

JULY
1923

The PLEBS



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is a BLIND MAN.**

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Poster)*

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LABOUR MAGAZINE**

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THE PLEBS

I can promise to be candid but not impartial.

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OUR POINT of VIEW

ALL kinds of folks—proletarians included—prefer Romance to Reality. One type of worker finds spiritual sustenance in rapt contemplation of the heroisms of Rudolph Valentino or the sweetness of Mary Miles Minter. Another, who counts himself superior to such uncultured delights, lets himself be carried away by the glamour of Older Universities, and Sweetness, and Light. Mr. Albert Mansbridge has just written a whole volume in praise of our Ancient Seats of Learning which, for sheer lyrical enthusiasm undiluted by any drop of nasty critical moderation, would be hard to beat. And

*That
"University
Spirit"*

a writer in the journal of the S. Wales Postal Workers has recently been hymning "the University spirit," which is concerned "less with producing belief than with stimulating thought, less with the particular views a man holds than with the reasoning by which he arrives at them"! It is amazing how deep-rooted is this admiration for vagueness, "other-worldliness," woolly-mindedness—for any sort of rosy Romance, in short, rather than for hard, prosaic Reality.

For the horrid, cold fact, of course, is that this so-called "University spirit" is practically non-existent—at any rate at the Universities. Here and there in those institutions *And the University Fact* you will find a man (probably a scientist) interested in the search for Truth, and careless where it leads him. But the Universities, as institutions, are to-day big vested interests; with jobs to give away, sinecures to defend, properties to extend and develop—and millionaire supporters to satisfy. For all these reasons the Universities are ruled by *class* influence and *class* bias. And the *class* is not the working class. The *Herald* the other day had an article and some letters about the "awakening social conscience" at our Universities; and one undergrad of Jesus College (who ought to know) poured some healthy cold water on some of the rhetoric by declaring that for every undergraduate with Labour sympathies there are twenty "assiduously cultivating the Fascist temper." Mere working-class outsiders will recognise that there is ample support for this assertion in the type of reactionary whom the Universities return to Parliament.

Oxford and Cambridge and the rest of them are not isolated from the rest of Britain—little secluded isles of Idealism, far removed from the struggle of the classes. (Even if they were, their appeal should be to only those workers who have given up the fight and decided to go in for drugs.) Older Universities, like every other social institution which survives, must have an economic basis. And, under Capitalism, the economic basis of any institution is very closely bound up with the commodities it supplies. If Oxford and Cambridge had not "delivered the goods" they would not have come unscathed through the great Victorian age.

Yet our old and dear friends of the W.E.A. can still rely on this venerable superstition about the Universities being the home of something superior called "the University spirit," to appeal to emotional—and self-distrustful *The "W-Hee-Haw"*—Labour men and women. No unlettered serf of the Middle Ages had a blinder faith in

the monk or priest with "book-learning" than have some Labour people of to-day—people who support their own Labour daily newspaper, and work hard for their own Labour industrial or political organisations—in anyone who speaks to them about Culture, with a University accent. And in this simple faith they are content to forswear their allegiance to the movement in whose ranks they work, to belittle the very aims they profess to be working for—to talk *bunk*, in short, about it being better "to stimulate thought than to produce belief," and less important "what views a man holds" than that he should have arrived at those views by a particular route (*via* the Universities).

The W.E.A. has lately been taking advantage of the kindheartedness of sundry Labour leaders and editors to get appeals on its behalf circulated in working-class journals. It plumes itself very particularly on its superiority to (unnamed) organisations whose aim is to *impress particular doctrines on their students*. In fact, it proudly reiterates its claim to the title and symbol which The PLEBS conferred on it a year or more ago—the W-Hee-Haw, best pictorially represented by Low's celebrated Coalition Donkey. It looks both ways—and is proud of it! And it feels immensely superior to educational organisations like the Labour Colleges, which look—and teach—*one way*: the Labour way.



(By permission of Low, the *Star* cartoonist).

As against this "impressing of particular doctrines" the W. Hee-Haw has adopted a new slogan—"the liberty of the student."

To permit a group of students to choose just what they shall study ("*within reason*," as Kipps *what crimes* . . . !! remarked on a certain occasion) is obviously a shining example of Democracy in Being; and as such is acclaimed by Trade Union leaders who years ago grew out of any silly "democratic" superstitions about "the liberty of the blackleg." Of course this "liberty of the student" to choose what subject of study he likes is very considerably limited in actual fact—for obvious practical reasons; just as his liberty to read what he likes is modified by the W-Hee-Haw's pushing of its own cheap editions of "safe" books. . .

Plebs! Keep your eye on that donkey. And when it shows its head—either of them—hit it, and hit hard.

We cannot omit to record in these pages Mr. H. A. L. Fisher's terrible attack on Ruskin College, and Principal Sanderson Furniss's dignified reply. The ex-President of the Board of Education, in a speech in the House of Commons, "deplored the limited character of the teaching at Ruskin, which was *practically confined to Karl Marx*." (Horror in the House—especially on certain of the Labour benches.) In a letter circulated by the Press Association a day or two later, Principal Furniss wrote that "there never has been throughout the history of Ruskin College the slightest foundation for this remark," and went on to quote an apology he had received from Mr. Fisher, who said he should be sorry indeed if any observation of his injured Ruskin College, "which does to my knowledge much excellent work."

An ex-student of Ruskin, writing to the *Herald* in passionate repudiation of Mr. Fisher's atrocious calumny, declared: "In point of fact, Ruskin College is no more Marxian than any of the University colleges."

No Pleb will have the smallest difficulty in believing him!

By the way, talking of Universities, we came across a leaflet the other day (on a seat in Hyde Park, to be precise) which rather suggested that the pose of "impartiality" was to be dropped, and that henceforth Universities were going to come out boldly and take sides on controversial questions. The leaflet (dated May, 1923) was issued by the "Oxford League for Hungarian Self-Determination," and from it we learned that—

more than 3,000,000 Hungarians now groan under the oppressive and barbarous rule of Balkan peoples, which have not even learned to govern themselves properly, and are certainly unfitted to exercise authority over others.

This seems to give an opportunity for the London University School of Jugo (and other) Slav Studies to come out with a counterblast! And why should not each of our Universities "adopt" somebody, and march boldly into the fray? Liverpool, for instance, might champion the cause of Greek Freedom—it has a few not altogether penniless Greek gentlemen among its supporters, has it not? Manchester would of course be interested in the great question of Indian Self-Determination. Durham might take up the Lithuanian cause—not for any particular reason; but such a subject might help, if extension courses were arranged, to lift the minds of the local miners above Coal.

*Ruskin's
Foundations
Quivered!*

*Practical Work
at the
Universities*

There are only forty places in our Summer School, and more than half of these are already booked. If you are coming, send your name (and your 10s. deposit) in quickly.

Our Summer School The lecture and discussion programme is being arranged, and we should have some highly profitable talks not only about the subjects we study, but about the way our movement is developing and the methods we can adopt in the near future to extend our activities still further. There'll be no lack of discussion when forty Plebs get together.

PLEBS and N.C.L.C.
SUMMER SCHOOL

Culcheth Hall, Newchurch, nr. Warrington
 August 11th—18th.



Come to our Summer School — August 11th—18th

Full board, £3 3s. for the week. Send your name and address, with a deposit of 10s., to The PLEBS Office. Instalments of any amounts from 2s. 6d. upwards also received and booked to your a/c. A good programme of lectures and discussions is being booked, the lecturers to date including T. Asheroft, M. Collins, J. F. Horrabin and Mark Starr—other names to follow.

BOOK NOW

Some of them are almost certain never to get to bed during the whole week. . . . There will also be stimulating contests for the Plebs Gold (p'raps) Tennis Cup, the N.C.L.C. Croquet Challenge Shield, and sundry other important sporting trophies. Book quickly.

Our front cover this month has been drawn by J. F. H. from a Russian poster reproduced in colour in Rhys Williams' *Through the Russian Revolution* (Labour Publishing Co.).

THE RISE OF MR. BALDWIN

IT is always difficult to say how far a politician can be regarded as a "representative" of some social group outside Parliament, and how far as guided by purely political considerations and only incidentally swayed from time to time by the "pressure" of outside influences. Especially is it difficult in England with its traditions of political "integrity." But there is discernible, I think, a fairly large correlation between the ebb and flow of groups and personalities at Westminster, and the ebb and flow of socio-economic tendencies beyond the precincts of Westminster; and this affords fairly strong ground for interpreting recent changes in Downing Street in other than purely political terms.

In an article in *The PLEBS* of January I ventured to suggest that the rise of Mr. Law signalled the ascendancy of the more passive element in British capitalism, such as the bondholders and the financial interests of "the City." They were shy of too great aggressiveness in British policy abroad. They favoured a settlement of our debt obligations to U.S.A., in order to restore the prestige of the City of London as the world's financial centre. For the same reason they were inclined to favour deflation, to restore sterling to its pre-war parity with gold and with the dollar—a step which incidentally would increase the real value of public and other stock to bondholders.

The policy of "Tranquillity" has now had its day, and has not been without partial success. The clouds in the Near East have for the moment passed. In Mesopotamia there is promise of withdrawal of military force (but not of "influence"). Egypt has been granted a "constitution." Mr. Baldwin has endeared himself to the financial world by his able handling of the debt problem, and the prestige of "the City" has been vindicated by the funding of the British debt to U.S.A. Sterling is not yet at its pre-war parity with gold, but it stands very close (about 19s.), and the hope has been expressed by a prominent authority recently that parity may soon be reached by a further slight fall in the value of gold.*

In the matter of reparations and the Ruhr, the policy of "Tranquillity" has been much less successful. The reparations problem is still unsolved; and Britain's influence in finding a solution of it is very much weakened. At one time there was considerable talk on the Paris boulevards and in the Paris editorial offices of a

* The value of gold at present depends on the value of the dollar, which in turn depends on the degree of inflation and the level of prices in U.S.A.

continental "bloc" of France, Belgium, and Italy, with an anti-British bias. The reply of the Quai d'Orsay to the German note of a month ago was not sent, as previously, in conjunction with Whitehall. The "Comité des Forges," though its blast furnaces have been rendered temporarily idle, has nevertheless obtained what it wanted—French control of the rival, complementary, and subsidiary industries of the Ruhr basin; and a foundation has been laid for a giant combine (or at the least a federation) of heavy industry astride the Rhine with the capital of Wendel, Laurent, Schneider, and the *banque d'affaires*, the Union Parisienne, in the ascendency. The policy of the French Government is now a rigid refusal to consider any German reparations offer unless first there is complete surrender to French control in the Ruhr. M. Poincaré has intimated that he intends to remain in the Ruhr for five years, which is the diplomatic way of saying "for ever"! And the proposals of M. Dariac* for the Frenchification of the Ruhr by the dismissal of German officials and the encouragement of a Rhineland separatist movement are being carried out almost to the letter.

The good which "Tranquillity" promised to do, it has therefore done, so far as it is ever likely to. The evil results of it, which its enemies prophesied, are becoming apparent. Meanwhile, British industry has recovered from its deepest depression. In U.S.A. there has actually been a trade boom for the last six months. Unemployment has fallen away almost to nothing; business transactions have quickened enormously, profits have risen rapidly, and in some cases wages even have been increased a little. The level of prices has risen to such an extent as to frighten financial circles (fearful of an uncontrollable inflation built up on the huge gold reserves), and to cause the Federal Reserve Board on pretence of too much speculation on the Stock Exchange to raise its bank rate, in order to check credit inflation.† In Britain the revival has been choked by political disturbances on the continent. Although the trouble in the Ruhr has stimulated pig-iron and coal production in this country, it has had a depressing effect on other sections of British industry. Sir E. Geddes recently opined that a trade boom might have been here as well as in U.S.A., had it not been for the French action; while Mr. Keynes stated more optimistically that not even the disturbance in the Ruhr would be sufficient to strangle the trade revival which began last year. At any rate, British capitalism has passed for the time being (but *only* for the time being)

* See THE PLEBS, January.

† This has now had the effect of temporarily checking the rise in the price level, and even of producing a slight fall.

its darkest hour, and has passed temporarily into a period of hope. The exports for May have shown a considerable increase, and the iron and coal industries are in a better position than they have been since 1920.

For this reason British heavy industry is in a position to assert itself again ; although still it is in a position of partial dependence on the banks. It was not unnatural, therefore, that, when occasion arose for a reshuffling on the Front Bench at Westminster, the reshuffling should be in the particular direction in which economic influences were moving—to a half-way position between the tranquillity and cautious conservatism of Mr. Bonar Law and the aggressive and progressive opportunism of Mr. Lloyd George.

The change came at a crucial time in European affairs. The first German note had made an offer of reparations, which the French and Belgians in a reply sent separately from Britain peremptorily rejected. British capitalism was displeased with the note, because it gave a loophole to France by making the payment of reparations conditional on the raising of an international loan ; and "the City" was unwilling to take the risk of subscribing the sum, as it had done for Austria. Mr. Keynes in *The Nation* declared it quite impossible to raise the sum mentioned in the financial centres of Europe and America, and tentatively proposed instead the issue of reparation bonds, which could be issued to the French Government, which could exchange them against holdings of French national debt. This, in effect, would mean that the Germans in paying interest on the bonds would be paying reparations by relieving the French Government of the need to pay interest on its debt. The second German note has again been rejected by France, because the Germans will not forego passive resistance in the Ruhr. France is willing to accede to British suggestions about reparations on condition that Britain supports France in demanding German surrender in the Ruhr.

