

173

The PLEBS

Organ of the National
Council of Labour Colleges

Monthly, 4^d

FEBRUARY, 1928

WHERE

IS THE

N.C.L.C.

GOING?

A Reply to Certain Critics

GIFT
MAR 6 1928

UNIVERSITY

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THE LABOUR MONTHLY

Edited by R. PALME DUTT

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(R. W. Leicester, Nov. 27, 1927.)

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THE PLEBS

Organ of the National Council of Labour Colleges

VOL. XX.

FEBRUARY, 1928.

No. 2

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WHERE IS THE N.C.L.C. GOING?

By J. F. H.

CERTAIN of our friends have been expressing anxiety as to the present position, and future direction, of the N.C.L.C. Early in January the *Sunday Worker* published a review, by T. A. Jackson, of J. S. Clarke's *Marxism and History*, under the heading, "Where Is The N.C.L.C.? Is It Deserting To Marx's Enemies?" A fortnight later, alongside a letter from J. P. M. Millar replying to Jackson, there appeared a letter signed by a Scottish Labour College (voluntary) tutor which roundly declared

that throughout the whole Labour College movement there was "a gradual desertion of the whole position taken up in the past," and that it was now necessary to "fight to preserve the Marxist basis of the N.C.L.C."

Apparently this aroused some protests from N.C.L.Cers. On January 29th, T. A. Jackson returned to the charge—or perhaps one should say, stood on his defence—referring definitely to two letters (from J. P. M. Millar and Winifred Horrabin) but quoting no others. (Copies of one or two letters which were sent to the *S.W.* but

not published have been forwarded to us, and we shall return to them later.)

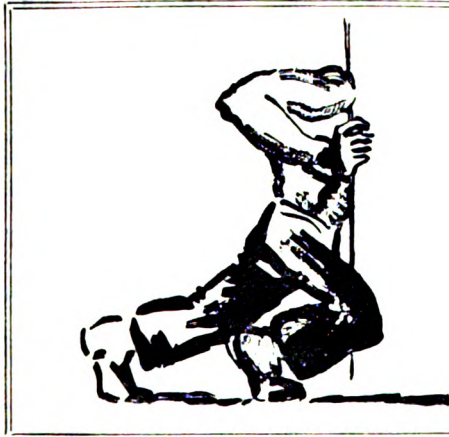
A Charge—but No Evidence.

Before going further into this matter it is necessary to sort things out a little. In the first place the *Sunday Worker* puts a “stunt” heading on a review of a particular book. It repeats that heading every time the subject is raised again in its columns. *And the only ground for the serious insinuation contained in that heading is the very vague and general charge made in the aforementioned Scottish tutor’s letter.* Jackson, in his second article, explicitly says that he does not wish to discuss “recent developments within the N.C.L.C. movement,” since “with these I

the N.C.L.C. is in some way going back on its professed basis—selling out, in fact.

Criticism—and Communism.

Now it is perhaps best to speak quite plainly; and the plain fact is just this:—When the *Sunday Worker*, and certain other critics, say that we’re not Marxist, what they really mean is that we’re not *Communist*. What they object to is the N.C.L.C.’s fixed determination to become neither a political organisation nor a part of a political organisation. Plebs will recall that, a year ago, when a *Sunday Worker* reviewer disagreed with certain opinions expressed in *A Workers’ History of the General Strike*, precisely the same sort of attempt was made to suggest that the PLEBS



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have neither the desire nor (from lack of detailed knowledge) the ability to deal.” He declares that the only question he is concerned with is, “Is Clarke’s book up to the N.C.L.C. standard?” Very well. We have no quarrel with candid critics, and in any case Clarke is quite well able to look after himself. (We may be forgiven for mentioning here that we smiled when we saw that along with Jackson’s strictures Clarke had received congratulations on his work from so well-known a Marxist scholar as Max Beer.)

But the main point at issue is not Clarke’s book. The more serious matter is the *Sunday Worker*’s “suggestion”—for it is no more than that, since not a shred of evidence is produced in support of it—that

was “moving to the right,” and that the writers of the *History* were betraying their principles. Where we were wrong was that we didn’t always see eye to eye with the *Sunday Worker*; i.e., with the C.P.G.B. Which, of course, as we all know, possesses the one and only CORRECT interpretation of events, movements and tendencies; and whose members, excellent comrades though many of them are, often tend to get unduly irritated if they are not allowed to control movements which for one reason or another they support.

The N.C.L.C.’s position has been stated in these pages a hundred times. We appeal for the support of the whole working-class movement—and we have won the support of individuals and groups repre-

sending every wing of that movement. We are not concerned, so long as they are class-conscious Socialists, whether our helpers and supporters belong to this or to that working-class political organisation. And in the N.C.L.C., accordingly, Labour Party members, I.L.Pers, Communists and Trade Unionists co-operate. But such co-operation is plainly impossible if every time any one of them discovers anything in this magazine, or in an N.C.L.C. publication, or in a tutor's remarks, which does not fit in exactly with his individual convictions as to present-day tactics, he raises a cry that the N.C.L.C. is selling the pass, "going over to Marx's enemies," and so on.

Where is the "Sunday Worker" Going?

We repeat—the *Sunday Worker's* scare headlines may be smart journalism, of the approved modern Fleet Street brand; but like other examples of that brand they do not make for clear thinking. And this brings us to the letters above mentioned, which were sent to, but not published in, the *Sunday Worker*; and from which we would like to quote a point or two. The first, from the secretary of the Scottish Labour College (Edinburgh District) mentions that the tutor whose letter attacking the N.C.L.C. appeared in the *Sunday Worker* is a member of the C.P.G.B. and "gives first allegiance to that body." The second, from a Liverpool comrade, mentions that in the Mersey District a C.P. member is tutoring W.E.A. classes; and further points out that two prominent friends of the *Sunday Worker* and of the Minority Movement, A. J. Cook and S. O. Davies, are contributors to the January issue of the *Highway*, the official organ of the W.E.A. He asks, pertinently we think, "Where is the C.P. and the M.M.?"

We conclude by answering the *Sunday Worker's* repeated question thus:—The N.C.L.C. is going on with its job of rousing, and teaching, class-consciousness, undeterred by Communist—or other—efforts to make it a wheel for some particular waggon. And the *Sunday Worker* would be well advised to rely on evidence rather than on headlines when next it brings seri-

ous charges against a body of working-class fighters.

The New "Plebs."

Our January number has brought us many congratulations, and a few criticisms. The criticisms, in the main, were of small points. The congratulations were many of them couched in similar terms to this letter from a Lincoln comrade:—

Just a line to say that I am sure the new PLEBS will have a greater appeal to the average student than the old one, and you can rest assured I shall do all I can to increase its sale.

We want to draw your attention, gentle reader, to the sentence we have italicised. There were many increased orders, and not a few "repeat" orders, for the January issue, and the prospect for February is encouraging. But we haven't heard yet from quite a lot of our friends, and if you're one of these we'd like to remind you that there's a Big Push on, and that we're finding out just now *who our real friends are*. You see what we're driving at?

Another Critic.

E. E. Hunter, whose onslaught on I.W.C.E. in a recent number of the *Socialist Review* we referred to last month, has accepted our invitation to repeat his criticisms in these pages. We hope to publish his article next month.

Hush! Hush!

seems to be the policy of some PLEBS readers. They buy us, read us, like us, but they never say a word to a soul.

WE'RE NOT A SECRET.

Introduce us to your friends.

MACEDONIA

A Balkan "Sore"

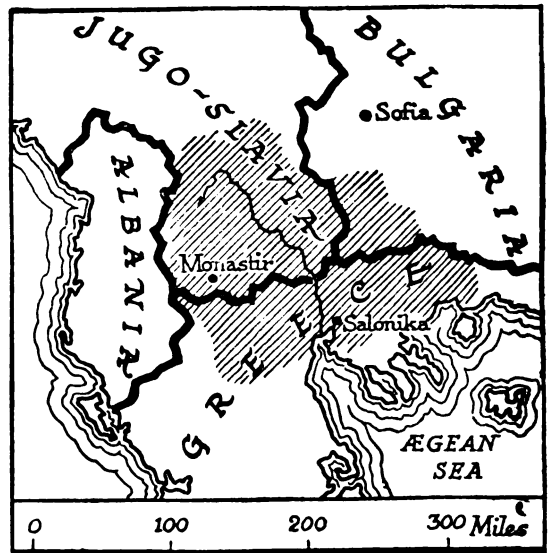
By CHAS. H. GRAY

Macedonia (shaded in the accompanying map) is now divided between Jugo-Slavia, Bulgaria, and Greece. This article, the writer of which has just returned from a visit to the Balkans, describes some of the problems resulting from that situation.

