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THE PLEB POINT OF VIEW

THE agenda of the Labour Party Conference at Margate contained a resolution from the Stoke Newington Trades Council and Labour Party pledging the Conference to "support in every possible way" the N.C.L.C. This was opposed by the Executive—whose spokesman was Mr. Morgan Jones—on the grounds (1) that so long as there were more than one working-class educational organisation with "similar aims" in existence, the Party could not give special preference to any particular one; (2) that, as against the principle of independence advocated by the N.C.L.C., the Executive felt it wiser to make use of the "facilities" afforded by Local Education Authorities. (On this latter point, Mr. Jones, and the Executive, should note the facts narrated in the short article by Jim Griffiths on a later page.)

The Labour Party Conference

Mr. Morgan Jones, of all people, knows better than to believe in the soundness of either of these arguments. We must assume that on this occasion he was merely acting as spokesman for a majority of his Executive colleagues. There is no other educational organisation in existence with "similar aims" to the N.C.L.C.—as, indeed, is tacitly admitted by the L.P. Executive in their objection No. 2; for it is precisely on the difference between working independently of capitalist educational machinery and being dependent upon it that the N.C.L.C. takes the stand which distinguishes it from other organisations. The two objections, in fact, are contradictory.

However, as the resolution was not voted upon, the previous question being moved and carried, this matter of independence in working-class education will doubtless come up again next year.

* * * *

The believers in education for education's sake—though they usually deny strenuously that they are anything of the sort—generally give themselves away when they set out to discuss education for the workers. In the *New Leader* a month ago, Mr. C. E. M. Joad, writing about the Easton Lodge scheme, argued that a system of scholarships from the evening classes to a residential College would give the classes "a definite objective for which to work." "It has always," he proceeded, "been something of a drawback to these classes, whether Plebs or W.E.A., that the class *leads to nothing* [our italics]. The student receives information, imbibes culture or class-consciousness, as the case may be, is stocked with intellectual

A Definite Objective

ammunition, for political purposes, during a certain number of years and then nothing happens. It is like fattening up geese for a Christmas dinner which is never eaten." The educational machine—or ladder—you see, is an end in itself. If a course in an evening class leads to a scholarship at a Labour University all is well—and the goose is eaten. Otherwise

It has not apparently struck Mr. Joad that the "definite objective" of N.C.L.C. classes is not to start people on an endless process of "getting educated"—climbing up a ladder with no top to it—but to fit them to play a part in the day-to-day struggle of their class. So far as a residential college assists in and carries on this work it is a desirable extension of the work of the classes. But in any case not more than one in a thousand of the Trade Unionists attending classes could get scholarships to a Labour University. To suggest that because of this the classes have no "definite objective" is absolutely to miss the point of real working-class education.

* * * *

The "Strike Stories" which we have been publishing in *The PLEBS* have gathered a great deal of valuable information about local happenings and conditions during the Great Strike of May last. We recently sent out to comrades in *Co-operative Research* all parts of the county a questionnaire which has brought in still more useful material. Both sources will be of real importance as the basis for the history of the Strike which we have in hand. This is the kind of co-operative study and research which the Plebs movement ought to develop further. All sorts of good historical material lie waiting to be harvested. Here is work for our Plebs Groups in every locality. On another page of this issue we print an informative article on "Research Work and How to Set About It," which we hope will stimulate students to get busy.

* * * *

Congratulations—a little belated, perhaps, but none the less sincere—to William Mellor, on his appointment to the editorship of the *Daily Herald*. Already, as one expected, *The "Herald's" New Editor* he has "made a difference." The *Herald's* leading articles now read as though they belonged to a Labour paper, and the book reviews are beginning to be interesting from a worker's point of view. Mellor has in his time struck more than one blow for I.W.C.E., and he knows, and appreciates, what *The PLEBS* stands for. I.W.C.E.s everywhere will work with a better will to increase the *D.H.'s* circulation because of that fact.

“RESEARCH” WORK:

What it is, and how to Set about it

We have many times urged Plebs—or groups of Plebs—to set themselves to do some research work into local history, industrial development, etc. We believe that a tremendous amount of useful work in this direction lies waiting to be tackled. But many comrades are rather terrified at the sound of the word “research.” They imagine that only those with some sort of special training can undertake research work. We believe, on the other hand, that scores of N.C.L.C. students only need a little initial encouragement to be well able to do it. With this object we have asked three or four PLEBS writers to contribute articles describing their own methods, and giving such hints as they can. Here is the first, by R. W. Postgate.

I.

STUDY is of two kinds: *firstly*, it may be merely study of a certain book, or of a certain subject as presented by a certain lecturer; as, for example, Webb’s *History of Trades Unionism* or Mark Starr’s lectures upon “Surplus Value in Polynesia.” *Secondly*, it may be general study of a subject not contained in a single volume, or series of volumes, and this study may be protracted and detailed, and involve what is called original work. In this case, we commonly call it *research* work. But it is important to remember that research work is no more than an extension and enlargement of the ordinary study as carried on by an ordinary student. Any successful N.C.L.C. student can carry out a piece of research work if he chooses. Any successful student who has studied his subject at all deeply in fact *has* carried out research work, all but the final step of putting his results on paper.

Now I have been asked to describe briefly and concretely the methods of historical research. Everybody has his own pet devices, but the general method does not vary. If you want it in a nutshell, it is (1) accumulation of facts; (2) reflections on these facts, selection of them and formation of hypotheses; (3) testing the facts and the hypotheses; (4) exposition.

Not much wiser? Well, take a concrete instance. We are, say, students living in Monmouth. We first pick the subject. As we are near Newport, we decide to make a study of the Chartist Insurrection of 1839. It is to be presumed that we are not totally ignorant of English history. Let us say we have read the PLEBS *Outlines*. First of all we proceed to prepare our minds. We read Beer’s *History of Socialism* and other books mentioned in the PLEBS *What*

to Read. At this point we are not taking notes, and are doing no more than renewing an acquaintance with the period.

Having read, say, Beer, the new *PLEBS Outline*, and Webb's *Trade Unionism* (very little to help there) we decide to get to work. The first job is the accumulation of facts.

There are two kinds of historical sources, *secondary* and *primary*. Primary are original documents—letters, memoirs, contemporary journals, etc. Secondary are later histories written by people not actors in the case. It is best to start with the secondary materials, so that, when you come to write, what is most recently in your mind is not someone else's interpretation. We start, therefore, by taking full notes of Beer's book, Postgate's *Revolution*, Ch. III. (sorry!), and a history of Chartism discovered in our local reference library—Mark Hovell's. At this point we note down everything likely to become significant, with its page reference—even if we know it already. As, for example (this is imaginary):—

BEER I. 253. Frost, John, intervened to save Duke of Beaufort from Whig Mob, 8/1/32, Newport.

255. Zephaniah Williams, a clockmaker.—N.B. No colliers among leaders.

256. Lord Tredegar as chief colliery owner in Risca area.

It is quite likely that we shall have to go back over these again, as we are not wholly sure yet as to what facts are going to be significant. But we hope for the best. We take these notes absolutely straightforwardly, not attempting to classify them in accordance with any theory. We have no theories yet.

This accumulation of facts goes on for as long as possible. "Accumulation of data should only be interrupted by death" is the remark ascribed to a Victorian scientist. We fall short of this ideal, but upon the wideness of our observation depends the value of our history. Therefore, when we have exhausted the books that obviously demand reading, and almost start out of the library shelves into our hands, we ask the librarian if he can get us certain others (from a central depot) mentioned in the bibliographies of the books we have read. If we can interest him, we are more likely to get them. While awaiting their arrival, we read the relevant chapters of the economic or social histories of England in the library—making notes without ceasing—because we find that the history cannot be written without an economic introduction. We also scan fairly quickly the memoirs of persons living at this date, in the hope of picking up some trifles. A glance at the Index for "Frost," "Chartist," "O'Connor," or "Newport" is often enough here.

We proceed to read the local histories of Monmouth and of Newport; some useful and dramatic matter here. We begin to take fuller notes, in some cases copying out whole passages likely to be useful for quotation, marking them in our notebook by some easily distinguished sign—say a big Q.

But the richest seam is the file of the local paper, the *Merlin*, which in due course provides the thickest pile of notes. We read all, including even the advertisements, of the 1839 file; earlier years we turn over fairly carefully from about 1830. We enter the West-gate Hotel, partake of refreshment, and see the marks of the Chartist bullets. We collect unreliable local gossip. The report of Frost's trial, together with some likely pamphlets, we find in the National Library of Wales, of which the librarian lends us a catalogue—or consults the catalogue for us. The fare to inspect this is, apart from a half of bitter, the only expenditure involved up to date.

But while this has been going on we have passed from stage 1 (accumulation of data) to 2 (reflection and selection). We read over our notes and try to form a general idea of the period. Conscious choice and experience act here. Suppose we say the period falls into these main divisions:—

- (A) Outline of economic background. (B) History leading up to the insurrection, viz.: Reform movement, organisation of Chartism nationally. (C) Organisation of Chartism in South Wales; preparations of insurrection. (D) The insurrection. (E) The trials and repression.

Seizing a large blue pencil we return to our notes and classify each entry, A, B, D, etc.

Then we may take one of two courses. We may adjourn any writing at all until we have everything clear in our heads. Actually we are more likely to write out right away certain sections which seem straightforward, and adjourn consideration of the more difficult parts. But as this is a small study, we will, for the sake of clearness, assume that we write nothing whatever until we have all the preliminary work completed.

We are now well into stage 2 of our work—the creative stage. The Formation of Hypotheses sounds very terrifying; it is really only asking yourself, "How are these events explained? What theory of their sequence is most probable?" It is as well to challenge yourself with every possible hypothesis, and then proceed to test it (stage 3) by the facts. As, for example:—

- Hypothesis 1.* That the Insurrection was organised by police spies.
Hypothesis 2. That the Chartists were betrayed by their leaders.
Hypothesis 3. That the rank and file carried their leaders away.
Hypothesis 4. That there was no insurrection.

And so forth. You may say the last hypothesis is silly. Far from it. You find that at the trial the defence made a continued attempt to suggest there was no insurrection, nothing but a noisy public meeting transformed into a riot by police provocation. In all such cases we have to remember that false stories—cunningly fabricated false stories—have often been put about for propaganda. Also pure "legpulls" are possible. (For example, I had once fully written out (but I suppressed) an account of a non-existent French revolutionary, M. Lerepaire Desmoustiques, Deputy for the Bouches-du-Rhône.

Sooner or later somebody would have suspected this "Mr. The-Haunt-of-Mosquitoes" from a blazing district occupied chiefly by stagnant pools. But I believe I should have got away with it for a long time.)

Well, you form these hypotheses on every question that arises. You check them by the facts, and find which suit the facts best. But here you are often abruptly checked by a difficulty which does not worry investigators in the exact sciences. If a scientist wishes to be sure what is the distance from the earth to the sun, or how many beans make five, he can repeat the experiments by which these truths were first discovered. But we cannot repeat the Newport insurrection. As, for example, the question arises: "Was there or was there not a secret, all-England, revolutionary organisation for which the Newport revolt was to act as a signal?" We arrange the evidence, say, something as follows:—

Lovett says "Yes." But he wishes to discredit O'Conner, his enemy, and he is only repeating gossip. Still, he was a man of good character and not a liar.

