

ORGAN OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF  
LABOUR COLLEGES

# THE PEOPLES

Monthly, 4d.

APRIL, 1929

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*Subjects include:*

RAILWAYS &  
CAPITALIST  
DEVELOPMENT

*(with Maps)*



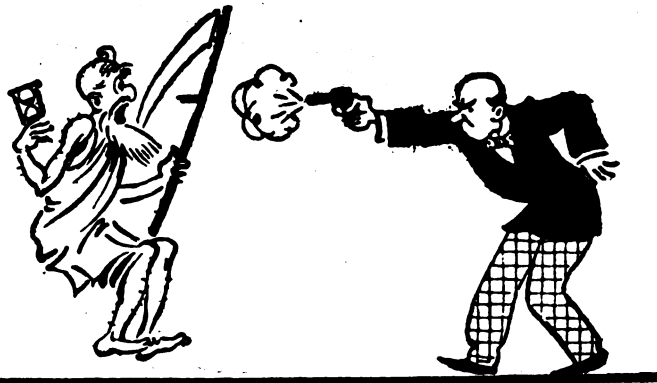
HEGEL



FIGHTING TORYISM  
A CENTURY AGO

N. C. L. C., 15 SOUTH HILL PARK GARDENS, LONDON, N. W. 3

# The Crime of Killing Time!



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# THE PLEBS

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## THE COLOUR LINE

By "INTERNATIONALIST"

**D**URING the last two or three years the labour problems of non-white races have begun to receive some practical attention from the British Labour Movement. Colonel Malone's illustrated booklets on China, and the report of Messrs. Purcell and Hallsworth, after their visit to India as delegates of the Trades Union Congress, are outstanding examples of the new attitude. In these publications the writers have endeavoured, and successfully endeavoured, to picture what is happening "out there" as a matter of vital human, as well as political, interest to the Western worker, to face honestly the complexities and difficulties of the situation, and to suggest immediate steps in the direction of a solution.

It is interesting to see that in the United States a similar job has been undertaken, on a somewhat larger scale, by Scott Nearing, whose *Black America* (Vanguard Press, \$3) has just been published in New York. Let us hope that in no long time an abridged edition embodying the most important facts and giving some of the most striking pictures will be available at a price better suited to the pocket of the average trade unionist.

Nearing's book is as terrible an indictment against capitalist institutions in America as are the writings of Malone and Purcell and

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on Back Page

Hallsworth against the behaviour of British capitalism in the Far East. If the relations between the exploiters in Britain and the United States continue to grow more strained, we may easily live to see our masters utilising exposures of this sort on both sides of the Atlantic in order to produce a war mentality in "their own" workers. Of course it will not be Nearing's book that will be used by the Americans, nor Malone's and Purcell and Hallsworth's that will be quoted over here. The capitalists will use them apart; that is why we on our side must be careful to use them together.

There are only about 12,000,000 negroes in the United States, while there are more than 300,000,000 Indians in the British Empire; but a very much larger proportion of the twelve million have been drawn into occupations in which white labourers are also employed, and the remainder can be utilised more rapidly in this way than is the case with India's multitudes. Geographical, racial and religious circumstances are as different as can well be imagined, and for that reason the solutions that will have to be found for the problems involved will differ at a hundred points; but in one essential particular there is no difference at all. In both cases a large non-white population is at the mercy of white capitalists in whose hands "race hatred" is only one of the weapons by which coloured labour can be kept cheap, and the white wage-earner fooled for some purposes into solidarity with his exploiter.

Both negro and Indian workers are expected to live in dwellings which white workers cannot be induced to inhabit. I freely admit that Nearing's pictures of the negro quarters in South Chicago and the Hill District of Pittsburgh are enough to make any decent worker (British, American or any other) ready to fight against the capitalists who compel human beings to live under such conditions. But when I turn to Purcell and Hallsworth's photographs of the textile-workers' hovels and the "homes" of the "better class" workers in India, I must say that, for my own part—after every allowance for India's climate and the smoke clouds of Pittsburgh—I would find life less intolerable even in Pittsburgh.

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L. R. D., 79 Warren St., London, W.1

"Theoretically, the American Federation of Labour has always stood," Nearing tells us, "for the inclusion of the Negro in the ranks of organised labour. Practically while a small number of unions have excluded Negroes from membership by constitutional provision and bye-laws, the great majority have simply refused to accept them when they applied for membership." This, of course, is very bad. It shows that American trade unionists are not like us in Great Britain—always thorough-going and utterly single-minded in our devotion to the workers' cause. Yet even here, where everything is naturally on a higher plane, I have heard a bus conductor, on his way home, heckling a Labour speaker and declaring, on the strength of his military service in India, that the only method of dealing with people like Indians was that of the boot. I have an impression—readers will doubtless correct me if I am wrong—that Lascar sailors on British ships do not receive the British union rates of pay, and that quite a large number of them remain unorganised. I know of the case of an Indian seaman who

lost his thumb as the result of an accident in the course of his employment on a British ship in a British port, and was not legally entitled to a penny piece of compensation, though the intervention of a group of British trade unionists secured for him a small compassionate grant.

The truth is that we are all in the same boat. None of us among the whites can feel much enthusiasm about our own past record, as a Movement, in relation to members of other races. We have been too pre-occupied with immediate struggles at home to take overmuch interest in the wrongs and sufferings of subject races. The inter-racial and international ramifications of modern capitalism are compelling us at last to take a new line; and it is cheering to notice that so much of the work of investigation and presentation of data is being conducted in a realistic and business-like fashion that gives hope of practical measures of co-operation between workers belonging to different racial groups. There is in these studies nothing of the hysteria which capitalist politicians of a past generation were able to excite over the sufferings of the noble Christian Armenians whenever it was desired to apply diplomatic pressure in the Near East; nor of the sentimentality expended in more recent times upon "gallant little Belgium."

It would be unfair to deny that the negro question in the United States is complicated by the fact that the two races have to live

and work side by side in the same country. My one criticism of Nearing's book would be that, although he devotes several pages to a consideration of the State laws against mixed marriages, he does not face the practical difficulties inherent in social equality. Any reader of Carl van Vechten's *Nigger Heaven* will realise at once what is meant. There are plenty of negroes in whom, as individuals, the colouring and other physical characteristics of their race are so faintly marked as to be indistinguishable by the ordinary white person. In order to avoid race discrimination, numbers of such individuals do, as a matter of fact, "take a chance" and pass themselves off as non-negro.

Only a very determined optimist, however, can persuade himself that quite serious reactions would not follow upon a state of affairs in which considerable numbers of white persons unwittingly intermarrying with negroes of this type found themselves parents of typical and unmistakable negro babies. Some readers will probably characterise me as reactionary for even mentioning such matters, but it has too often happened in other connections that Socialists have failed to be beforehand in dealing with objections that their opponents were sure to raise. Therefore it is still my conviction that it is a weakness in Nearing's book that he does not anticipate criticism by saying something clear and definite about this special phase of his subject.

## THIS "WOMAN MOVEMENT"

By CARA COOK

*(Miss Cook is on the staff of Brookwood Labour College, U.S.A., and is at present busy collecting "material" in the old world to use in the new. PLEBS readers should utilise this article to introduce the Mag. to Women's Sections and Co-operative Guilds).*

**I** MADE a dash for the tram. It was crowded, but a nice chap, with a dinner box, offered me his seat, which I took out of habit, and then thought to myself, "Why

should I? He doesn't look nearly as husky as I do, and is probably much more tired after his day's work. Where is this 'equality' which women are demanding?"

Later, reading over one of two books\* I noted what Mary Wollstonecraft, that pioneer of women's emancipation, had to say on the same subject 135 years ago:—

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\* *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, by Mary Wollstonecraft, and *The Subjection of Women*, by John Stuart Mill (Everyman edition; J. M. Dent, 2/-).

"I lament that women are systematically degraded by receiving the trivial attentions which men think it manly to pay to the sex, when, in fact, they are insultingly supporting their own superiority. . . . I do earnestly wish to see the distinction of sex confounded in society, unless where love animates the behaviour. For this distinction is, I am firmly persuaded, the foundation of the weakness of character ascribed to woman."

Like those useless biological hand-me-downs known as vestigial structures, such sex distinctions as this—giving up of seats, opening doors for women to enter first, walking on their outside on the street—habits harmless enough in themselves and having an association with "good manners," tend nevertheless, by their very origin in the days of feminine weakness and incapacity to perpetuate that sense of women's inferiority, which is such a handicap in securing more important sex reforms.

These are only straws, however, in a wind of more subtle opinion, which, if not actively opposed to the participation of women in fields of human endeavour formerly dominated by men, still indirectly discourages it. It is an appropriate time, therefore, as the new Franchise Bill comes into operation, for this reprint to appear—its arguments as fresh as ever, but its ideals still to be attained.

### The Tyranny of Needle Work

Of course we have come a long way from Mary Wollstonecraft's time when young ladies were considered social outcasts if they indulged in any effort other than their own needle-work, and so, as she complained, "contracted their faculties by confining their thoughts to themselves"; from the time when women in the eyes of the law were practically chattel property, causing John Stuart Mill to exclaim, "If married life were all that it might be expected to be, looking to the laws alone, society would be a hell upon earth"; and from the time when old Henry Cornvelt demanded of rebellious Lysbeth Sylvain\*, "Do you want to disgrace the family that has taken you in by going away to become a wage-earner?"

But the problem differs in degree only. Spheres of women's opportunities have broadened, but was it not within the past

few months that admission of women medical students to London hospitals was being bitterly opposed; are not English women still forced to accept the nationality of the men they marry, and are not women's efforts to become economically independent as wage-earners notoriously difficult and ill-rewarded? Men are still, as someone has facetiously put it, averse to associating with women *as equals*, although they are not averse to associating with women.

*The Rebel Generation*, with its solid Dutch flavour, makes a good desert to top off the more meaty substance of *The Rights of Woman*. The former deals with the ever-recurring revolt of the younger generation against the traditions of their elders, tracing this theme down through four generations from 1840 to 1923. Children break away from their cross-stitching to elope, or, overwhelmed with a sense of filial duty, submit to unhappy marriages and in turn become exacting parents, whose daughters run away to study medicine, and whose granddaughters enter Parliament.