ASERBIAN will tell you that the Slavs of Macedonia are the purest Serbs; for was not Macedonia the centre of that Serbian empire which fell only with the Turkish conquest, and do not the people of Macedonia to-day make use of the most exclusively Serbian customs? A Bulgarian will tell you that the Slavs of Macedonia are the purest Bulgarians; for is not their speech a Bulgarian dialect, and was not Macedonia not only the heart of a Bulgarian mediæval Empire, but the very mainspring of the nineteenth century Bulgarian revival? Russia championed Bulgaria, and in 1878 the Treaty of San Stephano would have given Macedonia to a big Bulgaria. But England was jealous of Russia's protégé, and Disraeli came back triumphant from Berlin with "Peace with Honour"; with a "peace" to which a large share of responsibility in much blood and misery since then must be ascribed. Macedonia remained Turkish till 1912.

Endless War.

Bulgaria's influence, with her independent schools, remained the most powerful. But Serbia always disputed the ground with her. Priests and schoolmasters carried on endless war. Christians murdered Christians and said it was the Turks who had done the killing. The Revolutionary Organisation was formed, and in 1903 a large-scale insurrection was staged, and most bloodily suppressed. Always the



great Powers, especially Austria-Hungary and Russia, fished in these troubled waters. The first Balkan War was fought to drive out the Turks; the second over the division of the disputed portion of the spoils—Macedonia, the strategic key to the Balkans, as well as a land of considerable economic importance. The greater part of Macedonia fell to Serbia; Bulgaria obtained a small section of Eastern Macedonia; and the South-East, including Salonika, fell to Greece. The conquerors set about Serbizing, Bulgarizing, and Hellenizing their new territory, and intriguing in the country of their neighbours.

During the Great War Bulgaria naturally fought on the side of Serbia's enemies; and for a third time Bulgaria was cheated of her prey. Jugo-Slavia was born, and obtained a further small but important section of what had hitherto been Bulgarian Macedonia. And Bulgaria lost to Greece all her Aegean seaboard.

But the struggle continues. Italy and France have taken the place of Austria-Hungary and Russia; that is all, except that contact with the outside world has at last begun to have some effect on the wretched peasants and workers of Macedonia, who for generations have starved and fought to further the ambitions of their masters.

Macedonian Rebels not Bulgarian Agents.

The writer has recently returned from a visit of nearly seven weeks' duration to this troubled land. He visited the scenes of nearly all the recent Macedonian "outrages," and in spite of opposition by the Jugo-Slav authorities, succeeded in talking with representatives of all sections of the population. He is convinced that the Macedonian Revolutionaries cannot simply be dismissed as a band of professional bandits, working on behalf of the most reactionary elements in Bulgaria to prevent any compromise with Jugo-Slavia and hoping even at the cost of foreign (that is of Italian) intervention to build up a bigger Bulgaria.

It is probable that some of the leaders of the Macedonian Organisation, at least, include mere Bulgarian chauvinists. And it is true that there are many Bulgarian "patriots" among the thousands of Macedonian refugees who live in Bulgaria. There are 150,000 Macedonians in Sofia alone. There are many Macedonians among the military clique which is accused of having murdered Stamboulisky, and which is said largely to rule Bulgaria to-day. Liapcheff, Prime Minister to-day, and successor of the butcher Tsarkoff, is a Macedonian.

A Live Movement.

But the roots of the Macedonian Revolutionary Movement lie not only, as we have seen, in the past. The Movement is not just a branch of the Sofia Government. It lives throughout Macedonia to-day; and its continued vitality is largely dependent on the actual conditions in Jugo-Slav Macedonia.

As the result of the working of rival propagandas, chiefly through schools, for several generations in Macedonia, the population is comparatively well-educated. Among the members of the older generations, Macedonians may be found in Jugo-Slav territory, who are only Bulgarian patriots. But, especially among the younger people and the poorer classes, there is a very real hatred of both the warring

factions, which have brought nothing but misery to the country, and an appreciation that only an autonomous Macedonia as part of a Balkan Federation can bring a solution.

Political Persecution.

All genuine local political life has been suppressed in Jugo-Slav Macedonia. A frank Serbian minister declared during the recent elections that it would not be possible to permit local candidatures for twenty-five years. Stepan Raditch, the Croatian peasant leader, tried to bring forward lists consisting in the main of local names. But the signatories were intimidated by the police; the lists themselves destroyed; and members of the Raditchist party set upon and wounded by police in mufti. Not one list was allowed to be presented. It is not suggested that such electoral practices are not general in the Balkans. The point is that when feelings run as strongly as in Macedonia the results are apt to be particularly unpleasant, in the long run, for the Government concerned.

The very name of "Macedonia" is suppressed; Jugo-Slav Macedonia is known officially as Southern Serbia. Schools, staffed by fanatical teachers from the old kingdom of Serbia, carry on the work of Serbization. All the important officials are brought in from outside. The fact that the local "intelligentsia" finds itself suspect, and therefore not employed by the Government, enormously increases under present Balkan conditions the forces of discontent.

A Welter of Races.

Only about 70 per cent. of the population of Jugo-Slav Macedonia consists of Slavs. The balance is composed of Turks, Kutzovlachs (Roumanians), Albanians, and gypsies. The only schools which exist, apart from two small French schools which are tolerated under stringent conditions and for political staging, are the Serbian schools. Yet most of these minor nationalities enjoyed their own schools during the last years of Turkish rule. There is slight provision for the Mohammedan children to be taught in their native tongue of Turkish or Albanian; that is all. A

Turkish attempt to form a separate party was violently suppressed about two years ago, and the leaders of the movement imprisoned.

The district of Kosovo Plain, which adjoins Macedonia to the north, was also visited. It is 80 per cent. Albanian-speaking, but the schools are all Serbian schools. Everywhere in Jugo-Slavia the priests of all religions are paid by the Government. It would be difficult to exaggerate the hold which this gives Belgrade over the villages.

Greek Macedonia.

In Greek Macedonia the bulk of the Slavs have left as the result of an "exchange" treaty with Bulgaria. Almost all the Mohammedans have gone to Asia Minor, since the Treaty of Lausanne, and to-day a large proportion of the population of Greek Macedonia consists of Greek "refugees" from Asia Minor. The amount of hardship involved in these mass peasant-migrations was enormous. There are perhaps about 130,000 Macedonian Slavs still living in Greece. These have no schools; and as (unlike Serb) Greek bears no resemblance at all to Macedonian, the hardship is much greater.

Both Jugo-Slavia and Greece exercise a veritable terror in Macedonia. The officials who are sent there are those whose influence and competence is so low that they cannot avoid what is regarded as a dangerous exile. Their efforts are largely devoted to currying favour with their superiors by the "firmness" of their patriotic measures.

The existence of frontiers, cutting right across the natural flow of trade, and the

continuance of acute political unrest, combine to make Macedonia materially depressed. In addition, Jugo-Slav Macedonia, in common with all the new provinces, pays taxes at a much higher rate than the old provinces. The population of Monastir, which was 80,000 in 1912, has fallen to-day to something like 26,000.

The Only Solution.

These conditions, then, are those in which the Revolutionary Organisation flourishes. If, owing to the passage of time, to dislike of the reprisals its activities provoke, and to its forced "loans" of money, its influence is not as great as it was several years ago, its influence is still very high. And events may well give it all, and more than all, of its former importance. Among the saner Serbians of the Right there is a feeling that it might be wise to conciliate Bulgaria by making concessions in Macedonia, in order to purchase her support against Italy. But it is unlikely that such relative sanity will win. Among parties of the Left, both in Sofia and in Belgrade, it is universally recognised that only a Federal solution of the problems of the Balkans can enable them to fight reaction at home, and to make a stand against Imperialist military manœuvres and fortune-hunting. In the fact that this realisation is gaining ground among the masses lies the chief hope for the Balkans. Whether, in the face of domestic chauvinism allied with external Imperialism, such a solution can be achieved otherwise than through a general insurrection following or preceding a war, remains to be seen.

OUR JOB IS TO ASK "WHY?"

"We are taught that faith is a virtue. . . . Nevertheless, at the present time I believe that mankind is suffering from too much rather than too little faith, and it is doubt rather than faith that must be preached. I am not thinking wholly or even mainly of faith in the Christian or any other religion, but simply of THE HABIT OF TAKING THINGS FOR GRANTED."

J. B. S. Haldane, in *Possible Worlds*.

THOMAS HARDY

A Writer who Scorned Pretences

By T. A. JACKSON

IF ever the gods laughed it must have been when Thomas Hardy was given a "Christian" burial in Westminster Abbey. It was as though official bourgeois society had conspired to execute just the very ritual ceremonial which would best vindicate the ironical pessimism which forms the ground-strata of the whole of Hardy's work.

Only bourgeois society, too ingrained in hypocrisy to have retained any sense of sincerity or congruity, could have conceived in all solemnity the pantomime of burying "in the sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection" the man whose whole life's work testified that he neither possessed nor desired any such "hope"—the man whom they had denounced as "pagan," "atheistical," "immoral" and "obscene," whose works they had belittled and banned (so far as they could) from public circulation—the man whom they had forced by their never-failing abuse to abandon novel-writing for poetry and who gained commendation in their eyes solely by living long, ceasing to annoy them openly, and becoming a "success" in the "best circles."

Complete the picture with a vision of London fashionables flocking to the graveside of the man who had scorned them with a life-long scorn, and flocking there because it was the "right thing, you know," add the official representatives of those "Dynasts," the tragedy implied in whose existence he had taken as the theme for his one great poem-drama, and the irony is complete.

