

Vol. XIV. No. 1

January, 1922

# THE PLEBS

AGITATE EDUCATE ORGANISE

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multiplication table and the  
Darwinian theory are just  
as much tools as the foot-rule  
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And don't hang back because it doesn't happen to deal with the particular subject in which you're most interested. Just because its subject is a comparatively new one, it is able to put the case for I.W.-C.E. in a fresh and appealing way. Every comment, bar one, which we have yet heard about the book has been enthusiastic in appreciation of it. The one exception was from an old "hardshell"; and Lord knows we never set out to please him or his kind! If we did, we should sell about six copies—and the great mass of our readers would still be clamouring for a textbook which ordinary people could understand!

\* \* \*

Now that the National Council of Labour Colleges has been established in order to co-ordinate Independent Working-Class Educational activities, some of our friends may possibly be asking, "What further need is there for the Plebs' League as a separate organisation? Has not the fact that it 'served as a link between the various classes and class-centres' always been put forward as one of the chief reasons for its existence? And now that the N.C.L.C. fulfils this function, is there any necessity for duplicating our organisations, and so risking a waste of energy?" We think this a perfectly natural question. But we think, also, that a very little consideration of the subject will suffice to make it clear that there is still as much—if not more—need for the Plebs' League now that the N.C.L.C. has come into existence, as ever there was before.

\* \* \*

This same question—the need, or otherwise, for the separate existence of the Plebs' League—arose when the Central Labour College, on the support of which the League in earlier days concentrated all its energies, was at length taken over by the National Union of Railwaymen and the S. Wales Miners' Federation. And it can be answered now as it was answered then. Writing in the PLEBS, May, 1915, Noah Ablett pointed out that just because it had always been our policy to persuade the Unions to make educational work a part of their own activities, and therefore to hand over to them, as soon as they were ready to undertake the responsibility, the management and control of that educational work, it was essential that we retained our own organisation as a body of workers who were convinced that *a certain kind of education* was needed; and who were ready to remain on the alert—watchdogs!—to see that that kind of education was supplied.

\* \* \*

Now the N.C.L.C., though the moving spirits in its inception were, as was to be expected, all keen Plebeians, is out to secure the largest possible measure of Trade Union support (especially *local T.U.* support) for each College and class. And as this support increases, so *The N.C.L.C.* also the proportion of T.U. representation on the committees controlling Colleges and classes will increase. That is to say, a growing number of the actual administrators of N.C.L.C. work will be Trade Unionists, convinced, up to a point, that Working-Class Education is a desirable thing, but not necessarily even aware of the fact that there is a distinction between *a real working-class educational policy* and certain other kinds! The convinced I.W.-C.Frs.—i.e., Plebs—in the several localities will, of course, stand for the maintenance of the policy

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which, at its foundation, is the very basis of the N.C.L.C. The PLEBS' magazine, also, will stand for the maintenance of that policy. But both individual I.W.C.Ers. and the PLEBS itself will be in a stronger position if they are backed by an organisation which exists wholly and solely to advocate I.W.-C.E. principles; which, in brief, is *class-conscious* in the sphere of education, and which is concerned first and foremost with spreading the aims and ideals of class-conscious education.

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For this reason we urge not only that the Plebs' League as a national body but also its branches in every area should "carry on" more actively than ever. There need be no overlapping, or waste of energy. Everywhere, Plebs will work for the extension and development of the N.C.L.C. Until such time as a class secures adequate Trade Union support, the group of Plebs will itself form the committee responsible for carrying it on. Once a class—or a College—has secured that support, the Plebs' group will consist of convinced I.W.-C.Ers. ready to undertake something more than the mere routine of committee work; they will be propagandists, tutors, organisers—anything for which their individual capabilities fit them. But *active workers*, emphatically; prepared to win respect for their principles by virtue of hard work put in on their behalf.

\* \* \*

There is one other consideration which, we think, makes it eminently desirable that the League should go on living! And that is this: An individual I.W.-C.Er. is in a stronger position when advocating the principles for which he stands if he can claim to be speaking as the

*Point No. 2* representative of a *purely educational, non-political body*.

Plebs' Leaguers are members of diverse political organisations—mostly Left Wing, of course! But it is vitally important, in order to secure the widest possible measure of support for our educational work, that this should be discussed *on its own merits*, and not confused with a whole string of controversial matters, important maybe, but irrelevant. Heaven knows enough misunderstandings and prejudices quickly grow up where any label is concerned; and the very word "Pleb" itself is sufficient to arouse blind rage in certain quarters! But there is no need further to imperil our chances by associating our educational propaganda exclusively with any one political party. And inevitably, if we had no propagandist organisation of our own, our aims would be labelled as "mere Bolshevism" in one quarter, as "mere Reformism" in another, as "mere Syndicalism" in a third, and so on. The word "Pleb" has come to have a pretty definite connotation. Let us keep it—and use it; and so at any rate reduce to a minimum the possible misunderstandings about our work and our aims.

\* \* \*

A resolution will be moved at the Meet on behalf of the E.C. that the annual subscription to the central body of the League be changed back to 1s. Last year, it will be remembered, it was increased to 2s. 6d. We boast of being candid; so we will make no attempt to conceal the fact that the change was not a success! Now we know full well that a matter of eighteenpence per annum is *not* a mere triviality under existing economic conditions; and we feel strongly that as extensive a membership of the League as

*League  
Subscription*

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possible is more than ever desirable to-day. A return to the old "nominal" subscription should, therefore, ensure that no one who wants to express his sympathy with our objects will be debarred from doing so by financial considerations. *Sell that Textbook, and we shall more than make up the balance* so far as League funds are concerned. (And send for some Plebs Stamps at the same time.)

<p>IMPORTANT NOTICE</p>
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## NATIONAL COUNCIL of LABOUR COLLEGES

FIRST GENERAL MEETING, 7TH AND 8TH JANUARY, 1921, HANDFORTH  
(NEAR MANCHESTER)

**W**E have been unable to get suitable accommodation for our Conference on the dates originally fixed, hence the above revised arrangements. The meeting will be held at—

The Clarion Clubhouse,  
Outwood Road,  
Handforth (near Manchester),  
Cheshire.

*Station*—Heald Green, Cheshire (L. & N.W. Rly.).

From MANCHESTER (London Road Station) book to Heald Green Station—five minutes' walk from Club House. (Handforth line not good—2½ miles from Club house.) Or take Palatine Road car to terminus, then bus to Cheadle, and another bus to *The Griffin*—then 10 minutes' walk.

From STOCKPORT, car to Cheadle, then as above. Copies of Club Tariff will be sent to all delegates. Meals for delegates not sleeping at the Club House can be supplied by arrangement.

DELEGATES SHOULD NOTIFY N.C.L.C. SECRETARY OF THEIR REQUIREMENTS—BED AND MEALS—BEFORE JANUARY 3RD.

The meetings will commence on Saturday at 3 p.m. and Sunday, 10.30 a.m.

### AGENDA

1. Chairman's opening address.
2. Secretary's Report.
3. Discussion: N.C.L.C. Constitution.
4.     "     Methods of organisation;  
       Report on American experiments—J. P. M. Millar.
5.     "     The relation of PLEBS magazine and League to  
       N.C.L.C.
6.     "     Leaflets, etc., arranged for and proposed.
7.     "     Monthly Return Forms of affiliated activities.
8. Other Business.

The Agenda is given in outline only. All affiliated bodies are urged

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to send along proposals and suggestions for the guidance of the Executive Committee in preparing drafts for the Conference as a basis for discussions.

Delegates should be provided with credentials, so that only affiliated bodies can record their votes on vital questions of policy, etc. But it is hoped that as many districts, classes, etc., as possible will be represented, even if unable at present to affiliate.

Names and addresses of delegates and others desirous of attending the Conference should be forwarded as soon as possible to:—

The Secretary, N.C.L.C., 11, Penywern Road, London, S.W.5.

## The PLEBS' MEET

**T**HE Annual Plebs Meet is due to be held in January, or early February. After careful consideration the E.C. have come to the conclusion that it would be folly to arrange two conferences, each involving travelling and board expenses, within a week or two of one another. The first General Meeting of the N.C.L.C. having been fixed for January, it was felt that efforts should be concentrated on making that fixture a success.

It was accordingly decided to request the Executive Committee of the N.C.L.C. to agree to a short session on Saturday evening (January 7th) for the transaction of Plebs business—secretary's, treasurer's, and editor's reports, etc. Apart from this, the main business of a Plebs Meet would have been to discuss the relationship of the magazine and the League to the N.C.L.C.; and this question, it will be noted, forms one of the main items on the N.C.L.C. agenda. It should, therefore, save time, as well as expense, if the Plebs Meet and the N.C.L.C. Conference are on this occasion fused into one.

Our editorial this month gives one or two good reasons why the League should maintain its identity, even though the N.C.L.C. will to a great extent in future take its place as a link between the various classes. But separate identity need not—and will not, we know—prevent the very closest possible co-operation. And a joint Meeting will assist this very considerably.

### PLEASE NOTE

☛ Will all Plebs Leaguers intending to be present (*unless they have already "registered" as N.C.L.C. delegates*) send names, and accommodation required, to Sec., Plebs, 11A, Penywern Road, S.W.5, *before January 3rd?*

Nominations for Plebs E.C. are now wanted. (See "News of Movement" for names of present E.C. members.) Each nomination should be made by *two* Plebs League members, and should be in the Secretary's hands before the date of the Meet, in order that a postal ballot may be taken immediately after.

Let's have a rousing time at Handforth!

**DO YOUR DERN'DEST**

*to be there!*

## EXTRACT of MARX

**T**HIS book\* claims to be (in 284 pp.) an abridged "popular" edition of the three volumes of *Capital*. If this wonder has been accomplished—the putting not only of the "guts" of Vol. I. but also of the two relatively unfamiliar volumes into such a compass—it would not only be a boon to the classes but would help our work in various ways. Our own textbook would grow out of the discussion around such a work, and we could use it to give Marxism a more modern setting. Following Hilferding, Luxemburg and Cahn, we should notice, for instance, the effects of monopoly and other hindrances to the Average Rate of Profit and emphasise the importance of the latest form of capital—finance capital; or, changing our aim, we might "popularise" in the sense of making an antidote to the current nonsense of our opponents and the fallacies circulated by the "Economic Study Club."

Julian Borchardt's thirty years' study has enabled him to get on top of his subject. You may quarrel with the order and juxtaposition of the chapters, and notice the gaps (we will below), but his book reads as a fine piece of compression and judicious extraction. He succeeds in identifying himself with his original, and it is difficult to detect what is quotation and what paraphrase. The mathematical illustrations are very sparingly used and very simple compared with those of the original. He claims to have avoided repetition and to have selected all the passages necessary to give the man with little leisure the main outline of Marxian Economics.

A good way to test the book is to open Marx's three volumes at "Contents," and compare.

In the short introductory chapter Borchardt summarises the three forms of income—profit, rent and wages; and the three factors in the cost of production, merely remarking that there is an average rate of profit. This reads like one of the fragments at the end of Vol. III. In the second chapter he is still away in Vol. III., and proving that just as no solution to the determination of value and price can be found by examining categories of income neither is the mystery solved by examining circulation. Then he returns to deal with Use-value and Exchange-value and how Surplus-value is created. Constant and Variable, Fixed and Circulating capital are examined and straightway the "uniform" (average) rate of profit explained. There is no separate treatment of wages—merely a short paragraph on p. 17—and only three pages follow about relative and absolute Surplus-value. Then the chapters of Vol. I. on Co-operation, Division of Labour and Machinery are compressed into two lengthy chapters.

