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The Organ of the National Council of Labour Colleges

THE PLEBS

I can promise to be candid but not impartial.

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WE BREAK a RECORD

WE sold out—*again*—last month; thereby breaking all our previous records and reaching the highest circulation figure The PLEBS has touched yet. To everyone who helped in that achievement we tender our heartiest thanks—and an urgent appeal to *keep showing!*

Since we went down to fourpence three months ago, our circulation has gone up steadily. We were 25 per cent. up in March, and (roughly) 33 per cent. last month. We're getting nearer to that 7,000. How soon are we going to reach it? The summer months need mean no delay in that achievement if our friends everywhere will turn over in their minds *now* the best way of getting the magazine to every subscriber who has purchased it during the

▲

last three months. It means a little bit of extra organisation—a little bit of extra effort. And neither, surely, should be impossible at a time when the full programme of class-work slackens somewhat, leaving I.W.C.E.ers time to “shove” in other directions. Now’s the time to break new ground, and the magazine exists to help you do it.

We want a steady circulation of at least 7,000 monthly. And if every one of our supporters could sell six PLEBS where now he sells five—we should be well over that figure.

What about it?

We intend to do our best to make your task easier by turning out a better magazine than ever during these summer months.

THE Empire This month’s issue is a special Empire Number—but it contains no *official* advertisements of the Great Wembley Circus. We thought it eminently fitting, at a time when press, pulpit and schools—all the publicity forces controlled by capitalism—are shouting of the Greatness and Glory of the British Empire, to print a few facts and comments by way of antidote; and we urge on the Labour Colleges everywhere the desirability of running special lectures or courses this summer on the Empire from the Workers’ Point of View. There is to be a Great Spate of Imperialist propaganda during the next few months. Wembley itself will be a colossal piece of super-window-dressing—designed to impress “the crowd.” Special lessons in schools, special visits of scholars—and of Trade Unionists—to the Exhibition, special articles in newspapers and magazines; all the million capitalist gramophones will be blaring out the same “patriotic” tunes.

Here, then, is our opportunity to give concrete illustrations of what we mean by *independent* working-class education—education from a *working-class point of view*. The whole magnificently engineered campaign is a flat challenge to us and to our movement. Let us take up the challenge. The Empire-mongers can—and will—spend pounds to our ha’pence. But we can, if we will, get directly at large numbers of workers, in a more effective way than they—with all their gramophones—can command. Why should we not drop every other subject for the next two or three months, and concentrate wholly and solely on the fascinating subject of the British Empire—how it was “built up”—its position in the world to-day—what it means to the workers, etc., etc.?

Several of our articles this month contain material which will be useful for such expositions. And we shall be very glad to print in succeeding numbers any outline courses or notes for lectures adopted by any of the Colleges.

Congratulations to A. J. Cook on his appointment to the secretaryship of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain. Though not, during recent years, a member of the Plebs League, Cook has always been a keen I.W.C.E.er, and has done yeoman service for the classes in S. Wales. May we hope that his accession to office will herald a more widespread realisation by the miners of the vital importance of Real Working-Class Education.

We are glad to note—and we trust that I.W.C.E. propagandists will note also—that in a recent speech on Labour's educational policy at Newcastle, Mr. C. P. Trevelyan, the Minister of Education, admitted that "the whole present system of teaching had got the old *class bias*." This is valuable testimony, from an "orthodox" Labour man, to the truth of what The PLEBS and Labour College movement has been urging for the past fifteen years. And if, as Mr. Trevelyan went on to imply, this "class bias" was not a thing which you could get rid of by mere Act of Parliament, is it not obvious that any adult educational movements financed by Labour organisations should aim, not at "impartiality," but definitely at counteracting the dope instilled into us all in our school days?

THE BRITISH EMPIRE

WE shall all be taking homœopathic doses of allied geography and ethnology soon. Wembley will be open and Mr. Thomas's Empire will reveal its multiform excellence to the awed beholder. In an atmosphere of oranges and ice-cream, of snack teas and string-quartettes, we shall learn to our private amazement how great and glorious are "our" possessions and how limitless "our" heritage. It seems brutal to spoil the harmony of a pleasant excursion and perhaps churlish to "mark the pitch" for a first-class advertising stunt. None the less, and even from no better motive than pure spleen it is worth while telling a few truths about the "British Empire" if only to keep in countenance the few millions of workers who will be unable to scrape up enough to pass the turnstiles at the GREAT Exhibition.

The British Empire consists of territories in all quarters of the globe and although it can be spoken of as a unity since for certain purposes the authority of the British Crown extends over the whole—it is a unit in nothing else. Geographically it is an arbitrary aggregation of discordant units; politically it is a bewilderment of self-governing Dominions (which are all but independent republics) crown-territories, protectorates, dependencies, and mandated areas.

Technologically it includes examples of every stage of development, from primitive mattock-and-hoe cultivation up to mass-production under scientific management; and economically it is a chaos of divergencies and antagonism. Racially it includes representatives of all the principal sub-divisions of the human race; culturally all stages in between the Neolithic type (of the Andaman Islands, the Veddas of Ceylon, and the Australian Aborigines—if there are any of these left) and Bernard Shaw. Spiritually it comprises every creed from primitive magic to ultra-Communism; every known religion and anti-religion can be found in the Empire. It has a dozen systems of coinage and half-a-hundred fiscal systems. Its legal systems would fill an encyclopædia and then need an appendix for martial law and the E.P.A. Those who set out to glorify the "Empire" and predict "its" future are either imbued with a magical faith in the transfusion of irreconcilabilities or—what is more likely—know nothing of what they are rhapsodising about.

For instance. It is customary to speak of Britain as a "democracy" and to suppose that the fact of inclusion in the Empire confers "democratic" status upon all—black, yellow, red, or white—born subject to its sway. Yet even the form of "self-government" is conceded only to a fractional part of its population. The population of the Empire is approximately 500 millions. Of these only one fifth are white and these alone have voting power to anything like a "democratic" extent. Moreover as these whites are chiefly congregated in a few centres—Britain and the Self-Governing Dominions of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Newfoundland (and Ireland?)—the vast numbers of "coloured" races are for the most part ruled without any pretence of asking their consent.

True, the apologist of Empire will argue that Britain's rule is wholly for the good of these "benighted" heathen, and that the cause of civilisation and morality is advanced by the extension of the British Empire. In its day the Spanish Empire thought the same thing about itself and went to a great deal of expense to attempt the "civilisation" of the "barbarous and ungodly" islanders of Britain. That their efforts failed because of the violent resistance of the objects of their benevolence forms a theme for rejoicing in our elementary schools to this day. Should however any Indian, African, Asiatic, or Polynesian be inspired by the fate of the Armada to resist the process of his emendation at our hands he will learn abruptly that we are not Spaniards and 1924 is not 1588. Truth to tell they were blunter and honest men in those days. When old William Hawkins and his son John sold kidnapped blacks to the Spaniards in America—or sacked and burned their towns if they wouldn't buy as it was "against the law"—they made no pretence

of democracy or equality. They thought the nigger was black because God had cursed the sons of Ham, and that therefore he had none of the rights of a human being, and no claim upon a Christian's sympathy. When Drake and the other gentlemen adventurers raided the Spanish Main and plundered all through the South Seas they had but one thought—to "despoil the Egyptians"; to wrest by the strong arm from the plunderer all that his sword had won him. True even then they salved their consciences (or side-tracked their critics) by tales of the "cruelty" of the Spaniards to the "poor Indians," but none of these "pioneers of Empire" pretended to any object beyond acquiring treasure of gold and silver for the greater prosperity of the adventurers and their friends and countrymen at home.

Even later, when the great objective of Trade succeeded to that of Treasure, the merchant-mariners who extended the Empire abroad made no humanitarian pretences. They fought the Dutch for possession of the Spice Islands because they wanted the spices and the profits of their sale. They claimed possession of Australia and New Zealand (as soon as the Dutch had discovered them) because they expected more spices or more trade from them—and left them alone and derelict (except as a dump for convicts) when neither was to be had. The old East India Company would have gone on for ever satisfied with swindling the Indians in the ordinary ways of Trade if the French had not forced them to fight and taught them to use native Indian troops for purposes of conquest.

It was left to the pious 19th century, to the Bible-worshipping age of Victoria, to discover simultaneously the need for territorially secured markets for manufactures abroad, in areas from which cheap raw materials could be drawn, and the art of camouflaging their acquirement under a cloak of pure godliness.

"The missionary," said a Maori chief, "comes to us and says 'Look up!' And we look up. When we look down again the land's gone!"*

We do not now plead God and Christianity or the injunction to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" as a reason for annexing every available inch of the globe regardless of the feelings of its population. The process has become much more complex: the camouflage is perforce more subtle. Nowadays we "have a genius" for bringing to backward races the advantages of law, order, and Western Civilisation and leading them upward to the point at which they are "fit for self-government."

"Our" earliest experiment in this direction began in Ireland as far back as 1185; after seven hundred years of experiment involving

* See also "Marked Passages," p. 181.

the usual processes of famine, revolt, reconquest and extirpation the Irish have become so "fit" for self-government that we can leave them divided territorially between two mutually hostile self-governments and torn by passionate hatreds to shoot each other in peace while we make a profit on the weapons.

Another classic instance of our genius for colonial administration was in the American colonies, which became so "ripe" for self-government that they revolted and founded the United States of America. If you look up the amount the British Government is paying to the U.S.A. annually on account of War Debt you will find the current market price of *our* genius for colonial administration.

A third instance is developing in India. Here the "civilising mission" illusion was never very plausible since its chief cities were ancient when London was a cluster of wattle-huts enclosed within a mud-wall. Still, to "free the land from the 'invader'" (nobody knew quite where from, unless it was Thibet!) "we" extended our sway. Now the Indian people have reached the point at which the "educated section" (educated according to Western standards into Western ways and culture) are clamouring for a share in the ruling of India, and they in their turn are pressed upon by growing clamour for National Independence from a wider circle. The demand for "Dominion Status for India" grows irresistible just at the time when it is obvious that its concession will pacify only a relatively tiny fraction of the wealthier and westernised Indians.

There is still trouble in South Africa between the Nationalists, Dutch and the British. Canada is rapidly becoming an "economic colony" of the United States. Australia is distracted between the clamour of its capitalist fruit-growers and manufacturers for protection against competition (from America) and the clamour on its wage-workers for protection against British sweated labour and the wholesale importation of British unemployed.

The Empire in fact is caught in the coils of its own system. The commercial exploitation of non-capitalist areas brings always the same result. First the home-country imported raw-materials and food-stuffs from the exploited area and gave manufactured articles in exchange. Then it exported machinery and means of production. Finally it exports capital and the exploited area starts on its career as an exploiter on its own account. In every part of the Empire the native capitalist is appearing. Everywhere he is only to be bought off from leading a Nationalist fight for independence by being admitted to virtual partnership in the rule of the whole exploiting system.

It grows less true every year that the ruling class in Britain itself has a monopoly of the ruling and administrative posts within the Empire. The Colonial bourgeoisie (in whose ranks must now be

included the Anglicised section of the Egyptian and Indian bourgeoisie) gain ground every year. But much as this makes for the existence of a composite Imperial ruling class the unity is "bought with a price." The more a central Imperial authority is established the less grows (relatively and absolutely) the power of the popular Legislatures in each part. The British House of Commons, for instance, steadily loses its power to control the Dominions, and loses it not to the gain of any popular assembly but to a vague and intangible Imperial Conference of Premiers.