Now, six months ago there was an even chance that the Ministry of Tranquillity might have made this bargain for the sake of a settlement. To-day, however, British heavy industry is in a better position to assert itself ; and it is not likely to view with equanimity the rise of its powerful rival, the Comité des Forges, to the position of the dominant federation of heavy industry in Europe. This apprehension felt by British heavy industry is expressed in the rise of Mr. Baldwin, and with him the policy of passivity is likely to give way to a policy of interference in European affairs. That interference will be directed either to direct frustration of French imperialist designs, or else to insistence on a "share in the swag." It is very significant that Mr. Baldwin has summoned to his side

Mr. McKenna, the Liberal Free-Trader and opponent of Deflation, and Lord Robert Cecil, the old-style Conservative moulded in the Disraelian tradition, whose heart still remains with pathetic confidence at Geneva.

Baldwins, Ltd., of which Mr. Baldwin was, until recently, vice-chairman, is one of the most important vertical combines in British heavy industry. It owns coal and ore mines, firms in various stages of iron and steel production, and also marketing organisations. Since the war it has instituted an important subsidiary in Canada, and has also acquired important interests in Argentine.

On the continent, especially in Germany, there is a tendency for these combines of heavy industry to be financed and partially controlled by commercial banks and finance houses. This is what Hilferding called Finance Capital. This is the part played by such institutions as the Deutsche and Dresdner Banks and Disconto Gesellschaft, and in U.S.A. by financial houses like J. P. Morgan's. In Britain this tendency is also visible, although it is not the banks proper which do this, but the numerous finance houses and investment trusts. As a rule one or two of these houses specialise on each industry, and the various firms in the industry are to a considerable extent dependent on this small finance group. Whereas formerly the connection of the industrial firm with the financial house was confined to the act of company promotion, now more and more the "promoter" tends to be a financial group, whose connection with the company is much longer than the mere act of "promotion." Thus finance encroaches into industry.

In powerful industries, such as the big iron and steel combines, however, the opposite tendency is in some cases apparent. The firm at the head of the combine tends to divert its attention more and more to the financial side—to the buying up of subsidiary firms, to the putting by of "reserves" for development work, and to the "promotion" of new enterprises, especially of new subsidiaries in foreign countries.* The combines tend to encroach into finance and to take on the work of doing their own "promoting." In Germany, for instance, Stinnes has started to buy up banking houses. This tendency is, of course, still only in its infancy; but a firm like Baldwin's is well to the front in this new development. It is an alternative form of Finance Capital.

There seems, therefore, some good grounds for regarding the new Conservatism of Mr. Baldwin as the politics of Finance Capital, of the partial merging of the interests of the financier and the indus-

* For the manner in which Vickers has done this with numerous foreign Vickers companies, see the Lab. Research Dept.'s "Lab. and Cap. in the Engineering Trades."

trialist. 1918—1920 was the period of growth after the war and of rapid new developments of Finance Capital. 1920—1922 was a period of disillusionment and of "redressing" the line. 1923 sees the re-marshalling of forces, the coming to rest of numerous political tendencies around a mean point of equilibrium. The hectic optimism of Mr. George, the cautious tranquillity and pessimism of Mr. Law, alike give place to the middle path of Mr. Baldwin's Conservative Imperialism, the policy of British Finance Capital.

If one is careful not to press an economic interpretation too far, one can describe approximately and roughly British Parliamentary parties to-day according to the following class relationships:—

BOURGEOIS PARTIES

Conservatives (Mr. Law).—Passive elements of bourgeoisie; bondholders and banking interests, State bureaucracy (higher civil servants, and officers of Army and Navy).

National Liberals (Mr. George).—Progressive elements among the advanced sections of heavy industry. These are most numerous during periods of development and optimism.

Mr. Baldwin's Ministry (combination of Conservatives and old Nat. Libs.).—Finance capital (merging of heavy industry and finance).

BOURGEOIS WITH MIXTURE OF PETTY-BOURGEOIS

Liberals.—Merchant interests of Manchester and Liverpool, small industry, and remnants of Victorian stage of Capitalism; professional workers (lawyers, professors); middle ranks of Civil Service, etc.

WORKING CLASS WITH MIXTURE OF PETTY-BOURGEOIS

Fabians.—Middle and lower civil servants; professional and salaried workers, etc.

I.L.P.—Shopkeepers, professional and salaried workers, proletarians.

Labour Party.—A political federation of the Trade Unions, largely representative of the official element in T.U.s, and dominated by the policy of the Fabians and I.L.P.

But capitalism will not find itself on the upward path for long. Finance Capital, in its fierce struggle for existence, is setting its hold firmly upon the State, and is putting it as surely on the road to Imperialism as ever in pre-war days. It is time the Labour movement shed its petty-bourgeois illusions, and realised that if the State nationalised the coal industry for the benefit of Baldwin's, Ltd., etc., as is quite possible, though not at the moment probable, this would be not a triumph for Socialism, as Mr. Webb and Mr.

Macdonald would no doubt hail it, but merely a further stage in that linking of the State and Finance Capital, which constitutes Imperialism. Imperialism, and the wreckage of civilisation which is its offspring, can only be ended when the wedlock of the State and Finance Capital is divorced by the power of the organised working class.

MAURICE H. DOBB.

The N.C.L.C.

What it is, and what it is doing

In response to the request of the Education Sub-Committee of the General Council, T.U.C., the following report of the aims and activities of the National Council of Labour Colleges has been prepared. It is reprinted here for the information of Labour workers generally, and we leave it to Plebeians to make the fullest possible propaganda use of this telling record of a fast-developing movement.

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LABOUR COLLEGES.

Object

The education of the workers from the working-class point of view. In other words the provision of Independent Working-Class Education—education not merely controlled by the workers but of a *working-class character*.

Constituent Bodies

The Council is composed of the Labour College, London, the Scottish Labour College, the Plebs League, the A.U. of Building Trade Workers, and the various London and Provincial Labour Colleges. It is about to be joined by the National Union of Distributive Workers.

Control

The control of the Council and of its component Colleges is in the hands of working-class organisations, particularly Trade Unions and Trade Union branches. Among the Unions identified with the work of the Council are the National Union of Railwaymen, the South Wales Miners, the Building Trade Workers, the Distributive Workers, the Lanarkshire Miners, the Fife Miners and the Mid and East-Lothian Miners, etc.

Curriculum

As the purpose of the education provided is to assist the workers in their industrial and political struggles, the subjects are chosen with that end in view. The following are the principal subjects taught :—Economics, Industrial History, History of Trade Unionism and the Working-Class Movement, Trade Union Law, Economic Geography, Imperialism, Sociology, the Science of Reasoning, Public Speaking, Psychology, Co-operation, the Theory and Practice of Electioneering, Class Tutoring.

Methods

1. Residential Tuition ; 2, Postal Tuition ; 3, Publication of Pamphlets, Magazine and Textbooks ; 4, Evening Classes ; 5, Weekend Schools ; 6, Trade Union Branch Classes ; 7, Trade Union Branch Monthly Lectures ; 8, Ditto, Occasional Lectures ; 9, Public Lectures (Ordinary and Lantern) ; 10, Lectures for the Unemployed ; 11, Classes for the Unemployed, which are free to them ; 12, Lectures to Strikers ; 13, Summer Schools ; 14, Trade Union Educational Schemes, *e.g.*, that of the Building Trade Workers which includes residential Scholarships at the Labour College, London, as well as free classes for the Union's Members all over the country.

Summarised Report on Evening Class Work Only 1922—23.

	No. of Classes.	No. of Students.	No. of Districts.
English Section	445	8,993	44
Scottish Section (Scot. Labour College)	84	3,005	1
	<hr/> 529	<hr/> 11,998	<hr/> 45

1923

Expenditure relating to Evening Class Work and Public Educational Lectures Only

	Tuition.	Other Class Ex- penses.	Organisa- tion Salaries.	Other Organisa- tion Ex- penses.	Other Ex- penses.	Total.
	£	£	*	£	£	£
English Section	1,266	864	*	552	661	3,343
Scottish Section	497	419	*	218	358	1,492
	<hr/> £1,763	<hr/> £1,283	<hr/> —	<hr/> £770	<hr/> £1,019	<hr/> £4,835

* Most Tutors do some organising.

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Income relating to Evening Class Work and Public Educational Lectures Only

	Members Subs.	Aff. Fees.	Class Fees.	Dona- tions.	Trust Funds.	Bd. of Educ.	Educ. Auth.	Other Sources.	Total.
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
English Section .	4	1,560	826	231	—	—	45	702	3,368
Scottish Section .	—	605	197	73	—	—	—	636	1,511
	<u>£4</u>	<u>£2,165</u>	<u>£1,023</u>	<u>£304</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>£45</u>	<u>£1,338</u>	<u>£4,879</u>

This year the above income of £4,879, it is anticipated, will be increased by a first payment from the N.U.D.A.W. of about £1,250 and an additional sum from the A.U.B.T.W. of £500. In the above figures, no account is taken of the income of the Labour College, London, or of the Plebs League (which carries out the publication side of the Council's work). This would mean an addition of some £5,500 and £2,500 respectively, which means that the *total educational expenditure represented by the Council was about £12,500 last year and will be at least £14,500 this.*

Only in one case during the year did an Education Authority make a grant to a class. It is not to be repeated. As a rule, the Authorities will not even grant the use of a class room to the Labour Colleges even when rent is offered. The moral is plain.

In connection with the number of classes and students it is to be noted that, as the classes do not deal with such subjects as the appreciation of art, but with subjects directly concerned with the problems of the workers, the Council has more students and classes dealing with subjects of direct importance to the working-class movement than any other educational body.

Some fifteen whole time tutors are engaged in the evening class work, besides some 250 voluntary tutors. In most cases so far it has been impossible to pay the full time tutors during the summer. They live, like the early Trade Union organisers, as best they can.

Reports have also been sent in by the Labour College, London, and the Scottish Labour College. We are unable to print these in full, but give below a few salient facts from each:—

The Labour College, London

Aims as above. Subjects taught include all those named above, and many others, more advanced, suitable to whole-time residential students.

The number of students in residence in 1921 was 32 ; in 1922, 24.

The cost *per student* was in the first-named year £156 ; in the second, £169.

The approximate values of the properties of the Labour Colleges :—

11/13, Penywern Road, Earl's Court (leasehold)	£
Gloucester House, Kew (freehold)	4,000
Furnishings and fittings (both places)	6,000
	800
	<hr/>
	£10,800

The College is at present entirely owned and controlled by the N.U.R. and the S.W.M.F. Each organisation has twelve students in residence for a period of two years. The cost of each scholarship to the Unions is £100 per annum. Certain other organisations maintain scholarships at the College, at a cost of £125 per annum. The annual deficit is borne equally by the N.U.R. and the S.W.M.F.

The Scottish Labour College

Aims as above. Methods—Evening classes, lectures to T.U. branches and to the unemployed, week-end schools, public lectures and residential scholarships.

Organisation

The National Committee is composed of one delegate from each District Committee of the College, one from each nationally affiliated organisation and one from each organisation ending bursars to the Day College. There are District Committees in Dundee, Aberdeen, Fife, Edinburgh, Stirlingshire, Glasgow, Greenock, Ayrshire, and Lanarkshire. The College is supported by 270 Trade Unions, Trade Union branches and other working-class organisations.

The College has permanent premises at 196, St. Vincent Street, Glasgow, and at 13, Abercromby Place, Edinburgh.

Day College

Since the miners' lock-out the Day College has been closed, but it is hoped to re-open it shortly. The students, when the College is open, are boarded out, attending the College for lectures only. The scholarships are for one year.

The following is a summarised report of Evening Class Work only, 1922—23 :—

Summarised Report on Evening Class Work Only, 1922—23

No. of Classes 84 ; No. of Students, 3,005 ; No. of Districts, 9.

Expenditure relating to Evening Class Work and Public Educational Lectures only :—

			Other		
Tuition.	Other Class	Organisers'	Organisers'	Other Ex-	Total.
£497	Expenses.	Salaries.	Expenses.	penses.	
	£419	—	£218	£358	£1,492

Income relating to Evening Class work and Public Educational Lectures only :—

			Educ.	Board of	Educ.	Other
Aff. Fees.	Class Fees.	Donations.	Trust Funds.	Educ.	Auths.	Sources.
£605	£197	£73	—	—	—	£636
Total—£1,511.						

* * * *All communications for the Scottish Labour College Nat. Ctee., should be addressed to J. P. M. Millar (Nat. Sec. pro tem.), 18, Westholmes, Musselburgh.*

NOTE TO ALL N.C.L.C.-ERS

1.—The extra £1 is. affiliation fee asked for in connection with the expenses of negotiations with the T.U.C. should be sent to the Press Secretary, 18, Westholmes, Musselburgh, Scotland. *The cash is urgently required.*

2.—Any district which has not yet sent in particulars of their activities during the past year, for the forthcoming Annual Report of the Labour College Movement, are asked to do so immediately, otherwise reference to their work will not appear.

CAUSE and PURPOSE
in SOCIAL SCIENCE

This is a summary of part of Chapter I. of Buharin's "Theorie des Historischen Materialismus," the introduction to which, likewise translated by W. W. Craik, appeared in the April issue (still obtainable).

THE Regularity of Phenomena in general and of Social Phenomena in particular. If we consider closely the surrounding phenomena of nature and of social life it will be seen that they are by no means a hotch-potch in which one can neither perceive nor foresee anything. On the contrary, careful observation reveals everywhere a certain regularity in phenomena. Night follows day and day follows night. The seasons alternate with regularity and with them, year in year out, a whole series of accompanying phenomena repeat themselves. Trees bloom and shed their leaves, various species of birds arrive and depart, men sow and reap, etc. . . . We all know that a seed of corn that falls on the ground germinates and that, finally, out of the shoot, under given conditions, an ear develops. On the other hand, we have never seen an ear of corn grow out of frog spawn or limestone. Everything in nature from the movements of the large planets down to a seed of

corn or a mushroom follows a regular course or, as one would say, is subject to given laws.

