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THE PLEBS

AGITATE EDUCATE ORGANISE

MAY DAY

by

J. T. WALTON
NEWBOLD
M.P.

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Monthly

Six Pence-

¶ If you want the Boss to smile upon you, and his lady friends to shake hands with you (once a year or so); if you believe that God has called you to that station of life—and that standard of life—which is at present yours; if, in short, you've decided that a *backbone* is a luxury you can't afford—

JOIN THE PRIMROSE LEAGUE

which has a real live Lord for a president, and all the Best People among its supporters.

¶ If on the other hand you've come to the conclusion that it's high time you and your class did your own thinking, instead of letting the Boss and his class do it for you; if you've realised that this is a necessary first step towards you and your class *acting together* to end a system of society which exploits the many for the benefit of the few; join the Plebs League, which bands together the students, tutors and supporters of the Labour College Movement.

Annual sub.—One Bob

THE PLEBS

I can promise to be candid but not impartial.

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OUR POINT of VIEW

MORE and more is the Trade Union Movement being forced to give some serious consideration to the question of educating its members. The old idea that education is simply a matter for the State is rapidly losing hold, with the result that, in addition to passing, in a more or less automatic way, resolutions demanding increased State-provided educational facilities, the Trade Union Movement is now beginning to consider carrying on educational activities itself.

*Trade Union
Congress and
Education*

That the need for Trade Union educational schemes had become recognised was indicated by

the resolution passed by the Cardiff Trade Union Congress in 1921. "This Congress," said the resolution, "is of opinion the time has arrived when the Trade Union Movement should consider the best means of providing for the educational needs of its members. . . . It, therefore, instructs the General Council to co-operate with the Trade Union Education Inquiry Committee* as to the best means of giving effect to the aims and objects of the Inquiry, including the taking over and running of existing Trade Union Colleges, including the Central Labour College and Ruskin College."

Following upon this resolution the General Council appointed a Sub-Committee to co-operate with the T.U. Education Inquiry Committee. This new committee took steps to circularise Trade Unions inquiring as to what extent they were undertaking any educational work. It also arranged meetings with the various bodies claiming to provide working-class education and in March of last year representatives of the N.C.L.C., the Labour College Governors and the Scottish Labour College interviewed the Committee. After a general discussion the Committee invited the I.W.C.E. organisations to submit answers to the following questions:—

- (1) Is the Labour College Movement prepared to accept Government grants provided there are no conditions attached to them?
- (2) Is it willing to run under the T.U.C., provided that its principles, policy, and curriculum are guaranteed against interference?

* * *

After balloting its affiliated bodies the N.C.L.C. informed the T.U.C. Committee that it was prepared to accept Government grants on condition that "they do not involve any interference with or modification of the present educational policy of the N.C.L.C." and that it was prepared to participate in the proposed T.U.C. scheme "on condition that our present policy and standpoint on education remains unchanged; which involves the liberty to run N.C.L.C. classes in any area and to take the necessary steps to obtain Trade Union support." The Governors of the Labour College replied in similar terms. It is hardly necessary to point out that no Government grants are to be expected on such conditions.

In due course the T.U.C. Committee drafted a report with certain recommendations which were to authorise the General Council to take over the Labour College, Ruskin College and the Workers' Educational Trade Union Committee (a W.E.A. Trade Union organisation), provided they did not incur any expense that would compel an increase in the fees paid to the T.U.C. The draft recommendations, it will be noted, made no reference to the S.L.C.

* This committee is entirely W.E.A. in character and includes Messrs. J. M. Mactavish and G. D. H. Cole.

or the N.C.L.C., for reasons which the Committee has never made clear. However, as the result of agitation, the letter "s" was added to the term "Labour College" before the report was submitted to and passed by the T.U.C. (1922). So far so good, although the N.C.L.C. did not share in the financial grants made by the Congress to Ruskin College, Labour College and the W.E.A.

* * *

In March of the present year the T.U.C. Committee arranged to send a deputation to meet the Labour College Governors. On the 24th representatives of the N.C.L.C. and (indirectly) a representative of the S.L.C. met the Governors, on the latter's invitation, and it was agreed to interview jointly the T.U.C. Committee's deputation. The T.U.C. representatives were Messrs. Cole, Hicks and Pugh. All the Governors were present:—Messrs. P. H. Black, W. T. A. Foot, J. Gore (N.U.R.), N. Ablett, A. Jenkins, T. Lucas (S.W.M.F.), and W. W. Craik (Principal),—while Messrs. Hamilton, Starr and Millar represented the N.C.L.C. The latter also indirectly represented the S.L.C.

After discussing the Southport Congress resolution approved by the T.U.C. Education Sub-Committee's recommendations, it was suggested by the representatives of the latter that a joint committee be set up, from the bodies mentioned in the resolutions—and including the N.C.L.C. and the S.L.C.—for the purpose of considering plans to be recommended to the next Congress for the practical adoption of the Southport resolutions. Both the N.C.L.C. and the Labour College Governors subsequently decided to participate in the joint committee. The S.L.C. at the time of writing has not yet considered the matter.

Whether the joint committee will be able to draft a workable scheme remains to be seen. There would be no difficulties at all did the Trade Union Movement as a whole know what it wanted in the way of education. Unfortunately, there are still many trade unionists who are ready to accept anything calling itself education. There are many trade unionists who fight both industrially and politically against the Governing Class, but curiously enough, have preferred to co-operate with it educationally. They suffer from the same defect as the rapidly decreasing number of workers who organise industrially against their employers, but co-operate with them politically on election days. Some trade unionists, too, are rather easily impressed by the mass of bourgeois educational culture. Nevertheless, in travelling the stony road of experience, Trade Unionism is rapidly losing its educational misconceptions and is realising that education is not some important duty high above the class struggle, but is an inseparable part of it.

Independent working-class education, in other words, working-class education under working-class control and of working-class character, moves from success to success. With more effort and more persistence I.W.C.E. will eventually have the field to itself.

The W.E.A. has much influence yet among many Unions simply because the workers do not understand the real character of this educational Mr. Facing-Both-Ways. Every active trade unionist should strive to make the discussions on the above negotiations the opportunity of arousing interest.

* * *

On another page will be found a report of the Conference of the National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers at which the decision was taken to inaugurate an educational scheme similar to that launched last year by the A.U.B.T.W. We may take this opportunity of congratulating all who have played their part in winning this victory for REAL working-class education, and of welcoming our new comrades in the work. Miners, railwaymen, builders and distributive workers—our movement grows apace! . . . *Is it to be the engineers next?*

MAY DAY

MAY DAY was selected as a festival to be kept in commemoration of the solidarity and fraternity of the toiling masses everywhere throughout the countries wherein were affiliated organisations of the Second International, for the reason that from time immemorial this day had been regarded as a customary holiday amongst the agrarian population of Europe.

Consequently what was to be particularly a festival, an occasion of demonstrations and speeches for the urban proletariat had its origin in the habits and in the beliefs of the peasant masses. This in itself may account for the slowness with which May Day has come into favour with the workers of this essentially prosaic and industrialised country. It has needed many long years to become an event having significance for any but a small fraction of the British proletariat. It has not had the same power of attraction, the same suggestion as, for instance, the big galas held by the miners in certain of the colliery areas. These latter have had about them something of the nature of the country fair and of the camp meeting so much in favour with the local preachers and their following, who were often respectively trade union officials and trade union rank and file.

May Day has been, so far as the proletariat in the industrial areas was concerned, an importation of alien origin. It has been, at the most, a revival of an institutional holiday which the Puritan and latter-day Methodist nonconformist traditions, amidst which the workers have emerged from the country village to the industrial communities of to-day, had served almost completely to discredit.

Thus, despite the fact that in old England, in Merrie England, May Day was kept with jollification and with something ceremonial and religious in its celebration, May Day as we know it in the Labour Movement is an alien introduction. It has had to be imported to this country from lands into which the virus of individualism in production and individualism in belief had not so far penetrated as completely to disintegrate the customary life of the masses, either in the country or newly drafted into the towns and mining areas.

It is singularly appropriate that International Labour Day should be that day which from ages of the most remote antiquity had been held sacred, in joy and freedom, to the dwellers upon and cultivators of the soil of Europe. It is only fitting that the day selected to hail the new freedom which the workers in industry and agriculture alike should by their united action achieve should be this day when the toilers in the all-pervading and oldest of all branches of production had been wont to hold high festival.

May Day is one of those festivals which the Christian Church has done very little to corrupt with its blessing and which has, therefore, continued to belong to the rebel and untamed masses and, therefore, to be anything but a respectable occasion.

It has remained a communal festival without becoming an occasion for the Church dignitaries to thrust themselves into the foreground of the picture, claiming it as the feast day of some "father" or "mother" sanctified by themselves and so dedicated to lordships reaching down, like the rays of noon-day sun, from heaven to earth.

It belonged to the very earliest cycle of customary festivals, of ritual occasions whose modified and mutilated remnants have come down to us sometimes as Christian saint days and sometimes as public holidays. There are quite evidently three of these cycles and they are the more interesting in that they make manifest to us the influence of economics upon the ideas of mankind, showing quite clearly how religion has been generated by material factors imperfectly comprehended by the human mind. The first of these cycles was the one which we find to have prevailed amongst those people whose economy was based not upon the cultivation of the soil, but upon the grazing of their flocks, upon the nature grown herbage of the field, and who supplemented their food supply by the spontaneous bounty of the seasons.

These people had two principal occasions of communal cere-

monial intended for the purpose of propitiating the forces of nature as they knew them, the unseen beings or rather the mysterious personalities which they deemed to be inherent in natural objects and in natural forces. The first of these was the Beltaine or May Day festival at the beginning of May, celebrated at that season of the year when the foliage began to burst fully forth, the flowers and the blossom to show themselves in their glory and the grass to grow green and luscious. Beltaine, kept with the burning of fires upon hill-tops, in propitiation of the sun and earlier as a means to assist the sun with the strength giving flames of the artificial giver of warmth, the man-made fire, was a festival general throughout, at any rate, Northern, Western and Central Europe.

May Day was not only the occasion of these fires, lit by the manhood of the neighbourhood, partly to strengthen the sun, partly to keep at bay the fairies and the witches who, at this season, were deemed to be particularly malignant, but was, also, an occasion for the worship of the spirit of vegetation, the spirit of the trees, the force of increase in not alone inanimate but, also, in animate life, in animals and in the human species.

May Day, like other festivals of a similar, contemporary or later development, was celebrated by a number of rites, some belonging to one primitive belief and some to another. It was kept with fire-worship, was surrounded by a series of dark myths of the dead and of beings, some evil like the witches and others eerie and in some measure to be avoided like the fairies, and was made an occasion of joyous bringing forth from the wastes and woodlands into the homesteadings and community centres, the villages, of the trees gay with blossom and green with new life. It was likewise a season when youths and maidens similarly felt and indulged the instincts of the generation of new life. It was a season of lovemaking when it was deemed desirable and, indeed, essential that the factors, very tangible and very personal and in no sense abstract and ethereal to the primitive peoples, which made for increase of crops and herds and children should be induced to show favour, and all that made for illness, death and miscarriage should be either driven away or induced, by a bribe, to absent themselves.

The other festival, the other principal festival of this cycle was All Hallows, or All Souls, at Hallow E'en on the 31st of October—a night when the graves all opened and the ghosts flitted gibbering across the fields. This was the occasion when winter was realised to be upon the earth and the dread influences of death shadowed the minds of men and women, who kept close together, kept within doors and shouted and made all the commotion necessary to keep at bay the evil things that at that time possessed the earth and sought to win straying travellers to their dismal company.

Hallow E'en, also, survives amongst us—as the Fifth of November with its bonfires to burn Guy Fawkes in England and Hallow E'en with its fun for the children—sole devotees of fairy tales to-day when their enlightened elders have embraced the rarefied myths of the Christian religion.

With the evolution of a more highly developed economy dependent on the cultivation of the soil and the growing of crops, another cycle of festivals was super-imposed on that earlier one of which May Day, Hallow E'en and Candlemas—not to speak of the origins of August Bank Holiday—were the cardinal points. This cycle, still arising out of the objective realities of the economic life of the people—however fantastically misunderstood, had as its cardinal points, Mid-summer Day, Yule or Mid-Winter, Easter and Michaelmas. This cycle was fixed by the seasons of sowing, of harvest home and of the summer and winter solstices when the sun was at its height and at its utmost decline.

Upon this cycle and, to some extent upon the earlier, the Christian Church laid its hands, blessing some and exalting them to be high saint days and great festivals like Easter, Whitsun and Xmas, and debasing others to be tolerated subject to the paring of their “abuses.”

The Church found in these “saint” days, these great “feasts,” a means to the raising of a revenue, and the establishment of immense wealth and over-weening power.

It banished the more popular ways, accompanying the grosser rites of more primitive cults, belonging to a simpler social system and its pre-conditioning simpler economy, to the realms of evil. It made them impious. It denounced them as sorcery, witchcraft and Satanism.

Some it could neither banish nor corrupt by its favour. Amongst these was May Day.

Protestantism—that mockery of Christianity which successive sections of the bourgeoisie have made more tractable and less attractive—has to its credit (or debit) the elimination of all “these features of paganism” and the rationalising of religion as a system of ideas and behaviour calculated to increase production, to pacify the proletariat and to reflect in heaven the beatific countenance of the capitalist.

Pagan lord, Catholic cleric and Protestant employer each by turn has robbed the common people of some element of economic freedom and social justice and bound them to the car of bondage.

May Day—reconquered by and for the masses as International Labour Day—is destined to be the festival commemorative of the long road of proletarian emancipation, commemorative of the ultimate triumph and the linking hand in hand, in the light of social science and economic power, of the workers of the world.

J. T. WALTON NEWBOLD.

Are the LABOUR COLLEGES DELIVERING the GOODS ?

