to expand faster than the rest of industry, and consequently for there to be *relative* over-production of constructional goods ; this being the starting-point of a general trade "slump."

Space does not permit the reasons why this maladjustment takes place to be explained in detail. They will be found in The PLEBS *Economics Textbook* in the chapter on "Crises."

The matter can be put in a different way like this: The market for the products of the cotton industry consists in the money incomes distributed in the course of production in all other industries (or that part of those incomes spent on cotton goods). Now, suppose all industries expand production 50 per cent. The production of cotton goods will have expanded 50 per cent. But so also will the market for cotton goods; for the expansion of production in other industries by 50 per cent. means a 50 per cent. increase in incomes distributed in the course of that production. But if production in the cotton industry expands 100 per cent., while that in other industries expands only 50 per cent., there will be relative over-supply of cotton goods. In the case of constructional goods, however, the expansion of other industries will have to be *greater in proportion* than expansion in constructional trades for harmony to be maintained, since machines are used in other industries, but only constitute a *part* of the cost of production there.

Mr. Hobson is wrong, therefore, in attributing unemployment to over-saving. It is not the absolute proportion of saving to direct spending which matters. It is the *distribution* of investments *between various industries*. However litt'e may be saved and invested, if too much of it is invested in shipbui'd ng and engineering, and too little in the textile and leather industries, there will be maladjustment and crises just the same.

This is no mere academic question. It has very important practical implications; for it lies at the basis of working-class policy on unemployment. If Mr. Hobson's theory is true, then, as he claims, a lessening of inequality of income by liberal reformism will cure "non-employment" by increasing spending relatively to saving. On the other hand, if the more extreme form of the Under-consumption Theory is true, then "non-employment" cannot be cured even in a Socialist community. For, as Marx said, Labour can never get its full product, because a part of the annual income will always have to be devoted to repair, development, and improvement—probably as large a part as is at present re-invested.

If, however, it be true that maladjustment of the economic mechanism, producing "non-employment," is due to the capitalist "anarchy of production," then a Socialist community, in so far as it diminishes this anarchy by a co-ordinated system of social production, will involve very much less "non-employment" than does capitalism. It will only be able to do so, however, in so far as it develops a scientific method of distributing economic resources in the best proportions as between their various uses.

The capitalists themselves try to get rid of this wastage by eliminating competition in certain branches of industry. But the result is that giant national combines are formed and they are more able to control the State for their own economic interests, and they use the State consequently in their competition with the rival national combines of other countries. This is the Imperialist stage. It is the partial removal of competition from the national sphere, and its transference in a more militant and destructive form to the international sphere; instead of a competitive price-cutting in Middlesbrough or on the Clyde, you have the military occupation of the Ruhr.

III.—UNEMPLOYMENT AND CAPITALISM TO-DAY.

Formerly, unemployment as a social factor was of benefit to the capitalist class, because it increased competition among workers and so weakened the bargaining power of workers relatively to employers. Since the war, however, owing to the intensification of the class struggle, the capitalist class run a risk from the existence of unemployment of riot and revolution, greater than any benefit they get from the existence of a "reserve army" of unemployed. The unemployed become a "reserve" for the Red Army rather than for the capitalist workshop. Hence, especially in Central Europe, capitalist states are burdened with huge insurance premiums against revolution in the shape of unemployment doles, bread subsidies, etc. This, combined with debt charges, makes it impossible for these states to balance their budgets. Three ways are open to capitalist states to remedy this excess of expenditure over revenue:—

(*a*) By increasing taxation on the capitalist class, *e.g.*, income tax, profits taxes.

(*b*) By borrowing from the banks, and as a necessary condition of this *inflating* the currency, or by inflating directly.

(*c*) By throwing the burden on to the workers by cutting down expenditure to benefit the workers, *e.g.*, housing, unemployment relief, etc.

It is usually impossible for a capitalist state to do much by (*a*). Fierce resistance will be met with from the capitalists. Moreover, it will cut into Surplus Value, the source from which capital accumulation under capitalism comes, and so diminish production and increase "non-employment." Most European countries have hitherto used (*b*) as the easiest way out. We need not dwell on the evil effects of even moderate inflation. The most spectacular instances are the "slump" of the mark and the krone.

During the last year, however, with the intervention of the financiers of London, Paris and New York, method (*c*) has been

adopted in Austria ; and it is to be adopted in the near future in Germany. In Britain it was started by the " Economy " campaign —reducing expenditure on housing, education, etc. That blessed word " stabilisation " means the transition to this new policy. Therefore, however liberal and generous in intention individual capitalists may be, the circumstances of world capitalism to-day compel them to throw a major part of the burden of the war on to the workers, and with regard to unemployment to revert to their old attitude towards it—to use it as a weapon to reduce the resistance of the workers. Unemployment to-day is therefore one of the ways in which this burden is felt, and at the same time it is one of the conditions of capitalist reconstruction. But since its effect is almost certainly to increase the class struggle, it may well prove the rope with which, if it is lengthened sufficiently, capitalism may hang itself.

MAURICE H. DOBB.

The HISTORY of UNEMPLOYMENT

IT is not of unemployment but of famine that we hear during the greater part of history. The modern form of unemployment—men finding no opportunity of labour in a society rich with all the means of production—could not occur either under tribal communism or under a slave or serf economy. In the first case every member of society had access to the commonly owned means of production, and so long as there was any product each had his appointed share of it. In the latter cases it was always worth the master's while to let the unfree labourer work for his own keep even if there were no surplus product. Only when the development of capitalist production gives the worker his political and legal freedom, when the master is under no obligation to support him, and when it is only on condition of producing a surplus product that it is worth while for the captain of industry to set him to work at all, does the phenomenon of unemployment in times of increasing productivity and national wealth arise.

From the fourteenth century onwards the ordered hierarchy of function and the traditional stability of technique characteristic of medieval production were breaking down. The dominance of land was bowing down before that of merchant capital and money, having acquired greater fluidity, became a powerful solvent of established institutions. Just as the class of town craftsmen was splitting up into two classes of employers and employed, so the

peasant of the countryside was becoming either a farmer, cultivating much land with hired labour, or a landless labourer. The landlords, whether of the old feudal order or of the new order of wealthy merchants setting up as county magnates, combined with the bigger freeholding farmers to enclose the old open fields and introduce more intensive cultivation. This, while no doubt increasing the total supply of foodstuffs, conferred no benefit on the smaller peasants, especially the tenants at will, who found themselves deprived of the common rights that had provided them with much of their income, if not evicted from their holdings. Thus they came to rely more and more for their living upon working for wages for the bigger men. A still more radical change in agriculture occurring at the same period in many parts of England, was the substitution of pasturage for husbandry. The breeding of cattle for meat and of sheep for the great textile centres of Flanders, and later of England itself, was more profitable to the landowner and the large-scale farmer than growing wheat and oats and barley ; but since it needed from one-third to one-tenth of the labour per acre of land formerly needed, the agricultural labourer did not share in the prosperity it brought to England. Unemployment in the country could not remain without a reaction on the towns. Labourers out of work flocked into towns, which thus became crowded with more men than there was work for ; the guild system was too decadent to regulate employment, and thus unemployment became as rife in the town as in the country. The Field of the Cloth of Gold, the brilliant court of the Virgin Queen, the Merchant Adventurers of London, the plays of Shakespeare and the poems of Sir Philip Sidney—this on the one side ; on the other—in 1550 a whole year's labour of a common man could not procure the standard of life for which fifteen weeks' labour supplied two generations earlier. Contributory causes to the impoverishment of the masses were the influx of silver from America, which raised the level of prices, while wages, fixed by custom and by statute, lagged behind, and the confiscation of guild property under Henry VIII. and Edward VI., a measure that would be parallelled to-day by the confiscation of friendly society and trade union benefit funds. At the same time the dissolution of the monasteries destroyed the principal channels through which distress was relieved.

For some time the only methods that the governing classes thought of for dealing with the hordes of sturdy beggars that infested the countryside were those of repression. Flogging, branding, and death were meted out to those who had no land and could find no master. (Nowadays they kill the unfortunates by inches.) Not until the reign of Elizabeth was the principle of communal responsibility recognised, in the form of the Poor Law of 1601. By this

time the country was recovering somewhat from the effects of the agrarian revolution. Increasing wealth (in which only the upper classes participated) increased the demand for labour, and by accepting a lower standard of living, the labouring masses were able to find more employment. With declining national prosperity under the Stuarts, the administration of the Poor Law became harsher ; the Act of Settlement of 1662, by sending back to his own parish any person likely to become a burden on the rates, checked all mobility of labour and virtually made the workers into land-bound serfs. *The more poverty increased the more it was penalised.*

About the middle of the eighteenth century the agrarian revolution makes a fresh spurt, marked by an increasing number of enclosures by Act of Parliament. In the century 1750—1850 nearly all the common land of England passed into the possession of the big landowners. Still more fraught with woe to the workers is the Industrial Revolution, which becomes marked about this time. From now onwards factory work begins to replace handwork, the scale of enterprise grows ever larger, the use of machinery and of mechanical power ever more extended. Manufacturing capital is soon to challenge the heights already occupied by agricultural and merchant capital. During the rapid changes in the processes of production there arose an ever increasing margin of workers who, not having the " economic man's " perfect mobility and the knowledge of opportunities, could not adapt themselves rapidly enough and so remained unemployed in the midst of increasing industrial activity. Moreover, there was often plenty of work, but it was done by women and children. Banking and stock jobbing had already developed ; the end of the century saw the invention of the Watt steam engine, the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. Modern capitalism then came into being. In Europe there is a great clearance of obstructions in the way of the law of supply and demand, and the whole world, European, Asiatic and Colonial, becomes one vast market. Then appears one of the most characteristic features of capitalism : the trade cycle.*

The Napoleonic Wars were followed by a time of terrible distress in 1816, caused largely by the cessation of the war demand and the failure to restore the markets of peace time. To speculation and over-production, especially in the short peace of 1803, was added an inflated currency. From this time onwards similar hard times occur once a decade, in 1826, 1836, 1847, 1857, 1867, 1875, 1885, 1892—95, 1903—06. Causes contributory to that of 1847 were the mania in railway construction of the previous three years

* An explanation of this is given elsewhere in this issue. See also *An Outline of Economics* (chap. 9).

and the Irish potato famine, to that of 1857 the Crimean War, to that of 1867 the Overend Gurney bank smash, to that of 1875 the Franco-Prussian War, to that of 1903—06 the Boer and the Russo-Japanese wars.

A period of great local unemployment in the cotton districts of Lancashire was caused by the cutting off of supplies of raw cotton by the American Civil War, the so-called Cotton Famine of 1863—5. During the whole of the nineteenth century the only "remedies" of the ruling middle class were Poor Law relief, put in 1834 on a sound individualistic footing and made almost more deterrent than going to prison, and relief funds raised by private charity—a penny in the pound doled out to victims of the system by those who benefitted under it.

Near the turn of the century the character of trade depressions began to change, corresponding to a change in the working of capitalism itself. They became less acute, but more prolonged, prices fell less, distress lasted over a longer time and recovery was slower. This was due to the growth of combination among employers, which, while doing little to remedy the anarchy of production, enabled manufacturers to hold out longer with less lowering of prices than was possible under free competition. The development of imperialism and the export of capital overseas also helped, since the relatively favourable interest obtained in foreign or colonial enterprise reacted on home industry and checked investment unless large profits were anticipated.

The effect of machinery and new inventions is also important. In spite of the prevalent view to the contrary, they do not necessarily cause unemployment. Under competitive capitalism, where the capitalist has every inducement to maximise output, every saving in labour cost causes an increased demand for labour that absorbs the displaced workers, while the greater cheapness of the product benefits the whole working class. Thus during the century in which mechanical advance was most rapid the average rate of unemployment was less than it had ever been since the beginning of capitalism, and the working-class standard of living rose. But under monopoly and the consequent restriction of output the capitalist can keep a part of the savings to himself, and the demand for labour is neither proportionately increased nor is the product proportionally cheapened; as during the agrarian revolution the benefit of improved methods accrue to the owning class alone, while the workers have to accept a lower standard of life if they are to live at all. Hence a part of the fall in real wages since 1896, a time in which real wealth per head was increasing, and the increased suffering of the workers during times of cyclical depression.

Most men now in middle age can remember the black winters

of 1892—95 and of 1903—06, the unemployed processions and the half-hearted attempts at relief works, the niggardliness of the so-called Guardians of the Poor, and the insufficiency of private charity, however well organised.

