

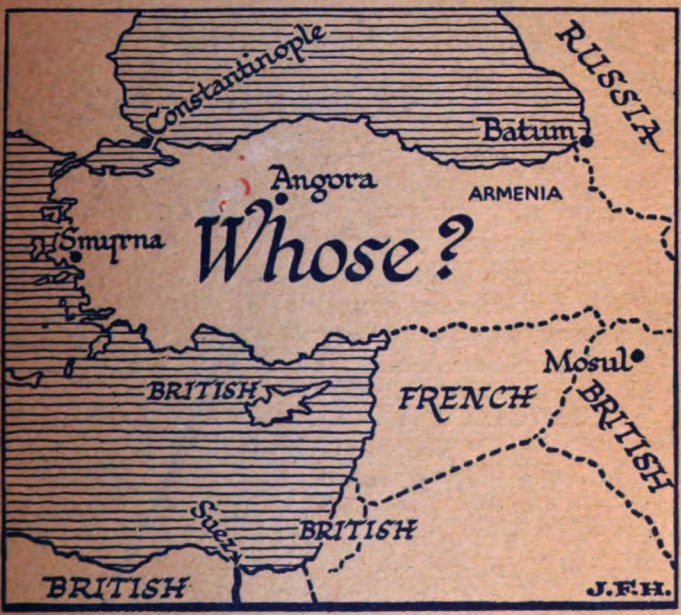


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June, 1923.

THE PLEBS

AGITATE EDUCATE ORGANISE



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**THE
LABOUR MAGAZINE**

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THE PLEBS

I can promise to be candid but not impartial.

Vol. XV

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OUR POINT of VIEW

"IN certain sections of the Labour movement you will find strong hostility towards you, and strong suspicion of your motives. If you do nothing for the workers they will be justified in such an attitude. Hasten, then, to win their support by doing something for them, lest they decide to manage altogether without you." No, this is not the voice of a Fabian of the 'nineties warning a Liberal caucus of the possibility of an *independent* Labour political party. It is the voice of Mr. Arthur Greenwood, M.P., of the W.E.A., addressing representatives of the Universities of Great Britain and Ireland assembled in conference a fortnight ago, and telling them that an *independent* Labour educational organisation was already in existence. Whether or

not this line of argument will appeal to the dons and the professors we do not know. But that it makes less and less appeal to class-conscious workers is apparent from the steady growth of their support for the independent educational movement, the N.C.L.C.

A Plebs-N.C.L.C. Summer School is to be held at Culcheth Hall Holiday Home, Newchurch, near Warrington, August 11th—18th next....Read that sentence over again,

Can YOU and think it over. We want *you*, if possible,
come along? to help in making the fixture a success.

No need to emphasise the usefulness (and enjoyableness) of a Summer School. We've been trying to fix one up for the past three or four years. The West Riding Labour College Council has now gallantly taken the initiative, booked Culcheth Hall, and made all preliminary arrangements. It only remains for I.W.C.E.ers in other districts to back them up. Culcheth Hall is an ideal spot in all respects. You can have a *holiday* there—bowls, tennis, croquet, billiards, etc., to fill in the intervals between lectures and discussions. A programme of these latter will be announced later.

The terms for full board, etc., are £3 3s. for the week. A small extra fee will be charged to cover organising expenses. Will all intending visitors send in names and addresses, with a deposit of 10s., to The PLEBS Office. We will also receive and book to your account, weekly or monthly instalments of any amount from 2s. 6d. upwards. "First come, first served," of course; so don't be too long making up your mind. Address any *inquiries* (as to accommodation, etc.) to Mr. F. Dixon, 49, Delph Hill, King Cross, Halifax.

LDH

We have got a "workers' daily." When is it going to develop a workers' point of view? We have no wish to be captious, or to belittle the good work which the *Daily Herald* has accomplished in the past. But there is pretty often nowadays a rather painful lack of anything approaching a "class" point of view in its criticisms and comments on various matters. We are not thinking at the moment of its pronouncements on home or foreign politics, or industrial affairs—other pens have recently been busy on this subject. Nor do we want to say anything about its Literary Page, except to remark that it seems to us as feeble as when we had something to say about it a year ago. It is its dramatic criticisms which have got our goat lately. Admitted—the revolution won't come *via* dramatic criticism; but if a workers'

daily criticises plays (and it would throw away the opportunity of much effective propaganda if it did not) then it should surely criticise them from something approaching a working-class point of view.

Three plays of far more than ordinary interest have been produced in London within the past month; and each of them has had a very special interest to class-conscious workers. Two of these were *The Machine Wreckers*, and *The Insect Play*.

What did the *Herald* have to say of them? Of the first, that it was an interesting example of the Central European dramatic movement which was ignoring the "unities" and doing or not doing other technical things. Not a hint that the play was, first and foremost, a play for proletarians—surely a point of more interest and importance to *Herald* readers than desultory comments on its technique. Of *The Insect Play**, the critic had little else to say than that it was "dull"; and the criticism was illustrated by a reproduction of one of the costume designs, which suggested—as did the notice of *The Machine Wreckers*—that what "point of view" there was behind the criticism was that of a Chelsea art-amateur anxious to display his æsthetic culture. . . . But even the dramatic critic was easily eclipsed by the person who caused to be inserted a reproduction of Orpen's Academy painting, "To the Unknown Soldier," and wrote under it "What does it mean? What is the artist satirising?" etc., etc. If the *Daily Herald* could not tell what a picture meant which expressed the workers' and soldiers' view of War, and the Men Who Won it, and of Peace Treaties and the Men Who Made Them, then it should have sent a reporter to do what Whistler once advised somebody in similar circumstances to do—go and ask the policeman on duty in the gallery! Or it could have referred to King Coal Berry's *Sunday Times* of the day before, the art critic of which had the pluck to tell his readers what the picture did "mean."

"Among the honorary degrees which the Council of Cambridge University will propose to the Senate for conferment on July 6th, is that of M.A. for Mr. Alfred Cobham, a working-house-painter, of Southport. . . . Mr. Cobham has been attending University Extension lectures for twenty-seven years, and for essay work holds thirty-six certificates for subjects embracing history, literature, science and art. . . . He was the first secretary of the Southport Workers' Educational Association" (*Daily News*, May 4th). And Southport Trades Council is so ungrateful as to affiliate to the Liverpool *Labour College*!!!

* About which see a Pleb's comments on another page.

We have been shewn a letter written by a prominent N.U.R. worker, a reader of *The PLEBS* for the past few years, in which the writer discusses the question of getting us new subscribers. He has found that people think our subject-matter "too dry and difficult," and says that articles are often "written in language that is difficult to understand by the average person, words being used that are not in regular use and sometimes not in the dictionary."

*One of
our Critics*

It is not exactly the first time that *The PLEBS* has met with this particular criticism, and we don't expect, so long as it is an educational magazine, that this will be the last. We are very far indeed from scorning such remarks, since our job, as we see it, is not to cater exclusively for the "educated," but to interest the beginner. All the same, we cannot help feeling that our comrade has been a bit unlucky in the type of worker he has tried the Magazine on. Looking through the proofs of the articles in this issue we cannot help wondering which are "too dry and difficult," or too "learnedly" written, for an average worker to understand. We are ready to admit that the average worker will make nothing of Mainwaring on "Disproportion or Surplus Product"; that contribution is professedly part of a theoretical discussion between students. But if the average worker can find nothing of interest in Starr on "Asia Minor," E. and C. P. on the "Robots," or Lekoy on "Agriculture," then...well, the need for I.W.C.E. is even greater than we had thought!

And we'll make our friend a challenge:—If he can find in the whole of this number a single (English) word not in the dictionary, or more than half-a-dozen words not in common use in newspapers and periodicals—we'll buy him a really good dictionary!

Some few weeks ago the Plebs League Executive met the Communist Party Training Committee with a view to discussing ways and means of co-operation in the work of Independent Working-Class Education. An agreement was drawn up by representatives of both bodies, and this, it will be remembered, was published in the *Workers' Weekly*, March 31st. Along with the agreement there also appeared a Statement on Working-Class Education by the C.P. Executive. In view of possible misconceptions as to the implications of the agreement, the Plebs E.C. has drawn up the following statement, not in any sense as a "counterblast," but as a parallel declaration of the League's policy:

*Ourselves and
the C.P.*

(1) The Plebs League, having for its object the training of Workers as class-conscious fighters for the abolition of wage

slavery, points out that it is not "neutral" in the actual struggle of the workers.

(2) The Plebs League takes note of the Communist Party Executive's recognition of the vital importance of working-class education in the revolutionary struggle; and is ready to receive the assistance of the Communist Party, or of any other *bona fide* working-class organisation, in the work of providing real working-class education under real working-class control.

(3) At the same time, believing that the education of the workers should be the concern of the whole working-class movement, the Plebs League declares that it is not, and does not intend to be, exclusively allied to any one section of that movement, or to any one political workers' party. It declares its conviction that such education can best be provided by a specifically educational organisation, supported by all workers' industrial and political organisations and uncommitted to any sectional policy.

The policy of the Plebs League remains as outlined in the November, 1922, issue of *The PLEBS*:—"We want it to be clearly understood, by Communists and non-Communists alike, that our policy is now, as it always has been, working-class control of working-class education. We are not, we never have been, and we do not intend to be allied to any one section of the working-class movement."

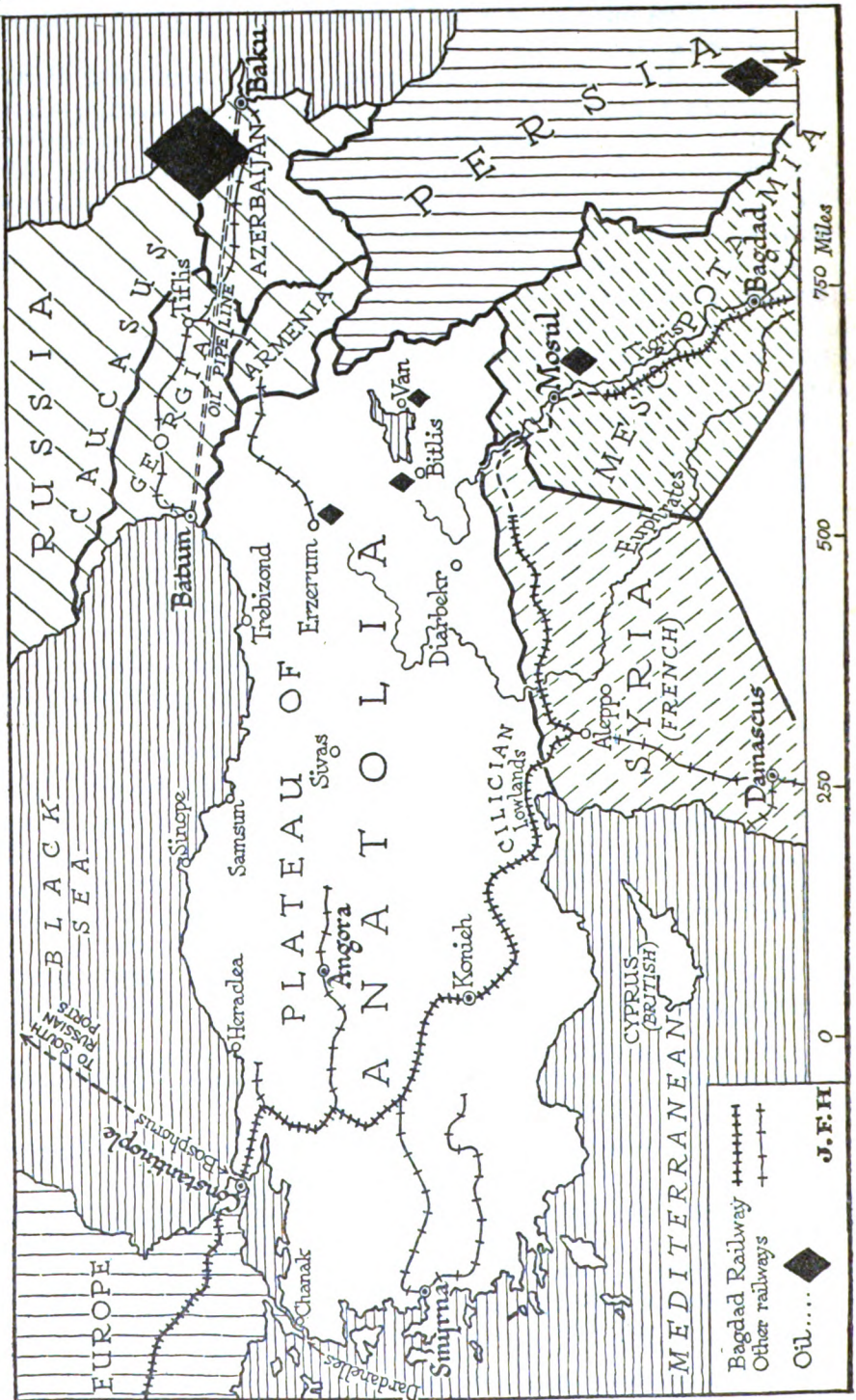
This Statement has been forwarded for publication in the *Workers' Weekly*.

"Mr. Dooley" recently expatiated on Socialism. He did not, of course, write as a believer—or his words would scarcely have been syndicated through the papers with the biggest circulations in America. But "Mr. Dooley" never, or rarely, talks entirely through his hat, and a paragraph in this particular article scored a hit off a certain sort of Socialist whom we have all met. He is describing a meeting:—

A lady prisint asked Mr. Lumley wud large hats be worn undher Socialism. He answered . . . he wud look th' matter up in a book be Karl Marx that he undherstood was an authority on these subjects.

Summer is the Time for Propaganda

Have you got a supply of our leaflet, *An Open Letter to a Labour Party Worker* (2s. 6d. per 100, postage extra). It will help you to win new recruits for next autumn's campaign.



ASIA MINOR : WHOSE ?

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE :—Asia Minor is the old Roman name for the Western Asian lands which form the eastern boundary of the Mediterranean—Anatolia, or “Turkey in Asia”; Syria, now a French mandate; and Mesopotamia, now British.

LENIN has a special chapter in his *Imperialism* on the partition of the world among the Great Powers. Reckoning in millions of square kilometres he shows from capitalist authorities that Russia, England, France, Germany, U.S.A., and Japan, in the years 1876 to 1914, increased their colonial possessions from 40.4 to 81.5 million square kilometres. But there is a limit to the earth's surface, and the areas available for annexation or exploitation become smaller and smaller. There are few important areas over which domination by one capitalist section is still in doubt. One is China; another is Asia Minor. The latter, by the Lausanne Conference and the renewed threats of war between Greece and Turkey, has recently been much in the forefront of world politics.