The following replies to J. T. Murphy's article last month, from active workers in the Labour College movement in various parts of the country, raise numerous points of importance and interest to everyone interested in working-class education.

WITH Comrade Murphy's desire to emancipate Marxists from an abstract Marxism, we are in full sympathy. With his criticism of the tendency of the earlier Marxian schools and parties to mistake abstractions for concrete realities, to lose sight of the trees in the forest, we are in complete agreement. It is possible to make of Marxism a new metaphysic. These earlier shortcomings—and there are still numerous survivals—are to be traced, we think, to the fact, that Marxian conclusions have been mechanically acquired *from* Marx, instead of being consciously self-acquired by the aid of Marx's method. And so, "the letter killeth but the spirit giveth life."

The essential and permanent feature of Marxism is the *method of investigation*, and this is the key to a revolutionary world-outlook. Without this the advance guard of the army of labour must lose touch with reality and with the main body. It is this method which is the *elan vital* of independent working-class education, and which distinguishes the latter, fundamentally, from W. E. A. and Ruskin College types. The assimilation of this method is the first and foremost task to which Labour College teaching must address itself, precisely in order to avoid those "pitfalls" of which Murphy speaks.

How to recognise "the fact of the class struggle"—a by no means simple, "lo and behold" fact—is an indispensable pre-requisite for understanding *how* "to wage the struggle." The practical fighter who would pursue a far-reaching policy in harmony with the evolutionary situation, cannot invent aims, plans, tactical manœuvres out of his head. He must time and again ask himself how his aims are related to historical necessity; how far his tactics are within the realm of real possibility; what social conditions are already present for the carrying through of his plan, and what conditions must still be fulfilled for successful realisation. For unless a policy is historically founded in the actual social process of evolution it will prove itself illusory. This is why it is necessary to "spread out the world before the workers on maps, etc., etc." which is, of course, not so easy a task as framing a formula, such as the one which Murphy elevates to the dignity of a "fundamental elementary" fact, namely,

“that emancipation is impossible without the conquest of power.” Such phrases are precisely the sort of “abstractions” which, as he himself says, “obscure the dynamics of the class struggle.” They play the same role among so-called “revolutionaries” as do the hackneyed texts from Holy Writ about the “Lamb of God taking away the sins of the world” among the faithful.

Education, as we understand it, is concerned with the *road to power*, which is not a ready-made road that one might find indicated in the Directory of the Russian Revolution (made in England) with the injunction, “This is the way; walk ye in it,” but a road which the workers themselves must make, conscious of their power to make it and of the materials which evolution has furnished for their historical task. And that is why our educational movement concerns itself with economic theories, with “maps,” with “evolution,” with the “intricacies of finance,” etc., with concrete realities rather than with abstract recipes. An education of this kind is alone effective against reaction—a reaction which is sometimes fed with the illusions of uncritical revolutionaries—and which can help to transcend the limitations of the Russian Revolution.

Murphy, in the latter connexion, seems to be living more in 1917 than in 1923, otherwise he would recognise that there is still truth in the statement that the most advanced countries in capitalism have a leading part to play in the making of revolution. It is still true that a successful social revolution is intimately connected with a high stage of technical development. The Russian revolution has not “shattered” that “main tenet.” But the lack of the factor indicated in that “tenet” has come very near to shattering the Russian revolution.

W. W. CRAIK
(The Labour College).

Denunciation Cuts no Ice

J. T. Murphy again raises the perennial question whether the Labour Colleges and the I.W.C.E. Movement as a whole are truly carrying out their function as custodians of Marxian education in Britain.

Undoubtedly the changed world situation demanded a revision of our curriculum, and this has been a matter of very earnest consideration and in the majority of districts has been provided for. Short lecture courses dealing mainly with Modern Problems, Working Class Policy, etc., are now the rule and not the exception.

No doubt a few centres are still obsessed solely with the old-time lengthy courses in “Economics,” dealing mainly with abstractions and taking no account of the inner workings of the huge modern financial capitalist machine, and similar courses in “Industrial History” elaborately dealing with Ancient Society, Feudalism,

etc., with but a hurried survey of Modern History, Workers' Organisations, and the class struggle.

But is there not some criticism from our side justified on the score of the numbers of one-time supporters of our educational movement being so enamoured of "revolutionary action" that they can't see any further necessity for educational work, imagining every little incident of a proletarian character as a revolutionary situation or crisis of the first magnitude, and whose idea of a revolutionary workers' party has been a mass of contradictory tactics? There are many adherents of the ultra left-wing who still express nothing but contempt for those whom they derisively term "b—— intellectuals."

This winter in Liverpool two courses of lectures were given on "Modern Imperialism," and the attendance of members of the extreme left could be counted on one hand. This course would have provided them with the facts and arguments for effective public propaganda, but instead of intelligent criticism likely to interest the average worker, the apparent stock-in-trade of many of these well-meaning enthusiasts is simply a senseless tirade of personalities.

The urgent need to-day is the broadcasting to the masses of what Murphy rightly insists on, viz., education showing "*why* there is a class struggle, the *character* of the class struggle, *how to wage* the class struggle, and *how to end* the class struggle." This is the work of the I.W.C.E. movement, which can attract the intelligent section of the workers keenly desirous of understanding the social problems and of finding a solution for them. But this work is impossible of achievement by any political party as part of its activities.

Very considerable tact has to be exercised in the prosecution of this task on account of the latent prejudices of the average worker. The dragging in of the "class war," "Marx," etc., in every other sentence, accompanied with denunciatory language, won't achieve our purpose. One can express in quite moderate language revolutionary facts and factors.

To this end the movement emphatically cannot work under any party label. The extension of our educational work will provide the leaven urging the mass to move in the right direction when the time for action definitely arises; for to repeat a much hackneyed saying, "Intelligent action can only come through knowledge."

J. HAMILTON

(Liverpool Labour College).

"History in the Making"

If the stuff we are dishing out does not assist the workers in their everyday struggles and enable them to see, and to work for,

the objective, *i.e.*, the removal of Capitalism, then the sooner we scrap it the better!

I am more convinced than ever that we are "delivering the goods," at least in the S.E. Lancashire area, and I am prepared to pose as a judge of this (with material at my disposal) even with J. T. Murphy. The work done directly by the Area Council has been in the main on new ground. A special feature of our classes has been the treatment of the great events of the day, *e.g.*, the Ruhr problem, the Near East, unemployment, wages attacks, etc. The Russian Revolution has received special attention, charts and maps have been used to assist. Our study of history has been connected to "history in the making," efforts have been made so as to throw light on the world situation. We have examined and criticised our own movement—the Labour movement—in a useful and constructive manner. Well, if Murphy is not satisfied, I am. There is nothing like changing your views, by getting different viewpoints, yet it makes one wonder what will be thrown up next. J. T. M. might have told us "how to wage the class struggle" or "how to end the class struggle," but herein lies a danger, for the method, or methods, are changing with our critic more rapidly than the weather. Let us be quite frank with ourselves! Are we expected to send, from our classes, every student into some definite party? Are we to say you *must* do this, or that?

Let us review our work. Let us get the maximum results for the minimum of energy. I agree with *criticism* and have done my share of it. It serves a useful purpose in so far as it draws our attention to results. But "The Marxism of Marx" is not a criticism! To be a critic one must be able to examine the matter in question, and I leave it to the reader to decide. I declare we are "getting it across."

E. REDFERN

(S.E. Lancs. N.C.L.C.).

One Organisation, One Job

Murphy is presumably keen on getting a seriously class conscious industrial and political army. Well, experience has proved the need for *specialised* industrial and political organisations, and the success of The PLEBS and Labour College movement has demonstrated the usefulness of a *specialised* educational organisation. But J. T. M. seems to insinuate that The PLEBS and Labour College movement tends to be "above the battle." As a matter of fact, it is part and parcel of the actual working-class struggle. But the task of organising the workers industrially and politically for the immediate struggle is surely not the work of The PLEBS and N.C.L.C. To say to the student, "Thou shalt join the Communist Party," will not prevent him making his own choice. As to the "fundamental elementary principles," I believe that in the realm of the

working-class struggle, the greatest service The PLEBS and N.C.L.C. can render would be to concentrate on getting across the famous trinity of Historical Materialism, Theory of the Class Struggle, and the Theory of Surplus Value ; and the best way to do it would be to adopt nationally the following set curriculum of lectures for evening classes :—

No. 1.—“ History of Modern British Working-Class Movement.”

No. 2.—“ Industrial History.”

No. 3.—“ Science of Understanding.”

No. 4.—“ Marxian Economics.”

Let the N.C.L.C. issue syllabuses on these four subjects, making provision for touching upon imperialism in No. 2, psychology in No. 3, and economic geography in No. 4. No. 1 allows scope for “ industrial militancy,” also “ oratory ” where students incline to become bored ; No. 2 for Historical Materialism and the lessons of the Class Struggle ; and No. 3 should produce argumentative momentum and an eagerness for No. 4, after which—the Struggle ! This is not the whole I.W.C.E. programme, but to *drill* an army the above is adequate. Thus the Marxism of Marx can be brought to bear upon the process of revolution.

EDGAR TURNER

(Darlington and District Labour College).

We Do the Sowing

Those interested in the question of I.W.C.E. will all recognise the need of overhauling our curriculum, in order that our instruction will be true to facts as new ones arise. But this does not imply the abandonment of all our previous system.

It would have been more useful if Murphy had shown us where the work of the colleges has failed. We aim at a thorough understanding of the facts, which should precede action, at assisting and developing class-consciousness. Surely these aims are vitally important, especially when we view the mistakes and confusion which have prevailed during the last four years in the revolutionary movement.

The colleges, in concentrating upon the trade union organisations, are moving in the right direction. Where could we find a more fruitful field ? We cannot definitely ally ourselves with any one of the political parties within the working-class movement. We exist to eradicate the false ideas and prejudices which bar the road to progress.

“ Independence ” in the educational world is essential to us. We must survey the various tendencies within the international working-class movement and attempt to explain the same. The colleges are strengthened in these investigations by our very “ inde-

pendence." The very fact that we are condemned, both by extreme Right and Left, shows that we do maintain a broader and better outlook than if we were attached to a particular party.

The work of the N.C.L.C. and its classes and textbooks, *are* getting down to the fundamentals, removing prejudices and awakening new and revolutionary ideas. It is up to the political parties to reap the harvest.

WILL. COXON

(North-Eastern Labour College).

We aren't Teaching Arithmetic

Murphy, in common with other members of the Left Wing section of the workers' movement in this country, makes the general charge that the real essence of Marx's theory is left out in our teaching; that the fact of the class struggle has simply been taught in a pedantic formal way, and that no attempt has been made to teach the workers "how to wage the class struggle," and how to end it.

Speaking from experience, I deny this charge, though at the same time I readily admit that the methods of teaching Marxian theory to the workers may be greatly improved. A rediscussion of teaching methods, etc., is necessary, and would be of great value at the present time. But it should be clearly recognised beforehand, that if such a rediscussion is to be of real value, it must be carried on by workers who have really attempted to study Marx's theory, and who also have a practical knowledge of the difficulties encountered by the independent educational movement, and who understand the actual evolution of the Labour College and the various Councils now organised in the N.C.L.C.

It is not a discussion that can be undertaken by the Communist Party as a party, because its membership has already plainly demonstrated their own need of education in Marxian theory, particularly in the principles set forth by Marx himself in the first few paragraphs of Chapter 2 of the *Communist Manifesto*. In actual practice, one big obstacle to Communism is the Communists.

Murphy, in his article in the April PLEBS, does provide some helpful material for discussion, although his statement that the Plebs League and the Labour Colleges "have been the custodians of the Marxism of the epoch of imperialist expansion," betrays a lack of real knowledge regarding the historical development and struggles of these institutions. They were only founded in 1909, and right up to the outbreak of the European War they were struggling hard for existence and recognition; and this struggle still takes up a great part of the energies both of colleges and tutors.

Murphy appears to look upon Marx's theory of the class struggle as being a doctrine from which one can draw up, in a theoretical

formula on paper, the method of waging the class struggle, which method must then be taught to the workers in the same way as arithmetic, and applied like a foot-rule to any economic situation.

But to simply draw up a theoretical explanation of "how to wage the class struggle" and then set out to persuade the workers to accept this explanation, and to act in accordance with it, does not succeed.

In regard to the problem of teaching methods, we must distinguish between the teaching of the residential students at the Central College and that of the mass of the workers who are taught in the classes. The residential students go to the Central College (or should do) with the definite aim of getting a detailed knowledge of economics, history, and philosophy, and their interconnections, so that they may be in a position to explain to their fellow workers the meaning of their everyday struggle and its ultimate outcome. When these students return as prospective tutors for the classes, they must not merely repeat the method, and make a detailed repetition of what they have been taught at the residential college. This is one mistake that can be rectified. The tutors should endeavour to apply the teachings they have received, in a popular manner, to the immediate practical problems of the workers' everyday life and struggle.

Tutors must start from where the workers *are* in order to take them to where they want them to be. A detailed course of lectures on the remote past is not necessary, and the past should only be utilised in so far as it is of interest and practical use in making clear the present and its future growth. But let it be clearly understood, the tutor himself must have a thorough grasp of the past in all its phases, in order to be able to give a popular and clear exposition of the present to the workers.

We have no easy task in our work. And some of our critics are so facile with their criticisms that one can only conclude they are still young—in experience, if not in years.

To paraphrase an old Cumberland song, we can say of some of these expounders of Marxian theory :—

They started out to fly their kites
With strongest string they had.
They came to grief, and weel they might,
For they were only lads.

ROBT. HOLDER.

