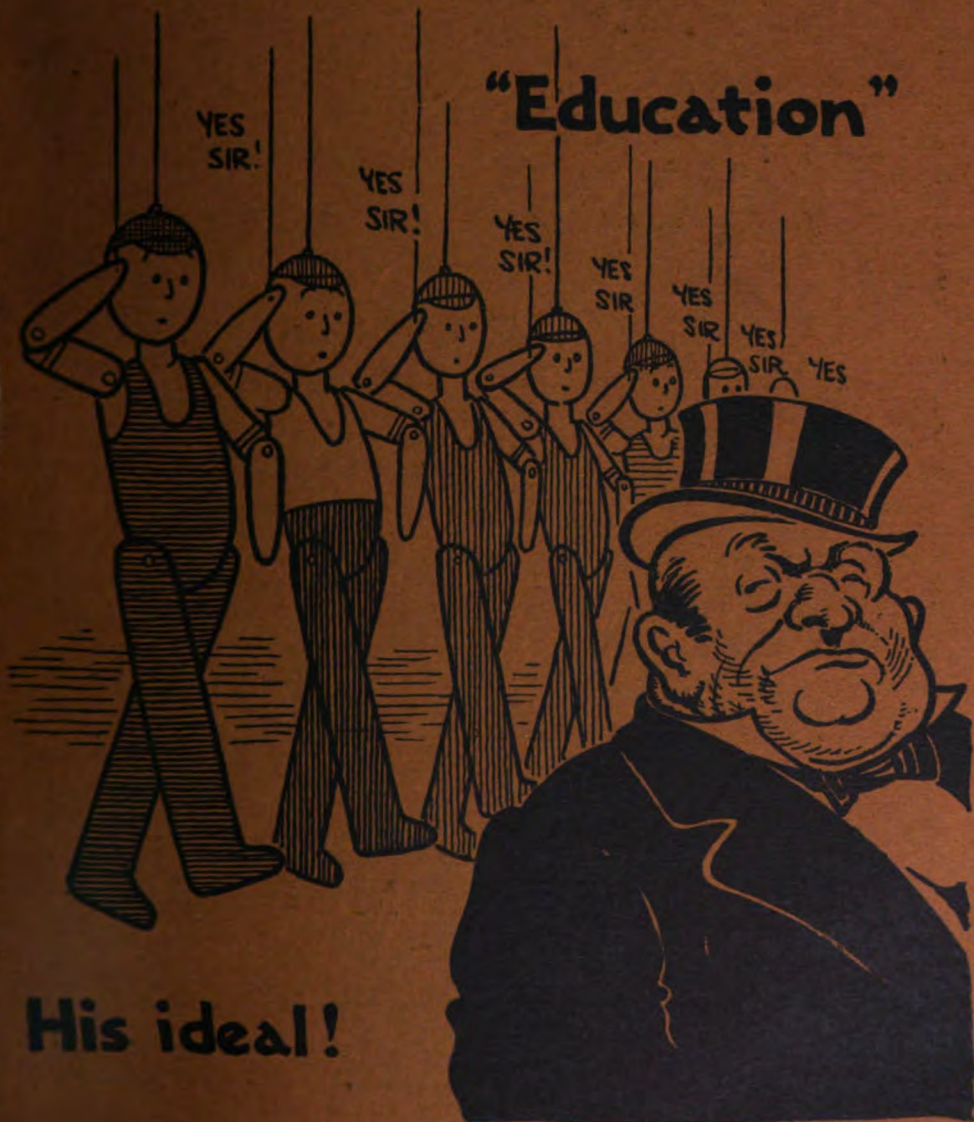


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THE PLEBS

Vol. XVII

February, 1925

No. 2

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The PLEB POINT of VIEW

WORKERS' Education has been receiving quite a lot of attention in the columns of the *Daily Herald* during the past month. The discussion started with the publication, on New Year's Day, of the Manifesto issued on behalf of the W.E.A. and signed by thirty-two trade union leaders. The terms of the Manifesto suggested that the W.E.A. was celebrating the advent of 1925 by turning over a new leaf. It was certainly news to most of us to learn that its dearest aim was to provide an education which would assist Trade Unionism to realise its object — "control of industry by the workers in the interests of the workers"; and Mr. George Hicks, in his letter printed a day or two later, put the question which a good many people must have been pondering over when he asked whether the Board of Education, the Universities, and the Local Education Authorities of the Capitalist

▲

State of Great Britain provide some three-fifths of the cost of W.E.A. education for any such purpose.

Apparently there is some disagreement within the W.E.A. itself as to what exactly the Association does stand for. The Manifesto was obviously designed to create the impression among trade unionist readers of the *Herald* that the W.E.A. existed to provide the same kind of "education towards class-consciousness" as that for which The PLEBS and the National Council of Labour Colleges have always stood. But when, the day after the Manifesto's publication, the *Morning Post* made an onslaught on the W.E.A. as "an instrument of propaganda rather than of education," the Master of Balliol (Mr. A. D. Lindsay) hastened to reply that the W.E.A. "has from the first refused to commit itself to the teaching of any set of doctrines" and aims only at "a University standard of scholarship and *impartiality*." There would appear to be room for a simple, unambiguous, official statement of the W.E.A. position; one which will not need to be "modified" according as the audience consists of the working-class readers of the *Herald* or the ruling-class readers of the *Morning Post*. We are casting no sort of doubt on the sincerity of the T.U. leaders who signed the W.E.A. Manifesto. They, we take it, really do believe that the W.E.A. stands for the aims therein outlined. What we are asking for is a categorical statement, signed by the W.E.A. leaders themselves, which will make their position clear.

Such a statement is all the more desirable at the present time since the T.U.C. Education Advisory Committee, on which both the W.E.A. and the N.C.L.C. are represented, is still seeking to carry out its terms of reference:—*Wanted—A* evolve a policy with regard to educational work
Plain Statement for the T.U. Movement, through the T.U. Congress; and to endeavour to co-ordinate such activities as are already in existence." "Co-ordination" can, of course, only come by consent of the organisations carrying on these activities; and that consent, we may be sure, will not be forthcoming from the N.C.L.C. unless its representatives are convinced that it will result in strengthening real working-class education—"education towards class-consciousness." Co-operation with a body which stood, unreservedly and unequivocally, for the aims expressed in the W.E.A. Manifesto should not be difficult. Does, or does not, the W.E.A. stand for these aims? And will it stand by them—whatever the results on the grants from the Board of Education, the Universities, or the Local Education Authorities, which make up the larger part of its income at present? That is the "acid test."

We in the Labour Colleges movement, in the course of our long controversy with the W.E.A., have consistently attacked, not any particular group of persons, but certain principles—or the lack of them. We are ready to work with all our fellow Trade Unionists to further the cause of an education explicitly designed to bring nearer “the control of industry by the workers in the interests of the workers”; i.e., the ending of Capitalism. Hitherto, the W.E.A. has opposed any such aim. Does it, or does it not, now accept it? A plain answer must precede any sort of co-operation on our part.

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald must have felt entirely at home in the spiritual atmosphere of the Working Men’s College, Camden Town, when he attended the annual supper of *Mr. MacDonald* the Old Students’ Club as a guest of honour on *Education* on December 20th, along with Lord Eustace Percy, the Tory President of the Board of Education. That institution admirably reflects the lofty, if woolly, principles of mid-Victorian Liberalism. In the course of his oration on this occasion, Mr. MacDonald set himself to answer the question “What is the educated man?” His definition suggested that he stands for the same great principle of Continuity in the sphere of Education as he so eloquently advocates in regard to Capitalist Imperialism. “The most educated man I know,” he said, “is a man who finds it difficult to sign his own name. That man,” he went on in a purple patch reminiscent of that other eminent lover of mountains, Mr. Lloyd George, “could be met on the hill-side if one wandered, as I sometimes do, in a country of rich historical memories, singing the old folk-songs that were sung by men who had to sing because if they did not sing their hearts would burst.” One can, of course, understand a politician’s preference for rank-and-filers who find it possible to ease their heartache by retiring to a lonely place and singing folk-songs, rather than by standing up in the market-place and uttering crude things about the urgent need for a change in the social order.

“I have sat by him,” Mr. MacDonald continued, “and he has talked to me about the sheep and the dogs, and has quoted Burns . . .” Well, there will hardly need to be any startlingly revolutionary changes in Education if Mr. MacDonald’s friend is to be regarded as our ideal. “Continuity” of the old village-school methods, *plus* the same old economic exploitation, will presumably go on producing men who find a difficulty in signing their names, talk only about their trade, and sing the songs their great-grandfathers sang. But, seriously, what sort of an ideal is this for the first Labour Prime Minister, a professed Socialist, to be upholding?

There was not a word in the whole of Mr. MacDonald's address (at any rate as reported) about the world as it is, or about the need for an education which would help men to better it. He did indeed refer to "institutions started for the purpose of educating working men to be good propagandists." "That is not education," exclaimed the friend of shepherds. "The man who goes through those colleges and comes out and quotes the high-falutin' has not begun to touch the hem of the garment of education. Education is bemeaned, made small, parched by being presented to the minds of young men in that form." One may be permitted to remark in passing that the man who rhapsodises in public about sitting on the hillside and singing "songs of love, songs of natural beauty, songs of heroism and romance," ought really to avoid mentioning the high-falutin'. But what in the name of commonsense does all this woolly stuff really amount to? Mr. MacDonald actually said before he sat down that "Education was not knowledge; education was being, and concerned *doing*." Doing what?—singing folk-songs, or helping one's fellows to work to end injustice and exploitation? And how is Education "bemeaned, made small, parched" by being devoted to the latter aim instead of the former?

No wonder the Labour ex-Premier and the Tory Minister of Education found themselves in such complete agreement! One supposes that Mr. MacDonald applauded with the rest when Lord Eustace Percy declared that "knowledge was power, but only on condition that it was not sought for the sake of *getting power*." More Continuity!

The latest issue of the *International Trade Union Review*, official organ of the Amsterdam International, contains an article by J. W. Brown on the International Conference on Workers' Education held at Oxford in August last. It will be remembered that the liveliest discussion at the Conference—in fact, the only one which waxed at all warm—took place on the proposal by the British N.C.L.C. delegates that the aims of the Educational International should categorically define workers' education as education "based on the fact of the class-struggle." The N.C.L.C.'s resolution was not carried, the majority of the delegates, in Mr. Brown's words, feeling "that more information is required about the divergent organisations before committing the projected International to any one specific point of view to the exclusion of another." In brief, class-struggle turned down.

Now in the opening article of the same issue of the *Review*,

J. Oudegeest discusses "The Hull Trades Union Congress"; and he commences by congratulating the British Union movement on the fact, "observable by all who have followed its history during the last few years," that it is at last coming into line with Continental Trade Unionism by accepting "the principle of class conflict." The T.U. movements of continental countries, says Mr. Oudegeest, grew up "*in and through* the class conflict," and accepted the principle, "which was both generally recognised and openly proclaimed, that the ultimate aim of the Movement was . . . the abolition of the Capitalist System." And he rejoices that in Great Britain these same principles are "slowly coming to be recognised," since this "opens up possibilities of closer co-operation between all the organisations."

Quaint, isn't it?—the N.C.L.C. severely lectured for suggesting that workers' education should be based on the fact of the class-struggle, while the British T.U. movement as a whole is congratulated for at last coming to recognise, and to take its stand upon, that same fact!

P.S. WE printed 8000 (eight thousand) of our January issue. By the 12th of the month we were SOLD OUT. Our heartiest thanks are due to all the comrades who assisted in the achievement of this splendid result. Will they do their darnedest to help us keep our circulation up to that figure during 1925—or even surpass it?

We are considering the publication of other Special Numbers dealing primarily with some particular subject, and should be glad to receive suggestions from our readers.

J. F. H.

CAPITALISM TO-DAY

I.—DOES IT STAND FOR COMPETITION?

THE tariffs foreshadowed by the Tory Premier will but assist to complete the remarkable drive towards the trustification of British industry. If conceit did not blind the funny little people who repeatedly sneer at Marx as being as out of date as Moses, they would see how the facts of everyday life confirm the Marxian forecasts and condemn their own silliness.