Hardy was in fact honoured by official society almost wholly because he had lived so long that the propagandist force of his earlier (and more obviously intelligible work) had become blunted by sheer lapse of time.

It is difficult now to envisage the time when *Tess* and *Jude the Obscure* were re-

garded as obscene. We know that it was so—and so much so that when *Tess* first appeared in serial form, some of its best chapters were deleted by the editor (despite Hardy's furious protest) on the ground that they were unfit for publication in a sixpenny periodical. But we know also that had they



THOMAS HARDY

been obscene in reality they would, nowadays, have been reprinted in millions.

The Deaconesses' Dictatorship.

Hardy had the misfortune to write them in the days when the Nonconformist Conscience had established its deaconesses' dictatorship, and he suffered accordingly. That age has passed; it melted into Brummagem imperialism, and that in turn into post-war Imperialism absolute, Imperialism tensed in all its sinews to meet the imminent Day of the Proletarian Revolu-

tion. What was felt as a blow full in its face by the timidly truculent Nonconformist conscience is less than a fleck of dust to Imperialism aware of a crisis in its fate.

For truth to tell Hardy brought no hope to the proletariat "rightly struggling to be free." He knew them, in the persons of the rural workers of his beloved Dorsetshire, and loved them; loved them all the more poignantly because he pitied them and the hopelessness of the doom they shared as the common lot of man, but to a more intensely tragical degree.

"The Mud-hearted Bourgeois."

He pitied the proletariat; he scorned bourgeois society. He had nothing but bitter contempt for the comfortable optimism of orthodox religion, morality and philosophy. He could see no cure for the evils—there was, he felt, nothing to do but bear up as bravely as one could; but he had this great and compelling virtue—he would not pretend that life was other than the grimly tragic thing that his sight and sense showed it to be.

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I—THE CLASS STRUGGLE

By J. P. M. M.

NOT a day passes nowadays but some reference is made to the class struggle or to "class warfare."

According to capitalist newspapers there is no class struggle but simply an occasional misunderstanding between masters and men. These newspapers are quite definite that the class struggle as a fundamental fact does not exist. Of course they are agreed that there are fomenters of artificial "class warfare," who endeavour to stir up trouble, and occasionally do. That, however, we are invited to believe, is a mere passing event like the sting of an irritated wasp.

Is the class struggle then a fundamental fact? That is the first question that every new student should have no doubts about. Unless he understands the class struggle issue, he cannot understand the history of his own times and the actual conditions in which he lives. In short he cannot understand the bread-and-butter question.

Oh, to be a Banker!

One way to deal with the problem is to ask ourselves whether a skilled workman, a doctor or a teacher has as much control over the country and its system of production as an absentee mill or mine-owner or a large shareholder in a bank. Everyone knows that none of the former members of the community has a fraction of the power.

The reason for that is that we are living in capitalism which (if my memory isn't tricking me) an old edition of Chambers' encyclopædia describes as "a system of society controlled by capitalists." The result is that Sir Alfred Mond, for instance, has more power than 10,000 skilled workmen.

Under capitalism the capitalists, through owning the means of life, compel the workers to carry on production to provide profit for the capitalists.

The Trade Union movement, the Labour Party, the Co-operative movement, the N.C.L.C. and similar bodies are the weapons forged by the workers to try to minimise or stop capitalist exploitation. In using these weapons the workers carry on and at the same time demonstrate the existence of the class struggle.

How that struggle goes to the very roots of the social system and periodically shakes it to its foundations was shown, for example, by the General Strike.

The Acid Test.

In a short talk such as this it is impossible to give a tithe of the facts that demonstrate the *fundamental* nature of the class struggle. Those who want further information should send to the N.C.L.C. for, say, Kautsky's book *The Class Struggle* (3/3 post free).

In conclusion though, lest someone thinks this talk quite one-sided, I shall quote from one of the most famous anti-Socialists. Mr. Hilaire Belloc in the *New Witness* as far back as 1913 said: "The great issue before England to-day is the issue between the proletariat and the capitalist." . . . It is the issue on which "all English history is turning with catastrophic speed and upon which a man's ideas are the test of his political capacity."

NOBODY

has ever knocked at your door and said: "I've never heard of The PLEBS, but I want to buy it."

Moral—

ADVERTISE US

WHERE WORKERS RULE

My Russian Impressions

By W. A. STRAWBRIDGE

Comrade Strawbridge visited Russia for the Tenth Anniversary celebrations as the representative of the N.C.L.C. Executive.

WE arrived at Leningrad on the morning of the 4th November, amidst bunting-bedecked ships and buildings. Many thousands of workers with bands and banners gave us welcome. Speeches of welcome given and replied to electrified the air and made one forget one's cold feet.

The Russian Challenge.

The Russian speeches challenged us to examine the Russia of to-day, with the pre-Revolution Russia. We were told to remember the famine, the civil war, the attempts at economic blockade, and then to close our eyes at none of their shortcomings, but to go back and tell our people the truth about what the Russians had failed to achieve as well as what they had achieved.

In Leningrad we visited an orphan home. There were about fifty kiddies, aged between three and six, all healthy and bubbling over with young life. We heard them sing of the joys of the new system, then dance and play. In a jocular way I ventured to ask one of our delegates (a miner's wife from South Wales) if she would like to take a few home with her. Her answer was much to the point: "God forbid that I should do anything so criminal." I felt I had drawn a blank!

More Production.

Factory visiting in Russia is an experience. A few of us visited a rubber factory where 4,500 people were employed making rubber boots and goloshes. After a chat with the manager and the chairman of the

Factory Committee, we had a walk around the works. To stop and chat with one of the workers is the signal for all in that area to gather around, all anxious to talk, and most of them doing it at the same time! We must hear of the fact that 12,000,000 pairs were produced in 1927, against 3,000,000 in 1913, and of hopes of 20,000,000 next year. Did we know that real wages were three times as high now as in 1913? That the improved methods were the results of the workers' efforts? Did we know that £10,000 was spent annually upon safety work? That no one was permitted more than two weeks successively in dusty places? These are but some of the things they were anxious we should realise.

For the Kiddies.

Children's crèches are a feature of all Russian factories. We visited one attached to the rubber factory. Here mothers working at the factory leave their children during working hours. In one room were twenty-seven children between eighteen months and four years of age; in another room were twenty-one babies under eighteen months old. There was a staff of seventeen nurses, provided by the Commission of Education. All nursing mothers leave their work at regular intervals to feed their babies. The rooms, decorated in white enamel, were large and airy. Before we entered the

greatest care was taken that we left outside any factory dust and dirt. We had to don a long white overall tied at neck and wrists.

Crèches are provided free of cost and are general in all industries all over the U.S.S.R. where women are employed. It is interesting to note, too, that crèches are a feature of all workers' clubs, where children can be left in safe hands while the parents are at a meeting or play.

The Red Square.

Amidst and above the many impressions that crowd themselves upon one's mind is that of the Red Square on the 7th November. Picture, if you can, a procession stretching as far as the eye could see, of men and women in lines fifty across and with bands and banners. It is eleven o'clock in the morning. They are marching, marching, cheering and shouting, "Long live the Workers' International." Twelve o'clock, one o'clock, still marching, marching, cheering, cheering, hour after hour. Two o'clock, three, four, five o'clock, still marching. At six o'clock and seven o'clock we were still there watching the seeming endless column, marching, cheering, shouting enthusiastically and passionately. One felt this was more than a procession of people; it was a demonstration of spirit that expressed achievement and a challenge to any that would rob them of what they had won.

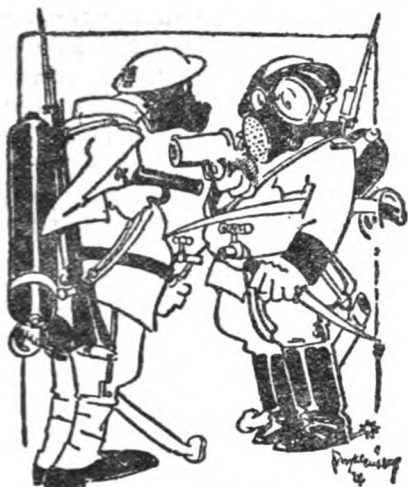
A LIBERAL ON CHINA

The Chinese Puzzle, by Arthur Ransome (Allen and Unwin, price 5/-), a collection of articles reprinted from the *Manchester Guardian*, gives us the typical Liberal outlook upon the Chinese question. A large part of it is devoted to Ransome's personal experiences, on his travels to Hankow and to Peking, and of his meetings with such leaders of the revolution as Eugene Chen and C. C. Wu. These descriptions are extremely vivid and excellent in every way, but when he attempts to analyse the social forces at work behind the revolution or to dabble in economics, the result is failure.

On the second page of the book one is met by the extraordinary statement that the troops which

were sent to Shanghai were sent as a "sop" to the "die-hard" Tories and that, "the British troops, though illegally in China, are a part of Sir Austen Chamberlain's *conciliatory* policy." (Our italics.) And later on we find the Shanghai Defence Force praised, as "its presence brings the North nearer to compromise with the South." It is indeed a strange twist of the mind which sees "conciliation" in the landing of any army on the soil of a friendly power, and then justifies such action because it may in the dim future help to unite China against the foreigner!