Sir John Campbell says "Yes." But he was Attorney-General and his job was to get a conviction.

Sir Frederick Pollock says "No" and knocks Campbell's tale into a cocked hat on technical grounds. But Campbell's tale is only one of several, and Pollock was defending counsel.

O'Conner says "No." But he was a liar and he was probably shielding himself.

A pamphlet, *The Newport Riots*, says "Yes" and gives full and plausible details. But it is anonymous.

When you have collected all the evidence, you have to act as judge and jury—without the possibility of cross-examination. You are not likely to arrive at more than a probability, and you may at this point most easily "show bias."

We take our decision; and now at last we raise our pen or address our docile class. Stage 4—Exposition—commences.

On this there is not much to be said. We must be able to write grammatical and clear English. This, like roller-skating, is an art within the reach of anybody. But remember, we shall not interest our readers unless we are interested ourselves. If we grind on mechanically like a sausage machine we shall only produce sausages. We shall not make our readers see Frost and his army marching on the Westgate Hotel unless we in our mind see him—see him as clearly as if we had looked at him in the flesh marching at the head, in black coat and high collar, with a blazing red tie incongruously thrusting out, and watched his hands nervously twisting and plucking at his coat. We can *talk* of oppression as much as we like, but unless we have visualised the tommyshops and the mining village, neither will our readers see them.

R. W. POSTGATE.

“HOMELESS ARTISTS”

Writers and Social Change

*This article by Karl Radek, written on the deaths of two Russian writers, appeared in “Pravda” two or three months ago. It raises so many interesting points about the relation of the artist to society, especially during a period of social change, that we have reprinted it here.**

THIS year has snatched from the ranks of Russian literature two artists who voluntarily turned their backs upon life and betook themselves to the dim part of the world whence no one returns—Yessenin and Sobol. To be sure, two different entities as writers and as human beings. And the death of each was undoubtedly actuated by personal and individualistic motives. But in the tragedy of these two artists there is also a great deal in common, and it is upon these common elements that we Soviet artists must pause and reflect.

Yessenin died because he had nothing to live for. He abandoned the village, lost all contact with it, but he struck no roots in the city. One can't strike roots in asphalt, and Yessenin knew nothing in the city except asphalt and the tavern. He sang just as a bird sings. He had no contact with society, and he did not sing for society. He sang because he wanted to delight himself and catch females. But when he finally tired of this stimulation, he stopped singing.

Sobol, however, had been socially active in the past. But during the war he lost the stem of life and became a social patriot. Subsequently he made attempts to find a new axis of life, but obviously without success. He therefore thought it useless to saunter about, merely observing and contemplating life.

Many writers are in the position either of Yessenin or Sobol. Not everyone, however, will resort to suicide. But that does not necessarily signify living. For to live means to create, and you cannot create to-day without knowing the aim and purpose of creative living.

In the old days there were writers who were onlookers. Even great writers like Checkov. They observed life closely and watched it in all its trifling manifestations. If they succeeded in putting down these trifles interestingly, that is, in a manner in which, their readers thought, they were rendered meaningful and they and their readers were satisfied. Later other writers came to the surface, who, on the basis of the work of their predecessors, wrote whole tracts concerning the meaning of life—its meaninglessness. Read Checkov's letters

* From the American *Workers' Monthly*, translated by Bessie Weissmann.

to his wife. These epistles are most depressing. Two intimate people find nothing to say to each other after a long span of years save the most trivial things. These letters are excellent commentaries, not only on the life and creative art of Chekov, but on the whole epoch in which it was possible to be a spectator, but even then only of trifles.

But it was impossible to be a spectator during the world war, when millions of people were being killed. It was impossible to be a spectator during the civil war of the Russian Revolution, when the old world was swept to its ruin. You cannot be an onlooker in the U.S.S.R. to-day, when a new world is being born. *For or against* that's the password.

A part of the writers remained with the old world, to die with it. But you cannot be a singer of putrescence. The whole Russian emigrè literature has not created a single work of art that is of any significance. Some writers lapsed into complete silence and became transmuted, as Akhmatova says in her tragic poem "Lot's Wife." They know that this world must be destroyed, but they are so bound up with it that they cannot take their eyes away from its destruction. And they stand, transmuted into salt pillars.

Others, who were younger, tried to "recognise" the new life. This was during the years of great suffering and heroic struggle. They felt that a historical storm was sweeping over Russia. They were not frightened by the thunders and lightnings. And, breathing in the pungent air which swished in their faces and tore their hair, they cried: *Long live the storm!* Thus were born the non-communist Soviet writers. They were born as singers of the grandeur and beauty of destruction. The best works of this literature will help future generations to understand the years of the civil war and intervention.

But these years belong to the past. Life to-day no longer proceeds under the boom of artillery and lightning of cavalry swords. It proceeds in the thick coal dust in the shafts of the mines, drenched in the sweat of workers at the blast-furnaces. Life goes on at the peasant's plow and behind the counter of the co-operative store. New relations are being created between people and new dangers are emerging for the Revolution. All this demands literary expression. The function of literature is to give a mirror of life in order that people may be better able to understand its meaning in artistic expression. This is the demand that life makes upon literature. Life forbids the artist to live upon the past exclusively. It has excellent means of compelling the artist to yield to its will. If the artist will not fulfil the demands of life, he will not be read by those who are most valuable to him. . . .

Why, then, does he not depict the new life, the life which is being

formed on the basis of new relations created by the Revolution? This may be explained also by external reasons. Our artists are bad workers. They do not love work. They have been trained in the habits of bohemia, strengthened by the disintegration of life during the period of the civil war. They do not like to live under uncomfortable conditions in the village. They do not want to ride in third-class cars when they can ride in a soft berth. They do not want to go down the mines and live among workers or become acquainted with the suburban flour dealer. They do not know the worker and the peasant of to-day. . . .

But insufficient contact with life is not yet the sole reason why the artists who are "committed to the Soviet platform" do not produce a representation of reality. Literature is a mirror, but not a mirror mechanically reflecting the world. The artist who *refracts* pictures of life through his brain must connect them and invest them with meaning. But the trouble with the so-called Soviet artist, the artist who is con-communist but who has "accepted the Revolution," is that he does not understand what he has accepted. He is not communist, although he sympathises with the Revolution, precisely because he has no firm comprehension of what goes on around him. He does not know whither the world is moving. For him modern life is one great chaos. . . .

Artists, in most cases, are people of emotion rather than intellect. When the Soviet proletariat begins to build skyscrapers, metropolises; when our network of electrical stations illuminates the entire Union; when new cities grow up, then every artist will understand that something great has occurred. But now when the beginnings of the new are wrestling with the vestiges of the old, when the final victory of the new is not yet seen, the so-called Soviet artist asks himself: How am I to know that the new which is being born will be victorious? After all, there is also some re-establishment of the old. And he watches. Now and then he tries to give a picture of a new and encouraging phenomenon. The results, however, are dry and fugitive, for he does not see the whole, and he purposely obscures the dark and rugged aspects. Now and then he tries to give a picture of ideological disintegration, the growth of philistinism, restoration of the predatory elements, and then he gets frightened. He is frightened not only of the censorship, but of himself, for he feels that somewhere he has lost the revolution which, after all, he does "recognise." . . .

In a period of the most subversive social change, the writer cannot be spectator. While fishing, one can sit on the bank of a languidly flowing stream and observe. But just try to come out on the battlefield with an umbrella in your hand, when artillery pounds on both sides, when shells fly in all directions, and then try to observe.

There is no room for the spectator in that milieu. You must sit in the trenches with a rifle in your hands and be ready to be killed or to start an attack. During a great historical change there is no room for the spectator. The only alternative left is to hide like a bed bug behind the wall paper. The storm, however, will kick him up helter-skelter. Tossed out into the air by the storm, he will break his skull against the stones. Left behind the wall paper, he will die of boredom or lack of spiritual food.

KARL RADEK.

CAPITALISM AND SOCIAL WELL-BEING

Some Facts from Ulster

IN our studies of modern capitalism the accumulation of capital and its social consequences occupy an important place. We contend that technical development increases the amount of capital necessary to set the wheels of exploitation in motion.

The big machine requires a big factory or shipyard, a big capitalist or trust as owner, and an ever-growing army of labourers in attendance. Thus the workers are crowded together in "rows" of houses in the shade of tall chimneys or shipyard girders. The industrial town or city, with its industrial reserve army, nomad population, diseases and prostitution, is the inevitable accompaniment of the accumulation of capital.

On the other hand, the capitalist is able, not only to absent himself from the workshop, but to leave the area of wealth production and retire to some healthier spot in the country or on the sea coast.

This social phenomenon is always interesting when given a little "local colour." We are, therefore, pleased to note that the Government of Northern Ireland has been taking stock, has in fact taken a Census which enables us to realise how capitalism in Ulster has progressed during the fifteen years from 1911 to 1926—to the advantage of the capitalists.

The Census Report is an interesting comparison of pre-war and post-war conditions. During this eventful period the population of Northern Ireland has increased only 0.5 per cent. The total population is given as 1,256,322 persons; 608,205 males and 648,117 females. Out of this total, 415,000 are crowded into Belfast, around the "biggest linen mill," "the greatest shipyards," tobacco factory, rope works, and distilleries, etc., in the world, all

producing commodities which were in great demand during the war.

During the fifteen years it appears that the poor have been moving into Belfast and the rich have been moving out. The towns showing the greatest increase in population are the seaside residential towns, while the villages are being deserted. Bangor, the Brighton of Belfast, noted for its golf and "selectness," a place of villas built according to the tastes of their owners, with no "rows" of houses nor compound chimneys, proudly tops the Census list with an increase of population to the extent of 65.40 per cent. in fifteen



Map showing the frontiers and principal towns of Northern Ireland.

years. The first six in the list of towns showing an increased population from 1911 to 1926 are—

Bangor	...	65.40	Newcastle	...	20.78
Port Rush	...	21.28	Holywood	...	19.63
Larne	...	20.78	Warrenpoint	...	15.27

all residential and "health resorts."

But they are not by any means overcrowded in these places despite such phenomenal increases. In Bangor there are 1.54 rooms per person; in Port Rush 1.86, Larne 1.11, Newcastle 1.28,

Holywood 1.10, and Warrenpoint 1.46, which compares very favourably with .80 and .83 in the working-class Court and Dock Wards of Belfast.

On the other hand, the poor villagers have been compelled to emigrate or try their luck in the town or city.

The urban population has increased from 42.9 to 50.7 per cent. of the total population during the past twenty-five years, showing a 4 per cent. increase during the last fifteen years. The population of county boroughs and urban districts has increased to the extent of 50,811 in fifteen years, the rural districts record a decrease of 45,020 in the same period, the latter being due "more to emigration than to movement within the country."

The greatest density of population is found in the poorest districts. "In the case of Belfast there has been *more than a six-fold increase in the number of tenements of one room since 1911*, whilst in Londonderry the number has nearly doubled." In Belfast over 7,000 people are living in single-roomed tenements, and approximately 3,000 in Londonderry.

Little wonder persons have to overstate their ages, in the absence of birth-certificates, in order to qualify for the old age pension at 70 years of age, or that the deaths from tuberculosis per hundred of deaths from all causes should have been 10.1 in Northern Ireland as compared with 8.7 in England and Wales in 1924.

