

THE

**AUGUST
1924**

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The PLEBS LEAGUE

CONSTITUTION

Object.—The general aim of the Plebs League is :—To develop and increase the class-consciousness of the workers, by propaganda and education, in order to aid them to destroy wage-slavery and to win power.

Methods.—The means used for this end are :—

1. The support of the National Council of Labour Colleges and the classes run under its auspices.
2. The maintenance of the class-conscious character of the teaching in the present organs and institutions of independent working-class education.
3. The publication of a Magazine and, in concert with the N.C.L.C., of text-books, syllabuses and other publications.
4. The holding of summer schools, teachers' conferences, etc.
5. Propaganda among workers' organisations for the adoption of new schemes of independent working-class education or the extension of existing schemes.

The League is intended to link together members of the Labour Movement for the discussion and advancement of a revolutionary industrial and political movement suited to British conditions.

Every supporter of independent working-class education —“Education towards Revolution,” in Morris's phrase—should join the Plebs League. The League is the link between tutors, organisers, officials, class-students, and every worker in our movement.

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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 NEXT MOVE

IN our issue of last month the General Secretary of the N.C.L.C. gave an account of the recent steps taken by the Trades Union Congress with regard to Workers' Education, culminating in the formation by the General Council of an Education Advisory Committee, with the following terms of reference:—"To evolve a policy with regard to educational work for the Trade Union movement, through the T.U. Congress; to endeavour to co-ordinate such activities as are already in existence; to undertake educational work on behalf of the Trade Unions; and to deal with any matters relating to Trade Union educational work, both in its national and international aspect, as the General Council of the T.U. Con-

gress may approve." Comrade Millar went on to point out that the appointment of this Committee—which consists of five representatives of the General Council, one from the Executive of each Union which has, or has decided to have, a definite educational scheme for its members, one representative each from Ruskin College and the London Labour College, and two each from the Co-operative Union Educational Committee, the N.C.L.C., and the W.E.A.*—clears the way for a definite (and let us hope, final) conflict between the two opposed points of view on Working-class Education advocated respectively by the National Council of Labour Colleges and the Workers' Educational Association. And he concluded by listing the steadily increasing number of Unions which are supporting the principle of Independent Working-class Education.

But if we are to win in this struggle—if, that is, we are to get the General Council to come to a clear and definite decision in favour of I.W.C.E.—we, the ordinary rank-and-

The Principles Involved

filers in the I.W.C.E. movement, must strain every nerve during the weeks and months immediately ahead, to make our fellow Trade Unionists understand the vital difference between Labour College and W.E.A. education. We do not refuse to work along with the W.E.A. for mere obstinacy's sake; there is a real conflict of principle—and it is up to us to see that the principles at stake are generally realised in the working-class movement. Put in a sentence, the difference between the two organisations is simply this: the W.E.A. stands for *extension* of ruling-class education; the Labour Colleges for the development of a purely working-class education, *with working-class aims*, as well as under working-class control. The W.E.A. wants the workers to have "more education"—of the orthodox university kind; the N.C.L.C.'s slogan is "Not more, but *different*."

Now it is exceedingly important that we all get busy—NOW—and that we don't merely leave the fight to our representatives on the Advisory Committee, because the W.E.A. is

The W.E.A. Gets Busy

already busy re-organising itself in order to look more like a *bona-fide* workers' organisation. It is telling its members that "the time has come when it is desirable to reconsider the relation of the W.E.A. to working-class movements, *with a view to basing itself even more firmly (!) upon them*." Hitherto, the W.E.A. has not precisely been "firmly based" upon the working-class movement. Only,

*The Plebs League E.C. has again asked for representation, and its application is to come before the General Council for consideration.

indeed, as regards that section of its work organised under the auspices of the W.E.T.U.C. could it make any such claim. Now, apparently, the W.E.T.U.C., having served its temporary purpose—"transitional arrangement" is the W.E.A. Central Executive's own phrase—is to go out of business; and the W.E.A. itself is to take its place. (Which incidentally proves that what the N.C.L.C. and The PLEBS have said again and again—that the W.E.T.U.C. was merely an "alias" for the W.E.A.—was exactly true.) The W.E.A., in short, has realised that the only kind of workers' educational work with any future before it is the kind which consists of "educational schemes in conjunction with Trade Unions"—the kind which the N.C.L.C. has relied on. The W.E.A. is accordingly anxious to alter its constitution, in order that Trade Unions may have "effective control" over "the educational work they desire to set going," so far—note carefully—as this is "*compatible with the maintenance of its (the W.E.A.'s) educational ideals and methods.*"

There is, in short, to be a show of "control" by the workers' organisations, and any necessary modifications of the W.E.A.'s constitution are to be made to that end. BUT—

Same Old Goods (?) and this is the point we, all of us, have to insist on—the education which is to be so "controlled" is to remain what it has always been: nominally "impartial," actually ruling-class education, and *not* education for working-class aims and *in* working-class interests. As the W.E.A. Executive puts it, it is to be "real and free education as distinct from propaganda and dogmatic teaching." A control of the mere machinery of education is of no use at all if the education provided by that machinery is at best unhelpful (from the workers' point of view) and at worst a source of real danger. And no amount of rhetoric about the "dogmatism" of the Labour Colleges, no clap-trap about "freedom in education," must be allowed to blind the eyes of any worker to the plain and simple truth that the first point to be decided upon in any discussion on working-class education must be:—What is to be the AIM of education financed by workers' organisations for the benefit of organised workers?

CONGRATULATIONS

We are very glad to learn, just as we go to press, that Mr. A. A. Purcell, President of the General Council of the Trade Union Congress, has accepted the Hon. Presidency of the National Council of Labour Colleges. Our congratulations—both to Mr. Purcell, as the first holder of what will be a historic office, and to the N.C.L.C., for having won the support of a leader of his standing for the principles of I.W.C.E.

THE EXPERTS' REPORT

Enter the International Bankers

II

THE Experts begin their report by saying that they have examined the reparations problem from the point of view of business and not of politics. They are out for the "recovery of debt" and not for the "imposition of penalties." They then proceed to proclaim, as an established axiom, the obligation of Germany to make good war damages, and they base this axiom on the assumption of Germany's sole war guilt. In other words they use the claim of the politician to advance their "business claim." A Marxian can chuckle at this sophistry, knowing full well that no political power is worth anything unless it is based on economic power. And here are the Experts in the opening lines of their report using political means to advance economic ends. We, however, are concerned with examining the source whence these economic demands on the population of Central Europe come, and the objects for which they are advanced.

The report makes its first concrete proposal by demanding the establishment in Germany of a Central Bank of Issue. This bank is to have the entire control over the issue of currency in Germany, to decide the rate of issue, the ratio of power to gold reserve, the method of granting credit to the German government, of which it is to have an entire monopoly, and the bank rate. In fact it is to become the financial nerve centre of Germany. On p. 16 of the official English translation it says: "The Bank is to be entirely free from governmental control or interference." This is not to be wondered at, for, when one reads a little further on that control over the bank is to be given to a General Board consisting of seven Germans and seven foreigners, who are to watch over the interests of the creditors of Germany, one has more than a shrewd suspicion, in view of what comes later, that they are merely nominees, both the Germans and the foreign members of the Board, of the international banking houses, who are promoting this scheme. At a time when the Labour movement is demanding in England greater control for the Government and Treasury over the Bank of England and the "Big Five" our government is asked to sanction exactly the reverse process in Germany, and the liquidation of the slender public control which the Reichstag has been able to exercise over the operations of the German banking and industrial monopolists. But, of course,

the pill is to be sugared, and we read further on that the Experts lay great store on the balancing of the German Budget and the maintenance of a stable currency and go so far as to quote the statements made to them by German Trade Union leaders. And the danger lies in the fact that large sections of the workers and small middle classes may be prepared to accept the Experts' Report, not because they approve of it, but because they would sooner have anything, however bad, than the horror of another period of inflation. The real objects of the Experts in standing out for a balanced Budget and a stable currency is not the altruistic one that they would have us believe in this passage. This is seen in a later passage (p. 19), where in defending balanced Budgets and a stable currency they say: "When speaking of the adoption of such a method for 'a considerable period,' we are thinking primarily of the period which lenders and investors, whose money is required as a part of our scheme, will have in mind." There lies the rub. The object of this plan is, therefore, revealed as an attraction to the investment of capital, now outside Germany, to come and invest in that country. A stable currency will stop the speculators who have been battering on the falling mark and franc and will attract those who would invest their money once more in Prussian Consols and German Threes. The fixed interest-bearing capitalists, as represented by Pierpont Morgan and the Bankers' Committee set up in Paris in the summer of 1922, leave their tracks all over this page, as they do over the whole of the report.

A scale of payments is laid down, in Part I., Section IX., which Germany is to make. These are scaled according to her probable Budget surpluses. Here are two very interesting points, which disclose the objects which the Experts are after. On p. 22 they announce that these payments are liable to additions varying with the "index of prosperity" (of which more anon) and that the "Supplementary payments should be made automatically in correspondence with the changes in the general purchasing power of gold." That, of course, leaves it open to the bankers to manipulate the reparations payments, as they think fit. A change in the purchase power of gold, artificially created by them, would be reflected at once in the obligations imposed on the population of Germany to hand over in taxes or mortgages in their national assets values to the international bankers. The other point on p. 23 is contained in the following passage: "Even insofar as the sums paid in reparation cannot be transferred, they can, under certain conditions, be used by the Allies for internal investment in Germany." Previous to this the Report had pointed out the difference between the "taxpayers' capacity to pay in Germany and Germany's capacity to pay the Allies," and had shown that there would be a grave danger of

the whole stabilisation scheme collapsing, if Germany was made to transfer large annual surpluses in marks into foreign currencies. The Experts, therefore, are not concerned in securing cash payments from Germany to France to enable the latter to balance her Budget and support her franc (that will be provided for by an international loan to France, for which good interest will be obtained no doubt). The object of the reparation payment is to release sums in Germany which can be used for the purpose of investment in that country to the credit of the international bankers. Once more one sees that it is the investor of passive capital, who is concerned in finding gilt-edged securities for sterling and dollar bank balances in Europe that is being considered here.

And the guarantees for the reparation payment and the loan, which is to be raised for Germany, are still further proof of the objects which the Experts and the people behind them have in view. In Part I., Section B., the great prize for which the bankers have been waiting for so long is claimed. The great transport system on the Continent, the German State Railways, are to be de-nationalised and made over to a Board of Management, which shall be entirely independent of the control of the German government or Reichstag. It is true, the German government will be allowed to hold the whole of the Common or Ordinary stock in the new company (13 milliard gold marks), but $\frac{3}{4}$ of the Preference Stock (2 milliard gold marks in all) are to be sold on the European Stock Exchanges and the whole of the Debentures (11 milliard gold marks) are to be handed over to the Reparations Commission, the interest on which is to come from the earnings of the railways and to be credited to Germany's creditors. In other words there is to be a wide field thrown open to the European Stock Exchanges and investors generally to buy gilt-edged Bonds, secured on the German transport systems assets. What more proof do we want that passive capital, concentrated in Pierpont Morgans, Rothschilds and the "Big Five" are behind this, for who else could find these gigantic sums for investment?

In Part I., Section C., the Experts propose a somewhat similar transaction to that concerning the railways. They state that since the war German industry has escaped all its former liabilities to the German banks and to the holders of Debentures in their concerns by the process of inflation which has gone on. The German industrial and speculative capitalists and holders of Ordinary shares have had their holdings increased enormously in value and this is largely due to depreciation to the point of wiping out the First Charges on their industrial undertakings. It is only fair, say the Experts, that these obligations should be reimposed, but the new mortgages which the German industrial capitalists are to take upon themselves shall be in favour not of the former mortgagors, the German

banks, but of the creditors of Germany, that is the Reparations Commission. And they go on to propose a general mortgage of 5 milliard gold marks at 5% and 1% sinking fund on all industrial and agricultural property in Germany to be handed over to the Reparations Commission. Presumably the Commission could sell these mortgages on the open market to get cash to balance the French Budget if needed, and once again one can see that another opening is made for the investment of passive bank capital in gilt-edged securities in Germany.