One can, however, make some allowance for such aberration of judgment on the part of a Liberal, but when it comes to a deliberate misinterpretation of the plainest facts, no forgiveness is possible. The book is amusing and makes an interesting evening's entertainment, but one wishes that Ransome had confined himself to descriptions of men and places, rather than to dabbling in pseudo-social analysis.



"The Acme of Security"

(From the Amsterdam *Notenkraker*).

THE question of whether there is an immediate danger of another European war has been raised in the minds of a good many people by the speeches which were made and the discussion which took place at the recent Congress in Moscow of the Friends of Soviet Russia.

The prominent Labour leader who warned the Russians some time ago against "crying wolf" when there was no wolf, probably expressed the view of the average Englishman, but I would suggest that when considering this question we should remember an equally old saying which runs "It's no use locking the stable door after the horse is stolen."

Let us consider for a moment what has taken place. When the cry of danger was first raised, it was met with contemptuous denials. When proof upon proof was put forward, the denials ceased and we were subjected to a smoke screen of disarmament proposals, international arbitration, industrial peace, industrial arbitration, pacts and protocols. All the while under the smoke screen the race for armaments has gone on, the trade unions have been shackled by repressive legislation and fascism has been

THE NEXT WAR

What is Capitalism arming for?

By JOHN JAGGER

(President, N.U.D.A.W.)

encouraged and strengthened on every hand.

That Peaceful Feeling!

In 1913, the military expenditure of the six great powers totalled £280,000,000 per annum, but in 1926 it had increased to over £428,000,000, or an increase of nearly 60 per cent., in spite of the fact that the Versailles Treaty imposed drastic reductions in military expenditure upon Germany. As a matter of fact, if we leave Germany out of the calculations, the increase is more like 100 per cent.

In 1913 the land forces of England, France, and the United States totalled 1,413,000. To-day they are 1,821,000. In addition to the regular army, the five great powers, U.S.A., Great Britain, Japan, France and Italy, have reserves either of a constitutional or a Fascist character, amounting to at least 20,000,000.

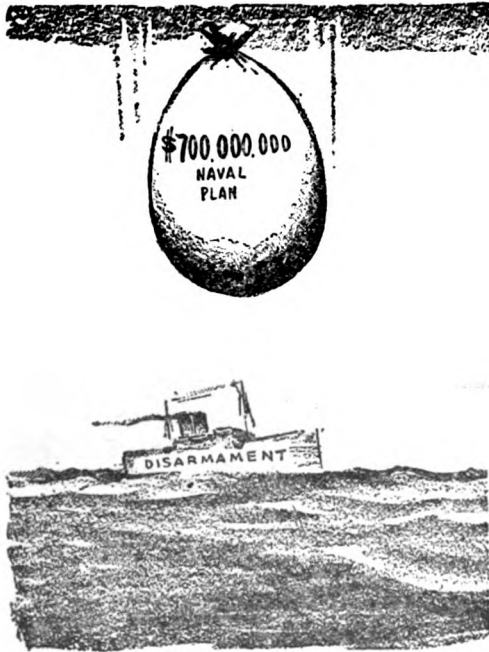
Let us turn to the navies. Great Britain has increased her strength in cruisers between 1922 and 1926 by 32 per cent.; U.S.A. by 210 per cent., and Japan by 100 per cent. Great Britain shows an increase of destroyers of 177 per cent.; U.S.A. by 182 per cent., and Japan by 360 per cent. In submarines Great Britain is up by 52 per cent.; U.S.A. by 62 per cent., and Japan by 309 per cent. Where there were 150 aeroplanes in 1915 there are now 3,350, and to show that the last war is not entirely

WHERE DO IDEAS COME FROM?

See MARXISM AND HISTORY - 1/1 or 1/7 post free.

the cause of this I may point out that the number of aeroplanes has more than doubled since 1923. It is most significant to notice that in Finland, Esthonia, Lithuania, Poland and Roumania to-day the air fleets amount to a figure which is four times greater than the air fleets of the whole world in 1913.

Immediately after the last war the capitalist Governments joined in pious expressions against the use of poison gas in warfare. Both the Washington Conference and the League of Nations decided on its prohibi-



"Another Bombing Attack."

An American comment on "Big Navy" proposals.

tion. Not a single country has ratified this decision and the U.S.A. Senate Committee definitely refused to ratify the Geneva protocol, and all the big capital countries are straining every nerve to perfect this devilish arm of war. All this takes no account of the mechanisation of war which has enormously increased the power for destruction. **Who's the Enemy?**

Does this look like Peace? It looks like War. War against whom? Is it England against America? Is it America against Japan? France against Italy? England against France? All or any of these wars are possible and will be possible so long as

Imperialism and Capitalism dominate the Chancellories of civilised nations, and there have been times when the friction over export trade, the hegemony of the Pacific, the rivalries over the trade of the Mediterranean and the near East, or the preservation of Britain's route to the far East might any of them set at least two of the nations at each others' throats.

That danger is still with us and always will be so long as competition is the rule between nations, but at the moment the capitalists of all these nations tend to be thrown into each others' arms rather than at each others' throats in the face of common enemies. The business of capitalism is exploitation. Russia has taken one-sixth of the world's surface out of the circle dominated by the exploiters. True, capitalism has temporarily stemmed the tide of revolution in the West, but there are ominous rumblings in the East that portend a possibility that capitalism may find its Waterloo in China, and rightly or wrongly, capitalism holds Russia responsible for what happens in China. Hence we find the capitalist nations prepared to co-operate with any kind of bandit or baron who will fight the revolutionaries, and, where possible, to buy and bribe even the leaders of the revolution.

Turning the Other Cheek.

One might say that at the moment the thing which matters most to the workers of the world is whether or not the Chinese revolution is successful. If it is, and we get a Chinese Soviet Republic, what can stem the tide of proletarian revolution in India, Egypt, Syria, Morocco and Nicaragua? In that event, as capital sees plainly, "Othello's occupation would be gone." If the revolution in China can be permanently defeated, then the shackles of capitalism are more firmly rivetted on the workers of all lands. Therefore, having temporarily split the revolutionary movement in China, they turn to Russia and by every means in their power seek to provoke Russia into action which will justify them in the eyes of the world in making a massed attack on her. Up to the moment Russia has defeated their object by turning the other cheek, and therefore the position must

be forced, and the natural way to force it is through Poland. How else can you explain the feverish war preparations now going on at their military headquarters?

Was a British General inspecting the Polish troops along the Russian frontier six months ago? And why?

Does anyone want proof that the Balkans are being armed for the fray? If so, let him read the speech of the prosecuting counsel in the recent "spy" trial. Yes! Everything points to war and to war against Soviet Russia. One thing holds capitalism back from the overt act. Would the workers of France and Britain flock to arms in sufficient numbers? Would the seamen man troopships? Would the transport workers carry munitions? Would the engineers make munitions? These are the questions to which our capitalists and their servants in the Cabinet are seeking an answer.

If the workers will give a unanimous and emphatic "No" before the dogs of war can be unleashed, then war may be averted, but—not otherwise.

THE COTTON CRISIS

By P. L. TAYLOR

Comrade Taylor knows the Lancashire cotton trade from A to Z. His observations on the present situation are of interest to all students of economics and present-day Capitalism.

THESE is to be a round table conference between the cotton employers and the employees. The cry is: "All cards on the table; and let us see if we cannot save our industry." Has either side ever played with a full pack of cards? Would either know a full pack if they saw one? I doubt it. Let us see what the present situation is and then consider if it is possible to find a solution.

The cotton industry, with few exceptions, is sectionalised. Two sections, spinning and weaving, can be said definitely to produce something for use as well as for profit. The spinner produces yarn from cotton, and the weaver cloth from the yarn. The bleaching, printing, and dyeing sections do not produce anything, but they improve the appearance of the cloth and make it more comfortable to wear, and therefore have a definite use value. The merchant section, however, beyond aiding distribution, cannot be said to have a use value of any sort, and yet it is the merchant section which financially (and it is finance that rules) holds all the other sections in the hollow of its hand.

This will continue so long as the other sections refuse to co-operate against the merchant section. Just as the employer uses his employee to get all he can out of him, and yet keeps him just fit enough to continue to be of equal use, so the merchant uses the producing sections and keeps them alive enough to continue to be of use to him. In other words, the merchant bleeds the whole trade, both masters and men, and it is the merchant and his goods that the financier uses to increase his credits and his financial power.

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Further, whilst the spinner and the manufacturer each has actual capital in the shape of mills and machinery, the merchant's overhead expenses are comparatively small, and, whenever it suits his purpose, he can afford to sit still, knowing the manufacturer will soon "kiss his boots" to get an order of some sort. It was to protect themselves against the exactions of the merchant that the bleachers, printers, dyers and finishers made their different sections into "combines," but the spinners and the manufacturers remained and still remain the prey of the merchant class. Never once have they attempted to free themselves from their greatest incubus, either by forming co-operative selling agencies and so pushing the merchant out of the trade, or by forcing the merchant to be as financially interested in the productive side of the goods he sells as he is in any other side.