And surely Ulster is the most- if not the best-governed State in Europe. Its population of $1\frac{1}{4}$ millions has a House of Commons with 52 members, an Upper House with 26 members, 13 representatives in the "Imperial House," and in addition to City Councils and Town Councils, etc., a Cabinet costing £12,000 per annum, Ministries of Finance, Labour, Education, Home Affairs, Commerce and Agriculture, a Serjeant-at-Arms, Black Rod and a Governor all complete, plus an armed police force which costs 18/- per head of the population as compared with 8/- in Scotland. And in spite of all this—or because of it—the rich are becoming richer and the poor poorer.

A. ELLIS

(Org. No. 11 Div. N.C.L.C.)

IF every reader of The PLEBS sent us a bob we should be out of debt.

Anything doing?

HISTORY AND THE WORKERS

VI.—APPLIED MARXISM

THE class struggle is expressed not only in actual strikes, lock-outs, wage disputes and political elections. Mixed up inseparably with these are notions of right and wrong, codes of morality and of written law. The capitalist class—like other ruling classes—spreads the illusion that its own laws and morality are eternal and unchanging. To the extent that it succeeds in making the rules of its own game seem permanent and sacrosanct, a ruling class safeguards itself. It always endeavours to identify its sectional class interests with those of the community.

The recognition of the changing nature of morality and laws is one of the gifts of history study. To the Marxist there are no innate ideas of right and wrong. The general idea of Right is derived from concrete example of rights. Vice and virtue play "puss in the corner" in various periods. The Eskimo woman boasts of her illegitimate child, but thinks war a crime.

Does this produce amorality and an abandonment of all duties to our fellows? Not in the least. A working-class morality is consciously adopted with class welfare as its criterion and a self-imposed discipline enforced for the good of the group.*

In laws changes are easier to trace. Instead of legislators engraving tablets of stone, they write in sand. For example, the growth in collective ownership of property and the changing economic position of women have changed the laws relating thereto. When human life becomes more important than property, ideas and laws about crime will be still further radically altered.

Religions, too, reflect and express economic needs. The feudal hierarchy had its echo in the hierarchy of the saints. Competitive individualism made for the importance of the individual's salvation by works. Religion was once a stopgap for lack of knowledge concerning natural and mental happenings. The encroachment of science has been gradual and sure. The dim religious candle is not needed in the glare of the sunlight of science. When the workings of the mind itself stand out clear there is no room for the supernatural. Irreligion is a by-product of capitalism, which system of

* The mess a Non-Marxist gets into in discussing this subject is well seen in C. E. M. Joad's *The Future of Morals*. After some very clever prickings of bourgeois morality bubbles—and even after emphasising the change in modern morality due to the *technical* advance in birth control methods and the change in the *economic* position of women—the author finally pleads for a new religion!

necessity developed natural and mechanical science; the workers inherit that by-product and develop it still farther by taking their part in the everyday struggle for betterment and by an understanding of the social sciences.

Art, too, is not "above the battle." When it expresses emotion, in line, colour or tone, these latter are influenced by the conditions of social existence. In music the establishment of a relation to social conditions is most difficult because emotions of joy, grief, militancy and such like expressed in sound are older than man himself. Yet the production of those sounds is dependent upon the stage of efficiency attained in the technical manufacture of musical instruments. Just as literature in its spread owes much to Caxton and his printing press, so in furniture and architecture fashions and styles are started by the technical means at hand and influenced by the general position of society. For example, the following from *Time, Taste and Furniture*, by J. Gloag, explains a recent period in furnishing thus:—

"The Victorian era plunged into an orgy of over-furnishing in ugly and elaborate styles—an orgy from which we are now only recovering. This tendency was the result of:—

1. The divorce of the architect from the designer of furniture and interior decoration, who during the Jacobean and Georgian periods had worked in concert when they were not one and the same man.

2. The introduction of machinery, with its consequences—'enormous increase in the production of wealth, a certain inability on the part of fortune-favoured merchants and manufacturers to educate themselves beyond mere gaudiness and profusion, and the fact that mechanical production was allowed to develop simply under the direction of stupid, rather greedy individuals whose sole concerns were cheapness and quantity,' and, one might usefully add, profit."

In architecture the slanting roof and pointed spire of the Northern architecture, in contrast to the flat roof of Southern lands, reflect a difference of climate. Where snow is probable a flat roof is out of the question. The sculpture of Greece is further intimately linked up with the presence of a stone than can be easily worked. These are examples of pre-economic influences. The change brought by the machine in architecture can be seen at a glance by viewing, from Westminster Bridge, the House of Commons on one side and the County Hall on the other. In the one there is the detailed ornamentation of the hand worker and in the other the plain pillars and facings of machine-worked stone. The use of steel and concrete forms the basis of the sky-scraper architecture of modern cities.

In painting, the appeal of beauty in line and colour may be universal, but the form of expression can be with interesting results related to economic influences. The square miles of saints, angels and cherubs which perplex the visitor to many galleries of medieval

art indicate the patronage of the Church. Beauty in Nature is so general as to be unnoticed. Landscape painting arises when railway cuttings and factory towns threaten parts of the countryside.

Literature must have a definite content and so is easier to relate to social changes. A very fruitful comparison has been made between the differences between Scott and Dickens as expressing approximately the survivals of feudalism and the beginnings of capitalism. Shakespeare and Cervantes ridicule the out-of-date feudal gallant in Falstaff and Don Quixote. Many of the plays on the theatres at the present time express distinctly the decadence of "Our Betters." Old standards of conduct are made the butt of devastating mockery. The new spirit and ideas to be found in the plays of Toller and O'Neil and in workers' dramatic circles and in such stories as *Flying Ossi* indicate significant changes.

A word of warning is necessary. The Marxist is not simply one who brushes the dust off the butterfly's wings to discuss its composition under a microscope. There is a joy and pleasure in art by itself. This is, however, strengthened by an intelligent understanding of the relation between that feeling of emotion and the conditions from which it came.

In politics the economic foundation of the super-structure is more easily to be seen. But this is no automatic affair. In the old civilisations of Babylonia, Egypt and China, on the same approximate basis of the plough and hand-cultivation of the land, a warrior, priest and literateur caste respectively held political control. The explanation apparently is in the differing natural environments strengthened by tradition and the momentum that any form of society develops.

The struggle between classes for control over the State machine alone gives the key to political changes. Without it, history is a medley of personalities and coincidences. The tragic results of Labour leaders who do not use this elemental guide is fresh in our minds.

Even those who oppose Marxism in theory, act according to it in practice. What, for example, is the special Labour Party campaign in "backward areas"? Why has the Trades Union Congress given special assistance to the union organising the farm workers? The conditions under which the workers obtain a living in the country prevent them from recognising the class struggle so clearly. Capital has not become impersonal and the worker still has a personal relation with his small farmer master. It is much more difficult to organise the individual labourer at the plough tail than the team workers of the modern factory, railway and mine.

In whatever field and in whatever way Marxism is applied, it is a mighty aid against the hypnotism of the ruling capitalist class. By

it the working class obtains a knowledge of itself and the work it has to do. The fulfilment of Marxism in history is the Social Revolution.

In recent years the Bolshevik application of Marxism in Russia has led both the Marxist Kautsky and the non-Marxist Webb to insist on "the inevitability of gradualness." Social democracy in Germany, corrupted by its electoral successors, had comfortably resigned itself in pre-war days to a slow change—the ripe apple would some day fall into its lap. What is often called Leninism has to its credit a breaking with that fatalism and an underlining of the part to be played by the workers' seizure of power and the special methods found necessary to secure and maintain workers' rule. Mistakes may have been made in estimating the *tempo* of the Revolution, but these are no faults of Marxism; they show that Marxists have allowed their own wishes to influence their judgment in measuring the respective strengths of Capital and Labour. Our aim must be to know more fully the facts of capitalist development, and to work more actively to prepare our fellows for the great application of Marxism in which they will make the history of their own liberation.

MARK STARR.

“EDUCATION IN SOVIET RUSSIA”

Comrade Eric Verney, at present resident in Russia, sends us the following appreciation and criticism of Scott Nearing's book, published by us earlier this year.

SCOTT NEARING'S book on Soviet education is the best work on the subject that has yet appeared in English. It deserves a fuller review than that by "N.U.T." in the April PLEBS. I should like, therefore, to add to "N.U.T.'s" praise what is surely the essential element of any review, *i.e.*, a resumé of the substance of the book.

The main factors of Soviet education as illustrated in Nearing's book may be summed up as follows:—

(1) The basic principle of Soviet education is to combine school studies with actual life in town or village, so as to give the children the knowledge and "labour habits" necessary for public life. The curriculum is therefore based on human labour and its organisation: (a) nature and man; (b) work; (c) society. This basis is applied first to the family and immediate environment, then to the local town

or country life, then to the Republic as a whole, and finally to the world as a unit. In technical institutions there is a corresponding combination of education with production.

(2) Collective or "group" methods of study according to a "complex" system (as distinct from the old classes, individual approach, etc.).

(3) Self-government of the children; no corporal punishment, discipline administered by children themselves, autonomous pupils' organisations, participation of students in school administration and organisation of curriculum.

(4) The aim of Soviet education is to produce class-conscious practical workers for the building up of Communist society.

The book is so good in general that no harm will be done by mentioning one or two of its defects. Of course, a "brief two-month's survey" (as the author himself puts it in his foreword) is liable to be subjective and only touch the surface; but the author might have been a little more analytical in his presentation of Soviet educational problems.

He does not sufficiently emphasise the fact that the Soviet educational system is based on the principles of historic materialism and on the proletarian dictatorship as a transition to Communist society. It is true that at the end of the book there is a schematic generalisation of these principles, which a Marxist reader would recognise as the M.C.H. But why not call a spade a spade? Curiously enough, Nearing himself admits that "It is impossible . . . to understand what is going on in the educational institutions of the Soviet Union without some general concept of Soviet social philosophy." Yet he shoves an all-too-brief sketch of this philosophy at the tail-end of the book, instead of in the first chapter. The author says he wanted to describe "education and not Bolshevism." But as he is describing *Bolshevik* education this is rather like making ham and eggs without the ham.

Some important features of Soviet education are not given sufficient prominence in the book. For instance, there are only casual references to political education in schools and practically no mention of Party schools. Co-education, a governing principle in Soviet schools, is alluded to only incidentally. As to the abolition of religious teaching, there is only the bare statement that this was eliminated by the proclamation separating church and school.

In the section on Higher Educational Institutions, more space might have been devoted to the Communist Universities (Sverdlov University, Moscow, Zinoviev University, Leningrad, etc.), which give Marxist political and economic training to future Soviet leaders. There is no mention of the interesting curricula of these Universities. I will therefore cite a typical example :

First Year.

1. History of the R.C.P.
2. Economic Geography.
3. History of Social forms.
4. Biology and Mathematics (with Physical Geography and Drawing).
5. Russian language.
6. Native language.

Second Year.

1. Political Economy.
2. History of Russia.
3. History of the West.
4. R.C.P. and Communist International (development of programme, tactics and organisational structure).
5. Biology and Mathematics.
6. A Foreign language.

Third Year.