Face The Facts

I don't know that there is any "storm raging throughout the revolutionary movement" on the question of independent working-class education. It is true that both methods and standards are being improved, but it is only here and there that an individual raises a point of criticism on such lines as Dutt did about the Im-

perialism Textbook. Such criticism, however, seems to arise from the fact that these critics have convinced themselves that at least a substantial minority of the workers know all about the class struggle and are simply needing a practical programme to rush the revolution into existence in about a twelve-month. The painful truth is, however, that there is no such substantial minority of workers. The great bulk of the minority, for instance, that votes Labour, recognises the class struggle no more consciously than it recognises the fact that at one time no sea divided Britain from the continent.

It, therefore, seems that even though the Labour Colleges entirely limited themselves to explaining the class struggle and throwing light on the activities of capitalist imperialism they would be doing exceedingly valuable work—work which would enable the workers to understand the world in a working-class way, which is a necessary preliminary to the drafting of an intelligent industrial and political programme, and to intelligent industrial and political action.

Murphy asks whether the Labour Colleges are to limit themselves to describing “the fact of the class struggle” without offering “a *single* suggestion as to how the workers are to wage the struggle.” The reply is “Not at all.” So far as I know, that has never been the policy of the Labour College movement. But this does not mean that the Labour Colleges are to draw up a detailed political and industrial programme and lay it before the students as the last word in Marxism. These jobs are jobs for the political and industrial organisations and for the students in their political and industrial activities.

As test questions, Murphy asks whether nothing must be said about the “saturation of Trade Unionism with Imperialism,” about the need for a workers’ political party to carry out the required revolution in social organisation, and about the indispensability of the conquest of power. The answer is that of course, these things must be said. They *are* being said and have been said for a very considerable time. What, after all, is the value of a class on Imperialism if it doesn’t, among other things, help to destroy the seeds of Imperialism carefully sown in the minds of the workers from their infancy?

J. P. M. MILLAR

(Edinburgh District, Scottish Labour College).

Labour College Students Lead

The only constant factor is change, and the process is oftentimes a long weary one. It may be so slow that some cannot see it.

Murphy asks if the Labour College movement is really playing the part its pioneers mapped out for it? Has it embodied with its teaching on the *facts* of the *struggle*, methods whereby that struggle can be eliminated?

The great need of the working class to-day is control of industry, in order to shape their lives in their own way. Outside of the Labour Colleges, there is no organisation that is preparing their minds for that eventuality. Here and there a few individuals in certain centres may be espousing it, to a select few, but in practically every part of industry, the classes are busy with the building of the foundation amongst the workers themselves. At least in the North-East area, whether the struggle takes either industrial or political forms, it is the Labour College students who take the lead. Even the R.I.L.U. is supported in its propaganda, in nearly every instance, by the same organisations that are the backbone of the Labour College movement.

However much one's enthusiasm may lead one to want to "get on with the war," it is no use ignoring the hard realities of the working-class movement. We have a long way to go yet to get that conscious minority.

We are getting across certain fundamental elementary facts. But "he whom we have to convince" is still master of the situation. And the I.W.C.E. method is the nearest cut to our goal, even if it seems the longest way round.

WILL LAWTHER.

No "One and Only"!

In 1913, in co-operation with William Paul, of the S.L.P., I helped to found the Birmingham Social Science Class. For several years Paul was its tutor, and in the course of his lectures he did not fail to point out, when it was appropriate to do so, "*why* there is a class struggle, *the character* of the class struggle, *how to wage* the class struggle, and *how to end* the class struggle." One thing however, Paul was careful not to do; he did not tell his students to join the revolutionary S.L.P. He was too tactful and sensible to make an educational lecture a direct means of propaganda for a certain political party. Nevertheless many of his students joined the S.L.P. (including myself), without it being dinned into their ears by him that it was the "one and only."

I mention these facts because it is important to remember that they occurred *before* the Bolshevik revolution, 1917. They demonstrate that the Labour College educational movement was not withholding, as some of its ultra-revolutionary critics are now insinuating, the kind of ideology which inspires proletarian revolutions. Paul was not the only Plebs lecturer at that time who "delivered the goods" in the sense indicated.

Since then the Plebs movement has broadened out into the National Council of Labour Colleges. Not only is independent working-class education subversive of the bourgeois ideology

which determines the state of mind of our Henry Dubbs on the one hand, and our reactionary labour leaders on the other ; but it is gaining ground in the trade unions more speedily and effectively than the propaganda of revolutionary Marxist organisations.

This being the present state of affairs it is rather surprising to find some communists taking up so biased an attitude towards the Labour College movement. It is more surprising still when one considers how meagre is the British literature issued by their organisation criticising British Capitalism and British Imperialism from the viewpoint of the Third International.

R. Palme Dutt has attacked *The PLEBS Outline of Modern Imperialism* because, in his judgment, it has not presented the cause from the viewpoint aforesaid ; yet his own organisation has not produced any works dealing with Imperialist problems affecting Ireland, Egypt, India and the Colonies which are potent enough to purge proletarian minds "saturated with imperialism."

When I was in the C.P. I promoted the formation of the Birmingham Labour College, and was its first Chairman. Yet I was so busily engaged in Party work that I never once took the chair !

Unfortunately, while I could not spare time to attend the class meetings, others in the party, several of them speakers, who could have availed themselves of an education they badly needed, failed to do so. Time after time in Branch meetings I appealed to members to join the class, but with the exception of a few, my appeals fell on deaf ears.

Since then things have not improved in this respect in the party. It is therefore a sensible move on the part of its E.C. to try to remedy this state of affairs by co-operating with the Labour College movement.

But it will be a sad mistake if the C.P. tries to capture the latter, or seek to force the education given into political channels favourable to itself.

There is no need for this.

If Marxism is soundly taught, and I submit it is being soundly taught in the Labour College movement, Marxist ideology in itself is sufficiently revolutionary to make converts for any political party which is scientifically poised on Marxism in theory and practice.

At present the Communist Party of Great Britain is not so poised.

FRED SILVESTER.

One Step at a Time

I agree whole-heartedly with Murphy that we must examine the results of our teaching from time to time and scrap anything which is outworn and useless. We need to make sure that our teaching is leading definitely towards the development of a fighting spirit in the ranks of the workers. But this applies also to any party or

organisation which sets out to guide and instruct the workers. Unfortunately it is not possible to make any party identical with the working class by "declaration." I imagine that if that had been possible "Letters Patent" would have been taken out a long time since by one of the old firms! We know that a number of groups have already claimed to be the "only original firm"; the ark of the covenant has already had one or two previous resting places. It is, in fact, not by words alone, or even by examining our theories that we shall rouse the workers—it is by work amongst and contact with them.

A review of the whole field of the organised and unorganised working class, and a realisation of lines of demarcation of work, is just as big a need as a re-examination of methods. The Marxism of Marx calls for a consideration of existing organisations and of all the ways that lead the worker towards mass action. In England it so happens that the educational spadework has been done by an organisation which set out fourteen years ago to draw support from all sections of the workers for the propagation of class-conscious, revolutionary teaching. This is the fact. The I.W.C.E. movement has gathered and can still gather into its folds people of every section of the workers. And the need is still there for it to go on doing it.

Murphy is right in saying that the implications of I.W.C.E. need furthering and emphasising. But I disagree when he argues that this emphasis must be *our* work. The average apathetic worker does not leap straight from slumber at the clarion call of any political party into the revolutionary class struggle. There are steps, there are stages. If Marx did not teach this, then I don't know what he taught.

Two things are needful. First, the more definite ginging up of our activities. In this I agree with some of our critics. We must test our work, overhaul our teaching, look hard and critically at the things we have established to carry on the work, and find out if they are doing what was intended and what is implied in our constitution. We must see to it that our classes really turn out "left wingers," and that our syllabuses emphasise and make clear our aim:—the training of class-conscious revolutionists, who *cannot* remain aloof from the actual struggle.

Second, and just as important, other sections of the workers must realise that there are lines of demarcation in the work. Ours is the job of preparing the way for the political parties. If we are to finish the job outright, what justification is there for their existence?

WINIFRED HERRABIN
(Hon. Sec. Plebs League).

In Memoriam : MARY MARCY

Mary Marcy, author of Shop Talks on Economics and other books and pamphlets well-known to Plebs, died on December 8th last. The following extracts from a memorial pamphlet by Jack Carney, late editor of the Voice of Labour, Chicago, will be of great interest to all who knew her name and her work for the cause.

MARY MARCY was born in 1877, in Belleville, Illinois. At an early age she found herself bereft of parents, together with two younger members of the family, Inez and Roscoe. Her greatest hardship, she once said, was when her brother and sister were taken away from her and were sent to live with relatives. But undaunted, Mary worked on through high school and finally succeeded in securing a job in an office, at the telephone switch-board. Her wages were nine dollars per week. Although the pay was small, she set up house-keeping, and took her brother and sister under her sheltering wing. She guided her sister through high school and her brother also, the latter securing a job as "printer's devil." With her "savings," she bought a textbook on shorthand, and soon became an efficient stenographer.

From this time on, Mary took a deep interest in economic, political and social questions. During the Bryan campaign of 1896, she was informed by her employers that no Bryan buttons would be tolerated. Instinctively the soul of Mary revolted, and wearing a Bryan button she found herself without a job. It is interesting to note that her employers were engaged in the business of manufacturing American flags.

Clarence Darrow, well known to the radicals, hearing of Mary's dismissal and the reasons that led up to it, secured her a position under William R. Harper, president of the University of Chicago. "One of the characteristic things about President Harper," said Mary, "was his deep concern for those students who were poor. He always seemed eager to assist them." Her tuition was free, and during her spare hours Mary had an opportunity rarely presented to working-class girls, which she was not slow to take advantage of. She studied psychology under Dr. John Dewey, and took advanced courses in English literature and philosophy. Contact with university circles gave her a slant on life that assisted her considerably in the study of economic questions.

After three years of intense university studies, Mary joined hands with her life partner, Leslie H. Marcy. They decided to go West

and made Kansas City their home. Here they found that the main question, as with all members of the working class, was that of earning a living. Mary secured a position as secretary to the treasurer of a large packing firm. She held this position during the years 1902—05. As a result of her new work she gained an insight into the methods pursued by Big Business, which helped her considerably in her Socialist Party work. (She was a member of the party from 1903 to 1917.) Readers of the *International Socialist Review* will recall her illuminating serial entitled "Letters of a Pork-Packer's Stenographer," which first brought her to the attention of radicals throughout the world.

About this time Congress appropriated 50,000 dollars to investigate the Beef Trust; "trust busting" was then the favourite indoor sport in political circles. The letters, appearing in the *International Socialist Review*, resulted in Mary being subpoenaed to appear before a grand jury in Chicago. As a result of her testimony the packers were indicted. Judge Humphries issued his famous "immunity bath" decision, so nothing came of the investigation. As was to be expected, Mary again found herself without a job. The packers had given "loyal" employees free trips to Canada, Mexico and Europe that they might not be subpoenaed.

Mary later secured a job with the Associated Charities and obtained first-hand information as to how charity organisations functioned. Her experiences here gave her an invaluable insight into the mental workings of rich and poor. Mary found that it was not considered scientific to help a person first and investigate afterwards. The custom was to investigate first and "encourage" afterwards. Mary upset all this and reversed the order of things. The packers, on hearing that she was working for the Associated Charities, stated that they would withdraw their annual donations, which were of considerable size, if Mary were not dismissed. Let it be said to the credit of Mr. Damon, at the head of the Associated Charities of Kansas City, that he refused to accede to their request.

As a result of her charity organisation work Mary wrote "Out of the Dump," which appeared serially in the *International Socialist Review*. It is interesting to note that it was illustrated by Ralph Chaplin, now serving a twenty years' sentence in Leavenworth penitentiary. Mary clinched the argument in her "Out of the Dump" when she had her leading character, old Granny Nome, declare, "Take keer of the stummicks, sez I, en' the morals 'll take keer of themselves." As a result of her articles, the magazine began to grow at a very rapid pace.

Mary was never of robust health, and she spent a year at Hot Springs, Arkansas, with a view to building herself up. Through

her articles in the *Review*, more especially her packing house letters, a demand arose for more of her writings. In 1908 she joined the staff of the *Review* and became secretary of Charles H. Kerr and Company, holding that position until the day of her death.

For fourteen years Mary gave of her best. No worker ever did more for the revolutionary movement. Into her work she poured her heart and soul. Readers of the *International Socialist Review* need not be reminded of this, for within its pages are enshrined the best writings of Mary.

Mary soon came to realise a weakness in the methods by which radicals were attempting to approach the masses. She saw from the outset that Marx had to be simplified if his teachings were to be accepted by them. As a result she wrote *Shop Talks on Economics*. Sitting in her home, where it has been our pleasure to confide in her and ask her guidance in many matters that trouble the mind of a radical editor, we saw copies of her *Shop Talks* in various languages. It has been printed in Japanese, Chinese, Finnish, Roumanian, French, Italian and Greek. During the last year of her life a British edition was published by the Socialist Labour Press, and the Industrial Workers of the World brought out a special edition. No greater tribute has been paid to any revolutionary writer. Over two million copies have been sold throughout the world.

One pamphlet followed another in rapid succession—*How the Farmer Can Get His, Industrial Autocracy, The Right to Strike, and Open the Factories*. Her pen was never idle; it turned out first a pamphlet, then a leaflet. Her theme was always the emancipation of the workers by the workers.

Her first scientific work outside the field of economics was *Stories of the Cave People*, which appeared serially in the *International Socialist Review*. In response to a persistent demand, it was later published in book form and, like her *Shop Talks*, has circulated in every part of the world.

In later years the country found itself flooded with sex literature. Every intellectual misfit wrote on sex, because he knew he had something that could be peddled to the unthinking. It was left to Mary, aided by her brother Roscoe B. Tobias, to write a brochure that exposed the alleged scientific pretensions of those who claimed to know and understand the sex question. In *Women as Sex Vendors* Mary and her brother literally wiped the floor with these alleged sex experts. H. L. Mencken, editor of *The Smart Set*, the keenest literary critic in America, praised it unreservedly and urged Mary to write more along such lines. We need hardly add that the book was promptly suppressed, but where there is a will there is a way, and thousands of copies are in circulation. A Japanese version is in press.