Every housewife knows that cotton and J. P. Coats & Co. are synonymous terms. A witness before the Government Inquiry said that this concern with a capital of £10,000,000 controlled no less than 95 per cent. of the British output of domestic cotton. If

one thinks of motors (*thinks not owns*, notice), the gigantic works of Ford and the growing firm of Morris come readily to mind. The recent groupings of the British railway companies have left only the G.W.R., the L.N.E.R., L.M. & S.R. and the Southern as the main giants, and these have developed inter-working arrangements. 70 per cent. of the British output of soap is produced by Lever Bros. whose paid-up capital is over £51,500,000 and whose associated companies number 160. The Dunlop Rubber Co., before it was recently reorganised, had a capital of £20,000,000 and the British American Tobacco Co. (the selling agency of the Imperial Tobacco Co. and other concerns), with a control over 80 per cent. of the world's output, made in the year ending September 30th, 1924, a profit of nearly £5,000,000 free of income tax.

The story is the same in milk and meat and other foodstuffs. The United Dairies controls one-third of London's supply and pays a regular 12½ per cent. dividend. The vested interests working as the Union Cold Storage handle 70 per cent. of the British meat supplies in their 2400 shops, and the recent soaring of their share prices indicates the very good business being done. The capital of Crosse & Blackwell was increased in the post-war boom to nearly £7,500,000 and still remains, despite a "writing off," at a high figure. Maypole and the Home and Colonial, who united in July last, have a joint capital of £8,000,000, while their fellow-distributor, Lipton's, has £1,250,000. In biscuit-making Huntley & Palmer and Peak, Frean & Co. made an alliance in 1921. As far back as 1920 a Fruit Combine of £1,250,000 capital was planned.

Woolworths and Boots Pure Drug Co. (the latter with over £1,500,000 of capital), illustrate the penetration of American control in addition to making their names household words. When Joynson Hicks has tired of attacking bricklayers he may turn his attention to the Cement Trust, which has £13,000,000 of capital and controls over 90 per cent. of the supply of that commodity; or, should he need to bombard Clydebank tenants out of Lord Weir's steel houses, then he will seek the help of the Nobel Trust which includes some 29 firms with £17,500,000 of paid-up capital.

As regards our clothing the story is the same. Rylands has its hundreds of mule and ring spindles. The Bleachers' Association represents £7,000,000 of capital and considerable reserves and the Bradford Dyers' Association unites some 30 companies who own the biggest dyeworks in the country. The absence of competition from Belgium enabled Courtalds Ltd., manufacturers of artificial silk, to increase their capital tenfold during the War, to the total of £20,000,000.

When the United States of the World comes into being we shall be able to take some lessons in world distribution from the General

Electrical Co. and the Allgemeine Elektrik-Gewerkschaft which in pre-war days partitioned out the world between them for the sale of electrical machinery. The following figures show what happened concerning the important commodity, oil, in 1923. Shell, Anglo-American and Anglo-Persian (the capital of this one alone amounts to nearly £26,000,000), had 85 per cent. of the total sales in Great Britain; National Benzole and British Mexican had 9½ between them, and the independents shared the rest. An agreement between the leading three companies was made in September last, but only the future will tell whether the truce is lasting and applicable to sources of supply as well as sales.

According to D. J. Williams—"From 1916 to 1920 the Ebbw Vale Steel and Iron Co. acquired collieries with an annual output of 6,250,000 tons; Dorman, Long & Co., 2,000,000." This was only following up the Cambrian Combine with a capital of £3,000,000 formed in 1908, which was swallowed in 1923 by that greatest of all vertical combines in S. Wales—Guest, Keen & Nettlefolds ("Multifold"). The rapid amalgamation of the newspapers is causing grave alarm to the journalists. On sea, in the shipyards and even in wireless telephony, trusts and greater aggregations of capital are to be found. Although there were 84,104 companies on the British register in 1922 as against 51,787 in 1910, many of these are very tiny and insignificant, and others have only a nominal existence in a holding company. The process has advanced so far in the United States that, according to Cahn, 1 per cent. of the firms produce 50 per cent. of the goods.

Banking, however, provides the most rapid examples of concentration. 37 banks remain in Britain, but five of them control 90 per cent. of the banking business. Their dividends over the last eight years show that the slump did not disturb them. Barclay's shares rose to 20 per cent. and have never been less than 14 per cent. per annum. Lloyds has kept a regular 16½ since 1920. The Midland, Westminster, and National Provincial have maintained rates of 18 per cent., 20 per cent. and 16 per cent. respectively. The rapidity of the concentration of power in banking is shewn by the fact that in 1883 there were in England and Wales 317 banks with 2,382 branch offices; in 1911, 99 banks with 6,413 offices. Well might the *Manchester Guardian Commercial* reviewing 1923 say: "The year has witnessed what must be virtually the completion of the great wave of banking amalgamations." The extension of banking facilities is to be seen in the fact that one of the Big Five, Barclays—whose assets are £400,000,000 and whose paid-up capital and reserves amount to £29,000,000—has over 2,000 branches.

Closely allied to the banks are the great insurance corporations which show a similar tendency.

As the Big Five in Great Britain so the four Big D.'s of Germany and the Big Three of France. J. P. Morgan controls some £500,000,000 of American capital through his banks. The growing dimensions of the starting capital necessary for modern industry increase the importance of credit. The Bagdad Railway, for example, could only be planned in co-operation with the Deutsche Bank. Interlocking directorates give the mutual control. Back in 1906 J. P. Morgan was proved to have had representatives in no less than 114 concerns. Stinnes had 170 enterprises and 60 newspapers under his control. Seymour Berry (S. Wales) is on no less than 50 boards.

All the above examples have been chosen at random and from ordinary newspaper information. If a deeper investigation were made it would reveal much more fully how modern capitalism is removing its own motor power of competition which once fixed prices and directed capital from one industry to another. When Labour really begins to govern it will find this concentrated power active to protect itself, and it would be foolish to underestimate the task of removing it.

MARK STARR.

The second article will deal with the methods of this trustification and its consequences.

READING REFERENCES

PLEBS, January, 1925, p. 37. For effects of rings in building materials.

Labour Research Department. White Papers, Nos. 3 and 5. Useful material attractively treated for the general reader.

Government Report on Trusts (cmd. 563, March, 1920). Much quoted and authoritative findings.

Labour's Alternative, by E. Fimmen. Cases of international combination in "Europe Ltd." For French-Belgian-German Iron and Steel Trust in formation, see *Review of Reviews* (Nov., 1924).

Capitalist Combination in the Coal Industry. D. J. Williams (Lab. Pub. Co., 6s.). An exceedingly valuable survey with a good summary of methods and effects of combines in general.

TWO CORRECTIONS

Two errors crept into R. W. Postgate's article on "Housing" in last month's PLEBS. On page 34, in the middle, *read* "The actual houses built between December 1921 and June 1923 were 99,000"; *not* 1922. On page 32, in the list of Housing Acts, *for* "Finance Act, 1909" *read* "Housing Act, 1909."

MUSSOLINI PLAYS ALL HIS CARDS

This study is in the nature of an Appendix to "Fascism" (PLEBS Sixpenny Series) dealing with events since that booklet was written. It does not attempt to repeat its analysis.

THE crisis in Italy is a class phenomenon of a very odd character. Fascism was originally a weapon in the hands of the big industrial capitalists for the purpose of crushing the workers. That they had to use such a weapon was fundamentally a sign of weakness, but the weapon was effective enough. The workers' movement was beaten by methods of mass murder. But now Italian capitalism is in the position of Frankenstein with his monster. Fascism, having served its purpose, will not go away. Whole sections of the middle class and the employing class—almost certainly a big majority by now—want the Mussolini episode of Italian history to close and "normalisation" to return. Fascism, however, is now no longer a mere instrument of capital. Capital called it in as the Sultan called in his Janissaries to kill a rival, and the Janissaries have remained in the palace and domineer over the surprised ruler.

Fascism has decided to stay in Italy and rule Italy in its own interests, which are not always or even generally those of capitalism, once the working class is down and out. The interests of capitalism in Italy at the moment are internal order and unimpeded transport. The workers are defeated, but capital cannot reap the harvest until normal conditions are restored. A liberal senator, reported in the *Daily Herald*, put it clearly when he said that Fascism must go because it was preventing the employers receiving the full profit of Labour's defeat. Moreover, he said, the continuance of Fascism was reviving a sullen spirit in the workers, whereas a gradual "normalisation" under moderate Fascist auspices might have perpetuated the present pleasing relation between employers and employed.

But the Fascists propose to govern, as has been said, in their own interests. These interests are in the main three. They are based not on class, but on caste or *esprit-de-corps*, and they are fatal to the "normalisation" cry. The first is the indefinite retention of the 300,000 Fascist militia-men as a crippling charge on the State. All over Italy these men hang about cafes and wine-shops in fantastic costumes, and vary the day with aimless violence. The second is the continuance of the present system of local government, called "Rassismo." A Ras, which is an Abyssinian word for

chief, is the local Fascist leader who controls the town, as Regazzi in Molinella and Farinacci in Cremona. The normal municipal machinery remains and works in appearance as before, but the real power lies in the Ras' hands. His orders cut across or reverse official decisions and his graft rules all appointments. Inefficiency and corruption follow automatically. Thirdly, the Fascists require frequent Communist or "subversive" disturbances. These are needed not merely for the purpose of looting, beating, raping and burning, which is what a Fascist means by employment, but also in order to bring to heel the restive bourgeoisie. Fascism gained its power because of the capitalist and lower middle class fear of red revolution. It can hold its power easily only if that fear is revived : and so the Red Spectre has to be prodded into convulsive movements. Fascist agents, it is known, have given arms to unwary Communists.

Carrying out this programme, the Fascists have more and more come into conflict with the capitalist classes. The papers that suffer suppression now—*Corriere della Sera*, *Mondo*, *Giornale d'Italia*, *Stampa* and so on—are not Socialist and Communist : they are papers of the politics and standing of the *Manchester Guardian* and *Times*. The remaining Fascist papers, *Popolo d'Italia*, *Idea Nazionale* and so on, are of no more standing than the *Empire News*, *News of the World* or *Morning Post*. Strong pressure has naturally been brought to bear on Mussolini to get him seriously to adopt the bourgeois policy of "normalisation." At the end of the year these proposals appeared to have been accepted. The new election law was proclaimed. The "extreme Fascists" representing the militia, headed by Farinacci, an ex-socialist thug who is the most powerful "Ras" in Italy, thereupon visited Mussolini. What passed then is uncertain, but there is little doubt that they handed him the "black spot" like any other pirate crew, unless he surrendered absolutely to their decision. Mussolini collapsed and the bourgeois effort to tame Fascism ended. The visible signs of this collapse were the "forty-eight hours" speech of Mussolini and the secession of ex-Premier Salandra.

The Fascist terror that followed lasted for several days in its acute form : in a milder form, indeed, it is still continuing. Doubt still exists as to what happened, but private letters have left no doubt in my mind that it was not a "fiasco." Fascisti burnt and beat up and down the country in their old manner. The full flood of savagery was let loose again, the opposition press being suppressed or so gagged that it could not speak. There was, however, this difference : the victims of this violence were no longer only socialists and Communists : they were every variety of Liberal and Constitutional politician.

(Perhaps a parallel will make the strange position clear. Imagine

a government headed by the Duke of Northumberland, in power through a coup, turning back after a mild period into extreme Fascism. Mr. Churchill, their last supporter, leaves them. The *Times*, *Manchester Guardian*, and indeed all papers except the *Morning Post and Telegraph* (bought by the Fascists) are suppressed. The staff of the *Daily News* is flogged: the offices of the *Scotsman* are burnt. Sir John Simon is severely beaten. Sir Charles Macara, attempting to ask a question of the Premier, is beaten on the head with loaded clubs. No exact news is available, but it is known that Liberal and Conservative clubs—the only ones left—have been sacked up and down the country, their members being beaten and perhaps killed. The British Legion has been dissolved by violence. No one knows who is alive still and who murdered: Poplar and the Clydebank have been systematically devastated. The Duke of Connaught narrowly escaped clubbing on a charge of being connected with the Freemasons.)

It is too early, when this is written, to say whether the terror has succeeded. Its object was to terrify the opposition into silence and to scatter it into its component parts. Especially did the Fascists want to break up the Aventine block which has left the Chamber. They appear not to have done so, but whether they have or not cowed the opposition up and down the country is as yet unknown.