The same can be observed in our public life, *i.e.*, in the life of human society. Complicated and manifold as this is, we can yet discover in it the existence of law. For example, wherever capitalism has evolved, be it in America, Japan, Africa or Australia, there grows up a working class, a socialist movement makes its appearance, and the Marxian theories spread. Simultaneously with the growth of the productive forces "mental culture" develops; for example, the number of people able to read increases. Inside of capitalist society periodical crises occur and are succeeded by industrial "booms," just as day follows night. When a great discovery or invention is made the whole of our social life is affected. Or, to take still other examples, if the births in one year in any given country be considered then it will be seen that in following years the increase in the population approximates to the same uniform rate. If the quantity of beer consumed per year in Bavaria be estimated it will be found that this is of a more or less constant magnitude, increasing with the increase in population.

If there were no regularity, no law, then obviously we could neither foresee nor act upon these results. To-day, day has followed night, but after to-night years might elapse before dawn broke again. This year it has snowed in winter, but next year oranges might be in bloom. In England the development of capitalism has been accompanied by a growth in the working class, but in Japan it might add to the number of landed proprietors! At present, bread is baked in ovens but perhaps in the future—and the devil knows what is not possible—bread may take the place of cones on fir trees!

But in reality nobody thinks that possible. Everybody knows that bread will not grow on trees, that in nature, as well as in society, a certain definite order, a definite law operates. To discover this law constitutes the first task of science.

Character of the Laws: formulation of the question. If, then, the regularity in natural and social phenomena of which we have spoken is accepted, the question arises, What is the nature of this regularity? In studying the mechanism of a good time-keeping watch, one can see how well suited each part is to the others, wheel to wheel, cog to cog, but it is also quite clear why it is so. It was made according to a definite plan and for a definite purpose. Every little screw has its place for precisely that reason. Is not this also the case throughout the entire world? Planets move harmoniously and strictly within their course; nature preserves special developed forms of life. One need only examine the structure of the eye of any animal to see at once how delicately, skilfully and purposive has been its construction. And how purposeful is nature everywhere; the mole that lives under

the earth has little blind eyes but, as compensation, a keen sense of hearing ; the deep sea fish upon which the water presses so heavily has an equal power of resistance. And in human society ? Is there not before it the great aim—Communism ? Does not the whole course of historical development lead to this end ? If it be the case that in nature and society everything has its aim—not always understood by us, but nevertheless in process of realisation—can we not consider all things from the standpoint of this end or aim ? There the subjection to law, of which we speak, becomes definitely purposive (or a teleological process ; in Greek the word “telos” signifies “aim” or “end.”) This is one aspect or one conception of nature and society as a domain of law.

The other conception is based on the principle that every phenomenon has its cause. Mankind strides towards Communism because of the fact that the working class grows inside capitalist society and can find no place within that society ; the mole has poor eyes and good hearing because in the course of thousands of years environment has acted upon animals producing and transmitting variations, so that only such animals survived as could adapt themselves to the environment. Day follows night, and night follows day, simply because the earth turns on its axis and the sun shines now on the one side now on the other. In all of these cases no one asks about the “end” or the “purpose” but only of the cause, *i.e.*, “why.” It is a question of cause and the regularity of phenomena presents itself now as a causal relation.

N. BUHARIN.

REVOLUTIONARY EDUCATION in BRITAIN

The following reply by Comrades Eden and Cedar Paul to an inquiry received from Holland, though of course quite “unofficial,” puts the case for the I.W.C.E. movement both forcefully and concisely. Also, as Plebs will note, it has a bearing on certain recent controversies in these pages.

HENRIETTE Roland Holst wrote to Eden and Cedar Paul under date, May 28th, 1923 :

A few young Dutch comrades who want to take in hand the educational work in our Communist Party have asked me to supply them with information concerning the educational movement in Western and Western-Central Europe. I hope that you will be so good as to answer the following questions regarding the British party. I propose to embody your answers in an essay I am writing anent education to communism.

(1) Is there any educational centre in the Communist Party of Great Britain ? If so, how is it organised, and how does it work ?

(2) Does it only organise lectures and classes, or does it also publish pamphlets, occupy itself with giving dramatic representations, and the like ;

(3) Is it simply conveying to the proletariat, Marxian notions concerning politics and economics ? Or is it working along the lines of general culture ? Does it give lectures on ethics, philosophy, religion, art, and literature ? In a word, does it systematically try to develop a revolutionary Marxist ideology ?

(4) Is anything done to educate the members, not only in a knowledge of communism, but also to act in accordance with communist ethics—to act as communists ? Above all, is anything done to develop a sense of class solidarity and a consciousness of social responsibility ?

(5) Is there any sort of social-pedagogic system in force in the Communist Party of Great Britain ? Does the party try to get a grip of the whole personality of its members ; to impress its mark, not only on the *rational* nature of these, but also on the *feelings* and the *imagination* ? Does it, in fact, make due allowance for the overwhelming importance of the subconscious ?

(6) Does it try, especially during anniversary commemorations and during other demonstrations, to work through the senses—by way of music, dramatic art, symbolic decorations, etc ? Does it endeavour to impress the masses after the manner that has of late years been employed in Russia, especially in the first period that followed the November revolution ?

* * *

I thank you in advance for your answers to these inquiries. If you can send me any literature on the subject, I shall be most grateful. If you think I shall find valuable information in *The PLEBS*, please have it sent to me.

Yours for the cause,
HENRIETTE ROLAND HOLST.

Eden and Cedar Paul replied, under date June 3rd, 1923 :—

For reasons that will become obvious to you as we proceed, we cannot give a direct reply to each of your questions in turn. Consequently the numbers that head our paragraphs do not correspond to the numbers in your inquiry.

(1) In the first place, the main movement for revolutionary education in this country at the present time is altogether outside the Communist Party. It is not to any notable extent under communist directives, although quite a number of active workers in the movement are members of the Communist Party of Great Britain. You must remember that the C.P.G.B. is numerically small, and that it has not yet (in its present form) existed for more than two and a half years. On the other hand, the I.W.C.E. (Independent Working Class Education) movement dates from fourteen years back, and developed at first to some extent under "revolutionary syndicalist" auspices. It is therefore (though by no means "anarchistic" in trend) somewhat alien in sympathy from anything that calls itself a *political* party and operates (in part) on the parliamentary field. Also it receives active support from rank and file trade unionists and ordinary members of reformist organisations like the I.L.P. and the Parliamentary Labour Party, who will not (at present) join the Communist Party. In this way there is a real United Front on the revolutionary educational field. You will understand the position better if you will look up the history of the I.W.C.E. movement in our book *Proletcult*, published two years ago. The developments

foreshadowed there have taken place. The National Council of Labour Colleges is now a nation-wide organisation for revolutionary Marxist education. The *Plebs League* represents the propagandist spirit of this great body.

Last November, when we were working in Moscow on the Education Committee of the Fourth Congress, we endeavoured (ably supported by an Australian comrade named Earsman) to make our fellow-workers understand the peculiar position of the I.W.C.E. movement in English-speaking lands, and to convince them that any attempt to bring this movement (at its present stage) under the direct control of the C.P. would certainly fail, and would hinder the progress both of communism and of Marxist education. We contended that, like the revolutionary trade union movement, the revolutionary educational movement must for the present be quasi-independent of the political wing which is organised as the Third International. We said that the first essential was for the E.C.C.I. to summon an *international congress* of all organisations and individuals interested in revolutionary education on Marxist lines and on the basis of the class war, and thereat to promote the formation of an *international organisation* analogous to the R.I.L.U. We are confident that such a movement offers greater revolutionary possibilities (greater possibilities for furnishing the C.P. with efficient recruits) than any attempt to make revolutionary education a strictly party matter.

(2) Whether these views be sound or not, as a FACT the movement for revolutionary education in this country is mainly conducted by the Nat. Coun. of Labour Colleges and guided by the Plebs League and not by the C.P. The C.P., of course, has its own scheme for the communist training of members and candidates for membership, and is getting to work on this. But the members are at present all overworked in connection with the new organisation scheme, which is completely transforming the structure of the party in accordance with the lines laid down two years ago by the Third International. We shall be better able to report upon the training scheme for members and candidates when another two years have elapsed.

(3) As regards C.P. training along lines of the use of the drama and other arts, nothing is being done at present. Early last autumn there was a spontaneous move here in London to form a special organisation within the party to attend to this important matter. But the initiators had to obey a decision of the Exec. Comm. that this would involve a dispersal of energies, and that the time was not ripe for anything of the kind.

(4) We must point out that your fourth question brings us up against one of the primary contradictions of our whole movement. You cannot develop a sense of "social responsibility" in a society

rent in twain by the class war. The main object, or one of the main objects, of our education and propaganda is to arouse the affects appropriate to the proletarian status, to arouse an emotional fervour on behalf of the *destruction* of the extant "society." The proletarians' "responsibility" is to the C.P., to his class, and to the future society, which exists as yet only in the womb of the ideal. To follow up these pedagogic and philosophical problems would take us too far afield. But we sympathise with the spirit of your inquiry, and we think that the matter has the earnest attention of all in this country who are interested in revolutionary education.

(5) As to your (6), we think that the importance of the matter is now being generally recognised; but Britain is still very backward in these artistic concerns. The "Proletcult" organisation planned last autumn (see our No. 3) was to work along these lines.

(6) The N.C.L.C. courses deal with other subjects besides economics, industrial history, and economic geography. Their primary aim is to develop a revolutionary Marxist ideology along broad lines.

(7) Your (5) especially interests us, and we can answer it in the affirmative. The C.P.G.B., no less than the N.C.L.C. movement and the Plebs League, is, we think, becoming fully aware of the importance of what we personally are accustomed to speak of as *the synthesis of Marxism and the New Psychology*. A comrade named Jameson, who died prematurely last year, was especially active in promoting this recognition of the fundamental importance of the subconscious in communist activity, propaganda work, and the I.W.C.E. movement. The idea runs like a red thread through *An Outline of Psychology*, the little textbook which the Plebs League published eighteen months ago. We urge you to have it translated into Dutch for the use of the comrades in Holland.

(8) Yes, READ THE PLEBS. . . .

No time for more at this writing.

Yours for the Revolution,

EDEN AND CEDAR PAUL.

THANK YOU!

"I have only one fault to find with The PLEBS—it does not come out often enough. I wish it was a weekly, but I suppose that is impossible?" (Extract from a letter received a few weeks ago.)

WE WANT NEW SUBSCRIBERS

A GOOD TANNER'S WORTH

Trade Unionism : Past and Future. By Mark Starr.

(Plebs League, 6d.)

ONE has so often felt the need for a short statement of the history of Trade Unionism, which would attempt to forecast its future lines of development, that the latest PLEBS publication is very welcome. To accomplish this in forty pages covering every aspect of Trade Unionism is indicative of what can be done to meet the requirements of classes, and may we hope help many, many Trade Unionists to know something of their own movement.

The changes of a century are very tersely summed up, on p. 12:—

“Now-a-days Trade Unionists argue whether their leaders should be allowed to become Privy Councillors. Less than one hundred years ago they could have saved their breath. After 1799 many Trade Unionists received State distinction, but it was the broad arrow; they enjoyed not the hospitality of Downing Street or Westminster, but of Newgate. From outlaws to Privy Councillors, from being persecuted by the State to being in danger of being damned by overmuch recognition—from law-breakers to law-makers—such is the change of a century.”

We quote this to show what in our opinion is in need of emphasising in any work that has to be undertaken in bringing Trade Unionists to recognise the hard facts they are up against.

Not one phase of Trade Union development is missed, amalgamation as a step and its possible dangers by “Top-heaviness and over much centralisation” in forecasting a possible next step out of to-day’s morass.

And the need for a clear recognition of the work that Trades Councils can still, and must occupy on the industrial side, as against the pure and simple political side. The case for the educational side of the Trade Union movement is clearly stated.

A very neat foreword is written by George Hicks of the A.U.B.T.W. whose statement on a very helpful aspect we cannot do better than quote:—

“The chart comparing the economic conditions of chattel-slave, serf, gildsman, domestic producer, and wage-worker is, in its bird’s-eye simplicity, of high value. It could hardly have been better done.”

Dates are given covering industrial, political, international and educational developments, together with the stages in technical progress.

A list of books is given to help the student, and we know of no better work to be done this summer than pushing this splendid tanner’s worth. We know of many trade union branches who could do worse than adopting this booklet chapter by chapter as a means of not merely educating the rank-and-file, but branch officials!

Many know no more of the subject of the portrait sketch (Robert Owen, by J. F. H.) on the cover than the sixteen-year-old member of a trade union who, when asked about Owen, replied "He was a Welsh internationalist"!! This booklet will shift a good many wrong notions of that kind.

WILL LAWTHOR.

Our Workers' Serial

WORK for the NIGHT is COMING

By "Ruby Robot"

We haven't had a serial story in The PLEBS for years. We feel we ought to have one. Here's a first instalment. We've modelled ourselves on the best examples available in the columns of our contemporaries!

CHAPTER I.—WHISTLING AT WORK.

JIM TRUEASTEEL was walking to work. As he walked, he thought over the exciting events of his life now-a-days. Branch meetings, district meetings, committee meetings, mass meetings—ever since he joined the Party his evenings had been one stimulating whirl of activity.

He wondered how ever he had managed to jog along before, wasting his time at the pictures, or watching Brixton Rovers.

But now, praise be to—Jim scratched his head and wondered whom the praise should be to?—he had been born again. His face was set towards the light.

Something hit him in the face. It was a lump of very dirty cotton-waste. But never mind! His face was set towards the light, so what did cotton-waste matter?