In regard to the actual balancing of the German Budget the Experts admit that German industrial capital has escaped its fair share of the burden. Indeed they are obviously concerned to re-impose burdens on the war-time speculators and inflation-mongers in Germany, thus disclosing the rift in the ranks of the European capitalist class. But when it comes to taxation of incomes and estates, the Experts do not do more than give advice. They can impose mortgages on the property of the companies and individuals operating in the vital industries of Germany, in order to force their economic power on that particular class of capitalist in Germany. But heavy taxation of all property in Germany would not suit their book, for that would hit them, as well. Both passive and industrial investments must be protected. It is true, this is not said in so many words, for there must be some window dressing. But beyond a platonic remark that death duties are too low and the income tax has not been collected on large incomes for some time past on account of inflation, the Experts have no definite plan, which they demand to be imposed, of direct taxation. They advise a levy on "windfalls" and propose that the German government should revalue industrial mortgages at 15% their gold value and levy a duty of 2% on the sum obtained. But this would not affect gilt-edged investments in Germany. It would only hit the persons who have made money out of inflation and war-time speculation. The Experts would impose some burdens on this class of capitalist and that is so much to the good. But the bulk of the burden of balancing the German Budget is to be borne by the producers and consumers. This is seen well in the proposals of the Experts to estimate the "index of prosperity," on which the final reparation charge is to be based, on the figures annually obtained for railway traffic, increase of population, foreign trade, consumption of alcohol and tobacco and not on the figures which could be obtained in the books of the German banks, showing the incomes assessable for income tax. Moreover, while only advice is given to the German government, as to how it should make capital bear its share of the burden of balancing the German Budget, the same mild tone is not adopted in the plan proposed for the imposition of new indirect

taxation. Here definite machinery is demanded from the German government to secure the attachment of certain revenues derived from indirect taxation to the Reparation Commission and a special machine for the collection of revenue from a Tobacco Monopoly. Customs and excise are to be raised and the burden will fall solely on the consumer. Unemployment doles are to be cut down and dismissal of railway and State employees are to be demanded and can be carried out, when it is remembered that the railways are to come under the control of a body responsible to the Reparations Commission, while the Bank of Issue, with its nominees of the banking trust controlling it, can bring the government to its knees and make it dismiss its employees by simply stopping the payment of salaries.

Speaking generally the effect of the Report will be to make Germany an area for the investment of bank capital. It will give to that bank capital a security which may be of the utmost value to it in stabilising its position internationally. If the "Big Five" in England decide that the hours of labour of the British worker ought to be lowered and the rate of his wages is too high, it is possible for them to stop the industries in the Black country, Lancashire, Yorkshire, South Wales and Lanarkshire by the simple process of calling in the credits which they have advanced in recent years to these industrial concerns. They can then employ their capital in buying up the mortgages on German industry and German railway debentures, which this Experts' settlement of the reparation question lays down at their feet. And when the British workers agree to accept the long hours and low pay of the German workers, then this international passive bank capital may consent to damp down its investment in Germany and graciously permit the wheels of industry in England to run round once more. This is no idle dream, but grim earnest. We had a taste of it in the preparations which led up to "Black Friday."

Germany is becoming what Marxist writers would call a colonial area. But it is not a colony in the sense that India and large parts of Asia and Africa have been to the industrial capital of the last hundred years. When Rosa Luxemburg wrote her *Accumulation of Capital*, she described the operation since its earliest growth of industrial construction capital in the primitive communities or areas where as yet no capitalism existed. She showed how the early mercantile accumulations were derived from trade in articles of consumption, how this was exported later in construction goods, like railways, harbours, etc., from the land of accumulation and broke down the primitive self-sufficient social systems of these colonial areas. But Germany is not a colony in this sense. Here is a country with highly-skilled artisans, with a highly-developed industrial

capitalism which has arisen alongside of agrarian privileges on the land in Prussia, but which has swept this away and consolidated its power by the war and by post-war inflation. Rosa Luxemburg and Marx did not live to see this new stage of capitalist development which, it seems to me, we are entering to-day. In this stage speculative industrial capital is being pressed out by the bondholder and the highly industrial lands, in which the coal and steel kings dominated, are going to be invaded by the investments of the passive capitalist, bondholder and banker. In this sense Germany is becoming a new colonial area and not in the sense in which Luxemburg used that term in her day. But this contains also a warning for the Labour movement. We must not underrate the power of this passive capital which has ruled jointly with industrial capital in England and America for some decades past and which is now stretching its tentacles across to Central Europe, where it has never had real monopoly powers before. It is strong, it is young and it has the whole machinery of the State in England, America and France at its back. It may be that we shall see several decades of its rule yet.

What then should be our tactics in face of this situation? The greatest peril seems to me to be that the Labour movement in this country should make this Report its own and innocently help this international banking oligarchy to get into power on the ruins of half the industries of Europe and at the expense of an enslaved working class. For this enslavement may come not in the way that the enslavement of the Red Indians and negroes to mercantile and industrial capital came, i.e., by massacres and burnings, but by sheer exhaustion of the masses and their readiness to accept anything rather than die of hunger. At the same time we must realise that we may have to see this Report put into execution owing to the relative strength of the classes throughout Europe not being in our favour at the present time. It is our business to see that the Labour government, while being forced to accept it, does so under protest, just as Lenin accepted the conditions of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, being unable to summon up the strength in Russia to resist them. If these tactics are adopted, the movement does not become compromised and it can reopen the question again whenever the relative strength of class forces is more in our favour. Furthermore, it is possible to see in the Report several points which may be used for our own purposes. The German Socialists have for years been demanding a State mortgage on industry in favour of the German Treasury. There is the kernel of this highly revolutionary measure in the Experts' Report. We might accept it on condition that the mortgage is made in favour of the German State, and any revenues paid out on reparations account from this source should come through the German Treasury. Then there is sound advice

given to the German government about raising death duties and incomes tax. Let us demand that the balancing of the German Budget be made from this source in the main. Let the advice be turned into demands and this will assist the German Socialists in their struggle. It is ridiculous to pretend that the Report must be accepted without any alteration, when the Report leaves several points in connection with the balancing of the Budget undecided, throws out only suggestions and advice there. The general principle may well be accepted even for a Socialist Commonwealth that the public revenues should balance the expenditures. It is to the method by which this is to be carried out that we must object with all emphasis and if we do this, we shall save the Labour movement from becoming the handmaid of one set of capitalists in its struggle against another. We could, in fact, if we study history from the Marxian perspective, utilise the struggles within the capitalist ranks to *our* advantage.

M. PHILIPS PRICE.

EDWARD CARPENTER

Pioneer

EDWARD CARPENTER, poet and propagandist, was born eighty years ago this month. He is one of the few surviving veterans of that band of Socialist pioneers who, in the eighties and nineties revived the revolutionary spirit in Britain, and so paved the way for our own movement.

In a quite real sense, indeed, we can count Carpenter among the pioneers of Independent Working-class Education; for in the early days of the University Extension movement he did his best to use its machinery for telling the truth to the workers. H. W. Nevinson, in his reminiscences, tells of his first meeting with Carpenter in 1887, and of how Carpenter "talked about the U.E.S. in the North, how the 'swells' get hold of it, build a college, leave the people no voice in the choice of lectures, etc., and so the thing dies." And maybe we Plebs have a good deal to learn from Carpenter the propagandist writer and speaker in the matter of clearness and simplicity of language.

Of his poems, perhaps "England, Arise!" is the only one known widely among the workers. But it is no small thing to have written a song which has become a real part of the working-class movement in this country.

We of a younger generation salute one whose name that movement will always honour.

J. F. H.

FASCISM

III.—THE RISE OF FASCISM



THE essential character of Fascism has been much misunderstood, owing partly to the confused political conditions in which it arose in Italy, and partly to the confused minds of certain observers. The critic, for instance, who talked of "red shirts beneath the black," must have been incapable of understanding so well known an idea as socialism, much less a complicated political phenomenon like Fascism. Fascism has been variously described as a terrorist movement run by landowners, a mere "stunt" of excitable young ex-officers,

a desperate outburst on the part of war-ruined middle-class elements, and so on. Each observer saw only one aspect of the movement, and regarded that as its main feature.

A close study of the whole situation reveals the fact that Fascism is essentially a movement expressing the interests of industrial capitalists. It is true that, at one time, the Fascist ranks were crowded with the sons of landlords, at another with ex-officers and the lower middle classes, while at another there were even considerable numbers of workers and of ex-socialists. But these are facts of temporary or minor significance. The financial support for the whole movement came in the main from capitalists, and the effect of the seizure of political power in Italy has been, as we shall see in detail later, administrative and legislative action in the interests of the industrialists.

We have already seen how the industrialists won a great victory over their agrarian rivals for power in securing Italian intervention in the war. But this victory was not a final one. The bourgeoisie emerged from the war in a shattered condition, while the land-owning class had lost but little of their power. To a certain extent, these rivals had one thing in common—the subjugation of the proletariat; both wanted a docile, underpaid body of labourers, and the participation of the agrarians in the Fascist movement was an expression of their willingness to join the bourgeoisie in this issue. The Fascists had a difficult part to play; they had to co-

operate with their minor enemy, the landlords, in smashing the common foe, while at the same time they had to build up the hegemony of the capitalists against the pressure of the landlords.

The Fascist movement proper arose in March, 1919, when Mussolini formed his first *Fascio Italiano di Combattimento* (Italian Service Men's Union) in Milan, and subsequently all over the country. The early *fasci* were by no means reactionary. In fact, they shared in the general revolutionary character of all political movements of that time. The war against the "old State" (*i.e.*, the agrarian State) was carried on under the plea that the politicians were wasting the fruits of the victory in the world war, and that ex-soldiers must unite to ensure that the nation reaped the benefit of the war-time sacrifices.

The early programme of the Fascists is fascinating and significant. Its demands included proportional representation, adult suffrage, the eight-hour day, a legal minimum wage, improved scales of social insurance, participation of the workers in the control of industry, expropriatory taxation, abolition of the standing army, nationalisation of munition factories, and so on. To secure these ends, Mussolini pointed out, the authority of the State must be restored and the "old gang" of politicians (*i.e.*, largely the agrarians) must be cleared out of the way.

These demands were put forward with considerable propagandist skill throughout 1919 and 1920. The device by which Mussolini, while not alienating the proletariat as such, attacked the Socialist Party, was to argue that the latter were working for the destruction of "National unity"—a stunt which Mussolini has worked to the last degree.

The advanced nature of this programme was, of course, due to the need for a bait to catch unwary workers. If these could be got into the ranks of Fascism, so much the better; and the best means to this end was to steal the programmatic thunder of the Socialists.

This scheme at first met with little success. The Fascist ranks remained thin and the wily workers joined the Socialist Party in increasing numbers. A certain number of misguided idealists did, in fact, enrol under the Fascist flag; some are still there; others have become disillusioned. One of the latter, Edoardo Frosini, wrote to Mussolini in 1923: "I was an apostle of the first Fascist programme . . . in those days we had no black shirts, but you wore our colours in your cap—the red cockade over the tricolour . . . You have thrown yourself into the arms of those whom we set out to fight, and Fascism is to-day synonymous with reaction and support of the bourgeoisie and the monarchy."

The early *fasci* were to a large extent armed, but no use was made

of violent methods until after the evacuation of the factories by the workers in the autumn of 1920. The factory owners had indeed felt the sword at their throats ; they had really been expropriated, and the end of their rule seemed to have come. When the workers had been tamely led away from the field of their victory by their leaders, the owners recovered their power and proceeded to use it. The Fascist bands were turned loose on the workers, and terror prevailed.

While this crude but simple punishment of the proletariat was proceeding, the Fascists were following a subtle and difficult policy in regard to the Government. Giolitti had taken office in the summer of 1920 on the cry of re-establishing the authority of the State. Now this was precisely the slogan of Mussolini—from whom Giolitti had cunningly stolen it ; but no real identity of interest lay behind this similarity of political objective. Mussolini meant Big Business ; Giolitti, Landlordism. And so Mussolini had to fight on two fronts—against the workers and against Giolitti. The latter he attacked as an opponent of the war and as an enemy of Italian gains following the peace. This anti-government (and anti-monarchical) policy gave a revolutionary tone to the Fascist propaganda of that time which misled many observers into overlooking its fundamentally reactionary character.

Giolitti's reaction to this policy was characteristically subtle. He could have crushed the Fascist movement by means of his control of the State armed forces, but he realised too well the value of the movement as an anti-proletarian influence. The steps he took were two. First, he declared the State to be "neutral" in the faction fight proceeding between the workers and the Fascists ; this, of course, was a hypocritical sop to the Fascists, since it deprived the unarmed workers of their sole defence—the forces of the State. Secondly, Giolitti dissolved the Chamber in May, 1921, and in the ensuing elections offered the Fascists the privilege of inclusion in his electoral *bloc*. This, again, was an advantage to Mussolini who at that time had no organised party or electoral machinery. But in entering the *bloc* of the "parties of order," he naturally deprived himself of the power of attacking Giolitti and his agrarian supporters. Giolitti had drawn the teeth of the Fascists.

