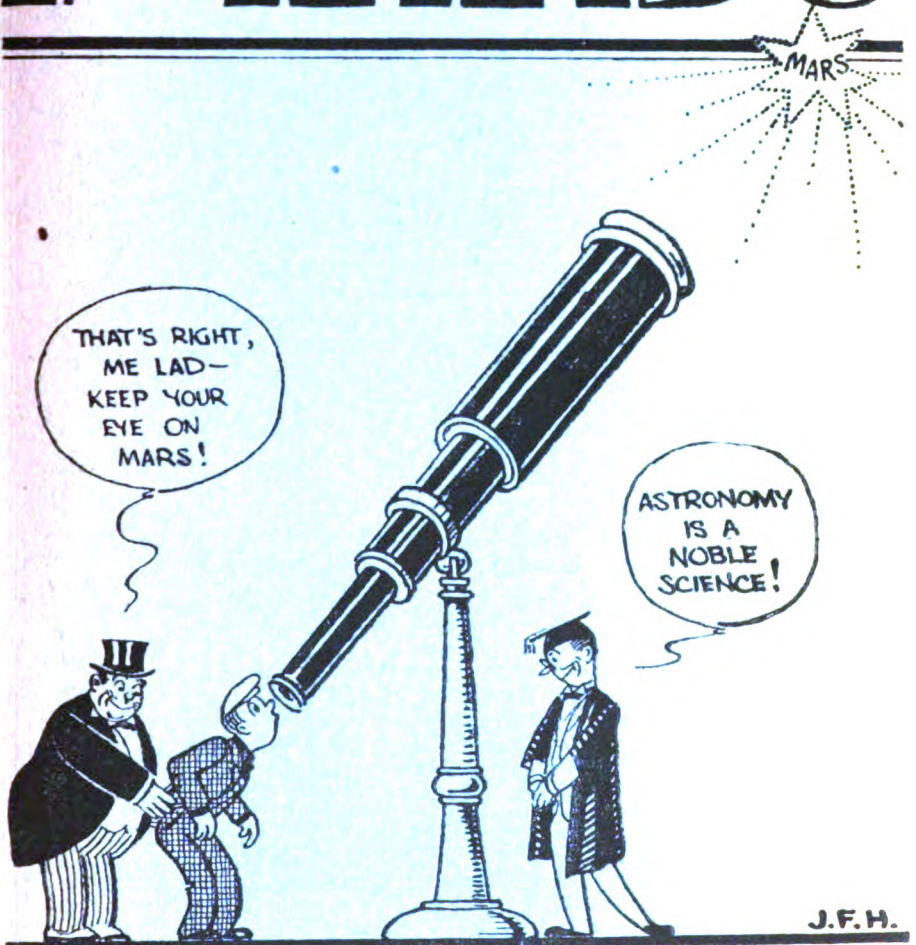


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THE PLEBS

*The Organ of the National Council
of Labour Colleges*

VOL. XVIII.

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THE PLEB POINT OF VIEW

WE write these words on the day when the Miners' Delegate Conference is meeting in London to receive the figures of the district voting on the Government's terms, and to decide upon their next step. What that next step will be—what the developments of the immediate future will be—we do not know. But this much is certain: every sign of the times—and the dastardly terms offered by the Government are a sign and a portent indeed!—points to an intensification of the class-struggle far greater than most of us in this country have known in our lifetimes. It is not, perhaps, too much to say that the British Revolution began last May; and that it is going on now, without a break—whether miners, transport workers or any other section of the workers be involved at a particular time—until the issue between those with nothing but their labour power to sell, and those who live by the exploitation of that labour power, is settled once and for all time.

* * * *

We repeat—every sign of the times points to the truth of this. And therefore any man who cries "Peace" where there is no peace is an enemy of the workers. "Woe to him who *Get Ready for the Fight* pours oil upon the waters when God hath brewed them into a gale!" We take our stand, in the Independent Working-Class Movement, on this fact of class-struggle. We have now to see to it, more than ever, that the education we give is designed to be a weapon in the workers' fight. That implies no change in our attitude, but, on the contrary, a new faith and fervour in our advocacy of the principles for which we have stood since our movement began. Never was real working-class education more needed than now. Never was it more necessary that that education should concern itself, first and foremost, with the actual needs of the struggle in which we and our fellows are engaged.

* * * *

Months ago we pointed out, in reference to the workings of "E.P.A.", that the whole working-class movement, political and industrial, was "seditious"—or it was nothing. Capitalist *A Class-Warrior* law, and the whole capitalist State system, aims before all else at the preservation of the existing order. The Labour movement exists to change that order; an aim which, from the capitalist point of view, is essentially "seditious."

So, in view of these facts, we congratulate our comrade Vin Williams, N.C.L.C. staff tutor in the Notts.-Derbyshire area, who

is now by police orders prevented from addressing meetings or even from attending his T.U. branch without police permission. There will be more of us in Vin Williams' position if we do our duty to our fellows—trust Jix, Churchill, Birkenhead, Baldwin, Chamberlain and Co. for that!

* * * *

For be sure these gentlemen will not hesitate to scrap democratic forms the moment that these forms are no longer the convenient instruments of their class. Labour Boards of *Capitalist* Guardians, elected by huge majorities, are being *Democracy!* superseded by paid officials from Whitehall, because their policy does not please the Tory Minister of Health. Labour magistrates have been refused seats on their Bench in coal-mining areas because they might be "biassed," and coal-miners have therefore been tried before Benches of J.P.'s consisting entirely of coal-owners or those interested in coal profits. The latest development is the refusal to accept the signature of trade union officials who are J.P.'s on official documents, and officials of Druids or Oddfellows have been asked to sign in their place. The Tory Press, furious at Labour's success in the recent municipal elections, is already talking of "saving electors from the results of their own apathy." The reality of the class-war is being forced home on the most moderate Labour supporter by a supremely powerful Government of Vested Interests.

* * * *

Our educational movement—as we learned from hard experience in the early days—is hampered and weakened to an enormous extent unless we have our own literature, designed to meet *The Sinews* the needs of our students. That is the work upon *of War* which the Plebs League has been concentrating since the N.C.L.C. took over the organisation of classes in every part of the country. And that work is in danger—unless our comrades rally to our support. We are taking risks in issuing the two books—the *Atlas* and the *History of the Great Strike*—announced in this issue. We look to every I.W.C.E.er to back us in these two ventures to the full extent of his ability and opportunities. On another page we describe a scheme for a Loan or "Investment" Fund by which every comrade can take a share in our new ventures, and by so doing help on the work which is so vital to the effectiveness of our education. Don't treat this matter as of merely formal interest—it is urgent. Do what you can to help us *now*.

With regard to the very surprising news that the General Council of the T.U.C. has refused to honour its promise to take over the London Labour College, we can scarcely do better than quote the statement made on the subject by J. P. M. Millar, General Secretary of the N.C.L.C., in *The Sunday Worker* of Nov. 21st. "The decision regarding the Labour College is, if public announcements are worth anything, a direct breach of a bargain definitely made. Prior to the Trades Union Congress it was given out that the General Council had decided to take over the Labour College, London, and had been considering the taking over of Ruskin. It cannot be argued that the decision against Easton Lodge compelled the General Council to go back on its undertaking. The General Council is authorised to spend on education £2,000 per annum of its own funds. It must have accumulated some funds from previous allowances, and in addition has received some grants from unions. Moreover, when the N.U.R. and S.W.M.F. agreed to hand over the Labour College to the General Council, both unions promised to send a substantial number of students and to provide a subsidy for several years. What justification, then, is there for not taking the College over?"

"One result of the General Council's decision," Millar concludes, "is that the N.U.R. has informed the S.W.M.F. that it proposes to relinquish its joint-ownership of the Labour College, London. That information has been received with noisy rejoicing by the capitalist Press and, I am afraid, with subdued rejoicing from the reactionary quarters in the working-class movement. The Labour College has been in difficulties before, and such rejoicings are, to say the least of it, dangerously premature."

**DO YOU
BELIEVE IN
LENDING MONEY
AT INTEREST ?**

Of Course You Don't !

THEN HAVE the COURAGE of YOUR CONVICTIONS

See Page 448.

STRAWS IN THE WIND.

*The Imperial Conference — Europe or Empire? — Mond's Ideal
The Diversity of the Empire — The Labour Aristocracy
The Labour Party and Empire*

THE Imperial Conference, in progress during November, signals for British Imperialism a very important parting of the roads. Ever since the great depression started in 1920, British capitalism has been torn between two sets of impulses, as violently as a neurotic, and has hovered in impotent indecision between the two. The one draws it towards closer union in European economy; the other towards separation from Europe in the creation of a self-sufficient Empire unit. Now, to a very much greater extent than ever before, this decision is being forced upon British capitalism, first, by Locarno; second, by the extent to which certain separatist tendencies in the Dominions have shown themselves during the last 12 months (Hertzog nationalist Government in South Africa, opposition to the action of the British Governor-General in Canada, request for withdrawal of Governor of New South Wales by Mr. Lang, the Premier); third, by the formation of the European steel cartel and the invitation to the British steel industry to join it.

In the last year the opinion has been growing in capitalist counsels in favour of a European Free Trade Union, which should break down the barriers of European trade (which is still little over 90 per cent. of pre-war, while U.S.A. trade is 126 per cent.) and reopen and extend European markets for British goods. It is argued that one of the advantages which U.S.A. industry enjoys is the large, assured home market, which enables it to enjoy all the economies of large-scale production, and so to export its surplus goods at cheaper prices. To compete with U.S.A., therefore, British capitalism requires a large, assured European market—an economic United States of Europe—in which Britain shall play the leading rôle. Dr. Leaf and W. T. Layton, editor of *The Economist*, in the spring of this year made important pronouncements in this sense. The only practicable way in which this could be achieved was by special commercial treaties between nations for preferential treatment of each other's goods in the matter of tariffs, or by international agreements between trusts and cartels of the various countries for sharing out the market between them and eliminating competition. The formation of the Franco-Belgian-German Steel Cartel, accordingly, raised the question of British participation. *The Economist* conducted a campaign in favour of

such participation, saying it was the only way Britain could hope to retain its position in the world market. Sir Alfred Mond made similar proposals for the coal industry ; and a conference of leading German and British industrialists was arranged to take place at Romsey in Kent.

It became clear, however, that if Britain went into the steel cartel, she might well find herself there as a junior rather than a senior partner ; and the fear was expressed by those who opposed participation that Britain might find herself in a weaker position (her interests insufficiently regarded in respect to the *quota* of output allotted to her, etc.) if she went in than if she stood outside. On the other hand, if she stood outside, she would have to meet the competition of the Continent as well as U.S.A. Further, there was the matter of the Empire. Locarno, the year previous, had raised the issue politically : Were the Dominions to be bound by Locarno, or to stand outside? If they stood outside, they might well be estranged by the entangling alliances of the Mother Country and thrown into the arms of U.S.A. If they came in, were they to stand on an equal footing with Britain ; and, if so, what if one of them (*e.g.*, Ireland) took a side in European counsels against the Mother Country? Now a similar issue presented itself economically. If British economic interests linked themselves in a European union, how was this to be reconciled with a close Empire economic unit? It might mean "goodbye" to Imperial Preference once and for all ; and Canada and Australia might have to take second place in Britain's markets to Germany or Italy ; and in such circumstances the separatist tendencies of the Dominions would increase. Canada, already predominantly overrun with U.S.A. capital, might soon become to U.S.A. what Belgium is to France. Australia would more and more go to Wall Street to find the capital for her rapid industrial development, and with it look elsewhere for her trade prospects.

