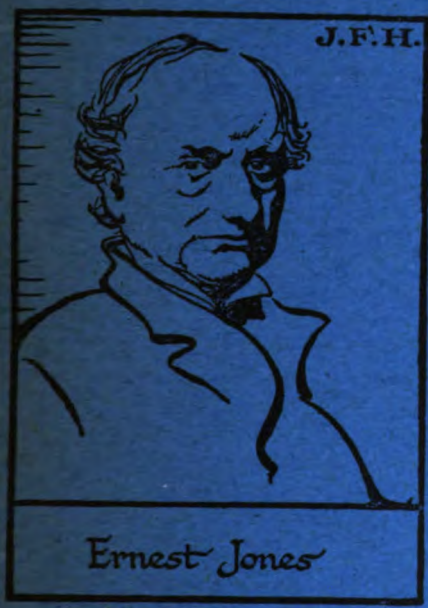
The April 1926

PLEBS



Ernest Jones

It is a necessity that some classes should be enemies. This is a melancholy truth, but it IS a truth nevertheless. It is injurious to create a false impression for the sake of writing with ink made of rose-water.

Ernest Jones
(from "Notes to the People", 1851)

MONTHLY FOURPENCE

"There has probably been no greater revolution of ideas than in the new educational system as practised in Soviet Russia."
—Report of the British Trade Union Delegation, 1925.

EDUCATION IN SOVIET RUSSIA

BY

SCOTT NEARING

(author of "The American Empire," "Dollar Diplomacy," &c.)

This is the first detailed account to appear in English of the educational work and experiments carried on by the Soviet Government. It is, therefore, a book of special interest to all I.W.C.E.ers. As the list of chapter-headings shows, it covers the whole Russian educational system, and it is the result of a first-hand study of that system—Scott Nearing having only recently returned from a tour in Russia in the course of which he visited the various educational institutions here described.

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EDUCATION in a WORKERS' STATE

A review, by a teacher, of the latest PLEBS *publication.*

THE publication of this book* is a "scoop" of first-rate importance—Scott Nearing and The PLEBS are first in the field. As Nearing himself says in the preface, practically nothing has been published about education in the Soviet Union and what has been published is not "worth ten cents a pound." Secondly the field is one of the most if not the most important from the point of view of those who are struggling to build up a working-class point of view in education. For whereas in this and other capitalist countries, we are compelled to struggle on ground encumbered "by the weight of mountain-high traditions, while established economic institutions have a firm grip of the educational system, and refuse to permit serious modifications in its forms or activities," Soviet educators have been able to start afresh. For the past five years they have been engaged on the colossal task of creating an educational system that shall be dominated by the working-class point of view.

In Scott Nearing's book you will find a firsthand account of what is being planned, attempted and achieved, written by an expert and in a style that is fresh and lively. It wasn't an easy job. Such a book must contain facts and figures, it must deal to some extent in the technicalities that are of interest chiefly to teachers.

The result might well have been dull—especially for the layman. It is so easy to forget that schools and classes exist only for the sake of students. Nearing never forgets. The facts, figures and technicalities are in the book, but they are illumined by brilliant sketches of the human beings, whether children, teachers or administrators, who are engaged in making educational history. One is startled to find statistics as it were coming to life and suddenly appearing between the papers and explaining exactly what they mean. In this way he has produced a book which is exactly what is wanted by the thousands of Plebs who are not themselves professional teachers, but are vitally interested in the whole question of working-class education. They all of them know that our present educational system is part of the machinery of the capitalist state, and therefore engaged primarily in doping the workers' children, or worse still in subtly impregnating the pick of them with capitalist

* *Education in Soviet Russia.* By Scott Nearing. (Plebs, 2s.)

ideology so that they may become willing tools of the capitalist system. They know all of this, but this book will show them just how the existing system can be attacked at its weakest points, and secondly it will show them how to lay the foundation for a workers' educational system when the time comes for that job.

But the book deserves and will get a far wider circulation than the membership of the Plebs League. By some means or other it should be put into the hands of the thousands of teachers who are more or less dissatisfied with existing conditions without realising quite why. I am a teacher myself, and I know that there are literally thousands of my fellows who retain a pathetic faith in the saving power of education and culture, who are struggling against appalling odds to improve the curriculum provided, and to reform antiquated teaching methods. Montessori, Dalton plan, laboratory method, handwork, civics—these are some of the hundred and one pills they are applying to cure the earthquake. And such is the weight of tradition and so strong the stifling grip of economic power that even these poor pills are rejected by the powers that be. The teachers of course know it, but few of them know how and why. This book will tell them, and still more will show them that there is at least one country in the world where experiment has a free hand. As Nearing says : "The Soviet Union is, at the moment, the world's largest and most important educational laboratory and the educational organisations, institutions and departments of the leading countries should have their experts in the Soviet Union now, collecting information and making suggestions."

In this task the Teachers' Labour League should be able to give valuable help. They are in intimate touch with teachers and can approach them directly from the craft point of view. Inevitably those who read the book will want more and fuller information, and the result will be a demand for a representative delegation of British teachers to visit the Soviet Union and see for themselves. From personal contact with some of the leaders of the Russian Educational Workers' Union, I know that such a delegation would be welcomed and afforded every facility for study and inspection.

* * * * *

So far I have written only with the object of stressing the importance of this book to anyone interested in working-class education. I have deliberately avoided quotation not because there is not much that deserves it but simply because selection is almost impossible. In February The Plebs published a couple of sketches which should be enough to show that in spite of all the information contained it does not suffer from dullness. Lest any one should doubt its broad scope and general interest to educators of all shades of political opinion I give some of the chapter headings : A Dark

Educational Past, The Soviet Educational Structure, Experiments with Subject Matter, Experiments with Methods of Instruction, Organisation Among the Pupils, Unifying Education, Socialising Culture.

Space forbids the quotation of Nearing's summary of the social philosophy that underlies the aims and ambitions of Soviet education. Plebs Leaguers will find in it a justification of the ideas on which they have always insisted.

One final quotation will perhaps suffice to convey the workers' general impression. "All over the Western world," writes Scott Nearing in his concluding paragraph, "leisure and culture have generally been open to the ruling class and closed to the workers. In the Soviet peasants' and workers' state, peasants and workers (and their children) are enjoying these advantages. This socialisation of culture is the basis on which all Soviet education is organised. It is one of the most remarkable experiments ever undertaken in the history of modern society. It is the socialisation of knowledge and of human achievment."

"N. U. T."

COAL and BRITAIN'S FUTURE

IN discussing possibilities of future change in the relative importance of capitalist states, Fairgrieve, in his *Geography and World Power*, notes certain factors operating in the exhaustion of the supplies of energy upon which mankind depends. In regard to coal he says :—

> Another and more important source of supply which must become exhausted lies in the coal-fields. This change is more serious, for when coal is used it cannot be replenished. . . . The survey of the world, though not complete and detailed, is yet so accurately known now, that there cannot be any great undiscovered source of coal. On this basis, it has been estimated that, at the present rate of consumption, coal in Britain and Germany may last for 500 or 1,000 years, and that in the United States for 6,000 years, but if the consumption continues to *increase* at its recent rate, all the coal that can be worked in these lands under existing conditions will be exhausted in 150 years. . . . As the coal-fields are worked out, the lands containing them must become of less account; those lands which can mine coal longest will, other things being equal, obtain a corresponding importance. The very extensive coal-fields in China must thus have a peculiar interest for the future.

Certainly one of the most deadly indictments of capitalism at the bar of posterity will be the criminal and reckless exploitation of Nature's irreplaceable stores of energy—coal, iron-ore, oil—under

the system. On this point Marshall, in his *Industry and Trade*, remarks :—

> Coal is not produced by man; he merely takes it out of Nature's limited store-houses. The position which Britain will hold in the world some centuries hence will depend largely on the care with which she has husbanded her store of it; any generation which *exports* it, in order to pay for those manufactures in the production of which Britain should hold her own, will inflict an injury on coming generations.

Europe absorbs about 75 per cent of the coal exports of Great Britain, not including bunker coal; the total exports in 1924 to all countries being 61.6 million tons out of a total output of 267.4 million tons. There has been a decline of this export trade due, not to ordinary competition from other countries, but rather to under-consumption coupled with the effects of Reparations coal. For instance 33 per cent of Italy's imports in 1924 was delivered by Germany on "reparation" accounts (3,700,000 tons). Another factor is the remarkable growth of water-power. In 1920 about 23,000,000 h.p. was generated from water throughout the world. In 1925 this had increased to 35,000,000 h.p. Estimates of the world's available water-power differ very considerably, but certainly we have to face the fact that Britain is badly off in potentialities as compared with other countries. Further, we have to realise that the increase of hydro-electric development does not necessarily mean decreased coal consumption. The normal industrial development of every capitalist country means an annual increase of power requirements. This may be met by further utilisation of water-power, by increased coal demand, or by both. In the case of Italy we have an increase of both, and this is probable generally. Fairgrieve has this interesting comment on water-power :—

> The energy of wind and of falling water, like that of the tides and unlike coal, is *continually being renewed*. The energy of the former is, however, also like that of the tides, in that it gives little return for outlay, and the total amount of the latter is probably by no means equal to that necessary to take the place of coal energy if coal should fail. In the United States, for example, the water-power is estimated to be able to produce from 36,000,000 to 66,000,000 h.p. This, even if all utilised, is certainly less than half of the h.p. actually to be obtained from coal now mined in the United States, and may be a good deal less. The water-power of the globe can produce approximately 200,000,000 h.p., which is much less than the h.p. obtained at the present day from coal, so that, in the absence of coal, water-power cannot supply all our needs, though it may be extremely useful. The energy of falling water has, however, the advantage of being more economical than either wind or tidal energy, in other words, more may be obtained for a given outlay, and it is probable that we may see high and rainy regions taking a more prominent place in the world system.

A little over a century ago Britain was transformed from a mainly agricultural country into an industrial and commercial nation, first in all things that make for material power, with London the financial centre of the world. The foundation of this gigantic achievement

was coal. But what a terrific price has been paid. We have consumed hundreds of millions of tons annually, ever increasing, so that now we consume twenty times as much as we did a century ago. As we have seen, supplies are not inexhaustible, and we must also remember that under capitalism the price at which coal can be raised to the surface, rather than the reserves, is what counts in the competitive market. Deeper and deeper has the collier had to go for those reserves, and so costs have risen. America in particular has a great advantage over us in this respect.

There is another count in our indictment of this wasteful capitalist system. As Mr. L. Lawton, an authority, graphically portrays it :—

> How sad to reflect that Nature should have stored up so much light and heat—so much sunshine—in the form of coal in the use of which we not only destroy and devitalise ourselves by converting it into poisons, but shut out from our lives the living light and heat, the vitamines of the sun itself, so necessary to healthy, happy existence. Could a greater tragedy of human error than this be imagined ? The loss involved in this criminal mishandling of coal has been colossal. All the costs and casualties of wars sink into insignificance compared with it. Let us try to enumerate some of the items on this black bill : Death, disease, degeneration, vice ; maintenance of hospitals, convalescent homes, prisons ; widespread depression caused by the gloomy environment of smoke-begrimed towns ; wastage of powers of production , damage to vegetation ; repairs to buildings—it has been estimated that half the cost of repairing all public buildings is incurred because of damage done by soot ; the importation of £50,000,000 worth of oil, all of which could be produced from coal at home ; the sacrifice of a large amount of the available heat of coal, in many instances up to as much as 30 per cent. and all the valuable products which it contains ; and finally, the homely, but by no means negligible detail of the nation's washing bill, which—according to calculations carefully ascertained—is many millions more than it need be because of the dirt spread from coal fires. Thus we are guilty of double waste : waste caused by the destructive properties of smoke, and the waste of heat and energy caused by the sacrifice of the valuable products of which smoke consists.

The destructive properties of the London atmosphere are demonstrated for instance in the fact that Cleopatra's Needle on the Thames Embankment has suffered more decay in the comparatively short time it has been there, than in the thousands of years previously in Egypt.