He walked steadily on towards the factory, his face now buried in the Resolutions and Theses of the 4th Congress. Ha! What inspiring words!

He reached the factory, put on his overalls, and entered the workshop, his heart bounding within him. How good it was to be alive—and a real proletarian! Not even the sight of the boss crossing the yard, his foul face all puckered up into a scowl of concentrated malice and his dirty, grasping hands grasping a wad of

greasy ten-shilling notes, depressed Jim.

"Let him fondle his Surplus Value," thought our hero to himself. "A day will come . . ."

In the fulness of his heart he started to whistle. But, alas, he whistled without thinking—and Percy Phervid, his Party group leader, was working at the next lathe.

"Jim," said Percy, a look of pain crossing his noble brow, "what are you whistling?"

"Sweet Peggy O'Neil," answered Jim innocently. "Don't you know it?"

Percy came across to him, and laid his hand on Jim's shoulder.

"Yes, Jim," he said in a deep voice, "I know it. It is one of the countless songs composed by capitalist parasites to lull the brains of the workers to sleep. Don't whistle it, Jim—remember, whenever you feel like whistling, *whistle class-consciously*. Whistle one of the revolutionary hymns of the toiling masses, Jim—'The Red Flag,' or 'The International.' . . . Shall we whistle together now, Jim?"

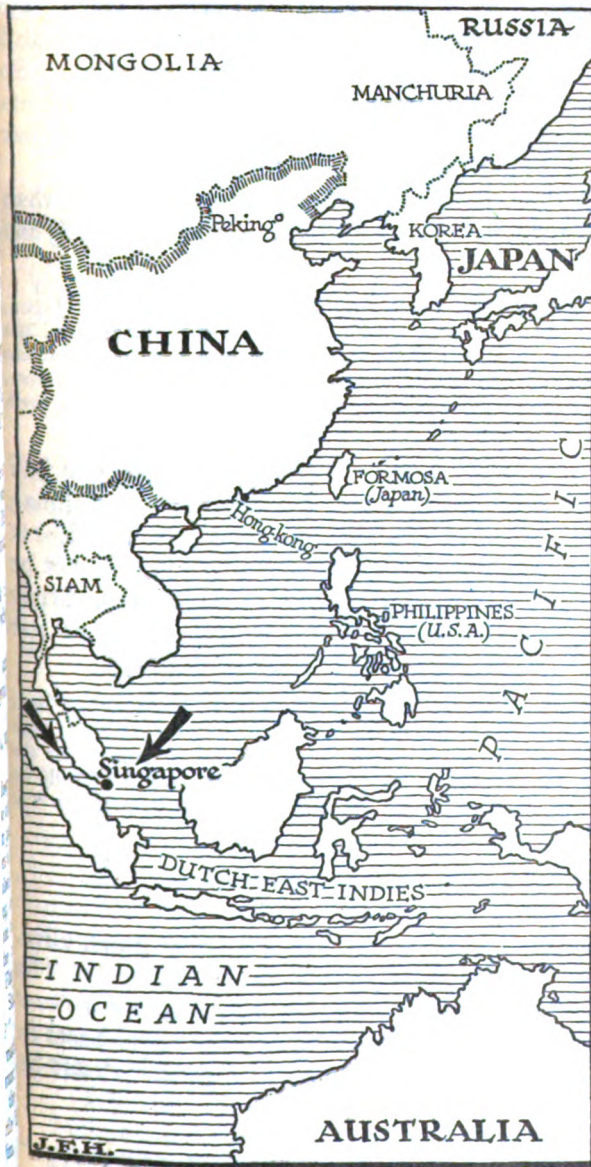
And above the roar of the machinery and the oaths of their ignorant work-mates, there poured forth the clear notes of the workers' Battle Hymn, from the lips of Percy and Jim.

Jim never forgot the lesson . . .

[One instalment of this is quite enough.
—ED., PLEBS.]

GEOGRAPHICAL FOOTNOTES to CURRENT HISTORY

SINGAPORE



Map showing Singapore and the Far East.

THE main sea road of the British Empire is the road to "the Indies"—through the Mediterranean Sea, the Suez Canal, the Red Sea, and so to the Indian Ocean. That ocean is to-day a British lake; and over each of the "gates" to it there floats the Union Jack. *Aden* guards the short (Red Sea) way to Europe. *The Cape* commands the longer ocean way round Africa. The key to the eastern gate, which connects the Indian Ocean with the Pacific, is *Singapore*.

The most cursory study of the map is sufficient to indicate the vital importance of Singapore to Britain. The British Empire, scattered almost haphazard over all the Seven Seas, can be held to-

gether only by ocean power ; and ocean power means control of key positions on vital routes. Singapore is such a key position. It is important to Britain whether considered as guarding India and the whole Indian ocean against any enemies coming from the east ; or as the gateway leading *from* the Indian or East African bases to the lands and the commerce of the Pacific.

It was just under a century ago that a distinguished empire-builder bearing the not inappropriate name of Raffles*—"anticipated" the Dutch, then the chief commercial power in the Malay regions, and seized it for His Majesty King George IV. This was in 1824. So were established the Straits Settlements. The Straits Settlements led to China. And a few years after the Union Jack first floated over Singapore it floated over Hong-Kong also.

China, and the way thither, is even more important in 1923 than it was in the mid-19th century. As the *Morning Post* put it (June 16th) :—

At Hong Kong is focussed all the trade from Europe to China and Japan, a large Western-owned China coasting trade, the Australian trade, and the trans-Pacific trade with Canada and America, either direct or *via* Chinese and Japanese ports. But Hong Kong, *without the backing of Singapore*, is so isolated that her tenure of possession *against an aggressor from the north* would merely be a matter of hours.

"An aggressor from the north," note. Who is this likely to be? Look at the map—at the possible starters. It will not be China ; for China is quite fully occupied in resisting aggression, and is not likely, on her own account, to become an aggressor. It will not be Russia, for similar reasons. What of the United States, firmly established in the Philippines? No—the *Morning Post* has no fear of America ; is indeed only too anxious to oblige her :—

. . . Those responsible for American rule in the Philippines will feel half their burden lightened if they know that their greatest friends are in a strong enough position to stem the Asiatic tide on the spot. No such opportunity for the protection of the Philippines is possible to America herself, and she would be far more likely to work in harmony with British trade interests if she was thus sure of their mutual protection.

You can see for yourself the only other name on the map. . . . The Anglo-Japanese alliance is *very* dead !

The Anglo-American one, on the other hand, is very much alive. And America's position in the Philippines is "isolated." The Washington Conference "solved" the Pacific Problem by a *status quo* arrangement which precludes the building of new naval bases in *the Pacific*. Singapore is a mile or two *outside the Pacific*. Praise be to God for Singapore !

* Explanatory note for non-playgoers :—Raffles is a gentleman-cracksman, hero of the play of the same name.

One other point the *Morning Post* is candid enough to mention :—

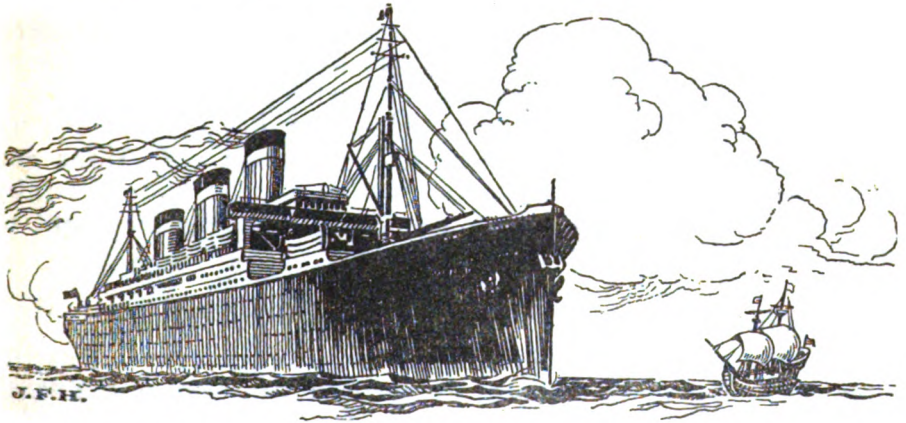
Another aspect of the Singapore scheme is that it must add renewed strength to the British position in India, since whatever untoward events might occur in the big Indian ports as the result of mutiny or revolution, a strong naval force could quickly be flung northwards, irrespective of what reinforcements were hurried out by the Suez Canal. To the Indian, as to other Asiatics, this very tangible reminder of our strength would not be without its effect.

Yes. It would seem that that far-seeing man, Sir Stamford Raffles, builded even better than he knew.

J. F. HORRABIN.

CLASS ROOM NOTES for Students and Tutors

From the "Mayflower" to the "Leviathan."



THE sailing of the "Leviathan" on July 4th coincides with the anniversary of the enlarged (48 pp.) PLEBS in the first number of which the shipping war between U.S. and Britain was discussed. This "Leviathan's" voyage is another step in that rivalry. On another July 4th the Republic hopes to enter on the conquest of mercantile power upon the seven seas. The "Leviathan" with its gross tonnage of nearly 60,000 and her 100,000 h.p. is claimed to be the largest ship afloat and the last word in luxury and speed. However, she is a trifle smaller than the "Majestic."

Tonnage figures do not do justice to the improvement in ship-building between the founding of America by the Pilgrim Fathers (1620) and the present gigantic and luxurious liners. But the "Mayflower" weighed about 180 tons. Earlier Drake sailed round

the world on the "Pelican"—a ship of only 100 tons. In the Armada the largest Spanish warship was only 1550 tons in weight.

Once the "Leviathan" was the "Vaterland" (of Hamburg), but Britain, in ruining one rival gave another rival, the U.S., a chance to capture and transform her. Congress is to be asked for £5,000,000 to construct two other liners of the "Leviathan" class and Sir J. W. Ashwood (9/6/23) says that the Government will build them. The huge advertisements and regular whole pages with maps devoted to shipping news in many leading American papers show the interest aroused. On the way across the Atlantic the Pilgrim Fathers were very seasick; their shipping descendants are trying to make their world rivals feel indisposed.

As has been remarked in these Notes the Shipping Subsidy Bill did not survive the opposition of zealous farmer and manufacturing interests and the international financiers. But this failure has been got round. Private companies have taken the ships from the Shipping Board but they have promised to maintain certain lines. Lasker is reported (11/6/23) to have advised Harding to form eighteen Government Corporations to take over 250 steel ships and eighteen Government steamship routes. The plan will have all the disadvantages of State Capitalism without any recompense for the taxpayers.

This latent opposition between U.S. and Britain makes itself apparent in British irritation against immigration restrictions and the clamour of the Wets in America will be completely drowned by the stentorian tone of a united America demanding the right to search the ships of every nationality.

The Gold Standard


Prof. Gustav Cassel, of Stockholm, economic adviser to the Russian State Bank, and world authority on currency and finance, delivered a lecture on "The Gold Standard" at the London School of Economics on June 18th. His proposals were as follows:—

(1) Countries where inflation has gone far, such as Italy, Germany, etc., should give up hopes of getting their currency back to pre-war parity with gold. They should *devalue*, i.e., stabilise at the existing ratio between currency and gold, and make currency convertible into gold at that rate. (2) A necessary preliminary to such stabilisation is the balancing of budgets and stopping of inflation, the restoration of a proper balance between imports and exports, the return of wages and prices to an "economic" level. (3) Britain should deflate a few points further. This should be done by raising the British bank rate. This will restrict credit advances and consequently the amount of purchasing power outstanding, and will depress the price-level, until sterling comes to parity with the gold dollar,

It would seem, however, that Prof. Cassel is too optimistic of :—
 (a) The ability of capitalist governments to balance their budgets, seeing that they are burdened with debt charges and armament charges ; (b) of the likelihood of the cessation of imperialist rapacity ; (c) of the likelihood of the Central Banks pursuing a wise bank rate policy ; (d) of the ability of the Bank of England to raise its rate, and as a result to prolong the depression of trade, in face of the

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 Past & Future

BY
 MARK STARR



Robert Owen
 1771-1858

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Foreword by Geo. Hicks

PLEBS, 162a Buckingham Palace Road, LONDON, S.W.1.

opposition of industrial capital, eager for inflation, rising prices and good trade.

The Vultures

The financiers and the diplomats are watching hungrily for a good opportunity to get their claws into China. The whole drift of the *Morning Post's* special articles on Singapore (quoted in our "Geographical Footnote" this month) was that Britain must have a good jumping-off place for activities in that direction. C. Birch Crisp is reported to be anxious to repeat his 1912 venture and float a loan for China in opposition to the Consortium of British, American,

Japanese and French bankers. He and his associates argue that the Consortium's refusal to lend China money so long as the present "anarchy" lasts is only playing into the hands of the Japanese. Meantime the U.S. Government—champion of the "Open Door"—is preparing a punitive expedition to rescue certain of its citizens who have been captured by Chinese brigands. We know those "punitive expeditions"! Imperialism simply couldn't get along without 'em!

The French F.B.I.

Francis Delaisi (the author of *Oil: Its Influence on Politics*) analyses in the *M.G. European Reconstruction* No. (Section 15) the significant changes in policy and control of the Comité des Forges. Previously its policy was one of restricted production, monopoly prices, and seclusion created by protective tariffs. But times have changed. The pillaging of the French plants in the area occupied by the Germans hastened a revolution in outlook, until the onetime conservative Comité became the brain and soul of the forces which hoped to set to work the magnificent equipment inherited from Germany for the conquest of the world. Enriched by the annexations France is able to produce eleven million tons of steel instead of five, and thus will need to export six. The sharing of the spoil with the Belgians has produced a strong enduring alliance.