Having traced the result of machinery and the growth of constant capital, an extract is made from Vol. III on the consequent decrease in the Rate of Profit which, in turn, means reproduction of capital with a greater proportion of constant capital, and here Vol. I is drawn upon. Its order is followed in tracing the effects of accumulation, the so-called primitive accumulation, and the inevitable end of capitalist accumulation.

Then comes a break, for now Borchardt goes back to Money. Apparently this has been held back until now so that he can go on straightway to

\* *The People's Marx*. By J. Borchardt. (Reformers' Bookshops, 2s. 6d.; post paid. 3s.; or from PLEBS Book Dept.)

Circulation and summarise what Marx says in Vol. II (chapters 1-4 and 6) and in Vol. III (chapters 16-17) about the cost of circulation and the commercial employees—*e.g.*, the shop assistant and commercial traveller—whose position has recently perplexed some Plebeian students. After an explanation of the influence of Commercial Capital on prices, comes a lengthy chapter summarising that fine chapter in Vol. III., "Historical Data Concerning Merchants' Capital." Then an examination of the relations between Interest and Profit, and a summary of Banking and Credits.

The last 20 pages—again a bad break in sequence—deals with Crises. There is a praiseworthy summary of the Marxian argument which, in the original with all its mathematical proof and complexity in Vol. II., is enough to daunt even the bravest. Then Borchardt puts in an essay of his own. We do not think that Socialists in England have ever gone far enough into Marxism and Vol. II. to grasp the real Marxian theory regarding the Crisis—the proportion between the industries producing the means of production and those producing means of consumption. (Compare Hyndman with this essay—or with Hilferding or Luxemburg.)

We have attempted to give students a clear idea of the scope of the book. One greivous omission will be noticed and that is Ground Rent. The saints forbid that anyone should struggle for long with the lengthy and difficult ten chapters Marx gave to this in Vol. III. But to give Ground Rent only an accidental mention (pp. 1 and 29) considerably lessens the value of the book. In England we have Socialists like Shaw, for example, who take the Ricardian Differential Theory and apply it wholesale. Marx certainly had something to say upon Rent, and it is closely concerned with the extractive industries. This book is going to send many searching in the mass of material heaped up in Vols. II. and III.

No two persons' choice of what to leave out in a selection like this would be the same. We, for example, should have given a larger place to chapter 5, Vol. III. The historical side might also have been compressed, and more space given to Money. And some of the subsequent developments of Credit might have been treated—at least in an appendix. However, we think that students and teachers—while alive to the shortcomings—will gain much useful knowledge and avoid much "slogging" by using this book. For the hard-baked ones there are still the original volumes, and probably to their dying day some of these will scorn Borchardt's or any similar endeavour.

Minor errors, such as spelling, etc., are few—and allowing for the nature of the subject, its style is easy. Is it true to say (p. 2) that "money is *only* a commodity"? Why is the word "bratto" (gross) left on p. 4? Would not "mass" give the correct meaning? Who is Vaucansen mentioned on p. 69 along with Arkwright and Watt? Why not use the hyphen in "labour-power" as used in surplus-value? Why not leave out the references to the now meaningless division into two parts of the English edition of Vol. I? Also seeing that the quotations have been translated—why retain the *faux frais*, *per se*, and *nervus rerum*, in a popular edition?

We have given the book careful criticism, because it is bound to be widely used in our N.C.L.C. classes. It does not do away with the need for an Economics *textbook*—indeed, it makes one more desirable than ever. But as a handy *reference* book, to be used along with a textbook, it will serve a very useful purpose.

MARK STARR



## PHYSICAL ECONOMICS

**T**HERE are Marxists and Marxists. This profound observation is prompted by reflections on the discussion following a couple of lectures given a few weeks ago by Professor Soddy at Birkbeck College, London. The comrades, presumably from the Labour College, who were most prominent in this discussion seem to me to be of the other kind of Marxist. They were, apparently, under the impression that Professor Soddy was attacking Marx, so they "rushed in." This impression, to my mind, was entirely wrong, as I shall endeavour to show.

The chief point at issue is the meaning and measurement of value. Professor Soddy advanced the opinion that, in view of the discoveries of physical science, the Marxist method of measuring the value of an article by the quantity of undifferentiated human labour incorporated in it is out of date and untenable, and that it should be superseded by the "physical" method of valuing the article by the amount of energy dissipated in its production. That is to say, the labour-hour should be replaced by the calorie as the unit of value. According to the latter basis, human labour is but one way of usefully dissipating natural energy and therefore only one way of using capital, the totality of which is given by the total amount of energy available for use by the community.

The secret of the difference really lies in this word "community," for Professor Soddy examines the problem as it affects the community considered as a corporate whole. But capitalist society cannot be treated in this manner, as it is merely a collection of individuals and groups, each struggling for himself with hardly a thought for the effect on society as a whole. In such a society, an individual only considers how much work he must do, or get others to do, to achieve any given object, and sources of natural energy, such as unmined coal and unused water-power, are not in themselves considered to have value, because they have been given freely by Nature without the intervention of human labour. Therefore, in analysing the working of Capitalist society, Marx came to the conclusion, a correct one to the mind of anyone not saturated with bourgeois superficialities, that value is labour-time, which remains true as long as Capitalism remains in existence.

This, however, does not alter the fact that the supply of natural energy is limited, and that if 1,000 calories have been "used" in producing an article A and 2,000 in producing B, B has used up more of the community's resources than A, though the labour-time incorporated in each may be the same, say  $x$  hours. Marx, considering capitalist working, finds that the value of each article is  $x$  labour-hours, whereas Professor Soddy, considering the value to the community as a whole, says, quite truly, that a person must absorb, say, 1,000 calories to do  $x$  hours work, and that the value of A is therefore 2,000 calories, and of B, 3,000 calories.

The new theory is but a further development of the Marxian theory (which explains capitalist production) to cover a society that produces communally, and which is therefore in a position to consider its resources as a whole. Such a society will, undoubtedly, have to bear in mind that

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natural sources of energy are limited and therefore will have to consider how best to use such sources to our advantage, that is to say, it will have to consider the number of calories dissipated in producing any given article.

To my mind, however, Professor Soddy—as is common with exponents of new theories—tries to carry this too far; for he entirely ignores the psychological difference between “expending” energy directly for production, and “expending” it as labour through the medium of the human body. The amount of labour incorporated in an article has an importance apart from the physical energy “consumed” in producing that labour, because the amount of available human labour is limited, and also because an hour at work is an hour taken from leisure, and man is naturally lazy, at least, this man is. Communal society will, therefore, probably include two factors in valuing an article, first and foremost, the labour-time embodied in it, and secondly, the amount of natural energy “used” directly in producing it. It follows that this second factor will be the surplus value accruing to the community as a whole, for, assuming money or an equivalent, each person will be remunerated for his labour (not labour-power, as at present), but in buying an article he will have to pay for the labour-time embodied in it, plus an amount proportional to the natural energy directly dissipated in its production. This last will be profit going to the community as a whole, which obviously gets its natural energy as a free gift from Nature.

Of course if, as is quite possible, if not probable, a new source of energy that is practically limitless is made available, the need for conserving our supplies will be reduced practically to zero, but even so, the direct expenditure of natural energy will form a convenient, because a natural, basis for obtaining surplus value for use by the community as a whole.

I hope this rather sketchy consideration of what I have called “Physical Economics” will serve to show that the new theory, though it may be rather Utopian, is worthy of serious consideration and should not be dismissed as an ignorant attack on Marxism, of which latter it is but a further amplification.

A. S.

## *The* PHILOSOPHY of *the* TOOL

**T**ECHNIQUE, by which we mean man’s method of producing the things he needs, is, we claim, all important, the real basis of our social life. To demonstrate this clearly it is necessary to begin at the beginning, basing our investigations on the laws of organic evolution and on what we know of primitive man. Human origins must come within our survey if we are to present the subject with that degree of completeness which appears psychologically necessary.

The problem of man’s immediate ancestors is not yet completely solved, but the finishing touches may be safely left to the “competent biological authorities.” It is sufficient for our purpose to know that man belongs to the same family as the higher apes, and with them is descended from a common ancestor—a tailed tree-dwelling form, living during the early Tertiary period. At an early stage man began to develop a mode of activity which rapidly separated him from the nearest related organisms, and we must face the question—What was the cause (or causes) of this upward step in evolution?

We know that the actual superiority of man rested on the fact that he produced tools, with which to secure food and protect himself. We know also that tools must have had a very rudimentary beginning—a very slight amount of fashioning would be needed to change a stick into a club or a spear. Yet once begun there is no end to the development of the tool; each minute improvement providing a starting point for endless further modifications.

This elementary beginning of tools should be emphasised because it is often contended that a very high degree of intelligence would be needed for an animal to produce a bow or a hammer. It would. But bow and hammer and pointed flint were late developments from far simpler beginnings. Each tool and each improvement of a tool made man's life easier and more secure, and also modified continuously the nature of his activities.

These few points are more or less obvious. Let us return to our question—What was the cause of man's upward step? Most Marxian writers either pass over the point in silence, or else are satisfied with a very superficial explanation. It is generally assumed that the rise of human society was due to a superior development of the brain in the early progenitors of the race, which enabled them to take better advantage of favourable circumstances. It is not explicitly claimed that this superior brain is a special endowment of man, a gift of Providence; but this, nevertheless, is implied by the varying terminology used. Take, as typical of this school, the explanation given by Untermann in the chapter on "Animal and Human Societies" in his book on Marxian economics. A passage or two will indicate the trend of thought:—

The brain variation gave to men a far better control over their environment than apes. . . . Cave-men and cave-apes lived under practically the same conditions, but the possession of a larger brain capacity enabled the cave-men to make more of the same environment. . . . The peculiar mental ability of the men was the original cause which differentiated human societies from animal societies. (p. 41.)

We are given no clue as to the *cause* of this peculiar mental ability, but are told that while the apes also bore traces of this evolution in their brains, natural selection did not favour it in their case. (See pp. 39 *et seq.*)

Kautsky in the same way claims that man must have had a higher intelligence *before* he could have produced tools (see *Ethics*, p. 121). The fallacy of this line of reasoning is that it assumes the existence of those material and organic factors which led to the origin of human society, and thus evades the task of *explaining* them. The brain is not an organ which can grow and develop of itself (in that respect it differs from the other bodily organs); its functions are conditioned absolutely by the needs of the body through which it receives and transmits its various currents of energy; and ultimately every stimulus *comes from the environment* either directly or in response to a bodily action. It is as illogical to imagine the brain of primitive man conceiving and visualising a complete tool, say a bow and arrow, as it would be to imagine the brain of Aristotle planning the structure of a Lawson biplane. In neither case were conditions ripe for such an achievement.

The probability is that the early development of the human brain was the result, in the first place, of environment, habits of life, etc., selecting

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**"The biological function or purpose of Knowledge is ACTION."**  
—(Psychology Textbook, p. 84.)

*those bodily variations which tended to develop the feet for walking, to establish the upright position of the body, and thus to liberate the hands for grasping and carrying things.* The growth of the brain would be the automatic result of this mode of life. A pair of hands, absolutely free for holding things—not to be used either for walking or swinging on trees—were essential for the development of that peculiar plastic adaptability of muscle and nerve which we call *skill*; a faculty altogether independent of inherited instinct, and itself forming the basis of intelligence and, later still, of rationalising thought. The fact that plastic intelligence has to so considerable an extent supplanted instinct in the human organism is due to the multiple uses to which the grasping hand may be applied.

