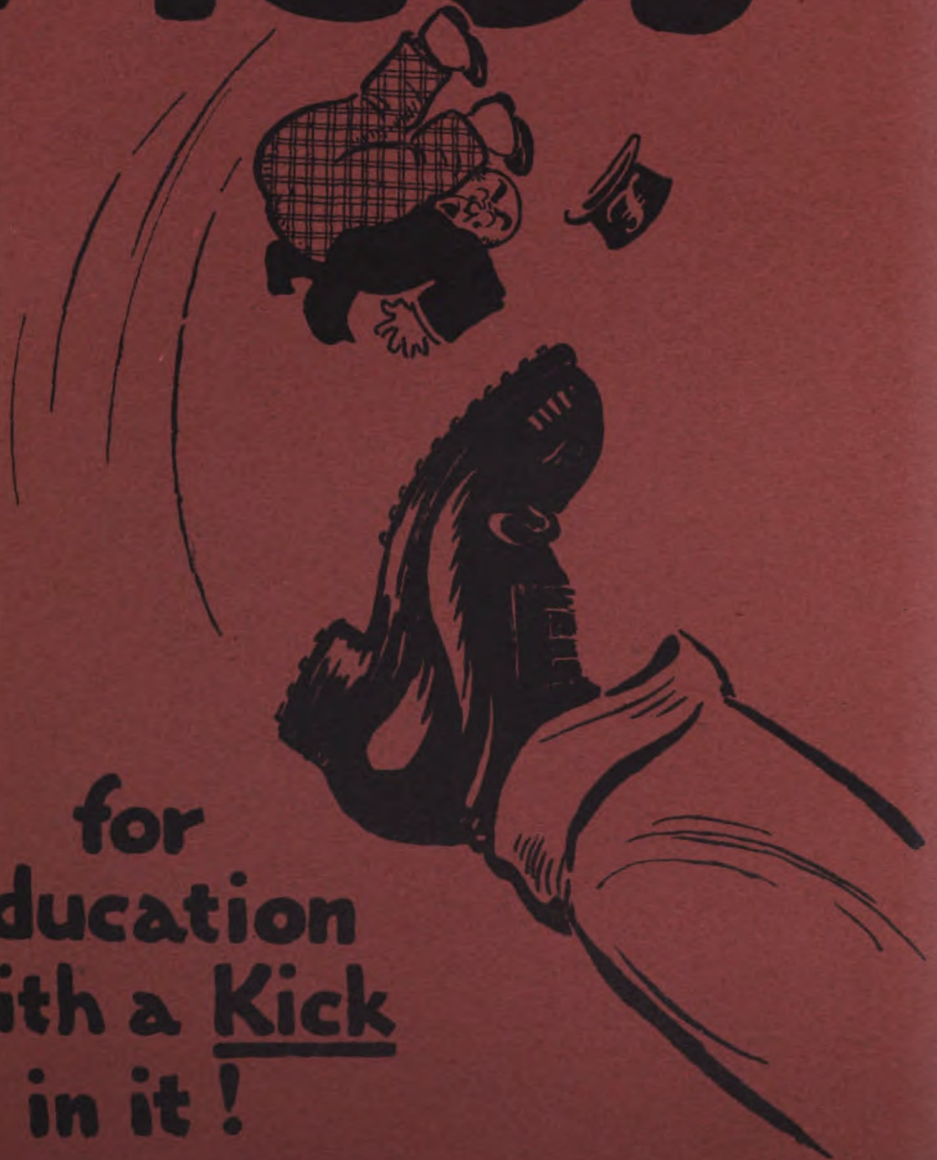


The

October
1924



Plebs



for
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with a Kick
in it!

J.F.H.

DO YOU COUNT?

In the struggle for working-class emancipation, the hub round which current history revolves, *do you count?* Just as the individual, himself weak, adds mightily to his strength by co-operating with his fellows, so can he, with his very limited experience add tremendously to his mental power by drawing on the knowledge of his fellows—by educating himself!

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NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LABOUR COLLEGES
22 ELM ROW, EDINBURGH

The Organ of the National Council of Labour Colleges

THE PLEBS

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WHERE WE STAND

Our readers will be interested in a plain account of what happened at the T.U. Congress over the debate on Working-Class Education. There was a good deal of confusion; but, as will be seen, I.W.C.E.ers have no reason to be disappointed with the progress our movement has made—and is continuing to make.

WHEN the final Agenda of Congress was circulated, it showed three amendments to the following resolution moved by the Managers' and Overlookers' Society:

“That this Congress instructs the General Council to take a more active part in the furtherance of independent working-class education.”

Two of the amendments were from the United Patternmakers and the Transport and General Workers. In substance these amendments were the same, being to the effect that the word "independent" should be deleted and that the General Council should be instructed to co-operate with all the working-class educational bodies. The A.U.B.T.W. submitted a third amendment—to add to the Managers' and Overlookers' motion :

"and recommends that any scheme which may be finally established should embody the definite principles advocated by the National Council of Labour Colleges and the Labour College, London."

It appears that when the General Purposes Committee got the movers of the amendments together, the Managers and Overlookers, under a misapprehension, *The Confusion Begins* allowed the word "independent" to be dropped, with the result that the following composite motion was circulated :

"That this Congress instructs the General Council to take a more active part in furtherance of working-class education, and urges the General Council to adopt educational schemes in co-operation with the Workers' Educational Association, the Workers' Educational Trade Union Committee, Ruskin College, the National Council of Labour Colleges, and the Labour College, London, and any other educational bodies, provided they are willing that the General Council shall exercise such measure of control over their organisations as is considered necessary in the interests of workers' education."

A printed notice stated that the above motion would be moved by A. Creech-Jones (Transport Workers) and seconded by Meredith Titterington (Managers and Overlookers).

Although the A.U.B.T.W. still stuck to their amendment, it is not difficult to imagine the confusion caused amongst some of the delegates of the Unions supporting us when they found that the Managers and Overlookers were apparently supporting the composite motion, and when the seconder was to be Meredith Titterington, well known to Congress as one of the ablest champions of the I.W.C.E. movement. The fact that Titterington's name was down as seconder was due to the misunderstanding above mentioned : at no time did he have the slightest intention of seconding such a motion. What he was to second was the A.U.B.T.W. amendment.

Most of the delegates realised that the debate was an exceedingly important one, and it must have been a surprise to many of them when it was brought on only about twenty minutes before Congress was due to close its Thursday session. The result was that when the mover and seconder of the motion and the amendment had spoken, it was decided to take the vote. While the cards in favour of the A.U.B.T.W. amendment were being counted, the writer and others noticed, among one small group of delegates, that the N.U.R. card for 328,000 votes was held up in favour of the amendment, and that immediately behind was another card for some 200,000 votes, while all over the Conference still further cards were being shown—including the cards of Unions that have no direct connection whatever with our movement. Imagine, therefore, the surprise of the delegates when it was announced that only 180,000 were cast for the amendment and 1,188,000 votes against! Immediately, all over the hall, delegates rose to challenge the vote, and the Chairman intimated that it was obvious to many on the platform that there had been something wrong with the count. It was subsequently agreed to take the vote again the following morning.

From careful inquiries there is reason to believe that had the votes been satisfactorily counted the A.U.B.T.W. amendment would have been carried. Up to this time the Miners had not voted, which was something surprising, in view of the fact that no group of Unions gives more support to the Labour College movement. On the following morning, A. J. Cook, on behalf of the Miners, asked George Hicks—who had ably moved the A.U.B.T.W. amendment—to withdraw it. He agreed to do so, because of (1) the confusion that had taken place in the count; (2) the mistaken and misleading announcement that Titterington was seconding the composite motion; (3) the fact that no time was available for further discussion; and (4) because a number of delegates would be voting in the morning who had been absent from the debate.

Bearing in mind that, to those who had not studied the question of Education in relation to the working-class movement, the composite motion had every appearance of extreme fairness, the support for the A.U.B.T.W. amendment was more than surprising in its volume; and that Union, and the Managers and Overlookers, together with all the others that supported it, have every reason to be satisfied with what transpired.

It will be noted that the A.U.B.T.W. amendment moved by Mr. Hicks dealt with the nature of any *final* T.U.C. scheme. On

the other hand, the composite motion which was passed does not refer to any final scheme and is obviously a merely temporary arrangement. This leaves the final form of the scheme still to be determined, and it will certainly be impossible for the Congress to arrange any educational scheme with any credit to itself unless it decides definitely the principles on which the scheme is to be based.

The attitude of many of the delegates at Congress was a plain warning to the W.E.A. and Ruskin College that if they desire to play any part in the Trade Union movement's future educational activities they will require to bring their organisation into line with the principles of Independent Working-class Education.

The capitalist Press did not conceal its satisfaction that the evil day had been postponed when the Unions will refuse to have anything to do with an educational body not based upon I.W.C.E. principles, although it doubtless regretted that Congress is to support the N.C.L.C. It fully realises the importance of workers' education. The *Church Times* (September 12th) had a half-column article headed "Workers' Educational Association: An Appeal to the Church." Its most interesting comment is "If the Workers' Educational Association grows weak or comes to an end, the ground it covers will not be allowed to remain unoccupied;" and it warns its readers that unless they assist the W.E.A., the unoccupied ground will be occupied by "materialistic" bodies like the Labour Colleges. The *Financial Times* (July 19th) offered hearty congratulations to the W.E.A. on its work, and goes on to say "The ardent co-operation of the dons of Oxford and Cambridge has rendered this (work) possible, and they have thus initiated a medium for the *discipline of class feeling*, which has been of the utmost value to the community" (*italics ours*). We hope that trade unionists who have not so far been interested in *our point of view* in adult education will ponder these two quotations carefully, and ask themselves if this "discipline of class feeling" which is so pleasing to the readers of the *Financial Times* is equally pleasing to them as active Trade Unionists.

But Trade Unionists everywhere are awaking to the vital importance of I.W.C.E. A reference to "N.C.L.C. Notes" this month makes it clear that the Trades Councils are more and more turning down the W.E.A. Amongst numerous recent instances, the most important is that of the Lancashire and Cheshire Federation of Trades Councils, which has just decided to refuse to support the W.E.A. any longer, and to support the N.C.L.C. What

*Further Signs
of the Times*

is true of Trades Councils is true of Unions. The Tailors and Garment Workers recently supported the W.E.A. They now support the N.C.L.C. Even more significant is the recent decision of the A.E.U. This Union had hitherto been a staunch supporter of Ruskin College, and had also given some support to the W.E.A. Its National Committee Meeting, however, decided that its educational scheme should be conducted by the N.C.L.C.

At the same time, the extraordinary success of our movement must not blind us to the fact that we have still much to do, and that all these victories bring heavy responsibilities. We feel sure that every member of the movement will lose no opportunity this winter of showing that the N.C.L.C. is capable of dealing with the responsibilities that are being placed on it by the Trade Union movement, and of ensuring that the figures of students and classes this year will substantially exceed all past records.

J. P. M. MILLAR.

May we appeal to Literature Secretaries and to all active supporters to do their utmost to help us during the next two or three months :

An Appeal (1) by placing orders for, and pushing, all our publications—especially the new items in our list ; and (2) by sending us the cash as soon as they possibly can. Our work has developed so rapidly that we have had to engage additional (paid) assistance in the Office ; and the publications we are issuing mean fairly heavy liabilities—which have to be met quickly. If you can't collect all the money due to you from your customers, send us an instalment on account. Get all the credit you can out of capitalists ! But don't treat comrades in your own movement as though they had unlimited supplies of " economic basis," and could be kept waiting indefinitely for money due to them.