The "Pacific"

The dove of peace, even if it escapes from the increasing squadrons of aeroplanes, won't find any olive branches beneath the Stars and Stripes, for the War Department is very busy organising industry for the next contest and placing tentative contracts for war materials with big firms. Hearst still fills his twenty-two papers with photodiagrams of a British Dreadnought pounding an American to pieces because the latter's guns are mounted too low to get within two miles of the superior enemy. He yells that the Californian fishing fleet is monopolised by Japan who would mine the ports in the event of war.

Wireless figures largely in modern plans for warfare, and the

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thrust away unit of the American Army can be given orders from Washington inside fifteen minutes; twice a day every warship ports. Japan's tremendous wireless station on Saipan, only seventy miles from Guam, and the Mitsui monopoly of radio in China, areorrying U.S. Also the fact that the British radio at the headquarters of its Pacific fleet near Victoria, B.C., interferes with the American which is only fifty miles away in Paget Sound.

Trades Council Unionism

R. W. P. writes:—In going through records from the builders' history I have found a curious thing about trade union organisation in Glasgow. Twice in recent history has there been a serious attempt to found an all embracing Scots union upon a territorial basis; that is to say, with trades councils containing all the various crafts and trades as the constituent bodies, and no national union at all. Once about 1833, by Alexander Campbell, again in the 1860's by the Scottish masons and others. Has any Scotsman any explanation to suggest (a) why it was only tried in Glasgow; (b) why it failed? It is interesting to speculate what would have been the development of trades unionism under such a scheme. More healthy perhaps—*cf.* the remark in Starr's new pamphlet.

L.W.C.E. in Russia

In addition to the great efforts which the Soviets are making to organise the education of children, they are also displaying the greatest activity too in popularising adult education. Their efforts in this direction are varied and numerous as the following list, taken from the scheme for adult education, of the Pensa Soviet will show. It comprises educational institutions, library, adult schools, museums, popular conferences, reading rooms, proletarian colleges, people's theatres, clubs, scientific societies, circulating libraries, propaganda trains and boats, the organisation of reading circles for the public reading of newspapers and, finally, communist agitation by "the pictures," and propaganda by aeroplane (*L'Ecole Emancipée*).

The "Freedom" of the Press

Readers will remember that Norman Angell, in his book *The Press and the Organisation of Society*, was sceptical about direct control exercised by Big Business over the Press. However, the *Morning Post* (18/6/23), in its desire to blacken the industrialists of Germany, quotes the editor of the *Vossische Zeitung* who asserts that 90 per cent. of the newspapers published in Germany are now in the hands of great industrialists or of companies they have set up. Hugenberg and Stinnes absolutely control German public opinion—by political

newspapers, weekly illustrated satirical and comic papers, and even family and women's periodicals. This editor says that the modern journalist has simply to execute the orders of the literary bureau of one or other of the great coal and iron syndicates.

Dollars on Top

The British £1, as we foretold in *The PLEBS* (Feb., 1923) is in no hurry to get back to the par of 4.86 dollars. The jubilation over the end of the dollar dictatorship has proved premature. The Americans cut prices to get markets and their bank rate was put down and money was exported. Hence on May 21st it was 4.62½ and at the moment of writing (11/6/23) it is 4.61½.

Pan-America

The new Monroe Doctrine ideal, thanks to America's huge export of capital (\$652 millions in 1922) is rapidly taking flesh in South America. According to Paul Hanna (*O.B.U. Bulletin*, 29/3/23) since the spring of 1921 nearly a third of a billion dollars have been placed in Central and South America. A lien on the custom receipts has been obtained in return for loans from Guatemala, Cuba, Haiti, Columbia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chili, Brazil, Uruguay and the Argentine. Mexico is not in the list, nor was she invited to the Pan-American Conference—Mr. Hughes is not satisfied with her attitude to oil properties. Once the U.S. has "fixed" things in South America, Europe and the League of Nations will get more attention.

Trade Union Banks

It used to be the working man in the Co-operative Stores who was a capitalist. Now Sir G. Paish believes that some American Trade Unions are becoming capitalists because they have purchased banks of their own. He thinks that the workers will become the capitalist class—*i.e.*, water will lose its wetness and yet be water.

Whatever may be the looseness in Sir G. Paish's idea of capital the Labour Banks will be watched with keen interest. Their number increases. The Clothing Workers, the Railroad Workers and Locomotive Engineers are prominent in the movement.

Unlike the proposals of Douglas these banks have not been formed jointly by the employers and employees. The Unions merely look after and use their own savings. Whether they will strengthen the conservative tendencies in the workers or make the industrial work of the unions more effective remains to be seen—as also whether the J. P. Morgan interests will limit their activity. If their promoters think that by working-class control over working-class *savings* the workers will emancipate themselves they are lifting themselves by their own boot straps with a vengeance.

In England the closer alliance between the C.W.S. Bank and the Trade Unions lessens the opportunity for such developments here. Although recent events at Pelaw and Silvertown are gravely disconcerting for us who welcomed that growing unity.

The Younger Students

The College S.S.S. (Glasgow) wants to know about books suitable for use among juveniles. There are for prehistoric times Mary Marcy's *Rhymes of Early Jungle Folk* (12s.), and her *Cave Stories* (5s.), Gowans Whyte *Wonder Stories* and Moore's *Savage Survivals* contain much good material. The *Piers Plowman Histories* (both junior and senior books) have a wealth of the very necessary pictures. For syllabuses and reading lists, G. Malton, 102, Wharn Cliffe Drive, Eccleshill, Bradford, is a useful man to know. Teachers keen on creating really international history books for children should keep in touch with M. Boubou, Edukista Internacio, 96 rue St. Marceau, Orléans (Loiret), France.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

SCOTCH STUDENT asks the cause of the Stabilisation of the Austrian currency. The reason is that the Allied Governments have given their support to the raising of an international loan for the purpose of stabilising Austrian finances. The proceeds are administered by a special committee of the League of Nations, which has certain powers over the Austrian Government. This loan enables the Budget to be balanced, and consequently inflation of the currency to be stopped. The check to inflation checks the fall in the internal and the external value of the krone. This has not been achieved, however, without bringing depression to industry (due to the cessation of the artificial stimulus afforded by rising prices), and consequently unemployment. Moreover, the Committee of the League has imposed severe measures of "economy" such as dismissal of State employees, reductions of wages, abolition of bread subsidies, etc. It shows that stabilisation can be effected in cases where (1) Loans and credit can be given from outside. (2) There can be a large reduction of the working class standard of life. It shows, however, that

stabilisation is unlikely in the absence of these conditions.

X. Y.—Yes, G. D. H. Cole does publicly declare himself a Socialist and a Marxian, and is still allowed to teach in the W.E.A. However, one swallow does not make summer. Mr. Webb probably declared himself a Socialist when he was permeating Liberalism yet that did not make unnecessary the I.L.P. Besides Mr. Cole is cleverer than most people, and thinks he can divide himself up into two people—the W.E.A. "educator" and the Marxian "propagandist."

J. W. calls our attention to the hoary error that re-appeared in the *Herald* (17/5/23) where it was stated that Trade Unions are thousands of years old and that the modern ones came out of the guilds. Evidently the *Herald* does not even keep a copy of Webbs' *Trade Unionism* in its office.

Yes, B.T., Professor Henry Clay, who will lecture for the Liberal Summer School shortly is the same person who mis-quoted Marx in his *Economics*—widely used in W.E.A. classes.

Marx's Economic Theories : by Karl Kautsky

An extract from the preface to the Third Volume of Marx's *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, written on the Anniversary of Marx's Death, 14th March, 1910.

THE volume lying before us shows how Marx in 1862, with the greatest precision traced out and brought into prominence what had been accomplished before his time regarding the explanation of surplus value, in the course of the further development of the Ricardian Value Theory. That the completion of his plan came so late was not his fault but that of an adverse fate.

Formally, what is contained here is fragmentary. Actually it forms a rounded whole. Marx gives in this volume the entire development of the theory of surplus-value up to the point at which he himself connects with it. With Richard Jones, bourgeois political economy came to an end as a theory of the total economic process of the capitalist mode of production, as an impartial endeavour to comprehend its working and became a partisan attempt at its justification. Neither historically nor logically can bourgeois political economy reach beyond this climax of its growth. The historical situation since the rise of Chartism has robbed it of impartiality and furthermore so long as it remains within the bounds of bourgeois society it is logically incapable of surpassing the conception of the capitalist mode of production put forward by Richard Jones, namely that it is a historical category.

The further progress of the theory of the total process (we do not speak here of the investigation of partial phenomena) beyond Jones can only be achieved from a standpoint which is superior to bourgeois society and reaches out towards its successor, that is to say a Socialist standpoint. Where Richard Jones left off, Karl Marx begins.

If, however, after Chartism, the June Days and Richard Jones an advance in the theoretical knowledge of the total

process of the capitalist mode of production and its tendencies of development could only come from the Socialist side, how is it to be explained that this Socialist school itself has not been able to surpass Karl Marx, or "Capital," or the knowledge that has existed for half a century, in any essential matter? It is just in this connection that the great practical interest of the present volume lies.

About a dozen years ago there appeared in our ranks a section, who started from the view that scientific teaching must change with the rapidity of fashions in clothes and that a teaching must be untenable for the simple reason that it was fifty years old. They sought to proceed beyond Marx to a higher knowledge. They have in their search for a way past Marx only managed to fall behind him.

The ill-success of Revisionism in its endeavours to improve the theory show clearly that in the foundations of political economy we have not yet succeeded in getting beyond Marx.

How is this to be explained in a period of continuous revolutionising of the sciences of nature? Whence the barrenness of political economy?

One of the grounds of explanation lies in the personality of Karl Marx, supported as he was by Frederick Engels; Intellectual giants of this kind, who unite so wide an outlook, such extensive knowledge, such profound acquaintance with special departments of science to a familiarity with practical affairs, are seldom to be found. When such a great thinker occupies himself with a region of science, he is usually able to dominate it for a long time as king. His construction may be touched up but is in itself unsurpassable.

Nevertheless a superiority of this kind can only exist within the region that has been mapped out. Should this

be limited, transformed or extended through new facts, new methods of observation which show the facts in a new light, then the dominance of the hitherto prevailing authority must give way no matter how overwhelming it has been.

New facts and methods of this kind have, however, not appeared in political economy since the time when "Capital" was written and hence its ascendancy remains. Already when Marx was working on his "Capital" the germs of those phenomena, the concentration of capital and the control of industry by joint stock companies and banks which to-day determine the economic life of the world, had made their appearance. Marx was permitted to acquaint himself with the first green shoots of the ruling tendencies of to-day. Consequently all the developments of the last fifty years instead of making the Marxian theory of capitalism useless have but gone to confirm its conclusions. This is demonstrated by the steady increase in the number of Marx critics. Only something living, whose power is feared, could call forth such rage as they display.

It was Marx's good luck, and also ours, that he studied capitalism at a time when, at least in England, it had developed its own peculiar character much more completely than in the time of Ricardo; that he investigated a capitalism which had already begun to develop its last and highest forms.

For beyond the domination of centralised industry by joint stock companies and banks capitalism cannot pass; capital has here become a completely impersonal, a purely social power. If for fifty years a further development of the *theory of capitalism* was only possible from a *Socialist standpoint*, so to-day an advance over the *practice of capitalism* is only possible by way of *Socialist production!* That is to say in other words the overcoming of the *theory* founded by Marx is only possible through the victorious advance of the *practice* which he pioneered. The theorist Marx can not be displaced by another theorist, but only by Marx, the man of action. So long as that has not taken place he will continue to dominate the theory of capitalism; his "Capital" will remain the great original source of scientific knowledge regarding economic matters, the classical work of political economy.

I consider therefore the publication of this volume not merely to be an act of piety performed in honour of the dead master, but also to be an important event for the scientific world as well as for the fighting proletariat, because therewith is completed the work, which, commencing half a century ago with the writing of "The Critique of Political Economy" has since then in a steadily rising degree determined the political and economic thought and action of the workers of all nations in the proletarian class struggle.

LETTERS

IUS PRIMÆ NOCTIS

DEAR EDITOR,—The *ius primæ noctis* was in vogue in Christian Europe as recently as last century, viz. : in Imperial Russia, where it was only abolished rather less than a hundred years ago. An account of this can be seen in the Cambridge Modern History in the section written by Professor Askenazy, formerly Professor of History at Lemberg University. I do not possess the section referred to, but I believe he quotes Russian authorities.

In any case, whether it was a legal "jus" or not, the custom was in effect practised, as can be gathered from

intelligent reading of some of the novels of the great Russian writers.

Yours, etc.,

A. P. L.

BIOLOGY

DEAR COMRADE,—I am astounded at J. J.'s attack on C. P. Dutt's *Biology Syllabus* in the May PLEBS. For the first time the working-class reader without technical training has been offered a guide to the living body of current inquiry in biological science in place of tedious anatomical titbits and academic teleological surmises of the Darwinian epoch.

I am not sorry on Dutt's behalf, for

the handsome appreciation he has gained in *The Scientific Worker* may at least give him the satisfaction of knowing that he has earned for independent working-class education some measure of attention from men who are actually devoting their lives to the furtherance of knowledge. But I do regret keenly that J. J. should have taken sides with a happily obsolescent generation of arm-chair professors to oppose a revolution in biological thought which to those who understand it implies a charge quite as profound as that with which the name of Darwin is associated.

Yours always,

P. L. E. B.

J. J. writes:—The astonishment of P. L. E. B. at my criticism—which he calls an "attack," on C. P. Dutt's *Syllabus* is really very interesting. Biological research has always run in fashions and whoever would seek salvation must crack up the current methods and deprecate the old ones. At present the younger Zoologists are preoccupied with the study of sex and related problems and so, as P. L. E. B. suggests, they regard workers who are not intensely interested in these matters as a "happily obsolescent generation." Of course this is the way science advances and the attitude is conventional.

