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The Organ of the National Council of Labour Colleges

# THE PLEBS

*I can promise to be candid but not impartial.*

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## OUR POINT of VIEW

At its recent annual conference the Labour Party passed the following resolution:—

**A** "This conference places on record its appreciation of the work of the Labour Colleges, and urges organisations to support the classes of the Labour Colleges in their work of educating the workers for their task of overthrowing Capitalism."

In thus supporting the Labour College movement, the Labour Party does nationally what a large number of its constituent bodies have already done locally. In various districts up and down the country the Labour Parties, realising the value and increasing importance of the work the Colleges are doing, have affiliated to the Labour College in their district. But from the Party as a whole

there had not previously come any encouragement. We leave it to Plebs and N.C.L.C.ers everywhere to see that the above resolution is brought to the notice of any local Parties who still hesitate to support our movement.

The importance of our educational work to the political movement is slowly coming to be recognised. During Bob Smillie's election campaign—and Smillie, note, is a supporter of the Colleges (witness his foreword to *Smillie—our pamphlet, More Production, More Poverty, and Lawther* last year)—no fewer than five class-tutors of the North-Eastern Labour College were engaged in platform work, and they were enthusiastically assisted by numerous students. When it comes to driving home arguments to a crowd, your Labour College man is the chap to do it! Rhetoric is all very well, but sound knowledge, and a "reason for the faith that is in you," make more effective weapons in the long run. Our congratulations to Smillie, and to the College boys who helped to secure his victory.

And congratulations, too, to another North-Easterner—and old-guard Pleb—Will Lawther, on his election to the National Executive of the Labour Party. We can trust Will to look after the interests of the I.W.C.E. movement in his new position.

The following is the new educational rule of the A.E.U. :—

*The A.E.U.* "The provision of grants and endowments, scholarships to members to colleges (including the Scottish Labour College) and institutions having for their object independent working-class education."

It will be noted that the rule not only provides for educational facilities through the Scottish Labour College but for Independent Working-class Education generally. The rule, fairly interpreted, cuts out Ruskin College and the W.E.A., which do *not* provide I.W.C.E. The W.E.A., for instance, in a statement recently circulated, states that *it stands for the principle of "control" as distinct from "independence."* At present the A.E.U., we believe, is still connected with Ruskin and is represented on the Central Council of the W.E.A. It is therefore up to all A.E.U. Labour College supporters to get immediately to work in their branches and District Committees to inquire what steps have been taken to put the new educational rule into operation. Will A.E.U. members, in other words, inquire by resolution what has been done by the E.C. to cut the connection with Ruskin and the W.E.A. and to arrange for educational facilities through the National Council of Labour Colleges, the Labour College, London, and the Scottish Labour College? The time is now!

Last month's annual conference of the Transport Workers carried the following resolution :—“ This conference recommends the National Executive Council to consider a scheme for the provision of educational facilities in economics and social science for the members and to co-operate with the educational committee of the Trades Union congress to this end.” No time should be lost in getting active in the branches of the Union, so that they may call on their E.C. for a straightforward scheme of I.W.C.E. through the medium of the N.C.L.C. The phrase “ educational facilities ” may mean anything or nothing. It is up to the Union's members to see it doesn't take the form of W.E.A. dope. That can be got in great quantities without squandering the hard-won pennies of Trade Unionists upon it. The State and the Education authorities are delighted to subsidise the work of the W.E.A. (which includes the W.E.T.U.C.) to the tune of thousands of pounds per annum for the purpose of producing tame Trade Unionists.

We published last month the announcement of the formation of a Labour College Students' Association. The history and traditions of the Plebs League being what they are, we welcome the establishment of such a body ; and we especially wish it success in what we take to be the most important reason for its existence, *i.e.*, to press for some measure of students' representation on the governing board of the London Labour College. At a time when workers' control in industry is in the forefront of working-class demands, it is hardly necessary to argue the analogous case for residential students having some voice in the management of a workers' educational institution. Such a measure is indeed, in our opinion, long overdue. The right way to get the best out of men is to give them responsibility ; and if responsibility cannot be permitted to the type of men who go up for two years' training at a workers' college, then there must surely be something radically wrong with the method of their selection. If the Students' Association succeeds in focussing attention on this single issue, it will have amply justified its existence.

## PLEASE NOTE

The PLEBS Office will be closed during the period of the Summer School at Culcheth, from August 11th to 18th inclusive.

## The POLITICS of DECADENCE

**I**N the course of the resumed debate upon Mr. Snowden's motion calling for "the gradual supersession of the capitalist system," there was no speech which may be said to have had greater significance or to have stated so completely the case not for the sentimentalists of the Labour Party but for the realists of the Communist Party as that of Mr. Lloyd George. The Labour M.P.s scoffed at it, holding up to contempt his bankruptcy of practical suggestions. They were derisive concerning his warnings to the Government and to the House. Yet his speech rung the tocsin of the imminent social revolution. It was not merely, as the shallow pates on both sides of the House and in the press represented it, an unsuccessful attempt "to come back" politically. It was the confession of impotence of a man, incomparably the greatest British statesman not merely of his day but of all the generations since the great Sir Robert Peel was borne to his grave, to put forward any practical solution to the problem of a system riven by its own inherent contradictions.

"In the old days," said he, "when there was discontent you could blame your parties for it, but now you have to blame systems, and that is the danger. I will just give to the House my real apprehensions with regard to the immediate future. I have read many hopeful reports from trade experts during the last few years. . . . I am not blaming the trade experts; they made their reports upon returns that came to them from the various industries of the country. Those who were engaged in those industries were basing their estimates upon what they remembered about the depressions of the past. The whole situation is changed, the causes are different. . . . The income of this country last year was £1,000,000,000 less than its income in 1914. . . . Supposing you settled Reparations to-morrow, and you had real peace in Europe—the Germans satisfied, France satisfied, Belgium satisfied, ourselves satisfied—you would say, 'Then comes prosperity.' What are the facts? Let us look at them frankly. . . . The moment peace is restored in Europe, and the exchanges are stabilised. . . . such advantages as we have from the difficulties that our competitors have experienced in making business because of the fluctuations of the exchange will have vanished. . . . They (all the countries) are ready for the great development which may take place when the settlement comes. I am sorry to dwell upon facts which appear to be so hopeless and pessimistic, but it is the business of the House of Commons to face these facts, however distressing they may be."

How he ridiculed the idea of solving this problem along the lines advocated by Mr. Snowden, by nationalisation!

Mr. Lloyd George knows what none of the others know, or knowing will admit, that he and they are looking on at the universal catastrophe which with the "inevitability of gradualness" has, at last, caught capitalism in its fatal grip. He knows what the leaders of the Labour Party do not know, *viz.*, that the system

is so demoralised, so devitalised, that no reforms, however drastic, could possibly prevent its utter collapse.

Decadence reigned supreme throughout the entire discussion—the decadence of the partisan defenders of the old order and the decadence of the party which has accepted the morality of that which it goes out to fight.

That decadence was a reflex of the political life of Great Britain in the gloomiest years in the island's long and famous story.

Mr. Lloyd George, Sir Alfred Mond and Sir John Simon, the three most able spokesmen of the capitalists and, all of them, Liberals, were all pathetic relics from the more fortunate days of bourgeois prosperity.

The last-named, the perfect master of the forensic arts and the most successful advocate of the present day, a man who has held high legal office under the Liberal Government of Mr. Asquith, has now no hope of rising to the commanding heights of the Lord Chancellorship, for which his learning and his eloquence qualify him. He is attached with too great devotion to the party of the Independent Liberals.

Sir Alfred Mond is one of the chief magnates in the firm of Brunner Mond, which, together with Lever Bros., dominates the chemical industry of the British Empire. He has been, for at least fifteen years, the economic power supporting the political genius of Mr. Lloyd George. His group of interests is probably relatively stronger within the ranks of the industrialists to-day than at any time previously, but, thanks to the general subjection of industry to high finance, the economy of which National Liberalism is the political counterpart has made it impossible for him to play the part in politics that his acute intelligence would otherwise assure him.

Mr. Lloyd George, a petit-bourgeois lawyer, practising in a small town in rural North Wales, a Nonconformist and an earnest and eloquent advocate of all the causes dear to the shopkeeper, the peasant farmer and the small and competitive manufacturer, was discovered some thirty-five years ago by Sir Alfred Mond's senior partner, Sir John Brunner, a Radical of pronounced pacifist and petit-bourgeois mentality, who had quarry interests in the neighbouring mountains, and given his opportunity in the industrial towns of the north where his brilliant speeches turned back, slowly but surely, the advancing tide of landed and financial imperialism. Supported by the Quakers of Yorkshire and Birmingham, he became a great national figure in the campaign against Chamberlain's slogan of "Imperial Preference" or Tariff Reform. In the Liberal Ministry of 1906 he took Cabinet rank for the first time as President of the Board of Trade, an office wherein Canning, Peel and Gladstone laid the foundations of their fame. There, whilst making

extremely Radical and Radical Socialist speeches, he brought off a series of administrative coups placing enormous economic advantages in the hands of the most powerful interests in British capitalism, the railway companies, the shipowners and the coal exporters. Later, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, *i.e.*, Finance Minister, he conducted, with more success, a campaign closely akin to that of Caillaux in France for the taxation of the vested interests. He made ferocious speeches against landed proprietors and brewers, threatening, so to speak, to set the Socialist bull-dog at their throats, and so alarmed them as to induce them more readily to admit his economic allies, the new industrial financiers, to a share in landed and banking properties. The money that he derived from his "socialistic" budgets found its way to the pockets of his economic allies, newly entrenched as manufacturers of armaments. His burning enthusiasm for insurance against accidents, sickness and unemployment translated itself into Workmen's Compensation and Insurance Acts that called into existence new and enormously strengthened existing insurance companies into which his economic allies poured their millions of investment capital and which they soon proceeded to use, as Morgan and Rockefeller had used the great life insurance companies of New York, as means to buying up and syndicating innumerable private enterprises. When the war came his policy put more millions into the pockets of the bankers and the insurance companies, underwriting "war-risks."

In 1915 he became Minister of Munitions, set up a gigantic state-owned or state-controlled system to make stupendous quantities of munitions, and brought in his "big business" friends to manage all the departments of this system. From 1916 to 1920, his economic allies were the absolute masters of industry, commerce and high finance. From 1916 to 1920 he was more than Premier, he was Dictator. In the latter year, the financiers with their money in liquid capital, here and in America, commenced to attack and to subdue the financiers with their money in fixed (and no longer required) capital. Then, when the collapse of trade and industry showed itself, behold Mr. Lloyd George became visibly embarrassed by the Conservative elements in his Coalition Government. Finally, in 1922, the political agents of the creditors of his economic allies held a fateful meeting at the Carlton Club, chose Mr. Bonar Law instead of his political ally, Mr. Chamberlain, as their leader and precipitated "the disaster irretrievable" of the greatest of our living statesmen, *viz.*, his resignation, the General Election and his annihilation as an effective force in British politics.

Mr. Lloyd George is brilliant, Sir Alfred Mond is a scientific organiser of industry, Sir John Simon is eloquent. It does not matter. They have behind them no adequate economic power.



It is not only Mr. Lloyd George and his Liberal associates who have fallen from their dizzy eminence. They have been followed by Mr. Bonar Law. In all probability, they will be joined, before long, in political retirement or eclipse by the man who gave away the fruits of war in the near East to buy "Peace with Dishonour" at Lausanne—the Marquess Curzon.

Mr. Lloyd George, Lord Balfour, Lord Birkenhead, Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Bonar Law and, probably, the Marquess Curzon—such are the men, statesmen of real ability and actual achievement, whom the logic of economic liquidation, of the deflation of industrial finance capital, has relegated to the scrap-heap.

To-day, we have to rule over us, in the name of the King, what is probably the most mediocre Ministry that this country has seen since, in 1831, the *grande bourgeoisie* surrendered the control of Parliament into the outstretched hands of the alliance of merchants and manufacturers led by Earl Grey. True, it has at its head a man of considerable ability, who has risen with inordinate rapidity, accounted for largely by the mediocrity of his associates, to the first rank in the State.

Mr. Baldwin owes his position, very much as did Mr. Bonar Law before him, to his former connection as a business man with the industry most influential in modern capitalist production, *viz.*, steel. There is, however, one characteristic about each of them which requires a notice that it has not hitherto received. Each of them has been, for a time, retired from the active participation in industry.

Mr. Baldwin was, moreover, qualified economically by even stronger claims than those conferred upon him by his former active and his recent and present passive interest in Baldwins, Ltd. He was a director and probably still continues a very large shareholder in the Great Western Railway Company. He was also formerly a director of Lloyds Bank, Ltd.