The Imperial Conference brought all these difficulties into the limelight. What the Dominions want is preferential treatment for their raw materials and foodstuffs in British markets. This involves Britain imposing tariffs on non-Empire raw materials and foodstuffs, which, though more inclined to do than formerly owing to her new desire to develop Empire sources of raw materials and so be free from America, she can hardly do without raising the price of those imports (*e.g.*, England relies very largely on meat from Argentine). In return for such preference the Dominions are willing in return to give British manufacturers preference over foreign goods in their markets ; but they will not go on giving this in return for nothing,

since they have their own "infant industries" to protect (British Empire tariffs have substantially risen since 1914 and more than those of other countries); while Britain, from her side, fears too great dependence on Empire markets in view of the growth of Empire industry itself which should one day supply all their own needs.

Another difficulty is the diminution of Britain's capacity to export capital (referred to in another article in this issue). Of the reduced amount which Britain has lent abroad since the war, 75 per cent. of it has gone to the Empire, as compared with 45 per cent. pre-war. Most of this has gone to Australia, with the result that British exports to Australia have increased since the war (while those to India, Canada and South Africa have decreased). But even this does not satisfy completely Australia's requirements; while on the other hand there has been increasing talk in the City of London about the "unsoundness" of Australian finance, and the relative unprofitableness of investing there when there are so many other needs for British capital. To which Mr. Bruce, Prime Minister of Australia, has replied in effect: "Very well, if you make bones about financing us, we will go elsewhere" (e.g., speech reported in *The Times*, November 17th). Meanwhile, in the case of Canada, "the relative decline of our export trade is probably not unconnected with the displacement of London by New York as the market to which Canada turns for capital" (Prof. Clay in *M.G. Comm.*, Oct. 14th).

It is of considerable significance, therefore, to find Sir Alfred Mond, who had earlier been one of the prime movers in the conversations with German industrialists, making a pronouncement in the following words in *The Observer* of November 14th:—

"On the one side there will be the U.S.A., a political and economic unit—and on the other side the United Economic States of Europe. Where is Great Britain to join? . . . I visualise Britain as a pivot of a great Empire which, in itself is a greater economic force than either of the two other possible world economic units. Great Britain's trade is already largely conducted over the seas towards her Dominions and not to the land across the Channel. Great Britain's eyes should be turned, and her vision focussed, in the same direction as her trade."

This is to be done by making the Empire an economic unit and "as self-supporting as reasonably possible in food, raw materials and manufactured products, while eliminating all dependence on foreign countries." The tendency to think of Britain "as a European Power mainly interested in European affairs" is sternly condemned as "dangerous." With a closer economic unit (together with Empire Trusts foreshadowed in the new Chemical Trust) "we should be in a position to obtain for all the members of the combination terms and conditions in the world's markets, modifications and

amendments of tariff schedules"—in other words, it would be a bargaining weapon in a gigantic world rivalry between three giant politico-economic groups. This is the new, more highly organised, more violent Imperialism that is emerging from the post-war "stabilisation."

Now, the British Empire as a unit is much less homogeneous and more likely to disintegrate than U.S.A., and probably than Europe also. An outstanding cause of this is the fundamental cleft in the British Empire itself between (a) the Crown Colonies, exploited without any pretence at democracy (E. Africa, W. Africa, Egypt, etc.) ; (b) the Dominions (Canada, S. Africa, etc.), which are the colonies acquired in the mercantilist period of the 17th and 18th centuries and were given self-government during the non-Imperialist period of the 19th century, and now stand virtually as independent nations with a developed capitalism of their own, who will cut their nominal allegiance to the Mother Country if ever an attempt is made to use it against their interest. In addition there are two sub-groups : (c) India, a former Crown Colony, which is now aspiring to Dominion status and is developing a capitalism of its own to which it is seeking to give tariff "protection" ; (d) protectorates and mandatories, which retain the form of their own government, but are actually under the control in all important matters of Imperial "advisers," garrisons, officers of gendarmerie, etc. (e.g., Palestine, Iraq, Egypt) ; and are either countries which Britain intends later to make into complete Crown Colonies, or else countries too strong to be subjugated entirely, but not capitalistically developed enough to stand on their own.

We intend in the next and subsequent issues of THE PLEBS to have articles dealing in greater detail with the character of Imperialist exploitation and the complex unstable tendencies to which it gives rise in these various sections of the Empire. We will not, therefore, dilate here on the unstable character of this geographical conglomeration that British capitalism, in its last desperate struggle to keep its "place in the sun," is trying to make into a homogeneous "unit." One aspect of it only will we mention at the moment : the fact that Imperialism, so far as it succeeded in bolstering up British capitalism, created a "labour aristocracy" in the home country, and similarly in the Dominions—in the latter case tending to follow the lines of race : the "whites" occupying the privileged positions, which they jealously guard for themselves, while the "blacks" are crowded into the lowest paid and most exploited occupations. This "labour aristocracy" tends to be pro-Imperialist and to separate its interests sharply from that of the exploited masses (e.g., S. Africa "colour problem").

Imperialism, therefore, in its struggle to maintain its equilibrium, leans on the support of this "labour aristocracy" and welcomes its unifying tendencies. Moreover, the more far-sighted Imperialists are seeing that the only way to hold the Empire together is to pursue a "liberal" policy of concessions and of flexibility in treating the various elements of the Empire differently—the Dominions as equals, India by promises of Dominion status "in the future," Crown Colonies by buying the support of native chieftains and such labour aristocracy as may be there, countries where a strong nationalist movement shows itself by grants of limited self-government (*e.g.*, Egypt). It is very significant that the ideological representatives of the interests of this labour aristocracy are now coming forward with a developed policy of this kind.

The indecision in the capitalist camp between Europe or Empire has reflected itself in the Labour Party as well. Some have held fixedly to old Cobdenite principles which bias them towards union with Europe. Others have tried to remain neutral to the Empire on pacifist grounds, but now find that when Labour is faced with "office" they must take their stand on one side or the other. Recently there has developed a powerful group which reflects inside the Labour Party the Mond-policy which we have explained above. This group is a curious combination of the most Right-Wing Fabians who vulgarise "Socialism" into meaning merely the extension of the influence of the capitalist-Imperialist State with sections of the so-called "Left-Wing." The new policy is succinctly expressed by its chief originator, Major Haden Guest, in a new booklet,* which claims that "the recent change in the Labour movement with regard to our policy of the Empire" marks the adoption of a policy that is the only practicable alternative to the Communist policy of organising the English workers with the Colonial masses in a general offensive against capitalist Imperialism. He would "reform" Imperialism and place it on a more liberal basis, not attack it; "accepting the Empire as a step towards a world organisation"—this is "the difference between the new Empire conception and the older International Socialist conception" (p. 18). The new policy was adopted at Liverpool in 1925, as a result of the Labour Party's experience in office of "conducting an Empire policy at least as well as—and in some ways better than—other parties in the State" (p. 9). The programme then adopted provided for taking steps "to ensure closer political and economic relationships between Great Britain, India, and the self-governing Dominions," for "self-government" for India, *provided* she remains a member of the "British Commonwealth of Nations," and the closer

* *The Labour Party and the Empire*, by L. Haden Guest (Lab. Pub. Co., 1/- net).

co-operation of the British Labour Party with the Labour Parties of the Dominions (*i.e.*, with the labour aristocracy of those countries). With regard to the Crown Colonies, Major Haden Guest is opposed to any "campaign among them calling for self-determination," since this "would result in tribal warfare and international complications" (p. 21); and he personally (together with J. H. Thomas, Wheatley, and the Clydeside group) would favour support of a scheme of Imperial Preference to cement the Dominions together. This new policy, he states, was partly the result of the report of the Ormsby-Gore Commission to East Africa, sent out by the Labour Government, partly of the discussion of the Labour Commonwealth Group set up first under the chairmanship of the ex-Tory Lincolnshire landowner, Mr. Royce, and later (on Mr. Royce's death) of George Lansbury.

If this policy becomes operative, then it provides the maximum chance of the dream of Sir Alfred Mond being realised. For it provides the greatest possibility of harmonising the violent contradictions of the Empire, and in particular in detaching the labour aristocracy and sections of the developing colonial nationalist movement from their anti-Imperialism, and makes them, in return for a share in the fruits of exploiting the native masses and for a privileged position, acquiesce in a limited degree of autonomy beneath the general hegemony of the Mother Country. On whether the workers of Britain allow this policy to be foisted on them, or whether they reject it, will, accordingly, very largely depend the continuance of British capitalist-Imperialism "from strength to strength" and even to a new lease of life—until it comes crashing down in the next Imperialist war.

ZED.

CAPITAL'S NEXT STEP.

MR. GARVIN, of the *Observer*, has been looking at the prospectuses of new capital issues waiting, in the newspaper advertisement files, for the defeat of the miners. And he tells us, "the necessity for more powerful consolidations is going to be as fully understood in this country as elsewhere." What is the significance of these powerful unions of capital? To answer we need to grasp the gathered fullness of the power wielded by what Lenin described as "the financial oligarchy"—the heart of the imperialist class.

In Britain this caste consists not only of the banks, the Big Five and the merchant banks, but of the big insurance houses, investment trusts, and amalgamators like the late Lord Rhondda or Mond, who have access to vast financial resources, their own or other peoples.

*Power of
Financial Oligarchy*

In other capitalist countries the same type of machinery exists. This oligarchy, the users of the great pool of profits made from trusts and monopolies at home and from imperial exploitation, had achieved control before the war. Every shock of foreign competition, due to the development of industry in Europe, America, and now Asia, Africa and Oceania as well, with its consequences—lock-outs, price-cutting, depression, wars—increased its grip. Recent events, the currency stringency and the British coal lock-out especially, have virtually completed its power in all leading capitalist countries.

In nothing was this power seen more clearly than in the forcing through of the gold standard policy by the United States and Britain. The gold standard faced the red flag in *The Gold Standard* Europe, and with the defeat of the revolution in Central Europe its general adoption was forced through as the only alternative. It had important consequences. In the first place it damaged export industries by lowering export prices (by the raising of the sterling exchange) while "costs" remained at their old high level, and it raised the real value of all debt (it is this that makes the gold standard so attractive to the creditor interests of all countries). This caused deflation, a check in export, shortage of credit, an attempt to cut wages, involving labour war. All these things accentuated the industrial depression.

But at the same time it added to the power of the financial magnates. It gave the central money executives huge control. To quote the words of Dr. Leaf, of the Westminster Bank :

"The Bank of England is the centre not only of the national finance. . . but is also the centre of the general deposit banking system of the country. . . The Governor is in constant touch with the Chancellor, and he is the medium by which the financial policy is conveyed to the City for execution."

And no doubt *vice versa*. A statement of this policy is to be found in the Hilton Young report on India.

At the same time the mortgagees, bankers, amalgamators who could offer ready money wiped up the industrialists who found their debts doubled and trade halved. The coal industry, the cotton industry, and the steel industry can be readily cited as examples in Britain.