But what we are concerned with here is the best way to present biological science to working-class audiences. Both P. L. E. B. and I have been through the mill and have had the advantage of an all-round training and we know the ordinary facts of anatomy and physiology though our actual experience of research is on very different lines. We don't agree as to the interpretation of many of the results of modern "genetics" and that indicates that something less debatable should be the subject of a working-class biological course. In fact I know because I have really tried—not only the anatomical titbits and the teleological surmises, but also Mendelism, and factors, and sex-linkages, and the ductless glands, and crossing-over in the Chromosomics, and all that sort of thing. I advise all class lecturers to buy C. P. Dutt's *Syllabus* and read it and the books recommended—and then construct a really balanced course of instruction for themselves.

STERILISED MARXISM

COMRADE,—I have just read the March PLEBS, beginning with the defence of its "non-party" character and ending with the reply to Comrade Palme Dutt, who, I gather, has attacked the non-party position of The PLEBS and the N.C.L.C.

I don't want to take sides in this discussion, which by now, no doubt, has fizzled out. But as an admirer of The PLEBS I should like to suggest a new area of study! *How Marxism can be useful to Reformists*. I may have put it clumsily, but you'll get my meaning directly.

I see you quote as a parting shot against Dutt a paragraph from the Webbs' latest book, *The Decay of Capitalist Civilisation*. You add that not the least striking thing is that the Webbs should have written this piece of Marxism. To me the question presents itself: "If Reformist writers like Webb can write stuff which becomes more and more permeated with the Marxian view of history, what time their political attitude becomes more and more permeated with the Reformist view what is to prevent readers drinking all this academic Marxism without its making the least difference to their class consciousness, class enthusiasm, yes, even robbing them of their fighting punch!"

I am just reading the brochure that Lenin wrote in 1902, *What to do?* He describes in that brochure the great vogue that Marxism had in Russia in the nineties. Liberals took up Marxism in their fight against the Populists, who based their political theory on peasant economy. Strouve, now a white guard, was really a capitalist Liberal in Social Democratic garb when he wrote the manifesto of the first Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Party in 1898, and afterwards went over to the Liberals. Lenin at that time pointed out the cloven hoof of Liberalism below the Marxist jargon of Strouve's articles.

The question is: How to prevent the academic, "non-party" study of Marxism becoming grist to the mill of mere Liberalism. You know how the church long ago adopted the jargon of science, and the Russian church has only just now adopted the slogans of the class war as the price of existence;

he Webbs no less have to conform to the times—how are we to make sure that Marxian education is not going to supply the Frank Hodges of a more advanced generation?

The answer seems to be clear. Marxism is a living thing. We can only insure ourselves against rearing up Marxist experts for the service of the reaction by teaching Marx right up to the latest development of his principles, and his latest development is the Leninian development of Marxism. To-day the only Marxism which can be true to the spirit of Marx is Marx plus Lenin. But no one can study Lenin (for example why did he split the Party in 1903) without studying Party tactics, relation of Party to the State and to the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. It seems to me then that the teaching of Marx, ignoring his Party, becomes as bloodless as a life of Lenin with all reference to the Bolsheviks left out.

Thus, Comrade Editor, I have managed to slip in a second subject of study—"The Study of Lenin."

Fraternally yours,

D. IVON JONES.

Moscow, May 21st, 1923.

TRAINING TUTORS

DEAR COMRADE,—I was interested to note the suggestions from the London Council I.W.C.E. re the examination of prospective tutors. Perhaps it will be of general interest to state what the Liverpool and District Labour College is doing in this connection. Faced with the difficulty of providing tutors, in view of the extension of our classes consequent upon the A.U.B.T.W., N.U.D.A.W., and other Unions' educational schemes, we have set up two Tutors' Classes for the summer months. The course taken is "Modern Industrial History" (twelve lectures) based on Craik's textbook. This course will be most in demand to meet the needs of new students in our movement.

Each member of the class in turn gives a lecture. The others take part in questions and discussion. One of the full-time tutors in charge of the class then sums up, points out obvious errors, mistakes in delivery, etc. In addition each member of the class writes an essay and answers questions bearing on each lecture. We provide a skeleton outline of the course.

So far the experiment has been eminently successful. Unlooked-for lecturing talent has been discovered, and we anticipate the accession of at least ten capable tutors to our staff capable of dealing effectively with this subject.

Fraternally yours,

J. HAMILTON.

"R. U. R."

DEAR COMRADE,—*R. U. R.* is a real play (which *The Insect Play* wasn't) and a good one. But how anyone can read into it, as Eden and Cedar Paul do, any coherent criticism of our present-day social structure beats me completely. They call it Marxian; I should call it Byronic.

The manager of the Robot-making company is surely on impregnable ground when he claims, just before the final onrush of the Robots, that the making of Robots *must* continue if mankind is to be relieved from drudgery. All opposition to this view whether from his sentimental wife, or her old servant, or the religious clerk of the works, is just so much Ruskinian flather!

Yours,

A. A.

A BOOK OF NOTE

DEAR EDITOR,—In the *Literary Guide* (the organ of the Rationalists) for February appears a review of *A Study in Moral Problems* by B. M. Laing. Judging from the quotation below there must be some good matter in the book for Marxian students.

"...Hence it may be said that morality supervenes upon or is sustained by conditions. This would imply that an explanation both of goodness and of evil is to be sought in conditions and that accordingly if we want to improve morality and to make morality strictly a system of actions and human qualities which are good without any admixture of evil, we must turn to conditions and to control of conditions as the way to our end."

The review of the book is headed: "Conditions first, Morality next."

Yours faithfully,

A. P. L.

REVIEWS

HOBSONIAN OR MARXIAN ?

Out of Work. By G. D. H. Cole. (Lab. Pub. Co., 18.)

AN American Marxian is reported to have once attended a strike meeting at which he, as a "hardshell," fired the following questions: Is labour-power a commodity which you sell to the boss? Can you lift the price of a commodity in a falling market? Then why in hell are you on strike? Cole claims to be a Marxian too, but he certainly is not of that doctrinaire type.

Most of us lazily say in an off-hand way: "Well, what do you expect but unemployment from capitalism?" Not so Cole, who industriously produces a book which could well be placed in the hands of any outside person who has never felt the supreme indignity of hawking his labour-power among little "Jacks in office"—and in vain. The final sentence of this useful booklet repeats the well worn dictum that only the international triumph of the workers will finally destroy unemployment. Yet leading up to this, the preceding chapters examine in simple fashion all the main factors aggravating post-war unemployment—restriction of production by Trusts, the growing mass of impersonal capital and its inflation, the effect of foreign exchanges, and the rival policies of currency inflation and deflation.

Nothing new is given except an attempt to blend the *under-consumption* theory of Hobson with the Marxian *mal-adjustment of industry* recently discussed in these columns. Cole rejects the Douglas idea of insufficient purchasing power but believes that at present it is wrongly distributed and this is to him the root cause of all the trouble. If Cole were less of a Hobsonian and more of a Marxian we should hear of the more fundamental cause—the production of Surplus Values which glut the market. What he calls faulty distribution of purchasing power is created by the difference between the value of labour-power and the value of the product of labour. [Strangely enough a Marxian Guilds-

man ignores the *producer's* point of view.] Again, a Marxian would have said something about the relative decrease of variable capital, the results of machinery, the necessity of a reserve of labour to employers and the falling rate of profit. We should hear less about "the capitalist disease of under-consumption." Mr. Hobson should welcome his efficient populariser; but we are not convinced that in no other name than Marx can devils be cast out!

The attitude of the last chapter is: Fain would I revolute with the Communists yet fear I to fail. However, he concludes with the belief that, despite its dependance upon an oversea supply of food, Britain has a chance of destroying its own section of capitalism and thus making "out of work" a state only to be remembered with horror.

M. S.

THE WORKERS' REGISTER

The Workers' Register of Labour and Capital, 1923. Prepared by the Labour Research Dept. (Lab. Pub. Co., 3s. 6d.)

The introduction states:—"We have aimed at registering the forces at the disposal of the two parties to the industrial struggle, at providing a record of what has been done and experienced, . . . during the period since the conclusion of the war."

The book is divided into two parts. In the first we are given an admirable survey of the workers' post-war struggles, of how the employing class played for time and favourable conditions, secured both, and launched a successful offensive against the workers' standard of living. In this section there is valuable material, statistical and otherwise, relating to T.U. organisation, unemployment, wages, hours, cost of living, and so on.

In the second part, the survey covers "not merely the organisation which the employers have built up to combat Labour, but still more, the business organisation of modern capitalist industry and finance."

Possessors of our textbooks on Economics and Imperialism, of Craik's and Carr's outlines, will find in the *Workers' Register* indispensable supplementary material. Plebs should get it for that reason, and an additional one—to encourage its publishers to make it an annual feature. Space permits of only single criticism. We cannot but regard as inadequate a "Register" which overlooks the Labour College movement. It is not above the industrial battle, *but part of it*: it is a force to the disposal of one of the "parties" in the industrial struggle." Subsequent editions should find a place for the increasingly important connection between working-class education under workers' control, for workers' aims, and the "industrial struggle."

W. H. R.

GET THIS BOOK

Through the Russian Revolution. By A. Rhys Williams (Labour Publishing Co., 7s. 6d.).

The least one can say about this book is that it more than deserves all the praises showered upon it. To my thinking it is better even than Reed's *Ten Days that Shook the World*. Ranome is a dilettante compared with Williams, who entered completely into the spirit and enthusiasm of the great days of November, 1917, and after. He makes one feel:—"Good was it in that dawn to be alive, and to be in Petrograd was very heaven!"

No set of books on the Russian Revolution can claim to be complete without these vivid pulsating pictures of 1917. You will sleep late and lose a shift if you begin it at night. The coloured posters and photographs contribute to the wonderfully graphic nature of the book.

In these days when the cumulative effect of biased information has dimmed our memory of the achievements of the Revolution, when we hear so much about the lowering of the Bolshevik ideals, no better reminder or stimulant could be found. No wonder the *Times Literary Supplement* attacked it. No wonder Curzon feels the very existence of Russia to be a danger. It is not a book to write about but to read again and again.

M. S.

DIPLOMACY

The Falsifications of the Russian Orange Book. By Baron G. von Romberg. Translated by Major Cyprian Bridge, with a Foreword by G. P. Gooch. (Allen & Unwin, 2s. 6d. 63 pages.)

In only one respect is this work a "remarkable" achievement—the German compiler, the translator, and the writer of the Foreword have all three co-operated in the book *without once mentioning the Bolsheviki* to whose publication of the Tsarist Government's Archives the present revelations are alone due.

During the war it was rather amusing to observe the pastime indulged in at various times by some members of our Socialist sects. The pastime consisted in showing the wickedness or amiability of this or that warring Power by contrasting selected paragraphs out of the various governmental "coloured books" of documents relative to the outbreak of war; we had the English Blue Book, the German White Book, the Russian Orange Book, and so on. Surely every real Socialist must have realised that these governmental books were all arranged and edited so as to "save the face" as far as possible of the Governments severally concerned, and to whip up the fervour of the common people everywhere for "defence."

The volume under review proves this thesis as regards the Russian Government of the Tsar and incidentally also clearly shows the keen desire of the *French Government for war before any ultimatums even had been launched*—see document given lower down.

The book consists of official dispatches that passed between the Tsar's Foreign Office (Mr. Sazonov) in Petrograd and the Russian Embassy (Mr. Izvolski) in Paris during that anxious week of 1914 from July 24th to August 2nd. The dispatches, with their official numbers, are all clearly set out, those that were entirely omitted from the Orange Book and the portions that were left out or falsified being printed in italics. Baron Romberg has added copious explanatory footnotes in addition to an introduction. The only

dispatch I shall quote is the following, omitted from the Tsar's Orange Book :—

Ambassador in France to Foreign Minister.

Telegram No. 216. Paris, July 31.
From Military Attaché to War Minister. I a.m.

The French War Minister informed me in earnest, hearty tones that the Government is firmly decided upon war, and requested me to confirm the hope of the French General Staff that all our efforts will be directed against Germany, and that Austria will be treated as a negligible quantity.

IZVOLSKI.

Mr. G. P. Gooch, in his Foreword, is responsible for a particularly insidious piece of anti-Bolshevik propaganda—I suppose this is why in Liberal circles he is regarded as an eminent historian! After declaring that the original Orange Book was a dishonest piece of work, he goes on to say that "the reputation of the Russian Foreign Office has sustained a damaging blow from the latest revelation of its tortuous methods." He deliberately refrains from pointing out that the present Foreign Office of the Soviet has no connection with the Foreign Office of the Tsar, whose tortuous methods are in question. Mr. Gooch also "warns" his readers that the footnotes are written "by a German diplomat passionately anxious to rebut what he regards as unjust accusations against his country"—and therefore require critical study. It is a pity Liberals did not indulge in a little "critical study" of things and events before the Versailles Treaty was concocted. But then, after all, the Labour Party was just as silent!

A. P. L.

Geo. Belt's new book, *Production*—reviewed in our last issue by Tom Mann—can be had (postpaid) for 3s. 8d., from G. Belt, *Daily Herald* Office, 2, Carmelite Street, E.C.4. A 4 pp. leaflet containing suggestions on the running of classes in Public Speaking will be sent free from the same address on application.

"UNBIASED" EDUCATION IN AMERICA

Upton Sinclair has always been a good friend of ours, but the review copy of his latest book, "The Goose Step"—which by reason of its subject-matter would appeal to us very particularly—seems to have gone astray in the mail somewhere. So we are quoting one or two extracts from a review of the book published in "Industrial Solidarity" and later reprinted in "L'École Emancipée."