He is the head of a landed family in Worcestershire which, in a county where during two centuries iron-masters have transformed themselves into landed proprietors, belongs to the later generation of Midlands industrialists who have made great fortunes in the heavy industry. The firm, in which he is now only a passive participant, is associated with all that is richest and most powerful not only in iron and steel, but in all the metal and mining industries whose traditional centre was Birmingham.

His colleagues are men who stand, for the most part, to the right of his own economic and social position and for elements of greater economic retrogression and political backwardness.

Mr. McKenna, his choice for the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whilst a Liberal, belongs to that school within his party whose ideas

date from the days of Gladstone, and is the head of a bank, pre-eminently concerned with merchant capitalism, the exchanges and pure commerce.

The Secretary for War, the Secretary for the Colonies, and the Leader of the House of Lords are all noblemen whose ancestors became peers more than three centuries ago, and who belong to what have been justly called the great governing families of England. The Secretary for India is the grandson of the famous Sir Robert Peel, and removed three generations from active participation in cotton manufacture. His two assistants are lords.

In the House of Commons, occupying the Ministerial Bench, is an array of individuals whose presence there becomes intelligible only when one examines their pedigrees or the pedigrees of their wives. Then the mystery is elucidated and one understands that they are where they are to give effect to the desires of the banking families into which they or their immediate ancestors have married. They belong to a close and select circle within the propertied class, drawn in the main from two public schools, inter-married alike with the aristocracy and the bankers, who, like their relations, have their economic interests in landed estate at home and in the colonies, in every kind of property in the Empire, in the State funds and in railways and mining royalties.

They have passed beyond the stage at which they have the initiative themselves to acquire new wealth by effort either of production or the exercise of managerial functions. They have also in the realms of government only a tradition to maintain, not new standards to establish. They stand, indeed, for tranquillity. Their motto should read like that of the Marquess Curzon, "Let Curzon holde what Curzon helde."

They are akin in economic thought and, indeed, in economic practice to those French capitalists with whose policy in relation to Germany they are in such strong sympathy. They prefer mortgages or, at any rate, an impersonal interest in an enterprise held on their behalf by a bank or a trust company. They prefer an investment, if not in land, in some negotiable instrument which they can transfer at will. They are prepared to receive their income from any part of the world, although for reasons of sentiment and of prejudice they have a passionate pride in "our empire."

They talk in glib but very superficial phrases of the system "which has made us the nation and empire that we are to-day." Their interest goes rather to the development of the Overseas Empire than to the amelioration of conditions at home.

There is one panacea in their minds for every ill that the worker experiences. That is emigration. They have one expedient for

stimulating the export of this human embodiment of labour-power and for the less dynamic commodities. That is "credits."

This same expedient "credits" occurs again and again in every reform measure which they bring forward from housing to agriculture and from unemployment to cotton growing. The very people who never weary of denouncing the intervention of the State in every other direction raise an equally insistent clamour for the State to guarantee the principal and interest of loans for every conceivable purpose.

They never have any money to afford the rate and tax-collectors, but they have unlimited millions to offer if only the State will guarantee to honour their claims should no one else do so. They are prepared to pledge the promise of someone else to make good their empty book-keeping counters to any amount. Their friends and relatives, the bankers, keep a cautious eye upon them and restrict their lavish generosity with wealth uncreated, but the way their brains work is quite evident.

They cannot see the immensity of the problem and the imperative necessity from the point of view of their own security of making colossal sacrifices to steady the tottering fabric of society. They have the "constructive" mentality of Fascism. They would transfer every asset of the State to "private enterprise" in the form of a public utility company or similar undertaking, and put everything but the guarantee of the credit of the State and the suppression of the workers under the control of "private enterprise."

Mr. Lloyd George might as well have whistled to the wind as talked to the Tory benches for any impression he made. They, like some happy innocents on the Labour Party benches, were only able to visualise this Cassandra of capitalist imperialism as a politician out of a job and bartering words for a wind to waft him once more to office.

No party in the State has at once the courage and the power to make even a serious attempt to save civilisation in Great Britain from the catastrophe which already envelops it.

J. T. WALTON NEWBOLD.

## PLEBS and N.C.L.C. SUMMER SCHOOL

Culcheth Hall, Newchurch, nr. Warrington  
August 11th—18th.

*See final particulars in "The Plebs Page" (page 381).*

## The POSITION in the MINING INDUSTRY

*This article and the one on the Railwaymen which follows it are attempts to review recent developments in these two great industries. They will be of interest, not only to workers in those industries, but to all teachers and propagandists who aim—as they ought—at relating their subject-matter to present-day events, and at emphasising the fact of the class struggle by reference to existing conditions.*

### *Development of the Mining Industry*

**T**HE possession of easily accessible supplies of cheap fuel is essential to an industrial nation. England, especially favoured in this respect, climbed—or burrowed!—its way into industrial prominence, and based its economy upon its rich mineral resources. The industrial revolution had its roots in the coal and iron ore resources of this country, the former of which has remained an unfailing source of industrial power. The enormous development of the coal industry from 1870 onwards is indicated by the following table:—

Year.	World Output Million tons.	Output of Great Britain. Million tons.	Great Britain Exports. Million tons.	No. of Men Employed. Great Britain.
1870 .. ..	210	—	—	—
1873 .. ..	—	128	16	626,000
1900 .. ..	800	225	58	776,680
1913 .. ..	1,300	287	98	1,118,000

(Coke and  
Patent Fuel).

The expansion of the coal industry in this country since 1913 has been checked, but before that year the expansion had been rapid. This expansion was stimulated by the growth of the heavy industries and transport system. The opening up of world trade and, later, the export of capital, reacted upon the mining industry and encouraged production. The rate of industrial development in U.S.A. and Germany absorbed practically all their rapidly increasing coal supplies and did not seriously affect Britain's position in the foreign coal trade. In 1913 five-sixths of Britain's exported coal found its way into European markets and the Mediterranean. Germany provided Europe with 30,000,000 tons, but demand moved faster than supply, and the resulting rise in prices during this period made possible wage increases and higher profits.

### *Workers' Organisation*

The expansion of the market from 1870 onwards produced more uniform conditions of sale and wiped out price differences between the various British coalfields. Special district monopolies were distinctly weakened. The miners were being forced towards national organisation, and in 1888 the M.F.G.B. was formed. The importance of the industry quickly brought the new organisation into prominence in the world of labour, and by the use of its industrial and political strength the M.F.G.B. succeeded in gaining for its members a minimum wage and an eight-hour day. Up to 1914 there seemed to be good prospects of a progressive improvement in the lot of the miner, but the war disturbed the even flow of events.

### *1914—21 Developments*

The demands of the Navy and the requirements of munition factories made coal of the first importance as a munition of war. The flow of exports was diverted from normal channels into those dictated by the needs of war. The industry was placed under Government control, and the demands of the M.F.G.B. were largely restricted to securing a wage commensurate with the rapidly increasing cost of living. The price of coal in this country was depressed or prevented from reaching its world price, while our gallant Allies had to pay exorbitant prices for their supplies. Export prices in South Wales during 1920 were as much as five times the pre-war figures. The profits of the industry soared to unheard-of heights in spite of the declining output, aggregate and individual.

National control brought into being national agreements, and, best of all for the miners, the advances were granted on a flat rate basis. At the close of the war the miners determined to make a bid for an all-round betterment of their conditions, and the many abnormalities led to a demand for nationalisation of the mines, an increase of wages, and a six-hour day. The miners were induced to suspend the threat of direct action by an invitation to take part in a Coal Commission which the Government proposed to set up. The interim report of the Commission recommended a rise in wages and a seven-hour day, the rise in wages to operate retrospectively from January, 1919, and the seven-hour day from July, 1919. After two years, if conditions were favourable, a six-hour day was to be introduced. A later majority report recommended State ownership of the mines. This later recommendation, despite the miners' protests and the Government's promises, was not honoured.

Meanwhile the Versailles Treaty was being arranged and trade was booming. "Peace and Plenty" were being restored. The coal trade continued to dispose of its product at high prices. The

Sankey Award (an increase of 2s. per day) was given specifically to improve the condition of the miners, which the Coal Commission had agreed was abominably bad. The rise in the cost of living soon destroyed the effect of this increase and again the miners had to ask for a rise in wages, but at the same time (1920) demanded a reduction in the price of domestic coal. What has come to be known as the Datum Line strike was the result. On November 3rd, 1920, the miners went back to work on an agreement by which wages were regulated upon an output basis—if production increased there would be an increase in wages, if it decreased wages would fall.

The signatures to this agreement had scarcely dried before the coal market began visibly to shrink. The Versailles Treaty coal was pouring into the continental market, coalowners were being left with surplus coal on their hands, and prices were tumbling down. Miners were thrown on the roads and many collieries began to close down or work short time. The Federation's finances were strained by the claims for unemployment pay made by its members.

The conditions were ripe for an attack upon wages and the coalowners were not slow to take advantage of them. The Government, though it had promised to retain control of the mines until August 31st, 1921, suddenly re-introduced competitive conditions by announcing the decontrol of the mines from March 31st, 1921.

The coalowners at once served lock-out notices to expire on March 31st, 1921. The miners were invited to accept wage reductions varying from a few shillings a week in some coalfields to two guineas in South Wales; Yorkshire alone was to escape. The men refused to be driven back into districts each having its own separate wages, each competing for the work of the other, and demanded the establishment of a National Pool as the economic basis for the second demand, the National Wages Board. After a heroic struggle, in which they were unsupported by any other section of the movement, they went back to work with a Government subsidy of £10,000,000 to tide them over the temporary period, after which they were to receive an "economic wage." The agreement which the miners accepted fixed a standard wage and a standard profit. The standard profit, the payment of which in many quarters depends upon circumstances we have no room to detail, was to be equal to 17 per cent. of the standard wage. Any surplus after other costs had been met was to be divided, 83 per cent. to wages and 17 per cent. to profits. So far this agreement has spread to losses rather than profits.

The miners, under the stimulus of starvation, and in many cases by virtually suspending the seven-hour day, have increased the

output. The coalowners, on their part, with the restoration of competitive incentive, have become more efficient taskmasters. The export trade has to some extent recovered, while the home demand still remains weak.

### *The Present Position*

The Versailles Treaty has disturbed the continent as a market for coal. Coalfields have changed hands and the balance of economic power has been shifted from one nation to another. Currencies and values have been so disturbed in all continental countries that it is difficult to estimate trading possibilities from one day to another. France, by invading the Ruhr, has succeeded in impoverishing Europe, but failed to enrich herself to an equal extent. As the iron and steel trades of France and Germany decline—and decline they must until one of them succeeds in reducing the other to submission—Europe as a remunerative coal market must contract. Having been robbed of her coalfields Germany may need to buy coal, but it is not easy to imagine, with the mark as it is to-day, how that need is to be translated into effective demand. Russia, which imported coal from this country in 1913 to the extent of 6,000,000 tons, took less than a million in 1922. The poverty of European countries drives them to seek for inferior substitutes, and Italy consumes peat while Germany consumes lignite. Particularly noticeable is the decline of England's coal export to the Scandinavian countries. In 1922 Norway and Sweden took 4,000,000 tons as compared with 6,500,000 in 1913, and even this amount may lessen with the development of the Spitzbergen coalfield.

Coal has also to face the competition of superior substitutes. The building of smaller naval craft and submarines leads to the consumption of oil. A vessel fitted with a Diesel engine can sail for fifty-seven days without re-bunkering, where a coal-burning ship re-bunkers every fourteen days. Mazut, which the Diesel engine consumes, gives 70 per cent. more heat than coal, is cheaper and occupies less space.

There have been two temporary spurts in the export of coal since the end of the lock-out. The coal trade was stimulated in this country when the American miners struck in 1922; so much so that in South Wales prices rose from 24s. 6d. per ton (f.o.b.) in the beginning of July, to 31s. 9d. (f.o.b.) at the beginning of August, and had fallen to 26s. 6d. (f.o.b.) by the end of September, when the American miners were back at work.

The Ruhr occupation at first produced a similar effect in 1923. Towards the end of February, in South Wales, prices began to climb, and rose from 30s. per ton to 43s. 9d. in April, and fell to

32s. at the end of June. Thus we see the export of coal stimulated by the misfortunes of the American miner and the German nation ; and temporarily aided by French Imperialism. But both booms have disappeared, leaving the market in a depressed condition.

### *American Competition*

Natural advantages and technical efficiency have assisted the rapid development of the American coal industry. Whilst, in this country, individual output still continues to fall and aggregate production has just reached the pre-war level, the U.S.A. has increased individual and total tonnage.