There followed a big drift of agrarians into the Fascist ranks. It was under the influence of this section that the fighting squadrons were formed. The earlier expeditions against the workers were carried out by Fascists selected *ad hoc* on each occasion. There was no "standing army" of trained assassins. The landlords came into the movement with the clearest and bloodiest intention of smashing the resistance of the landworkers and reducing them to a condition of economic slavery. A formal organisation of armed

men was established out of the most promising elements—at first, the sons of farmers and their hangers-on, and later such declassed elements as ex-officers, ex-N.C.O.s, and the like.

Mussolini was now faced with a serious menace. His organisation was diluted with numbers of the very class he was out to oppose. During the elections, he had perforce to accept this position: a split in the Fascist ranks would not only have ruined his electoral prospects, but would have ranged against him the forces of the State. So soon as the elections were over (in which the Fascists secured forty seats) he set about clearing the air. Once more he made a bid for the support of left wing elements, but only as a trick to drive out the agrarian right. He emphasised the "republican" character of Fascism and forbade the newly elected Fascists to attend the opening of Parliament, "since no true Fascist could cry 'God save the King!'" The move was partly successful, and a number of agrarians left the disloyal Fascists and entered other parties. Nevertheless, the agrarian section remained large and powerful, and other steps had to be taken to control it. The means adopted was the internal organisation of the movement into a centralised and disciplined party, subservient in every respect to Mussolini and his masters. In this Mussolini has never entirely succeeded. The agrarian section remains even to-day a thorn in his side. In general, the so-called "dissident" Fascists, or the "Fascists of 1919," represent the agrarian section—the terrorist section which even to-day Mussolini cannot control. It is in this division of interest that is to be seen the seed of the ultimate collapse of the Fascist government.

Throughout the history of Fascism right up to the present time, one hears of warnings issued by Mussolini to his followers not to go "too far" in their acts of violence. This is no mere humanitarianism: it is a sign of the ever-present antagonism between the capitalist and the agrarian interests. The latter desired nothing from Fascism but the violent subjugation of the landworkers. But Mussolini had other and wider aims. He wanted Fascism established as the permanent controlling force in Italian public life. He had no objection to the use of violence as a temporary means to the attainment of political power, but he by no means desired a state of civil war to characterise Italy perpetually. When he and his capitalist masters were settled in the saddle, he would prefer to use constitutionalism as his governing instrument. Violence, then, as a political weapon must be kept within limits and not become the accepted and permanent method of politics. A further important point of difference between Mussolini and the landowning class was that he did not desire so much a beaten and broken working class as a body of "free" labourers. However complete the process

of smashing the workers' organisations, there was always the danger of their being rebuilt and constituting a fresh menace to the domination of the employers. To this problem early in 1922 the Fascists turned their attention.

The means adopted to counter the danger of revived Trade Unions was the formation of rival organisations, the Fascist Trade Unions or National Corporations. These bodies are essentially collaborationist and opposed to a recognition of the class war. Originally they proposed to unite in one association both employers, technicians and workers. This was soon found to be an unworkable scheme, and modifications were made to provide for parallel groupings of employers and workers respectively, federated for common purposes. Even so, it was impracticable to get the federal bodies to function, and the affiliation of employers rapidly became nominal only. The workers' organisations played a considerable part in the campaign for reducing wages and worsening conditions of labour. As a friendly critic naïvely puts it : " The difference between Fascist organisers and other Trade Union organisers is that the former say frankly that, for the time being, wages must be reduced owing to present conditions in industry, while the latter are unwilling to recognise the necessity. " *

The National Corporations have given the Fascist leaders a good deal of trouble, and the workers organised therein have by no means always been prepared to take the advice of their organisers to accept the lowered conditions of life offered to them. Many instances have occurred in which the Fascist Unions themselves have turned on the employers with economic demands of their own ; there have been seizures of farms, ships and factories by the Unions when the proprietors refused all concessions, and, as might be expected, the antagonism between the Unions and the landowners has always been bitter. In November, 1922, when the Fascist government was in power, an attack on the eight-hour day of the State railway was made. The Fascist Railway Union in Naples retaliated by seizing the station and driving out the Government officials, who were endeavouring to enforce the new hours system. This revolt, like so many others, was suppressed, but it is symptomatic of the workers' attitude to the Fascist regime even inside the National Corporations.

The Fascists have given figures of membership which indicate a very high percentage of workers organised in the Corporations. There is no doubt that a large number of workers joined the Corporations out of fear : they saw what happened to active members of the genuine Unions, and they hoped to escape the wrath of their

*Odon Por. *Fascism* p. 243 note.

masters by enrolling in the Yellow Unions. Their great value to Fascism lay in the fact that they brought the masses under the ideological influence of Fascism and gave the Fascists unparalleled opportunities for propaganda. It was through the Corporations that Fascism, which had been an isolated terrorist movement and had developed into an organised political party, now first became a genuine mass organisation in the sense that it controlled the thoughts and actions of the majority of the workers. When that point had been reached, the seizure of the power of the State became possible.

But this was in fact only achieved through further acts of treachery on the part of the right wing leaders of the working class. These had, by their advocacy of the evacuation of the factories, first opened the road to the violence of the Fascists. Then, as the terror developed, appalled by the consequences of their weakness, they could conceive no better remedy than an abject surrender—which they called “complete passivity till the storm blew over!” From the extreme of futile pacifism, the leaders rushed to another and (in the circumstances) equally disastrous policy. Turati, in July, 1922, made efforts to secure inclusion in Facta’s newly formed cabinet, but the bourgeois terms were impossibly high. This left Turati and his friends in a difficult position, and they made a bold bid to recover their prestige by a move to the left. They declared a general strike. But the movement was badly organised. Whether the reformists were determined to bring about a failure so that they might use it as an argument against direct action, or whether they blundered through incompetency, is not clear. What is beyond dispute is that the declaration of a strike and its immediate and total collapse played into the hands of the Fascists. “The Bolshevik danger” was the slogan. The Fascists could point to the frivolity and the ineffectiveness of the socialist leaders as an awful warning of what might happen if the socialists obtained power. And as the labour movement broke up under the badness of its leadership, the ranks of Fascism were swelled by recruits from many sections of society.

By this time a state of civil war was in existence. Fighting between Fascists and Socialists, burning of socialist buildings and all the accompaniments of warfare, were constant occurrences. The Fascists were rapidly building their organisation firmly as a basis of the seizure of power. By the end of October, 1922, the *Times* could say of their Party: “A couple of years ago they did not exist. Now they are supreme. They have a real army of their own, armed, admirably disciplined, and full of daring and impatience. They command the enthusiastic adhesion of the National Army, of the Navy, and of the bureaucracy, or at least of a very large proportion of them. They have so terrorised the Press by threats

to burn newspaper offices and destroy the machinery, that the Italian people themselves know but little of their misdeeds, their insolence, and their cruelty in a great part of northern Italy. Thousands have been driven from their homes and dare not return. Mayors, prefects, officials of all sorts, are forced to resign at their bidding. Magistrates who have dared to punish Fascisti, however inadequately, for grave crimes, have been seized and beaten. The tyranny of the organisation is complete, and it is a brutal and intolerant tyranny."

With such forces at their command, and a debased and corrupted proletariat as their only opposition, the Fascists found the road open before them as they marched on Rome to seize power. The proper forms of constitutional opposition were maintained by the Government of Facta, who declared a state of siege. But the King, ever careful of his own position, sided with the big battalions of Mussolini and refused to sign the declaration. The Government fell, and Mussolini came into power on November 1st, 1922.

L. W.

The ROAD to INDIA

IT is never difficult to view objectively the Imperialism of some enemy or inferior country ; and it is perhaps for this reason that Americans are at present doing a signal service in providing us with histories and analyses of the Imperialism of Europe. This present work* by a young Professor of History in Columbia University, U.S.A., gives us a very thorough and realistic history of one phase of the Imperialist struggle which preceded the war of 1914. In this story of intrigues for financial dominance of Turkey and of the strategically important railway from the Bosphorus to the Persian Gulf, we are shown the real forces at work in their crude elements. Instead of being told, as would be the instinct of most bourgeois historians, that the railway was built for love of the brown eyes of Turkish and Arab babies, we are shown clearly the economic motives which dominated. "It was the expectation of the owners of the line that the construction would materially increase the volume of German trade with Turkey—an expectation which was justified by subsequent developments. . . The officers of the *Deutsche Bank* firmly believed that the export of capital and the export of commodities should go hand in hand. The other

* *Turkey, the Great Powers, and the Bagdad Railway.* By Edward Mead Earle, Ph.D. (The Macmillan Company 10s. 6d. net.)

banks associated in the Bagdad Railway enterprise likewise were closely affiliated with important industrial enterprises." Historians usually praise the impartiality of the officers of the State, who are "above the battle" of economic rivalry. Here we are shown that "the German diplomatic and consular representatives in the Ottoman Empire rendered yeoman service in furthering investment, trade, and commerce by Germans in the Near East. . . . The British Consul-General at Constantinople informed British business men that his staff was at their disposal for any service designed to expedite British trade and investments." And the Kaiser's pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1898—even that was "closely connected with the proposed Bagdad Railway concessions." And was there honesty in the dealings, befitting the champions of capitalist civilisation? Not a bit of it! Included in the promoting expenses of the railway "was a large item for *backshish*—gratuities to Ottoman dignitaries. . . . Djaird Bey informs the author that the item of *backshish* must have amounted to almost £100,000." In this gigantic game of grab we are shown religion, missionaries, and educational establishments playing an important rôle, alike in the hands of Germany and of France and of Britain.

The result of this German expansion in the Near East was that "Russia, Great Britain and France were gradually led to obstruct the progress of the railway by political and economic means—at least until such time as they could purge the project of its political possibilities or until they could obtain for themselves a larger share of the spoils." Russia disliked it, because she always wanted control of the Straits. France feared it would endanger her trade with Syria, and French finance had important holdings in the Ottoman Public Debt. Britain had interests in Persia, and wished to retain control over Egypt and the Persian Gulf as roads to India. Formerly she had feared the threat of Russia. Now it was the power of Germany which reached down into the sensitive zone.

A further signal merit of the book is the concluding chapter of forty pages which deals with "The New Struggle for the Bagdad Railway" since 1918. "The Great War may be said to have terminated the first episode of the great Bagdad Railway drama—the rise and fall of German power in the Near East; it opened a second episode, which promises to be equally portentous—an Anglo-French struggle for the right of accession to the exalted position which Germany formerly occupied in the realm of the Turks." The "characteristic fields" of this struggle "have been diplomacy and culture, its entrenchments, embassies, consulates, religious missions, and schools." We are given a very good account of the factors leading up to the Crisis of the Straits in the autumn of 1922—France intriguing with Turkey; Britain, having obtained

many spoils already, supporting the Arabs and also the Greeks, desiring particularly to keep Turkey weak. We are given a very interesting description of the Lausanne conferences, at which the crisis came over France's claim for restitution of her pre-war concessions. At Lausanne "the claims of Great Britain (for Mesopotamia and the neutralisation of the Straits) were more easily reconcilable with the Turkish programme than were the claims of France. Concessions obtained by British nationals between 1910 and 1914 were largely in areas detached from Turkey during the war—chiefly in Mesopotamia—whereas many of the most important French concessions were in Anatolia, the stronghold of the Turkish Nationalists." Hence Britain tended to gain, and to transfer her favour to Turkey, and "on May 15th it was announced that a syndicate of British banks had purchased a controlling interest in the *Deutsche Bank's* holding company for the Anatolian and Bagdad Railway Companies. . . . Thus British imperialists had won possession of the 'short cut to India'!" The book closes rather significantly with the arrival of America on the scene. The Chester concession of April, 1923, provides for the construction of 2,800 miles of railway in Asia Minor by a company controlled by an American syndicate.

This is quite one of the best histories of Imperialism which have appeared for some time, and ranks in importance with Leonard Woolf's *Empire and Commerce in Africa*. It should have a prominent place as an addition to the bibliography of our Imperialism Text-book. It should be in every working-class library, and should be studied by all lecturers on modern imperialism.

MAURICE DOBB.

PLEBS SUMMER SCHOOL

Bispham Holiday Home, Blackpool

August 9th—16th

THE second Plebs Summer School is now "booked up." Awfully sorry, but unless you bring your hut with you we can accommodate no more.