Is there a remedy ? Yes. Britain's future can be satisfactorily solved by the putting into operation of the Miners' proposals before the Samuel Commission. One outstanding proposal was that the coal industry should be co-ordinated with the electrical power industry and developed with a view to the production of electricity, gas, *smokeless fuel* and other by-products.

In this country we have mainly concentrated upon the distillation of coal by the heating of it in air-tight retorts. We originated the gas industry which distils coal at a *high temperature*, so that as much

gas is produced as possible. One ton of coal carbonised at the gas works yields the following products :—

	about
Gas	12,000,000 c.ft.
Coke and breeze	13½ cwts.
Ammoniacal liquor or sulphate	25 lbs.
Coal tar	10 gallons
Benzole	2½ gallons

Quite different results are obtained if the *low temperature* carbonisation process is used. On an average 16 cwts. of smokeless fuel (unlike coke it is free burning and has no unpleasant smell), 16 gallons of oil, and a quantity of gas of high calorific value, are produced for every ton of coal carbonised. From this method three smokeless fuels are obtained—semi-coke, oil and gas. There would be no waste such as characterises the present criminal and crude methods of using coal by dispersing in the atmosphere valuable products to the tune of £154,000,000 annually.

Shall we continue in the old ways, with the further degradation of the already unsatisfactory standard of life of the workers, with a vision even to the capitalist as foreshadowed by Jevons in *The Coal Question* (1865)—"The cost of fuel must rise, perhaps within a lifetime, to a rate injurious to our commercial and manufacturing supremacy . . . The check to our progress must become perceptible within a century from the present time."

Or shall we utilise the teachings of science, and see to it that the community will own and control the coal industry so that reorganisation can be effectively undertaken? Then only will gas and electricity be available everywhere, utilising also what hydro-electric power is possible, abolishing all present-day drudgery and providing for the wealth and social amenities of a whole people.

JOHN HAMILTON.

A CHAPTER of PROLETARIAN LIFE

CHANGES have taken place rapidly in the small town I have in mind. There still remain examples of the long rows of cottages without a single passage between them, which were once the chief form of house in the neighbourhood. The only means of entrance and exit to these dwellings is by the front door. A row of open ashpits before the cottage doors is a common sight. Reactionary local governing authorities have not seen fit

to remove them yet. The upper rooms of these cottages have oblong windows. In the old days these upper rooms were the stockingers' "shops." Besides the windows were their "frames," and those of their families.

Stockings were made on two or three different types of "frame." There would be a "two-topper," which as the name implies made the top part of the stocking. Next there was the "middler," making the middle part of the stocking and carrying the process to the end of the heel. Then there was the "footer" making the instep and the bottom of the foot on the same "frame." It required two "topping" machines to supply the "middler" with sufficient tops to keep him fully employed. The four men or sometimes three men and a woman, would make in their week's toil some eight dozen pairs of stockings.

Thus this was a form of domestic industry which lingered on till relatively recent times, and it certainly seemed to allow a greater development of personality than the mere machine minding of a later day. Consequently there were many fine types of character amongst these old stockingers.

It was not an uncommon thing on an early winter's evening when passing their "shops" to be drawn within the circle of light from the soft glow of their lamps, to listen to their voices as they drowned the "clitter-clatter" of their "frames." They were very fond of music, and the musical traditions of the old days still cling to the small town. The older inhabitants delight to tell of the time when with only six thousand inhabitants, the place had eight brass bands. There were also innumerable glee-parties. Singing competitions were a favourite pastime.

The town has also a much cherished sporting tradition associated with the game of cricket. They called it the "nursery of cricket." I have heard the old stockingers recall with pride how they played an "all-England Eleven" and beat them, while the young men of the trade went out as "professionals" all over the country.

Not yet herded into the factories, not yet ticketed and docketed like the operative of to-day, they were sturdily independent. They would talk with pride of their great deeds during the Chartist Agitation, they would tell how Fergus O'Connor made his triumphal entry into the town and how they pulled his carriage from the station a mile away. These were the events—when in reminiscent mood—of which the old stockingers and their wives used to talk by the hearth in the evenings. The women would be sitting round a shaded paraffin lamp, seaming up the stockings their husbands had made.

Their lives were simple it is true, devoid of many of the things we regard as necessities. As supper-time drew near Tommy would be sent for a pint of beer, and Johnny to the pork butcher's to fetch

a "duck," and he would take the largeſt basin so that he might ask the butcher to give him plenty of gravy. Then the needles would be laid aside, a white cloth would be spread, and the women seamers would take out of the oven the potatoes that had been roaſting. The supper would be eaten accompanied by the harmless gossip of the village, or their minds would be carried back to the terrible days of the cotton famine, when their trade was absolutely ſtopped, and the wolf of hunger snarled at their doors. One would hear how the great landlord, "moved to pity, gave to each man with a family, sixpence a day and a ſtone of flour each week, and set them to work making a reservoir to drive a flour-mill in the neighbourhood." Wonderful generosity! Some of them would tell ſtories of privation and hunger which made the liſtener shudder.

They would tell ſtories of the sufferings of the children; one was of a group of children famished with hunger, sitting round the hearth-ſtone talking of God; to their childish imagination he was some great and terrible monſter, and one mite suggeſted he was so big he could put a quartern loaf into his mouth all at once.

The lads were getting schooling, the franchise would make a difference, and when the vote was "rightly" used things were sure to be better. The land problem was going to be tackled. Free Trade would soon make a difference. What a long process the disillusionment is!

In every fibre of their being these old ſtockingers were radicals. The very names of the streets in the town bear witness to the radicalism of the diſtriſt—"Reform Street," "Union Street," etc. They were fearless in their efforts to make things better.

But something was happening, groups of them talked about it in the "Chatter House" (a waiting-room) in which they ſtood about till it pleased the "bag-man" or middle-man to give them their yarn for the week's work. They went to the "Chatter House" on Monday mornings. Waiting and gossip often made it dinner-time when they arrived home. Then the yarn would be put into damp cloths, and laid in a cool place. This damping of the yarn gave a better finish to the work, but it made their Monday very unproduſtive. It was known amongſt them as Saint Monday. Tuesday saw them getting to work; for either wife or children had wound the hanks of yarn on to bobbins. Moſt of them made up their minds as to how many dozens of hose they were going to make for the pay-day, and during the latter part of the week would sit up half the night to accomplish the allotted task.

In the days before the Truck Aſt the "bagman" paid the workman in kind. The butter, tea and sugar, nearly all the "groceries" had to come from the "bagman" or there was no work. It was the truck-syſtem that enabled "bagmen" to accumulate that "liquid"

capital which made it possible for them to purchase the first "power-frames" when they made their appearance, and built the first factories in the district. The abolition of the "truck" system helped the men to sturdier independence.

The news of the neighbourhood was circulated to a large extent by means of the weekly gathering at the "Chatter House." "Pip" would ask "Wag" (they had all nicknames) if he had heard they were making stockings by steam.

"Wag" would say he had heard about it, but he would bet they were poor stuff, and that they would never be able to make stockings like himself and his mates on the "hand frames." They were so supremely sure in their craft, they did not fear the tales that kept coming about this monster which was making six stockings a time; and was driven by pulleys and belts, and moreover made stockings from the "welt" to the heel end without having to put them on a different machine for the "middles."

But gradually when they went for their cotton on a Monday, they were told trade was getting bad, and a feeling of uncertainty and insecurity began to creep into the minds of many. However, "hope springs eternal in the human breast," temporary revivals gave them fresh courage, and their old confidence returned.

Nevertheless they began to send their boys into different occupations. Mines were being opened in the vicinity, and the lads were sent to them. It was hardly safe to teach them the "frame," still if they could keep the "stripes" going they would be all right for their time. But "striped" stockings began to be made on "power machines." It seemed uncanny to the older men that mere machines should appear as though endowed with human intelligence.

Again "hand-frame hosiery" appeared as though it had been given a new lease of life; "tackle" to make "designs" was put on the "frames" of the younger men, and the "lace" or "open work" stockings appeared. The older men could not remember how to make the different movements to fashion the "designs"; so week after week they went to the "Chatter House" only to be told that stockings were being made on the "power-frames." Conditions became gradually worse, until many of them were in the direst poverty.

Then a large factory was built in the village and the sound of the "buzzer" was heard. This was the herald of a coming change, and the death knell of one form of an industry. The younger men who had learned to make lace-hosiery commented on their good fortune; it surely would be impossible for "lace stockings" ever to be made on power machines.

Meanwhile the old men were tiring of the hopeless struggle. Nothing but the workhouse appeared to be before them—these old

toilers of a dying industry. Was there no alternative? Yes, there was one. Periodically news spread around the village that they had found "Old Jim" or "Old George" in Coldwell Dam; thus it was, now in one way, and now in another, many of the older men passed out into the everlasting silence. Some of them laughed in their horror, saying "We can't clam to death—they have to hang or drown a stockinger to kill him!"

Coldwell Dam lies in a pleasant valley. From its margin in spring-time stretched great clouds of bluebells, making a glorious picture, calculated to make one in love with life and the beauty of the world. Yet with what feelings of misery and despair did many old stockingers put an end to their existence in its placid waters. The dam is known to this day by the older inhabitants of the near-by town as the stockingers' rest. I say town, for it is no longer a village surrounded by natural beauty. The old conditions have given place to long rows of mean houses, and meaner streets, from which the workers come to the mines and factories. The streets echo to the heavy-nailed boots of the miner early in the morning.

The wheel of change has made another revolution, for now the finest and most elaborate "designs" for lace stockings can be made on "power frames." Stripes, vertical and horizontal, "squares" and "diamonds," made of all kinds of colours of yarn are blended and interwoven into patterns of every description. A new generation of operatives minding long frames making twelve or sixteen stockings at once have entirely supplanted the old framework knitters.

Instead of the eight dozen pairs per week made by the "hand frame" operative, now one man will make thirty dozen pairs of the finest silk hosiery in a week.

The end is not yet. Even these methods of production are already threatened by the introduction of the newer "circular" machines manipulated by girl labour. Thus technique moves on from stage to stage, relentlessly competition necessitates the scrapping of the old, the installation of the new. Human values, hopes, aspirations take second place to cheapness and the capture of markets. In private hands the new machine means new forms of slavery for the worker, male or female. How many more chapters before the achievement and invention of some do not mean misery and despair for others?

C. BROWN.

DOLLAR DIPLOMACY

THE Dawes Plan, when Europe had to go cap in hand to creditor U.S.A. for the wherewithal to save itself from collapse, marked the shifting of the centre of gravity of world capitalism from London to New York, and the growing subordination of Europe itself to the new creditor Power, just as previously more backward countries had been subjugated to groups of European capital itself. And faced with this startling new phenomenon, our Socialist theorists displayed some very strange reactions. Some claimed it as a new epoch of "peaceful" capitalism, in which the conflicts of Europe had found rest and harmony beneath the wiser counsels of America. Others sought to rally the English workers in a mad, hybrid nationalism against "the domination of Wall Street."

But the truth was, if one surveyed it calmly, that Imperialism, though it had changed its raiment, had not changed its soul. The kid-gloves of the Dawes Scheme only concealed the claw of the exploiter, eager to do in Central Europe what previously it had done in Africa and Central America and in China. Now we discern that the honeyed tongues of Locarno do no more than hide the zeal of a declining Imperialism to buttress its position against disintegrating forces at its centre and on its frontiers, and to dispute the dominance of the new World Power.