In India any concession of self-government to the privileged section of the Indian Bourgeoisie cannot fail to concentrate against them the hostility of the exploited peasantry and proletarians and the non-privileged among the bourgeoisie. As the concession of "self-government" to any extent can only release native Indian capitalism from all the Imperial restraints upon its development, Indian nationalism can only win self-government to open an era of class-conflicts on an unprecedented scale.

India occupies chief place in this consideration since three out of every five inhabitants of the British Empire are Indians (a fact which the multiplicity of exhibits at Wembley will serve to conceal rather than reveal). Its position is by no means unique, nor will its problems exhaust the stock of trouble before the Empire.

This is perhaps best shown (consciously and unconsciously) by that curious side-line among Wembley attractions—the British Empire Labour Conference. There will be represented the Labour Governments of Britain, of West Australia, South Australia, and Queensland, the Labour Parties of Australia, of New Zealand, of South Africa, and Newfoundland. The Workers' Party of Canada may be represented and so too the Indian Trade-Union Congress. But for the 100 millions of semi-servile and "indentured" labourers and peasant producers—negroes, coolies, Asiatics and Polynesians there will not be a single spokesman.

Yet if the white workers were wise it would be these whose co-operation they would seek before all else. The present necessities of Capitalism and particularly the desperate eleventh-hour effort to stabilise British Capitalism within a self-contained Empire can only mean the ever-increasing drift of employment away from the white to the coloured workers. Years ago it was conceivable that the rulers of the Empire could have made an alliance with the home born or British bred workers on the basis of devolving all the industrial and agricultural work upon the coloured races and maintaining the Whites as a privileged caste of intimate body servants, supervising functionaries, and armed guards. This Kiplingesque conception has been rendered obsolete by the rise of the various "coloured" groups of capitalists and their commercial assistants, concurrently

with the abasement of the British proletariat almost to the coolie level.

When the Imperial Labour Conference meets its attempts at unity will for ever be blighted by the problems of the negro in South and East Africa, of the Yellow man at the gates of Australia, of the indentured labourer in Polynesia and Malaysia—and of exploitation everywhere.

A Labour Party can become Imperial only by surrendering all that justified its birth. Only when the white workers can devise ways of making common cause with the "subject races" for a common struggle against exploitation will we have broken the vicious circle which began when the European Bourgeoisie first ventured overseas to carve out Empires in the New World.

THOS. A. JACKSON.

EMPIRE—or EUROPE ?

What is to be our attitude, as rank-and-filers in the British section of the world's workers' movement, towards the British Empire? That is very definitely a matter of "practical politics" for us, since, as the following short article points out, we can no longer—in the interdependent world of to-day—plan our schemes for working-class emancipation on a national basis; i.e., on the assumption that the workers of Britain can achieve economic freedom independently of the action of the workers elsewhere.

AS members of the workers' movement we are all of us, whatever our differences as to method, revolutionists. And whether by sudden and violent action, or by a slower "evolutionary" process, our movement (unless it forgets its aims) will arrive at a point when a revolution has been accomplished; when, that is, capitalism, even if it be still existent, is under control, and when supreme power is in the hands of the workers.

When that stage is reached we may expect—if we are wise we surely *shall* expect—hostile action against us on the part of any capitalist powers still in being; if not armed intervention, then at the very least economic blockade. We have, therefore, to face the problem, not merely of bringing about a revolutionary change in the basis of society, but of *safeguarding and maintaining* that revolution once it has been successfully realised.

Now the chances of the British workers bringing about a revolutionary social change—once they grasp the need for it—are at any rate "fair to moderate." But the possibility of their maintaining that revolution, *if they act alone*, is remote indeed; first,

because Britain's geographical position makes her an easy prey to blockade ; and second, because her industrial development has made her dependent for three-fourths of her food supply on outside sources—and it is doubtful whether a revolutionary government which asked its people—as a first instalment of economic freedom !—to make two days' food rations last over a whole week, would itself survive the first week.

The position, in brief, is this : We, as a revolutionary movement, are embarked on a course of action which must lead, sooner or later, when we have defeated capitalism at home, to a break with capitalism outside. We are almost entirely dependent on outside sources for our food supply, as well as for sundry vitally important raw materials, *e.g.*, oil. We are bound, then (unless we have aspirations after romantic suicide) to base our plans, not on action by the workers of these islands alone, but on common action by ourselves and the workers of such other lands as can supply our needs. We are, in fact, living in the twentieth century, and not in the early nineteenth.

Can we take the British Empire, or any parts of that Empire, as the geographical basis of our plans ?

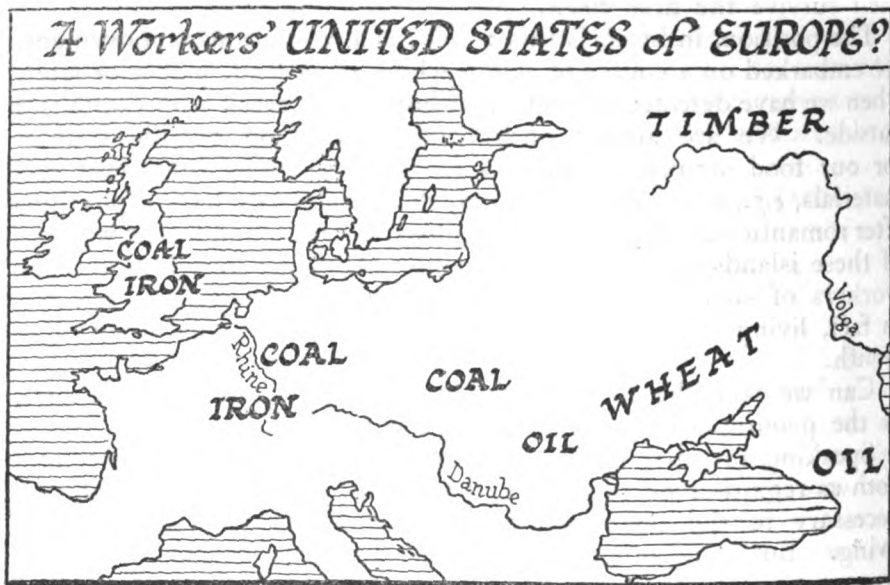
Speaking broadly, the Empire is, or could be, "self-sufficient," both as regards food-supplies and the most important raw materials necessary to the maintenance of twentieth century standards of living. But in no other respect is the Empire "practical politics" from our point of view.

It has no geographical unity. Its territories are scattered over the Seven Seas. And this factor of geographical unity—as the examples of Germany and the Central Powers during the War and of Russia after the Revolution show—is no mere academic consideration. In the present-day era of intense Imperialist rivalry geographical disunity is a very obvious disadvantage ; so great a disadvantage, in fact, that it may lead to the complete or partial break-up of a group of scattered territories, apart altogether from working-class action. In any case, and assuming that the British Empire held together until such time as the workers in every part of it were strong enough to seize power, its geographical disunity would be a fatal weakness in a world which still contained—let us say—a capitalist America, a capitalist Japan, and a capitalist France.

Further than that, the peoples of the Empire are so widely differentiated—racially, and (more important) as regards social development and therefore of standards of living—that any sort of common action by the great bulk of them can scarcely be regarded as an immediate possibility. And—still another reason—the mere fact that the Empire has been "built up" as a result of capitalist aggression,

and for the profit of the British bourgeoisie, means that the workers' movement *must* support, or at least not oppose, those nationalist movements in various parts of the Empire which are the inevitable reaction against exploitation, and which necessarily make for break-up, and not for consolidation.

But what is the alternative—since alternative there must be?



Geography helps to supply the answer. *The British Isles are a part of Europe—not of the Indian Ocean.* The workers of Britain, France, and Germany, joining hands with the workers of Russia, could form a Workers' Group which would be geographically a unit, and economically self-supporting. British, French, and German coal and iron and industrial plants; Russian wheat and oil; these might form the basis of a real United States of Europe. And apart from some such definitely envisaged scheme as this—with the coasts on the opposite side of the Channel and the North Sea held by proletarian comrades and not by capitalist enemies—revolution in Britain can be no more than a dream.

Our ultimate aim, needless to say, is a World Workers' Group. But that ideal—the world being large—will perforce be realised a step at a time. Practical politics—looking a shade further ahead than the end of our noses—dictates the closest possible co-operation between the workers' movements of France, Germany, and Britain. That way lies the possibility of victory. And we shall be wise if we make "Wembley" the text, not of the lessons our rulers and masters wish us to draw from it, but of discussions on very different lines.

J. F. HORRABIN.

How the BRITISH EMPIRE cares for the Peasant

One would assume from the tone of horror always adopted by the British capitalist press when alluding to the "tyranny" of the Russian Soviet Republic in its dealings with the Russian peasants, that the welfare of peasants was a matter of vital concern to British rulers. The wages paid to British peasants form one piece of evidence to the contrary. And the following article, which gives a few particulars about the way in which British rule in India has affected the peasants, throws yet further light on the subject.

THE story of India during the past seventy years forms one of the most interesting and also one of the most important sections of the history of capitalist civilisation. That India, in the near future, will pass through phases of rapid development may be regarded as a foregone conclusion, and the need therefore arises for collecting material from which a concise and reliable history of that country may be put together. A general idea of the character of the problems and difficulties which beset the Nationalist movement in its early days may be gathered from the book which forms the subject of this short article.* Of Wedderburn himself little more needs to be said than that he was a sincere reformer of the moderate "constitutional" type, who laboured faithfully for the cause to which he devoted his life—the improvement of the conditions of the people of India. In home politics he was a consistent and courageous Liberal, "a pro-Boer," a supporter of Trades Unionism, and an ardent advocate of non-sectarian education, Home Rule, small holdings and working-class magistrates. He was certainly fully deserving of the warm expressions of gratitude and affection which his indefatigable labours on their behalf called forth from the constitutional Indian Nationalists.

But the real importance of the book attaches to the account it contains of the early history of the Nationalist movement. It is to be regretted that the author did not treat this aspect of his subject more in detail, as he would then have written a work of real and permanent value. As it is, important and useful matter is largely buried among long passages of purely biographical interest. It

* *Sir William Wedderburn and the Indian Reform Movement.* By S. K. Ratcliffe (Allen & Unwin, 6s. net.).

is significant that the first problem that confronted Wedderburn as an Anglo-Indian official was that of

the economic condition of the labouring multitude—the destitution of the mass of rayats, those patient and industrious cultivators who make up four-fifths of the population....The Indian peasant was a poor half-starved human unit—one among 150 millions spread over a territory of 900,000 square miles, liable to famine on an average once every five years.

And famine, as is here conclusively proved, was due to the poverty of the peasant and not to shortage of food. We are told of the famine of 1900 that—

the Viceroy, Lord Curzon, declared that the famine of that year was greater in intensity than any previously recorded visitation. Even in the worst months of the famine, and in the worst localities, there has never been a deficiency in the food supply. There has always been a sufficiency of grain on the spot in the hands of the traders, but the cultivators have no means to purchase. They have no money, and being hopelessly in debt to the moneylender, have lost their credit.