Please keep our office staff busy this month writing receipts.

SEE PAGE 393
 FOR SPECIAL LIST OF OUR
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 &
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 AT ONCE

TOWARDS a LABOUR INTERNATIONAL

IT always does one good to read a book which analyses the international situation from an economic standpoint, by one not directly connected with the Labour College movement in this country. When one of us of the Plebs League writes in this way, we are criticised in some quarters as being cold-blooded materialists for whom "man is a purely economic machine or a pawn in a vast game of chess, played by trusts and diplomats, themselves little more than self-interested automata." So at least the reviewer of my *Germany in Transition* in the *New Leader* recently judged me. We are dismissed, because we refuse to look upon the present state of the world through the sentimental spectacles of a sham social science, which, in our view, does more than anything else to bring it about that Labour leaders are to be found to-day applauding the bankers' solution of the reparations problem as "the pacification of Europe." It is, therefore, a most welcome sign that a book has appeared by no less a person than Edo Fimmen, ex-secretary of the Amsterdam Trade Union International and at present secretary of the International Transport Workers' Federation, which treats of the situation in Europe from the realistic standpoint of the post-war development of capitalism.*

Fimmen starts out by tracing the growth of capital concentration in Europe during and since the war. He has a wealth of material, which he no doubt was able to collect during his term of office as secretary of the Amsterdam International, of the operation of the industrial magnates of France and Germany. He opens Chapter II. with a remark which ought to be learnt by heart by all students of international affairs: "The world war was first and foremost an economic war. During the last decades of the nineteenth century and the opening years of the twentieth, industrialisation had advanced with such rapid strides in the various countries of Europe that the national supplies of raw material had become inadequate. A newer and wider foundation was indispensable and the first condition of the requisite expansion was that there should be union between German coal and French ore. The main problem the war had to decide was whether this union should be effected under the French or the German flag." He gives us a masterly description of the

* *Labour's Alternative; The United States of Europe or Europe Limited*; by Edo Fimmen (Labour Publishing Company. 1s. 6d.).

UR
 underground negotiations, which went on between Stinnes and various members of the Comité des Forges, while the German heavy industry press was exhorting its readers to resist the French Ruhr occupation to the uttermost and while the henchmen of the Alliance of German Industry were financing agents to dynamite bridges in the Ruhr.

It is most important that this particular phase of contemporary international politics be correctly understood in Labour quarters. Those with a Marxian outlook saw no difficulty in reconciling the apparent contradictory phenomena of secret negotiations between French and German industrialists for a division of the profits of coal and iron production in the Rhineland on the one hand and bitter political conflict between these two on the other. It was all part of the game of percentages, part of the process of the international consolidation of capitalism, which is going on as an inevitable process since the war. I always used to observe a look of blank amazement when I used to give this interpretation of the Ruhr occupation to non-Marxian Socialist friends in England. But what I was saying then is being accepted now as a fact in circles far outside the Plebs League. Fimmen, of course, knew the truth from the first and, moreover, was the only man in the Amsterdam Trade Union International to fearlessly proclaim it. I well remember hearing him make a speech at a conference of the trade unions of the Ruhr at Elberfeld in February, 1923, right in the thick of the occupation, when he advised the German miners and metalworkers to carry on the fight against the Comité des Forges and the French militarists independently of the sham fight which was being carried on against these by the German coal and steel magnates. He was immediately attacked by a representative of the old school of the German trade unionists for breaking the "national front." But that was just what Fimmen was out for. He knew even as far back as the early days of the Ruhr occupation that the salvation of the French and German workers lay in a struggle on an international scale against the increasingly combining forces of international capital. So, when I heard that his position as secretary of the Amsterdam International had become untenable and that he had resigned, I knew the cause.

It is exceedingly important that we should realise the significance of the Micum Agreements and of the proposals for dealing with German reparations, as contained in Hugo Stinnes' interview to the representative of the *Journal des Debats* in January of this year, shortly before the former's death. In its essence it means the supersession of the governments of Europe by committees of industrial magnates. The governments are to exist solely as executive organs to collect taxes and imposts on behalf of these committees.

That was the outlook under an extended Micum agreement, which might have come into being last summer, had it not been for the entirely new development which has come about as the result of the Dawes Report and its application in practice. Here it seems to me is one of the weaknesses in Fimmen's book. It concerns itself almost solely with the concentration of industrial capital and does not examine the other side of the capitalist shield—finance, or fixed interest-bearing capital, whose political testament is found in the Dawes Report. It is true on p. 47 Fimmen has a valuable analysis of the *liaisons* made in recent months between American and English joint stock banks and banks on the continent, but there is no indication that the bankers' solution of the reparations and war-debt problem, of which these *liaisons* were the first indication, was likely to replace the solution offered by the industrial chiefs under Stinnes and the Comité des Forges. Possibly when the book was in manuscript the prospects of the bankers' solution were still remote. It will, I think, be necessary to supplement this book by another in about a year's time, showing the effects of the attempt of the bankers' committees, set up under the Dawes Report, to stabilise capitalist economy in Europe. Fimmen's book shows us the immense power acquired by coal and steel monopolists on the continent by concentration of administration and management and by the inflation of the country's currency. It also shows that these monopolists have failed to stop the rot and that their sole prescription for the ills of Europe is further burdens on the workers. It remains to show how this orgy of inflation which has brought the bull speculators to power in France and Germany, is being superseded by a period in which the bear speculators will try to stabilise currency and raise the value of mortgages and gilt-edged securities at the expense of the apparatus of production. Quite possibly the same people who were bulls during inflation will become bears under stabilisation; that is, the heirs of Stinnes will have their nominees on the committee for the control of the German railways and on the committee for the control of industrial mortgages in Germany. Such things occur every day under modern capitalism.

The most important part of the book is the constructive part in the last chapter. Fimmen has put his finger on the weak spot in the working-class movement of the world. "The main cause of the defeats which the working class has repeatedly sustained during recent years is to be found in the failure of the workers to note the post-war developments of capitalism and to draw therefrom the requisite theoretical and practical inferences," he says. While capitalism has become international, is thinking internationally, the workers are still sunk in mid-Victorian ideology of narrow craft individualism. The working class of the world has picked

up and is putting on the discarded clothes of nationalistic capitalism. Until the workers learn from the capitalists, there is not much hope for an improvement in their conditions. Fimmen registers the fact that in trade union circles "there is a trend towards reversion to the views of those earlier days . . . to secure an improvement of wages and conditions within the framework of capitalist society." Against this he rightly asserts that "the trade union movement must be something more than a mere machine for the raising of wages and the reduction of working hours . . . and that the workers must organise in order to fight capitalism and conquer it."

The existing industrial organisation of the workers on an international scale is futile. There is the Amsterdam Federation, there is the Moscow Red International of Labour Unions, there is a Christian (largely Catholic) Federation, and there is the anarcho-syndicalist organisation. Not only is there no touch between these, but there are large parts of the earth, in South America, Asia, Africa, where coolie labour is not organised at all, while in America the trade unions are in ideology, at a point where the British unions were about thirty years ago and regard Amsterdam as too revolutionary! In addition to this there are the International Trade Secretariats, that is to say the industrial unions in various countries have a loose international organisation. It is along the lines of strengthening and improving these International Trade Secretariats that Fimmen sees hope. The capitalists are now fighting the workers in one industry on an international scale, a lock-out first in the mining industry of this land, during which the miners of other lands are expected to act as black-legs. Having smashed the miners here, they then attack the miners in the lands which have just been black-legging and use the miners, who have just been beaten, to keep the wheels of industry going. Having settled the miners internationally, they then proceed to tackle the metalworkers or the transport workers internationally, and so on. This can only be met if "it is no longer the German Metalworkers' Union or the French Metalworkers' Union . . . which will have to decide whether the struggle is to assume an active form and will determine the way in which it is to be conducted. These decisions will be left to a supreme authority, the Metalworkers' International." He doubts the wisdom of trying to build a single international organisation out of the International Trade Secretariats and here he is probably right, for his experience of the Amsterdam organisation has doubtless proved to him that this unwieldy body has been all too easily captured by a group of people totally out of touch with the active elements in the trade unions. To my mind it would seem desirable to concentrate the greatest authority in the International Trade

Secretariats, but to have an international inter-Trade Secretariat as a bureau to keep a *liaison* between the various industries.

Here, of course, it is important to bring about some reconciliation between Amsterdam and Moscow. The task is no easy one, for in Amsterdam a fossilised type of trade union mandarin has dug himself in and acquired vested interest in the concern, whereas the Moscow Red Labour Union International was formed in a fit of revolutionary fervour, when the Third International leaders thought that the world revolution was knocking at the door, is led by people who do not see even yet how slow developments are in the West, and is consequently without any appreciable influence. The liquidation of this body would be, I believe, the best prelude to a united front, but not of course under the conditions which the above-mentioned mandarins in Amsterdam are trying to impose on Moscow. Freedom of propaganda of ideas within the international trade union movement is essential, and if Moscow goes on with its present tactics, the Amsterdam mandarins need not fear for the safety of their positions! Meanwhile the united front is already by way of being established in many International Trade Secretariats. This must be extended and the Russians everywhere brought side by side with those of the West. This is the best guarantee that a really serious attempt can soon be made to attack on the industrial front the dictatorship which is going to be set up over the productive and distributive apparatus of Europe by the bankers' international under the Dawes Report.

For it is along the international industrial front that the Dawes Report can be defeated. The first step towards strengthening the workers' side of this front will come when the ideas permeating this book of Edo Fimmen's are widely known. It is, therefore, a book which neither working student nor working-class fighter should fail to read, for it contains the key to victory.

M. PHILIPS PRICE.

A WOBBLY'S BIRTHDAY

Those Plebs who were at the Bispham Summer School had the pleasure of meeting Mike Gold, of the American "Liberator" group. In a letter, enclosing the following poem, Gold says:—"It's the kind of proletarian poetry I'm trying to learn to write—I'm through with the moonlight-roses-women-and-wine-forever variety."

OTHERS got tired, others lost hope and shut their mouths,
 or started little garages and grocery stores, found
 harbours of peace,
 Others sold out, turned respectable labour leader, or
 politician or foreman,

But Big Joe never shut his mouth, or turned respectable.
 He was loyal ; the enemy nailed him to a hundred crosses, they
 strangled him in a hundred prisons,
 They spattered his body and soul with their machine-gun fire of
 lies, beating and persecutions,
 His quieter friends thought Joe was wasting his life, his wife grew
 discouraged, his children became Americanised, and left him,
 But Big Joe Connolly could never desert the labour movement,
 The cords of birth still held him to his mother.

They tried to make a foreman of him once, but he turned them down.
 And once a silly District Attorney tried to buy Joe, but Joe laughed at
 him in the prison.
 And once they tried to frame him up with a woman, but he laughed
 at the woman.
 And once they tried to lynch him, they strung him up and let him
 down, but they never made him show the yellow,
 The cords of birth still bound him to his mother.