1. R.C.P. and Comintern (present-day problems and work).
2. Economic Policy of the U.S.S.R.
3. Soviet State and Law.
4. Supplementary themes along two lines of work (town or village).
5. Historic Materialism.
6. Scientific Labour Administration.

One or two minor inaccuracies might be eliminated on revising the book for future editions. It is not correct, for example, that students only take a "minor part" in the school management and administration, or that this is "probably more or less formal." On page 134 the author quotes Lunacharsky as saying: "A political revolution has no value, and from it there does not arise human well-being." Surely this is a mis-translation. Instead of "has no value, and from it . . ." etc., Lunacharsky probably said "has no value *if* from it . . ." etc.

I think that in comparing workers' children in Russia with the children of "profiteers" (p. 130), this term should be changed into 'business-men' in an English edition, as "profiteers," according to the English meaning of the word, do not exist in Soviet Russia.

It is stated on page 83 that the Pavlov Institute in Leningrad carries on psychological research. It is more correct to say that the Institute experiments in "physiological psychology" ("reflexology"), as readers might get the idea that the Institute investigates abstract psychology.

Finally, the number of Pioneers (Communist Children's Organisation) in the Soviet Union is given as 300,000 (p. 139). At the time the book was written there were already nearly two million Pioneers.

In making these criticisms of the book I have no intention of minimising its value. On the contrary, I repeat—it is the best thing so far written on Soviet education, and should have a wide circulation and see several editions.

ERIC VERNEY.

NOTES BY THE WAY

for Students and Tutors

The Decline of British Capitalism.

A HIGHLY interesting and ably handled survey of the position of British capitalism in the light of the facts and figures given in the recent Reports of the Balfour Committee is to be found in No. 23 of *The Communist International* by the pen of E. Varga. He quotes all the relevant figures very thoroughly; and as a mere compilation of these alone the article is valuable. The effects of the return to the Gold Standard is analysed very carefully from a Marxian point of view. The author's conclusions are worth quoting:—"Out of a production which is from 86 to 95 per cent. of the pre-war level, with a population which is 5 per cent. greater and with a reduction in the income from imperialist piracy, it is impossible to give each person the same real income without a reduction in existing wealth—without a disaccumulation. . . . With a decrease of internal production there has been an increase in consumption (shown in increased *per capita* consumption of food, drink and consumption up to 1924). This difference can be covered only at the expense of accumulation, especially at the expense of new investments of capital abroad." The return to the gold standard has increased the income going to *rentier*-capital, and this raises costs, and hampers sales in foreign markets, and is at the expense of profits of industrial capital. Hence, industrial capital can no longer bribe a Labour aristocracy with high wages, but has to reduce real wages below the 1914 level.

An article on the German economic situation, on Chili, and a most admirable study by Ercoli of the deceased veteran Italian Socialist, Serrati, should also be noted.

Imperialism.

Classes on Imperialism seem to be continuously popular; and there is certainly no lack of topical material. Intending tutors could hardly do better in this respect than take cuttings of the Foreign Notes which appear in the *Herald*, and which are one of the few features of that paper that maintain a

consistently class-struggle standpoint. Too little seems to be known by tutors and pupils of the Labour Research Department Colonial Series, which is an attempt to illustrate the workings of Imperialism according to the various forms in which it appears in different colonial areas, and to show its effect in creating a native capitalism and a native proletariat. At 1/- they are exceedingly cheap productions which should have a wide sale. *East Africa* has been out for some time. *Malays* is ready; and *China* is in preparation and should appear quite shortly." They also announce a new number in the Syllabus Series on *Imperialism* by Emile Burns (Pavlovitch & Woolf) are, of course, sufficiently well-known not to require mention. Earle's *Turkey, the Great Powers and the Bagdad Railway* is not so well known; but should certainly be consulted in a library. For U.S.A. Nearing's *Dollar Diplomacy* should not be forgotten. Arnot's *Oil: An Imperialist Monopoly*, at 1/-, is cheap enough to be purchasable. The files of *The Labour Monthly*, *The PLEBS* and *The Communist International* could be consulted with much profit for recent events; and Varga's two booklets and Radek's *Winding-up of the Versailles Treaty*, with the L.R.D. International Handbook 1921 (now obtainable from the Lab. Pub. Co. at a specially-reduced price) provide the best all-round survey of the post-war European situation.

For a study of the purely diplomatic history of 1906-14 G. Lowes Dickenson's *International Anarchy*, recently published by Allen & Unwin, should be added to the Book List attached to Chapter 9 of the European History Textbook. At 16/- it is a book which most of us can only afford to consult in a Library. But it is the best and most thorough survey of the diplomatic history of that period, based on careful research into diplomatic documents, to be found.

Economic Conditions.

Inprecorr for August 31 contained the usual comprehensive quarterly survey of economic conditions by E. Varga. The second quarter of 1926, according to this

survey, shows little change in the economic condition of Europe, with possibly a slight worsening in Germany. The outstanding feature is, of course, the English miners' strike. In U.S.A. the crisis which some anticipated has not materialised, and indeed there has been a slight improvement "in the turn of the half-year." In the case of France, it is suggested that the big industrialists (or a strong section of them) probably do not want to stabilise the franc because (a) they will profit from further inflation from the rising prices, especially export prices as the external value of the franc slumps; (b) because by depreciating the *real* burden of the national debt at the *rentier's* expense it will make stabilisation easier later on at a lower level. Hence the opposition to the Expert's Plan, and Poincaré's talk of "national stabilisation," i.e., by national not foreign resources. In the course of a special study of U.S.A. some important figures are cited throwing light on "The Fairy Tale of Workers who become Capitalists." These figures, based on U.S. Government Inland Revenue returns, show that 75 per cent. of the dividends from joint stock companies go to persons having a total income of over 5,000 dollars; while only 12.1 per cent. of such dividends go to persons with an income of under 3,000 dollars a year. In other words, "4 per cent. of the stockholders own 75 per cent. of the shares,

whilst 53.3 per cent. of the stockholders own only 4 per cent of the shares." Moreover, the proportion of dividends going to small incomes has been on the decline since 1921. On an estimate, wage-earners cannot share in stock holding in companies by more than 5 per cent., and the actual figure is probably less.

A Reference for Tutors.

Although its price is 5/-, tutors should have by them, or else make sure that they have it available at the local Public Library, the *Survey of Industrial Relations* just published by the Committee on Trade (H.M. Stationery Office, 1926). It is mainly a collection of facts and statistics—"official" ones, of course—relating to the conditions of the workers; and provides about the most handy book of reference on this subject that exists. It gives figures of population, of real wages in various trades, and comparisons with the chief cities of Europe and America, hours of labour, proportion of piece and time rates in operation, unemployment figures for this and other countries, summary of various Acts and Commission Reports, like the Trade Boards Act, the Whitley Committee, the Industrial Courts Act, etc., etc. In collecting details and figures for lectures, etc., this should be an important reference. It has a good index and 70 pages of statistical tables in an appendix.

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REVIEWS of BOOKS

THAT GENERAL STRIKE.

The Political Meaning of the General Strike. By J. T. Murphy (C.P. 1/6).
The General Strike and the General Betrayal. By John Pepper (C. P. America, 25 cents).

J. T. MURPHY has written a book of the everybody-out-of-step-but-our-Jock variety. According to his view of the General Strike only the Communist Party knew that it was bound to come; only the Communist Party knew how to prepare for it; only the Communist Party knew how to organise it when it came, and only the Communist Party is left in the field to supply the correct leadership for the next one.

The book is sounder in its criticisms than in its constructive proposals. After a passionate denunciation of the actions of the Labour Party in Parliament, the author declares that had Mr. Ramsay MacDonald boldly demanded a General Election "it would have done more to undermine the confidence of the middle-classes in the Government than any other course that could have been pursued." Would it, Murphy, now *really*?

Some parts of his criticism are definitely unfair. For instance, he declares that the Conference in the Memorial Hall did not want a strike, and he sneers at its hymn singing. However the delegates may have passed the time of waiting, no one present at that conference would deny that the majority of the people there only wanted a lead, and when they were told to go on strike the response, at the meeting, was enthusiastic.

Murphy's facts with regard to the Co-operative situation are hardly accurate. He states that nearly all the Co-operative employees were called out. As a matter of fact, only Co-operative transport was affected.

But no one can deny the general truth of the indictment which Murphy has marshalled. The facts are plain and every story of the General Strike can but repeat them. Amid his savage indignation, Murphy's sly humour comes through, as when speaking of "the confused people who wanted to be loyal to everybody—the King, the Constitution,

the Miners, Lady Astor, and Mr. Cook."

Alongside Murphy's story of the British working-class which he knows so intimately, a book by an American Communist, John Pepper, *The General Strike and the General Betrayal*, is shown to be curiously out of perspective. Pepper's main thesis is the decline of the British Empire. He sees the General Strike as a gorgeous melodrama against the flaming background of economic ruin.

He is frightfully thrilled about it all. Sexton Blake isn't in it when he deals with "the General Staff of the Defeat." But Mr. Pepper on the "Lessons of the Great Conflict" just leaves one gasping. Speaking of Black Friday, the Labour Government, and the General Strike, he says, gleefully (p. 97):—"From these three great experiences the working-class drew the conclusion that a joint action of all workers was necessary, and this in the form of an extra-parliamentary direct mass struggle: in other words, the application of the General Strike as the immediate weapon of the workers."

These Americans are SOME optimists!
 E.C.W.

THE THEORIST'S NIGHTMARE.

The Scourge of Europe. By Prof. Birck (Routledge, 10/6).

Professor Birck is a Danish Keynes. The lessons of *The Great Illusion* are analysed in this book and given an historical setting. The Shaw-Herald-Wells controversy has been anticipated by this timid liberal—a timidity that greatly contrasts with his ability.

His book is divided into three parts. (1) Description, describing the instruments of the creation of a national debt; (2) Explanation, explaining the functioning of these instruments; and (3) the Facts, in which the history of national debts is most splendidly examined.

Unfortunately, the author's horizon is limited in the sense that the only alternative to capitalism is "the abyss," and he does not appear to realise that production is the basis of credit. Had the author been prepared logically to follow the tendencies of his book and linked it up with the formation of credit on the basis of potential surplus values, this

book would have been hailed as a labour classic.

These shortcomings lead him to regard the "Public Debt" as the scourge of Europe which is undermining capitalist society. "The national debt," he says, "will by its own weight force a solution or drag Europe down into the abyss. If the leaders of the bourgeoisie understood that true conservatism is different from the temporary interests of the owning class, it would be conservatism which would demand the capital levy, and those who hope for a revolution would be its most inveterate enemies." He does not, unfortunately, see that the national debt is a necessity for Capitalist Imperialism, that it is its creation and the condition of its growth.

Despite all these defects the book is well laden with just that material which the worker-student requires. Perhaps like *The Collapse of Capitalism* it lays too much stress upon the mechanics of the system, but it does present a large number of facts which support the Marxian contention that capitalist society creates problems that cannot be solved within capitalism and lead to its own internal collapse.

It is interesting to get the following estimate:—

	Million £.
Pre-war Wealth	£16,000
Pre-war National Debt	£800
Present Debt	£8,000
Present Wealth	£27,000

These figures indicate that half of the capital of the country was consumed in the War, while the national debt is still equal to one-third of the national capital. From this the author predicts "a rate of taxation beyond the patience of the British people, which will compel the Government to encroach on the bare necessities of life of the man in the street. It also means for at least one year a paralysis of industrial output," and a transference of wealth from the capitalist proper to the bondholders.