The uses to which the ape-man could put his two hands were such as could not come under the guidance of instinct, but must be directed by the individual according to immediate circumstances. Hence each form of activity, the making of a club or spear for instance, as well as their use, would involve the continual exercise of the highest degree of *mental power* attainable at that time; and those individuals having the most adaptive nervous system would easily have the best chance in the struggle for life.

There is no ground for the assumption that the brain of man developed independently of the rest of his body, or by laws peculiar to itself. The powers of man's brain are similar in kind, though vastly different in degree of development, to those of the higher placental, and its growth is the outcome of the ceaseless interaction of man upon his own peculiar environment. Man did not progress from the ape level merely because he had a bigger brain and could think better—that is assuming just what we need to understand. He made the great step because his environment was such that plastic intelligence, resulting from the free use of his hands, had the greatest survival value. The increased growth of the brain was the result of this free interaction of the body and its surroundings; natural selection in the early stages being directed mainly upon the external organs of man.

We must now sum up the argument briefly. What distinguished man from the animals was intelligence and the ability to make and use tools and instruments of production, and the key to the whole advance of human society is the technical progress which these tools make possible. To the question whether it is the tool or the intelligence of man which causes the progress, we reply that by setting out the problem in that way we are apt to fall into confusion. All progress, all action in fact, is the result not of one of these factors alone, but of *the interaction of the two*. For intelligence, or human energy in any form, to be manifested at all there must be a suitable material environment on which it can impress itself. With the advent of the tool, from its faintest imaginable beginnings, man's relationship to the forces of Nature were changed. For the tool, right from the start, is something he can completely control, and it serves as an intermediary, a lever if you will, between him and the great forces and objects around him. Man's intelligence could now be applied to a multitude of tasks, each within his power to accomplish, and each serving as a stepping-stone to still greater accomplishments. The steps in the process appear to be: First, the use

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**“To man a change of environment means new worlds to conquer. To the ant it would mean extinction.”—(Psychology Textbook, p. 63.)**

of a natural object, stick or stone, as a tool ; then an increase in skill and intelligence caused by this practice ; next, an improvement in the tool, or the addition of another tool, with a further increase in the range of intelligent action, and so on, *ad infinitum*.

The mightiest thing in the universe is the tool in the hand of man, because for the first time it brings conscious purpose, order and guidance into the blind forces of Nature. By itself the tool is utterly useless ; without the hand of man it can neither exist for long nor accomplish anything. But the same applies to the hand, *and the brain*, of man. Without the tool they can accomplish nothing.

ARTHUR RILEY

## WHAT *one* TEACHER *thinks* about the PSYCHOLOGY TEXTBOOK

**N**O work can be of greater immediate—or ultimate—importance to the Labour Movement than the development and extension of educational classes throughout the length and breadth of the land. Big social changes are ahead—are, indeed, already upon us ; and only a fully conscious working class can ensure that out of those changes there emerges a better social order. Important as the question of a Labour Press, especially a Labour daily newspaper, certainly is, it is doubtful whether even this—though we hear a good deal more of it!—is more essential to the growth of that consciousness than the Independent Working-Class Educational Movement.

The formation of the N.C.L.C. marks a real step forward. We have left the stage of sporadic, more or less-disjointed efforts, and entered upon that of definite, well-considered organisation. But co-ordination of the classes is only going to make more apparent, and more urgent, *the needs of the classes*. And one great obstacle with which we have had to contend hitherto is the shortage of good textbooks. Plebs Textbook No. 1—*An Outline of Psychology*—makes its appearance, then, so to speak, at the psychological moment ! I would suggest, indeed, to the Textbook Committee, that the most fitting way of celebrating every anniversary in the Plebs calendar, and every fresh milestone on our march forward, will be the publication of a new textbook. . . . At any rate, the advance has begun. May we never look back, and may we have the whole series of textbooks ere long !

I am going to read the *Outline of Psychology* twice or thrice more yet. But three or four points about it strike me at a first reading (as a teacher



### “STAMP IT OUT!”

We're still handicapped by a debt—and it will be bigger directly, because we've issued that new Textbook. You can help us to wipe it out, and advertise the PLEBS at the same time, by buying and using some Plebs Stamps. 1d. each, 1/- a dozen (tastefully printed in two colours).



who has taken classes through a Psychology course) as deserving of hearty commendation.

1.—*The fact that it is a "communal production."* No one individual can possibly anticipate all the needs of both teacher and student. And while the work of a single author might have a freshness and vigour which most "communal productions" fail to achieve, it could hardly hope to be as entirely satisfactory *for class use* as a book discussed at every stage by a committee of tutors and students. This book "grew up" in the very best way possible for our purposes. Its material was originally used, I understand, as the basis of a course of lectures to an elementary class; the students of which were encouraged to discuss both subject and treatment as candidly as possible. It was then written out in full by the lecturer; submitted in sections to various Plebs "experts"; and finally read aloud, and discussed page by page, and chapter by chapter, in a committee composed of "experts" (i.e., Plebs who had made a special study of the subject) and of "laymen" (i.e., tutors and students who had not studied Psychology, but who criticised the treatment and suggested amendments, revisions, "cuts" or amplifications).

The result, it is safe to say, more than justifies the trouble taken over it. The book has lost nothing in freshness and vigour, and it has gained immeasurably in its immediate usefulness as a textbook.

2.—*Its general "readableness."* Students who have got into the habit of regarding textbooks not as books to read, but simply as "works" to be used in class, will have an agreeable surprise when they open this book. The Pleb who does not read it through from cover to cover, once he has started chapter one, must be a difficult sort of person to please. I have read a few books on Psychology, some (professedly) written for beginners and others for advanced students. I have encountered none which, while giving the beginner a good all-round grip of the essentials of the subject, contrive to do it in so easy and effortless a fashion. As is quite appropriate (though rare) this textbook of psychology does take into account the psychology of the readers to whom it is addressed. It is much to be hoped that in this respect it will serve as a model for every future Plebs textbook.

3.—*The general "make-up" of the book and the additional features—*other than the main body of the text—which make it especially useful to the student (whether in a class or used at home). I would especially mention the very full and valuable glossary; the Suggestions for Study; the way in which the subject matter has been broken up into paragraphs (with separate headings) and into chapters of reasonable length; and, last but not least, the blank pages left at the end for the student's own notes.

All these features are as useful to the tutor as to the student. Indeed, the class-teacher who, after a careful mastery of this little book, could not take a class of students through an elementary course in Psychology must be far too lacking in self-confidence, or in grasp of the Plebs' point of view, ever to be of much service to the I.W.-C.E. movement. A group of students, in fact, meeting in a study circle, would find that the mode of presentation adopted in the book would enable them to "carry on" without a teacher. Which, of course, is as it should be. For until the present lack of tutors is overcome, textbooks must perforce take their place.

4.—*The price.* Some of us doubted whether, in these days of high

prices, it would be possible to issue really adequate textbooks at half-a-crown, unless a tremendous circulation was definitely guaranteed for them. This book proves that the prices being charged by some commercial publishers for textbooks and handbooks are exorbitant. Compare it with . . . . but I had better mention no names. I will content myself with the remark that the *Outline of Psychology* is a half-crown's worth which will satisfy even a Scotsman or a Yorkshireman.

But—Why Psychology? asks the student of independent working-class education. This question has been anticipated in the preface of the textbook and dealt with very satisfactorily. But as this will not have been read until the book has actually been bought by the querulous, a few words right here will not be amiss. One would like to ask these doubtful ones what they really mean when they speak of such things as human nature, the working of the mind, class-consciousness, etc. How does a knowledge of these matters aid and supplement the knowledge gained by the study of Economics and Industrial History? How does it give rise to a more comprehensive and enlightened tactic than would otherwise be gained from the study of Economics and History alone? Even the sceptical must admit that undoubtedly it does do these things. The real question is—*how?* And the only answer one can give is that given in the preface: "Read this book and find out!"

In conclusion let me point out that this is no time for thinking twice about purchasing the book. If you are so down on your luck as not to have a spare half-crown, borrow or beg it and get this book! He who hesitates is lost, for whilst he is hesitating the edition will have run out.

Can I be more emphatic? Yes, you say? Well, then, don't be such a d—fool as to let this opportunity slip by you. Get the book—and, at once!

J. B.

## WORKERS' EDUCATION *in the* STATES

THE number of bodies in the United States providing either Independent Working-Class or W.E.A. education appears to be twenty-six,\* with a total enrolment of 9,670, which indicates that we on this side are further ahead. Fourteen out of the twenty-six Colleges or class groups enrolled not more than fifty students each; three have enrolments of between fifty and a hundred; six have enrolments of a hundred to three hundred; one had 1,000; another 2,000; while the Rand School had between 3,000 and 5,000, or nearly as many as all the others put together.

### *English as a Weapon*

The subjects taught number thirty-five, and in order of popularity the first three are English, Economics and the History of the Labour Movement. English, which is not to be confused with Literature, would appear last on our list, though it is first in the States. The explanation is simple.

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\* *Report on Workers' Education in the United States.*

In America many of the Unions have memberships composed of a variety of nationalities ; one of the Unions most interested in financing workers' education is the Amalgamated Garment Workers, the membership of which speaks in *thirty* different tongues. This also explains why the origin of the educational movement in the States has been different from ours. Here the Labour College movement has been and still is a rank-and-file movement ; in America, it seems, it has often originated in official labour bodies, simply because these bodies have been driven to try to get their members to have one language in common and this seems to have given the educational enthusiast an opportunity of introducing education in the social sciences. English in America is a weapon in the class struggle, just as much as Economics.

### *Class not Craft Education*

The result of the language difficulty is that in many cases each Union has its own educational organisation. We, on this side, have pretty well managed to escape that and we need to take care to continue to escape it, not a very easy thing, for craft viewpoints and Union pride are apt to suggest : " Let's have classes of our own." The disadvantages of every Union being its own educator are plain. It involves in one city the existence of a number of separate educational bodies all preaching the same gospel to their own little congregations—the position in New York illustrates this point. Besides, a Trade Union that proposes to have a class in each branch will fail, for at present every branch hasn't sufficient members interested enough to form a class.

In any case, surely the different types of workers are segregated enough in their jobs and in their unions without being segregated in their education. The aim of I.W.-C.E. is to give a working-class viewpoint and that is not done by the Clerks' Union running classes for clerks and the Engineering Union running classes for engineers. Not only does that perpetuate the craft point of view, but it deprives the workers concerned of the value of meeting and discussing regularly with workers of varying occupations and grades, and learning that clerical work or mining is not the only job that keeps society going. Solidarity is something to practise as well as to preach.

### *Value of Local Control*

Not only is it an admitted fact that better results are got from classes open to all types of workers, but it has also been proved that local funds and a substantial amount of local control give better results than purely national funds and control. This is true not only of this country but of America. Says C. J. Hendley, Instructor, Educational Dept., Pennsylvania Federation of Labour :—

Incidentally, I would say that our experience has been that it is more satisfactory to secure funds for this work directly from the local unions, than to obtain it all from the central bodies. When funds are solicited directly from the locals (branches) and contributed out of their treasuries, the membership becomes more vitally interested in the work than if some central body assumes the whole burden.

In other words the struggle to get an affiliation scheme carried in a branch is the first step in educating the members.

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**Psychology uninteresting ? Rot ! What about " Class Consciousness in T.U. Leaders " as a section-heading which shows that our new Textbook deals with real life ?**

*Need for Fairly Large Districts*

On the other hand, local control can be carried too far, if it means that every town must have a Labour College of its own. Each educational district must be sufficiently large to allow not only for the raising of sufficient finance, but also to make possible the changing of tutors from one class to another. This is necessary in order to allow subjects to be put from a fresh point of view and to allow for changes in the subjects taught in any particular class.