It would be wrong to conclude from this book, however, that the rebellion of the younger generation is the principal driving force in the progress of feminine reform. The "flapper vote" was not won mainly by flappers, and that greater fight now going on in the field of sexual inequality cannot be led by adolescents.

### The Middle-Class Woman.

It is rather those who, as Mill says "having paid what they are told is their debt to society—having brought up a family blamelessly, find themselves with undiminished activity but no employment for it" and feel most keenly the injustices of a system which denies them anything but a "place in the home." They are the ones who must carry on.

But, says the worker's wife, that's fine for the middle-class, comparatively-leisured woman, who brings up her child or two, and then has nothing to do but join clubs to agitate for social reforms. What about us, who never get this house-keeping job done? We know there's a women's movement all right; it keeps us moving 16 hours a day!

\* *The Rebel Generation*, by Jo van Ammers-Kuller; trans. by M. W. Hoper; J. M. Dent,

To these women, Mary Wollstonecraft did tribute in the following words:—

"With respect to virtue (used here in the sense of ability) I have seen most in low life. Many poor women maintain their children by the sweat of their brow, and keep together families that the vices of the fathers would have scattered abroad; but gentlewomen are too indolent to be actively virtuous, and are softened rather than refined by civilisation. Indeed the good sense which I have met with among the poor women who have had few advantages of education, and yet have acted heroically, strongly confirmed me in the opinion that trifling employments have rendered woman a trisler."

Someone has said that home-making to-day is an under-capitalised industry, and that the workers in the home have, therefore, to use inadequate tools. Certainly they are often forced to work under lower than decent standards, and their duties are seldom valued in terms of wage payment, though theirs is the most important of all industries.

The women's movement for them must therefore be a *collective* effort to establish their rights as wives and mothers, with certain standards of compensation and protection such as are embodied in maternity laws, pension systems and guaranteed standards of family life. At present the co-operative and trade union guilds attempt to meet this need for collective action, but these organisations are perhaps not trade-conscious enough. Is it too fantastic to imagine a National Union of Wives and Mothers, a regular trade union, with minimum compensation standards, insurance features and the right to strike?

This brings us to another idea suggested by Professor G. E. Catlin, in his introduction to *The Rights of Women*: "We seem to be passing into an age when the problem is not that of industrial conditions compelling unregulated competition, but of a civilisation which dispenses with the home."

If this is so, and a Socialist State should increasingly assume the routine burdens of the household, then more than ever must women be alert to safeguard the conditions of their new emancipation—much as the trade unions are now attempting to control rationalisation processes—or be controlled by them.

In the background of the arguments which these two books suggest, is the ever-present plea for better education, or rather equal opportunity for education. The test will

then become not sex, but actual capacity, the survival of the fittest intellect. Education must become a "grand national concern," says Wollstonecraft. She is emphatic, however, that such education should not be used in a narrow sense, for personal advancement, but believes that women should be educated for service *as women*.

At this point arises one of the chief criticisms of her writings, for she fails to distinguish adequately between the problems of married and unmarried women. To her the maintenance of the best human stock was by far the most important function of women, and her educational ideals were adapted thereto. Obviously, however, emancipation must mean something rather different from these two groups, and in its pursuit we must not let slogans confuse us as to the real ends each desires.



Wm. Gropper, the famous American cartoonist, has been visiting Russia. This is one of his sketches of Russian types, published in the *New Masses*. It is entitled, "Tartars Never Hurry." (Our Literature Sales Organiser says there must be Tartar blood in some of our class secretaries, judging by the time they take to send in orders for new publications).

# THE SPIRITUAL FATHER OF KARL MARX

By T. A. JACKSON

*"That the Hegelian system did not solve the problem it propounded is immaterial. Its epoch-making merit was that it propounded the problem."*

ENGELS.



THE appearance for the first time in English—more than a century after the original was written—of a translation of Hegel's *Science of Logic* is on all grounds a notable event.\* Hitherto we had had, perforce, to take our views of Hegel at second or third hand—or even more remotely. His *Philosophy of History* has for long been available (in a somewhat eccentric translation) and parts at any rate of his *Encyclopaedia* and *Phenomenology*.

Yet, despite the fact that the former contains an epitomised version of the *Logic*, neither of these works presents the innermost essence of what is by common consent the most stupendous feat of philosophising begotten even by the German Transcendental School.

## Hegel and the Hegelians

It is significant that this should be so; that nobody should be able to write at length about philosophy without mentioning Hegel (generally with disparagement varying from mild disapproval to fierce contempt) and yet few, if any, even of those who can read German have really grappled with the

\* *Hegel's Science of Logic*. Translated by W. H. Johnston and L. G. Struthers. (Allen and Unwin. 2 vols., 32/- net).

core and essence of his system—the "Bible" of Hegelianism, this present work, the *Science of Logic*.

Did not Hegel himself say (or was Heine up to his larks again when he reported him as saying?) "there is only one man understands me, and he *mis*-understands me?"

George Wilhelm Frederick Hegel was in fact, though successful enough in the narrowly material sense, tragically unlucky. He was born either a century too soon or 22 centuries too late. Among the Greeks in their philosophic prime he would have shone as an acute and comprehensive systematiser, to-day he would be acclaimed as an expositor and an elucidator for whom Einstein would have no terrors and for whom the Freudians would fall into line. As it was, it fell to his lot to carry on the work he found ready to hand. Was it his fault that, reasoning more rigorously and over a far vaster range than his predecessors, he did but the more speedily and completely demonstrate the failure of philosophy?

## Engels' Summing-Up

Engels, in a well-known passage, appraises the work of Hegel:—

The new German philosophy culminated in the Hegelian system. In this system—and herein is its



great merit—for the first time the whole world—natural, historical, intellectual—is represented as a process, i.e., as in constant motion, change, transformation, development; and the attempt is made to trace out the internal connection that makes a continuous whole of this movement and development. From this point of view the history of mankind no longer appeared as a wild whirl of senseless deeds of violence all equally to be condemned at the judgment seat of mature philosophic reason, and which are best forgotten as soon as possible, but as the process of evolution of man himself. It was now the task of the intellect to follow the gradual march of this process through all its devious ways and to trace out the inner law running through all its apparently accidental phenomena. That the Hegelian system did not solve the problem it propounded is immaterial. Its epoch-making merit was that it propounded the problem.

It needs no argument to show that in Hegel's day (1770-1831) only the tiniest beginning had been made to accumulate the vast body of positively scientific knowledge now available. When therefore he attempted, as he did, to elaborate a detailed world-conception in terms of his leading principle he could not fail to superadd to his own inevitable limitations those of his age. Naturally he thereby laid himself open to castigation and the very grandeur of his repute in his own day ensured that that castigation would be prompt and thorough. Yet for all that, the value of his central principle remained, and it is this that is expounded in the *Science of Logic*.

### Hegel's Great Principle

Briefly put, his central point may be expressed as the denial of the "Law of the Excluded Middle." In common text-book (or "formal") logic, a thing either is "so-and-so" or it is not; no interim or "middle" stage is possible. Beginning thus, "formal" logic proceeds to analyse propositions into their component assertions and sort them into identities. Having said that "all men are mortal" and that "Socrates is a man," we triumphantly deduce that we have, virtually, asserted the mortality of Socrates. So far no grievous damage is done. But when we erect this method into a species of revelation and carry it over into the valuation, not of verbal propositions, but of creeds, policies, and concepts its weakness is soon revealed.

Mankind in its history has often seen grandmothers murdered; may we therefore say that all men are liable to murder grand-

mothers? Even if we concede it as a potential possibility, would we be justified in saying that any particular man (John Smith or Stanley Baldwin) was potentially a grandmother-murderer?

Such and such a thing, it is argued, is "either Right or it is Wrong!"—but who is there nowadays that has not experienced the falsity of that proposition? Nowadays, with the old fixed lines of demarcation between Force and Matter, the Living and the non-Living, Christianity and Heathendom, Socialism and non-Socialism, all blurring and fading before our eyes, the truth of Hegel's central proposition (the repudiation of the "Law" of the Excluded Middle) must be apparent without effort.

More than that. To handle as we must categories such as that of the "proletariat," which, however circumspect our verbal definitions, always remain concepts only capable of a progressive, developing, and historical application, we must of necessity employ more or less skilfully the very "dialectical" method which in Hegel was so much the occasion of scandal.

Hegel unfortunately still kept within the limits of the Idealist concept of the Universe. He saw that all things were inter-connected; he saw that "all things glow"; he saw that all distinctions are arbitrary and comparative, so that each positive implied its converse, both were necessary for the act of distinguishing between them. But he was so filled with the sense that a positive mental effort was involved in every act of perception—let alone every process of deduction or comparison—that for him the universe became co-extensive with Mind and the two terms all but interchangeable.

To read this book with even an approximation to understanding will involve an effort—a sustained labour that few nowadays would seem willing to face. Yet one cannot handle it, examine it, or dip into it without feeling that here should be a stimulus from which much may come—to the greater glory of Marx and a better appreciation of the M.C.H. here upon earth.

At the very least one should be the better able to appreciate Dietzgen now that at last one can compare him with the "quarry from which he was hewed."

# WILLIAM GODWIN

and his "Essay on Property"

By FRED SHAW

WILLIAM GODWIN (1756-1836) was one of those middle-class "reformers" who, more than a century ago, fired by the doctrines and deeds of the French Revolution, attacked Church and State in Tory Britain. He was intimately associated with the leaders of the London Corresponding Society, and during the State trials of his friends, Horne Tooke and Thos. Holcroft, he wrote many letters to the *Morning Chronicle* in their defence, and his pamphlet, *Cursory Strictures*, on the judge's charge to the jury, is said to have been largely responsible for the acquittal of the accused. His first wife was Mary Wollstonecraft, writer of *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (a book which nearly killed Mrs. Grundy). Their daughter Mary married Shelley.\*

Godwin is chiefly remembered now for two books—his large two-volume treatise, *An Enquiry into Political Justice*; and his novel, *Caleb Williams*, one of the earliest "novels with a purpose." An abridged edition of the former used to be available in the old Swan Sonnenschein Social Science Series which used to form the basis of a worker's library thirty odd years ago. This volume has just been re-issued, with a very good historical introduction by H. S. Salt.\* It contains the "Essay on Property" from *Political Justice*, and in it Godwin discusses the relations between private property and human conduct. Thus the book is interesting to the Socialist student, and at the same time it contains the central theme of Godwin's philosophic argument.