Mary was next attracted by the Little Theatre movement, and wrote that breezy satire on "free love" entitled *A Free Union*. That it hit the nail on the head was made manifest by the indignant protests of alleged Bohemians. It has been staged twice with success, and has delighted many readers.

Just before Mary died, her latest book, *Rhymes of Early Jungle Folk*, was published. It is beautifully illustrated by Wharton H. Esherick, one of her many friends. Reviewers from coast to coast are praising the book. It is recognised by those who teach children as the finest work of its kind. Speaking to the writer a few days before her death, Mary said: "If I can write little jingles that will acquaint children with an outline of pre-history, I will feel satisfied that I have achieved my ambition." Mary's ambition has been achieved.

Mary Marcy, agitator, author, playwright, editor, busy as a bee, yet always found time to write to her many fellow workers.

Mary had a large following of "wobblies." In 1918 she joined the Industrial Workers of the World; the number of her card was 526,613. When political chaos came in 1919 and resulted in the formation of the Communist Labour Party and the Communist Party, Mary foresaw the danger that presented itself. She foresaw—and how correct she was—that the "reds" would waste their time fighting each other, instead of fighting the boss. She urged them to remember that each side had its faults and that above all they must remember that in dealing with real things they should first, last and all the time be realists. She reminded them that in their haste they might commit acts that in after years they would regret. But the Russian Revolution, with its great emotional urge, had swept the comrades from off their feet. Many lost their perspective, and to-day the failure to heed the healthy advice of Mary Marcy has resulted in chaos.

In 1917, when the Communist Party, the Communist Labour Party and the Socialist Party were holding their rival conventions in Chicago, bitterly denouncing each other, she wrote for circulation among the delegates a leaflet entitled "A Revolutionary Party," which contained more commonsense and sound tactics than the total output of the three conventions. In it she said:

If, instead of denouncing the only revolutionary movement that is actually making inroads in industry we would learn what political action really is, and tell our friends what it is; if, instead of petty criticising, we were to back up this fighting organisation and show it that an army is the FORCE that makes the State something besides a few words, or laws written upon pieces of paper; that mass action may be political action and that we are all so close together that we ought to present a solid front to the capitalist enemy, we might then develop a movement in this country that would actually move and grow.]

Her advice passed unheeded, and to-day wherever you go men ask who you are, looking for your label. Heresy hunting has become the order of the day, and the great masses go floundering by. Rare opportunities meet us day after day and we fumble them. Viewing the situation now, the death of Mary Marcy becomes a greater tragedy than it appeared at first sight.

During the last four years, due to the strain of the war, her health gave way. Her home was ransacked by the Department of "Justice," and the sight of hundreds of fellow workers, many of them her own personal friends, going to gaol played havoc with her. When the war-storm broke and the night was darkest she mortgaged her little home in order that A. S. Embree, acting secretary-treasurer of the I. W. W., might continue at his work. Later, when Embree had been convicted and imprisoned at Boise, Idaho, she again put up her home to secure the release of "Big Bill" Haywood. . . .

Mary was a student in every sense of the term. Her well-chosen books were her tools; her library was her workshop. During the past year she over-taxed her strength by re-reading practically all the standard books put out by the publishing house, in order to re-write descriptions of the current catalogue. She loved to read or be read to until late in the night. When she wrote the words came swiftly, and the keys of her typewriter fairly flew.

Her latest enthusiasm was for modern educational methods, and she was particularly attracted by Thorndyke's *Educational Psychology*. She was in close touch with the "School of Organic Education," at Fairhope, Alabama, where she took her vacation each winter for several years past. By correspondence and an occasional contribution, she showed her deep appreciation of the Plebs League and the work of the Labour Colleges of Great Britain.

JACK CARNEY.

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A LESSON IN ENGLISH

The lack of a proper course in English for our students has always been marked. We used to use Nesfield's Grammar, but that is a singularly inadequate stop-gap. We suggest that it would be a good thing to revive William Cobbett's English Grammar. Not only was Cobbett the greatest master of English polemical prose of his day, but he wrote the Grammar particularly for "the use of soldiers, sailors, apprentices and ploughboys," in a series of simple letters addressed to his son James.

As far as possible with so difficult a subject he takes us easily, even amusingly, along. His examples of errors to avoid are taken exclusively from the speeches of Ministers, Judges and other reactionary bigheads. He manages even in a Grammar to teach a revolutionary lesson. Unfortunately the book is out of print. It would take a competent English scholar three days to go through and remove the archaisms, and then there would be a magnificent textbook for us. We wish we had the capital to finance such an edition; we should get our money back. As it is we can only offer the suggestion to any enterprising publisher. Herewith we give a specimen chapter.

LETTER XXIII.

ON PUTTING SENTENCES TOGETHER AND ON FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE.

MY DEAR JAMES,

I have now done with the subject of Grammar, which, as you know, teaches us to use *words* in a proper manner. But, though you now, I hope, understand how to avoid error in the forming of sentences, I think it right not to conclude my instructions without saying a few words upon the subject of adding sentence to sentence, and on the subject of *figurative language*.

Language is made use of for one of three purposes; namely, to *inform*, to *convince*, or to *persuade*. The first, requiring merely the talent of telling what we know, is a matter of little difficulty. The second demands *reasoning*. The third, besides reasoning, demands all the aid that we can obtain from the use of figures of speech, or, as they are sometimes called, *figures of rhetorick*, which last word, means the power of persuasion.

Whatever may be the purpose, for which we use language, it seldom can happen that we do not stand in need of more than one sentence; and, therefore, others must be added. There is no precise *rule*; there can be no precise rule, with regard to the manner of

doing this. When we have said one thing, we must add another ; and so on, until we have said all that we have to say. But, we ought to take care, and great care, that, if any words in a sentence relate, in any way, to words that have *gone before*, we make these words correspond grammatically with those foregoing words ; an instance of the want of which care you have seen in paragraph 178.

The *order* of the matter will be, in almost all cases, that of your thoughts. Sit down to *write what you have thought*, and not to *think what you shall write*. Use the first words that occur to you, and never attempt to *alter a thought* ; for, that which has come of itself into your mind is likely to pass into that of another more readily and with more effect than any thing which you can, by reflection, invent.

Never stop to *make choice of words*. Put down your thoughts in words just as they come. Follow the order which your thought will point out ; and it will push you on to get it upon the paper as quickly and as clearly as possible.

Thoughts come much faster than we can put them upon paper. They produce one another ; and, this order of their coming is, in almost every case, the best possible order that they can have on paper : yet, if you have several in your mind, rising above each other in point of force, the most forcible will naturally come the last upon paper.

Mr. Lindley Murray gives *rules* about *long sentences* and *short sentences* and about *a due mixture* of long and short : and, he also gives rules about the *letters* that sentences should *begin* with and the *syllables* that they should end with. Such rules might be very well if we were to *sing* our writing ; but when the use of writing is to *inform*, to *convince*, or to *persuade*, what can it have to do with such rules ?

There are certain *connecting words*, which it is of importance to use properly : such as *therefore*, which means *for that cause*, *for that reason*. We must take care, when we use such words, that there is *occasion for using them*. We must take care, that when we use *but*, or *for*, or any other connecting word, the sense of our sentences requires such word to be used ; for, if such words be improperly used, they throw all into confusion. You have seen the shameful effect of an *although* in the King's Speech, which I noticed in my last Letter. The adverbs *when*, *then*, *while*, *now*, *there*, and some others, are connecting words, and not used in their strictly literal sense. For example : " Well, *then*, I will not do it." *Then*, in its literal sense, means *at that time*, or *in that time* : as, " I was in America *then*." But " Well, *then*," means, " Well, *if that be so*," or " *let that be so*," or " *in that case*." You have only to accustom yourself a little to reflect on the *meaning* of these words ; for that will soon teach you never to employ them improperly.

A writing, or written discourse, is generally broken into *paragraphs*. When a new paragraph should begin, the nature of your thoughts

must tell you. The propriety of it will be pointed out to you by the difference between the thoughts which are coming and those which have gone before. It is impossible to frame rules for regulating such divisions. When a man divides his work into Parts, Books, Chapters, and Sections, he makes the division according to that which the matter has taken in his mind ; and, when he comes to write, he has no other guide for the distribution of his matter into sentences and paragraphs.

Never write about any matter that you do not well understand. If you clearly understand all about your matter, you will never want thoughts, and thoughts instantly become words.

One of the greatest of all faults in writing and in speaking is this : the using of many words to *say little*. In order to guard yourself against this fault, inquire what is the *substance*, or *amount*, of what you have said. Take a long speech of some talking Lord, and put down upon paper what the *amount* of it is. You will mostly find, that the amount is very small : but, at any rate, when you get it, you will then be able to examine it, and to tell what it is worth. A very few examinations of this sort will so frighten you, that you will be for ever after upon your guard against *talking a great deal* and *saying little*.

Figurative language is very fine when properly employed ; but, figures of rhetoric are edge-tools and two-edge tools too. Take care how you touch them ! They are called *figures*, because they represent other things than the words in their literal meaning stand for. For instance : " The tyrants oppress and starve the people. The people would live amidst abundance, if those *cormorants* did not devour the fruit of their labour." I shall only observe to you upon this subject, that, if you use figures of rhetoric, you ought to take care that they do not make nonsense of what you say ; nor excite the ridicule of those to whom you write. Mr. Murray, in an address to his students, tells them, that he is about to offer them some advice with regard to their " future *walks* in the *paths* of literature." Now, though a man may *take a walk* along a *path*, a walk means also *the ground* laid out in a certain shape, and such a walk is *wider than a path*. He, in another part of this address, tells them, that they are in " the *morning* of life, and that that is the *season* for exertion." The morning, my dear James, is *not a season*. The *year*, indeed, has seasons, but the *day* has none. If he had said the *spring* of life, then he might have added the *season* of exertion. I told you they were *edge-tools*. Beware of them.

PLEASE PAY for your
PLEBS
PROMPTLY

A PLAY for REVOLUTIONISTS

CAPITALIST psychology is a queer thing ! Here is a firm of publishers which specialises largely in trade and employers' journals and in books and pamphlets designed to promote the great cause of Industrial Peace ; a capitalist publishing house, that is to say, and one peculiarly identified with the publication of capitalist apologetics ; and this firm is responsible for the appearance in an English version of a work which must at once take rank as one of the greatest and most passionate expressions of the proletarian spirit in literature. The work is a drama dealing with English working-class history, its title is *The Machine Wreckers*, and its author the Bavarian Communist poet, Ernst Toller.*

Why, in the name of Industrial Peace was not such a work left untranslated ? If anyone else but a perfectly respectable capitalist firm had issued it, there would have been paragraphs in the press about hidden hands and Bolshevik gold. The attention of Sir John Butcher and Lord Pembroke-&-Montgomery ought certainly to be drawn to its publication. For if this is not a "subversive" book, then I never encountered one. Sympathetically read—and its power ensures that it will be—it would put backbone and a fighting spirit into a front-bench Labour parliamentarian ! I recommend the Scottish M.P.s to rehearse one or two of its choruses in readiness for their next musical outbreak ; they'll find several here with more kick in them than "The Red Flag."

The scene of the play is Nottingham, about the years 1812—16. The subject-matter is the Luddite Riots—the revolt of desperate men and women against the dread Machine which was threatening them with death by slow starvation. The characters are "Weavers," "an Overseer," "a Beggar," "a Manufacturer," "an Engineer," "a Streetwalker," and so on (except in the Prologue, the scene of which is the House of Lords, and the characters—"Lord Chancellor of England, Lord Byron, Lord Castlereagh and other Peers.") The pith and marrow of the play is not any abstract revolt against tyranny and injustice, but, very definitely, the modern proletarian revolt against the brutalising conditions of capitalist civilisation. It is a "propaganda play" with a vengeance ; but the propaganda is woven into the very texture of it—not tagged on as a "moral" to the "story." And it is a play of *to-day* ; not merely of a hundred years ago. Change a name or a phrase here and there, and its scene

* *The Machine Wreckers* : A Drama of the English Luddites. By E. Toller. (Benn Bros. 6s. net.)

might as well be the England of 1923 as the England of 1816. For Still Machine is master ; still—

.. Men are govern'd by a cruel clock
That beats a doleful time—tick-tack, tick-tack
For morning, noon and night—tick-tack, tick-tack.
One shall be arm, another leg, a third
Brain—but the soul, the soul is dead !

Toller is not an antiquary ; he is a 20th century revolutionist—who has played his part in an actual revolution, and who now lies in gaol in "Socialist" Germany as a consequence.

I am not going to attempt to "tell the story" of the play. It is a tragedy—as the movement of which it tells was a tragedy. It is bitter, and brutal, and—*cleansing*. Ned Lud's final words may, quoted here alone, sound comparatively ineffectual ; but read as the climax to the last moving scene of the tragedy, they make one feel at once a little humbler, and a little more determined :—

Imprison us ! We know what we have done !
We will pay forfeit for the man we slew !
But after us will come men better school'd,
More faithful, braver, to take up the fight
Against the rightful foe—and they will conquer !
Your Kingdom totters, masters of the world !

I may be prejudiced ; but that last line, even in translation, seems to me to have the authentic ring !

Or here is a piece of irony, as coldly passionate as Lud's defiance is fiery hot. Jimmy Cobbett, the men's spokesman, is face to face with Ure, the manufacturer. He has pleaded the men's cause so magnificently that even Ure is touched :—

URE : You dream. Yet I would have you dream beside me.
Henceforward you are welcome to my house.

Coming straight down from dreams to hard facts, Jimmy counters him with—"Will you give work to workers then?" The profit-maker remembers himself in time !

URE (*resuming the official tone*) : We must return to business since you wish it. The terms of work are known ; I have no more to add to them

Stage-directions, as Shaw and other moderns have shown, may be as dramatic as the spoken words of a play ; and that "*resuming the official tone*" is the stroke of a real dramatist.

