

115

# The PLEBS

Organ of the National  
Council of Labour Colleges

Monthly 4<sup>d</sup>

Published on the 15th of each month.

JULY-AUGUST, 1928

ONCE  
UPON A  
TIME—

OCT 10 1928



This sort of machine was the up-to-date thing on the road. But that time is past.

And once upon a time elementary education in the "Three R's"—reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic—was good enough for the workers.

But that time is past, too!

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# HAVE YOU EVER STOPPED TO THINK?



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Education, in the ordinary (capitalist) sense, doesn't fill the bill. Class-conscious workers want education in the Social Sciences—the sciences which treat of the basic principles on which the Labour Movement is built.

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# THE PLEBS

*Organ of the National Council of Labour Colleges*

VOL. XX.

JULY-AUGUST, 1928

No. 7

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## MAXTON AND COOK *and other Matters*

IT is not our business, in *The PLEBS*, to discuss the Maxton-Cook manifesto from the angle either of its tactical wisdom or its immediate political implications. But we should be untrue to the principles on which, and for which, the Labour College movement was founded if we did not heartily welcome its clear, unequivocal re-assertion of the *class* basis of the Labour Movement.

It is twenty years ago next year since *The PLEBS* first appeared; and from its first issue onwards it has stood for the principle of working-class independence—in politics, trade union organisation, press and educa-

tion. Our whole educational work has been based on the fact of the class-struggle. Our immediate problem, all the way through, has been to assert that fact against those who, in the sphere of education, sought to show that there was any community, either of interests or ideas, between Labour and its exploiters. Our aim has been, through the pages of this magazine, to help in creating a live, informed, working-class point of view; a working-class way of looking at this as distinct from a capitalist 'community' way. That was, and is, the fundamental difference between ourselves and the W.E.A.—or any other

organisation based on ideas of class-cooperation.

With such a history, therefore, and with such principles there is only one possible attitude for I.W.C.E.rs so far as the *spirit* of Maxton and Cook's manifesto is concerned. Whether their protest is timely or not; whether the circumstances of the moment make new political alignments desirable; whether this or that person or group of persons are or are not entitled to take a certain line of action—all these are issues about which, in common with the rest of the Labour movement, I.W.C.E.rs will have their own ideas, but on which The PLEBS, concerned primarily with educational matters, is not called upon to express any opinions.

Our duty is to urge all I.W.C.E.rs, whatever the immediate outcome of Maxton and Cook's action may be, to keep in the forefront of their own minds, and of any discussions in which they take part, underlying principles rather than tactical or personal considerations; and to use to the utmost, not only in the interest of our own educational movement, but for the sake of the far wider interests of the workers as a class, this opportunity to stress the truth that Labour's mission is to agitate among the workers, *as a class*; to educate the workers, *as a class*; and to organise the workers, *as a class*, to achieve their own salvation.

### Capitalist 'Enlightenment.'

One group of capitalists sometimes "blow the gaff" on another section. We reproduce on this page two cartoons from American capitalist papers which are of special interest to I.W.C.E.rs. Both deal with the 'educational' campaign now being waged by the U.S. electricity supply corporations—the Power Trust—on behalf of their efforts to secure control of water-power in the States. Both underline the truth which The PLEBS has been preaching for years—that the capitalist control of education, in the widest sense of that word, is a barrier to emancipation which the workers can only surmount by using a counter-education of their own.

The American Power Trust has even been charged by certain papers with employing school-teachers as "vehicles for inspired publicity." But of course direct interference of that kind is not the main



THE NEW SCHOOLMASTER  
(From the New York Evening Journal).

part of our case against capitalism. It is the fact that—as the second of these cartoons illustrates—capitalism has its hand on the switch-board of every kind of publicity, educational or 'propagandist,' which constitutes the big danger we are out to fight. And until the workers are strong enough to secure control of all the switch-boards, they have got to have switch-boards of their own.

### "Plebs" Reviews.

Our paragraph last month on the subject of book reviews in The PLEBS has brought us this cheery letter:—

Dear Comrade,—The June-July PLEBS is excellent. Your book reviews are an intellectual necessity to me, and a test of a real, live grip on modern thought, its lessons and its dangers to the worker. Those who grumble at this feature fail to realise the use, and menace, of the written word.

Herewith £1 towards PLEBS expenses—in appreciation of its value. Yours frat.,

A KEEN CRITIC OF THE N.C.L.C..

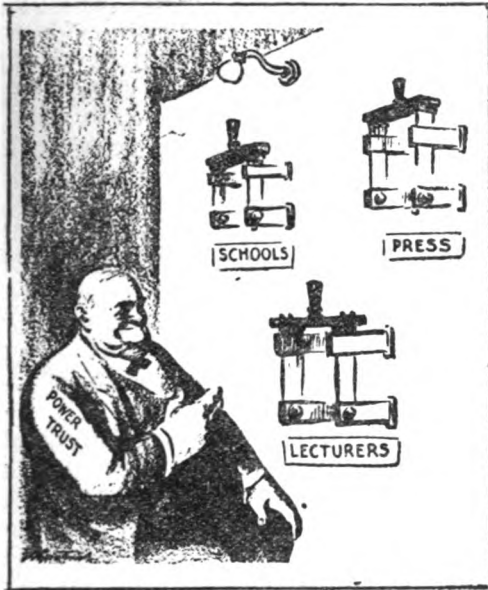
Here's hearty thanks to our critic—and may there be some more like him! (And



even if you can't afford to enclose a donation, we should like to hear your views on that question of more, or fewer, book reviews in *The PLEBS*.)

### "Bob" Holder.

We deeply regret to report the death of Robert Holder, one of the earlier generation of N.U.R. students at the Labour College, London. For many years Comrade Holder has suffered from indifferent health which he found a very great handi-



THE "ENLIGHTENING" SYSTEM  
(From the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*).

cap in his unceasing endeavours to help the cause of Labour and particularly the Labour College movement. He contributed a number of articles to *The PLEBS* and to the *Railway Review*, and was for some time a full-time tutor for the N.C.L.C.

Bob Holder had the uncommon capacity of putting difficult things in a simple way. It is doubly sad that he has died at an age when most men have many years of service still in front of them. A short personal sketch of Holder by Mark Starr and a review by Holder himself appear elsewhere in this issue.

## THIS INTEREST YOU?

*We need more readers.*

*At its present circulation, The PLEBS pays its printers' bill month by month. But that leaves nothing towards office rent, staff salaries, etc.*

*A 50 per cent. increase in our circulation would make all the difference.*

*That is to say, if every Two of our readers would get us ONE new subscriber between them, we should be able to stand on our own feet—and be an asset to the I.W.C.E. movement, instead of a liability.*

*If this interests you, what about getting us that new subscriber?*

### The N.C.L.C. Annual Conference,

Before these words are in print the Annual Conference at Cober Hill will have taken place, and the first of this year's two Summer Schools will be over. We shall publish next month a report of the principal discussions and decisions of the Conference; and some account of the activities of the School. Meantime, will our readers note that there are still several vacant places available for the Brussels School next month (see particulars elsewhere in this issue).

## THE PLEBS

—is edited by J. F. Horrabin and J. P. M. Millar.

—is published monthly, on the 15th of each month.

—costs 4d.; or (postpaid) 5d. Annual postal sub., 5/-; 6 months, 2/6.

—is published for the National Council of Labour Colleges, Swinton House, 324 Gray's Inn Rd., London, W.C.1.

# WHITE AND BLACK IN SOUTH AFRICA

*Where Colour complicates Class Problems*

By M. FORTES

**T**O-DAY all South Africa's social, economic and political difficulties hinge on the Native Question. It is the problem of every capitalist country, but more complex because in this case the proletariat is not only a different class, but also a different (and despised) race. Walker's book shows how the problem began with the landing of the first white men at the Cape and has remained fundamental ever since.

Here is a history of the White Man in South Africa,\* 1415—"the exploitation of Africa had begun," says Prof. Walker; for then Prince Henry of Portugal began sending first his seamen and then his slaves and then the inevitable missionaries to India *via* Africa. They looted and baptised indiscriminately on both continents. Then, 1652, the Dutch East India Company, feverishly and unscrupulously exploiting the East Indies, sent an expedition to make the Cape a port of call for its ships. Company men were planked down willy-nilly, to barter cattle from the Hottentots and grow vegetables for the Company's ships. At first the settlers could trade only with the Company; later they were allowed to trade freely, subject to a mass of restrictions which caused a lot of friction. Soon slaves were imported—presumably to give the settlers more freedom to hunt the pigmy Bushmen, who, knowing no law, raided and robbed cheerfully. Thus the White Man starts his career in South Africa, feeling immensely superior to the brown men who worked his lands as slaves or whom he could hunt as Bushmen, or gull with cheap alcohol and beads and texts as Hottentots.