Prior to 1914, American industry absorbed practically the whole of its increasing coal supply. The withdrawal of Britain from the South American coal trade and the abnormal war demand stimulated development in the American bituminous fields. The lure of high profits and the possibility (in America) of early returns attracted large masses of capital. The number of mines rose from 8,000 in 1917 to 14,000 in 1922. Her exportable surplus in 1913 was 20 million tons, but when the war terminated had advanced to 31,000,000 tons. This expansion enabled her, despite the Transatlantic distance, to invade European markets in 1920.

The collapse of prices and the influence of larger British production upon the world's coal market, found America suffering from over production. Many mines with high costs of production ceased to operate. To-day, normal American requirements are estimated at 500,000,000 tons per annum, whilst the industry can supply 800,000,000 tons. Some of the surplus coal has been consumed by the internal boom. The revival has apparently attained its highest point and signs of decline are not wanting. The fall in the home demand will force the flow of coal into export channels. Transport economies are rapidly being introduced and attempts will be made to reduce wage costs during the present year. Last year's struggle has weakened the miners, and the possibilities of successful resistance are very remote, especially now that the mine-owners have divided the workers in the anthracite and bituminous areas.

A fall in productive and distributive costs and the demand from the miners for an increased number of working days every year will strengthen America's already strong position in the export trade. The conversion of America into a creditor nation tends to stimulate her import trade ; and her shipping policy of becoming a carrier nation will make coal more necessary for her foreign trade.

### *Internal Demand*

Substantial increases in the British trade are only possible with



the growth of the home demand. In 1913, England consumed 75 per cent. (214,000,000 tons) of her total production in the following order: iron and steel, 1-6th; railways, 1-12th; factories, 1-3rd; gas works, 1-10th; and domestic consumption, 1-5th. In 1922, 191,000,000 tons were consumed.

In all previous depressions, the recovery of the coal trade has followed the heavy industries. To-day the position is reversed. The expansion of the mining industry and the poverty of the miners is the condition for industrial recovery. Speaking at the last quarterly meeting of the Association of the British Chambers of Commerce, Mr. North Lewis stated "that as a coalowner he thoroughly appreciated the burden which the high price of coal was casting upon industry. But if coal to-day was invoiced at the bare cost of production, without allowing anything for the huge capital expenditure in the industry, it would still be an intolerable burden upon industry."

With the general decline in wages and the shortage of housing accommodation, the domestic demand is lower than it might have been. In the past, the home market, especially the domestic consumer, was used to subsidise export prices. To-day, this is impossible, thereby further weakening the competitive power of the industry upon the foreign market.

### *The Possibilities of Revival*

With the contraction of markets on the continent, the utilisation of inferior and superior fuel substitutes, the weakened condition of the home demand and the growing competitive power of the U.S.A., it is improbable that industry, organised as it is to-day, can yield sufficient revenue to guarantee the increases which the miners require. The recent rise in the bank rate suggests that the belief in an immediate trade revival has been shaken.

### *Remedies*

The capitalist view is that Labour should bear the brunt of the depression. The coalowners suggest that increased output, through the re-introduction of the eight-hour day, will provide a solution.

Owing to the intensification of labour due to the introduction of machinery and slave conditions in the mine, aggregate production has practically reached the pre-war position. However, the relation between miners employed at the coal-face and those engaged in hauling, repairing, winding and screening has changed. In 1913 the ratio was 1,000 miners to 1,118 other workmen, by 1922 it was 1,000 to 1,520. During the post-war artificial boom the proportion was greater, but since then all unproductive labour has been eliminated. The explanation of this change lies in the fact

that as the mines become older a greater quantity of supplementary labour is required.

To compare the position of the hewer—in 1913 his production was 549 tons (approx.), by 1922 it had increased to 589 tons. Intensification has been so great that it will be impossible to provide a corresponding increase in the production of coal with the acceptance of an eight-hour day. The hewers will receive no increase in wages; rather, with the withdrawal of the one-seventh increase in wages, which was given to pieceworkers when the seven-hour day became operative, it will be difficult to increase production to such an extent as to compensate for its disappearance. Neither is there any likelihood of the wages of the other workmen being increased.

If the desire of the owners is simply increased production and cheaper coal, they can get these by immediately giving effect to the economies in production, distribution and consumption suggested by the Coal Commission.

### *The Miners' Attitude*

At their Annual Conference, the miners have recognised the improbability of any immediate increase in the revenue of the industry. Capitalist control is largely responsible for existing starvation conditions. The two exceptional boom periods have, it is true, demonstrated the unfair operation of the present agreement. It has been shown that providing the industry expanded the miners would not receive an appreciable increase in wages until the coalowners got £23,000,000 in profit (the average annual profit 1908-13 was £13,000,000), whilst both parties would share the surplus revenue. These figures explain why Mr. Baldwin appreciates the agreement as a profit sharing scheme.

So the miners demand an alteration in the ratio of profits to wages and the increase of standard of life to pre-war level. Improvements are demanded upon a district basis, all ideas of national regulation of wages being abandoned for the present. Whilst to-day a national agreement would yield no wage benefit, as it promised to do in 1921, its unifying value remains and would prepare the industry, economically and psychologically, for a further step towards nationalisation. The national agreement idea must still be kept in the foreground. If the market becomes worse, it might lead to competition between the various districts, which would have a disastrous effect upon the national organisation.

Unification is the only sensible remedy. Its necessity is proved by the recent amalgamations of coal companies. Control of industry by the workers is the only incentive which can provide willing workers in the mines. Nationalisation is but a partial solution.

The present condition of the international market will still exercise its sway. At present, the need for international action is greater than ever, and it is hoped that the bitter experience of international black-legging will lead to measures for the control of coal supplies during strikes. Such a situation reveals the ever present competition, which cannot finally be eliminated until complete control is exercised in times of peace and war. International action upon industrial lines is imperative.

At home, the technical tie which binds the mining and other industries together, has become stronger with the struggle for international power. In Britain and America railway costs are being lowered to increase the competitive power of coal and other commodities. Other classes of workers are being drawn into the struggle from which they can emerge triumphantly only with the complete consolidation of all our industrial forces.

D. L. J. B.

## The Railwaymen's NEXT STEP

### What is it to be ?

**P**RIOR to the war the railwaymen of this country were in the lowest paid strata of the workers. An industry that could only claim to pay an average weekly wage of under 27s., which also included in its ranks more than 100,000 adult workers who were getting less than 20s. for a week's labour, and which had an average working week of sixty hours, could hardly boast of being a highly paid industry.

But while the employees were existing upon what may be rightly called a starvation wage, the fortunate individuals who possessed shares in the railway undertakings were waxing fat upon profits and dividends. According to a report in the *Times* (17/2/23) three of the leading trunk lines—the G.W., L. & N.W., and Midland—paid in 1913 an average dividend of 6 $\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. on ordinary shares, which can be looked upon as a fair rate of return upon such securities.

#### 1914—18

During the war years the cost of living gradually soared higher and higher; the Unions which catered for the railwaymen had the satisfaction of gaining for their members a slight increase to compensate for the high cost of living, but it was not until 1917, however, that the wages of railway employees managed to top the cost-of-living figures to the extent of approximately 3.2 per cent.,

*Decontrol—and Whitleyism*

In August, 1921, the decontrol of railways was accomplished without any dispute. The Government put forward a plan for workers' representation on the railway directorates, but this plan was dropped by agreement, and the National Wages Board and the Central Wages Board became statutory bodies. Local, Sectional and Railway Councils were set up as consultative bodies on each railway, much after the scheme of a Whitley Council. The Scottish companies put forward a demand for a reduction of wages (average 5s. that had been secured through the N.W.B. in 1920), a discontinuance of the extra allowance for night duty, and an increase in the hours of labour. The N.W.B. decided to increase the fall in wages from 1s. to 2s. upon the fall in the cost of living of a full five points, and also a "spread over" of nine and ten hours as a day's work. In the early part of 1922 this decision was made applicable to the English and Welsh railways. The principle of the eight-hour day was seriously endangered.

*The Shopmen*

In September, 1922, the railway shopmen had also to accept a 10s. reduction in their weekly wages. This was largely brought about by the division in the rank and file. The engineers, defeated in the earlier part of the year, were not in a position to retain for the shopmen conditions that the majority of their members had already lost. There were engaged in the negotiations at the time thirty-five Unions—thirty coming under the Federation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Trades, three in the National Federation of General Workers, and also the Building Workers and the N.U.R. Great divisions exist in the ranks of the Unions concerned. All the Unions outside the N.U.R. and N.F.G.W.U. are craft unions, and most of them advocates of the district rate. The N.U.R., on the other hand, is an industrial organisation and advocates a national basis for wages. These divisions were shown during the negotiations and were the chief instruments in bringing about the reduction. The N.U.R. stood out for some time against the reduction, and it was made abundantly clear that industrial organisation was more fitted to meet the desires of the rank and file. In July, 1922, the conditions of service and rates of pay were standardised, but very few advantages were gained outside this principle.

*The Grouping of the Railways*

During this period a new feeling was developing among the rank and file of the railway organisation, a development that can be traced to the grouping system of railways, the Bill to institute which was then before the House of Commons. The grouping

system was brought into existence to bridge to a certain extent the gap between private and State ownership. Under the Railways Act of 1921 the railways were by law amalgamated and formed into certain groups, each group being responsible for a certain area of the country. Four groups were formed, each consisting of certain trunk and subsidiary lines. This amalgamation scheme came into operation on January 1st, 1923. The share that the workers had in the new form of railway organisation was vested in :—

- (1) *Local Departmental Committees* which are set up at every station where seventy-five or more railwaymen are employed. The objects of these committees are to provide means of communication between the employees and the local officials and to give the employees a wider interest in the conditions under which their work is performed. The matters with which these committees deal are :—Satisfactory arrangements of working hours, safety appliances, first aid, holiday arrangements, etc. Four railwaymen and four railway officials form the committee.
- (2) *Sectional Railway Councils*. Not more than five of these to be set up on each railway. Twelve representatives of the workers and twelve representatives of the Railway Company form the personnel. Their functions consist in the local application of National agreements relating to salaries, wages, hours of duty and conditions of service ; suggestions as to operating and working, etc., and matters referred to them by the Local Departmental Committees.
- (3) *Railway Councils*. A Council is established for each railway, composed of not more than ten representatives from each side. Its functions consist in matters similar to those dealt with by the Sectional Councils, but which cannot be adequately dealt with by them, also matters submitted to them from the Sectional Councils.
- (4) *Central Wages Board*, consisting of eight representatives of the Railway Companies and eight representatives of the Trade Unions, four N.U.R., two A.S.L.E. and F., and two R.C.A. It deals with all questions appertaining to rates of pay, hours of duty and conditions of service. If this Board fails to agree on any matter referred to it, all such matters are referred to the
- (5) *National Wages Board*, which consists of an Independent Chairman, six representatives of the Companies, six representatives of the Railway Trade Unions (two each from the N.U.R., A.S.L.E. & F., and R.C.A.), and one from each of the following :—Trades Union General Council, Co-operative Union, Association of British Chambers of Commerce and the F.B.I. The four latter represent the users of the Railways. The N.W.B. deals with all questions referred to it from the C.W.B. No strike can be declared until the period of twenty-eight days has expired after the contentious matter has been referred to the N.W.B.

The Local Departmental Committees, Sectional Railway Councils and Railway Councils cannot arrive at any agreement which is contrary to the decisions of the N.W.B. and C.W.B. In contradistinction to the mere advisory capacity under which the workers now sit on these various bodies they have begun to recognise the need for control of their own working conditions. Resulting from this new movement a scheme was put forward by the District Councils of the N.U.R. for complete control of the industry, but it was

rejected by the Annual Delegate Meeting in 1922. Railwaymen are beginning to recognise the insufficiency of demands for increased wages and better conditions, when most of these are lost in slump periods. More fundamental changes are desired, something that will guarantee a fair standard of life. This can only be brought about by a change in ownership, so this new movement should be encouraged.

Whilst railwaymen are being gradually won over to this new theory, they are confronted with further and more determined attacks on the conditions of their employment. For some months past the companies have been pressing for a modification in the conditions of employment of the Conciliation grades, and for a decrease in the shopmen's wages of 6s. 6d. per week. The shopmen's problem approached a crisis when the N.U.R. at a special delegate meeting in March, 1923, decided that they would neither negotiate about nor accept any reduction in the wages of their shopmen members. This decision was arrived at in spite of the willingness of other Trade Unions to accept the reduction. Afterwards the craft unions concerned fell into line with the N.U.R. decision. The demands concerning Conciliation grades have been continually put off, but within the last month the attack has been renewed. The companies desire the abolition of practically all the improvements gained during Labour's advance. No explanation is forthcoming except that it is necessary to reduce freightage rates. Financially the companies are in a better position than ever before, their reserves since 1914 have been increased by 706 per cent., the average profits paid in 1922 on the ordinary shares of the three companies mentioned in the beginning of this article was 8 per cent. The question again arises as to who is to pay for the reduced freightage—the companies or the workers?