It is one of those books that cannot be understood or appreciated apart from the

historical conditions of its birth. Published in 1793, in the midst of European political reaction following the French Revolution, and during the period when Radicals and Reformers in Britain were being mercilessly repressed; when members of Corresponding Societies were being sentenced to Botany Bay; when the ruling class encircled their power with well-cultivated social status, intense caste prejudice, formality and ceremonial; when the Divine Right of Kings had been re-established in the form of the omnipotence of Governments and Property by the very people who had challenged the first; and where society was culturally divided very sharply betwixt extreme servility on the one hand and supreme courage in agitation on the other.

Under these conditions it was natural that the political argument of the reformer should be enriched by the widening out of the discussion from the immediate and concrete to the criticism of the foundations of society and social development. Godwin's book did not give a battle-cry to reformers as did Rousseau's *Social Contract*. Nor did he reach the popularity, or the simplicity of argument, of Tom Paine. True, workmen's associations used to "club up" the three guineas for the two-volume work; but it was for that part of the book which criticises in a revolutionary fashion the social institutions and the morality of the useless great, and not for the philosophic thesis upon the "New Society" which forms the main purpose of the book.

Godwin was a philosophic anarchist, and his ideal as stated in the book is a "simple form of society without government." "Property, being the keystone of political justice" should not be privately appropriated. So long as private property exists we shall have governments and their evils, coercion, prisons and punishment. It is responsible for the vanities of the rich and the servility of the

\* The student is recommended to read H. N. Brailsford's *Shelley, Godwin and their Circle* (Home Univ. Library).

\* *Political Justice*. By Wm. Godwin. (Allen & Unwin, 3/6).

poor, wars and conquests are due to it, and it forms the basis for marriage.

The tutor and student of Dietzgen both will revel in the numerous examples offered of a metaphysical justice developed by Godwin, and a class-conscious concept of justice developed out of actual social relations and from which the concept can only be explained. Godwin wrote in a period rich in metaphysical speculation and whilst he would have rejected a religious concept (he became an atheist) yet he lived in an atmosphere where categories were both real and eternal. Actually Godwin's ideal was self-reliance and independence, and his failure to recognise the class basis of society and at the same time the economic interdependence of world wealth production forced him on the lines of world regeneration by the spread of intelligence and the personal application of social justice. What he would have said if he could have seen the press, cinema and stage manufacturing "ethical concepts" by mass-production at a penny a yard would no doubt be illuminating.

He shows neither knowledge of economics nor understanding of economic development, though he quotes Adam Smith (on the division of labour in making pins). But to Godwin, co-operation in any direction was to be discouraged. Tools and implements were to be kept as simple as possible and capable of individual application. (I personally remember a group of anarchist-communists who held a dinner to celebrate the petrol engine as the 'wedge' that was going to break up large-scale industry on the lines of every man his own factory). With all these economic limitations Godwin states that two hours per day of labour will be sufficient for society. Frugality is a necessity from every point of view in his society, for the possibility of over-population has to be faced. That contingency must be met by the supremacy of intelligence over sex desires (birth-controllers, please note).

We can agree with Godwin that the evolution of Marriage as an institution has been in keeping with property relations. Godwin abolishes marriage and leaves the sexes to complete freedom of choice. He is very vague as to the early protection of children either by the mother or parents,

and thus this chapter upon population is the least satisfactory in the book.

Yet as a denunciation of the evils of private property the book is invaluable to the tutor and speaker. Godwin saw the evils clearly enough, but his 'solution' by means of decentralisation and the limiting of co-operation shows up the weakness of his philosophy. He was an individualist-idealist. He could not see the class nature of society and therefore failed to see that his own book, his very conception of social justice, had been determined for him by the social relations of his own time.

# FIGHTING TORYISM A CENTURY AGO

By JOHN S. CLARKE

NOT before time the historian of the titanic struggle waged between the Reformist-cum-Revolutionary journalists and the detestable Georgian governments of Britain has arrived. He is Mr. William H. Wickwar, and his book, *The Struggle for the Freedom of the Press, 1819 to 1832* (George Allen & Unwin Ltd.), is the most complete account so far penned. What a host of historical summaries we have had during the last fifteen years—all traversing the same ground and emphasising the same points. Every one of them have casually referred to Hone and Carlile and Eaton as if these stalwarts were merely "also rans." Mr. Wickwar has thrown them up in high relief as men who, more than even the industrialists and radical politicians of the period, inspired terror in the paltry hearts of the Sidmouths, Castle-reaghs and Eldons, not to mention the Ellenboroughs and Wilberforces of that interesting age. This by virtue of a force of character, a courage and integrity, difficult to appreciate in these respectable

"don't-hurt-the-other-fellow's-feelings" kind o' days. Then, when the bewildering rapidity with which the Industrial Revolution moved opened up vistas of Utopian thought and raised more problems than practical thought could grapple with, militancy came to the top. Stubbornness and tenacity of purpose characterised the grim warriors of the press battle. Among the many heroic figures of the period, none stands out with greater prominence than Richard Carlile. Carlile was obsessed with the atheistic ideal, but this is both explicable and pardonable when one is acquainted with the religious bigotry exercised for political

reasons by the other side, particularly the odious "Vice Society" as Cobbett aptly named it. Those terrible years between 1819 and 1832 mark the hottest encounters in that memorable struggle, and various forms of attack on privilege, vested interest, and political bigotry (Tory of course) were then as they are now. Anti-Shavians, for instance, will derive some satisfaction from Carlile's pronouncement upon his own methods:—

"I saw that the corruptions and delusions of the day required to be attacked with something stronger than squib and pasquinade, which, however it might annoy the subject of attack or amuse the reader, must be confessed to be ill-adapted to convey

## AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING!!



### IMPURE LITERATURE!

[Moral reformers, in the name of the Young Person, are eager for the suppression of "improper" novels in which women novelists, by the way, do such a brisk trade.]

**RIGHT-THINKING PERSON:** "What we need, my dear **Sirs**, is legislation to prevent our daughters from reading the novels they have written!"

**W**E reproduce this cartoon from *Cartoons*, by Will Dyson, published by the *Daily Herald* in 1913. Its applicability to recent events needs no emphasis. The Jixes were indeed always with us!

Please Note the N.C.L.C.'s New Address: 15 South Hill Park Gardens, Hampstead, London, N.W.3

principles to the mind. Correct principles require nothing but a clear and forcible statement to have them adopted and admired; and the promulgation of correct principles forms the most powerful opposition to corruption and delusion. Juvenal attacked the vices and corruptions of Rome in satire, but what effect did it produce? None whatever, for some of the objects of attack themselves derived as much amusement from the description as others to whom the satire had no relation."

In prison—for Carlile spent over nine years there—and out of it, he kept up a continual fusilade of ironical comment upon current situations and enunciated what he believed to be correct principles upon human government. But there were others. There was that fine fearless old warrior, William Hone, whose book-worm mind was always one too many for the persecutors, whose squibs and parodies against aristocracy, superstition and monarchy occasionally bring high prices at auction to-day, and whose greatest triumph was when his crushing victory over the relentless Lord Ellenborough sent that die-hard to his last sleep. There was Daniel Isaac Eaton, Horne Tooke, Henry Hunt and the inevitable Cobbett, and scores of others, not omitting the malodorous John Wilkes of earlier days. These all receive their meed of justice at the hands of Mr. Wickwar. One gets, too, a better idea of that trojan of the eighteenth century revolutionary arena, Thomas Paine. He is the Tory and Christian *bete noir*. The spirit of Paine seems to hover everywhere, darkening or illuminating, as the case may be, every horizon of thought. Mr. Wickwar has not confined himself to the English struggle. He has not repeated an oft-told tale. His book is crammed with information upon the subject of the Press struggle throughout the Empire, and it is one of the most invaluable documents the Plebs tutor can have in his possession. There are nine comprehensive chapters and three useful and necessary appendices, but the price is somewhat heavy—16/- net.

A Liverpool N.C.L.C.er sends the following:—At a Tory meeting held in Liverpool, the Tory member, dealing with the question of Electricity, told his audience of the developments made with electric power in America. They listened to his account of the All-Electric House, with its Electric Cooking Stove, Electric Kettle, Electric Radiator, Electric Iron; in fact every thing Electric; then a voice from the audience exclaimed, "Yes, even the Electric Chair!"