\* *A History of South Africa*, by Eric Walker, M.A. (Oxon.), Professor of History in the University of Cape Town. (Longmans, Green & Co., 2/6).

Dutch, French, and British.

The Cape farmers moved further and further inland to escape the Company and find more land. Their law was the Old Testament and their guns—as with their descendants in the nineteenth century. French refugees were brought in to augment their numbers. Local government came into being. The Cape was the Dutch East India Company's white elephant, for the 200 odd years of its stay there. The underpaid officials robbed it. The settlers were rebellious. The natives couldn't be massacred either by guns or by the small-pox epidemics fast enough to keep them quiet. During the Napoleonic wars the Cape changed hands twice. At length Britain got permanent possession of it—"Our African Empire" born!

Britain found the Cape financially bankrupt, economically stagnant, dependant on slaves for skilled work, clamouring for farm labour, without a decent school, or organised communications. The Bantu, the Kaffirs, on the frontiers, fearing for their land, were becoming unruly. The Native Problem—the problem of the division of land and labour—becomes acute, and together with the Kaffir wars it caused, became the chief concern of every governor till the present century. A missionary of those days, John Philip, demanded complete legal and *economic* equality for men of all colours. His name is reviled to this day in White South Africa.

The 5,000 British settlers imported in 1820, only increased the land and labour hunger of the Whites and the fears of the Kaffirs—and the consequent marauding, reprisals and wars. Governors tried fixing boundaries and building forts to keep white and black apart, but traders with whiskey and rifles and missionaries with

the gospels got through to the Blacks somehow, and the Kaffirs in their turn managed to steal cattle. So the bloodshed continued. When one governor tried to build hospitals, roads and schools in Kaffirland, public opinion refused to subscribe funds. Native territories were annexed in the name of peace and traders, missionaries and magistrates sent to civilise the inhabitants.

### The Great Trek.

In 1837 some thousands of Dutch farmers, objecting to certain doctrines of equality then abroad in the Cape and to the emancipation of the slaves, "trekked" inland. It took them about thirty years to hack their way through the native populations of the interior. Then, while they were building their crude republics in Natal and Orange Free State and Transvaal, the British Government was hastily annexing as much as it could of neighbouring territory and "protecting" Kaffir chiefs on the borders of the Cape and the Republics. For sixty years some sort of Kaffir war was always in progress somewhere.

As the Cape grew prosperous, its land and labour hunger grew correspondingly. Kaffirland soon had its white settlers. Legal dodges to make the Kaffirs work began to be resorted to. Land hunger led to constant quarrels between the Boers, the Cape and Natives. These reached their height when everybody claimed the diamond fields. Naturally the Cape got them—some say by force, some by fraud. So was added to land speculation and Kaffir trade the sphere of illicit diamond buying for those who wanted to get rich quick.

### Indentured Labour.

Events moved apace. The Natal sugar planters found the Kaffir tribes intractable even in the face of exorbitant taxation and laws enforcing labour. So they imported Indians indentured for five years at ten shillings a month plus rations! Some Cape governors had long been ambitious to federate the whole of South Africa under the Union Jack. When gold was discovered in the Transvaal, this ambition swelled hugely. Unfortunately, the Trans-

vaal, suddenly changed from pauper to millionaire, began to put on side. Its President, Paul Kruger, wanted to boycott the British Colonies. Now Rhodes came upon the scene. He bought the support of governments, firms, and public opinion for the Chartered Company he founded to exploit Rhodesia in the name of Empire. The natives were fleeced as never before in South Africa, and the inevitable bloodshed occurred. Kruger and the Transvaal were the most embarrassing obstacles to a Red South Africa (in the good sense!) The jealous and narrow-minded Boers refused to let Uitlanders—the cosmopolitan riff-raff which had flocked to the Rand mines—vote or use English for legal or educational purposes. The Uitlanders, egged on by mining magnates, threatened to revolt, asking Britain to help them. Rhodes was waiting for such a chance, but his lieutenant, Jameson, raided the Transvaal prematurely and only diplomacy averted war.

### War.

The Boers wanted the gold, and monopolistic and patrician rights; the Uitlanders wanted their rights; the Colonial Office dreamt of a United South Africa. War was unavoidable. Britain won it, of course, by sheer force of numbers. The war, with its farm-burning and children dying wholesale in concentration camps, was nothing to be proud of.

The Transvaal, now a British Colony, set about solving its labour troubles. The mine magnates pulled wires until they got permission to import Chinamen to work the mines, with the proviso that they were to do only the unskilled labour. Unfortunately, sodomy and crime became rife among the underpaid, underfed and insanitary Chinese, and they were hastily repatriated—the labour problem left unsolved till today.

At last came Union. The problems remain unsolved, though the handling of them changes hands. The blacks are becoming not only race-conscious, but class-conscious, and envisage a solution quite unlike that proposed by their masters. Perhaps a change will come soon.

# THE REIGN OF TERROR

## *Forces, not Figures, make History*

by JOHN S. CLARKE

ONE of the classics which figures in every list of the hundred best books—the books which every gentleman must read—is Thomas Carlyle's *French Revolution*. It is still held by many writers to be the standard history of that tremendous event. It is the picturesque, even flamboyant, narrative of the "world shaking" upheaval written by a puritan, a Scottish one at that, to whom such an upheaval meant little more than a chastisement inflicted by the Almighty upon tyrants. And as God is not particular what instruments He uses (did not He use one Judas Iscariot on a special occasion?) we are not called upon to admire His instruments if they do not act their parts in accordance with our own little bundle of prejudices.

So to our dyspeptic Thomas, who, in spite of the encomiums of his worshippers, seldom saw the wood for the trees, the revolutionists who really mattered were a vile bunch at best. Robespierre, the bilious-froth afflicted "sea-green incorruptible," never had the bile as Carlyle suffered from it whenever he had to write his name. Marat, the "horse-leech" (Thomas *knew* that Marat was nothing of the kind, but the eternal verities were drowned in an ocean of malevolent bile) and Marat, the "obscene spectrum," never excited such hatred in his contemporaries, not even excluding Madame Roland, as he did in the oracle of Ecclefechan and Chelsea.

### The "Terror."

Nevertheless, Carlyle himself frankly confessed that there was no period to be met with "in which the 25,000,000 of France suffered less than in the period which they name the 'Reign of Terror.'" Since his day an enormous amount of scholarly research work has enriched our knowledge of



MARIE ANTOINETTE IN THE TUMBRIL  
(A drawing from life by J. L. David.)

that somewhat florid period, and to some brought a more balanced judgment. The student who holds that "open sesame" to historical problems, the Marxian method, will obtain by it a much saner outlook upon the French Revolution than the most erudite of students not so equipped. Figures recede more and more into the background, and forces, social and economic, stand out in brilliant relief as one becomes more deeply immersed in the story.

### Modern Research.

Among modern scholars who have sifted once more the available data upon the great drama—great because it *began* an epoch—



there are none to compare with the clever school which has M. Albert Mathiez as its most prominent figure. He has specialised upon the study of Robespierre and has advanced in his several books sufficient documentary and other evidence to rehabilitate that very distinguished man's character a hundred times over.

Recently, Mr. Louis R. Gottschalk presented us with a purely Marxian study of Jean Paul Marat which fixes that character in the correct historical niche from which no intelligent being will attempt to remove him. In all of these works we know that men of flesh and blood are being dissected or analysed, and not the sinister maniacs or nightmarish monsters which the pens of Carlyle (or even Belfort Bax in the case of Robespierre) have depicted.

Now we are permitted to read a masterly study of the *Reign of Terror* itself in the book of that title by Wilfred B. Kerr (of Buffalo University). Nothing so thorough as Mr. Kerr's enormous book has so far appeared on the subject. The terrific struggle waged between Mountain and Gironde,

hitherto imagined by so many as a kind of party vendetta, and by others as the result of conflicting personalities, is rightly interpreted here as what it always has been to the Marxian—the struggle of two economic systems fighting for supremacy on the corpse of their common enemy. It is futile at this time of day to speculate on historical might-have-beens. The triumph of the sans-culottes meant more to France than the typical bourgeois historian will admit. The triumph of the Mountain meant the consolidation of France, the centralisation of government, and the safety of the Revolution. The Gironde *may* have had the right political sow by the lug, so might the Mensheviks. It was not correct political theory that was wanted in 1792, nor in 1917, but *action* swift and audacious, and at such moments of crisis, the most daring and audacious body will come out on top. However, if PLEBS readers wish to pursue the study from every possible angle, I urge them to procure this magnificent work. It is, unfortunately, sixteen shillings net, published by the Toronto University Press, but it is THE book on the Reign of Terror.