The trader, the moneylender and, "greatest of these three," the Government tax collector, were responsible ; even our worthy liberal friend came ("with extreme reluctance") to see that "this chronic poverty was mainly due to the modern system of land revenue and assessment, perfected after India had passed under the dominion of the Crown." It was the price the Indian peasant had to pay for the privilege of living under British rule. Consider the following :—

In the old days, in a bad year the rayat had to give but little ; if he had no crop he gave nothing, but in a bumper year, the rayat gave of his abundance. But the Government, for the sake of official convenience, placed a rigid cash assessment on each field, to be paid at fixed times, what ever the success of the season's crop. Further, the date of payment came before the harvest in order, of course, that the crops of defaulters might be seized), and if the money were not paid the authorities had power to take from the peasant even his home, land, plough, oxen, bedding and cooking utensils.

A Commission appointed in 1876 (as the result of "direct action" on the part of the exasperated peasants, who forgot themselves so far as to "riot") admitted "that the rigid cash payment had driven the rayat to the moneylender, and that once in his hands, the Government debt courts completed the ruin of the peasant." Three years later the Government found "a remedy" by remitting the rayats' debts, not to the wretched peasants, but to the moneylenders, "leaving," as the author says, "the revenue system, which was the cause of the mischief, untouched." Comment is needless.

Some account is also given of how the Indian demands for self-government and education came to be formulated, and how every

reform, even of the most moderate and constitutional character, was rejected either by the Indian or the Home Government. Even temperance reforms suffered the same fate.

The Indian people demanded restriction and local control, while the only effectual opposition came from the revenue-collecting department...the British Government officials sold licences to the highest bidder, till the Excise Department had become one of the most lucrative of public departments.

Plebs who can borrow this book from a library will find in it a good deal of useful ammunition to use on those unthinking (and uninformed) "Labour" men who talk of India's debt to British rule. Whatever "benefits" India has received have been paid for by her peasants and workers—in human life, as well as in money.

H. WYNN-CUTHBERT.

MARKED PASSAGES

Most people mark books as they read them. The passages thus approved of are often of interest to other folks. Send yours along.

The Missionary and the Empire

A DAILY HERALD man recently interviewed some of the negroes who appear in Galswothy's play, *The Forest*. One of them spoke thus:—

"Long ago Dr. Livingstone come to my country. Our King ask him: 'Do you come for war?' and Dr. Livingstone say: 'No, I come to cure the sores of your people.'

"So he showed his medicines, and our King said: 'Good. It is peace. Do what you can do!'

"So Dr. Livingstone put medicine on the sore legs of my people, and bandaged them. And by the time the bandage came off my country was a part of England."

(*Daily Herald*, April 15th.)

An Imperial Monument

... In the autumn of that year [1841] the Society was plunged into the most terrific struggle that it ever had had to bear alone. ... The Society declared "black" the rebuilding of the Houses of Parliament, Woolwich Dockyard, and the erection of Nelson's Column. . . The strike was called in September, 1841, and went on until the end of May next year. . . Blackleg labour had for some time been working on the Column, and the most famous monument to the British Empire is, suitably enough, built by scab labour.

The Builders' History, R. W. Postgate (Chap. VI.)

The WORKERS and WEMBLEY

The Psychology of Imperialist Propaganda

OUR main concern in the present article is to show how a knowledge of psychology—*modern* psychology, the *new* psychology—may help the champions of Independent Working-Class Education to understand, and to counteract, the baleful influences of imperialist propaganda. We take for granted that imperialism is opposed to the workers' interests; and that, from the workers' standpoint, the British Empire in particular is a reactionary instrument—that its downfall must be ardently desired by all who aim at the welfare of the working class (and by all those who desire the true welfare of the human race, which can only be achieved by way of the social revolution). The question psychologists in the I.W.C.E. movement have to answer, is: "Why do so many of the workers thrill responsively to the 'Idea of Empire'; why are they proud—yes, poor devils, *proud!*—because they bear part of the 'White Man's Burden,' because they belong to the 'Empire on which the Sun never Sets?'"

Why, in the name of Glory, are they proud?

The Inferiority Complex

Undoubtedly, one of the main sources of this pride is the universal will-to-power, the widespread and natural reaction against the sense of inferiority, against discontent with the actual conditions of existence. For a more detailed account of the "inferiority complex" and its influence on human behaviour we must refer to *The Plebs Outline of Psychology*, pp. 8-9, pp. 126-7, etc. Enough, here, to point out that the workers' minds are open to the suggestive imperialist propaganda of the master class (begun in the elementary schools, and sustained by all the influences of press, cinema, and so on, in later life), because of their well-grounded conviction that the conditions of their daily life and work are abominable, and ought to be bettered. But instead of "doing their own thinking," and instead of striving to mend matters along the lines of revolt against exploitation, they readily seek escape into a world of fancy, accepting imaginary compensation as sharers in the "greatness of Empire." It is just as foolish as being content with the prospect of "pie, in the sky, by-and-by"—but how natural, and how general. We have not yet learned the art of life. For the most part, the art cannot be truly mastered in this "society" of crude beginnings. Even the well-

to-do need their "guiding fictions" to help them along the path leading out of the world of reality. Take two notable instances: George Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells. These men had a hard struggle in early days, but in both cases their genius, their "rent of ability," has now made their pecuniary circumstances easy. But neither of them is content with the world in which his lot is cast. Shaw writes *Back to Methuselah*. Wells goes on writing *A Modern Utopia* over and over again—a brilliant fancy-picture of a world in which the "H.G." he knows and is far from being satisfied with will have had a much better chance of harmonious development! The inferiority complex and the guiding fiction, over and over and over again. . . .

But as far as the workers are concerned, the Empire is such another Utopia, an imaginary world in which our dross is transmuted into gold, a world which the power of imagination makes real to us. The business of the I.W.C.E. propagandist in this matter is, not to attempt the annihilation of the inferiority complex (should he try, he will bark his knuckles in vain), but to turn to useful account the healthy reaction against the sordid realities of everyday life. He must show that in the imperialist scheme the worker's will-to-power is being fed with chaff. As far as the under-dogs are concerned, as far as the exploited are concerned, when they use the exploiters' eyewash they are playing the exploiters' game. *Only as a class-conscious member of the proletariat using the power of combination for revolutionary ends can the individual worker satisfy his will-to-power.* "Imperialism" is a capitalist device for the maintenance of the master class, at the particular phase now reached in the struggle for power between the "owners" and the "workers." What the master class fears, above all, is the attempt on the part of the workers to realise their will-to-power upon class-conscious lines. Is that attempt, too, no more than a "guiding fiction?" Certainly it will not bring paradise; but it is the *only* way by which the world can be made more habitable for the workers; the *only* path along which the workers can, in part at least, realise their will-to-power. Whereas the way of "Empire" can lead the workers only to a hell upon earth, of which 1914—1918 offered no more than a faint foretaste. Such is one of the lessons which the I.W.C.E. propagandists must try to teach the workers.

Other Aspects of the Psychology of Imperialism

In the space available to us we can only touch on these briefly. One factor of the ease with which the workers accept the imperialist propaganda of the exploiting class is, beyond question, race-feeling and colour-feeling. These are parts of the "herd-complex" (*Psychology*, pp. 138-139, etc.) To a worker sophisticated by the wrong sort of herd-complex, it seems a "natural" ordinance that

“a German” or “a Frenchman” should be exploited by “an Englishman”; and, still more, that “a coloured man” should be exploited by “a white man.” The remedy for this is not vague talk about “human brotherhood,” but an explanation that the struggle which matters to the workers is not the struggle between the “British” herd and the “German” herd, etc.; nor the struggle between the “white” herd and the “yellow” or the “black” herd, etc.; but the struggle between the “workers’” herd and the “owners’” herd.

But is there no real basis for the contention that the workers can win advantage from membership of such an organisation as the British Empire? If there were none, the question would be simpler than it is! Many times in history has it suited the master class, an exploiting class, to give favoured sections of the exploited a share in the spoils of Empire—to make the latter joint beneficiaries in exploitation. In the palmy days of Roman Imperialism, the Roman mob enjoyed the “bread and circuses” provided by revenues wrung from the colonial territories. Part of the capitalist and imperialist game is to convince the workers that their interests are bound up with the maintenance of Empire. And in a country like England—grossly overpopulated in relation to its actual food production, and dependent therefore upon the exchange of its stored natural resources in the way of minerals (raw and manufactured) for food-stuffs grown in other lands—the narrower and more immediate interests of certain sections of the workers are especially apt to conflict, for a time, with the wider and more enduring interests of the workers as a whole. In Britain, under the actual economic conditions that have issued from the war, the pretext is wearing rather thin. But Wembley is an attempt to make the workers stoop to the old lure; to make them subordinate the “reality principle” of the considered end to the “pleasure principle” of immediate gain (see *Psychology*, p. 7, etc.). In this matter, the imperialist falconers are ably supported by those among the “labour leaders” who, though sprung from the working class, have been profoundly demoralised as the beneficiaries of Empire—by those who have “assumed the responsibilities of Empire” and are running “his Majesty’s government” (his Majesty being, of course, the figurehead of the bourgeois ship of State), instead of continuing the fight along the front of the class war. But of the actual workers who may be content to be the beneficiaries of Empire, we may ask whether they really like their rôle of co-exploiters. Why are they proud?

And for them many a weary hand did swelt
 In torchèd mines and noisy factories,
 And many once proud-quivered loins did melt
 In blood from stinging whip; with hollow eyes

Many all day in dazzling river stood
To take the rich-ored driftings of the flood

.....
.....for them alone did seethe.

A thousand men in troubles wide and dark.
Half-ignorant, they turned an easy wheel,
That set sharp racks to work to pinch and peel.
Why were they proud? Because their marble founts
Gushed with more pride than do a wretch's tears?

.....
Why were they proud? Again we ask aloud,
Why in the name of Glory were they proud?

EDEN AND CEDAR PAUL.

OUR GRAND OLD GOVERNING CLASS

(In Two Acts)

II.

THE EMPIRE BUILDERS

THE Glorious Revolution, as we showed last month, put political authority into the hands of a select coterie of great landed proprietors, interested above everything in the maintenance of a Church Establishment and a Parliamentary Government (strictly limited in franchise and at the mercy of an oligarchic executive), which would assure them in the enjoyment of their ill-gotten estates, enable them to add to these and fix them in control of State Funds. This *coup d'état* was carried through with the assistance of financiers, mainly of alien origin, who received their reward in the entry that was afforded them into the rapidly appreciating commerce of a carefully protected Colonial System. Powerful economic interests were admitted within the gate, so placing at the disposal of the landed class an alternative fund of loan capital upon which, in addition to native sources of money, they could draw.

The great Whig Families governed England—and Scotland—for the next fifty years after 1690 almost undisputed. In the following twenty years or so the Whig regime was undergoing modifications but, for three-quarters of a century, it was an alliance of British landed property and Dutch loan capital that retained the real mastery of the United Kingdom.