What made capitalist publishers issue such a play ? Were they, like Mr. Ure, momentarily dreaming dreams ? Perhaps you would be well-advised to get a copy of it quickly, lest they too "resume the official tone"—and withdraw it from circulation !

J. F. HORRABIN.

CLASS ROOM NOTES

for Students and Tutors

EUGENE Sue was a bawdy French writer of considerable influence during the reigns of Louis Philippe and Napoleon III. He died in 1857, in exile. He is best known to the workers as the author of an enormous *History of a Proletarian Family Throughout the Ages*, translated by Daniel Deleon, and for some years pressed upon all converts to the socialist movement as a work of supreme importance. Deleon himself praised it excessively, and convinced himself that the bourgeois world had tried to suppress Sue. The reverse was the case; during his lifetime Marie Joseph Eugene Sue enjoyed a popularity in England, France and America that Marie Corelli might envy. His revolutionary reputation is due almost to an accident; in the turmoil of 1848 he, like many others, was swept away in the current of revolutionary Republicanism. He imprudently inserted in a novel, *Le Berger de Kravan*, attacks upon the pretender, Louis Bonaparte, and when the latter became Emperor, Sue left for England. In spite of his genuine sympathy with the oppressed, the revolutionary movement of the time did not take him seriously, regarding him correctly as a dilettante and loose-tongued journalist; but after his death the Commune of Paris published in its *Official Journal* a serial by him entitled *Poor B—s* (*Les Pauvres Bougres*).

The *History of a Proletarian Family* is partly, of course, trash, though certainly not such trash as Ethel M. Dell or Marie Corelli, and no worse after all than a good deal of Jack London. There are great tracts of dull machine-made stuff in it, but for the most part it is lively enough serial-stuff, though not to be trusted as history. For those who like serial-stuff it is an easy if dangerous introduction to more serious study. But Sue, emphatically, is not to be judged by it. His main output—*The Seven Deadly Sins*, *The Mysteries of Paris*, *Paula Monti*, *Arthur*, *The Wandering Jew*, *The Memoirs of a Valet-de-Chambre*, and so on—is all of one machine-made type. His novels deal always with “debauchery” and “intrigue” in high or low life. His is not the plain, loud, decent filth of Shakespeare or the Elizabethans, calling a spade a spade and a hen a hen, but a sort of crab-like dirtiness, a sidelong and indirect approach to his invariable subject, fornication. His *Mysteries of Paris*, is said to be about to be filmed as a serial by Pathé's.

Geddes Talks

Some interesting facts and figures come from a recent speech

by Sir E. Geddes. In 1921 Britain exported 50 per cent. of 1913 exports. In 1922 nearly 70 per cent. Imports in 1921 were 75 per cent. of 1913, and in 1922 85 per cent. "If we divide the world into large groups such as Europe, the Far East, the Americas, the Empire, and so forth, we find that the proportion of total export trade done with these markets in 1922 compared with 1913 is very similar." Our imports from America, however (our creditor), have tended to fall in 1922. The adult male population of Britain is 1,300,000 greater than in 1911. Capitalism is producing only 70 or 80 per cent. of what it did in 1913! Sir E. Geddes considers that, in spite of the temporary stimulus to the iron and steel and coal industry, due to the Ruhr occupation, the long run effect of this fresh political disturbance will be to choke the trade revival which showed signs of beginning last year. Thus the mouthpiece of British capitalism!

The Mark

We have had questions from students of foreign exchanges about the doubling (during March) of the value of the mark. Some experts have said this was due to the action of the German Govt. in using Reichsbank gold (usually used in paying reparations) to buy up marks in the international market, and so improve the exchange. Others said it was "manipulation" by German coal and iron magnates, wishing to buy coal from Britain. They could buy on more favourable terms if the purchasing power of the mark abroad improved. We have heard, however, on good authority that in the few days when the mark leaped from over 200,000 to under 100,000 to the £, that not much more than £20 worth of marks in all were purchased. But speculators were so surprised at *anyone* buying marks after everyone had been selling for so long, that it needed very little buying to manipulate a "bull" movement.

Training in Boss-Class-Consciousness

The Times (4-4-22) gave details of the Phillip Stott College for Workers run by the Unionist Party, in which seventy male and thirty female students will be equipped "to discharge with greater knowledge and insight such duties of citizenship" as may devolve upon them. Among the lecturers are: J. A. R. Marriott, the historian, whose "unbiased" writings have been more than once exposed in *THE PLEBS*; Sir H. Mackinder, the geographer, a fervent Protectionist; Prof. Hearnshaw, who once boiled over to the extent of a column in the *Observer* about that wicked book, *Revolution: 1789-1906*, among other little splutterings referring to "the hateful and malignant mind" of Marx; Harold Cox, who

wants to sterilise the workers in order to remove poverty ; and Dr. Shadwell, who "exposed" the revolutionary educational organisations for the delight of *Times* readers as far back as 1917. With the exception of the First Lord of the Admiralty and Sir W. H. Sugden, M.P., all of them are big-wigs of those universities to which the W.E.A. highway of education leads.

The Stott College is an attempt to preserve specimens of that almost extinct beast—the Tory working-man. One can be sure there will be no monetary difficulty for the students, who will remain in session from May to September. Their employers—if they have any—will only be too glad to free them to learn from such authorities all about T.U. law, the duties of T.U. officials, Co-partnership, and the like.

Dear Old Mrs. Partingtons ! Let 'em brush for all they're worth !

Capitalist Disagreement

It is a mistake to think that capitalists, here or in America, form one united conscious bloc. The American Ship Subsidy Bill (see *THE PLEBS*, July, 1922), was talked out by the farmers' bloc in the Senate at the beginning of March. The agriculturists are suspicious of the bankers, and want credit for farmers, not subsidies for shippers. However, the last word has not been said in the controversy, for the Anglophobes and Japanophobes are never tired of picturing the possibilities of a mercantile marine in war time.

Rescuing the Workers

American Trade Unionism is in some respects in the 1871 stage of the British movement ; it is seeking a place within the legal framework of capitalism. Morris Hillquit and S. Untermyer have been debating on "Shall Trade Unions be regulated by Law ?" Untermyer is the sponsor of a bill introduced into the New York Legislature which, while opposed to the injunctions obtained elsewhere against the Unions, would make sympathetic strikes impossible and generally bind the Unions hand and foot by placing their final control in the hands of an outside Commission. Just as the Sheffield outrages were used here, so the close monopolies of a few exceptional small unions are being used there. The poor members themselves and the workers have to be saved from the Unions' Tyranny !

The Wash-Out Conference

After the Washington Conference in November, 1921, *Avanti*

published a cartoon bearing the caption : *PEACE: The Pacific after the Disarmament Conference.* Seas were rolling mountains high, torrential rain was pouring and the heavy clouds were crossed by great flashes of lightning which lit up the frail bark *Pax* tossed helplessly to and fro.

That is now generally recognised as a true picture. The Conference increased competition in all the more effective armaments. Rivalry in cruiser, submarine and aeroplane building continues unabated. Even the limitation of capital ships by the ratio of 5—5—3 is being interpreted in conflicting ways. Now it is the personnel and now the number and size of the guns of these limited ships that is in dispute. The U.S. has decided recently that increasing the range of the guns by elevating the turrets is no violation of the pact.

The Hearst press is giving prominence to Bywaters, who maintains that because Japan fortified all her islands before November, 1921, and is spending all the money saved on capital ship in building cruisers and submarines, the Washington Conference established Japan as the mistress of the Pacific.

Now the British Government proposes to spend £11,000,000 on a naval base at Singapore. This is only 300 miles outside the 110th meridian beyond which Washington said no further fortifications should be made. Singapore, according to Amery (First Lord of Admiralty) is Britain's gateway to the Pacific and almost what the Panama Canal is to the U.S. It only needs that Uncle Sam shall discover an excuse to fortify the Phillipines and Guam and the "wash-out" will be complete.

The Powers behind the Government

We mentioned last month the proposals heard of in Paris for an alliance between Belgium, France, and Italy, with an anti-British bias. Perhaps the reason why this has for the moment been rejected by the Italians is to be partially explained by the counter-move on the part of Stinnes & Co. in Italy. The following statement in *Daily Telegraph* of March 31st, is instructive :—

With regard to Herr Stinnes' much advertised trip to Italy....Stinnes went to Italy on the initiative of a powerful group of industrialists to seek a basis for co-operation of German and Italian industry....By this attempt to restore on a large scale the pre-war co-operation of German and Italian industry Germany hopes to wean the Mussolini Government from M. Poincaré....Stinnes and his group may negotiate with the committee of American financiers now *en route* from Rome to Germany for the participation of American interests in German industry.

The chief points characterising the situation are : First Herr Stinnes' efforts to detach Italy from France by a promise of increased coal deliveries and the advantages of industrial co-operation with Germany . . .

Meanwhile, M. Loucheur, the Stinnes of France, comes over to sound Mr. Bonar Law on a settlement of British differences with France. The lines of the compromise are supposed to be British assent to the French staying in the Ruhr in return for France reducing her reparation demands to Mr. Law's "reasonable" figure. If anything comes of this, it will mean that Mr. Law, for the sake of "tranquility" for British finance and commerce, sacrifices British heavy industry to the competition of M. Loucheur & Co. triumphant in the Ruhr. *The Manchester Guardian* for Apr. 7th commented thus on M. Loucheur :—

It is certain that he is the foremost figure among the big French industrialists, who in turn exercise in France enormous political influence. That is what really gives importance to any suggestions he may make....The occupation of the Ruhr....is supported by French industry, because it could be made to give France overwhelming predominance in the iron and steel markets of Europe....when dealing with M. Loucheur one may be fairly confident that one is not dealing with abstractions and phantoms, but with substantial realities. And the chief reality of the Ruhr is its mineral wealth. The chief purpose of the French industrialists is to make that wealth subserve the French iron and steel trades....Economic control over the Ruhr industries cannot be given to France, or at least cannot be made effective, without some measure of political control.

It is believed that M. Loucheur's mission has at any rate the private approval of M. Poincaré.

The Capitalist Outlook on Education

John J. Tigert, United States Commissioner of Education, is waging a war on illiteracy. In the *New York American* (25-3-23) he writes :—"It has been estimated that, if the productive labour value of an illiterate is less by only 50 cents a day than that of an educated man or woman, the country is losing \$825,000,000 a year." He does not add, as he might, that Mr. Hearst, with twenty-two daily and fifteen Sunday newspapers, would lose his power, as would our own Rothermere, if the illiteracy of the workers made them proof against floods of printers' ink.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

INNOCENT.—No, we should not recommend S.V.B.'s little biographies of Labour M.P.s in the *Herald* as models of how such things should be done. As examples of how they can be over-done—yes, certainly. We should, indeed, regard it as highly improbable that any political party since politics began ever contained 100 per cent. of really striking, forceful and altogether unique personalities; though we agree that, were such a party discovered, S.V.B. would probably be equal to the task of turning out a fresh stock of adjectives for every member of it. No, we do not think this particular kind of writing serves any purpose except to make its author, its victims, and the paper in which it is published, slightly ridiculous.

G. A. SPERRING writes *a propos* of the Bank Return and the increase in deposits. He points out that in 1910 coin and bullion stood at £39,000,000 odd, while in Nov., 1922, it stood at £125 odd, and "Total assets have jumped from roughly

£57,000,000 in June, 1910, to £144,000,000 in Nov., 1922." He asks whether the Issue Department of the Bank of England is a Government Department, and whether this increase in coin shows that it has been "juggling with figures."

No, the Issue Department is not a Government Department. It had to get leave from the Government to issue Treasury Notes during the war. The Bank of England is governed by a Governor and directors, representative of the commercial world. The increase of coin and bullion can be explained by the fact that gold was withdrawn from circulation during the war, gold flowed to this country from Europe during the war, and recently the Bank has been building up its gold reserve so as to offer a sound basis for the restoration of a gold standard. In U.S.A. the gold in the hands of the Federal Reserve Banks has increased by about 2½ million dollars since 1914, a million of this being since 1920! The Federal Reserve statement for May 31st, 1922, showed the following:—

Reserve deposits	..	..	..	..	..	..	\$1,800 m.
Federal Reserve notes	..	..	..	..	..	..	\$2,100 m.

Against which there is gold held to amount of \$3,000 m.
(See *Reconstruction in Europe*, M.G. Comm., No. 10, p. 6r6.)

AN A.U.B.T.W.-PLEB.

We learn that the elections of A.U.B.T.W. organisers are shortly taking place, and that one of the candidates is our old and tried friend, J. G. Clancy, of Battersea. Clancy's election would very decidedly be "in

line" with the A.U.B.T.W.'s educational policy, since he has always stood—and worked—for I.W.C.E. principles inside and outside of his Union. We may take the opportunity of wishing him luck!

What a BOSSES' JOURNAL says about it:—

"*An Outline of Economics.* (Plebs League, 2s. 6d. net.)

This textbook is intended for the use of classes in connection with the National Council of Labour Colleges. It is based on the teachings of Marx, a discredited philosopher.

Nobody will doubt the benefit a knowledge of economic science would be to the working class, for such knowledge would lead to industrial peace. But such a knowledge will not come from this book, which appears to be written for no other object than to distort facts to suit the fancy of those responsible for its preparation. The Labour cause would be better served, we think, by a straightforward presentation of economic truths."

British Dominions Trade. (April, 1923.)

Note what the bosses want from economic science—"knowledge leading to industrial peace." But Plebs Textbooks are not written to fill bosses' requirements.

ANOTHER ALLY GAINED

N.U.D.A.W. declares for I.W.C.E.