### *The Next Step?*

Can the railwaymen present a united front against the attack? The difficulty about craft unionism remains as it has been for years, a festering sore in the side of any movement for unity inside the railway shops. Outside of this department the question does not present much difficulty. The R.C.A. and A.S.L.E. & F. will without doubt fall in with any move made by the N.U.R. Even in the shops, grave as the position is, a great deal could be done if a strong lead was given by the N.U.R. Railwaymen must fight for their hard won conditions. But their leaders do not intend to fight. Mr. J. H. Thomas is the embodiment of conciliation. His disregard of the controlling body of the N.U.R. with reference to their decision to strike if the shopmen's conditions were attacked, and his utterances both in public and to his own organisation, show

that his desire is for peace in the railway industry at any cost to the workers. He is a staunch advocate of co-operation with the masters. He believes that the lion should lie down with the lamb.

We believe that such a policy is not only against the railwaymen's interests, but that in following it the railwaymen would let down their fellows. The companies' demands must be resisted; the line of retreat must be consolidated at the point at which it now stands. For one section of the workers to accept a reduction will mean ultimately a reduction for all. The rank and file of the railwaymen can and must repel the attack, and if they do so they will have rendered a great service to the working class of this country. The spirit of Trades Unionism will revive and become once again the strongest weapon in the hands of the working class.

F. A. & L. G. F.

## The PASSING of a PIONEER

### "TED" GILL.

#### Died July, 1923.

**T**HE independent working-class educational movement in this country is poorer to-day by the loss of Captain, or to all who knew him, "Ted" Gill.

He was one of the most prominent of the founders of the Central Labour College. He was at Ruskin College during the fateful years 1907-8, when the Plebs League was founded and the groundwork prepared for the establishment of the C. L. C. To him belongs the distinction of inducing the Western Valleys Miners to establish the first scholarship from the South Wales Miners' Federation, and I will never forget the enthusiasm with which the result was received by the small band who were pioneering the Movement. No great Parliamentary election result—such as Grayson winning Colne Valley, when the Lefts were shouting that we were on the threshold of the millennium; and no great industrial success—such as the Minimum Wage Act, 1912, had quite the same thrill for me as the winning of the Western Valleys Miners for the Labour College. From then on we marched from success to success until we had cleared all the Federation students from Ruskin College and had sent enough students to the C. L. C. to give the Movement a solid fighting chance to establish itself.

In all this Ted Gill was an invaluable asset. He had the rare gift of presenting his case in such a plausible, suave, and yet forcible manner, that long-standing opponents after once hearing him became ardent supporters of our Movement.

In those days the bogey in fashion against the College was that we were Syndicalists and Industrial Unionists, and that our main object was to smash the Trade Union movement. Ted, in his inimitable manner, would quietly, and without passion, enunciate the principles underlying our movement, and when it was patent that he had won his audience he would calmly announce that all he had been saying was described by our opponents by the above terrifying labels. His sincerity disarmed opposition; his plausibility carried conviction; and his passion for our principles inspired enthusiasm. His motto was "get results," and he achieved a great number.

It is almost axiomatic that anyone who propagates new principles inevitably makes enemies. If that be so, then Ted was the exception that proved the rule. During the sixteen years it was my good fortune to know him, I have never heard a really malicious or very bad thing said about him either by friend or foe. His criticisms were generally tempered by generosity and respect for his opponents, and he had the art of making them feel that they were really good fellows who, on this only occasion, had gone astray. In short, he was a natural "pal."

When the Central Labour College was established, Ted was made a member of the Board of Management, a position which he retained until he severed his connection with the South Wales Miners' Federation in 1914.

During all this period he was a teacher of classes, a propagandist travelling most of the South Wales branches, always putting in a word for the College. His pen and voice was always at our service. Many times did he champion our cause at the Trades Union Congress and other National Conferences.

We shall not forget him.

NOAH ABLETT.

## THANK YOU!

"When I feel down in the dumps and fed up with everything, it is The PLEBS that revives my enthusiasm. Wishing it every success!" (*J. S., Manchester*).

"The PLEBS gets better—if that is possible—every month." (*G. G., Stafford*).

## WE WANT NEW SUBSCRIBERS



## NOW, N.U.D.A.W.ers !

*The National Organiser of the N.U.D.A.W. here makes an appeal to the Union's rank and file—and to all N.C.L.C.ers—to pull together in making the new scheme a success.*

**T**HE N.U.D.A.W. has adopted the I.W.-C.E. scheme not mainly as a result of rank and file pressure, but with the lead of the Executive Council, whose scheme has been adopted. While this is satisfactory in that it ensures the co-operation of all officials in the work, there is a danger that the Union members may regard the whole plan as something to be carried through by Central Office. In that case, the best traditions of the I.W.-C.E. movement would not be maintained ; for it essentially exists to supply the rank and file with just the kind of education that they want. But if the scheme is taken up enthusiastically by the N.U.D.A.W. branches, an enormous impetus will be given to the whole movement.

The Co-operative side of the N.U.D.A.W., which constitutes the largest bulk of the membership, has certain definite advantages for work of this kind. There is hardly a town or village without a co-operative society and, consequently, some members of the N.U.D.A.W. Most co-operative societies grant the use of their halls or rooms for Trade Union or educational work among the employees, and so the question of meeting-place is not a difficulty.

Moreover, in the smaller villages the co-operative employees are often the only persons who can undertake labour work without fear of victimisation, and this places them in a strong position for helping along such a movement as that of the Labour Colleges. After all it is not the large towns which already have educational schemes in operation where N.U.D.A.W. members can contribute most, but in all those smaller places where the need is so great and the opportunities so few.

These classes should not be N.U.D.A.W. classes only. The funds supplied by the Union, and the Union members in the locality ought to be the nucleus around which any other workers who need such education can group themselves.

If any worried branch secretary impatiently asks what is the good of all this, let me refer him to the experiences of the great C.W.S. strike and boycott. Wherever there were class-conscious workers to give the lead, men who understood the fundamentals of class solidarity, there was no trouble about the boycott. Such men acted as centres around which all the vague enthusiasm of the weaker branches could gather, and that enthusiasm was harnessed to practical

"the curriculum *has* been revised"; and Comrade Millar says there is no trouble apart from the few critics who convince themselves that a "substantial minority of the workers know all about the class struggle and that all they need is a practical programme to rush the revolution into existence in about twelve months." So the Bad Bolshevik Bogy of the *Daily Mail* has got into the Labour College in the form of "the few critics." This exhibition of "Marxians" with the wind up when a discussion is afoot is really delightful! If only the weather was cooler one could laugh more heartily!

Two things are evident up to now. First, annoyance because someone has asked them to think things over a bit. Second, the prejudice of the craft-unionist in education against the new-comer in the form of the Communist Party. The first one can dismiss with a chuckle. The other shows quite clearly that there has been little consideration given to the role of a worker's revolutionary party in the class struggle. This applies not only to Plebs' League and Labour Colleges, but to all sections. The study of parties has been relegated to Party politics as if it were only a question as to which label one had to wear instead of a most serious question to the workers. Even if we accepted the opinion put forward by a number of Plebeians that the Colleges, etc., are preparatory schools for the parties, the least that ought to be done is to prepare the students to make a choice by a thorough study of working-class parties and the kind of party required to exercise efficient leadership in the class struggle. But this is not done and it is a most serious defect in the armoury of those who claim to be teaching the workers "how to wage the class struggle."

The Plebs and Labour College position was aptly described by Comrades E. and C. Paul, in the July PLEBS—"It is therefore (though by no means 'anarchistic' in trend) somewhat alien in sympathy from anything that calls itself a political party and operates (in part) on the parliamentary field."

This attitude is neither Marxian nor true to the interests of the workers. It leads to the notions expressed repeatedly in the letters directed against my article, of "one organisation, one job"—the party to emphasise, the classes to teach—just as if a political party striving for the leadership of the working class, or actually leading it, could leave out of its scope the question of working-class education and relegate it to an organisation of mixed political views. Such a course is inconceivable for a party based upon the class struggle. The I.L.P. learned this long ago, and set about winning the leadership of the Labour Party and Trades Unions. The syndicalist elements within the Labour Colleges and Plebs League dominate them, and it is these who resent the new competitor. The

advent of the Communist Party has roused the wrath of both sections. The I.L.P. are the most bitter opponents of the C.P. in the Labour Party, and the syndicalists and I.L.P. are the most bitter opponents in the Plebs and Labour College. They are fearful of a competitor for power and immediately proceed to misinterpret and misrepresent the policy of the C.P. under the plea of "neutrality."

The Communist Party does not seek to issue orders to the Plebs League or the Labour Colleges, saying do this or do that. Nor does the Party seek to do this to the unions. It seeks to win the membership of these organisations to its political faith and policy; by an ideological victory to secure an organic victory. That is why I do not support Comrades E. and C. Paul in their proposal to the Communist International. The immaturity and youthfulness of many of our parties makes it imperative that these get to grips with Marxism.

In this immediate task, which of necessity must stress the importance of the role of the Party, we are faced with the fact that many of our Party members have been trained in the Plebs and Labour Colleges, and are expressing the notions exemplified in this correspondence—essentially anti-party notions. Instead of the Plebs and Labour Colleges having been a preparatory school for a Marxian party we are finding that some of the stiffest opposition to the development of the Party comes from them in the name of Marxism. Because of this fact I wrote my article, to shift the discussion entirely from that of a wrangle between two organisations to that of a discussion of Marxist education. I knew full well that it would be bound to bring out the theoretical conceptions which are the background of the Labour College and Plebs movement. This it has done, but not in a very creditable fashion. It has shown clearly, although I did not raise the question, that a non-Marxian conception as to the role of the Party has considerable support.

But more. May I repeat a little of what I wrote in April:—

The extent to which events themselves have shattered the main tenets which we held prior to the Russian revolution indicates the nature of the change which the movement is undergoing . . . [We used to think that] the most advanced countries will be the first to make the revolution. This was the basis upon which the most revolutionary sections built their theories and they looked to America to lead the way. And the route—the ballot box plus industrial might. Those who were not parliamentarian in the reformist sense stressed industrial organisation and leaned towards the theory of the growth of workers' industrial organisations to such dimensions that this would emerge out of capitalism much as the butterfly emerges from the chrysalis.

Then I proceeded to say that the actualities of the revolutionary epoch had swept these notions away, and pleaded for a revaluation of our educational material.

But all that is forthcoming up to now, apart from the outburst of grievances against the Communist Party, is the reply of the custodian of Marxism in the Central Labour College. Comrade Craik puts out nonsense about "ready made roads to the revolution," and writes as follows:—"Murphy elevates to the dignity of a fundamental elementary fact that emancipation is impossible without the conquest of power. Such phrases are precisely the sort of 'abstraction' which as he himself says 'obscure the dynamics of the class struggle.'" Then Comrade Craik manifests his "concrete" wisdom about the road to an "abstraction"—"Education" he says "is concerned with the *road to power*."

Exactly. Then this fundamental fact will not obscure the road but illuminate it, and place the dynamics of the struggle in proper perspective. That is both Marxian wisdom and commonsense.

But having been too clever with the "concrete" and the "abstract" he makes some endeavour to get to grips with the revolution; listen—"There is still truth in the statement that the most advanced countries in capitalism have a leading part to play in the making of revolution. It is still true that a successful social revolution is intimately connected with a high stage of technical development. The Russian revolution has not shattered that main tenet."

Let us examine this statement, which falls into two parts. First, what is the leading part which the advanced countries are playing in the revolution? As a matter of plain fact, the advanced countries are playing the *leading reactionary* part in the revolutionary epoch and are likely to do so until their workers have conquered political power. (Or shall I say "conquered the fundamental abstraction?") Further, the workers have conquered power first in Russia and will most probably conquer power in America the last. The advanced countries are not therefore playing the leading role in the revolution, because the spread and development of revolution depend upon the spread of instability in capitalism. Its outworks fall before its principal forts. It is obvious, therefore, if our theories have been built on the opposite notion, as expounded by Craik, that there will be considerable need for revision.