Meanwhile, a new mercantile community was in course of evolution in London, Bristol, Norwich, Lancaster, Newcastle, Liverpool,

Edinburgh, Glasgow, and others of the larger towns. The merchants handling colonial produce, dealing in wool and linen, sending coal to London from the Tyne and Wear, and trading in corn, were entering into the business of banking and were assuming a very real importance economically that caused them to challenge the policy and assail the political monopoly of the landed magnates and their banking allies.

William Pitt the Elder was the spokesman and, in office, the agent of these new elements, voicing the aspirations and serving the interests of the commercial class. His whole policy was directed towards the extension of their markets and the widening of their opportunities. His was "the will to power" of the stockholders of the East India Company, the planters of Virginia and the West Indies, the merchants of the ports whose mercantile marine had been protected by the Navigation Laws and enriched by privateering. His son, William Pitt the Younger, expressed "the will to retain power" of the merchant and the landed classes, fused more and more in the intervening generation between the Seven Years War and the French Revolution and, by the latter event, rallied together in Britain and the United States against all subversive ideas and the assault on their class monopolies of all new and sturdy elements amongst the rising middle-class of their generation.

William Pitt the Younger had for his friend and adviser in financial matters, Thomas Coutts, one of the new bankers of the 18th century, and placed his loans to finance the French Wars with other 18th century banking houses, like Smith, Payne and Smith (the origin of the National Provincial Bank), Barings and Ricardos.

The merchant class, especially in so far as it had disguised itself as a landed class and had acquired by patent or by marriage, titles, and, by purchase, pocket boroughs, was completely in the saddle by the close of the Napoleonic Wars.

Those who held power and who directed policy until the Reform Act were, in the main, those representing the families who had made money between 1740 and 1790. They constituted the solid mass of Toryism. They had upon their flank, however, and in general alliance with them, the mercantile families who had been trading in the raw materials and the finished products of the new manufacturing industry that had developed after 1776. Their Toryism was, therefore, modified by a more liberal tendency in all that affected commercial legislation and in the sphere of foreign relations, notably with South America which, revolting from Spain and Portugal, was opening its markets to London and Liverpool trade and finance.

Canning and Huskisson, two Tories who sat for Liverpool, Peel, the son of a Blackburn calico printer, and Gladstone, the son of a great corn merchant and cane-sugar planter of Liverpool, were the

representatives, pre-eminently, of this adjustment of the outlook of the governing class to harmonise with the interests of the new recruits joining its ranks and the new tendencies resulting from the Industrial Revolution.

The governing class of this period of British history was pre-eminently of native origin and much more truly national in character than at any time before or since. It was constituted of the pick of those elements of the English and Scottish nations who had accumulated the rents of lands stolen from the Church or filched from the common folk and subsequently improved and put under stock or corn, the profits of commerce in agriculture, handicraft and colonial produce, and the interest on loans advanced on favourable terms to a government controlled by its creditors. It had been revolutionary. It had resisted, overcome, remodelled and directed the state machine. It had possessed itself of power and had exercised it—at home and everywhere that a British squadron of line-of-battleships could go. It could say—"Britain, that is our class!"

There was, however, another contingent advancing its menacing challenge to this magnificent monopoly and seeming in its vigorous economic development and political activity to threaten the overthrow of all authority as by custom and by law established. It was not so national in its composition or in its outlook. It consisted of the brokers, shippers and loan agents of the new textile capitalism of the steam factories, the more successful manufacturers of the new jungle towns of the Industrial Revolution, and all the religious, philanthropic elements depended upon their bounty and gave idealist expression to their petit-bourgeois mentality. It was in general sympathy with the new political thought that was expressing itself on the Continent and in America, where the bourgeoisie was at death grips with the landed magnates and with established authority in Church and State. In Lancashire, in Yorkshire and in London there were export firms, notably piece-goods merchants and corn factors, like the Rothschilds, the Behrens and the Rallis, who were opening up markets first for cottons and woollens and, later, for engineering and railway material all over Europe and in the New World and the new settlements of Cape Colony and Australia.

The Catholic and Jewish Emancipation movements met and co-operated in an alliance with the Whig and Radical politicians and manufacturers to break down the monopoly of the Tory merchants, squires and parsons in the administrative and social life of Great Britain. The new merchants and bankers, trading in raw materials, manufactures, bullion and credit between London, Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, Bradford, Hamburg, Antwerp, Frankfurt, Smyrna and Alexandria were beating at the doors of Parliament, demanding the withdrawal of the privileges of the Chartered Companies, the

abolition of the Corn Laws, the establishment of Universal Free Trade and banking and currency reform.

They were, on the Continent, the dominant elements in the Revolutions of 1830 and 1848. The first was the Revolution for Rothschilds against Barings and Hopes. The second was the Revolution against Rothschilds for the newer generation of cotton goods merchants and loan-mongers.

From 1847 onwards, in this country, and from 1851, in France, the new governing class of the Empire Builders got their grip upon the state power on both sides of the Channel. Their failure in Germany and in Austria was, in very truth, the genesis of the World War. They conquered in Britain, France, Belgium, Italy and in the United States. Victory in these countries gave them the entry into all countries and the reversion of the Empire of the Earth, except where, under Kaiserism, the State eluded their grasp.

The Rothschilds exercised enormous but always very indefinite power behind the scenes of British politics during the fifty years after the passing of the Reform Bill. They stood always by the side of Lord John Russell. They had, however, many and powerful rivals, notably the Barings, the bankers of the Tories. They were gradually compelled to give ground before a younger group, issuing like themselves from Frankfurt and from the cities of the Rhineland. These were the Goschens, the Erlangers and last, but by no means least, the house of Bischoffsheim, Goldschmidt and Co. This last is a name almost forgotten, a name never very well known in this country, but only because this firm knew how well to cover its tracks. Everyone who studies Imperialism has heard of Baron Hirsch, everyone knows the name of Sir Ernest Cassel, "banker to the King of England." Yet these were only Bischoffsheim's poor relatives, their office boys. They were, like Morgans, cotton merchants to commence with. Their headquarters were in Brussels, Paris and Antwerp. They were the founders of the great French industrial and trade bank, the Banque de Paris et des Pays Bas.

They were, with perhaps the single exception of Morgans, the greatest credit house in the world. They gathered in available capital from everywhere and poured it into every one of the new countries. They were to the forefront in Egypt, they were everywhere in the Balkans and Russia and Argentina. They were in Morocco and in South Africa, in the Congo and in China, in Mesopotamia and in Persia.

The Erlangers, whose name is to-day coming more and more prominently to the fore, were in at the birth of the British South Africa Company. They were deep in the Rand Gold Mines. They drove their fangs into Algeria, Greece and Egypt. Everywhere that there is a helpless debtor state or a promising railway concession,

assuring fabulous interest, there do we find flying first in the line of capitalist vultures, those favourites at Court, the d'Erlangers, whose father, "entitled either to French or German nationality" was so kind as to elect to be British. As for the Goschens, well, to look at the *Directory of Directors* leaves you with no doubt that "this sceptered isle" is "the land of Goschen." They are It, especially in India.

Then, the Sassoons and the Montagus, the Schröders and the Samuels, the Grenfells, the Hambros, the Hoares, the Glyns and the Mills, the Lazards—saloon keepers in the '49—and Seligmans—the old clothes dealers of San Francisco—the Astors—who traded whiskey for furs, the Barnatos of Whitechapel, the Guinnesses of Dublin, the Strakosches of Johannesburg, and the Szarvasys of the *Daily Mail* and "somewhere in Central Europe"—cannot we have them all on show at Wembley to witness to the glory and profit of Henry Dubb's "British" Empire?

J. T. WALTON NEWBOLD.

HOW to BUILD HOUSES

Comrade George Hicks, Gen. Sec. of the Building Trade Workers, here replies to Professor Clark's article last month.

PROFESSOR CLARK'S contribution to the April PLEBS was marked by the practical outlook one expects to find in anything written by him on Housing. In general he has anticipated the Report of the House-Building Committee now issued by the Government. He would be more drastic, it is true; even more national in handling the problem; but much of the Report, leaving out of account the proposal of establishing Municipal banks and other extra-legislative items, follows fairly closely the lines of the Professor's short study.

Dilution still appeals to Professor Clark as a "way out" of the labour difficulty. The Committee has found a better solution. Months ago I pointed out that Housing presented the triple problem of Materials, Labour and Finance. It was unreasonable, I said, to ask the Building Unions to deal with Labour by itself, especially along the dangerous line of dilution, without regard for the parallel questions of materials, supply and building organisation. I said that time was a more or less equal consideration in all three cases. I am to a very large extent justified.

In the first year of the projected Government Housing Scheme it is proposed to build 50,000 houses more than outside private enterprise might be expected to build, the total being 90,000. The

extra 50,000 as the beginning of a national scheme is a number determined by the circumstances of the industry in all three respects mentioned. At the present time there are sufficient craftsmen in the building industry outside those required for commercial maintenance to build over 200,000 houses a year. It is proposed to build 90,000 in the first year of the scheme, so that fewer than half the craftsmen available to-day would suffice for immediate requirements. I know quite well that men engaged on big buildings cannot be transferred wholesale to cottage work, and I do not suggest stopping luxury work which provides employment for many outside the building industry in its narrower definition. But I say that work of this kind is fluctuating, and when some of the big contracts come to an end as many will before long, men will be streaming back into the smaller branches of building.

My contention is that for an extra 50,000 houses there is ample adaptability in the industry for the purposes of the proposed Act. The Committee recommend drastic overhauling of the apprenticeship system, at present as slipshod as it could be. If all goes well joint apprenticeship committees are to be set up in every locality, and a national committee of a similar joint character. In all housing contracts there is to be a condition, that in the following trades:—bricklayers, masons, carpenters, joiners, slaters, tilers, plasterers and plumbers; one apprentice to three shall be employed at an agreed period-scale of wage rates. The number of apprentices introduced into the industry will be reviewed from time to time in proportion to the supply of materials, and the building programme. These apprentices are to be indentured so that they shall be under the direct supervision of the Local Joint Committee of employers and operatives and so that they shall be transferrable. The period of apprenticeship is to be four years, a restricted duration correlated to guaranteed systematic training.

Now I ask Professor Clark—What does he expect to get out of dilution either in speed or production more than such a controlled scheme of apprenticeship offers? Dilutees would be trained to do some kinds of work badly. Apprentices would get a greater all-round training, and, at the same time, would be working on housing schemes with as much effective application to practical work within equal training periods. Employers and operatives are agreed. Dilution is un-workable, uneconomic, and unnecessary.

I refer Professor Clark to the Government's White Paper containing the Report of the House Building Committee which, as he will know, is representative of employers, materials—manufacturers and operatives, for proposals in regard to removing limits to the full scale of materials and ensuring protection against increased prices. At the same time the Committee suggests that the Govern-

ment should grant such powers as might be necessary to assist in the provision of adequate and economical means of rail transport for materials required for use in connection with all State—assisted Housing Schemes.

These measures, as I am sure Professor Clark will, on examination, agree, are in the best sense of the words national and scientific. Quasi-military schemes of conscript labour are wholly fantastic, would fail to secure the necessary co-operation required between the industry and the State and would make the cost of any scheme prohibitive.

GEORGE HICKS.

The ECONOMICS of CAPITALISM A Syllabus for Classes

(The earlier Lessons of this series appeared in the March and April PLEBS; a few copies still obtainable.)