He never knew why he was loyal, or why he would rather die
 than desert the labour movement.
 And thinkers would argue with him, and try to understand his
 passion, but he could not explain it to them.
 He could not explain that his mother had given him birth on the
 stormy sea of poverty,
 Where strong men had wept, knowing the bitter fate before the child,
 But his mother's faith shone like a light on a rock,
 And she bred him to manhood, despite the black midnights and steep
 waves of poverty,
 And the cords of birth still bound him to his mother.

In darkest city tenements she bred him.
 The sun was quenched there, and failure lived in each room.
 And landlords and bosses guarded the prison ; there was no escape.
 But the gas-lit dungeons throbbed with his mother's fierce chant,
 " The Poor must not die ! The Poor must live and be brave ! "
 So the cords of birth ever bound him to his mother.

Her back was twisted and bent with many loads, her hands scarred
 by a thousand labours.
 She was small, weak, kind, but dark and terrible as a jaguar at times.
 She sewed, swept, cooked, she never rested,
 She took in washing, she stole wood and coal from the railroad yards
 in winter,
 When her man was killed, she did not despair, but went on fighting,

And Big Joe loved her, and never forgot her after she died,
 The years went by, jail-sentences, discords, strikes, defeats, spies,
 fighting, thirty-five years of tragedy and hope in the labour
 movement,
 And the cords of birth still bound him to his mother.

Big Joe Connolly is fifty years old to-day.
 And it is thirty-five years since he entered the labour movement.
 And the workers have brought a horseshoe of blood-red roses to the
 union hall,
 And they present it to Joe, who blushed behind his big grey mous-
 tache like a schoolboy,
 And they shake his hand, punching him and hugging him like huge
 brother-bears, showing him their rough love,
 The pretty young girls kiss him, and the big, slow, kind mothers in
 shawls smile as they clasp his hand,
 The children climb his knees and grab his arms for affection,
 And someone makes a rough speech, built of honest words like bricks,
 And Joe answers in a torrent of words like logs pouring down a Maine
 river,
 And the workers listen with tears in their eyes, glad that he will be
 loyal to the grave,
 And glad that the cords of birth still bind him to his mother.

MICHAEL GOLD.

A TALK to TUTORS

The following hints on teaching methods are the fruit of many years' experience of teaching in the Labour movement, and have had, moreover, the advantage of having been submitted to, and approved by, two highly-successful Labour College tutors, both men with from ten to fifteen years' tutorial work behind them.

FIRST I want to point out that these hints are in the nature of general directions, applicable on the whole to the teaching of any subject, but not to be applied too closely to any one particular subject. It is obvious, for instance, that the teacher of, say, Economics, will not observe precisely the same tactics as a teacher of Logic. These directions must be varied in minor details as the subject varies.

The first point I want particularly to emphasise to the young tutor—the point that can scarcely be emphasised too much—is Adequate Preparation. I have, as you will notice, given the words with capital initials, and if I thought that by writing them in capitals all through

I could indelibly imprint them on your memories, I should certainly do so. Adequate Preparation.

Spend two nights—three or four if necessary—in preparation for that hour's lecture in the week. Read all the *best* books on your subject. If you do not already possess them, beg, borrow, or, if necessary, steal them. At any rate get them.

And here is where that excellent little book *What to Read*, issued by The PLEBS, will stand you in good stead. You will find in it, under the headings of the various subjects, a little list of books. Sometimes, indeed, it is not a little list, and you will perhaps be appalled at the number of books you are expected to get through. Well, there is, as you know, no royal road to learning, and I am afraid the road to teaching is, if anything, even less royal. But the task is not really so formidable as it seems.

There is such a thing as "skimming" a book; a very useful art, whereby you are enabled to get the full strength of the milk without having to drink it all! A very small percentage of books can be justly labelled "Full Cream." There is usually a pretty considerable amount of "skim milk." Practically all decent books nowadays are provided with an index, and this index will be of great use to you in your "skimming."

So, again, Adequate Preparation. Upon this factor will depend, more so perhaps than on any other, whether your class is going to be a success or not. The mere fact that you feel yourself to be master of your subject will give you a confidence that nothing else can give.

Having gathered together your facts the next thing is to marshal them properly. This is essential. A rambling, backwards-and-forwards discourse never convinced anybody of anything, and instead of teaching it merely confuses. Choose some striking and well-known fact to start from, and from there proceed to build up your argument in such a manner that each fresh statement seems to rise inevitably from the one that preceded it. Every lesson should be in its own way a work of art. And every work of art, whether a picture, a drama, a piece of music, or a lesson in economics, should have a certain unity about it; should be, so to speak, an organic whole. When the artist starts to paint his picture he must have in his mind's eye a vision of the complete work. It is so with the tutor. He must have always in his mind a picture of the whole lesson.

Not only is this true of each single lesson, but it also holds good with the series of lessons as a whole. When the tutor begins his first lecture he should be able to visualise the whole series of lectures down to the last. Only if he can do this will he be able so to arrange the lectures that they also will fall naturally into proper order.

And here it may be well to say something about the use and

abuse of textbooks. Certainly I advise every young tutor to use a textbook. The advantages of doing so are obvious. It serves as a guide, as a support, as a time-table. With it before you, you are not so liable to wander off into the by-paths and side-issues of your subject. And as a support, even you with your (supposedly) encyclopædic knowledge of the subject, will find the textbook at times "a very present help in time of trouble."

But don't overdo the textbook business. Don't be a slave to it. Don't say to yourself, "Oh, it will be all right. We have a textbook. I'll just get them each to read a paragraph and I'll supply a running comment on it as we go along." That way lies disaster. *The textbook must be kept subordinate to the teaching.* You are the tutor, not it.

In almost every paragraph your pupils will find matter for questions—questions to which the book supplies no answer. They will note implications that arise from the various statements, and naturally you will be expected to explain them. Here is where your additional reading and preparation comes in. You will know not only these paragraphs in the textbook, but all that can be usefully said for or against them.

Talking of textbooks leads one naturally to speak of another aid to good teaching—the blackboard. The good tutor will make a generous use of it. Those of you who have studied psychology will remember that psychologists say that there are two main classes of memories; audible and visual. Some will remember anything they have *heard*, read or spoken, whilst the written word makes little impression on them. Others, if they have *seen* a thing written will always retain a vivid recollection of it. There is the well-known example of Macaulay who, if he heard anyone making a quotation, say, from Shakespeare, could immediately say "Ah yes! You are quoting from 'As You Like it,' Act 5, Scene 3, Page 234, about the bottom of the page!" His visual memory was so good that he actually *saw* a picture of that page before his eyes.

In your class there will be, no doubt, representatives of both these types of mind. Some will remember what you tell them, others must have it written, and you must cater for both. So use your blackboard. Arrive, as a tutor should arrive, a little before the time of the class. Place your blackboard in a good light, and in such a way that the fellow at the back will be able to see what you write on it. Test this for yourself. Now take and write out clearly and distinctly the five or six main headings of that night's work. When your class assembles, get them to take down these headings and explain to them that you mean to cover that ground to-night. By so doing you will have, in a manner of speaking, burnt your boats. You must now, to retain the respect of the class, cover that ground.

If you don't, although they may say nothing to you, they are pretty certain to say something like this to themselves. "Ah, old So-and-so bit off more than he could chew last night. He didn't get through as much as he said he would."

In each lesson you should labour, by every means in your power, to imprint on the minds of your pupils three or, say four, main facts. No more. The human mind is, in some respects, remarkably like the human body. To keep it in a healthy condition it requires to be supplied regularly with good mental food, but it can only assimilate a given quantity of this food at one time. To insist on its taking any more will only give rise to a sort of mental indigestion. And we of the Labour Colleges must bear this particularly in mind. Our classes are drawn mostly from men and women who have been working all day, their bodies tired (which affects the mind), their systems filled with the poisons of the bad and unhealthy atmospheres of pit and factory (which clog and retard the working of the brain), and we must be particularly careful to avoid "forcibly feeding" our students. Pick out the three or four essential facts of the lesson and hammer them home. All the rest of your discourse should be merely scaffolding and supports for these four cardinal points. Don't drown these facts. They should always be visible, jutting up like rocks out of the sea of explanations and illustrations. To vary the metaphor, don't prevent your pupils from seeing the forest by the multiplicity of the trees. Keep your secondary matter in strict subordination to your main ideas.

This again leads me to talk of illustrations. See to it that they illustrate. One of the most pitiable sights imaginable is to see a tutor, after he has served up an illustration that to his class is about as clear as mud, starting off undauntedly to illustrate the illustration. Let your illustrations be homely, drawn preferably from the everyday life of your audience. Don't try to convince the cabinet-maker by an illustration drawn from the mine nor the miner by one drawn from the life of the pastry-cook. You will leave them both cold. But show the miner how, in his first two hours in the pit he has already produced his day's wages. That will come home to him and he will immediately sit up and take notice.

The gaining of knowledge, it has been said, is a progression from the known to the unknown. In teaching there is no more excellent maxim. That is why, in my remarks on the marshalling of your facts I advised you to choose some well-known fact to start from. Say, for example, you are going to treat of the Industrial Revolution. Your ordinary working-man audience has only very vague ideas of what this is or when it occurred. It might have been thirty years, fifty years, 100 or 200 years ago for all he knows. But he has heard of the "glorious victories" of Trafalgar and Waterloo.

He knows at least a little of Napoleon, Nelson and all that gang. Make *that* your starting-point—what he knows. You proceed then to tell him what he does not know ; of the fierce economic, commercial struggle between England and France, of which Waterloo and Trafalgar were merely picturesque episodes, and of which such figures as Napoleon and Nelson were merely the puppets, although they appeared to ride the storm.

Lastly, as to the general manner of the teacher. The key-note of this should be earnestness. Earnestness and enthusiasm. The mood of the teacher is reflected in the class. Keeness in the teacher begets keeness in the class. On the other hand, a lackadaisical, this-is-a-dry-business kind of manner begets listlessness and indifference in the class.

And as to the voice—vary it. There is nothing more monotonous than to have to listen to someone expounding a theory in the one unvarying tone, neither rising nor falling. I once knew a teacher who was cursed with a voice of this kind. He was keen. He knew his subject thoroughly—if he had invented it himself he could scarcely have known it better. But his voice——! It was a sort of a droning sound, a muffled monotone that irresistibly suggested sleep to the most wakeful. His class stuck it manfully for a night or two, but gradually grew beautifully less and less until finally it petered out altogether.

Another excellent idea is to try, as far as possible, to get to know your class individually. Try to make each pupil feel that you are interested personally in *him* ; that you look for great things from him and are anxious he should do well. You will probably have in your class one or two rather brilliant pupils who will, unconsciously perhaps, try to force the pace. Heed them not. The pace of the class is dictated by the slowest member. It is just as important that he should thoroughly understand and learn as the other fellows.

Devote the last five minutes of the lesson to a brief resume of what has been learned that evening. This helps to fix it firmly in their minds. And when you start on the next evening it is well to run over this recapitulation again. It provides a fine starting-point for the new matter.

Finally, never forget that in these Labour College Classes we are attempting to build a real workers' university—a university owned and controlled by the workers, financed and filled by the workers, and staffed by the workers. *You* are the nucleus of that staff. *You* are the professors of the future ! *You*—for the movement is yet in its infancy—are the pioneers of that revolution. See then that each of you, individually, do everything within your power to hasten, and nothing that will retard, the coming of that day.