Now to the second part of Craik's statement as to the relation of high technique to a successful social revolution. Who has ever disputed—certainly not the Communist International—that the development of technique is related to the revolution? But if Craik means to say that the capitalist class cannot be overthrown until every country has a high technique, then the Russian revolution flatly contradicts him. If he means, however, that to have a fully developed Communist Society, a necessary prerequisite is a high technique, then we are in agreement. But there is nothing in his

article to show that he does mean this. His remarks are made in a way to cast reflections upon the Communists for having upset his calculations and managed a revolution in Russia before it had gone through a full development of Western capitalism. Much as this may be annoying to one's theories, it is a fact which relegates the question of high technique to one of varying value in the political struggle of the classes. Its development produces a greater proletariat, and also strengthens the state power of the capitalist class in its resistance to the proletariat. It facilitates the solution of economic problems when the workers have taken power, but makes the job of getting power infinitely harder. Hence it is that the Western proletariat have a harder job than the Russians to capture power, and an easier economic task than the Russians when they have got it.

Our position was repeated very clearly by Comrade Trotsky at the Fourth Congress of the Communist International. He said:—

The possibilities of the upbuilding of socialist economic system, when the essential conquest of political power has been achieved, are limited by various factors; by the degree to which the productive forces have been developed; by the general cultural level of the proletariat; and by the political situation upon a national and upon an international scale. We have learned in the elementary school of Marxism that there is no possibility of making one leap from a capitalist society to a socialist one. Nor did any one of us believe that it would be possible with one leap to move into the realm of freedom. Not one of us ever believed that a new society could be built twixt night and morning.

Up to the conquest of political power by the proletariat and the successful suppression of the capitalist class questions of technique, type of working-class education, industrial struggles, must be related to and subordinate to political expediency. Had these things been fully realised by those claiming the name of Marxians in this country it would not have proved so difficult to build a Communist Party. Nor should we be finding it necessary to debate the relations which should exist between the Communist Party and such organisations as the Plebs Leaguers and Labour Colleges. The need for a thorough overhauling is clearer than ever, and I hope this discussion will continue.

J. T. MURPHY.

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Our Thrilling Serial

## DICK O' HULLABALOO

By Ermytrude Pogson Pogson

*The instalment of our Workers' Serial published last month not having been received with the tumult of applause we had hoped for, we have decided to try, try again. Here, accordingly, is a Thrilling chapter from a story in another vein—the Herald-Historical.*

## SYNOPSIS OF EPISODES I—LXXXVIII.

In the year 1780, Sir Jasper Browbeat, a wealthy landowner, came of age and into the Browbeat estates. Being rather a lad, he has secretly married most of the girls of the village, and when our story opens is busily engaged avoiding the natural complications. In 1781 he publicly marries Lady Anne de Pandey, and turns over a new leaf. In 1790, coal is discovered on the Browbeat estates, and shafts are immediately sunk. The boys of the village, mostly miscellaneous sons of Sir Jasper's, are sent to work in the pits.

In 1802, several of them come of age and decide to revolt. They go in a body to interview their master, who is terrified lest his wife should recognise the deputation's strong likeness to himself in features, colour of hair, chest measurements and rich baritone voices. He sends for the dragoons, who disperse the deputation in 1803.

In 1810, the dragoons are still chasing the men. Our hero, affectionately known as Dick o' Hullabaloo, because of his gentle disposition, is now seven years old. He is the son of one of the 1802 deputation and therefore the grandson of Sir Jasper. (Be sure to keep tight hold of all these relationships.)

## EPISODE LXXXIX.

**T**HE little Lady Petunia, youngest child of Sir Jasper and the Lady Anne, had lost her way in the wood. Her richly caparisoned steed had galloped madly into the thickest glades of the forest and only now paused in its mad career because it had caught sight of the handsome form of Dick o' Hullabaloo lying asleep across the path.

The Lady Petunia saw the boy, too, and flicking him lightly over the face with her whip, said, in the quaint jargon of those days, "Canst direct me to the road, boy, for fain would I journey thither."

For the space of a second Dick's face flushed darkly as he observed the rich silks and laces of the fair young thing who gazed haughtily down upon him from her milk-white steed. Was it for these gew-gaws that he had to work sixteen hours a day and usually some overtime? (He was playing truant to-day.) Then, remembering the lessons he had learned at his mother's knee, his

face assumed a forgiving expression and he said, "Fain would I direct ye to the road leading to human brotherhood, lady, for the rank is but the guinea's stamp, the man's the gowd for a' that, as Scotia's sweet singer has so well put it. But perchance ye care naught for such thoughts, and wish only to live out a selfish life, surrounded by silks and satins, classical and modern music, recitations, and dancing. O my lady, be warned in time, and seek rather to promote the good cause of human fellowship."

He would have said more, but you must remember he was only seven, and he hadn't done badly for seven, had he?

The Lady Petunia was touched by his words.

"I mustn't stay any longer this morning," she said, "for there is a banquet toward at the Castle this noon, and 'twould grieve my father were I to miss the hors d'œuvres. But here, boy," she went on, taking a coin from her richly emboidered girdle, "is a shilling for thy courtesy."

Dick drew himself up proudly, and clenched both hands.

"Dick o' Hullabaloo touches no Browbeat silver," he said in his clear, ringing voice, so loudly that all the rabbits came out to see what the row was about. "He touches not the blood-money wrung from the slavery of the common people. Keep your ill-gotten gains, daughter of a flint-hearted father, and offer not your charity to a free Engerlishman."

So saying he strode proudly away.

Little did the boy know—as the reader will know, if he has learned those relationships thoroughly—that he had been talking to his  **aunt** !! . . . .

# THE PLEBS

## REVIEWS

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### MONKEYS AND HOUSES

*Rent, Rings and Houses.* By G. D. H. and Margaret Cole (The Labour Publishing Company, Ltd., ls.).

EVERYONE is familiar with the problem of whether a person walking round a pole upon which is perched a monkey who turns so as continually to face him, goes round the monkey or not. The answer is believed to be in the negative. Some such problem occurs to one on reading this information-packed little book by the Coles, where in the first chapter an argument is set out in favour of State subsidies for housing. Dealing with the case that we must build down to the prevailing low wages it is urged that if wages are too low to pay for reasonable houses, wages must be raised, and, till they rise, houses must be let at less than an economic rent. "Building bad houses perpetuates low wages." Which may be true; but so do State-subsidies, and, moreover, wages have been drastically reduced in most industries in spite of stationary rents and a house famine, which seems to suggest that the capitalist monkey is always crafty enough to keep his back side well out of sight. If there is anything at all in the argument it would seem rather to be in favour of high rents to encourage the payment of good wages, only the theory, like most others, does not seem to work with precision.

This production, however, is not one to pick to pieces for the sake of trying to find out a few minor economic flaws, but one that can be thoroughly recommended as a handy and, in its own way, comprehensive guide to the housing question. Statistics crowd its pages so far as they deal historically with housing shortage and practically with costs, etc., but style and arrangement throughout are excellently adapted for propaganda use. Within the space of fewer than a hundred pocket pages there is hardly an aspect of the housing problem overlooked, while adequate authority is quoted for every statement of fact made. There is a useful summary of Housing Acts from 1890 in the form of an appendix.

Little that is fresh is to be found in the authors' conclusions; that is to say, it is not pretended that short cuts and patent ways for solution of the housing problem are available. Houses are the only remedy for the want of them. Naturally, the Building Guilds come in for favourable notice in reference to direct housing schemes, and certain revisions of Local Government powers and areas are suggested on the lines of G. D. H. Cole's *The Future of Local Government* with regard to facilities for good communal town-planning.

GEORGE HICKS.

### THE WORLD'S NEXT STEP

*The Next Step: A Plan for Economic World Federation.* By Scott Nearing (Labour Publishing Co., 2s.6d.).

Scott Nearing's book is somewhat disappointing. It opens with a *plea* for economic world federation, which is excellently done, and contains a good many facts, figures, and arguments likely to be useful to lecturers on Imperialism and Economic Geography; and then goes on to a *plan* for same, which is so solemn as to be slightly ridiculous. It is one thing to put—and put well—the case for world organisation of world production and distribution; and another to work out an elaborate scheme—complete with diagram—of Administrative Boards, World Executive Committees (consisting of ten per cent. of World Parliament) Boards of Managers, Major Industrial Groups, and so on. Nearing has even amused himself to the extent of arranging that the voting by the workers in each of the Major Industrial Groups for their representatives in the World Parliament would take place "in June of each year," and the Parliament "meets in July." And there is more than a hundred pages of this very Utopian talky-talky.

The first two chapters, on the other hand, are really worth while. They deal with concrete facts—not too well realised even in the workers' movement. And perhaps half-a-crown is not dear for these fifty pages.

J. F. H.

## TROTSKY IN FLIGHT

*My Flight from Siberia.* By L. Trotsky (Young Communist League, 36, Lamb's Conduit Street, W.C. 1, 1s. 6d.).

This book, as compared with the *Theses and Statutes and Debates and Resolutions* is really good revolutionary propaganda. It helps to catch the imagination and mind of the workers. Unless we can make the average man realise that Communism is a great adventure, to show him the romantic side of revolution and fire him with some enthusiasm, we can drone out our formulas until the printing press breaks; no one will listen. First catch your worker—and he will more likely be caught by the tales of past fights and what men have done than by all the "correct analyses" in the world.

This book is a small but very good specimen of the right kind of Communist literature. Trotsky's own readable and simple account of his escape from Siberia will be read by many who could not be tempted by anything else.

I hope there will be many more in the same series. Some are announced which sound interesting.

B. P.

## THE CRUSADES

*The Crusades.* By Ernest Barker (Oxford University Press. 2s. 6d.).

This book is a reprint of an article in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* with "the style much improved." (What it was before, God knows.) It suffers mainly from obscurity. Dr. Barker is a man of great learning and he has tried to pack too many facts into a very small book. His style is dull from too much matter, and abundance of names and dates prevents anyone gaining a clear idea of the whole period.

If in this space Dr. Barker had consented to give two-thirds of the material he has done, he would have produced a really valuable manual. He gives proper weight to the economic basis of the Crusades and he clearly knows his subject inside out. Indeed he knows it almost too well and forgets that some of us might like the quotations in Old French, Monkish Latin, and High German, translated.

In the bibliography we notice these words concerning the chronicler William of Tyre:—

"His temper was naturally that of the trimmer, and he had thus many qualifications for the writing of un-biassed history."

These are golden words that should be tattooed upon the forehead of every lecturer for the W.E.A.

P.

## IRELAND, 1910-21

*The Irish Revolution and How it Came About.* By William O'Brien (Allen and Unwin, 16s.).

Horace Plunkett once said that Irish history should be forgotten by the Irish and learnt by the English. If we cannot agree with the first part of the statement—because we do not think Irish history should begin with co-operative creameries—the latter part is certainly true. And no portion is so significant as the 1910 to July, 1921, period treated in this book.

McLaine and W. Paul have made small raids upon Irish history and given us small pamphlets. W. P. Ryan, who used to be responsible for the notices given to Sinn Fein poetlets in the *Daily Herald*, is all too vague in his *Irish Labour Movement*; his last chapters make one feel that he was incapable of explaining the division between Larkin and Connolly after the memorable dispute of 1913. Connolly's *Labour in Irish History* is far the best book for past developments, and his *Reconquest of Ireland* reveals how he was influenced by the Plunkett ideas of co-operation between the small Irish farmers and the town workers. Impressionistic accounts of the Easter Rebellion (1916) are many, but apart from too general references to the Irish question in discussions of Labour and Nationalism nothing has been done to make clear Irish happenings. Many Plebeians who could tell one about Marat and Robespierre, and, say, the difference between Longuet and Marcel Cachin, would be "stumped" by questions about Wolf Tone and Mitchell, or the present difference between Johnston and Larkin.

T. A. Jackson is reported to have in manuscript an unfinished history of Ireland. We beseech him to lighten our darkness. Meanwhile O'Brien, with



ervations, will help. For he is the anticipator turned narrator. O'Brien was the member for Cork, which was the second greatest industrial and commercial centre in Ireland until it was displaced in the latter half of the nineteenth century by Belfast. Cork's industrial greatness is significant in explaining how O'Brien in 1910 founded the Middle Party—the All-for-Ireland League—between the rabid Nationalist and Catholic Hibernians on the one hand and the Protestant Orangemen on the other. The League stood for conciliation of all Irish creeds and classes.

Middle parties always cut a sorry figure in history. However, their members, never having been strong enough to undertake power and be tested, can always talk in *what-might-have-beens* and *we-told-you-so*. Mr. O'Brien is no exception. In making this *apologia*, Mr. O'Brien tells us a great deal from inside knowledge about the scurvy ricks of the Liberal and Nationalist politicians. Imperialist Britain is transparent before his X-Rays. The Curragh incident and the Ulster gunrunning, with the "Fanny" and its 20,000 German and Austrian rifles sailing through the British Fleet undisturbed; the outrages of Hamar Greenwood's murder gang, the Black and Tans (forerunners of the Fascisti) are described here for the disconcertion of those who believe that our rulers will listen to any appeals or reason.