LESSON 7.—CAPITALISM IN DECLINE (B).

Liberals say Versailles was "folly." Therefore need to teach "wisdom" and to revise it. But the Treaty of Versailles was the result of a conflict of Imperialist forces :—(a) French wanted hegemony in Europe ; (b) U.S.A. wanted to regularise Europe as a colonial area for America ; (c) Britain wanted to gain from the colonial settlement and to co-operate with France in sharing gains in Europe.

Results :—(a) France gets Lorraine and Saar, and she gets "independence" for her vassal States (Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, etc.) ; (b) U.S.A. fails for the time being and withdraws from Europe. She turns her attention to Pacific and to American continent ; (c) Britain gains colonies and mandates—Mesopotamia, Palestine (Note oil gains) ; (d) Reparations question left so that France could continually interfere in Germany.

The Powers formed united front against Russia.

During 1919 British capitalism prosperous in artificial and temporary boom. British capitalists concentrate their control over State (e.g., rail strike 1919, and miners' dispute). In April, 1920, Trade Depression started ; British financiers stop inflation by raising bank-rate ; European exchanges "slump" and prevent trade ; temporary post-war replacement orders come to an end. *Result* : British capitalism sees need of stabilisation in Europe. Beginning of Lloyd George policy of Conferences.

Genoa Conference. An attempt to stabilise. Britain makes overtures to

Russia for oil concessions. U.S.A. intrigues with France to stop Britain getting oil. France wishes for collapse of Germany. Genoa fails. Failure of Lloyd George policy. Period of political "crises" between Britain and France begins. These are symptoms of the increasing rivalry of French and British Imperialism.

Autumn 1922—First Crisis.—The Near East. France has supported Turks and British Greeks. Turks victorious, and threaten to occupy the Straits. Britain lands troops at Chanak. The Lausanne Conference.

This "crisis" which increases the disorganisation of British capitalism causes the fall of Mr. Lloyd George and the rise of Mr. Law and "tranquility."

Britain withdraws from Europe (as did U.S.A.) and develops her Empire. Result: U.S.A. had trade recovery in 1922. Trade recovery in sight in Britain in December, 1922.

February, 1923.—Second Crisis.—The Ruhr. French occupy Ruhr to control coke for Lorraine industry. Break-up of Germany follows. This smothers British trade rivalry. French consolidate their hegemony over Europe. Mr. Baldwin bewildered; interfere in Europe or develop the Empire?

French and German capitalists co-operate to exploit the Ruhr and a United Front is formed against the Workers' Governments in Saxony and Thuringia.

N.B.—Growing imperialist rivalry. Largest Imperialist groups trying to be economically self-sufficient. United front against workers.

Lesson 8.—THE WORKERS' MOVEMENT.

During First Stage of Capitalism:—

Workers scarcely yet a *class*. In the Guilds journeymen hoped to rise to become masters (e.g. Dick Whittington). Journeymen worked with masters, and had therefore petit-bourgeois psychology. Workers organised only occasionally—sporadic strikes and riots. As they become a *class* they organise under cover of friendly societies, at first in localities, and finally extending nationally.

During Second Stage:—

Combination illegal up to 1825. Trade Unionism begins.

(i.) 1830—40. *Owenism*. Attempt to remedy ills of *Industrial Revolution* by *industrial action*. Organisation of National Consolidated Trades Union. Failed because:—(a) Trade Unions still local. (b) Lack of communications. (c) Sectional and local outlook prevented any national movement.

(ii.) 1840—50. *Chartism*. Workers turned from *Owenism* to *Parliamentary action* to get the vote. Failed because:—(a) Mixed elements (petit-bourgeois, London artisans, handicraftsmen, factory workers) destroyed unity of aim. (b) Lack of communications. (c) Lack of organised *power* to enforce Charter.

(iii.) 1850—70. *Craft Unionism*: building up of conservative and cautious craft unions (e.g. A.S.E.). "The Junta." The basis of modern Trade Unionism, but craft selfishness strong. Anti-political in tendency.

During Third Stage :—

Trade Union Acts of 1871 and 1874 gave legal status to Trade Unions. 1889 Dock strike was start of organisation of unskilled workers. This was period of Socialist propaganda—Fabians, S.D.F., and formation of Labour Party as a Party of the Trade Unions to fight for trade unionism in Parliament. Result Trades Dispute Act 1906. Fabians and I.L.P. strive to gain lead in Labour Party. Socialism during this period Reformist. Capitalism was developing. Therefore the interests of the Trade Unions was in gaining a share of the increasing profits of capitalist production. Social reform made possible by gains of imperialism.

Second International a loose federation of national reformist parties. Socialists look to extension of state power (Collectivism) to secure reforms. Therefore Labour Movements were :—(a) Reformist in aim ; (b) Desired extension of state power ; (c) National in outlook ; (d) Neutral or even favourable to imperialism ; (e) Thought in terms of *sections*, Industrial, Parliamentary, etc.

It logically followed that when war came in 1914 the Labour movements sided with their own Imperialist states. Break up of Second International.

During the Decline of Capitalism :—

Declining wealth of capitalism makes reforms impossible. Therefore reformist movement checked. Capitalists themselves desire the extension of State-power and consequently for this purpose are willing to co-operate with reformists. But they want it for their own purposes, not for the workers'. Failure of Imperialists to secure national aims and fear of revolutionary masses give rise to Fascism. Growth of Fascism blocks the road to social reformism.

Rise of Revolutionary Socialism :—

(a) Challenge to the Imperialist States ; (b) Rallies workers to seize state power and abolish capitalist class monopoly ; (c) Seeks to unite all *sections* of workers' struggle into single *political struggle* against capitalist state. This seen in Third International.

Russia : Reformism fails. Revolution succeeds.

Italy : Reformism fails. Revolutionaries too weak to seize power. Fascism.

Germany : Reformism fails. Rise of Fascism. Contest between Fascism and Workers' Revolution.

Britain : Reformists coming into power.

Lesson 9.—ECONOMICS AND POLITICS.

What is a class ?

A social group with common economic interests and with political aims fundamentally opposed to those of other social groups.

How does a class seek to gain its ends ?

By use of political power.

What is political power?

Power over the State, so as to control the laws, the administration, education, property rights, etc.

How many classes are there?

Two : Capitalists and Workers.

Why is not the "middle class" properly a class?

Because it is made up of numerous sections with different aims (e.g. lawyers, shopkeepers, peasants). They have no positive and common political aim. At times of acute crisis they side either with the capitalists or with the workers.

How can the workers promote their aims?

By organising so as to seize political power. To do this a Workers' Party is necessary. The aim of the Workers' Party should be to organise the working-class political struggle.

Political Parties in Britain.

(1) *Conservatives*—Financiers and bondholders and established businesses, State officials—army and navy and upper Civil Service.

(2) *Liberals*—The progressive sections of industry, professional workers (lawyers, university professors, etc.).

(3) *Labour Party*—A party of the Trade Unions, representing the officials of the Trade Unions, led by the Fabians, petit-bourgeois elements, I.L.P., and including growing oppositional elements led by the Communists.

Aims of a real Workers' Party :—

(a) It must be *in touch* with the mass of the workers, so as to *lead* the workers in the political struggle ; (b) It must have a single aim, and must have strong central control and organisation, and its members must be *disciplined* ; (c) It must seek to convert every *sectional* struggle (industrial or parliamentary) into a *political struggle*.

"Revolution"—the climax of the workers' political struggle comes when the workers seize State power and proceed to set up a Workers' State, to dissolve capitalist monopoly by socialising important industries, and to create a new and efficient system of production run by the workers for the workers.

M.H.D.

A CORRECTION

By an unfortunate accident some lines were omitted from the last paragraph but one of Lesson 6, published last month.

After the words "all attempts of the workers at 'control' must be crushed," read :—

Hence Fascism, the distinctive features of which are (a) It is a military and openly anti-democratic movement, aimed at crushing the revolutionary workers' movement ; (b) It uses popular slogans specially designed [etc., etc., as printed].

NOTES BY THE WAY

for Students and Tutors

Britain's New Rival

FROM *The Treachery of France*, by C. J. C. Street (Allan & Co., 5s.)—a recent book expressing the British capitalists' fear of post-war France—we take the following:—"At the present moment, France has under her control the greatest part of the industrial forces of Europe. France has at her disposal to-day, including the Saar coalfields, a reserve of thirty-three milliards of tons of coal, twice as much as she had before the war. In reality, partly through political, partly through capitalistic influence, in Belgium, Czechoslovakia, and the Eastern portion of Silesia which has been assigned to Poland, the control of France extends to coal territories which make up four times as much as France's own coal reserves and mount up in the aggregate to some 226.2 milliards of tons, that is, one third of the total coal reserves of Europe. . . . Should the French industrialists succeed in attaining the objects with which the military invasion of the Ruhr was undertaken, France would find herself part in direct possession, partly in direct control, of over 450 milliards of tons, or three-fifths of the entire coal reserves of Europe, which amount to 759 milliards of tons. She would thus have control of two and a half times as much coal as England." The author also shows that French production of iron ore is one half the total for Europe and has a potential productive capacity three times as great as that of Great Britain. France, if she gains the Ruhr, will have an output of pig-iron on the pre-war figures of twenty-six million tons, three-fifths the entire capacity of Europe. These figures are worth inserting in the blank pages of the *Outline of Economic Geography* with a reference to Chap. 10.

"The New Egypt"

E. Redfern writes:—
This is the heading of an article in the *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, March

21st, 1924. Are we really to believe that a "New Egypt" has arisen? Can Egypt have its freedom from British Imperialism? Listen to this respectable organ of Free Trade Capital:

"There are, of course, very real British interests in Egypt which any British Government is bound to do its best to protect. They are all of them summed up in the safety of our communications with India, the Far East, and the Dominions through the Suez Canal."

Precisely! Students of Economic Geography at our classes have heard something like this before. Hold on still:—"For this purpose we have asked to maintain such a military force in Egypt as will be adequate to protect the Canal, and, provided this is not asked for, as Lord Curzon asked for it, in a form inconsistent with Egyptian independence, the terms of such an arrangement could in all probability be arranged."

Now for methods of persuasion, if necessary:—"There remains the question of the Sudan and of the control of the upper waters of the Nile. As we reconquered the Sudan for Egypt, and she could very likely not hold it against any serious revolt by her own strength, and as we have treaty rights with her on the subject, there is clearly room here for a friendly understanding, and it may probably be found that in the necessity of such an understanding with the Power which is in actual control of the Upper Waters may be found our strongest weapon."

Control of the Upper Waters, *i.e.*, of the Sudan, will be used as a mighty lever in bringing "nationalist" Egypt to its senses. Egypt is the Nile. Control of the Upper Waters enables those in control to wipe out Egypt if necessary. Truly, these modern methods of persuasion, put forward by supporters of the League of Nations, for the continuation of Capitalism, are instructive.

Engels

J. T. Deakin writes, in answer to A. Millar's inquiry last month:—

Landmarks of Scientific Socialism, translated by Austin Lewis, and published by Kerr's, is not a translation of that part of *Anti-Duhring*, published by Allen and Unwin under the title *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*. See page 236 of Kerr's which states: "The first two chapters of this Division,

which deal respectively with the historical and the theoretical sides of Socialism, are omitted. They have been already translated. The well-known pamphlet, *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*, contains both of them. The second has also been translated by R. C. K. Ensor and published in his *Modern Socialism*."