Will this card be placed on the table at the conference? Will any reference to it be made? Judging from suggestions so far made it does not look like it. What suggestions have been made? Lower wages; longer hours; lower bleaching, printing, dyeing and finishing charges.

Now, will the Textile Unions insist on their employers (the spinners and manufacturers) putting their house in order by tackling their own lack of selling capacity before attempting to force their employees to a coolie level of wages and hours?

Herein lies the failure, from the workers' point of view, of all capitalist enterprise. Brawn only counts so far as it can be kept going or reproduced; brains only count so far as they help to exploit brawn and for this exploitation are given a little taste of luxury. But money, or credit, is the one power that "bleeds" both brawn and brains, dominating all their activities, and doing nothing in return. This power exploits all workers in every country, and it also exploits mill managers, mill directors, mill owners in so far as they take any part in the running and working of their productions. The Lancashire cotton trade, as such (that is the spinning mills and weaving sheds, whether owned by public or private limited companies or by private

individuals) having been well exploited in the past, and having helped to build up the Colossus that now exploits it, is now found to be less "juicy and meaty" than the undeveloped, uneducated coolie in India and Japan, and can go on to the scrap-heap unless it will drive its workers' standard of living lower and so provide more and more food (profits) for Mr. "Fat" Merchant and his fat brother Money-Bags.

Will the Unions fight or will they accept lower wages and longer hours, "in the interests of all in the industry?" If they don't fight now they will either have to fight later on, when they will be even weaker, or accept a much lower standard of life. Lancashire, set a lead!

A Student's Essay :

IMPERIALISM

By MARY AUGHTON

The writer of this short essay is a member of the Nelson Weavers' Union and a student in an N.C.L.C. Class.

IT is very necessary for all workers in their own interest to understand the problems which confront the world to-day, and the most pressing problems arise out of Capitalism in its new phase—Imperialism; which, based upon the exploitation of the workers, has spread to every country and is the dominant force in the world to-day.

In the period before the Industrial Revolution, foreign trade had been very small, consisting of the exchange of luxury articles; but with the development of machine production came the need to export manufactured goods which could not be consumed at home, and import raw materials and foodstuffs for the increasing industrial population, maintaining friendly trading relations with other countries, without attempting to annex them.

But the growth of these light industries had given impetus to the iron and steel

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industries, which, with the accumulated profits from the exploitation of the home workers, and exchange of manufactured goods, expanded and produced more than the capacity of the home markets to consume them. Hence the surplus capital goods were exported to other countries, thereby industrialising other countries which were able then to enter the market as competitors. This led to fierce competition amongst the industrialised countries for trade with those which were not yet capitalised. Thus there was a wild scramble for colonies, in order to invest capital, dispose of surplus goods, and obtain cheap raw materials.

The intensity of competition led to the formation of trusts and monopoly groups to keep up prices and partition available markets, and these became closely linked up with the banks; finally coming under their control by their dependence upon them for

credit and assistance in the floating of loans. These in turn amalgamated, thus making for control by a small financial oligarchy.

These groups in every country are closely linked up with the State, which keeps up armaments for the safeguarding of Imperialist interests in colonies and dependencies, any infringement of these interests leading to warfare, which owing to the far-reaching nature of Imperialism, makes inevitable a world war.

So that Imperialism, the inevitable product of the forces of Capitalism, is the dominant power in the world, making profit from the exploitation of the workers in every country and under every kind of rule. Hence the obvious task of the workers is to understand the nature of Imperialism and to formulate a definite anti-Imperialist policy, in order that they may destroy this, the latest phase of Capitalism.

A PAGE FROM OUR OWN HISTORY

By J. P. M. MILLAR

A STATEMENT of mine with reference to the author of *Marxism and History*,* John S. Clarke, has aroused somebody's ire.

"I have been instructed," writes J. B. Payne, organising secretary, Glasgow Labour College, "to challenge the statement by the General Secretary of the N.C.L.C. in the PLEBS that John S. Clarke was the first tutor to take a Labour College Class in Scotland, and it would be more than interesting to know if his source of information was Clarke himself.

"It is well-known in Glasgow and throughout Scotland generally that our late Comrade, John Maclean, was the first Labour College tutor in Scotland, and was, in fact, the founder of the Scottish Labour College, which was established several years before the formation of the N.C.L.C. Comrade James Macdougall was closely associated with John Maclean in the pioneering work of organising and teaching

classes in independent working class education, and there is no doubt that Maclean and Macdougall were in the field long before Clarke or the General Secretary of the N.C.L.C. were ever seen or heard of in connection with the Labour College movement.

"A little less log-rolling would help to prevent such blunders from being made and in the present case would have avoided insult to the memory of John Maclean, Scotland's greatest teacher and exponent of Marxism."

The Point at Issue.

The Glasgow Committee have every right to question (challenge, if they rejoice in strong words) my statement. The letter contains two, if not three, unpleasant innuendoes, and the reference to John

* Of which over 2,000 copies have already been sold.

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Maclean's memory is an obvious piece of demagogic cant. It is not the sort of letter we are accustomed to in the Labour College movement.

What is Mr. Payne's evidence that John S. Clarke was not the first Labour College tutor in Scotland? It appears to be (1) that the S.L.C. was formed before the N.C.L.C. and (2) that John Maclean was the founder of the S.L.C.

The facts are that the S.L.C. was founded only in 1916. John S. Clarke and I were connected with the Central Labour College (founded 1909) some years before the S.L.C. was formed, and Clarke lectured in Edinburgh as a Labour College tutor for the Central Labour College in 1912. So far as I know John Maclean was not a Labour College tutor then, although he may have been taking Marxist classes. He was not, however, alone in that, and was preceded by others.

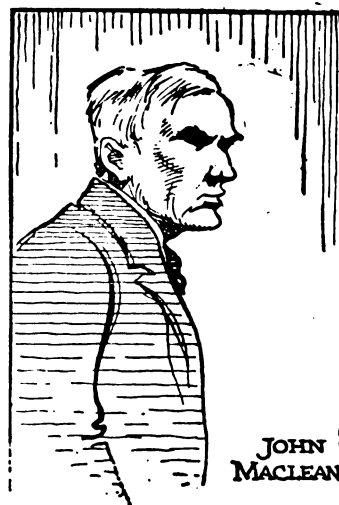
John Maclean was the founder of the S.L.C., which he intended to be a residential (i.e., full-time) College, associated with evening classes. When first I heard of his proposal two points occurred to me. One was that Scotland would probably not be able to support a residential College and that if it did it would be at the expense of the more necessary evening class work. The other was that there was already a residential College, namely, the C.L.C., which was having a titanic struggle to keep its doors open. In these circumstances I thought it would be better policy for him to assist the existing college first and at the same time carry on evening class work.

A Fruitless Visit.

With these ideas in mind, and after discussing the matter with W. W. Craik, Vice-Principal of the C.L.C., I went through to Glasgow, on 2nd January 1916, to see John Maclean. He was, however, away from Glasgow, but I saw J. D. Macdougall, Maclean's closest colleague. I put the case to Macdougall, but he said it was useless to try to persuade John Maclean to change his plans. "If you knew John as I do. . ." was the very phrase Macdougall used. John

was determined to have a Scottish College with full-time students.

Seeing the die was cast I attended the first Conference called to consider Maclean's plan, and was immediately afterwards co-opted on to the first Provisional Committee and have been on the S.L.C. Committees ever since, with the exception of a certain period during the War years, and the nine months or so during which I had leave of absence to attend the Labour College, London (previously the C.L.C.).



These are the facts as I know them. If Glasgow can demonstrate that John Maclean was the first Labour College tutor in Scotland, John S. Clarke will be the first to insist on a correction.

This topic has brought on a reminiscent mood. John Maclean certainly did an enormous amount of work for the Labour College movement in Scotland. Force of economic circumstances and other factors, however, killed the "residential" college and the colleges that have made the biggest mark in Scotland are the district colleges, which provide evening classes. The main work of building up these Colleges was not done by John Maclean. As a matter of fact a large part of it was done when Maclean was in prison as a political prisoner. **Maclean in Jail.**

When, at his request, I went to see him while he was a guest of His Majesty for the last time, I was shocked to see how jail

was breaking him up. On his release, when he found that circumstances had decreed that the residential college was not possible, he lost his burning interest and diverted his attention to the unemployed, leaving those of us who were building up the district colleges to carry on even in Glasgow, where we had eventually to make two attempts to get a College going, and succeeded on the last occasion with the magnificent help of Jack Wood.

From Convict to Consul.