It is significant that Germany reduced her national debt to only one per cent. of her national capital by a policy of inflation; Britain has increased her national debt during a period of inflation and by returning to the gold standard has to pay for the cheap loans in terms of dear money. Thus while she can visualise 1914 prices and wages she has a national debt ten times that of 1914.

HIT ON THE HEAD WITH A BRICK

That was what happened to a Hull comrade who was selling our "History of the Miners' Struggle." It was a compliment to the pamphlet—the other side can put forward no other arguments against the facts it contains.

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In other words, while the sale of one cow was sufficient to raise £5 as a loan, the workers, because of the return to the gold standard, can only pay that £5 back by the sale of five cows. And it is the workers who have to pay whether it is through inflation or deflation.

This book, though its price is equal to half a week's unemployment pay, ought to be on Marxians' shelves, if only for the fact that it points out that British capitalism cannot save itself; it is creating the ferment of revolution by its own stupidities.

One wonders if the good professor wrote with his tongue in his cheek!

N. E.

U.S.S.R.

The Soviet Union Year Book, 1926.

By Louis Segal, Ph.D. and A. A. Santalov (Allen & Unwin, 7/6 net).

Guide to The Soviet Union. Issued by The U.S.S.R. Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (Kniga, Ltd., 6/- net).

The appearance of these two books in English is particularly welcome, and they should be in every Public Library and on the shelves of every student of Soviet (Russia).

The latter is a detailed guide in 350 pages to the chief cities of the U.S.S.R., and in addition to the usual guide book features—particulars of travelling, hotels, theatres, museums, art galleries, etc.—it has an excellent Marxian introduction on the historical development of Russia and the present political and economic system. Moreover, one remarks with pleasure that the English of it has been revised before

publication by an Englishman—not always the case!

The former book gives one a good 500 pages for one's money, and follows on and extends the *Year Book* for 1925. Here we are given full facts and figures, competently set out, about the present situation of industry, agriculture, trade, finance, labour and education, together with a fairly full description (though this might well be extended) of the political system and legal code. Statistical tables, maps and diagrams complete this essential book of reference.

The reviewer has only a small criticism to make. There is a certain lack of uniformity in the tables of agricultural and industrial production. Figures are given of the total value of industrial output, and for separate industries and products. In some cases the 1913 figures are given as a basis of comparison with the present; but in others no figures are given earlier than 1920. Again, in some cases they are brought right up to date with the estimates for 1925-6, in other cases only to the summer of 1925 or even only to 1923. A composite table of agricultural and industrial production, similar to those of foreign trade, so that one could survey the salient features at a glance, would be a great improvement. Perhaps, also, a graph showing the upward line of progress! M. H. D.

A GOOD SCHOOL BOOK.

Piers Plowman Social and Economic Histories: Book VII. 1830 to the Present Day (Phillips, 3/6).

This is the last of the series of history books previously reviewed in *The Plebs*, and gives us the opportunity to repeat our general praise of their matter and method of presentation. Perhaps

the badness and bias of so many widely used school books make this series stand out so well. While the usual text-book enlarges upon the even-handed justice and civilising influence exercised by the beneficent British Empire, Mr. Niemeyer and Mr. Spalding, the authors of this last volume, refer more truthfully to "the shameful war with China in 1842," and tacitly show how the British Empire jumped the French claim to the Suez Canal. While in the usual book there is either significant omission of, or adverse reference to, Labour organisation, the final chapter of this book is mainly devoted to the development of the Trade Unions. The authors too are aware that a certain sort of "workers' education" was developed as an antidote to revolution.

There are on the other hand many points for criticism. For example, the story of the Plimsoll line does not tell about its later suspension. There is no satisfactory explanation of the starvation wages forced upon the farm labourers and no indication of who was responsible for the withdrawal of their Wages Boards in 1920. Throughout there is studious avoidance of reference to political parties and struggles. The authors' regret for the mining Conciliation Boards, broken by the Minimum Wage Strike (1912) which resulted in "The Minimum Load (?) Act," and their faith in the League of Nations, indicates their limitation.

However, for its illustrations, good book lists, references to contemporary novelists and writers, special attention to village life, details of housing conditions, growth of education, etc., teachers in our Movement, as well as members of Education Authorities and their employees, will find this extremely useful.

M. S.

A Sixpenny "Best Seller"

TRADE UNIONISM

By MARK STARR

A new revised and expanded edition is now printing, and we hope to be able to supply copies shortly.

LETTERS from READERS

BUKHARIN'S DETERMINISM.

DEAR COMRADE,—May I say in reply to P. M. Moir's letter in the October issue that I am as much a determinist as Bukharin, and that Bukharin in his editorship of the *Pravda* is certainly helping "to shape events" whatever may be the interpretation placed upon his latest book by your correspondent. *Beuerbach* (p. 25) and (p. 130) gives opposite opinions of Engels and Marx upon the matter.

Yours,
M. S.

A TUTORS' TRAINING CENTRE.

DEAR COMRADE,—As one who was fortunate in being at the August Training Centre, I endorse your comments and plea for three-months' courses as a speedy solution to the increasing tutor problem. The present economic dependence of wife and family on a married I.W.C.Eer, and the oft-times existing dependence of "old folks," etc., on a single student, constitutes a real barrier to either serving as a qualified tutor in our movement. Even if the barrier is leaped, the time away from the locality prevents the easy return to a job when the two years' College training is ended.

Three-months' courses will not weigh in this double sense on both types of potential tutors. Moreover, that period is quite long enough to concentrate to good purpose those energies which are now diffused in so many directions as the price of enthusiasm. If the short course was not too crammed, but aimed at a short intensive treatment of the essentials in a few basic subjects, it would serve admirably for our most pressing and present needs. Intensive study, with the student relieved from bread and butter struggles, is then a practicability.

Two conclusions can be drawn from the scheme if it became a reality. (1) The students from a certain defined area could have one or two specialists among them; (2) this would serve to cause interchange of tutors in the area after the cessation of the course to be a desirable and immediate practicability. Finally, the financial problem; the 1925 returns of students attending classes were 25,071, and if each student were to pay 1d. per month into a students' fund it would

enable 30 students to be sent to a Training Centre for 14 weeks each year. Times are bad—needs are great! Let us have ideas. Hoping some of the students will send them along.

Yours fraternally,
H. STOREY.

Blyth.

A REPLY TO THE W.E.A.

The General Secretary of the N.C.L.C. has sent the following reply to a series of statements which appeared in the October issue of the W.E.A.'s official journal:—

Sir,—In reply to the many passages "throwing mud" (your own expression) at the N.C.L.C., may I make the following statement?

1. The Bishop of Manchester's letter does not square with the information supplied by Dr. Marion Phillips, the Secretary of the Women's Relief Committee. (See *PLEBS*, October, 1926.)
2. All tutors employed by the N.C.L.C. must be and are Trade Unionists, all your insinuations to the contrary notwithstanding.
3. The W.E.A., in the document it submitted to the Sub-Committee set up by the Education Authorities, undertook not to make membership of a Trade Union or professional organisations "a condition governing appointment." (See *Education*, 12th February, 1926.)
4. Mr. Cole's statement that the N.C.L.C. opposed the Easton Lodge Scheme "on the ground that the available money ought to be spent in financing N.C.L.C. Classes" is not true. I am afraid Mr. Cole must have realised this when he saw his statement in print, if not before.
5. If Trade Unions have not yet learned to pay for education, as Mr. Cole complains, the responsibility to a large degree lies with Mr. Cole and the W.E.A. generally in encouraging them to believe that the capitalist State's educational machine—the Universities, Education Authorities, etc.,

—would meet the great bulk of the cost.

Yours, etc.,
J. P. M. MILLAR.

THE ELECTRO-CHEMICAL AGE.

DEAR SIR,—It was Sir Robert Ball, I believe, who advanced the curious theory that the temperature of the sun is maintained by the pressure due to shrinkage caused by cooling. Mr. Walton Newbold has capped that idea by saying, in the September PLEBS, that we must steel ourselves to conquer capitalism by surrender to capitalism. Let us quote:—

“The steam coal miners, the boiler-makers, the engineers, the building workers and all too many of the iron, steel, and railwaymen have no more a place in the fighting line of the new future than had the handloom weavers of the middle of the last century.” He goes on to say that they should be got off the battlefield. Does he mean *under*? Unfortunately there are only two ways “off” this battlefield, because the enemy has to be taken into account, and he cannot compromise if he would. Either the worker must fight and win—in which case he will alter the class system; or he must take what is coming to him by defeat or, as Mr. Newbold advises, by surrender.

As Mr. Newbold’s electro-chemical inventions make the worker redundant, he will get less and less until he is starved, his epitaph being “no longer required.” Mr. Newbold says that to fight is hopeless. It may be; but as we happen to be live human beings we shall continue—perhaps illogically—to fight. Not to fight is to die, first spiritually, then mentally, and finally physically. The third death may, as with Mr. Newbold, be delayed a little. It may even be spread out by doles.

Whatever developments the future may hold, the plain fact stands out that at the present moment the workers enumerated by Mr. Newbold are indispensable—as completely, and absolutely indispensable to society to-day as ever the technicians or scientific workers can ever be to any future society. Without their work to-day, Society and Mr. Newbold would cease to exist to-morrow. In a word, they still hold potentially, all the economic power that any class ever can hold, and they will do for a long time

yet. Education designed to cash that potential is well worth while, and there is no education like experience on the battlefield. Wars are won though battles be lost.

There is no substantial evidence that the machine age is passing, let alone past. Mr. Newbold’s enthusiasm for electro-chemical processes which have not yet materialised, reads like an advertisement for pills. It is a pity that Mr. Newbold didn’t tie a thread of commonsense to the entrance of the maze of international capitalism when he entered it to investigate the doings and relationships of the Wiermergazers and the Gluckbugs. If he had done so, and kept tight hold of the other end, it might now guide him back to the ordinary world again.

Two other points, briefly. (1) All the inventions—electro-chemical included—have not enabled Capitalism to dispense with raw materials, or to increase their supply in anything like the measure to which the capacity to use them has increased. Even Mr. Newbold’s “coal-dust-cum-oil” needs coal and oil. (2) Mr. Newbold seems to imagine that his electro-chemical age will be the last. It won’t. All the arguments he is using to dishearten the workers now, will be equally cogent in his “twenty years’ time” if what he suggests happens.

Yours truly,

P. BULL.

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MONEY AND MEN.

DEAR COMRADE EDITOR,—Woe is me that with my first letter to PLEBS I should have aroused Comrades Lawther and Moore's disdain to such an extent.

I have re-read by letter twice to try and find my offence. Surely it is very practical to argue that any revolutionary movement *must* have funds. I agree that we can never beat the capitalist in spending money—but there is a minimum sum we must have if we are to put up a fight. Part of my proposals outlined what I still believe to be the best method of raising this.

With regard to leadership, Moore and Lawther both agree with me as to the necessity for a change. Must I suffer this withering contempt because I suggest how to get one—and they do not?