New methods of dealing with the out-of-work problem came in with the period of social reform at the beginning of the twentieth century, due to an increase in the political power of organised Labour and to the enlightened self-interest of the capitalist class, who would rather sacrifice a part of their profits than lose the whole, and who also had an inkling that a healthier, more educated, better paid and more contented working-class would produce more profit even after paying the cost of its betterment. Thus we had the Labour Exchanges (later Employment Exchanges) set up under the Act of 1909; little good in dealing with the general distress of a depression, they nevertheless mitigated many of the causes of unemployment under capitalism, diminishing the reserve of labour always at the margin of employment when many workers are competing for jobs and when the demand for labour in each trade is dissipated among many different employers. To deal with seasonal or cyclical unemployment the Unemployment Insurance Acts were passed, that of 1911, restricted to the constructional and engineering trades, always in the vanguard of either boom or slump, and that of 1920, which made the scheme general. The insurance scheme was actuarially good (even at the present time only a quarter of the benefit that has been paid under it is an overdraft), but instituted on the very eve of an abnormally severe depression, before it had accumulated a normal reserve fund, it could only be expected soon to become exhausted.

All these deal with symptoms of the disease, not with the cause of it, which is capitalism itself. With capitalism unemployment came into the world, and only with capitalism can it leave the world. In a state of society where the means of production were socially owned and controlled, unemployment in the midst of plenty could not exist. The workers must organise to abolish unemployment by abolishing capitalism. That is the problem of to-day.

H. D. DICKINSON

An Open Letter to an Out-of-Work

DEAR COMRADE,—If you had only had the luck to be born a horse, your maintenance would be secure. Your master would then have had to face the problem of your keep. As it is—well, of course, you're a "free" man; "free" to break your heart because your master finds it

unprofitable to buy your labour-power at the present time.

We know from our own experience what it's like to hunt a job in vain, day after day. One's little savings exhausted, a dead-weight of debt pressing one down; shamefaced acceptance of charity—visits to the pawnshop—gnawing anxiety about one's dependents—these are the refined tortures of 20th century civilisation. And the bosses don't support the Society for the Prevention of this kind of Cruelty either!

What have "educated" people to say about your lot? The orthodox economist will prate about "the necessary surplus of labour" and the mysterious "trade cycles" which produce alternately slump and boom. Very consoling to you! And they go on to raise the parrot-cry, *Lower Wages, Longer Hours!* Those reputed to be the best "educated" seem the least fitted to tell us how Unemployment can be ended. In fact, they tell us it is inevitable. Now an education which has no solution for one of the biggest problems of our day is no education at all. An education which has no bearing on practical problems—other than to talk round about them and leave them as they were—is a waste of time.

We—workers and out-of-works—want an education which will really explain the WHY of Unemployment, and will so show us the WAY to end it.

The bosses won't supply us with that. If we want it, we shall have to provide it ourselves. That is what the Labour College movement has set out to accomplish. We aim at *understanding* the damnable social and economic system which brings about the tragedy of two million "unwanted persons"; at understanding it with a view to *ending* it.

They don't teach our children anything of that sort in the elementary schools; nor do they teach it to the children of our masters in the public schools and universities. They teach that the system is the finest and best imaginable, and that to question this is something like blasphemy.

Well, when you're "out" you feel at times like blasphemy! And blasphemy against an unjust social order is a duty, not a crime. We appeal to you to do what you can in support of the movement we stand for—the provision of *real*, not fake, education for our class. You need *understanding*, not for its own sake, but in order to work out your own salvation from the misery and injustice of wage-slavery.

Our movement exists to help you. Support the movement which is out to teach the truth about social problems.

Yours fraternally,

PLEB.

SOME STATISTICS of UNEMPLOYMENT

The following figures have been collected by the courtesy of the Labour Research Department from their records. Some of the figures here quoted will appear in their forthcoming "International Yearbook," to which reference should be made for further details.

TABLE I.

Percentage Unemployed in British Trade Unions, 1871—1913.

	General Percentage for all Unions.	Percentage for Engineering Shipbuilding and Metal Trades.
1871	1.6	1.3
1879	11.4	15.3
1882	2.3	2.3
1886	10.2	13.5
1890	2.1	2.2
1893	7.5	11.4
1899	2.0	2.4
1904	6.0	8.4
1906	3.6	4.1
1908	7.8	12.5
1911	3.0	3.4
1913*	2.6	2.9

* December.

—Board of Trade Abstract of Labour Statistics.

TABLE II.

World Unemployment: Percentages Among Trade Unionists.

	Germany.	Australia.	Canada.	Mass., U.S.A.	Norway.	Netherlands.	United Kingdom.
June, 1913	2.7	7.3	—	4.5	0.7	3.9	1.9
Dec., 1913	4.8	5.3	—	8.5	3.7	9.1	2.6
Dec., 1919	2.9	5.2	3.5	4.1	2.6	9.0	3.2
June, 1920 ..	3.9	6.2	2.5	14.6	0.7	5.9	1.2
Dec., 1920	4.1	7.8	13.1	29.2	6.8	13.4	6.1
June, 1921	3–0.	12.5	13.2	20.1	20.9	8.1	23.1
Dec., 1921	1.6	9.5	15.1	24.2	22.9	16.6	16.5
Jan., 1922	3.3	—	13.9	—	23.5	20.0	16.8
Mar., 1922	1.1	9.2	9.6	18.8	25.1	14.1	16.3
June, 1922	0.6	9.6	5.3	12.2	—	9.5	15.7
Aug., 1922	—	—	3.6	—	—	9.2	14.4

—*International Labour Review*, Nov., 1922.

In Table I figures are taken (with the exception of 1871 and 1913) of the highest and lowest years. Thus between 1871 and 1879 unemployment was increasing till it reached its top figure of 11.4, and then fell away to 2.3 in 1882, when it began to rise again. It will be noticed (*a*) that unemployment was heaviest in the metallurgical industries, (*b*) by comparison with Table II that unemployment has been much heavier since the war than it was before.

Note, (Table II) that the unemployment percentages for Massachusetts, U.S.A., and for Britain are highest. Germany has the lowest unemployment percentage merely because the continued currency inflation and "slumping" of the mark have temporarily given a stimulus to industry and postponed the "crisis" in Germany. With the coming of "stabilisation" of currency and the exchange, however, the "crisis" in Germany and its accompanying unemployment is likely to be all the more severe. Unemployment has been decreasing fairly rapidly in U.S.A., showing signs of a temporary revival of trade and production there.

TABLE III.

Comparative Figures of Unemployment Among Trade Unionists.

Trade.	Unemployed at end of Nov., 1922.		Increase or Decrease in Percentage on a year ago.
	Number.	Percentage.	
Building	10,210	7.5	+3.3
Coal Mining	14,722	8.8	—8.1
Engineering and Shipbuilding ..	123,894	27.3	+0.2
Miscellaneous Metal	6,709	11.4	—4.3
Cotton	4,282	6.1	—2.0
Woollen and Worsted ..	126	1.0	—4.4
Printing, etc.	5,046	5.3	—3.1
Boot and Shoe	3,207	4.3	—0.1
Leather	546	7.9	—3.8
Pottery	5,500	17.7	+6.7
Woodworking	3,593	0.1	—3.1
Total of all industries	185,004	14.2	—1.7

—*The Labour Gazette*, Dec., 1922.

These figures cover trade unions, which pay unemployment benefit, with an aggregate membership of 1,305,750. The total number of applicants for work at the Labour Exchanges at the end of November, 1922, was 1,437,351, as compared with 1,886,000 at the end of December, 1921. It will be seen that unemployment is far heavier in engineering, metal, etc., and constructional trades

generally than in other industries. This bears out the theory of crises given in the *Economics Textbook*—that it is over expansion of constructional trades which causes "slumps," and constructional industry is worst hit by the "slump."

TABLE IV.

Comparative Real Wages, Estimated as Percentages of Wages in the United Kingdom.

	United Kingdom.	Germany.	France.	Belgium.	U.S.A.
Bricklayer	100	50	65	59	214
Carpenter	100	50	83	57	192
Fitter	100	58	66	59	147
Compositor (book) ..	100	43	66	55	168
Unskilled Labourer ..	100	71	69	60	76
Average	100	54	70	58	159

—John Hilton in *Reconstruction in Europe*, No. 9.

For the method in which this table is arrived at reference should be made to Mr. Hilton's article. Real wages, it must be remembered, in distinction to money wages, are wages expressed in what those wages will buy. This table represents, therefore, the comparative purchasing power of wages in the various countries. It will be seen that real wages in U.S.A. are highest, whereas in the countries of Europe most afflicted by the ravages of imperialism they are lowest, where capitalism is making the greatest struggle for existence, there the workers are hardest hit, and it is in those countries that the class struggle is keenest.

The average real wages as shown in the above table are represented diagrammatically as follows :—

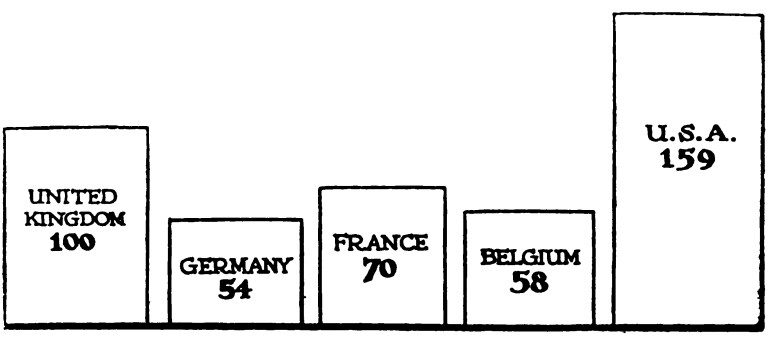


TABLE V.

European Real Wages in 1922, *Expressed as Percentages of* 1914 *Real Wages.*

	U.K.	France.	Nether-lands.	Sweden.	Italy.	Ger-many.
Coal Mining	78	85	125	151	—	120
Metal Workers :—						
Skilled	120	110	139	131	—	68
Unskilled	133	127			—	98
Building Workers :—						
Skilled	96	113	139	106	173*	77
Textiles	121	119	—	130	162	105
Printing	130	—	—	122	154	877
General Average	108†	115	—	132	138	85–95

* Skilled and unskilled. † June, 1922.

—J. H. Richardson, of the International Labour Office, in *Reconstruction in Europe*, No. 9.

TABLE VI.

Aggregate British Wage Reductions since 1920.

(Figures in thousands).

	Number of Workers suffering wage changes.		Total net decrease in weekly wages.	
	1921.	Jan.-Nov. 1922.	1921.	Jan.-Nov. 1922.
			£	£
Building	450	509	304	391
Mining and Quarrying	1,290	1,037	2,588	525
Iron and Steel	240	240	475	243
Engineering, Shipbuilding and other Metal	1,730	1,679	1,054	1,387
Textile	1,010	1,001	651	404
Transport	910	993	388	490
Paper, Printing, etc.	200	190	54	59
Chemical, Glass, Pottery, etc.	280	276	139	134
Total of all Industries	7,100	7,546	6,006	4,170

—*Ministry of Labour Gazette*, Dec., 1922.

This shows aggregate wage-reductions of £11,716,000 per week during 1921 and 1922, affecting about 7 million workers. This is roughly, and on the *average* a reduction of £1 10s. per worker per week in the chief industries of this country. This is part of

the capitalist offensive on the workers. In mining, however, the average reduction per worker per week is about £2 15s.

Will Trade Revive?

We have noted in the above figures a distinct falling off in unemployment in U.S.A. during the last year; and a fall, too, in this country, although that fall is very slight. In several other countries a slight fall is also noticeable. Does this mean that a revival of trade, production and employment is likely in the near future? This is an important question; for if employment is likely to increase in the future, then the tactics of the working-class movement will obviously have to be different to what they otherwise would be.

This question is dealt with in detail and the various indices of trade activity, such as movements of wholesale prices, and security prices, imports of raw materials, volume of bank clearings, etc., are examined in an article by M. H. Dobb on "British Capitalism in 1922," in the January-February number of *The Communist Review*, and to this reference should be made.

To summarise the state of affairs briefly: In U.S.A. there are distinct signs of a revival of trade. Wholesale prices have been rising throughout the year, the volume of goods traffic on the railways has increased, as has also the volume of bank clearings. If a trade revival occurs in U.S.A., it is almost bound to have a sympathetic effect on British trade. In Britain there was at the beginning of the year an investment boom—prices on the Stock Exchange taking a leap upwards, and continuing to move upwards ever since. Pig-iron, steel, and coal production were greater in 1922 than in 1921. Wholesale prices, however, have not yet moved upwards. One point in Dobb's article needs emendation. He mentions the increase in imports of raw materials. But this increase in the summer has not been continued since, and the Board of Trade Index Number of raw material prices was the same in November as in February. It would seem that in Britain the tendencies to revival, which were evident in the early summer, have been smothered by the fresh disorganisation of Europe owing to political and exchange disturbances. All one can say is that in the absence of fresh disturbing factors in Europe some revival of employment seems likely within the next year.