AT the annual conference of the National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers, held twelve months ago, the following resolution standing in the name of Manchester Central Branch was unanimously agreed to:—

That this Annual Delegate Meeting of the N.U.D.A.W. requests the Executive Council to consider the formulation of an Educational Policy on behalf of the members, and expresses the opinion that the best and most suitable education for the working class is the independent working-class policy of the Labour College Movement.

Last December this was followed up by New Ferry No. 1 Branch sending in for discussion at the 1923 Conference the following resolution:—

That the Executive Council take steps immediately to become affiliated to the Labour College.

To this, Manchester Central proposed the following amendment:—

Delete the words "Labour College" and substitute "National Council of Labour Colleges"; and add "and to make arrangements with that body for a scheme of education similar to that enjoyed by the members of the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers.

Arising from the above, the Executive Council appointed a committee to investigate and report upon the various bodies which claimed to exist for the promotion of working-class education.

This committee decided after due consideration to recommend to the E.C. that an educational scheme suited to the best interests of members could be best provided under the auspices of the Labour College Movement.

The E.C. accepted the recommendation and subsequently the committee met a deputation of representatives of the Labour College for the purpose of formulating a scheme to be submitted for the consideration of the delegates at the Annual Meeting.

In the preparation of the scheme, the three following considerations were kept in mind:—

- (1) That the scheme must furnish the maximum opportunities for all the members of the Union by the formation of classes, etc., and also include provision for the attendance of individual students at the Labour College;
- (2) That the N.U.D.A.W., like other similar organisations, had suffered financial set-backs owing to unemployment, etc., and therefore its existing resources and commitments would impose a limitation upon the amount of money that could be utilised at present for educational purposes.
- (3) That, whilst bearing this in mind, the scheme should be a complete one, and should be so drafted as to enable part of it to be applied immediately without detriment to the whole plan being carried out as circumstances warranted.

DRAFT SCHEME.

Section 1.

Provision of educational facilities shall be made for the members of the Union by the establishment of:—

- (a) Scholarships at the Labour College, London.
- (b) Educational opportunities for the members throughout the country in the form of:—
 - (1) Tutorial Classes.
 - (2) Study Circles.
 - (3) Individual Correspondence Courses.

Note re (a).—The ultimate plan will involve the allocation of at least one scholarship for each Division of the Union. The present scholarship fee is £125 per annum, and includes tuition, board and lodgings. In addition, provision should be made, as is the custom with other organisations, for allocating to each student a personal grant of money, to assist him in meeting

the cost of books, travelling, and other personal expenditure. The Miners' and Railwaymen's Unions allow to each of their students £60 per annum, plus three return railway fares. The course of tuition at the College extends for a period of two years. These scholarships will not be awarded simultaneously, but in two parts, so as to permit of continuity between first and second year students.

Note *re* (b).—(1) The Tutorial Classes are administered by the National Council of Labour Colleges. Classes are already in existence in most of the industrial centres, and the Council will undertake to provide additional classes in other places, where necessary and practicable.

(2) Where local circumstances do not permit of the regular services of a tutor, arrangements will be made for the carrying on of Study Circles.

(3) In the case of isolated members, arrangements will be made for postal courses.

Section 2.

Financial provision for the above-mentioned educational facilities shall be made from the General Fund of the Union, the extent of which shall be regulated from year to year by resolution of the Annual Delegate Meeting, with a view to the progressive development of the whole Scheme.

Note.—It is proposed to make immediate provision from the General Fund for the carrying out of Section 1 (b), on the basis of 3d. per member per annum and on the understanding that any part of a sum made available on this basis for use in any given branch which is not used for the provision of educational facilities for its members shall, at the discretion of the Executive Council, be allocated to develop facilities for less favourably situated branches and areas.

The E.C. submitted this scheme to the Annual Meeting at Southport at Easter, the New Ferry No. 1 Branch

withdrawing their resolution in its favour. On being given an undertaking by the E.C. that the adoption of the scheme would also carry with it affiliation to the N.C.L.C. the Manchester Central Branch delegate (A. L. Gwilliam) also withdrew the amendment.

The scheme was ably moved by the Joint General Secretary, Mr. J. Hallsworth, who made a telling speech in favour of independent working-class education.

Mr. McKinder (Rotherham), who seconded, said that the only thing that could be said against the scheme was that it did not go far enough.

Mr. George Beardsworth (Birkenhead), wanted to know whether the E.C. had given due consideration to the claims of the W.E.T.U.C., his desire being to eliminate competition in the educational world.

Mr. A. L. Gwilliam (Manchester), said that an educated membership, educated on Labour College lines, would be a membership which the employers would find difficult to defeat.

Miss Ellen Wilkinson effectively replied to Mr. Beardsworth. Several other delegates spoke in favour, and the resolution embodying the whole of the E.C.'s proposals was carried without dissent.

Mr. Hallsworth explained that for the first year only the section relating to provincial education, *i.e.*, tutorial classes, study circles, and individual correspondence courses would be put into operation. This means that a sum equal to 3d. per member per annum (on the present membership, roughly 80,000, this means approximately £1,000), will be spent. In the second year six whole time scholarships will be awarded, and in the third year a further five, which will bring the total eventual cost up to £3,000 per annum.

May other unions soon be induced to follow this fine example! Get Busy.

A. L. G.

WILL Plebs everywhere help us by drawing the attention of N.U.D.A.W. members to the Magazine, and endeavouring to gain their support.

REVIEWS

A LIBERAL IDEALIST

War: Its Nature, Cause and Cure. By G. Lowes Dickinson. (Allen and Unwin, 4s. 6d.)

AS a writer of English prose dialogue Mr. Lowes Dickinson may not unfairly be described as without a rival in the whole history of our literature; witness his classic *A Modern Symposium*. But his exquisite literary skill only serves to emphasise the more his almost entirely liberal pacifist-humanitarian outlook. I say almost, because he has moments in this book when he seems to see light—as when he says that “war is about territory, power and trade, and about nothing else.” Yet he actually contends that the tendency of development of the British Empire has been towards “free self-government” (shades of the Irish Free State, and the hundred and seventy-two men who are to die for the Chauri Chaura riots!), and he has all the liberal’s pathetic faith in a League of Nations into which Germany shall have been admitted and a “recognised” Russia invited.

It gives no shock to learn, after this, that revolution is merely suicide, that though Russia might be able to hold out for years, a revolutionary State in Western Europe would starve at once, etc. Mr. Dickinson is anxious, terribly anxious, for the continuance of civilisation, which another war, he tells us, will utterly destroy; he talks as if civilisation were all of one piece, without in the least realising that it is cut into two by the class division of society, and that it is *bourgeois* civilisation which is collapsing—the subjective factors of it, that is, not the vast industrial technique or the books or the laboratories. Like all the finer spirits of the old world, Mr. Dickinson, while able to expose the hypocrisies of patriotism and to combat effectively the “guilty nation” myth, has no grip at all on the root developments of Imperialism, and does not seem to conceive that No More War is a meaningless cry apart from No More Imperialism.

In other words, he does not see that the only true pacifist is the fighter in

the working-class struggle for power, the struggle against Capitalist Imperialism, the struggle for a World Federation of Workers’ Governments. There is nothing but fatuity in earnest appeals to the “ordinary elector,” the “plain man.” Faith-healing will not exorcise the tremendous demon of Imperialism; incantations will not prevent the outbreak of a new Imperialist war. The only remedy, and the one class that can apply that remedy, can clearly be discerned. But Mr. Dickinson is no Marxist. G. A. H.

BIOLOGY

Biology. An introductory course for classes and study circles. By C. P. Dutt. (Labour Research Dept. 6d.)

This pamphlet professes to be a “guide to modern knowledge, modern problems and modern lines of experimental reasoning.” The popular accounts of biology, and especially those prepared for working-class audiences, says the author, “are filled with the lumber of outworn controversies.” This “syllabus” presents us with the lumber of existing ones.

There is now a huge mass of sifted and verified knowledge of the animal mechanism of the sequences of forms of life on the earth and of the origin of the human race. *That* I regard as the matter to be presented to a working-class audience—or *any* kind of audience—and C. P. Dutt apparently doesn’t. What he gives his readers is a presentation of the present day working hypotheses of “genetics.” The experimental facts are exceedingly difficult to understand—even if one reads the original memoirs; the explanations are tentative and frankly such and the whole subject is rapidly being transformed. Few working biologists attach more than provisional importance to the results, and in any scheme of working-class education their significance is quite secondary to that of biology in general.

The proof of this will lie in the application to actual teaching of C. P. Dutt’s syllabus. Has he “tried it on the dog?” From the way in which

the thing is arranged I should say not, but I may be wrong. If so it would be interesting to know, for instance, how a class has received an exposition of Morgan's *Physical Basis of Heredity*, a "quite essential" part of the scheme presented by this syllabus.

J. J.

TWO RECENT BOOKS ON PSYCHOLOGY
What is Psychology? By Charles W. Hayward, M.D., etc. (Allen and Unwin, 7s. 6d.)

The Machinery of the Mind. By Violet M. Firth; preword by A. G. Tansley. (Allen and Unwin, 3s. 6d.)

Plebeians who consult Dr. Hayward in order to find out what psychology is, will be "left asking." (Happily they already have a substantial answer in the Plebs *Outline*.) Hayward's title is misleading. He uses psychology in a sense peculiar to himself. He defines the term at the outset, after a fashion, but fails to use it in any consistent sense. Often he means what is perhaps more fitly called "ideology"—general outlook. Still more often he uses the word as equivalent to "the individual psyche." A great deal of the earlier part of the book is a reiteration of the importance of environment rather than heredity as the cause of "psychology." For instance, on p. 44 he tells us that "true psychology is entirely a matter of environment." Here, of course, he is on the edge of the Marxist generalisation that the ideology of the members of a social class is determined by their economic environment—but he bungles it. In actual fact, the essential thesis of the book is in conflict with such a view, for Hayward's teaching embodies the theory that the right use of "reason" will transform all our "psychologies" and create a new world. On p. 49, he tells us that "psychology" can be moulded "without money and without price, simply by ensuring that newly-born infants shall be cut off from evil environments and influences, and trained by loving and truly educated parents and attendants, so that their growing psychology shall record nothing but truth, fair play, and good humour." As if it were "simple" to secure these desiderata! It would not have been simple in the Republic of Plato, and we

live among the dregs of Romulus—in a decaying capitalist civilisation. The task will be difficult enough in a revolutionised world, and we can hardly begin it till the morrow of the social revolution.

It is amazing that a man can be both a doctor of medicine and a barrister-at-law, and yet have so little inside knowledge of contemporary science. For instance, when he touches on the application of the doctrines of evolution to the individual and social life of mankind, Dr. Hayward's observations are rendered almost worthless by his essential failure to understand the distinction between the "biologic" human being subject to the laws of biologic evolution, and the "economic" or "social" human being who (as a part of human society) is removed from the direct operation of these laws (cf. *Outline of Psychology*, pp. 13 and 64). To sum up, we should classify the author as a person of good will rather than of good intelligence. This is unfortunate in one who aims at remodelling the world by reason.

We have left ourselves little space in which to deal with Violet M. Firth's far less ambitious and much more useful volume. Students of psychology who wish to enlarge their knowledge of subconscious mentation will find in this little work a valuable introduction to larger and more difficult books such as Tansley's *The New Psychology and its Relation to Life* and Bandouin's two volumes *Suggestion and Auto-suggestion* and *Studies in Psychoanalysis*. To avert a possible misconception, we should explain that "the machinery of the mind" discussed in this book is not the machinery of nerve cells and fibres, but the machinery of *psychic* determinism.

E. AND C. P.

THE LAND

An Economic Survey of a Rural Parish.

By J. P. Howell (Oxford Univ. Press, 1s.)

In a foreword to this slight study, C. S. Orwin, head of the Institute of Research in Agricultural Economics in the University of Oxford, remarks on the increasing interest in rural affairs displayed by various individuals and organisations in recent years. A glance at a map shewing the distribution of

Labour M.P.s in Great Britain should convince the labour man of whatever shade of opinion that his interest in Hodge must be considerably augmented if some of the blank areas are to be filled in at the next election.

Propagandists in rural districts have sorely felt the absence of any socialist agricultural programme. PLEBS readers hardly need to be reminded that the land problem, whether in Russia, Poland, Italy, or England, is one of the hardest to solve—but yet a solution is imperative if socialism is to succeed.

The absence of a policy is largely due to dearth of knowledge and any contribution to agricultural economics is welcome. For that reason the publications of the above Institute are well worth watching by Plebs. This particular pamphlet is scarcely a typical example, resembling in its shallowness much of the published work of other agricultural institutions. An economic survey with no maps, no mention of geological formations, proximity of large towns, or rates of wages, is of little value to any student—unless it be to suggest to him a field in which valuable spade work remains to be done. And a student from a working-class viewpoint could hardly fail to be of higher value than this pamphlet from Oxford University.

H. G.

H. G. WELLS' OUTLINE

The Outline of History. By H. G. Wells. Definitive Edition, revised and re-arranged by the Author. (Cassell, 21s. net.)

It is agreed by most people to-day that history must be re-written, but on the question of how and why it must be re-written there is very little unanimity. Mr. Wells expresses the need in this wise—"There is a feeling abroad that the teaching of history considered as a part of general education is in an unsatisfactory condition, and particularly that the ordinary treatment of this subject by the class and teacher and examiner is too partial and narrow."

His book is written with a view to shattering the prevailing idea that each nation has an individual history

which is entirely independent of all other nations, and unaffected by the development of contemporary countries; that is to say it is written from the point of view that historical development is *universal* and *not nationalist*. This, no doubt, is a very laudable object, and is in keeping with modern tendency.

A historian who to-day failed to grasp the outstanding fact that political and economic questions are no longer national but international, would be mentally blind and not fitted to do his job. It is this fact above all others which has led Mr. Wells to be such an ardent supporter of the League of Nations idea. What he understands by the League is made clear by the following quotation:—"The League is at present a mere partial league of governments and states. It emphasises nationality; it defers to sovereignty. What the world needs is no such league of nations as this nor even a mere league of peoples, but a *world league of men*. The world perishes unless sovereignty is merged and nationality subordinated. And for that the minds of men must first be prepared by experience and knowledge and thought. The supreme task before men at the present time is political education."

