A Short History of the British Working Class Movement 1900-1927.

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A Short History of the British Working Class Movement 1789-1927 by G. D. H. Cole

Volume III. 1900-1927

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PREFACE

SINCE I published the second volume of this study, at least two books of first-rate importance bearing upon its subject have appeared, both in the United States. Miss Gillespie's "Labour and Politics in England, 1850–1867," fills a gap which caused me some trouble; and Mr. L. H. Jenks's "The Migration of British Capital to 1875" throws a very valuable light on the economic forces at work in the years before the "Great Depression." Will readers of this "Short History" add these two to the brief lists of books given in the preceding volume ?

I have found this third volume harder than its predecessor to write; and I am even less satisfied with it now that it is done. For it is extraordinarily hard, at this nearness to the events described, to make sense of a period at once so eventful and so discontinuous as the quarter of a century covered by this volume. It is hard, here and there, not to lose one's temper over a controversy fresh enough to arouse passions. It is hard to tell what will seem significant in fifty years' time. And it is hard to compare, within this narrow compass, events of which even the details are largely fresh personal memories. I can only say that the job wanted doing, and I have done my best with it. If someone else will do it better, good luck to him l

I still hope, at some time, to make these three volumes the basis of a larger and more elaborate study. But that must wait, partly because I lack just now the time to do it, and partly because, if I did it, the working-class public would lack the money to buy. A book like this is obviously a mere apology for a history; but there seemed something to be said for an apology someone could afford to read in preference for a real history which would languish only in a few libraries. Conditions, I hope, will change, and then, unless someone else has done the job first, I hope to try my hand at a record on a scale more worthy of the subject.

Finally, I have to give my best thanks to Mrs. Manus for re-drawing my clumsy attempts at chart-making.

G. D. H. COLE.

Oxford, 1927.

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