Out of that womb of peoples, Central Asia, various Turk races of fighting herdsmen swept westward ten to twelve centuries ago. Anatolia was captured in the eighth century, and a century or two later Europe itself was entered. In 1371 Adrianople became the Turkish capital. Every student knows what followed the crossing of the Straits and the conquest of Constantinople in 1453. So far did the conquerors sweep that even central Europe was menaced. The turning point came when, besieging Vienna for the second time in 1683, the Turks were disastrously repulsed. There followed a steady weakening of Turkish power; until the country of the all-conquering Sultan became at length “the sick man of Europe.” The Balkan races successfully revolted, and Nineteenth Century Liberalism wanted the Turk kicked out of Europe “bag and baggage.” How could the rising and triumphant industrialist States favour a military despotism which knew not the factory hooter and the ideals of Manchester?

Yet the Turk held the great crossways between Europe and Asia. Russia could march to the sea only over the Turk. France and England were interested in the Mediterranean, especially after the building of the Suez Canal (1869). Rothschild interests and French bankers pandered to “the sick man” at high rates of interest. They backed the Turk against the Russian, to keep the latter out of the

Mediterranean, and Britain never forgot the old caravan land routes to India. Meanwhile she was busy annexing—the word “mandate” had not then arrived—Africa and occupying Egypt.

Now enter the younger Imperialist “bloods”—the U.S. and Germany. An American Admiral named Chester was sent some fifteen years ago with an American gunboat to sympathise with the suffering Armenians. Unfortunately, these Christians had no oil wells or coal, and few opportunities for railway construction. So Chester had tea with the infidel, Abdul Hamid, and the foundations of the Ottoman-American Development Company were well and truly laid. The Chester Crusade was transfigured into the Chester Concession. In 1909 informal Turkish assent was won for a programme which included “the development of one of the richest oil, copper and iron areas of the world . . . the building of railways [2,500 miles with exclusive mining rights over a belt of land twenty miles wide adjoining the track], of canals, ports and cities, forestation, installation of telephones, telegraph and electric lighting and the construction of hotels, health stations, banks and observatories.” Nothing was forgotten, for “in some open and appropriate spot . . . a perfect capital with mosques surpassing any existing” was to be erected. Who said the faithful Christian Armenians were forgotten? For them the “surpassing” mosques!

But Chester, alas, was before his time. America’s development had not produced a man to play Chamberlain to his Rhodes. Russia, France and Britain jumped hard with both feet on any ratification of the treaty, which they rightly saw would place Turkey completely under U.S. control. But if the Chester plan remained only a splendid gesture, it was otherwise with the great German “Mittel-Europa” scheme. The great Berlin-Byzantium-Bagdad Railway dates from 1903 onwards; the Kaiser’s visit in 1898 was that of an up-to-date commercial traveller. This incidentally would not only have robbed Russia of her hope of Constantinople, but have rivalled her scheme of linking Petersburg to the Persian Gulf by hoops of steel. Its great danger to the British grip on India was also obvious. Growing German supremacy in the Near East was an important factor in creating the World War. Oddly enough on the eve of the War it seemed that an Anglo-German agreement had been made about the future of Turkish development. France also won concessions from the Turks in 1914. But it was too late. The holocaust raged and Turkey fought on the side of Germany.

The War promised to cut all the knots in the Near East problem; the victors had only to divide the spoils! Parts of a dismembered Turkey were promised indiscriminately to all the Arab tribes who

consented to fight for "freedom."* As early as May, 1916, the Allies were busy parcelling out Turkey amongst themselves. Under the Sykes-Picot Agreement Britain received Mesopotamia but not so far north as to include Mosul, which came into Syria—France's share. France also was awarded a large portion of Anatolia, including the fertile cotton-growing lowlands of Cilicia, northwards to Sivas and eastwards to Armenia, given to the Russians. Italy received south-western Anatolia, and Constantinople and Western Thrace were at long last to be handed to the Tzar.

The Russian Revolution cleaned out one bunch of Imperialist robbers, but the remaining sections rejoiced to see their shares thus become larger. Yet all was not amity among the victors. Oil was found in the Mosul region, and Great Britain decided that it must belong to her. France was more or less pacified by a 25 per cent. share of the oil under the San Remo Agreement (April, 1920), and was allowed to smash up the Arab King Feisul, whom the British had encouraged to set up a kingdom in Damascus. In the Sévres Treaty† (August, 1920), all the previous treaties and understandings were brought up to date. The British ownership of Mosul was confirmed. Italy got the coal of Heraclea apparently to compensate for giving up a zone around Smyrna to the Greeks. French, Italian, and British capitalists were going to take over on equal terms the Bagdad Railway. The Allies' "rubber stamp"—the League of Nations—confirmed the mandates and took control of the Straits.

But they were all counting their chickens too soon. Turkey was not "down and out." Basing itself on the remote highlands of Anatolia, an armed Sinn Fein movement defied the Powers. Lloyd George had encouraged the mercantile Greeks to regard themselves as the possible new keepers of the Straits and had given promises of support. Flushed with victory the Greeks marched further inland, and then, in the autumn of 1922, they were utterly overwhelmed by the troops of Mustapha Kemal, the "Sinn Fein" leader. The jealousies of France and Italy against Greece and Britain played a part in this reversal and only the British Navy prevented complete disaster for the Greeks and the destruction of British troops at Chanak.

Turkey, having asserted itself in a way the Allies could understand, had to be invited to the Lausanne Conference, Jan.-Feb., 1923,

* For a detailed summary of the amazing entanglements in Mesopotamia, Syria and Anatolia, and of the present situation see a series of articles by F. Seymour Coombs, running in the March—May issues of *The Forward*. See also *The PLEBS Outline of Imperialism*, Chaps. 2 and 9.

† Summarised in *Outline of Imperialism* (with map), p. 96.

and its attitude about the Straits and Mosul so disgusted Curzon that the Conference ended abruptly. Kemal Pasha knew that French support is fickle and that French ambitions in Syria and anxiety over the repayment of the Ottoman Debt were not conducive to the wellbeing of his nation. [As we write the French are complaining of menacing concentrations of Turkish troops near the Syrian frontier ; probably they are anxious about Cilicia which French troops are holding nominally to protect Armenian refugees.] Again Kemal might have foreseen that France would bargain a free hand on the Ruhr for herself for her opposition to British interests in Mesopotamia. Therefore just before the second Lausanne Conference met, the Angora Assembly ratified the Chester Concession which had so long wandered in the wilderness. It was but a repetition of what the Bolsheviks had tried to do with Vanderlip in Kamschatka and the Sinclair Corporation in Sakhalin. It made a useful card for the Turks to play against France and Britain, who realised with a jolt that a country with the greatest amount of capital was their rival.

The Chester Concession jumped at once into the world limelight. The American plans were fully explained. In some quarters it was hailed as the first great foreign venture in American railroad construction for which a billion dollars would have to be raised, and in charge of which had been placed General Goethals, builder of the Panama Canal. French cartoons pictured a rapacious American eagle under a sky of stars and stripes flying away with Turkey in its talons. Complaints were made that the Chester proposals infringed upon pre-war concessions made to France. Both French and British Embassies emphatically protested.

But Washington, through Mr. Grew, announced at last that it would not support the Concession and so it at once falls to the ground. The Chester scheme to make the desert blossom with railway tracks and pipe-lines had come within sight of success only to fail. It was twelve months late. The Anglo-American international bondholders had formed a friendship which survived the test. Back in March last, the U.S. had been so angry about the British monopoly in Mosul that it had retaliated by stopping the further participation in American oil properties of all companies belonging to countries which did not give to the U.S. "the open door." Under such circumstances, and if faced with Lloyd George's Big Business instead of Bonar Law's High Finance, the U.S. would have welcomed Chester for giving them a foothold in Mosul, as well as safeguarding the Soviet oil at Baku now being worked by an American concern. Unfortunately for Chester he is a rival of Standard Oil, which had been allowed to come into a 20 per cent. share of Mosul oil. [According to the *New York Tribune* (22-4-23) this was arranged in London

last November, as an amendment of the 75 per cent. British, 25 per cent. French, ratio.] And Washington, of course, is the voice of Standard Oil in this matter.

But although the U.S. has refused to support Chester, France is still worried because a British-Swiss financial group is reported (17-5-23) to have taken over the Anatolian railways.

In order to enable us to understand future happenings in Asia Minor it will be well to sum up what is at stake.

First there is a pungent odour of oil in Mesopotamia. Industrial, mercantile and naval supremacy are all vitally dependent upon an oil supply—all too rapidly exhausted. Once oil was found at Mosul the French might have anything else in Syria but that. The British control the Tigris and the Euphrates transportation and the railroad which will soon reach Mosul from Basra. At Abadan, on the Persian Gulf, there are huge oil refineries for treating the products of the Persian and Mesopotamian fields. From the Persian oil fields the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (in which the British Government has shares) gets about 2,000,000 tons annually. The further north the British zone can be extended the more power it can wield in Baku where in their keenness for oil, new concerns are forgetting the British and French claims on Soviet property.

No need, then, to be surprised that my lord Curzon will not hear of any Turkish claim to Mosul! Or that those in power, who have already spent £150,000,000 since the Armistice in maintaining King Feisul in Irak, are prepared to spend still more to maintain "Arabian independence." Even orthodox pre-war writers (e.g., J. Macdonald, *Turkey and the Eastern Question* (Jacks, 1913, p. 82), recognised that racial conflicts in Asia Minor were quite secondary to economic interests. But they are and will be used for stalking horses. Whatever irrigation may do for Mesopotamia in the future the immediate factor of importance is oil.

Anatolia in the past has been accounted a barren plateau whose inaccessibility incidentally saved the Turks from destruction. The mining prospector does not share that view. There are the copper mines of Erghana worth at least £30,000,000 and there is copper, coal and sulphur elsewhere. Oil trickles to the surface in the areas of Erzerum, Van and Bitlis. The *M.G. Reconstruction* (No. 4) said "The rich oil stores of Turkey are at present something of a sleeping beauty. The prince who is to breathe life into them is transport." (Chester was rehearsing for the part.) But Turkey has not only mineral wealth for Bowman (*The New World*, p. 443) remarks:—

While half of Anatolia is desert, steppe and mountain, there are locally fertile areas upon which silk, cotton, tobacco, fine wool, and subtropical

fruits can be produced. Improved irrigation works will greatly increase production and will make cotton-growing possible even on the central plain of Konieh, where now much of the land is desert, for lack of a proper application of the available water supply.

But modern Imperialism not only takes raw materials ; it gives railways, canals, ports, and cities ; it irrigates, dams rivers, makes bridges, piers and harbours. Chester promised to "form a Turkish working class and imbue the population with a taste for sport [per *The Pink'un* ?] and physical exercise [running into factories before the buzzer blows ?]." During 1923, says the *M.G. Commercial* (10-5-23), Turkey will import American agricultural implements and machinery to the extent of 1½ millions of Turkish pounds (18s. at par).

The Berlin-Bagdad Railway began the process. Whatever section of Imperialism wins, the towns of Angora, Samsun, Sivas, Erzerum, Trebizond, Bitlis and Mosul will be linked up by railways. And whoever gets the railway construction job will be the real Sultan (new style !) of Turkey.

Anatolia also involves the control of the Straits and of the ports of the Black Sea and the Danube mouth. Because of the range of modern guns the Turks have decided that Angora is a healthier capital than Constantinople. The young Turks are breaking with the past traditions of the Golden Horn, and Angora may become the centre of a capitalist Turkey instead of a mere transshipment trading centre like Constantinople. And in addition to waterways there are landways to consider. Anatolia is the landway to Persia, Bokhara, Afghanistan, India, and eastwards to China. Raw materials, markets, spheres of investment and important routes are all at stake.

Russia's revolution profoundly affected the whole Near and Middle East. And the existence of the federated Soviet republics on her north-eastern borders will invariably affect the course of development in Turkey itself. Kemal Pasha's government is composed of elements which are still largely in the pre-capitalist stage—officers of the Young Turk movement of 1908, inspired in the main by nationalist and religious feeling. Ere long the question of the distribution of the land will be raised by the peasant-proletarian elements, and a situation may rapidly develop in which the exploited classes look to Russia, and the governing groups to the capitalist powers, for assistance.

In the meantime, it is up to us proletarians of the West to study the facts of this and other world problems, in order to protect ourselves and our fellows from the dust the Imperialists would throw in our eyes.

MARK STARR.

Some FACTS about AGRICULTURE

This article, by a writer with first-hand knowledge of his subject, will be of interest to Trade Unionists, as well as to all Labour Students of current affairs.

THE amount of space devoted to Agriculture and the woes of agriculturists by the Press can rarely have been greater than at the present time. What is the reason for the sudden increase in general interest? Can it be put down to the war alone, or would agriculture in any case have played a more important part politically and economically than it did say twenty years ago? The latter seems more probable, but it is also true that the war hastened the change. The process was a part of that larger movement which gave rise to the Tariff Reform agitation of the early years of this century.

The loss of Britain's unchallenged commercial supremacy owing to the phenomenal development of industrialism in Germany and America led to the movement for Protection, and the same economic change would have led inevitably to a greater interest being displayed in agriculture by economists and politicians. The possession of foreign markets becoming less secure and the acquisition of new markets more difficult, the question of greater output of raw materials at home became more urgent. The outbreak of the war, with the instant loss of our biggest markets and later the difficulty of importing huge quantities of food, brought home the matter to the minds—and stomachs—of all. With foreign trade still diminished in volume, with the urgent necessity for increasing exports to pay interest on external debts, it is still for Britain a matter of vital importance to maintain a high level of internal production. Yet as everyone knows the output of food in this country has fallen enormously since 1918.

Is this in itself a matter of regret for socialists? Would this country under socialism remain essentially an industrial nation exporting manufactured goods to pay for food, or would an attempt be made to become self-supporting so that our manufactured goods could be utilised mainly to raise the standard of living?

It would seem, that owing to the predominance of town-bred men on the "progressive" parties no serious attempt has been made to grapple with such questions as these and with many others which might be formulated. Obviously there is room here for exhaustive inquiry to be made by a capable body, on the lines of those conducted

by the L. R. Dept. into the Cotton and Engineering Industries—though the inquiry would be of vastly greater difficulty.

In "Class Room Notes" for April, attention was drawn to some important considerations bearing on the rural problem. Such an inquiry as I have suggested would attempt to determine the significance of these. Suppose, *e.g.*, the land were nationalised (without compensation) by how much would the rent of land be reduced? Would it have an appreciable effect on the cost of production? (Even in Russia there is a corn tax which we may regard as a rent.) At the moment rent is the only big item in the cost of production which could be attacked by a socialist government, but it is difficult to say how much of it could be wiped out and thereby provide for an increase in wages.