Now we come to the most important effect, and the main reason, for the re-establishment of the gold standard. It provided a common monetary unit, an international minimum stability, an *Safe for Investment* L.C.M. as we learnt at school, on which finance capital could operate its policy. And the main feature of that policy is international investment. It is true that depreciating currencies made it easy to pick up bargains easily, but this was only of temporary advantage. No interest could be collected, exchange dumping could not be stopped till a stabilised

gold currency was introduced. The gold standard was first introduced as a means whereby United States and British finance could percolate the world.

The result of the financial rehabilitation of the productive centres of Europe was to set the normal factors of imperialism working hard. Germany, Belgium and soon France and Italy were still in a measure subordinate : the retention of some of their gold balance at New York and London secured this ; but they were again entities in the world, often co-operating with Norman and Strong in the common interest of the monetary standard. The "new" area which thus came to the front was Central Europe.

"Europe is no longer merely a market, but an active industrial competitor," complains the *Financial News* (23rd October, 1926), and it is rapidly developing the features of imperialism, though still (to a degree and under protest from the Governor of the Reichsbank) dependent on capital import.

The financial oligarchy in the leading industrial nations has now obtained control. What is its policy for production in face of the decline of production and overseas development? There are three phases.

Finance Capital's Production Policy In the first place, *Regimentation*, the organisation of "disinterested" centres of finance oligarchy control, and the provision of certain industrial fundamentals under a sort of capitalist collectivism. The electrical "grid" is an apt illustration and allegory for this policy.

Keynes, in his pamphlet on *The End of Laissez Faire* (i.e., of free competitive capital), notes

"the trend of Joint Stock Institutions, when they have reached a certain age and size, to approximate to the status of public corporations rather than that of individualistic enterprise."

In other words, big capitalist institutions, banks, railways, insurance companies, etc., secure with a high dividend rate, act *in the interests of capitalism* as a whole ("public corporations"), not simply for their own hand. One finds this "broad view" not only in the Bank of England, but in all the big finance groups. The Electricity Act, like the 1921 Railway Act, is an example of the forcing of a vital basic industry into modern large-scale trust form. Certain parts of the coal industry may soon provide another.

In the second place, *Rationalisation*. This implies the setting up of large-scale monopolies, worked either through complete trustification or cartels (agreement on prices, production, markets, etc.), virtually covering the industry concerned, for the purpose of regulating and limiting production. The Samuel Commission, "weak and woolly" though it was, was an official statement of an approach to this policy.

The policy involves in its entirety,

"the operation of units of a group in such a way as to secure the maximum efficiency of working. . . The technical re-equipment (is) pushed forward and plant not fitting in with the requirements of modern mass output ideas has been to all intents and purposes discarded or laid idle, so that the present-day units in operation are composite examples of the latest technical improvements." (D.O.T. report on Germany.)

The *Financial News* is also worth quoting on the subject :

Combinations, mergers and interlockings, an aspect of limited liability investments and trading little foreseen when that principle was conceded, have grown up because of their advantages. . . (There is) the conviction both that the absorbing power of markets is not fixed and that markets can be better developed by strong combinations. The truth is that capital is too dear to be ventured in industrial war. To limit industrial war is to conserve resources."

The operation of "rationalisation" is thus (1) high centralisation ; (2) wholesale discarding of inefficient plant, with consequent widespread unemployment ; (3) concentration on modern production methods which further increases capacity ; (4) restriction and limitation of production to keep up prices, as in the new Franco-German Steel Cartel. This causes more unemployment.

It will be seen that there is a root contradiction between policies (3), added efficiency, and (4), restriction of output. The question which immediately arises is therefore that of markets, and therefore the one within which these highly protected agreements are to work.

This involves the third step in finance capital's policy for production, namely *Ramification* by means of international combines.

"There seems little doubt but that we are on the eve of enormous developments in respect of what we might call the International Combine"

wrote the week-end tout of the *Financial News* (6th Nov., 1926).

They provide examples of spurious internationalism, really of a super-organised imperialism transcending certain national boundaries, in no way altering the nature of capitalism *New Imperial Groupings* or mitigating imperialist rivalries. We have new groupings as the result of the great changes of the last twelve years, but the emergence of these newer groupings is altering only the incidence, not the character of the imperial struggle. The international monopolies, as Lenin described, now struggle to divide the world. Sir A. Mond realises that :

"The economic trend of the world at the present time is one continuous advance towards growing concentration of interests and of industries. Economic units tend to become larger and larger; industries tend to become more and more operated as units. The world of to-day seems to be shaping itself into certain definite economic communities." (*Observer*, 14/11/1926.)

He gives America, Europe "the counterpoise," and, he hopes, the British Empire "the counter-balance," as the main groups. In forming Imperial Chemical Industries, Ltd., he certainly furthers his hope, but it is fairly on the cards that British finance capital will play one group against the other with the shifting friendliness of gamblers staking their mistresses.

D. PARSONS.

RESEARCH AS TRAINING

F. J. Adkins here continues the Series on "Research Work: What it is and How to set about it," which was begun by R. W. Postgate in the last issue.

IN last month's PLEBS, R. W. Postgate began his article with the words, "Study is of two kinds"; and I feel that I cannot do better than follow his example and begin mine with the words. Research is of two kinds: Research proper, or the widening of the bounds of knowledge; and research as training. It is with the latter aspect of research that, as my title indicates, I wish to deal.

Let us consider first how the majority of students set about the learning of their subjects; they take lectures; they read a prescribed book; they prepare written work; and, perhaps, they attend a seminar, or conversation class. Beyond this earlier stage lie for the keen and efficient students wider reading and discussion, verbal and written; and as a result we may say that persevering students can acquire a certain word-born and word-nourished knowledge of their subject.

But it is necessarily of the word, wordy. It is perforce a pre-digested and peptonised knowledge; perhaps even a tainted knowledge, and in any case a knowledge tinged by the medium through which it has reached the student: the mental habits of the teacher or writer. Such knowledge is a structure of which the bricks are words. The wider the reading and discussion of the student, the less dominant, of course, the personal factor of any one expounder of the subject becomes. Different lines of advance, different angles of treatment may tend to counterbalance each other and leave in the mind of the student a knowledge of the subject independent of any one presentment of it; but, for all that, even this wider, better-founded knowledge remains verbal and second, third or fourth hand in its nature.

Is this as far as we can go? Are we to be content with weighing up what others have done and taking our own line as a result? Such is, of course, the usual process. A teacher who can hear his pupil say: "To my master the subject meant so and so; but to me it means such and such," is a teacher who has succeeded and has earned his place in the apostolical succession. But, at any rate, in certain subjects, we are already free from this laying on of hands.

If we are studying a branch of Natural Science our teachers turn us away from their lectures and the set books into the laboratory or the field or quarry or river-bed or beach; and there we have to experiment and observe for ourselves. We learn not only to read the open book of Nature, but to ask Nature questions. We find

out things for ourselves ; and although our discoveries are only, of course, rediscoveries from the point of view of the subject we are studying, they are, nevertheless, real discoveries for us ; they are research as training ; and it is because science subjects afford such training that they hold a place by themselves in educational schemes.

Now, if we could only arrange work in the historical and economic subjects which more particularly concern us to correspond with the practical work of the science laboratory—or still more, perhaps, with the field-work of the geologist and botanist—we should gain in every way. Not only should we increase the training value of our studies, but our knowledge of our subjects would also gain a new character. Our investigations would make us increasingly independent of our authorities and increasingly dependent on the facts we should have found out or verified for ourselves. Our practice of tackling our subject “in the round,” as it revealed itself less in the pages of books than in the conditions in the midst of which we are living, would sooner or later develop our touch or instinct, which would greatly increase our effectiveness when we apply our theories to existing problems.

And this last is perhaps the chief gain of all. J. R. Seeley used to say that history without politics has no fruit, and politics without history has no root. Unless our studies can be linked up with present-day problems, unless our knowledge can be focussed upon the present position, it is as largely waste as the ordinary broadcasting in comparison with the newest Beam system ; and since the most obvious field to begin upon is the local field, it is fortunate that the three-dimensional or concrete study I am advocating has not only great educational advantages, but has the further practical advantage of fitting the student for the local political struggle by training him intensively on the actual facts of his locality. A man so trained is in a different category from the ordinary elected person ; his first-hand local knowledge is the first essential of ultimate local mastery.

What practical work can we undertake to gain these ends ? I do not say that practical work should supersede the more usual lectures and reading ; it never can. But it ought surely to supplement them and to discover local illustrations and instances of more widespread movements.

The real history of the industrial revolution is not to be found in the text-books. It was first written by the revolution itself upon the face of England ; and if we can only learn to read that face and to understand the significance of the scars, lines, warts and bruises we are too familiar with to speculate about, we have the area for our field-work lying all round us and challenging our individual and corporate investigation. This book is harder to read than a nicely

printed digest, but it is the original authority from which the others derive, and everybody has not only the right but also the duty to go back to the original.

Just as a botanist can read the history of a tree in the rings of its trunk-section, so can the historian read the history of a town in the rings of its growth. From the early centre of Parish Church and Market Square the names of the main streets indicate the changes that have occurred ; as witness Boar Lane, Leeds, and the various Gates, like Deansgate, Manchester ; Fargate, Sheffield ; Briggate, Leeds. Then, in the midst of the slum ring of back-to-back houses and the big-windowed upper storeys of the hand-loom weavers' home-workshops, we find such dating names as Hanover Chapel, Brunswick Street, Regent Terrace, the Adelaide Hotel, the Duke of Kent. Such a town so studied is an epitome of the whole change, especially if we note the implications of the outer rings : the mentality of the suburbs, with their Alexandra Parks and Jubilee buildings ; the self-consciousness of the town-planning areas still further afield.

Or, if we turn to industrial history, what cannot we still save from oblivion by recording, while yet there is time, passing trade customs and compiling and collating what our elders have to tell us of the conditions of the past. An exercise-book filled with jottings of this description is worth more in some ways than the most expensive text-book, because, although it will not, of course, supersede the text-book, it has an originality and a uniqueness that lift it above the text-book level into the august company of the sources and the authorities ; and the compiler of a record of this kind finds himself able to use with a sense of freedom the formal collections in libraries, museums, muniment rooms and archives which would ordinarily have baffled and overawed him.

But, since history is but the politics of the past and politics only history in the making, we must not confine our first-hand work to the mere dissection of the dead past ; we must venture also upon the vivisection of the living present and discover how the history of the future is being moulded in our own day.

As people awaken more and more to the muddles of the moment and begin to think about avoiding still worse muddles in the future, they are being forced into a more thorough and scientifically organised study of the facts of the areas that concern them. As a result of this necessity, surveys of different kinds and with different degrees of authority and fullness are being increasingly undertaken. The Civic Survey of Sheffield is actually a municipal enterprise ; educational trusts finance others, while voluntary bodies like the Browning Settlement of Walworth in South London are also at work. Sometimes, as is the case in South Lancashire and East Kent, the areas involved are considerable ; but, whatever the

purpose or scale of the work, the method is that of a first-hand examination of the actual conditions and a turning of the results into graphic rather than verbal form. By working statistics down on to the map of the area, we not only display our facts in an easily-grasped and interesting (often, indeed, a surprising) form, but we escape from the handicap of verbiage; and a set of slides made from our graphs and charts may well be a more powerful stimulant to our fellow-citizens than any other I know of.