*Funds and Fees*

The bulk of the funds for running the American classes is got from National Executives and local branches of Trade Unions. The pioneer Trade Union in education is the International Ladies' Garment Workers, which spends \$15,000 a year on education. So far as fees are concerned, the students in some cases pay the full fees; in others the fees are partly paid by the Unions; while the Union just mentioned opens all its classes free to its members, which is the general policy in our movement in Scotland.

*Educating the Unemployed*

The question of educating the unemployed is one of particular interest to us in these days. Workers have plenty of time for study during periods of unemployment or during strikes, but they are not in a mood to use it in that way. They cannot think abstractly when their practical problems are so distressing. "During unemployment," says one part of the Report, "it proved impossible to do intensive educational work, because unemployment psychology is not conducive to such work." It was, however, found possible to hold meetings of the unemployed and give short popular lectures, diluted, as a rule, with a small musical programme. The only type of unemployed workers with whom class work can be successful is the hard-bitten, class-conscious type.

*How to get Students*

In some cases the getting of students is more difficult than the problem of getting finance. The Americans have found, like ourselves, that a serious obstacle is the scarcity of Labour educational propagandists. To the average trade unionist, the phrase I.W.-C.E. simply brings up a picture of schools and school books—it has no real meaning to him. He has got to be shown the bearing of the Labour College on his low wages and unsatisfactory housing conditions. The International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union leaves few stones unturned to excite interest in its educational work. Its journal allots part of its space for that purpose; it provides short lectures at branch meetings, posts educational leaflets direct to the homes of the members, arranges social gatherings and runs summer schools.

The Rochester Labour College goes even further. To make it possible for mothers to attend the Friday night lectures, the College employs a paid storyteller, who tells stories to about 150 youngsters while their mothers are listening to the lecture next door. Moreover to attract the young people in the unions, it offers free dance tickets one night each week,

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**What is the difference between religious faith and the faith of the Marxian? See Psychology Textbook, p. 123.**

which are only valid if the holder attends the lecture that precedes the dance!

"We should say to the workers," says the Director of that College, "dance and sing to your heart's content, but when we get through dancing and singing we must fight; and in that fight the educated labour man is more precious than gunpowder."

Next month a summary of the papers delivered on teaching methods will conclude the review of a very valuable Report.

J. P. M. MILLAR

## GET READY *to* ADMINISTRATE

**A** COUPLE of years ago, hearing a rumour that the Labour College was to include technical education in its curriculum, I made the following very slovenly observation:—"It's no use spending trade-union funds on training men who, in nine cases out of ten, will ultimately become foremen under the capitalist system. The technical schools will attend to that branch of education."

Personal experience had revealed that a foreman is usually a person with more petty ambition than manly principle, and there appeared to be no necessity to go out of our way to increase this type. Hence, prejudice took the floor and elbowed reason into the background.

However, in going through Mr. J. Tannenbaum's book, *The Labour Movement*, the chapter on "Labour and Education" gave prejudice such a nasty knock that its vigour is considerably decreased and reason is once more trying conclusions with the doughty old warrior.

Briefly, this is Mr. Tannenbaum's contention: "No amount of lecturing on radical literature, on price, value and profit, nor any amount of criticism of the policies of the Government, makes a worker better equipped actually to participate in the efficient democratic functioning of an industry so technical, so many-sided, as, for instance, the steel industry. He may have learned to dislike the present scheme of things bitterly, but he has not acquired the process of control, direction and co-operation essential to the continuance and smooth working of the productive process."

Now, the Labour College teaches us the need for control over, and co-operation between, the various departments of an industry and between different industries, while the Workers' Committees are attempting practical application of this teaching. But there appears to be no organised effort to deal with the technical aspect of this question, and that is the one I propose to deal with in this article.

Let us consider the matter under two heads—What is desirable, and what is practicable? The desirability of providing the working-class movement with sufficient technical knowledge to enable it to carry on without assistance from any other class will, of course, appeal less to some workers than to others. Those who put all their faith in the ballot box and a Labour Government will be content to rely on taking over the technical experts along with the industries. On the other hand there are

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**Don't kick the foreman for being a fool. Read the Psychology Textbook and find out why his brain works that way.**



those of us who believe that circumstances may arise—war, collapse of credit, unemployment, etc.—which may bring about such a crisis as will put the working class in power. In such event we should naturally wish to be in a position to manipulate the industrial machine with as much efficiency and as little friction as possible. If so, we must prepare for such a situation arising, a situation in which our technical experts may desert us and line up with the expropriated capitalists. We must not be obliged to grope our way through repeated failures to a belated success, but take such steps now as will enable us to inaugurate a new social system with the confidence born of knowledge and ability. If we agree that it is desirable for us to include in our movement technical experts who will render us independent of capitalist hangers-on, the question arises—What is the plan most practicable at present?

We are still living under a capitalist system of society and we want to train workers in preparation for a different form of society. How can it be done without risking the diversion of the services of those we train and their absorption into the ranks of capitalist underlings? It would seem that the best plan would be for each important trade union to train its own experts by giving a certain number of scholarships providing the very best technical education at the most highly equipped centres. After this training is completed satisfactorily these experts to be employed by the organisations which have trained them. What are the arguments in favour of this plan?

In the first place, it is not necessary for the working-class movement to train shop or departmental foremen. The technical schools in industrial centres are already training potential foremen in excess of demand. Just as the capitalists had to give the workers elementary education in order to carry out industrial processes, so there is the provision of technical education in order that the employers may not be at the mercy of their skilled foremen. There are large numbers of men working at ordinary occupations who are fully qualified to act as shop foremen if they should be required.

Again, we must not overlook the contingency that the duties of a shop foreman, under the new *régime*, may differ from present-day duties. It is probable that he will be selected mainly for his ability to cope with technical difficulties and for the allocation of work, while discipline, promotion and shop organisation generally may be dealt with by the shop committee.

But with the experts the position is different. The mining engineer, mechanical engineer, civil engineer, draughtsman, architect, surveyor, chemist, doctor, and numerous others in the same category, are just as essential to industry as the shop foreman but their numbers are smaller and their sympathies more definitely middle class. For these reasons they could not be depended upon to rally to the aid of the workers in a time of social crisis. Obviously then, if we are to prepare for administration we must train fully-qualified men to fill their places, and, having trained them, we must employ them in order to retain their services. Students so highly trained as they must be to supply our needs, would probably not be content to return to workshop drudgery and they would be doubly desirable to the capitalist in that their capture would mean a loss to the working-class movement—just as active shop stewards are offered foremen's jobs and trade union leaders government jobs. We must be able to make them as good an offer as the capitalist would or risk their loss. It

would be easy to utilise the men who had acquired this expert knowledge in various ways, such as lecturers or inspectors who would carry out investigations on behalf of their members. By protecting the safety, health and working conditions of their fellow trade unionists they would render beneficial service under the present system of production while keeping in touch with technical developments in preparation for the rôle they will fulfil in an industrial democracy.

There is plenty of scope for greater elaboration of this question, but perhaps this outline will be sufficient to provoke useful criticism and suggestions. After all, it is one of the use-values of a Pleb to serve as a whetstone on which fellow Plebs may sharpen their weapons in readiness for another educational attack.

ALICE PRATT

## STUDENTS' NOTES *and* QUERIES

*Q.—How should Marxians deal with the Free-Will-Determinism controversy?*

*A.—*For an answer to this question see the Plebs Psychology Textbook, Chap. XVIII., on the "Will."

*Q.—What is the effect of the Co-operative Movement so far as the working-class is concerned?*

*A.—*The Co-operative Movement as we know it is an association of consumers leagued together to avoid paying the merchant profits. In so far as it undertakes production it also gets for itself the profits of the industrialists. Because the primary exploitation of the worker is in production the Co-operative Movement is no remedy for ending working-class exploitation; indeed, as a consumers' association it exploits its employees in the same way as the ordinary capitalist firm. (As an example of "existence determining consciousness" the Economics of the Co-operative Educational Movement does not favour the Labour Theory of Value but endeavours to make a peculiar blend of the ideal of co-operation with the point of view of the consumer.) Unless the workers are strongly organised the economies they make in collective purchase will not go into their own pockets but into those of the employer by way of lower wages.

Having made its limitations clear, we may summarise the good effects of Co-operation as:—

(A) It helps to raise the worker's standard of life and strengthens his resistance in lockouts and strikes. (Against this can be urged that it stimulates the narrow conservativeness of the "small investor" mind.)

(B) So far as its actual employees are concerned it often leads the way in improving conditions.

(C) Its educational activity is praiseworthy in many districts.

By itself the Co-operative Movement would go round in a ring. Linked up with the industrial and political organisations of the working class it could give great help.

A. W. raises the point that *the capitalists, by lowering wages, lessen the purchasing power of their own customers.*

Whatever use this point may have for propaganda purposes it is hardly of much practical value for it assumes that the satisfaction of consumption is the aim of capitalist production. The workers' relation is not to the total of commodities produced but to variable capital alone. If this can be lessened the employer benefits at the expense of and not by the workers' wages. Viewed from another angle, it can often be seen that while output is reduced the same or larger profits can be made. A better propaganda point is to emphasise the Economy of High Wages, i.e., that it pays the capitalist not to cut down wages because the labour-power he finally receives is inferior in quality.

The same correspondent refers to the present attack upon the Seven-Hour Day in the mine. Here again we have to insist that the intensity of labour is more important than its duration. An increase in the length of the working day would mean a terrible lowering of the workers' standard of life—worse than any decrease in wages—and must be fought accordingly.

A very interesting topic which the

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**Question.—Is the new Plebs Textbook the goods?**

**Answer.—Well, take a look at it!**

"Economic League" and "Economic Study Club" lecturers are treating free of charge in the Workmen's Clubs of South Wales is the relation of machinery to unemployment. Their contention is the old one that machinery makes work instead of lessening it. A favourite illustration is that of motor buses superseding the old cabs, transport thereby being more widely used and an additional number of men found work in making and driving the buses. Quite so. Introduce a steam navvy and you will displace navvies. According to the above lecturers these men would immediately become engineers, smelters, or some other type of worker necessary to making the machine. But granting this absurd quick transformation, if as many people were necessary to make the machine as it displaces under capitalism, there would be no purpose in its introduction. (Students might well re-read Section 6 of

Chap. 15, Vol. I., "Capital," for further suggestions on this topic.)

The reply given in November that the domestic servant created no surplus-value has aroused some comment. It should be clear, however, that a person who engages a domestic servant buys her services as they would those of a singer or a doctor. Productive consumption of labour-power and individual consumption are two distinct things. If the same servant was engaged by a multiple teashop then the case would be different. The bookbinder who writes stating that he is occupied in binding only the books of a financial firm, which it is afraid of sending out, seems to me to come under the head of commercial employees, who realise S.V. for their employers but do not create it.

M. S.

## TRA LA MONDO : *Esperanto Notes*

*Bookbinders I*.—The organ of the Norwegian bookbinders' trade union *Norsk Bokbiner-Tidende* has recently started a section in Esperanto in the hope of receiving news from confrères in other countries. In the issue of 15th November the President of the Union requests that communications of interest to trade unionists of the book-binding and printing trades be sent to the editor:—Hans Aas, Bokbinderforbund, Folkets hus, Kristiania, Norway.

"*Esperanta Ligilo*."—It seems to me to be a sufficiently remarkable fact that there should be circulating a monthly international journal in Braille having 623 blind subscribers in 28 different countries. This journal is, of course, in Esperanto.