John Maclean was undoubtedly the biggest Labour College figure in Glasgow, in which town our movement has had many stalwarts. In Scotland itself he did a great deal of propagandist work for I.W.C.E., but taking Britain as a whole it can, I think, be agreed by those who know the facts that the work of W. W. Craik and George Sims, to mention two, did entirely eclipse the work done by Maclean. Craik and Sims devoted their whole time to what turned out to be the stupendous job of getting Trade Unions to see that Trade Union education had to be independent. They, along with Ablett and others, were the founders of the first Labour College and also of the PLEBS Magazine. Maclean, on the other hand, sprang into most prominence because of his anti-war attacks on the Government and his revolutionary Socialist attitude during the Great War. This resulted in his being indicted at the Scottish High Court and sentenced to penal servitude. It also led to his being appointed Bolshevik Consul for Glasgow after the Russian Revolution.

Maclean was a man of boundless energy. Before his death he had reduced his voice to a wreck, through brutal overwork. His nerves were worn to tatters and finally he passed on. He had burnt himself out on the altar of international Socialism. The last thing any of us in the Labour College movement would dream of doing would be to belittle his work for I.W.C.E.

THE BOOKSHELF

By J. F. HORRABIN

WHETHER British Imperialism is "better" or "worse," that is, more or less efficient than other Imperialisms, or more or less "dangerous" from the point of view of subject races, may be a question open to discussion. But one thing is certain: no other Empire-builder is so sure of the righteousness of his mission, so convinced that God's will and his country's profit always point in the same direction, and so magnificently unconscious of anyone else's point of view in the matter, as is your governing-class Briton, intent on giving other and inferior peoples the benefit of his advice or protection.

If Egyptians Stopped to Think —

These remarks are inspired by a book entitled *The Mediterranean and its Problems*, by Major E. W. Polson Newman (Philpot). It is a book typical of quite a large class—a mixture of serious (and often sensible) discussion of economic and strategic problems, flavoured with "travel talk" and personal reminiscences of sunsets, hotel porters, leading statesmen and restaurant charges. But above all it is characteristically British in its superb condescension towards other countries and peoples. A few quotations will make this clear. (The italics are mine.)

Writing of Egypt, Major Newman says:—

The [Suez] Canal consideration has been the most influential factor in the shaping of our Egyptian policy, and Egyptians argue that Great Britain first considers her own interests in regard to the Canal, and treats the welfare of Egypt as a purely secondary consideration. Yet if they were only to stop to consider what the Canal has done to tie Great Britain to Egypt, without which the country would never have prospered as she has done, they would see that in reality the Suez Canal has been and is an untold blessing.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE between religious faith and the faith of a Marxian? See New Edition Psychology Text-book

sing to Egypt. *Such ideas, however, seldom if ever enter the Egyptian mind.*

Comment, you will agree, is superfluous.

Another reference to Egyptian aspirations is almost equally magnanimous in tone. "The question naturally arises," says Major Newman, "as to whether the Egyptians are capable of governing themselves"; and, he admits, "on this point opinions are found to differ." But while he is ready to concede that the Egyptians are as capable "as any other Oriental race" of self-government in the narrow sense, he feels it his duty to point out that other and larger issues are involved:—

... What I do strongly maintain is that, with Egypt situated as it is at the cross-roads of the East and West, and at the most vital point in the sea communications of Europe and America with the Far East, the Egyptians are *not capable themselves of governing the country in keeping with its geographical and political significance.*

Which, of course, is where Britain comes in.

The British Angel of Peace.

Major Newman is very much alive to the strategic importance of the Mediterranean to the British Empire. But he is equally sure that this is all to the good for the Mediterranean peoples:—

The British nation holds the keys of Gibraltar and Suez and can, almost at a moment's notice, isolate the Mediterranean from the outside world. . . Hence, Mediterranean Powers hesitate to take action which may lose them British friendship, *and this is one of peace's greatest safeguards.*

If other nations interfere in areas outside their own frontiers, their motives must necessarily be suspect. Russian relations with Persia, for example, are clear proof of the sinister aims of the Soviet. Whereas British interference in Persian affairs is not interference at all:—

In Persia our policy is to encourage the policy of Shah Reza Pahlavi to build up a fabric of national cohesion *without interference*, and this fits in with the aspirations of the Persians themselves, who know that *disinterested* British advice can be obtained whenever they wish to have it.

But Major Newman's greatest condescension is reserved for the Italians, who, he declares, are exceedingly proud of the

material achievements of Fascism:—

The Italians feel that, as a result of the Fascist régime, they belong to a nation which is increasing in power and achievement. They can no longer be regarded as a race of organ-grinders, ice-cream vendors, macaroni merchants and guardians of tame monkeys. This makes them feel a pride in belonging to a people which is making history. . . .

I have not italicised anything in that paragraph. It might seem rude.

THE PROLETARIAN SPIRIT

*"Here lie I by chancel door,
Here lie I because I'm poor;
The further in the more you pay,
Here lie I, as warm as they."*

(Old West Country epitaph.)

Russia To-day.

I have been reading three books written by people who have recently returned from Russia. The first is the Report of the British Delegation to the Tenth Anniversary celebrations, *Soviet Russia To-day* (L.R.D., 6d.). This contains much useful statistical material, and not a few vivid first-hand impressions of people and things. But it is—naturally—somewhat uncritically enthusiastic in tone; and there is rather too much obvious paraphrasing of official reports for it to be altogether satisfactory. The second book is W. J. Brown's *Three Months in Russia* (Labour Publishing Co., 2/6). This is much more interesting—not only because a book written by a single hand must inevitably be more interesting than an "edited" symposium of several individuals' views; but also because it does strike one as a painstaking and conscientious attempt to portray, and adjudge, the conditions of life in Russia at the present time. Incidentally, and from the point of view of mere book production, it is a remarkable half-crown's worth.

The third volume has not yet been published, but exists only in typewritten form. It is the Diary of his Russian trip written by John Jagger, of the N.U.D.A.W., and

its detailed, often humorous, and always lively descriptions of conferences, interviews with commissars and T.U. secretaries, railway journeys, visits to factories, clubs and private houses, make really first-class reading. Jagger, like Boswell, "has an eye like a corbie's for detail." Little pen-pictures like that of Barbusse reading his speech in a dreary monotone, "like a curate reading the lessons and forgetting to stop"; or of Clara Zetkins' trembling steps but burning words; or of the big banquet in the Moscow Trades Council hall—with "blanket tossing" of the principal guests—stick in one's memory.

HOLY WRIT in Esperanto

By M. S.

THE Bible is still the world's best seller. Parts of it have appeared in 593 versions, and the entire Bible has been printed in 144 languages. The recently issued Esperanto edition will have a lasting place in Esperanto literature, if for no other reason than its literary value, because the translation from the Hebrew in the Old Testament was done by Zamenhof himself.

This is how some of the echoes of the class struggle in protests against land seizure and slavery to be found in the Bible read:—

"Ve al vi, kiuj aligas domon al domo, kampon al kampo, ĝis restas jam nenia loko, por ke vi solaj posedu la landon" (Jesaja 5. v. 5.)

". . . ili vendos virtulon pro arĝento kaj malriĉulon pro paro da ŝuoj. Ili premas teron . . ." (Amos 2, v. 6-7.)

Micah's dream of peace is thus expressed . . . "ili forĝos el siaj glavoj plugilojn kaj el siaj lancoj rikoltilojn; ne levos nacio glavon kontraŭ nacio kaj oni ne plu lernos militon."

The translators of the New Testament have closely followed the Zamenhof style as their version of James 5, v. 1-4, will show:

"Atentu nun, riĉuloj; ploregu kaj kriegu pro la mizeroj sur vin alvenontaj. Via riĉo putriĝis, kaj viaj vestoj konsumiĝas de tineoj. Via oro kaj via arĝento rustiĝis; kaj ilia rusto atestos kontraŭ vi, kaj konsumos vian karnon, kiel fajro . . . Jen kriis la de vi trompe retenata salajro de la laboristoj, kiuj falĉis viajn kampojn . . ."

It is to be hoped in view of the probable results of the anti-T.U. Bill that this version will be placed alongside the English Bible without which no prison cell is complete. The above passages and the general study afforded will help through the long desolate week-ends in Wormwood Scrubs.

AMONG THE BOOKS

By

"PLEBS" REVIEWERS

HOW the *Soviet Works*, by H. N. Brailsford (Vanguard Press, 2/9, post free from N.C.L.C. Office). How do they work? Not one person in ten even in the Labour movement could give a correct answer. That is the value of Brailsford's book; it provides an answer. *How the Soviet Works* is a story of achievement. It's a story of work done—not simply words uttered. According to Brailsford, the Russian Communist Party is the iron band that holds the Soviet system together. It seems that just as William the Conqueror raised great castles in England in order to hold down the Saxons, so has the Russian Communist Party built the branches that form the steel corset worn by Soviet Russia. This book, just because it is not lacking in intelligent criticism, will do more good to both the Russian and British workers than a dozen of the panegyrics that appear from time to time.

J.P.

* * *

Denkschrift über Die Deutschen Geschichts und Lesebücher, vor Allem Seit 1923 (Hensel, Berlin, 3 mk.). Dr. S. Kawerau, the author of this book, has examined about three hundred history and reading books used in German schools. He has found unlimited ignorance and stupidity mingled with arrogant self-esteem. His exposure has aroused great attention in his native land and is worthy of attention and imitation by our English colleagues.

M.S.