The following instruction to visitors is reprinted from the leaflet advertising the House:—

Take Cleveleys or Fleetwood car at Talbot Road Station (Blackpool) and book to Little Bispham, NOT Bispham.

There's going to be rather less work and more play at Bispham

than at Cober Hill—that is, if weather permits. One lecture per day (discussion afterwards) is the programme ; and the time of day at which it takes place will be settled by plebiscite on the spot—so that it fits in with other arrangements.

The following lecturers and lectures are already booked :—

J. T. Walton Newbold :—“ Capitalism in Lancashire.”

Ellen Wilkinson :—“ The Industrial Revolution of To-day
—Modern Workshop Methods, etc.”

J. F. Horrabin :—“ British Workers and the Empire.”

J. Hamilton :—“ The Present Position and Policy of the
N.C.L.C.”

Ernest Johns :—“ Poetry and the Proletariat.”

Otto Eichler :—“ The Youth Movement on the Continent.”

W. K. Colyer :—“ Americanism.”

CLERKS become MACHINE- MINDERS

The Industrial Revolution of To-day

Ellen Wilkinson here summarises the lecture on Modern Workshop (and Office) Methods which she delivered at the Cober Hill Summer School.

CONVENTIONAL history books talk of the industrial revolution as something that happened in the first half of the nineteenth century—something which is now finally over and done with, and with which we are merely concerned in working out the results. This is, of course, grotesque. We are only at the beginning of the industrial revolution, which has been going on steadily since the first day the steam engine was invented.

During the first half of the nineteenth century the new inventions were restricted to factory production and to transport. While the rapid expansion of the world's markets was still going on, there was no considerable inducement to introduce the machine to other forms of more highly skilled labour, but the vital need of capitalism is expansion not only of markets, but of production per unit, and as competition abroad grew ever fiercer the inducement to extend machinery into new sections of work became compelling. One of the most eventful periods of the industrial revolution was when the machine began to be used to replace brains as well as hands. The

last twenty years has seen the rapid expansion of machinery to replace the armies of black-coated workers who had hitherto considered themselves as anything but "working class," but who now have been as surely forced down to the ranks of the proletariat as any handloom weaver forced into the early textile factories. Some examples of modern office machinery will show how the ranks of these workers have been decimated by the machine.

The Comptometer can list and add a thousand four-figure items per hour, and from three to four thousand sales tickets. One large firm, with a thousand branches, each sending in weekly totals which had to be listed into eight books, employed sixteen male clerks on this work. Now only two girls are needed.

A machine called the Rouleau has been devised for the most detailed logarithmic calculations. The "Millionaire" is a machine which does addition, division, subtraction and multiplication by merely pressing a lever, and any junior can be taught to do the most complicated calculations in about half an hour.

A book-keeping machine called the Elliott-Fisher can post ledgers, make statements, make up pay rolls, make out invoices and extract balances. It can write in bound books as well as on sheets.

The Hollerith Tabulating machine is a contrivance costing only £20, which in an office of which I have knowledge has recently replaced five adult clerks, being now operated by two girls. Information, instead of being laboriously copied on to card indexes, is recorded rapidly by punching holes on the cards. These cards can be sorted in any order and for any purpose at the rate of 9,000 cards per hour. By the use of stop cards, totals can be given at any point in the addition.

These are just a few of the more sensational developments. In addition there are addressographs, which address envelopes at 2,000 per hour, where the quickest workers by hand or typewriter can only address eighty. This has a tab device so that sections can be sorted out as needed. There is an envelope filler which can insert two enclosures in an envelope and seal at the rate of 2,000 an hour, and an address-all, which will take paper from a roll, print on a name, address, and other information, and cut the wrapper to length and gum it for posting at a speed of 10,000 per hour. Dictaphones replace the skilled shorthand typist by a mere machine operation. Inter-telephones eliminate messengers. Duplicators and printing machines can enable one clerk to do the work of four. In a great insurance office the use of machinery has cut down the total staff employed to exactly one-sixth of what had been employed previous to the war.

Here, as in the factories, the introduction of machinery has brought into a sphere once entirely the province of men the cheap woman

worker. The value of women for monotonous repetition work is in the eyes of the employer undoubtedly higher than that of a man. This cannot be comfortably explained as due to the inherent docility of woman as compared with the daring initiative of the men, but the value of women to the capitalist is that a large percentage of them leave industry just about the time when they would demand an adult wage.

Even the introduction of machinery and of women's labour has its limits. The latest problem of the employer is the increase of productivity per labour unit. Where machinery cannot usually be employed, or where human labour is cheaper than the necessary capital expenditure on the machinery, the attempt is now being made to turn the man into a machine, and by means of automatic movements rigidly enforced to secure the same result as would be gained by the introduction of machinery, namely, the use of fewer men to do a given amount of work. While this system is only in its infancy at present in Great Britain, owing mainly to the overwhelming resistance of the men's Trade Unions, its introduction on a large scale is inevitable. The employers, faced with the increasing competition abroad, and the closing of markets either by tariffs or depreciated currencies, will find it necessary to lower their costs of production beyond any point which the workers would stand while the unemployment dole remains at its present level. Increased productivity per unit is, therefore, the only alternative.

The usual attitude of the employer has been to pay his men the least possible wages and use foremen to nigger-drive them into doing the largest possible amount of work; but as regards his actual task, the workman has been left to do pretty much as he pleases. The introduction of piecework has formed a rough incentive, checked by the fact that if a man earns more than the employer conceives to be good for him, a general cutting of piece rates takes place. The result is seen in the general ca' canny policy and loss of time in the workshops. It is the object of scientific management to replace the rough and ready "leave it to the worker" attitude of the average employer by task management. The essentials of this scheme are first, the careful selection of workmen—for obviously it is no use taking a highly intelligent, restless man and expecting him to submit to the rigid discipline imposed by scientific management. The ideal worker for this system is a man of good physical health with the least possible admixture of brain. Secondly, the task has to be plotted out by time-study experts so that movements of the body are reduced to a minimum, and machinery and tools are carefully devised to secure the least amount of fatigue or waste of time. The third essential is the training of the man to perform these motions automatically. This new science, which has developed

rapidly in America, has become known as Economic Psycho-Technics.

In the standard example quoted by Taylor, an increase of product of 300 per cent. was rewarded by a wage increase of 60 per cent.

Some firms in America are now adding psychological investigation to the mere physical tests of fitness. A man has to satisfy his employer that in his mind, as well as his body, he has the correct outfit for a good wage-slave. In this country, the craft unions have fought scientific management, but during the slump some big employers have brought in the new system by introducing less skilled workers and playing on their jealousy of the skilled man.

Scientific management in capitalist hands aims, according to one of its advocates, at only taking from a worker what can be replaced during the hours of rest. An excellent invention for sucking the workers dry! The militant socialists while approving cannily under capitalism, must at least understand a new system which is only part of the same process as the introduction of labour-saving machinery. Managed by the workers, scientific management could be a great help in reducing drudgery and above all in getting the workers' state through the difficult post-revolutionary period, when the slacker takes advantage of the situation and the true revolutionary works himself to death on the "factory front."

ELLEN C. WILKINSON.

Oh, Wherefore are They Proud?

High-sounding phrases about the "British Commonwealth of Nations" are fashionable just now—even in some Labour circles. Workers should look at the hands of our Imperialists—not at their mouths! Compare the Empire in theory with the Empire in fact.

The Empire in Theory

OUR days of voyaging are not over. The world of mind and idea lies around us in unexplored tracts more vast by far than this earth was to our seamen, and the Commonwealth of Nations centring in this Motherland still hears the call, but in an Elizabethan spirit of gallantry and doughtiness, in search of Liberty, Justice and Peace."

The PRIME MINISTER'S

Empire Day message.

"That great fraternity of peoples which is known as the British Empire."

—Mr. Baldwin.

(*Weekly Bulletin of Empire Study No. 2*).

"We are a great, world-wide peace-loving partnership. By the wisdom and courage of our forefathers, by great deeds of heroism and adventure by land and sea, by the insight and corporate sagacity, the tried and tested experience of many generations, we have built up a dominion which is buttressed by the two pillars of Liberty and Law."

—Mr. Asquith.

(*Weekly Bulletin of Empire Study No. 2*).

"I am proud of the British Empire Exhibition and proud of the Empire it embodies and represents."

—Mr. J. H. Thomas (*Times*, 24/5/24)

"It [Wembley] represents to the world . . . that spirit of free and tolerant co-operation which has inspired peoples

of different races, creeds, institutions and ways of thought to unite in a single commonwealth."

—H.M. The KING, opening Wembley.

"The circumstances of our Empire are different from all those which preceded it. We have learned the lesson history has taught by the fate of empires which based their existence on the doctrine of force. Oppression makes martyrs, steels the will, and kindles the faith that never dies. So the British race nurtured in liberty, governs by consent. No constitution binds us, no force enthral us; no fear subdues us. We are self-governing partners of a Commonwealth of Nations."

Mr. S. M. Bruce

(Prime Minister of Australia),
in an Empire Day Message (*Times*,
24/5/24).

The Empire in Fact

Who were the brave Elizabethans who started "in gallantry and doughtiness" to build the Empire? Men like Sir John Hawkins and Sir Francis Drake, whom even orthodox school books admit were pirates. What were their "deeds of heroism and adventure by land and sea"? Capturing African natives and selling them as slaves in America to replace the natives there ruthlessly extirpated by European plunderers. The industrial greatness of Britain, the foundations of Liverpool and Bristol fortunes, begin with the outrageous traffic in flesh and blood—"buttressed by the two pillars of Liberty and Law." Well might Anatole France say: "The coloured people know us only by our crimes." By "the insight and corporate sagacity" the fortunes made in looting the New World and in ravishing India were used to exploit mercilessly the little white slaves of England, whose blood was coined into profits. No apologist for capitalism can gloss over that black page of the history of the heart of the Empire which was written in the dark days of the 18th and early 19th century.

Into the dream picture of the British race, a "great fraternity of peoples," which is "nurtured in liberty and governs by consent," obtrudes the disturbing facts that it was victory in the trade wars of the 18th century

which enabled Britain to appropriate whatever town and route was necessary to her commercial supremacy. The retired burglar has a great respect for peace and property! The "Empire builders" include the corrupt officials of the East India Company and the big-bellied nabobs who thrived upon the great dividends of that concern; and the men who set Indian prince against prince in rival intrigues with the French to add that "brightest jewel" to the Emperor's crown.

It is true that the loss of the United States taught Britain a severe lesson, but the grant of self-government to Canada in 1847 was not unconnected with the rebellions that preceded it.

"Nurtured in liberty, governing by consent," indeed! What of the Maori and Zulu Wars? Is Britain proud of its treatment of Ireland through the centuries? Were the clearing away of the Boers (1899) from the gold reefs of the Rand and the securing of the diamond mines for the De Beers and the introduction of indentured Chinese coolies typical instances of "nurtured in liberty"—or a "fraternity of peoples"? Should we not blush in shame when we think of the Opium Wars against China, of the Denshawai and Amritsar outrages, of the slaughter by aeroplane of the defenceless Bondelz-watz men, women and children, and the continued bombing of natives in Iraq, and the State recognised brothels in Hongkong? In the very issue of *The Times* in which Mr. Bruce's rhetoric was printed, evidence was being given in the O'Dwyer law case which showed the British authorities in India threatening to submit the native women to indescribable indignities in order to compel their men relations to enlist to fight for liberty! What right have British capitalists to protest against French outrages in the Ruhr?

What is behind this agitation for Empire? Briefly it is that one section of the capitalist class, which has pegged out claims to more than one quarter of the earth's surface, desires to keep that area as a field for investment, for markets and as a source of raw materials.

The speeches about "the family estate" and "a fraternity of peoples" are as near to reality as the Wembley coal mine! Mr. Bruce says that empire

must not be based on force—yet he wanted the Singapore Naval Base! The Yellow Press and Sir Kingsley Wood picture Britain being swamped with foreigners despite the fact that in 1923, according to Government figures, outgoing aliens exceeded the incomers by about 2,500! The same people yell about protection for the British worker against cheap foreign labour when the engineer in the Ford factory gets an average of 37s. 6d. a day while the British engineer is lucky to get 10s.; the Indian textile worker—privileged to sweat beneath the Union Jack—gets 4s. a week and the Indian miner—as befits one “nurtured in liberty”—receives 8d. a day, while his wife and child, if 10 years old, have also the right to be exploited underground for 54 hours a week. “The maximum compensation payable to the dependents of a workman killed while at work is only £167.” And this is the thing of which leaders of British Trade Unions are proud!