Work of this description has the further advantage of being co-operative and synthetic. The final results are the joint product of numerous workers; for while one group may be mapping out the density of the population, another may be preparing an area-map of the variation of retail food prices, a third noting the geographical distribution of fried-fish shops or places of worship or picture-palaces or open spaces and playgrounds (with relation more particularly to the child population). Health and vital statistics, rents, rates, indeed, most aspects of communal life can be rendered graphic and therefore intelligible by this method; and, armed with local knowledge thus prepared and presented, a small body of investigators would wield an influence out of all proportion to their numbers.

But whatever the ultimate practical possibilities of this training may be, its immediate educational value is, I think, undoubted. When I was a lad I gained a certificate in elementary science issued by the old Science and Art Department in South Kensington; and it bore the words, "In Nature's infinite book of secrecy a little can I read." May we not search out in our own subjects an equivalent to this book, at any rate as an alternative to our printed text-books? It is probable that we can really know only the facts of our immediate environment, and that extensions beyond these limits are likely to be less solid and more inferential than perhaps we realise. The more intensive, concrete and locally applicable we make our subjects the more we touch the spot and the better prepared shall we be to take occasion by the hand.

F. J. ADKINS.

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BRITISH CAPITALISM GOES IN PAWN

THESE has been much talk recently about the increase in Britain's "unfavourable balance of trade," and about the possible reasons for it and the consequences of it. Much of this talk has been wrapped about with a bewildering technical jargon, in which phrases about "invisible exports" and "balance available for investment" float across the ear. Separated from this technical jargon, what does all this mean?

When reduced to its simplest terms the question is not a very difficult one. A capitalist country, like an individual trader, carries on its business by selling certain things to other countries and buying certain things in return. If it sells more than it buys, it has a *credit balance*—it is owed more than it owes. On the other hand, if it buys more than it sells, it has a *debit balance*—it owes more than it is owed. Now this latter state of affairs cannot go on for very long, unless it can cover its debit balance by *borrowing*—borrowing by short-term credits or long-term loans. Unless the debtor country can cover its balance of indebtedness by borrowing in either of these ways, then the rate of foreign exchange will turn *against it*, as a sign that it owes more than it is owed. This turn of the exchange against it will either directly, or by an outflow of gold forcing a deflation of the price-level, check imports and stimulate exports until a balance between what it owes and what it is owed is restored. (c.f. my pamphlet, *Money and Prices*, L.R.D. Syllabus No. 16, Section 7.)

If, on the other hand, the country has a *credit balance*, then it can safely *lend* up to that extent to other countries, either by short-term bank credits or long-term foreign investments. But it cannot for long go on lending or investing abroad an amount larger than this credit balance; because, if it does, it will be paying away more than it is being paid, and this will turn the foreign exchange rates against it, with the same results as have just been mentioned above.

Now, the things for which a country owes and is owed money consist very largely of *imports and exports of goods*; but not entirely so. A country may also be owed money as interest on foreign investments or as repayment of a former loan, and as the price of banking, insurance, shipping services, etc. These latter are sometimes known as "*invisible exports*." In financial parlance a country is said to have an "unfavourable balance of trade" if its *visible imports* of goods (as shown in the Board of Trade statistics) exceed its *visible exports* of goods. The use of the phrase is a relic of mercantilist

notions which thought an excess of exports desirable ; but a surplus of visible imports may not be really unfavourable if it is balanced by "invisible exports" of various kinds.

For example, the following figures show the position for Britain for 1924-26, as estimated by the Liberal economist, Mr. J. M. Keynes, in *The Nation* for October 23rd. † :—

(In £ million)	1924.	1925.	Jan.-Sep. 1926.	Oct.-Dec. 1926
Net favourable balance of all "invisible" items	447	474	355	119
Excess of "visible" imports over exports	324	386	317	140
(i.e., the "unfavourable balance")				

† Keynes considers the Board of Trade estimates of "invisible exports" too low, and so adds about £60 million on to the Board of Trade figures. His figures in the first line are, therefore, probably on the high side. The Oct.-Dec. figures are estimates.

If one subtracts the figures in the second line from those in the first line, one finds the extent of the *credit balance* on all the items ("visible" and "invisible") of British trade. The Board of Trade is accustomed to refer to this as the "Balance available for foreign investment"—that is, the amount of capital that can be exported without tipping over the balance between money-incomings and money-outgoings so as to upset the foreign exchange rates. If we make this subtraction, we get the following result :—

(in £ million)	1924	1925.	Jan.-Sep. 1926	Oct.-Dec. 1926
Balance available for Foreign Investment	123	88	38	—21

And if we place against these figures the actual export of capital from Britain in the last three years, we get this result :—

(in £ million)	1924.	1925.	Jan.-Sep. 1926.
Actual Foreign Investments	134	88	72

What do these figures mean? They show that Britain's net "credit balance" of trade has steadily declined in the last three years, and at the end of 1926 has become an actual "debit balance" (and this on the most favourable estimates of the value of "invisible exports"!). And, moreover, the actual export of capital has exceeded in every year except 1925 (when an embargo on foreign investments was enforced by the Bank of England) the "credit balance" available. This means that Britain is paying away more than it is being paid, a condition which cannot last for long without upsetting the foreign exchange rates and undermining the stability of the gold standard—a fact shown in recent heavy outflows of gold—except in so far as Britain can *borrow from abroad to redress the balance*. And borrowing from abroad with one hand while investing in foreign shares with the other hand, seems the only explanation of the figures given above. How large this borrowing has been is difficult to say. The City Editor of the *M.G. Commercial*, in an article headed, "Are we paying our way?" suggests the possibility

of an annual borrowing up to £100 millions; although the Midland Bank monthly review declares it difficult to discover in what ways this borrowing is being done. Mr. Keynes' estimate of the "credit balance" is probably on the favourable side, and is at any rate some £60 millions higher than the Board of Trade estimate; and the figure of actual foreign investments in the first nine months of 1926, as given by the *M.G. Commercial*, is some £10 millions higher than the figure quoted above. The extent to which British capitalism has had to borrow from abroad (presumably, mainly from U.S.A.), or sell out some of its capital, in the course of 1926 cannot be far short of £70 million, and may be considerably more.

British capitalism, therefore, which before the war was the creditor of the world, drawing annual interest on foreign investments to the extent of some £200 million and reinvesting abroad each year some £100 million, is now faced with complete loss of her power to invest abroad, let alone to regain her pre-1914 position by replenishing the £600 million or so of foreign capital which she had to sell out for war purposes. While other European countries have fast sunk into added indebtedness to U.S.A. during recent years, British capitalism has striven to keep its head above water, to rival the financial influence of U.S.A., and by Locarno, etc., to rally the rest of Europe to her side. Now she, too, may have to go to pawn in Wall Street.

In this position there have arisen two trends of policy in British capitalism. The one, of which Mr. Keynes is a representative, would reimpose the embargo on foreign investment,† and concentrate capital and attention on reviving the home market and home production. This is to renounce the financial struggle in the international sphere in favour of internal stability. With this would probably be coupled a certain degree of "Americanisation" of British industry. The second, which is at present in the ascendant and seems likely to remain so, strives to reduce wages and lengthen hours at home, so as to stimulate exports and diminish working-class consumption of imported food, and so leave available a larger "credit balance" for investment abroad, whereby to rival American capital in annexing and exploiting potential colonial areas. The former is an attempt to produce relative and the latter to produce absolute surplus-value. Official Labour (and Mr. Newbold) lend their support to the former policy.

MAURICE DOBB.

† On going to Press there comes the information that the Bank of England intends to reimpose the unofficial embargo on foreign investments as a temporary measure.

Geographical Footnotes to Current History: CHINA

HISTORY is being made rapidly in the Far East. We published in *The PLEBS* ten months ago* a map and some notes on the situation in China. A comparison of that map with the one given herewith will show at a glance the remarkable developments which have recently taken place.

The most notable fact, of course, is the succession of victories won by the armies of the Canton National Government. Canton is the "key-word" to the Chinese puzzle. The democratic-nationalist Government set up by the late Dr. Sun-Yat-Sen has not only maintained itself against the virtual blockade carried on by the British at Hongkong, but has retaliated by a boycott of British goods, which has at last forced the British Imperialists to come to terms.

"Never again," said an American business man of the East to me, "will men buy real estate on the Peak of Hongkong and sit them down secure in a heritage for their grandsons. Everyone in the East knows now that Hongkong can be ruined any time the Chinese care to do it."

— (Anna Louise Strong, *New York World*, May 9th, 1926).

Kwang-tung, the province of which Canton is the chief city, is itself "as large and populous as France, and nearly half as populous as the United States." Within the past few months, as the arrows in our map indicate, Canton has extended its dominance right up to the Yangtse valley, in Central China. The Canton Government is labelled "Red" by our Imperialist Press; but it represents various classes and interests with but one common bond—hostility to foreign exploitation, expressed in a demand for the annulment of the "Unequal Treaties"; *i.e.*, those Treaties giving extraordinary rights to foreign nationals, and treating the Chinese as an inferior people. Canton stands for the more militant Left Wing of the Kuomintang—the Chinese People's Party—which has adherents and supporters in every part of China.

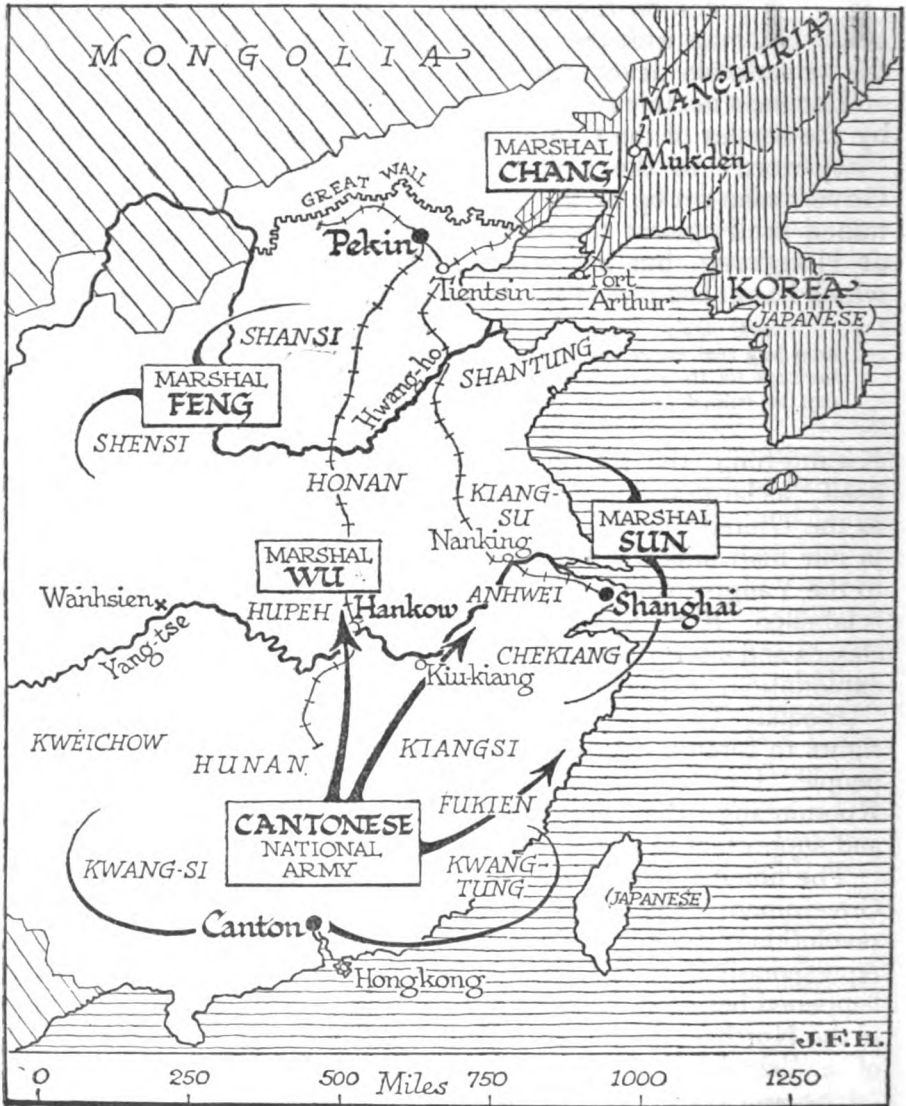
The nominal capital of China is still Peking, where the republican Government which succeeded the Manchu dynasty after the revolution of 1911 is still formally in being, and where the accredited representatives of the foreign Powers still reside. But — as has happened before in Chinese history—the South has taken the place of the North as the dominant area. Peking to-day is the seat merely of a "shadow" Government; though even that Government,

* February *PLEBS*, p. 58.

emboldened by Cantonese successes, has adopted recently a somewhat more independent tone in its discussions with foreign ambassadors.