Of course it is not true, or not yet true anyhow, to say that Fascism is totally without support of some sections of Capital. The Fascist government is notoriously corrupt, and contractors who have "come across" with enough palm oil have reaped rich harvests. Nearly every Fascist official of importance (except Mussolini himself and his secretary Acerbo, be it said) idles about Rome flaunting sudden wealth and new mistresses. This money has not been given for nothing and the particular firms who have benefited by the graft will desire it to continue; and so support the Fascists. Again, until quite recently at least, the iron and steel "heavy industry" supported Mussolini because his "vigorous foreign policy" meant more orders. There are some, but not decisive, indications that this support is weakening. Finally, there is the question of foreign support. The greatest banking concern in Italy is the Banca Commerciale. Since the collapse of the Banca di Sconto, none of the native Italian banks like the Banca di Roma have been in the same class with the Commerciale, which is notoriously foreign-controlled and handles much Rothschild money. Now, foreign capital has no objection to misgovernment and corruption. Contracts giving grossly inflated profits can be obtained more easily—as in the Sinclair Oil case exposed by Matteotti—and an isolated government is more susceptible to pressure generally. Corruption

and tyranny were positive recommendations to the City, the Bourse, and Wall Street in the cases of Nicholas II., Abdul Hamid and Ismail, as Mr. Brailsford pointed out years ago in the *War of Steel and Gold*. It is significant that after an initial attempt to suppress it, Mussolini's relations with the Banca Commerciale have been very friendly. It is far from certain that the native bourgeoisie of Italy will be able to rely on the aid of International finance against Fascism.

These do not end the list of Fascism's supporters. There is still the Pope. Pius XI. is a subtle old Italian cleric, who has put his money, despite restiveness even in the College of Cardinals, upon Mussolini. He has hesitated in the past and may again, but for the moment his influence is pro-Fascist. What that influence is can only be estimated. Its roots are not economic interest, but lie far back in two thousand years of history. At present it keeps many peasants immobilised, has enfeebled the action of the Popular party and keeps two wretched relics, called Catholic Centrists, in the Cabinet as Mussolini's last hostages.

Still, the core and centre of Fascism is the militia. The January Terror and the Farinacci ultimatum showed that the only way out was to break the militia and pull down the Ras in every town. How can the bourgeois do this? In face of so difficult a problem—how the capitalists with the workers' support (what a position!) are to overturn Fascism by force—the usual Left-to-Right classification is not a sufficient guide. Unexpected elements show strength and advanced talkers weakness. Let us examine the opposition more closely.

There are two sections: the Aventine, or original opposition which left the Chamber, and the later opposition which has quite recently quitted Mussolini because of his refusal of "normalisation." Take the second, which is the least important. It consists chiefly of the personal following of the imperialist nationalists Salandra, Giolitti and Orlando (ex-premiers all) and the group of Combattimenti (ex-soldiers). Giolitti is the most artful living Italian politician.* The ex-soldiers are under the most reactionary and nationalist leaders. These groups gambled altogether on Mussolini proceeding with "normalisation." There was to be a non-Fascist government, or a mixed moderate Fascist-Nationalist-cabinet. The capitalist was to resume control, and Mussolini was to stand aside with his organisation intact, in case it was needed for the future. The group was already counting its chickens and arranging the method: the King was to send for Salandra, who would find himself unable to form a cabinet, and then it would be

* See Index to *Fascism*, s.v. Giolitti.

Giolitti. But Farinacci, like Brennus the Gaul, flung his sword in the scale and upset the bargain. This was checkmate to this group, and they are likely to lie low awhile and do nothing. A decisive anti-Fascist move from other groups might be followed by the rank and file of the ex-soldiers and the dissolved "Italia Libera" association.

And now for the Aventine opposition—so called because it meets on the Aventine Hill like the Plebs of old. It consists of many groups which shift and change. But here are the main groups, reading roughly Right to Left: Sards, Left Liberals, Democrats (with internal dissensions, like most others for that matter), Populars (Catholics), Republicans, Unitary Socialists, Socialists (Maximalists). The last two parties alone represent the workers: the third workers' party, the Communists, has left the opposition and in January re-entered the Chamber. Up till the time of the "forty-eight hours' speech" the Aventine had scored heavily at the expense of Mussolini. It is true that it had not called a full general strike at the burial of Matteotti, as demanded (probably rightly, but not certainly so) by the Communists, but by leaving the Chamber and focussing the agitation on a sort of rival Parliament at the Aventine, it had given a very sharp and definite nature to the struggle. The official Chamber was left ridiculous and in the air. The Press campaign was admirably directed; the shocks of the Matteotti confessions exactly timed. So long as Mussolini was kept inside the Parliamentary game, the Aventine won steadily. But now that he has run wild again, new tactics are wanted, and the groups that come forward are not those one might expect. It depends upon the resoluteness, rather than the advanced ideas, of the Party, sometimes even on the individual.

Of the bourgeois parties, the Sards and Republicans are of little weight. In the Liberals that attend there is small strength: they may at any time go over to the Giolitti-Orlando group. The Populars contain big rural masses and detest Fascism. Their programme reads as though it were fairly advanced and large sections of the Populars would undoubtedly join in a serious active move. But the party directors are not likely to move. The party is Catholic and the Pope still says, No. It is in a relatively small group of Democrats that we find more strength of will. Mussolini has already made a serious attempt to kill or maim Signor Amendola, the "big noise" here. Amendola is an enemy of the workers and an ex-minister of the Colonies. His mind is military and he is accustomed to action. Well before Mussolini's running amuck he warned the Aventine at the Milan Conference, when others piously talked of propaganda, that the Fascist Militia must be smashed. There could be no peace, he said, till it had been ground to pieces.

Now, Amendola is a man in close touch both with the Court and high Army circles. The Army not only shares the general contempt for Fascism, but is spurred to especial dislike by professional jealousy. Even the Generals are estranged : they only await the King's sanction to go out and wipe up the blackshirts. They hold, with some justice, that Fascism would crash before any serious military force—especially as recent mobilisations have shown a waning of numbers in the urban militias. If Amendola can bring them to the point of action, Fascist tyranny will end. This seems almost the only weapon left to the bourgeoisie ; though of course there may be secret preparations of which we know nothing.

And what of the workers, trodden deep in the mire by these antagonists ?

Bad and divided leadership and great misery. Italian Socialism is split into three. The Unitary Socialists, whose secretary was Matteotti, are much stronger since that crime, which rallied to them many workers who had decided that this group was incapable of action. But the Unitarians, or Reformists as they are commonly called, hardly deserve this confidence. Their leaders share Matteotti's rosy idealism without possessing his courage or ability. Turati, their dominant man, is more fluent than Mr. MacDonald and even less capable of decisive action. They are almost the most timid group in the Aventine. Moreover (as exposed in *Fascism*) they can be accused of worse than timidity. Their most important group, the trade union leaders headed by D'Aragona, have for months now strangled any trade union action or revival, and still boast of their success in breaking up the metalworkers' seizure of the factories. These trade union officials are popularly called Bonzes, from the Buddhist priests who are reported to be able to sit motionless in the same attitude for vast periods of time. This name gives away their character : we have had some remarkably fine " collectors' specimens " of them over here. To expect the workers' liberation from this class-peace reformist party is absurd : it is too much even to expect it to take direct action against Fascism. Members of it have even been willing to serve under Mussolini.

The increase, however, in the Reformist ranks has not been due only to Matteotti's death. It has been due even more to the deplorable division between the two class-war parties, the Maximalists and Communists. The main lines of the policy of both these are identical, but during their bitter quarrels the Reformists have held the leadership. At the last T.U.C. in Italy the Reformists swept the board through the dis-union of these two, who, systematically cut each others' throats. It is probable, indeed that the Reformists, once outnumbered by the Maximalists alone'

have now more members than both together.* In this connection the author of *Fascism* makes an error in classing the Reformists and Maximalists together. A far deeper gulf lies between the Reformists and Maximalists than separates the latter from the Communists.† Both parties are firmly based on the class-war and consist of tried revolutionaries (even Zinovieff admits it). They both realise that direct war by themselves alone on Fascism would lead to a horrible massacre : they both try to manœuvre beneath the shield of bourgeois dissatisfaction with Fascism into a position where they can recommence the workers' struggle. They both work for the reconstruction of the class trade unions on a class basis as opposed to the Fascist. In all these cases their action has been paralysed by bitter disputes on tactical questions and personal feeling.

The differences that separate them are, firstly, the refusal of the Maximalists to accept the discipline and policy of the Third International, which they contend knows nothing of Italian affairs ; secondly, points of tactics—e.g., the Communists have now left the Aventine block while the Maximalists have stayed in. The two groups during last summer and autumn several times made indirect and sullen overtures to each other, only ending in fresh quarrels. At the end of the year matters were much worsened by the affair of Serrati. Serrati, a man of much ability but unsympathetic character, was heading a group of Maximalists who demanded that the Party join the Third International. After months of agitation he left the Party with his followers and joined the Communists. Immediately *Unità*, the Communist daily, crowed that he had been all the while a Communist agent, aiming at disrupting the Maximalists and carrying away as many as possible. This way of crying "Yah!" was childish enough, and in addition has embittered *Avanti* and its party so that they talk now as though every Communist was a crook.

Until these two parties are reunited the proletariat is defenceless. After all, when everybody in sight has been duly called a Hired Lackey of the International Bourgeoisie, the fact remains that the two class war parties are divided and hostile, unable to do anything but check each other. What influence the Communist International can or will exercise on one of the combatants is uncertain. The report of the 1924 Congress gives certain indications that wisdom

* Figures are lacking, but both parties have recently published lists of subscriptions to their newspaper funds. The Reformists got 625,000 lire, the Communists 25,000, and the Maximalists about 300,000—all in small subscriptions.

† I am not speaking without my book. I have studied the three dailies *Giustizia*, *Avanti*, *Unità*, for some months now and they show conclusively that L. W. was unjust in calling the Maximalists "reformists."

may prevail. Zinovieff, it is true, held up to the derision of Congress a letter from "old Lazzari" of the Maximalists in which he said that it "was a matter of conscience" with him that made him reject certain instructions of the Communists, and consequently, said Zinovieff, Lazzari was no Communist, only a sentimental revolutionary. But Bordiga, the Communist, was rebuked for taking an extreme attitude against the Maximalists.*

Here is the position, then. We can only hope, firstly, that the two parties reunite quickly; secondly, that the Court will assent to turning, sooner or later, the Army on to the sanitary job of cleaning up Fascism. Once the break comes, in whatever way it comes (and it cannot come without the smashing of the militia) events will rush so swiftly that no one can say where they will end. Perhaps——

RAYMOND W. POSTGATE.

TWO STAGES of CAPITALISM

A brief study which brings home to the student the danger of drawing "lessons" from history without a very careful examination of the differences as well as the likenesses of different periods.

THE early capitalism which developed in Western Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries bears many striking resemblances to modern Imperialist capitalism. In the "natural history" of capitalist production the same forms tend to repeat themselves—although there are many striking differences between the two periods corresponding to the general transformation through which, in the meantime, society and its institutions have passed. Historical comparisons, treated superficially, are always dangerous; but if they take proper care to note differences as well as likenesses they make the study of history much more interesting, and its meaning much more intelligible.

Modern Imperialist capitalism is characterised by four main features: (a) The reign of corporate capital; (b) Combines and monopolies; (c) Colonial expansion; (d) The conflict of national capitals. In their modern form they are essentially new—products of the nineteenth century; and three of them at least have come into prominence only since the end of that century. Yet as economic and political characteristics associated with the development of

* The report is abridged, often very obscure, and in places appears really inaccurate. We are invited to believe that MacManus, supported by Murphy, told the conference that the C. P. had secured the removal of "the reactionary Frank Hodges" and his replacement by A. J. Cook, as secretary of "the Miners' Federation." Thus it is difficult to rely on any single statement in the report.

capitalism they are by no means novel ; for they are found, in varying degrees of development, in the sixteenth, seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. This is not to imply that capitalism has returned to its starting point or that it is heading for its "second childhood" ; for the difference between the earliest and the latest forms are as deeply rooted as the revolutions by means of which capitalism has arrived at its present stage. A brief examination of each of these features in their early setting will indicate to what extent the two periods resemble and differ from each other.