Two books recently published by the Viking Press of New York* deal with the rapid rise of this new imperialist Power. Neither of them analyses the factors which have shaped this new trend of world events, nor do they examine the political significance of it to-day—this they make no pretence to do. Robert W. Dunn collects together in useful reference form the various investments of American capital in foreign countries, classifying them according to countries, and by Government and industrial securities. The significant fact which is the import of this survey is that, whereas in 1914 U.S.A. was indebted to other countries to the extent of $2,500,000,000—$3,000,000,000, her position has now so changed as to show an increase in the aggregate American foreign investments by $6,400,000,000 at the end of 1924 to a total of about $9,000,000,000. This is in addition to some $12,000,000,000 owed by foreign Governments to the U.S. Government; and in addition to a redemption of previous debt (through re-purchase by Americans

*_American Foreign Investments_, by Robert W. Dunn; and _Dollar Diplomacy_, by Scott Nearing and Joseph Freeman (B. W. Huebsch and The Viking Press, $5.00 and $2.50 net.).

of American securities previously held by foreigners) to the amountof $2,000,000,000. The result is that U.S.A. capitalism is now creditor to the reſt of the world to the amount of something like $17,000,000,000 (somewhere the same as the British figure in 1914, which has since declined considerably)—a total which the author thinks may well increase rapidly in the forthcoming years.

The other book—by Scott Nearing and Joseph Freeman—tells the story of American imperialiſt expansion in China, Central America and the Near East since 1890, and so does for U.S.A. Imperialism in rather less detail what Leonard Woolf did for the tale of British Imperialism in Africa.

Previously absorbed in the problems of her own internal development, U.S.A. capitalism, though late in the field, showed itself a ready disciple of the imperialiſt methods which European Powers had already learned to employ. In faſt, in reading this book one is ſtruck by the surprising similarity of the ſtory to that told by Woolf of the scramble for Africa. Change the names and a few geographical details, and the various ſtories jumbled together might scarcely be diſtinguished one from the other. Always the same ſtages : foreign investment ; influence by the inveſting financiers on their own government to bring diplomatic " pressure " to bear in their intereſts ; againſt this " pressure " the debtor concerned proteſts or revolts ; and then behind the " pressure " comes the " mailed fiſt " of warships and marines, aeroplanes and machine-guns, employed in the intereſts of " property and order." The final ſtate of affairs is a puppet government, financed by the imperialiſt country and fettered by controlling regulations and foreign advisers ; in which subjeſt position the debtor has little more choice in raising money, in the placing of contraſts for development work, or in giving concessions to work her raw material resources than had the colonies of the 17th and 18th centuries in their dealings with the mercantiliſt Mother Country. Modern usury is conduſted on an international scale and our Shylocks are the lords of the earth !

The American chapter in the Chinese ſtory does not begin until 1898, when U.S.A. gained the Philippine Islands after her viſtory in the Spanish-American War. In that year American intereſts, in the shape of the American Chinese Development Company, obtained their firſt concession for the building of part of the line of railway from Pekin to Canton. Eager to get a footing in a country where rival Powers had already carved for themselves " spheres of influence," the U.S. Government in the next year announced its policy of " The Open Door," recogniſing equal opportunity in trade for all nations. Six years later there followed the attempt to secure a foothold in Manchuria, where Japan was also aſtive, from which dates the ever widening rivalry between these two Pacific Powers. Under the

administration of President Taft in 1909 the policy of expansion secured official support, and a group of American bankers, headed by J. P. Morgan, was organised to finance any concessions for railroads which American capitalists might obtain from the Chinese Government. Two years later, in co-operation with Britain, Germany and France, she negotiated with the Chinese Government a loan for developing Manchuria and reforming the currency, and as security the creditors obtained a mortgage on numerous indirect taxes, which could not henceforth be decreased without the creditors' permission.

But it was not until after the world war that the U.S.A. had sufficient capital to give her the dominant position as usurer and concessionaire in the Far East. The united front of foreign money lenders was re-formed in 1920 in the new Chinese Consortium ; and of the Powers participating, the U.S.A. alone (and to a lesser extent Japan) had capital in abundance to spare ; with the result that most of the loans floated by the Consortium are in practice mainly financed from Wall Street. In addition, the U.S.A. has secured considerable political success by means of the Washington Conference, both in terminating the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, and in securing the return by Japan to China of the important province of Shantung. A free-handed usurer and controller of numerous educational establishments in China, U.S.A. Imperialism is playing for the moment the role of the "liberal" Power, sympathetic to China's needs, in strong contrast to the hated Japan—a tactic as plausible in its show of disinterestedness as the earlier affirmations of the principle of the Open Door.

But though less topical, the story of the rapid encroachment of control by Washington and Wall Street over the republics of Central America is in some ways more interesting. In the case of Panama—a highly strategic region by reason of the projected canal—interest starts in 1903 when a rising was organised by persons sympathetic to U.S.A. against the Columbian Government, to which the territory had formerly belonged. The "impartial" action of the U.S. Government consisted in preventing the Columbian Government from landing troops on the isthmus to quell the revolt, and ten days after the rebellion in recognising the rebel party as governors of the new independent State of Panama. Fifteen days after the rebellion the U.S. Government signed a treaty with the new Panama republic by which the former obtained a perpetual lease of the canal zone.

In Mexico it was the familiar story of rivalry between American and British oil interests, to the latter of which the President, Diaz, had shown especial favour. In 1910 Madero, representative of bourgeois against feudal interests, organised a revolution; and there was considerable suspicion (though no actual proof) of the actual financing of his cause by American oil interests. After a brief

two years' triumph, Madero was in turn overthrown by Huerta who reverted to the old Diaz policy, and drew special support from and gave concessions to the English Cowdray interests—a fact which drew from the Democratic President Wilson the canting declaration: "We can have no sympathy with those who seek to seize the power of government to advance their own personal interest," and the refusal to recognise the Huerta regime. From the end of 1913 onwards a persistent attempt was made to force Huerta's overthrow. Pressure prevented his securing a loan in Europe, with the result that Huerta had to suspend payment of interest on government bonds in January, 1914; while Britain was gradually detached from diplomatic support of the Mexican Government. Meanwhile, a fresh rising under Carranza and Villa had broken out in the north, and Washington, which had formerly placed an embargo on the import of arms into Mexico, in February, 1914, removed it, admittedly with the intention of strengthening the rebel forces and hastening Huerta's fall.

All this time the oil interests were agitating for active intervention by U.S. land and naval forces, and accordingly in April, seizing upon two absurdly inadequate pretexts of "insults to the flag," American battleships were despatched to Vera Cruz, and bluejackets and marines were landed to occupy the town. As a result, Huerta was defeated, and Carranza installed as President.

But Carranza himself proved to be no such docile instrument as the American oil interests had hoped; and in 1917 and 1918 he proceeded to nationalise all mineral rights and to impose a tax on petroleum. This selfish show of independence drew stern protests from the U.S. Department of State, and the oil companies proceeded to pay Pelaez, a rich brigand, $200,000 a month to make trouble against the Government, and persuaded President Wilson at the Peace Conference to oppose the entry of Mexico on an equal footing into the League of Nations.

More blatant still was the rapacious policy towards San Domingo and Nicaragua. In the former case, the San Domingo Improvement Co., a New York concern, bought in 1893 the debt of £170,000 which a Dutch company had loaned to the Dominican Government. When, ten years later, financial difficulties prevented the republic from paying the interest, the U.S. Government demanded the right to control and collect the revenues of the republic, paying 55 per cent of them over to the bondholders and the remainder to the Dominican Government, and to prohibit any increase in debt or lowering of taxes if it thought fit. The result of this financial control was a national insurrection in 1916; and on this excuse U.S. battleships entered the roadstead of San Domingo City, landed a large force of marines, and proceeded to take over the whole of the Dominican

customs, treasury, army and police with American officials, and to refuse to pay over to the Government the latter's share of the customs. A new President was elected ; but the U.S. Government refused him recognition unless he signed a treaty making the country a virtual protectorate. A deadlock ensued, martial law was declared in 1916, and a military dictatorship and military terror was instituted. This lasted until 1924, during which period loans were raised with New York bankers, the interest on which the people of San Domingo had to pay ; and the dictatorship was only finally terminated when a puppet President under the muzzles of U.S. rifles signed the treaty which made his country a virtual protectorate.

And Nicaragua—but why need the story be told over again, since the details of each case are so tragically similar to those of every other ? Here we have the same story : American investments ; a canal project and a valuable naval base. President Zelaya resists the " encroaching " attempts of the U.S. Government. In 1909 a revolution against Zelaya breaks out ; Washington first covertly then overtly, supports the rebels ; and Zelaya is forced to resign. An American loan to the rebel government follows, secured by U.S. control of the customs ; and a warship is sent to the capital in order to damp down popular opposition to the proposal by its " moral effect." The final position of the republic in 1918 was : a debt to U.S.A. of a million dollars ; her railways and bank controlled by New York capital ; an American collector of customs ; a High Commission, composed of two Americans and one Nicaraguan, controlling State expenditure ; her constabulary trained and officered by Americans. In Haiti and Cuba the succession of events was not dissimilar.

The results of the war have lain Europe open as a similar tempting hunting-ground for U.S.A. finance-capital. The Dawes Scheme for Germany shows the floating of a reconstruction loan, secured against certain taxes and the revenues of the railways, a new Bank of Issue, whose board contains seven non-Germans out of fourteen, and a number of " controllers " to supervise the economic life of the country. There has even been talk of a " Dawes Plan for France " ; and the present plight of French Government finances is the result of failure to accept the terms which Wall Street wishes to impose. In the Near East, too, American finance is raising its voice amid the claims of France and Britain. Armed with the concession given to Admiral Chester in 1909, U.S.A. is seeking to become the heir of Germany to the Bagdad Railway Scheme ; and here her claims complied with the British bulldog hold on Mosul. So great was the pressure, and so eloquently did the minions of Standard Oil preach the gospel of the Open Door at the Lausanne Conference, in protest against British monopoly exclusiveness, that the company

was admitted to a 25 per cent share in the Turkish Petroleum Company, in which Shell holds chief sway. Mr. Nearing's story leaves us, like the first instalment of a serial, at the confirmation of the Chester concession by the Angora Government, and the Ottoman American Development Company preparing to "carry out its plans for building the Bagdad Railway, and to work its oil and mineral claims."

Nearing's book tells its story in a very readable and comprehensive way, with a studied objectivity and a careful verification of every fact; and the book should without fail find a place alongside Woolf and Earle and Delaisi and Arnot in our library of Imperialism. But we should not halt at the mere telling of the story. It is important for us to think out further its relevance to the actual political situation as it faces us to-day. If we do this, we shall neither conclude that capitalism has changed its nature and become stable and peace-loving nor that our first task lies in preaching a crusade against Wall Street. We shall see that Imperialism has done no more than enter a more complicated stage, which because of its very complexity contains more germs of a second August, 1914, than did the pre-1914 situation itself. On the one side is workers' Russia—on the "up-grade"—gathering to her standard the exploited nationalities of the East and the gradually arousing workers of the West. On the other side is U.S.A. capitalism, strong, confident and also on the "up-grade" extending her power and influence westward across the Pacific to challenge the Asiatic hegemony of the "Yellow Dragon," and eastward across the Atlantic to Europe itself and to the Near East. Between the two lies Europe—indebted and struggling against the forces of economic decline; of the one part the new "colonial" countries of Central Europe, stabilised temporarily at the expense of their working class, of the other part Britain, proudly disputing the supremacy of her new creditor—Britain that was formerly creditor of the world—marshalling the continental nations to her side, maintaining her competitive position by depressing the standard of life of her workers, and acting as the fulcrum of reaction towards the class struggle in Europe and the rising national struggle on the borders of her Empire. This situation it is our duty to show in all its dramatic vividness to the movement—a situation which demands no neutral attitude towards Imperialism, nor an opposition merely to one Imperialism as more oppressive than the rest; but a situation which demands a world united front of all elements oppressed by Imperialism who find in that exploiting system a common foe. Those who obscure the issue or fail to grasp its implications will be submerged as miserably as the old 2nd International in the new war of Empires which is already taking shape in the womb of history as surely as was the case between 1905 and 1910.

MAURICE DOBB.

HISTORY and the WORKERS

I

THE HISTORY OF HISTORY AND ITS USES

Social History is still the most popular subject with N.C.L.C. classes, and the series here commencing will be of interest alike to student and teacher. Future articles will deal with the methods of teaching history and its interpretation.