“Not by territories, nor by arms shall

we be judged by posterity, but by the welfare and happiness of our individual citizens. That is the test of our greatness as an Empire and that is the test by which we shall stand or fall.” Thus Mr. Bruce in a later part of his message. We accept the test, and starting from England itself where 71,000 children die before they are a year old; farm labourers eke out an existence on 25s. a week; and miners’ wages have to be supplemented by Poor Law Relief (while according to the last Income Tax returns (1923–24) 137 people drew £3,750 a week) and going from that to India with its sweated workers, to Canada with its unemployed and to Australia where the same social problems and the same class struggle reappears—we would urge that the Empire stands condemned. From the Nelson Column—erected by blackleg labour—to the sweated waitresses at Wembley, Empire has been associated with the exploitation of the workers—white, black, or brown!

MARK STARR.

MARKED PASSAGES

Shaw on the Ruling-Class Englishman

HE is never at a loss for an effective moral attitude. As the great champion of freedom and national independence, he conquers and annexes half the world and calls it Colonisation. When he wants a new market for his adulterated Manchester goods, he sends a missionary to teach the natives the Gospel of Peace. The natives kill the missionary; he flies to arms in defence of Christianity; fights for it; conquers for it; and takes the market as a reward from heaven. . . . His watchword is always Duty; and he never forgets that the nation which lets its duty get on the opposite side to its interest is lost.

(*The Man of Destiny.*)

The Material Basis of Art

“Good style depends on freedom from monetary troubles; only thus can one arrive at perfect diction.”

(A Persian writer of the twelfth century.)

“No gold; no Holy Ghost.”

(Samuel Butler's *Notebooks.*)

A Mexican Revolutionist

President Obregon discovered that most Mexican “bandits” were really revolutionists, and that when they got what they were fighting for they would stop fighting.

There were 50,000 bandits, so-called, when Obregon came into power. They had been setting the Government by the ears eleven years. Within five months the roads were safe, the trains were running, and the bandits disappeared. Obregon sent Samuel O. Yudico to call upon Gen. Saturnina Cedilla, with instructions to tell him that the revolution was over and ask him what he wanted. Cedilla said: “I want land. I want ammunition so that I can protect my land after I get it, in case somebody tries to take it away from me. And I want ploughs and I want schools for my children, and I want teachers, and I want books and pencils and blackboards and roads. And I want moving pictures for my people too. *And I don't want any church, or any saloon. That's all.*”

Now Cedilla and six of his “bandits”

attend the conventions of the Mexican Federation of Labour as delegates.

(New York World, April 27th.)

A Hint to Labour Men wearing Court Dress

The Paris correspondent of a Swiss journal tells a quaint tale of a dress coat. Maxime Lisbonne, the Communist, received an invitation to present himself, along with other political guests, at the palace of the President. He accepted and duly attended. It was necessary that he should renounce his Communist non-conformity for the occasion, and conform to the present evil world by appearing before Citizen Carnot in a dress coat. This temporary backsliding from primitive principles in dress was naturally reviewed with distrust and suspicion by his revolutionary comrades, and he was called upon to defend himself before the "Equals of Montmartre." "Citizens," said he, "it is true that I have visited the President of the Republic. I can assure you that he receives the people in a good and honourable manner. But you will ask, why should I, Lisbonne, and not another, have gone to the palace of the President as the representative of the people? For a very good reason; I was the only one who possessed a dress coat." "How did you get it?" shouted several voices; "have you been herding with the Aristos?" "Citizens," continued Maxime Lisbonne, "you are aware that I am an actor. I had a dress coat in which I performed the

part of the Manager in 'Thirty Years: or the life of an Actor' at the Bouffes du Nord. I found this old coat somewhat out of fashion and stained with grease spots, from which I cleansed it with spirits. One of Citizen Carnot's guests, as he passed, sniffed at me and observed, 'It is a notion which would have occurred to nobody except a revolutionist to perfume himself with petroleum.'—From *The Commonwealth* (organ of the Socialist League), Feb., 1888.

The "Home" of "Learning"

Two years of unusual misery and failure, followed by two years of radiant joy and success—that is the record of my Oxford life. . . . As I was neither rich nor titled, but only a "Junior Student" or Scholar, receiving money left to the college for the encouragement of true religion and useful learning, I was naturally put in the Meadow Buildings (Christ Church) overlooking a dank and unwholesome swamp. The hope, as we satirically asserted, may have been that we scholars might die there of some feverish chill and so save the thrifty Bursar the expense of our scholarship. But probably the real purpose was only to pour contempt on the little pride we may have retained after our interview with the Dean, who fell prostrate before aristocrat and plutocrat alike, but regarded a Scholar as a necessary evil.

(*Changes and Chances*, by H. W. Nevinson.)

The Plebs League and the London Labour College

WE have received the two following communications:— publication in the next number of *The PLEBS*.

I
LONDON COUNCIL FOR WORK-
ING-CLASS EDUCATION.

July 14th, 1924.

DEAR COMRADE,—I enclose a copy of a resolution passed at yesterday's meeting of the above Council, which I was directed to forward to you for

With best wishes,
Yours fraternally,
GEO. PHIPPEN
(Div. Organiser).

Enclosure:—

"That this London Divisional Council of the N.C.L.C. protests strongly against the attack upon the Labour College made by comrade M.

Starr at the recent Plebs Meet, as reported in the July PLEBS Magazine, where it was declared that the Labour College is no longer a source of strength to the educational movement.

"This Council, having had very close and continuous educational contact with the Labour College for many years, is bound to testify to the very great help it has received, and is still receiving from both the College staff and students, and it resents very much the publication in the official organ of the N.C.L.C. of a statement which is not founded upon fact."

II

The Labour College,

July 10th, 1924.

DEAR COMRADE,—The resident students of the Labour College wish to point out that Comrade M. Starr, as reported in the account of the Plebs Meet (July PLEBS) has not their authority or sanction for making the statements regarding the College and the students.

Yours fraternally,

A. H. JONES,

(Sec., Students' House Meeting).

A REPLY

THE above communications compel us to discuss the Plebs E.C.'s criticisms of the Labour College more fully than we were at all anxious to do in these columns. Our report last month purposely omitted a great deal that Comrade Starr and other speakers said on the subject at the Plebs Meet.

In the first place, it has to be made clear—the report being somewhat indefinite on this point—that Comrade Starr was speaking for the Plebs E.C., and not in his personal capacity, either as individual Pleb, ex-student of the College, or class-tutor and organiser, at all. The Plebs E.C. takes full responsibility for his statements, which were made in the course of a report, made by him as an E.C. member, to the League members at the Meet, on the relations between the Plebs League and the Labour College during the past year. We have, therefore, to ask the senders of these two communications to substitute "the Plebs E.C."

for Comrade Starr in any minutes of these resolutions.

May we reply to the second communication first:—It is, of course, obvious that neither the Plebs E.C. nor any individual member of it or of the League would need to obtain the authority or sanction of the students in residence at the College before making any criticisms of that institution, or referring to facts and events known to many outside supporters of it. We are, however, exceedingly glad to publish the students' communication because it makes it clear that, while The PLEBS for some time has actively sympathised with the efforts made by students and ex-students to bring about certain changes at the College, there has been no direct "collusion" between the students, as a body, and the Plebs E.C.

In reply to the resolution passed by the London N.C.L.C. Council, we think it best to give our readers a brief outline of the particular course of events which led to the definite and deliberate statement, on behalf of the Plebs E.C., that the Labour College, as constituted at present, was "no longer a source of strength to our educational movement."

It is just two years ago since The PLEBS published a detailed criticism of the curriculum of the Labour College, with the main points of which the staff of the College expressed themselves in agreement. So far as we are aware, no substantial alterations or modifications of the curriculum have yet been made.

During last year the dissatisfaction of a majority of the students then in residence came to a climax when the students directly approached the Executives of the two controlling Unions, and asked for the appointment of a Committee of Enquiry. At its September (1923) meeting the Plebs E.C. passed unanimously the following resolution:—"That in view of recent developments and events in connection with the Labour College, London, this E.C. feels strongly that the time has come when support should be given in the magazine to the students' demand, not only for representation on the governing body of the College, but for a full enquiry by the controlling Unions into the administration, curriculum, etc., of the institution."

The Committee of Enquiry was

appointed by the Unions this same month (Sept. 1923). But six months later it had not met; and at the meeting of the Plebs E.C. held March 6th last, at which the full newly-elected Executive was present—M. H. Dobb, Geo. Hicks, J. T. W. Newbold, Cedar Paul, R. W. Postgate, Mark Starr, and Ellen Wilkinson, with the Hon. Sec., Winifred Horrabin, and the Editor, J. F. Horrabin—it was unanimously agreed that the following resolution be moved by the Plebs representative at the next N.C.L.C. Executive meeting:—"That unless the full and public Enquiry already promised is immediately held the London Labour College be expelled from the N.C.L.C."

[It should be noted that the aim of this resolution was not, primarily, the expulsion of the College, but a demand by the N.C.L.C., on pain of the only penalty it was in its power to inflict, that the Enquiry should be no further delayed.]

This resolution was accordingly moved at an E.C. meeting of the N.C.L.C.; but on Mr. Foot, secretary to the Labour College Governors, explaining that the Enquiry had now begun, it was withdrawn.

At the Annual Meeting of the N.C.L.C., held at Leeds, May 3rd—4th last, the following resolution was moved by the Plebs League delegate:—"That this Council regrets that the Enquiry into the condition of the London Labour College, demanded by the students, has been held in private; and asks that copies of the evidence and findings be made available for affiliated bodies." That resolution was carried, after a full discussion (in which the College Governors' representatives took part) by a large majority.

This bare outline puts I.W.C.Ers in possession of the facts. It need only be remarked, in supplement thereto, that it is a part of the Plebs League's duty to the I.W.C.E. movement to criticise any affiliated institution, if it has grounds for the belief that such criticism is desirable in the interests of the movement as a whole. The Plebs E.C. feels that it had such grounds for criticising the London Labour College—indeed, Governors of the College themselves admit in unofficial conversa-

tions that such grounds exist—and it supported the 1922-23 students' demand for an Enquiry in the belief that this was the best way to secure certain reforms. We feel strongly that any course of action which would result in the officers and the rank and file of the two controlling Unions taking a closer and more critical interest in the affairs of the College would be more than justified; and would result in a strengthening of the whole movement which at present is definitely weakened by the adhesion of an institution over which it has no sort of control.

In direct reply to the London Council's resolution we may say, also, that we are well aware of the assistance rendered by the *students* of the College, past and present, in the classes held in the London area; and we would point out to the Council that many of these students are the very men whose demand for an Enquiry The PLEBS is supporting—and the Council (presumably) opposing.

As regards similar assistance from the *staff*, we are unable to speak from precise information. But we are prepared to risk the assertion that at least five members of the present Plebs E.C. have rendered considerably more assistance to the London classes than any member of the College staff; and we may perhaps be permitted to remark that the Plebs E.C. has not received—nor expected—any thanks from the London Council on that account.

But the main point is, of course, not the more or less accidental usefulness of the College to the London district—the natural result of its geographical location. The important thing is its usefulness to the national movement; and, frankly, we decline to believe that the London Council seriously thinks that the College is doing all it could in that respect.

Finally, we resent very strongly indeed the allegation that we have published any statement "not founded upon fact;" and we would remind the Council that the Plebs League's general attitude towards the Labour College was endorsed (as reported above) by a majority of the delegates at the Annual Meeting which constitutes the governing body of the I.W.C.E. movement.

J. F. HORRABIN, Editor, PLEBS.

The NATIONAL COUNCIL of LABOUR COLLEGES

HEAD OFFICE—22 ELM ROW, EDINBURGH
Gen. Sec., J. P. M. Millar (to whom all reports should be sent)

SHEET Metal Workers.—Arrangements have now been made for this Union's educational scheme, and all College Secretaries have been advised that the members of the Union are entitled to free classes and to free Correspondence Tuition and that each branch is entitled to send a representative to the College Committee in its area. No doubt all our officials and tutors will do their utmost to make the scheme a great success.

Club and Institute Union.—This body, which is composed of Working Men's Clubs (except the Conservative Clubs) recently agreed to grant £100 to the W.E.A., but has refused to make a similar grant to the N.C.L.C. Labour Clubs, should get busy sending in resolutions to the Executive expressing their views.