The Barometer of Economic Conditions compiled by the London School of Economics showed at the end of 1922 that:—

> "No rapid increase in production is to be anticipated in the near future, for the importation of raw materials was no greater in the autumn than in the summer; but there are many indications that we are passing out of the worst of the depression."

In conclusion, it is necessary to point out the danger of confusing (*a*) a purely temporary revival of trade due to temporary factors, and (*b*) a permanent recovery of world capitalism. The most that is likely to happen in the near future is the former. This is dwelt upon in Dobb's article mentioned above, and also in the *Plebs Economics Textbook*, Chapter 12, where the causes of the present depression are outlined. See also article by H. P. Rathbone in *The Labour Monthly* for January.

A Short Lecture Syllabus on Unemployment

I. UNEMPLOYMENT (GENERAL).—A distinctive feature of capitalism. Absent from life of chattel-slave and serf, also of domesticated animals. Its necessity to capitalism. Early unemployment caused by enclosures for sheep-farming. Effects of machinery. Crises of 19th century. Pre-war Statistics.

II. THE WORLD WAR AND UNEMPLOYMENT.—Temporary Removal. Speeding up of productivity. Destruction of wealth. Illusory prosperity of post-war boom. The cry for Increased Production.

III. POST-WAR UNEMPLOYMENT (1920—1922).—Huge world-wide extensions. Effect of the Versailles Treaty (1919). Millstone of War Debts. Result of taxation. Capital levy proposal.

IV. ORGANISATION OF THE UNEMPLOYED.—New post-war spirit. Seizure of public buildings. Apathy of employed workers, with local exceptions. Formation of N.U.W.C.M. First National Conference (1921). Appeals to Guardians. Marches on London. Unemployment Sunday (January 7th, 1923). General effects.

V. THE CURE OF UNEMPLOYMENT.—Palliatives advanced. Is a boom in sight? Effects of another war. Growth of luxury production. Unemployment a permanent feature under capitalism. Solution in ending of capitalism by joint action of employed and unemployed.

READING :—

ARTICLES AND FIGURES OF THIS ISSUE OF THE PLEBS.

Out of Work (fortnightly).

Labour Monthly, 1922 (Nos. 4, 5, 6); 1923 (No. 1).

Hansard, November—December, 1922.

An Outline of Economics (PLEBS) for Industrial Crises.

An Outline of Imperialism (PLEBS) for Versailles Treaty.

DAVID URQUHART
A Forgotten Friend of Marx

IN the thirties of the last century a young Scotch gentleman named David Urquhart published a book called *Turkey and Its Natural Resources*. It secured immediate recognition as the most acute study of the "East"—meaning the Levant and Asia Minor, *i.e.*, the so-called Middle East—yet published. It ran through many editions, and as late as the nineties a distinguished British diplomat could recommend it as *the* book for any diplomat concerned with the Middle East to study. Since then it has been completely forgotten.

Its author had a more intimate acquaintance with Turkey than any other European, certainly than any other Englishman, of his time. The result of this close knowledge of a still feudal, agrarian civilisation, undefiled by the growing capitalist system, filled Urquhart with a burning hatred of modern bourgeois society ; but it was not the revolutionary hatred of the rebel working class ; rather, it was the reactionary hatred of the aristocrat who idealises the middle ages. Urquhart decided that progress was a mirage, and that "stationariness" was the social ideal. He liked the ordered class-hierarchy of Turkish society, the grave chivalry and courtesy ; he profoundly admired the Turkisk Bath, which indeed he was responsible for introducing into England. He was, in his social views, a specimen of that queer species of the genus Crank—the medievalist (those people to whom G. D. H. Cole is always so unaccountably polite).

Coupled with this medievalism was a morality of a most exceptional kind—an overwhelming passion for an immense abstraction that he called "justice" or "truth." He was practically obsessed by what can only be called moral mania. A stout Protestant till the day of his death, he could yet call the Papacy "the greatest moral force in the world." In fact, he went to the Vatican Council in 1870 in the hope of establishing universal justice through the Catholic Church and its law, the Canon Law, administered by the Pope. Now all this might be simply amiable lunacy which did not concern us at all, except as a pure curiosity ; but there was a practical side to this strange being—for during his stay at Rome on this extraordinary errand of his he was corresponding regularly with Marx on the financial position of Europe and the governmental influence of great financiers.

His fierce conviction of the essential right, truth, and justice

that man must attain lest he perish, manifested itself most conspicuously in the realm of foreign affairs. There were two principles in the world—good and evil ; and so far as politics and diplomacy went, the evil principle was incarnate in Russia. Russia was the Anti-Christ, the Seducer, the Conspirator plotting against all that was good and pure. Urquhart carried this stuff to the lengths of conspiracy mania. Behind everything he discerned the evil genius, the foul machinations, of Russia. Palmerston was the agent of Russia ; and Urquhart spared nothing to carry on a vehement anti-Palmerston polemic, which had the customary bitter ferocity, and the customary plausible manipulation of facts, of such forms of monomania. It is a disease known to students of mental pathology as combinatory paranoia ; its features being a seizure on isolated and generally insignificant facts and their combination into the evidence of a vast and far-reaching plot. Oddly enough, Marx was infected with this strange Urquhartite mania, as his *Story of the Life of Palmerston* shows. In those interesting autobiographical notes of Marx printed in the May PLEBS of last year, he mentions that he contributed to Urquhart's paper, the *Free Press*, and also that he supported him in his anti-Russian policy, though not in his views—and actions—with regard to Chartism. And here at last we come to brass tacks.

In pursuit of his vocation of fighting for the divine law, justice, etc., Urquhart happened to come into contact with the working-class Chartist movement. This was in 1839, when the second great crisis of the movement was at hand. Urquhart, as we have remarked, was no lover of the capitalist industrial system ; and he honestly sympathised with the " operatives " and inveighed against the vile social conditions which were driving them to revolt ; though his social gospel was anything but revolutionary. In September, 1839, he stood as Tory candidate for Marylebone, and at his first meeting many Chartists were present—some delegates to the National Convention, which was sitting at this time. To cut a long story short, Urquhart succeeded in winning over the delegate for Marylebone, William Cardo, the delegate for Bolton, Warden, and Westrup. Other conversions followed. This victory was secured, as a friend of Urquhart wrote, by pointing out " the source of the evils under which the nations groaned, and that the only remedy is in returning to the simple institutions of our forefathers. . . " Anyway, the converts (should we say renegades ?) felt it to be their duty to inform Urquhart of the insurrectionary plans of the Chartists. The lover of truth and justice at once informed the Government, and proceeded to tour the country, trying to win over the Chartist leaders, or at the worst to frighten them out of acting by the knowledge that their plans were known. It was only, Urquhart alleged,

because he missed Frost by half-an-hour that the rising in South Wales took place at all. True to his monomania, he discerned underneath the ordinary Chartist organisation a secret control by foreign agents—and whose agents would they be but those of Russia? This was proved by the fact that one of the "physical force" Chartists (Major Beniowski) had once been in the Polish Lancers; how could such a person be other than in the employ of the Russian Secret Service?

Urquhart and the convert-renegades Cardo & Co. euphemistically described their attack on, and attempted destruction of, Chartism as "showing another and a better way" to social improvement. The analysis on which this "better way" was founded has been summed up by Urquhart's biographer in these words—"Class injustice and class distress were but symptoms. The real disease lay deeper. It was to the unjust and foolish Foreign Policy of England and the disloyalty of her Governments to her ancient Constitution and to the principles of justice, both in international and national affairs, that the present distress of the operatives was due." How like the liberal-pacifist accents of the Union of Democratic Control of latter days!

The Urquhartites soon got the name of "Foreign Policy men." Lord Normanby said, with the customary blindness of the reactionary, that Urquhart was "nothing but a Chartist with the Foreign Policy added." The true appraisement of the whole business came from those Chartists who remarked suspiciously that the "Foreign Policy cry was a red herring drawn across the trail to draw off the attention of the operatives from the Charter."

Having, as he proudly claimed, broken Chartism, what did this self-deceived crank offer to the working class in its place? The "Committees for the Investigation of Diplomatic Documents," which, it is significant to note, were first intended to consist of all classes! The irony of the thing is almost too ludicrous; the picture of proletarian stalwarts turning from considering ways and means of insurrection to the pious study of Vattel on International Law fills one with a sense of the impossibly absurd. Yet behind this absurdity lurks something sinister. For with all his superb visions and his exalted ethical bent, this fanatical Scotch aristocrat had simply been playing the game of the master class as against the workers. His violent intolerance of, and crudely expressed contempt for, those Chartists who stood unreservedly for the workers, and who thought in terms of the class struggle, shows clearly enough his own unconscious class bias. How far the "Foreign Policy men" nobbled the Chartist movement perhaps we shall never know exactly; the matter has attracted little attention from the historians of the movement—Beer has apparently heard nothing about it, and Julius West relegates it to a short paragraph.

Newcastle, Bolton, Manchester, the Potteries, are mentioned as some among the Chartist centres which were won by the Urquhartites. One of the crew penned delightedly (of Newcastle) that "Classes hitherto in a state of rancorous hostility are there linked together, operatives and merchants sit together at the same table, conning over the same papers and espousing the same convictions..."

All told, there can scarcely be any doubt that Chartism was sidetracked more than has been commonly supposed by this U.D.C. born out of due time. The further vicissitudes of Urquhart's career need detain us no longer—how the Committees faded away after doing their bit for capitalism, and after the temporary closure of the Eastern Question in 1841, to rise again as the "Foreign Affairs Committees" in 1854, and in the American Civil War to agitate against the recognition of the South; nor need we trouble about his strange coquetry with Catholicism and the Papacy, referred to above. For us the cardinal fact about Urquhart must remain his deflection of working-class effort from its historic end, the struggle against the property-owning classes. The world-wide development of capitalism has made it essential for the workers of to-day to study Foreign Affairs. But we have to study them, not as a problem apart—a problem which we can unite with our exploiters to solve—but as part of the general struggle against exploitation. The study of Foreign Affairs means, to us, the study of capitalism in its latest form. As The PLEBS *Outline of Imperialism* puts it "We cannot solve the problem of Imperialism while capitalism lasts. The two are bound up together."

G. ALLEN HUTT.

[NOTE.—*The facts on which this article is based are drawn from the latest and most important work on Urquhart*—DAVID URQUHART *by Gertrude Robinson* (*Oxford, B.H. Blackwell,* 1920.)]

MALNUTRITION IS "NATURAL" UNDER CAPITALISM!

THE death took place on January 9th, of Andrew Fullarton, late secretary of the Gateshead Unemployed organisation, and a student of North Eastern Labour College classes. The doctor's certificate showed that he died from *malnutrition*; the press reports of his death and funeral state that "death took place from *natural causes*."

Remember! Under capitalism semi-starvation is "natural"—the capitalist press says so!

Comrade Fullarton leaves a widow and four children, and we desire to join with the students and officials of the Newcastle classes in tendering them our deepest sympathy.

BIOLOGY and EVOLUTION

A Syllabus of Lectures delivered for the Liverpool Labour College

PART I—THE EVIDENCES OF HUMAN EVOLUTION.

I AND II: THE HUMAN RACES.

THE living races of Man are the Australian, the African and Negroid races, the Mongolian, and the European and East Indian races. All these are the one species—Modern Man.

The extinct races of modern man are the Tasmanians, Cro-Magnons, Grimaldis and some others. Extinct races of ancient man are the Neanderthals, Pre-Neanderthals, Piltdown Man and *Pithecanthropus*. These are different species. The course of evolution is: From some unknown Anthropoid ancestral form, through *Pithecanthropus* and Piltdown Man (*Eoanthropus*) to the Pre-Neanderthals. In each case the process ended in a branch of the human family tree that became extinct. *Pithecanthropus* is the "annectant form," or "missing link," showing most strikingly both the Simian and the human characters. But the Pithecanthropoids, Eoanthropoids and Neanderthals all became extinct, from causes that we cannot trace.

Modern man (*Homo sapiens*) comes from some form that belongs, probably, to the Pre-Neanderthals. Then a number of races evolved. The Grimaldis (who were probably the ancestors of the existing black and white races); the "River-bed," "Galley Hill," etc., races; the Cro-Magnons, and the Tasmanians. All these, too, have died out. But, on the way, so to speak, they have given origin to the four main categories of existing man.

III: EVOLUTION AS AN HISTORICAL RECORD.

The great geological periods (Primary, Secondary and Tertiary) and their characteristic forms of life. The Quaternary period—that of the succession of glacial and inter-glacial ages. Man evolves during the Quaternary period—probably only about a 50,000th part of the whole life-period of the earth.