The note in *What to Read* (p. 35) on Engels, therefore, requires amending or qualifying somewhat.

The ENGINEERS' WAGE PROBLEM

THE ENGINEER'S WAGE PROBLEM

DEAR COMRADE,—One would like to agree with J. D. Lawrence when he advocates "guerilla warfare" as best suited for the engineers at the present time, partly because his argument arises from a careful survey of the present appalling position and partly because things are so bad in the industry that one is inclined to favour almost anything that will indicate an inclination to fight for better conditions.

But I think Lawrence is wrong—though I admit that it is by no means easy to suggest a way out of the present situation.

Engineering wage rates are about the worst in the country. Skilled men are receiving less than tram conductors were getting before the latter demanding their eight shillings and accepted six. This is not to suggest that tram conductors should get less than engineers—but when we consider the relative positions of these two sections of workers before the war, and consider them now, the plight of the engineers appears in startling contrast.

Lawrence suggests that the spread of payment-by-results has created a wide cleavage in the ranks of the engineers and has divided them roughly into high-rate pieceworkers and flat-rate time workers; and he argues that "the higher paid (are) too absorbed in themselves to feel concerned to take active steps to help their under-paid fellow-workers." He also argues that the "traditional belief

in a genuine identity of interests among engineers is nothing but a myth, and the sooner the under-paid among them realise it, the quicker they will succeed in raising their wages." He does well to think this as likely to be regarded as "an unpopular opinion." It will be!

The statement that any large number of engineers are getting good wages because of payment-by-result systems is a *statement* and nothing more. Can Lawrence give us some evidence? The evidence should come from more than one district.

But even if it were true, that piece-work men were not inclined to help the flat-rate men, how are the latter to remedy matters by moving on their own? If a shop contains 300 flat-rate men and 300 piece-workers, are the flat-rate men to come out and leave the piece-workers in? Alternatively, if shop A is piece-work and shop B is day work, is shop B to strike and let shop A go on merrily working overtime doing the work from shop B?

Lawrence's indignation at the present pauper status of the engineer has got the better of his judgment, and he has forgotten some of the facts.

It is not without significance that practically every important movement in the engineering industry has come from the employers—the lock-out has been more potent than the strike. 1852, 1897, 1922, all were lock-outs, and all resulted in smashing defeats for the men. The Engineering Employers' Federation is one of the **strongest** bodies in this country, and

it is probably the most ruthless. Its reply to the shop strike is always the same—return to work pending negotiations or face a national lock-out. It will not concede anything to a local movement unless trade is very good.

Now consider the industry as a whole. During the war new factories were built up and down the country; new machine tools were manufactured by the thousand, motor lorries were made by tens of thousands, and so on. The sales of munition plant, machines, tools, motor lorries, aeroplane engines, etc., since the war have run to millions of pounds. The continental demand has dropped to zero, and America has an engineering manufacturing plant vastly superior to what it was before the war. The net result of all these things is that the world does not want engineering products from England to-day. We may strike until we are black in the face, but that alone will not restore the engineer to his old proud position of the "aristocrat of labour."

More important still perhaps, is the fact that economic development tends inevitably to destroy British engineering. You cannot supply the world with the means for making engineering products and expect to go on selling them yourself.

Suppose for a moment that the engineers strike for more wages in the near future—as they are likely to. Will the press publish pictures of people walking to work, will Cabinet Ministers work overtime trying to effect a settlement? They will not. And why? Because when the engineers strike no one cares. If people cannot jump on the bus some fine morning, because the bus-men are on strike, people are very indignant; if engine-drivers go home and leave their engines in the sheds, the world knows about it, but if the engineers take their tools home they can keep them at home for three months and the world wags on unheeding. The products of the engineering industry are not made in half an hour and sold at once. If a cruiser is held up for three months it matters little, and if a turbine promised for May is not finished until August it is not a matter

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of great moment. In any case engineering contracts usually have a "strike clause" by which the employer is protected against any penalty for delay.

The only way the engineer can make his striking power effective is by allying himself with other workers who can strike in such a way that the world has to sit up and take notice. It is not by narrowing the area of the dispute down to the shop, but by extending it,

that success can be achieved. If the fitter and the turner can get support from the E.T.U. and from the transport workers, something might be done. If this is not attempted, then we are likely to see in the near future a national strike or lock-out of engineers lasting another three months, and the position at the end worse than at the beginning.

Yours fraternally,

W. McLAINE.

The REVIVAL of TRADES COUNCILS

DEAR COMRADE,—I have followed with considerable interest the discussion in *The PLEBS* on the revival of Trades Councils.

In 1913-15 I wrote consistently in the G.F.T.U. organ, *The Federationist*, urging the Trades Councils to widen their constitutions so as to admit all *bona fide* working-class organisations—Trade Union, political and co-operative—into affiliation. I then realised the growing tendency to transform the Councils into mere political agencies, *i.e.*, local Labour Parties, bodies for securing the return of working-class candidates to the municipal bodies and to Parliament. I felt then—and I feel more strongly now—that that was a *one-sided* policy. Electoral action is only one of the weapons in the workers' armoury.

Industrial strife in 1913 was as keen and as bitter as now. More so. Conditions then, as now, determined that the class struggle should find expression in industrial action. And because of that fact alone there was need to have in the localities bodies which would rally the whole of the organised workers behind those on strike, keep up the morale of the strikers, and secure such other support as was necessary.

Nor was that all. Our movement had enormously developed in other directions. The manner in which the Co-operatives aided the Dublin Transport strikers, when co-operative ships laden with co-operative merchandise were sent to their relief, showed the

possibilities of the co-operative movement as a factor in the class struggle. There was need definitely to attach the co-operatives—the essentially proletarian co-operatives—to the main body of the working-class movement and to induce them to play their part on the workers' side in the class war. And what bodies could be better fitted to do this than the Trades Councils?

Then there was another phase of the movement—a phase that the Plebs League and *The PLEBS* has done so much to foster—the class education of the workers. And in this matter, too, it was evident that the Trades Councils, being *general* and not *sectional* working-class bodies, and, therefore, able to view things from a general class standpoint, could do important work. There were other needs of the workers—sport and culture—catered for in this country by demoralising capitalist agencies, religious and otherwise (very much otherwise some of them). And in this regard, also, the Trades Councils stood out as the best mediums.

This meant almost a revolution in what are at present conceived to be the functions of the Trades Councils. It meant also the imposition of tasks on the Councils which their present financially starved condition renders impossible. Yet all this is in the regular line of the development of our movement, and means ought to be discovered whereby the Councils can express in the localities *every* phase of working-class activity and

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cater for every aspect of working-class life. They should be agitational bodies—the leading organs of the class struggle in the localities. They should be mobilising centres, around which all the workers in the localities should gather. Trades Councils should not think in terms of delegates but of members. It is a small Trades Council, indeed, to which less than two thousand workers are affiliated. And with two thousand workers, persistently rallied and enthused and educated by lectures, demonstrations and literature, it should be possible to accomplish almost anything in that locality—even to taking it over and running it.

Do not let us be hidebound by forms and traditions. The old form of Trades Council no more meets the requirements of to-day than does the present local Labour Party. As the Woolwich Trades Council resolution at the national conference stated—workers are Trade Unionists, members or potential members of co-operative organisations, as well as voters. They are producers and consumers, as well as citizens. And in these regards

they are becoming conscious, and are seeking more expression. "All things flow." All things change. Therefore let us shape the local central bodies of the working-class movement to satisfy modern needs.

Yours fraternally,
TOM QUELCH.

TO BIRMINGHAM COMRADES

With the object of forming a centre for the promotion of Independent Working-Class Education, the spread of Marxist literature, and the study of scientific Socialism and allied subjects by means of lectures, discussions, etc., a Club named after Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg has been established at 26, Digbeth, Birmingham.

In addition to the serious side it is the object of the promoters to organise socials, anniversary celebrations, concerts, rambles in the summer, dramatic readings, etc.

PLEBS readers in the district who may be interested are requested to communicate with Fred Silvester, 8, Evelyn Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham.

The NATIONAL COUNCIL of LABOUR COLLEGES

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

TRANSPORT AND GENERAL WORKERS' UNION. The Executive of this Union has instructions to prepare an Educational Scheme, and Transport Worker supporters of the N.C.L.C. by resolutions from the branches, are urging the Executive to arrange a Scheme with the N.C.L.C.

Summer Classes.—No doubt all colleges are taking steps to arrange for summer activities in the form of classes, week-end schools and day schools. Where it is not possible to run classes it is possible to run day schools. Our work must certainly not stop merely because the weather has changed!

Annual Meeting.—The Annual Meeting takes place in the County Hotel, Vicar Lane, Leeds, on Sat. and Sun., 3rd and 4th May. The Conference is to conclude with a demonstration which will be held on Sunday evening in the People's Palace, Leeds. Mr. Charleton, M.P., is to be in the Chair, the speakers being Mr. Coppock, General Secretary, N.F.B.T.O., Mr. Jagger, President N.U.D.A.W. and Mr. Hamilton, President N.C.L.C. The Leeds College is doing everything possible to make this a record gathering.

N.U.R.—It is understood that some N.U.R. branches are raising the question of an N.C.L.C. Evening Class Scheme and the matter will be before the A.G.M. of the Union. All N.U.R. I.W.C.E.ers will no doubt give their full support.

A.E.U.—The National Committee Meeting of this Union takes place in May when the nature of the A.E.U. Scheme will in all probability be definitely decided. Our A.E.U. supporters will we hope carry the day.

International Conference on Working-Class Education.—The second Conference is to meet in Oxford during the present summer. The date has not yet been fixed.

Correspondence Courses.—In addition

to the existing Correspondence Courses on English Grammar and Essay Writing, Industrial History and Economics, two new courses are now ready, one on Public Speaking and the other on Economic Geography. Each course consists of 12 lessons, the fee being 21s. per course or 1s. to join and 2s. for the correction of each Essay.

DIRECTORY—ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS.

- Div. 7. *Derby* Labour College, Sec.:
Mrs. Crispin, 149, Cambridge Street, Derby.
Div. 6. *Coventry* Labour College, Sec.:
Mr. W. L. Halliwell, 213, Corporation Cottages, Holbrook Lane, Coventry.

WHAT THE DIVISIONS ARE DOING.

Division 1.—London Divisional Council have arranged for an Essay Competition. At East Ham class five N.U.D.A.W. students wrote two essays a week for eleven weeks making 110 essays, while in the Canning Town class three N.U.D.A.W. students wrote sixty-six essays. J. T. Walton Newbold has been giving a series of three lectures on the "History of London" with the local M.P.s in the chair.

Division 2.—The Secretary of the Weymouth Labour College is Miss, not Mr., Francombe. Strike meetings of the A.S.L.E. & F. have been addressed and the Divisional Organiser desires to express thanks to those who have been assisting him in the work of tutoring during the past few months. Secretary Prickett is keeping things moving in the Oxford area.