Alongside the historic documents noted by Philips Price recently, giving the recent appeal of the German Government to be allowed by the French to crush the Ruhr "rebels," a gratitude for a similar service rendered by the Germans against the communards in 1871, should be placed beside the fierce denunciations by both Carson and John Redmond of the Irish rebels of Easter, 1916. Redmond, speaking for the Nationalist Party, regarded them with "detestation and horror" and was prepared "most cordially" to join with Carson "in everything that can be done to denounce and put down these rebels now and for evermore." Such a revelation of the intensity of interest between Orange and Catholic capitalist politicians is worthy of preservation.

Mr. O'Brien had hoped to win over even the Ulster Unionist landlords to Home Rule by giving them safeguards. But the progressive elements, like Plunkett, were not to be enticed away from their schemes of economic self-help for Irish farming; while the rest enlarged upon the fact that O'Brien was a negligible factor in the Home Rule Movement; the rancour and hate stored up for centuries by England's stunting of Irish development were too strong for him.

In 1918 the Nationalists were practically wiped out; their place hunting and futile Parliamentary bargains, and the pro-British appeals of Mr. Redmond and his attitude to the Easter Rebellion, had disgusted the people. Previously, in order to secure America's entry into the Great War for Freedom, the Convention (1917) was held, but broke down on the question of Ulster and the demanded British financial control. The abortive attempt to inflict conscription only strengthened what became known as the Irish Republican Army. From 1918-21 the Sinn Feiners reduced Dublin Castle to impotency and ran a skeleton Government of their own. The R.I.C. was melting fast away when the little Welsh Nonconformist Lloyd George let loose the dogs of war—the murder gangs of the Black and Tans whose deeds were only paralleled by the shameless mendacity by which Hamar Greenwood tried to hide them. The Truce of July 11th, 1921, was the British confession of failure to jackboot Ireland into submission.

O'Brien says that the agrarian problem is still acute, and that there is no solution with Ulster cut off from Ireland. He has shadowy hopes of intervention by the League of Nations. The Irregulars should be leniently treated and allowed to agitate for their ideal—a Republic.

I have discussed the book at some length because it will, one hopes, find a place in public libraries and because the British section of the working class has much to learn about the Irish section. This book, though written without any theoretical insight into the economic basis of politics—and suffering from the absence of an index—will be of assistance. M. S

## A GOOD SYLLABUS

*Unemployment.* By G. D. H. Cole (Syllabus Series, No. 8. Labour Research Dept., 6d.).

This is an excellent little survey of opportunity and comes at a very opportune period. Unemployment is in everybody's mind and the trouble is that mental conceptions are not always as clear as they will be after this pamphlet is read. It traces the nature of the problem and its causes in good times and bad, through crises and the various theories on the subject on to the organisation of the unemployed and their maintenance. It is concise, clear and yet very inclusive. After each section there is a very helpful list of books and pamphlets dealing with the subject matter and occasionally a hint to class-leaders as to the method of handling the material. There is to my mind, one very serious omission—no reference is made to the population question, in spite of the anti-socialist propaganda on the subject and the various emigration plans in the air.

The numbering of Section 3 is also lacking in logic, but this is not very serious in an excellent pamphlet.

In his treatment of crises Cole refers and rightly in my opinion (though I see Starr has censured Cole in last month's PLEBS on this point) to the similarity between Hobson's and Marx's theories of crises. Marx's theory is not simply one of maladjustment, but includes the underpayment and the consequent under-consumption of the worker in relation to the production going on. This outline is cheap at sixpence.

A. M. R.

## SOMETHING AND NOTHING

*Wages, Prices and Profits.* By the Labour Research Dept. (Labour Publishing Co., 6s.). *Society and its Problems.* By G. S. Dow (Harrap, 10s. 6d.).

The Labour College lecturer is often faced with great difficulty in getting very necessary statistics. To him the first-named book will be of value, for it is packed full of just the sort of material he needs for the period 1914-21, a period that teems with interest for the student of economics. The title gives a pretty clear idea of the contents

although it gives little indication of the amount of interesting matter presented, not only by means of statistical tables, but by means of well balanced interpretations of the tables.

One of the most useful chapters, not only to lecturers but to everybody actively engaged in the Trade Union movement is the chapter on "War Prices." It explains how cost of living index figures are calculated and throws a very critical light on the official method. Says this chapter, "To the ordinary man or woman the phrase 'rise in the cost of living' means just what it says—the increase in the amount of money necessary to secure the same standard of life that was obtained in pre-war days. But our official experts have ingeniously found another meaning for it altogether. Clever Professor Bowley and the Working-classes Cost of Living Committee, 1918, could not use such an obvious definition. Instead they defined the 'rise in the cost of living' as the increase in *actual expenditure* by the worker's family in 1918 as compared with 1914..... Thus it is not surprising that they found the rise in the cost of living to be much less than was commonly asserted."

Another very useful chapter is that on "Bonus shares in 1920," and it will come as a surprise to many workers to read in the section on war wages that between 1914 and 1920 real wages on the whole declined.

*Society and its Problems* sounds an interesting and somewhat dangerous book in these days of intense class struggle. The fact that it is written by a Professor of Sociology at an American University indicates however that it is not likely to be anything but "safe," for the Professor like the potato must be adapted to his environment. The book has the merit of having provided a 600-page job for some printer.

J. P. M. M.

## THE FIGHT FOR FUEL

*The Saar Question.* By Sidney Osborne (Allen and Unwin, 12s. 6d.).

This book applies to the Saar region the same treatment which Mr. Osborne gave in a previous work to Silesia. It gives a detailed account of the "settlement" which handed nominal control to the League of Nations, but virtually

submitted it to French dominance. The lying arguments used at the meetings of the Big Four, the perversions of history and the faked statistics are tracked down. The French troops still occupy the area and attempts are being made to introduce the French currency and language by the ruling French officials. Nearly two-thirds of the book is filled with Appendices of documents which prove *inter alia* the secret agreement made with Russia in 1917 to secure for France Saar and Alsace-Lorraine and how the League of Nations has been a mere catspaw for French interests. Teachers wishing to expand the references to the Saar given in *Outline of Imperialism* (pp. 69 and 86) will find this volume useful.

The chapter on "World Rivalry for Cheap Fuel" has the greatest general interest. Osborne's contention is.... "that the French Government having betrayed the interests of the French people in the matter of cheap liquid fuel [see Delaisi's *Oil*], must now continue to keep its foot on the neck of Germany for all time in order to ensure the receipt of the only remaining source of cheap fuel, namely, German coal." And he anticipated the Ruhr occupation as a necessary consequence of that policy. As jealous coal sellers and iron

and steel producers the British successfully protested at the beginning of July in the Council of the League of Nations and their protest is based on much of the evidence this anti-French book contains.  
M. S.

#### THE CONTINENTAL SYSTEM

*The Continental System, an Economic Interpretation.* By Eli Heckscher (Carnegie Foundation. Oxford University Press, 10s. 6d.).

The sub-title of this large book by a Swedish professor sounded attractive, so we asked for it for review. The "Continental system" was a series of degrees by which Napoleon, during the wars of 1802—1814, attempted to ruin England by excluding all English products from the Continent. A study of this seemed apposite in view of the recent use of the blockade. The work has been well and conscientiously done; the translation is adequate. But in fact this book does not concern us much, as things are. It is a careful and detailed study of fiscal and economic policy at a time when conditions and ideas were utterly unlike they are to-day. It would provide a few occasional illustrations for a class lecturer but no points of general importance.

R. W. P.

## LETTERS

#### RHYS WILLIAMS ON RUSSIA

DEAR COMRADE,—“M. S.” was a bit too hasty in his review of Williams' book on Russia. Williams is good—but to compare him with John Reed.....!!

*Ten Days* is the book. It is harder reading. It gives you the *causes* of the revolution. It isn't just a series of snapshots—very interesting snapshots—as Williams' is. To compare the two is like trying to compare the map on p. 311, July PLEBS, with the sketch on p. 293.

And “M. S.” falls for Williams as against Reed. Tell “M. S.” from me he is the cats' meow!\*

Yours,

JACK CARNEY.

[We have given Jack's message to “M. S.,” who says that if Carney will express himself in Esperanto, or some other civilised language, he will promise to compose a repartee.—ED.]

#### PRICE AND VALUE

DEAR COMRADE,—Many thanks for your reply which appears in the June number, to my question. In my anxiety to be brief it is evident that I have not been explicit. Let me try again.

On p. 91, *Easy Outlines of Economics*, Ablett says:—“According to Marx the price would be equal to the value of the commodity produced by the capital, whose composition (C. and V.) would be equal to the average composition of the whole capital employed in that sphere of production.”

\* American for one who takes the cake.—ED., PLEBS.

Now, I maintain that as it stands that sentence is incorrect and is calculated to give the student a false idea of the teaching of Marx.

The whole point of the so-called "great contradiction" is that price and value are not equal *except where the composition of the productive capital is the same as the composition of the whole social capital*. In those branches of production where the organic composition coincides with that of the total capital of society, then price is value; in branches whose composition is higher or lower, the price (of production) is greater or less than value.

Ablett takes for his example the manufacture of hats and assumes that the average composition of that branch is 75c. + 25v. But suppose that the social total capital is composed 80c. + 20v. and the rate of surplus-value 100 per cent. What now becomes of his statement? Under these circumstances, the price of production of hats will be 120, *i.e.*, 5 below their value.

Have I made myself clear? My contention is that price is not value *always* under the conditions that Ablett cites, hence my suggestion that the sentence should be amended.

With best wishes.

Fraternally yours,

B. L.

[Whether or not the sentence needs amendment, it will now have to go down to history as it stands; for Ablett's book is "o.p.," and the *Plebs Outline Economics* has taken its place as the truth-seeker's *vade mecum*.—ED., PLEBS]

COBBETT

DEAR COMRADE,—Thank you for introducing to our notice Wm. Cobbett's *English Grammar*. Let me point out that the book is also published by Warne Lock and Co., at the price of 2s. 6d. net.

Yours fraternally,

J. G.

DISPROPORTION OR SURPLUS PRODUCT

DEAR COMRADE,—My reply to Comrade read Mainwaring's long letter sha

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Foreword by Geo. Hicks

PLEBS, 162a Buckingham Palace Road, LONDON, S.W.

be brief. Comrade Mainwaring engages in a Quixotian task: he attacks, not the theory I am upholding, but something quite different, which I have never questioned. The whole of the long-drawn out argument of his first two pages results in proving, *not that there is a surplus of goods*, but that there is a *surplus of money* in the hands of capitalists, which they desire to reinvest. For, either Comrade Mainwaring means this or he means nothing at all. But he does not seem to realise himself that there is any such distinction between the two; for after speaking about the capitalist's need to "capitalize" this surplus (of money), he goes on straightway to talk as if this means necessarily a surplus product of goods, *after the capitalists have invested their money*. If the capitalists invest their profits, whether in Manchester or London, or Iceland or Tierra del Fuego, there will be no necessary over-production of goods owing to under-consumption. I had already drawn attention to this distinction in my reply to A. M. Robertson; but Comrade Mainwaring seems to have ignored it.

My case is practically admitted in the statement that "*under-consumption by the workers, taken by itself, is not the cause of crises*" (p. 273, para. I.) Why then all this fuss? Comrade Mainwaring started this controversy with a bold promise of "elucidation." I venture to think that little elucidation comes from all this pompous wordiness, which to my mind (and probably too, to the minds of many others) only succeeds in enveloping the issue in an academic fog.

Yours, etc..

M. H. DOBB.

#### "WASTE PAPER?"

DEAR COMRADE EDITOR.—It must be perfectly obvious to any intelligent reader that the review by B. P. of the *Report of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International* and the *Resolutions and Theses* published by the C.P.G.B. is the result rather of spiteful bias than of honest criticism.

For what are the criticisms levelled at these publications? They are, he says, enormously long, badly-printed and very boring; their propaganda value is a minus quantity, and they will

only be of interest to members of the party and of these very few. In fact, says he, they form part of a great mass of useless publications perpetrated by the C. P.

Now as one who is fairly well up-to-date in the matter of C. P. publications, I must confess that I have not been aware of this great mass of publications—the complaint, on the contrary, has been that the issue has been all too small—so that unless B.P. can give me a full and lengthy list of these, even tho' they be "useless," I shall be inclined to think that this portion of the review at least is "mere verbiage, behind which, etc."