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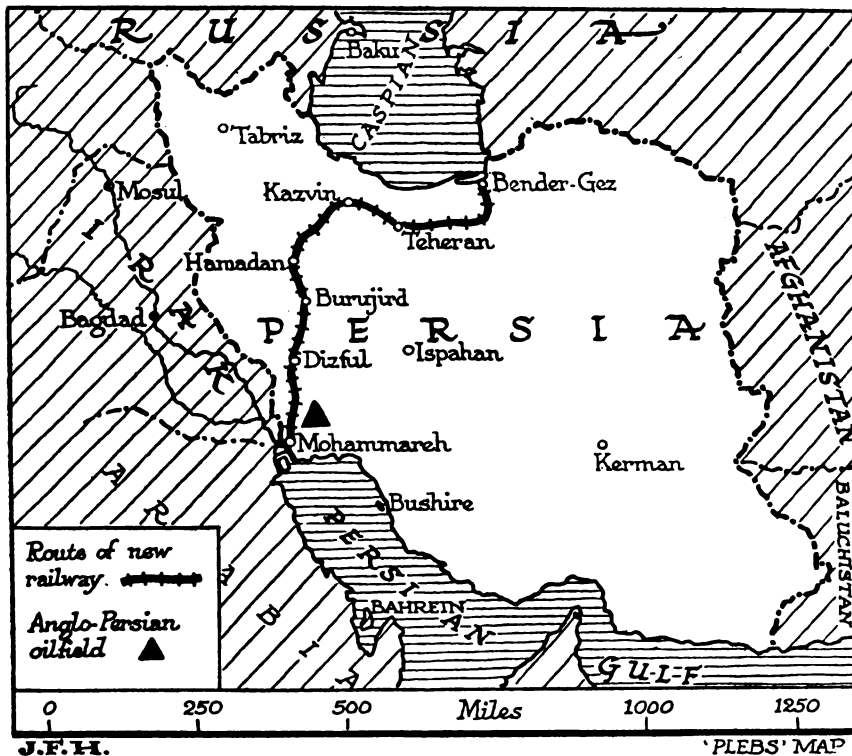
# RAILWAYS AND CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT

By J. F. HORRABIN

**P**ERSIA is one of those Asiatic countries which, largely by reason of the rivalries of powerful neighbours and outside Powers, has maintained a sort of limited independence.\* Two factors have contributed in recent years to its emergence in the "world scene":—the discovery of rich

which led, immediately after the Anglo-Russian Treaty of 1907, to the division of Persia into "spheres of influence." The War and the Russian Revolution broke up that arrangement. But northern Persia, for obvious geographical reasons, is necessarily closely linked with Russia; and Britain has taken corresponding steps to safeguard her hold on the south and centre, particularly of the oilfields, first, by assisting a political revolution which placed a British nominee (Riza Khan) on the throne of the Shah, and, second, by securing her grip on the gulf, *i.e.*, on Persia's only sea outlet.

The "opening-up" of the country itself was bound to follow. Persia's transport system was primitive. Railway concessions



oil-fields just north of the head of the Persian Gulf; and the situation of the country as a whole, lying athwart the British road to India.

On the north, the Persian frontier touches Russian territory on either side of the Caspian Sea. It was this fact, of course,

\* Cf. maps in *Plebs Atlas*, Nos. 37 and 39. Also p. 83, *Short History of the British Empire*.

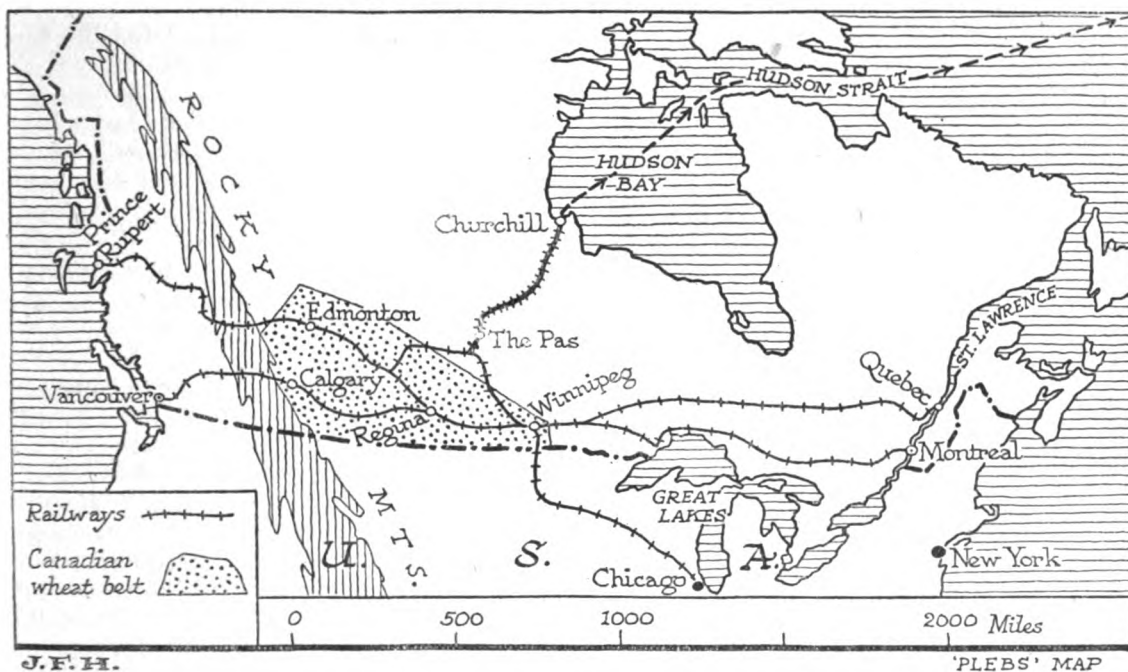
were an inevitable next step. Two years ago the Medjliss (Parliament) authorised a scheme for a trans-Persian railway, running from the Caspian Sea to the head of the Gulf (see our map).

According to an article in the *Paris Petit Journal*, quoted in the *New York Herald-Tribune* (Jan. 6th) the contract for the line has been given to a German consortium,

which has made sub-contracts with three other groups—British, French, and American. The line is to run from Bender-Gez, on the Caspian, southwards and westwards to Teheran; and thence *via* Hamadan, Burujird and Dizful, to Mohammerah, the port near the Anglo-Persian Co.'s oilfields. The Germans are to build the northern section, as far as Teheran; the French, the central section to Burujird; the British and Americans are to divide the southern section.

"Construction will take eight years. The cost, estimated at £25,000,000, will be covered by taxes on tea and sugar."

**I**N the early days, before the coming of the railways, the way from Britain to all Canada, west of the Great Lakes, lay through Hudson Strait and Hudson Bay.\* (This, of course, was necessarily the main British route while the French held the territories bordering on the St. Lawrence). The building of the trans-continental railways in the latter part of the 19th century, "opened-up" the vast agricultural areas of the Middle West, and made possible the organisation and administration of the whole great territory, from Atlantic to Pacific, as a unit.



The "strategic" significance of the line from the economic point of view is, of course, that it will tap the mineral, timber and agricultural resources of Northern Persia, for which there is now no outlet except into Russia; and bring them down into the British "sphere." At the same time, too, it will facilitate the import of British goods and materials, which will thus be in a position to compete with Russian commodities in northern Persia. It will be easy, too, to link the line with the Mesopotamian railway system.

\* \* \*

But the disadvantage under which Canadian wheat-growers suffered was the enormous cost of transporting their product to the outside world; whether it went eastwards, by the long rail haul to Montreal (or by rail to the Great Lakes, and thence by ship down the St. Lawrence); or westwards to Vancouver on the Pacific coast (the shorter rail journey in this case being counterbalanced by the greater costs of haulage over the mountain slopes of the Rockies). Since the opening of the Panama Canal, more and

\* See p. 69, *Short History of the British Empire*, and map (p. 60) in *PLEBS Outline of Economic Geography*.

more Canadian wheat has gone westward to Vancouver.

Imports, of course, since they must be carried into the agricultural interior by one or other of these same routes, were correspondingly dear.

There was accordingly an inevitable tendency to send the wheat to, and receive the imports from, the United States, since geographical facts made this an easier and cheaper outlet. Hence one great reason for the close economic linking of the U.S. and Canada during recent years.

But a new outlet—or rather the revival of an historic one—has now been decided on. A correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* (March 9th, 1929) gave particulars of the scheme to build a railway linking the existing lines with a port on Hudson Bay, and so making use of the old sea-route to Britain (see our map).

Plans for this line were made as long ago as 1910, and most of it—up to about 100 miles from the Hudson Bay coast—actually laid. Work has recently been resumed, and the line will be in actual operation this year. The construction of the port at Churchill, and certain necessary constructive work in Hudson Straits, are to be completed by 1931, and the whole route is expected to be open for navigation by that date.

#### **A Challenge to the U.S.**

The scheme, of course, is a definite attempt to break, or at least to challenge, the hold of the U.S. on Canada, by linking the Middle West directly with Britain. By Vancouver and Panama, the distance from Edmonton or Calgary to Liverpool is over 10,000 miles. From Churchill (the Hudson Bay Port) to Liverpool is 2936 miles—nearly 100 miles less than the sea journey between Montreal and Liverpool; while the rail journey to Churchill from the wheat area is only about half that to Montreal. The completion of the new route will also, as the *Manchester Guardian* points out, enable British exporters “to compete almost on even terms in Western Canada with Eastern Canadian manufacturers.” But whether this is likely to make for a greater degree of Imperial Unity the *M.G.* does not state.

# THE WORKERS’ FIRST LINE OF DEFENCE

By W. COLDRICK

THE coming of the modern industrial system brought with it the law of the jungle as one of its outstanding features. In the subsequent struggle for survival, the workers had to create new organs of defence. Destined for life to be wage-slaves, they sought to deprive that slavery of its worst features. To resist the continued downward pressure upon their standards of living necessitated counter-action. The only method of effective action was combination, and so were born the first trade union organisations. So long as these confined their efforts to attempts to enforce the existing laws respecting wages and conditions of apprenticeship, they were suffered to exist. Parliament for centuries exercised the privilege of regulating these matters. This had not conflicted seriously with the needs of a comparatively non-competitive industrial system, which changed only very slowly, but the altered conditions of industry, brought about by division of labour and later by the introduction of the machine—a revolutionary if there ever was one—demanded new policies. The politics of the old did not harmonise with the needs of the new order.

New economic theories were therefore propounded. These found the fullest expression in the works of Adam Smith, who taught the doctrine of unrestricted competition as the soundest principle upon which to build a prosperous country. This doctrine that “Man’s self-love is God’s own providence” coincided with the interests of the new master class. It was soon incorporated in the legislation of the country, and measures considered to be opposed to this principle were abolished. Foiled in their efforts to get redress for their worst grievances through parliament and the law



courts, the workers used their trade unions to challenge the employers on questions of wages and conditions of employment. This attitude did not meet with the approval of the masters who saw in the trade unions a barrier standing between them and the realisation of their avaricious dreams. Efforts were made to suppress the unions, and these culminated in the passing of the Combination Acts which declared trade union organisations to be illegal.