C. L. McDERMOTT.

BANKS—and TANKS

Arthur Woodburn here concludes his study (began last month) of the Banks and the methods by which they control the "tank" of socially-produced commodities without contributing anything to it.

LET us now examine this transaction in its book-keeping form. In the above accounts Jones might sell £1 worth of goods to Brown, in which case Brown is withdrawing £1 worth of goods from the tank, and he passes part of his "credit" across to Jones, by sending a cheque which is a note telling the bank to take £1 from his £8 and add it to Jones's £3, and the credits would then stand at £7 and £4 respectively, but *still making a total of £11*—and no money has changed hands. Practically all large transactions take place in this way by simply changing entries in books, and these entries in books, with the exception of the small amount of cash, are the only means society has of knowing who has contributed goods to the tank and reserved their right to withdraw their equivalent. If all the books were destroyed, it would be difficult to say who owed the tank and who had claims on the tank. Probably the tank could not meet all the claims for reasons appearing hereafter—hence the anxiety for increased production.

A bank balance sheet is somewhat as follows :—

LIABILITIES.				ASSETS.			
	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Capital etc.	—	—	—	Property, etc.	—	—	—
Deposits of customers ..	100	—	—	Cash	20	—	—
				Investments	10	—	—
				Loans to customers..	70	—	—
	100	—	—		100	—	—

Everything in the first column is what the bank has, in theory, received, and for which it has to account ; and in the second column it accounts for the amounts in various ways. I have assumed the Capital—received from the shareholders—to be invested in the property of the bank, and have left amounts blank, to save figures.

Deposits of customers are *in theory* the record of the goods contributed by the customers to the tank, and for which no equivalent has yet been withdrawn. The amount shown is arrived at by the addition of all the amounts standing to the credit of customers such as we see in the accounts of Brown and Jones. If we look on

the other side we can see in whose custody the actual commodities are, since the banks obviously do not store all the goods. We find Property, which is a commodity the bank uses. We find Cash, and in so far as this consists of gold, silver and copper, they are storing commodities. The large amounts are in "Investments" and "Loans to Customers," which are both loans, of course. That means that the greater part of the goods in the tank are lent, and not withdrawn against claims, and the bank receives interest on the loans, interest being a share of the extra wealth obtained by the capitalist producer. Now, if all the loans in the balance sheet shown were paid back, what would be the position? The balance sheet would no longer have £70 loans on the Asset side, and, marvellous to relate, the Deposits would be reduced by £70, making the amount on both sides £30. How can paying money to the bank reduce the deposits? Let us start with the £30, as follows:—

LIABILITIES.	ASSETS.
Deposits of customers £30	Cash £20
—	Investments 10
30	—
=	30
	=

If one of these firms who can promise remunerative exploitation comes to the bank, and suggests that it should lend them the right to take goods from the tank, the bank simply turns up that firm's account and enters to their credit £70, and to make the double entry turns up a loan account and puts on the debit side "loaned to so and so" £70 (i.e., debiting themselves with goods the firm promises to contribute to the tank), and when both sides of the books are added up they still balance, but the account now appears as we saw it first, with £70 extra deposits *without any goods having been put into the tank*, and on the Asset side £70 loans to customers.

If we look at actual facts for a moment and add the figures of about ten British banks according to a recent return, we have Deposits in the books amounting to about £1,695,000,000 and Cash of £196,000,000, nearly the whole balance of £1,499,000,000 being book-keeping entries, entitling certain capitalists to use the commodities in the social tank for exploitation purposes. The War Loan is largely built up in the same way and about £300,000,000 real claims on commodities in the tank are collected annually for interest to those people who lent the "nation" book-keeping entries. Since the more the banks can lend to successful speculators in productive exploitation, the more interest they receive, what prevents their increasing the loans indefinitely?

The Brake

If £100 represents the value of 1,000 commodities, each £1 will represent ten commodities, but if the bank lends another £100 of mere book-keeping entry to the capitalists it does not increase the number of commodities in the tank, and £1 would only obtain five commodities at double price. If this took place suddenly there would be alarm, and the owners of the real £100 would rush to claim their commodities, or in other words a run on the bank would take place, everyone demanding the commodity gold. This actually happened at the outbreak of war; but the Government closed the banks for some days, and in the interval printed Treasury notes (which were handed to the banks on terms never disclosed), and alarm had died down before they opened again. Treasury notes with Government assurance behind them were accepted by everyone.

So that *alarm* or *panic* is the brake which prevents too great loans, and this alarm would be caused by a too rapid rise in prices. If a run took place on the bank, all the bank has to meet it, according to the above figures, is about one-ninth of the deposits in cash. There is a minimum known through long experience below which banks do not think it safe to allow cash to drop. Let us see how this worked when capitalism functioned with regularity:—

1. Banks lend money to capitalists who produce for profit.
2. These capitalists employ men.
3. This increased industry leads to more cash being required for wages.
4. More cash in workers' pockets and shop tills means less in bank.
5. Less cash in bank means lowering of safety limit.
6. Banks become cautious and raise interest.
7. Some capitalists cannot afford raised interest, and pay back loans.
8. This means less industry, more unemployment.
9. More unemployment means less money in circulation and more in bank.
10. Bank reserves become strong again.
11. They lower interest, and capitalists commence speculating.
12. Banks lend money again to capitalists—and so the merry round goes on. . . .

But Wealth Really Increases

But in each of these circulations some capitalist has engaged workers and produced entirely new wealth, beyond what existed before, as well as replacing the wealth consumed by the workers and themselves in the process. Not all the new wealth is used up, and part remains as a basis for the creation of still further wealth, *but it belongs*

to the banks and the capitalists, and they cannot get it into the tank until it is accepted as useful, or until they obtain a market for it. It is only then that the amount is put to the credit of themselves and the bank. So that this lending is dependent also on *markets*. Markets simply mean finding someone who desires the goods produced and who is willing to contribute an equivalent to the tank, so that *markets are only really limited by the capacity of the human race to consume*. At the moment, however, there is another obstacle to the development of production to this extent, and that is that a large part of the human race called the proletariat, the propertyless workers, must be kept from consuming in order to be the slave of the tank controllers, and consequently must also be kept from being producers able to qualify as a market. As capitalists are not able to consume and waste at anything like the speed of production, the filling of the tank has to stop from time to time to allow it to run off its overload.

The Contradictions of Capitalism

These contradictions must eventually mean the destruction of capitalism, and the setting free of this power to produce, until everyone has sufficient. We can tabulate them as follows:—

Banks are the custodians of the tank and its goods.

They lend the right to use these goods for productive purposes.

This is practically unlimited if markets can be obtained.

Every potential producer is a potential market.

Therefore every worker is a potential market.

Workers are not allowed to produce direct to tank, but must hand product to capitalist employer who gives them an allowance from tank.

Workers do not suffer this gladly and do so under threat of starvation.

Workers' capacity to produce would easily obtain for him wealth.

Therefore capitalist must prevent worker producing independently, and so keep him wage slave.

Capitalists themselves are unable to consume all that capitalism can produce.

Capitalism is forced to create capitalists in undeveloped countries by lending them goods.

Every country in the world becomes capitalistic and in turn increases the power of capitalism to produce.

So that we are bound to reach a stage where capitalism will burst if nothing arrives to burst it. We are merely concerned with the mechanism, and with one or two points we will have concluded our excursion round the machinery. That our investigation can apply to questions of topical interest is clear if we instance inflation.

Inflation

All this lending of the right to withdraw goods from society's

tank could quite well be called by another name—inflation. But as bank inflation has been at once a result and a means of the development of production, we must not condemn it without understanding it. It is not because inflation, i.e., using other people's goods without their knowledge, is in itself bad, it is only bad in relation to other circumstances. If the Government inflates or borrows some of the wealth in the country to build houses, the banks say that is the road to ruin, but if the banks do the inflating for the building of the houses, that is the road to prosperity—for them.

Conclusion

We can now summarise our results and see

That wealth is not money but an accumulation of goods produced by man for his needs.

That in modern times man would starve without access to this accumulation.

That this access is controlled by a few people.

That the majority—the workers—can only deal with the tank through the intermediary of a capitalist, and on condition that the capitalist owns their product and gives them a subsistence from the tank.

That the mechanism of the tank-control was originally through commodities, commodity-money, and tokens, but growth of transactions made this impracticable.

That the mechanism of control is now a huge system of accounting.

That this accounting, and therefore the records of the tank-transactions, are in the hands of bankers or finance capitalists.

That practically no large scale production can be carried through without other people's goods from the tank.

That producing capitalists depend on bankers for this privilege, and have to share the surplus value wrung from the workers with the banks.

That banks only lend the right to draw goods to potential surplus-value obtainers, therefore workers are debarred.

That in addition the banks are largely controlling and exploiting the exploiting capitalist who, of course, controls and exploits the worker.

That, therefore, the banks are the key position to control capitalism.

That all production is contingent on the results being consumed, i.e., on markets.

That markets are limited to capitalist-controlled-consumption, workers being debarred from using wealth for reproduction, independent of the employers.

That capitalist production has outrun all possibility of capitalists consuming it, and capitalist production cannot function.

That, therefore, capitalism is throttling human progress.

That capitalism must be ended.

ARTHUR WOODBURN.

The METHOD of SCIENCE

Dr. Jas. Johnston's lecture on "Scientific Method" was one of the most striking items in our Cober Hill Summer School programme. He has now written out and expanded that lecture in a series of four articles, the first of which appears below. The three succeeding articles will be on "The Description of Nature," "The Inductive Method," and "The Method of Deduction." They are not intended, of course, as studies of science "for science's sake," but as aids to clear thinking and the application of the methods of science to our own social and economic problems.

THIS series of articles is a very summary account of the methods which are used by scientific men in their investigation of nature. Space does not admit of much illustration of these methods, and the articles are meant to awaken interest in the subject rather than fully to expound it. We begin by inquiring into what appears to be the meaning of knowledge—from the practical-scientific, rather than from the metaphysical standpoint.

I.—THE MEANING OF KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge means the ability of a man to act upon the things in his environment. This action may be voluntary or involuntary, conscious or unconscious, deliberated or automatic, and there are really no hard and fast distinctions in our actions between these kinds of doing something. Sometimes one breathes with deliberation and consciously, but more often one does it automatically and unconsciously. Ways of acting on our environment are :—

(a) *Organic functioning*, that is, we know how to use our limbs, hands and feet, chest, lungs, teeth, etc., in walking, running, eating, breathing, etc. ; (b) *Using artificials or tools*, that is, for instance, throwing a stone, making and using a club, or a knife, making and using a saw, or plane, or a fishing line, or a boat, or a microscope, or a sextant—all these things are tools ; (c) *Rationalising*, that is, thinking about the relations between ourselves and the things in our environment, or the relations between the things around us, in order that we may acquire further power over those things.

All knowledge is really *doing something*. There is hardly ever any "pure thought" in us. In all evolutionary processes—whether these may be the evolution of a race, or an individual action, comes before thought. What we call "pure thinking" is virtual, or imaginary bodily acting.