(a) Early commerce in Europe was almost entirely inter-municipal. The chief trading centres of the time were found around the shores of the Mediterranean. With the discovery of the new world routes to the East and West the Mediterranean ports declined, and the ports of those countries with a western seaboard came into prominence. For the first time commerce became world commerce. This commerce needed much more capital for its successful pursuit than did the earlier inter-town commerce ; and the fortunes of the individual merchants were, with few exceptions, inadequate to meet the needs of the world-trade which now rapidly developed under the new conditions. This difficulty prompted the merchants to pool their capital ; and from this the famous merchant companies arose. At first these companies were formed to undertake some hazardous trading ventures to distant ports, and at the end of the expedition they were disbanded and the profits shared. Later on they became definitely constituted chartered companies and fought most tenaciously to defend and maintain their privileges. The modern joint stock companies are not in any sense the descendants of these early trading corporations : there is even no link of continuity between them. The early companies flourished when commerce was in advance of industry. With the coming of the Industrial Revolution the basis of their existence was destroyed.

(b) Combinations of capital and monopolies in the modern sense are distinctive products of recent economic development. It is, however, only in their modern form that they are new. The trade and commerce of early capitalism were predominantly monopolistic in character. Monopolies were found in coal, copper, salt, etc. ; whilst most of the chartered companies had a monopoly in their respective lines of business. These monopolies furnished not only the basis of many trading fortunes : they were regular sources of royal revenue. Queen Elizabeth made a regular practice of granting these monopolies—for a consideration. In one of her deals with the Newcastle coal merchants she "scooped" £12,000—a not inconsiderable sum in those days. Between the "free" merchants and the monopolists there was a bitter struggle, which called into existence an extensive anti-monopolist literature. Repeated laws

were passed to put down the monopolies, but the kings—especially the impecunious Charles I.—went behind the law to negotiate with the prosperous merchants. After the “constitutional” triumph of 1688 the prerogative of royalty to grant monopolies was revoked, but even then many monopolies had become too deeply entrenched to be formally abolished. Some of them continued until well into the eighteenth century. These early monopolies, however, rested on the general backwardness of the means of production. Modern monopolies, on the other hand, are products of a highly developed industrial technique and economic organisation. Again, the early monopolies were local in character, but modern monopolies are not limited even by national boundaries.

(c) Colonial Expansion falls into two well defined stages. First the Mercantilist phase of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries ; secondly, the modern Finance Imperialist phase. The major portion of the British Empire was acquired in the first period, though much has been added during the modern Imperialist era. Early expansion in this direction was concerned mainly with loot—human and material. The early buccaneering expeditions were organised for plunder pure and simple. Later, trade became the object. The ambition of the early colonisers rarely went further than the acquisition of monopolised markets—mostly in precious metals and human lives. Their motive was not Empire but plunder and trade. The acquisition of territories was subordinate to this. The modern period of Imperialist colonisation differs fundamentally from this. It is marked by the acquisition of territories ; by the shameless suppression of native peoples and the ruthless exploitation of native labour ; by the wholesale extirpation of the traditional social relations of the native population and their transformation into helpless wage slaves ; by the use of armed force to subjugate the natives and to impress other imperialist nations having the same designs. Thus, while the two periods have certain traits in common, the differences between them are much greater.

(d) The growth of commerce in Europe led, amongst other things, to the emergence of Nation States. And if, at first, monopoly was the aim in home commerce, competition certainly was the dominant principle in foreign trade. The competitive struggle of different capitals engaged in commerce thus soon appeared as a struggle of nations, and was in fact fought out, not with the orthodox weapon of the economists of competition—cheapness—but with armed force. Mephistopheles has told us that war, piracy and commerce are an indissoluble trinity ; and in the halcyon days of early commerce—which was capitalistic from the first—this certainly was the case. It was partly the desire of the merchant class for trading privileges abroad that led to the consolidation of the National States ;

for the stronger the home State the better the trading privileges. Inevitably, therefore, the clash of commercial interests led to the clash of Nation—and, earlier, of city—States. Thus the wars that accompanied the advent of early capitalism were fought between the leading commercial nations—England, France, Spain, Holland, etc. The clash of national capitals still leads to wars—but to wars of a vastly different character. At most—in spite of the prominence they receive in the history books—the earlier wars involved only local groups; but the modern Imperialist struggles are worldwide and therefore involve world wars. The early conflicts were fought chiefly over trading privileges; the modern struggle centres round the eventual control of the world. This struggle is one of the salient features of modern Imperialism.

The two periods are marked not merely as two stages in the history of capitalism: they are marked by two distinct types of capital. The early period was characterised by the rule of commercial capital over all other forms. In the present era commerce and industry have become subordinated to the sway of Finance Capital; the difference between them is not one of mere form, but a difference of the entire social, economic and political arrangements associated and bound up with each other.

D. J. WILLIAMS.

The METHOD of SCIENCE

IV.—THE METHOD OF DEDUCTION

WE are never content merely to observe, generalise, classify and make inductive laws. We tend always to ask, Why? Long ago sailors noticed that the sea level rose and fell twice in every period of 24 hours 50 minutes, and also that the rise was greatest at some time after full moon and new moon, and least about half-way between full moon and new moon. Attentive study enabled men to make a correlation between the height of the tide, the time that the moon and sun cross the meridians, and the time of the year. Now all this was simply induction based on precise observation. But why is the rise and fall of the tides so associated with the positions of the sun and moon?

Scientific Explanations

The answer to our question involves an *explanation*. To explain an event is only to re-describe it—but the re-description we make involves some law of nature of more general application than the regularity that we seek to explain. Thus the tides are explained

by showing that the sun and moon *attract* the waters of the ocean, drawing them up into a wave. As the earth rotates, this wave appears to travel round its surface. Now the law of gravitation also explains the motions of the planets in their orbits, the fall of shooting-stars and other natural events, and so it has more fundamental significance than the laws of tidal motions. *To explain anything means describing it in the simplest and most general way possible.*

The Scientific Hypothesis

Whenever we attempt to explain anything, we invent an hypothesis. An hypothesis is only a *guess* made in a reasoned way. Kant sought to explain the solar system, that is, show how it came to have the form it has, by his nebular hypothesis. He supposed that the materials of the sun and planets existed long ago in the state of glowing vapour, forming a vast cloud, or nebula. This was slowly rotating, cooling all the time and becoming smaller. As it became smaller, it rotated faster, until it spun so quickly that parts of it became detached to form the material of the planets. By and by these masses of material became cold and solid.

Darwin explained the existence of the hundreds of thousands of living organisms by his hypothesis of natural selection. The previous explanation—also an hypothesis—was that each species of organism had been created separately out of nothing. Newton explained the movement of the moon in her orbit round the earth by an hypothesis of gravitating matter. He assumed that every material body attracted every other material body. The force of attraction was directly proportional to the product of the two masses and inversely proportional to the square of the distance between their centres. Thus the force between two bodies a foot apart and each two pounds in weight is proportional to the product $2 \times 2 = 4$. If the bodies are removed to double the distance (the masses remaining the same), the force is reduced to one-fourth ($\frac{1}{2} \times 2$, or $\frac{1}{2}$ squared).

The verification of an hypothesis

The difference between the hypothesis of the origin of species by special creation and the hypothesis of their evolution by natural selection is this: the Darwinian hypothesis invited verification, the other one did not. It was impious to suggest that it required to be verified, and it was given the status of a *doctrine*, that is, something revealed to men, which should be taught and ought to be believed. (Now one cannot deny that there are scientific pundits that give their results something of the status of doctrines, but sooner or later that attitude is destroyed.)

Hypotheses are verified in various ways:—

Directly by experiment.—For instance, an expert physicist can

actually observe and measure the force of attraction between two bodies of a pound weight placed near to each other. So also breeding experiments demonstrate that species may transform by continual selection—thus we have the numerous kinds of pigeons, fruits, vegetables, cereals, etc.

Indirectly by tracing the results.—Thus the masses, velocities, etc., of the planets ought to be such and such if the Kant-Laplace nebular hypotheses were true. They are not so, and therefore the original form of the nebular hypothesis has been modified. We believe now that solar systems originate by the attractive effects of two suns which approach near each other. When the consequences of such an hypothesis are examined, they seem to justify the guess.

How hypotheses are made

No great scientist has ever been able to show this. Newton says simply that he "intended his mind." That is, he thought hard. The hypothesis is a pure invention of an imaginative mind, and everyone exercises this faculty of inventing explanations of the things that he sees every day in ordinary life.

Magic.—Thus the magical ceremonies, and the beliefs of savages are simply crude hypotheses that have been made in order to explain natural events, storms, the seasons, harvests, etc. It is characteristic of the mind of the savage—as well as that of the much more sophisticated believer in theological systems—that such magical explanations are simply accepted without any question as to the need to verify them. What distinguishes the magical and theological explanation from the scientific hypothesis is that the latter is made only to be verified. If it is not verified after testing, it is abandoned or modified without hesitation.

The discipline of science consists mainly in this attitude of criticism—and of such a training in experimental and logical method that will confer the technique which is required in order that hypothesis may be put to the proof. The successful man of science must have the original, highly imaginative mind well stocked with the results of former investigations. He must also have the craftsmanship that will enable him to devise apparatus, methods of experimenting, and crucial tests for his hypothesis.

Scientific Theories

The steps in an investigation are therefore these: there is, first of all, the simple description of some aspect of nature, the process of patient observation. Then comes the work of arrangement of the observational results, the compilation of statistics, comparison and generalisation. The end of such "spade-work" is the formation of an induction.

Next the explanation has to be devised. An hypothesis, or a number of such are invented and stated. Now the spade-work begins again. Experiments are devised in order to test the hypothesis (Einstein's eclipse observations, for instance). The experiments are re-made, and confirmed; the hypothesis is abandoned, or modified, or proved, and the final result is in sight. Every great advance in science is made thus. The first essential is observation—and no result of science ever can have a big enough observational basis. But all original discovery springs from an hypothesis, test by observation and experiment. The tested and proved hypothesis becomes a *theory*. Thus the theory of planetary motions, the theory of the tides, the Marxian theory of value. A scientific theory is a formal statement of natural laws, verified and capable of being used deductively.

Deduction

The theory is "true," that is, whenever it is applied in any way it *works*. If it is true, and if its results are applied in correct logical reasoning, it leads to the discovery of new truths. Note that a basis of observation is essential to all knowledge of nature, but, given a tested body of knowledge, new truths can be discovered deductively without further observation.

Some of the most striking of modern scientific discoveries have been made deductively. Thus J. Clerk Maxwell, back in the middle of the nineteenth century, deduced four laws, called "Maxwell's electromagnetic relations." Examining these, purely mathematically, he deduced that, whenever a high tension electric discharge occurs there must be pulses of energy sent out through space, with the velocity of light. A generation afterwards Herz verified this deduction, demonstrating the transmission of these ether waves by beautiful experiments. A generation later still, Marconi and others—acting as the camp-followers of science—invented the necessary apparatus to utilise the discoveries of Maxwell and Herz, and the typical exploitation followed.

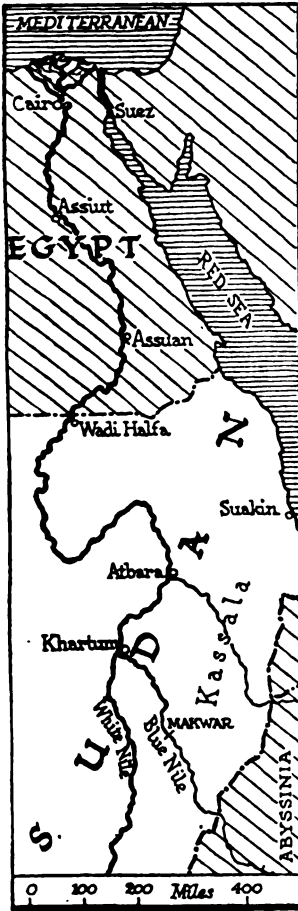
Applications of science

Over and over again this happens. Clinging to the outskirts of science are the inventors—the men who apply the original ideas of others, seeing (as the scientists seldom do) the "practical value" of these ideas. Behind the inventors and waiting for their opportunities are the predatory capitalists, the patent agents, and the company promoters, armed with all the devices of modern commerce. And we still wait for some one who will enable us to scourge these traders in other men's ideas out of the temple of science.