"CONSIDER History with the beginnings of it stretching dimly into the remote time, emerging darkly out of the mysterious eternity—the true epic poem and universal divine scripture," wrote Carlyle; and however clearly we understand the why and wherefore of the recorded changes that constitute history it still contains an element of wonder and fascination. Legend, myth, fable and folklore stories are at the beginnings. The writers of the Old Testament blend the recording of events with their interpretation. In Homer's stories or in the resurrected tales of Hiawatha there still is no sure ground. With an eye upon his patron the feudal minstrel made no effort to be impartial as he sang of deeds of valour. Such stories of adventure as that of Herodotus and the monastic chronicles are nearer history.

But history is more than personal adventures, and more than a mere record of facts great and small. Gradually it has come to mean only a record of such events as have affected society. The line is often hard to draw between the chit-chat of a diary and history itself, but it is actually drawn by the individual historian according to his bias. If John Brown cleans his teeth that fact, as such, is not of historical importance; but if other people by cleaning their teeth increase longevity, and thus the size of the population, that or any other similar action must receive attention. If the buying of a motor were an exceptional event, the historian could afford to ignore it; but if new sections of society buy cars, and petrol consumption and road transport radically change the nature of the countryside, then the historian would have to take it into account. In short he must deal with social movements, their causes and effects.

Down to the 17th century there was no attempt to weigh the importance of events or trace their social consequences, much less to search systematically the records and inscriptions of previous times. Writers gave a personal narrative concerning contemporary happenings and their artistic and literary powers were of more importance

than their powers of observation. In Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* (1776—1788) the literary artist is combined with the student of records and inscriptions.

The history of History reaches its modern stage in the 19th century. The historian was spurred on by the rapid contemporary changes. Research was begun and theories of national development formed. History became less an art and more a science. Whatever one may think of Cobbett as a historian, he certainly well outlined the new purpose of history in contrast with the old when in 1824 he wrote (Preface, *History of Protestant Reformation*) :—

> The far greater part of the books which are called *Histories of England*, are little better than romances. They treat of battles, negotiations, intrigues of courts, amours of kings, queens and nobles; they contain the gossip and scandal of former times, and very little else. . . . The great use of history, is, to teach us how laws, usages and institutions arose, what were their effects on the people, how they promoted public happiness or otherwise; and these things are precisely what the greater part of historians, as they call themselves, seem to think of no importance.

In feudal times only the kings, the nobles and the monasteries could afford the luxury of a chronicler, but now almost every movement, institution and industry has its own historian. Society becomes more complex; events occur in greater number; the supply of material—documents, newspapers, biographies—increases rapidly. History in its wider sense no longer means "English" history or "French" history, but world history. This intensifying and widening of history could only be met by specialisation, which brings to the orthodox historian the danger of never seeing history as a whole complete process. In the workers' education movement this danger is avoided because in Social History we treat not only the roots of social growth in the development of the means of production but also their consequences in every phase of life. The earlier term "Industrial History" suggested the importance of industry as against the doings of kings, warriors and diplomats which had previously received undue attention.

Because of this point of view, we are often accused of bias by those who make a profession of an absence of a definite point of view into a virtue. But as we have seen, history itself is a selection of the essential and important facts. The two facts that Waterloo was won in 1815 and that between 1760 and 1844 over 4,000,000 acres of land were enclosed are two undoubted facts. Yet in choosing to mention the former rather than the latter the usual history books demonstrate a bias even in selecting facts. Such cases of significant omissions abound in every school reader.

It is quite easy to recognise the point of view of many historians. Cobbett's book mentioned above has been described as a brilliant

phillipic for the Catholics and against the land grab of the Reformation. Macaulay in his *History of England* (1848) was everywhere dominated by Whig bias for the Glorious Revolution which, according to Marx, made him a systematic falsifier of history. Grote's *History of Greece* was the reply of a democrat to the *History* by Mitford, which blamed democracy for the downfall of Greece. Seeley by his *Expansion of England* (1883) started the writing of British Imperialist history which has been carried on up to Mrs. Knowles' works and the Wembley originated "Bulletin of Empire Study." Unfortunately such tendencies are not confined to Britain. The notion of Mr. E. B. Osborn of the *Morning Post* is being adopted in various countries—that it does not matter whether the history taught is true or not, provided that it creates the desired nationalistic sentiment.

What do we workers want from history as an antidote to these dangerous tendencies?

Less about kings and more about peoples.

Less about warriors and more about workers.

More about the wonderful story of human control over nature and less about battles.

More about Spartacus and less about Cæsars. Less about King Alfred and the cakes and more about the workers' share of the cake then and now.

More about the Enclosure Acts and the spread of landlord sm and less about the spread of the British Empire.

Less about the Duke of Wellington and more about Francis Place and Robert Owen. Less about Waterloo, more about Peterloo.

More about the Chartists and less about the Magna Charta. [Would workers sell their vote for a ride in a motor car or an aristocratic smile if they knew the price paid for the right to vote?]

More about the steady progress of humanity and the succeeding social systems and less about the rise and fall of Empires.

MARK STARR.

A PAMPHLET FOR THE MOMENT

WE are issuing immediately a 16 pp. pamphlet, *The Class Struggle in the Mining Industry*, by John Hamilton. This is a revised and enlarged version of the article which appeared in these pages last month, and it forms an admirably concise and telling history of miners' trade unions, and of legislative enactments, etc., dealing with the mining industry.

Now the time when this pamphlet is valuable propaganda is NOW. NOW is when Trade Unionists need to know the main facts bearing on the present situation. Our job as an educational organisation is to make those facts known as widely as possible. Every Pleb and every N.C.L.C.er should give a hand in the work of securing a wide circulation for this pamphlet. Send for a dozen, and "plant" them among your fellow-workers. Help us to sell out this month. We don't print pamphlets of this sort to keep on our shelves—we want them to be made use of in the working-class struggle. Let's have your order.

CHRISTIANITY and the CLASS STRUGGLE

(Concluded from February issue)

THE idea of a Son of God was not discovered by the Christians. The Roman Emperor was regarded as the Son of God. Julius Cæsar was supposed at the time to be the son of the goddess Venus who was understood to have had an unfortunate affair with little Julius' father. After his death the Senate admitted Julius to the galaxy of the gods and a comet's appearance was taken as a token that he had ascended into heaven. His successors were all worshipped as gods and this shows that the stories subsequently invented about the birth and nature of Jesus were of the type current in the Roman Empire during its decline and were by no means confined to Christian congregations. As Kautsky aptly puts it: "To be a Son of God was a portion of the business of a redeemer, whether he was a Cæsar or a street preacher." The Christian conception of the nature of the Deity was only a reflection of the deep-seated revolution that was going on in men's minds at this time. The religion of ancient Rome was polytheistic and resembled that of primitive Man, who made a god out of every natural phenomenon. The advance in the knowledge of natural causes made Nature better understood, while the growth of towns divorced a section of mankind from her altogether. God became therefore something wonderful and unseen, outside and above Nature, intervening arbitrarily in man's affairs, a single power, replacing a galaxy of gods and goddesses. This was reflected in the political changes in Rome. During the polytheistic period there was a Republic in Rome, just as there was a sort of Republic of slave-owning aristocrats in Olympus. The decay of the economic system based on slavery caused man's mind to look for a Saviour, a dictator, a Cæsar, and so the downfall of the Republic of aristocrats in Rome

and the setting up of the rule of the Cæsars as sons of Heaven with courts and courtiers corresponds with the tendency of Roman religious thought towards Monotheism, towards the idea of a One Almighty God with his son born of an earthly mother and with a hierarchy of saints and angels round his court. It is not difficult to see why Christianity soon became popular in high Roman society.

In a very interesting section, tracing the social and economic history of the Jewish community from its early nomadic stage in the deserts of Sinai to the settled life in Palestine, Kautsky shows that the Jews were by their peculiar geographical and historical associations the people who in advance of others in the basin of Mediterranean were destined to develop strong monotheistic tendencies. The position of Palestine on the periphery of warring Empires, first of Egypt and Assyria, then of Egypt and Babylon, then of Rome and Parthia, subjected them to periodical exiles, in which, however, not the whole people but only the ruling and priestly caste were the victims. Finally the dictatorship of the Cæsars led to the most appalling extortion and exploitation of the labour of the East Mediterranean, for as the slave system broke down in the heart of the Empire, owing to the extermination of the free peasantry and the decay of agriculture, so the pressure on the peoples on the periphery to provide the food and the slaves increased. Hence a people with strong monotheistic leanings are placed in a position, from which only violent revolution against the rule of the foreign oppressors could possibly free them. What better ground could be found than in Palestine for revolutionary movements based on the idea of a Saviour, coming straight from one Almighty God to rid mankind of this terrible scourge, the exploiting overlords of Rome.

> We have already shown (continues Kautsky) that it is impossible to say anything definite about the alleged founder of Christianity. But we may add that it is really not necessary to know anything about him. For there is not a single Christian thought that requires the assumption of a sublime prophet and superman to explain its origin, that cannot be pointed out before the time of Jesus in " pagan " or Jewish literature.

On the other hand the really important thing is to discover the character of the early Christian congregations. Here it is fortunately possible to get reliable knowledge. There can be little doubt that these congregations originally consisted of poor working-class elements who had at one time been drawn towards two important movements within the Jewish community. These were the Zealots and the Essenes. In other words Christian congregations arose out of and united these two streams of thought. The Zealots comprised those among the propertyless and homeless outcasts of society in Jerusalem who were ready to go to any lengths to overthrow Roman rule and set up Jerusalem in the place of Rome. The book

of Revelation is largely inspired by this idea, for Babylon, here referred to, is really Rome and the Golden City that shall replace it after its fall is Jerusalem. The Book of Revelation, in fact, is a violent revolutionary diatribe. The Zealots in Jerusalem used to resort to street rioting and assassination of Roman officials. In Galilee they got recruits from the petty peasants and shepherds who took to the caves and the hills to escape slavery and taxation and became bandits. It is no accident that tradition assigns the home of Jesus to Galilee. The Zealots were the Jacobins of that time, who split away from the Pharisees, because the latter, while anti-Roman and strongly Jewish nationalist and opposed to the Sadducees, who were all the time lick-spittling to the Roman power, were nevertheless not prepared to go to extremes. The Pharisees were the Girondists of that period.

The other elements that made up the Christian congregations were the Essenes. These were more confined to the peasants of Judea who were not satisfied with a violent national revolution and the overthrow of the Roman yoke. They wanted a short cut by creating a democratic, communistic society at once. It was they who were responsible for the practice of communal meals among the Christian congregations. They provided the pacifist and internationalist element to early Christianity, as the Zealots provided the militant nationalist element. They were the Utopians of the Robert Owen type, who hoped to create the new society alongside the old. Their hermit colonies in caves bordering on the Arabian deserts, in the valley of the Jordan overlooking the Dead Sea, and in the Egyptian deserts were the outward indications of the ascetic, mystic side of the movement for a new life in the Jewish nation, which formed the second great element in the Christian congregation.

The conflict between these two streams of thought in the early Christian congregations is responsible for the most conflicting statements, often amounting to the barest nonsense, appearing in the Gospels. Thus Kautsky points out that the whole story of the ancestry of Jesus is rendered absurd, for the Jewish nationalist element wanted to make out that the Messiah was a Jew of the House of David, while the Galilean revolutionaries did not care a bit about it. And so a compromise story was concocted in two of the Gospels that his parents lived in Galilee but were originally from Bethlehem, which was in the territory of the tribe of David. And in order to get him there at his birth the Evangelists invent a general order for taxation issued by Augustus in the year A.D. 1. Now we know from other sources that Augustus never issued any such order, that Quirinus issued one in the year A.D. 7 but that according to Roman law citizens were taxed in the place of abode and not in their place of birth.