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*Russia*.—Another crime of the Bolsheviks! In Saratov they have actually nationalised the famous Esperanto library of G. Davidov—the largest library of Esperanto works in existence—probably containing upwards of four thousand books and pamphlets. This library is not, however, the only State Esperanto library in existence, for the *Saksa Esperanto-Bibliotek* in Leipzig is maintained by the Government of Saxony.

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*Bradford*.—In the local branch of the West Riding Labour College English is taught in conjunction with Esperanto (text-book: *Esperanto Teacher*) by Prof. A. H. M. Dessin, Ph.D. Where a knowledge of English grammar is lacking, it is an excellent idea to teach the two languages simultaneously. Some 30 students attend the classes.

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*Svislando*.—En Genève la Laborista Kongreso Virina akceptis Esperanton por sia venonta kunsido en 1923. Tre sukcesis

granda publika kunveno ĉe la Geneva Universitato organizita de Instruista Unuiĝo, Pedagogia Societo kaj Instituto J. J. Rousseau por klarigi al gepatroj la kialon de Esp. instruado en lernejoj. Parolis profesoro Bovet, Privat kaj Malche, ŝtata direktoro de l' unuagrada instruado. Poste komenciĝis du kursoj akun 85 instruistoj.

*El Esperanto*

*Cinio*. Antaŭ kelkaj jaroj la ĉina laboristaro ne konsciis pri sia servuteca situacio. Tamen la gilda organizado jam de tre longe ekzistas en nia lando. Sed la gildanoj ĉiam kunvenis por adori sian idolon. Lastajn du jarojn, dank'al propagando de socialismo, la laboristoj vekigiĝis kaj fondis sindikatojn. Jam ekzistas tiaj organizaĵoj en Shanghai, Hon-Kon kaj Kanton. La sindikatoj estas helpataj de socialistoj kaj anarkiistoj, kiuj instruas, ke la kapitalismo estas granda malamiko de la laborista klaso, kaj ke por savi la laboristojn el la mizero estas necese fordetri la kapitalismon kaj starigi komunismon.

Nune ekzistas en Ĉinio pli ol dek gazetoj kiel organoj de la laboristaro. La plej konataj estas: "The Social," ĉiutage eldonata en Kanton; "La Laborista Movado" en Pekin; "La Laborista Mondo" en Sanhaj; "La Laborista" en Kanton. La ĉi tri lastaj aperas ĉiusemajne. Krom tiuj, la revuo "La Voĉo de l'Popolo," "La Komunisto" estas ankaŭ disvastigataj inter laboristoj kaj vekgas ilin por sociala revolucio.

Strika movado estas kelkfoje tre vigla. La laboristoj jam sukcesis altigi sian salajron kaj mallongigi la labortempon. Tamen nun ili ankoraŭ devas labori pli ol dek horojn ĉiutage; nur la maŝinistoj en Kanton sukcesis ricevi la naŭhoran labortagon kaj dimanĉan libertempon.

*Simpak*

POPOLANO

LETTERS *from* PLEBS

*We invite contributions from readers on all subjects of interest to working-class students. The only condition is that they must not exceed 400 words—and preference will be given to those shorter than that.*

## IMPORTANT CORRECTION

DEAR EDITOR,—In the effort to crush the last instalment of my "Labour and the World Crisis" series into the allotted space last month you have by some means succeeded in transforming a simple illustration into a positive statement.

On p. 362, line 15 from bottom it reads, "It means that England decided," etc.; and again "Thus one sovereign was made," etc.

The original was—"What does this mean? Nothing more or less than IF England had decided," and "making one sovereign," etc. This as you will see alters the meaning considerably and as published amounts to an error.

Yrs. frat., W. H. MAINWARING

[We tender our apologies, both to our contributor and to our readers. The error arose from an even more than ordinarily acute pressure of space in the December magazine, and as an alternative to wholesale "cutting" we attempted condensation. There was not, moreover, in this instance, time to submit proof to the writer.—Ed. PLEBS.]

## THE GOLD STANDARD

DEAR SIR,—I am much obliged for Mr. Mainwaring's answer to my letter and for his efforts to show me how to improve my knowledge of the money problem. But I think he is mistaken when he infers that I have left one of the uses of money by the wayside. What I want to do is to make more extended use of its uses.

I think we are evolving past the Gold Standard period, and I want to help the evolution along. I think the acceptance of a Gold Standard is due to ignorance. In any case we have a very diluted Gold Standard now and we don't seem to be travelling very fast towards its proper resuscitation.

Does Mr. Mainwaring agree with me that if the Government borrowed money from the banks by means of bank credit, and lent it under guarantee for the purpose of improving railways, roads, electric development, sewers, houses, etc., this would go a very long way to solve our present unemployment problem? If this process was continued whenever trade depression came along, would it not have the effect of improving the standard of living?

I can't see that an increase of a thousand million in the present floating debt would be anything like so serious a matter as the present unemployment problem. The extra currency notes which would be required would certainly not be more than one hundred million pounds. The thing to bear in mind is that the credits created would assist in the production of tangible assets and not shells, etc., as in the war.

With everybody working our national income would be greatly increased; with the result that the proportion of present taxation to income would be diminished.

I should be glad to learn Mr. Mainwaring's views. I have certainly got the disease, as he suggested; though if I was venturesome enough I might even diagnose for Mr. Mainwaring.

Yours, etc.,

T. W. WYATT

## ANOTHER HUMANITARIAN

DEAR COMRADE,—A new order of society is very necessary, if only to civilise the Socialists. They can make heaven and hell and earth ring with denunciations of the capitalist for ill-using *them*; but they in turn can ill-use *others*—and glory in it as affording a means to "marching on to victory" and "entering into their kingdom."

With a little more wit and nerve (or if we used even what we have) we could easily shake off our tyrants; but animals are in the position of not being able to speak for themselves but are entirely dependent upon us—they suffer under our cruelty and prosper under our justice—unable to oppose one or encourage the other.

The capitalist bleeds the worker because it is to his advantage. The worker slaughters and condones the vivisection of animals because he considers that is to *his* advantage. Where is the difference in principle? The Socialists have made the interesting discovery that they are being robbed, and so advocate Socialism to put a stop to it. But they don't understand freedom. Perhaps when the Socialist Republic arrives they may have more time to think about it.

Yours fraternally,

V. WILSON

Manchester.

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**Three consecutive items from the Index to our new Textbook—  
"Supernaturalism," "Swank," "Swinburne." Varied contents,  
what?**

## UNIMAGINATIVE SCIENTISTS

DEAR EDITOR,—Your correspondent Florence Baldwin, in her attack on "P. L. E. B.," says "anti-vivisection is a great fight for the rights of others." But at what stage exactly of animal development do animals (in the broadest sense) commence to have "rights"? The liver-fluke thrives in the liver of the sheep and can eventually rot it; has the liver-fluke no right to live? Has the bacillus that causes diphtheria no right to live?

It is a remarkable fact that most of the leading anti-vivisectionists, e.g., the Hon. Stephen Coleridge, were ferocious "never-endians" during the Great War. Moreover, though these same anti-vivisectionists have been loud in proclaiming that man, even for his own alleged good, has no right to experimentation on and make use of animals, I do not remember any outcry whatsoever among them between 1914 and 1919 against the use of horses in the war; indeed, a Blue Cross organisation was set on foot to patch up ill and wounded horses for further military service.

I am not a rabid vivisectionist. I did, it is true, study physiology in the laboratories for which it is claimed they constitute the leading physiological school in the British Empire—the professor at the head of it is one of the greatest living authorities on, yet one of the rottenest teachers of, this science—and in the course of my studies dissected out and experimented with the nerves, intestines, etc., of freshly-killed rabbits, chickens and other animals, but from the professional demonstrations on anaesthetised living animals I learned nothing. For instance, one such experiment was to test the blood pressure of a dog, by watching its life's blood gradually rising in a graduated tube, inserted in the carotid artery, owing to the pumping action of the heart. This experiment was first performed a few decades ago. Personally I learnt nothing from it that I could not have learnt out of a book; what necessity is there for its repetition? Is it because of the general lack of imagination and of the faculty for visualisation among the general body of physiology students, whether on the "pure" science side or the medical side? It would seem so, if one is to judge by the mentality of the average medical student, as displayed by his political activities, which are invariably cast on the side of reaction.

Yours, etc., A. P. L.

## WAKE UP, PLEBS!

## SCHEME TO RAISE £10,000

COMRADE EDITOR,—I submit details of scheme for raising £10,000 for I.W.-C.E. development as follows:—

I find from map in November PLEBS that our classes are grouped roughly into 12 areas:—Liverpool, Manchester, Midlands, S. Wales, London, Sheffield, Notts., Scotland, Derby, Newcastle, West Riding, and Dublin.

I propose that a Watch-Stopping Competition should be run in each of these areas. A gold watch value £25 to be wound up and placed in a sealed case by the Editor of PLEBS. The case to be opened on February 28th and the subscriber in each area whose name appears against the time or nearest at which the watch stops to have a gold watch value £25 presented to him.

Now let us see how this will work out:—720 sheets each with 60 seconds to the sheet, or 60 lines at 6d. a line, equals 720 at £1 10s. = £1,080. Twelve areas each disposing of 720 sheets equals 8,640 sheets at £1 10s., i.e., £12,960.

Twelve gold watches, at £25 each ..	£	300
Printing and stationery, say ..		100
£12,960, less £400 .. .. .		12,560
Twelve consolation prizes, value £5 ..		60

£2,500 to Southport Social Science Class for its enterprise leaves £10,000 for Development Fund.

I claim that this scheme is workable. Will the PLEBS take it in hand?

Yrs. frat., T. E. HOLT

Southport.

[If running a scheme were as easy as outlining one, we should be tempted by our correspondent's enthusiasm. But does he really think that, in each of the 12 districts he names, 43,200 people can be persuaded to subscribe 6d. each to the scheme? . . . Also (omitting the Consolation Prizes) his scheme, on his own showing, costs £400 to launch. Can he put up the £400? The PLEBS can't—if it could it would soon have another Textbook out!—Ed. PLEBS.]

## PECCAVI

DEAR EDITOR,—Not the proof reader, but me. Damn. The reference should have been to the *Three Acts* (1794, To empower His Majesty to secure and detain all such Persons as His Majesty shall suspect are conspiring against Person and Government; 1796, For the better Prevention of Treason and Sedition, and For the protection of His Majesty's Person).

Best thanks to "A. C." for pointing out the mistake.

Yrs., R. W. POSTGATE

## IRELAND A NATION

DEAR COMRADE,—I have been reading Com. Andrew Clarke's letter, addressed to fellow-Plebeians, stating some of his reasons why scientific Socialists should support the Irish people in their struggle for self-determination. May I put forward some more fundamental reasons?

Every class-conscious worker knows that the dominant economic class control the political machinery and also the imperialistic forces; and while the Irish people are in direct conflict with both these, is it not true to say that they are engaging the class enemy of the working class of this country at the same time—thus weakening the resources of the bourgeoisie which would



ultimately help to emancipate the wage-slaves of this country?

The Irish question is not only political, but at bottom resolves itself into an economic question also. It would take too much space in my letter to prove this, but suffice to say, that you can have no political agitation or fermentation in any country without having some economic cause.

James Connolly was a Marxist of the first water, and quite well understood that the blow aimed at the capitalistic-Imperialist force of England in 1916 was aiming at the overthrow of Murphyism simultaneously. As scientific Socialists we must deal with facts as they present themselves to us. All attempts to organise a successful Socialist Party in Ireland have failed, owing to the minds of the Irish workers being absorbed in the struggle with the immediate enemy, the Crown Forces. Not until the last English soldier is cleared out of Ireland will there be any perceptible sign of the movement in Ireland taking on a definite proletarian character. Therefore, to facilitate this future development, we as class-conscious workers should endeavour to assist the people of Ireland to their present aspirations, in order to "clear the way" for dealing with the much larger Irish question: Who will own and control the fields, factories and workshops—the present owners, or the Irish working class?