J. J.

GEOGRAPHICAL FOOTNOTES

The Battle for the Nile



“RIVERS unite,” the geographers tell us. But, in a capitalist world, economic interests diverge; and so it comes about that rivers may become a potent source of discord.

The Nile makes Egypt and the Sudan one—geographically. Both depend for their very existence on the waters of the great river. International politics apart, the whole Nile valley is one economic unit. But an entirely artificial frontier—a line on a map—divides the Lower from the Upper Valley. The Lower is the “independent” nation-state of Egypt; the Upper (i.e., *upstream*—lower on the map) is the Sudan, a “possession” of the British Empire.

In the world of commerce, both Upper and Lower Valleys stand primarily for one thing—cotton. Cotton-growing was begun in Egypt a century ago. Modern engineering developments made possible the construction of larger and larger dams and irrigation systems, and so brought under cultivation greater and greater areas of land. More recently the same process has been at work in the Sudan. The great dam at Makwar, on the Blue Nile (see map) is to “enable 100,000 acres to be put under cotton in a few years’ time, with unlimited scope for

extension.”* The Gezira, the area in the angle formed by the White Nile and the Blue before their junction at Khartoum, is the great centre of this development. And the Sudan Plantations Syndicate, Ltd., is a concern with powerful friends in high places in Great Britain.

Egypt (i.e., the Egyptian capitalist cotton-growers) needs Nile water. The Sudan (i.e., the Sudan Plantations Syndicate, Ltd.) needs Nile water. *And the Syndicate, being upstream, can cut off*

* *Statesman's Year Book*, 1924.

and reserve for its own use the Egyptian supply. That is the geographical fact which the British Government promptly took advantage of when the murder of Sir Lee Stack last November gave it its opportunity. Egyptian "independence" has to be kept within strictly limited bounds (for reasons discussed in *The PLEBS Outline of Economic Geography*).

Nearly a year ago the Liberal and peace-loving *Manchester Guardian* was pointing out* that the Power which held Khartum (i.e., the Sudan) could always use as an "argument," if the Egyptians went too far, its control of the Nile waters. And sure enough, the ultimatum despatched by the Tory Government after the Sirdar's death took care to negate Egypt's right to consultation concerning the development of the Sudan's irrigation system, previously controlled by the Egyptian Ministry of Public Works; and asserted the right of the Sudan (i.e., of the Syndicate) to use as much Nile water as it wanted, without regard to the needs of Egyptian capitalists or Egyptian peasants downstream. (Note how Liberal and Tory Imperialists think alike on these matters!) The shares of the Sudan Plantations Syndicate, Ltd., rose sharply during the few days following the ultimatum.

The incident affords an interesting illustration of the advantages of "strategic position" in the great Imperialist game. Egypt, whatever her geographical advantages at an early stage of human history, is in a singularly unfortunate position to-day. Not only do her people live next door to a key position on one of the great world-routes—Britain's road to the East; but they must depend on a river whose head-waters are out of their control. Regarded as a chess-board, the map suggests that the British ruling class is well up to the moves of the game.†

J. F. HERRIN.

NOTES BY THE WAY

A Proletarian University

THE Proletarian University of Milan has sent us a very interesting leaflet on its activities. It appears to be doing good work still despite the Fascist terror, and seems to be the only place in Italy where the three sections that have divided the working class so hopelessly can meet

without quarrelling. The list of regular lecturers ranges from the extreme Right, with Turati and D'Aragnona (Unitary Socialists) through Lazzari and Nenni (Socialist Party—"Maximalists") to Bordiga and Serrati (Communists).

Their programme for the coming year is divided into "fundamental courses" and "collateral courses." The subjects dealt with in the first section are:

* See quotations in a "Note by the Way," by E. Redfern, PLEBS Empire No. (May, 1924).

† For an excellent historical account of "British Policy in Egypt," see Labour White Papers, No. 7, issued by the Labour Research Dept.

Origins of Life (Biology), Man and the Earth (Economic Geography—Dr. Schiavi, the lecturer, uses The PLEBS Geography Textbook as basis, and proposes to translate it), Man and Production (Economics), Man and His Surroundings (General History), Capitalism and Imperialism, Socialism, History of Socialism.

Collateral courses are: The Worker in the Factory, Problems of the Workers' Domestic Economy, Co-operation, Social Ethics, Protective Legislation for the Worker, Constitution of the U.S.A., The Principles of 1789, Microbes, Esperanto. This last list seems a little odd; presumably they are subjects that have been asked for. Sunday addresses and special lectures are also announced. Two of these, Great Inventions and Modern Big Industries, and Labour in Art, are lantern lectures.

Other unusual features are "Visits and Instructive Perambulations" in museums, picture galleries, clinics, etc., and public readings of literary passages on Labour by an M.P.

The University has been driven out of its rooms by the Fascisti, but is still carrying on.

"Legalisation" of Trade Unions

W. M. F. writes—"I am at a loss to understand the point of view expressed in the little book on *Working-Class Education* written by the Horrabin, where on p. 85 Prof. Beazley's date of the legalisation of trade unions is stated to be 'only half-a-century out!' I can quite conceive the importance of the repeal of the Combination Laws to the workers' movement, but at the same time it would be idle to ignore the fact that from 1824 until 1871 Trade Unions were unlawful bodies at common law and had no legal status under civil law. With the repeal of the Combination Laws it ceased to be criminal to combine, but that did not make the combination a lawful body. Legalisation came with the 1871 Trade Union Act."

J. F. H. and W. H. reply:—The point of our comment was simply that Prof. Beazley apparently knew so little about the history of the working-class movement as to be misled by the word "legalisation" into thinking that the 1871 Act, which gave the Unions *legal status at common law*, was the

¶ *For some time past there has been a need for a concise, handy volume, giving the essential facts about Workers' Education in Britain, and pointing out the differences between the various organisations providing—or professing to provide—such education.*

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has been written to meet this need. It does not discuss its subject as an "abstract" proposition, but treats it in the Marxian way, i.e., historically; describing the many educational movements carried on by or for the workers since the early beginnings of the modern working-class movement more than a century ago.

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most important event in the history of Trade Unionism—since it was the only one he thought fit to mention. Important as it was, it was of course of far less significance than the “legalisation” afforded by the repeal of the Combination Laws half-a-century earlier which gave the *legal right to combine*. If the Professor had mentioned both dates our comment would have been unnecessary

Reviewing a book entitled *The State Theory of Money*, by G. F. Knapp (recently translated and published for the Royal Economic Society) the *Man-*

chester Guardian Commercial remarks:—

“The author states that in developing his theory he was forced to invent a terminology of his own, and in order to ensure the international comprehension of his work the new terms were sought in ancient Greek. . . . Money, for instance, is classified into hylogenic and autogenic. Hylogenic money can be either orthotypic or the reverse; autogenic money can be metalloplatic and papyroplatic. Money can also be paratypic, chrysogenic, or argyroplatic.”

It can also, as many of us know only too well, be mighty scarce.

Towards a TRADE UNION YOUTH MOVEMENT

We print below two letters on the important question raised by Com. R. Coppock, Gen. Sec. of the Nat. Fed. of Building Trades Operatives, in our December number. The first is particularly interesting since it describes an experiment actually being made; and we hope other comrades with experience of similar attempts will describe them for the benefit of PLEBS readers.

DEAR COMRADE EDITOR,—Comrade Coppock points out the need for organising the young workers, and suggests that no trade union in this country has considered this problem. This is not actually true. The National Amalgamated Furnishing Trades Association has already considered this question and issued a leaflet (enclosed) entitled “Enrolment of Apprentices and Learners,” laying down very cheap contributions with Out-of-Work, Dispute, and other benefits to induce the young workers to join up.

The East London Branch No. 15, was not satisfied with just merely rallying the youth into the Union by promising benefits, etc. Early in July, 1923, a sub-committee was elected to deal with this question. As a result of discussion, a Young Workers' Section was formed. Here I disagree with Comrade Coppock; it is not only dangerous but against the very principles of Trade Unionism to organise young workers into branches by themselves. What we need is uniting the forces of the workers, both young and old, in their common struggles.

Our Section is a part of the East London Branch, and we have already awakened a good proportion of adult workers to the necessity of organising the young workers.

I agree with Comrade Coppock that our present branch and T.U. routine business does not interest the young workers, and we have attempted to give them something worth joining for. The first principles we have laid down are Independent Working-Class Education, and Independent Working-Class Sports.

Our Educational Side.—We have an Esperanto class in conjunction with the British League of Esperantist Socialists (a member of the B.L.E.S. as our tutor). Our members attend a class on Industrial History at Bethnal Green (N.C.L.C. tutor). We are building up a Section Library, interesting members in working-class literature, etc., etc.

Our Sports Side.—We have a good football team, playing in London football competition of the Workers' Sports Federation. A good running section has commenced and we are now in the midst of forming a boxing and gym.

class. In the summer we are organising a cycle section and arranging rambles, etc.

We have not, at the same time, forgotten the technical side, and we are arranging for technical drawing classes and general woodworking classes.

Another very successful attempt which may interest Comrade Coppock and others interested in youth and the T.U. movement, is the publication by ourselves of a Section paper (two copies enclosed). The paper is entitled *The Bulletin* and has proved very useful in our work.

One other point before concluding—the question of immediate demands. Demands always act as a means of rallying and fostering up of the movement. We have with the demands been able to rally the youth to our ranks. I think it would be useful to give our demands. They are five as follows:

1. A guaranteed Minimum Wage for all Improvers and Apprentices.
2. Two half-days off per week for technical training (with full pay).
3. The 44-hour week for all young workers (minus two-half days off for technical training). *No overtime.*
4. All improvers and apprentices to be controlled by Trades Union.
5. No task work.

I hope this letter will help to carry on the discussion on Comrade Coppock's subject. We *must* rally the youth into our ranks.

Train and educate them, and make of them a strong backbone of the workers' movement.

Yours fraternally,

ALF. B. COHEN,

Secretary, Young Workers' Section.

DEAR EDITOR,—Comrade Coppock's article in your December issue will undoubtedly provoke discussion in many quarters.

Technical education can safely be left in the hands of the boss. I do not think we actually live in the days of Direct Labour and Guilds, yet, nevertheless, there is a great need to train young members to understand the social position of the workers in preparation for the actual struggle for workers' control when the conditions are ripe.

The growth of a Trade Union Youth Movement depends largely on how far the present trade union officials are

prepared to give a lead in the field of actual struggle. During such periods young members of any industry whose minds are plastic can be recruited into the Trade Unions with a reformist craft outlook or the revolutionary industrial outlook. The preliminary to a change in outlook would be the scrapping of the craft unions which have long ago outlived their usefulness.

The Friendly Society aspect of these Unions is a complete bar to any real progress, and this aspect of Trade Unionism must be kept completely subordinate in any Youth Movement. Youths when being received into their respective Unions must be led to believe that they are joining a real live working-class revolutionary organisation, not merely for friendly benefits, halfpenny an hour advance in one district, id. an hour reduction in another, or a spread-over 44-hour week. They must be led to understand that the weapon being forged is for completely changing the workers' conditions.

Com. Coppock suggests it would be necessary to set up an additional department in the head offices of each Union under the heading of Youth Section. This I would suggest is a reactionary and not a progressive idea. We do not want the present official idea of Trade Unionism implanted in the minds of young members. The progressive rank and file members can very well deal with them, and it will be well for us to keenly scrutinise any tendency in this direction.

The young minds of the youth of our movement will be trained in the field of struggle and experience. It is for the old reactionary leaders to clear out of the way, and let the oncoming youth movement try where they have failed.

Yours fraternally,

E. BOWMAN.

Blackburn.

In reply to this letter, Com. Coppock writes:—

Com. Bowman entirely misses my point, and it would be wise for him to re-read my article. The things he says should be avoided are the immediate points I desire less consideration given to. Surely Bowman knows that if the youth attends branch meetings of adults the conception he will get of the T.U. movement is that of demarcation

quarrels, wage advances, and hours of labour, also some befogged ideas of Labour policy. An industrialist of to-day will agree with your correspondent about Amalgamation, but to agree with it and to attempt to bring it into operation are two different things.

I do not agree with the statement that special youth organisations apart from the present method would be a reactionary step. The only time you would get reaction in such a movement would be when the wise old ones started to give advice.

OUR FOREIGN POST-BAG

Notes from Plebs in Other Lands

U.S.A.