Each race had its own anatomical characters, but the cultural characters are more significant, for the purely morphological ones change but little. The cultural phases are: Eolithic, Lower Paleolithic, Upper Paleolithic, Neolithic and Metallic, the distinctions being based on the materials of the implements used,

and on the craftsmanship developed. The various cultural periods are not strictly successive, but overlap. Thus Tasmanian Man, in the middle of the 19th century, had a neolithic culture. Cro-Magnon Man, 10,000 to 20,000 years ago, was Paleolithic and made rude flint implements, but was highly artistic, had a ritual, and was morphologically "higher" than Modern European Man.

IV: EVIDENCES THAT AN EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS HAS OCCURRED.

Everything, so far, *points to* an evolutionary process. The sequence of forms of life, up to man, and of the times of appearance of the various races of man, are all *as they would have been* if there had been evolution. But all this historical evidence is quite consistent with the hypothesis of special creation.

When the morphology of the animal kingdom is studied anatomical relationships are *suggested.* Everything is as it would be, given evolution. But, again, this is consistent with special creation and design. The study of embryology suggests powerfully the evolutionary idea. Higher animals show, in their individual, or embryogenic development, traces of the organisation of the lower groups.

The paleontological record and the evidence of embryology thus point to a process of evolution, but cannot prove that it did actually occur. The proof is in the establishment of the mechanism of the process and the demonstration that transformism (the origin of new species) can be seen in progress even now. This proof requires a knowledge of animal physiology and it is the subject of the following lessons.

PART II—THE STUDY OF ORGANIC ACTION.

V AND VI: THE ANIMAL BODY; THE MECHANISM OF MUSCLE AND NERVE.

It is convenient to regard the animal as something *purposeful*—though no admission of a "natural teleology" or "purpose" should be made. In teaching physiology emphasis should be laid on the great impulses, or "urges" of life: (1) self-preservation, (2) nutrition, and (3) growth (including reproduction). The animal organism must defend itself, eat, grow and reproduce—these impulses and their results are its life.

The animal is a structure of organ-systems, organs and tissues. These parts are unified, or integrated to constitute a mechanism that goes *of itself.* Lecture V deals with this mechanism—the skeleton, muscular system, central and peripheral nervous system, the circulatory system, the nutritive, respiratory and excretory

systems, the reproductive system, the tissues and cells of which all these are composed. Lecture VI deals with the mechanisms of movement, organs of locomotion, attack and defence. A movement-system includes (*a*) a part of the skeleton provided with muscles, (*b*) the nerves connecting this with the central nervous system, and (*c*) the sense-organs associated with the motions which are to be effected.

VII AND VIII: THE BRAIN AND NERVOUS SYSTEM; SENSATION AND PERCEPTION (AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF PSYCHOLOGY).

The unifying or integrating bodily mechanism is the nervous system ; this makes the activities of the animal *one*. The central nervous system in man is the brain and spinal cord and connected with this is the afferent peripheral nervous system—that is : (1) the nerves carrying stimuli from the organs of sense, and from the body itself, to the brain and spinal cord, and (2) the efferent peripheral nervous system carrying stimuli from the brain and spinal cord to the *effector* organs, that is, the muscles and glands.

The human nervous system is highly complex, but it can very easily be compared with that of a low animal, such as the earth-worm, and it is fundamentally the same. Above all the brain in man is the organ of control over the muscles ; the link between events happening outside the body and bodily movements. Such bodily movements *adapt themselves* to the events that occur in the environment so as to satisfy the animal impulses—self-preservation, nutrition, growth and reproduction.

Sensation is the stimulation, by purely physical means, of the organs of sense and the conveyance of such stimuli to the central nervous system. The bodily movements that then occur are the *responses* to the external events that stimulate the sense organs. Such responses are purposive, subserving the life-impulses. In all this treatment *consciousness* need not occur, nor need it be postulated. When we come to deal with consciousness, perceptions, conceptions, ideas, etc., we enter the field of psychology.

Instinctive and intelligent activities must, however be studied here because of their bearing on evolution. Instinctive actions are inherited abilities to do certain things ; intelligent activities are abilities of the same scope, but they must be *learned* by trial and error, or imitation, and they are not transmitted by heredity.

IX AND X: THE DRIVING FORCE OF THE ANIMAL MECHANISM; DIETETICS; ENERGY.

The animal does work and the condition for this is that it should expend energy. The physical meaning and measurement of energy

and work. Animal energy is obtained by the combustion of food substances within the muscles. Muscular energy is controlled and liberated by the nervous system.

The digestive and nutritive organs (mouth, stomach and intestines with their glands) transform food chemically into states capable of assimilation by the muscles and other bodily tissues. The heart and blood vessels distribute this transformed food material through the body. The lungs (in higher animals) and the gills (in lower animals) take oxygen from the environment and the blood stream carries this to the tissues. There the food materials are oxidised so as to yield energy.

Waste substances result (note the analogy of the animal body to a steam engine, or other prime motor). These waste products are excreted by the lungs, kidneys and skin.

Food substances have various energy-values. Classes of foods. The physiological meaning of labour-power.

PART III—THE STUDY OF ORGANIC EVOLUTION.

XI AND XII: REPRODUCTION AND SEX; EMBRYOLOGY.

An individual animal grows from a single, minute piece of protoplasm—the ovum. Having attained to full development, its further growth takes the form of reproduction. There are numerous ways in which organisms reproduce.

Asexual reproduction (in which there is no distinction between males and females); reproduction by budding; sex and its meaning—the differentiation of the gametes (that is, the ova in the females and the spermatozoa in the males). Fertilisation of the ovum by the sperm and the meaning of the process. Hermaphroditism (where the female and male organs are contained in the same individual). Parthenogenesis (or virgin reproduction). Artificial parthenogenesis (the fertilisation of the ovum by chemical means).

Embryogeny is the development of the individual body from the fertilised ovum. Stages of development—the blastula and gastrula phases that can be recognised in most animals. The law of recapitulation and its significance—the individual *tends* to retrace, in its own bodily development, certain phases in its evolutionary history. Rudimentary and vestigial organs and their significance for evolutionary hypothesis.

XIII AND XIV: HEREDITY AND THE THEORY OF THE GERM-PLASM. CROSSING; HYBRIDITY AND MENDELISM.

Something in the make-up of an organism tends to cause it to

resemble its parents—immediate or remote ; this is *the family or racial organisation.* However it tends to resemble one or another parent, or grand, or great-grand (etc.) parent something tends to cause it to resemble a certain generalised type of body and behaviour—this is *the specific organisation.*

Sexual reproduction always leads to *variability*—the offspring from the same parents do not exactly resemble each other or either parent. The effects of crossing different races, or strains, or species ; these are very complex. Hybrids or mongrels are the offspring from parents belonging to different species or strains. Usually the characters of the two parents are not simply blended in the offspring, but may be transmitted according to certain "Mendelian laws."

The essential things in sexual reproduction are certain substances contained in the ova (of the female parent) and the spermatozoa (of the male parent). These substances are the *germ plasms.*

The hereditary qualities, or organisations, of the animal are, somehow or other, *carried by* chemical substances contained in the germ-plasms. What is transmitted from parent to offspring (in either ovum or spermatazoon) is a bundle of *factors.* These factors determine the adult form of the individual in the course of development. The factors tend to adhere to each other, forming certain combinations. The adhesive tendency is what we have called the family, racial and specific organisations. All these matters constitute the study of heredity.

XV AND XVI: THE THEORIES OF EVOLUTION.

Part III. (Lectures XI to XIV) lead up easily to the present theories of transformism.

Lamarck's hypothesis. The animal responds to changes in the environment by changes in its body and behaviour, and so transformism occurs. Thus the use of parts of the body develops the latter, and *vice versa* with the disuse of parts. Such bodily modifications are then inherited by the offspring and gradually new varieties and species of organisms come into existence.

The inheritance of acquired characters. The weakness of the above hypothesis lies in proving that changes in the body acquired during the lifetime of an individual are transmitted by heredity. This is very difficult. Many biologists do not believe that individually acquired characters are transmissible by heredity. *Natural Selection* as stated by Darwin avoids this difficulty. There are two kinds of variability (in form and behaviour) from the average, (1) fluctuations which are not transmissible, (2) mutations which are transmissible by heredity. Variations are advantageous or not to the individual ; if they are they aid it in the struggle for existence

and the favourable mutation is transmitted to the offspring. Thus transformism occurs.

The modern study of heredity—especially of Mendelism—is leading to a re-casting of the Darwinian theory of natural selection.

XVII: THE FACTORS OF HUMAN EVOLUTION.

The *course of human evolution* has been—erect posture with changes in the skeleton and muscles of the foot, pelvis and neck, then the fore-limbs set free for "handling." Development of the wrist, thumb and fingers. Development of the motor area of the cerebral cortex. Acquirement of omnivorous diet. Increasing intelligent, as opposed to instinctive, behaviour. Evolution of the herd-instinct.

All this has now nearly ceased. No marked changes in the human body for 10,000 to 20,000 years.

The *further development*, since paleolithic man, has been (1) that of the tool in the generalised sense; (2) evolution of the community through the family horde, the gens and the tribal group; further development of the acquisitive instinct, which is always in conflict with the herd instinct. So we pass to the study of Sociology.

The *factors of degeneracy* are (1) the extraordinary development of the acquisitive instinct, leading to modern capitalism. This leads to specialisation of hand-labour, the use of semi-automatic machine tools, and so to a restriction of the expression of individual variability, on which all biological evolution depends. (2) Growth of the property owning class and the consequent enjoyment of wealth without responsibility for production. Thus the Lamarckian factor of disuse comes into play. (3) The weakening of the struggle for bodily existence in the modern state; preservation and reproduction of the unfit (insane, unbalanced, epileptic, deaf-mute, feeble-minded epileptic). Increasing difficulty of child-bearing in women due to the slackening of natural elimination.

The Modern Eugenics Movement. This should be discussed critically. It supports the aristocratic ideal and that of social castes. Its evidence, at present, entirely insufficient. Its leaning on the notion of the non-transmissibility of acquired characters—the latter still in doubt.

PART IV—COSMIC EVOLUTION.

XVIII: MATTER, SPACE AND TIME.

Fundamental ideas. The hierarchy—electrons, atoms, molecules colloidal particles. The chemistry of the universe and its unity.

Space and its measurement. The dimensions of space. The

geometry of Euclid and modern ideas. Units of space. Cosmic space and its measurement.

Time and duration. Measurement of time. Intervals of duration. *Universal gravitation.*

XIX: THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF THE VISIBLE UNIVERSE.

The stellar universe: stars, star-clusters, hot and cold stars, gaseous and spiral nebulæ, cosmic dust, the solar system. Cosmic distances. The galaxy.

The condition of the earth. The sun an eruptive star. The origin of the earth. The nebular hypothesis of Kant and Laplace and its difficulties. The modern planetesimal hypothesis. The ultimate fate of the solar system.

XX: THE ORIGIN OF LIFE.

The nature of a living organism; something that persists of itself, adapting itself to its environment and the changes in the latter, reproducing its own individual form and mode of behaviour.

Spontaneous generation. This has never been demonstrated. Hypothesis of the terrestrial origin of life.

The hypothesis of Pan-spermia. Life everywhere in the universe. Germs of life travelling through cosmic space. Life, like matter, eternal. A state of matter.

LITERATURE.

PART I.—*Ancient Types of Man*, Keith (Harper's Library of Living Thought), *Geology for Beginners*, Watts (Macmillan). For reference, *Men of the Old Stone Age*, Osborn (Bell), *Origin of Species*, Chapters x., xi.

PART II.—Huxley's *Text Book of Physiology*, or Hill's *Manual of Physiology* (Arnold). *The Human Body*, Keith (Home University Library).

PART III.—*Sex*, Geddes and Thomson (Home University Library). *Origin of Species, Descent of Man*, Darwin. *Evolution*, E. S. Goodrich (People's Books, Jack). *The Herd Instinct*, Trotter (Methuen).

PART IV.—*The Origin of a Planet*, Grew (Methuen). *Matter and Energy*, Soddy, (Home University Library). *Origin and Nature of Life*, Moore (Home University Library).

J. J.

We are compelled, through pressure of space, to hold over until next month an article by Scott Nearing, author of "The American Empire," on "Proletarian Culture in America."