Division 3.—New classes are being arranged for the summer and it is hoped shortly to arrange facilities in Clacton-on-Sea. Day schools are being held at Yarmouth, Luton and Grays with Mr. P. C. Hoffmann, M.P. in chair at latter and Dr. Eden Paul as special lecturer. Deputations to the Eastern District Council of the N.U.R. and

Essex Council of the N.U.R. are being arranged.

Division 4.—A considerable number of successful day schools have been held with J. F. Horrabin, R. P. Dutt, Dan Griffiths and R. Neft as lecturers. It is satisfactory to note that there is an increased attendance of A.U.B.T.W. members. New affiliations are still coming in.

Division 5.—Organiser F. Phippen is arranging a series of visits to A.U.B.T.W. and N.U.D.A.W. branches in the less accessible parts of his Division.

Division 6.—Under the auspices of the Coventry branch of the N.U.D.A.W. a public meeting was held with W. E. Halliwell and T. D. Smith as speakers and Mr. A. A. Purcell, M.P., President of the T.U.C. as Chairman. In the W.E.A. stronghold of Leicester the Leicester T.C. has decided to affiliate to the N.C.L.C. in the locality. Coventry T.C. is also affiliated and recently held a Conference in support of I.W.C.E. for the purpose of forming a local college.

Division 7.—Leeds is holding a Conference in the beginning of May. A Conference has been arranged in Doncaster for the purpose of extending our activities in that area where it should be possible to develop a strong Labour College. Mr. W. W. Craik and Mr. W. Paling, M.P., are the speakers.

Division 8.—Through a typographical error in last month's PLEBS, it was stated that "N.E." Lancs. had appointed E. Redfern as Organising Lecturer and had about 100 N.U.D.A.W. students. The sentence should have read "S.E." Lancs. The Carters' and Motormen's Union (10,000 members), are likely to arrange to come home with the Liverpool District L.C. Blackburn Trades and Labour Council has affiliated to the local Labour College along with a number of other working-class organisations.

A Week-end School is to be held at Windle Labour Club, St. Helens, on May 24th and 25th. On the Saturday, J. F. Horrabin will deliver two lectures on "Geography and the Class Struggle." On Sunday afternoon, T. Ashcroft will lecture on "The Ruhr & Reparation"; and in the evening, J. F. Horrabin will give a dramatic reading of Toller's play, *The Machine Wreckers*.

Division 9.—W. Coxon of the N.E. Labour College is trying to get the same rights of broadcasting propaganda through the B.B.C. as are given to a body called the *Employers and Employees Association*. An Easter Week-end School was held in Newcastle with Messrs. Lawther, Newbold, Edwards, Spoons, Stewart and Basey as lecturers on an exceedingly interesting list of subjects. Cumberland is getting on its feet and R. Holder has been active in Carlisle.

Division 10.—The Scottish T.U.C. which this year affiliated on a basis of £5 5s. per annum, has decided to increase its support to £50 per annum in return for increased representation on the National Committee. Glasgow L.C. is running a tutors' class during the summer and is hoping to arrange a week-end school at Rothesay. Aberdeen L.C. is opening up at Inverurie. A Conference is to be held in Peterhead (*outside* the prison!). Edinburgh L.C. is arranging a summer session as usual. The Staff Tutor, J. P. M. Millar, has resigned as it is no longer possible to combine local tutoring and organising with the steadily growing secretarial work of the N.C.L.C. This year has been Edinburgh's record year, the amount of affiliation fees received being over £300—an increase of one third.

Division 11.—The first N.C.L.C. Class in Belfast has been a success. Among the students were two Building Trade Workers and fourteen N.U.D.A.W. members.

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WE have again to ask all those comrades who have booked places for the above to send along the deposit of 10s. if they have not already done so. Time is getting short now, and we are anxious to have all our arrangements well in hand.

As stated last month, the week's programme will be as follows:—

Sunday. Morning and evening lectures.

Monday (June 9th, Whit Monday).—The Plebs Annual Meet. Evening, performance of two one-act plays and musical programme.

It is hoped that comrades who cannot get for the whole week will be able to take advantage of Whit-suntide excursion facilities to Scarbro', and be present at any rate for this day. Cloughton is some six or seven miles from Scarbro'—frequent train and bus service. Teas will be provided at the Guest House.

Tues., Wed., Thurs., and Friday.—Morning and evening lectures (full programme in next month's PLEBS).

The lecturers will include Wm. Paul, Ellen Wilkinson, W. Paling, M.P., Mark Starr, R. W. Postgate, Arthur Woodburn, Jas. Johnstone, M. H. Dobb, and J. F. Horrabin; and we are also hoping to add comrade M. Philips Price's name to the list.

Afternoons throughout the week will be free for walking excursions—moors and cliffs—tennis, bathing, etc.

Terms: £3 3s. inclusive for the week. *A few places are still open, but intending visitors should book places at once.*

PLEBS SUMMER SCHOOL,
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AUG. 9—16th.

Bookings are coming in well for this second school, full details of which will be announced after the Cober Hill School is over.

Meantime, note the date, and the fee—56s. per week, or 45s. 6d. for accommodation in tents in the grounds.

All particulars of both Schools from PLEBS Office, 162a, Buckingham Palace Road, London, S.W.1.

THE PLEBS LEAGUE

Suggested New Constitution

WE reprint this month the newly-drafted Constitution of the League, to be discussed at the Annual Meet (Cober Hill, Cloughton, Scarbro'—Whit-Monday, June 9th), in order that League members may have ample time to consider it, and to forward amendments or criticisms:—

CONSTITUTION

The general aim of the Plebs League is:—To develop and increase the class-consciousness of the workers, by propaganda and education, in order

to aid them to destroy wage-slavery and to win power.

The means it uses for this end are:—

(1) The support of the National Council of Labour Colleges and the classes run under its auspices.

(2) The maintenance of the class-conscious character of the teaching in the present organs and institutions of Independent Working-Class Education.

(3) The publication of a Magazine and, in concert with the N.C.L.C., of textbooks, syllabuses and other publications.

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(4) The holding of summer schools, teachers' conferences, etc.

(5) Propaganda among workers' organisations for the adoption of new schemes of I.W.C.E. or the extension of existing schemes.

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

**THE LABOUR COLLEGE
(LONDON)
STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION**

NEXT month the re-union will take place. I have received many suggestions as to what form it should take, but will wait for further advice before circulating the members.

One suggestion is a discussion on the lines of last month's notes. No subject can be more profitably discussed than the possibility of hammering out an educational policy or "Next Step" for "Past Students." Are we to go on *developing* our educational policy or are we to hand on what we have had and nothing more?

It is surprising how few of the Trade Union theorists are men who have had intimate and personal knowledge of the Trade Union machinery. Here is a field of thought which no one might more fittingly explore than the man who has had both experience and training to aid him in his work. There are obstacles in the way of those who ought to undertake the work. Either they are left out in the cold through unemployment or expected to carry on in the best way they can without the aid of the Trade Union organisation. All this needs discussing.

At our last Social we had a very international representation. Comrades from "The People's College" (Germany), "Brookwood College" (America), and comrades from Russia, Australia, Iceland and Italy.

Regarding the inquiry, the Committee have met and I am sure that their deliberations will end in acceding to our request, *i.e.*, students' representation on the Board of Governors. This will tend to do away with the anomalies which arise from time to time in the existing state of affairs.

A. GLYN EVANS (Sec.).

JAMES CONNOLLY

James Connolly. By Desmond Ryan (Labour Publishing Company. Paper 2s. 6d., cloth 5s.).

DESMOND RYAN has made a brave effort and it is more his misfortune than his fault if his book fails to be the ideal life of James Connolly, for which many would gladly spend twice the price of this present volume. It is not a bad book by any means. Great care has been taken with it and the numerous and apposite quotations from Connolly's various writings help to maintain its interest as well as its value. Moreover Ryan's sympathy with the subject is shown on every page and in several places his first hand acquaintance with the facts and personalities incidental to his narrative breaks through even in spite of himself. The loving description, for instance, of Con Colbert (executed as one of the leaders of Easter Week), with its vivid little memories of St. Endor's school, could only have come from direct experience.

The book, too, contains many details (probably all the most diligent search could recover of the facts of Connolly's life,) and deals more or less conclusively with every aspect of his propaganda and policy. Certainly for want of any better biography of James Connolly this one should be read, and no better one has yet been written.

Yet for all that one puts the book down unsatisfied. It is not, I repeat, a bad book—either in point of style or arrangement; and the facts (or most of them) are all there. Yet after reading it through a second time to find what was wrong with it, I am forced to the conclusion that it is not a *good* life of James Connolly for the plain reason that the author could not without working a miracle prevent himself from sub-consciously spoiling his own work.

The book is dedicated "to all who fell in the Irish Civil War, June, 1922—April, 1923"; and this is the clue to the whole mischief. If Desmond Ryan had sat down in 1916 and written, hot after Easter Week, a description of James Connolly as he had known him and what he stood for, and how he

fought his great fight for Ireland, the book might have been a good deal less of a magazine of biographical information, but it would have been a much more lifelike (and therefore useful) book about the man Connolly. If it had been compiled at odd moments and finished in the rough amid the thrills and turmoils of the battle against the Black and Tans it would have contained all that it does and much more of the living soul.

But—it wasn't. And only those who had thrilled to see the flag of the Irish Republic flying in battle against the historic foe; who, schooled in the faith of Patrick Pearse, had seen his cause grow in the face of stupendous odds until an Irish Republican Army could extort a truce and a treaty from the British Empire freshly victorious over its continental foe—only those could or can understand all the terror and the tragedy and numbing disillusionment of the dark days indicated in that dedication. He meant to write a life of James Connolly and a description of his works, but the very subject forced him to think of Cathal Brugha, scarred all over with the wounds received in 1916, falling riddled again and fatally before the guns of the very men he had led in Easter Week—of Liam Mellows dead before an Irish execution squad, of Liam Lynch dead on the hill-side, and De Valera, whom no English prison could hold, a prisoner in the hands of an army commanded by one of the few who, with him, rose in Easter Week.

Desmond Ryan is too close to the events and the personalities of the drama to disentangle the objective facts from his subjective valuations. Try as he will he cannot do the impossible. He cannot pretend to be impartial, and reverence for the dead prevents him being candid. The result is that he slurs over the very things upon which we have the most need for enlightenment. Moreover he is to his misfortune very little grounded in Marxism and only in Marxism can be found the real explanation of James Connolly.

The great problem which every

biographer of Connolly must unriddle lies in the paradox that the revolutionary internationalist was the one nationalist leader who spurred on all the others to make a national rising inevitable and so quicken into life the greatest nationalist revival that modern Ireland has known.

The answer is simple provided your Marxism is good enough. The Russian Revolution—less than twelve months after Easter Week—is, if you have the clue, Connolly's vindication. Patrick Pearse held with mystical fervour to the faith that a blood-offering—an atoning sacrifice—was needed to save the soul of Ireland. Connolly had no such illusion. But he did know as Lenin knew that there are worse things

than death. "If there is a 25 per cent. chance of success for a proletarian Revolution, Lenin will take it," said one of his comrades. And James Connolly's mind and temper was much nearer to that of Lenin's than many seem to realise. It is not impossible that the desperate venture of assaulting the British Empire with the force and arms of 700 men all told may have set in train the series of consequences that stand expressed to-day in the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics.