As regards Wartime Inflation I think undue importance can easily be attached to this. A small number of farmers *have* been affected, but most of those who bought farms accumulated sufficient to withstand the shock of the present slump. The maintenance of the higher standard of living secured by the farmer during the war is a much more important matter. Then, the most incompetent fool could make money and as a result he went in for luxuries previously unknown—motor cars, expensively equipped houses, heavy life insurances, and so on. Naturally he is determined to maintain the high level at all costs—which simply means at the cost of the labourer.

Let me draw attention to a few other points bearing on Agriculture.

1. Although always described by political speakers as "our oldest and greatest national industry" it is not an industry in the ordinary sense of the word. In this country with few exceptions, industrial organisation is unknown in agriculture. The farmer makes use of new implements—generally years after their adoption elsewhere—but his methods remain the same as 150 years ago, uninfluenced by the Industrial Revolution.

2. Farming, then, as a productive occupation cannot be compared with any important section of industry. In outlook, methods (or lack thereof) and in education the farmer can be compared only with the petty shopkeeper. As Sir Daniel Hall, Scientific Adviser to the Ministry of Agriculture, says in *After the War* :—

We have in all considerations of agriculture to reckon with the temperament and equipment of the men who are actually holding the bulk of British land at the present moment. Putting aside a substantial minority they have not been touched by the revival of agricultural education that has taken place during the last twenty years. Most of all their business training is at fault: they often are capable enough craftsmen but they are bound within a narrow routine and show no adaptability either in their management or in their buying and selling. On the average farm the expert sees a general low level of knowledge and management.

We owe to the war, I think, such a frank statement from one so highly placed.

3. But unfortunately, the farmer disposes of the lives of others. These men suffer from the apathy and incompetence of the employer whose only notion of lowering costs of production is to strike at wages. (The manufacturer, of course, does not lose sight of this method, but he is forced also to move forward and to develop efficiency in his processes.) As a result the most intelligent and able workers have been driven from agriculture into the towns. The standard of all engaged in agriculture is therefore very low ; it is our greatest sweated industry.

4. Strangely enough the very inefficiency of the farmer enabled him to get a comfortable living. By merely allowing some of his land to go out of cultivation altogether—letting it tumble down to grass—he could manage quite easily to make ends meet. To quote the same book again :—

There can be no doubt about the prosperity of the industry from 1910 to the outbreak of war. Accounts are available showing that good arable farms were then making profits of from 10 to 20 per cent. on their capital : yet the area under the plough continued to decline.

That is they did still better on grass farms.

5. The relations between farmer and employee are very different from those prevailing in a large industrial enterprise. There is close contact between master and man, and the former has a big pull on his workmen through tied cottages as well as through the social organisation of the village. Nothing can be kept hidden in the average country parish. Accordingly trade union organisation is extremely difficult both to build up and to maintain.

6. As may be imagined, in such an inefficient business costs of production vary tremendously and accurate statements are rarely encountered. Profits are easily camouflaged by including interest on capital and management expenses under costs of production, and even where the final operation of feeding home-grown foodstuffs to cattle is an essential part of the particular mode of farming practised, the foodstuffs are often charged at market prices. (A comparable procedure would be for a motor car manufacturer in estimating *his* cost of production to place on wheels, tyres, etc., the current market prices of these when sold as "spares.") Accordingly the farmer has generally provided for his living before arriving at his total expenses. It is therefore easy for the farmer to show a loss and to oppose any improvement in wages. It is hardly necessary to point out that in the past there has been no correlation between prices of produce and rates of remuneration. It is of interest, too, to note that one of the earliest writers on English agriculture—so

far back as the thirteenth century !—shows that even then wheat was being grown at a loss ! Farmers are indeed incurable philanthropists.

7. Farmers, as a class, have allowed themselves to become the passive hosts of crowds of parasites. The manufacturer as a rule has some voice in determining selling price—in trustified industries the retail price is fixed by the producer—but in farming the producer is at the mercy of middlemen. Of course this is a result of the farmers' incompetence, but nevertheless it is of such importance that most probably it is here that measurable improvement of the condition of agriculture can be most easily attained.

All these considerations have a bearing on the question "could this country provide its own food?" Undoubtedly the answer is "Yes! quite easily." That is, it is a physical possibility and could be done without any very elaborate organisation and even without any greatly improved methods.

A recent publication, *Food*, by Sir Chas. Fielding (Hurst and Blackett, 12s. 6d.), has as its object the preaching of this doctrine that the country can and should produce its own food: "Under the pressure of war the farmers did increase their output in the year 1918 by nearly one-third. We have in this a strong indication of what could be done by a more prolonged effort based on security against loss."

Unfortunately this book is badly planned and written. The writer has no coherent line of thought: he is continually led away on side issues and his knowledge of elementary economics is shadowy. The earlier chapters attempt an exposition of the fundamental agricultural facts and principles: they could well have been omitted as this has already been done well by other writers—notably Sir Daniel Hall. Yet to those who are interested in the problem and have access to the book in a public library it will suggest the lines along which a conclusion may be more logically reached, while for purely propaganda purposes the book supplies much useful material.

C. LEKOV.

PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENT

We have in actual preparation, and hope to publish early this autumn, Number Four of our Textbook Series:—

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WANTED : REAL STUDENTS

DEAR COMRADE,—There is at the present time an enormous amount of energy and thought being expended by Plebeians on the question of educational classes : methods of teaching adult workers, arranging syllabuses, &c. It is, of course, very proper that this should be so, and the success of this movement is an inspiring omen for the future. Granting this however, and in face of the opinion of many Plebeians, I venture to assert that the independent self-taught student is the backbone of the movement.

Intelligent class consciousness can only be the result of study and much reading, combined of course with such experience of working-class psychology as is possible to the individual in his work-a-day life. This study requires rather more patience and perseverance than is involved in merely sitting down once or twice a week, to listen to a lecture given by some other worker who happens to be better informed than the average. The man who never gets any further than that will never be a "live wire ;" to be alive he must be continually charging himself afresh with new ammunition for his mental armoury. In other words he must become an earnest self-student. The most that any classes can do for him is to set him off on the line of inquiry which he must thereafter peruse himself. Perhaps, therefore, a word to the individual student may not be amiss.

From my own experience I have found that the rapidity and ease with which any subject can be mastered depends largely upon the kind of books one gets at the beginning when first approaching the subject. Guidance in this matter is thus of the highest value.

There are books which specialise on one particular aspect of a subject—like glorified magazine articles—interesting, essential in fact, but confusing at the beginning. There are others, real scientific classics, which give an orderly epitome of their subject, and form a nucleus round which all further accretions of knowledge may be grouped. It is this latter type which I have called "foundational." For the student who has the good fortune to begin with such a work progress will be rapid : and even if he is floundering helplessly among the innumerable writings which beset every subject, to come upon such a work will at once set him upon firm ground.

These foundational books are not by any means the most expensive, for even where the price rises above the inevitable 2s. 6d., the difference is more than saved by the quality and range of information to be derived from them. I have in mind in this connection a work worthy of note by all who are interested in the history of civilisation

in its broader aspects. This is Deniker's *Races of Man* (Contemporary Science Series, Scott, 6s.) a book of 600 pages splendidly bound and illustrated, and giving an accurate and concise account of the subject matter of Ethnology and Ethnography (or Anthropology as it is now termed). There are chapters on the origin and growth of Language, on primitive tools and industries, weaving, pottery, etc.; arts, music, drawing, etc.; on the classification and distribution of races and the principles on which these are based. These alone are well worth the cost and will enable the student to think and speak with confidence, and to dispense with many more expensive and less useful books. (It is of course a "bourgeois" book and the student himself must adapt the information it contains to proletarian needs.)

Another work to which I must draw the attention of the serious fighter is *Property, its origin and development*, by Ch. Letourneau (as above). This is another invaluable foundation book by a brilliant French sociologist, who whatever his social status may be has certainly acquired the proletarian outlook. It contains an exhaustive description of Primitive Communism in all its forms, the development of family property and the village community with detailed information of the laws and customs connected therewith from every quarter of the earth. The use of private property, its causes and its effects in degrading the mass of workers, are traced in a most lucid manner. Facts are accumulated, and made to speak with a cold convincing logic more irresistible than the most powerful polemic.

The various conditions of slavery are fully described and the economic changes which led to the transformation of the chattel into the serf, and the latter into the wage worker, are explained; and we are able to appraise at their true value the advantages and disadvantages of each method of exploitation. One sees also the folly of hoping to establish anything like a tolerable civilisation so long as exploitation under any disguise remains. The worker student who assimilates the facts presented here, will be for ever a rebel at heart.

Very good you say, but 6s. is a mighty lot of money: so it is comrade worker, but this book is worth saving up for, it will give you no end of pleasure, and it is a rich mine of information on matters of vital concern to our class.

Yours, etc., ARTHUR RILEY.

A POSTSCRIPT

WE agree heartily with Comrade Riley's declaration that the student who never gets further than attendance at lectures once or twice a week will never be a "live wire"; and, further, with his plea for home study. But the individual student is always up against the problem

of *What to Read*—which books are really worth while, and which are of only secondary importance.

We are glad to announce, therefore, that *The PLEBS* has in hand, and will issue some time next month, a new pamphlet entitled *What to Read: Books for Worker-Students*, which will contain carefully prepared and annotated lists of books on all the subjects of primary importance to workers; Economics, History, Geography, Philosophy, Psychology, Modern Biology, Working-Class Movement, English, etc.; with full particulars of price, publishers, etc. The aim has been to include expensive books of reference, which can be consulted in free libraries, etc., and also smaller inexpensive works within the reach of folks with limited purses. Each section has been prepared by someone with specialised knowledge of the subject, and the pamphlet (which we hope to issue at 6d., same size page as our Textbooks) will, we believe, be one of the most useful publications we have ever issued.

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The EDUCATION QUESTION —Still Burning!

LENIN has recently declared that only education can bring about a world revolution. There is nothing new or original about this assertion, but it is one that requires constant and emphatic reiteration. It is often too readily assumed that when we have divided Labour educationists into two classes—Plebs and W.E.A., we have rendered further discussion of the question unnecessary. But I venture to think that two important considerations should induce both parties to reconsider their respective positions. The W.E.A. ignore the facts of social development, and the Plebs do not yet appreciate the importance of individual training and personal culture.

This latter statement sounds very much like heresy, but hear me first and hit me afterwards. The greatest tragedy of the W.E.A. is that many of its best and most sincere supporters ought to be in the Plebs League. Why are they not there? Firstly, because, as their published utterances plainly and painfully prove, they entirely fail to understand the Plebs position; secondly, because they totally ignore the logical inferences to be drawn from the facts of social evolution. It is obvious that the first reason is closely connected with the second. For example, take the following:—

"The difference betwixt the W.E.A. and the Plebs does not therefore arise from a difference in economic faith. It is due to our different conceptions of what education is."* Quite so. But whence arise "our different conceptions?" That is the fundamental issue. The W.E.A. theory of education is sound enough in the abstract. Put shortly, it is that the purpose of education is to develop the personality and to train the student to think things out for himself. Admirable sentiments both—sentiments that Plebs will ignore to their undoing. But taken by themselves and advocated with an almost total disregard for the facts of social evolution, they become not merely futile but dangerous in the extreme. And the whole W.E.A. position is really based on the assumption that the social organism can thus be entirely disregarded; for they claim that the personality and intelligence of the individual can be so developed under existing social conditions. If this is untrue, then they have no justification for their existence.

Combined with this "conception" there is the most astonishing misconception of the Plebs point of view. "They (the Plebs) believe that the working class can only be saved if they are bludgeoned into accepting, not merely the doctrines of Marx, but the doctrines of Marx as interpreted and believed in by themselves."*

If after an impartial and critical study of Plebs literature (and it would be an impertinence not to assume that Mr. Mactavish has performed this mental task) he arrives at such conclusions, one is forced to confess that he is a very poor advertisement for W.E.A. methods of education. A glance at the syllabuses issued by our Labour Colleges or at the pages of this magazine will at once show how numerous are the non-Marxian works which our students are urged to read.

On the other hand, the Plebs "conception of what education is" starts, not with the cultural abstraction of the solitary individual, but with the facts of life as our experience—individual and social—show them to be. It recognises man's place, not only in nature, but also in society, and insists that all our ideas about man must be the outcome of a study of his social relations, and that the supreme object of working-class education is economic freedom, which can only be achieved by a clear understanding of the necessity of their present economic bondage. This understanding of the nature of social relations is the most urgent need of the wage workers at the present time.

The W.E.A. says that this is not education at all, but only the partisan propaganda of the views of a sect. It is this amazing inability on its part to recognise the plain fact of the class struggle and all that it implies that makes it so difficult to have any sympathy

*Mr. Mactavish in *What is Real Democratic Education?* (W. E. A., 1917).

r even patience with W.E.A. advocates, however sincere and well-attended they may be.

But if it is wrong to ignore the class struggle, it is equally futile to dismiss it lightly with a phrase and say the workers have only "to take and hold" the means of production. There are more things involved in that taking and holding than appear to be dreamt of at present by the average "class conscious" worker, but of that more later on.

It is just here that there arises what appears to the writer to be the chief defect in the Plebs League. We have got "the goods," the real explanation of social phenomena, but have we got the men? We aim, quite rightly, at making the workers "class conscious," but what do we mean by "class conscious"? Very often one meets with a worker engaged in one of the big industries, who has spent much time and money in educating himself in economics and industrial history, and whose studies have resulted in the production of an embittered wage slave who feels himself helpless in the toils of the capitalist system. He sees with amazement that the great mass of his fellow-workers are either stolidly apathetic or at best inclined to futile action by way of protest when the pinch of the economic shoe becomes too painful to be endured. That is the extent of his "class consciousness."

The workers to whom The PLEBS appeals are—or should be—the pick of their class. They should be "Labour leaders" in the real sense of the term. Without leaders of the right sort the masses will never get anywhere—for the masses are never going to study capitalism for themselves. That "social conditions will produce the consciousness needed in the minds of the workers" is a statement which cannot be taken at its face value. The conditions certainly are creating a working-class consciousness, but it is the consciousness which thinks largely in terms of sport and "pictures." Leaders therefore we must have, and the creation of such leaders is the supreme function of the Plebs League. Leadership implies character, will, purpose, a sense of humour, cheerfulness, a readiness to meet objections, and that (if it may be said) without abuse and contempt. Above all, a leader must be a student of human nature.