CLASS ROOM NOTES
for Students and Tutors

THE *Socialist Standard* for December had an attack on The PLEBS, because we said there had been inflation of the currency during the war, and this was the cause of higher prices. It sought to prove that there was no inflation by showing that prices had risen in a greater percentage than the quantity of currency had increased! Therefore, it argued, there was no inflation of currency *relative* to prices! But whoever said anything about "*relative to prices*"? The editor of the *S. S.* clearly does not understand the meaning of "inflation," which simply means an expansion in the volume of currency *leading to a rise in prices*, and the figures quoted in the *S. S.* merely go to show this. Nowhere—but in the *S. S.*—is inflation used to mean increase in currency to a greater extent than increase of prices. Price merely expresses a relation between currency and commodities exchanged. Hence, increased currency and the relation (prices) alters. The level of prices is not a separate entity of its own, moving up or down at will. The point about "convertibility" in the *S. S.* is also wrong. There was only *nominal* convertibility. Restriction on export of gold made it not worth anybody's while to convert Treasury notes into gold. The *S. S.* will duly appreciate the verdict hall-marked by the official imprint of the State at present controlling the political machine. The *Final Report on Currency and Foreign Exchanges* (Cmd. 464) remarked concerning the convertibility of the currency note: "The nominal convertibility of the note, which has been sustained by the prohibition of the export of gold, is of little value."

Advanced students, who have access to libraries, would do well to look up the article by Abraham Bergland on the Political Policy of Japan in the October, 1922, issue of the *Journal of Political Economy* (Chicago Univ.). The article starts by saying: "Political policies are usually shaped by economic forces. They may be, and in most cases are, the resultant of several industrial influences working towards certain general....ends. Not infrequently, however, a single industry or class of industries may be the sole or main determinant of political action." He gives facts and figures to show the relation of Japan's policy in China to the Japanese iron and steel industry. He notes how Japanese steel companies are setting up steelworks on the mainland of China. The figures of raw material resources, taken from the reports of the International Geological Congress, are most valuable.

J. R. (Musselburgh) wants a simple explanation of (*a*) the remarkable December rise of the £1 in relation to the dollar ; (*b*) why this results in a fall in the price of gold unwelcomed by the gold producers.

He bases his questions on two *Scotsman* cuttings. One (18th December, 1922), which confesses mystification *re* (*a*) and the other describing (*b*). Readers will remember that the *par value* of the £1 is $4.86. During the war the Rate of Exchange was " pegged " by the help of J. P. Morgan & Co. at $4.76. When in March, 1919, the " pegs " were taken out the £1 fell to $3.21½. All the jubilation about the end of the dictatorship of the dollar arose out of the fact that on the 13th of December the £1 fetched 4.69¼ dollars ; in other words, it was worth in America 19s. 2½d. Experts like Emil Davies correctly described the jubilation as premature, and now (12th January, 1923) the £1 has fallen back to $4.68.

We suggest the following factors were chiefly responsible :—

(1) The pronouncements *re* the funding of the British debts (referred to elsewhere in these pages) with a consequent improvement in British credit.

(2) The shipments of gold (£55½ millions in 1921, £22½ up to December in 1922) by Britain to America aided by the excess of our other exports (visible and invisible) to America over our imports from her. Obviously America will buy where she can get £1 worth of goods for, say, $4.50. But the nearer the £1 gets to *par* the more that incentive to buy British goods will be weakened.

(3) The lower level of prices in this country compared with U.S.A. (For an explanation of this Purchasing-Power Parity Theory, as well as for a general treatment of Foreign Exchange, see *Outline of Economics*, chaps. 5—6.)

(4) The heavy purchases of British securities by Americans. (Incidentally Americans buying 5 per cent. War Loan and National War Bonds get their interest free of the British income tax.) Insecurity for investing and the depreciating currencies on the Continent would encourage this movement. This can only effect a temporary improvement because the transference of money—once and for all—for the purchase of securities is inevitably followed by the continual and contrary reaction caused by the payments of interest upon the same.

The " permanent " improvement in £1 sterling is like the trade revival—a case of the wish provoking the thought !

In regard to (*b*), if the £ is worth more dollars, then it will buy more gold, for American prices are gold prices. The price of an ounce of fine gold, in gold £s, is £4 4s. Gold producing companies could always be sure of that. During the war, when

the paper £1 was used, the price went up to £5 and £6 per ounce in the free market. That much trumpeted advance of the £ only meant that an ounce still costs £4 8s. 6d. To the gold producing companies, however, it means a reduction in the British goods they were able to receive for each ounce, and hence the change was not to their liking.

It is difficult for a monthly journal to serve its news "hot and steaming," but Dobb's and Millar's articles in the last PLEBS on France and the Ruhr were very timely in their anticipations. (The *Daily Herald* only began to talk about the Dariac report on January 3rd.) And the explanation of the relation between the fall of Lloyd George and the rise of Bonar Law, and the French attitude to Germany, proves how invaluable is applied Marxism. Those who attack our movement as being academic are certainly not PLEBS readers.

Will all those students and tutors who have suggestions or criticisms concerning the *Outline of Psychology* forward them at once? And will all purchasers please note an error in the *Imperialism* Textbook—p. 87, line 15, for "Russia" read "France."

J. P. D. writes :—In answer to A. P. : the *Dictionary of National Biography* gives a biography of George Potter, based mainly on an obituary in the *Times* of June 5th, 1893. I have slightly amended :—

> POTTER, GEORGE (1832–1893), trade-unionist, was born at Kenilworth, Warwickshire, in 1832, and served his apprenticeship to a carpenter at Coventry. In 1854 he came to London, and was elected a member of the Progressive Society of Carpenters. He first became prominent in the lock-out in the building trades of London in 1859. On 11th April, 1864, he headed the deputation of workmen of London who welcomed Garibaldi, and rode on horseback by the side of his carriage. In recognition of his public services he was presented by the combined trades of London and the provinces with an illuminated address and a purse of £300. With Howell, Allen, Coulson, Applegarth, and the other leaders of trade-unionism he was seldom in agreement, and they in their turn denounced him as an aider and abettor of strikes. He started in 1861 a paper, *The Beehive*, which exercised some little influence, but he never held any important post in the trade-union world. On March 5th, 1867, as president of the London Working Men's Association he opened the Conference of Trade Delegates, held in St. Martin's Hall, London. This was the immediate forerunner of the existing Trade Union Congress. He also presided at the Trades Union Congress in London, March 7th to 11th, 1871. He was elected to the London School Board for the Westminster district on 27th November, 1873, and served for nine years. He was the first member of the Board who brought before his colleagues the question of free education, and he had the satisfaction of moving for and obtaining the appointment of the Educational Endowment Committee. In his attempts to enter the House of Commons he was unsuccessful ; he contested Peterboro' (1874), and Preston (1886).
>
> His last public appearance was at the demonstration against the Local

Veto Bill, in Trafalgar Square, London, in March, 1893. He died at 21, Marney Road, Wandsworth, Surrey, on 3rd June, 1893.

Though a self-taught man he was an able writer on labour questions, upon which, from time to time he contributed articles to the *Times* and the *Contemporary Review*. (See Vols. 14, 16 and 17, years 1870 and 1871.) He in 1861 published *The Labour Question: An Address to Capitalists, Employers, etc.*; and in 1873, *Labour Portrait Gallery*, with biographical sketches.

References to George Potter and the *Beehive* are to be found in Webb's *History of Trade Unionism*, George Howell's *Labour Legislation, Labour Movements and Labour Leaders* (1916 Edition), W. J. Davis's *The British Trades Union Congress, History and Recollections* (Vol. 1), and Cicely Richards' *History of Trades Councils*.

In view of their pronouncements at the International Peace Conference (December) on the need for "education of a different kind" for the workers, we shall expect more help for the N.C.L.C.-Plebs movement from certain Labour leaders in this country—including the member for Derby and the Secretary of the Labour Party.

ESPERANTO NOTES

PITY the poor interpreter! This is the burden of a lament in the *Evening Standard*, written just before the Lausanne conference. "Interpreters seem to me an object for sympathy because they are handicapped in all sorts of ways. They must either trust to their memory and listen closely to the speaker, getting up at once afterwards to reproduce in the other language what he has said, or else they must take notes and run the risk when they come to read them of having missed a material point in the speech. Then there is the other difficulty that the statesman, who naturally prefers to use his own language, often displays an unexpected knowledge of the other one. I have myself more than once heard Mr. Lloyd George at the Peace Conference correct an official interpreter with a 'No, no; that is not what I said.'" Another aspect of the confusion and waste caused by diversity of language at international congresses was given by James Leakey in a letter to the *Daily Herald*, September 21st, 1922. "Interpreting at international congresses, of which I have some experience, is an intolerable nuisance to the majority of an audience. A twenty minutes' speech translated into only five languages takes two hours, and the reply of equal length, another two hours, making up a whole morning's sitting, without counting interjected questions and chairman's observations—all requiring translation! I have just returned from the Esperanto congress at Helsingfors, where 1,200 delegates from thirty countries were assembled, and where all the proceedings were in Esperanto; imagine what it would have been if translations had been required—each day's proceedings would have required a fortnight. If labour is ever to realise its ideal of complete international understandings, it must realise the necessity of an easily acquired international language for its congresses."

At the time this letter was written the International T.U. Federation was asking the British T.U. movement to send English interpreters to Amsterdam in order to cope with the work of the Bureau! Yet it is not sufficient that only delegates and officials should know Esperanto. Every worker should

use it in order to acquaint himself with international affairs by direct intercourse with "foreign" workers. He could do this most effectively through *Sennacieca Asocio Tutmonda.*

The Co-operative Movement has always been alive to the value of Esperanto for trading. The Educational and Political Committee of the London Co-operative Society announces in its report for the quarter ending December 2nd, 1922, that Esperanto classes are in process of formation. Another opportunity for beginners is afforded by the new course of lessons in the *Workers' Dreadnought* (1d. weekly). Readers of the *Fourth International* newspaper who studied the previous course of lessons will find in the new series a fresh exposition of the language by a well-known Esperantist of long experience.

The League of Nations report on Esperanto which was reviewed in last month's PLEBS may be obtained free by any teacher who cares to apply to the British Esperanto Association, 17, Hart Street, W.C. 1. Another item of interest to teachers is the *Adresaro de Tutmondaj Esperantistaj Edukistoj.* It will be published about Easter, 1923, by the proletarian educational journal *havoj Tempoj,* which asks all Esperantist teachers to send their addresses. 1,000 entries have already been collected. Those who are not teachers by occupation, but are interested in education, may have their addresses classified separately at the end of the volume. Apply to E. Vittecog, Sassetot par Bacqueville (Seine Inférieure), France.

REVIEWS

FOR GEOGRAPHY STUDENTS.

The Peoples of Europe. By H. J. Fleure, D.Sc. (Oxford Univ. Press, 2s. 6d. net.)

SO much nonsense has been talked about races and nationality that serious students and especially Plebs are inclined to put all books on the subject aside as waste of time. It would be a pity if that happens to this one.

Professor Fleure is well qualified by birth, temperament, and experience to write sanely on this question, and he has produced a little book which will at any rate "give cause furiously to think" to anyone who wants to know what are the real components out of which our "statesmen" have made the present mess called Europe. He shows how impossible are clear-cut boundaries and nation-states where no such boundaries exist either in the descent, character, language or religion of the people. For example, he says: "The study of such a set of boundaries can be given a special value, for it shows us that the linear boundary, however necessary it may be under our outworn system of aggressive states in politics, is an artificiality when applied to the study of peoples. Boundaries are zones, not lines, zones of intermediacy which with better political organisation might become interpreters rather than causes of conflict." In another place he refers to "The hampering effect of our present undue insistence on the idea of the sovereign state rather than on that of the united states of Europe."

This is essentially a geography book, although naturally it deals with much history and has offended some of the orthodox historians. Throughout we are confronted with the climatic and economic conditions of each region, and with the need to consider the lives which the people lead and not catch-words invented for them by politicians.

All students of economic geography should read the book, though they will need a dictionary by their side.

R. C. M.

MAN'S MASTERY.

Discoveries and Inventions of the Twentieth Century. By Edward Cressy. (Routledge, 12s. 6d.).

This profusely illustrated volume is an attempt to give the non-technical reader an idea of the remarkable advances which have been made with great rapidity in this wonderful century. What will man not be able to do by its end?

From the first crude wheel the author

passes on to the water wheel, the turbine engine, and the attempt made to utilise the 5,000,000 h.p. of the Niagara Falls. Man no longer shivers in the cold and dark, but uses coal, gas and oil as sources of heat and power for engines in which improvements never cease. The modern miracles of electricity in driving, lighting and heating, are explained. The "tool-making animal" has now automatic machines to make his tools!

> The material is fed in at one end and a whole series of operations are performed upon it without any attention from the man. In fact so little attention is required that a man or boy can take charge of five or six machines . . . They have been developed step by step from the original machine in which every movement was effected by hand. First one motion was rendered automatic, then a second, then a third, and so on, until the machine can do everything but pick up material from the floor.

All the more recent advances in foundry and forge are detailed. New substances like aluminium and stainless steel have been made. Man can liquefy air, and reproduce the temperature of the Arctic regions when he needs to store his food. Experts are studying the biology and chemistry of the soil, and pedigree wheats are being reared.