Experience the Condition that Knowledge can Exist

Things that happen in the environment affect parts of our bodies called the sense-organs. Thus a flash of lightning makes an impression on the retinas of the eyes, and the changes in the materials of the retinas set up disturbances in the optic nerves, which disturbances, or nerve-impulses travel up into the brain and set up some kind of disturbance in its substance. Then we "see" the lightning. This is a "sensory impression." Probably we start, or do something when we become conscious of the lightning flash and that doing something is a "response" to a sensory impression.

Now the sensory impressions we receive, as well as the responses we have made to them, tend to persist somehow in us—either as memories, or habits of some kind. Some of the sensory impressions, with their responses, that our ancestors have received and made may also persist and be transmitted by heredity: these become "instincts." All these persistent sense-impressions are responses, whether they are acquired by us during our own lifetime, or are inherited from our ancestors, *are our experience.*

Ancestral and Acquired Experience

Most of a man's experience is acquired during his own lifetime by imitation, reading, trying and failing and trying again and succeeding (and then remembering our trials and their results)—in general our main experience is *learned.* But the newly born infant has some experience in the form of its instincts. It knows, for instance, what the feel of its lips on the nipple of its mother's breast means, and it knows also how usefully to act in response to that sense-impression. This experience is instructive and inherited from its ancestors.

There can be no knowledge without experience—that is, without present or past sense-impressions and their responses. But we must next consider how a man deals with experience so that he can utilise it in acquiring greater control over the things in his environment. In order to make this inquiry a practicable one we must assume something in us called "mind"—without knowing very much about what that mind *is.*

The Mental Mechanism

Throughout our conscious and unconscious life a continual stream of sense-impressions enters our brains from the eyes, ears, organs of smell, taste, temperature, etc. We are really unconscious of the great majority of these sense-impressions (or "stimuli")—thus during sleep the organs of hearing are being stimulated, but we do not necessarily *hear.* That is, we *attend* only to those stimuli that have practical interest for us. What enter our brains are

crude sensations (the immediate results of the stimulation of our sense-organs) and then something is done to these crude sensations—if they really matter to us. That which works up the crude sensations are the operations of the mind.

The Logical Categories

These mental operations, or categories, arrange our crude sensations. The latter are spread out, one after another in the same place (the ticks of a clock, for instance) and thus we have experience of *duration* or "*Time*." They may be spread out (extended) at the same moment, but in different places (a row of pennies, for instance). Thus we experience *space*. There may be ten, or fifty, or 100 ticks of the clock ; or ten or twenty pennies, and thus we have experience of *quantity*. The ticks may be in the same order but some may be loud and others soft ; or the pennies may be old ones or new bright ones, and thus we experience *quality*. The pennies may be arranged thus O O O O O O, or thus, OO OO OO, so that their quantities and qualities are the same but their order differs, and thus we have the experience of *relation*. We see that all animals die sometime or another, and thus our familiar experience gives us the category of *necessity*. As we investigate nature we discover that behind the properties of things there is something that all things, no matter how different they appear, exhibit : this is their mass. Thus we acquire the notion of *substance*. And so on : the logical categories are differently classified, but the above short discussion is enough for our present purpose. Further we cannot fully give the reasons, but modern analysis shows that the basis of this mental mechanism that gives us the logical categories is a *nervous-muscular one*.

The Formation of Concepts

Thus we become aware of things existing and things happening in the external world but this general awareness is not thought. A man sitting in an easy chair in front of the fire may simply *feel* warm—soft—supported—comfortable, all at the same time. Probably that is how a cat feels. But the chances are that the man works up his crude sensation, or feeling. He notes that the fire is warm and glows redly. But his experience is that the sun is warm and so is the fur of a cat, or a steam radiator and so there is a quality of warmth in things that are otherwise very different. Also the fire glows red, but he remembers that the sun may be red, that blood is red, that a man's face may be red, that a flag may be red, and so there is a common quality of redness in things totally unlike in most other respects. Again, all things are heavy to some extent—lead and feathers and air, for instance, and so there is a common quality

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of *mass*. Or he can think about square blocks of stone, wood and butter, all the same size and shape, but having different degrees of *consistency*. Now there cannot be colour, or temperature, or mass or consistency apart from material substances, and every material substance displays, *at the same time* colour, temperature, mass, shape, consistency, etc. Yet we can attend to only one of the properties of a thing, neglecting all the others for the moment, and we can imagine, or at all events postulate the existence of temperature, say, apart from a thing. That is, we can make the mental concepts of colour, temperature, mass, shape, size, etc.

There is no such thing as a "point." No matter how small a dot, or puncture we make on a sheet of paper, a microscope will always show that it covers *some* space. So we imagine the space covered to become smaller and smaller until, "in the limit," the dot has position only. Then it would be a point. So also with a straight line : no matter how carefully it is drawn, it always has some thickness when we see it magnified. But *think* about it getting thinner and thinner and in the limit we can only imagine its length, but not its thickness. Then it is a line.

Thus we think about our sensible experience and replace it by *conceptual images*, we make concepts and it is these, and not their sensory bases, that we reason about. Now all this is really a very ordinary affair of life. All men and women, even they are not, in the least, consciously scientific, make and use mental concepts—that is to say, all civilised men, for savages have ideas that are always more concrete than civilised human beings have.

J. J.

REVOLUTIONISING THE DRAMA

Ernst Toller sent us—too late for inclusion in the actual volume—the following special preface for the PLEBS edition of "Masses and Man." It has been translated by Eden and Cedar Paul.

OUR dream is that there should be a great community between stage and public ; that there should be a community of feeling towards life and the world, a community of ideas, a fertile inter-relationship between audience and players, an ardent unity among all who participate in the work of presenting the drama. Let us never forget that the audience and the players are collaborators in this work of presentation. Do the players build the work with their words, their gestures, and

their bodies? Yes; but the audience are building it as well! They are building it with the force of their enthusiasm; with the fighting will of a spirit that defies fate; with the beauty of the dreams that inspire them. No one can say that the work has been created on one side of the footlights or the other, for it has grown out of the community. And the community, inasmuch as it breathes the breath of life into the work, receives back from the now living work new and deep and wondrous creative forces—its own quintessential forces purged from the dross and clarified from the turbidity of everyday life.

Thus may we suppose the Greek drama to have been engendered; and thus did the mediaeval mystery plays come into being in the days when Christian mythology was part of the folk-spirit. Thus, we may hope, the proletarian drama will grow to its full stature.

ERNST TOLLER.

Freud and the New Psychology

DEAR COMRADE,—We feel we must make some rejoinder to R. W. P. anent his review of Wittels' *Sigmund Freud*.

First of all, R. W. P. is not competent to review this book, however competent he may be (and is!) in other fields. He is incompetent because he does not understand it. Two or three years ago, apropos of another book, but always apropos of the New Psychology, he said he would not allow anyone to tie this particular tin kettle to his tail. In fact, he is afraid of the New Psychology, and when he hears the rattle of the tin kettle, he puts his tail between his legs and bolts to a safe retreat. Then he turns round and barks at this formidable Something he cannot understand. But a reviewer must have a sympathetic understanding of the topic, if he is to write a competent and intelligent review. This does not mean that he must agree with the theories put forward in the book under review. But he must *understand* them, must be able to get inside the writer's mind. Otherwise his review, if adverse, will not be a criticism, but a mere gibe—a puppy's bark. We Marxists all know the difference between the criticism of the opponents who understand Marxism, and that of those who regard it as a tin kettle which the mad

German Jew wanted to tie to the world's tail.

Secondly, with regard to "strange and ugly words." Is it necessary to say once more that every new thought, like every new thing, requires a new name—and that new names always seem "strange and ugly" to those who have not got used to them? Marxists, like other specialists, have a "jargon" of their own. That is to say, every one who wishes to understand Marxism has to master "many strange and ugly words." From one outlook, learning a new science is nothing more than learning a new vocabulary, nothing more than learning the exact meaning of a number of new terms, which gradually lose their "outlandishness" as they grow familiar. "Jargon" in the bad sense, is the *needless* use of technical terms. But one who is afraid of new knowledge, one who is loath to take the trouble to think along new lines, can always excuse his indolence or "rationalise" his repugnance (indolence is not R. W. P's trouble!) by barking about terminology.

Thirdly, as to humour. Yes, it is a saving grace, and we sometimes wish that certain Marxists and I.W.C.E.ers had more of it. ["Name, please!"—No, not to-day; that is another story.] And people laugh at

different kinds of things. We know that R. W. P. and the writers of this letter are not always tickled by the same thoughts and happenings. We agree, too, that many psycho-analysts, like many Marxists—and like humanity at large—are apt to be unable to see their own foibles. But we do not agree, most emphatically we do not agree, that either Freud or his biographer Wittels lacks a sense of humour. R. W. P. girds at Freud's and Wittel's "idea of a joke" on p. 199. Well, Freud's joke is not the sort of joke perpetrated by one who makes an apple-pie bed or sets a booby trap, and yet the passage here quoted by Wittels from Freud is instinct with subtle humour. The whole of the two pages 198 and 199, where we have opened the book to verify the reference, are packed with both wit and humour to which R. W. P. is soul-blind—like Well's professor whose "sense of causation" was shocked beyond endurance by R. L. Stevenson's *Bottle Imp!* But it has been well said that "a difference of taste in jokes is the most hopeless of all differences." We are back at our unbridgeable chasm, across which R. W. P. and E. and C. P. can only bark defiance.

Fourthly and lastly (Praise God from whom all blessings flow!) we come to the vital question. What use can Wittel's *Sigmund Freud* be to readers of the Plebs? We think it can be of considerable use to some of them, and that is the main reason why we are writing this letter.

Nearly three years ago the first of the Plebs Textbooks, *An Outline of Psychology*, was published. It has had a well-deserved success. Turn to the index of that work. When you scan it you will see the names of Adler, Ferenczi, Freud, Jung, and other psycho-analysts; you will see references to a number of psycho-analytical books; and you will see a lot of what R. W. P. calls "strange and ugly words," such as "complex," "inferiority complex," "psycho-analysis," "rationalisation," "repression," and the like. The *Outline* was an initial attempt to help working-class students to an understanding of the science of human behaviour, which is largely (not exclusively) based upon the acquirements of

psycho-analysis. It was the belief of "Nordicus" and the other comrades who inspired the drafting of that textbook that some knowledge of the New Psychology is an indispensable weapon in the arsenal of all who wished to play an active part in the working-class struggle—that the synthesis of Marxism and the New Psychology is essential to the efficient guidance of the contemporary working-class movement. R. W. P. still believes the New Psychology to be a "tin kettle" which some one wants to tie to his reluctant tail. We, on the other hand, consider that the experience of the last three years has more than justified the issue of the *Outline of Psychology*. This does not mean that every intelligent I.W.C.E.er must master the details of psycho-analysis, many of which are highly technical. (None of them are "horrible"—to one who has got "beyond good and evil" in this matter as in others.) Nor does it mean that he need, at this stage, accept "Freudianism" in its entirety. But it does mean that he must have a working knowledge of something that is transforming human outlooks and potentialities as they have been transformed only three or four times in the history of thought—thanks (to name only three names) to the writings of Isaac Newton, Charles Darwin, and Karl Marx.