* * *

The Foundation of Education: Vol. II. The Practice of Education by Prof. J. J. Findlay, M.A. (London University Press, 10/6). The writer of this book from a lifetime spent in teaching has much of value to say upon the aims and methods of education. His conversational style leads to verbiage in places, but makes the subject accessible to the layman. Prof. Findlay believes in the direct method in teaching languages and would introduce Esperanto into the primary school. He favours co-education and would not dismiss women teachers upon marriage. His support of the Dalton Plan is very qualified and in other matters he does not take sides. In the realm of adult education he has still to discover the N.C.L.C. and, just as surprising, is his fathering "the economic man" on Marx. Thus the teacher himself must be taught.

M.S.

* * *

How to Read Literature, by G. E. Wilkinson (Longmans Green & Co., 1/- and 2/6). This book

justifies its title. In lucid fashion the author discloses the factors that will enable a student to appreciate literature. The necessity for a reader adopting an independent attitude, no matter whether the subject read be a leading article or a classic poem, is emphasised. A goodly number of books is suggested to assist the novice in extracting the best value from his reading. S.W.

* * *

Kerr & Co. have arranged a centenary edition of Dietzgen's works in three volumes at \$2 each. The third volume *Knowledge and Truth* is a posthumous work not hitherto available in English. March 1st is the date of publication.

* * *

If only N. D. Deuchar had not made his Trade Union stalwart turn to God in the final act his play *The Fires of France* could be wholly recommended to the dramatic and play-reading groups in connection with our classes. Its theme is the struggle of the Trade Unions for legal existence: The *agent provocateur*, the bullying police and magistrates and the workers of Baldock and Hitchin's belief in the Union are all vividly presented with the Napoleonic Wars as a background. No doubt Mr. Deuchar has a reason for the final brain softening and would add further explanatory notes to those which already explain his characters as the play proceeds.

The second play in this volume (*Three Plays*, Deuchar, Letchworth, 3/6) would need the Guignol players to do it justice, for it is an onslaught against capital punishment into which a murder, the hangman and his gallows are introduced—only slightly off.

The final play is slighter and shows, in an Irish setting, "uneasy" wealth purchased by treachery.

M.S.

* * *

Mr. F. J. Gould, the veteran Comtist, in his latest book *History. The Teacher* (Methuen, 4/-) explains his scheme of how world history can be taught. In an all-inclusive series of lessons, which embrace the geography, art and literature, usually divided into watertight compartments, Mr. Gould draws upon his wide knowledge which includes the achievements of the Eastern as well as of the Western world. Particularly for the teacher of juveniles there is much suggestive and helpful detail on how to present and make alive that history of humanity which will inspire to social service.

* * *

The Trade Union Movement of Sweden, by Sigfrid Hansson (From Lab. Party, 9d.) is No. 6 in the I.F.T.U. series. Although relatively much smaller, with about half a million members in the national centre and the syndicalist unions, the Swedish Movement is worth attention to us, on account of its National Strike (1909), the long discussions and attempts to introduce organisation by

industry, and its activity in workers' education. Apparently the latter, under the A.B.F., is able to secure State grants, although it includes Co-operative, Socialist, Syndicalist and Communist bodies. The editor is an authority on the Swedish trade union movement and his booklet is full of information of use to the student of International Labour.

M.S.

* * *

Co-operation, by Honora Enfield. (Longmans, Green & Co.; paper 1/-, cloth 2/-). A useful introduction to the study of a Movement which, strangely enough, is very little known or understood despite its great growth and importance. Whilst written frankly from the consumers' point of view it does not shirk some necessary criticisms and discusses some of the difficulties arising from trade unionism, collectivism, and international problems. J.H.

P's and Q's

The *Morning Post* of 19th January was more than usually amusing because on the financial page a large import of Russian gold was welcomed for its beneficial effects, while a few pages on Locker Lampson's lurid advertisement appealed for a boycott of Russian "stolen" timber, oil and jewellery.

* * *

"My G—, I've been exploited by the capitalist class, but that's nothing compared with the way the PLEBS has exploited me. A month ago I sent a ten-shilling note for four books and I've received neither books nor receipt." This good comrade had sent no address—not even his name!

* * *

An N.C.L.C. advertisement in the *Forward* a few weeks ago read as follows:—

DONKEYS LIVE ON HAY,

But intelligent workers are reading

John S. Clarke's *Marxism and History*.

A week later a representative of one of Britain's biggest booksellers solemnly presented at the N.C.L.C. an order form reading: "Please supply one copy of *Donkeys Live on Hay*."

"AMONG THE BOOKS."

Dear Comrade,—As one more or less familiar with the contents of the Bible and also possessing a nodding acquaintance with Biblical history, I must confess that the reference by "W.H." to the "Arc of the Covenant," on p. 21, January PLEBS, leaves me somewhat in the dark. Therefore, enlighten our darkness, we beseech thee, good "W.H."!

Fraternally yours,

J. REYNOLDS.

[Harc, harc, comrade—"W.H." was not guilty; our own proof-reading was at fault.—Ed.]

HUMAN NATURE & HISTORY

Read what J. S. Clarke says
in MARXISM & HISTORY

Industry moves South. As in the United States, where there have been industrial shifts within the country, and certain industries have migrated from the North to the South, while an ever-growing stream of negro workers are making their way from South to North, so in England a "new industrial revolution" has been taking place, there being a gradual drift of the industrial population from Northern to Southern England. What this really means is that the old sick industries, such as shipbuilding, coal-mining, the textile industry, etc., are losing ground, while in the South young industries

are springing up, which cater chiefly for home markets (the building trades, the motor-car industry, artificial silk, and the electricity industry). In 1923, for instance, coal-mining occupied 10.83 per cent. of the insured population, in 1927 only 9.88 per cent. The percentage engaged in shipbuilding has fallen from 2.35 to 1.78, that engaged in the iron and steel industry from 2.09 to 1.81, and that of the wool and textile industry from 2.35 to 2.05. The South now contains 47 per cent. of the insured population of the country against 45.7 per cent. in 1923. I.F.T.U.

PLEBS—PLEASE NOTE

By W.H.

THERE has been a very fair response to the appeal in last month's magazine and we are beginning to find out once more that we have a solid ground-work of stalwart friends ready to help us when we need them, even though times are bad for them too. There are one or two things that seem to be puzzling people and the following queries are answered publicly for the benefit of all.

* * *

A bonus for being married. Much has been, is being and will be written about Socialists and free love, all we are going to say here is that if you are a "Pleb" and your wife is a "Pleb" (as of course she will be) you get your magazine and the two subscriptions for 6/- inclusive. Someone wrote asking if a man and wife had both to pay 5/- each, so just to encourage everybody there's the answer.

* * *

Many sincere thanks for those who have sent us ten shillings for two years' subscriptions. If anybody else feels like it we shall only be too pleased to accept as many as possible. Now is the time when ten bob is worth very much more to us than it will be two years hence. I don't know what the Law of Diminishing Returns is, but I do know that when we are on our feet, ten bob will look nice, but that just now it looks like a rainbow full of promise in a dark sky.

* * *

The question has been raised whether anyone who sends five shillings automatically becomes a member of the "Plebs." The answer is in the negative. We want a register of people who accept the principles of independent working class education, but as well as that we want to link together the people who are prepared to support the Magazine and to pledge themselves to help it. Therefore, unless your five shillings is accompanied by a request to be registered as a member of the Association you will be accounted an ordinary subscriber. Don't forget to say that you want to be a Pleb.

Some secretaries have written saying that they have been taking parcels but that now their customers are sending in the five shillings direct they ask "What are we to do?" What we should like and what we hope will be done is as follows:— The secretary will still continue to take a parcel and will endeavour to get new readers. In this way our circulation will not only stabilise itself by means of the annual subscriptions, but will increase. The new magazine is specially designed to attract new comers and we want the comrades who have been acting as distributing agents to act as commercial travellers pushing the sales up and opening up new areas.

NOMINATIONS FOR NATIONAL COMMITTEE, PLEBS AND N.C.L.C. STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION.

These should be received at Head Office not later than Monday, February 27th. Every nomination should be signed by TWO Plebs members.

One other point, and that an important one:— We are constantly being asked whether Plebs Groups and Students' Associations can affiliate to local Labour Parties. The answer is in the negative. As an *educational*, not a *political*, organisation, we are not eligible, either locally or nationally, for affiliation to the Labour Party. And we appeal to all Plebs not to confuse their political activities with the proper job of our movement—i.e., *educational work and propaganda*. They only put obstacles in the way of that work if, however straightforwardly, they use the N.C.L.C. or Plebs label for activities which are not our main business. All those who care about the development of our work will bear this in mind.

The MIND IS MAN'S MAIN TOOL See the Psychology Text-book

WHAT'S DOING?

The N.C.L.C. at Work

THE following is a list of the new affiliations obtained in January by the Local Colleges:—

Division 1, 7; Liverpool District, 3; S.E. Lancs., 2; Derby, 1; Lanarkshire, 1. Last month S.E. Lancs. should have been reported as having had 2 new affiliations.