Then as regards the spirit in which the founder of Christianity carried on his propaganda there is a conflict of evidence in the Gospels which explains much. According to Kautsky Jesus was the leader of an armed band of rebels who led an assault on the Roman power in Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives. The attempt failed and he was tried and executed. There is much evidence to support this. First of all throughout that century the number of insurrections against Roman rule in Judea were legion. A famous one led by an Egyptian Jew in A.D. 52 also started in Galilee and ended up with an unsuccessful assault on Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives. Moreover in a most illuminating passage in St. Luke (chap. xxii. ver. 36-38) we read that Jesus said to his disciples: "Now he that hath a purse, let him take it and also a pocket and he who has not, let him sell his cloak and buy a sword. For I say unto you, It must now be fulfilled in me what is written. . . . They said, however; Lord here are two swords. And he said unto them, that is sufficient." This was just before the arrest of Jesus. And in a few verses later, when Peter uses the sword to defend him and cuts off the ear of a servant of the High Priest, Jesus is represented as reproving Peter and posing as a non-resister to evil. Within an hour in the same Gospel Jesus becomes converted from a Bolshevik, exhorting his supporters to get arms at all costs, to a Tolstoyan who submits to be arrested, bound and executed without striking a blow! Kautsky's explanation is that the bishops and Christian elders of later centuries, when Christianity was becoming respectable and trying to attract the rich, doctored the Gospel of St. Luke, but unfortunately for them and fortunately for us did their work carelessly and left in the verses about the swords. Personally I am inclined to think there is also another possible explanation. It is conceivable that Jesus at this later period of his career really had become a pacifist. He probably began as a militant leading an armed rebellion in Galilee, raiding the Roman commisariat caravans. But the interesting episode of the forty days in the wilderness seems to portray him as one subjected to great internal conflict, such as comes to all leaders of popular movements on the question, Does the end justify the means? He could have the kingdoms of the world, i.e., overthrow Roman power, if he would fall down and worship the Devil, i.e., if he would use force. And possibly he led his men up to the Mount of Olives and funked it at the last minute, just as Gandhi organised civil disobedience till he had all India at his feet, and then at the crucial moment his nerve broke when he was faced with the armed force of British Imperialists. Possibly Judas Iscariot's behaviour is explained by his disgust at a wavering indecisive policy and a desire to force the issue, by facing Jesus with the necessity of defending himself. The contradictions in the Gospels may be as much due to Essenes and Zealots tampering with the

original report each in their own sense, as, according to Kautsky, it is due to later Christians tampering with the documents of the earlier ones. An Essene copyist may be responsible for the story about Jesus' rebuke to Peter over the servant's smitten ear, while a Zealot copyist may be responsible for the passage about the need for buying swords.

It is impossible to do justice to this great work, which teems in facts and careful analysis of ancient and modern writings on this most interesting subject. The student must by hook or by crook get hold of this book, although it is not cheap (16s.) It shows us how this revolutionary movement of two thousand years ago with its primitive consumer's Communism among its early congregations became in the course of time perverted into a gigantic opportunistic organisation with a hierarchy, owning immense wealth and becoming the mainstay of the feudal system of serfdom in the middle ages. All this can be explained, and Kautsky explains it on the basis of the materialist conception of history. The world was not ripe for Socialism two thousand years ago. It was possible to establish Communist colonies in which the members *consumed in common*. But technical science had not advanced far enough to enable man to *produce in common*. There were no factories, there were not even small workshops. What production there was in the towns had to be done in the home by a single individual. And if an individual produces in the home, he will want to consume in the home. It required another seventeen centuries to reach the stage of mass production with the corresponding new mentality. Meanwhile feudalism was undoubtedly an advance on the slave system of the Roman Empire. But in the meantime Christianity had gone by the board ; its early traditions were wiped out and fat abbots feasted where once the primitive Christian commune had broken bread and drank the blood of Christ.

Whether the new tendencies in the Church can overcome the centuries of traditional support of the existing order and make this venerable institution an instrument for assisting the new human economy, we cannot discuss here. Kautsky doubts it, but, as I said at first, the Church on the continent is more stereotyped than in the Anglo-Saxon lands and it is unwise to prophesy.

M. PHILIPS PRICE.

LETTERS

ARE WE TOO ACADEMIC ?

DEAR COMRADE,—The infuriated trumpetings, like provoked elephants, of some N.C.L.C. officials urge me to rush to the aid of Comrade J. M. Williams before he is trampled under their feet.

I don't endorse by any means the whole of his criticisms, but I do most emphatically say that such criticism is what the movement needs most and what The PLEBS should be most anxious to publish. If we abandon or frown on self-criticism of this sort, we had better change our badge from ? to ! For we shall have abandoned the attitude of questioning for an attitude of open-mouthed admiration.

Take the teaching of English, for example. We have not got to ask: "Is the teaching of English helpful to the workers in their struggle ?" Arithmetic, by aiding them in problems of organisation, is useful to the workers in their struggle. So are sports, by keeping their bodies well and so keeping their minds clear. But does anybody want the N.C.L.C. to teach physical drill and multiplication and division ? Reading and writing are almost essential for revolutionary workers, and many of the workers are very groggy in both—but is that the job of the N.C.L.C. ?

No: the real question is, "Are the capitalist sources of education in English [and so forth in other spheres] so tainted that the workers should not be left to use them ?" In history and economics: *Yes:* in English obviously *No.*

I should add that if it is the case that the English course is so popular that it enables the N.C.L.C. to run from its proceeds other, less popular, more valuable courses—then there is a good sound scoundrelly reason for keeping on with it !

Yours fraternally,
R. W. POSTGATE.

DEAR COMRADE,—In replying briefly to some of the criticisms of my article I had better, perhaps, recapitulate my main arguments. First, technical and cultural subjects should be left by the N.C.L.C. to other agencies. Second, in Social Science pre-Capitalist history and some phases of economic theory should be curtailed in order to give more attention to current problems. Third, in an industrial struggle such as the present coal crisis, a special concentration, to the exclusion of most of the ordinary activities, should be made thereupon by our educational movement. None of these points have been touched by my critics. My chief objection to their criticising is that they do not reply to my article.

Good English, I agree is useful to the workers. So also is good oxygen ! But will Woodburn and Miss Thompson advocate N.C.L.C. courses in hygiene ? An argument against running a bakery is not necessarily an argument against eating bread. Neither is my argument against N.C.L.C. English courses an argument against acquiring English. To justify the teaching of English by the N.C.L.C. it is not only necessary to show the utility of the subject, but also the futility of its teaching by State institutions. This has not been done. I take it that no one is prepared to suggest that there is such a thing as Independent Working-Class English.

In the teaching of history and economics I simply advocated proportion. Modern problems should receive greater attention, and at the expense of cutting down—and in some cases cutting out—the more academic phases of sociology now imparted. The acuteness of the class-struggle demands it. Morever, we have to see that laborious excavation of the dead past does not make our Socialism leisurely inclined towards the future.

Those N.C.L.C.ers who sincerely believe in an elaborate historic grounding will be disappointed with J. Hamilton when he claims that "only a brief survey" of history is given in our classes. But it is a matter of common knowledge that throughout the N.C.L.C. generally Industrial History—

considered by Hamilton as one of the two principal subjects—consists to the extent of more than one-half of a treatment of *pre-Industrial* periods.

However, the outstanding fact of this controversy is the loose conception of the elementary principles of the I.W.C.E. movement. Simplification, yes; Substitution—of less essential for more essential subjects—no. To convert the egg into an omelet may be excellent; to produce the omelet without the egg is, to say the least, rather a different matter.

I suggest to Comrade Hamilton that once a clear conception of the fundamentals of our movement is gained, most of the difficulties of our less experienced critics will disappear. To emphasise this is essential, otherwise the difference between the N.C.L.C. and other educational bodies will be *run* to death in theory and *done* to death in practice.

Yours,
J. M. WILLIAMS.

DEAR COMRADE,—Comrade Williams says, "Why should English become a burden on N.C.L.C. funds?" First, because most workers leave State schools when they are children and therefore unable to deal with their own language. This would not matter to the workers if their only function were to say, "Go to hell" to the bosses, but it does matter to N.C.L.C. students who become propagandists.

Second, the lack of knowledge of English largely accounts for the prejudice that still exists against Marxian students. I was told by an ardent worker in the political movement only in February, "The Labour College has rarely turned out men of any use to us. They only come back (to S. Wales) mouthing long phrases."

There are many who will admit that English is necessary as a tool, who can only think of Literature as a W.E.A.ry subject. Yet it is the method of treating the subject that matters, and if the N.C.L.C. students can do in Literature what they do in History and Economics, they can influence hundreds more, for many who never attend classes read novels, and go to plays, and get their ideas from them.

Yours, etc.,
LEONORA THOMAS.

SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION

DEAR SIR,—The Co-Operative Co-Partnership Propaganda Committee (Educational Committee of the Co-Partnership Productive Co-Operative Societies) is this year offering a Scholarship tenable for one week at the International Co-Operative Summer School to be held in Manchester commencing July 17th.

This Scholarship is open to all members of Co-Operative Societies, Trade Unions or Labour organisations.

Candidates must write an Essay of not more than 3,000 words on either of the following subjects:—

"*The Ethics of Industry.*"
"*Co-operative Co-partnership and Trade Unionism—Their Relation One to the Other.*

Competitors must send their Essay to the Secretary, C.C.P.C. Alliance Chambers, Horsefair Street, Leicester, on or before Saturday, May 15th.

Envelopes must be plainly marked "Scholarship Competition."

Yours faithfully,
J. J. WORLEY (Sec.)

Hobson on Marx

Dear Comrade,—Yet another bourgeois economist has found his Waterloo in Marxism, and strange to relate, The Plebs special correspondent and eye-witness of the debacle omits all reference to the same in his official dispatch. "J. L. G." need not fear "excommunication" for the concluding suggestion in his review of J. A. Hobson's *Free-thought in the Social Sciences;* it is for his sins of omission, rather, that he deserves some such fate. That such glaring mis-statements of fact as are made by Mr. Hobson should be allowed to pass unchallenged by a Plebs outpost is to say the least reprehensible.

On p. 157, in a section which, so the author tells us in the preface, has had "the careful reading and valuable criticism" of his friends Prof. L. T. Hobhouse and Mr. R. H. Tawney, Mr. Hobson states, "It would be more difficult to foist upon a body of trained economists fallacies so crude as those which lurk in scientific socialism." Let us now follow him in his recital of some of these "fallacies so crude."

Mr. Hobson writes, on p. 149, "For the socialist . . . workers are imbued with the doctrine that labour is the sole source of wealth." Marx actually said, "Labour is not the sole source of wealth"; and Kautsky, in his *Economic Doctrines of Karl Marx*, p. 18, says, "There is no form of wealth, however, which comes into existence through the agency of human labour alone." Someone appears to be telling stories!

Mr. Hobson demonstrably has not yet attained to that very, very elementary stage in Marxian economics at which an understanding of the essential difference between wealth and value is reached, for on p. 154 he writes of "the glorification of labour as the sole source of value. . . ." This in itself is sufficient to nonsuit him as a competent critic of Marxism, but we can afford to be charitable and will draw further from p. 149, whereon he states, ". . . I hold that the true labour case lies, not in an insistence that labour is the sole source of wealth, still less in the narrow meaning of labour which excludes or disparages brain work. . . ." Why, even the Labour Party Constitution refers to the "Workers by hand or by *brain!*"

On pp. 152 and 153 Mr. Hobson writes:—

"The pseudo-exactitude of mathematical 'marginalism' which wins for the Cambridge School the title of defenders of the capitalist faith, is confronted by a similar feat of 'abstraction' performed by the Marxian theorists in anchoring their faith upon a principle of value based on 'abstract necessary social human labour.' . . . Confronted with the same difficulty . . . the reduction of qualitative to quantitative differences, Marx and his adherents resort to an extraordinary device best described in Marx's own language:—'Skilled labour counts only as simple labour intensified, or rather as multiplied simple labour. . . .' But how is this done, how is the standard applied? He (Marx) replies: 'The different proportions in which different sorts of labour are reduced to unskilled labour as their standard, are established by *a social process that goes on behind the backs of the producers*, and consequently appear to be established by custom.'