The law failed to suppress what economic conditions made necessary, and underground these trade union organisations lived a dangerous existence. Failure to suppress, and the good work of reformers like Place, resulted in a limited legal recognition being accorded them. Then sprang up a great number of unions of craftsmen, who by reason of their relative monopoly of skill, were best placed to offer resistance to the downward trend of the workers' standards of living. These organisations did good work for their members, but the increasing power of advancing industry soon enabled the owners to break down craft resistance.

### **The Model British Workman**

From the changed conditions and the multiplicity of trade unions was formed the conception of Unionism in general. To materialise the ideal was, and still is, the problem of the working class. Many efforts were made in the first half of the 19th century to accomplish this. Unions seeking to embrace the whole of the workers, and striving to supplant capitalism by a co-operative commonwealth came into existence. They failed to achieve their purpose, not for want of daring devotion, but owing to the lack of the necessary power. With the failure of the Grand National Consolidated, in which union Robert Owen figured prominently, and the collapse of the Chartist Movement, there came a lull in all revolutionary and militant activity among the working class. During this period between 1850 and 1870, the wheels of industry whirled merrily, and Britain enjoyed an unrivalled industrial supremacy in the world. This prosperity brought forth the "model British workman." Content with the in-

## SCHOOLS, TEACHERS AND SCHOLARS IN SOVIET RUSSIA

*Preface by*

W. T. GOODE, M.A.

*Former Principal of Greystoke Training College, Correspondent for the 'Manchester Guardian' in the Baltic Countries and Russia*

A descriptive account of a visit to Russia by delegation of the Teachers' Labour League in 1926, with additional information from a League investigator after 6 months' study of education in that country 1927-28.

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creasing crumbs which fell from the overloaded tables of his masters, he had no room for revolutionary trade unionism, or beliefs in a class struggle. In these conditions developed the trade unions with the model constitutions and the "businesslike" administrators. The fighting spirit gave way to the spirit of diplomacy. Class co-operation and no class conflict became the slogan. The centralised power of these new unions placed an effective curb upon the wayward tendencies of the branches, and the path of peace was considered as the path of prosperity.

### **Enter Germany and America**

Four decades of this "New Unionism" sufficed to show that it is not only men who become too old at forty. The changed conditions created by the entry of Germany and America into the industrial world as formidable competitors soon hardened class antagonisms, and stimulated the spirit of revolt among the younger men of the trade unions. Realising that a man who could

not see beyond his craft was of little service to his class, they substituted class consciousness for craft consciousness as the aim of the trade union. Aided by circumstances, these men performed prodigies in bringing into trade unions great masses of workers hitherto unorganised. For the most part these were the unskilled workers, but the growth in trade unionism generally had its advantages for all unions. These changes in policy have always been carried out in the teeth of severe official opposition. Time has softened the former antagonisms, only to find that a new force again appears, and with it the "revolutionaries" of yesterday become the "reactionaries" of to-day.

Knowing this, one would expect that the trade union historian of to-day would be careful in passing judgment upon his contemporaries who at present are not receiving the official benediction. The conditions to-day are such that one may at least be permitted to desist from singing the praises of "Mondism" without being termed "wreckers."

In *Trade Union Documents* (by W. Milne-Bailey; Bell & Sons, 8/6), the author has given us a valuable collection of materials for forming our own opinions on the rights and wrongs of the Trade Union Movement, both past and present. His is the official mind which sees in participation in the Mond-Turner Conferences the virtuous tendency of some present-day trade union leaders to recognise the full sense of their responsibility. May not our efforts to appear "statesmanlike", while winning the approval of the employing class, alienate us from the spirit of the men whose efforts have built up this Trade Union Movement? It has been the call for power to challenge capitalism not to co-operate with it, that has always rallied the workers to support their organisations.

The book contains documents dealing with (1) Value, Aspirations and Objects of Trade Unionism, (2) Structure and Organisation, (3) Functions and Methods, (4) The Place of Trade Unionism in the Community.

Altogether it comprises a source book of great value to every student of Trade Unionism.

## THE BOOKSHELF

By J. F. HORRABIN

IS there any pleasure much greater, to a booklover, than turning over a new edition of an old friend? Particularly if it be really a new edition, with new matter included, and the old re-arranged—expanded or condensed, according to the author's developing ideas or to the course of world events since he wrote his earlier version.

I have just been savouring that pleasure—with a book which must indeed be an old and tried friend to not a few N.C.L.C.ers: Dr. Isaiah Bowman's *New World: Problems in Political Geography*. When this invaluable work first appeared, seven years ago, we reviewed it in *The Plebs*, urging all our tutors to secure it for themselves, or to see that it was available for their use in some library. It was a mine of suggestion and information when we came to issue our own *Plebs Outline of Economic Geography* and, later, the *Plebs Atlas*. Its wealth of maps, as well as its mass of statistical matter, must have made it, in very many cases, a well-thumbed volume indeed.

Messrs. Harrap's have just published the fourth edition of the book, "completely revised, augmented, and reset from new manuscript." It is stated—and even a cursory glance through its 800 pages bears out the claim—that this new 1929 edition is in fact a new book. New chapters have been added on "The Mohammedan World" and "The Situation of the United States," and there is an introductory essay dealing with mandates and colonies, minorities, boundaries, etc., etc. The photographs included in the earlier editions have been omitted to make room for more and better maps, including some coloured ones.

This new edition of *The New World* is an encyclopedia of political and economic geography which is absolutely indispensable to the tutor and student. My own copy of the first edition is stuffed full of cuttings, by means of which one did one's best to keep the book up-to-date. I shall start right away doing the same thing with the new volume.

I have omitted to mention its price—21/-. A long price, true; though costs of production must assuredly make this book cheap at that figure. See that it is in your local library and, if possible, in every class library.

\* \* \*

Another book from Messrs. Harrap's spring list will have a special interest for Plebs. Ellen Wilkinson, a frequent contributor to these pages, has turned novelist, and her first tale, *Clash*, will appear during

## STOP PRESS

The War Office is not giving a copy of *A Short History of the British Empire* to every new recruit

April. It is a story dealing very largely with the days of the General Strike and the months of the miners' struggle following it. Most of us, maybe, will have to wait for the 'popular' edition which we hope will come later; but in the meantime we can see to it that local committees don't attempt any "banning" of the novel on political grounds.

I have not yet seen, but am hoping to read shortly, the novel of mining life, by Harold Heslop, just published by Brentano's—*The Gate of a Strange Field*. Heslop was a student at the Labour College three or four years ago, and has since, having returned to the Durham coalfield, done good work for N.C.L.C. classes in that area. A novel of his (I am not sure whether it is this same one) has already been translated into Russian and achieved a big circulation in the U.S.S.R. Good luck to him, and wide sales in this country.

Every keen working-class student of Modern Imperialism knows, and uses, the little volumes in the Labour Research Dept.'s "Colonial Series." The latest addition (No. 5) is *British Imperialism in Egypt*, by Elinor Burns (paper 6d, boards 1/-), which covers the most recent chapter in the long history of the Valley of the Nile, from the first "penetration" of Egypt by foreign capital in the eighteen-fifties, when work started on the Suez Canal to the "suspension" of the Egyptian parliament in July of last year. There are invaluable chapters on the Sudan, and on "Peasants and Workers," analysing working-class conditions of life, wages, etc.; and a useful map as a frontispiece. A book which should be on every class literature-stall.

If only we had more money—and leisure—in the I.W.C.E. movement, what fascinating text and reference books we might produce. A fully illustrated *Worker Looks at History*, for example. . . . These Utopian dreams are inspired by two volumes sent us by B. T. Batsford, Ltd.—*Life and Work of the People of England in the 14th Century*, and the same, *17th Century*, by Dorothy Hartley and Margaret M. Elliot (stiff boards, 4/6 each). These are uniform with the two previous volumes (reviewed by W.H. in the PLEBS just a year ago) dealing with the 15th and 16th centuries. Each consists of some 150 illustrations, reproduced from contemporary prints or MSS., covering such diverse subjects as—to take a random list from the index of one of them—Markets, Meals, Medicine, Merchants, Mills, Mining, Monasteries, Musical Instruments. A history tutor who could draw, or who could find a student with that qualification, might prepare an interesting set of illustrations to his lectures by copying, on an enlarged scale, some of these vivid little pictures. Considering the amount of the material in each, and their excellent get-up, these volumes are wonderfully cheap.

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## "CEMENT"\*

By MAURICE DOBB

THE firm of Martin Lawrence has done our movement another service by making available an English translation of this epic of proletarian reconstruction, which during the last two years has adorned the leading bookshops of Europe and been the gossip of continental literary reviews. The author is a Russian peasant, turned teacher and writer, and later Communist. The story is of a town in South Russia on the Black Sea, with a large cement factory at its heart—its "Diesel engines standing like black marble idols, bedecked with gold and silver; just a touch and their polished limbs would start dancing." Gleb Chumalov, a worker in the factory who has been a commander in the Red Army during the civil wars, returns to find the factory deserted, the workers idle and starving, and the town derelict and disorganised. He finds also that the shy Dasha, his wife, whom he left behind three years ago, has in the meantime suffered also in the class war, and has become a "new woman" in a red kerchief, who spends all her days in Party work, will not sleep with him at night until he ceases to claim it as a right, and reserves her freedom to go with other men if she pleases, just as he had his "other women" while away at war.

With the end of the civil war and the final crushing of a bandit rising there comes N E P with its trading in money, its shops, its cafes with string orchestras, and with it disillusionment, even despair, among nerves exhausted by civil war and unable to adjust themselves to the struggle on the new front. By his immense will and energy, symbolic of the strong, crude creative force of the workers, Gleb Chumalov manages to crush the bandit rising, save the town from its impending fuel crisis and finally to start again in the factory "the winged flight of the wheels"—"the eyes of the factory opened like electric moons and the factory and mountains quivered with an internal rumbling."