I would recommend Plebeians to re-read Connolly's *Labour in Irish History*, to get a clear ground-work of the Irish question.

I will conclude with a well-known saying of Connolly's: "The cause of Ireland is the cause of Labour, the cause of Labour is the cause of Ireland."

A disciple of Connolly,

SEAN GLICKMAN

#### NIETZSCHE

DEAR COMRADE,—Whether or not the writings of Bergson hold anything of value for proletarian students, it is my own opinion that much greater benefit can be derived from an intelligent perusal of Nietzsche.

True, Nietzsche is not a scientific thinker nor anything of a sociologist; true also, he is a creator of "spooks," and largely under the influence of Stirner and the philosophical anarchists generally. Still there remains much in his work that fits in with the Left-Wing position. His doctrine of the Will to Power as the dynamic of human society is, after all, only a metaphysical statement of the class struggle, i.e., the class Will to Power, the recognition by a rising class (to-day the working class) that it must control society if humanity is to take a further step forward.

On the question of "good" and "evil," too, we may join hands with Nietzsche, for the only criterion of "good" for the workers to-day is their own interests—everything that helps them to power. The workers thus

are "Beyond Good and Evil." They must transvalue all previous valuations. All doubt, all hesitation as to the historic destiny of the proletariat, all weakness in the face of our opponents is due to our mental slavery to bourgeois ideology; our wants determine our duty and our duty is to be inflexible in the pursuit of our wants—to be "hard" in the Nietzschean sense.

How many are there, who might otherwise have been good fighters for the working class, whose outlook is entirely vitiated owing to their mental subjection to Christian ethics?

Again, on the question of democracy, the Left Wing is to-day, like Nietzsche, definitely anti-democratic. That we stand for economic equality (so far as the abolition of exploitation of man by man) is from reasons of historical necessity and not from any belief in the superior justice of equality. Indeed, complete democracy would seem to necessitate mental as well as economic equality, and we have no reason to believe this obtainable or even desirable.

Certainly there are many points of contact between Nietzsche and the militant proletarians, and I, for one, think he has something to offer to our movement and that something not of little value.

Yours frat., H. S.

W.C.2.

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## REFORMERS' BOOKSHOPS

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 Under Capitalism it is shorter—  
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 And having to look after the allotment  
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 (Not to mention other things),  
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 Of course,  
 It isn't merely a question of time,  
 Those three big volumes  
 Somewhat scare me—  
 Besides, I haven't the cash.  
 : : :  
 However, that is no reason  
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# NEWS of the MOVEMENT

*We rely on class-secretaries and tutors to keep us informed of new ideas and new developments. Send your paragraphs to "W.H.," at PLEBS Office.*

We trust that every Pleb who can possibly do so will be present at the joint N.C.L.C. Conference and Plebs Meet at Handforth on the 7th and 8th. We can't expect a vast gathering in these hard times. But this is an exceptionally important fixture, and we want it to be as successful as possible.

Balloting for the E.C., and all decisions on resolutions concerning the League, will be carried out by post afterwards. But discussion can only take place at the Meet itself, and then is the time to let the E.C. know what you think about questions of League policy. So if you can't come, write.

Will all Leaguers remember that nominations for the new E.C., to hold office during 1922, should be sent in as early as possible. [See note under "Plebs Meet" on an earlier page.]

The names of the present Plebs E.C.—all of whom are eligible for nomination and re-election—are as follows. Attendances at the ten E.C. meetings during 1921 are shown:—

	Attendances.
†T. Ashcroft .. ..	3
J. Burns .. ..	2
C. T. Pendrey .. ..	4
R. W. Postgate .. ..	8
Geo. Sims .. ..	10
Mark Starr .. ..	8
*C. Terry .. ..	3

\*Co-opted in place of B. S. McKay (resigned).  
†Co-opted in place of L. Hogben (resigned).

It should be noted that, until we are financially in a position to pay members' travelling expenses, the E.C. must inevitably be composed of individuals resident in the London district.

Now that the GLASGOW District Committee has been set going, the National Committee of the Scottish Labour College (196, St. Vincent Street, Glasgow) is taking steps to form a Lanarkshire District Committee. Will all those interested please communicate?

The EDINBURGH District Committee is running classes in Edinburgh, Leith, Musselburgh, Prestonpans, Tranent, Bonnyrigg, Loanhead, Gorebridge, Newtongrange, Dalkeith, Queensferry, West Calder and

Stoneyburn. One class has over 100 members. Occasional educational propaganda lectures are being given to the unemployed, to whom all the classes have been thrown open without charge. Public lantern lectures have also been delivered. Despite the bad economic conditions, the number of Labour bodies affiliated to the Edinburgh District has increased from 36 last year to 56 this.

The BIRMINGHAM Social Science Class has now adopted the title of the Birmingham Labour College, and its chairman is Mr. F. B. Silvester. The Principal is Mr. A. D. M. Taylor (London Labour College) and the chief assistant tutor is Mr. T. D. Smith. All interested are asked to communicate with the secretary, Mr. A. W. Morris, 58, Colville Road, Sparkbrook. The Birmingham College is linking up with the newly-formed Midlands Division of the N.C.L.C.

The Rev. G. S. Woods, 33, St. Saviourgate, YORK, would be glad to hear from any Pleb in that city, with a view to discussion of possible activities. Mr. Woods has hitherto been connected with the I.W.-C.E. group at Taunton, and wants to get York on to the Plebs map!

Will any subscriber to our Pound Fund who wished to receive Plebs publications to the value of his subscription, and who has not received a copy of our Psychology Textbook, please communicate with the Office Secretary?

By the way, we hold some I.O.U.'s sent to that Pound Fund which have not yet been redeemed. We should be deeply grateful if — etc., etc.

The LEYTON Class (London I.W.-C.E. Council) sends us an examination paper set to students at the end of the first session's work. "Points will be given for (a) conciseness of expression; (b) balance of material; (c) evidence of cause and effect from stage to stage of society; (d) originality of treatment and presentation." Which seem to us admirable axioms for essay-writers to bear in mind.

Push that Psychology Textbook.

W. H.

**Do you know what your brain looks like with the lid lifted off?  
Study the diagrams in the Psychology Textbook.**

## N.C.L.C. NOTES

**T**HE Governors of the London Labour College have decided to "join up" with the N.C.L.C. That makes a total of 14 affiliations to date of going to press. Who's next!

MIDLAND Classes not yet affiliated to the recently formed Midland District should get into touch with the Secretary: T. D. Smith, 12, Old Meeting Street, West Bromwich, Coventry, please note!

It is hoped that a definite announcement about the forthcoming Plebs textbook on Economics will be possible at the January Meet. If it turns out as good as the Psychology textbook—Thumbs up!

The pamphlet issued by the Amalgamated Union of Building Trades Workers—Our

*next step: Education*—is THE GOODS. Get a few copies and then ask your Union—What about it?

Things for Delegates to N.C.L.C. Meet to remember:—

1. Bring a display of locally issued Syllabuses, Leaflets, etc.
2. Don't forget your credentials.
3. You should bring a spare copy of any suggestions put forward by your group for N.C.L.C. Secretary's use.
4. Let Head Office know your accommodation requirements as soon as possible.
5. Work in a *notice* of N.C.L.C. Meet in your local paper.

## COLLEGE AND CLASS DIRECTORY

We print below a complete list of Colleges, Districts and Classes, *so far as we have any definite particulars of these*. We are anxious to publish a revised version of the map which appeared in the November PLEBS, and the following represents our information—to date. Class secretaries or organisers are urged to send on at once (to Sec., N.C.L.C., 11, Penywern Road, S.W.5) any additions or corrections to this list.

Those marked with an \* have already affiliated to the N.C.L.C.

SCOTTISH Labour College.—Secretary, P. Lavin, 196, St. Vincent Street, Glasgow.

Districts.—Edinburgh\*, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Fife, Dundee, Ayrshire and Stirlingshire.

SOUTH WALES Classes (mostly S.W.M.F.).—Aberdare, Abertillery, Ammanford, Blackwood, Blaina, Gorseinon, Tredegar, Treorchy and Tylerstown.

Barry Dock\*: S. Farrant, 20, Sydenham Street, Barry Dock.

Cardiff: A. Pope, 1, Ruthin Gardens, Cathays, Cardiff.

Newport: (1) W. G. Riding, 28, Conway Road, Newport, Mon.

(2) M. Selby, 27, Corporation Road, Newport, Mon.

MIDLAND Division (Birmingham, Coventry, Smethwick, Walsall, West Bromwich, Wolverhampton). Secretary: T. D. Smith, 12, Old Meeting Street, West Bromwich.

SHEFFIELD Labour College\* (Bentley, Denaby, Doncaster, Goldthorpe, Mexboro', Rotherham, Sheffield, Staveley). Secretary: E. Bradshaw.

LIVERPOOL and District\*.—Secretary: J. Hamilton, 99, Botanic Road, Liverpool. (Large number of Classes and spread over parts of Cheshire.)

HARTLEPOOL (Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar, South Bank, Stockton-on-Tees). Secretary: T. A. Lloyd, 11, Trinity Street, Stockton-on-Tees.

GLOUCESTER Labour College.—Secretary: G. B. Luker, 30, Granville Street, Gloucester.

NORTH OF ENGLAND Labour College\*.—Secretary: W. Coxon, 5, Byron Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne. (Classes in Durham County and Northumberland.)

MANCHESTER and District\* (Bury, Oldham, Rochdale, Stockport, Altrincham, etc., etc.). Secretary: J. McGee, Woodlands Lodge, Crescent Road, Crumpsall, M/c.

WEST RIDING Labour College\* (Bradford, Brighouse, Castleford, Dewsbury, Farsley, Halifax, Huddersfield, Leeds, Normanton, Shipley, Spensborough, West Vale). Secretary: J. Armstrong, 118, Rosemount Terrace, Elland, Yorks.

LONDON District Council\*.—Secretary: R. Holder, 11A, Penywern Road, London, S.W.5. (Representing about 40 Classes in and about London.)

DERBY Labour College\*.—Secretary: W. Noland, Derby.

LEIGH and District.—Organising Secretary: T. Ashcroft, 175, Newton Road, Lowton-St. Mary's, Newton-le-Willows, Lancs.

NOTTS.—Mansfield. Secretary: G. Abbott, 37, Carter Lane, Mansfield, Notts.

Sandiacre. Secretary: E. Groom, 32, Longmore Lane, Sandiacre, near Nottingham.

Shirebrook. Secretary: J. F. Buttery, 32, Lincoln Street, Sandiacre, near Nottingham.

COLCHESTER.—Secretary: W. W. Calthorpe, 5, Parson's Heath, Harwich Road, Colchester.

TAUNTON.—Secretary: A. W. Lovey, 29, Station Road, Taunton, Somerset.

## REVIEWS

## THE BOLSHEVIK POINT OF VIEW

*The Defence of Terrorism (Terrorism and Communism): A Reply to Karl Kautsky.* By L. Trotsky. With a Preface by H. N. Brailsford. (Labour Pub. Co., and Allen & Unwin. 3s. 6d.)