While leaders are elected by bargaining and block votes, leadership will always be confined to the thoroughly comfortable. Let the rank and file elect directly and they will, at any rate, get the leadership they deserve.

Yours fraternally,

JOHN BECKETT.

ORGANISATION BY CASH.

DEAR COMRADE,—Might a humble layman reply to some of the loose thinking of our comrade John Beckett, who very nicely uses the whitewash brush to cover up the deplorable leadership of the General Council during the General Strike? How the formation of a Central Fund will put "guts" into those bipeds who were born without these necessary fighting organs, takes a bit of seeing.

The workers' power lies not in the control and use of unlimited funds, but in the wielding of their economic power, and the deliberate use of their Trade Union organisation for a set purpose. Our daily conflict, or class struggle, is not a duel between the £ s. d. of Rockefeller and say the cash of Unity House. If such a conflict were waged, the worker could be counted out as soon as the gong was sounded.

Any General Strike must win or lose by the strikers' control of such local bodies as Guardians, Co-operative Societies, etc., for the feeding of the workers' army; the using of their power on City Councils, Urban District Councils, etc., in the obstruction of the police, and counter-capitalist organisations.

NovemberLABOUR
MONTHLY

NOTES OF THE MONTH: The Miners and the New Phase. By R.P.D.

FORWARD TO VICTORY!

By A. Horner.

FROM LIVERPOOL TO MARGATE.

By Dr. R. Dunstan.

PHARAOH IN DOWNING STREET.

By W. N. Ewer.

HOW COME THESE TRAITORS?

By Rutland Boughton.

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Report from the country show the workers were prepared to use this power, but were prevented from doing so by the respectable elements who weakly cried, "The General Strike is not a challenge to the constitution"; or in other words "We believe the capitalist state to be eternal."

While much remains to be done in the re-organisation of Trade Unions from a structural aspect, yet the one clear lesson which stands out in the great betrayal of the miners has been the neglect to use the economic power of the movement. Coal has been moved—coal has been shipped from abroad—and cash for soup kitchens will not stop these hard facts.

Let those of faint heart retire; the future demands courage.

Fraternally,

J. M. STEPHENSON

(Chopwell L.R.C.)

DO WE STILL NEED A PLEBS LEAGUE?

DEAR COMRADE,—As a lecturer for the N.C.L.C. classes in several towns for four-and-a-half years—and still lecturing under the auspices of the Darlington District Council of the N.C.L.C. at Middlesbrough and Thornaby—a Plebeian of several years' standing, and at present President of a Plebs Group with a membership of forty-four, meeting every week, I think I may claim to submit views backed up by considerable experience.

Let me first state my reasons for becoming a Plebeian. Firstly, I wished to meet with fellow-workers of an organisation to discuss the various problems of the day—political and industrial—to exchange viewpoints so as to enable one to carefully follow the trend of events, the significance of discussions in one's T.U. branch, or Labour Party meeting. Secondly, that I might by these discussions and exchange of views better fit myself to play the part of a class-conscious worker. Thirdly, that with others of a like outlook an opportunity would be offered for us to formulate a policy after a close study of all known facts, and go into the T.U. branch or L.P. meeting well fortified for any eventuality. Lastly, that my debating powers could be developed.

The N.C.L.C. classes do not give scope for students to emphasise their political tendencies, at least very seldom. Members of the N.C.L.C. classes could not, if they would, nor would not if they could, discuss the political and industrial problems and formulate policies, because many of the students attending the classes for the sole purpose of education would not relish a discussion except upon the subject before the class.

Comrades Millar and Hamilton pleaded for a League of individual members, not groups, at the Plebs annual meeting. Will they tell me what use the Plebs League would be to anyone if the members were never to meet except by accident, or at the annual meeting, to which every member could not go for various reasons? If the Plebs League merely functions for the publication of textbooks and a magazine, then by all means scrap it. But since the Labour College Movement grew out of it, is a child of it and is becoming a fine growing child, it does not follow that like the young

robins it should kill the parent that hatched it.

The League must continue to function; it must produce groups whose purpose and aim must be to formulate policies by free and open discussion among the group members, to produce, as Comrade Moores puts it, "Mass Theory." The groups must become a force in their respective localities, not merely formulating a policy in the group and leaving it at that, but that policy must be given effect to and carried out at all times.

Yours faithfully,

FRANK LEWIS.

ARE WE DEFINITE ENOUGH?

DEAR COMRADE,—If ever there was need for revision of the methods of I.W.C.E., surely it is now. We have the spectacle of nearly a million miners, their wives and children, slowly being starved into submission, while the rest of the workers stand looking on, waiting their turn. And in the midst of chaos stand our "leaders," abusing one another!

We have come through a period when every progressive individual, and every advanced organ of the workers' movement, was shouting "All power to the General Council!" The power was given—and we have seen the result. The PLEBS was amongst the foremost in making the demand; yet now, for months past, by word and by cartoon, it has been abusing the General Council for all it is worth.

Surely, in a state of affairs like this, we I.W.C.Ers need to be as definite and explicit as possible. We must face, not run away from, the issues now being raised. Are we facing them?

In his latest book, Comrade Postgate seems to me to run away. Discussing future possibilities he says, in effect, "some say this; some that." I submit that this is no position for an I.W.C.Er. If our studies, guided by the M.C.H., don't enable us to see the line of development clearly, and prepare the workers for it, then there is certainly something lacking—either in ourselves or our theory.

I think we have strayed away from fundamentals because of the effect of the Russian Revolution, and are tending overmuch to evaluate the class-struggle in England—and in Europe—in terms not of the M.C.H. but of Russian history.

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And while we are wrangling over essentials our common enemies go forward inexorably.

In the General Strike we had a body of leaders only half believing in the weapon they were using; and a rank and file enthusiastic, but only half understanding the implications of the fight they were in. We need knowledge, and the conscious, fearless application of that knowledge to our problems; and that is the job of I.W.C.E.

The textbook for our further development is still the *Communist Manifesto*. From Lenin and Russia we can learn valuable lessons, but not fundamental ones. We need to get back to Marx, and to apply Marxism to our own conditions and our own problems.

Yours fraternally,
W. H. B.

is the need for a new leadership. This is similar to the attitude of a savage race which, finding that its old wooden god fails to bring it prosperity, burns it down and builds a new one.

The lesson is surely that the workers' failure to realise their slave status in society, is the greatest obstacle to their emancipation. The fact that the workers are prepared to follow leaders proves that they are far from having reached a revolutionary position.

Your contributors are loud in their praise of the loyalty of the rank and file, but it is just this "loyalty" that is the danger. They loyally dashed back to work when the order came, and have since cheerfully handled the coal that is helping to beat the miners.

Yours fraternally,
J. LEA.

CAN WE BE ABOVE THE BATTLE?

DEAR COMRADE,—Philip Price's letter in the October PLEBS suggests that his attitude is rather pedantic.

To interpret the publication of articles on the General Strike as "aspiring to become His Majesty's Opposition" is unwarranted. If we are to teach and to study the class war and Materialist Determinism we cannot do it in any better way than by applying ourselves to current events, and particularly to such instructive events as the recent General Strike. I don't see how, with intellectual honesty, we can thoroughly pursue our educational aims without at the same time entering controversially into present-day events and development of the working-class movement.

I have seen Marxist teachers of the W.E.A. struggling to teach economics without bringing in politics! Price very expediently suggests a similar restraint, a similar self-imposition in order to avoid risking the displeasure of those who were responsible for the May fiasco, i.e., the T.U.C.

If we devoted ourselves completely to discussing epistemology we might remain popular.

Yours fraternally,
R. GORE GRAHAM.

DEAR COMRADE,—In reading The PLEBS since the Strike one is struck by the curious unanimity of your contributors in the opinion that its chief lesson

MIND AND MATTER.

DEAR COMRADE,—Jones, I believe, thinks he has discovered some sort of a snag in my reasoning. I think he merely misunderstands me. He makes a special point of asking me "which is primary and which is secondary—matter or mind?" I should say neither, unless we define the limits within which the question is put, because, so long as we speak in the present tense, it is obvious that *both exist simultaneously*, that each is a part of the other, or again, that they are complementary. I am sure there is no concept (mind) without something (matter) to think about, nor is there any matter existing that has never been thought about, at least under the name Universe, if not under any special name. This is not tautological, nor is it idealism of either brand.

If we say that matter *is* primary—meaning primary at all times—we take up a static position contrary to the dialectic (changing character) of thought, and I cannot do that merely to oblige Jones.

Had he asked "which *was* primary?", then the question would clearly relate to the past, and I should know that he referred to the period before mind was evolved.

However, here is another attempt to clear up the confusion.

To me, "the whole of Nature" means everything. This complete Nature is continually changing and evolving new

combinations of its parts. Each new combination is secondary as compared with prior forms of existence, but to the extent of its subsequent *interaction* with other parts may be either primary or secondary as compared with still newer forms of existence. Which it *becomes* will depend upon the given limits within which the question is asked.

For example, Nature existed before there were trees (one part of Nature). In this connection Nature was "primary and original," the trees being "secondary and derived." But once trees were evolved, they, as part of Nature, *interact* with some of the other parts, and then, whether they are regarded as primary or secondary will depend upon how the limits to the enquiry are extended or contracted.

It is the same with mind. Nature (matter) existed as the primary before mind was evolved as a secondary and derived part of Nature. Afterwards mind does not *react upon* (unless considered in special relationships) but *interacts with* other parts of Nature, and so may be regarded as primary or secondary according to whatever circle of relationships is being discussed.

The latter idea, when worked out in Sociology, becomes the dialectic of the thought process, and a knowledge of it should enable us to appreciate the part played by mind (the mental superstructure) in social development, for mind in certain connections acts as the "primary."

Marx and Engels worked out dialectics in Society and in Nature—Dietzgen in the realm of Thought. Bukharin is partly lacking in the latter application of dialectics, and the same lack, one regrets, manifests itself in British "Marxism." (Britain is badly in need of a definite school of Marxism.)

As to science versus epistemology, I think at bottom we are in agreement.

Though matter existed prior to mind, we come to understand that fact only through the later *complementary connection* of matter and mind. This connection, to the extent of the minds engaged in it, forms the limit to the possibility of either epistemology or science, but by virtue of the enquiry and discussion involved, we come to have knowledge of things which existed prior to the discussion. Therefore neither science nor

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epistemology do violence to each other.
As a matter of fact they are both science.

Yours, FRED CASEY.

J. JONES writes :—There does not seem to me to be any purpose in further continuing this discussion between Comrade Casey and myself *re* matter and mind.

If his above letter, in which he concedes the point that "Nature (matter) existed as the primary before mind was

evolved as the secondary and derived part of Nature," is contrasted with the points I took exception to in his review of Bukharin's *Historical Materialism*, my purpose in entering the discussion will have been served.

Furthermore, I believe such a contrast will disclose the "snag" in Comrade Casey's reasoning.

Yours fraternally, J. JONES.

IN MEMORIAM EUGENE DEBS

Died, October, 1926

A GARLAND FOR DEBS

Here, in our easychairs, we sit and choose
Words for a garland woven of our praise ;
The fluent metaphor, the striking phrase,
Inserted gracefully, are what we use
And there he stands, and silently reviews
The bitter scented nights, the flowerless days,
Thinking of all the many little ways
A man may win all that he seems to lose.