The PLEBS teaching contributes largely to the mental make-up of our prominent Left Wing men, and it must therefore bear the blame for some of the defects in their psychology. Between them and the best of the workers there is a great gulf fixed. Many W.E.A. students are precisely the men we want and ought to have. What is wrong with our methods that we not only fail to attract them, but in many cases antagonise them? Their position and

programme is false, but their ideals are good. Do we show any sympathy with them?

These are but a few points bluntly put and open to criticism, but they are made by one who is wholly in sympathy with Plebs principles, and who feels that it only needs to make good certain obvious defects to become the power in the Labour Movement that it should be. Marxism must be the basis of culture; but we must have the Culture as well as the Marxism—and that with a capital C!

H. WYNN CUTHBERT.

The REVOLT of the ROBOTS

MANY writers have toyed with the idea of creating a human machine, or training a lower animal, to do all the work, and leave man free from work's exactions. Some have conceived the possibility that the creature would in due course revolt against the creator—as Frankenstein's monster revolted in Mary Shelley's novel, and as the trained apes revolted in the fantasia by the French sociologist, Tarde. "The Male Figure" and "The Female Figure" in Shaw's *Back to Methusalem* have to be destroyed because of such an inclination to revolt. Karel Chapek, the young Czech dramatist, has taken this idea, has grasped its full economic implications, has made it the vehicle for Marxist criticism of the existing social order, and has leavened the whole with the New Psychology. The result is the play, *R.U.R.*, now running at the St. Martin's Theatre, one of the most strikingly original dramas staged for several years.

"R.U.R." are the initials of "Rossum's Universal Robots." The word "Robot" is the Slav (Czech, Russian, etc.) root signifying "work" or "worker," pruned of superfluous terminations. When the play opens, in the year 1950, Robots are being extensively manufactured on a remote island by a secret process based on the recipe left by the deceased biologist Rossum, who had discovered how to make living matter. The Robot is a perfect machine for capitalist exploitation. He—or she, for they can be made in the semblance of either sex—can be trained to do any kind of work intelligently, quickly, and cheaply. In fact, he is Henry Dubb, taylorised. So good a working machine is he, that he is rapidly replacing the comparatively inefficient workers that have hitherto been the raw material of capitalist exploitation. Consequently, unemployment is rife among the human workers—but that is only a minor inconvenience incidental to the process of transition! The Robots are "worked out" in the course of twenty years, and then have to go to the stamping-mill to be broken up. But they are

already much cheaper to produce than the ordinary human worker, and the enormous demand for Robots is enabling the supply to be yet further cheapened. The capitalist Powers find them extremely useful as soldiers. "You can feed them on pineapples, straw, whatever you like." They're not really sensible, only acute. "They've no will of their own. No passion. No soul." They are, therefore, even better adapted than the natural human product of military discipline to fulfil the sublime injunction of the poet—"theirs not to reason why, theirs but to do and die." The increasing frequency of devastating wars in which Robots were the cannon-fodder was another of the little troubles of the transition period. As the use of Rossum's Universal Robots became more and more general, the world tended increasingly to assume the pleasant characteristics of the period of Peace that has followed the War to end War!

Ten years later, conditions are far less promising for the master class. To say nothing of war and unemployment, the universalisation of Robots has had a curious effect upon the human birthrate. Man is ceasing to procreate his kind, and the human species is obviously doomed to extinction within a generation or two. But the extinction is hastened by a revolt of the Robots. Even as originally manufactured, they sometimes exhibited an unaccountable inclination to resist. "Occasionally they seem somehow to go off their heads." (The manager of Rossum's is explaining things to a visitor.) "We call it Robots' cramp. They'll suddenly sling down everything they're holding, stand still, gnash their teeth—and then they have to go into the stamping-mill. It's evidently some breakdown in the mechanism." But at this later date, the revolt has become *conscious*. Dr. Gall, the head of the company's physiological department has made a few hundred Super-Robots, which can feel pain, and are "even of like passion with ourselves." As long as they had only intelligence, they were perfect tools; but with feeling as well, they have acquired the driving-force for an independent existence. "I gave them a twist," says the inventor. "In a certain respect they're already above us. They're stronger than we. They've ceased to be machines. They're already aware of their superiority, and they hate us." Radius, one of these Super-Robots says: "I do not want any master. I know everything for myself. I won't work for you."

These few hundred Super-Robots are enough to organise the revolt, to teach the ordinary Robots to combine (Chapek is apparently a Blanquist!) The "Robots of the World" form a Soviet, issue a manifesto in the most approved style, and start a revolution. The counter-revolutionists, the "human" beings, the members of the master class, have decided that in future there shall be no "universal" Robots. "Make National Robots" is the new watchword. They

shall be of various colours, shall speak different tongues, shall be hopelessly divided by the barriers of race and language. But it is too late. The Robot rebels already have the upper hand. They declare the Dictatorship of the Robots, and exterminate the "human" race.

Now a difficulty arises. "Male and female created he them." But the Robots are male and female in outward semblance merely. And Rossum's recipe has been destroyed during the revolution. (This symbolises the danger that, after the revolution, the workers will be unable to "carry on," owing to the lack of "directive ability," and the sabotage of the revolution by the "intelligentsia.") In two decades, not a Robot will be left alive. But the situation is saved by the discovery that two of Gall's masterpieces, Primus and Helena, have become animated with that libido which, according to the Freudians, is the real driving-force of life. They are competent to procreate a new race, a Robot race to replace the human beings who do so many "unnecessary things" (such as going to Wembley!). Thus baldly stated, the idea may seem ludicrous; but the epilogue in which the possibility is disclosed is anything but ludicrous. Extravagant, it may be; and yet it has the convincing artistic charm of some of Shaw's metabiological fantasies in *Back to Methuselah*.

The play is admirably staged, the technical difficulties of presenting Robots who are at once machine-like and humanly credible being cleverly surmounted. In Paul Selver's translation and Nigel Playfair's adaptation, it has all the force and grace of an English original. It is a piece of revolutionary propaganda to be seen at the theatre if possible. Failing that, we urge fellow Plebeians to read the book. *R.U.R.* is published at half-a-crown by the Oxford University Press.

EDEN AND CEDAR PAUL.

A POSTSCRIPT—BY ANOTHER HAND

Another play by the author of *R.U.R.* (and his brother) is now running in London—*The Insect Play*. It is an equally striking piece of work, satirising with savage force sundry aspects of post-war society. Its "moral," indeed, is rather clearer than that of *R.U.R.*, for the very fact that the latter is a thrilling melodrama tends to conceal its biting Socialist criticism of modern industrialism and industrialised science.

The third act of *The Insect Play*—showing the Great War between the Brown and the Yellow Ants for an Empire "between two blades of grass"—is the deadliest onslaught on militarist-industrialism I have met with. It has the same quality as Sassoon's war poetry.

And the dung beetles in Act Two with "their little pile—their capital—their little all"; the ichneumon fly, affectionate at home but a remorseless bloodsucker outside; the parasite—a ghastly figure of the slum proletariat, alternately cringing, braggart, and cruel—they are all figures from the human world we know.

The Insect Play is also published by Humphrey Milford, price 2s. Get it, and put it up alongside the Shaws.

J. F. H.

CLASS ROOM NOTES for Students and Tutors

A Rotten Turn

SIR OSWALD STOLL, the music-hall magnate, whose hobbies are economics and finance, provided entertainment for *Referee* readers (15-4-23) by again destroying the Labour Theory of Value. Adam Smith's error that labour was the measure of exchange value was inherited by Marx and according to Stoll, he made the mess worse. For Nature is left out in this theory and the "labour" of Nature never finishes. Who is to be paid for this "labour" of Nature Sir Oswald doesn't say. We suppose that the mining royalty receiver is merely acting in trust for Nature by thus taking payment for Nature's "labour" in heating and compressing vegetable material!

Afterwards Oswald mixed up little quotes about "congelation of labour" and human "labour in the abstract." Standing on his head he complains that Marx is upside down. Of course Marx is assumed to have ignored *use* value. (Will somebody lend him of *Capital* Vol. I., with pp. 2 and 3 marked red before he writes another article on his hobby?) But the crushing blow is kept until the last in a quotation from Whately. "Pearls are not valuable because men dive for them—men dive for them because they are valuable." Might we ask this critic what the *exchange* value of a pearl would be if they could be obtained as easily as pebbles?

Curzon Can't Stop Interchange of Ideas

Craik's *Short History of the British Working-Class Movement* has been published in Russian by the State Publishing Agency. S. Petrovsky contributed a preface. Pravda gave a very favourable review to the book. We wonder when the British Board of Education will issue such a textbook!

By the way, those who have worn out their paper copies will

notice that a limited number of bound copies are available for 2s. 6d. (2s. 9d. postpaid).

Ford

Robert Blatchford is so impressed by Henry Ford's *My Life and Work* that he has apologised for his past and confessed that Ford has found a better way. Ford, be it noted, is merely an astute capitalist who has recognised the economy of high wages, and he triumphs largely because his rivals are stupid. He is also the great industrialist who, *so far*, has been able to keep his business out of the clutch of the banking interests. His book exposes what has been a commonplace in Marxian circles since Hilferding's *Finanzkapital* (1909): the growing dominance of the banks over industry. Poor Ford! He understands his own capitalist system so well that he wants an unvariable measure of exchange value. When society is consciously organised, as a Ford factory is, then—and then only—will money be unnecessary and the lords of finance will rule no longer.

G. D. H. C. is no Detective

G. D. H. Cole, in a review in the *May Guild Socialist*, amused himself by trying to trace the different authors who had a hand in our *Outline of Economics*. He discovered a Mr. A., a Mr. B. and a Mr. C.; one of them the "original Marxian expositor," one a "neo-Marx-cum-Marshallite refiner," and one a "final proletarian gingerer"; and he even made a shot at spotting which sections each was responsible for. Well, it's pretty obvious that in a "communally produced" book different hands will be discernible; but apparently they "blend" not too badly, for Cole not only errs in the number of hands who contributed to the book, but he allots to different authors sections which were written by one and the same hand! He himself is so fond of dividing himself into Mr. P., the propagandist, and Mr. E., the educator, that he ought not to forget that one individual may have a dual personality!

"Biassed" Geography

Geography is one of those subjects which some simple folk imagine cannot be taught from any particular "point of view." Well, here is a sentence from a little pamphlet on *The Teaching of Geography* issued by the University of London Press. A certain book on the economic geography of the British Empire is described as "ideally suitable for that *revision of world geography from the point of view of the British Empire* which appropriately crowns the geography syllabuses of modern schools and modern examinations." It

should be apparent that, if you want a "revision of world geography" from the point of view, say, of the Workers' International, you will have to go elsewhere for it.

N.B.—The PLEBS *Outline of Economic Geography* will be published this autumn.

The Post-Tutankh Period

Egypt is worth watching. The great contractor firm, Pearson and Son, with Lord Cowdray at its head, was reported in September

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last to have secured a £3,000,000 irrigation job in the Sudan. The Labour M.P.s, Johnston and Jowett, exposed the scandal of the Sudan Plantations Syndicate, Ltd., which, in making the desert blossom with cotton, were also making 35 per cent. profit and receiving State guarantees. Raw cotton within the empire makes Manchester imperialist about Egypt. Markets and the importance of the Suez Canal combine to make control of that country vital to the British Empire.

We commend to those wanting to bring up-to-date the details in *Outline of Imperialism* (pp. 14, 17 and 97), G. A. Hutt's article in the May *Labour Monthly*. He shows how the native capitalists

are struggling for power, and how suppression of the workers' organisations has begun.

Rifts in the British Loot

Earsman, the Australian Communist, has been revealing how the U.S. is penetrating Australia, which would incidentally give her the military base she needs in the Pacific. In Canada a process has been going on to complete by economic control the geographic factors that make the U.S. and Canada a single unit. This is reflecting itself in diplomatic relations. A proposal has been made that instead of the British Embassy at Washington acting upon instruction from London in Canadian matters, Canada shall have a direct representative. Already Canada has acted for herself in making a treaty concerning fisheries with Secretary Hughes. The American officials argue that concerted action between the two countries is an absolute necessity for the enforcement of the U.S. domestic laws; prevention of smuggling; regulation of railway traffic and shipping on the Great Lakes, and coastwise on the Atlantic and Pacific; utilisation of water power; common postal services and banking.

Interchange and interlocking of business in both countries—these are urged as justifying the diplomatic independence of Canada. Such changes will make our Imperialists think furiously while Wall Street extends its dominance. No wonder an Imperial Conference is needed when to the above are added the problems of India and Egypt.

Right of the First Night

This subject of the *Ius primæ noctis*, as it was called, has been much debated, and some bourgeois historians have denied its existence. Socialist writers from Sue onwards have adopted it as a fact and a propaganda weapon. Bebel made great play with it in his *Woman*, and William Paul also refers to it as an established fact. How far is it such?

In Scotland there existed a feudal payment called *marcheta mulierum*, and tradition stated that this was imposed by Malcolm III. about 1090 in redemption of a more excessive obligation imposed by King Euenus, who, being a man of infamous life, had passed a law to the effect that every overlord should have the right to sleep the first night after her marriage with the wife of any of his serfs. "Marchett" was also paid in Nottingham and other parts of England. *Gobr-merch*, or *Amoby* among the Welsh, *Lecherwyte* among the Saxons, are said to have been fines of the same nature, but there

seems to be reason to believe they may have been fines for seduction exacted by the lord. But if the evidence for the right in England and Wales is scanty, there seems little doubt that it at one time existed in Scotland. The tale of King Evenus is a later invention to explain the origin of the custom, but it is probable that such an exaction had existed and was commuted about 1090 as stated. (See in particular John Anderson, *The Origin of the Mercheta Mulierum*, Transactions of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 1825, vol. 3, p. 55. Also Du Cange, *Diç. Mediæ et Infimæ Latinitatis*, s.v. *Mercheta*: "In quem locum sic Skenæus," etc.)

When we pass outside Great Britain, we might expect to find it universal. It at least had that reputation. Beaumont and Fletcher made it the subject of a play. General statements have been made of its wide spread over the whole continent. It has been confused with the religious prostitution of the Babylonians and of Asia Minor, and with various ancient lubricities. But in fact there are few evidences of its existence, except sporadically, outside France. In Italy, in the towns in Piedmont and Montferrat, it appears to have existed. Jacob Grimm also mentions it as having existed in Mure (Germany), where the mayor exercised the right.* All these are slight evidences, but the French feudal system has been subjected to a more exact study, and numerous money dues have been discovered which bear strong evidence, in their name and character, of being fines paid in replacement of this ancient vexation. (*Droit de culage, cuissage, jambage, ius cunni*. See Larousse, *Grande Dictionnaire du XIX cent.*, D., p. 1270.) But the exaction of this fine, payable, of course, to women and clergy, when such became lords of the manor, is a different thing from the enforcement of the right. There is evidence, however, of the conversion, in a document of the Seigneur de Bizanos (1674) and one of the Seigneur de Louvil (Pau, 1538); but these were survivals, for the custom had begun to die out as early as 1302.