**T**HIS book appeared in Russian a year and a half ago, just before the second congress of the Third International, at a time when Trotsky was sanguine enough to hope that the answer to the Polish attack on Ukraine and Soviet Russia would be the destruction of bourgeois Poland by the forces of the Red Army. That hope was not to be fulfilled. Some of the other hopes built upon the Russian revolution have been frustrated—for a time. The logic of events does not always work with the speed and precision of the human intelligence. Unforeseen elements, ignored in the theory, work confusion in the practice. Then, on the morrow of the disillusionment "little men of little minds" (we quote Kipling) "rise up to buy and sell again," and these chaffers, pointing the finger of scorn at the mistaken prophet, seek the consolations of the successful profiteer.

To many of us, however, it seems that the logic of history is, under our very eyes, confirming the bolshevik theory. A slight miscalculation in the pace of the historic movement need disturb us no more to-day than it disturbed Marx and Engels after 1848. The events of 1914 to 1918, and, above all, the revolution of November, 1917, have magnificently confirmed the main generalisations of the *Communist Manifesto*, and in spite of set-backs we remain sanguine that the quickened pulse of contemporary history will soon lead to the justification of revolutionary communism upon a yet wider scale.

Since the November revolution, the theory by which the bolsheviks were guided has been discussed in original English books. But readers naturally turn with keener interest to the books penned in the intervals of battle by those who are actually engaged in the making of the revolution! Two Russian writings stand out in this connection: Lenin's *The State and Revolution*, and Trotsky's *The Defence of Terrorism*. Lenin's book was badly translated, and the English version is now out of print. Moreover, Lenin, though he perhaps excels Trotsky in political sagacity, cannot compare with the younger man in brilliancy of style. The English title of Trotsky's book is badly chosen, for the defence of terrorism is not

the main part of the book. It discusses democracy, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the organisation of labour, and similar matters of vital importance to communist theory.

Prefixed to the excellent translation is a forcible preface by H. N. Brailsford, whose admiration for the epic of the Russian revolution often outbalances his constitutional dislike of its ruthless and "anti-democratic" methods. At the close of this preface Brailsford writes: "The English reader of to-day is aware that the Russian revolution has not stood still since Trotsky wrote. . . . Even in the view of the bolsheviks themselves, the evolution towards communism is in Russia only in its early stages. The recent compromises imply, at the best, a very long period of transition, through controlled capitalist production, to socialism. . . . Catastrophic revolution and the seizure of political power do not in themselves avail to make a socialist society. . . . To every reader's mind the question will be present whether the peculiar temperament of the bolsheviks has led them to over-estimate the importance of political power, to underestimate the inert resistance of the majority, and to risk too much for the illusion of dictating. To that question history has not yet given the decisive answer. The daemonic will that made the revolution and defended it by achieving the impossible, may yet vindicate itself against the dull trend of impersonal forces."

A book to read and re-read.

E. & C. P.

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## A SHORT CUT BACKWARDS

*A New Policy for Labour.* By H. Cousens.  
(Cecil Palmer, 5s.)

In Mr. Cousens' judgment, the Labour Movement—on both wings and in the centre—is wasting its energy and its enthusiasm in the pursuit of ideals which have long since lost all value. Moreover, "it promises to fail through slowness of thought."

Mr. Cousens, on the other hand, thinks rapidly. So rapidly, indeed, that he has hardly time to think very deeply. And if the obstacles to effective action were no more serious than the obstacles to "rapid" thinking, then we might all be at the millennium before we had had time to realise what had happened.

The book is advertised as a topical introduction to the much-boomed Douglas Scheme; and it was as such an introduction that we set out to review it for the PLEBS. But we must defer serious consideration of that scheme until we have assimilated Major Douglas's own books.\* From Mr. Cousens' book we have been unable to learn anything precise about it. He touches on topics almost innumerable—economic categories and theories; social problems; questions of political government, home and foreign; policies and tactics; etc., etc. But on the Douglas Scheme itself he is comparatively uncommunicative.

Mr. Cousens' "rapidity" is therefore sufficiently obvious. But his profundity is not so marked. His knowledge of economic theories is on a par with that which led a financial paper recently to sneer at the "armchair economists" of capitalism. Without giving any signs of any *understanding* of the capitalist mode of production, he considers its effects with the air of an authority. Money, it seems, was an invention made in order to balance debts; credit a device to meet modern requirements. And the evils of capitalism lie not in the exploitation of labour-power in production, but in the strangling power of financial capital. Indeed, the capitalist order is defended against the revolutionary aims of the working-class movement.

All we need to do, according to Mr. Cousens (and this, we believe, is where the Douglasism comes in), is to cut the claws of finance capital as concentrated in the present banking system. To find a parallel to such proposals we must go back to the notion of the early co-operators that the evils of capitalist machine-production could be overcome by pooling their resources, purchasing shops and factories, creating a

\* An article on which will appear in February PLEBS.—ED.

trading monopoly amongst themselves, and thus all becoming capitalists themselves. In fact, Mr. Cousens appears to think the stream of ideas flows backward instead of forward, and so imagines that the rest of the world is behind him. Whereas

If it be objected that this treatment is too curt and inappreciative, I reply that in this case no other treatment is possible. One cannot waste time or space on an author who does not trouble to earn one's respect by doing a little preliminary thinking before he writes a book.

W. H. M.

**Support the Russian Famine Fund by buying the following Pamphlets!**

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By E. PREOBRAZHENSKY.

32 pages. Price 1d. 8d. per dozen. Postage extra. This deals with the October Revolution, the struggles of the Soviet Government, the Red Army, the success of the Soviet constructive work, the Peasants and the Soviet Government, etc.

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### G. Zinoviev's Report of the Executive Committee of the Communist International for 1920-1921.

Delivered at the 4th Session of the Third Congress of the Communist International on June 25th, 1921.

86 pages. Photograph of G. Zinoviev.

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READY SHORTLY.

### LABOUR'S NEW CHARTER.

Containing resolutions and discussions adopted by the First International Congress of Revolutionary Trade and Industrial Unions (July 3rd—10th, 1921). With an Introduction by A. Losovsky.

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**"The culture of fungoid ideas." That's the chief job of the capitalist press. See Psychology Textbook, pp. 121-2.**

## POLITE BUT DULL

*A Short History of the American Labour Movement.* By Mary Beard. (Workers' Education Bureau, New York. 65 cents.)

Certainly the American Workers' Education Bureau has not made a hole in its manners by its publication of this book. If this is the type of work to be turned out the Bureau will be the "white hope" of the reactionaries, for it is an achievement in impartiality.

One would think that even the most well-bred writer would have some preferences, but a second careful study of this book has not resulted in the discovery of any. Apparently quite unbiassed, the author calmly informs us how the changes were rung back and forth, from industrial action to political action, and what this or that group of workers advocate, but *she* is not out to advocate anything. The class war, as such, is never discussed, and the whole trend of the book is merely to give dates and events connected with the various bodies, which have, in their totality, formed the American Labour Movement from the Declaration of Independence to the present time.

It is only fair to say that the book is cleverly written, the definitions very good, and there is an attractive and useful arrangement of matter under appropriate sub-headings. For anyone who requires no more than statistics regarding the American movement the book may be valuable, but to Plebs, at least, the statistical skeleton would be more appreciated were it clothed in class-conscious material. It is really a pity to put a book of this character into the hands of a worker-student seeking economic salvation. With its record of struggle and changing tactics without any consequent loosening of the economic shackles, and its lack of any word of encouragement or guidance for the future, it might well make him despair.

However, we must hope that the W.E.B. contains elements which will refuse to be satisfied with an output of publications as

colourless and non-committal as this, and which will insist on works giving a more definite lead to the workers in their fight for emancipation.

A. PRATT

## AFTERTHOUGHTS ON THE WAR

*How We Came Out of the War.* By Irene Cooper Willis. (Int. Bookshops. 2s.)

The theme of this book—if it has any—is Liberal idealism and the war; the substance, a mass of quotations from the *Times*, etc. The lady who has collected the cuttings, and whose name appears as author on the cover, seems to be under the delusion that the war was due to a lack of rationality on the part of the Liberals.

What, then, is the remedy? She herself tells us:—Thought must conform to a rational standard! We suggest that the Editor sends her a copy of the new *Outline of Psychology*, imploring her to study the chapters on Reason.

D. J. WILLIAMS

## RUSSIA

*The New Policies of Soviet Russia.* By Lenin, Bukharin, Rutgers (Kerr, 1 dollar). *Report to the Communist International.* By Zinoviev (Union Publishing Co.). *Russian Information and Review* (Russian Trade Delegation). *Bulletin of the Red Labour Union* (Moscow). *Pen Pictures of Russia.* By John S. Clarke (Plebs' Book Dept., 4s. 6d., post free).

The first is a reprint of articles and speeches on Soviet policy. Lenin's article, "The Meaning of the Agricultural Tax" is not new, but it is such a soundly argued piece of work that one welcomes its appearance in this permanent form.

The Bukharin speech, "The New Economic Policy of Soviet Russia," covers part of the problem treated of by Lenin and partly the question of policy due to the industrial situation. Both articles are invaluable for the purpose (1) of meeting anti-Bolshevik propaganda; (2) for the study of the

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## Questions in Economics

BY GEORGE STEWART HITCHCOCK, D.D., S.S.D., F.R.A.S., F.G.S., F.R.G.S., F.R.Met.S., F.R.A.I., M.R.A.S., Fellow of the Royal Economic and Statistical Societies.

## The Good Hope

BY HERMAN HEIJERMANS  
*A Play in Four Acts*

*Daily Herald*—"Scope for some very fine human acting."  
*Glasgow Herald*—"Not surpassed by anything in Russian fiction."  
*Scotsman*—"An effect like that of a Josef Israels picture."

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LONDON: HENDERSONS, 66 CHARING CROSS RD.

practical problems raised by a sudden revolutionary upheaval. These problems, some of which may be purely Russian, give guidance to the intelligent reader in the consideration of matters of organisation raised from time to time when dealing with the question of the control of industry.

Both are masterly considerations of theory in relation to practice. As methods of analysis alone they are quite worth studying. In fact, this side particularly strikes one in going through the remaining articles, reports, etc., above mentioned. And they also prove that intellectual treatment is not incompatible with clearness of exposition and simplicity of language. The Russians have taught us much.

Clarke's book is a very readable set of pen pictures of the social conditions in Russia to-day, as they strike the interested tourist. It is refreshing to read of the attitude of the common people towards the Soviet rule. Perhaps more can be gleaned in this way of the possibilities of its permanence than from all the wrangles of the theorists, be they yellow, pink, or red. The best or worst systems are justified in their acceptance or toleration by the mass of the people. Clarke knows what to look for and how to describe what he sees.

The only drawback is the excessive zeal of the propagandist in the matter of "the enemy"—dead or alive. A mere recital of some of the stories of the late Russian rulers would be more effective than is the flamboyant invective from Clarke's vitriolic pen. Likewise a saving gift of humour is necessary in treating of Wells' threat about the shaving of Marx. By the Beard of the Prophet we must treat our opponents with a due sense of proportion; one does not expect grapes from thistles or Marxism from bourgeois Radicalism. It is a defect of propaganda not peculiar to Clarke. Other and much less able comrades suffer from it. This grouse is made because the book is such a very good bit of descriptive writing, and should certainly be read.

G.

Don't overlook the  
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### A FINE PAMPHLET

*The Irish Crisis.* By Wm. Paul. (Communist  
Party, 3d.)

No change in the general trend of events can make such a pamphlet as this out of date. With each aspect of the problem given a section by itself, we here have the bewildering complexities of the Irish issue reduced to their elements, and an economic interpretation of ideology in best Pauline style.

In Section IV. we get a cross-section view of the subject as a whole. The three principal figures are each given their proper place:—the British Government viewing the upheaval as *civil war*; the Irish middle class viewing the conflict as a *national war* against a foreign invader; while the Irish workers, or rather the more militant section of them, see in the struggle the first symptoms of the *class war*. Here I would refer the reader for more detailed information to that splendid, handy book, *The Irish Labour Movement*, by W. P. Ryan.