Re the proprietors of American Universities:—It is generally believed that the American Universities exist for the sole purpose of affording education to "all classes in society." The class conscious workers of the United States have long since recognised, however, that these institutions really serve only the interests of the capitalist class.

Sinclair makes some astonishing revelations regarding the fact that the directors of the largest of these universities are also the directors of the big industries. "It is impossible," he says, "to distinguish between a document issued by Harvard University and one issued by Lee, Higginson and Co., the Boston banking house. The same thing applies to Pennsylvania University and the United Gas Company."

So with all the universities in the country. The point of view of the teaching in state institutions or establishments controlled by private individuals is strictly in harmony with the interests of industrial and financial capitalism. The same people control them, serving at one and the same time the interests of capitalism and those of "higher" education.

Re The University Board of Education:—The first and most indispensable qualification of a college principal is that he should be a faithful servant of the proprietors of his university. It is in this spirit that he has to organise "higher" education. He must give instruction that will tend to the preservation of capitalism.

Re University professors:—It is impossible to imagine anything worse than the position of a professor. In recent years the question of free speech has become a burning one. Such of

them as are faithful to the interests of capitalism can keep their posts, those who refuse to do so risk losing their position and are liable to be "excluded" from the university. The expulsion of Scott Nearing from Pennsylvania University was a typical case.

All "radical" clubs among students are suppressed. One girl of Russian origin was sent away from Columbia, she at once entered Hunter College. As the result of an inquiry she was dismissed from that institution. Why? "She was a Socialist and was known to have expressed sympathy with Soviet Russia." Q.E.D. There are, however, some exceptions and Sinclair pays a tribute to such schools as permit of freedom of thought and speech.

Sinclair is agitating for a general strike by the American professors to free them from the moral tyranny which enslaves them, and to improve their conditions. He recognises, however, that Labour is "the ultimate liberator" who will free education when it frees itself from the bondage of capitalism.

A BUNCH OF PAMPHLETS

Women's Work in the Labour Party (20 pp., 6d.) is full of useful advice upon the detail work of a Women's Section, including everything from the keeping of branch accounts to running a public meeting and canvassing and lecturing.

As a consequence of the attempts made to lengthen working hours the T.U.C. and the Labour Party set up an inquiry whose *Interim Report on Hours* (12 pp., 3d.) is now published. The main argument prepared for a middle-class audience is that working costs can be lessened by a shorter working-day. George Hicks' *How to Get Houses* (3d.) is also now available in its second edition.

Frank Rose, M.P., wants, in *Sword-Blades or Ploughshares?* (12 pp., 3d.), an agreement between Britain and America to control their steel and iron industries and limit armaments. We suppose there's no harm in asking the pigs not to grunt. Mr. Snowden asks for the same miracle in his speech against *The Big-Business Budget*, reprinted as a penny pamphlet. In both appeals much useful detail is given. When,

however, one capitalist pig got stuck both our authors criticised the people who really ended the grunting—but there, logic is often not a strong point in Labour Party policies and pamphlets.

Readers interested in learning how and why the armament rings sabotaged Woolwich Arsenal and other national factories will find *War and Peace* (6d.) by Gilbert Slater very useful. *A Syllabus of Religious Positivism* (6d., Daniel), by Malcolm Quin, speaks for itself. Those interested in the problem of training technical workers should read *Apprenticeship in Modern Industry* (3d., Guilds League) where G. W. Thomson briefly outlines how the apprentice should be indentured to the Trade Union, which would all be very nice if men like Sir Allan Smith did not block the way. However, with that person removed the problem would still have to be faced because technical skill, although lessened will never be entirely eliminated.

Part of the articles written by Ness Edwards, and printed in *The PLEBS* have now been reprinted in pamphlet form, *The Early Trade Unions of South Wales* (2d., Western Valleys Labour College). They are well worth while to all Trade Unionists (not merely to Welshmen) as a reminder of the times before 1834, when to be a Trade Unionist was decidedly not healthy. It is a shame that Edwards' complete material cannot be published in book form; but two or three pamphlets like this will be a lot better than nothing at all.

K.

THE SOVIET CONSTITUTION

The Soviet Constitution: edited by Andrew Rothstein for the Russian Trade Delegation (Labour Publishing Co., 2s. 6d.).

This book is both valuable and interesting. It consists of three parts: I. The text of the Soviet constitution, as passed in July, 1918. II. Amendments and additions up to the end of 1921. The Third part deals with the constitution at work, 1918—1922, and there is an appendix which gives the Treaty or Declaration of Union between Russia and the various lesser Soviet Republics. (By the by, it is interesting to note that the main provision of the Union is precisely the inverse of that

of the American Union: each state may leave the Union whenever it wishes.) The possession of these documents and a knowledge of the exact facts concerning the Soviet system is of great importance. Other texts have appeared (I possess three in English and one in French) but they are either out of date or inaccurate.

More important is part III., which I believe appeared in irregular scraps in the *Russian Review*, where it was not very helpful. As it stands, however, it is of great value. It is a brief account of how in fact the Soviet constitution works, and a rough estimate of the relative importance, at present, of the various organs of Soviet government. It is both concisely and clearly written. In reading this book, it is advisable to start with Part III. and then turn back to the documents.

R. W. P.

HUMANISM

The Life Story of a Humanist. By F. J. Gould. (Watts & Co., 4s. 6d.)

Mr. Gould has spent a life-time attacking orthodox religion and education. The solid part of his achievements, to us, lies entirely in the realm of child-education. In middle life he threw in his lot with the positivists, whose prophet is Auguste Comte, "that shallow thinker" as Marx rashly observed to Beesley.

The followers of Comte have to be optimistic and creative, but their perpetual stoking of the fires of progress seems to leave their mentality rather weak at times. The effect might be paralleled, in another sphere, by the Nemesis of excessive procreative efforts. Lassitude overtakes the all-embracing generative genius.

We suppose it was during one of these periods of convalescence that Mr. Gould discovered the justice of England's fight for Little Belgium. But it may have been the full Positivist inspiration led him to it: for he argued with himself that since the world is progressing, and all the world has gone to war, therefore the war is just (see page 161). From warmongering Mr. Gould has appropriately turned to cultivating the League of Nations Garden, but the plants are not so hale as he could wish.

These Humanists!—sub-Humanists!

J. G. C.

WASTE PAPER

Report of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International (Communist Party, 1s. 6d.). *Resolutions and Theses* of the same (Communist Party, 1s.).

These deplorable publications are a clear sign of one of the present troubles of the Communist Party in Great Britain—which is, a great mass of useless publications. Over two years ago J. S. Clarke in the *Worker* remarked that the English and Scottish workers were fed up with the publication of theses, reports and resolutions. The Communist Party has learnt nothing. These new volumes will interest only members of the party and very few of these; their propaganda value is a minus quantity. They are enormously long, badly printed and very boring.

Behind this enormous mass of verbiage there must, we suppose, be something; but no worker will ever plough through to it. It is disastrous, when so little money is available for left-wing publications, that the C. P. should waste their money on this. For all the use it is, they might as well have poured the workers' money down the King Street drains.

B. P.

FOR STUDENTS

The Labour International Year Book, 1923. Prepared by the Labour Research Dept. (Lab. Pub. Co., 2s. 6d.).

This book, of 120 pages, is on the short side, and makes no attempt to cover the area covered by the larger 1921 book. It has very few tables and statistical information, and is in parts more like an article than a book of reference. This particularly applies to Chapters IV., V. and VI., dealing with Russia, India, Egypt, Ireland and the Internationals. On the whole, given the limited space, this is probably all to the good.

It appears to be accurate, is as full as could reasonably be expected, and is altogether a good book to have upon one's shelves. The chapters upon the effects of the Peace Treaty, and the general decline of capitalism are most informative. The other "article" part, is of variable value; the part on Russia contains very few facts and no figures, and does not mention the famine.

F. O.

ESPERANTO NOTES

Parrot Guides and Dumb Travellers

THE Workers' Travel Association (Toynbee Hall, 28, Commercial Street, E. 1), is, with other agencies, doing excellent work in making European travel accessible to workers. Often in pushing the claims of an international language one is met by the reply: "Yes, but I have no chance of getting into personal contact with comrades abroad and hence, outside of correspondence, could make no practical use of an auxiliary tongue." That certainly is no longer true. Incidentally the W.T.A. could give its tourists more intimate personal contact with the workers of other countries by encouraging the use of Esperanto and thus escape the thralldom of professional interpreters and parrot guides in charge of the usual dumb and sheep-like groups of travellers.

The Business Men's Conference

Representatives of twenty Trade Fairs of Europe and 180 Chambers of Commerce, Industrial and Banking Associations and Touring Syndicates from twenty-two countries met in Venice from the 2nd to the 5th April to confer on the diffusion of a common commercial language. All the proceedings were conducted in Esperanto, although some of the delegates had not been studying the language for more than a few weeks. It was generally agreed that Esperanto could be a useful aid to profit-making.

When will the labour unions hold an international conference on the value of Esperanto to them? The recent change in the attitude of *The Daily Herald* to the language question may

be an indication that the time is not far distant.

New Class in Forest Gate

West Ham Borough Council has offered a class-room free of charge for a course in Esperanto which will begin in September. Many of the students are members of the N.U.R. Locals who wish to enrol should write to the teacher, James Gourlay, F.B.E.A., 71, Godwin Road, Forest Gate, E. 7.

Greetings

The comrades of the Groupe Esperantiste Revolutionaire from a meeting addressed by Mark Starr, 4/6/23, in the Paris Bourse du Travail, sent "korajn salutojn" to Plebeians. Notice of the meeting appeared in *Humanite* and *Populaire* and once again Esperanto swept aside the divisions created by language barriers.

Ilo ne Celo

Guérard (*History of International Movement*, p. 123), says "It is curious to note that the language of peace and goodwill was pressed into service by the contending nations. Esperanto must have a material and spiritual power of some importance, for Germany and France, who had no power to waste on trifles or dreams, found it worth their while to send forth documents and appeals in the auxiliary tongue. A German-Esperanto-Dienst scattered broadcast Esperanto translations of the daily Bulletin of the General Staff; a fortnightly illustrated review, *Internacia Bulleno, duonmonata informilo pri la milito* spread in many lands the strange concoction known as German truth. On the French side, a committee *Por Francujo, per Esperanto*,

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published a number of leaflets, and, among more ambitious documents, a *Report on Acts contrary to the Laws of Nations*. [This was French truth!] Esperanto was used to some extent by the admirable Swiss committees which collected and communicated information about the fate of war prisoners."

Are the advantages of Esperanto going only to the bosses? Is the "Bobbies International" going to leave the Second and the Third Internationals behind? The Labour Office of the League of Nations circulates a Bulletin in Esperanto, but Labour sticks in the mud of the old way. At the Stuttgart Congress (1907) the Second

International refused to discuss the question of an international language "as not yet ripe." How much longer will it wait?

Broadcasting Up-to-date

The first four chapters of *The PLEBS Outline of Psychology* have been translated into Esperanto by the Manchester B.L.E.S. group, and will probably first appear at the request of the *Edukista Internacio in Sennacieca Revuo* (6d. monthly from A. Atherton, 11, Powis Square (7 Flat), Bayswater, W. 2.). The Internacio is translating all *The PLEBS* Syllabuses and plans for Textbooks as they appear.

C. W. V.

Labour College Students' Association

BY A STUDENT

FOR a long time past it has been felt desirable that some organisation should exist in which past and present students of the Labour College could be brought together. Such an organisation could provide a channel for the exchange of views and ideas which would be helpful to the students in their work, after leaving the College, of lecturing and organising, and also help to solidify the attempts now being made to extend the activities of the Labour College itself. Another purpose, perhaps not less important, would be to preserve the friendships created during residence at the College.

The need for an association of this description has been further emphasised by the agitation of the present students for representation on the Governing Body of the College. In an age when democracy is supposed to be rampant it is rather surprising that students of a "Labour" College have no voice in control. Complete control of the College is not desired, but it must be evident to all that the students could give much valuable assistance, not merely in the administration of the College, but also in the actual arrangement of the curriculum. During 1921-23 the students have pressed for this, but so far unsuccessfully. An

organisation of students and ex-students could do much to obtain this by agitation in the branches and lodges of the Unions concerned.

The students now in residence decided on June 15th to form the Labour College Students' Association. They have drawn up rules and regulations which are as follows:—

(1) The name shall be "The Labour College Students' Association."

(2) *Objects*.—

(a) To promote the aims and objects of the Labour College, by co-operation of present and past students and to present a uniform policy whereby this can be done.

(b) To work for the improvement and extension of the present educational activities of the Labour College.

(c) To further the movement initiated by the students of 1921-3, *i.e.* in respect of giving students a voice in the management and administration of the Labour College.

(d) To help new students by an interchange of ideas, by advice, hints on reading, books and information, and by help on, and interchange of, lecture courses.

(e) To enable ex-students to keep in touch with the affairs of the Labour College.

(f) To form a channel of intercourse on educational subjects between ex-students or between ex-students and students.

(g) To enable friendships that have been made during residence at the College to remain intact and strengthened.

(h) To endeavour to arrange an annual re-union commencing Whitsun Week, 1924.

(3) *Conditions of Membership.*—

(a) Membership shall be open to all students and ex-students of the London Labour College and its immediate predecessor, the Central Labour College, who agree to further the objects of the Association as outlined above.

(b) The minimum subscription shall be 1s. per annum.