National Society Operative House and Ship Painters.—A note from Comrade Highly (Halifax) states that this Union's Conference agreed to insert in its Objects a clause providing for Independent Working-class Education, and also passed a resolution reading: "This delegate-meeting recommends the Executive Council to affiliate to the National Council of Labour Colleges and also to meet the Council with a view to putting into operation a definite Scheme of I.W.C.E." The alteration of the Constitution has still to be balloted on, but no doubt the enthusiasts responsible for the excellent Conference decision will see that nothing goes amiss with the ballot.

Furnishing Trades Association.—This Union has decided to affiliate to the N.C.L.C. by paying the £5 5s. affiliation fee. We hope that this will be the forerunner of an Educational Scheme. Mr. Gossip, the General Secretary, is to represent the Union on the N.C.L.C.

Vehicle Builders.—The question of affiliating to the N.C.L.C. was before

the Amalgamation Conference held recently. Can anyone advise the N.C.L.C. Head Office as to what happened to the resolution?

J. W. Thomas Memorial Fund.—Attention of Colleges and individual students is drawn to the Fund that is being raised to assist the widow of our late Divisional Organiser, J. W. Thomas. Applications for Collecting Sheets should be sent to the Secretary of the Plebs League or to the General Secretary of the N.C.L.C.

What the Divisions are doing

Div. 1.—A successful Garden Party was run by Div. 1 in July, and steps are being taken to arrange another for August. Several classes are running short summer courses.

Div. 2.—The Division is to have the tutorial services of our old friend Wynn Cuthbert during the coming winter classes. Organiser D. W. Thomas strongly recommends the Labour Research Department "Labour and Capital" series as a source of matter for topical lectures.

Div. 3.—Arrangements have been made for a lecture tour in the Northern part of the Division in the July-August period.

Div. 4.—Organiser Owen has had an interview with the S.W.M.F. An appeal is made to all S.W.M.F. I.W.C.Ers. to follow the matter up. Five successful Day Schools have been run with Dr. E. Paul and W. W. Craik as Lecturers at Aberavon, Ogmore Vale, Ammanford, Llanelli and Swansea. Other six Day Schools are to be held in August.

Div. 5.—Gloucester Labour College has arranged a series of outings to places of interest with a view to keeping the students together. This is an excellent plan that might be followed in other areas. Successful Day School, with J. F. Horrabin as lecturer, held at Bristol, July 12th.

Div. 6.—During July, class work

has been done at Coventry, Newcastle, Chesterton and Birmingham. Stafford has formed a Study Circle for the summer. The immediate need in this Division is a strong Labour College for Birmingham District.

Div. 7.—Every College Secretary is no doubt, doing his best to make the J. W. Thomas Memorial Fund a credit to the Division. Several local comrades are among those who have applied for the vacant position of Divisional Organiser. A Sheffield Boilermakers' branch has supported a resolution calling upon the E.C. to negotiate an N.C.L.C. Educational Scheme.

Div. 8.—Liverpool Labour College held a very successful Week-end School at Birkenhead, with T. Ashcroft and J. P. M. Millar as lecturers, Coun. Grant of the N.U.D.A.W. presiding. On his way back the General Secretary also addressed an excellent meeting at the Manchester Labour College. In the South Eastern area the Colleges have decided on a re-organisation which should bring about considerable advances in their work during the coming year. For this purpose a Conference is being called in Manchester on August 23rd; chair will be taken by Mr. W. A. Robinson, Political General Secretary of the N.U.D.A.W. It is hoped that Mr. George Hicks of the A.U.B.T.W. will address the Conference, along with Councillor James Gormand (A.E.U.) and Mr. J. L. Davenport (Sheet Metal Workers). Last month we omitted to report that the Birkenhead, Liverpool and Rockferry Students' Association had decided to inaugurate a summer programme of rambles and debates. As a beginning, writes Comrade J. Bennett, they had a very successful char-a-banc trip to the Logerhead, Wales, the beautiful scenery of which was disturbed by the strains of the Red Flag. A successful weekend school was held at Tottington, near Bury, with F. Casey, Ellen Wilkinson and E. Redfern as lecturers.

Div. 9.—Sometime ago Comrade Coxon apparently overheard that Newcastle Broadcasting Station was being used to carry on some sort of propaganda for some Employers' Organisation for educating workers. Comrade Coxon took the matter up with the

Broadcasting people, and we have heard that he has been successful in getting an opportunity to speak over the wireless on I.W.C.E. Heartiest congratulations! An Educational Conference is to be held in Newcastle, Aug. 23rd, with A. J. Cook (M.F.G.B.) Chas. Flynn (N.U.D.A.W.) Will Lawther (Durham Miners) Ebby Edwards (Northumberland Miners) and Will Coxon as speakers.

Div. 10. Scotland.—A typographical error occurred in last month's issue. The "fully 11,000" Glasgow District Students had a nought too many! Edinburgh District has appointed C. L. Gibbons as staff tutor-organiser. He begins his new duties in August. All success to his efforts. Lanarkshire and Stirlingshire have held successful Annual Conferences. Comrade Michell's report on the Fifeshire Committee's Annual Conference showed an exceedingly creditable year's work. Fife starts the new year with a balance in hand. In the far-flung Shetlands the N.C.L.C. flag is kept flying by the Economics Club, 5, Commercial Road, Lerwick, who have just published the first of a series of propaganda pamphlets, entitled *Socialism and Sarolea*, a reply to Prof. Sarolea by Ernest Trueman. Single copies postpaid 3½d., per dozen 2s. 6d.;

Directory.—Additions and Corrections.

Div. 5.—Divisional Organiser: F. Phippen, 23, Baden Road, Redfield, Bristol.

Div. 7.—York Labour College, Sec.: Mr. Yeatman, 114, Holgate Road, York.

Div. 10.—Edinburgh District, Sec.: A. Woodburn, 1, Viewforth, Edinburgh.

Div. 8.—Great Harwood L.C., Sec.: Miss C. Pugh, 7, Croft Street, Great Harwood.

STOP PRESS.

The Manchester Labour College is holding a Garden Party at Dalton Hall, Saturday afternoon, August 16th. Sports, games, play-reading, speeches, etc., etc. Admission by programme, 6d. each—obtainable from the College, Dale Street, Manchester. Roll up!

LETTERS

POURCEAUGNACS

DEAR COMRADE,—If comrade Eric Verney ever finds time to read Marx, he will find "the aggressive word 'Pourceaugnacs'"—which to him is Greek—in *The Civil War in France* (Kerr ed., p. 25). It was a term of humorous abuse which Marx applied to the "Rurals," and may be freely translated as "pig-face."

Yours fraternally,

"OWL-FACE."

MULLER-LYER

DEAR COMRADE,—May I suggest that you try to arrange for the publication of a cheap edition of Muller Lyer's book, *History of Social Development*, on similar lines to Postgate's *Revolution*.

I will guarantee (with cash) to take three.

Yours fraternally,

W. GREAVES.

Manchester.

[If we can get 297 other comrades to do likewise, something might be possible. But we should need that minimum number of cash guarantees.—Ed., PLEBS.]

FASCISM

DEAR EDITOR,—Writing about the seizure of the factories (and their later evacuation) by the Italian workers in September, 1920, your contributor "L. W." states that up till then no serious acts of violence had been committed. The facts are otherwise.

Long ago in *Forward*—quoting from a July 1921 issue of *Avanti*—I gave figures in regard to the number of workers killed and wounded as a result of the activities of the Fascist-Arditi gang during the three autumn months of 1919. A specific instance (referred to by me in the *Cambridge Magazine* of December, 1919) was the throwing of a bomb by members of this gang into the midst of a procession of workers at Milan who were celebrating the Socialist successes of the General Election—two or three workers were killed and several injured. Mussolini, Marinetti, and other leaders at the Fascist headquarters close to the scene of

the outrage were actually arrested—see small paragraph in *The Times* of November 20th, 1919—but were later released.

Also it is scarcely correct to say that the Fascist Trade Unions were founded only in 1921. They were already in existence—if not exactly under that title—and favoured by Mussolini in the early part of 1920.

"L. W." does well to draw attention to the "vacillating" policy of Serrati, former editor of *Avanti*. No single individual, apart from Mussolini, has contributed more to the break-up of the Italian Labour movement, and it is a fitting sequel to his malevolent activities in not excluding the then small Reformist Right-wing group of Turati, D'Aragona and their friends, that he himself more than a year ago was expelled from the "official" Socialist Party (mainly another Right-wing section), which now controls *Avanti*.

Yours faithfully,

A. P. L.

WORKERS' BIRTH CONTROL GROUP

DEAR COMRADE,—I am happy to say that the above Group is going to be a live body. We organised a petition last year, with 5,000 signatures, which we took to the Minister of Health, as a deputation on May 9th, for the express purpose of imploring the Ministry to permit Health Authorities—Maternity and Welfare Centres to *give to those who desire it* information on the subject of Birth Control, and in those cases where the doctors give information, the Ministry should not on that account withhold the Grants.

Mr. Wheatley turned us down, and told us to go to the Hospitals, and also said that it was a question for the House of Commons rather than for the Ministry of Health.

We have sent women to the Hospitals, and they are not given information there, but are generally insulted.

We, as a Group, are unanimous that the Welfare Centres are the right places for working women to go to be instructed.

We formed our Group because we realised that the middle class women find it much easier to get information; they have only to go to Harley Street, pay a fee and are given all instruction.

Not so the working woman.

We are endeavouring to conduct a vigorous propaganda by means of:—

1. Meetings of Local Labour Parties on the subject.

2. Resolutions by the Party sent to the Ministry of Health and to the Local M.P.

3. Discussion by members at the Labour Party Conference in October.

4. Petitions to be sent to every Local Authority in the area.

The resolution we recommend is the one that was passed at the National Conference of Labour Women this year, and is as follows:—

"That this Conference, while in no way criticising the view of those, who, from scientific or moral reasons, are opposed to the practice of Birth Control, expresses its opinion that the Ministry of Health should permit Health authorities to provide for those who desire it, information on the subject of Birth Control, and that in cases where Local Health Authorities desire to give such information, the Ministry of Health should not on that account withhold the usual grants."

Yours truly,

(Mrs.) FREDA LASKI
(Acting Secretary).

16, Warwick Gardens,
London, W. 14.

HOUSING

DEAR EDITOR,—Com. Hicks' reply to my letter, July PLEBS, is very evasive. What is there to prevent the House Building Committee, of which he is a member, or any similar body, taking a census of all empty and under-occupied houses, and if he doesn't like expropriation, put forward some modified proposal to meet the immediate needs of many who are homeless? I submit that such a scheme would in no way resemble "a midge in a millstream," but is a sensible proposition.

His remarks on the suggested apprenticeship scheme on adequate lines of dilution, *vs* one apprentice to three men (on Housing Schemes only), do

not coincide with the Report on the present position in the Building Industry, by the National House Building Committee, which states on p. 15— "Apprentices up to the total ratio of one apprentice to three craftsmen." (This does not mean one to three of the men on the contract, but in the trade in the district.)

Com. Hicks has on more than one occasion declared himself, and the name of his Union implies one Union for the Building Industry. I feel that this new fangled apprenticeship scheme will tend to set up new craft barriers, rather than break down old ones. If dilution is necessary let it come as an evolutionary process, open and unashamed, and not by back door methods.

However, the Housing Scheme of the Labour Government may easily go the same way as its predecessors. It has gone where it may be soon cut and carved out of recognition.

A nation of forty millions will then not quietly cry out for more production, but will loudly acclaim for more equal distribution.

Yours fraternally,

E. BOWMAN.

I.W.C.E. IN AMERICA

DEAR EDITOR,—The educational movement, here in America, is in a terrible condition. It is true the A.F. of L. has supported the Workers' Education Bureau. But no worker who thinks as a worker is seriously concerned with educational schemes that find favour in the eyes of Samuel Gompers.

The revolutionists have not attracted the masses because of the nature of their appeals and the methods pursued. They think education is like whiskey, you must have a prescription and then draw on it. They try to educate the masses apart from the struggle. It is because The PLEBS and the League have made education part of the struggle, and have outlined their courses in line with the struggle, that their appeal finds favour in the eyes of many whom we might not term Communists, yet, nevertheless, their deeds make Communist theory workable.