The Marxian student will find in this book plenty of material brought together in a handy volume. He will, of course, need to sort it out, and often to interpret the facts in a different light, because, although running close to a Marxian interpretation, Mr. Wells does not use the Materialist Conception of history as his guide. But he cannot escape the inexorable logic of events, and he unconsciously is compelled to give an interpretation of facts and sometimes to use phraseology to which even a hard-shell Marxian could take no exception.

Mr. Wells carries out very thoroughly his intent in this work, *viz.*, to show that history is all of a piece; as he states in his preface, "It has been written primarily to show that *history as one whole* is amenable to a more broad and comprehensive handling than is the history of special nations and periods, a broader handling that will bring it within the normal limitations of time and energy set to the reading and

education of an ordinary citizen. This outline deals with ages and races and nations, where the ordinary history deals with reigns and pedigrees and campaigns."

As a historian he is to be classed with the "idealist" school rather than the "materialist." With him it is a question of ideas, as the following shows:—"The need for a common knowledge of the general facts of human history throughout the world has become very evident during the tragic happenings of the last few years. Swifter means of communication have brought all men closer to one another for good or for evil. War becomes a universal disaster, blind and monstrously destructive; it bombs the baby in its cradle and sinks the food-ships that cater for the non-combatant and the neutral. There can be no peace now, we realise, but a common peace in all the world; no prosperity but a general prosperity. *But there can be no common peace and prosperity without common historical ideas.* Without such ideas to hold them together in harmonious co-operation, with nothing but narrow, selfish, and conflicting nationalist traditions, races and peoples are bound to drift towards conflict and destruction. . . .

With the above Marxians will beg to disagree. To them it puts "the cart before the horse." The lack of peace throughout the world is much more a matter of conflicting economic interests than of "wrong and fantastic ideas." These ideas are themselves the result of conflicting economic interests and are therefore secondary, an effect rather than a cause.

Teaching will play a part in the struggle for mastery—hence *The Plebs*. But we do not believe that the problem is simply one of ideas, it is much more than that.

In the main this edition is the same as that issued in the fortnightly parts. There are several minor alterations, some matter being taken out of the original production and the sections replaced by new matter, while other sections have been re-written. Sections 7, 8 and 9, of Chapter XL are new matter, which are certainly an improvement upon the matter displaced. The chronological table has been brought right up to date, and

includes "Increased disorder of German Finance and inability to pay the excessive war penalties. Growing estrangement of France and Britain."

The book is well printed in bold black type on an excellent white paper. It is beautifully illustrated by our J. F. H., whose maps are an outstanding feature. It is well arranged under the chapter headings, the sections are given with a brief outline of their contents. The scheme of contents is well set out and occupies six and a half pages. Nine pages are devoted to the chronological table, and twenty-two and a half pages to the index. From all of which it will be readily agreed by every student that this is a properly produced book. It is a pity that the binding is not good, for this spoils what is in every other respect an excellent production.

C. T. PENDREY.

UNEMPLOYMENT.

International Aspects of Unemployment.

By Watson Kirkconnell. (Allen and Unwin, 6s. 6d. net).

The extreme divergence of views on the question of unemployment reflects the different standpoints from which the problem is regarded. It would be much easier to secure agreement among the various writers on this subject if, first of all, a common basis were accepted from which the analysis could then proceed. As it is, one deals with a given situation and considers that alone; another regards the division of the product, within capitalist society, in such a way as to confine it to the capitalist class and the working class directly employed by capital; a third endeavours to consider the problem in the light of the general conditions of capitalist development, which involves more than a mere division of the product.

From these different standpoints there must inevitably be drawn widely differing conclusions. Hobson and what Brailsford in the *New Leader* calls the "Glasgow school," regard the problem purely as a division of the product in the form of wages and profits. If the latter is more than the capitalist can consume it is capitalised and results in a still greater surplus, hence a glut of goods. Dobb (in *The*

PLEBS), on the other hand, endeavoured to treat the problem from the standpoint of general capitalist relations and to consider why crises periodically disturb (but do not prevent) capitalist expansion.

The book here under review regards the present world crisis and unemployment as a result of the wide destruction of material wealth during the war and the shortsighted policy of politicians in framing terms of peace. The author accepts the law of population with all the crudeness of Malthus and to this, in the last analysis, the problem is reduced. His conclusion respecting the way out of the difficulty is expressed in the following:—

The two chief dangers to the effectiveness of this capitalist system are that population should outstrip the provisions of accumulated wealth and that the thrifty should cease to save.

In his view, therefore, everybody should save to the utmost of their capacity and thus create what, from the Hobson-Glasgow standpoint, would be a still greater crisis.

W. H. M.

PRE-HISTORY.

Everyday Life in the New Stone, Bronze, and Early Iron Ages. By Marjorie and C. H. B. Quennell. (Batsford, 5s. net).

Plebs who read the earlier volume in this series—*Everyday Life in the Old Stone Age*—will know what to expect from this second book. Here, in handy form, is a mass of information summarised from the very latest authorities, and made doubly valuable by numbers of fascinating illustrations.

The book is not, perhaps, quite so readable as its predecessor; but that is due to its attempt to include as much detail as possible about periods concerning which a much larger number of facts are available than about earlier ages. It is full of illuminating side-lights on the "development of the tool," and on particular aspects of social development (*e.g.*, the discussion on pp. 35—36 of the effect on social life of the concentration of a large number of people in hill forts—a sort of primitive city life). Every keen student of "historical beginnings" will add it to his library.

J. F. H.

LETTERS

"AMORALITY."

DEAR EDITOR,—In his reply to R. P. Dutt, Comrade Postgate says that when we realise that ethics are dependent on social conditions we pass through a stage of amorality. Does he imply that when an individual is removed from those places where such conditions take effect, he has no moral obligations, and is free to go to the uttermost limit of self-expression? Perhaps you could devote a few lines to this subject.

Yours fraternally,

R. J. MILLIGAN.

[R. W. P. writes: Comrade Milligan misunderstood me. I said many people pass through a stage of "amorality,"

but this is precisely because they do not understand their Marxism.]

INDEPENDENCE.

DEAR EDITOR,—An official Communist Party pronouncement with regard to "Working-class Education" is published in the Party organ, the *Workers' Weekly*, of 31st March last, where it is stated: "The Communist Party declares...that it consistently works for and instructs its members to work for the Communist education of the workers under the *guidance* and inspiration of the Party."

If by this is meant that the "guidance" of our Independent Working-class Education movement is to be

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controlled by the Communist Party, the answer must be "hands off." That scheme may perhaps be all very well in Russia and perhaps also in some other countries (though I doubt it), but it simply *will not do* in Britain. To put the "guidance" of our I.W.-C.E. movement under the Communist Party rather than under the control of our trade unions (such as the S.W. Miners' Federation, the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers, the N.U.R.) would be sheer folly, and is a policy that should be fought by all sincere workers whether in the Communist Party or not. Anyone can join and even dominate sects like the Fabian Society, the Communist Party, or the I.L.P.; such a charge cannot be levelled at our trade unions, these being composed of working men and women.

Yours faithfully, A. P. L.

[We may remark, with regard to the above letter, that neither the Plebs E.C. nor the N.C.L.C. Executive has any intention of affording any facilities whatever for the "guidance" of the I.W.-C.E. movement by any political party.—ED., PLEBS.]

WARD'S "ANCIENT LOWLY."

DEAR SIR,—With reference to the review of "The Claims of Artiquity" by "R. W. P.," in your issue of February, 1923, the third paragraph of which Ward's *Ancient Lowly* is referred to. I should like "R. W. P." to substantiate his statement with regard to this.

I have recently bought this work, which is published by Kerrs of Chicago, with the intention of studying it in order to be able to enlighten my fellow men who have not the means

or the inclination to read it themselves, as I considered it a great asset to the working-class movement.

To substantiate his statements in the work the author has provided a table to point out the various authorities from which he has gleaned his facts. Are we, then, to disregard all this and think that they have been put there to deliberately mislead the reader, because "plain lies" in my opinion mean deliberate lies.

Will "R. W. P." please give a few examples of these "plain lies" in order that I may not continue to mislead myself and others in this matter?

Yours sincerely, GEORGE BAILEY.

[R. W. P. writes:—I threw away my copy of Ward as worse than valueless, but a comrade has lent me a copy to look at. I see he changes Sulla's proscription of the Equites into "a massacre of 50,000 working-men" for effect. But mere exaggeration and the embellishments of rhetoric which take the place of facts in Ward are not the worst. He knows nothing of his period and even claims to have proved that "trade unions existed in ancient Rome"—a claim quite absurd to anyone who knows the first thing about the Marxian method. Indeed, Marx, with his scientific mind and habit of careful research, would have been the first to punish this shoddy journalistic stuff as it deserves. I know Ward makes out a list of authorities that he claims to have read. I am afraid, however, that he either hasn't read them really or was a very foolish man. Just as I close his book I see he calls the Greek *hetairae* "musical trade unionists"! They were prostitutes.]

Disproportion or Surplus Product A Reply

I HAVE indeed brought a hornet's nest about my ears. First, I should like to say that I agree with the last paragraph of Starr's letter in last issue. His summary of the position expresses my views.

Second, there is Mainwaring's very interesting letter. But since it is a

dissertation *about* the question rather than a refutation of my original article, I cannot very well reply to him. He declares, with a gesture of omniscience which I envy, that my theory of crises supposed "on the face of it an utterly senseless proceeding lacking almost everything that characterises

the capitalist system." But since he nowhere offers any proof of this somewhat sweeping assertion, my position is a little embarrassing. I can only reply, with as dogmatic a parody of his own words, that it "is a completely sensible proceeding, quite adequately characterising the working of the capitalist system." My hopes were raised, when at the end of the third column of preliminary discourse and after numerous question - marks, Mainwaring postulated three very excellent points necessary to "the elucidation of this question." But I was denied this promised "elucidation." To my dire disappointment he went on abruptly to chastise H. D. Dickinson. Perhaps part of his letter got lost in the post!

I am at any rate glad to have the admission from him that my theory of crises is that expounded by Marx in Vol. II. All that Mainwaring has to say about this is the following rather lame comment: "Is this, however, capitalist production and accumulation? True, Marx develops the argument as if that alone were in his mind, but it is quite another matter to demonstrate that the results obtained are possible within capitalism." But I never for a moment suggested that the adjustment can be maintained within capitalism. If he will read carefully my original article (page 53) he will see I say exactly the opposite. This misrepresentation of my argument runs through most of Mainwaring's letter.

I repeat: I do not deny the existence of a "surplus product" under capitalism, resulting in recurrent crises. I claim, however, that its cause is not under-consumption (as Boudin and Mainwaring claim) but the anarchy of production; this anarchy involving continual disproportion or maladjustment between the parts of the industrial machine. I venture to think that this is the view of the Russian Marxists, as far as one can judge from the available writings of Varga and Buharin on the subject.

A. M. Robertson's letter gives me more opportunity of "getting my teeth into it." But even with his criticism my task of replying is made difficult by a certain "woolliness"

about the expression "surplus." He does not make it very clear whether by "surplus" he means a surplus of money which the capitalists wish to invest somewhere at the highest possible rate of profit, or a surplus of goods, after capitalists have invested their profits where best they can. If he means (as he at times appears to) that there is a continual piling up of profits, which the capitalists want to reinvest, and that to avoid a falling rate of profit they are tempted to invest abroad, he is stating a truism, which I should be the last to dispute. But there is nothing logically inevitable about this. In fact it does happen, but if export of capital abroad were impossible for any reason, the capitalists would just have to "lump it" and invest at a lower rate of profit at home. One can scarcely imagine yet a while a condition of things where every opening for investment was completely filled. Robertson says that the extent of reinvestment is limited because of the limited supply of labour-power. But he neglects to note that the composition of capital changes; and as long as this happens there is plenty of room for reinvestment in increasing constant capital, e.g., financing new inventions and installing new machinery.

With regard to the point about the World Trust in Robertson's first paragraph. It is true that if the capitalists succeeded in getting complete international control of production they could partially solve the crisis. They are trying to do so by means of national control of production through national combines and state control; and the result is a much more destructive form of competition between nations—Imperialism. As Varga says: "The tendencies towards an international organisation are far weaker than the antagonism between the various national interests."

One final relevant point: I think it is generally agreed now by students of the trade cycle that there is no regular periodicity about crises, such as Jevons supposed. They vary in length from anything between seven and eleven years. (See Plebs Econ. Textbook, p. 104.)

M. H. DOBB.

ESPERANTO NOTES

HANS AAS is editor of *Norsk Bokbinder Tidende*, the official Union journal of the Norwegian bookbinders. The Norwegian unions are discussing the possibility of closer working arrangements between the Co-operative Movement and themselves. And Aas wanted to profit from British experience. What did he do? Being an Esperantist, he wrote to our office for information, which was gladly supplied. Should he need, he can get similar willing help from comrades in every country under the sun. The following appeal was made in the above journal:—

"COMRADES,—The All-Norway Association of Labour Unions held its tenth congress in Kristiania, 4th—11th of March of this year. The following resolution was adopted:

"The Congress expresses its sympathy with the work for the furtherance of the use of the international language Esperanto, considering that an international instrument of communication would be the best means for evolving and strengthening the solidarity and fellow-feeling of the workers, and that it will be an invaluable aid during the struggle for freedom in which the working class of the world is involved. Therefore the Congress advises the chief secretariat, the trade unions and district organisations to act among the workers for the spread of knowledge concerning Esperanto. Attempts should also be made to get into touch with foreign labour organisations concerning the use of Esperanto in international correspondence, also towards the use of the language in coming international congresses."