"But this 'social process which goes on behind the backs of the producers' is the operation of the very capitalist system that Marx sets out to overthrow. To accept the respective valuations this 'social process' assigns to the different sorts of human effort is nothing less than a complete acquiescence in the existing system of distributing wealth."

In the first place, where does Marx state that he set out to overthrow capitalism? Nowhere! Boudin

remarks, *apropos* of this oft-repeated charge, "In describing the process of capitalist production Marx intended merely to state the facts as he saw them. . . . If his theory of value and surplus value and his condemnation of the capitalist system stood in any causal relation, . . . his theory of value and surplus value was probably the cause, and his condemnation of the capitalist system the effect, rather than the reverse."

Then, again, if "to accept the respective valuations," etc., is "nothing less than a complete acquiescence in the existing system of distributing wealth," on the same argument to accept the fact that war is an inevitable concomitant of capitalism is nothing less than a complete acquiescence in war. Logic—with a capital L!

But time is too short—at least for a proletarian like the writer—to go chasing more Hobson will-o'-the-wisps, and in any case enough is as good as a feast. Hobson is of the salt of bourgeois economists; and if the salt hath lost its savour. . . .

Fraternally yours,

F. G. CAIN.

BOOK REVIEWS

OXFORD AND MARX

Karl Marx's Capital: An Introductory Essay. By A. D. Lindsay (Oxford University Press, 2s. 6d.).

IT is certainly surprising to find a master of Balliol College, Oxford, writing a book on Marx. Still more surprising is it to open the book and find that it purports to be a sympathetic study, introductory to the reading of *Das Kapital* itself. Oxford may read Marx for historical interest (Cambridge never reads him at all, and has no more than Volume I. in its University Library), but it does not trouble to write books about him, save on rare occasions, to refute him from the standpoint of pure logic. What, then, does this portent mean? Has the W.E.A. changed its spots? Is "permeation" after all possible even in the Senior Common Rooms of Oxford colleges?

The portent, however, seems less alarming if we regard the circumstances of its origin. The book was born from the author's sojourn amid the smoke-thickened Clyde; and it was, in fact, first delivered in the form of lectures to the Glasgow I.L.P. It was prompted, therefore, by a contact with mass emotions and raw industrial realities which the ordinary "remote and ineffectual don" browsing beneath the soft skies of Oxford never experiences. But the response to this contact is, nevertheless, made in a typically Oxford way. The book is of Marx; its birthplace is the Clyde; but the rare scent of its pages is of the Isis and the Cherwell . . . charming, enervating, ineffectual.

The book starts with considerable promise. One's interest is immediately stirred. As an Hegelian philosopher Mr. Lindsay is clearly well qualified to understand the relation between Hegel and Marx, which is the subject of the first chapter; and here we find some interesting ideas clearly and readably expressed. The opening explanation of the labour theory of value also seems promising, as for instance the suggestion that some of the misunderstanding of Marx by his critics is due to the fact that the two "seem to be giving different answers to the same question," whereas "they are really answering different questions." This is very succinctly put. And, again, there is interest in the parallel which he draws between what McCulloch meant by "real cost" and Marx by "labour value"; and one follows with approval his insistence that Marx was not enunciating a theory of price. ("What McCulloch calls real cost and Marx exchange value is what a commodity would fetch in a society under certain standard conditions; what McCulloch calls exchange value and Marx price is what it fetches under existing conditions.")

But the promise fails to be fulfilled. We soon find that beneath the aroma of "sympathetic understanding" lies a convenient dilution of everything vital and original in Marx, leaving

only a mixture of vague liberal "ideas." Amid suggestive passages we find recurring instances of serious misunderstanding. The class struggle is mentioned tentatively in the second chapter, and then ignored subsequently save for a purely incidental reference. For instance, this is the explanation of the class struggle doctrine with which we are served:—

> "Nationalism gone mad is a danger to society, because it assumes that man cannot love his country without hating other countries. . . . Similarly while class consciousness may easily degenerate into a state of mind where hatred of members of other classes is more prominent than love of members of one's own class, yet the remedy is not to deny the existence of classes or to maintain that there are no conflicts of interest in society, but to make men care for the community as a whole as well as for their class, and to use the organisation of the community to remove the economic causes of these social cleavages. . . . The only way to produce a united society is to understand the extent and the causes of its present divisions!"

The author spends several pages quarrelling with Marx's statement that exchange does not increase value. The whole argument seems to neglect the fact that Marx did not deny that merchants might, *incidentally*, perform certain productive functions (Vol. III., 315) just as capitalist *entrepreneurs* may; but that *qua* merchants and capitalists they do not, and hence only share in surplus value in proportion to the capital they employ. Again, it is argued that "organisation" creates value, and hence the capitalist "organiser," as well as labour. In support of this, the argument is adduced that "some of the *value* produced is produced by the association, not by its separate members, and the attempt to represent the price of the commodity as an amount of separate values created by the labour of the separate individuals concerned must break down"—a sentence in which clearly the word "utility" or "wealth" is really meant in place of "value."

As we near the end of these well-printed pages, we realise that the Oxford atmosphere has completely vanquished that of the Clyde. We hear no longer of class struggle even as a "dialectical principle." Concrete entities are forsaken for vague and cloudy generalities. We hear a great deal of "rights" and "justice" and "equality" and "moral" issues. The secret of the labour value theory is revealed as a theory of "natural rights," after Locke. Its influence has been due to the fact that it stresses "the dignity of human labour." The theory of the collective labourer leads to a Socialism which "is for Marx essentially the democratisation of the collective labourer" and the principle of social control. The importance of his historical method is to teach "that the realisation of ideals is not the achievement of a moment, but is brought about by a process of historical development." We end with a chapter in which Marx is compared with Rousseau; while Rousseau preached political democracy, Marx preached industrial democracy.

An article in a weekly Labour contemporary treated the appearance of this book as symptomatic. Probably it is. But if it is symptomatic, it is of this—of the ability, in which the British ruling class is richly talented and for which Oxford is the superb training ground, to "annex" hostile persons and doctrines with "sympathy" and "understanding," and by so doing to rob them of their vitality and distinctiveness. Slave-societies were often wont to make eunuchs of the male slaves who waited on their lady's bedchamber. In the future we may well see a eunuch-Marxism in England (has not Kautsky in Germany admirably shown us the way?), in which the class-struggle, if it is retained in name, loses all its revolutionary virility. And as the smoke and rumblings of the mass-struggles on the Clyde penetrate even to the still places, we may well find the gowns of Oxford fulfilling in such ways this historic role of the "liberal spirit."

M. H. D.

Summary Socialism

A Summary of Socialism. By Gordon Hosking (Labour Publishing Co. 1s., paper; 2s. 6d., cloth).

I wish I had a mind like Mr. Gordon Hosking. It must be such a tidy mind,

with all its ideas tucked away in little dockets tied up with red tape—no blue ribbon. He has summarised Socialism for us in eighty-eight of these little envelopes, each containing about 120 words. In the first eight pages he has comfortably disposed of Socialism and the democratic theory, trade unionism, co-operation, municipal socialism, religion, art, science and marriage. Then he gets into his stride.

Mr. Gordon Hosking has no doubts. "For the continuance of the human race women are *as essential* as men." (Italics mine.) Or again, "All human beings, *including* workers, children and invalids, are entitled to an adequate share of the necessaries of life." So nice for the workers, but why leave out lunatics from the time-honoured catalogue? Mr. Gordon Hosking solves the vexed problem of marriage in a delightfully simple way. All these modern troubles come because so many men are killed off by wars and the competitive system. "Under Socialism," says Mr. Gordon Hosking, "women will probably not out-number the men at all; consequently no man will be able to have more than one wife." So that's that. Each nice little girl being provided with a nice big boy, everyone will live happily ever after. But, dear Mr. Gordon Hosking, there are a *few* other problems connected with the marriage question.

Mr. Gordon Hosking is also an optimist. He assures us in his preface "that the thinkers and leaders of Socialism are already making detailed plans for the constructive effort necessary to bring about Socialism. A bold Socialist Government given plenary powers would be able to abolish unemployment almost immediately." But Mr. Gordon Hosking does not tell us how that Bold Government is going to get these plenary powers,—and, if I may say so, that's the rub.

It is a little difficult to understand why the Labour Publishing Co. should have issued this book so soon after the appearance of Mr. Brailsford's magnificent effort. Nevertheless, it has its uses. If you have only one shilling to spend, buy Brailsford, but a cynical Pleb with a shilling to spare could get a good deal of entertainment out of Mr. Gordon Hosking. Only don't let the book get into the hands of some one who has no sense of humour. That would be a disaster.

E. C. W.

ROBERT OWEN

A Bibliography of Robert Owen, the Socialist (National Library of Wales. No price stated. 1,000 copies only).

This is the second and much enlarged edition of a book which is a great comfort and pleasure to all "poor scholars." It is a complete catalogue of all the books, periodicals, pamphlets, etc., by Robert Owen, concerning Robert Owen, explaining or attacking Owen's system, or dealing with any of his settlements or other activities. It is done with elaborate care and thoroughness, and well printed. It contains also a note of the most important portraits of Owen. It is a pity that we have had to rely on the spirit of Welsh nationalism for this vital work for labour history. But then, Welsh (or Scotch) nationalism is not dangerous to capitalism and so it can raise money. It's an ill wind that blows nobody any good.

R. W. P.

A NEW POPULARISATION OF MARX

Karl Renner's *Die Wirtschaft als Gesamtprozess und die Sozialisierung* (Economics as an Integral Process, and Socialisation), published by Dietz, Berlin, in 1924, is but one of a dozen books which would be translated if Britain were less insular—and less decadent. But when there is still no prospect of the translation of Rosa Luxemburg's *Die Akkumulation des Kapitals*, it seems idle even to expound the reasons why such momentous works remain untranslated. Renner belongs to the Austrian school of Neo-Marxists, and his name (though little known in England) is associated with those of Hilferding and Bauer. It is less familiar than theirs because he is not so hard-shelled a "reformist" or "revisionist" as they, and he has played a less prominent part in the war of words that has raged in the Marxist world ever since the bolshevik revolution. But as a statesman he was a man of note, having been State Chancellor of the Republic of Austria after the revolution at the close of the war, and subsequently (after Otto Bauer's retirement), Minister for Foreign Affairs. He has written upon political as well as economic subjects. In the volume now under consideration—an octavo of nearly 600 pages—he makes a praiseworthy effort to confine himself to the economic field. He cannot, however, avoid trespassing into politics from time to time; and the present writers (who are not professional economists) find these political excursions the most interesting parts of Renner's interesting book.

As far as economics is concerned, the volume is one of the numerous attempts to simplify Marx's teaching, and to make the theories of *Capital* easier to understand. Marx's writing, says Renner (p. 5), belongs to the "philosophic age." With every decade, therefore, his *Capital* becomes more difficult to understand, and, in a period when we are inclined to argue inductively rather than deductively, the whole problem and its solution need restatement. The book is an endeavour to show the general economic trend of Marx's system. The core of Renner's economic teaching is that the problem of socialisation must be approached from the outlook of the circulation of commodities rather than from the outlook of their production. The old formula was that socialism meant "the nationalisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange." But exchange is only the instrument of the circulation of commodities; and distribution is the goal of circulation. Thus the processes of supreme importance, when we are considering the problem of socialisation, are *production* and *circulation*. It is the international and world-market features of the modern process of circulation which make socialisation, upon a larger arena than that of any extant national State, at once so difficult and so indispensable. By a different route, Renner comes to the communist conclusion that socialisation is hardly conceivable except upon an international scale. He deprecates (pp. 9—10) the "fatalist" notion that capitalism will dig its own grave. Socialism must be established by conscious effort on the part of socialists. Of course the recognition of this fact brings him face to face with political issues. To his dealings with these issues in the extremely valuable concluding chapter of the book (Chapter eleven, "The Integral Process and Socialisation"), we propose to devote the remainder of this brief comment. How does our Austrian reformist envisage the transition to socialism?