LOCAL COLLEGE QUARTERLY FINANCIAL REPORT: These reports should now be in the hands of the Divisional Organisers and the N.C.L.C. Head Office.

UNIONS WITH N.C.L.C. SCHEMES: Secretaries and Committees are requested to go into the attendance of members of the above Unions and to endeavour to arrange that as many members as possible take advantage of the Correspondence Courses and that the Branches arrange for lectures.

CAMPAIGN AMONG THE UNIONS: Members of Unions which have no N.C.L.C. Scheme should endeavour this month to see that their Branches raise the question at the Unions' forthcoming Conferences. Members who have been successful in getting resolutions submitted are asked to forward copies to the N.C.L.C. Office.

WORKERS' EDUCATION IN GERMANY: N.C.L.C. tutors are invited to join a party of British teachers in the Adult Education Movement who are going to Germany in April to see Adult Educational work done there. It is hoped that some N.C.L.C. tutors will be able to go. Particulars of the cost can be had on application to the N.C.L.C. Office.

DYKE ACLAND TRAVELLING SCHOLARSHIPS: The Trustees of the above are offering two Scholarships of a total value of £200 each. The holder of a scholarship will be invited to map out his or her own field and method of study and to decide on the centre or centres from which it will be pursued. The latter are to be limited to Europe. N.C.L.C. students who are interested should apply immediately to the Secretary, Co-operative Union, Limited, Holyoake House, Hanover Street, Manchester.

SCARBOROUGH SUMMER SCHOOL: The N.C.L.C. annual meeting, combined with the summer school, will be held at Cober Hill Guest House, Cloughton, near Scarborough, during the week beginning 7th July, 1928. The cost will be £3 3s. (for tutors, class secretaries, etc., £3). The booking fee is 10/-, and as there is no doubt that space will be limited early booking is essential. Fees may be paid by instalments.

BRUSSELS SUMMER SCHOOL: The N.C.L.C. has decided to hold a Summer School at the Belgian Labour College on the outskirts of Brussels, for the six days, 4th to 10th August (Bank Holiday week). Cheap fares will be available and the cost of the School will certainly not be more than that

of the Scarborough School. The booking fee is 10/-, and again early booking is essential.

DIVISION 1.—The annual meeting held in January had a record attendance. Our usual business Council meetings, held on the second Sunday afternoon of each month, will be followed by an evening school. Two new classes have commenced in the city and another at Croydon. The Organiser addressed the Timanstone (Kent) miners in January with the result that they agreed to form a class, affiliate to the Division and also to recommend the Kent Miners' Association to arrange a scheme with the N.C.L.C. Lancing Camp has now been booked for a week summer school, from June 23rd to 30th. Terms for the week: huts and tents, £2; house, £2 5s.; booking fee of 10/-. The deposit or the whole sum can be paid in instalments to any London class secretary or to the Organiser at 71 Prebend Gardens, W.6. Booking should be immediate.

DIVISION 2.—No report.

DIVISION 3.—Grays Club has made a welcome grant of £2. H. Short has started a new course at Brentwood. Peterborough has begun, under M. H. Dobb, a class on the "Present Position of British Capitalism." H. S. Bools and E. Proctor on alternate weeks deal with "Modern Problems." T. Ashcroft has given much appreciated play-readings at Southend and St. Albans. Grays' keen Esperanto class has gone on to the advanced stage, under I. Flower, and at High Wycombe Mrs. Bowers has started a class. Ipswich and Felixstowe have changed over to "Social History." Norwich, Braintree and Southend are maintaining a good attendance. Interest and written work generally are being maintained. Faced with a deficit the Divisional Executive has appealed to the Colleges to tighten up the local organisation and secure more local affiliations.

DIVISION 4.—A successful Day School was held at Clydach with Comrades Nicholas and Owen as lecturers. Social arrangements were splendidly carried out by the women's section. Comrade Richard, an old I.W.C.E. student, offered two prizes of 10/- for the local College examination on the first session's work. Seven students sat for the examination and all papers were of an excellent standard. Newport T. and L.C. is running a lantern lecture on "British Trade Unionism," with N.C.L.C. co-operation. Thanks to the splendid efforts of Comrades J. Williams, Bridges, Thomas and L. Williams, new classes have been set up at Aberdare and Treharris. A lantern lecture on "Modern Imperialism" has been arranged by the Rhydney group. Classes for A.E.U. and shop assistants are going strong. Grangstown Labour Party is arranging a lantern lecture and hopes to

set up a class. Arrangements are being made to hold a divisional rally of all students, secretaries and tutors at Cardiff and Swansea—Easter Saturday and Monday. Book this date and get your ticket.

DIVISION 5.—Two new classes are starting in the Bristol area—one at Mangotsfield (G. Sperring) and the other at Redfield. Mangotsfield Labour Party has decided to affiliate to the Bristol L.C. The organiser has addressed many meetings during the month, and at Kingsley Hall, under the auspices of the I.L.P., about 600 listened with evident approval to a statement of the case for I.W.C.E. The College is running a social and dance this month and Comrade Neale and his colleagues are working strenuously to make it a success. Thanks to the activity of Comrade Quelch and the members of the Cheltenham class a successful whist drive has been held. Newton Abbot is now starting on Esperanto and Comrade Kershaw is conducting the new class at Torquay. Miss Mary Stoddart, 18 All Saints Road, Gloucester, has now been appointed secretary of the local College. Following a visit of the organiser to Plymouth, a College has been formed.

DIVISION 6.—Birmingham classes have re-started this session with a considerable increase in students. The Plebs League had a reunion in Digbeth Institute and it is anticipated that the new 5/- membership scheme will be taken up enthusiastically in Birmingham. Walsall, Nuneaton, Coventry and Stoke Colleges are steadily making headway. Arrangements are being made for a number of tutor's classes in the Division, to be held after the present session has been concluded.

DIVISION 7.—No report.

DIVISION 8: S.E. Lancs. Area.—Tutors' Council is making satisfactory progress with the problem of training tutors by setting up three training classes. A new class has been started in Newton Heath; many E.T.U. members have enrolled. Openshaw class students have arranged to visit the Manchester Museum. In this half-session "Modern Problems" is a subject in demand. The course includes lectures on "Industrial Peace," "The Class Struggle," "Fascism," "China," etc.

N. Lancs. Area.—Week-end schools are to be held in the Weavers' Institute, Nelson, February 25th-26th, with J. F. Horrabin, H. Sara and Councillor P. L. Taylor as the lecturers, and in the Central Labour Rooms, Preston, March 24th-25th, with Prof. Johnstone, D.Sc., and W. Paul as lecturers. Thirteen classes with 400 students were held during the first half of this session. Enrolments are larger this session.

Liverpool and District.—We regret to record the passing of Comrade R. Magin, Birkenhead. Comrade Magin was an enthusiastic supporter of independence in working-class education and for a time acted as auditor of the Liverpool College. A class, under the auspices of the N. Seacombe Co-operative

Women's Guild, is taking a course on the Co-operative Movement. A series of lantern lectures has been arranged in connection with the Liverpool Carters' Union scheme. Three classes on Esperanto have been arranged with Mrs. Shipman as tutor. Those desirous of joining a tutors' class, subject, "Economics," should send in their names to the secretary. Messrs. A. Dawson (Textile Workers' Union) and J. W. Horan (A.E.U.), who recently visited Russia, are willing to address branch, etc., meetings on their experiences and impressions. Expenses only; arrangements to be made through the divisional organiser.

DIVISION 9.—No report.

DIVISION 10.—For some time the Colleges in Scotland and the Divisional Council have been considering the need for improving the organisation. The last meeting of the Council was attended by Messrs. Dawson and Coxon, of the N.C.L.C. Executive, and by J. P. M. Millar, general secretary. After a very full discussion the Council approved of a scheme under which Scotland will be divided into five districts, each of which, except Aberdeen, will have a full-time man appointed nationally, who will be responsible for the work done in his area. Aberdeen will carry on as before with a locally-appointed tutor for the winter sessions. The result of this scheme will be that instead of some areas having the services of a full-time man and others having no full-time man, all the areas will have the assistance of a full-time official. It is part of the scheme that the areas must raise a definite quota of the salaries and must, of course, be responsible for the cost of the class work, etc.

DIVISION 11.—Our 1928 classes have made a splendid start. The class on the "Science of Reasoning," conducted by the organiser, enrolled seventy students on the first night and on the second the seating accommodation was more than taken up. During the October-December term 120 students enrolled for the Belfast class on "Social and Economic History of Ireland" and 103 for "Economic Theory." The average attendances were exceptionally high. The Public Speaking class is now getting students to take the chair and speak in public for the first time in their lives and should help to provide a number of tutors and speakers.

DIVISION 12.—Classes in the new session have recommenced with increased numbers. Nottingham College steadily increases the number of its classes and its support from the local working-class movement. Literature sales are being pushed, and a really virile and active College movement is being built up. Lincoln I.C.W.E.'rs. greatly appreciated the visit of Frank Horrabin and are looking forward to the day school at which he has promised to lecture. The interest shown by a number of branches of Shop Assistants in their education scheme is very welcome.

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