These are only a few of the many fascinating things described in this book. Most of us board bus, tram, tube or train without a thought; this book reminds us of the ceaseless gigantic improvements they represent. And man is only at the beginning of his conquest of earth, air, and water!

Mr. Cressy rejoices in cheapness as the final achievement of applied science. He appears to regard this as synonymous with a higher standard of life for all men. Some of the unemployed could give him another point of view. He hopes that electricity will mean a fresh localisation of industry. He blames "the cussedness of human nature" for the fact that scientific progress has not lightened burdens and lessened misery, which suggests that while he well describes "the logic of the machine" he does not understand it. Some comparative statements of productivity—however general—would have increased the value of the book, which is nevertheless a noteworthy piece of work.

M. S.

A Pleb's Book.

Thinking: An Introduction to Its History and Science. By Fred Casey. (Labour Publishing Co., Ltd., 3s.)

If only the workers understood their position in society! Invariably, this lament is raised when we workers, as a class, fail to make the most of our opportunities, either politically or industrially, or both. But society grows more complex and increasingly difficult to understand, especially for the average worker who is stinted for money with which to buy books and leisure in which to study them.

And there are so many competitors in the field—cheap publications which yet pay high salaries to writers who can present the standpoint of one class in society—the employing class—so simply and yet so convincingly as to delude and even make the delusion entertaining to the other class—the workers. We know perfectly well that these publications are not issued for the mere pleasure of providing the workers with mental nourishment. They are a response to a definite need, the need to control the sources of information, which forms the raw material for our ideas about world matters. Therefore, to combat these sources of error and confusion, our urgent need, as workers, is a series of text-books, reliable in content, simple in treatment and low in price.

Judged by these requirements, Com. Casey's book meets our need more completely than any other book in this particular branch of science known to the writer. It is divided into two parts, with, in addition, a very fine introduction. This introduction gives the reader a brief outline of the evolution of the thinking faculty, tracing the development from nebula to the rise of philosophy in Greece. To quote one passage: "Just as life is a function of certain combinations of naturally evolved matter, so is thinking a function of naturally evolved special

parts of that matter—organs of sense and brains." Altogether, the introduction is an excellent preparation for what is to follow.

The first part of this book is a survey of the history of philosophy, starting with Thales, 636 B.C.—and extending over a period which ended with the publication of the work of Joseph Dietzgen in 1869.

The second part deals with the science of understanding, freed from the fetters of speculation with which philosophy has been shackled. In this part there are 44 pages, each of which is a pleasure and a profit to the reader. There is no overlapping, every question is dealt with in a way that is straightforward and easy to comprehend. The language is more in accord with everyday language than anything previously met with on this particular subject. Indeed, with this work at his disposal, any student of average intelligence should find no difficulty in getting a good grasp of the science of understanding. The study ought to become as popular as football!

An additional virtue is that the book is written from a working-class point of view, with the definite object of assisting us in our fight for economic freedom. Many current problems are dealt with, *e.g.*, "Is machine production beneficial for society?" "If Socialism is bound to come of what use are classes in Social Science?" "Are strikes unreasonable?" "Are majorities always right?" "Would it be right for Socialists to confiscate the property of capitalists, or, is it right to steal?" These problems serve not only to show the method of applying scientific logic, but *also* constitute a most valuable contribution to everyday topics of discussion.

I would urge all workers to make an effort to get the book. Mr. Casey is, I believe, an I.W.C.E. class tutor in Lancashire. Certainly he has been a class-student there, and this work adds prestige to the provincial class movement. It is no small achievement to expound the theory of Joseph Dietzgen in simple, homely terms. Also, throughout the book its author has borne in mind the motto of the Plebs League: "I can promise to be candid but not impartial."

ALICE PRATT.

A CO-OPERATIVE FRANKENSTEIN.

History of the Co-operative Printing Society. (C.P.S. 6s.).

The game-keeper keeps a larder over-hung with the vermin he has killed. This history of the Co-operative Printing Society would qualify for a place in any similarly nasty museum. It is, from the production point of view, perfectly horrid—in very truth a perfect example of a badly made book.

To begin at the beginning, its binding is stamped with a design which would do discredit to a Victorian fireplace. The lettering thereon, I am thankfully incompetent to name; it is doubtless the work of an "artist" and not dug from a type-founder's closet. Its end papers are in the manner of 1880 school-prize storybooks. Its text paper is that gruesome composition facetiously known as "art paper"—dead in colour but lively in reflections on its gleaming lead-coated surface. This paper has its use; the printing of half-tone blocks. As a medium for type it is an ignorant and expensive monstrosity. The title page is set in a face totally different and—a hard thing, different in the wrong direction—from the type of the book itself. It offers some pathetic blandishments in the shape of "rules" (lines). The List of Illustrations is set in a different type from the text, this time decidedly better. The initials to the preface and the chapters do not fit. The heading to the preface has a superfluous full point after it, though even bad printers are now generally aware of that one item of technique. The other headings revert to the type of the list of illustrations.

Every page in the book has a deplorable muddily-coloured rule border with the deplorable monogram of the Society deplorably introduced. The margins take no cognisance of the accepted due proportions. The illustrations (largely of beavers, let me say, for it is impossible not to be prejudiced even about hirsute features when they are thus presented), are grouped in amazing decorations and at strange angles. Finally, the spaces between words, and particularly after full-points is altogether excessive; the page is a mass of "rivers of white." After one full-point, observed at ran-

dom, the white is almost two " ems " of the text ! And a number of these " effects " have been got at great expense. That's the very devil of it.

It is not within my province to speak of the editorial contents of the book, but I cannot refrain from pointing out that the total capital of the Society —which, as far as I can judge, is not owned as to a penny by its employees —is some £23,000 ; that in 1919 the profits were more than £26,000, that there is no loan capital ; that the plant itself is worth infinitely more, probably twenty times more, than the capital. Some Co-operation !

Let me conclude with one quotation : " The outbreak of war in 1914 caused the committee some anxiety ; but the management rose to the occasion and, despite the many difficulties which had to be met, were able to maintain the Society's rate of progress, as the above-mentioned figures amply prove."

F. M.

LATIN AND GREEK.

The Claims of Antiquity. 30 pp. (1s. Humphrey Milford).

This excellently printed little handbook (its price should have been halved), is part of a spate of recent literature about Greece and Rome, that has for object the arresting of the decline of the study of classics. There are pamphlets on " The Value of Latin and Greek in the Modern World," books on " The Spirit of Antiquity and To-day," and other popularisations written by eminent and fusty dons who have never been outside Trinity Great Gate (date Henry VIII.'s reign, I think). This is due finally to the instinct of self-preservation (and is a curious example of the working of the M.C.H.). Classical studies are dying : in the largest Cambridge college recently, there were four full-time tutors for seventeen students of the subject, therefore the M.A.s, D.Litts., and even D.D.s are moaning and muttering, hoping that if no one will be fashed with their grammatical lessons any more they may at least retain a decent livelihood as translators. The change has come about in the last fifteen years. I remember scholars who abused the very idea of issuing a translation, saying that it ruined good scholarship, and was only undertaken by down-and-outs who had failed in the legitimate profession. Now they simply sit on the doorstep of Murray, Hienemann, Methuen and Macmillan, their pockets distended with MS. translations.

This pathetic haste is a sign of the gradual break-up of a thing much older than capitalism. In Oxford and Cambridge, as in some country houses, there have lingered for the last hundred years relics of the old landlord—aristocratic civilisationof the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The bases of this civilisation were Latin and Greek, as any man can see from Boswell's *Johnson*. So to-day the inheritors of the tradition have been vainly urging the extreme beauty of the Latin and Greek literature—which is true—the inadequacy of translation—which is also true—and the great value of a knowledge of Latin and Greek for an understanding of English. This is perfectly true also—both the training and the knowledge of Latin can improve one's mastery of English enormously. But the capitalist class will take no notice of them : it prefers the teaching of science as more useful.

But what is useful for the capitalist is not necessarily useful for the worker. All the same, it is not worth a worker's while to learn Latin and Greek. But a knowledge of the civilisation and history of the ancient world is well worth while. Occasionally we find Marxist students making the most absurd errors, and if we have to rely on works like Ward's *Ancient Lowly*—which contains plain lies—we shall go on having misconceptions of a period of history which must be understood for a complete comprehension of the Marxist theory of history, and which is at least more important than the Nebular Theory and Prehistoric Communism.

This pamphlet consists of a preface and " annotated List of Books for those who know neither Latin nor Greek," and from the point of view given above, is really very good. A considerable number of the books recommended are books from which we can easily get the sort of stuff we want. It is also pleasant to see the editors have obviously remembered that some of us have lean purses.

R. W. P.

A Good Guide.

The Outline of Science. Edited by J. Arthur Thomson. (Geo. Newnes.)

If I were asked to name the great weakness of genuine working-class education to-day, I should say lack of Science, *i.e.*, physical science. I believe that the older literary attitude of mind is out of sympathy with the times and that the future lies with those who look at the world with the clear, interested eyes of the student of Natural Science.

Hitherto such study has been beyond the reach of most working-class students, not only from lack of time and money, but also from lack of guidance. Professor Thomson's *Outline of Science* supplies the guidance. It introduces the reader to most abstruse problems in a way which cannot fail to give a real insight into the mechanism of the universe.

Naturally it is not a book of socialist propaganda, but it will provide any speaker with a wealth of illustration with which to lighten a dull lecture. Moreover, it will strengthen the foundations of his own belief. As is almost inevitable in such a work the chapters are of unequal value, but the good ones more than compensate for the bad ones. It is a great pity that the chapters by Sir Oliver Lodge on Psychic Science were introduced into a book which is otherwise eminently sane. My advice for students is to leave them unread.

Get your local library to buy a copy. If you have a friend who took in the parts, borrow them and read them; above all, introduce all the young people you know to the book.

R. C. M.

Industrial Conditions.

The Worker and the State: Wages, Hours, Safety and Health. By Frank Tillyard, M.A. (298 pp. Routledge, 10s. 6d.)

This is the first attempt since Jevons' *State in Relation to Labour* (1882) to give an account of legislative regulation of the conditions of labour. The difference between the size and scope of this book and of Jevons' illustrates the enormous increase of such interference with "free competition" made in forty years. As its sub-title implies, it is no academic disquisition on the rights of labour, of capital, and of the community, but a description of the existing state of the law on certain definite subjects. While covering much of the same ground as the same author's *Industrial Law*, it is not a detailed work of reference, but an analytic summary. It is divided into five sections: Introductory, State Interference with Wages, Time Conditions, Safety, and Health. Each section is then further subdivided; thus that on Wages deals in order with the determination of wage rates (minimum wage legislation and trade boards), the ascertainment of work done (tickets given with piecework, check-weighing), safeguards as to the payment of wages (Truck Acts), and facilities for recovering wages illegally withheld. It will be seen that the arrangement is that of logical order, not of development in time; within each chapter, however, the treatment is chronological. In so

far as any general conclusions are drawn at all, they are to emphasise the evolutionary character of our industrial legislation. The author is not dogmatic, as witness the following (p. 36) :—

> How long this evolutionary process will go on it is perhaps idle to speculate. The association of workers according to their industries, instead of according to their crafts, would make it feasible for industries to be much more self-legislating than they are at present. Again, the abolition of the wage system would naturally render obsolete the most progressive legislation founded on the wage system. A Code of Regulations for Safety and Health would certainly be needed, whatever changes in the social fabric came about, but speculations of this kind are outside the scope of this work. Industrial legislation so far has been distinctly evolutionary, and if and when revolution comes, this legislation will have to take its chance in the melting pot.

The fact that the author has had experience as chairman of trade boards gives additional value to this book, which should be in every public library and read by every active worker in the industrial field.

H. D. D.

LETTERS from PLEBS

WHAT IS THE ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RUHR OCCUPATION ?

DEAR COMRADE,—At first sight it really did look possible that the French occupation of the Ruhr was motived by the desire of their iron-masters to secure the minerals necessary to convert their ores into high-class steel. Yet there was nothing to prevent them buying in the ordinary way of trade. The coal-owners of the Ruhr would be quite as willing to dispose of their products to them as to any one else. It is quite certain that the French Government will not seize the mines, etc., from their present owners. What is more, the latter have no doubt placed their interests nominally in the hands of Dutch or English firms.

But anyhow, the mines are of no use to anyone without the workers to operate them. Now the workers are only concerned about the wages they receive, and the hours (plus intensification) they have to give in return. Whether it is unoccupied territory or not, whether the mines are owned by German or French interests, the payment of wages in marks that have slumped from 30,000 to 50,000 to £1 is going to raise Cain.