* * *

And then—this verbal wreath . . . perfumed . . . precise—
Pathetic incongruity It adorns
A head too scarred and knotted to be nice.
This floral tribute prettifies the scorns
And outrage. Something plainer should suffice—
Some simple, patriotic crown of thorns.

LOUIS UNTERMEYER.

Reprinted from *Debs and the Poets*
(Published by Upton Sinclair, and
obtainable from PLEBS Office.)

NO EDUCATION FOR EMANCIPATION.

Board of Education Insists on W.E.A. Classes.

Below Jim Griffiths, agent of the Anthracite Miners, shows how the W.E.A. and the Government works hand-in-glove to sabotage I.W.C.E. We hope the facts will be made widely known. Labour papers, please copy.

For five Sessions Evening Classes in Social Science have been run under the auspices of the Carmarthen County Education Committee and tutored by ex-Labour College students. Now the "axe," not of economy, but of capitalist economics has descended. "No more shall public money be utilised to subsidise revolutionary teaching."

In September, 1921, I returned from the Labour College, and the Ammanford Trades Council undertook to establish classes. The local labour members of the County Education Committee volunteered to endeavour to get classes run by that Authority and, strangely enough, succeeded. Four classes were run in the Session 1921-22. The subjects taken were Industrial History and Economics, the syllabuses were on the Marxian plan, and the Plebs textbooks were used. Even in that first session His Majesty's Inspectors were perturbed, both at the "partiality" of the teaching and the "type" of textbook. However, the classes were successful and all went well. The demand for these classes grew

session after session until last winter there were no fewer than twelve such classes run under the County Committee, tutored by five ex-Labour College students. The Inspector continued to worry the tutors and to complain that the Labour bias was too strong and apparent. Then came the Anthracite Strike of 1925, and prominent in that struggle were the tutors and students of these classes. Secret investigations were conducted into the "subversive forces" in Carmarthen and it was found that among such forces were these classes. That put the lid on it, with the result that two months or so ago the County Committee were informed (in person) by His Majesty's Inspector that no Board of Education grant would again be paid for these classes *unless they were definitely converted into W.E.A. Classes*. Some of the tutors were "sounded" as to the possibility of their going over to the W.E.A., but they have all refused to betray their principles. So after five years the classes, as County Education Committee classes, are dead, but the same classes, with the same textbooks and the same "partial" tutors will live more vigorously than ever as N.C.L.C. classes.

JAMES GRIFFITHS.
(*Anthracite Miners' Agent.*)

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TO THOSE IN PRISON AND OUT

So, once again the prison doors are barred
 On those who with their fellows would be free.
 Truly the way is long, the journey hard
 (As Hist'ry shows to those who care to see).
 For we are free, but as the caged bird
 That flutt'ring in a small and confined space
 To freedom and to greater flight is stirred,
 To find the door fast bolted in his face.
 We are like dogs upon our master's chains,
 Who caper and cavort and think us free,
 To find the lash is added to our pains
 If we but seek effective liberty.
 Yet we'll fight on, for lo, the day draws nigh,
 When "We are free," wage slaves shall truly cry.

LEONORA THOMAS.

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)

VICTORIA LABOUR COLLEGE: A letter received from our comrades in Australia indicates that they are keeping the flag flying in Melbourne. The half-year's report shows that four successful classes have been held, and that the College is active in both publishing and distributing literature. More power to its elbow!

DUNDEE CALENDAR WORKERS' UNION: This Union has decided to have an N.C.L.C. education scheme providing free access to classes and free correspondence courses. We hope our supporters in Dundee will do everything possible to see that the members take full advantage.

SCOTTISH PAINTERS' SOCIETY: The Triennial Conference of the Scottish Painters' Society was addressed by J. P.

M. Millar. A motion in favour of an N.C.L.C. education scheme, moved by our old supporters, W. Morrison, of Aberdeen, and J. Clunie, of Dunfermline, was carried unanimously, the scheme providing free access to classes, free correspondence courses, and free access to non-residential week-end and day schools. All Scottish secretaries, tutors and officials are asked to do everything possible to make the scheme a success. The branches should be visited with a view to explaining its nature and purpose.

W. D. RAE: One of the N.C.L.C.'s executive members, W. D. Rae, who was previously assistant secretary for the National Union of Sheet Metal Workers in the London District, has been appointed District Secretary. Our Move-

ment will wish him hearty congratulations; he has been a very staunch supporter of the N.C.L.C.'s work.

LOCAL AFFILIATIONS: The decision of the Dundee Calendar Workers and the Scottish Painters should make it clear to our Movement that, despite the difficult financial situation, it is still possible to make progress, and we hope therefore that the colleges and the organisers will show great activity in endeavouring to obtain further local affiliations and in encouraging unions to arrange educational schemes. A college that is not obtaining new affiliations, except in a purely mining district, is not making the progress it ought to make. There are thousands of T.U. branches and other working-class organisations which are not affiliated in any way, and we should do our utmost to secure their support. In addition, the greatest of care should be taken to see that affiliation fees once paid are renewed. Every month this question should be gone into and, in the event of non-payment, steps, such as a visit to the branch concerned, should be arranged. Affiliation fees are a result of good class-work *plus* good organising. Each month college secretaries are asked to send in a report of new affiliations obtained, and the results are published in this column. In a number of cases the report has not been sent in, and, consequently, colleges entitled to credit for their activities are amongst those that appear to have been able to do nothing in the way of getting further support.

NEW AFFILIATIONS RECEIVED DURING SEPTEMBER: London, 10; Lanarkshire, 4; Newry, 4; Fife, 2; Belfast, 2; Leeds, 1; Leyland, 1; Lincoln, 1; Newport, Mon., 1; Edinburgh, 1. **IS THE NAME OF YOUR COLLEGE HERE? IF NOT, WHY NOT?**

LITERATURE SALES: The selling of literature is a very important part of the N.C.L.C.'s work. Judging from the orders coming in for the new pamphlet

on I.W.C.E. some colleges seem to have retired from business. We cannot expect to make progress unless we are continually stating our case to the workers and winning further supporters. Has your college got a supply of the new pamphlet? Division 8 and Chesterfield Labour College top the list with an order for 1,000 in each case. South Wales Division comes next with a 500 order.

NATIONAL UNION OF BRASS AND METAL MECHANICS: This Union is willing to pay for any of its branches the 2d. per member affiliation fee that provides free access to classes. Thanks to Comrade Kymer, of Braintree, this branch's fees have already been paid by the Union's Head Office. What about the branches in your area?

NATIONAL SOCIETY OF OPERATIVE PRINTERS AND ASSISTANTS: This Union has an arrangement under which it is possible for members to get N.C.L.C. correspondence courses free. Applications should be addressed to the Union's head office and a copy of the application should be sent here. These facilities should be made widely known. The Union is also willing to provide scholarships to week-end schools.

GENERAL AND MUNICIPAL WORKERS: This Union has arranged an educational scheme under which it is paying £300 to the W.E.A. and £100 to the N.C.L.C. The actual facilities to be provided for the £100 have not yet been definitely arranged, but it will, of course, be impossible to provide free access to classes for that figure. Colleges are urged to make use of the fact that the Union now officially supports us to start a campaign to get local affiliations from the branches.

N.C.L.C. NATIONAL SCHEMES: It is highly important to recognise that while the money for N.C.L.C. schemes comes to Head Office, Head Office has to supply reports on the number of mem-

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bers of each Union participating. Secretaries, Tutors, and Organisers are therefore asked to ensure that all the localities do their best to show satisfactory results.

CORRESPONDENCE COURSES DEPT.: The number of courses (not lessons) dealt with in the six months Mar.-Aug. was 1,720; September enrolments numbered 86; October enrolments (first fortnight only) number over 130.

WALL MAPS FOR CLASSES.—Will secretaries note that Comrade J. W. Davison, 42 Hotspur Street, Heaton, Newcastle-on-Tyne, is able to execute orders for wall-maps promptly and cheaply. Please write him direct.

BY THE END OF NOVEMBER arrangements for the second session of the winter classes should be nearly completed in each Division so that a Divisional List for the January to March section may be issued during the first week in December. All branches will thus have an opportunity of seeing the circular before the classes open.

WHAT THE DIVISIONS ARE DOING.

Division 1: Forty-five classes are now running in the London Division, including new ones in Hammersmith, Putney, Greenwich, N. Paddington, Kentish Town, North Hackney, and South Hackney. The class at S. Hackney has been formed mainly to meet the special needs of the dyers of that district. One of the best classes in London, from the standpoint of attendance and interest, is held at Stepney, where "the Science of Understanding" is treated by J. Jones. It is worth while recalling that some of our best classes for the last two years have been on this subject, and it is evident that, whatever may be the experience elsewhere, London students find Dietzgen very stimulating. Another subject which is arousing much interest this season is Sociology, based on Bucharin's "Historical Materialism." The N.U.R. branches are responding well to the circular sent to them by the organiser in August, and it seems as though very few London branches will not be affiliated by the end of the year. Ramsgate N.C.L.C.ers took advantage of the Margate Labour Party Conference to arrange a mass meeting at the West Cliff Concert Hall, Ramsgate, on Wednesday, 13th October, with the following

speakers:—Miss E. Wilkinson, M.P., John Beckett, M.P., Will Lawther, and Frank Horrabin. The meeting has given a big push to the local classes.

Division 2: With the co-operation of all the Trade Unions and Labour organisations, Yeovil hopes to arrange a series of week-end schools in addition to this programme. One remarkable feature in this Division is the interest that Trades Councils are taking in the work of the N.C.L.C.; the following councils have had discussions which show much sympathy for us:—Reading, Bournemouth, Salisbury, Portsmouth, Andover, Southampton, Oxford, Newbury and, as a result of a deputation from the Eastleigh class, the Winchester Council have invited the organiser to address them. The prospect for good classes at Portsmouth and Southampton in particular are rosy. Swindon and Reading classes are to receive tutorial assistance from Wynn Cuthbert. Joe Mathews is taking charge of the Littlehampton class. If Bognor and Worthing develop, as we hope, our good comrade will also do the necessary tutorial work. This Division is still badly handicapped through lack of tutors, and there is no doubt that we could do much more effective work if the number could be increased. Some of the classes have already produced promising tutors.

Division 3: Miss Thompson (Chelmsford) is taking the works of some modern dramatists and writers with special reference to the social criticisms they contain. She would be glad to compare notes with other teachers on her methods. Thanks to H. F. Turner a class on British Social History has been started at March. The local secretary at Peterborough is giving special lectures on Economic Geography to the Women's Section. Other classes are also running. Guildford has a good class, and Woking is receiving visits from J. M. Williams. The Div. E.C. at its meeting on October 16th welcomed the representative of the Eastern District Council (N.U.R.). Special lectures have been given to the Norwich Branch N.U.G. and M.W., and the Cromer Branch of the A.U.B.T.W. Slough, Southend and St. Albans have had talks at their request on "Red Russia." Cromer ran a Day School on "Trade Unionism and Its Problems,"

October 24th. Ipswich is using the lantern lectures on November 7th. Visits to Kingston, Oxted and Chesham have been arranged and it is hoped to open up fresh ground in Surrey. 19 classes are now running, with hopes of more.