Wittels' *Sigmund Freud* enables the intelligent reader to take stock of the present position of this particular thought-movement; and, with the aid of *An Outline of Psychology*, the student with a psychological turn of mind, will be able to apply the essentials to the quickening of the class struggle, and to the furtherance of Independent Working-Class Education. He will understand himself and the labour movement the better for having read it. Ten shillings and sixpence is a long price. This is not a book which many I.W.C.E. students can or should afford to buy for themselves. But there is such a thing as co-operative buying. And what are public libraries for?

But, above all, this is a book for class-leaders in psychology, which is one of the four or five absolutely indispensable elements in I.W.C.E.

We repudiate the notion that we "swallow Freud on the principle of accepting any new thing." Besides, the New Psychology is no longer so new as all that, and those who still boggle at the essential verities of psycho-analysis are as far back in the days of the past as pre-Marxist economists, pre-Darwinian biologists, and pre-Newtonian physicists. Let them switch off the electric light, put on their night-caps, draw the curtains of their four-poster beds, and read the first chapter of Genesis by the light of a tallow dip!

Yours fraternally,
E. AND C. P.

R.W.P. writes:—It is something to have made E. and C.P. sit up and write in plain English instead of telling me in bad Greek that I want to castrate my grandfather. But it will not escape the reader that they have totally evaded the points I made, though they have taken as much space as I did. I suggested that Wittel's *Freud* indicated that Freudian or subFreudian psychology

was nonsense, and so far as I was allowed tried to show this by quotation and laborious proof. They make *no reference to this at all*, but only claim that the *Outline of Psychology* is a good book. Who said it wasn't? Anyway, its main virtue was precisely that "Nordicus" very largely squelched this particular rubbish with a heavy hoof when the book was in preparation. E. and C.P. for the rest of their reply dodge off on two perfectly minor points. One is that they don't like my accusing them of using hideous new words, and they reply that new ideas need new words. Of course. All I resent is the wanton ugliness of the new words chosen: E. and C.P., so far as they are responsible, seem almost totally devoid of a sense of form or beauty. The second point is their sense of humour, about which it is difficult to argue. Still, what can one think of two persons who in 1924 announce without a flicker of a smile that they have passed "beyond good and evil?" But all these are trifles, and I am still waiting for an answer to my review.

LETTERS

THE DAWES REPORT

DEAR COMRADE,—In the September PLEBS Comrade Rathbone takes me to task for recognising what is a fact, viz., that the Dawes Report is going to be put into force, and that the best thing that the Labour Party can do under the circumstances is to stand by under protest and let the international financiers rip; knowing full well that, given enough rope, they will hang themselves in the end. This bowing to superior force under protest I ventured to compare to Lenin's tactics at Brest-Litovsk. He argues, as Radek at the time argued to Lenin, that the masses have voted in favour of resistance. He sees the masses in Western Europe standing pat with their feet against the Dawes Report.

I fear Comrade Rathbone is suffering from a severe attack of infantile sickness. The difference between the Brest-Litovsk situation in Russia in Feb., 1918, and the situation on the Dawes Report in Western Europe to-day is that in Russia the peasants

voted for Brest-Litovsk with their feet by running away from the front, as Lenin said, while to-day the masses in the West are voting for the Dawes Report by standing still, because they are tired and think that they must have a breathing space. In Russia at that time the tramp of self-demobilised soldiers was the measure of the voting for Brest-Litovsk. In England to-day the absence of any tramping of the masses is the measure of the voting against the Dawes Report.

If Comrade Rathbone denies this, let him put down the pen which he can wield so ably, and set aside his valuable statistics and material about the latest activities of international finance in Egypt and elsewhere, and just walk the streets and talk with a few people, whom he meets casually. Let him go on a tramp in any English county and try to get up a discussion in a village pub and see if he can get the masses to march against the Dawes Report. He will probably meet with the remark: "What is this 'ere Dawes Report, anyway?" as I have

on numerous occasions in recent weeks. He will certainly see the naiveté of his words—"Comrade Price, you know quite well, when the masses are consulted through the German and British Communist parties, they show uncompromising hostility to the Report." My advice is: Come down to earth, Comrade Rathbone, and cease stargazing, excellent as the visions are that you see. The Dawes Report will be defeated not now, nor perhaps next year, but when the masses, inert as yet both here and in Germany, begin to feel the effect of its application and begin to drop their illusions that by handing over power from industrial to finance magnates, the economic crisis in Europe can be solved.

Meantime it is our business to tell them that they have illusions, and to insist that the Labour Government accepts only under protest, and that a minimum industrial programme is necessary, and should be worked out by a united international labour organisation to defend the eight-hour day and trade union standards. This, if effectively organised on an international scale, will undermine by direct action the economic effect of this bankers' offensive.

Yours fraternally,
M. PHILIPS PRICE.

NOTES BY THE WAY

For Advanced Students

Max Beer's *Guide to the Study of Marx* (L.R.D. Syllabus Series, 6d.), is a masterly summary of the chief Marxian theories, political, philosophical and economic. But the difficulty of the task has made the booklet one for advanced Marxian students needing a "rub up" on Rent and the Average Rate, rather than for the beginner. Beer has the keen student in mind when he recommends that the last five chapters of Vol. III. be read first; then to Vol. II. for the average rate of profit, and afterwards to Vol. I. to find out how the value of labour-power appears as wages—after which the student "will find no difficulty"! The approach by way of the historical chapters of Vol. I. as outlined in PLEBS (Feb., 1920), is a more likely path.

BRIGHTER CLASS-ROOMS

DEAR EDITOR,—Now that arrangements are being made for the winter classes, local Colleges should not overlook the great importance, from the point of view of attracting and retaining students, of breaking away from the idea which seems to be prevalent all over the country, that any dirty little back room, basement, or attic, is good enough for a Labour College Class. From my own experience as a District Secretary of the S.L.C., I know what improvements in attendances can be effected by securing bright and comfortable class-rooms in pleasant localities. Higher rents may have to be paid, but it is well worth while to pay them.

This matter was brought forcibly to my mind by an announcement in The PLEBS a few months ago that a Marxian Club was to be formed in this city. The address given as headquarters of this club is in the heart of a slum district, and it would scarcely be possible to find a more depressing and uninviting place. Possibly the intention is to ensure that the members get the proper proletarian outlook, but a more desirable location would not necessarily result in the inculcation of a bourgeois mentality for its members.

Birmingham. Fraternally,
J. Wood.

In an interesting footnote, Beer ranges himself with Luxemburg concerning the unfinished and theoretical nature of the Reproduction Tables of Vol. II. and the failure of the capitalists to establish any equilibrium between the means of production and of consumption which failure produces Imperialism and the death struggles of capitalism.

A list of Marx's and Engels' works, with comments, would have greatly increased the value of the Syllabus, which lacks any Bibliography.

A Great History

The French Communist Party has now completed its reprint of Jean Jaures' *Socialist History of the French Revolution*. This is an immense work, but it only goes up to the fall of the

Gironde. The reprint, which is of course in French, is in seven volumes, lavishly illustrated from contemporary cartoons, etc. They are fifteen francs apiece: an English bookseller would probably charge 7s. 6d. Ordered direct from the Libraire de L'Humanité, 142, Rue Montmartre, Paris, they cost, including postage, 4s. per volume at the present value of the franc.

For anybody who can read French, this enormous work is an inspiration. Not only does it compare favourably (as the famous historian Aulard admitted) with professional historians as regards scholarship, but it is also a piece of applied Marxism probably unequalled in the world. Jaures' was a great man and this work is a classic of independent working-class education. If you can imagine what Marx would have written if he had had time to leave such brilliant sketches as the 18th Brumaire and devote his time to a profound study of what was, till 1917, the most important event in the world's history—that is what Jaures' *French Revolution* is.

All interested in housing should read the article on the Government's Housing Policy which the Minister of Health has contributed to the September issue of the *Operative Builder*, the Quarterly Journal of the National Federation of Building Trades Operatives.

Mr. Wheatley particularly stresses the human factor, both in the necessity for co-operation within the industry itself and the deplorable results of inadequate housing to the people as a whole. The imperative need for an increase in the personnel of the trade, the achievements of previous Housing Acts, the question of prices, the House

Building Committee and its findings, and the outlook in general are all graphically dealt with.

As an authoritative statement of Government Policy, it is worthy of earnest attention.

We imagine most PLEBS readers and students will be applying the information gained from Economic Geography in the fight for the Anglo-Russian Treaties. A 6d. pamphlet upon that topic issued from 3, Adam Street, Adelphi, W.C. 2, and a 1d. pamphlet, *The Workers and the Anglo-Russian Treaty* (Labour Party), will be found useful for recent developments.

Robotisation

In August we published Ellen Wilkinson's article *Clerks become Machine-Minders*. Our last issue contained *Robots once More*, a further comment on the mechanisation of the labour process. It will be interesting, in the same connection, to read the following extract from Edo Fimmen's book *Labour's Alternative* (reviewed by Philips Price elsewhere in this issue):—

“For decades past, the general trend has been to replace skilled craftsmanship by elaborate mechanical processes. The aim of the employers is to become independent of skilled labour, and to transform the workers into unthinking parts of the machinery. But the aims to be secured by the mechanisation of the Labour process are not restricted to the abolition of highly-paid labour. The struggle of the employers against skill in the labour process is at the same time a struggle against the mental culture of the workers. Their intellectual life is to be crushed by mechanisation; creative joy in labour is to be annulled by a deadly monotony.

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The industrials do not wish to train a generation of workers to be the 'grave-diggers' of the extant industrial system; they want to kill the mental life of the workers, and to transform them into marionettes pulled by the strings of the productive process."

World Workers' Weekly

Worker Esperantists cannot afford like the "neutrals" to build a world broadcasting station at Geneva. However, the issue of the weekly *Sennaciulo* will give them a splendid opportunity to show the practical utility of Esperanto to the workers. A P.O. for 2s. 4d. to J. Flower, Workers' Esperanto Club, 144, High Holborn, W.C. 1,

will ensure its delivery for thirteen weeks.

Diskutota ce Queen's Hall

Jen rezolucio proponita de Doncaster L. P. kin staras (p. 6) en la tagordo de la Kongreso de la Laborista Partio (Okt. 7 am 10 a) "Pro la progreso de la internacia lingvo Esperanto inter la laboristoj mondaj, ni petegas ĝian laprenon kiel unu el la oficialaj lingvoj de Internaciaj Laboristaj Kongresoj. Plue ni petas ke la Labor-Socialista Internacio eldonu periode Bultenon en Esperanto kaj dissendu inter la aligitaj organizaĵoj." Delegatoj subtenu tiun ĉu paŝon al praktika internacismo!

MARKED PASSAGES

Mark Twain's "Prayer in Time of War"

"Oh Lord, our Father, our young patriots, idols of our hearts, go forth to battle. Be Thou near them! With them—in spirit—we also go forth from the sweet peace of our firesides to smite the foe.

"Oh Lord, our God, help us to tear their soldiers to bloody shreds with our shells; help us to cover their smiling fields with the pale forms of their patriot dead; help us to drown the thunder of the guns with the cries of the wounded, writhing in pain; help us to lay waste their humble homes with a hurricane of fire; help us to wring the hearts of their unoffending widows with unavailing grief, help us to turn them out roofless with their little children, to wander unfriended through wastes of their desolate land in rags and hunger and thirst, sport of the sunflames of summer and the icy winds of winter, broken in spirit, worn with travail, imploring Thee for the refuge of the grave and denied it—for our sakes, who adore Thee, Lord, blast their hopes, blight their lives, protract their bitter pilgrimage, make heavy their tears, stain the white snow with the blood of their wounded feet!