## *Brussels Summer School*

**BELGIAN LABOUR COLLEGE,**

*near Brussels, August 4—10th (six days).*

*Programme.* Lectures on the Subject Races and the International Trade Union Movement and on the Concentration of Capital and the Trade Unions, by Edo Fimmen, Secretary of the International Transport Workers' Federation, and lectures on a Workers' History of Belgium and on the Belgian Trade Union, Labour, Co-operative and Educational Movements by the Staff of the Brussels Labour College. All lectures will be in English. *Fee for board and tuition* £2 12s.

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IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO MEND, BUT—IT'S  
OFTEN TOO LATE TO BOOK.

# RATIONALISING THE ROBOT

By D. J. WILLIAMS

**I**T has always been the dream of the capitalist to create a working class of human machines who will work but not think, slave and toil but not revolt. More work for the workers, more profits for the boss. One of the most recent steps adopted towards the fulfilment of this dream is scientific management. The home of this new cult is U.S.A.; its founder and high priest, Dr. Taylor (hence the name Taylorism, by which it is sometimes known).

## The Mecca of Capitalism.

The present "rationalisation" policy of capitalism has given a new impetus to the development and application of scientific management in Europe.\* For the indispensable preliminary to any comprehensive rationalisation of capitalist economy is to rationalise the workers and their organisations. In the practical application of scientific management, however, Britain, for historical reasons, lags a long way behind U.S.A. But the events of the post-war period—notably the decline of British capitalism and the ascendancy of U.S.A. to a position of world supremacy—have aroused in the breasts of British capitalists a desire to emulate the methods of their Yankee brethren. Hence the endless pilgrimages which have left the shores of these islands for this mecca of capitalism to learn at its sacred shrines the secret of capitalist salvation. Amongst the secrets discovered by these erstwhile knight-errants is that scientific management is one of the principal causes of the world supremacy of the Almighty Dollar.

## Scientific Squeezing.

Scientific management aims at squeezing the maximum amount of energy out of the workers in the least possible time. It is

\* *Scientific Management in Europe.* By Paul Devinat (I.L.O., 4/-).

scientific exploitation carried to the  $n$ th degree. For this purpose the most varied devices are adopted. The worker is placed under the most complete surveillance and is subjected to the most absolute system of rigorous military discipline. His life becomes a matter of clock-work, his whole existence reduced to a mechanical routine. His every movement is timed by a stop-watch. Cinematograph cameras are brought to play on him. Psycho-technical experts employing the most elaborate scientific apparatus dissect and analyse him from head to toe.

As a result of these "studies," every waste movement, calculated with mathe-

## DEFINITION

*A man we know says the upper classes are people who can owe money to the lower classes and get away with it.*

Chicago Daily News

matical precision, is "scientifically" eliminated. The speed of working is forced up to the maximum. This results in an enormous increase in output—and in the profits of the capitalist. Some examples of the process will be illuminating. Gilbreth, one of Taylor's disciples, reduced the number of movements involved in laying a brick from 18 to 5 and increased the number of bricks laid per man per hour from 120 to 350. In an American foundry scientific management increased the output of castings from 950lbs. to 2,200lbs. per man per day. The same process applied to a structural steel establishment resulted in an increase in the output from 1,854 to 4,000 tons—with the same number of men employed. These examples could be multiplied a millionfold.

### Bonuses and Bait.

It is not to be wondered at that the workers, even in the U.S.A., do not welcome these scientific sweating methods with open arms. In Britain, with its strong craft traditions, the opposition of the workers to these innovations is more pronounced. This opposition has to be broken down—and it has to be broken down “scientifically.” As an accompaniment of scientific management therefore there has been evolved a wholesale system of cajolery, bribery and corruption. These methods are not unknown in Britain.\* Every kind of bait is dangled before the workers to induce them to acquiesce in the new scientific order of things and to press up the output. They are encouraged to take out shares in the concern, to co-operate with the bosses, to “share in the management.” Golden prospects of becoming capitalists themselves are held out before them. Elaborate and complicated systems of “payment by result” have been devised. These systems vary considerably in form, but in principle and purpose they are all the same. Under the Halsey System, for example, a “basis time” is fixed in which a job ought to be done. If the job is accomplished in less than the basis time the worker is paid a bonus proportionate to the time saved. This is one of the simplest of the Premium Bonus Systems. The Rowan, Taylor and Gantt systems are so many variations (slightly more complex) of the same theme.

### Squeezing out the Unions.

Part of the object of scientific management is to squeeze more surplus labour from the worker. The other part is to break down the resistance of the working class to this process. One of its principal objects is to squeeze out the Trade Unions from the workshop, and occasionally, as a sop to the influence of Trade Unionism on the workers, to transform them into Company Unions. Taylor himself claims that his system does away with the need for collective bargaining. Yankee capitalism can show Britain something in this respect; and

\* *The Payment of Wages.* G. D. H. Cole (Allen & Unwin, 6/-).

signs are not wanting that British capitalists are learning the lesson and are proceeding post-haste to do likewise.

The effects of all these processes on the worker need no elaboration here. They grind the human out of the man, and transform him into a mere instrument for creating profit. They create antagonism between worker and worker. They cut at the roots of working-class solidarity and emaciate the strength and power of Trade Unionism. These are not the least of the reasons why the capitalists and their lackeys wax so eloquent about the virtues of scientific management.

### *Ten minutes Talks with New Students:*

## 6—THINKING ABOUT THOUGHTS

by J. P. M. MILLAR

**L**AST month we noticed that the difference between a man's watch and his mental picture or idea of the watch brought us to the distinction between Being and Thinking. We sometimes say that the watch is an example of Being—it is real, it is material—while the mental picture of the watch is an example of Thinking.

That statement, however, may conceal a misunderstanding. Is not my idea of the watch also an example of Being? Is it not also material? It is not material if we're going to limit the word to tangible things—to things we can grip, say a stone or a policeman's baton. But that would rule out the heat of the sun, the smell of an onion, the reflection in a mirror or the shadow of a tree. Yet the smell of an onion and the warmth of the sun are as real as the tangible watch or the tangible baton. The same is true of thought. My mental picture of my watch is as real as the tangible watch—it too is an example of Being.



When therefore we talk about the distinction between Thinking and Being we are simply for convenience distinguishing one form of Being from another, just as we distinguish between coal and electricity.

### Where Thought is Unlimited.

Each of the senses is limited to its own particular objects. The sight can perceive only the visible. The eyes can't see a sound nor can the ears hear a colour. But thought is not so limited. The visible, the audible, the tasteable, the smellable may all be thought about.

Thought, however, is in another way itself limited. It is limited because it cannot get on without the senses. It is by means of sight and sight alone that one gets a picture of the visible. Thought is also limited because it cannot exist without an object. In other words it cannot at bottom supply its own objects of thought: it depends on the objects that exist outside of it. In short it is dependent (1) on Nature for providing objects, and (2) on the senses for putting it in touch with those objects.

We have seen that my watch has a two-fold existence. It exists as an object outside my mind and as a picture in my mind.

## NICARAGUA

(cf. A. A. Purcell's article in last months PLEBS.)

*The American weekly, "Judge," had a cartoon recently depicting a number of Sandino's men in a trench, with shells bursting over them, and the title "Has anybody here seen Kellogg?"*

In that case my watch was the object of my thought. But having once thought about the object watch, I can also think about my mental picture of the watch. In other words I can have a *thought about the thought of my watch*. In this case the



object is no longer the watch, but my mental picture of it.

If we were studying watch-making we should be engaged in thinking about watches. As we are trying to understand thinking our job is to think about thoughts. Let us therefore take a thought and examine it.

We all have an idea or thought of what a pen is. But how was that idea or thought arrived at? In experience we find there are many kinds of pens—steel pens, fountain pens, quill pens, sharp pens, broad pens, gilt pens, black pens, not to say post office pens—the worst of the species.

By a pen we mean a pointed writing instrument using ink. Notice we don't say that a pen is a writing instrument using a nib for that would rule out the stylo pen which writes with a needle. Neither do we say that a pen is a writing instrument using a black point because, although that would include the J pen, it would rule out the golden-nibbed fountain pen.

The more we examine the various pens and compare them with our idea of what constitutes a pen, the more we shall see that our thought or idea of what constitutes a pen is got by—what? Next month you will see whether your answer is correct.

# THE MACHINE AGE

By T. ASHCROFT

**I**N a series of admirable studies, from *The Psychology of Jingoism* (1901) to *Problems of a New World* (1921) J. A. Hobson has emphasised the importance of the scientific investigation of social psychology. Hobson's approach to the subject has consistently been that of the economist and the penetrating critic of modern imperialism. Unfortunately, his work has found but few imitators, but in Miss Playne's present volume,\* it is given the full recognition it deserves.