### ONWARD AND UPWARD

The book, like a symphony which gathers into a rhythmic whole a tumbling variety of minor themes, ends, not on a final, dying chord, but on a rising cadence. The note on which it ends—Gleb "grasped a red flag and waved it three times above the crowd; and the mountains echoed with metallic thunder and the air was shaken by a mad whirlpool of sound"—is one of growth and transition, alike in the individual problem between Gleb and Dasha, which remains unsolved to the final page, as in the collective problems of the Party and of economic reconstruction. And this, together with its fierce unflinching realism, is the book's power and strength. It cuts out a random section of Soviet

\* *Cement*. By Feodor Gladkov, trans. from the Russian by A. S. Arthur and C. Ashleigh (Martin Lawrence Ltd.), cloth 7/6, boards 3/6, postage 6d extra; from the N.C.L.C.

## WHAT DO WE KNOW of EUROPE

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Russia's creative struggle, moulds it to a pattern and gives it form, and at the same time shows it as but part of a larger whole, in time and space, a moment in the sweep of a wider moving process, surging towards a dimly-perceived goal.

Here and there, it is true, one may feel that the pattern is not perfectly woven; there are gaps and breaks in the rhythm, flaws perhaps of a too hasty workmanship. But in spite of such elements of incompleteness, there is a power and magnificence in the sweep of the major rhythm, like a Rubens picture. And on the surface of the pattern there are many gems of vivid writing, a rich colour-sense in the pictures of mountains and factory and clouds and sea, and some acute character-drawing—Badin, the bureaucratic but efficient chairman of the executive committee; Serge, the shy intellectual, selflessly devoted to the Party; the curly-haired Mekhova, still cherishing romantic memories of the October days in Moscow, but reduced to tears and despair by the hum-drum monotony of N E P and economic reconstruction; Engineer Kleist, the silent old inventor, won to be a "devoted Soviet specialist" by the example of Chumalov's energy; Shibus, the head of the Cheka, ever "screening his eyes with his long lashes" to hide the "leaping demon" which lies behind; Savchuk the drunken cooper and Motia his full-breasted wife. Those who wish to feel something of the forces which are making the new Russia must not fail to read this fascinating book.

## WE MAKE IRON IN BIRMINGHAM! \*

[We do not often print verse in The PLEBS, but the following short poem from the *American Nation* will, we are quite sure, be appreciated by many British workers].

**W**E make iron in Birmingham,  
Damn the rest:  
We make iron.

*We fling up noises that shriek in the sky;  
We glut the clouds with smoke,  
And the sun filters faintly through.*

*Our cats, and sparrows, and buildings are smutty,  
Our trees are naked and black,  
Like bony Negro women.*

*We don't seem to mind the quiet moon  
That eases across the tops of the buildings;  
Nor the sun that sets soft down the L. & N. tracks,  
We don't seem to mind.*

*We make iron in Birmingham,  
Damn the rest.*

KARL C. HARRISON.

\* For Birmingham read Middlesbro', Dowlais, Wigan or any other beauty-spot you please.

# A YOUNG MAN WHO KNOWS

By T.U. OFFICIAL

*Wages in Theory and Practice.* By J. W. F. Rowe,  
M.A., M.Sc. (Routledge, 12/6).

IT is a good plan for active trades unionists to read a book of this kind occasionally, if for no other reason than that it makes them realise what a lot more they know about such matters than painstaking young Liberal university graduates. Mr. Rowe appears to have spent about eight years in preparing this book of three parts, and he makes it perfectly clear that Part III. is only to be regarded as an interim and not as a final report on the subject, so I presume we may look for further information from him in the future.

Part I. is a study of wages in five great British industries from 1886 to 1926, and the industries selected are building, coal mining, cotton manufacture, engineering, and the railway service, and there are all kinds of tables showing what certain people would have received in wages in 1886, 1913, 1920, and 1926, if they had received them, but, unfortunately, as some of them did not all the time and some of them did not some of the time, as a record of what wages people actually did get, the figures do not appear to be of much service.

Women weavers will be pleased to learn from Table I., on page 42, that they belong to an unskilled grade, and painters will find from reference to the same page that they are merely semi-skilled.

Part II. of the book deals with the growth of collective bargaining, the attitudes and policies of trades unions and their bargaining power. Our bright young author also criticises trades union officials for not having been active enough in pressing demands for improved conditions, and informs them that in formulating wage demands they must be careful to find out exactly what an industry can bear in order that they may ask from the employer a little more than that sum, and thus encourage him to employ to a still greater extent labour-saving machinery, which he would be inclined to ignore so long as he got his labour at a relatively low rate.

In Part III. we get Mr. Rowe's interim report, in which he treats us to a reconsideration of the wage theory in the light of modern collective bargaining, and shows us the influence of modern collective bargaining as a stimulus to industrial efficiency and also the implications thereof.

In his reconsideration of the wage theory Mr. Rowe has discovered that when a sweated worker compels his employer to give him a decent subsistence wage, the worker himself increases his physical efficiency by being properly fed to such an extent that the

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**Mr. BALDWIN HAS NEVER ADVISED ANYONE**  
to buy The PLEBS. Have you?

employer gets enough extra work out of him to compensate for the increased wages. I have always been under the impression that a well-fed, well-housed, and well-clothed workman can do more work than an ill-nourished, underfed, badly-housed and badly-clothed one. It is nice to know that eight years of research by Professor Rowe justifies my opinion.

Mr. Rowe has also discovered that the captains of industry do not know everything, and seems to admit that in many directions the employees can teach them how to run their business more efficiently, a thing which any good craftsman who loves his job could have convinced him of in less than eight minutes.

A few sample quotations from Mr. Rowe's book will give an indication of the fare he puts before you:—

"This is not to say that trades unions can never under any circumstances accept a reduction of wages; far from it, for, in technical terms, marginal productivity may change greatly in a period, and an absolute refusal to allow any corresponding adjustment of wage rates might well bring ruin upon the industry."

"In my opinion trades unionism to-day often carries its resistance to wage reductions too far."

"Backed by a powerful trade union, an individual wage-earner who suggests an improvement in organisation and technique, is not making profits for his employer, or for the capitalist in general, but is directly increasing wages, since the trade union will take the matter into account at the next adjustment of wages."

"As well as making the greatest possible positive contribution, trades unionism must refrain from putting any obstacles in the employer's way. For success, a forward wage policy demands the abandonment of all restrictions on the adaptability and inventive energy of the capitalist system. It is no use for trade unionism to seek to stimulate the resourcefulness of the employer, and at the same time endeavour to bind his hands and feet with demarcation rules, hindrances to the fluidity of labour, inelastic system of wage differentials, and opposition to this, that, and the other."

For those who like this sort of thing, Mr. Rowe's book is just the kind of thing they would like. J. J.

## LETTERS

### B.B.C. "IMPARTIALITY."

DEAR Comrade,—Re Ellen Wilkinson's article on the B.B.C. and capitalist chloroform, the following may be of interest. A few weeks ago Professor Mottram, the B.B.C. dietetic expert, was lecturing. He said that in an experiment some rats had been deprived of a certain vitamen, and this had made them behave in a most peculiar and alarming manner; in other words "they had behaved in a way that can only be termed Bolshevik" (his own words). How does this conform to the B.B.C. pose of complete impartiality?

Yours, B.

### CONTROVERSIAL METHODS.

Dear Comrade,—The letter which you publish from C. L. Gibbons contains the suggestion that I was partly responsible for the treatment of his correspondence to the *Sunday Worker*. May I be allowed to say that his suggestion has no foundation. The whole of his letter is a mis-statement of the facts.

Yours fraternally, HENRY SARA.

# KERR BOOKS

To PLEBS readers in the early days, Charles Kerr & Co. of Chicago were THE publishers of Marxist works. To-day they are still the largest English-speaking publishers of Marxist literature.

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### DO YOU WANT £20?

DEAR SIR,—I should be greatly indebted if you would kindly make some reference to the International Scholarship we are offering this year in your Journal, particulars of which are given below:—

The Co-operative Co-Partnership Propaganda Committee is again offering this year a Scholarship, value £20, for the Best Essay sent in on the following subject:—

"State the views of the Christian Socialists on Co-operative Production and trace the Development of their Ideas."

This competition is open to anyone, and essays sent in must be written on one side of the paper only and not exceed 3000 words in length and must reach the Secretary, C.C.P.C., Alliance Chambers, Horsefair St., Leicester, not later than May 4th, 1929.

The Scholarship will be tenable at the International Co-operative Summer School, to be held this year in July at the Hague, Holland.

Thanking you in anticipation of your co-operation in making the Scholarship widely known.

Yours faithfully,

S. V. MILES,

Asst. Secretary.

# AMONG THE BOOKS

By

"PLEBS" REVIEWERS

MODERN Books Ltd. have published *The Proletarian Revolution* (3/- cloth, 1/6 paper), and to read this reply by Lenin to Kautsky raises inevitably the question, why do Marxians who realise the economic causes of social change—or ought to—continually indulge in the pastime of blaming individuals for failures and violence? Here in this book we see Lenin, thrown by the economic breakdown of Tsardom into the task of managing Russia, attacked on all sides by critics. We all know that spectators see most of the game, or think they do, and it is no wonder that Lenin, like Macdonald, turns on such critics and calls them "infantile lefts" or "eesie oosie asses." It is more than patience can stand, to be faced with nearly insoluble problems, and have some superior person being wise after the event.

To be continually misrepresented, and to have the facts of the case stated in very biased form against him by Kautsky and others made Lenin lose all patience, and we see him burning with indignation all through this book.

It is perfectly childish to blame Lenin and the Bolsheviks for the Russian Revolution, for, apart from the general Marxian interpretation of history, Lenin himself has carefully explained that such revolutions take place as the result of economic conditions, not as the result of revolutionaries couching themselves: "every day in every way we are becoming more and more revolutionary."

Our own Labour Movement suffers to-day from the same disease as Lenin had to resist, and the sooner the members of it get down to studying the actual problems and how they can be faced, not how we would like to face them, the sooner are we in this country going to have a strong movement working with a clear objective.