"We ask of one who is the Spirit of Love and who is the ever-faithful

refuge and friend of all that are sore beset, and seek His aid with humble and contrite hearts. Grant our prayer, O Lord, and Thine shall be the praise and honour and glory, now and for ever. Amen."

Art and its Material Basis

Sir Martin Conway, M.P., who is to open to-morrow the Liverpool Autumn Exhibition of Art, was the principal guest at a dinner given to-night at the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool.

Sir Martin said that his theme really would be that of the turnip, but for which, he said, the English school of art would have been a very different thing from what it was to-day. Turnips came in with the Hanoverians and created a revolution in agriculture. They provided much-needed winter food for cattle, and so led to the enrichment of lords and farmers alike. Then great country houses sprang up. The art of domestic architecture developed, and the services of portrait painters were required.

That, said Sir Martin, directly arose from the prosperity of the country arising from turnips. (Laughter.) Then landscape painting followed. Artists were wanted to paint pictures of the houses and parks of wealthy people in the country. Again, turnips. . . .

(*Manchester Guardian*, Sept. 13th.).

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The NATIONAL COUNCIL of LABOUR COLLEGES

HEAD OFFICE—22 ELM ROW, EDINBURGH
Gen. Sec., J. P. M. Millar (to whom all reports should be sent)

TAILORS' AND GARMENT WORKERS' UNION.—Temporary arrangements have been made to provide the members of this Union with the same facilities as are being provided for the N.U.D.A.W. and other Unions.

A.E.U.—Arrangements have also been made with the A.E.U. under which the N.C.L.C. will receive £1,000 for the current year. Members of the A.E.U. will be entitled to free correspondence courses and free access to classes. Now that we have the A.E.U., Tailors' and Garment Workers' and Sheet Metal Workers' additional schemes, in addition to those of the N.U.D.A.W. and A.U.B.T.W., a heavy responsibility is thrown upon every member of the organisation. Every effort should be made to ensure that all these schemes will not merely be a success but a very great success. College officials are urged to do everything possible to interest the members of these Unions in their educational schemes, and accurate records should be kept of the number of students making use of the various facilities.

Lanarkshire Miners.—It is also very satisfactory to be able to report that the Lanarkshire Miners—who have given financial support to our movement for many years—have decided on an extensive Evening-class Educational scheme, which has been arranged with the Lanarkshire Labour College, at a cost of £265 per annum.

Publicity.—Hearty thanks are tendered to those Trade Unionists who have been writing articles on I.W.C.E. for their Union Journals, and Head Office will be greatly obliged if copies of such articles are sent on as published. Special congratulations are due to the supporter who got the whole of our Leaflet "Ten Points about the N.C.L.C.," inserted in the *Stockport County Express*. All letters to T.U.

journals should be followed up by a resolution to Union headquarters, and for Union Conferences asking for N.C.L.C. educational schemes.

Correspondence Course Department.—To the twelve-lesson Correspondence Courses on Industrial History, Economics, Economic Geography, Public Speaking and English Grammar and Essay-writing, has now been added a six-Lecture Course on the History of Trade Unionism, the charge for which is 10s. 6d., or 1s. to join and 2s. for the correction of each essay.

New Divisional Organisers.—The National Executive, after considering the many applications sent in for the vacancy in No. 7 Division, decided to appoint Fred Shaw as Divisional Organiser. Comrade Shaw has the advantage of knowing our movement from A to Z, and at the same time has a thorough knowledge of his Division. The appointment should be gratifying to the A.E.U., of which the newly-appointed Organiser is a prominent member.

The Executive have also appointed Sydney Rees (one of the original Ruskin strikers) as Divisional Organiser for No. 9 Division. He takes up his duties at the beginning of October.

New Affiliation.—The Yorkshire Warp-twisters' Society has affiliated to the N.C.L.C., and we hope that other Textile Unions will follow.

What the Divisions are doing

Div. 1.—The Interim Report of the London District states that ninety-one organisations, apart from those under National Schemes, affiliated during the current year, including the London Co-Operative Society, the London Council N.F.B.T.O., the A.S.W. Management Committee, the London Trades Council, Wood-cutting Machinists' District Management Committee. During the year ending June

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24th, sixty-nine classes on various subjects have been conducted and over 150 meetings have been addressed on the need for I.W.C.E. Altogether, the Report is very satisfactory.

Div. 2.—The Organiser has recently conducted a tour in North Wales with a view to giving some assistance to Division 8. Apart from the usual series of winter classes, we are hoping for fruitful developments in the Southampton area.

Div. 3.—An extensive series of classes is being arranged for the winter, and it is hoped to obtain more extensive local support from working-class organisations.

Div. 4.—A considerable amount of new ground will be broken in this Division this winter. Applications for classes have come in from Pembroke and other towns so far not touched by our work. The Afan Valley Miners are considering affiliation to the N.C.L.C. and the Eastern Valley Miners and the Aberdare Miners have decided to affiliate. A most successful series of Day Schools has been held with J. T. W. Newbold as Lecturer. Cardiff L.C. is arranging Ward Classes with a view to extending its work.

Div. 5.—Twelve Classes have already been arranged, and others are in course of arrangement. New areas such as Box, Corsham and Exeter are being opened up for the first time. Any enthusiasts in Swindon, anxious to start a class, should communicate with Organiser F. Phippen, 23, Baden Road, Redfield, Bristol.

Div. 6.—Winter session classes will have been arranged by the time these notes are in print. This Division is to be reduced in size, which will allow of more effective working. The boundaries have not yet been decided at the time of going to press.

Div. 7.—Part of this Division is to be added to part of No. 6 in order by forming a new Division to make possible more effective working in the Midland area. A very extensive series of classes has been arranged, and the additional support of the A.E.U., Sheet Metal Workers and Tailors' and Garments' Workers should make for extensive educational developments. Leeds and Brighouse have already sent their winter class programme to Head

Office. Sheffield is increasing its orders for PLEBS by over 50 per cent.

Div. 8.—Blackburn and Liverpool and District L.Cs. are the first in this Division to send in particulars of their classes on Report Form 1. Liverpool and District Labour Colleges report that last year their students numbered 1,265. The College has decided to appoint A. L. Williams (N.U.R. and Labour College, London), as a full-time lecturer. Perhaps the most notable fact in connection with the recent activities of Division 8 has been the extraordinary success with which the Trades Councils have been approached. The following Councils have recently affiliated:—Bolton, Ashton-under-Lyne, Darwen, Haslingden and Stockport. Bolton, Ashton-under-Lyne, Darwen and Earlstown and Warrington Councils have turned down the W.E.A. What is more notable still is that the Lancashire and Cheshire Federation of Trades Councils and Labour Parties (probably the most important body of its kind in the country) has decided to cease to support the W.E.A. and to affiliate to the N.C.L.C. Thirty-two votes were cast in favour of affiliating to the N.C.L.C. alone, twenty-four in favour of affiliating to both. Bravo, No. 8!

The North-East Lancs. area held an exceedingly representative Conference in Manchester at which over 131 organisations were represented. W. A. Robinson, of N.U.D.A.W., was in the chair, the Conference being addressed by J. Hamilton (N.C.L.C.), E. Redfern (Area Organiser), Councillor J. Gorman (A.E.U.), M. J. L. Davenport (Sheet Metal Workers), and A. A. Purcell, M.P. (President N.C.L.C.).

Div. 9.—Division 9 is for the first time having a full-time Divisional Organiser, and hearty thanks are due to Comrade Coxon for having up till now carried out the duties of the Divisional Organiser in addition to the heavy amount of work involved in acting as Secretary of the North-Eastern Labour College. The latter College's Annual Conference in Newcastle was attended by fully 360 Delegates representing 271 organisations. It was addressed by A. J. Cook (M.F.G.B.) and E. Edwards (Northumberland Miners). When the

famous Chopwell Miners' banner was unfurled, Mr. Coxon made use of the opportunity to draw attention to the importance of I.W.C.E. The Workington Trades and Labour Council has turned down the W.E.A.

Div. 10.—A. J. Cook (M.F.G.B.) is to address the Ayrshire L.C.'s Conference. In consequence of Ayrshire's tutor, J. N. Williams, being appointed to a position in the PLEBS Office, a new tutor is being appointed. Fife L.C. has already arranged nine winter classes, with more to follow. Edinburgh has held a highly successful week-end school, with Ellen Wilkinson, A. Woodburn and C. L. Gibbons as Lecturers. Over twenty winter classes, including a tutors' class, have already been arranged.

Lanarkshire.—Lanarkshire L.C. is rightly jubilant over the extended support to be received from the Miners. The College Annual Conference is to be addressed by A. J. Cook and Duncan Graham, M.P., with A. Small, Secretary of the Lanarkshire Miners, in the chair.

Aberdeen have re-elected their old tutor, Comrade Browett.

Glasgow.—305 Delegates representing 105 organisations, attended the Annual Meeting of the Glasgow L.C., which was addressed by Campbell Stephen, M.P. and Ellen Wilkinson. Thanks are due to the S.C.W.S. for acting as hosts. The week-end school held at Rothesay in September is the most successful, so far.

Greenock.—A Conference has been held at Greenock with a view to stimulating activities there, and a new Secretary has been appointed.

Directory.—Additions and Corrections

Div. 2.—Guildford L. C.: Sec., Mr. H. Steele, 10, Margaret Road, Guildford, Surrey.

” Portsmouth L. C.: Sec., Mr. Monty Schofield, 73, Stamford Street, Portsmouth.

Div. 3.—Treasurer and Division 3 Organiser: Mr. Mark Starr, 25, New Street, London, S.W. 1.

Div. 7.—Mansfield L.C.: The Secretary, c/o Mr. C. Brown, George V. Villa, Garden Lane, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Notts.

Div. 7.—Nottingham L. C.: Sec., A. Comrie, 15, Broadholme Street, Lenton, Nottingham.

” Chesterfield and District L. C.: Sec., Mr. A. V. Williams, 1 South Street, Mosbro, Nr. Sheffield.

Div. 8.—Accrington L.C.: Sec.: Bert-ram, Toft, 111, Charter Street, Accrington.

Div. 9.—Divisional Organiser: Mr. Stanley Rees, c/o W. Coxon, 5, Byron Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

” Workington L.C.: Sec., George Telford, 20, Findley Place, Workington, Cumberland.

Div. 10 (Scotland).—Lerwick L.C.: Sec., R. Jamieson, Twagias, Lerwick, Shetland.

” Greenock L.C.: Sec., P. Canning, 12a, St. Lawrence Street, Greenock.

” Paisley L.C.: Sec., A. Maxwell, 15, Johnstone Street, Paisley.

” Renfrewshire D.C.: Sec., David Dick, 1, Henderson Street, Paisley.

LABOUR COLLEGE (LONDON) STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

The College opened on September 16th for another year. Several students have been helping the interests of the I.W.C.E. in their various districts, and speaking for the workers' political parties. Another group has returned from their very interesting visit to Russia.

We welcome the four students sent by the Durham Miners' Association. This is the first time they have sent any students to the Labour College.

We also welcome Mr. T. Ashcroft as our new Economics lecturer. He replaces Mr. W. H. Mainwaring, who has returned to the South Wales coal field to deal with the practical working class struggle.