Certainly neither Hobson nor our authoress is a Marxist; but both approach the subject from the standpoint of society and social forces, and thus provide important material for the Marxist student.

In Miss Playne's view, an extraordinary degree of passion, emotion, irritation marked the minds of the European peoples before the War. "The balance of men's minds was upset." Something more general and deep-rooted than the characteristic instability of crowds was induced. This widespread neurasthenia she traces to "the great social changes which were so rapidly taking place." Even though these changes brought in their train vast extensions of the possibilities of life, in part shared by the masses themselves, yet it must be remembered that "Changes always provoke fear or at least anxiety in the natural man." A nervous disorganisation of the group mind characterised the closing years of the nineteenth and the opening years of the twentieth centuries.

But at the root of the social changes themselves is the machine, its development and its capitalist motivation. The psychological effects are not less portentous than the "purely economic." First of all, there is the tirelessness and the ever-accelerated speed of the machine. The workman in the factory and the workshop was subjected to

the strain of keeping pace with, and standing against, the drive and the deafening din of these mechanical monsters.

Where fast and faster our iron master,  
The thing we made, forever drives.

"It was only when the accentuation of the stress resulting from the fantastically intensified drive of war-time productivity threatened widespread nervous breakdown among the population that the insidious growth of industrial fatigue received attention and study."

But again, in the field of transport and communication, we have the same process of speeding-up to which the human make-up cannot adequately or at least swiftly enough adapt itself. The increased pressure of life cannot be borne without severe injury to nerve and mind.

"It is scarcely to be wondered at that many twentieth century people became—so to speak—*rattled*; they never could cram enough into a day, they began fresh things without stopping to complete anything, till at last the fevered strenuousness of the close of the last century became more and more a promiscuous flight through time and space rather than an ordered existence."

## The Shadow of Unemployment.

Finally, uncertainty of employment works havoc in the minds and emotions, not

### STAGGERING!

"*War against War*," writes one of our readers, J. Trask, who ordered a copy of this war-picture book, "is simply stupendous—staggering." Get your copy now—only a few left. Price 6/6 post free from the N.C.L.C.

only of the already unemployed, but also of those threatened by it. Thus large masses of the population suffered constant mental anxiety as they saw before them sudden descents into the pit of unemployment. Even those who were seemingly secure saw their fellow workers hopelessly worsted in the hazardous struggle for subsistence. And, for the majority there seemed no way out. So far as these were concerned, there was no intelligent, healthy discontent with the system as such, bearing with it the hope of salvation, but only an irritated unrest of a neurasthenic character, or a chronic depression which induced apathy and submission.

\* *The Pre-War Mind in Britain*. C. E. Playne. (Allen & Unwin, 16/-.)

So far as the effects of machine-minding and unemployment or the threat of unemployment are concerned, these are matters which most of all affected the industrial workers. But the proprietary classes were also profoundly affected psychologically by the Machine Age. A quotation from Mrs. Asquith's autobiography indicates the pathological condition of "cultured, leisured Europe before the War."

"I am fundamentally nervous, irritable and restless. These may sound slight shortcomings, but they go to the foundation of my nature, crippling activity, lessening my influence and preventing my achieving anything remarkable. I wear myself out in a hundred unnecessary ways, regretting the trifles I have not done and rearranging what I have got to do and what everyone else is going to do, till I can hardly eat or sleep. . . . I am *driven* along by my temperament till I tire myself and everyone else."

Among the plutocracy, an orgy of competition both in acquiring and in displaying riches is the dominant feature.

This unhealthy mood made our generation an easy prey to any excitement which might come along. Thus, "multitudes in all the European countries accepted the outbreak of war in 1914, multitudes welcomed it as a licensed break-up of detestable lives." It is indeed to this psychological preparation for the Great War that the bulk of the book is devoted (and it forms an exceedingly valuable contribution to this aspect of modern Imperialism). But, as was inevitable, it is without constructive conclusions. Miss Playne, it is true, distinguishes between the parasitical and the productive classes in society in her analysis. She says:—

"Social perversions usually originate among those classes which are removed from the steady influences of daily toil, bread-winning and close association with other toilers. Bread-winners are from infancy onwards in close touch with the bottom realities of existence."

She fails, however, to see those economic and social forces in the lives of the workers which, even while depriving them of any hope of salvation within the present system, unify, discipline and organise them for the mastery of the machine and, with that, for the self-determination of their own destinies.

## CO-OPERATION AND SOCIALISM

by J. HAMILTON

THE I.L.P. Report on the Co-operative Movement\* and the recent Co-operative Union Committee of Inquiry Report on Municipal Trading are interesting contributions to the study of the proper relationships between the Co-operative and the Labour movements.

The I.L.P. Report, the work of a Commission which included many prominent co-operators, after a description of the different forms, structure, and progress of the Consumers', Producers', Agricultural and Credit Co-operation, surveys the general field of policy and examines the problems which have arisen from recent rapid developments of co-operative services, such as the supply of milk, coinciding with the coming of Labour administrative control in a number of important municipalities. Impressive figures are given of the assistance afforded Trade Unionists during the industrial disputes, 1921-26:—

	£
Total amount lent to Miners' Unions,	
1921 ... ..	82,395
Value goods supplied on Miners' security, 1921 ... ..	639,962
Estimated Share Capital withdrawn,	
1921 ... ..	1,628,155
Estimated amount of Credit given, 1921	526,322
	£2,876,834
Total value Grants to Trade Unions,	
1926 ... ..	101,735
Value Credit given on T.U. and Members' Security, 1926 ... ..	596,912
Estimated amount Share Capital withdrawn, 1926 ... ..	2,409,657
	£3,108,304

Thus a sum of nearly £6,000,000 was available for the workers' support, which, if spent over the counters of private traders, would have simply swelled their profits. The moral is obvious.

\* *The Co-operative Movement and Socialism* (I.L.P., 6d.).



On the thorny question of Voluntary Co-operation *versus* Municipal Trading, there is need for thorough discussion by all parties concerned to arrive at a common, agreed policy. We must avoid any future *contretemps*, as in the case of the Sheffield Corporation Bill, when clauses empowering Municipal Trading were dropped to avoid possible local Co-operative hostile petitions. Municipal Trading was a big plank in the Labour programme, and to obtain general powers the Labour Party demanded the passing of an Enabling Bill into law.

A generally accepted Co-operative opinion is that "immediately you begin to talk about the Socialist conception of co-operation they think you are out to capture the movement for what you can get out of it." But, if the recommendations of the Co-operative Committee, adopted by the recent Co-operative Congress, that "in respect of the trade in milk, meat, coal, bread, and other commodities," the policy of development by co-operative societies offers the most practical and satisfactory way of extending collectivist principles in meeting the

needs of the community, then "they must be prepared," as Mr. Gallacher (S.C.W.S. director) has pointed out, "to render those services not merely to co-operators, but to every member of the community. They might have to revise their policy on prices and dividends."

It has been stated that only 400 societies were supplying 8 per cent. of the national consumption of milk, 450 societies were only supplying 20 per cent. of the meat consumed, 300 societies were only supplying 8 per cent. of the coal used, and between 500 and 600 societies were supplying 25 to 30 per cent. of the bread consumed. Obviously, if the co-operative movement is to control the necessities of life much more has to be done than those figures represented.

Under existing conditions the co-operators have, however, a very weighty objection to be handed over to the municipalities whose vicissitudes are still subject to the fluctuations of the ballot box. The I.L.P. Report suggests, as an alternative, that a public utility service might be adopted, the municipality and the co-operative society

## BRITAIN IN EGYPT



THE TEMPLE ON THE NILE.

Egyptian independence remains, as hitherto, free from any encroachment by Britain.

(Kladderadatsch, Berlin).



THE ENGLISHMAN'S MANNERS.

How Britain discusses matters with Egypt.

(Izvestia, Moscow.)

forming a partnership. This was done in Austria under the legislation of the Socialist Government of 1918-20. This method has these advantages :—

1. It prevents any possibility of competition between the two forms of collective effort by uniting them in a joint enterprise;
2. It puts at the disposal of the enterprise both Municipal capital and Co-operative business experience;
3. It prevents the reversion of the business to private enterprise with a change of party in the Municipality, as in the event of the Municipality wanting to withdraw it can only sell out its own shares, which the Co-operative Society naturally has the first opportunity of taking over.

At least, for some time to come it appears that the co-operatives and the municipalities might very well work side by side until the field is wrested from private enterprise.