Pekin, however, is situated within the zone dominated by Marshal Chang (Chang-Tso-lin), the Manchurian "war lord," whose base is at Mukden, and who "from time to time comes a little way south of the Great Wall to give orders to the Peking Government."* Chang is the tool of Japan. To camouflage this fact he has proclaimed the independence of Manchuria; which, however,

* H. Wilson Harris, *Daily News*, November 15th.



remains in fact a Japanese "sphere of influence"—easily controlled from Japan's mainland base, Korea.

The position of the other "war lords"—military governors ("hunting dogs of the foreign Imperialists," as the Chinese people call them)—is shown in our map.

In Central China, the Yangtse valley — actually a British "sphere"—has until recently been held by two commanders : the mouth of the river and the coastal provinces, including Shanghai, by Marshal Sun (Sun Chuang-fang), and the inland provinces by Marshal Wu (Wu Pei-fu). The Cantonese armies have turned the latter out of his base (and arsenal) at Hankow, and the former has been compelled to withdraw downstream from Kiu-kiang, and to abandon the whole of the provinces of Fukien and Kiangsi, and the western half of the province of Anhwei (*D. Herald*, Nov. 15th). These provinces, together with those of Chekiang and Kiangsu, he had declared an autonomous State.

The conquest of Hankow by the Cantonese is of the highest importance, as the great Hanyang iron and steel works are situated there ; and the great need of China south of the Yangtse is railways. These had been closed down by Wu Pei-fu (probably acting under British instructions).*

Further north, in the area south-west of Peking, is a general who is in full sympathy with Canton—Marshal Feng, the "Christian general," who has recently returned to China after a long visit to Russia. He has been consolidating his hold on the provinces of Shensi and Shansi, and is moving south to join hands with the Cantonese on the middle Yangtse. When that happens, Canton will be in effective control of by far the greater part of China.

It remains to add one word—"Wanhsien." Readers of the Labour Press will be familiar with what took place there recently. Another "Amritsar" has been added to the British record. The reactions of that event will undoubtedly be a factor of importance in the near future in China.

J. F. HORRABIN.

* See C. L. Malone's *The New China* (I.L.P., 6d.)—an invaluable booklet which every student should possess.

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REVIEWS OF BOOKS

A MINER ON MINERS.

THE PLEBS is constantly agitating for a "literature of the job," for stories and plays written by workers about their daily life. Harold Heslop, a Durham miner, who was at the Labour College on a scholarship, has written such a novel which has received high praise from so competent an authority as H. N. Brailsford. Unfortunately, it seems too strong meat to find a publisher in England. It has, however, been translated into Russian and had a considerable circulation. Readers will be interested in the following review from "Izvestya," which compares Heslop's book with James Welsh's "The Underworld."

[From "Izvestya" (14 September, 1926)]
James C. Welsh—*The Underworld*.
Harold Heslop—*The Wilderness of Toil*
(published by Priboi, Leningrad).

Two books on the same subject. Two authors of the same social class. In substance the very same fact. But what a difference in scope, form and exposition of the same material!

In the two books, dealing with the same matter, nothing is alike. From the first pages—more than that, even,—from the first lines one can see the fundamental difference between the two authors, which leads them in opposite directions up to the end and makes them expose pictures of life and struggle from different points of view.

The book of Welsh breathes the spirit of the old, strong "liberal English trade-unionism." In accordance with trade-unionist morals of "class harmony" the owners are extremely noblehearted and virtuous. If the miners are exploited and wronged the fault lies with the middlemen—the managers and agents. The catastrophe due to the neglect of the laws of the safeguarding of labour are not the result of the greed and neglect on the part of the owners in the eyes of Welsh, but are due to "pale fate ruling over things."

In a quite different light does Heslop tackle the tragic subjects.

Heslop is not a Communist. As Maisky says in the Preface, he is "somewhere mid-way between the I.L.P. and the Communist Party." But it is just

this position of Heslop that makes him see and represent the life of the north of England miners in a different light to Welsh.

The first chapter in the novel of Welsh begins with a lyrical conversation between the miner and his wife. Heslop starts with a mass scene, the annual festival of the northern miners and a political meeting. This beginning is very characteristic of the author. The novel develops in an atmosphere of the mass struggle of the miners with the owners. On the background of this struggle develops the life and fate of the hero. The personal story of the hero does not push to the background the social subject, does not stand apart from it, but is organically and intimately linked up with it.

Heslop is not so naive as to place the blame of exploitation on the management of the mines. He clearly shows that the hands of the managers are directed by the will of the owners. But, on the other hand, he is not so naive as to see the liberation of the mass from the capitalist yoke in liberal trade unionism. He sees the way out in Communism. That is why his book shows strong and militant spirits, where in Welsh's book we see lyricism leading often to sentimentalism. Heslop grasps the subject in a wider spirit and sees deeper into the problems with which he deals.

MORE ABOUT THE GENERAL STRIKE.

The General Strike: Trades Councils in Action. By Emile Burns (pub. Labour Research Dept., 2/-).

The British General Strike. By Scott Nearing, intro. by Ellen Wilkinson, 2/6 (post 2/8) at PLEBS Office.

It is an interesting time to be living in,—that is if you can manage to provide yourself with three meals a day,—for we are making history, and writing about it as quickly as we make it. There will soon be a considerable literature about the General Strike, and every serious student of working-class history should make a point of reading each of these books. The lessons of the great strike are the most important that our class has to learn. So don't be like the woman who remarked to her husband when he brought home a book,

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"Why did you buy another book; haven't you got one?" None of these books can give the whole truth about the strike, but each has a special contribution to make to the whole.

The Labour Research Department is issuing a history in two volumes. The book by Burns gives a resumé of the strike bulletins, and a careful analysis of local activities, based on answers to a questionnaire that was sent out by the Department. It will form an invaluable source book for any future historian of the strike. The heavier matter is lightened by an amusing chapter of brighter bits from local bulletins, and some excellent cartoons.

Scott Nearing's book is especially valuable to the British reader, because it is written by an able yet detached observer who places the strike against its proper background of world economic forces. While giving a very detailed story of the strike, with copious quotations from the speeches of the various leaders, Nearing never loses sight of the big issues involved. Particularly valuable are the appendices giving in full the main documents connected with the strike, such as the *Daily Mail* Editorial which precipitated action, the General Strike order issued by the General Council, and the report of the Northumberland and Durham Joint Council which had the historic negotiations with Sir Kingsley Wood, which he afterwards denied in the House of Commons.

E. C. W.

ENGLISH "CENTRISM."

The Living Wage (I.L.P., 6d.).

Mix up Hobson's theory of "under-consumption" with the Civil Service ideas of Wise about State control of purchase and sale of important commodities. Get a union official like Creech Jones to taste the mixture so ably mixed and expounded by Brailsford's pen, and you have the Living Wage proposals. Socialism is going to follow beneficial doses of the mixture which the capitalist is going to swallow willingly for his own good amid increasing general prosperity.

We agree with the authors in their first assertions that the clarity of a theoretical programme is of little use if it cannot be linked with the immediate struggles of the workers. Marx was never more effective in his satire than when he attacked the Proudhonists and

Anarchists who posed to be above the battle for any kind of immediate amelioration. We know how useless are the tiny sects which are, in their own estimation, so far ahead that they can sit in separation from other existing organisations and wait for the workers to catch them up and ask for their guidance.

But we suggest that there are several basic errors in the scheme and that from these there follows the illusion that the workers will go to victory on the soft cushions of the Blue Train rather than in an armoured train fighting in many cases for life itself. The difficulties of fixing a living wage because of the varying standards of life, irregularity of work, and the possibility of lessening the union's vitality by the award of a legal minimum, have been made by other reviewers of these I.L.P. proposals. We propose to probe a little more deeply.

Wages are the price of labour-power. The exploitation of this commodity by the capitalist, who usually buys this at its value, is the fundamental point in the capitalist system and the source of profit, rent and interest. To talk of "under consumption" as the evil of modern society is nonsense unless we explain which section is under-consuming. It was natural for J. A. Hobson, writing in a time when greater numbers of people were forced outside actual production and when the Fabians were "breaking the spell of Marxism" and making their plans of an ideal consumers' State, to look at production from the point of view of consumption and not production. Yet even from that angle, if *classes* are examined, under-consumption is not general, because in many instances there is a harmful *over-consumption* of luxury commodities. The "under-consumption" of the workers, viewed from the ideal non-capitalist view-point of their needs as human beings and not as living repositories of labour-power, is an effect and not a cause. Capitalism exists by perpetuating it. Let us insist on a living wage by all means. But if we back it by arguments about this really "benefiting capitalism," and we subordinate our programme to this benefit as an aim, then we are travelling the road to collaboration with capitalism, not its overthrow. If on the other hand, the living wage policy will not benefit the capital-

ists, they will oppose it; and there will still remain the problem of how to fight them. And this problem is not advanced one wit, but rather "blinked at," by the enunciation of a mere "living wage" policy.

The modern persuasion now applied usually preaches Fordism and makes reference to the prosperity of the U.S. as being caused by a conscious policy of higher wages adopted by farsighted employers. There is still, of course, some force in the Economy of High Wages, and Ford benefits from that law. The figures of a high-sounding *nominal* wage are, however, often misleading; the *real* wage (its purchasing power) has to be taken into account, and also the *relative* wage (i.e., relative to profits). Statistics show that the latter is as low in the U.S.A. as anywhere. The rich natural endowments of the U.S.A. only recently emerged from a pioneer colonial stage, her continental area still providing the worker with greater chances of alternative employment, her relatively low taxation and the recent restriction of immigration must be taken into account in addition to the special position of Ford as the pioneer of new methods of intensive mass-production in a new and quickly-expanding industry. The whole story of Fordism is not yet told.

Fear of dislocation and catastrophe apparently loom largely in the authors' mind, but they must not think they can dodge a very severe struggle by their suggestions. For example, is the £125 million needed to pay the Family Allowance at 5/- a head up to maximum of £1 per family, going to be taken from the rich by increased direct taxation without some resistance? But a more important proposal is made without any reference to any expected difficulty—that is to take over the Bank of England and have Government representatives on the boards of the Joint Stock Banks. This has got to be done according to the Brailsford idea of ironing out the ups and downs of the trade cycle by cheapening credit at signs of a slump and cutting it down in a boom. The interlocking of *rentier* and industrial magnate and the regulation of supplies by the trusts, in many cases already practised, are apparently forgotten. Can we really take over the book-keeping accounts of capitalism and use them against capitalism without a severe struggle?