Quite the most important document, however, is a record of a judgment of that year given by the Court of Guyenne, which in its terms and in its circumstances makes the nature of the right, and the fact of its physical enforcement, unquestionable.

Tradition states that a certain Count de Montvallet in 1665 attempted to revive the exaction of this right in kind, not money. Times, however, had altered; he had a strong-minded wife, and he ended his life unpleasantly. However this may be, it is probably true (1) that the right did exist, and was exercised in various localities in Western Europe; (2) that it at no time was created into general

* It was also practised in certain districts of Catalonia. See G. B. de Lagreze, *Histoire du Droit*, p. 398.

feudal law, but was on the other hand disallowed and discountenanced by the central authorities.

Its origin is fairly simple : it was an effect of the inrush of complete barbarians upon the corrupt Roman Empire. Without question the Frankish and Goth invaders exercised the right to do as they pleased with their female subjects not merely on the night of their marriage, but whenever they chose. The very existence of the custom points to an alleviation and the beginning of a return to order. Its disappearance is equally easy to explain. No seigneur could ever exercise it in full over all his domains, and once payment in money was accepted instead the principle spread as civilisation grew. Moreover, as has been said, its importance has been much exaggerated, for it was never a general law or even custom.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A.—Yes, it is true that the W.E.A. Bookroom has transformed itself into an independent company, but we believe *the W.E.A. holds all the ordinary shares*. It's the old game—if the W.E.A. isn't liked by Trade Unions call it the W.E.T.U.C.!

"Labour Monthly" Reader.—As you suggest, the phrase used by Marx in the *Manifesto* was "class struggles" and not "class war." But does it matter much? "The letter killeth . . ."

Inquirer.—The W.E.A. classes still receive money from the Cassel trustees. The April *Highway* recorded how Yorkshire classes had benefitted in this way.

B. L. (Liverpool).—We think your proposed alteration (Ablett, p. 91) from *the average composition of the whole capital employed in that sphere of*

production to the average composition of the whole social capital would be an improvement if a preceding sentence had not confined the inquiry by saying *Let us consider a given industry . . .*

There is an average rate of profit for each industry, for the total industries of each country, and for the social capital of the world. The tendency towards uniformity between them all does not mean that at any given moment they are alike, and Trusts are responsible for some deviations.

Can anyone supply B with the name of the author of the following lyric? He can search us! :—

"Oh, Mr. Dietzgen, what shall I do?
I want to know what's relative,
And what is really true.
Is there any Absolute?
Or will "What is, is" do?
Oh, Mr. Dietzgen, I can only turn to
you.

Disproportion or Surplus Product

IN continuing this discussion, and to avoid laying myself open to the charge of mis-representation, I may be permitted to repeat a few of Dobb's original statements. On p. 53 of the February PLEBS he said :—

"Let us suppose that one-third of the national income goes in profits and two-thirds in wages; and let us suppose for the sake of simplicity that all profits are re-invested.... Two-thirds [of the national income] will be spent for the present on finished

commodities ; but the other one-third will be spent on constructional goods. All it will mean is that national production must be distributed in the proportion of one-third industry producing constructional goods and two-thirds producing finished goods ; and there will be no necessary over-production so long as these proportions are maintained."

Industries producing means of production

Industries producing means of consumption

£300 variable capital
150 surplus

£600 variable capital
300 surplus

£450 total.

£900 total

Total wages are seen to be £900 and total profits £450. Industries, wages and profits are all in the proportions suggested by Dobb.

Wages are equal to the task of circulating the total product in the form of means of consumption. And at first glance it would seem too that the total profit of £450 could be expended in means of production. To begin with, however, the whole of the product in the form of machinery, etc., is not available for capitalisation, but only the surplus part of the product to the value of £150. Of the total product of these industries one

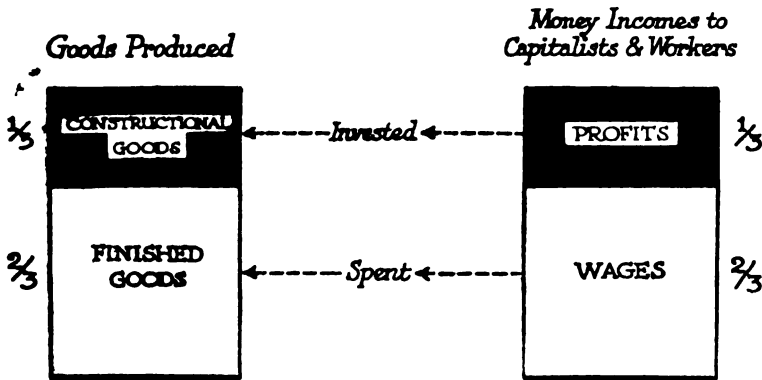
In commenting upon these I make the following assumptions :—

(1) That " income " includes no more and no less than variable capital plus the surplus.

(2) That " constructional " goods signify means of production and " finished goods " means of consumption.

Upon that understanding let us examine the example of necessary proportions between industries, how equilibrium could be maintained and, given the latter, crises abolished.

As shown in the diagram used by Dobb (and here reproduced), the profits



of both groups of industries are expected to purchase, and are invested wholly in the surplus product of the industries producing means of production. Wages, on the other hand are expected to purchase the whole of the product (including the surplus) in the form of means of consumption.

This illustration is absurd since it ignores altogether the element of constant capital, used up in the productive process, the value of which re-appears in that of the product. To make this clear let us put the example in another form :—

portion replaces their own worn-out machinery, etc., another replaces the worn-out materials of the other group of industries and the surplus alone is available for expansion in either sphere. £450 cannot therefore be invested in £150. The illustration shows how one group of industries receive £300 worth of means of consumption, but does not show how anything is given in return. As a matter of fact, unless they had previously sold £300 worth of machinery, etc., the first group would not be in a position to purchase means of consumption. The example

ignores the necessary exchange between the two departments.

Further, even if means of production were present in the required quantity, it would still be impossible to invest the whole of the surplus in these materials alone. Constant capital requires the attendance of labourers, if it is to be productively employed. The surplus destined for accumulation must for that reason be invested in both groups of industries, and part of the capital in both spheres take the form of variable capital.

The result of Dobb's illustration then is to prove the opposite of what he intended. In seeking to oppose the theory of under-consumption he has, on account of the preceding example and what is to follow, landed side by side with Hobson; this being not in the slightest degree dependent upon his consciousness of the fact.

However, in the article already quoted, he proceeds:—

"The market for the product of the cotton industry consists of the money income distributed in the course of production in all other industries (or that part of those incomes spent on cotton goods). Now suppose all industries to expand 50 per cent., the production of cotton goods will have been expanded 50 per cent. But so also will the market for cotton goods, for the expansion of production in other industries by 50 per cent. means a 50 per cent. increase in incomes distributed in the course of that production. But if production in the cotton industry expand 100 per cent. while that in other industries expands only 50 per cent., there will be relative over-supply of cotton goods."

Here we have the implication that just as cotton goods are bought by the money incomes distributed in the course of production, so also can the whole of the product of capitalist industry be disposed of. In other words, the sum of money expended in production is equal to the task of purchasing the whole of the product; the whole range of industries take in each other's washing!

Now it is quite true that Dobb does not in so many words tell us it is possible for capitalism to maintain the definite proportions required for progressive, undisturbed development,

but he does outline a situation which, if attainable, would permit capitalism to maintain itself as an independent economy, provide all the materials required, consume the whole of the product and uninterruptedly capitalise the surplus year after year. On this very point he expresses his agreement with Starr. But, suppose we assume with the latter the world trust which he suggests it would amount to, all we do is to assume one vast productive organisation finding all the conditions of existence within its own area and definitely excluding all other forms of production. Still, it is a capitalist trust and the workers are expected to produce a surplus. Of the total annual product therefore, one part will replace the worn-out materials, another, representing variable capital, will be consumed by the workers and there is left—the surplus.

Part of this will be consumed by the trust owners; no one is likely to suggest they consume the whole. What of the remainder? Oh, that will be capitalised! Let us accept it for a moment. If it be capitalised for whom is the increased production carried on? The capitalists have no need for it; they already fail to consume last year's product. The workers' share is limited and one cannot commence by assuming the trust owners to be philanthropists increasing production so that the workers' standard of life may be raised; besides, accumulation is impossible if the surplus is consumed either by the capitalists or their workmen.

How then is production to be expanded? How is the surplus to be capitalised? For Dobb all this is quite simple—they need only see to it that the materials are present in the required proportions and on a similar basis distributed among the various spheres of production. But, here again difficulties appear, to do this necessitates an increase in the number of workers. If the law of population does not add to the numbers of the working class at the same rate that capital accumulates then there will be a shortage of labour. In that event the new means of production will not be employed, or if employed an equal mass of old means will be scrapped. It may, however, be further suggested that the new means having a

greater productive power than the old it will be in the interest of the trust to destroy the latter. If so who is now to consume the still greater product? Are the workers to be permitted to wear two shirts where previously they wore only one and so on through the whole range of products?

The suggestion that capitalism, within any circumstances, can be conceived of as an independent economy consuming the whole of its product and progressively capitalising the surplus is absurd. I repeat, the picture presented to us is one devoid of almost everything that characterises the capitalist system. And on that basis no logical objection can be raised to the theory of under-consumption as outlined by Hobson. If Dobb desires to defend the Marxian theory of crises, and this appears to be the case, then he had better start off with a sounder basis than has thus far been adopted. The fact that capital accumulation takes place is sufficient proof that under-consumption by the workers, taken by itself, is not the cause of crises. That is why I suggested the necessity, first, of elucidating the actual conditions

of accumulation. That done the problem of explaining the disturbances taking place during the process could with greater ease be tackled. To discuss accumulation apart from disturbances is no greater crime than a consideration of the theory of value apart from price variations. Variations in prices and economic crises must be explained on the basis of the conditions of capitalist production. At the same time since under-consumption by the workers is an essential principle of the capitalist order and we should previously have shown how accumulation could take place despite of the fact it would be impossible to regard under-consumption as the sole cause of crises. On the other hand, it was Marx himself who said:—

“The last cause of all real crises always remains the poverty and restricted consumption of the masses as compared to the tendency of capitalist production to develop the productive forces in such a way, that only the absolute power of consumption of the entire society would be their limit.”

W. H. MAINWARING.

REVIEWS

POTTED TEXTBOOKS

The Russian Revolution. By R. Page Arnot. *Periods of Working-Class History: I.—Chartism and the “Trades Union.”* By R. W. Postgate. (Labour Research Dept., Syllabus Series, Nos. 6 and 7. 6d. each.)

WE recommend both these syllabuses to working-class students. Each in itself is a “potted” textbook, as well as a guide to further reading. Arnot’s is really a narrative-pamphlet, a brilliant condensed account of the main events, tendencies and persons of the Russian Revolution, coming right down to an account of the “New Economic Policy” and its working; and including a bibliography so full that even the “cloud of witnesses” who, after a week or two in Russia, have given to the world a volume

recording their impressions, are included. (He does not, by the way, include among the economic causes of the so-called “emancipation” of the serfs the fact that in the most densely populated provinces of Russia there had come to be a larger number of “hands” than the land would support, and that in many cases “unpopulated lands were sold at higher prices than peopled estates, which showed what a burden [to the landlords] the serfs presented in comparison with the value of the soil.”—Kornilov, *Modern Russian History.*)

Postgate’s is more strictly a syllabus, its chapters “forming six lectures, divisible if necessary into twelve.” Moreover, Plebs will be interested to note that the syllabus is based on the apposite chapters of *Revolution, 1789—1905*. But it, too, is an eminently readable narrative, and constitutes a nutshell history of Chartism. It is

hardly necessary to say in these pages that the job is well done.

N.C.L.C.ers should get busy now planning short historical courses, based on these syllabuses, for next autumn. One is just as valuable as the other. There is a sort of devout Communist who sees some special virtue in a study of the history of the Russian Revolution, and on the other hand regards a study of Chartism as a mere academic exercise. This kind of person has the revivalist type of mind. Carried out unintelligently, the study of any period of history, past or present, may be academic and nothing more—and there is no particular virtue in the study of current events which will act as an antidote to unintelligent method. But if treated in the right way, *i.e.*, as subject-matter for intelligent questioning and discussion—as “food for thought” to be applied to immediate problems—any and every historical period may be valuable.

J. F. H.

CAMBRIDGE'S FIRST TODDLER

The Miners' Unions of Northumberland and Durham. By E. Welbourne, M.A., Fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. Awarded the Thelwall Prize, the Seeley Medal, and the Gladstone Prize. (Cambridge University Press, 10s. 6d.)

This is the first official university effort, so far as I know, to write a history of a trade union or unions. Naturally, such inexperienced people as dons turn first to the easiest possible task. The Durham-Northumberland coalfield forms a single unit, easily studied, which has had a separate history isolated from the rest of England from the beginning. Moreover, the work has been more than half done already, with the histories of Wilson and Fynes to fall back on. For a 'prentice effort, therefore, it was highly suitable material, and the University seems, by the list of official honours, to have quite an adolescent's pride in this first attempt. Nor, as a childish effort, is it discreditably. It is not a mere electioneer's pamphlet like Webb's *Story of the Durham Miners*. It tells a story connectedly, and apparently accurately. Such as it is, it is the best history yet written.

But of course it suffers from the

usual university faults. It is written obscurely and sometimes utterly unintelligibly (see for examples pp. 125—127). We, being vulgar fellows, might talk about people in glass houses not throwing stones; in Emmanuel College they write, “All were engaged in destroying the transparent fabric of their opponents' dwellings” (p. 52). The author also, unfortunately, knows very little history; he cannot in any way relate the history of Durham and Northumberland to the history of trades unionism as a whole. He knows that a change in the character of union policy and of union leaders occurred in the sixties. He does not know that it occurred all over England, nor does he know its causes. He is equally ignorant of the reasons for the ousting of the old trade unionists by a more class-conscious group in the beginning of this century, nor does he know why the Northern coalfields joined the Federation. Like the wind and the rain, fine weather and foul, these things happen, and Mr. Welbourne don't know why.