Hitherto the highly organised workers in the Ruhr have to a certain extent been able to keep pace with the depreciation. This has of course, necessitated frequent adjustments, always bitterly contested. Now comes along a greater inflation of the currency than ever. Unless the workers can be compelled to accept terms dictated by their employers, they, the employers, might just as well meet the financial obligations of the Government by increased taxation. The question resolves itself into a matter of force ; but how to apply it ? It is doubtful if the German Government could afford the military power necessary ; possibly it is not at their disposal under the terms of the Peace settlement.

Apparently the safest procedure is to invite French occupation to maintain capitalist Law and Order ; which being interpreted means compelling the workers to accept " dud " marks.

Yours fraternally,

F. L. RIMINGTON.

HOUSMAN AND CAPITALISM.

DEAR COMRADE,—A few words in answer to " Lemco " in your last. His first grief is that I " apply the M.C.H." to particular individuals (he *says* " particular events " but we will deal with what he *means*—for I did not apply it to events) instead of " general trends." " Lemco " writes like a typical W.E.A.er. In W.E.A. philosophy movements, ideas, organisations, have a spiritual existence of their own and can be affected by the M.C.H. and other things. But individuals are quite different—not affected by such

things at all, deary me, no, the class tutor himself would not be infallible then!

For us, movements and ideas have no such independent reality; they consist of a number of individuals. If the body of causes we lump under the name M.C.H. does not affect those individuals, then it cannot affect the movements, trends, or organisations at all. If it does not have effect on persons, it has NO effect. Consequently, the study of its effects on an individual (such as a poet), though difficult, is legitimate. I am sorry to be so imbecilely elementary, but you know these W.E.A.ers, Bro. Editor.

Then again, "Lemco" argues that what I have said of Housman is true of Omar Khayyam (I take it he does not mean Edward Fitzgerald?—however, leave that). Nonsense! Khayyam was not unhappy at all: he had plenty of wine and women and amused himself very well, the old dog, and jeered at any one who disagreed with his policy of "Take the Cash and let the Credit go." He was very like Horatio Bottomley and not at all like A. E. Housman.

Finally (if I understand him) "Lemco" says that because Housman did not write poems upon the "Regrettable Ignorance of the Theory of Surplus Value," and does not exactly label his discontent, therefore the horrors of industrialism have nothing to do with it, but it is due to "Profound Pessimism" (cause unstated). To which (since I am exceeding space), I answer (1) Poems specifically on the capitalist system are rare and very bad, the subject apparently not lending itself to verse; (2) Your explanation is no explanation; (3) Probably if Housman had understood, or been able to understand, what was the cause of all he lamented, he would not have been so sterile (Remember the early Morris.).

I believe I am correct in classing "Lemco" among the beef extracts discovered by the great Liebig, who later announced that "though possibly useful as a stimulant they have no nutritive value." This is an allegory.

Yours fraternally,

R. W. POSTGATE.

PARALYSING PESSIMISM.

DEAR COMRADE,—As a humble worker in the working-class movement, I feel that such articles as "Is Revolution Inevitable?" are out of place in our PLEBS.

I shall start at the end and work backwards. He concludes by asking "How to overcome the paralysing effect of our industrial system on the psychology of the workers?" My answer is, without admitting the paralysing effect, that all class-conscious workers do all that they can to stop the rot, instead of wasting their time writing doubting-Thomas articles of this description.

I will conclude by asking all comrades to read very carefully the contradictory last paragraph. It may be that the object of this article is to start a discussion, if so, I have no time to argue, the fight is on, and I am in it, and have to rely for guidance on the conditions as they exist on the part of the revolutionary front where I am serving.

Please, comrade Editor, keep on dishing up the *facts* in the excellent way shown in the *Outline of Imperialism*, and don't allow valuable space to be used up by articles such as this.

Yours fraternally,

JACK JONES.

DEAR COMRADE.—The article by John Lewis, in the January PLEBS, asking "Is Revolution Inevitable?" puts the problem—"How to overcome the paralysing effects of our industrial system on the psychology of the workers."

I venture to suggest that one of the means, and an important one, is first to equip oneself with a knowledge of social science. Then, when you feel convinced of being able to explain to your workmates the *causes* of their various grievances, set about the job with the determination of showing them the class struggle within society and of making them realise that the present industrial system has a paralysing effect upon their outlook. You next point out that there is a cure for this paralysis through a treatment prescribed by I.W.C.E.ers.

By this method you will persuade them to be more concerned with weight

of argument than the weight of jockeys, and with the strength of their own organisations, rather than the strength of "Elmo the Mighty."

In short the best way to tackle the problem is to look at the simplicity, not the difficulty, of its solution. Don't make a god of your grandfather because he was one of those who poured on to the streets; rather attempt to improve upon the efforts of your progenitors.

Yours fraternally,
FRANK JACKSON.

A GEOGRAPHICAL FOOTNOTE.

DEAR EDITOR,—One important source of iron is generally overlooked when discussing the subject of "heavy industry," *viz.*, the rich iron mines of Northern Sweden within the Arctic circle. The main mining centres at present are Kiruna and Gellivare, the ore obtained being some of the richest in the world containing as it does 65 per cent. to 75 per cent. of pure iron.

Before the war, when I made an effort (partly on ski) to cross Lapland in winter from sea to sea, I visited the district. Everything is run by electricity, including the trams; the "juice" is supplied from Porjus, a few miles to the south, where an enlarged and tremendous generating "plant" driven by water-power was being installed. Since I was there the electric railway to the northern Norwegian port, Narvik, on the Atlantic coast has been completed.

In pre-war days already two-thirds of the ore went to Germany, mostly to Essen; of the other third some supplied the Swedish home industries, some went to Norway, and the rest went to Russia, mostly to supply the Putilov and other works in the Petrograd district. The ore that could not be shipped away before the North Baltic froze, was stored during the winter at Lulea, the southern terminus of the Kiruna-Lulea railway.

From the above it will be seen that a reactionary Finland and the blockade in the Baltic further damaged. the already starved metal industry of North-western Russia. As furthermore the Tcheko-Slovaks and Koltchak occupied the mining areas of the Ural Mountains, and the Germans followed by Denikin occupied those of Ukraine (South Russia) for two years it is a wonder that the Russian metal industry survived at all.

Yours faithfully.
A. P. L.

"MARX PERVERTED."

DEAR COMRADE,—Pardon me returning to the subject, but the editorial footnote to my letter in Jan. issue provokes it. You say "The point is was the article a plea for Rampant Reformism. If it was then Marx was the Rampant Reformist and Com. Rimington must transfer his allegiance to a more fiery leader."

This would be a k.o. for me if society existed independent of time and place. One can understand Marx slating a party which was nothing more than a Black Hand gang, posing as saviours of humanity, but evidently he was unable to restore any semblance of order in these irresponsibles for seemingly they went from bad to worse. Leo XIII., who, when Cardinal Archbishop of Perugia, wrote quite sympathetically of the working-class movement, one year later (1878) as Pope violently attacked the Socialists, and on the strength of the excesses of the Bakuninists was able to slander the movement as a whole.

I am strangely vindicated by the letter of Douglas S. Browett from the land of Daniel de Leon, and Jack London, also of Gompers and Karl Dannenberg. They were just five years ahead in a discovery so valuable to the breed of socialists who infest capitalist administrative bodies. The same gang diverted the revolutionary aim of Australian Industrial Unionism into State Fish and Meat Shops. Chronologically you can place the States as approx. five years ahead of this country in economic development; consequently it has produced the super-Reformist, so cleverly camouflaged that the Devil himself couldn't distinguish them from the goods. Our Dannenbergs are arriving, but the story of this gentleman's exploits will keep for another time. Of course they are all good Marxians, but as soon as one criticises their methods they set up a yell of "anarchist" which

is but a smoke cloud to hide their shifty business. Worse still, one's political friends fall to the noise and I am advised to seek a more fiery leader.

For the benefit of those who do not know, allow me to state that I am a member of the S.L.P. which is a political party endorsing Industrial Unionism as outlined by Daniel de Leon. No Party in this country has done more to disseminate Marxian teachings than the S.L.P. and we are very watchful for any mis-use by a false interpretation being placed upon them. One slip and you are sliding head-long into the new camp of Revisionists and the means become the end.

Yours fraternally,
F. L. RIMINGTON.

[We are not quite sure what Com. Rimington is driving at in various parts of this letter, but we print it in order that he should have the last word.—ED., PLEBS.]

PROGRESS IN SCOTLAND.

DEAR COMRADE,—I find in this month's PLEBS a slight mistake. Comrade Ferguson is not tutor for Aberdeen. Our tutor is Douglas S. Browett, who has been engaged for a four months' winter course Industrial History and Economics.

It may interest class secretaries to know that we have had for the last three years a class-room free of charge from the Educational Authority. Of course we have had many opponents to the granting of this privilege.

The W.E.A. have started a series of twenty lectures with Prof. Gray, of Aberdeen University; subject:—Karl Marx. At the introductory address only one pupil enrolled. They (the W.E.A.), asked us to send a few of our pupils to create interest in Prof. Gray's classes, but we had to regret our inability to do so!

Yours fraternally,
W. MORRISON.

N.C.L.C. ITEMS and NOTES

Organisation.—It was agreed at the Annual Meet to test the opinion of our affiliated bodies on the question of a re-grouping of areas based on the county unit; the latter to be again re-grouped into Area Councils. In some cases there are urgent grounds for re-grouping, in others the local organisations have automatically developed on the most suitable organisation basis. The subject should come under early consideration everywhere, with a view to carrying out any needed re-shuffling of areas. The question will become more difficult to adjust with every additional affiliation of National bodies, affiliations which seem likely in the very near future.

Ireland.—As mentioned in last month's Notes a short tour of the No. 11 Division of the A.U.B.T.W. was made in December last. The towns visited were Belfast, Portadown, Londonderry, Omagh, Enniskillen, Dundalk and Dublin. In general the impression gained was that there were distinct possibilities about the future of I.W.C.E. propaganda. In all but the first and last mentioned towns the educational policy proposed was obviously new to those assembled, but well received. As is the case in breaking new ground everywhere, it will be a testing time of the capacity of the tutor to adapt his subject and treatment of it, towards the development of the interest and the encouraging of further inquiry among his audiences. Illustrations from Irish social and economic history will be demanded and many pitfalls will have to be avoided.

Scotland.—The Edinburgh District are going some! They've engaged a picture-house for Sunday evening lantern lectures, and J. S. Clarke has been having audiences of 600! On the 14th January, J. P. M. Millar is "on the screen," in that drama of the near East, "The Struggle for the Turkish Straits." That same lecture is being given in seven different towns and villages in one week! Edinburgh District affiliations number 113, representing a membership of 50,000! Ayrshire District have Classes running

in seven different towns, with 200 students and 36 affiliated bodies. Aberdeen District have four Classes running, with 220 students and twenty affiliations. The recent progress of these last two Districts has been a matter for congratulation to all concerned.

Wales.—Under the A.U.B.T.W. Scheme twelve Classes have been formed up to Christmas. Comrade W. J. Lewis, the Educational Organiser, reports that forty Conferences have been held and nineteen separate Branches visited. One of the methods for encouraging interest in this Division (No. 4), is the giving of lectures at the branch, and getting invitations to it sent out to other Labour bodies. Apart from the above, Cardiff and District Labour College is running three Classes, with 140 students and seventeen affiliated bodies. A Class is being run at Newport, and another at Barry Dock. The latter class has been run continuously now for some years by a few enthusiasts, who help the National Movement by the sale of PLEBS and affiliation to the N.C.L.C. In addition to the Classes mentioned some Miners' District Classes are running independently, but on the I.W.C.E. basis.

England.—Preston has two Classes running with eighty students and nine affiliated bodies. The subjects taken are Imperialism and Economics. *Hull*, two Classes, seventy-five students and six affiliations. Subjects: Evolution and Psychology. *Oldham*, five Classes, sixty-five students and ten affiliations. Subjects: Economics, Trade Unionism and Industrial History, Science of Understanding, Evolution and Biology. *Gloucester*, four Classes, 100 students and thirteen affiliations. Subjects: Economics, History, Elocution, Shortland and English. *Mansfield*, six Classes, 160 students and ten affiliations. Subjects: Industrial and Trade Union History, Economics, Historical Materialism and Science of Understanding. *London* has twenty-three Classes running on the Primary subjects. Most of these are taken by students from the Labour College. *Manchester* has five Classes running, in Economics, Industrial History, Esperanto, Science of Understanding, and Sociology (fee 1s. 6d. per course, per class.)