These criticisms do not mean that the Labour Party could not with good propaganda results find out a wage figure necessary for a decent standard of life. The struggle for a Family Allowance to be paid from direct taxation would also be worth while if it were remembered that, unless accompanied by strong trade union organisation, its only result might be lowered wages. But they should not be connected with loose references to under-consumption, with the Fordist argument that capitalism prospers by high wages, or illusions concerning an easy passage into a reorganised society.

MARKIAN REALIST.

SCOTT NEARING.

Education in Soviet Russia; Educational Frontiers; British Labour bids for Power; Glimpses of the Soviet Republic; Stopping a War; World Labour Unity; Oil and the Germs of War; Russia Turns East. All these are by Scott Nearing, and most of them bear the imprint, Social Science Publishers, 7 West 106th Street, New York City. Price not stated.

A sheaf of pamphlets and booklets. The movement has long been in urgent need of a really efficient pamphleteer. *Education in Soviet Russia* has been re-issued by the PLEBS, and is such good wine as to need no further bush. Buy it, read it, lend it, talk about it, rub it in.—*Educational Frontiers* is a book about the late Simon Nelson Patten (an American professor of economics) and other teachers. We have no time to talk about Patten now, but will quote his maxim for our fellow Plebeians and N.C.L.C.ers: "the place of the teacher is in the firing-line of civilisation." As a modification we suggest: "the place of the I.W.C.E.er is in the firing-line of the class war."—*Stopping a War* (a trifle over-sanguine both as regards title and treatment) is an account of "the fight of the French workers against the Moroccan campaign of 1925."—*World Labour Unity* is a healthily Red account of the problems and the movements comprised under this title. A good deal of it is based on Edo Fimmen's *Labour's Alternative*; but Nearing, of course, brings the topic down to a much later date.—*British Labour Bids for Power* is an excellent account of the Scarborough Trade Union Con-

gress. About a third of it consists of a reprint of Comrade Swales' presidential address on that occasion.

Apart from the one first mentioned, the best of the series are *Russia turns East* (32 pp.), *Oil and the Germs of War* (1923—32 pp.), and *Glimpses of the Soviet Republic* (32 pp.). They are so amazingly good that we earnestly hope the Plebs League or the C.P. will have a few hundred copies on sale before long.

E. & C. P.

Red Money (prepared by All-Russian Council of T.U.'s, Trans. by E. & C. Paul, with a Foreword by A. J. Cook, and published Lab. Research Dept., 6d. net) is a timely rebuttal of the capitalist lies about the source of the relief sent by Russian workers to the British miners. It gives the actual facts and figures concerning the contributions of Russian workers, including an exhaustive list of resolutions passed by factory meetings. Altogether, a highly important document of international solidarity which should be in the hands of all students and speakers.

For those engaging in seditious conspiracy the new Fabian pamphlet, *Seditious Offences*, by E. J. C. Neep (Barrister-at-law), with introductory note by Prof. H. J. Laski (Fabian Society, 3d.), will prove a handy summary of the exact state of the law on the matter. A history of trials for sedition from the reign of Elizabeth to the Communist trial is particularly illuminating. Of course, the writer does not show how law and the judicial system are merely instruments of a class dictatorship; but the facts he cites give rich instances of this. He ends in true Fabian manner by pleading for a "reform" in the law to establish "freedom of speech"; but the "reformed law" which is proposed would still forbid "unconstitutional action," and so would forbid any mass action to shake capitalist dictatorship. But even such "reform" the author thinks in the existing political situation a long way ahead! "To promote feelings of hostility between different classes" is likely, therefore, to continue to constitute at the discretion of the Judge a Seditious Libel or Seditious Conspiracy.

Z.



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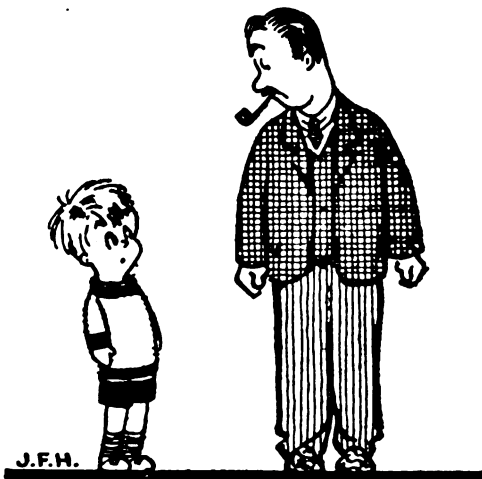
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NOTES BY THE WAY

Bucharin on World Capitalism.

The report on the International situation, presented by Bucharin to the 15th Conference of the C.P. of the Soviet Union on October 26th is an exceedingly important Marxian document. A summary of the report is, accordingly, given here; but students should not fail to refer to the complete report in English contained in *Inprecorr* for November 4th.

Bucharin starts with the question: *Are there signs of capitalist stabilisation?* He quotes figures of world production of iron, steel and coal, which show a marked improvement since 1922, respectively from 73.6 (per cent. of 1913) to 98, from 90.5 to 118, and from 86.8 to 97.6. The area under cultivation has also increased. Therefore "in general we may make the qualified statement that capitalism is approaching the conclusion of its period of reconstruction." World trade has also improved to within a few points of pre-war, and currency stabilisation has proceeded considerably.

Thus, there has been a *certain stabilisation*, but it is on a *very insecure and unequal foundation*. (1) "Capitalist reconstruction proceeds in unequal jumps and spurts," not in the regular curve of boom and depression of pre-war. (2) There is a "wide degree of difference in development in the separate countries" which has assumed "acute forms." There is "great discrepancy between European and American economics" and "between the development of England and of Central Europe." (3) The stabilisation does not apply at all to the colonial countries of Asia, where there is actual civil war.

There are 5 "*Types of stabilisation*":—

(a) U.S.A.—most rapid rise of the curve of development, "to which there is no analogy in any part of Europe."

(b) England—capitalism declining, acute class antagonisms, vast regroupings and changes.

(c) Asia—rise of nationalism and actual civil war, which is a completely new factor in the post-war position.

(d) Germany and France—"curve of capitalist stabilisation on the rise."

(e) Poland, Czecho-S., Jugo-S., etc.—an uncertain movement; some "tendency to revert back to agrarianism."

"We must no longer permit ourselves to be content with a *general* characterisation of the position of international capitalism, but must *differentiate* at least the separate groups."

Bucharin then proceeds to analyse *the theory of the post-war crisis*. He combats the theory that post-war overproduction was due to an increase of accumulation and technical apparatus during the war. It is "entirely wrong, and even absurd, to imagine that there was any great accumulation of capital whatever during the war." Such a view arises from confusion of "the growth of the total capital of a country with the growth of capital in individual branches of economics." Actually "original capital has probably on the whole been reduced by the war," even though there "may have been an increase in the apparatus of production in certain sections, e.g., heavy industry." Hence the post-war crisis of over-production is due to the *impoverishment of the masses*—an impoverishment which has gone further than the decline of accumulation. Hence, producing plant working at less than capacity, and a hunt for markets.

This produces the new capitalist policy which has been called in Germany *Rationalisation*. This has three stages:—(1) pressure on the workers; (2) improved methods of organising labour to secure greater productivity and greater intensity of work; (3) various technical improvements. Part of this latter consists in "the present tendency to *trustification*, to the closing down of unprofitable undertakings, not only in a commercial form by means of cartels and syndicates, but at the same time in a form involving the immediate vertical and horizontal amalgamation of various branches of industry." The starting point of the whole process is "the suppression of the working class." Figures are quoted showing the successful results of this rationalisation so far; e.g., Ruhr coal increase in productivity per worker from 63 per cent. of 1913 in 1922 to 116 per cent. in June, 1926; and German

steel increase in daily output per worker of 43 per cent. since 1925.

This has given rise ideologically among the intelligentsia to the *Pan-European movement*—the ideal of organising Europe and making it a unity to prevent its being submerged by America. The breaking-point of this movement, however, is England; if England is excluded, she will be thrown into the arms of U.S.A.; if she joins, she will be estranged from Canada, Australia, etc. The "*bankers' manifesto*," on the other hand, is the attempt of U.S.A. finance capital to break down tariff barriers in Europe, to break down the European alliance between branches of production, and to open the door for the penetration of U.S.A. capital. The Social-democrats, having aided in the earlier "suppression of the workers," are now lending their support to the Pan-European ideology and to Rationalisation.

Rationalisation, meanwhile, proceeds in the Soviet Union, but is there based on "the endeavour to meet the needs of the masses," and "the absorbing capacity of the markets" there is "greater than productive capacity." Whereas, "with the capitalists the motive for rationalisation is the desire to gain greater profits, and the necessity of adaptation to narrowed markets." And while they rationalise technique, they at the same time strengthen monopoly, and so restrict the scale of production; and this must cause unemployment.

"Are we then actually entering upon a phase in the development of capitalism, long prophesied by Kautsky, and designated by him *super-imperialism*?" The answer is 'No.' *First*, because of the conflicts inside Europe which still persist, and between Europe and U.S.A. *Second*, because much of the rationalisation is only being done by aid of American capital. For instance, "up to the present Germany has been living to a great extent on American loans." Whereas now these will fall off and reparations will increase. *Third*, the international combines which have been formed are unstable alliances. "Before the great world massacre there were international cartels which afterwards fell to pieces. Now this steel trust is being organised, but conflicts are inevitably bound to rise within it, among the countries participating, for the largest

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share of the total production of the trust." *Fourth*, because of the situation in Asia.

The correct slogan for the workers on the question of rationalisation must, therefore, be as follows:—"The whole cost of the stabilisation process to be borne by the ruling classes, and every result of rationalisation which burdens the working class is to be energetically combated." We are not opposed, Bucharin continues, to the introduction of machinery or to the introduction of improved organisation of working methods. "But so long as these improvements are introduced in a *capitalist* form, we are opposed to the disadvantages incurred for the working class, and we must mobilise the whole of the working masses against the total sum of injury dealt them by rationalisation from the capitalist standpoint."

A further result of the process of rationalisation is "*extensive regroupings in the working class itself*," e.g., the decline of the English Labour aristocracy and abolition to great extent of division into Labour aristocracy and unskilled. Also the process "is inevitably bound to be accompanied by some form of pressure on the workers, either in increased intensity of work and lower wages, or in lengthened hours, or in the exploitation of working class consumers by means of high monopolist prices." Hence a further revolutionising of the working class, seen in (a) growth of a T.U. opposition; (b) a Left-wing in the social democratic parties; (c) growth of workers' revolutionary organisations, such as Workers' Defence Corps, etc.

The three crucial centres of the world struggle against capitalism are at present:—*Britain*, with the miners' struggle; *China*; and the *Soviet Union*.

World Trade Statistics.

The *Memorandum on Production and Trade* (Constable, 1/6) should be a useful reference booklet for tutors. It is a collection of statistics of world trade and production, prepared for the Preparatory Committee of the International Economic Conference, which is shortly going to take place and attempt to reorganise Europe on a sounder economic basis against U.S.A., much as the Brussels Conference of 1920 sought to bring order out of the chaos of currencies and exchanges. The following table is a sample of some of the important statistics given:— Percentages of 1913.