The following extracts from a letter of an American comrade will be of interest to students of the Labour Movement in the U.S.A. :—

"I regard the election of William Green of the United Mine Workers to succeed Gompers as unquestionably the best choice that the E.C. of the A.F. of L. could possibly have made. He is a man with broader training and outlook than anyone else on the Council, less of a 'politician' than his nearest rival for the position, Matthew Woll, pretty conservative on some things but in the main I think forward-looking. His own organisation, the Miners, will be compelled by conditions to take aggressive action on the industrial field and will more and more incline to independent action on the political field also. Green is bound to be influenced by this. You may remember that he was the most ardent advocate of nationalisation of railroads at the Montreal convention of the A.F. of L., where that subject was hotly debated some years ago.

"Green believes in political action much more than Gompers ever did. His attitude toward workers' education will be intelligently sympathetic, I think. Our guess is that with a new and younger man in the presidency, the tendency of the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. will be to make long delayed concessions to the progressive elements and to try to maintain the unity of the movement on that basis. The fact that James Noonan, president of the Electrical Workers and a decided progressive, was elected to fill the vacancy on the Executive Council

created by Mr. Green's promotion to the presidency, is one of the straws indicating which way the wind blows."

Austria

Plebs who attended the Blackpool Summer School last August, and heard Dr. Otto Eichler's lecture on the Austrian Social Democratic Children's Organisation, will be interested in this note from him on recent developments—

"The general trend of the Social-Democratic parties on the continent is towards co-operation with the bourgeois parties. That results in a general revision of Social-Democratic theories in all fields. An interesting example of this fact is the latest development of the Social-Democratic Children's organisation in Austria, which is still the leading organisation of that kind in the German-speaking countries.

"The Kinderfreunde ('Children's Friends'), began as a simple petty-bourgeois society for social welfare; proletarian children were cared for; after lessons at school, outings, games, visits to museums, etc., were arranged for them. The lives of these children should be made brighter, if only for a few hours. At the end of the war came the great change which attached the children's organisation to the Labour movement; now the main stress was laid on class-conscious education, to which all other activities should be means.

"But these radical features could not hold out against the growing accommodation of Labour politics to 'this world.' One of the 'great democratic achievements' of the Revolution of 1918 in Austria is a very moderately

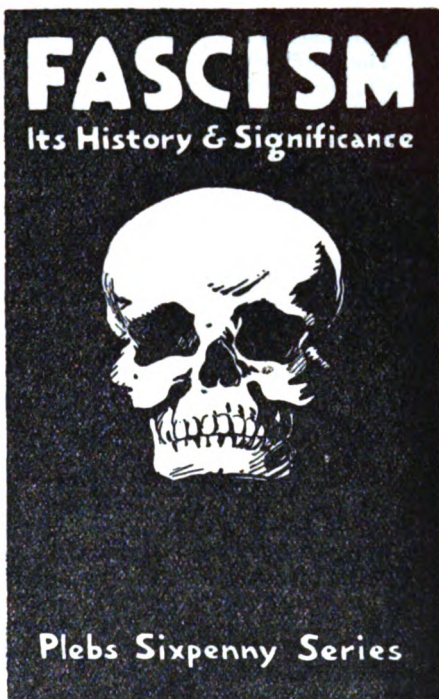
improved school. Its teachers, even its socialist teachers, who are nearly all reformists, are not at all fond of any sort of socialist education of children. They will henceforth confine themselves to outings, games, etc. So they have safely arrived at the point they started from.

"It will be the task of the revolutionary workers to stop this surrender or if that should not be possible in the teeth of a strong reformist majority, to form their own revolutionary children's groups."

Chile

A PLEBS contributor now in South America wrote us recently giving some of his impressions. After referring to the way in which U.S. capitalists and industrialists are "all over" Chile, he gives the following amusing account of happenings there last summer:—

"As you no doubt have heard we have had a little revolution here. Everything went off quietly simply because the army and navy were on the same side. Politics are touchingly simple here. Rich presidents are the general desire because they are not likely to steal so much. This year forty million pounds disappeared quite early on without too much scandal and the civil servants had not been paid for six months—nor the army, nor the navy. The Government had given a man a nitrate concession of several thousand acres and he promptly sold it for four million pounds, part of which found its way back to the promoters on the Government side of the concession. The Minister of Finance made a proposal in the senate to print forty million pesos to pay wages. At the mere mention of such a scheme the peso went down with a bang—here where the Bolsa (Stock Exchange) is the all absorbing game of everybody. The Minister of Finance by a queer coincidence had bought several millions of sterling only the day before he made the proposal, sterling which he patriotically changed into pesos some days later. Well, with all this in the air people were more disgusted than ever with the Government, especially the president (Alessandre, a poor man and the most arrant demagogue). The Government took it into its head to vote a colossal salary to all senators and deputies with



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"The military and naval chiefs went up to Santiago in a body, held a meeting in their club and presented Senor Alessandre with fourteen pleas, the first of which was dissolution of Government. Nothing could stop them—they chucked out first the cabinet, then the senators and deputies, next the president, then the police prefects, next the municipalities took possession of all communication with outside

and exercised a strict censorship, cleared out the customs officials—a cleaner sweep can't be imagined.

"The 'Junta Militar' starts like all such movements as a non-party government and the effects on the class struggle cannot be prophesied. Chile is unbelievably primitive politically and honesty of politicians an achievement. There is practically no class consciousness amongst the workers as yet and the common bandits who abound call themselves innocently I.W.W.s."

REVIEWS

"TOO OLD AT FOURTEEN"

The Case for Socialism. By Fred Henderson (I.L.P. Publication Dept., 1s. and 2s. 6d.).

This is a reprint, with some omissions but no new material, of a popular manual first published as far back as 1911. Its reappearance above the name of the I.L.P. can hardly do that body much good, for it has changed and progressed a great deal in the last fourteen years; and this book has not. It is a typical example of the collectivist thought of pre-war days, being divided into chapters on Socialism and Personal Property, Liberty, Officialism, Waste, Levelling Down, Human Nature, etc. It obviously belongs to the period of Liberal ascendancy, when Socialists tried to seduce the working-man voter from the Liberal Party by showing that they were more Liberal than the Liberals. "We prove to you, intellectually, the injustice of capitalism; you are rational and free human beings; make your own choice, and we are sure it will be Socialism. We will bring you not less but *more* personal property, *more* liberty, *less* officialism, *less* waste."

No one who believes in the existence of the class-struggle can share either assumption, that of the continuity of Liberal and Socialist ideas, or that which ignores the influence exerted on men's opinions by their class and economic environment. The case for Socialism based merely on Justice is

incomplete; it needs to be strengthened by a passionate class-consciousness.

When we reflect that this book was issued in the year of the first great rail strike and in the middle of the Syndicalist ferment, it is almost incredible that there should be no reference to trade unionism. There is still a lingering, futile controversy in the ranks of the I.L.P. as to whether trade unionists are "real" socialists or not, but surely Mr. Henderson is unique in ignoring them altogether. A revised edition, moreover, might with advantage have said something about capitalism and war. Surprisingly, the author takes a vigorous stand against the compensation principle, and demands the more or less complete expropriation of the capitalist classes. In this respect the I.L.P. also seems to have abandoned its earlier position.

All this may be hypercritical. To the unconverted, some will argue, this book can do nothing but good. It will at least make them Socialists. Once they accept the principle you can persuade them to go further and (if you will) better by becoming Marxists afterwards. But that would seem a waste of time. Let the Labour Colleges and The PLEBS get in first, and so save the harassed worker the necessity of unlearning a lot. Mr. Henderson may have made thousands of converts by the first edition of his book (indeed, I was one of them), but to-day it is but second-rate propaganda.

J. L. G.

REFORMIST ECONOMICS

The Workers' Share. By A. Hook
Labour Publishing Company, Ltd.,
1924. Price 2s. 6d. (paper), 3s. 6d.
(cloth).

This book is about the workers' share in the national dividend, how much it is, what it is composed of, and how it might be increased. The author deals with the old statement that the workers get most of what is produced, that if it were divided equally they would not receive much more. He contends that the evil of the present system lies not so much in the unequal distribution of money as in the consequent unequal apportionment of labour-power and resources to the production of various things; that too many luxuries are produced and too few "normal needs," i.e., necessities of life; and that the workers' aim should thus be to increase the proportion of "normal needs" to other things produced. Three chief means to this end are discussed: taxation of large incomes and of luxuries, the enforcement of a national minimum, and the direct provision by the community of "normal needs" at fixed prices. The importance of the co-operative movement is emphasised. These amount to proposals for setting up a socialist commonwealth without mentioning the word "socialism."

Throughout the book the author's assumptions are those of orthodox economics and political theory. There is an entity known as the community that has a certain income, that can, if it will, determine the division of its income, and that can proceed to buy out powerful groups and interests and tax whole classes out of existence, or organise and subsidise alternative services to compete with them without more than constitutional interference. The all-important question of finance and the private banks is left untouched.

This book would be a useful one

to put into the hands of an obstinate disbeliever in the possibility of any socialistic order of society, who might be disarmed by its general orthodoxy and clever avoidance of socialist shibboleths, were it not that it contains several ideas of doubtful economic soundness. Thus, the proposal (p. 81) to "transport goods to their destination without any reference at all to the cost of transporting them" for a charge proportionate to their wholesale value would entail waste under any social system. The author deals with foreign trade (Chapters XII. and XIII.) in a very unsatisfactory manner; his proposals amount to an elaborate system of subsidies on manufactured exports paid out of the difference between the value of agricultural imports and their selling price on the home market. This is none the less a tax on imports because it is concealed under a state monopoly of import trade and justified by the necessity of paying higher wages to the agricultural worker. The author does not seem to see that this involves a rise in the price of "normal needs," but later (p. 92) he proposes that, in order to keep alive a dying export trade, "a small increase in the fixed retail price of 'normal needs'" should supply the subsidy required.

H. D. D.

LANGUAGE

The Philosophy of Grammar. Otto Jespersen (Allen & Unwin, 12s. 6d.).

The author has the merit in this compendious volume of making "direct observation of living speech" the basis of his study rather than documents written and printed in dead languages. In a previous work he similarly used the first lisplings of his own children to investigate the origin of language. Both in the text and the footnotes Jespersen shows that he is fully in-

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formed of the simplicity and improvements of the grammars of the so-called "artificial" languages in comparison with the irregularities and illogicalities of the grammars which have "just grown." Of course, as a savant of world fame he can still suggest improvements, forgetting his own maxim that life is bigger than logic, and that the latter sometimes rules out in

language the equally important virtues of clarity and beauty. However, the rare Marxian student of language cannot afford to neglect this book.

M. S.

[We regret that owing to pressure on our space this month several reviews, notes, etc. have to be held over.]

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)

TEN YEARS HARD LABOUR AND MORE
TO FOLLOW!

THE Executive of the Plebs League held a dinner in December in order to celebrate the ten years' active work done by Mrs. Horrabin as Secretary of the Plebs League and by J. F. Horrabin as Editor of the Magazine. It was at this dinner, by the way, that Mr. John Wheatley, M.P., made the speech that so much upset the Capitalist Press recently. The N.C.L.C. was represented at the celebration by the Chairman and Gen. Secretary, the former of whom presented to Mr. and Mrs. Horrabin an illuminated address in appreciation of their great services to the movement. When one thinks of the magnitude of the N.C.L.C. to-day and compares it with ten years ago, one is in a position to appreciate the good work done by The PLEBS. To Mrs. Horrabin fell the task of keeping the magazine going during one of the darkest parts of the war period. The PLEBS is now second to none amongst British working-class monthlies and even second to none, one may be bold enough to say, amongst the monthlies published by the International Labour Movement as a whole. A very great deal of the credit for this happy situation is undoubtedly due to the good fortune The PLEBS has had in its Editor, J. F. H. He, moreover, has also exercised an exceedingly healthy influence on the actual class work done, especially in the way of always insisting that the

last word on Independent Working-Class Education and on the subjects taught had not been said years ago. He has played a great part in the important job of preventing I.W.C.E. from sinking into a rut. There is no doubt that the sentiments of congratulation and appreciation expressed at the dinner are echoed throughout the whole movement.