# THE BOOKSHELF

By J. F. HORRABIN

**A**T the annual meeting of the Liverpool Labour College a few weeks ago, a comrade put forward the very sensible suggestion that we should publish in The PLEBS from time to time lists of books which I.W.C.E.s could exert themselves to get included in the Free Public Libraries; books, that is, of interest to worker-students, but which were either too expensive, or not quite sufficiently important, or both, for workers to own for themselves.

Here, then, are the names of a few recently-published volumes which come under the above classification; all of them of interest, in various ways, to one or other sort of student, and all of a kind and quality which any ordinarily intelligent Free Library Committee should recognise as worth while :—

*Genghis Khan: Emperor of All Men.*

By Harold Lamb (Butterworth, 10/6).

*Black Majesty.* By J. Vandercook (Harper's, 7/6).

*The Restless Pacific.* By Nicholas Roosevelt (Scribner's, 12/6).

*The Black Journey.* By Haardt and Dubreuil (Bles, 16/-).

*Tigers, Gold, and Witch-Doctors.* By Bassett Digby (Lane, 12/6).

Observe, I am not claiming for any of these the importance of books like McGregor Ross's *Kenya*, or the Rothschild family history reviewed last month. These latter ought to go in our own College libraries. My list above are of books which are worth reading once, and from which sensible students (and tutors) will make a few notes and extracts, but which they do not need to own. A few remarks about each will make it clear whether this or that particular book is "up your street."

Mongol and Negro.

The two first-named, *Genghis Khan* and *Black Majesty*, both tell the life-story of 'coloured' men (yellow or black) who in their time triumphed over Europeans. *Genghis*, the nomad Mongol chief, who in

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the early thirteenth century made himself over-lord of practically the entire area of what is to-day Russia in Europe and Russia in Asia, has a special interest for the student of history for precisely this fact—that, six centuries before the Tsardom extended Russian territories from the Baltic to the Pacific, he achieved, for a time, the ‘unification’ of this same vast expanse of territory. He did it on the basis of a new development of technique—military technique; to wit, by the use of “a new force in warfare—a disciplined mass of heavy cavalry capable of swift movement in all kinds of country”—by an improved means of land transport, in short. He was an organiser. And this weapon which enabled him to levy tribute from Peking to Moscow he later developed into a machine by means of which he could keep his empire together after the immediate business of conquest was over. He built new roads, east and west, and established a horse-posting system which made communication over enormous distances possible. Writing of it two generations later, Marco Polo tells us that some 300,000 horses were kept in these posts and that there were 10,000 post-stations.

Mr. Lamb's book gives us the known facts of the Emperor's life, and something about his personality. He was an autocrat. Many a convener of committees will envy the power which enabled him to announce, when calling a congress of his nobles:—

Those who, instead of coming to hear my instructions, remain absent, will suffer the fate of a stone that is dropped into deep water, or an arrow among reeds—they will disappear.

Yet he would seem to have possessed a saving sense of humour. On the question of strong drink—a Mongol failing, he is reported to have said:—

A man who is drunk is like one struck on the head: his wisdom and skill avail him not at all. Get drunk only three times a month. It would be better not to get drunk at all. But who can abstain altogether?

### A Black Emperor.

*Black Majesty* is an account of the negro revolt in the island of Haiti, in the West Indies, which followed the French Revolution, and in particular of Henry Christophe, the negro who became Emperor of the

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island. It is too ‘picturesquely’ written to be quite satisfying. A plain account of conditions in Haiti, of the revolt of the slaves and their seizure of power, and of the social and economic organisation set up by Emperor Henry, would have been better worth while than some of Mr. Vandercook's highly dramatised purple patches. But it is a marvellous story, and Christophe was a man about whom one would like to know more.

### Africa—and Asia.

*The Black Journey* is the diary of the Citroen Expedition, by ‘caterpillar’ motor-cars, across the Sahara and through the heart of equatorial Africa to the shores of the Indian ocean. It is full of odd facts about native customs, beliefs, and ways of life, and it is interesting to read it with a good map of Africa in front of one. It has several photographic illustrations.

In *Tigers, Gold and Witch-Doctors*—though you wouldn't guess it from its title—Mr. Bassett Digby tells of lonely wanderings in Eastern and North-Eastern Siberia, among the present-day descendants of



Genghis Khan—the nomad tribes of Buriats, Ostiaks, Tungus, Yakuts, Samo-yeds, etc., who now are numbered among the citizens of the U.S.S.R. Were it not for an incredibly silly outburst of *Daily Mailism* about Bolsheviks which disfigures the last two or three pages, one could wholeheartedly recommend this book not only as a far more than ordinarily interestingly-written book of travel, but as a mine of information about some of the few primitive peoples still surviving in the world. However, the Free Library Committee will probably be reassured by those last few pages as to the book's 'safety'; and students keen to know all they can about every corner of Russia will read all the rest and skip the foolish peroration.

### The Pacific.

Mr. Roosevelt's *The Restless Pacific* is a book for the student of economic geography and Imperialism, and while it contains little that is new is a very readable statement—by an American Imperialist—of the "Pacific Problem." In the opening sections, entitled "The Geography of Position" and "The Geography of Production," the author discusses the strategic and economic considerations affecting the position of the various Powers with a "stake" in the Far East. Under the heading, "The Conflict of Policies," he goes on to tell something of the history of those Powers and their acquisitions; and in two final chapters on "The Naval Arm of Diplomacy" and "America in the Pacific Era" (*Pacific Ocean*, not *pacific intentions*) he looks at things from the American-imperialist point of view—as he would say, "in the spirit of modern America, the might of intelligent materialism."

Mr. Roosevelt is great on historical continuity. "In 1899," he says, "the war with Spain waged by Elizabeth and her descendants on both sides of the Atlantic ended" with the cession of Cuba, Porto Rico and the Philippines to the U.S. after the Spanish-American War. He is a realist. "The rivalry for control of raw materials is more intense in world politics now than before the war . . ." And

"economic penetration and political pressure" are the weapons by which the great Powers struggle against each other. PLEBS students of economic geography will be particularly interested to read, in the chapter on "Holland's Treasure Islands," that—

It is no secret in European political circles that there is some sort of an understanding between the Dutch and the English about the Indies. What its terms are no one knows, but the presumption is that Holland has granted Britain special rights for oil in return for which Great Britain has undertaken to preserve the *status quo* in the Singapore region.

"Singapore, Panama—the west and east gates of the imperial ocean. Their guardians hold the keys to the trade and politics of the Pacific."

I hope to return to this book again next month, when I shall also deal with the three volumes of the new Studies in America Imperialism series published by the Vanguard Press (5/- each), dealing with Bolivia, Cuba, and Santo Domingo. These last are emphatically books for our own College libraries, and should be noted at once by those in charge thereof.

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# THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

by FRED SHAW

**P**ERHAPS the most interesting period to the student of social development are the years encompassed by what is usually called the "Industrial Revolution." Authorities upon history, especially economic and industrial history, as a result of their common experience in research work have conveniently broken the sequence of history into 'periods,' each in turn being described by certain characteristics peculiar to itself.

This method has been forced upon students by the magnitude of the task and the consequent need of specialisation, but whilst this mode of procedure has undoubtedly assisted the gaining of knowledge of the 'periods' there has always been the danger of over-emphasis in some direction or other; or, on the other hand, there is the pitfall that once the outstanding features of the succeeding periods have been grasped the new student may feel that he has completed his historical studies, and, metaphorically, cleaned up his study and thrown the brush away.

The dangers of taking a period by itself and separating it from the long stream of human effort are usually present when we turn to the literature dealing with the Industrial Revolution. Some writers deal with the transition from handicraft industry to competitive capitalism as though the factors of the change were co-ordinated, uniform in their progress over the older order of things, with a conscious development implied. Others deal with the theme as though it was the result of changes in political or economic thought. Very few, actually investigating the social and economic conditions of the centuries preceding the industrial revolution, show up that revolution as something like Henry Dubb of fame—often stupid and obstinately set against "progress," narrow and limited, arriving at dictatorship with wonderment upon its brow.

M. Mantoux's book, *The Industrial Revolution in the Eighteenth Century*,\* is the second edition of a work, the first edition of which was published in 1908. In many respects, especially in his method of dealing with the period as the result of many diverse changes that had been taking place in the previous 150 years, Mantoux was a pioneer. This new edition maintains the original line of research, but has been brought up to date by the author's constant touch with the ever-growing publications upon industrial history. In fact the references alone are a huge storehouse of data, and remind one of a Buckle or a Gibbon! Yet one could compare it with the Hammonds' *Town Labourer* for its easy flow of language, and, more important still, its compelling power of keeping the reader interested.