	Popula- tion	Raw Materials Production	Quan- tum of Trade
East & Cent. Europe :—	1925.	1925.	1925.
Incl. Russia	99	102.5	73
Excl. Russia	103	102	82
Rest of Europe	105	107	99
Europe :—			
Excl. Russia	104	104.5	94
Incl. Russia	101	104.5	89
N. America	119	126	137
Caribbean	107	170	128
S. America	122	134.5	97
Africa	107	138.5	99
Asia	105	120	136
Oceania	116	122.5	132
Whole World	105	117	105

What is specially noteworthy in this table is the great disproportion between different parts of the world. Central and Eastern Europe is considerably behind Western Europe, relatively to the 1913 position; while America shows a large development over 1913, quite out of proportion to Europe which has on the whole stood still over the last 13 years. The "backward" continents, on the other hand, show considerable development in trade as well as raw materials output. Another remarkable point is the decline in the quantity of European trade as compared with pre-war; while N. America's trade has advanced by the large figure of 37 per cent. This is a symptom of the general decline of Europe, and is to be accounted for by the wholesale raising of tariff barriers and the breakdown of the international division of labour which has characterised post-war Europe.

Prof. Kammerer.

The Presidium of the Communist Academy in Moscow has issued a statement on the death by suicide of the noted biologist, Prof. Paul Kammerer, at Vienna. Prof. Kammerer had for years been experimenting on the "inheritance of acquired characteristics"; and by a series of experiments on toads claimed to have found a case where characteristics acquired during the lifetime of a

toad were transmitted by inheritance to subsequent generations. This caused enormous controversy among world biologists, many refusing to believe in the validity of Kammerer's experiments, especially as other scientists by similar experiments were quite unable to reproduce Kammerer's results. Some experiments on dogs by Prof. Pavlov, which seemed at one time likely to lend support to Kammerer, were admitted by Pavlov to be inadequate, and are at present being undertaken anew by Prof. Pavlov in Leningrad.

Appreciating the supreme importance of these experiments for the whole future of natural science, the Communist Academy in Moscow invited Kammerer to come and repeat his experiments there, to which he consented; and the Academy proceeded to prepare special laboratories for him.

In August, however, a certain American, Dr. Noble, wrote an article in *Nature*, stating that he had examined one of Kammerer's toads, and had found, in place of the callosities alleged to have been inherited, nothing but an injection of Indian ink. This was equivalent to a charge of imposture and "faked" experiment! Prof. Kammerer proceeded to re-examine his specimens and found that it was true that several of them had been, as he said, "improved post mortem" with Indian ink. While declaring that he had had "nothing to do with these falsifications" and that an enemy had tampered with them, he wrote to the Communist Academy saying that he was "completely unable to bear this frustration of my life's work," and that he had decided accordingly to take his own life.

The statement of the Communist Academy hails Kammerer as a true materialist, and as a martyr of science, sacrificed to the petty jealousies and the opposition of bourgeois science to anyone who introduces revolutionary theories.

Capitalist Terror.

Tutors who are dealing with the predatory character of present-day capitalism, which sheds even the cloak of "democratic" methods, or who require to draw comparisons with reactionary terrorisms in the past, can find abundant instances and more in the history of the last two or three months. We have in U.S.A. the atrocious "frame-up" by Dept. of Justice officials of a supposed murder and robbery on Sacco and Vanzetti; and the refusal of the Supreme Court Judge to give a fresh trial in spite of the confession by a criminal to having committed the crime. We have the savage sentences under E.P.A. in the mining areas for so much as appealing to workers to stop black coal and for whistling at blacklegs; the use of a century old Vagrancy Act to prosecute miners for not accepting work; and the wholesale prohibition of meetings by the police. In Germany the trial of officers and N.C.O.'s of the monarchist "Black Reichswehr"—a kind of unofficial "Black and Tans"—for the murder of members suspected of Communist sympathies, has revealed the close connection between these murder organisations and the Republican Government with which social-democrats were at one time in coalition. In Hungary there has recently been the trial of Rakosi and others merely for class struggle propaganda; and a similar trial of Stefanov and others on like charges is proceeding in Rumania. The horrible White Terror in Bulgaria is recent history and still proceeds. Terror is not confined to Fascist Italy, nor to "exceptional" occasions, nor do "democratic" institutions save a country from it. It has become a universal and permanent feature of capitalist suppression of the workers.

WANTED

—TO BUY OR BORROW

NUMBER ONE of the *British Gazette*. Can any comrade forward this to PLEBS Office? It will be returned safely if so required.

THE N.C.L.C. AT WORK

(Reports for this page should be sent to J. P. M. Millar, General Secretary, National Council of Labour Colleges, 62, Hanover Street, Edinburgh).

NEW LOCAL AFFILIATIONS: A. L. Williams, North Lancashire Area Organiser, reports thirteen new local affiliations for the month of October. This shows what can be done!

The following is a list of returns showing new affiliations obtained in October by Local Colleges,—North Lancashire, 13; London, 7; Slaithwaite, 4; Division 4, 3; Belfast, 2; Bradford, 3; Edinburgh, 3; Guildford, 2; Grantham, 2; Londonderry, 2; Eastleigh, 2; Leicester, 1; Liverpool, 1; March, 1; York, 1.

LANTERN SLIDES: Attention is again drawn to the sets of lantern slides which are on sale or on hire. A number of important additions have been made to the set on I.W.C.E. and purchasers of the original set would be well advise to obtain copies of the additions. Any pictures that might be of value in making up sets of lantern slides should be sent to J. Hamilton, 11 Channell Road, Fairfield, Liverpool. Pictures specially wanted are those dealing with the History of the British Working Class Movement.

LIBRARY: Attention is again drawn to the Jean Dott Tutor's Library. A catalogue and rules may be had for 3d.

LABOUR COLLEGE, LONDON: The N.U.R. has announced that it has intimated to the S.W.M.F. that it proposes to withdraw from the Labour College, London. It is hoped that the N.U.R. will reconsider this going back on the splendid work which it has done for I.W.C.E.

PLASTERERS' UNION: This Union has decided to offer free scholarships to the N.C.L.C., 1927 summer school. Its current journal provides a form which plasterer students should fill up and return to the Union's Head Office.

NEW LEAFLET: At least one new leaflet for advertising classes will be available before this paragraph is printed. Colleges are urged to send in their orders immediately and to see that notices of the new session's classes are sent out as early as possible.

DAY AND WEEK-END SCHOOLS: As a number of colleges have recently failed to advise Head Office of their day and week-end schools, it has been impossible to offer scholarships to the two Unions whose schemes provide such facilities. Advice of such schools should be sent on the form provided, and about a month beforehand.

CLUB AND INSTITUTE UNION: The W.E.A. is very active in approaching the clubs attached to this body with a view to educational work. Organisers and college secretaries are asked to take the necessary action to encourage clubs to support Labour College facilities.

REPORT FORM I. (CURRENT CLASSES): Some college secretaries are showing slackness in dealing with such reports as the above.

NEW PAMPHLET: Do not forget to push *The Trained Mind — Trained for What?* which should be on sale at all classes.

AN EXCELLENT IDEA: The Leeds Branch of the N.U.D.A.W. have gummed a little slip which reads as follows in the contribution cards of the members: "This cards entitles you to attend the educational classes organised by the National Council of Labour Colleges free of charge. Ask your secretary for particulars."

WHAT THE DIVISIONS ARE DOING.

Division 1: A class has now commenced at Southall on Imperialism, conducted by J. Williams. Other classes have begun at Erith and Chiswick, conducted by H. Short, one at Fulham on Public Speaking by Morgan Phillips, and one at Plumstead for the Woolwich A.E.U. No. 8 on Trade Unionism with Sean Cahalane as tutor. Others are expected to commence during December at Walthamstowe, Margate, Ramsgate and Carshalton. A series of lectures on Finance by Abel Cohen at Yiewsley, under the auspices of the Uxbridge Div. L.P. is proving very satisfactory both from the standpoint of attendance and interest. Another series of topical lectures by the Organiser at Hayes, Middlesex, initiated by the Hayes N.U.R., is also very satisfactory. The Westminster and Wimbledon Labour Parties have arranged Sunday evening N.C.L.C.

lectures. The Organiser addressed the Newington Reform Club and got a unanimous recommendation from the large number of members present directing the Management Committee to affiliate to the London Division. In return for the affiliation the Club will be given a supply of lecturers on topical working-class problems. The demand still continues for lectures on the Lessons of the General Strike.

Division 2: A new class is to start at Winchester with Lewis Thompson as tutor and the trades council support. Thanks are due to the Eastleigh class for this result. The inaugural lecture on "The Lessons of the National Strike" to the Portsmouth class attracted eighty students and constitutes a record for Division 2. Mr. R. Bates, the divisional organiser for the A.E.U., is giving fine support to the N.C.L.C. The Southampton class is better than ever. The subject for this session is Marxian Economics. The trades council had a fine discussion on I.W.C.E. as against W.E.A.ism, with the result that further inquiries are being made on how to support us. A few branches of the A.S.W. have passed resolutions in favour of affiliation to the N.C.L.C. As a result of a conference at Reading it was decided to run weekly classes on Economic Geography with Wynn-Cuthbert as tutor. The Labour Party in particular is giving all the support they can. The lectures arranged for the Dorchester agricultural workers are highly appreciated. The figures of attendance are increasing and the lectures are loud in their praise of the interest displayed by the students. There is nothing in Div. 2 to touch the enterprise of the union, but we hope to see it beaten before very long. Little Hampton are arranging a week-end school for December 5 with Wynn-Cuthbert as tutor. The sales of the new pamphlet are very encouraging.

Division 3: Newmarket Branch of the A.U.B.T.W. received a special visit on November 6th. G. Purser, the A.U.B.T.W. organiser, has issued a special circular to all his branches urging them to arrange special lectures. Appropriately enough when many of the churches were holding their Day of Remembrance on November 7th in Ipswich, under the auspices of the A.E.U. and the Trades Council, we held a Day of Understanding and by the help of

lantern slides dealt with *History of I.W.C.E. and War—Why?* All three lectures were well reported in the East Anglian evening and daily edition. Brentwood has also secured good press notices for its successful class. The East Anglian District N.U.R. is receiving a deputation. Eric Godfrey is taking a new class at Camberley on Imperialism. Colchester sends out an S.O.S. for the Tuesday night class on Social History at the Leon Walk Rooms which is faring badly. We owe it to Dr. Jamieson's memory to keep our work going here. Cambridge also needs help. Chelmsford has suspended its activities until the bye-election is over. All the colleges have been offered special lectures and it is hoped that secretaries will lose no time in making arrangements. Grays is greatly interested in Comrade Cohen's treatment of European History. The next Divisional E.C. has been fixed for February 6th.

Division 4: Hengoed L.C. is making good progress both with regard to classes and affiliations. Throughout the whole division there is a marked increase in the desire for I.W.C.E. and many new classes have been formed. At present the Division is running 53 classes.

Division 5: No report.

Division 6: Walsall College's three classes are going splendidly, and a whist drive organised by the Brownhills Class was a great success. The Dudley Class is taking Economics. A week-end school is being arranged to cater for the district with a view to spreading the work of the College. An additional class has been arranged at Saltley. The Stafford College is arranging a visitation of Trade Union branches to push the work of the I.W.C.E. Organiser Barr addressed a mass meeting of engineers at Coventry and a class is being arranged.