It was a great tragedy that Kautsky, with his great theoretical knowledge, allowed himself to be carried away intellectually by his personal resentment against the members of the Bolshevik party, when he might, as Lenin points out, have written the history of the Russian struggle as no other man could. A.W.

Historical Materialism (despite almost continual "refutation" since its first enunciation) continues to filter through into the history books, and in a dilute form is now a constant ingredient of the "popular" outline.

*The Foundation of Modern Civilisation*, by H. C. Thomas and W. A. Hamm (Hamilton, 3/6 net), is quite readable, and as an outline sketch as useful as most of its kind. Its earlier chapters have assimilated Buckle-Semple-Fairgreaves and Co., and the middle chapters show distinct traces of Marx. Probably a sense of guilt on that score caused the authors to summarise everything since the revolt of the American colonies into a final chapter too broadly generalised to be dangerous. T.A.J.

The Bishop of Hereford thinks that *Socialism and the Bible*, by Jean Ouvret (C. W. Daniel Co., 3/6) "should

be of real service." If men were logical (which in bulk they are not) it would certainly be useful to convince the pious anti-Socialists that "Before Socialism, and with the same vehemence, Biblical authors denounce social inequalities," that "the Bible takes the side of the weak as Socialism defends the poor," while "both wish to establish Justice." Also that "the Bible limits the rights of property" and that the spirit of the Bible is "a Communist spirit." All, unfortunately, this reasoning is likely to produce nowadays is a growth in the disrepute of the Bible—or, perhaps, the retort, "Ah! but, as you say, there is no nasty class-war about Bible Socialism." T.A.J.

*The Jews and other Minor Nationalities under the Soviets* (by Abrahm Yarmolinsky. Vanguard Press, 2/6; 2/8 post free from the N.C.L.C.) deals primarily with the problem of the Jewish peoples as one of the "182 ethnic groups, speaking 149 different languages," living under the Red Flag. How this problem, a most perplexing one in this case (the Jews were never considered to constitute a "nation") is being solved, speaks well for the Soviet system. It seems that the Bolsheviks have been able to keep power for so long principally because they made "the right of self-determination for the subject peoples" a fact. I must be remembered, however, that in the Communist scheme of things "a people" is synonymous with its working classes, and that these alone truly express the national wills. Now that the British workers are likely to be confronted with nationality and race problems, especially in the Crown Colonies and Egypt, they might well study how difficulties are being overcome in the U.S.S.R. N.A.

Within the limitations of a pamphlet Fred. Casey endeavours to make a readable summary of *Dietsgen's Logic* (published by the author, 1 Langdale Avenue, North Reddish, Stockport, Manchester, 3d). It is crowded with illustrative material, perhaps a little too much so, but it should prove stimulating to the enquirer. Some of the problems are not answered, but then, as Casey explains, he has aimed at giving a popular exposition in an exceedingly brief form with the view of making his readers sufficiently interested to go to Dietsgen themselves, and he has succeeded. This provocative pamphlet should have a wide circulation. H.S.

*The Road to Plenty*, by W. T. Foster and W. Catchings (Pitman and Sons, 3/6) sets out to find a solution for poverty and unemployment. A method is propounded to bring the closed workshop and the idle machine in contact with the unemployed worker, in order to produce the things needed by hungry men, women and children. The horrors of poverty are quite well expressed, but what of the solution? As one reads through the sections, it emerges that the problem is one simply of purchasing power. The booms and declines in trade conditions are caused by saving being out of proportion to spending. The proposed solution is to adjust the flow of money so that when a boom is evidently about to take place it can be checked by reducing the flow of money that goes into the channel of spending and *vice-versa*. It is an American book and proposes another Federal Board in addition to the Federal Reserve Board. This Board "shall itself gather and measure the data best adapted to show the adequacy of the flow of consumer income. . . . Having thus collected the needed information, the Board shall advise the Government how to use it as a guide in all fiscal matters."

The authors attempt to find a solution to problems which are an inevitable feature of capitalism, whilst retaining the system itself. The contradictions of unemployment, idle mills and hungry people are more than a monetary problem; they are part of capitalism and will remain with us so long as capitalism itself remains. The way to adjust saving to spending of wealth is not by money control alone but by ending the power of a class that subjects the whole industrial system to the production of private profit. E.P.

*The Shepherd of Israel*, an historical novel by Leonora Eyles (Constable's, 7/6) is an entertaining and interesting, if somewhat unusual, book dealing with the life of Moses. The social structure of the period, the corruption at the Court of the Egyptian kings, the horrors enacted in the College of the Priests, and the horrible conditions of slavery, filth and disease that fall to the lot of the exploited workers, the Israelite bricklayers and their families, are all most vividly described.

The current beliefs in miracles and plagues as exhibitions of the power of the gods are shorn of their magic and shown to be a consequence of natural forces or economic conditions. Moses is portrayed as a pioneer primitive Socialist leader, who realises that before the workers, freed from slavery, can enjoy the fruits of their emancipation, they must be taught to understand that "the flocks and herds do not belong to the individual but to the community as a whole." Of the responsibilities of leadership he says—"the path of a leader must never stray from the common ways of men."

His emotions, sometimes of enthusiasm, at others of utter despair, are common to the workers of all ages who seek the emancipation of their fellows. In Miriam, his assertive, passionate sister, the fear of freedom from bondage under the Egyptian yoke becoming slavery under individual dictatorship is well brought out. Here and there one finds the emotional touches of domestic life which show the sex of the writer.

Leonora Eyles has certainly given us a mirror in which is reflected the problems which face us as workers and leaders to-day, and the vital need of education for emancipation. F.W.

## WHAT IS AN "INDEPENDENT STUDENT"

By E. REDFERN

*"The Committee believes that the authors have produced books which will appeal to independent students who want not to be told what to think, but to be helped to think for themselves."*

THIS quotation is a part of the foreword to the *W.E.A. Outlines\** and may appeal to the unwary as quite "reasonable." Let us see precisely what this sentence means. What constitutes an "independent student"—independent of what? Are the ideas of a student independent of the

material and interpretation of the material surveyed? Have not workers' ideas been influenced by school education, press, etc., and do not these ideas generally reflect anything but workers' needs? What does "independent student" mean in the sentence quoted? It has no meaning.

The N.C.L.C.'s job is to equip workers with a *method of thinking*, not to tell them "what to think," but *how* to "think for themselves."

By many we are accused of being "biased," "partial," etc. What does this mean? It is this. We have a purpose; it is to improve the position of the working-class here and now and to win social ownership and control of the basic factors of human life. The means to its attainment are to be found in Independent Working-Class Education, given to workers so they may give effective service in the working-class movement. Our purpose, therefore, decides for us that our studies shall mainly be in the realm of social science. If true understanding of our social problems is to take place our ideas must coincide with concrete realities outside our minds, hence the class struggle—the struggle for capitalists' needs and workers' needs—must be recognised. *If this is "bias" it is still desirable (for workers) for it is true understanding*, and is the first step towards solution of the problem. One will be "partial" in making choice between a good apple and a bad one. The worker, with true understanding, will be "partial" in his choice of social conditions and will act accordingly.

In *Trade Unionism To-Day*, Mr. A. Creech Jones informs us that "the N.C.L.C. refuses State financial assistance." We reply—State financial assistance is conditional and the nature of these conditions does not permit an education giving true understanding of workers' needs. The government of the Anti-Trade Union Act of 1927, and of other oppressive measures and actions against organised labour, is not likely to give unconditional grants. *Capital generalises its needs too well*. The author shows the efforts, and some of the difficulties, in relation to amalgamations, industrial unions, and central control of the Trade Union Movement.

Mr. Lambert gives many interesting facts on Modern Imperialism, and to some extent shows it as a process of capitalist development; in many cases leading to war. He believes the League of Nations was created "to check imperialist expansion generally."

Despite this, we must compliment the author on his book being sufficiently unorthodox and sound to merit some attention from the Board of Education. We should like to know if Lord Eustace Percy has read it, and what he thinks of it.

To those who remind us from time to time that we, the N.C.L.C., list and use books written by others than N.C.L.C.ers, we reply—of course we do. This paragraph will make clear why.

Providing the worker-reader is equipped with a method of thinking and a knowledge of economic theory as taught by the N.C.L.C. these books can be made use of. Without this equipment workers may read libraries and yet die in mental confusion.

\* W.E.A. Outlines—*Modern Imperialism*, by R. S. Lambert; *Trade Unionism To-Day*, by A. Creech Jones. (Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd., 1/- and 2/-).

## The "Empire" is almost certain to be a Tory

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## WHAT THE N.C.L.C. IS DOING

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**B**Y now Colleges should be far on with their arrangements for the summer session work—classes, tutorial training, week-end, day and summer schools, as well as lectures at branches. College secretaries are reminded that particulars of week-end and day schools should be forwarded to the N.C.L.C. in the usual form so that Scholarships may be allocated.

College and divisional committees will find it well worth while comparing the figures for the quarter just closed with those of its predecessor and the corresponding quarter in the preceding year, so that they may ascertain where progress is being made and where the work is slipping back. Special attention should be given to the problem of encouraging promising class students to equip themselves for college work, both tutorial and other. Many of the best types will not volunteer; they have to be encouraged. Useful work can also be done during the summer by visiting those branches of Trade Unions and other bodies which are not affiliated, getting the help of any of our students who may be members.

**THE N.C.L.C. NATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL—**The lectures to be given at the School will consist of a series on the **NEW INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION**, one of the most vital topics now facing the working-class movement.

**NEW CORRESPONDENCE COURSE—**The N.C.L.C. has arranged a new correspondence course on the **Industrial History of Modern Europe**, the Examiner of which is **W. T. Colyer**, the author of *Americanism* and *A Worker's Passport*. This is a particularly valuable course, as the following summary of the lessons will indicate:—

- The Feudal System—From Roman Slave to Feudal Serf.
- The Beginnings of the Trading Cities—Enter the Tradesman.
- The Economic Significance of the Crusades—Jerusalem for the Gentiles.
- The Cities of Italy—The Bankers of Venice.
- The Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation—The New Christianity.
- The Cities of the Low Countries, Germany and Britain—Road Traffic and Markets.
- Nationalism and the Merchant Adventurers—Patriotism of the Pocket.
- The Beginnings of the British Empire—Painting the World Red.
- The French Revolution—The Bolsheviks of 1789.
- The Development of Central Europe—The Rise of Modern Germany.
- The British Empire on the Defensive—John Bull with his Back to the Wall.
- The Present Situation—What Next?