Education must be, and in the final analysis can only be, life in action. It is a guide to action. It is not a uni-

versity curriculum. We cannot learn apart from the struggle. We learn with it. It is because some Marxians think they can look themselves up in a room and become educated that education has made little progress in the United States. Our leading "Marxians" still regard psychology as "moonshine" spiritualism. Of course, they have not studied psychology, except for occasional book reviews. Dietzgen never mentioned psychology, so it will not go!

The most promising sign is the formation of a new political movement, the Farmer-Labour Party, arising out of what has come to be known as the St. Paul Convention. Its programme, rather mild, thanks to the political sagacity of the Communists of America, is not

the thing to judge it by. It is what the party will mean. It will mean bringing into line over a million workers and farmers. They will gain a new spirit and let us hope, a new understanding. This new understanding will be born out of the struggle. The new understanding will awaken the minds of the farmers and workers. Then will come the demand for education.

The future is with groups like the Plebs League. Some comrades in Britain may not appreciate the League because it has been on the job for so long. Out here the League is like the Waverley pen—it "comes as a boon and a blessing to men."

Fraternally,

JACK CARNEY

(Editor *Labor Unity*, San Francisco).

The PLEBS Page

THE ballot vote on the new constitution has resulted in a large majority in favour of the change. Only two people voted against, and many comrades wrote expressing their agreement and their desire to support the League in any way possible. One comrade wrote that he did not agree with the qualification contained in the words "suited to British conditions," as "there is only one working class and the geographical and concomitant political constitutions are only disturbing factors that must be eliminated. . . . It leaves the movement open to the charge of insularism, beside allowing room for such notions as an all-British Socialist Commonwealth or Imperial Socialism. I see by The PLEBS that discussion has taken place and been closed. I hope someone will watch carefully the tendencies."

I don't quite know what that last sentence means, but the fact is that we published the new constitution in the magazine and *asked* for discussion and opinions before ever it was submitted to the League at the Meet. So if someone had been watching before instead of after, someone could have started the ball rolling! Our comrade will notice, if he reads the constitution carefully, that the "British condi-

tions" refer to a revolutionary policy, not to the general idea behind I.W.C.E. I suppose that even the most orthodox Marxist would allow us to plant our little seed in the proper way to ensure its growth, and I assure every Plebeian on the watch for heresy that the British Empire does not inspire us as a garden in which to plant that seed! We want to make some internationalists realise that they must set their own house in order before lining up either alongside or behind folk who have accomplished their revolution.

* * * *

We often receive requests from Plebs who are standing for Trade Union or other offices for a paragraph in the Mag. calling attention to this. In the past as our readers will know, we have often acceded to such requests. As the number of I.W.C.Ers increases, however, and as these I.W.C.Ers take an increasingly active part in Union work, it becomes exceedingly difficult for us to make individual recommendations of this kind. We think it best, therefore, in future to "name no names." Every Pleb is urged to find out, when called upon to vote for any Union officer, whether or not he is a supporter of I.W.C.E. and if he is—other things being equal—to support him.

* * * *

We received the other day a very welcome letter from Comrade Rosa Lucas—so far as we are aware, the oldest member of the Plebs League (she has passed her 80th birthday). Congratulating us on our action with regard to Marx's grave she mentions that she attended his funeral. . . . The portrait here reproduced is of the



youngest member of the League, Karl Fujita, of Tokyo (Japan) just 16 months old. He is sporting his Plebs badge—other members please note.

This is the sort of letter that gladdens our hearts—received recently from the treasurer of a large I.L.P. branch in S.W. London:—"I enclose treasury note of ten shillings which you will use your discretion in apportioning to any section of the Plebs League which needs it most. My branch of the I.L.P.

is enthusiastically in sympathy with the Plebs League and all its works." We have put half our comrade's donation to the J. W. Thomas Memorial Fund. Individual League members who have not contributed to collecting sheets can send donations to The PLEBS Office.

Comrade F. MacDonald asks me to say that he is anxious to form a group of the Plebs League at Pegswood, near Morpeth. Will local readers communicate with him? He has already the nucleus of a group and will welcome support. His address is 430, Langwell Terrace, Pegswood, Morpeth.

The report of the Summer School at Scarborough brought in quite a sheaf of letters from Plebs bemoaning the fate that kept them at work when such glories were in progress, and even the folk who were there have written to say that it brought it all back to them and made them feel happy! Well, comrades, we have temporarily booked Cober Hill for the last week in June and the first in July next year, so you can fix your holiday now. One Scotsman has actually written to say that he has bought a box and is saving up for next year. Can you beat it!

W. H.

PLEBS LEAGUE

Financial Statement and Balance Sheet

Jan. 1st—Dec. 31st, 1923.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

<i>Income.</i>	£ s. d.	<i>Expenditure.</i>	£ s. d.
Balance at Bank, Dec. 31st, 1922	136 0 6	Printing, PLEBS Magazine ..	934 6 7½
Donations	3 15 1	Printing Publications	534 16 11
Sales of PLEBS Magazines ..	949 6 11½	Advertisements	26 3 0
Sales of Publications	968 16 1½	Books purchased	158 15 2
Sales of Books	250 13 7½	Postages; despatch of mags. and parcels	240 5 11
Sales of pamphlets, leaflets, maps, etc.	86 11 9	Salaries	256 0 0
Advertisements	43 12 0	Office Expenses:—	
League subscriptions and badges	38 16 4½	Rent, light and telephone ..	71 11 4
Loan	200 0 0	Stationery	26 10 5
Foreign Money (sales of PLEBS and publications)	40 7 2	Repairs, Cleaning, Office help	77 3 5½
		To purchase of badges	5 18 1

Miscellaneous :—			
Postage re-			
funded by			
Lab. Coll..	4	12	0
Cheque unpre-			
sented ..	1	13	4
Petty cash in			
hand ..	5	11	3
		11	16
			7
		£2,729	16
			2

Binding PLEBS			
vols.			
N.C.L.C. Levy..	1	1	0
Slides ..	5	7	4
		15	2
			5
Repaid Loans :—			
To publish Im-			
perialism ..	105	0	0
R. W. Postgate	85	0	0
Anonymous ..	13	9	4
		203	9
			4
Bank Charges ..		5	10
Petty Cash in hand		2	0
Cash Balance at Bank, Dec.			
31st, 1923 ..	163	3	1
Miscellaneous ..	14	17	4
		£2,729	16
			2

BALANCE SHEET.

Assets.							
	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Office Furniture ..	25	0	0	£1 Fund loan ..	33	11	6
Outstanding accounts ..	525	14	7	Loans :—			
Publications in stock ..	777	3	8	J. F. Horrabin ..	120	0	0
Cash Balance at bank ..	163	3	1	Dr. Johnsten ..	20	0	0
Cash in office ..	2	0	11	The late Dr. Jameson ..	20	0	0
				G. Sims ..	2	9	1
				Pelican Press ..	60	0	0
	£1,493	2	3	Publications ..	506	16	5
				Rent (to Dec. 31st) ..	13	9	6
				Balance on Marx Grave fund	8	9	11
				Books bought (approx.) ..	15	0	0
				Balance ..	693	5	10
					£1,493	2	3

Audited and found correct
this 4th day of June, 1924.
C. L. GIBBONS.

LABOUR COLLEGE (LONDON) STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION.

THE reunion of ex-students and residential students was celebrated during Whitsun week-end. The social on Saturday night was well attended, a good quota of the ex-students having arrived from their various districts.

At 10 a.m., Sunday, the L.C.S.A. gathered for its first conference. One of the residential students, Idris Cox, was elected chairman, and he gave an address of welcome to the ex-students. The secretary then introduced each member by name and then proceeded to give a brief report of the preceding year's work.

Arising from this, discussion followed upon the question of the inquiry set up by the two Union E.C.s, to investigate the charges and criticisms made

by last year's students. Stress was laid on the fact that no report had yet been issued.

The conference reassembled in the afternoon, and the auditor's report was read and accepted. For the coming year J. T. Derricott (Northumberland) was elected as secretary.

A long discussion took place concerning the students' position regarding employment after leaving the college, and also with reference to the curriculum and lecturers. Other items upon the agenda had to be abandoned owing to lack of time.

The garden party at Kew on Whit-Monday afternoon brought the first reunion to a successful conclusion.

J. T. D.

BOOKS REVIEWED

by PLEBS reviewers

BOB SMILLIE

My Life for Labour. By Robert Smillie (Mills & Boon. Cloth, 4s. ; paper, 2s. 6d.).

THE impression that one gets from this book, which suffers from the circumstance of it having been written as a serial for a weekly periodical more chatty than literary, is of Bob Smillie, the home-loving man of simple tastes, never so happy as when he is seated in a cosy corner of No. 29, Millar Street, Larkhall.

It is the reminiscences of this fighting personality whose life work had so very much more to do than he will admit with the change that has in recent years appeared so suddenly to come over the industrial and political outlook of the working folk of Clydesdale. To know Bob Smillie without having met him in the home circle at Larkhall is not to know him, because, with less of the assertive nationalism of most of his race, he is very decidedly a man from Scotland—even though he was born in that town of fanaticism, but fine fighting men, Belfast.

Bob Smillie and his wife—as wonderful a person as himself—have brought up nine of a family in the conditions so familiar to those who know the miners' "rows" of Lanarkshire, but quite beyond the imagining of those who don't. He feels most keenly of all the degradation of those conditions, the mockery of home-life, the hideous brute existence to which the miner has been condemned by the coal capitalists of Scotland. The crusade for pit-baths, the quest for decent houses, the struggle for shorter hours, a greater regard for safety underground—these reformist enthusiasms which mean so much to Smillie, the man who has spent half a century fighting to better the lot of his miners, are the single reforms which, never to be realised under capitalism, have made Lanarkshire men and women the potential revolutionaries that they are to-day.

The coal and iron towns and villages of Clydesdale—most of all the villages, for the towns are but aggregations of villages—are ever before Smillie's eyes. The green straths of Clydesdale and its woods and orchards, its rolling moors and its salmon streams, constitute the fair land that he, through all his strife, his political contests, his journeyings to and fro from London to Larkhall through the weary years, his endless hours of negotiation—he is a marvel as a negotiator—his tireless activities in the Socialist movement, is seeking to win for the common people to enjoy in common.

He is no scientific Socialist, no deep reader of theoretical treatises, not a very avid reader of any of the stuff our fellows like. He loves the poets and the great authors. He dreams—and few Scotsmen not reared in Renfrew Street don't—of the land his forebears loved and lost.

But he has been amongst the most staunch supporters of independent working-class education. Independence—industrial, political, cultural—is of the very fibre of Smillie's being.

With what quiet joy he tells of his curt "Yes" and "No" to the ineffable Margot when she tried to butter his feet with flattery! I only wish he had told the story of his first—and, probably, his only—visit to Buckingham Palace.

This book breathes Smillie, the idealist, the restless champion of the weak, but it leaves so many, many gaps—such as his efforts to win Women's Votes—that I do hope someone who knows him intimately will give us a fuller picture. He will never do it himself.

J. T. W. N.

A WARNING

Bloody American Capitalism. By Joe Walker (Reformers Bookshop, Bradford. 6d.).

The history of the persecution of the American workers for their activities in industrial and political movements

on behalf of their class is not new, but the author of this pamphlet gives the reader sufficient instances of the unscrupulous methods used by the capitalists to stimulate a study of the many volumes to which he makes reference. How much the American bosses respect any government can be seen by the threat made by a member of the Standard Oil Trust to a member of the Government investigating body into the operations of that monopoly:—"We are bigger than the Government. Standard oil is stronger than the United States. We own the Senate and the House. If you pursue your investigations beyond the point necessary to fool the public, we will have you removed."

When reading of the "frame ups" organised with a view to casting into prison the militant workers for daring to incite their fellows to strike and to organise in the unions, one is reminded of the more recent trial in Cawnpore of M. N. Roy and his comrades in India for daring to rouse the workers of India to organise against their capitalists. And the British Labour Government looks on, showing no inclination towards intervention on behalf of these workers. The workers in this country may strike without the fear of the military forces being arrayed against them, but how long will the mediating committee or the court of inquiry be considered sufficient to stem the rising tide of revolt? It is with a view to making impossible the introduction of these callous American methods that Joe Walker appeals to the workers of Britain to be ready and work towards the formation of a united working-class front.

E. V. A.

A CONSTITUTIONALIST

The Wages of Labour. By W. Graham, M.P. (Cassells, 3s. 6d.)

Most Members of Parliament will agree that in Mr. W. Graham the Government have found a man eminently suited to the position of Financial Sec. to the Treasury. His knowledge of financial matters and other things appertaining thereto is admittedly great. He gives one the impression of being a veritable mine of information in things economic. One expects, there-

fore, to find a wealth of useful material in his new book, and I think most of those who have the opportunity of reading it will not be disappointed.

