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AN OUTLINE
OF
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NOTE

This textbook, like the other volumes in the same series, has been first drafted by one hand, and then discussed and revised by an Editorial Committee.

The author of the original draft of this book is J. F. HERRIN, who has also drawn the maps illustrating it. His arrangement of the material and general method of presentation has been adhered to throughout; but numerous suggestions, corrections, and additions by other members of the Committee have been embodied in the book.

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NOTES FOR STUDENTS AND TUTORS

THE maps illustrating this book are not intended to take the place of an Atlas, but should be used as supplementary thereto. We recommend, as being both cheap and well produced, Philips' "Elementary Atlas of Comparative Geography" (2s., post-paid 2s. 4d.).

The twelve chapters of this book will form a Syllabus for a course of twelve lectures.

For a shorter course of six lectures, the later chapters dealing with the world of to-day will probably be chosen as the basis. Some such arrangement as the following can be adopted:—

LECTURE 1.—*The World of To-day*. Economic Interdependence (very brief summary of Chapters II-V). The Five Great Groups.

LECTURE 2.—*America*. The Two Oceans, and the Key Route Between. Coal, iron, and oil.

LECTURE 3.—*The British Empire*. Geographical Dis-Unity. Sea-power and Sea-routes, &c.

LECTURE 4.—*The Far East*. The Riches of China. The Rise of Japan. The Pacific Problem.

LECTURE 5.—*Russia*. Land Transport. The Wealth of Siberia. Geography and Revolution.

LECTURE 6.—*The French Empire*. Imperialism in Europe. France takes Germany's Place. The Control of the Mediterranean. Conclusions.

It will of course be realised by every intelligent student that any study of present-day world-problems needs to be constantly revised and kept up to date in the light of *current events*. Tutors, wherever possible, will take care to use contemporary happenings in international affairs as supplementary illustrations. This book aims at providing a broad outline, into which the details have to be filled.

For a short course on Geography and History—which, as experience has proved, is exceedingly useful as a means of interesting new students in both subjects—Chapters I to VI will form the syllabus. Tutors, of course, should take care to introduce into these historical lectures frequent references to current problems and to the world of to-day in order to emphasise the connection between past and present history.

P R E F A C E



IT is obvious that one small book cannot cover that vast mass of facts and statistics which forms the material of the study of geography. To do that would require an encyclopedia; and even if worker-students had leisure to assimilate encyclopedias, there would be no need for the Plebs League to attempt one on this particular subject, since many excellent geographical books of reference are available. "Pure" geography, *i.e.*, the mass of geographical facts, is not one of the subjects open to rival class interpretations. The depth of the Atlantic, the number of the tributaries of the Amazon, or the average rainfall in equatorial Africa, all these are definitely ascertainable (if not already ascertained) and are the same for capitalist and proletarian. So far, therefore, as the proletarian student requires—and of course he will require—a groundwork of "pure" geographical knowledge, he will make use of the books produced by bourgeois authors and capitalist publishers; and especially of that best of all compendiums of geographical knowledge—a good atlas.¹

This book has a different aim. It is not primarily concerned with "pure" geography, but with geography studied in relation to history and economics, two subjects of vital importance to the workers. It does not claim for the study of geography a special or peculiar importance; on the other hand, it treats geography as subsidiary to the study of human history, past and present. Only in so far as knowledge of geographical facts and factors helps towards a better understanding of the course of social development and—especially—of the problems of our own day, does geography concern the proletarian student. (Though he, of course, as much as other people, is entitled to his share of recreation; and may, if his bent is that way, get as much pleasure out of maps as others get out of the movies.)

The vital international problems of to-day are, by the very nature of Imperialism—the latest phase of Capitalism—

¹ See Notes for Students and Tutors.

PREFACE

to a large extent geographical problems. Modern monopolist-capitalism aims at the economic exploitation of all the territories of the world; at the control of all the raw materials therein (including human labour-power), and of the sea and land routes necessary for the transportation of materials, first, to the industrial centres and, second, to their ultimate markets. Quite apart, therefore, from an understanding of the nature of this monopolist-capitalism—which is the subject-matter of economics—we need, if we are to study it in actual operation, to know as much as possible of the geographical facts and factors which condition, and in their own way dictate, its workings.

Further, those very problems of world production and distribution which Imperialism has made acute are the problems which it will be the task of the world's workers to solve. The working class has to face the job of organising world resources for the use of the peoples of the world, instead of for the profit of a few. And that, in its ultimate stages at all events, is a problem in economic geography.

In all this we are a long way removed from the "pure" geography in which rival class interests and interpretations played no part. Hence this book: which, from the great mass of geographical material, selects certain facts of greater significance than others *from the working-class point of view*, with the specific object of helping to make that point of view more fully *conscious* and informed.