Attention during the coming year will have to be given to the question of increasing the number of tutors. The matter came up at the Annual Meet and a resolution was passed asking for the assistance of the Labour College, London, towards this end. This assistance will be forthcoming in the shape of correspondence material and advice. Our groups should draw up a list of candidates and a statement of the assistance desired from College. Local effort should be arranged to supplement this, and to secure regular and purposeful training. Also where possible advantage should be taken of the proposed Whitsuntide School at Kew, where the courses to be arranged will aim at the needs of prospective tutors. Start Summer School Clubs for meeting expenses.

THE N.C.L.C. CONFERENCE

THE Second Annual Meet was a decided success. Our groups from all parts of the country were represented, Wales, Scotland and England. In addition, groups as yet unaffiliated and also individuals actively engaged in the A.U.B.T.W. scheme were present. The present era of high fares and economic depression had no appreciable effect upon the enthusiasm of I.W.C.E. supporters, judged by the attendance. The only drawback was the limited time available for the conference. The arrangements made for the delegates reflect credit on the proprietor of the Guest House. As a detailed report will be issued to the affiliated bodies, only a brief résumé of the Conference is necessary.

Comrade J. Hamilton presided. His remarks were brief and to the point, a welcome to the delegates, a hope for businesslike treatment of the agenda

by all participating, and finally that decisions reached would help towards the steady development of our work for 1923. After that the General Secretary's and Press Secretary's reports were presented, both of which merely repeated the matter that has appeared from time to time in The PLEBS, etc., plus a statement of the general prospects for the future. The cash statements showed a small adverse balance from head office and a small profit from the publication of *More Production—More Poverty*, of which 12,500 have already been sold.

District reports were optimistic and a further extension of class work outlined. As regards activities, Liverpool and Edinburgh still lead the way. Some need for re-organisation of group areas exists in many places, and it was agreed to invite the opinions of existing groups on the matter of organisation by counties. The need for all-the-year-round activities was expressed as a condition for the employment of whole-time lecturer organisers, as it was felt that without the latter the best results cannot be obtained.

The reports on the A.U.B.T.W. scheme indicated that much work had been done, including the opening of a number of new areas for I.W.C.E. activities. Much yet remains to be done, both from the head office of the N.C.L.C. and by the Districts, but with each section willing, success is already assured. Mr. Reg. Warburton, the A.U.B.T.W. delegate and a member of the Union E.C., expressed appreciation of the work that had been already done, and his assurance of future steady development.

Much satisfaction was expressed over the announcement that the A.E.U.'s new education rule, besides embodying the name of the Scottish Labour College, stipulates for I.W.C.E. Hearty thanks to the A.E.U. men who are responsible for the change. It is now up to the Districts to take advantage of the new situation.

Principal Craik's report of the residential work of the Labour College was well received. An increased number of students is anticipated in September next. The Conference decided to emphasize to other Labour organisations the need for joining the Railwaymen and Miners in support of the College.

With regard to the resolutions on the agenda, relating to The PLEBS and the N.C L.C., the E.C. of the latter withdrew these in view of a further early meeting between the two executives having been decided upon at the Plebs meet held earlier in the day. This meeting is arranged for the 4th February.

An interesting discussion on Teaching Methods was all too short. It is hoped to continue this discussion in The PLEBS, and at a proposed joint I.W.C.E. summer school to be held at the Labour College, Kew, at Whitsun, 1923. Names of those desirous of attending should be forwarded to the General Secretary.

Amendments made to the constitution will, of course, be reported in detail to the districts.

Steps are to be taken to draw up a list of approved lecturers, and Districts are asked to co-operate; also please note that sets of lantern slides may be hired from Liverpool Labour College at 5s. per set or at 1s. 6d. per dozen.

Comrades Hamilton (Liverpool), Smith (Birmingham), Brown (Mansfield), Coxon (Newcastle), and Fouchard (Rochdale) were nominated for the three places due to be filled on the E.C. by the Conference. The ballot showed the first three to be successful.

The PLEBS MEET: REPORT

THERE was a fine " gathering of the clans " at Crich (Derbyshire), on Dec. 30th-31st; and though both our own and the N.C.L.C. agendas deserved as many days as we could afford hours for their discussion, a lot of important business was got through.

Charlie Brown, of Mansfield, took the chair for the Plebs meeting on Sunday morning.

Winifred Horrabin presented the Secretary-Treasurer's report and balance sheet (latter to be published later). Our position, as reported by W. H., can be put in a nutshell as " Busier than ever—and harder up than at any time during recent years." Industrial depression, of course, largely accounts for this—though it was pointed out during discussion that certain districts which had been hit hardest by unemployment had yet increased their orders for PLEBS. But though " industrial depression " might explain the position, it did not solve the problem of carrying on. Two courses were open to us; (1) to increase our sales and receipts; (2) to cut down expenses. It was up to our supporters to see to No. 1. On No. 2, the E.C. recommended closing down the Book Dept. (see announcement elsewhere), this being the one branch of our activities which could possibly be done without. Millar (Edinburgh) moved, and Dobson (Darlington) seconded, the carrying of this recommendation into effect.

The balance sheet showed, on the year's working, an increase of debt by nearly £100.

J. F. Horrabin next presented the Editor's report on Magazine and Publications. The vital problem, he pointed out, was to increase the circulation of the Magazine—quickly; and to organise the sales of the new Textbooks so that these, too, would bring in grist to the mill. The discussion which followed on a proposal to reduce the price (and size) of the Magazine appeared to indicate a general verdict in favour of carrying on as at present. [*But this can only be done if an increase in circulation takes place at once.*] " Prompt orders and prompt payments " would have to be the motto if the Textbooks were to be a financial success. The League had to undertake the biggest financial responsibility in the whole movement, in bringing out these books; it was up to the movement to see to it that a responsibility undertaken *on behalf of the movement* was backed up by every section of the movement.

The rest of the all-too-short time available was devoted to the two resolutions on the Control of the Magazine, and the Function of the League, both of which, of course, raised the important question of the precise relationship to be maintained between the Plebs League and the N.C.L.C. The first, which declared for " the continuance and development of the League as an organisation of individual I.W.C.Ers," and for " the Magazine being controlled as hitherto solely by the E.C. elected by League members," was moved by Pendrey (Woolwich), and seconded by Dobson (Darlington). After a very keen discussion, which undoubtedly did a great deal towards clarifying the issue and directing attention to the main principles involved, the resolution was carried by a considerable majority.

The second resolution, on the Function of the League, was moved by Mark Starr (London), and seconded by W. Horrabin. The E.C.'s aim in bringing the resolution forward, Starr explained, was to emphasise the need for allocating some part of the activities of the N.C.L.C.-Plebs movement to Plebs members, as such. If " the continuance and development of the League " was desirable, then it was essential that the League be more than a mere vague " Fellowship," and that its members should have definite work to do. Geo. Sims (London), finally moved that the matter be referred back to a further Joint Conference between the two Executives (of League and N.C.L.C.), and this was agreed to.

In view of this latter decision, which we believe all League members will

agree is desirable in the general interests of the movement, the ballot for the new Plebs E.C. is being taken as this Magazine goes to Press.* A further ballot of members on the questions raised at the Meet will be taken after the Joint Conference has been held. We have every reason to hope that it will be possible to submit, for members' confirmation, a scheme which will embody a practical working arrangement between the two wings of the movement and safeguard the interests of both.

We should like to express our best thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Ludlow, of the Guest House, Crich, for the gallant way in which they tackled the problem of housing many more delegates than were originally prepared for; and we hope that it will be possible to "amalgamate" the next Meet with a Summer School, and make it at least a week in duration. We see all too little of one another!

* At the Plebs E.C. meeting, January 12th, the Secretary reported that three provincial members had been nominated for the new E.C., but that all three had declined to stand, on the ground that an Executive composed of members living in the same district, and therefore able to meet regularly, was, for Plebs purposes, preferable to one containing members who would probably not be able to attend a meeting more than once in a year.

The PLEBS Page

BY the time this Magazine is out, the ballot for the new Executive will have taken place. The result of the voting will be published next month. Will all members please note that membership fees are now due? One shilling, please, for 1923—and we want a record year. We of the League should not content ourselves with being just an organisation of "old boys" (and girls). We must rope in all the live wires in our movement, and take counsel together how best to strengthen and develop it.

We have had the honour of being "banned!" Com. Lamb, of Wolverhampton, who is trying to work up the circulation in that area, sent to a local paper the following "Ad":—

BANNED by the local "Free" Library.—The PLEBS for Labour students: monthly, 6d. (by post 7d.).—LAMB, 139, Dudley Road, Wolverhampton.

The editor of the journal informed him that he had made inquiries as to why the Magazine was banned, and that he could not accept the ad. One wonders what he was told! Lamb's comment is "*Remember:* Boss-class boycott is our highest hall-mark."

The energetic secretary of the Glasgow Labour College, J. Wood, sends us the following:—"Regarding the par in Nov. PLEBS commenting on the fact that there is now a Labour College group of at least two (Barker and Newbold) in the House of Commons, I think you will be safe in adding the names of two of the Glasgow contingent, James Maxton and John F. Hay, both good friends of the S.L.C." Mr. Paling, of Doncaster, and the two Labour College ex-governors, Mr. Charlton and Mr. Lowth, complete the list. "We are Seven."

Letters from America received this month contained news that in the one case cheered us and in the other saddened. The one was to say that Jack Carney (Editor, *Voice of Labour*, Chicago), who had begun a term of five years' imprisonment, was released; the other—written by Carney—told us of the death of Mary Marcy. Every reader of *Shop Talks on Economics*, and everyone conversant with Mary's other journalistic work for the movement will join us in lamenting her death. We can ill-afford to lose such a worker. Carney promises us a sketch of her life and work as soon as the sad task of sorting out her papers is complete. This will take some time, as Mary was full of ideas and plans for future work. One of the last things she planned, says Carney, was "to write more for PLEBS." The whole movement is the poorer for her loss.

We are closing the Retail Book Department. This does not mean that we shall not sell books; it means that we shall not sell any or every book which anyone likes to order. A year's working has convinced us that with the small staff at our disposal we

cannot carry on the work of four departments—the League, the publications (Textbooks, etc.), the Magazine, and the Retail Book Dept. It is safe to say that 75 per cent. of our time is taken up with the latter, which is after all, only a side line. Our organisation is important, our propaganda work is vital, the circulation of the Magazine is the life blood of our movement, yet all these have perforce been neglected because the day-to-day work of retailing books (often at a loss) has occupied nearly all our time. We are therefore discontinuing. BUT, please take careful note, we still want paying for books already supplied, and we have still a stock which we must sell. We bought these books to facilitate the work of the districts by despatching quickly, and we shall have to depend on the districts to help us sell them.

Several districts owe us big bills which we need settling. We have had to pay out cash for these stocks of books and all secretaries are asked to call their committee together and send us the biggest cheque they can afford. With the two new textbooks and an increased circulation, 1923 can be the best year yet, despite the fact that we are having to give up one section of our work. It *can* be—if everyone will help by paying up promptly. It shouldn't be necessary to emphasise the importance of the Economic Basis—to Marxians. Yet some of them don't seem to realise that what is true of society in general is also true of a propagandist movement. And that kind of "helper" *hinders more than he helps.*

Will class secretaries please note:—All reports or advance notices of CLASSES should be sent to the Sec., N.C.L.C., 11, Penywern Road, S.W. 5, who deals with such matters in "N.C.L.C. Notes." The "Plebs Page" is for paragraphs of general interest to I.W.C.Ers., notes on Plebs Group activities, Magazine propaganda stunts, and anything that cannot be classed under the heading "Classes, their organisation and activities."

W. H.

THE PLEBS BOOK DEPT.

NOTICE

We regret to have to announce that the Book Dept. will close down on Feb. 28th. This means that after that date we shall be able to supply only *our own publications* and any *special editions* which The PLEBS may arrange for.

This step has had to be taken in order to reduce our running expenses, and though we regret the necessity for it, we believe that it will enable us to concentrate more effectively on pushing our own Magazine and Textbooks.

Our friends will help us considerably if they will make a note of the date, and *not* send us general book orders afterwards.

For the Plebs E.C. WINIFRED HORRABIN, *Hon. Sec.*

¶ If you want the Boss to smile upon you, and his lady friends to shake hands with you (once a year or so); if you believe that God has called you to that station of life—and that standard of life—which is at present yours; if, in short, you've decided that a *backbone* is a luxury you can't afford—

JOIN THE PRIMROSE LEAGUE

which has a real live Lord for a president, and all the Best People among its supporters.

¶ If on the other hand you've come to the conclusion that it's high time you and your class did your own thinking, instead of letting the Boss and his class do it for you; if you've realised that this is a necessary first step towards you and your class *acting together* to end a system of society which exploits the many for the benefit of the few; join the Plebs League, which bands together the students, tutors and supporters of the Labour College Movement.

Annual sub.—One Bob

Printed at the Athenæum Printing Works, Redhill.