(4) The Secretary shall be appointed annually and shall be a resident second year student of the London Labour College. The secretary shall have power to make an additional levy of not more than 1s. per annum if it becomes necessary. He shall be responsible for keeping an up-to-date list of members' names and addresses. He shall reply to all inquiries made by ex-students and shall be the means by which one member may approach another. He shall keep all members informed of any special matter appertaining to the College and the

educational movement. The retiring secretary shall inform the members of the new secretary on appointment.

All members shall keep the secretary informed of any special matters appertaining to the educational movement in their respective districts.

The Association is to be affiliated to the Plebs League.

It was thought desirable to appoint a resident student as secretary in order that permanency of address would be secured. For the ensuing year, Comrade A. Glyn Evans was elected, whose address is, of course' 13, Penywern Road, Earl's Court, S.W. 5.

The PLEBS has promised to give space for any announcement that the secretary has to make. By this means information of the L.C.S.A. can be made known, but the secretary will circulate any special communication to the members when necessary.

The success of the Association depends largely upon the support given to it by ex-students. It is therefore important that all who support its aims should communicate with the secretary at once.

The Association will work, not independently of The PLEBS and N.C.L.C., but in conjunction with them, and thereby materially assist in the advancement of Independent Working-Class Education.

The PLEBS Page

THE Summer School looks like being a big success, and comrades wishing to attend should send at once to be sure of a place. There is no doubt that it will be an enjoyable week. It is quite likely that we shall get a rush of folk wanting to book at the last minute, so make your minds up and come and have a good time amongst congenial companions. We are trying to arrange a special programme for the Sunday (August 12th), so that friends in Lancashire and Yorkshire who cannot get for all the week can come on that day. More of this in the August Magazine. Meantime, book the date.

N.U.G.W.

A comrade writes:—At the next District Council Meeting of the National Union of General Workers (Lancs Dist.) held some Saturday in July, a resolution on I.W.C.E. asking the Union to affiliate both nationally and locally will be brought forward. I would like to ask all Plebeians interested to do their bit to get support for the resolution. Please note.

Liverpool

Liverpool Labour College students have formed an Association which will hold the students together after the classes have stopped by various means such as rambles, dramatic per-

formances, discussions and social activities generally. A good number have joined and the Association promises to be a success. It meets weekly on Thursdays, and all past students and members of the Plebs League are urged to join in this effort to revive and keep alive interest in the classes. Write J. Hamilton, 99, Botanic Street, Liverpool.

Manchester

The fifth annual Garden Party and Carnival of the Manchester Labour College will again take place in the grounds of Dalton Hall, Conyngham Road, Victoria Park, on July 28th. An excellent programme has been arranged, including sports, sideshows, a choir and a dramatic performance. A. A. Purcell (President Manchester Trades and Labour Council) will speak on "War and Education." Admission is free, refreshment tickets 1s., programme 2d. Prizes will be awarded for the best and most original fancy dress. All Plebeians should come along and bring their friends. The propaganda value of such social gatherings is very often under-rated, and there is no doubt that a successful meeting of this sort often leads to a revival of interest and support.

Plebs League of Australia

At a meeting of delegates from the Sydney and the mining districts of New South Wales, held on March 31st, the Plebs League of Australia was formed. Its constitution is identical with ours as far as aim goes, though the actual organisation will be different because they are asking for affiliations from T.U. branches and not basing their membership on individuals; this is, of course, necessary because they are out to form a Labour College as soon as they get the necessary support. We welcome the new League and trust that it will be the means of establishing a unified system of independent working-class education throughout the whole of Australia. We shall be glad to keep in touch with our comrades and help them in any way we can. They have already approached us about distributing the Magazine, and also about the badge

which they wish us to supply. As soon as they are rather more organised, there is no doubt that the League will affiliate.

Common Cause, the organ of the miners, is giving a lot of space to Plebs propaganda, including discussions of the merits and demerits of the Plebs Textbooks, and altogether a lot of interest is being aroused in independent working-class education. The secretary, Geo. Winter, is in touch with us, and is energetically defending PLEBS "down under." Criticisms of The PLEBS exported from England have promoted interest, and Geo. Walters (late of Bargoed) and Ned Evans (late of the Labour College) have joined in the fray. Any Pleb who would like to join in the correspondence and so work up interest should write to Geo. Winter, Secretary, Plebs League of Australia, 159, Bridge Road, Sydney.

Ourselves

The circulation is looking up a bit, but everyone who has an outstanding account with us is *implored* to send it in. Never mind whether you have a detailed statement or not—don't wait for it. If you send too much we hereby swear (you ought to hear us) that we will return the surplus. In a long and varied career at The PLEBS office we venture to assert that the folk who have paid too much can be counted on the fingers of one hand! It is a select circle; don't you want to join it?

In Conclusion

Finally, brethren, do not forget the Summer School. It does not matter whether summer is there or not, we can promise you an interesting time and a jolly holiday.

W. H.

"PLEBS" BOUND VOLS.— IMPORTANT.

WE have bound vols. of The PLEBS to dispose of; and we need various odd numbers to make up sets of past volumes. Will the "pioneers" search their cupboards and help us

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Bound volumes XI., XII. and XIII., are obtainable from PLEBS Office, price 7s. 6d. each, and of Vol. XIV., 10s.

The PLEBS Bookshelf

WILLIAM COBBETT

WILLIAM COBBETT is one of the very few great English revolutionary writers. Working-class students have recently woken up to the fact that England and Scotland have a fine revolutionary history and this forgotten mine has begun to be worked again. Not only Owen, but Bray, Gray, Ravenstone, Hodgskin and others have reappeared. On the side of action, not theory, there has been less discovery, but we do hear more of Feargus O'Connor, Julian Harney, the Reverend J. E. Smith, than we used to. Every goose is a swan to its owner, and every baby a genius to its father, so perhaps some of us have made a little too much noise about our discoveries. But no noise could be too loud for William Cobbett. Even a judge of the High Court of Calcutta (H. L. Stephen) has been forced to recognise that this "violent and ignorant demagogue" was "a leading master of the English language." His English grammar, of which a chapter was published in the May issue of PLEBS, is perhaps one of the best examples of his writings. This was a simple work intended "for the use of schools and of young persons in general, but more especially for the use of soldiers, sailors, apprentices and ploughboys." Writing within strict limits and always with the end of instructing the helpless worker in the art of self-expression, he nevertheless managed always to teach, even to illustration, a lesson

of contempt for the exploiters of England. In commenting on an error in the King's speech he observed:—

"*Enemy* is not a noun of multitude, like *gang* or *House of Commons* or *den of thieves*; and, therefore, when used in the singular must have singular pronouns and verbs to agree with it."

He had a profound and just contempt for the clergy and the universities, a hatred particularly pleasing to us as Plebs. Dismissing some fiddling question of grammatical pedantry, he writes:—

"It is for monks and for Fellows of English colleges, who live by the sweat of other people's brows, to spend their time in this manner, and to call the result of their studies Learning; for you, who will have to earn what you eat, and what you drink, and what you wear, it is to avoid everything that tends not to real utility."

* * *

Cobbett started in politics as a strong Tory and only gradually and almost in spite of himself did he become the greatest defender of the oppressed of England. He was always by nature a conservative and a farmer. He had a rustic's cunning and his unreasonableness. It was always easy enough to convict Cobbett of inconsistency and prejudice. He was obstinate, foolish, wrong-headed, and hasty. He was an impossible person to work

with, and he was conceited. He was never anything like a socialist; his social philosophy was rudimentary and often self-contradictory. All that he had was an unrivalled English style, especially in invective, much horse sense, and a bundle of prejudices. His mixture of straight good sense and extreme perversity can perhaps be studied in his wise *Advice to Young Men*, which has been reprinted steadily ever since its appearance. While we can smile at the old farmer's advice to a lover to see whether his sweet-heart has *grime* behind her ears, there is in it a spirit of decency and cleanliness of manner which is strikingly lacking, for example, not from the matter but the manner of (say) Mrs. Marie Stopes.

But among these prejudices was one in favour of justice, and another, a hatred of oppression. He hated bitterly the landlords and parsons who had stolen the land of England, and within the memory of man reduced the English peasant to misery and

starvation. He hated even more the government which protected them by every conceivable illegality and cruelty. Like his other prejudices, these answered to the feelings of the men around him. His *Political Register* reached the then huge circulation of 50,000 and, although he was forced to fly to America, he became the biggest single opponent of the governmental tyranny of a hundred years ago.

* * *

He quarrelled with the next greatest single figure—Henry Hunt—and he has many hesitations and omissions to be recorded against him, but no one can read his works without being impressed by his fundamental greatness and honesty. His writing is remarkable primarily because of his personality; we admire not rhetorical efforts or flights of fancy but a strong character expressing itself in clear and simple English, notably free from Latin and Latin derivatives. When we have read Cobbett, we know already

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he lesser men like Belloc and Chesterton who derive their inspiration from him. They have all his crotchets. They hate the Jews, they love the small farmer, they admire the Roman Catholic Church, and one and all they have some worthy left-wing politician like E. D. Morel or Henry Hunt) whom they spatter with venomous and baseless accusations. It is unfortunate that they have not his good sense nor his revolutionary spirit. It is significant that they have never come into conflict with the police.

One of the works of Cobbett from which they derive much inspiration is his *History of the Protestant Reformation*, a very perverse and inaccurate book in places, but nevertheless a classic of the M.C.H. As it shows the economic roots of the Reformation ("engendered in beastly lust"), the extensive robbery of the people that accompanied it, and the purely predatory motives of the followers of Henry VIII., it has been republished in a carefully edited form by a Roman Catholic propaganda society. Translated as that edition is, it is better than nothing. Other works of his which have now been reprinted are *The Last Hundred Days of English Freedom* (Lab. Pub. Co., 5s.), and *A Year's Residence in America* (Abbey Classics, 5s.).

Since we published a specimen chapter of the Grammar, the Oxford University Press has sent us a copy of their 1906 edition (cloth 3s. 6d.) which their note is still in print. It has the introduction by H. L. Stephen mentioned above. In this introduction certain comments are made upon the "very few errors and short comings" that exist and Mr. Humphrey Milford suggests that these remove the need for an edition which takes out the archaisms, as we suggested. I cannot agree. Cobbett, for example, uses "blowed" "threwed" "shotten," and a few other words which were good English in his time. The student who is going to learn English from Cobbett should be warned of these.

Meanwhile, it is good to know that there is at least one edition on the market. The Oxford edition is quite a pleasant and well-bound book.

I have talked round about Cobbett

long enough. Here finally is a quotation, from the eighth number of his *Twopenny Trash* (February, 1831). He is dealing with a gentleman who told him that the extensive rick-burnings and machine-wrecking by the starving rural labourers were due to "a set of conspirators in London."

"I could account, without much racking of my brains for the strong imaginations of Peel and Knatchbull, and the rest; but I really was frightened when I heard this gentleman talking of a *conspiracy in London* instigating the fires; and, in his case, I can account for the monstrous absurdity only by reflecting on the effect of the stories which the people in the country are continually hearing of the surprising dexterity and cleverness and the profound wickedness that exists amongst the discontented spirits in London. If this gentleman were to dwell a little in the vicinage of these surprisingly clever and discontented spirits, his alarm would pretty quickly cease: he would soon find that if he could keep his wine-decanter and brandy bottle from them, that need be his only care; and that if he would let them have their run at them, he would find them some of the best-tempered fellows in the world. Men that talk very much are apt to do very little; and I, if I had ricks and barns at stake, should be more afraid of the vengeful feelings of one single labourer, whose son or brother I had caused to be imprisoned or severely dealt with for poaching, than I should be of the speeches, the writings and the machinations of all the discontented spirits of London, who, besides all the rest, hardly know a rick from a barn; and certainly do not know a barn from a stable; are totally ignorant of the state of the homesteads and of the means of assailing them; would be frightened out of their wits at the idea of going along a dark lane or over a down by themselves; and, in short, are as incompetent to give instructions or suggestions in such matters as the labourers would be to give instructions with regard to getting up plays and games at Covent Garden.

"Yet, so loth are you to acknowledge; so loth are the landowners, the parsons, the bull-frog farmers, aye, and the debt-owners too; so loth are you all to acknowledge that these fires have proceeded purely from the minds of the labourers that you all still cling to this monstrous idea of extraneous instigation. The cause of this clinging is this; that you cannot acknowledge that the fires have proceeded purely from the minds of the labourers, without tacitly acknowledging one of two things; namely, that they must have had some deep and irresistible provocation, or that Englishmen are become a totally different people. There is not much to choose between these two; either of them looks pretty angrily at the government which has existed for some years past. The fact is, that these dreadful acts, if ascribed to the mere movements of the labourers, imply that they have been rendered desperate by hunger. This implies that they ought to have had higher wages; this implies that to put a stop to the fires they must have higher wages; and this implies that many millions a year must now be taken from the aristocracy and the church, or that those many millions must be taken from the debt-owners. Therefore it is that every

effort is made to ascribe the fires first to foreigners, next to people travelling in landaus and post-chaises, next to conspirators in London, and, lastly, to writings of various descriptions, particularly *cheap publications*. Why, there are no cheap publications that I know of, except my poor TWOPENNY TRASH, and this I am allowed to publish only once a month. As to the REGISTER: a single number of it now amounts to nearly as much as the Wiltshire allowance for a week's food and clothing for a constantly hard-working man. I know of no cheap publication but this, that goes regularly forth, while the *Society for Promoting Useful Knowledge*, while the church parsons with their pamphlet societies; and while the nasty, canting, lousy Methodists, who inveigle the pennies even from the servant girls; while all these are pouring out their pamphlets by millions, and all of them preaching up the doctrine that bacon, bread and beer corrupt the soul of man, and that potatoes, salt and water, are sure to lead to eternal salvation."

This is a chance specimen of polemical writing; had I time to search through the *Rural Rides* and elsewhere, I could find things even better.

R. W. P.

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