On p. 348 he tells us that socialism is not realisable without the conquest of public authority. Of course the question immediately arises, whether this "conquest" is to be effected by constitutional or unconstitutional means! We don't think that Renner has quite made up his mind upon this point. One of the fundamental characteristics of what is termed "bolshevism," or of "revolutionary communism," as contrasted with "evolutionary socialism," is an insistence on the unlikelihood that the conquest will be achieved without unconstitutional action. Now, Renner expressly deprecates a polemic against bolshevism. "I am certain that, from the very first until now, the Russian revolution has done what it had to do—and has then made a virtue of necessity" (p. 371). But, like an English thinker with whom he has many points in common, and whom he quotes, Renner

shrinks from the alarming possibilities of unconstitutional action. "A blow will in a moment destroy a watch which represents hours, days, or even weeks of a skilled craftsman's work. I am reminded of Cole's fine saying: 'It is easy to destroy the capitalist economy, difficult to replace it'" (p. 371).

He goes on to say (p. 374—we summarise) that socialisation must be the fruit of organisation. It cannot be achieved by dictatorial decree, cannot be the result of a miracle. Man is not God Almighty, who said, "Let there be light," and there was light. "In the socialist movement we still find those who have faith in miracles, but socialism as a science and a deed knows nothing of miracles, and does not need them."

Yet, like all the Austrian Neo-Marxists, Renner is a class-war man. It is only through the driving force of the class war that socialisation will be achieved—and perhaps mainly on the economic [i.e., industrial] plane, by direct action, and "without the State" (p. 378). But the discussion of this political problem lies beyond the scope of his book.

He cannot, however, escape the political issue. On the very next page, he reiterates the assertion that socialisation, effective socialisation, can never be achieved without the conquest of political power. Having said that, he is again assailed by spectral doubts. The State can, by decree, destroy the wonderful mechanism of circulation. It must not do so! The problem of socialisation is the replacement of the old system of distribution, the organisation of a new system. "But the categorical imperative of socialisation is to keep the circulation of commodities functioning during the period of transition—and this cannot be done without winning for the proletarian cause an outstanding proportion of the officialdom" (p. 379).

How far this term "officialdom" means "civil servants," and how far it means "managerial staff" of private key enterprises, depends upon the extent to which "State socialism" has already been established.

Follows (p. 380) a temperate restatement of the reformist case. The proletariat, says Renner, must form alliances—changing alliance—with other sections of the "community." As for the theory of the absolute negation of the State, that, he tells us (p. 380), is now of purely historical interest. It is out of date.

Renner concludes (pp. 381—382) with the following considerations: *The world war was a stage on the way to a universalisation of the world market. Separate national economies cannot continue. The fighting international of the proletariat must be the chief instrument in unification. Complete socialisation is impossible to an isolated nation. The first requisite is a victory of the proletariat in the countries of advanced capitalist development, and this can only be achieved by the establishment of a world-wide political international.*

It will be agreed that, for a reformist, and for one who has been Prime Minister of a considerable (though sadly reduced) realm, Karl Renner goes a long way!

We repeat, in conclusion, that these political problems form no more than a minor part of a most important book. We wish we could see a ghost of a chance of its publication in the English language!

EDEN AND CEDAR PAUL.

A Pioneer's Life Story

Mary MacArthur. By M. A. Hamilton (Parsons, 3s. 6d.).

Mrs. Hamilton has given us a biography of permanent value concerning the woman whose name will be forever associated with the organisation of women workers in Britain. The record of Mary MacArthur's life and work should be an inspiration to those now engaged in the difficult tasks of the General Council's recruiting campaign for women trade unionists. Whatever our afterthoughts on the effect of Trade Boards in weakening union organisation, the struggle to introduce them for the women chainmakers of Cradley Heath and elsewhere was magnificent. The book, indeed, throws much interesting light upon the whole period of pre-war Industrial Unrest. The tragedy of the unexpected death of W. C. Anderson and Mary MacArthur is all the more poignant in the light of the after triumph of their other colleagues who shared their opposition to war hysteria and hate.

In her general treatment one is glad to note that Mrs. Hamilton avoids the adulation which mars some of her other biographies.

M. S.

A Novel Verse Anthology

English Verse, from Spenser to Tennyson. (Johnston, 2 parts, 1s. 6d. each).

It is refreshing to find a poetical anthology excluding lyrics, and by this means Mr. Somerville has been enabled to give us a good selection of long extracts from the narrative and satiric verse of the major English poets. Used in conjunction with one of the numerous lyric anthologies the book forms a valuable introduction to English poetry. Part 1 takes us from Spencer to Coleridge, and includes some of the finest passages in *Paradise Lost* and three interesting extracts from Dryden's *Absalom and Ahithophel* —a contrast of poetic form and political motive force which may be advantageously studied by Marxian students of literature.

E. J.

The NATIONAL COUNCIL of LABOUR COLLEGES

HEAD OFFICE—62 HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH

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

Ayrshire Miners' Union.—This Union, after turning down the W.E.A., has made a grant of £5 to the N.C.L.C. It is hoped that it will soon arrange an N.C.L.C. Educational Scheme and bring itself into line with the other Scottish Miners' Unions.

National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives.—This Union's forthcoming Conference will be considering a resolution in favour of a W.E.A. Scheme and a resolution from Kilmarnock in favour of an N.C.L.C. Scheme. Will our supporters please note and lend every possible assistance?

N.S.O.P.A.—This Union is willing to provide any member with a free N.C.L.C. Correspondence Course, provided the member makes a serious attempt to deal with his papers. Applications accompanied by Union card should be sent to N.C.L.C. Office.

Shop Assistants' Union.—Edinburgh and Tottenham Branches have resolutions down in favour of an N.C.L.C. Scheme. The Conference takes place on April 4th and 5th. Good luck to our supporters!

A.S.W.—The Executive has, for the first time, made a small grant to the N.C.L.C. We hope the members will take up the question of having an N.C.L.C. Educational Scheme.

A.E.U.—Ruskin College has issued a circular to members of the A.E.U. urging them to alter the A.E.U.'s Education Rule. The circular endeavours to show that the T.U.C. Scheme makes the alteration necessary. This is, of course, not the case, as the T.U.C. Scheme explicitly provides that

Unions may arrange educational facilities directly with the N.C.L.C. Our A.E.U. supporters will, no doubt, do everything possible to have the suggested amendment turned down.

Union of Post Office Workers.—This Union's Conference takes place in May. The Manchester Branch has down a resolution in favour of the N.C.L.C.

N.U.R.—A number of branches of the Union have sent in resolutions for the forthcoming A.G.M. asking for an N.C.L.C. Scheme. Our supporters in the N.U.R. have now the best opportunity they have had for some time if sufficient energy is put into the campaign.

Railway Clerks' Association.—Doncaster Branch has a resolution down in favour of an N.C.L.C. Scheme and looks for support from other branches.

National Union of Blastfurnacemen is willing to pay the fees of its members attending N.C.L.C. Classes.

Association of Engineering and Shipbuilding Draughtsmen.—This Union is willing to provide scholarships to N.C.L.C. Week-end and Summer Schools and to pay class fees. Will members interested please apply and send copies of their applications to the N.C.L.C. Office ?

Local Affiliations.—The following list speaks for itself. Does your College's name appear ? Liverpool, 7 ; Division 1, 3 ; Division 3, 2 ; South-East Lancs, 3 ; Stirlingshire, 2 ; Abergavenny, 1 ; Workington, 1 ; Glasgow, 1 ; Londonderry, 1.

Tutors' Training Classes.—Every area should now have made its arrangements for Tutors' Training Classes during the summer.

Annual Meeting and National Summer School.—We are going to have our biggest Summer School yet this year. Booking fees should be sent in immediately and every step should be taken to get local and national organisations to provide scholarships.

What the Divisions are doing

Div. 1.—The London Council is considering changing the present basis of affiliation to one of 2d. per member per year. We hope this progressive proposal will carry the day. A new class has been formed at Ramsgate.

Div. 2.—The N.C.L.C. is developing remarkably in Portsmouth, thanks to the tireless efforts of the Secretary, a few A.S.L.E. & F. members and Comrade R. Bates (the District Organiser of the A.E.U.). J. F. Horrabin gave an excellent lecture on "Imperialism in China" at Guildford. Fifty students attended. J. M. Williams is to lecture on the "Mining Crisis." Woking Class Secretary reports that A. J. Cook's visit on Feb. 19th broke all records in attendance, collection and sales of literature. Wynn Cuthbert is to conduct week-end schools at Eastleigh, Dorchester, Portland and Portsmouth. The organiser has been giving lectures on the "Mining Crisis" to nearly all the classes during February, and is making arrangements for week-end schools in May on the same subject. Ringwood, Camberley and Godalming are to be visited with the object of starting new classes. Sales of the new N.C.L.C. booklet are good.

Div. 3.—No report to hand.

Div. 4.—Successful meetings held at Llanelly, Skewen and Aberavon, addressed by J. P. M. Millar. Griffithstown class reports that H. C. Piper

has made an excellent impression as a class tutor. Comrades Cole and Richards have commenced tutorial work with very satisfactory results. Bedwas class group reports satisfactory progress, thanks to the tutorial assistance of A. Williams. New classes have been formed at Abercynon and Tredegar. Our local secretaries will be delighted to receive the co-operation of all local Plebs. Day schools were held at Newport, Abergavenny and Blaina, with E. F. Wise as lecturer. I. Cox addressed the A.U.B.T.W. at Aberavon on "Trade Unionism and Working-Class Education." The Rhondda L.C. reports that arrangements are being made for a big rally, as a conclusion to the winter's work. The Divisional E.C. has decided to offer two summer scholarships; in addition, Mr. E. F. Wise has offered a scholarship. These scholarships are open to all members of N.C.L.C. classes in the Division. The examination will be held on April 17th. Will College secretaries please forward details of local competitors as early as possible? Will all intending students or delegates to the Annual Meeting please book early. Cardiff L.C. is providing branch lectures for the A.E.U.

Div. 5.—A new class formed at St. Bravels in the Forest of Dean, thanks to H. Craddock. Gloucester and Cheltenham have had lectures by Philips Price on "Can Capitalism Stabilise Itself?" A successful lantern lecture on "Imperialism" was held at Gloucester. Organiser Phippen has circularised all affiliated bodies offering a list of twelve subjects for branch meetings. The "Economics of the Mining Crisis" is urged as the vital subject for March and April. Bristol is forming a class on this subject for April with March PLEBS and the L.R.D. *Summary of the Coal Commission* as textbooks. Literature sales show a record figure this winter. The organiser alone has disposed of more than £17 worth. Bath Labour College has secured the affiliation of the local Labour Party. Congratulations to Ben Hipwood, an N.C.L.C. enthusiast at Devonport, on being appointed Parliamentary Candidate for the Tiverton Division of Devon.

Div. 6.—Birmingham College is still developing, further classes being in demand. Attendance at all existing classes well maintained. Preparations are being made for an extensive campaign among T.U. branches and other sections of the movement, and several comrades will assist the organiser in this work. Duddieston I.L.P., Lozells Ward Labour Party have decided to affiliate and the Nechalls I.L.P. is expected to do so. Alum Rock Class

has arranged a social and dance for March 20th. Dudley College still going strong, and credit is due to the energetic and painstaking Secretary, Comrade Ward. A week-end school has been arranged for Saturday and Sunday, March 27th and 28th, to be conducted by Organiser J. Stuart Barr; subject, "Imperialism." Walsall Class has decided to hold a conference and week-end school on April 17th and 18th (instead of the dates given last month). Leamington Spa and Stafford Classes are still doing well.

Div. 7.—No report has been received.

Div. 8.—Congratulations to H. Ingle and the Manchester L.C. on their success in raising over £40 by means of dances. Liverpool L.C. Annual Meeting is to be held in "Beechcroft" Settlement, Birkenhead, Saturday, June 5th, the speaker being J. F. Horrabin. Widnes Class, with the assistance of Tom Lowe and the Earlstown Labour Choral Union Quartette are having a concert recital to aid N.C.L.C. work locally.