Division 7: At a quarterly meeting of the West Riding Area Colleges called to arrange classes and tutors January-March, 1927, a report from fifteen colleges with 32 classes showed an attendance of 902 students, Leeds being first with twelve classes and 554 students, Bradford with five classes and 74 students, Halifax with three classes and 62 student. As reports were not to hand for the absent colleges these preliminary figures will show a general advance

in number over the whole Division. The Organiser is to visit Sowerby Bridge and Todmorden Trades Councils—in the first case to establish a new college. The Normanton class has increased to 70 and the women's section of the Labour Party are asking for increased facilities. The Kippax class with Lew Davies still grows and the students attending now stands at 284. Otley report that Mrs. E. E. Crossley has joined the college and will be of great assistance in developing that area. The Organiser is to visit Hull for a series of meetings. Classes under the Doncaster College in the mining villages are going strong and will show ultimately that the miners prefer N.C.L.C. classes rather than welfare-subsidised W.E.A. classes. Barnsley college have a class in the Cop. Hall on Fridays with W. Burden, of Batley, as tutor. The classes arranged for the dyers are well attended and generally the reports show an expansion of work throughout the Division.

Division 8: Alex. Evans, who has been tutoring Labour College classes since 1919, has been fined £30 under E.P.A. for a speech given in Wigan. Evans is a locked-out collier. Classes generally are keeping up to the standard. Requests for new classes are being received for the New Year. Manchester L.C. has been successful in arranging for an educational scheme with the Manchester Branch of the Postal Workers. A feature of the Liverpool district is the number of lantern lectures arranged with various bodies, such as Labour clubs, Co-operative organisations, etc. A successful annual re-union of students and Clarion cyclists was held at Earlestown on November 6th.

Division 9: A day school is being arranged by the Durham and District Labour College at the Miners' Hall, Red Hills, Durham, on December 11th, when J. F. Horrabin will deliver two lectures. The Hetton-le-Hole branch of the N.U.D.A.W. and the Stanley Branch of the same Union have now classes running. The Middlesbrough branch of the Tailors and Garment Workers' Union has started a class.

Division 10: Dundee has now got its classes successfully running. A record session is anticipated. A special class is

being arranged for victimised members of the Printing Unions. The Edinburgh Sunday morning Economics Class, with A. Woodburn as tutor, has 80 students. The Edinburgh College held a debate on "Psychology" between C. L. Gibbins and D. Kennedy. The Ayrshire classes are still increasing. The Lanarkshire's Shotts Class has about 80 students. Glasgow is running a special course of lectures illustrated by lantern slides on the "Theory, History and Application of Socialism." Dumfries is carrying on despite the fact that illness has robbed them of their tutor.

Division 11: During the month further affiliations have been received. The series of Sunday educational lectures given in Belfast gains in popularity. The subjects dealt with during the month include "Psychology and the Workers" and the "Bankers' Plan and its Effects in Europe." C. McCrystal, assistant secretary, Belfast College, has addressed several working-class organisations during the month. Arrangements are being made to start two additional classes in Belfast. The Organiser is to deliver a lantern lecture on "Modern Imperialism and Modern Poverty" in Londonderry. The Newry College, with Councillor Myles Connell as energetic secretary, supported by an active committee, continues to make good headway.

Division 12: Abnormal conditions still obtain in the mining areas, making systematic class-work more difficult than usual. The Mansfield College will have its usual classes, and a good few new ones running normally by the time these notes appear. They are also running a week-end school on Saturday and Sunday, November 27th and 28th, with R. Coppock, of the Building Trades Federation, as lecturer. Leicester College held a very successful school with E. F. Wise as lecturer. Comrade Bull, of Nottingham, commences a class in Grantham on November 18th. Northampton, Wellingborough, and Lincoln continue to thrive. The Organiser, in co-operation with Comrade Millership, is endeavouring to make a beginning in the Worksop area, by means of a Day School early in January.

PLEBS LEAGUE

E.C. NOTES

We propose briefly to report the main discussions which take place at the Executive Committee meetings each month, and League members are asked to comment on same—adversely or favourably.

THE first business on November 5th was finance: *Low Finance*—for we have never been so badly off. Many times we have faced the winter with a big burden of debt, but the General Strike and the Miners' Lockout and the consequent stacking-up of debts to us by local Colleges and comrades, leaves us this winter with several big bills to face, and with anything but rosy prospects ahead for the workers on whose support we depend. What is to be done?

After a long and detailed discussion we decided to make both personal and general appeals. We need the help of all who believe in I.W.C.E., as we have never needed it before. Watch the pages of the Magazine for ways in which you can help us.

* * *

The Editor **has been** asking for some relief from the routine part of this work lately, owing to the fact that he has found it increasingly difficult to fit in all the various jobs he has undertaken. It will be remembered that the Meet gave the E.C. power to appoint an assistant. It was therefore agreed, at the last E.C. meeting, to ask Maurice H. Dobb to act as Associate Editor. J.F.H. will continue to contribute "Bookshelf," editorial and other articles, and to do cover designs. But articles, letters and reviews should now be addressed to M. H. Dobb, Middleton Cottage, Sidgwick Avenue, Cambridge.

* * *

Contemplated publications were discussed. These include the *Plebs Atlas*, for which we anticipate a big sale; and *A Worker's History of the General Strike*," compiled from the very excellent data sent in to us by good comrades in all districts. We have also just reprinted Mark Starr's *Trade Unionism*.

* * *

Owing to strained finance, the Secretary felt it best to delay the ballot of

League members on the resolution: passed at the Meet, until we took the ballot for the new Executive Committee. The resolutions did not involve any drastic alterations in policy, and as each ballot means expense in postage, etc., the E.C. endorsed the Secretary's action.

* * *

All League members are asked to take a special interest in the League Executive Committee election this year. It is no good grumbling about "cliques" running a show if no one makes any effort to put in some new blood. We want the League to be a live wire and it can only be that if the E.C. and the rank and file work together enthusiastically. Don't grouse about other folks' apathy—use the organisation that you are interested in for the best interests of all concerned. 1927 is going to be a record year for Labour—let's make it a record for PLEBS!

W. H.

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THE PLEBS BOOKSHELF

IT is a good many years now since I quoted a long passage from H. M. Tomlinson's *The Sea and the Jungle* in *THE PLEBS*, and urged Plebeians to get acquainted with this author. I have often wondered why Tomlinson's name does not appear more frequently in our Labour press. What's the matter with Labour editors that they don't recognise in this man's work fighting-stuff of the first quality?

I have just read his *Under the Red Ensign*.* The publishers do him a disservice by suggesting that the book is a sort of "work of reference" dealing with the British Mercantile Marine. If the result of this is that Tomlinson's "propaganda" gets into circles it would not otherwise have reached, well and good. But it is to be hoped that as soon as may be they will issue a cheap edition, and label it what it is—a bitter onslaught on the workings of modern industrialism. Then the thousands of readers who could appreciate its irony, its passion, and its human feeling, will have a chance of reading it.

* Williams & Norgate, 10/6.

* * *

Under the Red Ensign does incidentally contain some interesting facts and figures relating to the British mercantile service—just as *The Sea and the Jungle* contained a certain amount of information about the Amazon and the lands through which it flows. But Tomlinson is one of those writers who is much more interested in men and women than in statistics. And just as his trip to the Amazon inspired him to write many mordantly wise things about European civilisation, so his tour of investigation (on behalf of a London daily paper—why wasn't it the *Herald*?) round British seaports has given him the opportunity for an attack on capitalism and its material and spiritual results which stirs one's blood.

He sees—and can set down what he sees.

Take this picture of a Welsh landscape:—

"There is a village near the head of the [Taff] Vale which, in its settling of cinders and ash, with the hills round it the colour of sin, and the continuous

bursts of livid flames and dim smoke from its centre, might be the place of torment once visited by Dante. But it is not that. It is a normal aspect of our realm and the source of immense wealth. That last, however, you would never guess, for no land could call itself wealthy when challenged by the hovels of this place, by the mute appeal of its underfed, thinly-clad and barefooted children. No wealth is there. I have never seen village life in any barbarous country at so low an ebb as it is in that Welsh village, which looks, not the origin of gold and fame, but of the thin and grey ooze of poverty itself."

Don't tell me that this paragraph tells you "nothing new." I know that. But it makes you see again something we none of us ought ever to forget—something which should put passion and fighting faith into our "daily round and common task"; and, seeing it through the eyes of a man who *felt* what he saw, it is less forgettable for us henceforth. "The thin grey ooze of poverty itself."

* * *

Or take again this restrained yet bitter comment—strangely appropriate just now:—

"The nature of the common man varies, as we have seen, according to the way we view it. The same quality in the fellow may be both good and evil. There were those skilled coalminers I saw on the Western Front, working in tunnels under the German lines, surrounded by explosives, moiling in silent expectation of discovery and obliteration by the enemy; and yet that same native skill and courage, when the war was over, fell under the censure of good folk who desired no more mines to be dug under possible invaders of English streets."

Those "good folk" and their placid blindness to the foulness of the world we live in! If their hide is not inches thick some of Tomlinson's thrusts ought to get through to whatever sort of souls they've got.

Here is a comment of his, following on a reference to the horrors and bestialities of modern war:—

"It is true that a delicate human spirit, undaunted if disillusioned, will remain to the end facing undefiled the most obscene barbarities of war. It may be even shocked into a deeper apprehension of life. Yet the ironic smile on the resolute face of the good lad as he dies in the muck of battle should not convince society, which ordered him to the sacrifice, of its own admirable ways."

And in a passage like the following we get a note too often lacking from our critical studies of financial operations :—

"For when money is made dear, when credit becomes difficult, then, even laymen may guess, the life goes out of trade, and idle workmen will wait for doles, for charity, or for anything else that will keep children crying for food. I suppose we ought not to call it starving the children, for that, though true, is not a financial term. We must call it a Return to the Gold Standard. . . . As to those children, there is a specific warning :

Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the depths of the sea.

Anything in that warning? We are not so superstitious as we used to be, but there is that which is unpleasantly disquieting in the eyes of a starving child."

Finally, since I must stop quoting some time, let me make a present of this sentence to the tutors of our classes on Finance :—

"If the water in the capital of the companies controlling most of our ships were decanted into barrels; it would fill the holds of all the idle ships of the world."

See that this book is in your local library—and make good use of it.

* * *

By accident there came into my hands just as I had finished *Under the Red Ensign* another book dealing with the mercantile service—*The Islanders*, by Archibald Hurd (Cassells', 3/6). This book will be circulated in schools and places where ideas are "formed." It is all about our island story, the Blessings of Sea Power, the Virtues of Private Enterprise, and the "high wages, good food, improved accommodation,* and other advantages of British seamen" (which, by the way, "constitute no mean hardship" on British shipowners in their "unprotected" rivalry with the shipping of other nations). There is a chapter entitled "Shipping Rings," beginning—"There is an impression that by some mysterious means shipowners, British and foreign, manage to control freights to their own advantage." Whereas the fact is, of course, that the intense desire of British shipowners to carry goods for the lowest possible return is only equalled by their passion for giving high wages and palatial conditions to the men who work their ships.

Let us repeat—this book will be circulated in thousands to Tomlinson's tens. The moral for I.W.C.E.rs is obvious.

J. F. H.

* * *

* I wish I could have quoted Tomlinson on this.

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