The cost of the course is One Guinea, payable in advance, or 3/- to join and 2/- a lesson. Members of Unions with N.C.L.C. schemes may, as usual, have the course free.

**PLEBS SALES**—College Secretaries and Divisional Organisers have been requested to make arrangements for the distribution during the summer. This is most important work, not only from a financial point of view but from the point of view of keeping in touch with our students. There must be several dozen PLEBS readers who could take parcels each month to sell, on sale or return, and there must be hundreds who could get one of their friends to subscribe. Can you help us? The working-class movement must depend on its own energy, and our movement is no exception. What about it?

**CAMPAIGN AMONG UNIONS**—PLEBS readers are asked to do everything possible to have the question of an N.C.L.C. Education Scheme raised in any Union which does not yet have a scheme.

**SHORT HISTORY OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE**—As "the Empire" is likely to be a Tory stunt during the General Election, J. F. Horrabin's new book can be a most handy weapon for every labour party member. Does your party have it on sale? If every reader of PLEBS saw that his party was supplied with PLEBS literature, our sales would go up three-fold. Here is another job for those who want to see the movement grow.

**NEW LOCAL AFFILIATIONS**—London, 6; S.E. Lancs., 1; Bristol, 1. Some colleges, even large ones, have not appeared on this list for many months. How does your college stand?

## WHAT THE DIVISIONS ARE DOING

### DIVISION 1.

The London West E.T.U., the Walworth Mixed Co-operative Guild and the Acton A.E.U. have received a three lecture course on the Materialist Conception of History and have appreciated it immensely. Other branches have received lectures on "Banks and the Worker" and "What is Rationalisation?" Co-operative Guilds like these two subjects as well as Co-operative topics. A new class has commenced at Bow, with the help of the Bow and Bromley Labour Party. Battersea E.T.U. is having a series of lectures on "Labour and the Nation." The last two meetings of the Tutors' Council have been extremely interesting. Mrs. Clayton fascinated the first meeting with a lecture on "The Relation of Biology to our Movement," and she also provoked a discussion which had its sequel in the title of the next meeting's subject. At this second meeting, Comrade Colyer opened on "The Nature of Racial Differences and their Relation to the Class Struggle." This subject, handled by Comrade Colyer, gave us the most intellectually lively meeting we have had. When the meeting ended everyone was wishing he or she would be permitted another half-hour to smash the opposing case. A most enjoyable evening! An essay examination is being held during this month for the classes throughout London.

### DIVISION 2.

Secretaries report good meetings addressed by A. A. Purcell, M.P., at Littlehampton, Oxford, Guildford and Bournemouth. The latter college arranged a delegate meeting with 95 delegates representing 24 trades-unions and labour organisations, in addition to a public meeting, at which the labour candidate presided. The Moordown class is still increasing its membership and the register now carries 55. A local B.Sc. has given some well appreciated lectures on Science and Agricultural problems. The Littlehampton secretary writes: "We received a visit from Mr. Ashcroft who gave us a very fine speech. We hope he will come again." This class also reports a successful social and dance. All classes, colleges and trades-unions affiliated have been circulated to support the lantern fund. A number of summer classes have been arranged to take place before the General Election, with six lectures on "The Problems of a Labour Government." Bishopstoke, Guildford, Salisbury, Oxford, Bournemouth and a few others will be responsible for this special course. The Totton class is doing well with Dan Huxstep as tutor on the subject of "Rationalisation and Unemployment." Week-end summer schools will be arranged for Bournemouth, Oxford, Bishopstoke, and Eastleigh, Guildford. Details later. We expect sales of new text-book to increase very much.

### DIVISION 4.

A successful series of Public Lectures were given under the auspices of the Rhondda L.C. by Trevor David, with the aid of the Divisional lantern. It is now universally acknowledged that our film, "War Against War," is the best on the list. Newport L.C. are arranging to wind up the session with a social, and are expecting to raise £10 to provide scholarships for Summer School. With the co-operation of Llew. Davies (Org. A.U.B.T.W.) a very successful lantern lecture was given by the Organiser to the Cardiff branch. Everybody expressed their appreciation in a unanimous appeal for a further visit. Swansea and Cardiff are limping badly, local secretaries are appealing for the co-operation and support of all I.W.C.E. adherents. There is plenty of scope for development and activity in both cities, and room for every active comrade in the area. What about it? Comrade Jenkins is keeping the Pontypridd Class going, with a new series of lectures upon "Modern Capitalism," and arrangements are in hand for a public lantern lecture and class rally. G. Jones, an old class student, is now secretary of the local Trades Council and Divisional L.P. Summer School contributions cards are now available for all classes, and we would like to see an increased interest in this work. The Rhondda L.C. is starting off with a 100 contributors. What are the other colleges doing? The half-yearly meeting will be held at PENARTH on Easter Monday. Every class is entitled to a delegate, and the Penarth comrades are looking forward to a good rally, as they are anxious to meet the wise men from the east and west.

### DIVISION 5.

Last month we succeeded in getting a good class formed in Yeovil. Comrade Chapman is to act as tutor. The secretary is Mr. J. G. Baker, P.O., Goldcroft, Yeovil. A good local committee has been set up with Comrade Williams (N.U.D.A.W.) in the chair. Gloucester College has been unfortunate in losing the services of Miss Stoddart as secretary. She has removed to Birmingham owing to a change of employ-

ment. No doubt the Birmingham College will be hearing from her. Mr. Sallis, 9 Churchill Road, Gloucester, has taken over the secretaryship of the local College. There has also been a change in the secretaryship of the Plymouth College. Comrade Liver has left for London, and his place has been taken by Comrade Thomas, 11 Hornby Street, Devonport. During the month the Organiser has addressed a number of meetings of the A.U.B.T.W., A.E.U. and A.S.W. and a number of correspondence students have been enrolled.

#### DIVISION 7.

The meetings organised by the Bradford College, with A. J. Cook as speaker, had to be altered from Feb. 23rd to April 20th. Please note. The Leeds College will hold its Annual Meeting on the same date in the Trades Hall, Leeds, at 2.30 p.m., with Will Lawther as speaker. The Brighouse College are to hold a Demonstration on Sunday, April 21st at 2.30 p.m., with A. J. Cook as speaker. Details can be had from the College Secretary. The Division will hold its Annual Meeting on Saturday, April 27th, in the Trades Hall, Bradford. Plebs readers are invited to attend this meeting. Congratulations to our Comrade Mrs. Hill of Bingley on the safe arrival of a daughter. Students of her various classes will be pleased to hear the news.

#### DIVISION 8.

S.E. LANCs.—The last monthly lecture of the session, arranged by the Manchester Students' Association, was given by J. Owen. Rambles and College Inter-meets are to be a feature during the summer. Three training classes are nearing completion. Others will follow during the summer. Manchester No. 3 Branch of the A.S.W. is asking the Union's General Council for an N.C.L.C. educational scheme. Other branches please copy. Branches of the Patternmakers and A.S.L.E. & F. in the Manchester district are also pressing. The new secretary of the Bolton N.C.L.C. Committee is—Mr. F. W. Atkinson, 10 Grendon Street, Morris Green, Bolton. The secretary (*pro tem*) of Oldham N.C.L.C. Committee is—Mr. E. M. Hall, 4 Poplar Avenue, Hollins, Oldham. We are extremely sorry to record the death of J. McGowan of Manchester who was a pioneer of the Manchester Labour College.

#### DIVISION 9.

Lantern lectures have been given at Coundon, Wheatley Hill, Darlington, South Shields, Willington and Brotton. The regret is the lantern was not obtained earlier. A few more lectures have been fixed

up before the days become too long. Next winter will see a big demand for lantern lectures in this area. A good week-end school at Newcastle at Easter is anticipated. Coxon, I think, will appear in a new role at this school. At least the title of his lecture "The Great Illusion," suggests this. Will Lawther will give two lectures—(1) Russian Economic Development of the last ten years; (2) Russian Trade Unions. The School will conclude with a concert given by the Newcastle Clarion Vocal Union. There is an attractive programme for this concert. Day Schools are being arranged. The Durham College is leading the way in this direction.

#### DIVISION 11.

IRELAND—The Organiser gave a Lantern Lecture on "Russia To-Day" in the I.L.P. Hall, this being the 40th Lantern Lecture given by him in the Division on 23 different subjects during the past four years. The lecture was the last of a series of six Lantern Lectures given in the I.L.P. Hall during the present session. The lectures have been very successful, more than 2200 persons having paid for admission. The *Daily Herald* film on "The Making of a Newspaper" has also been utilised during the month with good results. Arrangements have been made for a public showing of the film "A Journey to Soviet Russia." The Class work during the Jan.-March session has been adversely affected by widespread sickness.

#### DIVISION 12.

The Division has suffered a great loss during March in the passing away on the 5th, of Comrade Drage of Wellingborough. Before Division 12 was created, and when Wellingborough formed part of Division 6, Comrade Drage was responsible for arranging classes in the town. It is only a few months since he relinquished the secretaryship of the College, and undertook the duties of chairman. The movement owes a great debt to him for his enthusiastic advocacy of the cause of the Labour College movement in the area in which he resided. A very loyal group of supporters will sorely miss his inspiration and enthusiasm. After a good deal of effort on behalf of the movement by friends and supporters in Kettering, and with the assistance of the Trades Council, a class was commenced on March 7th. If one can judge by the inaugural meeting, the effort will prove highly successful. The Organiser attended the District Meeting of the Blastfurnacemen in the same town on March 15th and found a great deal of approval amongst the delegates for the principle of I.W.C.E.

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