A. A. Purcell's Tour.—The N.C.L.C. has been very fortunate in being able to book A. A. Purcell to give a series of Lantern Lectures throughout the country on "Russia Re-visited" with special reference to Trade Union Education. The lectures will be held jointly under the auspices of the N.C.L.C., and the local Trades and Labour Councils. This will be a splendid opportunity to do educational work and to win still further support for I.W.C.E.

Shop Assistants Union.—The Scottish Divisional Conference of the Shop Assistants Union carried a motion by the Aberdeen Branch reading as follows:—

"*W.E.A. and National Council of Labour Colleges.*—This Conference urges that the organisation should sever all connection with the Workers' Educational Association and throw in its entire support with the Independent Working Class Educational Movement as carried out by the National Council of Labour Colleges." Congratulations to Aberdeen! The N.C.L.C.'s General Secretary addressed

the Conference in the hope that all shop assistants, both in Scotland and England, will see to it that the forthcoming Annual Conference of the Union will decide on a N.C.L.C. Educational Scheme.

Scottish I.L.P.—On the same day as the Scottish Shop Assistants passed the above resolution the Scottish Conference of the I.L.P. carried a resolution to add to the immediate Aims and Objects "the provision of Independent Working-class Education." We trust that I.L.P.ers throughout the country will follow the matter up, as a Party that stands for the principle of *independent* working-class political action should fully realise the equal importance of *independent* working-class education.

N.C.L.C. Annual Meeting and Summer School.—The Executive have been able to make arrangements for combining the Annual Meeting, which will be held at the beginning of Whit-week (30th May), with a week's Summer School. Owing to difficulty in getting suitable accommodation in England during the holiday week it has been decided to book "Roseland," Rothesay, Scotland. Delegates to the Annual Meeting will have the advantage, if they attend the Summer School, of having their fares paid, and Colleges situated in the South of England are reminded that the delegates' fares to the Annual Conference are "pooled." The charge for the week's Summer School is to be £3 3s., but those actively engaged in assisting the N.C.L.C. as tutors, district secretaries, etc., will be able to get a substantial reduction on this figure, provided they are paying their own expenses.

The Lecture programme at present includes:—

Lecturer: A. A. Purcell, Vice-Chairman, T.U.C.; *Name of Lecture:* International Trade Union Organisation.

Lecturer: George Hicks, General Secretary, A.U.B.T.W.; *Name of Lecture:* The Building Trades and the Building Industry.

Lecturer: A. J. Cook, Secretary, M.F.G.B.; *Name of Lecture:* The Mining Unions and the Mining Industry.

Lecturer: J. Jagger, President, N.U.D.A.W.; *Name of Lecture:* Distributive Trade Unions and the Distributive Industry.

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Lecturer: W. H. Hutchison, A.E.U. Executive; *Name of Lecture:* The Engineering Unions and the Engineering Industry.

There will be Study Circles, led by J. F. Horrabin, W. Coxon and others.

The entertainment programme will include dramatic readings and plays. Already the A.U.B.T.W. has agreed to send a student from each of its Divisions. As accommodation is limited those who desire to attend the week's school are asked to book immediately. Please write J. P. M. Millar, General Secretary, N.C.L.C., 22, Elm Row, Edinburgh, and enclose 15s. booking fee. If any students desire to pay the £3 3s. or lesser sum by instalments this can be arranged, but please *write immediately*.*

Training Centre.—The Executive have been discussing the question of the Training of Tutors and a summary of their findings will be issued later. In the meantime it is hoped to arrange a six weeks' training course in London during the summer. Will all those who desire to take advantage of this please write immediately?

British T.U. Congress.—The General Council has appointed A. A. Purcell, who is our Honorary President, as their representative on the N.C.L.C. Executive.

National Association of Plasterers, Granolithic and Cement Workers.—Following upon an interview between the N.C.L.C. and the Rules Revision Committee of this Union, the latter agreed to alter its rules and to arrange for an N.C.L.C. Educational Scheme on the basis of fully 3d. per member per annum. The Union's General Secretary, A. H. Telling, has been appointed to represent it on our Executive. Particulars of the Scheme which will include free classes and free correspondence courses will be circulated later.

Managers and Overlookers Society.—This Union, which last year made a grant in connection with our class work, has this year decided on a definite Educational Scheme with free classes and correspondence courses, and arrangements are being made to put it into operation very shortly.

* See announcement in "Plebs Page" this month of other Summer Schools planned for this year, and note that arrangements for the other two are in the hands of The PLEBS Office.

Existing National Schemes.—College Secretaries and Tutors are urged to give special attention to the National Educational Schemes and to ensure the maximum amount of success.

What the Divisions are Doing

Div. 1.—The London Division, N.C.L.C., has presented a report to the London Labour Movement which states with just satisfaction that during the period under report as many as 107 classes have been conducted on a very varied curriculum. This is the largest figure in the history of the London Division. As many as 114 working-class organisations are affiliated. Within the last week or two new classes have been arranged at Erith, Watford, Crayford and Richmond.

Div. 2.—Comrade Schofield reports a very satisfactory extension of our educational work in the Portsmouth area and it is satisfactory to add that this work is receiving a rapidly growing support from the local Trade Union movement.

Div. 3.—Lantern lectures were given at Leighton Buzzard and Grays, and the former received one and a half column report in local press. Stevenage Class inserts report of its Economic Lectures by J. M. Williams in the *Worker* (Letchworth). Further successful lectures given to Norwich No. 1 Branch, Boot and Shoe Operatives on January 22nd and 29th. The Divisional E.C. meets on February 20th. Will classes forward any matters to be discussed?

Div. 4.—Fourteen Colleges and four affiliated Class Groups have now been established in the S. Wales area. During the last quarter fully fifty classes were running. A considerable number of miners' Districts and other working-class organisations have recently decided to support the work of the N.C.L.C. Further Day Schools have been arranged, Trevor Lewis, the Rhondda Secretary, sends on the programme of the Ninth Annual Chair Eisteddfod to be held at Ferndale in April. Among the items is an Essay Competition on "Why Independent Working-class Education"; the adjudicator being W. H. Mainwaring.

Div. 5.—R. O. Scrivens reports that Cheltenham College in addition to the usual classes is giving a series of lectures,

some of which are by M. Philips Price. Classes at Box and Corsham have arisen out of the Strike Meetings addressed last year by div.-organiser Phippen. A new class has been formed at Trowbridge and a tour on the "Industrial Development of the West of England" has been arranged with J. T. W. Newbold as Lecturer.

Div. 6.—A Conference is to be arranged for the Potteries shortly, and all I.W.C.E.ers in the area are asked to help to make it a success. Write div.-organiser T. D. Smith, 12, Old Meeting Street, West Bromwich. The div.-organiser has been lecturing at various classes on the "History of Metals," which subject is of peculiar interest to-day both for A.U.B.T.W. and A.E.U. members in view of the wide-spread use of steel in housing construction.

Div. 7.—With reference to the Managers and Overlookers Scheme referred to above, most of the members of the organisation are in this Division, and it is hoped that when once arrangements are complete, our local secretaries will do their utmost to make the Scheme a success. Thanks are due to Meredith Titterington for conducting the new class at Otley. A successful conference was held at Otley with a view to boosting the class. Doncaster College is now under way.

Div. 8.—Liverpool Labour College has an extensive list of 23 classes now running and has arranged a Speakers' Class in conjunction with the Liverpool Trades Council. Preston College has arranged a very attractive series of lectures in addition to its classes. Blackburn and District College issues a list of affiliations that would make some other Labour Colleges "sit up and take notice" and Blackburn has not stopped yet by any means. Mainly as a result of the participation of more Unions in N.C.L.C. National Schemes the attendance at classes, particularly that of A.E.U. members, has greatly increased throughout the Division. In Liverpool area the Carters' and Motormen's Union and the Sheet Metal Workers are taking up the educational facilities with considerable enthusiasm, while increasing support is being had from the Birkenhead and District Co-operative Society. The S.E. Lancs. Area in addition to running

quite a number of lectures has, during the past three months, conducted fully 31 classes, practically all of which are having extensive official support from local Unions.

Div. 9.—The Education Committee of the Barrow Town Council agreed after pressure, and thanks to the good support of Ald. J. Whinnerah and Comrade Longstaffe, to make a grant of £15 to each of the three classes run by the Barrow Labour College. The Town Council however, by a majority of one, turned down the proposal so that the College is to get no grant at all. The N.E. Labour College alone has 38 classes running, while Darlington is also pushing ahead with 7 classes. Div.-organiser Rees is now in the West with a view to meet the demand that is arising in that area. In the Spenneth District of the N.E. Labour College has issued a card with the following caption, advertising the local classes:—

"There is a time and place for Dancing.

There is a time and place for Football.

There is a time and place for Sport.
THE TIME AND PLACE FOR EDUCATION IS", etc.

Div. 10 (Scotland).—A successful Conference with staff-tutor J. B. Payne as speaker was held in Dumbarton and a local Committee has been formed. The Glasgow Labour College is running a series of Lantern Lectures by John S. Clarke. The Picture House used is crowded and in many cases numbers are turned away. Other Colleges who desire the services of J. S. C. should write him 5, George Drive East, Govan, Glasgow. The Glasgow District has also published a pamphlet on *Robert Burns and his Politics*, by John S. Clarke. The price is 3d., and other Colleges are asked to support Glasgow's enterprise. Orders should be sent to Secretary P. Campbell, 39, Duke Street, Glasgow. Last year the Edinburgh class students with the assistance of Miss Jacob, one of the tutors, produced a sketch at a Jamboree run by the College. This year the Glasgow students have formed the "Glasgow Labour College Players" with Mrs. Jean Kennedy as secretary. At Rothesay in September last they presented some plays and they are busy with some new ones. Edinburgh

District has arranged to break fresh ground by having classes at Bo'ness and Livingstone Station. Stirlingshire District Committee has appointed S. Walker as full-time tutor and all I.W.C.E.ers. in the District are urged to give him every assistance to make the remaining part of the winter session a great success. Lanarkshire District regrets that J. D. McDougall has been compelled to resign in consequence of ill-health. We trust he will have a speedy recovery.

Div. 11 (Ireland).—A. Ellis, of Newton-le-Willows, has been appointed div.-organiser and has now started work in Belfast. The Belfast Labour College is at present running four classes with H. Gemmell and A. Ellis as tutors. Belfast A.E.U. and N.U.D.A.W. are fortunate in having James Freeland and J. A. Kirk as officials, who are doing everything possible to get their members to take full advantage of the National Educational Schemes. Both Belfast branches of the A.E.U. have affiliated to the local Colleges. All I.W.C.E.ers in the North of Ireland Area are urged to get into immediate touch with div.-organiser Ellis, whose address will be found below.

Div. 12.—Comrade Bennett, Chesterfield Labour College secretary, forwards another list of new classes that have been started in his area. Mansfield Labour College is also very active and thanks are due to the energetic Secretary of the Northampton Class, Mr. Weston, of the A.U.B.T.W.

Directory.—Additions and Corrections.

- Div. 2.*—Dorchester Labour College, Sec. : J. H. Moore, 8, Durngate Street, Dorchester, Dorset.
- „ Newport Class Group, Sec. : Mrs. Pullen, 2, Lonsdale Avenue, Parkhurst, Newport, Isle of Wight.
- „ Portsmouth Labour College, Sec. : J. Brown, 38, Canal Walk, Portsmouth.
- „ Bridport Class Group, Sec. : Horace V. Fuller, 17, Barrack Street, Bridport, Dorset.