I am moved to ask also whether our reviewer expects that the report of a world revolutionary congress, met to discuss work done during a period of world crises, to consider how far practically the world movement has progressed in the various constituent countries, to learn lessons from successes and failures, and to determine on courses of action for the future, should be a work designed to meet the elementary propaganda demands of the politically-uncultured masses. The report is valuable and justified in that it gives the varying points of view with regard to policy and tactics in relation to world revolution, and gives the earnest revolutionary an idea of our general international weakness and strength. It is a serious publication meant for serious people whose interest in world revolution must be something more than mere casual interest, and for whom "revolution" must mean something more than a subject of theoretical unworldly, philosophical speculation, while the *Resolutions and Theses* giving the results of the discussions recorded in the report is obviously a volume for handy reference.

Fraternally,

GABRIEL COHEN.

DEAR EDITOR,—I wish to protest against the review by "B. P." in the July PLEBS of the *Report of the IVth Congress of the Comintern*, under the heading "Waste Paper." It is understood that a review is based upon the personal opinion of the reviewer, but at the same time the very publication of this review suggests that The PLEBS must be in general agreement with the opinions expressed.

It is difficult to understand how a proletarian Marxist organisation can publish in its official organ a counter-revolutionary commentation, which discredits and sneers at the most important and valuable existing documentary records of the present day Proletarian Marxist movement.

The report of the IVth World Congress of the Communist International far from being a "deplorable publication," and "very boring," constitutes an exceedingly interesting, and even fascinating volume. Apart from the great historic value of such a record of politico-economical experience of the *current* Class War, the report, being as it is a compendium of reports and speeches, contains the first-hand thoughts of the greatest revolutionary fighters not only of Russia, but of the whole world Marxist movement. The masterly speech of Lenin on the "Perspectives of World Revolution" (occupying 10 pages), that of Clara Zetkin on "Five Years of the Revolution," and Trotsky's brilliant study on the "New Economic Policy," are alone historic documents to be treasured by all *intelligent* proletarians. But these are not all. There are hundreds of such speeches by other comrades which are not "verbiage," but highly developed practical studies of different aspects of the Labour Movement from the view-point of fighting Marxists.

To put such a publication down as "useless," and as having a "minus value" for propaganda, is not only superlatively stupid, but also very impudent. Your correspondent accuses the Communist Party of issuing a mass of useless publications. Nonsense! The Party has never published a "mass" of any sort of literature. That is one of its greatest faults. In this case the publication it has issued happens to be anything but useless. It is true that this book may only appeal to Party members, but after all, that is what it is chiefly meant for. The ordinary proletarian may not "plough through" these pages with great ease. The average bricklayer's labourer will of course peruse with much more ardent intellectual avidity the purely proletarian pages of *The PLEBS* Psychology textbook.

And the printing is *not* bad anyhow!

As for his remark about the King Street drains, I could easily remark that such "Waste Paper" as B.P.'s review should be poured down the B.P. (Buckingham Palace Road) sewer—but it would not be clever.

Constantinople, Fraternally yours,  
July 10th, 1923. ERIC VERNEY.

DEAR COMRADE,—I was surprised at B. P.'s review, "Waste Paper," and can only think it was inspired by an attack of indigestion. A verbatim report of speeches is bound to be "dry"—I take it that these publications were never intended as elementary propaganda but as records for use in all countries.

If all collections of documents are to be condemned, what about such a book as R. W. Postgate's *Revolution*? I have no doubt that many rank and filers would regard that book as tedious.

The average worker has difficulty in ploughing through any sort of book—hence the need for I.W.C.E.!

Whatever else can be said about the Theses, they are a record of work done (the speeches of leading Communists in Council are not reported in the capitalist press of the different countries so that they must be put on record somewhere), and as a record of work done they are not intended to while away an odd half hour or to provide entertainment for tired workers.

Yours fraternally,  
W. H.

B. P. writes:—The storm of protest that followed upon my review (to every word of which I hold) shows that it has touched a sore point. Moreover, the quantity and character of the reply shows that I have offended not a reasoning, but a religious spirit. On any other subject a reviewer could have expressed his opinion without provoking anything like this acerbity, and would probably have received a reasoned reply. Here, it is simply a case of someone who has profaned the Holy Ark; let him be struck dead. If only these new pedants of the Communist Party realised what a dreadful effect this new orthodoxy was producing on the rank and file....

However, religious or quasi-religious hysteria is a disease. Therefore I do not argue, I prescribe.

For W. H., a strong purgative course is Dietzgen's logic. For the answer to her letters is twofold. Firstly since she asks, I am afraid R. W. Postgate's *Revolution* is a dull book, though I am conscious I am but adding to my offence by making so gross a statement. But what of it, anyway? What has it got to do with the question? If I say one collection of entirely unselected speeches and resolutions and so on, is boring and of no particular use, do I necessarily mean that all collections of documents are boring and of no use? If I say one novel is bad, do I say all novels are bad? Pooh!

For Verney, any astringent medicine that will prevent his letters being so inordinately long and containing so little matter. What a space, Comrade Editor, to spend on nothing! Out of all his talk comes nothing but the fact that he does not find the theses and the rest of it boring, but very nice and humorous and exciting. All right, he is entitled to his opinion and I to mine. What he has got to show is why it is "stupid, impudent and discreditable sneering" for me to express my opinion that their publication was a mistake. There is no reason; Verney is just behaving like the Bishop of London, or some even sillier religious bloke, if there is such.

G. Cohen also cannot see any reason but "spite" for my not holding exactly the same opinions as he does, and he asks me a prize obscure question in thirteen lines, to which the answer is "No." As for the "mass of verbiage," the amount of words in these theses, debates, and resolutions, and those of previous congresses, and the various numbers of the *Communist International* containing much the same stuff, seem massive enough to me, whatever be their weight in avoirdupois.

But, finally, I protest that anyone has a right to attack C. P. or other publications without being drowned under screeching accusations of bad motives. There is no room for heresy-hunting in *THE PLEBS*; if you don't like a thing, argue it. Anyway, if there is a band of orthodoxists on the prowl, I'm out to punch the nose of the first wowzer.

## CRISES

DEAR EDITOR,—In my last letter on Crises, I took Dobb's hypothesis of harmoniously adjusted industry and tried to show in an abstract way, quite obviously leaving money out of consideration, that capitalism could not harmoniously consume its own product and remain capitalism, as Dobb said. By the way, I was rather amused at his bucolic sense of wit, but even more so at his naive suggestion that I should have forgotten that the composition of capital changes.

Concerning the supply of labour-power at wages profitable to the capitalist, one of the hindrances as an *actual* capitalist boom rises to its peak, machinery could not be used *ad infinitum* to dispose of labour-power because invention does not take place so quickly nor so extensively as would be necessary to solve the problem.

There is quite evidently a general over-production of commodities in any big crisis, which in itself would not be a serious affair, were it not that capitalism is governed by prices and values individually held, and so means, as things are, that there is a failure in exchange and in consumption. Still, as everybody knows, over-production is not uniform for all industries and the actual break must begin somewhere and takes place earlier because of maladjustment. Even then every industry will not be hit in the same proportion—the constructive industries being subject to greater fluctuations because, for one reason, they are less amenable to correct forecast. But I should say that the wage-system (with the under-consumption of the workers) and the necessary over-investment of profits by the capitalists are more fundamental factors in crises than maladjustment of one industry with another.

Finally, he says he agrees with Mark Starr. Now, Starr says Boudin's theory is one of over-production and that "if Boudin is right Dobb is wrong;" but later *seems* to adopt the Boudin theory with explanations; and Dobb agrees. There is evidently something wrong here, though I admit there is some difficulty in discovering which theory Starr is adopting.

Yours fraternally,

ALEX. M. ROBERTSON.

## Bright Lads from Leeds

**Y**OU'VE heard of the "Economic Study Clubs," fellow Plebeians? They are organisations financed by philanthropic Bosses whose one desire in life is that you, and their other serfs, should have *sound* ideas on economics. They exist to teach the Truth, as distinct from all the nasty biased stuff that results in Unrest, Robots' Cramp, and similar complaints among the workers.

Well, the Economic Study Club of Leeds, meeting in the Chamber of Commerce Rooms, under the presidency of a Colonel, has been holding a series of conferences to discuss—don't start, brother!—The PLEBS *Outline of Economics*!! Honest, yes! Fancy!—a Special Conference—leather arm-chairs, mahogany fittings, cigars and so on—and the centre of interest that bright little orange volume which we issued a few months ago. The poor little thing must have felt quite shy in such distinguished surroundings—especially when it discovered that all the gentlemen in white waist-coats and gold chains were talking about it. We have only seen a report of the first session (*Yorkshire Post*, July 4th). But if the same amount of brain-power was in evidence at the later meetings then we should not be the least little bit surprised to learn that the book's orange complexion had turned to a beetroot blush of shame at learning what a lot of wickedness it had in its inside.

A Mr. Molloy opened the discussion. He said that almost as soon as he opened the book he could see that it was "tainted with the propaganda

of Socialist views." No getting past an eagle eye like that! . . . "Its insistence upon the existence of a class struggle was so emphatic as to foster class war." Whereas all really educated people know now-a-days that "the idea of such a class struggle was as antiquated as Karl Marx himself."

Mr. Molloy gave place to a Mr. Foulston. He at once made clear what a quick, bright lad he was by declaring that the book was "evidently a communal production." Not content with this proof of his unusual perspicacity he went on to assert positively that it was "evidently based upon work by Mr. W. McLaine, the author of *Economics Without Headaches*." And finally, emboldened by these daring discoveries, he proceeded to name some of the anonymous members of the committee which had produced the book. One was probably Mr. Bernard Shaw, who "polished up Mr. McLaine's crudities," and another, "a quite competent hand," was, perhaps, Mr. Sidney Webb, who "provided excellent chapters on banking and foreign exchanges."

Then there arose Mr. Magson, Yorkshire secretary of the Industrial League and Council, and he struck a solemn note at once. He believed that in the minds of the working classes there *did* exist a class war. "Therefore the book in his view became a dangerous weapon, because it was giving to ignorant, illiterate grades *below the artisan class* (!!!) half-truths which they would use mischievously."

Mr. Chadwick, who came next, appears to have been in favour of

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"half-truths." He "emphasised the need for the employer to give his side of economics in answer to the attacks upon him." He, you see, didn't believe in the Pure Truth; but was just naturally anxious (being an employer) that the "employers' side" should get a show. And such books as *The PLEBS Economics* made him more anxious than ever.

Last of all the chairman—the Colonel—summed up. "The book was the plausible product of a feeling heart, a very cunning head and a great deal of knowledge, and it deserved proper attention from business men."

If "proper attention" means that they should get together and talk about it lots and often, we trust the business men will follow the Colonel's

advice! We can't afford to pay for much publicity, but we're always ready to acknowledge it with thanks. In fact, if the Leeds Troupe will volunteer to do a tour of the country, reciting their little pieces about *The PLEBS* textbook, we'll engage to find them audiences.

Meantime, O literature secretaries and propagandists, don't forget to make use of the above-quoted testimonials. No good getting publicity if you don't make use of it! Tell likely customers—especially those "ignorant, illiterate grades below the artisan class"—what the bright business men of Leeds think about the *Outline of Economics*—and order more copies.

J. F. H.

## ESPERANTO NOTES

### *Two Congresses in Germany*

**B**OTH the international congresses will be held in Germany this year. Cassel will receive (11-15th August) the 3rd congress of S.A.T., under the presidency of Dr. Einstein, the famous scientist. Nürnberg will be the home of the 15th International Esperanto Congress (2-8th August).

### *Parley Parolas*

All kinds of people use Esperanto, including Parley P. Christensen, the Farmer-Labour candidate for U.S. President in 1920. He has toured round the world in 800 days—not missing *The PLEBS* Office and the Labour College by the way—and this is what he told the reporter of the *Globe and Commercial Advertiser* (New York, 26/5/23):—

"I have been particularly struck by the large number of people who speak Esperanto now-a-days.

"In Denmark I was invited to a party given by some working-class people. There were seven nationalities represented, and hardly any of the persons present spoke more than one language, or two at most. Yet they all conversed fluently and easily all evening in Esperanto; a fact which so impressed me that I brushed up my own knowledge of the language.

"On my travels I wore the button of the Esperanto Society; and I discovered persons who spoke that synthetic tongue in every important city in the world. Down on the Black Sea, the casual intervention of an Esperantist saved me from what might have been serious trouble with the customs official."