Mantoux puts the mechanical side of the revolution into its proper proportion. There is no Archimedes, lever in hand, visualising a fulcrum with which to move the world; but we are shown instead the carpenter, the millwright, the handicraft-worker in their workshops, homes and cellars attempting to better existing methods of production, urged on by clamorous merchants and producers overwhelmed by demand, accentuated by the unbalanced technique in the varied stages and departments of the prevailing modes. Every advance in the technique is examined, its purposes made clear; the claims of inventors are challenged, comparisons made as to the value of the change—and many statues toppled over and new names enshrined! The process is reduced, as it were, to the modern mill-mechanic, wearied with recurring breakdown, overcoming it with some innovation. It is impossible to give examples—the earlier chapters are full of them.

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\* *The Industrial Revolution in the Eighteenth Century*. By Paul Mantoux (Cape, 540 pages, 16/-).

As in all previous periods of rapid transition, the men of affairs, the controllers of property, the administrators and politicians, writers and agitators, do not, out of their conflicts, arrive at a common understanding as to "where is Britain going?" The implications of the class struggle preclude any uniform consciousness of social tendency, and hence posterity has always to perform the christening ceremony. In the case of the Industrial Revolution, Mantoux discovers that the first writer who used this term is Engels, in his *Condition of the Working Class*. The debt that bourgeois intellectuals owe to Marx and Engels in social and economic studies is shown by Mantoux in his frequent references to Marx. (One has often visualised our native specimens devouring the Socialist classics with the avidity of a school boy pouring over his first *Deadwood Dick*—but in strict privacy and with no acknowledgment!)

Mantoux's book examines all the factors in turn—the old type of industry, commercial expansion, re-distribution of the land, machinery and the textile industry, the factories, coal and iron, the steam engine,

population, industrial capitalism, the condition of labour, and finally the creed of *laissez-faire*, each one in turn with valuable historical comparison and generalisation. Halifax receives special treatment as the classic example of domestic industry. Lancashire is descriptively transformed from a "kind of wilderness, covered with forest and bogs" to a well-populated and highly-industrialised county. Special attention is paid to the growth of Liverpool from a fishing village to a shipping centre.

In the section dealing with land and agriculture, the author, whilst giving full details of the growth of knowledge and discoveries in agriculture, does not when dealing with the Enclosures make the usual plea of economic justification, but gives numerous quotations of the hardships forced upon the agricultural worker.

To all students of industrial history this book will be invaluable. Its price will prevent a large circulation in working class circles, but college librarians should not hesitate to procure a copy, and our students should urge the public libraries to do the same.

Vale!

## ROBERT HOLDER

by MARK STARR

**I**F only his physical strength had equalled the might of his spirit, what great things for workers' education Bob Holder might have achieved!

I first met him in the dark days of the War, but despite his bouts of bad health, severe even then, his spirit was undaunted. He had been in residence at the C.L.C. for some months before the War began — a contemporary of W. H. Mainwaring, Ted Williams, Heber Pratt and Herbert Booth among others—and those who preserve their volumes of *PLEBS* will find in the June, 1914, issue a good photograph of Bob as the very long-limbed Foreman of the Jury in *Blanco Posnet*.

My own first impressions of the big

Government buildings in Whitehall are linked with Bob Holder's cheery remark—"Aye, lads, they've got some rare fine places all ready for us when we come into our own!"

That the workers would come into their own he never doubted. In many a London N.U.R. branch and elsewhere "up North" Bob explained—with his own characteristic gestures—how the contradictions of capitalism *plus* workers' organisation by industry would finally bring it crashing. Those who only knew him by his writings (in *The PLEBS* or the *Railway Review*) missed the quiet, comradely manner, the transparent honesty and simplicity, and the spark of humour in his eye which were the first

things to strike those who met him in the flesh.

Knowing his physical weakness I feared that prison life would be fatal for him, but when I met him on the "conchy" Men's Committee at Dartmoor his spirit was as cheery as ever. But prison left its mark on him—in grey hairs and increased weakness. And he has carried on ever since despite a heavy burden of ill-health.

Bob Holder's body may lie a-mouldering in the grave; but truly his soul, which was part of the workers' education movement, goes marching on.

## 20th CENTURY MARXISM

by ROBT. HOLDER

*Leninism*, by Joseph Stalin (Allen & Unwin, 7/6), ought to be carefully studied by every active worker. It provides plenty of food for thought for both Right and Left Wings—especially if they not only pick out what applies to the other person, but also seriously think over what applies to themselves.

On seeing the title of the book many people will probably be inclined to exclaim, Hello! another ism, another dogma, but in reality Stalin's work is the exact opposite of a dogma. One of the most important sections deals with the "Foundations of Leninism," wherein Stalin defines Leninism as being "the Marxism of the epoch of imperialism and of the proletarian revolution." It is not merely a revival of Marxism, but a step forward, in that Lenin adapts Marx's theory of social development to the new imperialistic conditions of capitalism which have arisen since the time of Marx.

The Russian Revolution has contradicted the old idea that the working class would first achieve power and control in those countries where industrial development was most advanced. Stalin explains how to-day we are living within a world-wide imperialist system, whereby all the various countries have been linked together and transformed into "parts of a united whole, which is spoken of as the world-economy." Within this world-economy different countries stand at different stages of development and their capitalist exploiters are first overthrown in the country "where the chain of imperialism is weakest." This is generally found where capitalist industrial development is comparatively backward.

Hence, we get this vital contradiction in the evolution of the working class. They first achieve power and control in the country that is least fitted in the industrial sense for the establishment of

"THANK YOU,  
SIR—



MUCH OBLIGED,  
SIR!"

This little picture (drawn from a fifteenth century illuminated MS.) shows a proletarian touching his hat as he receives alms from a rich bourgeois.



If this is your idea of the right and proper attitude for proletarians, *don't* vote Labour; *don't* join a Trade Union; and *don't* have anything to do with Independent Working-Class Education.



If on the other hand you feel that it's about time you knocked the other fellow's hat off, instead of touching your own, get inside the Labour College Movement, and read

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Socialism, whilst in those countries that are industrially ripe for Socialism the workers remain subject to and favour co-operation with their exploiters. Because of this contradiction, the hardest task of the Soviet Government is to build up and develop industry.

In other sections of the book Stalin deals with the hard practical problem of winning the way through to Socialism. He shows the many difficulties that have to be overcome both within and without their country, and admits that in the last analysis they can only succeed if they have the sympathy and active support of the international working class.

Two years have elapsed since the Russian original of this book was published. During this period we have had reports from delegations and the impressions of various individual writers as to the position of affairs in Russia. Readers can therefore judge the book in the light of these two years' developments and the present international position.

## A HISTORY OF OURSELVES

By E. R.

The new edition of *Trade Unionism* by C. M. Lloyd (A. C. Black, Ltd., 5/-) includes a bibliography and a copy of the Trade Unions Act, 1927.

The beginning and growth of Trade Unions are soon covered and by the time we reach page 31 the author is treating of Trade Unionism during the great war. A survey of the period 1921-1927, described as "lean years," covering the General Strike and Coal Lockout and the Trade Unions Act, 1927, is followed by a chapter on Trade Union organisation in which the machinery of several unions is explained.

Dealing with the function of Trade Unionism the author states that there are two antagonistic theories—the "war theory" and the "peace theory," or the philosophy of the class struggle and the belief in industrial peace. Co-partnership and Profit Sharing schemes are shown at work. Compulsory arbitration as it exists in some countries is explained; also the relationship of the Unions to the State. One chapter is devoted to Trade Union regulations, including rates of pay, hours, conditions of work, apprentice and boy labour, competition of women and demarcation disputes. Chapter 8 treats of Friendly Benefits, Political Machinery, Industrial Courts, Whitley Councils and The Strike. The following chapter is devoted to structure and space is given to Amalgamations and Federations. Difficulties confronting the establishment of Industrial Unionism are brought out. The Shop Stewards' Movement receives some attention as does the relationship of Trade Unions to the Labour Party and the Co-operative Movement.

## A NOTE FOR THE UTOPIANS

"Yasser. Folks dunno w'at bin yit—let 'lone w'at gwineter be."

UNCLE REMUS.

In looking for the goal of Trade Unionism the author refers to the "new spirit" which demands the control of industry; he brings in Syndicalism, Guild Socialism, Building Guilds, Miners' Schemes, etc. The limited amount of workers' control in other countries is dealt with and we are informed that "the prospect of achieving a successful revolution in this country is very remote."

N.C.L.C. tutors and students will find this book really useful, for it contains many features not to be found in any other book I know of its size and price.