Division 4: An educational scheme has been arranged for 12,000 members of the South Wales and Monmouth N.U.R. District Council, the payment being at the rate of 2d. per member. The Abergavenny Co-operative Society have arranged educational facilities with the N.C.L.C. We regret that as a result of the action of the authorities, Comrade Green, secretary of the Ogmere Vale College, is the guest of his Majesty. A number of very useful educational conferences have been held. The situation in the Ammanford Area is referred to in an article on another page this month.

Division 5: Division 5 has also had a number of conferences, with good results. Visits have been paid to the committees of unions that support the N.C.L.C.'s work in the locality.

Division 6: Birmingham College has seven classes going, and more are in process of being formed. A week-end school is being arranged. The week-end school at Walsall Wood was a great success, 86 students attending (largely miners), and the interest manifested in I.W.C.E. augurs well for the winter's class work. Forty students enrolled for the Walsall Wood Class and thirty-five for the class at Brownhills. Special conferences have been arranged for Walsall, Worcester, Nuneaton, and Stafford. Several new tutors have been secured.

Division 7: Class work is now in full swing. Special classes have been arranged for the Amalgamated Society of Dyers and the National Union of Textile Workers, bringing the total number of classes in the Division up to fifty-seven. Two of the classes are packed with miner students. Normanston has 54, and the class at Kippax, under the Leeds College, with Lew Davies as tutor, has an attendance of 160, gathered from surrounding villages. A well-attended Div. Council Meeting recommended all the colleges to accept the findings of the Special National Conference. Classes are being formed by the Doncaster College at Bentley, Crockroft, Edlington, and Brodsworth, with Comrade Morgan, late of the London Labour College, as tutor. The Hebden

Bridge class, under the Trades Council, is now in full swing with A. Holdsworth as tutor. The Secretary is F. Lord, 18, Oak Street, Hebden Bridge. The Young Labour League at Todmorden have formed a class, the Secretary being G. E. Northcott, Weavers' Institute, Todmorden. The Shipley College are conducting four classes; Comrade Hill, the secretary, taking Industrial History at Cullingworth and Shipley. Comrade Roland Hill is taking Esperanto, at Bingley and Social History at Yeadon.

Division 8: A well-attended and representative conference was held in Liverpool on September 25th with Will Lawther as principal speaker. Lawther and the divisional organiser (J. Hamilton) addressed a full house at the Earlestown Labour Club. The organiser also addressed public meetings on the need for I.W.C.E. under the auspices of Runcorn and Skelmersdale Labour Parties. The Runcorn Labour Party has arranged a class under our auspices, their previous allegiance being with the W.E.A. Classes throughout the Division have commenced well, but it is very difficult to raise finance with the continuance of the Miners' Lock-out. A. L. Williams is conducting a class for the Nelson Weavers' Association with an attendance of about 70. Liverpool Carters' had an attendance of 60 at the opening. The Mersey District Committee A.U.B.T.W. has arranged for a series of lantern lectures to be given to the juvenile section. The N.U.D.A.W. (Liverpool District) has also arranged for a series of lantern lectures. The Plasterers' Union in the Liverpool Area is endeavouring to stimulate educational interest among the apprentices and the organiser addressed a meeting of 51 members on October 7th. S.E. Lancs. area report a greatly increased number of classes. A class has been commenced for the first time in Ashton-in-Makerfield. This has the backing of the local Labour Party, N.U.D.A.W. and miners' lodges.

Division 9: North-Eastern Labour College is submitting an excellent annual report to its Annual Conference. Unfortunately, the system on which the College works does not give it an opportunity of showing the full financial value of its work in its annual balance-sheet.

Division 10 (Scotland): J. Wilson (Lanarkshire Secretary) states that the

college has the largest number of classes in its history and that the attendances are higher than they have ever been: The enrolments this year look as if they are going to increase by 100 per cent. Ayrshire's Conference was addressed by A. Woodburn and a number of classes are already under way. Glasgow and Edinburgh have both big lists of classes and Fife is also very active. The General Secretary visited Dundee and one result is the decision of the Dundee Calender Workers' Union to have an N.C.L.C. educational scheme which will help the work in the Dundee area.

Division 11 (Ireland): The visit of J. F. Horrabin to Belfast was a great success. The public meeting was delighted with his treatment of "World Problems of To-day." The Belfast and District N.C.L.C. Conference was also highly successful—119 delegates were appointed to attend the conference by Trade Unions, Co-op. Guilds and Labour Parties. The Conference elected an Executive Committee for the Belfast District. The Belfast classes commenced splendidly and many new affiliations are already rumoured. The Newry and 'Derry classes are doing well. John S. Clarke gave two lantern lectures on "The Evolution of Militarism and Warfare" in Belfast on October roth. J.S.C. was in fine form dealing with the subject in a thorough-going working-class fashion. His slides are really first-class and up-to-date. A series of Sunday Educational Lectures is being arranged; the list includes several lantern lectures by the organiser.

Division 12: Class work has recommenced throughout the Division. The unsettled condition in the mining areas is making systematic work somewhat difficult, many of our active workers being busy with various matters connected with the lock-out. Where it has been possible to commence our classes in the mining towns and villages the attendance is phenomenal. Comrade Millership, of Worksop, an old Labour College student, is making an effort to open this area for N.C.L.C. classes. This is new ground for us and we hope his efforts will meet with success. Branches of the N.U.R. in various parts of the area are showing a greater interest in the classes this year. We should like all our friends in No. 12 Division to urge the Midland District Council of the N.U.R. to do something for the entire

area in the way of an educational scheme. Comrade Jarvis, of Lincoln, reports the affiliation of the Trades Council. This is no mean achievement in this W.E.A. stronghold. We all regret the illness of Nottingham's hard-working Secretary, Mrs. Skellinton.

N.C.L.C. DIRECTORY—*Additions and Corrections.*

- Division 2: *Aldershot C.G.:* Secy.: H. J. Lloyd, 59 St. George's Road, Aldershot, Hants.
Bridport C.G.: Secy.: E. Stone, 17 South Street, Bridport, Dorset.
Oxford L.C.: Secy.: A. Hughes, 66 Bullingdon Road, Oxford.
Portsmouth L.C.: Secy.: Mr. Sykes, 24 Winter Road, Southsea, Portsmouth.
- „ 4: *Abergavenny L.C.:* Secy.: H. C. Thurston, 45 Castle Street, Abergavenny, South Wales.
Glynneath and District L.C.: Secy.: B. Jones, 5 Company Street, Resolven, South Wales.
Ogmore Vale L.C.: Secy.: I. Williams, 2 Meadow Street, Ogmore Vale, Nr. Bridgend.
Pontypridd C.G.: Secy.: M. Rees, 12 Dyffryn Road, Rhydyfelin, Pontypridd, South Wales.
Ystrad Mynach C.G.: Secy.: E. T. Pugh, "Maesycoed," Penallta Road, Hengoed, Nr. Cardiff.
- „ 5: *Bath L.C.:* Secy.: W. P. Reed, 5 North Parade Passage, Bath.
- „ 7: *Leeds L.C.:* Secy.: Miss Mabel Warner, 2 Exeter Street, Woodhouse Lane, Leeds.
Normanton L.C.: Secy.: G. Sylvester, 1 Clifton Street, Wakefield Road, Normanton, Yorks.
Slaithwaite L.C.: Secy.: J. W. Kennedy, Ing Head, Linthwaite, Huddersfield.
- „ 10: *Aberdeen L.C. (Scotland):* Secy.: Miss N. Miller, 10 Strachan's Lane, Holborn Street, Aberdeen.

THE PLEBS BOOKSHELF

I KNOW a man who flatly refuses to arrange the books on his shelves according to subject, or size, or the colour of the binding, or any of the usual dictates of law and order as applied to bookshelves. He just puts books wherever they'll fit—and the result is certainly interesting; more especially as he hasn't a one-track mind.

What reminded me of him was the three books lying in front of me this month. They are decidedly "miscellaneous"; and they're all good.

* * *

Number One is "Yaffle's" play, *Foiling the Reds*, just out from the Labour Publishing Co. (2/-). I was especially interested in this, because one of the few performances of the play was given under Plebs League auspices a few months ago—and "Yaffle" said we were the best audience he'd had. It reads—assisted by "Flambo's" excellent illustrations—as funnily as it acted; which is saying a good deal. "Yaffle" on top form is one of the world's great men,

Waters is the writer of *An Economic History of England* which was highly praised in *The Plebs* a short time ago. That book, being intended for use in schools, had to stop about 1870; because when you draw nearer to-day than that you get on to all sorts of thorny subjects, and of course impartiality must at all costs be preserved. But Miss Waters is obviously a highly intelligent woman, and not simply an antiquarian. So she carried on her studies to 1914, and in this new book traces the main lines of social and economic development during the last half century, in order to "give those interested a statement, based on a short survey of their origin, of the economic problems facing the men of the twentieth century." Her book is a wonderful piece of condensation. The chapter headings will give some idea of the ground covered:—Agriculture, Our Chief Industries (Cotton, Wool, Coal and Iron), Organised Labour and the Growth of Capitalism, State Control—Factory Legislation and the Poor Law,

NOTICE—*To Plebs League Groups and Members* : Nominations for the League Executive Committee should reach the Office not later than November 15th.

and in this play he is at his best almost all through. If I start quoting I'm afraid I shan't be able to stop; but I'm just going to open the book at any old page and copy out the first thing that catches my eye. . . Page 33, Lola (the Vamp) is addressing Charlie (the Ideal Working Man)—

"Charlie, I have never asked a favour of any man before, but you—you are different from other men. Charlie, won't you—for my sake, help us to utilise the co-operative machinery for the socialisation of industry?"

Foiling the Reds is not difficult to produce—though it needs acting by folks with a sense of humour. It would "read" splendidly, too. Workers' Theatre groups and Plebs propagandists should get hold of it without delay.

* * *

Number Two is *A Short Survey of the Economic Development of England and the Colonies, 1874-1914*, by Charlotte M. Waters (Noel Douglas, 7/6.) Miss

Imperialism and the Scramble for Markets, Banking and Exchange, Changes in Economic Theory and Outlook. (This last contains a section on Marx which suggests that Miss Waters' gifts lie rather in the direction of summarising facts than of criticising theories.) See that it is in your local Free Library. (And of course it will be added to the N.C.L.C. Tutors' Library.)

* * *

Number Three only costs 6d. and should be at once acquired by every student of Modern Imperialism—C. L. Malone's pamphlet, *New China* (I.L.P.) This is one of the most satisfying pieces of work I've struck for some time. Not only does it summarise the somewhat confused medley of facts about China today; but it does so with the "first-hand" touch of a writer who has been and seen for himself. I hope every N.C.L.C. class will get a supply, and every N.C.L.C. tutor spread the facts which this pamphlet contains.

J. F. H.

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In spite of demands for "economy," the Board of Education has promised the N.C.L.C.'s principal educational rival increased State financial assistance, if more work is to be done. The N.C.L.C. therefore urges Trade Unionists to see that their organisations support Independent Working-class Education and arrange Educational Schemes with the N.C.L.C.



J For Booklet, giving full particulars of the N.C.L.C.'s work, including Correspondence Courses, send 3d. in stamps to J. P. M. Millar, General Secretary, N.C.L.C., 62 Hanover Street, Edinburgh.