### *Useful to Unions and Labour*

The U.P.W. has learnt about the Spanish Postal Strike from the postmen's *Interligilo*, whose articles were translated into *The Post* (June 16th and 23rd). The Postal Workers' Union (35,000 members) of Poland, officially supports and uses Esperanto. An appeal for interchange of Union members, made by Helmuth Niendorff, of the Bauarbeiter Verband in the June *A.U.B.T.W. Journal*, was transmitted by the medium of Esperanto and a message from George Hicks will appear in the *Grundstein*. A Polish Esperantist made known in the same fashion the brutal suppression carried out in Poland (against which Curzon is not likely to protest) and his account appeared in *The Worker* (23/6/23) and *The Workers' Dreadnought* (30/6/23) and (unacknowledged) in the *Daily Herald* (27/6/23). *The New Charter* (organ of the unemployed) has used information from Esperanto sources.

Did you ever think of getting international news for your Trade Union journal in the same way?

#### S.A.T. Year Book


Arising from the article "Revolutionary Education in Great Britain," in the July PLEBS, a correspondent suggests that the Dutch comrades could use Esperanto to satisfy their needs for first-hand information. There are always the pages of the *Sennacieca Revuo* (6d., monthly), and if they join Sennacieca Asocio Tutmendo they can use the services of the comrades whose names are listed in the S.A.T. Year Book. In 1922 only 1,064 addresses were given, but this entirely left-wing organisation has doubled its membership within the year, and now 2,328 comrades are listed and the membership has gone beyond 3,000 since the book was published. The Year Book also includes a directory of labour unions, articles on the Co-

operative and Labour Movements, special statistics, etc. S.A.T. members in Great Britain are few—no more than in Finland—while according to population we should be twelve times more numerous. The Year Book will help us to end this reproach.


#### A Pamphlet to Push.

When Plebeians know that J. F. H. has designed a special cover for *Esperanto and Labour* (16 pp., 2d.) they will want it for that alone. Specially drawn portraits of Marx and Zamenhof are encircled respectively by the slogan *Workers of the World Unite—Per Helpe de Esperanto*. The case for the use of the international tongue by Labour has never been better stated and in addition there are samples of the grammar and statistics concerning the increasing adoption of this battering ram against the Tower of Babel. PLEBS Office can supply: single copies, 2½d. (post free); 1s. 6d. a dozen. Ready August 1st.

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## The PLEBS Page

**T**O ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.—This is the last word about the Summer School which will appear before the actual occurrence of that important function.

A fraternal gathering of comrades will be held on Sunday, August 12th, so that Plebeians in the neighbourhood who cannot attend all the week may have a chance of meeting. The Manageress of the Home has kindly arranged to provide tea for those comrades who will let her know their needs on or before August 9th. A charge will be made for this, and everyone is hereby warned that there will be *no tea for chance callers*; only for residents and those who have written the Manageress. (Culcheth Holiday Home, Newchurch, near Warrington.)

All special inquiries about times of trains or getting to the Hall should be sent to Mr. F. Dixon, 49, Delph Hill, King's Cross, Halifax, and not to PLEBS Office.

*No one will be booked later than August 3rd. At the time of going to press there are still a few vacancies, and as it is possible to get a little extra accommodation, comrades are asked to write and make quite sure before deciding that it is too late to book. We have had to fix August 3rd to allow time for final arrangements.*

We have nearly booked up the Hall, and with fine weather a most successful Summer School is anticipated.

Everyone is looking forward to a good time, and already several challenges for sports contests have been made. Yorkshire has challenged "all the rest of the country" to anything—bowls, tennis or anything else. Also we are informed that the Yorkshire comrades are presenting a Grand Trophy (T'owd Tin Pot) to the winner of the bowling handicap. The rest of England must get ready!

W. H.

## N.C.L.C. ITEMS and NOTES

*Will all secretaries and organisers please note that the National Secretary, N.C.L.C., is now J. P. M. Millar, 18, Westholmes, Musselburgh, Scotland, to whom all communications should be addressed; and the Treasurer is Mark Starr, 100, Grosvenor Road, London, S.W.1.*

**T**HE Aberdeen Trades and Labour Council has affiliated to the Aberdeen District of the S.L.C. Edinburgh and Glasgow Districts ran a joint week-end school in July at North Queensferry with Comrades Dunbar and J. P. M. Millar as lecturers. Despite the fact that the week-end preceded the Trades Holidays by only a few days, the venture justifies a more extensive effort later on and September may see a second week-end school. The experience has shown that when the weather is fine lectures should not take place in the afternoon but in the evening, lest sleep

overcome both lecturer and lectured! The Scottish Regional Council of the National Federation of Building Trade Operatives has resolved to place the question of affiliating to the National Council of Labour Colleges on the Agenda for the Federation's Annual Meeting. The Women's Section of the Leith Labour Party, the Edinburgh University Labour Party and the Edinburgh and Leith Unemployed Committees have recently affiliated to the Edinburgh District of the S.L.C. Under the auspices of the Hawick Labour Party, J. P. M. Millar addressed a public meeting in Hawick and a class

under the Edinburgh District has since been formed. Credit is due to a former student of the Edinburgh classes, Miss A. C. Reekie, and to the Hawick Labour Party.

At the annual general meeting of the *Ilford Labour Party*, the following resolution was passed unanimously:—

“That in view of the vital necessity of Independent Working-Class Education, this meeting instructs the Executive Committee to affiliate to the London Council for I.W.C.E.”

Further, a member of the Ilford Plebs League was elected to the Executive of the Ilford Labour Party for the coming year.

The seventh annual meeting of the *North-Eastern Labour College* was held at Newcastle on Saturday, July 14th. Delegates from all over Northumberland and Durham attended, and Will Lawther presided. Will Coxon, the secretary, read letters from various local Labour M.P.s, including Messrs. Sidney Webb, C. P. Trevelyan, and David Adams, commending the work of the College.

The N.E. College is holding a Week-end School on August 4th and 5th, with

Mark Starr as lecturer. Write W. Coxon, Byron St., Newcastle, for particulars.

Liverpool Labour College is holding a Week-end School at the Beechcroft Settlement, 15, Hollybank Road, Birkenhead, on August 25th and 26th. Lecturers: Mark Starr and T. Ashcroft. Mark Starr is doing a tour of Lancashire on behalf of I.W.C.E., the following dates are already booked: August 20th, Warrington; August 21st, St. Helens; August 22nd, Wigan; August 23rd, Preston; August 24th, Liverpool. Particulars and inquiries to J. Hamilton, 99, Botanic Road, Liverpool (see note *re* change of his address below).

On and after August 10th, J. Hamilton's address will be 11, Channell Road, Fairfield, Liverpool.

The Annual Conference of the A.U.B.T.W. enthusiastically endorsed the Education Scheme. The only change made was that it will be no longer met by a special Education Contribution. A previous proposal to make the contribution optional received only one vote.

## Labour College Students' Association

THE L.C.S.A. has “kicked off” and as is customary in movements of this character comment and criticism comes to hand. So far the criticism has mainly been that previous students had mooted the idea. It would not be worth while to quarrel over that; the Association anyhow is now an accomplished fact. It is up to all ex-students to support it. Send your subscriptions along and enclose suggestions and criticism concerning any activities you may think to be within its province.

During the summer months arrangements will be probably made to prepare lecture courses for the coming winter. Some are specialising upon certain subjects. Already ex-students have been put into touch with each other. It would be advantageous if all ex-students send their names on,

to facilitate the interchange of the addresses of prospective tutors.

A Farewell Social has been arranged for July 21st by the students now in residence at the College, but as these notes have to be sent in before the event, no report can be made. This Social marks the conclusion of the two years residence of the majority of the students (there being only four first-year students now in residence at the College).

Some of the returning students are not yet assured of their jobs. This is a question which could well be taken up by the Association with the Unions concerned, there being quite a number of ex-students out of their original jobs.

Our aims and objects were outlined in the July PLEBS. Secretary, A. Glyn Evans, 13, Penywern Road, Earl's Court, S.W. 5.

## The PLEBS Bookshelf

**A** CURIOUS book, *The Public Conscience*, by G. C. Cox (12s. 6d.) is published by Allen and Unwin. It claims to be "case-book" of the growth of the public conscience. It consists of brief reports of law cases of various dates dealing with a large range of offences, and is intended to show the growth of public conscience in these matters in England and America (other countries don't exist). Thus it is like a handbook of alchemy, or a collection of the evidences of astrology; it proves things which are not so. Because it is devoted to a characteristically Liberal thesis it omits all the "irrelevant" portions of these cases, so that you don't even get any amusing stories in the examples given.

In personal liberty, so far as anything can be extracted from this book, we appear to have gone back. About 690, Chief Justice Holt on libel stated:—

It hath been adjudged that to call a Justice of the Peace blockhead, *asse, et cetera*, is not a slander for which an action lies because he was not accused of any corruption in his employment or any ill design or principle; and it was not his fault that he was a blockhead, for he cannot be otherwise than his Maker made him.

The same just judge decreed that "bufflehead" was an epithet that could not be allowed. But to-day, even avoiding the provocative word "bufflehead" I cannot call the Rt. Hon. ——— M.P., P.C., J.P., "blockhead, *asse, et cetera*."

\* \* \*

What Mr. Cox does not explain, and what he could have usefully dealt with, is the growth of "blue laws" in America and their threatened invasion of England. There is an enormous crop of laws that interfere with personal liberty in the most irritating, because apparently pointless, manner. There are laws which forbid you to smoke cigars, laws that forbid you to smoke anything but cigars. There are the most fantastic laws about Sunday. As in all cases of this sort, the laws start by

interfering with women. Laws giving police officers the right to inspect women's bathing dresses are fairly common. Laws regulate the amount of thigh that may be shown by inches; also, the amount of leg that may be shown beneath the skirt. A woman was turned out of Zion City, U.S.A., recently for wearing a "peekaboo shirtwaist"—that is to say, a blouse which in the opinion of the delegated official, after a good stare, showed him more than he should see.

Why should there be this outburst of infuriating petty tyranny just now? The only reasonable explanation I have ever seen is Chesterton's—that it is an essential part of capitalism's breaking-in of the workers generally. If one is used to obeying senseless commands in trifling matters, one is reconciled the more easily to obeying vile commands in important matters. "If a man has the power for a dozen years to make the inhabitants of Brixton nod their heads three times before getting up in the morning, at the end of that time he will find it much easier to cut off their heads if he wishes to."

\* \* \*

Since I wrote about Cobbett in *The PLEBS*, the Oxford University Press has published a volume of *Selections* (3s. 6d.) which on the whole is perhaps the best introduction to his works, if in places a bit scrappy. Here is a bit of ammunition from him:

Upon beholding the masses of buildings at Oxford, devoted to what they call *learning*, I could not help reflecting on the drones that they contain and the wasps that they send forth! However, malignant as some are, the great and prevalent characteristic is *folly*: emptiness of head; want of talent; and one half of the fellows who are what they call *educated* here, are unfit to be clerks in a grocer's or a mercer's shop.

Here is a further quotation which will show what is the character of Cobbett as English prose writer:

This inn (at Everley, in Wiltshire) is one of the nicest and, in summer, one of the pleasantest in England; for I think that my experience in

this way will justify me in speaking thus positively. The house is large, the yard and stables good.....The garden, which adjoins the south side of the house, is large, of good shape, has a terrace on one side, lies on the slope, consists of well disposed clumps of shrubs and flowers and of short grass very neatly kept. On the lower part of the garden there are high trees, and amongst these the tulip-tree and the live-oak. Beyond the garden is a large clump of lofty sycamores, and in these a most popular rookery, in which, of all things in the world, I delight. The village, which contains 301 souls, lies to the north of the inn, but adjoining its premises. All the rest, in every direction, is bare down or open arable. I am now sitting at one of the southern windows of this inn, looking across the garden towards the rookery. It is nearly sunseting; the rooks are skimming and curving over the tops of the trees; while under the branches I see a flock of several hundred sheep coming nibbling their way in from the down and going to their fold.

This surely, brings the inn and the whole scene as clearly and vividly before you as English can.

\* \* \*

The third of the three books I am dealing with this month is Professor Levy Bruhl's *Primitive Mentality* (Allen and Unwin, 16s.). This has been a classic in French for some years, both in anthropology and in psychology. It forms a valuable companion and corrective to Frazer's *Golden Bough*, reviewed here recently. It is simple and intelligibly written. A reader of it confirms the opinion that to understand primitive society it is more important to understand the *mind* of primitive man than to read long books on "primitive communism." The mind of primitive man is quite different from ours. Cause and effect are not perceived or apprehended in an absurd manner. The very facts of nature appear absolutely different to a savage and to us.

Of the three books mentioned here, the first is not worth reading, the second is well worth reading and even buying, the third should be looked for eagerly in reference libraries.

R. W. P.

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