A correspondent informs us that the British Legion is approaching employers to assist them in combating "the reds." The employer is asked to purchase for free distribution a bright and chatty little booklet entitled *Our Empire*, which contains stories about the Prince's tours and other items warranted to foil red propaganda. If any reader happens to be among the staffs so treated, we hope he will forward a copy to add to our collection of such quaint documents.

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# AMONG THE BOOKS

By  
"PLEBS" REVIEWERS

**I**N *The Man Who Knew Coolidge*, Sinclair Lewis claims to give us a picture of "the soul of Lowell Schmalz," an office-supply man and prominent member of the Kiwanis Club in Zenith, U.S.A. Throughout the book, save in the last chapter, which consists of an address delivered by Schmalz to the Men's Club of the Pilgrim Congregational Church, Zenith, on the topic "Basic and Fundamental Ideals of Christian American Citizenship," this solid American citizen discourses on things in general after the manner known in the States as "talking socially." He is a friend of the famous George F. Babbitt, from whom, according to his own summing-up, he differs in the following respects: they drive different makes of cars—Babbitt is a Presbyterian while Schmalz is a Congregationalist—Schmalz prefers eye-glasses as "much more dignified" than the "big round spectacles" that Babbitt wears—and the one likes fishing better than golf, while the other likes golf better than fishing. From one point of view the book belongs with *Main Street*, *Babbitt* and *Elmer Gantry*. Like them it is brilliantly witty and its theme is similar, but the method of treatment is different. It looks as though Mr. Lewis has been worrying about the bourgeois individualistic origins of the novel, and as though he is endeavouring to work out a new technique. Despite what he says about himself, Schmalz differs from Babbitt in being simply a social type, while his friend is a real human being overwhelmed by his social environment. In some eyes this change will be a merit; it will be said that Sinclair Lewis is getting away from the narrow interest of the individual and dealing with the social forces that really matter. The exact opposite, however, is the present reviewer's opinion, but the whole question is too big to be discussed in this short review.

Suffice it to say here that the book has some lovely quotable passages illustrative of capitalist psychology, which the Editor thinks he may use in future issues of *The PLEBS*. Look out for them.

W.T.C.

*Economic Institutions*, by Willard L. Thorp (Workers' Education Bureau, New York, price unstated). This is one of those irritating books by a Professor at Amherst College, which American professors love to write for the edification of the masses—a catalogue of headings, chosen out of a card-index, under each of which something has to be said, but under none of them too much. The result is a tidy arrangement of odd bits of information, without any theoretical framework or any appreciable analysis of what is described. Here

and there we find bits of information that are useful—like the meat in a railway sandwich. For instance, the section on markets and prices and on money, on trusts and on risk. But in general the whole thing is too "scrappy" and unrelated to be of much use to the workers. May we be saved from those with minds like catalogues!

*The Problem of Trust and Monopoly Control*, by A. P. L. Gordon, B.A. (Routledge, 5/-, pp. 169) is the work of an Oxford research scholar, and shows some of the defects of its origin. In analysis of factors, in terms of cause and effect, the author is not strong. His theoretical judgments are usually so broad as to be useless or else crude and a trifle misleading. But on the descriptive side the book is good, and collects for us in summary form a good deal of useful information about modern trusts and cartels, mainly in Germany, and the relation of the State and of State policy to them. As a summary of German developments in this sphere since the war, about which information in easy form is hard to get, the book can be well recommended. The author is inclined to favour a mild form of State capitalism, under which trusts and cartels are encouraged as "rationalising" influences, with the State exercising powers of regulation and control.

Z.

Prof. H. D. Lasswell's *Propaganda Technique in the World War* (Kegan Paul, 10/6) antedated in its issue the more easily available *Falsehood in War Time*, by A. Ponsonby (Allen & Unwin, 2/6), but its conclusion is the same. Reading his story of successful deceptions, one trembles at the gullibility of mankind. Some of the war stories were wholly fakes while others had a substratum of fact. Even G. B. Shaw and H. G. Wells shared in the ravings of war delirium. Professorial dignity we presume decided Prof. Lasswell's title for this piece of "debunking," but Ponsonby's title seems more fitting. Propaganda is not necessarily lies. A statement of the facts concerning incomes now received is propaganda for the working-class movement. A deaf and dumb man propagands for cleanliness if he shows the good effects of soap and water on his face. It is no accident that *propaganda* in the hands of the capitalists means *lies* to be used either in the struggle against an Imperialist rival or in the class struggle against the workers. The latter is the reason why we should read Lasswell's book (at least in the public library) in order to combat those who later applied their "technique" in the *British Gazette* and still control the megaphone press—or should it be spelt the sup-press?

M.S.

We are told the schools are improving so fast that independent workers' education is unnecessary. A text-book to hand does not confirm that view. *Social History of England* by F. Bradshaw (University Tutorial Press, 6/-) is replete with all the information warranted to help a student pass the Intermediate Arts Examination of London University; but out of 376 pages, nine-and-a-half only deal

with "Socialism, Trade Unionism and Kindred Movements." In these nine-and-a-half pages "the Philosophic Socialism of the German Jew Karl Marx" is referred to, although neither the national origin of the family Wetten (now Windsor) nor of Disraeli is mentioned. The wrong date is given to Owen's G.N.C.T.U., and also to the publication of *Capital*. Profit-sharing schemes are said to have been more successful than "productive enterprises by co-operative effort." Having obviously—from his references to "surplus value"—never looked inside even Vol. I. of *Capital*, Mr. Bradshaw is able in another connection to refer to "the facile generalisations of Marx." The Osborne judgment is said to be the legal acceptance of the view of "many of the moderate trade unionists" who having safeguarded their funds "ceased to sympathise with the Labour Party." Just that and no more. Osborne himself evidently took the pennies out of his child's saving box to carry that cessation of "sympathy" to the House of Lords. The author uses six lines to register the appearance of the "non-political Miners' Trade Unions" and the fact: "They have powerful allies in the Seamen's Union, led by the Trade Unionist veteran Havelock Wilson." (This is the only living trade unionist honoured by a personal mention.)

We are assured that the author's treatment of the mercantilist system is good. Others doubt that Coke, the agricultural reformer, sailed in a ship made of oaks planted by himself, as Mr. Bradshaw asserts. His summary of the case for and against the Mark endeavours to be fair. He says the King "tricked" the peasants in 1381. When, however, the author in a future edition makes changes, veracity demands that in the passages indicated his social history will be more generally trustworthy.

M.S.

## ESPERANTISTS PLEASE NOTE

Dear Editor,—The advertisement of the Brussels School in the last two issues suggests a lapse into the let-'em-learn-English laziness and away from the support given by The PLEBS to Esperanto since 1920. In view of the prominence given to that subject, in both the correspondence and oral courses by the N.C.L.C., I do not think that suggestion was intended. You did but wish to remove one of the chief bugbears to foreign travel for professed theoretical internationalists, who could not directly ask for a room, let alone the Revolution, outside their own language region. However, I would like to invite your Esperanto readers to the Workers' Congress (S.A.T.) at Göteborg, Sweden, August 14th-18th. Excursions to Stockholm, Helsingfors and Leningrad are being planned in addition to the meetings and local attractions. Send a stamped envelope to 25 New Street, S.W.1 for details. Via frate 488.

Yours frat., M.S.

# WHAT'S DOING

## The N.C.L.C. at Work

THE following is a list of new affiliations obtained in May by the local colleges: London 3, Division 3, 1, Bristol 1, Newton Abbot 1.

### WHAT THE DIVISIONS ARE DOING.

#### DIVISION 1.

At the Woolwich College Day School, J. Jones, Labour College, lectured on "The Workers' State" and on "Population Theories." The Women's Committee held a Day School at Mitcham, conducted by T. Ashcroft. An excellent recital of "The Insect Play" in the evening completed an enjoyable day. H. Cooke interested our June Monthly Discussion Meeting in Parents' Councils. The London N.C.L.C. Tutors' Council spent an instructive evening discussing an address by F. J. Adkins on "Teaching Methods." The Women's training class at King's Cross, conducted by F. J. Adkins, still goes strong. The week scholarship to Cober Hill, given by the Divisional Council to the best woman student in the recent Essay Examination, was awarded to Mrs. D. Sindy, of the Sheerness class. Book prizes will be given to the best essayist in each class and will be presented at the Garden Party at Highfield, Golder's Green Road, N.W.11, on Saturday, July 21st. London N.C.L.C.ers should note this date. Sports, music, dancing, plays, etc. Admission 1s. E. Leyton, W. Section, has resumed with a class on "Modern Problems." Battersea and Hanwell Women's Sections continue with their classes. An Esperanto class has commenced at Stepney, with Comrade Flowers as tutor. A popular lecture on "Rationalisation" is being given to many branches in London.