No report has yet been issued by the Committee of Enquiry. The reason why we do not know, as no explanation is given for the delay. We hope the Committee will issue a report to the students upon the whole of the proceedings.

J. T. D.

THE PLEBS PAGE

The House that Plebs Built ?

WE have had several answers to our query about a Summer-School-House of our own in last month's magazine in the shape of particulars of large and wonderful mansions with prices running into well over four figures; but these, of course, are impossible. Our scheme must be a fairly modest one and start from humble beginnings and one comrade has sent us a scheme which might be workable if we had enough support from individuals and the districts. Will *all* who think the thing interesting send me a postcard so that I can form some idea of the backing such a scheme would have? Never mind about whether it's practical, I want to know whether Plebeians would like to have a Guest House of their own. We can't start on any scheme unless we know if people are interested or not.

Meanwhile we have had a very sporting offer from a comrade. He has suggested that we let him organise a Summer School to be held in Northern France (in a country district) for next summer. He says he can make something towards our Guest House Fund and give everyone a splendid holiday for less, apart from travelling expenses, than a week's school costs in England. Even if travelling expenses mounted up rather, he does not think that the total

cost, i.e., board and lodging and travelling expenses would be more than a week's school in England. Again I want postcards from people who would be interested in such a proposal. Our comrade has already taken several large parties abroad and given them a successful holiday, he is an expert linguist and a good organiser. Let me know what you think about it.

Our best thanks to our old friend Jack Carney, now Editor of "Labor Unity," San Francisco, for the following little boost which he gave us recently, after reprinting an article from our pages:—

"The above article was reprinted from PLEBS, the well-known British publication, carried on for the purpose of educating the working-class of Great Britain. We have no hesitation in recommending it to our readers. There is no publication of its kind, in the English-speaking world, equal to it. It is in a class by itself. Send two-bits to "Labor Unity" for the July and August issues. We feel sure that you will subscribe for it after giving it the once over."

Will Plebeians note that the address of the secretary of the Liverpool Students' Association is 34, Mason St., Birkenhead, not 4 as stated in last month's PLEBS page? W.H.

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The PLEBS Bookshelf

I AM, I suppose, risking sending some of my comrades into apopleptic fits by saying something I've wanted to say for some time: to wit, that it is high time we I.W.C.E.ers took a much keener interest—an active interest—in plays and novels and music and several other things which we have been in the habit of regarding as matters of secondary importance, if of any importance at all, in our work. Certain recent experiences—for instance, William Paul's singing at the Cober Hill Summer School, our reading of *Masses and Man* during the same week, a public reading by Tom Ashcroft of O'Neil's *Hairy Ape*, a talk with a miner-Pleb a few days ago, Michael Gold's poem on another page of this month's PLEBS—have convinced me that we are quite definitely limiting the scope of our appeal and weakening its effectiveness, too, by interpreting a shade too narrowly and imaginatively that golden rule, "First things first."

I suggest that we ought to include some study of contemporary literature in our curriculum; and, further, that we should also regard as an integral part of our *educational* work such activities as play readings or productions, song recitals, and so forth.

Let me give one or two reasons.

First, there is a tendency on the part of our all too accommodating friends of the W.E.A., realising the advances our own movement is making, to say—"We admit that, so far as Economics and History are concerned, there is a great deal to be said for your point of view; and we therefore think that the teaching of these subjects might very largely be left to you. We, on the other hand, will take charge of the 'humanities,' for the study and elucidation of which we are fitted by our superior culture."

Now we cannot afford to leave the "humanities" to be taught by these people. We don't leave the social sciences to them; why then imagine for a moment that they can be trusted to

handle the arts and literature—definite expressions of *social* consciousness? So far as contemporary literature and drama are concerned (and intelligent people are always most keenly interested in the work of their contemporaries) the W.E.A. mind, just because it lacks a working-class point of view, is utterly incapable of appreciating the most significant work that is being created to-day. The vital playwrights—the men whom one recognises as the heralds of a new school and a new outlook—are writing plays (not impartial plays either!) inspired by the fundamental fact of the modern world: the class-struggle of the workers against their exploiters. They take sides—*our* side; and we, as Toller suggests in his new preface to *Masses and Man* (printed on another page) have an important part to play as their audience. The W.E.A. mind, which perceives a peculiar virtue in *not* taking sides on any live issue, robs the writer of his audience by concentrating its attention on his style, his technique, and half a hundred other things—on anything but on what he is actually *saying*. Does anyone suppose for a moment that Toller, for instance, wants an audience of highbrows, discussing the effectiveness

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or otherwise of the "expressionistic" form in drama? . . .

We are the audience men like Toller are writing for; and if our conception of working-class education is not wide enough to include the work of such men, then the loss is ours. I don't suggest that we run around getting excited about all literature and any literature. I don't want us to become a "Youth" movement, with the vaguest of aims and point of view. But I do suggest that we recognise that the proletarian "ferment" now working in the arts is a vital concern of ours, and, for the sake of our work and its increased effectiveness, make full use of it. If we are to reach the mass of our fellows we shall have to use the dramatic, the emotional appeal. The basis of our work will still be the facts of history and economics. But if we are to make these dry bones live we need all the help the artist—playwright, novelist, musician—can give us.

I have referred above to a talk I had recently with a miner friend—a keen Pleb and strong Minority Movement man. He said, "We want *novels* as well as textbooks. I've sold six *Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*' for every one Plebs Textbook. We shall never get at the majority of chaps with textbooks; and if our education aims at making folks class-conscious then we've got to come off all 'high-and-mightiness' and make use of every weapon which will help."

I think he's right. So do the Russians—witness the amazing development of every form of theatrical activity in Russia since 1917. "No other country," says Mr. Huntly Carter, in his recent book on *The New Theatre and Cinema of Soviet Russia*, "has developed a theatre so new and so strong, so life-centred and so unified, yet so varied in interest. . . . The theatre expresses more clearly and forcibly than any other popular institution in Russia the Russian state of mind. . . . and its efforts to create a new culture, new human relations; new conditions of life, new crystallisation of life and thought." On another page Mr. Carter makes the significant remark—"It was as though

the Soviet Government saw the theatre as the nearest way out of a *petrified world of education*." I think it's up to us to ponder over that last phrase.

We can't inaugurate a theatre like that of the Russian workers at a single blow. What we can do is to get busy reading and talking about every novel and play that possesses significance for us, as workers; so paving the way for the novelists and playwrights who will assuredly arise in our own ranks.

Here are four plays* for us to get busy with right away. All the lectures in the world on American capitalism and the American workers' struggle would not *move* men and women as a reading of Upton Sinclair's *Singing Jailbirds* would. One can hear what a W.E.A. professor would say about it—"crude melodrama—violently propagandist—interspersed with doggerel songs." It tells the story of an I.W.W. leader, beginning with his arrest during a strike and his examination by the District Attorney; going on to his imprisonment in "the hole," his dreams while he lies there of incidents in his previous career, and his death after he has hunger-struck. It doesn't talk around and about the class-struggle; like *Masses and Man* it is the class-struggle, dramatised and made vivid for us. It would be a difficult play to produce; but a magnificently effective one to read—and sing; for nearly all the classic I.W.W. songs are introduced into the play. We ought to use it as part of our courses on Imperialism and Modern Capitalism; it could be read through aloud in little more than the time taken by a single lecture.†

Of *Masses and Man* I don't need to say much here, since it is already known to many Plebs, and more are just now reading it for themselves in the cheap edition we have been able to arrange

* *Singing Jailbirds*.—A Drama in Four Acts. By Upton Sinclair (25 cents). *Inheritors*.—By Susan Glaspell (Henn & Co., 4s.). *Masses and Man*.—By Ernst Toller (Cheap edition for PLEBS, 1s. 6d.). *Education: A Medley*.—By F. J. Adkins (Cheap edition for PLEBS, 2s. 6d.).

† If anyone interested will write in to the PLEBS Office we will get into touch with the author (who is his own publisher) and arrange to get over some copies of the play.

for. Let me repeat—we are the audience such a play is written for. I saw the Stage Society's production of the play last May; fine in many ways as that production was, it lost nine-tenths of its effectiveness for the lack of an audience who could *feel* the play's message. A working-class audience would have played its own part in the performance of such a play; and only to a working-class audience could its message really "get across." The W.E.A.er would put all the stress on the tragedy of the Woman, the individual caught up and overwhelmed by events; and in so doing would miss altogether the conflict which is the very essence of the play.

Susan Glaspell's *Inheritors* (which I hope Messrs. Benn will be able to issue at a cheaper price) is a play of especial interest to us as working-class educationists. It tells of an American pioneer who had ideals. He had fought in the war against the Indians, and he had never been happy in the possession of the land that had been stolen from them. He gives a part of it to form the site of a college, a college which shall stand for the ideals of Truth and Freedom which he and his friend, the Hungarian ex-revolutionist of '48, believe in heart and soul. He wants to live to see that college founded—"then maybe," he says, "I can lie under the same sod with the red boys and not be ashamed."

The rest of the play, forty years later, shows what the college—"that runt on a high hill," as its founder's granddaughter scornfully calls it—had become. It needs to expand, says the President of its Trustees, the son of the Hungarian revolutionist—so it applies for State grants, and, in order to get them, emphasises its 100 per cent. Americanism, encourages its young men to act as blacklegs during strikes in the neighbouring steel mills, drives out Hindoo students—"dirty dagoes"—suspected of sedition; and compels the only professor of radical sympathies to shut his mouth by confronting him with the alternatives of being "discreet" or of condemning his delicate wife to death by accepting dismissal

and poverty. It is a bitter story—and it is told with a deadly, quiet force that is as moving as Toller's fury of passion. It ends when the one girl who refuses to close her mouth chooses expulsion and imprisonment for sedition—"Yes, I'm leaving grandfather's college—then maybe I can one day lie under the same sod with him and not be ashamed."

After the dramatic force and fire of these three plays, F. J. Adkins' *Education: A Medley* strikes one as singularly unexciting. But it has, among other qualities, the advantage of dealing with specifically English problems and English people; and it uses another method—that of detached, almost genial satire—to point the same moral as that made in Miss Glaspell's play: the utter emptiness of the pretensions made by the orthodox educational institutions of to-day. The only thing that surprises one is that a man so obviously convinced of that emptiness can write so dispassionately about it. What moves Miss Glaspell to white-hot scorn leaves Mr. Adkins faintly amused. But his readers—if they are Plebs—can put in the white heat for him! (If they are W.E.A.ers they will probably be in a white heat of indignation themselves at the play's irreverence towards such sacred institutions as Universities.) I like the line put into the mouth of the Bursar of St. Thomas's College, Cambridge, right at the end of the play, after the decision to put a "safe" man into the Economics professorship—"It looks well to have had—well—practically a Marxist as the runner-up." The quiet satire of that will take a lot of beating.

Here, then, are four plays—and there are many others: Toller's *Machine-Wreckers* and Eugene O'Neill's *Hairy Ape*—to say nothing of Shaw. I hope every N.C.L.C. class will arrange readings of some, if not all, of them this winter. And I hope somebody will write to The PLEBS and say that all this has nothing to do with Independent Working-Class Education—because I'm spoiling for a fight about it.

J. F. H.

The PLEBS LEAGUE

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