Div. 9.—Some people have been circulating a rumour that Will Coxon has severed his connections with the N.C.L.C. This impression may have got abroad owing to Comrade Coxon having to leave Newcastle and take up his abode at South Hetton. Comrade Coxon thought it advisable to give up the secretaryship of the North-Eastern L.C., and that work is now in the hands of Comrade Stewart. But Coxon is taking a class in Durham City, and is generally as active on our behalf as ever he has been. Our enterprising comrades at Wallsend are making good use of the N.C.L.C. propaganda leaflets. They have had "Bombs and Brains," "Are You a Live Wire?" etc., inserted in article form in the Wallsend *Labour News*. In every issue of this paper there are some N.C.L.C. propaganda notes. Classes started at Durham City, Sherburn Hill and Carlisle.

Div. 10.—*Scotland.*—The series of whist drives organised by the Women's Class in Kilmarnock has realised the very handsome sum of £15. A. Villiers, the Glasgow Secretary, has resigned in consequence of having been appointed Sec. of Glasgow N.U.R. Branch No. 12. It is, we are told, the second most important branch in Scotland. Our best thanks are due to Comrade Villiers for his excellent work. Good headway has been made recently in the town of Stirling. Thanks to the activity of Tutor Deas, a women's class has been started at Bannockburn with thirteen students. The Edinburgh District Trades Council has a monthly report on the educational work done locally by the Labour College. A. J. Cook is to speak at Edinburgh College Conference in April, and is also to speak for the N.C.L.C. in Dundee. The Fife Committee are hoping to retain Tutor D. J. Williams' services during the summer.

Div. 11.—*Ireland.*—March registered the end of the first complete N.C.L.C. winter session in Ireland. Five weekly classes have been conducted in Belfast on various subjects and the work of extending the organisation has proceeded steadily. Perhaps the most important feature of the session has been the formation of well-attended classes in Newry and 'Derry. 'Derry, situated 100 miles from Belfast, has had occasional lectures given by the organiser, two regular classes with Joseph Campbell as class leader, and a class on Public Speaking is now going ahead with Mr. McCourt as tutor. Lectures to T.U. branches are to be a special feature of summer work. Derry Branch of the Transport and General Workers' Union has affiliated.

Div. 12.—Lincoln L.C. has a very business-like secretary, and our work in this area should develop under his charge. Some class secretaries are giving unnecessary work to Comrade Bennett, of Chesterfield, by failing to return their class registers. Vin Williams is putting in good work as full time organiser-lecturer in place of T. D. Smith, whose connection with the N.C.L.C. has ceased.

Forthcoming Day and Week-end Schools

Penarth.—Y.M.C.A., Windsor Road. May 22nd to 26th. Lecturers:—S. O. Davies (Vice-Pres. S.W.M.F.), R. J. Ellis, D. Lewis, Ness Edwards, R. Neft and R. Jenkins.

London.—The Labour College, 13, Penywern Road, Earl's Court, S.W. 5. May 8th and 9th. Lecturers:—A. M. Robertson (Acting Principal, London Labour College), J. F. Horrabin (Editor, PLEBS).

Peterborough.—Co-operative Rooms, Park Road. April 11th. Lecturer:—Maurice Dobb.

Scarborough.—Cober Hill Guest House, Cloughton. July 10th to 24th. National N.C.L.C. Summer School. List of lecturers later.

Directory—Additions and Corrections

Div. 4.—Newport and District Labour College, Sec.: J. Williams, 2a, North Street, Newport, Monmouthshire, S. Wales.

Div. 7.—Leeds Labour College, Sec.: T. H. Wormald, 2, Exeter Street, Woodhouse Lane, Leeds.

,, Shipley Labour College, Sec.: W. Hill, 1, Ives Street, Shipley, Yorks.

Div. 10.—Glasgow Labour College, Sec.: W. Peters, 341, Dumbarton Road, Glasgow, W.

,, Dumfries Labour College, Sec.: Alex. Bayne, 3, Whitesands, Dumfries.

,, Perth Labour College, Sec.: J. Small, 35, Victoria Street, Perth.

Div. 11.—Londonderry Labour College, Sec.: Robert Molloy, 24, Aubery Street, Londonderry, Ireland.

Div. 12.—Leicester Labour College, Sec.: E. A. Peacock, The Woodlands, Brook Road, Scraptoft, via Thurnby, Leicestershire.

PLEBS LEAGUE NOTES

IT was decided at the last Executive meeting that it would be quite a useful thing to publish on this page a short résumé of what happens at E.C. meetings.

At the last E.C. meeting on March 5th, the Summer School was discussed and names of lecturers submitted to the N.C.L.C. We take this chance of appealing to all Plebeians to do their best to be at Cober Hill some of the time between July 10th and 24th. This will be by far the biggest effort we have yet made, and we can promise not only a jolly holiday but some really fine discussions. We are not running our own Plebs School this year, but have decided to make it an "all-in" N.C.L.C. School. Anyone who has been to Cober Hill knows that it is worth a second visit. If you have never been, try it this year—you'll never regret it. All particulars from N.C.L.C., 62, Hanover Street, Edinburgh.

The E.C. discussed four new publications which should arouse interest. The first, Scott Nearing's *Education in Soviet Russia* (2s.), will be out before these words appear. It is full of information which can be used as an antidote to the dope of the Capitalist Press about Red Russia and its child victims. Nearing writes in a simple readable way and gives his personal experiences gathered on his recent trip. We are expecting a big sale, so write early.

The second new publication is a pamphlet by Jack Hamilton, *The Class Struggle in the Mining Industry*, enlarged and revised from the March PLEBS, and now presenting in compact tabloid form the history of mining organisation—all for 2d.

The third publication is a Plebs *Atlas*, to be composed of the maps that have been in *Lansbury's Weekly* and in our own Geographical Footnotes from time to time. No exact date of publication is yet fixed, but the matter is being proceeded with and further details will be given as soon as possible.

The fourth is a short history of the British Working Class by R. W. Postgate, a sort of potted version of a larger book that he has been engaged on for some time. This will be especially welcome. It will be published at 1s., and we hope to announce details next month.

After discussing publications, a very long argument took place with reference to Plebs groups and "political action." It has been felt by several groups that we should stick very close indeed to the educational side of our movement, and that where our decisions border on the "political," they shall be

carried out by individual Plebeians, not as Plebs Leaguers, but rather as members of their respective political organisations. I hope to write rather more fully about this next month. The following resolution was passed :—

> "That this Committee, after full consideration of the views expressed by the N.C.L.C. representatives and by various Plebs groups on 'political' activities of the Plebs League, reiterates the suggestions put forward in paragraphs 5 and 6 of the circular recently issued to League members; but desires to emphasise that Plebs Leaguers are only urged to play their part in the inauguration of *discussions* on current working-class problems; and not as members (or groups) of the League, to identify themselves with any particular decisions on these problems or activities arising out of such decisions. In these latter matters they should act as Trade Unionists, or as members of their political organisation; as Plebs Leaguers they are concerned solely with the educational importance of discussions on current issues."

The Editor addressed a meeting of BIRMINGHAM class-students and N.C.L.C.ers on March 12th on "Brass Tacks in Workers' Education," Comrade Stuart Barr presiding. There was an excellent discussion, indicating the good progress made by the I.W.C.E. Idea in the district recently. Why not a Plebs Group—to help Comrade Barr with the spade work of propaganda?

W. H.

The PLEBS BOOKSHELF

The Rise of Modern Industry. By J. L. Hammond and Barbara Hammond (Methuen, 10s. 6d.).

HERE is a book which, so soon as a cheap edition is available, should be on every Pleb's bookshelf, and which, even were it more expensive than it is, would certainly have to be acquired at once for the N.C.L.C. Tutors' Library. It is industrial history—with blood and tears, as well as dry bones; which characteristic of it will not, of course, surprise anyone who knows the Hammonds' earlier books.

What does come somewhat as a surprise is the fact that this book, unlike those studies of particular aspects of the Industrial Revolution in Britain which have won for Mr. and Mrs. Hammond the admiration and gratitude of all working-class students, deals in broad and masterly fashion not merely with the main facts of that Revolution, but places those facts in their proper historical setting and sketches in the whole background of events and developments, social, technical, and psychological, which complete the picture of a phase of history regarded as a whole. The earlier volumes were studies, so to speak, of particular trees; this book gives us an aeroplane-view of the entire wood. It is an affair of broad strokes and a big canvas. But, perhaps, only painters who had mastered and assimilated the multitudinous details of their subject could have done the job so successfully. (One may say this much while disagreeing with certain of the authors' generalisations, and regretting that this or that factor was not handled in some different way.)

Not only does this book relate the purely industrial developments of Britain to its original social background, but it places both in a European setting, and thus becomes a chapter of world history—not a footnote, or an appendix, to a chapter. It also relates events to ideas. And in that sense it is certainly more Marxian in spirit than many works which quote the master on every other page. Let me quote as a sample of the range of the book this passage from the chapter headed "A World in Disorder," in which the violence and confusion which followed the discovery of America are studied for purposes of comparison with the anarchy of the Industrial Revolution. Writing of the changed mental outlook which resulted from the voyages of the sixteenth century, the Hammonds say :—

> To the world that was ringing with the reckless violence of this new strife, a grim and significant ghost returned from the shadows.

As men talked of its great exploits, their minds went back, not to some generous cavalier who had rescue rather than bloodshed in his heart, or to some conqueror whose fame rested on achievements nobler than conquest. John Stow,* wishing to praise the bravest and the most attractive of all the knights of this age of high mettle, said of Drake that he "was as famous in Europe and America as Tamburlaine in Asia and Africa." When Marlowe set upon the stage, in his swift and ruthless drama, the passions that had slipped from men's guarding reason, he choose for his hero this same nomad "scourge and terror of mankind," who welcomed new discoveries because he longed to set his savage heel upon the wide face of the world.

That, incidentally, is a piece of real "social criticism" applied to literature; and it is because it is possible, usefully, to do more of such criticism that I wish (as I have remarked here before) that we could devote some time to literature in our N.C.L.C. studies.

By way of contrast, let me quote another passage—the opening paragraph of the section of the book dealing with the actual events, technical developments, etc., of the Industrial Revolution:—

A Lancashire town to-day receives its raw material from Egypt or the United States; it sells its products as far away as India or China; it lives largely on meat from the Argentine and corn from Canada or Australia; in the windows of its shops there are boots that have been made in America and clothes that contain the products of several countries; the windows of many of its houses may have come from Norway and the rails on which its trains are running from Belgium. Almost everything its inhabitants use has been made by machinery: almost every transaction in which they engage is part of a world-wide system of exchange.

The "[illegible]nic interdependence" of

The Summary of English

the modern world is there indicated as vividly and as concisely as it well could be. And another important fact—a historical one—is brought out very clearly in this book (as it is in The PLEBS Textbook of *European History*): the fact that you cannot understand the social changes wrought by the Industrial Revolution unless you have looked further back and noted earlier developments. As the Hammonds put it—"the Industrial Revolution gave a look of catastrophe to the final stages of a process that had been in train for centuries."

I have already remarked that this book is, in certain respects at least, thoroughly Marxian in spirit. It is a little surprising, in view of the nature of its subject, that it contains no single quotation from, or reference to, Marx himself. In one place "an Italian historian" is credited with the saying that "all through history you can watch the struggle between those who produce wealth and those who seize it from them." As the Italian gentleman, whoever he was, was obviously only expressing in picturesque terms the idea of the class-struggle, it would surely have been better to have quoted from the man who first formulated that idea, and who expressed it rather more precisely. But I hasten to repeat—quotations from Marx don't make a book Marxian; and this book has other claims on our respect.

It is good to note, by the way, that among the authorities cited is our old comrade, Ness Edwards, whose *Industrial Revolution in S. Wales* is several times quoted from.

J. F. H.

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