Not, of course, that he has no policy or prejudices. When we read on the wrapper that Mr. Welbourne could tell us when the masters and when the men were just in their demands, we knew the worst. The demand for a living wage, we learn was “fallacious.” Tom Mann was “an intruding demagogue.” Restriction of output (by the men, not the owners) involved “false statistics, broken faith and foolish theory” and was a matter for “scorn and moral indignation.” W. P. Roberts, he actually suggests, was a “rogue.”

There are many other things I had marked for comment, but they are not worth it. We all know that one mark of inexperience is the sort of omniscience that lectures everybody else on what they know better. I look forward to the publication of Mr. Welbourne's manuscript work on the Art of Sucking Eggs.

R. W. P.

TEACHING THE YOUNG IDEA HOW TO SQUINT

The Teaching of Modern Civics. By E. M. White. (Harrap, 3s. 6d.)

Compared with the average book produced by the servants of that most potent force against progress,

the State-education machine, this well-written but expensive booklet is good. The author is a practical enthusiast with the post-war Liberal outlook. From this standpoint he points out a few of the more glaring faults of State schools and teachers as regards "the full preparation of the young for life," and shows clearly and concisely the purpose of civics and its relation to life. But he is a teacher (lecturer in civics, L.C.C.), and has been trained to live in the "non-sectarian, non-party, non-political," non-existent world of the good teacher.

He ignores the class struggle, though there is ample evidence that a subconscious fear of that struggle and its inevitable results forced him to write this book! Shunning the disconcerting realities of to-day that penetrate even to a lecture hall, he wants them to be sugared o'er for rebellious youth to swallow. He regrets "the irresponsible attitude so often seen" in young people, and wants "*freedom under authority*." (Author's italics.)

He would develop in them "a sense of gratitude for what they have received" from the past (but not the employer?), and "a training that will produce attitudes corresponding to the two aspects of civilisation—a subordination to its order and a participation in its progress." He would give them such "knowledge concerning growth of institutions, the progress of civilisation, the causes of present conditions and some glimpse of the future" that should inspire them with a feeling of devotion and a desire to serve the community. "Lessons will be given on the various ties that bind citizens together" and "make people feel at home with each other." Exactly! The L.C.C. will be pleased.

But, even so, the class character of our society, especially of the State-education machine, is such as to prevent even the author's ideas on such a possibly "dangerous" subject being carried out beyond the experimental stage. Our educational "system" is a nearly perfect product of our class society and cannot be used as the *precursor* of a classless one, or as *anything endangering the position of the present rulers of society*. And it is so much more satisfying and less risky to write a book than

agitate among teachers and lead them to gain *control* of the work the author wants carried out.

Post-war problems are forcing middle-class radicals to strive to be a more effective buffer between the two forces heading with obviously increasing speed to a final collision. But Liberalism within schools cannot prevent class-warfare without, nor salvage our decaying civilisation. That is the task of the despised and rejected, the industrial proletariat. Far from any deep, progressive social influences being exerted through the State schools, colleges, and their teachers, these institutions will become in the hands of the real rulers of society a more efficient means than ever of de-educating teacher and taught. This book, the best State educationists can give us, is a further justification for intensifying our efforts towards independent working-class education to enable the workers to accomplish their historic task.

H. W. H.

RECOMMENDED—BY A GOOD JUDGE
Production. By George Belt. (Herald League.)

This book should be invaluable to the young speaker who aims at becoming qualified for platform work. How to produce speeches and pamphlets, etc., plus the cure of nervousness, diffidence, and speech defects is not only worth knowing, but is of the most vital importance to those who want to be useful to the movement by pen and tongue.

The advice and instruction given by the author on how to build up a speech is genuinely helpful, and is exactly the kind of instruction needed, and *if studied and acted upon* will change the incompetent into the competent in a short time.

I can imagine the novice being somewhat appalled on taking a first glance at the book with its 110 pages, many of which may seem at first sight to be overladen with detailed instructions. If any student feels thus, I would advise him, after a cursory glance at the book, to fix definitely upon pages 6 to 10, beginning at Speech Defects, and study these diligently, stopping at middle of page 10. When he has read and

pondered and acted upon the advice there given, none of which is really difficult, and all of which is really essential, the rest will come easy.

As the author advises, every would-be speaker must make constant use of a good dictionary. I have found Chambers' a great friend and a good stand by. To badly mis-pronounce words on the platform as many do is most blameworthy, and detracts largely from the effects of an otherwise good speech.

The speech on Unemployment printed in the book and used with great effect as an example is most excellent. The advice as to how to overcome nervousness and stage fever, etc., etc., is all very valuable, whether for pen work or tongue work. George Belt's book will be found immensely helpful, and it is I consider in all respects an excellent production.

TOM MANN.

WHO BURNT SMYRNA ?

The Martyrdom of Smyrna and Eastern Christendom, by Dr. Lysimachos Oeconomos. (Allen and Unwin, 7s. 6d.)

The lengthy sub-title of this book sufficiently explains its nature and purpose: "A file of overwhelming evidence, denouncing the misdeeds of the Turks in Asia Minor, and showing their responsibility for the horrors of Smyrna."

The author is a devotee of impartiality. Unfortunately there are many others who are anything but impartial. Hence it is necessary, in order to give the correct version of the Smyrna fire, to put aside the testimony of French and Italian witnesses, "on account of their obvious partiality dictated by the foreign policy of France and Italy." So much—or rather so little—for French and Italian evidence. Our author has a similarly short method with the evidence of a number of witnesses in the English press: in their case, home politics interfere with that strict impartiality which he requires—of others, at any rate. Having thus carefully excluded all testimony which is guilty of the crime of partiality (to the other side) the effect of the evidence that the learned Doctor is able to bring from American and (friendly) British sources is indeed overwhelming.

But, in the preface which he contributes to the "file," his case against Turkey is clearly stated. It consists of two points; that the Greeks had everything to lose and nothing to gain by the burning of the city; and that the postponement of the starting of the fire for several days after the arrival of the Turks is evidence that the latter were deliberately waiting for the change in the direction of the wind which would carry the fire north and north-west from the Armenian quarter, *i.e.*, away from the Turkish quarter of the city.

The weakness of the statement is the deliberate exclusion of all witnesses against his argument, which thus suffers from a certain air of unreality.

T. A.

LITERATURE FOR LITERATURE'S SAKE

Dryden and his Poetry. By Allardyce Nicoll. (Poetry and Life Series. Harrap. 1s. 6d.)

This series of little books on English poets scarcely lives up to the promise of its name; or at any rate it puts the narrowest possible interpretation on that name. By "Poetry and Life" it does not imply any attempt to consider a particular writer's work in relation to the life, in the broad sense, of his age; nor that work considered in relation to the conditions of life of his present-day readers; but simply a description of a poet's work given along with some biographical details about the poet.

This is disappointing. For the mere "outward" events of a man's career may provide a poor clue, even if they are not sometimes quite irrelevant, to his intellectual reaction to the spirit of his age. As a method of interpretation it tends to shut off literature, in a watertight compartment, from life, and from any "philosophy of life"—materialist or idealist. That, at least, is what one feels about this little book on Dryden. It is a scholarly (but readable) discussion of a literary artist considered purely as a literary artist; its writer, one would say, lives entirely *within* literature, and makes no attempt to get outside its walls and see it, as a whole, in relation to the world outside.

J. F. H.

BRITISH SOCIALISM

The Story of the I.L.P. By J. Ramsay Macdonald, M.P. (I.L.P., 6d.)

Some of the members of a recent German deputation visited Ruskin College. Among other things they asked was "Is yours a Socialist College?" "Well, in a way, yes," was the reply, "we teach *British Socialism*." This pamphlet, which is a revised form of an I.L.P. Study Syllabus—one of the "devotional handbooks" as G. D. H. Cole called them—(1921), emphasises *British Socialism*. It is also "British" in the muddle-headedness which remarks that "*the class war*, though a true description of Capitalist relations, was no guide for Socialist reconstruction." The latter we presume will be cudgelled from men's brains and the organic community consciousness. One wonders if the I.L.P.'s opponents will regard its appeal as "not a class appeal."

An inadequate book list completes a rather dear six pennyworth.

K.

TO STABILISE CAPITALISM

Stabilisation. By E. M. H. Lloyd. (Allen and Unwin, 4s. 6d.)

Mr. Lloyd, who was among the experts at the Genoa Conference, has written a very readable little book on the present world crisis so far as its credit and monetary aspects are concerned. Quoting Mr. Vanderlip, the American millionaire, he says: "Europe is gradually settling down into a group of twenty or more predominantly agricultural and self-supporting states. These states will not be able to afford purchases abroad on the pre-war scale; they will take fewer manufactured goods, etc. from Great Britain, the Dominions and from the outside world.... This may mean that between ten and twenty per cent. of our population will have to emigrate or starve." He concludes: "Such chronic impoverishment can only mean a perpetuation of destitution among large masses of the wage-earning classes of Europe, a lower standard of life for all, except possibly for peasants and American millionaires; cut-throat competition between manufacturing countries for foreign markets; suicidal efforts to economise by cutting down education and housing and health

services; in short an international 'poverty competition' between the producing countries of the world, each seeking to produce more cheaply, to work longer hours, and to pay lower wages than any of its rivals"! Has any Pleb in his most prophetic moments painted a blacker picture?

Mr. Lloyd sees that the only way out of this for capitalism is to organise production scientifically and *on a world scale*. He makes two main proposals. First, he proposes a stabilisation of the price-level, and hence a mitigation of the trade cycle and industrial crises by a regulation of the volume of purchasing power by the banks. The instrument through which the banks would secure this regulation would be by a raising or lowering of the bank rate, whenever prices started to rise or fall respectively. The movement of the bank rate, by affecting the volume of credit advances, would affect the volume of purchasing power in circulation and hence both production and the level of prices. "The essential feature of the scheme is that the central banks of the world, linked up with common centres in London and elsewhere, will endeavour to regulate the volume of currency, not with reference to any fixed amount of one commodity, such as gold, but by reference to the total volume of all commodities bought and sold, as indicated by the general level of prices, statistics of trade and production, and general economic conditions."

The second measure of stabilisation is an international consortium under League of Nations control to give a guaranteed price for important "key" raw materials, hold them, and sell them in the world's market in such a way as to keep their price steady.

There are, in addition, several clearly written and informative chapters explaining the present monetary position, the deflation of the last two years, and the stabilisation attempts of the Genoa Conference. On all of these Mr. Lloyd is well competent to speak.

Mr. Lloyd admits that his scheme would give immense power into the hands of the banks and financiers; but he hopes that they would use it in the interests of capitalism as a whole. The book shows no realisation of any class issue. If all capitalists were as wise

as this far-seeing civil servant, there might be some chance of capitalism preserving itself by the adoption of some such scheme, and evolving, with the help of the Webbs and Macdonalds and Snowdens, into the servile state. But the chances of international co-operation on a capitalist-basis are now much further removed than they were at Genoa; and it may well be that it is Mr. Lloyd who is the Utopian dreamer!

M. H. D.

GUILDS IN ITALY

Guilds and Co-operatives in Italy. By Odon Por. Translated by E. Townshend. Introduction by A. E. and Appendix by G. D. H. Cole. (Labour Publishing Co. 5s.)

This book contains good descriptive chapters on the productive co-operative organisations of Italy. The degree to which co-operation has developed in that country makes the subject of importance to the working-class movement, and the part to be played by co-operatives in post-revolutionary society will undoubtedly be great. But the Italian co-operatives and guilds are run on a profit-making basis, and they have a long way to go before they are socialist either in present method or in outlook.

Odon Por considerably exaggerates their revolutionary significance. His general political attitude is muddled and many of his statements contradict one another. He has a childlike faith in the power of the State for good, and regards it as an impartial third party in the conflict between capital and labour. Fascism he accepts as a force "not hostile to Labour," but working for "Nation-building," an end for which "any and all means must be used." In short, he writes as a romantic Liberal influenced spasmodically by miscellaneous socialist ideas which he fails to assimilate or even to reconcile with one another.

The translation by Mrs. Townshend is excellent. A.E.'s introduction consists of fine words and pious hopes. G. D. H. Cole's note on the English Guild movement covers the ground concisely, leaving an accurate impression that the whole thing is somewhat in the air.

L. W.

POOR OLD JOE!

The History of the United Patternmakers' Association, 1872-1922. By William Mosses, J.P. (Souvenir Edition, published by U.P.M.A. Executive.)

It is difficult to know whether to review this book as a Trade Union history, or as a pathological document, revealing only the amazing state of mind of the author. For Mr. Mosses, who was the Pattern Makers' General Secretary for over thirty years, evidently never forgave the Association for superseding him in 1917; and the whole of the last part of his book is marred by an intolerable querulousness. Page after page is filled with pathetic attempts to score off the present Executive. And the whole tone of the book is autobiographical to an extreme degree, as Mr. Mosses admits in his conclusion. Yet, even so, the book has value; for it expresses very clearly the ideology of the organisations of skilled craftsmen that constituted British Trade Unionism in the middle and later half of the nineteenth century. Throughout the whole of this book we catch not the least savour of the class struggle, we do not find any trace of organisation as a means to fight and beat the capitalist—rather, organisation appears as an end in itself, or at any rate, only as a means to "mutual aid" and friendly benefits.

Mr. Mosses is evidently an old man; but his inveterate Liberalism (he is violently anti-Labour Party!) and his inherent inability to take a working-class view of anything are fundamentally one with the outlook of the overwhelming majority of Trade Union officials—including the younger ones—to-day. It speaks volumes when we find Mr. Mosses boasting that the Pattern Makers have never used the weapon of the national strike—and when he says (after adducing the usual capitalist arguments against the Capital Levy), "What we want is to exploit such markets as are in a position to buy from us. To do so we must keep down the cost of production to the lowest possible limit, and we can only do so by team work. The interests of employer and workmen are indissolubly bound together . . . we should recognise our community of interests . . ." This pleasant compound of imperialism and

class co-operation might be the epitaph of the organised movement of the upper strata of the British working class, as expressed in the ideology of their leaders. After this, the details of the Pattern Makers' history are of small importance: they are of merely parish pump interest.

The book is badly put together: there are no chapters or index, and it is really a clumsy chronicle—each year treated separately, and ticketed with its date. As the printing is in the most abominable type (the same as that used for Alcock's N.U.R. history) the book is almost unreadable.

G. A. H.

From Crow-Scaring to Westminster.

By Geo. Edwards, M.P., O.B.E.
(Labour Publishing Co., 5s.).

This book seems a rather expensive five shillings worth. And its title tends to "warn one off." It reminds one too much of "Ladders to Fame" and other material of the "Log Cabin to White House" brand.

Mr. Edwards is one of the old Liberal-Labour school of trade union leaders, whose economics are based on the writings of men like Henry George. But his book contains much useful information about the fight of the agricultural labourers to build up a union and gain some measure of freedom. And this historical material makes the book valuable.