- Div. 3.*—Grays Labour College, Sec. : J. Jones, 169, Cromwell Road, Grays, Essex.
- „ Luton C.C., Sec. : J. R. Dransfield, Trade Union Club, Park Street, Luton, Beds.
- „ High Wycombe C.C., Sec. : E. Rolph, 56, Kitchener Road, High Wycombe, Bucks.
- „ Stevenage C.C., Sec. : L. Williamson, 131, Walkern Road, Stevenage, Herts.
- Div. 4.*—Cardiff Labour College, Sec. : E. J. Pearce, 31, Merches Gardens, Cardiff.
- „ Newport and Dist. Labour College : Sec. : G. Heap, 16, Queen's Hill, Newport, Monmouth.
- „ Pembroke Dock Labour College, Sec. : A. Evans, 30, Castle Street, Lower Penryn, Pembroke Dock.
- Div. 6.*—Dudley Labour College, Sec. : C. Barnsdell, 85, Munition Cottages, Dudley.
- „ Tettenhall Class Group, Sec. : E. Lawley, 26, Grange Road, Tettenhall, Wolverhampton, Staffs.
- „ Tipton Labour College, Sec. : H. J. Woodall, 5, Dudley Road, Tipton, Staffs.
- „ Worcester Labour College, Sec. : W. L. Huckfield, 298, Astwood Road, Worcester.
- Div. 8.*—Ashton-under-Lyne Labour College, Sec. : R. Waters, 82, Furnace Street, Dukinfield, Cheshire.
- „ Blackpool Labour College, Sec. : J. H. Lockwood, 25, Richmond Road, Blackpool.
- „ Darwen Labour College, Sec. : A. Fleming, 7, Lorne Street, Darwen.
- Div. 9.*—Divisional Organiser : Stanley Rees, c/o R. Morgan, 2, Glenfield Terrace, Barepot, Workington, Cumberland.
- Div. 10.*—Oban Class Group, Sec. : John W. Smith, 14, Alma Crescent, Oban, Scotland.
- Div. 11.*—Ireland : Divisional Organiser : A. Ellis, 33, Delaware Street, Ravenhill Road, Belfast.

The PLEBS Page

THE following is the result of the ballot for the 1925 Executive Committee:—

	Votes
R. W. Postgate ..	248
Geo. Hicks ..	247
Cedar Paul ..	244
Mark Starr ..	229
Ellen Wilkinson..	210
M. H. Dobb ..	215
M. Philips Price..	215
T. A. Jackson ..	183
Eden Paul ..	164
Geo. Phippen ..	91
A. Vandome ..	55
A. J. H. Okey ..	45

The first seven are duly elected.

About one-third of the ballot papers sent out were returned.

Please note that we compile our membership file from counterfoils of the receipt for the membership subscription, and if you did not get a ballot paper the inference is obvious. Don't forget we need a bigger membership this year. Catch your pal!

We want not only to increase our membership this year but to revive interest in the League, and to rouse people to join by new activities. The League has always consisted of those who felt that because they believed in the principles of independent working-class education then they must link themselves together into some organisation; but we have never attempted to make the building-up of an organisation, as such, our chief aim and we don't intend to do so now. Our main aim is propaganda for the idea, and help to the classes. At the same time it would not harm us to double our membership, and as to the new activities mentioned above—well, glance over the following paragraph:—

"A Manchester Plebs Group has just been brought into being. Its objects are, to push forward the work of the National Plebs League, to assist in the work of the local College, and at the same time to develop, encourage and assist the cultural, intellectual and social side of the movement. Will all willing

to become members please write to A. L. Gwilliam, 69, Heywood Street, Alexandra Park, Manchester."

There will probably be some "argy-bargy" from the cut-and-dried Marxists of the old school about these words "cultural" and "intellectual," so any group that wants to get busy can start by having a debate on some such subject as "That Art and Literature can be left till after the Revolution"; or "That Economics don't count amongst Human Beings"; or a dozen such controversial subjects. It may stir up the local lights and provoke some good discussions and so awaken interest not only in the classes but in much new work that can be done. Secretaries of groups are asked to let us know what is going on so that we can report.

In these days of fog and incessant rain, just to write the words "Summer School" seems encouraging. This year there will be three schools for I.W.C.E.ers to choose from. One in Scotland (Rothesay), at Whitsuntide, organised by the N.C.L.C.; one at Cober Hill again (July 4th to 11th) and one in Northern France (Aug. 8th to 15th). We cannot give details yet as prices have to be fixed, but the price will be kept as low as possible. Cober Hill will be £3 3s. as last year and we are hoping to be able to do the week in France for £5 to £7, from London, and to make arrangements for cheap bookings from other towns to London. Will all interested write to me. Unfortunately we could not get full particulars before going to press, but we shall probably know them before the March number is out, so that they can be supplied if a *stamped* envelope is sent for reply. We had a wonderful time last year, and we anticipate a rush; so don't ponder on it, or you may be too late.

W. H.

MAKE A NOTE NOW
Rothesay, May 30th—June 6th
(write J. P. M. Millar)
Cober Hill, July 4th—11th
Northern France, Aug. 8th—15th
(write PLEBS Office).

THE PLEBS LEAGUE

Report of Retiring Exec. Committee

TWELVE meetings of the E.C. have been held during the year, the attendances at which have been as follows:—R. W. Postgate (chairman), 12; Mark Starr, 12; M. H. Dobb, 11; Winifred Horrabin (hon. sec.), 11; J. F. Horrabin (Editor), 10; Cedar Paul, 8; Ellen Wilkinson, 6; J. T. Walton Newbold, 6; Geo. Hicks, 5; A. Vandome who was co-opted to act as PLEBS representative on the London I.W.C.E. Council has attended two meetings; and as N.C.L.C. representatives, J. P. M. Millar has attended two meetings, and J. Hamilton, one. Kathleen Starr (office secretary), has been present at all meetings; and J. M. Williams (accounts clerk), has presented a financial statement at two meetings. At its last meeting the E.C. had the pleasure of welcoming Mr. A. A. Purcell (vice-chairman T.U.C. General Council), as a visitor.

Apart from the regular routine business of discussing plans for each number of the magazine, and for other publications,* the most important items in the Executive's activities have been:

(1).—*The New Constitution of the League.*—This was decided upon in view of the fact that the formation of the N.C.L.C., and the handing over of all classes to that body, had made desirable a re-statement of the League's aims and objects. The new Constitution was framed after very full discussion, and was subsequently approved by the Annual Meet and a ballot vote of League members.

(2).—*The London Labour College Inquiry.*—The E.C. has done all in its power to urge upon the controlling Unions and the Board of Governors of the London Labour College, the desirability of making public, at least to affiliated bodies, the results of the inquiry held in response to the 1923 students' demand. Resolutions on the

matter were submitted to the Annual Conference of the N.C.L.C. in May, and were supported by a large majority of the delegates.

(3).—*Draft Report on Training of Tutors for N.C.L.C. Classes.*—The Annual Meet instructed the Executive Committee to prepare a draft scheme on the training, examination, etc., of class tutors, and for a residential college, and to submit same to the N.C.L.C. Executive. A sub-committee consisting of J. F. Horrabin, R. W. Postgate, and Mark Starr, drew up a draft, which was later discussed and approved by the E.C. and forwarded to the N.C.L.C.

(4).—*Representation on T.U.C. Advisory Committee.*—The E.C. has endeavoured—so far unsuccessfully—to secure representation on the Education Advisory Committee set up by the General Council of the T.U.C.

(5).—*"Left Wing" Conferences.*—Believing that such activities were in line with the concluding paragraph of the League's Constitution ("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,") members of the E.C. took the initiative in arranging two weekend conferences, held at Easton Lodge (Sept. 6th) and Jordans' Guest House (Nov. 29th), which were attended by Left Wingers attached to various working-class political parties and organisations. It was decided, however, that the E.C. should not be responsible for the agenda of such conferences, but merely that The PLEBS office should act as the convening body.*

(6).—*Office Re-organisation.*—On the recommendation of the Hon. Sec. the E.C. decided in September to increase the office staff by the appointment of J. M. Williams as accounts clerk.

* As these have already received full publicity in The PLEBS, as they were published, there is no need to draw up a complete list here.

* One member of the E.C. dissented from the inclusion of this paragraph in the E.C.'s Report.

(7).—*Central Tutorial Classes for London*.—The E.C. has suggested and discussed with Geo. Phippen (organiser, London District N.C.L.C.), plans for running central classes for intending tutors in London area.

The year ends with the League in a fairly satisfactory financial position, and with the circulation of the magazine

at a higher figure than has ever been reached previously. A Balance Sheet and Financial Statement will be published in an early issue of THE PLEBS.

For the E.C. (1924),

(Signed)

RAYMOND W. POSTGATE (Chairman).

WINIFRED HORRABIN (Hon. Sec.).

The PLEBS Bookshelf

I ADDED three to my row of Anatole France volumes recently. (That half-crown series published by John Lane is a boon and a blessing.) They were *The Gods are Athirst*, *The Well of St. Clare*, and *Balthasar*. The first-named is of course the biggest book. I had never read it before, so I'm probably well behind many Plebs who took advantage of the earlier cheaper edition. It would be interesting to compare *The Gods are Athirst* with Libedinsky's *A Week*, that startlingly vivid picture of the Russian Revolution in a small provincial town. Both books treat of great events and forces, of nations in revolution, and each gets its effects by showing how those events and forces react on the lives and fortunes of a small group of people. When you remember that whereas Libedinsky was, so to speak, drawing from life, Anatole France had to reconstruct the whole of his picture of the French Revolution from books and records, you realise the greatness of his achievement.

The Well of St. Clare is a collection of short stories about Italy of the early Renaissance; and there are more good stories than bad—which is more than one can say about some of the Anatole France story-volumes. Was ever a really great writer more unequal? There are half-a-dozen volumes of stories in this half-crown edition. I should say the really worth-while ones would just about fill one volume. I shouldn't include any from *Balthasar*.

The Greenwich correspondent whom I quoted last month as objecting to Michael Gold's poem (published in the October PLEBS), writes again to say that he's read and re-read the poem and "Where is the rhythm, I ask you?"

Almost by the same post comes a letter from a Manchester comrade beginning:—"Our friends complain that Gold's poem lacks rhythm. It lacks *rhyme*, but is none the worse for that. . . . It can surely only appear crude to readers unfamiliar with Whitman or Edward Carpenter, to name only two men who have used a freer form of verse." I'm afraid I should make a poor job of explaining where the rhythm comes in in a poem of this kind; and anyway there's no space this month for the attempt.

My Manchester friend, by the way, concludes his letter with the following interesting quotation from Whitman:—"I say the profoundest service that poems or any other writings can do for their reader is not merely to satisfy the intellect, or supply something polished and interesting, nor even to depict great passions, or persons, or events; but to fill him with vigorousness and clean manliness, religiousness, and give him *good heart* as a radical possession and habit." It seems to me that—rhythm or not—Gold's poem comes within that definition of poetry.

Poems of Revolt, chosen by Joan Beauchamp (Labour Publishing Co., 2s. 6d.), contains some fine things. But it scarcely lives up to the promise of its title—at least if you assume, as I did, that "revolt" meant the revolt of the workers. I know of course that the compiler of an anthology of contemporary poetry can't always include just what he'd like to—copyrights and such like obstacles get in the way. But why should G. K. Chesterton's "Anti-Christ: or, the Reunion of Christendom" be included in a book called *Poems of Revolt*, while that magnificent "Tell it to the Wheels, Master" (I can't remember its formal

title) is missing? And what about the same writer's "Sonnet to a Labour Leader on Concluding a Truce at Christmas"? Miss Beauchamp includes James Welsh's "Tribute to Robert Smillie." But a poem doesn't necessarily express any revolt because it's written to a revolutionary. Surely the poem Welsh contributed to the *Labour Magazine* a few months ago, shortly after the big Cumberland mining disaster, was far more worthy of a place.

The collection as a whole strikes a pacifist rather than a proletarian note, despite the fact that it opens with the anonymous poem, "Labour," which—though it be a parody—is the sort of poem that gives a proletarian "good heart"! There are some of Pat MacGill's "Songs of a Navvy." But there is nothing of John S. Clarke's. Osbert Sitwell's jibes at Winston were good fun when they appeared in the *Daily Herald*, but don't seem to me worth reprinting in a collection like this.

The W.E.A. has issued a student's cheap edition of *The Art of Literary Study*, by Prof. H. B. Charlton (Student's Bookshops, paper covers, 2s. 6d.). It is an interesting book, though it nowhere gives any hint that its author is aware of the existence of a working-class movement, or dreams that such a thing has anything to do with a point of view in literature. Within its limits, that is as a textbook of literary study quite apart from any reference to social background, it is useful and very well written. Let me confess that I've scoffed more than once at lectures on "The Beauties of Browning," and felt duly squashed when Prof. Charlton's analysis of the "Soliloquy in a Spanish Cloister" held me almost spellbound. No one could read this book without having his appreciation-faculty stimulated and strengthened; and that, after all, is as much as its title promises. But we still want "An Approach to Literature" written for worker-students, from the working-class point of view; and the W.E.A. won't supply it, because it doesn't understand what you're talking about when you state the need for it.

J. F. H.

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