The measure of agreement with the conclusions arrived at will not be quite so unanimous. Mr. Graham analyses the nature of the Wage System and also offers a criticism of same. He arrives at the conclusion that if the workers are to get more adequate remuneration and a better standard of life, then our wasteful methods of conducting industry must be superseded by a system of scientific management with a gradual growth towards joint control and the democratisation of industry. He concludes that some form of Guild is the next stage in economic progress, and that a vigorous constitutionalism rather than the revolutionary method is the much shorter road to the ideal. On the whole, a book worth buying.

W. PALING, M.P.

RUSSIA

The First Time in History. By Anna L. Strong (Labour Publishing Company, 6s.)

What worries our opponents most concerning Russia is that after six years of unique tribulation, the Bolsheviks are still *in power*. Inevitable "Marxian" concessions have had to be made to unfavourable "conditions," but the thing that matters most—*power*—is still in the hands of the Workers' Republic.

Dr. Anna Strong has written a wonderful book. She tells the great, grim story of Russia's life-struggle, and tells it *all*—even its most regrettable features.

"Russia is different," we hear on all sides; "Communism is gone." But these cries do not disturb the revolutionaries. "They (the Communists) say there never was any Communism. They are building according to plans discussed widely and known throughout Russia. It will take years and decades and even generations; but they expect to hold power in Russia for all that time—to build it."

Thus the secret of the New Economic Policy is let out. The revolutionaries are building according to plan. They know the advantages of credits. Hence the fight put up at the Conference.

But they also appreciate the dangers, and behave accordingly. They were compelled to be more "reasonable" at Geneva than they are in London.

"Voting is not by district and by ballot, but by factory meeting." The Communists, although a minority, control Russia by virtue of their zeal and service. Membership of the Party is no easy matter. "It takes from six months to three years to get into the Communist Party." Discipline is necessarily strict. When a Communist commits a crime against the Republic the penalty is heavier than it would be for a non-member. Communists have actually been shot for graft in office.

The Bolsheviks have already mastered all the arts of statesmanship and of politics. They know all about the control of the press and of popular education. Their Republic will live and its march forward to complete Communism will be slow but steady and sure. The Revolution cannot fail. Lenin is dead, but his spirit will live for ever. Dr. Strong deserves the thanks of the world proletariat for recording in such a vivid and arresting manner one of the most thrilling chapters in the real history of the human race.

BEN GRIFFITHS.

GEOGRAPHY

Phillips' *British Empire Atlas* (G. Phillips & Son, 2s. 6d. From PLEBS postpaid, 2s. 10d.).

A Commercial Geography of the British Empire. By L. W. Lyde (Methuen, 3s. 6d.).

Commercial Geography. By Marion Newbigin (Home Univ. Library, 2s. 6d.).

The first two of these books will be useful to tutors and students devoting attention just now to the British Empire. Messrs. Phillips' new atlas (excepting the rather awful cover design) is worthy of its two predecessors—both recommended to Plebs—the *Elementary Atlas of Comparative Geography* and the *Atlas of Commercial Geography*. It has 32 pages of coloured maps, with useful diagrams inset; full geographical and historical (orthodox!) notes, and an index.

Prof. Lyde's book was first published in 1893, and it has been brought up-

to-date and largely re-written. It is a very useful reference book, though not remarkably cheap considering that it is not illustrated. There is a passage in the Preface which makes one wonder whether the Professor is a Bolshevik. The book includes good, though short, sections on the British Isles.

Dr. Newbigin's book, one of the latest additions to the Home University Library, is disappointing. One had got used to expecting *books* in that series—volumes, that is, which not only treated their subject adequately, but handled it in a fresh and readable way. This book is dull; probably because it deals overmuch in generalisations. It, also, is unillustrated.

J. F. H.

WORLD HISTORY

The Martyrdom of Man. By Winwood Reade (Watts & Co., 2s. 6d.).

As one who was greatly impressed by the perusal of a library copy of this book—which gave me more interest and insight into world history than all the history lessons of school—I am particularly glad that a well-bound cloth edition is now within the reach of a proletarian purse. Winwoode Reade—a strange blend of Tory, Anti-Communist, Deist and attacker of the prevailing Christian religion—made history live for me. And the spell of his imaginative and picturesque writing is as strong as ever. Plebeians may attack his bad economics and expect the new Textbook on modern history to say something very different to Reade's chapter on "Liberty" about modern civilisation. We can also discuss universal history from the stages of River Valleys, Inland Sea, Ocean and Land Transport in all the superiority of modern Economic Geography, and despise Reade's divisions of War, Religion, Liberty and Intellect. But to see universal history as a whole was in itself a great advance and Reade's attempt is of permanent historical value. He put in plainer everyday English what Spencer said about the Unknown and bore the consequent storm of execration. He had the courage fifty years ago to say that the Bible stories were largely a myth. These things add to the great intrinsic interest of his work.

M. S.

BONA BROSURO KAJ LEKSIKONO
La Komunista Manifesto (9d. Workers
Esperanto Club, 144, High Holborn,
W.C. 1).

English-Esperanto Dictionary, by Ful-
cher & Long (7s. 6d., Marlborough).

Dr. E. Pfeffer has translated into
Esperanto the first immortal document
of Marxian literature and Sennacieca
Asocio Tutmonda has made it much
more cheaply available than is the
translation of Arthur Baker which
Kerr and Co. published as far back
as 1908. We think Dr. Pfeffer should
have included the Engels' foreword
(1888) rather than his own. His trans-
lation generally reads well although
there are a few words and phrases
which could be reconsidered with
advantage.

A closer examination and use of the
Dictionary compiled by the two very
competent Esperantists Fulcher and
Long compel us to underline the re-
commendation given in *What to Read*.
Well over 30,000 English words are
provided with equivalents in such a
way that error is impossible, e.g. the 15
uses of *with* have each a separate line
and likewise in the 13 different uses
of *stop*. The authors recognise the use
of the new affixes *io* for the names of
countries and *mis*—but say nothing
about *end* which is to be found in
the pages *Sennacieca Revuo*. *Trade
union* we are glad to notice is being
accepted as *metisindikato*. This Dic-
tionary should greatly assist those
groups of Plebeians who are endeavour-
ing to make The PLEBS Textbooks
available to the workers of the world
by the medium of Esperanto and it
should find a place in every group and
public library. M. S.

ANOTHER PSYCHOLOGIST

The Fighting Instinct. By Pierre Bovet;
Translated by J. Y. T. Greig
(Allen & Unwin, 10s. 6d.).

Modern psychology has a lot to

answer for. The ceaseless stream of
detailed compilations that floods our
publisher's lists is testimony enough
that many good men are wasting their
time. Here is a man obviously reason-
able and alert minded, busying himself
with the laborious (and it must be
frightfully laborious) collection of such
incidents as these. The discovery that
Frederick the Great played with lead
soldiers as a child, that (and here
Harold Begbie's *Broken Earthenware*
is his authority) many ex-pugilists
find their way to the regular army,
that aggressiveness in girls culminates
at the age of thirteen, that Central
African natives pound each other's
skulls to decide the ownership of a
woman, that the movements of anger
represent an abridgment of the be-
haviour appropriate to contests of
very long ago, that "the sex" fre-
quently lose all reserve in the presence
of a uniform—oh, and pages and pages
of such light-shedding pronouncements
all delivered in the jargon we know so
well, complete with great solid slabs
of notes at the bottom of each page,
appendices, bibliography, and all the
paraphernalia of the man who specialises
because he has nothing better to do.

And all this fumbling with anecdote
and the "well-known case of Miss
Araminta Biggs," coupled with the
"evidence of 'A' the algolagniac
lavatory attendant" is to come at the
nature of an instinct. To use the word
at all is sheer presumption. What
do we know about instinct? Instinct
is a hypothesis invented to describe
a system of motivation that existed
before man as at present constituted
appeared on the world's stage. To
attempt to discuss its power or scope
in man of to-day is foolhardy in
the extreme. We can never separate
reason and rational from instinct and
instinctive motivation because the two
have interacted and intermerged for so
many æons as to be indistinguishable.

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All we can do is to note those encroachments of rational and material considerations which have taken place within recorded history. A proceeding we might expect of a man who gives large and sympathetic accounts of the Salvation Army and the Boy Scouts (with quotations about loyalty to one's country and one's employers) quite undreamed of by our dear mild Genevan professor in the Jean Jacques Rousseau Institute.

How long will it be before all the more trivial incidents of daily life have had their covering of psychologist's jargon standardised? We shall have peace then. K. P.

SAVING—THE DIVIDENDS

The Birthright of Man. By Henry Lowenfeld (Leonard Parsons, 3s. 6d.).

This is one of many attempts to construct a Utopia which will free Capitalism of all its evil consequences—especially class struggles and the possibility of revolution—while retaining its beautiful side—dividends for ever, paid punctually.

The author nowhere gets below surface appearances. Thus he points out that in recent times there has been an unprecedented accumulation of capital in the form of highly efficient means of reproducing wealth. To what is this due? To the "intellectually strong." These, presumably, are spiritual cousins of Mallock's pets—"the directors of ability."

Again, the author, being an observant man, has noticed that money relations dominate society. Do not rush to the conclusion that this arises from commodity production in general: it is due to—money. And again: capitalism produces much wealth and much poverty. Now quite a number of people have innocently believed that the conversion of money into capital on the basis of the purchase and exploitation of labour-power lay at the basis of this contradiction. But Mr. Lowenfeld knows better. "Improper appli-

cation of money-power has brought these evils into existence." Society, therefore, is to be saved by its savings. Thrice blessed is such a solution for it involves no interference with the sacred "rights of property."

W. H. R.

AMERICAN LIBERTY

The Deportations Delirium of 1920. By

L. F. Post (Charles Kerr, \$1.50.) "American Liberty" it has been said, is a sort of trade description, like "German silver": Whatever it is, it isn't silver, or liberty.

American capitalism is much less clever and much more brutal than English. We have to go back to thirty-year-old Featherstonehaugh to find a good instance of plain murder by State authorities. Since Carnegie began it, the murder of American workers by State police or private, has been customary in the States. It was only a year or two ago that an Italian worker was tortured by the Boston police until he threw himself out of a window fourteen storeys above the street.

The story that Mr. Post tells is a queer one, interesting, if not of great moment. In order to smash the "reds" in America, Palmer, Wilson's Attorney-General, sent out wrecking raids with about 5,000 warrants for deportations. There were the usual smashings and cruelties, and then Mr. Post, in the execution of his duty as Acting Secretary of Labour, cancelled 2,000 of the warrants as illegal and baseless. That is all the story. The rest is a description of the howl of rage by the gutter press against Mr. Post, the determined attempt to drive him out of public life and catch again the miserable victims he had saved, and the final weakening and collapse of the onslaught in face of the pertinacity and unshakable case of this worthy old gentleman, who appears to be a genuine Liberal who reads the American constitution and believes every word of it.

R. W. P.

THE PLEBS *Annual Postal Sub. 5s.*

Published by the Plebs League, at 162a Buckingham Palace Road, London, S.W.1.

THE N.C.L.C.

The N.C.L.C. is the National Council of Labour Colleges, the central organisation of the Labour College Movement. It is composed of the Labour College, London, the Scottish Labour College, 51 non-residential local Labour Colleges, the Plebs League, the Amal. Union of Building Trade Workers, the Distributive Workers, and the Nat. Fed. of Building Trade Operatives.

OBJECT:—The education of the workers from the *working-class* point of view. The Colleges have been built up by working-class organisations, the members of which have realised that only *educated* Trade Unionism is *effective* Trade Unionism. These members have recognised, moreover, that just as it would be ridiculous to join a Trade Union financed by employers, so, for education on social, economic or Trade Union questions, it is equally foolish to support Colleges or classes assisted by employers, or under the influence of educationists with *employing-class* ideas.

CONTROL:—The control of the Council and of its affiliated Colleges is wholly in the hands of working-class organisations. In consequence of the working-class character of the education provided, these Colleges, like the Trade Unions, get no financial support from State departments, which is a testimonial to the good work they are doing for the Labour Movement.

METHODS:—The principal methods take the form of Evening Classes, Residential Tuition, Postal Tuition, Week-end Schools, Publication of a Magazine, "The PLBBS," and Textbooks, and the conducting of Educational Schemes such as those of the Building Trade Workers and the Distributive Workers.

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