"We hope and believe that the above-quoted opinion will be widely spread and help our further work for Esperanto. But if the efforts concerning the use of Esperanto among the departmental organisations are to have result, our comrades in other lands should carry the propaganda among their own organisations in such a manner that as many as possible

should declare themselves willing to use Esperanto.

With fraternal greetings,
THE NORWEGIAN

BOOKBINDERS' ASSOCIATION."

It is high time British Labour organisations followed the lead. Here Esperanto has only reached the agendas of the Labour Party and I.L.P. Conferences.

Your Part

Meanwhile no individual need wait for widespread official recognition before using Esperanto to gain personal contact with other comrades in every land. If you have the time, learn the language and *begin using it* as soon as a working knowledge is attained. If you are too old or too busy, bring this practical instrument of international working-class culture to the notice of younger comrades. Interest school-teachers and Labour members of Education Committees with a view to its introduction into the schools. Join B.L.E.S. (1s. per year) and thus keep in touch with those organised to make Esperanto known in the Labour Movement.

London Classes

Bethnal Green Men's Institute, Wolverley Street L.C.C. Schools, 7.45 p.m., Mondays (advanced) and Wednesdays (beginners). Teacher: Mark Starr (Diplomito).

Forest Gate railway and other workers who wish to join a class, write to H. E. Shephard, Corresponding Secretary, N.U.R., 82, St. James Road, E. 15.

Legado

Esperantistoj fervoraj sed naivaj ofte proklamas: Simileco en lingvoj detruos malamon kaj regigos pacon. Tamen en Japanujo kaj Ĉinujo la sama skribita vorto komprenigas pro la sama ideografa sistemo. Sed daŭre la japanoj englutas Koreon kaj penas ekspluati la ĉinojn. Reciproke la ĉinoj malamas "la prusojn de la Oriento." Necesas pli ol komuna lingvo realigi mondharmonion. Sed ĝi helpas kaj helpas la proletarion fari tion.

C. W. V.

N.C.L.C. ITEMS and NOTES

South Wales.—An attempt is being made to co-ordinate I.W.C.E. educational activities in South Wales, for the purpose of setting up permanent machinery for utilising the services of the many trained lecturers residing there to the best advantage. The S.W.M.F. and in a lesser degree the N.U.R. have been responsible for much isolated class-work in the past, and now that the A.U.B.T.W. has come in and N.U.D.A.W. follows, the whole of the possibilities should be exploited. One thing is certain, until the position of the tutor is regularised by means of a yearly salary, much costlier and less effective results will ensue. Any Plebeians or PLEBS readers wishing to help towards this much-needed co-ordination should write to W. J. Lewis, 5, Rees Terrace, Llanbradach.

Rhymney Valley District Classes.—An interesting and instructive report of the classes was presented to the district meeting in February last. From it one gathers that in spite of opposition to the classes at the commencement they have been very successful, both the Philosophy and History courses being well attended. Public lectures and socials have been successfully organised by enthusiastic students. The lecturer is Bryn Roberts, ex-student of the Labour College.

A.U.B.T.W. Scheme.—A conference of educational organisers under this scheme was held in London on April 7th, the Nos. 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 Divisions being represented. In view of the sparseness of N.C.L.C. supporters in these districts prior to the conception of the builders' scheme, the reports were very encouraging. The proposals

agreed upon for summer work included week-end schools and conferences; short lecture courses; study circles with occasional visits from lecturer; if, possible, classes for tutors; the visiting of individual branches of Unions and Trades and Labour Councils and parties. The need for local voluntary assistance in any or all of these activities is urgent, and PLEBS readers willing to assist should write N.C.L.C., 11, Penywern Road.

London Council, I.W.C.E.—Report on winter activities, 1922—23:—Fifty-two courses of lectures were held, including: Industrial History 16, Economics 17, Imperialism 8, Economic Geography 6, Science of Understanding 3, Finance 1, Women in Social Evolution 1. The shortage of lecturers was a hindrance to further extension of activities. The bulk of the lecturers are now drawn from the Labour College. Attendance at classes varied from about 9 to 60. Trade Unions: About 100 branches addressed on I.W.C.E. and, in some cases, popular lectures given on industrial topics. This line of activity is distinctly promising. Trade Union branches welcome very much these popular lectures, as do Co-operative Women's and Men's Guilds. Affiliations number 100, including Trade Union Branches and District Councils, Labour Parties, Trades Councils, Co-operative Guilds, Socialist and Communist Parties. The secretary is Geo. Phippen, 11, Penywern Road, S.W. 5.

Manchester and District Labour College.—Com. H. Lees writes:—"The classes started for the winter season have come to a close. The attendance has been good all round, and the

Summer is the Time for Propaganda

Have you got a supply of our leaflet, *An Open Letter to a Labour Party Worker* (see particulars on p. iii. of cover)? It's just the thing for breaking fresh ground.

results highly gratifying. This year end finds us fresher and more prepared to spread I.W.C.E. further afield and rope in more workers, especially those of the A.U.B.T.W., the A.S.W., and our newly found friends, the N.U.D.A.W.

"In Manchester we, like the capitalists, have periods of 'depression,' and the summer is our time. But we are attempting to overcome this by a series of popular lectures. Each lecture will be complete in itself, and they are to be delivered each Monday evening, commencing 23rd April, in the college, 32a, Dale Street, and will continue throughout the summer months. Arrangements for classes will be announced shortly.

"The most recent and welcome

success has been achieved by the adhesion of the Manchester Borough Labour Party to this College. The Party embraces 145 affiliated societies, etc., comprising 27,500 workers. Another link in the chain relating the I.W.C.E. movement to the workers' movement.

* * * The PLEBS' *Open Letter to a Labour Party Worker* has been used to advantage here. [Other Districts, please note.—Ed.]

"Since the Reformers' Bookshop closed our literature committee has been on overtime. There is no reason at all why Manchester friends should go short of literature. We can supply everything they want if they will take note and come to 32a, Dale Street."

INTERNATIONALISM in EDUCATION

THE first sentence of what we hope will prove to be a new chapter in the history of the movement for Independent Working-Class Education was written during last month at the Labour College, London, when a delegation from the Educational Section of the German Socialist Party was entertained for a few days at the College.

On Sunday, April 8th, a Conference was held, attended by the members of the delegation, Governors and ex-Governors of the College, prominent

T.U. officials and workers, and London I.W.C.Ers. Herr Bruno Lache, Herr Horlitz, and Herr Weimann described the German workers' educational movement, and Noah Ablett (Chairman of Governors), and W. W. Craik (Principal), also spoke. A number of questions on the methods adopted in Germany were put by members of the audience, and answered by the German delegates.

It is much to be hoped that some arrangement for a regular interchange of students between the German and British Colleges will result from this very successful visit.

LABOUR RESEARCH DEPARTMENT SUMMER SCHOOL.

The above will be held June 23rd to July 7th, at Dunford House, Midhurst, Sussex, a very beautiful house in the midst of gorgeous country. Inclusive charge, £2 15s. per week.

The following subjects have been selected for lectures and intending students are asked to vote for whichever they desire when sending in their applications:—

Workers' Compensation, Trade Union Organisation, Local Government Administration, Unemployment, Teaching Methods, Development of Imperialism, Structure of Modern Business, British Working - Class History, Literature,

Russian History since 1917, The Ancient World, Economic Geography.

Plebs who had the pleasure of being at the L.R.D. Summer School last summer will be sure of doing their utmost to be present again this year. A pleasant holiday, combined with useful lectures on important subjects and the pleasure of discussing same with congenial people will prove a great attraction. Applications should be sent in as quickly as possible as accommodation is limited and there will be a rush later on, so book early.

Write Miss Rose Cohen, Labour Research Dept., 162, Buckingham Palace Road, S.W. 1.

The PLEBS Bookshelf

MR. WELLS' NEW UTOPIA

WHEN H. G. Wells' new novel, *Men like Gods**, was being run as a serial the hoardings in the Strand asked us scandalously:

Have you read Mr. H. G. Wells' GREAT NEW ROMANCE in the *Wastepaper Gazette*?

No Government
No POLITICS
NO CLOTHES

We got the impression that the book was mainly about young women "without a stitch," and hoped for an illustrated edition, like the *Outline of History*. In fact, however, the book is absolutely clean; it was only the advertisements that were not.

Then it got a new form of advertisement in the *Daily Herald*, when Mr. Wells was annoyed by a review written by Mr. W. J. Turner, a poet, and an explosive correspondence followed. The noise is still in our ears, but the verdict, I think, is fairly clear. On the major question Mr. Wells wins. The criticisms he makes of the *Herald* "literary page," of its worthless coterie character and so on, are mainly true, and what he said would be endorsed by nearly every Pleb. On the other hand, upon the particular point at issue, Mr. W. J. Turner had some basis for his remarks, ill-expressed and inept though they were. There is a certain unreality about Wells' new Utopia.

Before, however, one criticises the book, it is only fair to praise its merits. Before the war Wells used to be emphatically one of the people that counted. His mind was genuinely alert and creative. People whose mental growth dates between 1900 and 1914 owe very much indeed to Wells—I do myself anyway—and while he was not a founder of a school he did more than anyone else except Shaw to wake people up to the facts of the foulness of capitalism. But from about 1914 onwards the stream began to

run dry. The novels became more repetitive. Novel followed novel—*The Wife of Sir Isaac Harman*, *Marriage*, *The Secret Places of the Heart*, and so on—which even the ardent Wellsite has difficulty in distinguishing from each other. Worse still, Wells seemed to be equally barren politically. He put all his money on the Allies and later President Wilson, quite in the *Daily News* manner. There was no trace of anything individual in his politics, except perhaps that he hated Lord Carson. His mind seemed not dead, but incapable of further assimilation. He had not ceased to be an artist—his *Mr. Britling Sees it Through* proved that—but he could do nothing new. When he wanted to produce something fresh that should stir us up like the old work, all he could offer was the deplorable *Soul of a Bishop*. Finally, he went to Russia and he saw nothing at all. This, from Wells, was the most violent shock. The mere fact that he was praised for not falling to the mud-slinging level of the *Express* shows how low he had fallen already.

This book answers, then, a question which had been forming itself: "Is Wells dead?" Somebody wrote not long ago a book called Bernard Shaw's Epitaph. Shaw replied by writing *Heartbreak House*. Of the Webbs, like Lord Chesterfield and his friend, it was supposed that "we have really been dead a long while now, but don't choose to have it known." Then they produced their new book. Mr. Wells' is the last of these revivals: after it there is no doubt that his mind is alive.

The story will be familiar to most of us by now. A Mr. Barnstaple (as in all Wells' books, half a self-portrait) is thrown suddenly, with some other persons, into Utopia, which is another planet in another system. This planet is merely our own earth as it might be: the inhabitants, as before stated, have no government,

* *Men like Gods*. (Cassell 7s. 6d.)

no politics and no clothes. They are beautiful and wise. But there is no need here to go through a clumsy re-description of what Mr. Wells has done so well. In this short book—just 300 loose-printed pages—he shows us that he has not lost any of the powers that made him once the best living English novelist. It is a great achievement to have sketched, however roughly, Utopia, without either boring us or provoking unbelief. He is able to underline his points because he brings in with Mr. Barnstaple a group of useless or scoundrelly products of capitalism, who include, under thin disguises, Winston Churchill and Lord Balfour. The re-actions of this group to Utopian conditions gives Wells room for some of his sharpest and most savage social satire.

But there are, of course, faults, and some glaring. The one we turn to first is Wells' usual anti-Marxist stuff. Mr. Barnstaple "had seen the movement losing sweetness and gathering force in the narrowness of the Marxist formulæ.... Like every Liberal spirit in the world he had shared the chill of Bolshevik presumption and Bolshevik failure.... But now in the days of doubt and exhaustion vision was returning to Socialism and the dreary spectacle of a proletarian dictatorship gave way once more to Utopia...." And so on—"Earth would tread the path Utopia had trod. She would weave law, duty and education into a larger sanity.... Men also would presently laugh at the things they had feared...." Pleasant generalities! Always personifications and metaphors—*Earth* does this, *Men* do that. No precise agents, nothing exact, only a hazy atmosphere of progress. "The whole effect seen from the calm height of Utopia was one of steadfast advance."

Anyway, who is Mr. Wells to speak of the "chill of Bolshevik failure?" What enthusiasm of his was wrecked? Did he ever pin any hopes upon it, support it and defend it? Not once. But he did "go all out" on something

—on President Wilson and the League of Nations. Nothing is said about the chill of *that* failure.

From that we are led naturally to what is and probably always will be an impassable barrier between Wells and all real socialist revolutionaries. And that is his conception of the *method* of the revolution. He is discreetly vague about it. When illustrators reach some portion of the human body or some attitude which they cannot or are not allowed to draw, they fill in with decorations or a trailing vine. When the old cartographers reached a part of the world which they really knew nothing about, they filled up the blanks on their map with a scroll announcing *Heere be Elephants* or *A Picture of ye Hippogriff, a strange Monster*. So Mr. Wells has carefully drawn in decorations and clever talk round about the event, but after it all we are still wondering what exactly happened.

"The impression given Mr. Barnstaple was not one of those violent changes which our world has learned to call revolutions, but of an increase of light, a dawn of new ideas in which the things of the old order went on for a time with diminishing vigour until people began as a matter of commonsense to do the new things in place of the old."

It appears that in schools and colleges the new ideas were thought out and spread and they "seized upon the men and women they needed with compelling power." The governing classes did fight "fiercely but irregularly." The change, we are casually informed, took five hundred years.

Well. Mr. Wells challenges, in a rather sneering reference, comparison with Morris' *News from Nowhere*. Compare then his account with Morris' Chapter XVII. (*How the Change Came*). In delineating living characters, Wells may be a man and Morris a child, but in constructive ideas as to how the change should come Wells is a dreaming little girl and Morris a grown man.

R. W. P.

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