THINKING

Effective Thinking. By Samuel W. Ball. (Central School of Practical Psychology, Chicago, 16pp., price 6d.)

For breaking new ground in teaching the Materialist Conception of History, and for clearing out the mental rubbish of those who believe "It was always so," this pamphlet should be invaluable. It is bright, comprehensive and even entertaining without for one moment losing grip of its main theme, namely, the broad general principle that all things change, and since thoughts are but the mental reflections of things so does thinking change in accordance, and so do we get different systems of religion, philosophy, ethics, politics, etc.

But on page 14 the author appears to regard the dialectic from a rather too intellectually detached standpoint when he refers to "the mistake

of stating that the present system is 'wrong,' or that the coming change is 'right.'" The writer thinks he could improve what is otherwise an excellent piece of work, by showing how mental reflexes *do in practice* take the forms of "right" or "wrong" in relation to certain purposes and as viewed from different standpoints; or again, how the coming new order may be "better;" such treatment would also give greater justification for the title.

Any Pleb giving this to a fellow-worker and following it up would be doing very useful work. It could also serve as an admirable basis for a single lecture on Dialectical Materialism.

F. C.

EXPRESSING

Exercises in Thinking and Expressing.

By J. W. Marriott. (Harrap, 2s.)

This book written "for use in day schools, evening schools, adult classes, etc.," is, we should gather from its determined cheerfulness, the work of a vigorous teacher of children, whose pupils like Goldsmith's schoolboys, doubtless laugh "with counterfeited glee at all his jokes—for many a joke had he."

It is "not intended to be a work on formal logic;" but it is nevertheless full of those verbal puzzles which no doubt attract the care-free schoolboy whatever effect they may have on the mind of the overburdened adult. It is however a useful attempt and none the worse for being irregular. "If the professional logician discovers that the author has driven a coach and four right through the subject the author will not dare to contradict him. Teachers will frequently disagree with statements contained in the book; that is part of the plot!"

The Reading Exercises at the end of each chapter have obviously been chosen with much care; but the whole book is more suitable to school children acquiring a general education than to adults whose interests are already fixed and channelled and to whom therefore the lightsome jumpiness of the author may prove distressing rather than stimulating.

A.

LETTERS

IN DEFENCE OF SUE

DEAR COMRADE,—The May PLEBS contained a note on Eugene Sue, written by an unappreciative hand, and the treatment was both inadequate and misleading. Sue's chief contribution to literature—his *History of a Proletarian Family across the Ages*—must not be so lightly dismissed.

How Sue became connected with the "extreme Left" is not important, and even if his revolutionary reputation is due almost to an accident, that does not detract from his greatness as a writer. De Leon in his Introduction wrote—"The series, though a work presented in the garb of fiction, is the best universal history extant." As literature only the series would be valuable, but it possesses an added value to the Marxian student, for running like a thread through all twenty-one volumes is *the class-struggle*. No other writer has penned, or probably even conceived, such a majestic series.

Sue, it is alleged, was bawdy in tone. It is difficult to see how such a claim can be sustained. One might charge John S. Clarke with being bawdy in his vitriolic *Pen Pictures of Russia*. But history is bawdy in places; and such filth may, although it rarely does, obtrude itself on Sue's spacious canvas. To paint Queen Brunhilde as a sort of Virgin Mary would be a misleading piece of prudery. Sue has unconsciously adopted the Plebs motto—"I can promise to be candid, but not impartial."

Yours fraternally,

G. A. S.

[Our own opinion—repeated—is that "as literature" Sue's novels are negligible; and as history they are somewhat too melodramatic to be wholly reliable. Certainly they are not now "the best universal history extant," whether or not they were when De Leon translated them. Admittedly, the conception was magnificent; but a good subject does not necessarily result in a great achievement—or there would be a good many more masterpieces!—ED., PLEBS.]

AN AMERICAN EXPERIMENT

DEAR EDITOR,—The analysis of the curriculum of the London Labour College (July, 1922, PLEBS) raises questions of teaching method which we here at Brookwood Workers' College, Katonah, N.Y., have worked from the start to meet. That all the courses in a Labour College should be conducted as one course; and that one course in world history from "paleolithic times to world imperialism" be given is recognised as essential.

An article by the chairman of our Faculty, A. J. Muste, in your October issue shows how the faculty have aimed to conduct all the courses as one course. But Mr. Muste said little about our "History of Civilisation"—which seems to be exactly the type you urge that the Labour College give—perhaps because Mr. Muste himself conducts the course.

As a student I feel it might be valuable to tell you how our course is conducted.

We begin with the making of the earth—students read either some or all of Gregory's *Making of the Earth* and write a short essay. Next prehistoric times are taken, students being responsible for definite chapters in *Mind of Primitive Man* by Boas, *Old Stone Age* by Osborne, etc. Breasted and Wells are used as the main text.

A novel teaching method is employed with the beginning of written history. A rapid survey of history from the Dawn of Civilisation to Modern Times is given in eight weeks, four hours of lectures each week. Every student then writes an outline of history in 5,000 words. This year, due to exercises in our English class in summarising, technique of writing history, etc., the students did not find the job as staggering as did the last year group.

After this a return is made to the history of Egypt and each important period is treated thoroughly. The sense of proportion gained by the Rapid Survey eliminates the chance of over-emphasising the place of any period. Even the Industrial Revolution is pu-

in its proper place. Discussion is definitely directed so that past events can bring light on present situations.

As Mr. Muste said in his article, the course in History of Civilisation seeks to give the students an idea of the story of mankind as a whole; and on the other hand to suggest how all the sciences, from mathematics, astronomy, chemistry and physics, through biology to social psychology and economics are ideally one and jointly contribute to the knowledge of man and his world.

We here at Brookwood follow your discussion of teaching method with great interest.

Fraternally yours, RUTH GORDON.

IS THE LABOUR COLLEGE MOVEMENT DELIVERING THE GOODS?

DEAR COMRADE,—Most of us will agree that if we try to separate thinking from fighting we shall become

useless. But our classes should not forget that theirs is a wider task than discussing current politics and immediate tactics. The job of giving the workers an independent outlook on every sphere of life is greater even than discussing the question of rank-and-file members on the Executives of the Labour Party and the General Council, or organisation by industry, or affiliation to the R.I.L.U. Those are important certainly, but they do not cover the whole of working-class interests.

In many villages and country towns, for example, there are many comrades who have not passed through what might be called the "R.P.A." stage, and we have the job of giving the scientific outlook on life generally, as well as in Economics and Social History. Otherwise in any time of crisis they will be the tools of the Black International. Yours, S. M.

N.C.L.C. ITEMS and NOTES

LECTURERS—The following suggestions have been sent in by London Council I.W.C.E., and are quoted for comment and further suggestions:—

Recommendations (General).

(1) In view of the difficulty of setting up a national examining body for the N.C.L.C. we recommend that each District take upon itself the examination of its Tutors.

(2) Such Tutors shall be recognised as N.C.L.C. Lecturers and alone be allowed to use the title, "N.C.L.C."

(3) All names of recognised Tutors shall be published in the Annual Report or Year Book to which reference should be made by Districts or Colleges when engaging teachers from other areas. Additions to, and withdrawals from, this register shall be published in the N.C.L.C. notes in The PLEBS from time to time.

Recommendations (Special to London).

(1) That an Examining Committee of four be set up for London, consisting of two representatives from the Labour College, one from the Plebs' League, and one from the Council, of whom three shall form a quorum. The Committee shall meet to consider applications when they are made and shall personally examine the applicants.

(2) The Committee shall place the present acting Tutors upon the register and may waive the examination of those who have previously lectured.

(3) We suggest the Committee be guided by the following considerations:

(a) Acceptance of the I.W.C.E. position and its relation to other propaganda bodies.

(b) Attendance at Classes and Teachers' Classes; and also essay work.

(c) The ability to express ideas clearly and knowledge of the lecturer's particular subject.

A.U.B.T.W.—With the end of the autumn and winter sessions we can make some general estimate of progress. In such divisions as Nos. 1, 7, 8, 9, and 10, where the N.C.L.C. already had active groups at work in the large towns, the difficulties have been few and mainly due to the newness of such a widespread scheme. Both sides, the educational bodies and the union, have had to set up and work machinery of a quite unique character in educational effort. I think we can congratulate both upon the results. There is yet much to be done in the way of educational organisation and in developing

the interest of the members of the A.U.B.T.W. and other organisations, the latter particularly in Divisions Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, where little independent educational effort had been formerly attempted. Even these divisions, however, taking everything into consideration, have been very effectively roused to an appreciation of the value of education as a means of developing and creating Trade Union and Labour activity.

If much remains to be done in the way of developing interest in Labour's own form of education the educational organisers and tutors have also to learn the lesson of popular appeal—the educator has, in this sense, to be educated. The new methods adopted under the education scheme are an earnest that this side of the work is being strenuously tackled. Education in this way benefits both the teacher and the taught.

The last thing that need be mentioned is the necessity for training and developing teachers for the classes and study circles. This is being tackled by the National Council of Labour Colleges through the summer, by the running of classes for prospective tutors, and it is hoped the A.U.B.T.W. members will also take up a share in the task by sending students to the Labour College in September next.

Constitution for N.C.L.C. Groups.—In response to a few requests for a sample constitution the following recently revised constitution is given. This seems a good basis for discussion where constitutions are under consideration.

1. *Name.*—Scottish Labour College (Glasgow District Council).

2. *Object.*—To provide Independent Working-Class Education for members of the organised Labour Movement and the working class generally, with a view to equipping them for the existing class struggle and aiding them in the fight for the abolition of capitalism.

3. *Methods.*—Public Educational Lectures and Classes, mainly, but not wholly, on the Social Sciences (Economics, History, etc.)

4. *Affiliation.*—Working - class organisations, and branches thereof, shall be entitled to affiliate with the Council. The fee shall be a single payment of five shillings, plus twopence per

member per annum (minimum, thirty members), and this shall entitle all members of the affiliated body to free tuition at the Council's classes. In special cases the Council may, at its discretion, vary the terms of affiliation. Local branches of nationally-affiliated bodies shall be treated in all respects as locally-affiliated bodies.

5. *Composition of Council.*—The Council shall be composed of: One delegate from each affiliated organisation, or from a Co-operative Society subscribing not less than one guinea per annum; One delegate from each class during the session; Tutors, who may attend in an advisory and consultative capacity, but without a vote.

6. *Officers.*—Chairman; Vice-Chairman; District Secretary (corresponding and financial); Classes Secretary; Literature Secretary; Minute Secretary; Organising Secretary; National Delegate; and two Auditors; all of whom shall be appointed by the Council. The three first-named Officers shall be jointly responsible for the holding in trust of the Council's funds.

7. *Emergency Committee.*—The above-named Officers, with the exception of the Auditors, shall act as an Emergency Committee between the meetings of the Council.

8. *Annual Meeting.*—The financial year shall run from May 1st to April 30th, and the annual meeting shall be held in the month of May. Each affiliated organisation shall be entitled to send an additional delegate thereto. Non-affiliated organisations which have subscribed not less than ten shillings to the Council during the previous twelve months shall each be entitled to send one delegate to the annual meeting. The report and balance sheet for the past year shall be presented to the annual meeting for adoption, and the officers for the ensuing year shall be elected thereat.

9. *Organising Conference.*—A conference of working-class organisations in the area covered by the Council (except national bodies) shall be held during the first week in September of each year with a view to securing support for the work of the Council during the ensuing session, particularly in the form of affiliations.

10. *Control of Classes.*—The Council shall control and be responsible for all

classes in its area set up under the auspices of the Scottish Labour College, except day classes for bursars that may be set up by the National Committee, but in special cases the Council may, on request, supply a tutor for a private class run by an affiliated or subscribing body.

11. *Staff Tutor*.—The Council may appoint one or more full-time or part-time tutors at such salaries as it may determine, and such appointments shall be submitted to the National Committee for endorsement.

12. *Amendments to Constitution*.—Proposed amendments to this Constitution shall only be considered at the annual meeting, and one month's notice in writing must be given by the affiliated society proposing same.

Barrow.—Comrade Purcell, the Secretary, reports a very successful session. The classes commenced in October last and concluded in March. Classes four. Subjects taken: Industrial History, Elementary and Advanced; Economics, Elementary and Advanced; Imperialism. 140 students attended, with an average of fifty in each class. We have twenty-four affiliated branches including the U.W.C.M. (Men's and Women's Section), Co-operative Guilds, etc. The expenditure of the classes will amount to about £80 when the accounts are completed.

We were fortunate in securing the services of Mr. J. Leach, of Bolton, whose wide range of knowledge upon questions which affect the lives of the workers, patient handling of questions, and ardent desire to instil into the minds of his students the knowledge which he himself has acquired has created in Barrow a permanent prestige for I.W.C.E.

In addition to foregoing courses, we have also been running a class on Elocution conducted by Mr. J. Stamper, of Barrow, who has proved to be a very capable Tutor. We have decided to enlarge this class and to continue our study of Public Speaking throughout the summer.

The Committee which was responsible for conducting the classes have had a strenuous time, in organising social

events, administration, etc., in order to stimulate interest in the Classes. Our Literature Secretary has been particularly active in keeping students supplied with literature, having sold about £30 worth of PLEBS publications and other material necessary for Working-Class Students.

Edinburgh.—Nearly 200 delegates attended the annual conference of the S.L.C. Edinburgh District which was addressed by Robert Smillie, Ex-President, M.F.G.B. The following table indicates the work done by Edinburgh District since its foundation:—

	1919-20	'20-'21	'21-'22	'22-3
Aff. Bodies	Nil	56	81	115
Public Lectures	1	2	23	27
Classes ..	4	21	25	27
Students ..	124	659	850	1011

Over £249 of literature was sold during the year.

The following summer classes have been arranged:—Sociology, Theory and Practice of Electioneering, Public Speaking and Voice Production, Discussion Class (Speakers' Practice), Biology, Chairmanship.

The *Preston Labour College*, inaugurated last October, has just issued a report of its first winter's work, showing a total of between 80 and 100 students on the register, affiliations gained from the Preston Trades Council and fourteen local T.U. branches and other working-class bodies—and a cash balance in hand! Good work! The Preston I.L.P. assisted generously by lending its lecture room, free of charge, two evenings a week. And we may add that the keen work put in by the enthusiastic secretary, Mrs. Taylor, has had not a little to do with the College's success.

The *Liverpool Labour College* is holding a Week-end School at "Beechcroft," 15, Hollybank Road, Birkenhead, on June 23rd—24th. Lectures—Prof. J. Johnstone and T. Ashcroft. Inclusive fee, 2s. 6d. (which provides teas on Saturday and Sunday). Early application to J. Hamilton, 99, Botanic Road, Liverpool.