In dealing with "The Middle Class in Politics" the author shows an uncanny grip of a tricky subject, although his dismissal of the I.L.P. is too sweeping. But all will agree with his description of the figure heads of the Labour Movement in their attitude to Ireland. This pamphlet is well worth buying if only to see how definitely Paul puts his finger on the spot. It speaks volumes for his ability as a trained observer.

A. CLARKE



## THE FATE OF S. WALES

*The Doom of a Coalfield.* By J. T. Walton Newbold. (Communist Party. id.)

Newbold has long since established for himself a reputation as a research worker, and the value and importance of his work requires no emphasis. This little pamphlet deals with the conflict between Coal and Oil and the efforts of coal capital by concentrated interlocking interests to defend itself and ward off the impending doom.

Dealing particularly with the Welsh coalfield it is of value mainly to the Welsh miners. How far Newbold's sweeping claim is justified the future must show. I personally think the pamphlet will have to be re-written some day, and modified. W. H. M.

## THEORIES AND THEIR APPLICATION

*"Don't get too academic. Don't concentrate mainly on expositions of theory. Apply your theories. Economic theory is merely a tool to be used for the right understanding of history, past and present."*—Comrade L. B. Boudin in the October PLEBS.

DEAR COMRADE,—The above has encouraged me to pluck up my courage and draw attention to our comparative neglect of the Co-operative Movement. Here is a huge organisation of 4½ millions, mostly wage-earners, engaged in the production and distribution of wealth on a very considerable scale. Its retail trade last year amounted to £350,000,000. It has thousands of shops, farms and factories. It is not merely holding its own but making considerable progress. In another ten years it is more than probable that its membership will be six or seven

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millions. Is this not history in the making and does it not deserve more attention than it has received from our PLEBS historians and economists?

I take the liberty of suggesting one or two lines of research.

(1) What are the revolutionary possibilities of the "Co-op." movement in the struggle against capitalism?

(2) Is it likely to modify the economic structure of society to any considerable extent in the near future? Is it, in short, a new (economic) system forming itself in the womb of capitalism?

(3) Is the payment of interest and dividend (which Socialists criticise) necessarily a permanent feature of the Co-operative Organisation? Is it a justifiable compromise with capitalism under existing circumstances?

(4) As a means of weakening the capitalist class have the workers any other weapon likely to be so effective in carrying on a war of attrition?

(5) What results could be expected from a wholesale transfer of the purchasing power of the working class from the private shops to the "Stores"? How would it affect the following classes in the community?

- (1) The small shopkeepers;
- (2) The wholesalers who supply them;
- (3) The manufacturers who supply the wholesalers;
- (4) The newspapers, national and local, which are kept going by the advertisements of the above;
- (5) The Banks and Insurance Companies;
- (6) The political capitalist party funds, national and local;
- (7) The investors in "Industrials";
- (8) Other speculators and middlemen.

I trust that somebody more able will work out in detail these possibilities, or impossibilities, of the Co-operative Movement.

Yours fraternally,  
T. P. KEATING

Was Woodrow Wilson a conscious hypocrite? See Psychology Textbook, p. 73.

## The PLEBS BOOKSHELF

THESE University professors continue to weigh in cheerfully with "discoveries" about ten years after mere crude Marxians first expounded the same things. Here is Prof. A. C. Pigou—Cambridge, I believe—announcing in his latest volume, *The Political Economy of War*, that (I quote from the *Daily News* review) "the desires of financiers and concession-hunters in undeveloped countries are a greater danger to international harmony than the desires of traders." A great truth—but a wee bit stale to readers of Brailsford's *Steel and Gold*, Boudin's *Socialism and War*, and countless pamphlets and articles published since these. The *Daily News* thinks that "in view of the Washington Conference, special interest attaches to his clear-cut argument." If only these Liberals took the trouble to keep in touch with modern thinking on economic questions they would not so constantly be left gasping in astonishment and dismay at the trend of events.

The mention of University professors reminds me:—Oxford University is inaugurating a new Honours School of Philosophy, Politics and Economics, the subject of which is to be "the study of the structure, and of the philosophical, political and economic principles of modern society." And the prescribed [not proscribed] books for this course are, in Political Economy—Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*; the works of Ricardo; Jevons, *Theory of Political Economy*; and . . . yes, MARX, CAPITAL, Vol. I. Marx prescribed at Oxford! The revolution has indeed begun.

The following account, by a writer in *Nature* (September 29th, 1921), of a series of Science Textbooks issued by the Soviet Government, makes one wish it were possible to add translations of one or two of them to our own Textbook Series:—

The particular constructive element to which I refer is the effort of the Soviet Government to bring the fundamental conclusions of scientific thought within the reach of the "proletariat" with the deliberate purpose of shaping the mental outlook of the masses, and especially of the rising generation, in such a way that the standard of values in everyday affairs will be based on a naturalistic interpretation of man's environment and of his relations to it. In pursuance of this end the Soviet Government has already issued a whole series of elementary textbooks ("Estestvenno-Nauchnaya Biblioteka"), which aim at explaining the scientific position in terms intelligible to the "proletariat," many of whom have learned to read only since the advent of Bolshevism. They are written by scientific

men who have remained in Russia, and who, like most of our own men of science during the war, have temporarily suspended their "free" researches in order to take part in work directed to particular ends considered by the State to be more immediately important under the existing emergency. The series includes such subjects as "How Man Arose," "Human and Animal Evolution," "The Origin of the World," "What Chemistry and Physics Teach Us," "Popular Astronomy," "Brain and Spirit," "Outline of the History of Geological Knowledge," etc.

It would be difficult to imagine the present Government of any of the nations of Western or Central Europe evincing such a faith in science as able to bring about the "change of heart" on which alone a new society could be founded, that in the midst of all the horrors of blockade, invasion and civil war its publishing department would issue broadcast to the "proletariat" a whole library of introductions to scientific thought.

It would!

Plebs on the look-out for good propaganda plays should secure a copy of *The Good Hope*, a four-act play by Heijermans, a Dutch author, just issued by Hendersons (2s. 3d. post free). It would test the mettle of any group of amateurs to produce it; but it would be worth the effort. There are one or two "big scenes" in this tragedy of the lives of fisher-folk which, though they would be magnificently theatrical in the hands of skilled professionals, might well make an even more poignant appeal if played quite simply and sincerely by workers whose own lives gave them a sympathetic understanding of the characters they were portraying. Even where actual production was impracticable, *The Good Hope* would be a finely effective play to read aloud.

A Government, in an industrial dispute, is always *strictly* impartial, isn't it? It never, never favours one side at the expense of the other. O dear no! It simply safeguards the "consumer's" interests, and "keeps the ring." That, at any rate, is what I was always given to understand.

But listen to this, from the upright, God-and-democracy-fearing *Manchester Guardian*. It occurs in an article describing "The New Industrial Policy in Russia," and the grave "risks"—of not making sufficient profit—which foreign concessionaires will run:—

Possible friction between the concessionaire and his Russian employees may also be difficult to deal with. Suppose his workmen go on strike, *what support can he expect from a Government* which to a large extent represents the unique interests

of the working class? To take an extreme instance, *will the Red Army suppress a strike in the interest of the foreign capitalist?*

Quite a naïve revelation of the employer type of mind, isn't it? Unless he can rely on "support" from the Government and the Army in case his miserable hirelings go on strike, how can he be expected to adventure his capital? Profits, of course, are a reward for "risks of enterprise." But there are some risks altogether too risky!

\* \* \*

Nothing like pinching the other fellow's "gags" if your own are wearing thin! The W.E.A.—would you believe it!—is now out for "independent working-class education"—see par. about a London conference on Adult Education, *Daily Herald*, December 1st. Impartiality cuts no ice; so Independence is substituted. The moral of which seems to be—Don't stop short at the label; look carefully at the goods.

You'll need to look carefully, too! For here is Mr. Mactavish—our Mr. J. M. Mactavish—writing in the organ of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union of America an article on "The Education of Class-Conscious Workers." Now presumably Mr. Mactavish knew that the I.L.G.W.U. was well on the Left Wing of the American Labour movement, and that its educational work has been run on the sort of lines we of the PLEBS advocate. So he cut out Impartiality.

Listen to this—it's Mactavish, not Craik, speaking:—"To say that knowledge or education is desirable 'for its own sake' is no more than a lazy man's device for avoiding deep thinking." Mr. Mactavish must surely have been looking up the back files of the PLEBS.

"Time permitting," he says further on, "I would like to spend many years studying the primitive characteristics of civilised communities, including those of many University Dons!" Flat blasphemy—and from a champion of the "educational ladder," too!

"The aim of working-class education," he concludes, "should be to stimulate

class consciousness . . . equipping the workers to evolve their own social valuations, their own moral standard, judgment, code of honour, etc., etc.

Have we converted him? I doubt it. I'm inclined to think, as I've already suggested, that the W.E.A.ers, faced with the choice of eating their own words or going out of business, have reluctantly decided on the former.

\* \* \*

By the way, the *New York Nation* (December 7th), reviewing the Report on Working-Class Education in America, which J. P. M. Millar is discussing in the PLEBS, has a delightful paragraph which deserves quotation right here:—

There is another difference [between the Universities and the Labour Colleges]—but this is rather a distinction than a difference. Workers' education is class-conscious. Of course, there could be no more class-conscious institution than Princeton or Yale or Harvard. But the distinction lies in the fact that the class-consciousness of Harvard is not as frank as that of the Boston Trade Union College, for example. The latter institution of learning lists as members of its governing board Dennis D. Driscoll of the Horse-shoers' Union and Netty Silverbrook of the Waistmakers. But the Harvard catalogue does not mention in its list of Overseers that George Wigglesworth is the president of a large cotton mill or that Francis Lee Higginson is a member of the firm of Lee Higginson & Co. That seems the essence of it. The courses listed in the Harvard catalogue are designed to be useful to future partners in Lee Higginson and future presidents of cotton mills. Or rather it should be put the other way: few of the courses are dangerous to futures such as these. By the same token the courses listed in the Boston Trade Union College are designed to be useful to members of the Waistmakers' Union. Each institution is class-conscious. Only the workers' college admits it.

Excellently put!

J. F. H.

---

*The PLEBS invites contributions on Labour problems in general and on subjects of interest to Working-Class Educationists in particular.*

**PLEASE NOTE.**—No contribution should exceed 2,000 words. (This is a maximum—not a minimum.) Articles or letters intended for following month's issue should be sent in not later than the 15th of the month. Will correspondents also remember to write on one side of the paper only, and to enclose full name and address, whether for publication or not? N.B.—No payment is made for any contribution—you get your reward in heaven.

---

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To further the interests of independent working-class education as a partisan effort to improve the position of Labour in the present and to aid in the abolition of wage-slavery.

### METHODS

Assisting in the formation of classes in social science, such classes to be maintained and controlled, wherever possible, by Trade Unions, Trade Councils, or other working-class organisations. The issuing of a monthly magazine. The assistance in every way of the development of the Labour College or any other working-class educational institution with the same educational policy.

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**ADMINISTRATION.** The administration of the League shall be in the hands of an E.C. of seven members, meeting monthly, with, in addition, the Hon. Sec. and Editor of the Magazine. These all to be nominated, by not less than two members, a clear week before the date of the Meet, and elected by postal ballot of members, to be taken afterwards. The E.C. are empowered to decide on the practical application of League aims and policy, and to enforce same where necessary.



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Printed by Vacher & Sons, Ltd., Westminster House, S.W.1.—94566.