#### DIVISION 2.

A new class commenced at Totton with the organiser as lecturer. The Bournemouth College gave a trial to a student as a tutor and decided to start a class at Winton on Industrial History. The new Croydon secretary writes that Tom Ashcroft is giving monthly lectures and that a conference will be held in September. Visits have been made to branches of A.E.U. at Portsmouth (2), Bournemouth and Weybridge with good results. The Day School at Guildford was handicapped by bad weather. The outstanding success of the month was the Day School at Carterton by the Oxford N.C.L.C.—fifty-six students were present for the three sessions. The Dorking Trades

Council decided to recommend the half-yearly meeting to reject the W.E.A. offer and set up an N.C.L.C. for next autumn. The Southampton College accepted with regret the resignation of the secretary and appointed Dan Huxstep as successor. It agreed to start a class at Woolston with Comrade Huxstep as tutor, and to have a delegate conference in September. The central class is to be for tutors. PLEBS sales are increasing in this area.

#### DIVISION 3.

There was a good rally at St. Albans, where a conference for the early autumn is already being arranged. The Organiser has helped outside divisions by visits to Sheerness and Nottingham. At Southend the class under K'dino Main took a series of interesting tests formulated by the International Education Bureau. A large number of A.U.B.T.W. members attended the branch lecture at Luton. The Labour Club there has decided to affiliate and allow the prospective class the use of a room. We are hoping for sunshine on July 15 for the open-air school at Wickford ("Gowanbank," Russell Gardens, Wick Lane, Southend Road, is the full address of the meeting place). Peterborough is discussing the question of Industrial Peace at its school on July 22. N.B.—Colleges with resolutions for the Division 3 A.G.M. on July 28 should forward at once for the final agenda and appoint their delegates. A report of the National A.G.M. will be given.

#### DIVISION 4.

Arrangements for Div. Camp School are now complete. For 22/6 all students attending classes, or members of affiliated Unions will enjoy the finest educational holiday of the year. The school will be held at Rhoose, near Barry, from August 4th to 11th and will consider "The Theory and Practice of Working-Class Organisation." There will be adequate facilities for sports, bathing, and rambles. The lecture list includes Miss Nicholas, Miss Edwards, Jack Roberts, Arthur Homer, Trevor David and Councillor Dick Lewis. As our accommodation is limited all intending students are urged to book now. Please forward your booking fee, 5s., to Div. Org., 13 Waengron Street, Blaina, Mon. The reorganisation of the West is making good progress. A West Wales Labour College has been set up embracing Aberavon, Glyn-Neath, Swansea and Swansea Valley. Nun Nicholas has been appointed tutor-organiser. To date three classes are running in the area, and two successful Day Schools have been held at Clydach and Mumbles. Other schools are being organised at Ammanford, Glyn-Neath and Aberavon. The Council is organising a draw in co-operation with the Divisional Council. Arrangements are also being made for some extensive propaganda during Congress Week. Recently, the Organiser, on behalf of the A.U.B.T.W., presented a cheque for £150 to a member of the Pontypool branch, as settlement of his compensation claim. The occasion presented an opportunity for extolling the importance of Trade Union Organisation and the

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AND ASK YOURSELF  
WHETHER YOU'VE GOT  
US THAT  
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Union's educational scheme. The results were beneficial, a branch class being arranged and correspondence course students enrolled.

Abertillery L.C., thanks to the splendid co-operation of Comrade Chivers, is holding a successful Esperanto Class. Comrade Len Hill, the College secretary, with the co-operation of the students, intends visiting all lodges and branches in the area prior to the Winter session. The annual meeting was poorly attended. Some Colleges were not sufficiently interested to send delegates, and some Trade Unions can improve. The report shows 129 classes, 3,576 students, 29 day schools, 1,203 students, 132 branch lectures, nine lantern lectures. On the whole a favourable report under present circumstances, and a compliment to the voluntary tutors and College and Class Secretary.

#### DIVISION 5.

In addition to the Week-end School in September, Bristol College is having a Day School in August, with J. Jagger, President of the N.U.D.A.W., as lecturer. The local tutorial class has started well and offers much promise. Bristol East Labour Party has affiliated to the Division. Cheltenham College Day School attendance was not good, but an enjoyable and profitable time was spent by those present. Torquay has arranged a Week-end School for 21st and 22nd of July. Will all Plebeians who may spend their holidays in Torquay remember this? A good meeting of the local branch of the A.S.W. was addressed by the Organiser last month. The Divisional Council meeting decided to send two representatives to the N.C.L.C.

Annual Meeting and Summer School. Miss Stoddart, secretary of Gloucester Labour College, was elected as co-delegate with the Organiser. Comrade Stephens, of Torquay, has been given the A.U.B.T.W. Divisional Scholarship. During the month the Organiser has addressed meetings of the Shop Assistants and A.U.B.T.W.

#### DIVISION 7.

Bad weather conditions have affected all the Divisional Day Schools up to date. On the weather, therefore, this Division is in favour of negotiations. The Halifax College's School was, due to rain, held in the Hebden Bridge Trades Club. About forty students attended from surrounding colleges, the Organiser and Hector Highley giving the lectures. The Nelson Weavers' Students' Association had arranged to have a ramble to this school. Again due to weather the members from Nelson got to Burnley and had dug themselves in. However, Miss McCall, their secretary, got through. On the same date a Day School was held at Slaithwaite, Roland Hill, R.C.A., and the Organiser took the lectures and forty-six students attended. Colleges should understand that if they will hold Day Schools on dates that clash with each other, and at the same time desire the services of the Organiser, they will have to consider getting a baby Avro. The Bentley class (Doncaster) is to have a Day School at Wentbridge (Pontefract-Doncaster Road) on Sunday, July 15th. Students will assemble at the 'bus halting-place at 3 p.m. Howell Morgan (London Labour College) and the Div. Organiser will lecture. The Skipton Weavers' Association and the Div. Organiser are now considering methods of interesting their members in the N.C.L.C.

#### DIVISION 8.

LIVERPOOL AREA.—Old students in this and Manchester districts will regret to hear of the passing of Bob Holder. He was one of the most conscientious and unassuming tutors the movement has had. The Day Schools at Penketh and Birkenhead were very successful. Mrs. Galloway ably chaired at Penketh and the Birkenhead School was the first to be held in the very fine educational centre of the Birkenhead Co-op. Society. Mrs. Gregory, a member of the Education Committee, welcomed the students. Maurice Dobb's lectures at both Schools were greatly appreciated. Tom Ashcroft has been booked for a Day School on September 9th next. He will also address a delegate conference in Liverpool on September 8th. Hearty congratulations to C. F. Booth (chairman of the Liverpool College) on winning the Scholarship, value £25, offered by the Co-operative Co-partnership Propaganda Committee, for the best essay on "The Producers' Theory of Co-operation and its Relation to the Development of Co-operation."

NORTH LANCASHIRE AREA.—The Week-end School at the Ribble Valley was attended by over one hundred students, thirty of whom were granted residential scholarships by their trade unions. Professor Johnstone was the lecturer. The Day

## TWENTY YEARS NEXT FEBRUARY—

since the first number of *The PLEBS* appeared. And throughout all that period it has had no subsidy other than the pennies and bobs of its friends and supporters.

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School was held on the lawn of a house in Preston, placed at our disposal by a good comrade, and Alex Evans was the lecturer.

The Area Organiser is running an afternoon class for locked-out members of the Nelson Weavers' Association; it is hoped that the winter classes will have an increase of students as a consequence. Similar facilities have been offered to the members of the N.U.T.W., who are on strike in the area. Two Tutors' and two Discussion Classes are running, while in Blackburn and Nelson, contact is maintained between students by periodic rambles.

#### DIVISION 10 (SCOTLAND).

Lanarkshire ran a Day School at Airdrie on the 24th June with a lecture on "The Structure and Finance of State" by Arthur Woodburn, and "Experiences in Russia," by A. Hunter (vice-president of the Lanarkshire Miners). Bathgate's able class secretary has had a conference and arranged a Day School for August, as well as a special Public Speaking Class for the county. E. Shinwell, M.P., is to be in the chair at the Day School. The new organisation scheme comes into force this month, and it is expected that Edinburgh and Stirlingshire will be making arrangements for its administration and deciding on their new officials, and how the new organisation can be built up.

#### DIVISION 11 (IRELAND).

The Belfast students recently enjoyed first-class lectures by J. Davidson on "The Life and Work of Shakespeare" and by Jas. McCauley on "Coal." A reading of "Masses and Man" brought the first summer term to a close. During the month several lectures to Trade Union branches have been given, and the Organiser gave a report of the educational activities to the A.E.U. Divisional Conference. A Discussion Class and Advanced Esperanto Class have been arranged for the July-September term.





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