And when at long last the Workers' Republic of Ireland is included in that Union James Connolly will be valued, and his Blood Atonement appraised, each at their proper worth.

THOS. A. JACKSON.

REVIEWS

CASTOR OIL AND DOPE

Mussolini as revealed in his Political Speeches. Selected, etc., by Quaranta di San Severino. (Dent and Sons, 7s. 6d.)

The Fascist Movement in Italian Life. By Pietro Gorgolini. Translated by M. D. Petre. (Fisher Unwin, 10s.)

Fascism is reaction masquerading in a guise of impartiality in the class-war. Its deeds are unmistakably black: the calculated destruction by violence of the labour, socialist and co-operative movements; the establishment of tame or reactionary "labour" organisations to regiment the workers in the interests of the Fascist party and the boss; the fostering of capitalist interests by reduced taxation on "enterprise" and the cession of nationally owned concerns to private profiteers; the development of "firm" central government at home side by side with a forward policy of imperialism in foreign affairs—these are the facts of Fascist rule. In Mussolini's speeches, as in the various Fascist *apologiae* recently published in this country, we see the pretty fairy stories invented to cover up and "explain" these unpleasant things. All is done, runs the argument, not for a class, but for the "nation"; violence was a necessary temporary expedient to smash

the enemies of Italian greatness and to secure a new *risorgimento*. In other words, the bourgeoisie were terrified at the economic and political chaos created by the war, by the weakness of Italian central government, by Italy's isolated position in the scramble for oil, coal and iron, and by the threat of a proletarian revolution foreshadowed in the occupation of the factories.

From their panic they were saved by Mussolini and his terrorists. His speeches reveal him as a commonplace rhetorician of limited intellectual power. Mussolini used to give the workers castor oil; he now offers them dope, but it is, fortunately, of a low grade. His claim to fame rests not on the ideology of Fascism (it has none!) but on his practical skill in organising the destruction of the working-class movement in Italy and the temporary re-establishment of capitalism in a country where it seemed doomed to very early extinction.

Dr. Gorgolini's book was apparently written before the Fascists secured power, but it is a valuable piece of work, for, though strongly pro-Fascist, it naively gives away the whole show. A large amount of space is devoted to attacks on Communism; Fascism is represented as the saviour of Italy from "Leninism" on the one hand and the criminal weakness of the

Government on the other. Dr. Gorgolini exhibits the imperialist (he prefers to call it "expansionist") nature of the Fascist movement, and an amusing feud takes place between the author and the translator. Both resent imputations of imperialism against their respective countries. Gorgolini points an accusing finger at England in respect of Egypt, Ireland, Canada (!) and so on; the translator regrets "the omission of any mention of Armenia or of Tripoli." The translator has the last word and seeks to achieve his ends by mutilating his text under pretence of summarising certain references to England on p. 173.

In telling the story of the rise of Fascism (a triumph of political organisation) no mention is made of the large funds that must have been necessary to make it possible. But, on the principle of *cui bono*? it is clear that the financial support came from those sections of the bourgeoisie that need supplies of iron and coal from abroad for their industrial operations—the class that is necessarily imperialistic and, in terms of English politics, National-Liberal in outlook.

L. W.

BRITISH IMPERIALISM AT WORK

The Truth about Mesopotamia, Palestine and Syria. By J. de V. Loder. (Allen & Unwin, 7s. 6d.).

In this instructive volume we are given, if not the whole truth and nothing but the truth, at least a large amount of information that will be new even to many close students of Imperialism.

Speaking from considerable personal knowledge of the course of events, the author states his view of the development of the Middle Eastern situation since 1914 with refreshing frankness. Arab Nationalism is shewn to be less an Arab renaissance of race, religion and tradition, than a response to the deliberate policy of "Ottomanisation" initiated by the Young Turks after the revolution of 1908; and this antagonism to the Turks made them the obvious instrument to which the Allies turned in order to counteract Turco-German attempts to incite the Moslem world to "holy war."

The approach to the Arabs was

complicated by the divergent claims of the "Big Three" Allies and the Arab demand for self-determination. But the publication by the Soviet Government of the Secret Treaties at the end of 1917 did not deter the English and French from giving an assurance of "impartial and equal justice" to the Arabs—a Declaration (November 7th, 1918) interpreted very differently by the two sides, and therefore involving later dissensions. The victory of the Allies permitted the open expression of interests and claims—hitherto all the agreements and promises had been qualified by the uncertainty of the issue. But now

"everyone thought the time had come when they [sic] would get what they wanted—the French their cultural and economic heritage in Syria, the British their dream of a Pax Britannica carried forward on a surging wave of Manchester goods, the Moslem Arabs their independence according as they conceived it in their different stages of mental development, the Jews their resurrection as a nation, the Oriental Christians the right to get their own back on the Moslems. (p. 61.)"

In this frame of mind, they turned to the deliberations of Paris. The Arabs demanded an Arab Confederation, opposed by French interests. From this point, the French policy in Syria is set forth in some detail, as well as that of Britain in Mesopotamia. The former ended in the inevitable ultimatum, the French military occupation of Damascus, and the annihilation of the Arab State, the northern part being taken over by the French, while the southern part passed under British administration as Transjordan.

Meanwhile, in Mesopotamia, the British mandate met with no enthusiasm from the Arabs, who regarded it as a negation of war-time pledges. The result was a general rising, based on the concrete grievances of the masses arising "partly out of the unavoidable consequences of the war and partly out of resentment at the determined methods adopted to collect revenue."

The succeeding months kept the British busy, but "from a military point of view, order may be said to have been restored by the end of 1920."

A re-organisation took place along the familiar lines—the more it changed the more it remained the same thing. Arab officials were appointed, assisted by British advisers; and Feisul, who had played a prominent pro-British part from 1914 and now gave assurances that he would accept British assistance was elected King of Iraq, the British not having used any direct pressure, but merely having “eliminated,” by deportation, etc., the rival candidates. This election of Feisul further embittered Anglo-French relations, while it did nothing to remove the causes of Arab discontent, and the Arabs were confirmed in their experience that the mandatory system is “synonymous with foreign domination.”

Arab distrust of the British Government has been further increased by its attitude to the Zionist movement, which the Arabs, not without justification, regard with deep suspicion. “Certain Zionist pronouncements have given them reasonable grounds for apprehension.”

The book concludes with a severe criticism of the mandatory system as it works out in practice; and it contains a number of useful historical appendices.

T. A.

A PAMPHLET TO BUY

Socialism as a Science. By M. Philips
Price (from Labour Agent, Ruskin Hall, Gloucester. 3d. post-paid).

This 32-page pamphlet is a reprint of a lecture given by Comrade Philips Price to the Gloucester Labour College a few months ago. It is a splendid “popular” introduction to the Marxian view of history, and as such should be on sale on every Labour College literature stall and find a place on every Pleb’s bookshelf. We of The PLEBS Editorial Committee are more than a little proud—remembering who the lecturer is—that so much of it is an exposition, and an underlining, of our *Outline of Economic Geography*. We are communicating with the publishers in the hope of securing a large enough edition of this pamphlet to meet the demand which ought to be forthcoming. Meanwhile, wise men will secure a copy without delay.

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THE PURPOSE OF HISTORY AND EDUCATION

History and its Place in Education.

By Prof. J. J. Findlay. (University of London Press, 3s. 6d.)

The Children of England. By Prof. J. J. Findlay. (Methuen, 7s. 6d.)

Prof. Findlay does not agree with Shaw’s aphorism, “The only thing that history teaches is that it cannot teach us.” For he agrees with Plebeians that history for the adult student “not only satisfies his impulses of curiosity, but he realises the possibilities of change in a future which is one with the past.” The Professor realises that even in the unavoidable selection of facts a bias comes into play. He cites Hume, Macaulay and Freeman as examples of historians whose views governed their judgments. If he had known more of the workers’ point of view he might have dealt with history not as “a sense of the social unit,” but as the story of class-struggle. But perhaps that would be asking too much of the Labour candidate for the combined universities.

Prof. Findlay is fully alive to the fact that history is used to inculcate

nationalism, and in his epilogue advocates the teaching of world-history as an antidote. In his view the aim of education is the cultivation of the "civic virtues"; but he is none the less convinced that there is a distinction between "education" and "propaganda." However, since even Mr. R. H. Tawney has come to believe that there is a Labour view of history as well as a Labour view on current problems there is yet hope for Prof. Findlay.

The second book, *The Children of England*, though intended for the general reader rather than for the student, contains an interesting historical sketch which illustrates how the various forms of education have served the varying social needs of different periods—(and, one would add, of different classes, but Prof. Findlay might call this "propaganda.")

M. S.

STOP KIDDING, JAMES!
Unity in Industry. By James Kidd (Murray, 3s. 6d.).

According to Mr. Kidd the workers are being treated very badly. They are exploited by Labour Leaders, Socialists, Communists, Syndicalists, Agitators, Demagogues, etc., etc., while all the time the way out of all their troubles can be provided by a simple amendment of the law relating to Trade Unions.

In this little book with a big price he works out his theory as follows: In pre-industrial times the moral sanction of capital—the fact that it was the result of thrift, restraint and discipline—was evident to the worker because he worked by the side of the small master and saw all his virtues. With the coming of mass production all this changed because the worker and the employer became separated—though the moral sanction for capital still remained. The modern industrial system has given us some evils but against these must be set high wages and cheap goods.

First of all says he, "we must reveal the truth that the alleged division of capital and labour is a political myth." Having done that we must apply the real remedies. The Guild idea is no good; profit sharing is no good; mines agreements are no good; industrial councils are "only a makeshift."

His own solution is to follow Disraeli

and place the Trade Unions in their proper position in relation to industry by letting them invest their funds in capitalist enterprises and so make the workers real partners in industry. This could be done by amending the law relating to Trade Unions. The workers would be given places on the Boards of Directors according to how much they subscribed.

Mr. Kidd thinks if this were done a new spirit would permeate industry, prosperity would abound in the land, and we should all live happily ever after. It is quite obvious that James does not know what he is talking about. In this morning's papers Vickers, Ltd., give notice that they are to issue some new Debenture Stock which is greater in value than all the combined funds of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, so that if the A.E.U. bought up all the issue with all its funds and if Debenture holders had seats on the Board of Vickers it would mean that the biggest engineering union would have about one seat on *One Board!* W.

BEER, INGLORIOUS BEER
Social Struggles in the Middle Ages.
By M. Beer. (Parsons, 6s.)

A reviewer, in writing a notice of Shaw's *Heartbreak House and Other Plays*, courteously remarked that he would refrain from criticising when an old warrior of the movement ventured into print "not fully armed." Most of us felt the same inclination to be gentle when the author of the *History of British Socialism* produced his first volume of *Social Struggles*. But now that he is going on, on precisely the same lines, is such reticence still justified? What are we to do with old warriors of the movement who persist in venturing abroad, not merely insufficiently armed, but almost entirely unclothed?

Let us keep the task of criticism brief. The faults in the book are that it is grossly over-priced—6s. for 200 pages in the largest type,—that it makes no attempt, no attempt whatever, however bad, to tell the history of the period, that it consists of vague and unrelated comments on medieval theorists without explaining their importance or relevance to their period, that it—still, that will do.

P.

THE N.C.L.C.

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

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

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