THE PLEBS

ESPERANTO NOTES

Motley Translations by the Black International.

TWO rival translations of a sentence from *Pravda* provided a loop-hole for the Archbishop of Canterbury to wriggle out of the charge of forging documents in order to prepare the minds of the people for a bellicose note to Russia. These two sentences, given in *The Times* (a) and by Dr. Hagberg Wright (b), are considered by the Archbishop to be the same:—

(a) Although we have declared war on the denizens of Heaven, it is by no means easy to sweep them from the households of the workmen.

(b) It is not easy now, when war has been declared by the godless, to sweep that which is divine from the homes of the workmen.

Seeing that (b) comes from an opponent of the Bolsheviks, Brailsford's translation of the same sentence would be interesting.

But even when the translators are sincere something is lost in the new version and misunderstanding becomes probable. Esperanto will eliminate translation troubles in international dealings.

Foreign Comrades Told of Our Work.

Esperanto is giving practical assistance in making the Labour College movement known in other lands. An article by Mark Starr in *Sennacieca Revuo* was translated in the *Ecole Emancipée* (July, 1922). In *Novaj Tempoj* (April, 1922), the organ of the Teachers' International, there was an account of the Labour Colleges and the Plebs League which is being supplemented in the current (June) issue. Comrade Robinson gave a description of the programme of the Manchester Labour College in the May issue of the same organ.

An Aid to English.

The specimen chapter from Cobbett's *English Grammar* reproduced in the May PLEBS draws attention to the need for a standard English course for the use of worker students. Such a course should include, in addition

to lectures and advice, a set of exercises on the use of words and phrases. The Esperantist can use his knowledge of his native language and the international tongue to the advantage of both, by translating from one to the other. We are all disposed to overwork certain words, and consequently to neglect part of our vocabulary. A few of our two-edged tools we wear away, while a greater number are rusting through lack of use. Translation-practice compels us to use our full reading-vocabulary in active expression. Continued exercise in translating into English extempore will in time abolish hesitancy in speech and writing.

Educationists Concur.

Inspectors of British elementary schools where Esperanto is taught are in substantial agreement with the teachers who say that the children "speak better, write better composition and are better able to follow the intricacies of English grammar. It is said that children who learn Esperanto improve in English composition, that is to say they express themselves with greater precision and perspicuity" (*Esperanto as an International Auxiliary Language*, pp. 52—54).

"Bles" Doesn't Beg.

One is inured to the constant appeals for money sent out by bourgeois Esperanto societies, so it is refreshing to hear a bolder note in the call by B.L.E.S. for more workers. These are expected to respond as in past years to Starr's speech at the Hyde Park May Day demonstration, and to the secretary's statement in the annual report. The only guarantee fund is for the special purpose of producing a pamphlet, "Esperanto and the Working Class," which will be sold at 2d. If you want to help in circulating the pamphlet, or help the movement in any other way, send your name and address on a postcard to C. W. Spiller, 6, Windermere Avenue, N.W. 6.

The PLEBS Page

WE are beginning to experience the usual summer slump and we ask all Plebeians to do their best to help in keeping up the circulation. The classes are stopping, and this means that unless someone is keen enough to "register" all who want to take the Magazine through the summer our sales drop considerably, since we have small bookstall trade. This need not be so if everyone will put their backs into doing a little booming.

Several groups have urged the necessity for a campaign in their district on behalf of PLEBS circulation. The Executive have decided that where a group can arrange and organise a meeting, a speaker will be sent down (all his expenses paid). These "revival" meetings could be used to arouse interest in the work of the League and the Magazine. There is no doubt that a little diversion is necessary after the interest of the class has subsided, and a well organised meeting to which T.U. and Labour Party delegates are invited would do a great deal both for us and for you. Let us know if such a meeting is possible in your district.

WE WANT A SUMMER SCHOOL !!

And this year we're going to have one. All members of the League are urged seriously to consider the possibility of attending. It was decided last Meet that all Plebs Meets should in future be held at a summer school, and this trial run by one of the Districts if successful will give a big impetus to future gatherings of the same kind. Those of us who have experienced the rush of the Plebs Meet weekend during the last few years will relish the idea of a week in which one could talk and get

to know one's comrades in the movement. Owing to difficulties that could hardly be avoided the arrangements for this Summer School have been delayed till rather late in the year, but if any sort of a decent response is forthcoming there is no doubt that the experiment will be repeated. *Its up to you, comrades.*

* * *

The secretary of the Bury group writes:—On Sunday, June 3rd, Comrade Casey begins a series of lectures on "The Economics of Capitalism," at the S.E. Lancs. Clarion Clubhouse. The clubhouse is within easy reach of Bury, Bolton, Radcliffe, Heywood, etc.—in fact of all S.E. Lancs. If possible, the lectures will be held in the open air and teas will be provided at the club. Intending students should write to S. Ainsworth, c/o Clarion Club, Harwood Road, Tottington, Bury.

* * *

Although we have shut the retail book shop we have not given up selling books. . . . Please note we still have in stock all the books mentioned on the cover; and we can also supply *Proletcult*, E. and C. Paul (4s. 9d. postpaid); Philips' *Elementary Atlas*, for use with the *Outline of Imperialism* (2s. 3d. postpaid); *Christianity and Communism*, Bishop Brown; and the Labour Research Dept's. various Syllabuses (7d. each, postpaid).

* * *

All members are asked to read the Balance Sheet and Financial Statement and to note carefully how very little the "Donations" item was last year. Note, too, the amounts of our debts, and the horrid and fearful item called *outstanding accounts*. If you are guilty then you are asked to do something else beside "note!"

W. H.

That book you want Second-hand or New on any conceivable subject.

FOYLES have the largest stock in Great Britain of Books for Study, including Political Economy, Social Problems, Economics, Technical and Scientific subjects, &c., &c. Call and inspect the carefully classified stock, or send for catalogue 303 (post free) mentioning wants or interests. *Enquire from Foyle's first.*

FOYLES, 121/5 Charing Cross Road, LONDON, W.C.2.

PLEBS LEAGUE

Financial Statement and Balance Sheet

Jan. 1st—Dec. 31st, 1922

FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

<i>Income.</i>	£ s. d.	<i>Expenditure.</i>	£ s. d.
Balance at bank, Dec. 31st, 1921	187 4 2	Printing	1,343 1 0
Cash in hand, Dec. 31st, 1921	24 11 9	Advertisements	24 18 9
Donations	3 4 7	Books purchased	280 16 6
Sales of PLEBS	964 3 7½	Salaries	341 10 0
Sales of Publications	552 2 7	<i>Petty Cash</i> —	
Sale of Books	718 14 6½	Books, £46 os. 2d. ; Office	
Advertisements	20 18 6	expensess, £34 11s.	
League Subscriptions and		3d. ; Postage, £134 7s.	
Badges	34 14 5	4d. ; In hand, £5 11s.	
£1 Fund Loan	7 0 0	3d.	220 10 0
Sales of Plebs stamps	2 2 10	Office supplies (rent,	
Marx Grave Fund	25 5 7	light, etc.)	54 2 3
Miscellaneous	49 8 8	Miscellaneous	84 18 3
Foreign money orders	17 0 8	Postage	112 1 0
	<u>£1,606 11 11</u>		<u>2,461 17 9</u>
		Bank charges, etc.	8 13 8
		Balance at bank, Dec.	
		31st., 1922	136 0 6
			<u>£2,606 11 11</u>

BALANCE SHEET.

<i>Assets.</i>	£ s. d.	<i>Liabilities.</i>	£ s. d.
Office furniture	30 0 0	<i>Loans</i> —J. F. Horrabin ..	120 0 0
Outstanding accounts	445 16 2	Dr. Johnston	20 0 0
Publications in stock	423 2 0	The late Dr.	
Cash in hand	136 0 6	Jameson	20 0 0
	<u>£1,034 18 8</u>	G. Sims (1912)	2 9 1
		£1 fund liabilities	63 14 9
		Pelican Press	90 0 0
		Postgate Book Fund*	82 19 7
		Balance on Marx Grave	
		Fund†	8 9 11
		Re-printing Psychology	
		Textbook	43 9 6
		November book account	
		(approx.)	36 12 4
		Balance on Phillips Price	
		Book	25 0 0
		Rent, etc., to Dec. 31st ..	26 6 0
		December book account	
		and PLEBS printing	
		(approx.)	100 0 0
		Balance	395 17 6
			<u>£1,034 18 8</u>

*s.e., amount due, after deducting Book Dept.'s commission, to be set aside for financing further reprints.

† Held for cost of annual renovation, etc., of grave.

Audited and found correct
this 24th day of March,
1923.

(Signed) H. CHIVERS.
GEO. PHIPPEN.

The PLEBS Bookshelf

THE GERMAN REVOLUTION

THERE has been very little matter published in England about the German Revolution. The literature about the Russian Revolution is tremendous: to catalogue it, let alone read it, would be a task of months. But the books about the German Revolution could be counted on one hand. There was a book by L. Matthaei, called *Germany in Revolution*, which was almost entirely useless. There was a good book by Edwyn Bevan on the Social Democrats during the war, which stopped short before the revolution; and there was *The New Germany*, by George Young. There were one or two pamphlets. But that was all. Therefore the publication of Heinrich Ströbel's *The German Revolution and After* (Jarrod's, 12s. 6d.) is an important event. It gives us in England the beginning of a possibility of estimating what actually has happened in Germany. It is not (for example) anything like so good a book as Price's on the Russian Revolution, but it has some claim to be counted in that class, though far down the list.

The characters of the three main socialist parties can be deduced pretty clearly. The Majority Socialists seem really utterly detestable. Britain and Germany, probably, were the most imperialist countries, but I cannot think of a dozen labour leaders here so completely saturated with imperialist ideas as the German Social Democrats. One had discounted the stories of their utter subservience to Kaiserism as partly war-propaganda. But in fact they do seem to have been totally bad. There seems to have been no core of decency, no substratum of loyalty to the workers at all: they were rotten through and through. It is not, perhaps, so wonderful then, that we find these people the worst enemies of the Revolution: servile to the defeated militarists and bourgeoisie, savage towards the workers. Their appalling record of incompetence, cruelty and cowardice began with the murder of Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, and is not yet ended. Here it

is set out, not by a Communist, but by a member of the Independent Party that has now amalgamated with the Majority, and sometimes one has to stop reading for very sickness at the things these men did.

Not that the Independents can claim much more credit. Their record is a record of indecision and foolishness. Right from the very beginning they were hopelessly divided between the revolutionaries and the Parliamentarians. The eventual split (which Ströbel calls a "disruption instigated by Moscow") was inevitable from the very beginning of the Revolution. From November 9th, 1918, onwards the Independents were split between the Haase-Dittmann group and the Ledebour-Däumig group. Right at the very beginning they fell between two stools. The Haase-Dittmann group entered the first revolutionary government—probably following a correct policy. But the other group made them the target of violent attacks for associating with the Schiedemann party at all. The result was that the Independents did not reap whatever advantages might have come from remaining outside (for their representatives were in the government) nor yet that of remaining inside, for their representatives were so feeble and so little supported by their own party that they became mere figureheads and the Majority Socialists quickly got the real power into their hands. Hence, when the Independent representatives dramatically left the government the theatrical stroke fell absolutely flat and everything went on as before.

Unfortunately, outside the Independents there was still to be found no sure guidance. The weak Spartacus League had become completely drunk with the revolutionary advance. In spite of the advice of Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg the Spartacists were driving forward to an immediate attempt at a further revolution. Elsewhere I suggested that at this time the Spartacists formed not a Marxist Party at all, but a Blanquist, and Ströbel's book

confirms this. Anyway the struggle came over the post of Chief of Police, always a key-position in a revolution ever since '48. The Majority " Socialist " Wels was trying, in January, 1919, to drive out the revolutionary Eichhorn, in pursuance of his policy of substituting the old imperialist army for the armed workers. The explosion of anger that followed was turned by the Spartacists into a rising that was fairly easily crushed. The worst tragedy was the brutal murder of Liebknecht and Rosa Luxembourg. As a result, the direction of the Spartacus League, later the Communist Party, fell into the hands of enthusiastic and inexperienced left wingers. They had the name and authority of " Communists " and exploited the Russian revolution, but they were still not safe guides for the workers.

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In this period it seems true that the nearest approach to a genuine working-class policy was found by Kurt Eisner in Bavaria. It is perfectly true (as Ströbel repeats incessantly) that revolutionary policy in Germany, with over half the population dependent on industry, cannot be the same as in Russia with perhaps a million industrial workers. Eisner used the intervening period before the summoning of the " democratic " diet (which he delayed as long as he could) to purge the administration of all reactionaries, to replace them by Socialists and to carry through as many fundamental Socialist measures as possible. But capitalism is not to be checked by one man: Eisner was just murdered. In the resultant explosion power was seized by the Communists: the Bavarian Soviet—the " Republic of amateurs " as Lenin called it—was set up and lived four weeks. In the massacres that followed its fall (April, 1919) and the earlier horrors in Berlin in March, the Majority Socialists showed their true metal. It is for these weeks above all that Noske is remembered.

Noske, by the by, is said to be worse

than the old Kaiserist officer, who at least had some traditions. " He embodies that special type of non-commissioned officer who represents the policy of hitting below the belt in its most brutal form " (p. 227).

From 1919 onwards the story is the same, even down to the Kapp Putsch, when, after the defeat of the Kappists, the restored Social-democrats took no revenge on the militarists, but shot a number of the workers they had themselves called out. In this later period Ströbel's look grows worse: his account of the collapse of the United German Communist Party is so distorted by hate as to be barely comprehensible.

Ströbel himself is a queer silly fellow and a living explanation of the failure of the German revolution. He has many words about the foolishness of " Marxist fatalism " and the need for ' vigorous action ' towards ill-defined ends. But he has learnt absolutely nothing. His immediate programme is that Majority and Independent Socialists should unite to get reparations reduced. He still holds that the German Constitution supplies all the means for the complete achievement of Socialism. The Soviet system he (and some of its advocates apparently too) thinks means the seizure of workshops by shop stewards. He has recounted often enough with real indignation the way in which Parliamentary decisions in favour of the workers were not carried out. But the proposal he approves for establishing a Soviet system, if such be found needed is (summarized) simply this:—

The referendum can be secured by the demand of ten per cent. of the voters. Let the Communists then induce 4,000,000 voters to sign a demand for the Soviet constitution: the government then has to put it to the vote: if a majority of the people wishes it, it will be carried. The revolution is over.

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