

Vol. XIII. No. 8

August, 1921

# THE PLEBS

AGITATE EDUCATE ORGANISE

WE'VE GOT A DEBT

Monthly **WORKING** 32 pages

FOR INDEPENDENT CLASS EDUCATION

*The*  
**PLEBS**

11a PENYVERN RD.  
EARL'S COURT, S.W.5

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# THE PLEBS LEAGUE

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## CONSTITUTION

### OBJECT

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

### METHODS

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

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## *Membership and Management*

**SUBSCRIPTION.** Each member shall pay 2s. 6d. a year to the central fund of the League, subscriptions to run from January to December.

**BRANCHES.** Individual members shall wherever possible form branches. Every such branch to be responsible for its own expenses, and to have a voting strength at the Meet according to its membership. The work of a branch shall be to promote the establishment of social science classes, and when and where such classes are established to assist in the maintenance of a genuine working-class educational policy; to arrange for propaganda on the aims and objects of the League, by public meeting, visits to T.U. branches or other working-class organisations, press controversy, or any other method; to extend the sales of the Magazine and other Plebs publications; and to report to the E.C. on the activities of our own or other educational organisations.

**ANNUAL MEET.** An annual meet of members shall be held, at a convenient centre, in the early part of each year. Any alteration of the constitution shall be raised by resolution at the Meet and decided by postal ballot of all members taken afterwards.

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

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# THE PLEBS

"I can promise to be candid but not impartial."

Vol. XIII

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## HELP US TO BURY THAT DEBT



We hate to have to return to this horrid subject—particularly in the holiday month of the year. But we can't help ourselves. A debt really is a serious matter—the weight of it has made the staff hotter and hotter all through July. We do want you to realise that the success of the forthcoming winter's work depends in no small measure on our starting with a clean slate—with that debt buried, once and for all. We want to be able to make a definite announcement next month about the first of our new textbooks; but we can make no definite plans until our bank balance is all right.

We explained the situation last month. There is a balance of £150 owing to the printers of Craik's *Short History* and Starr's *Worker Looks at History*. And we want funds, furthermore, for the new textbooks now in



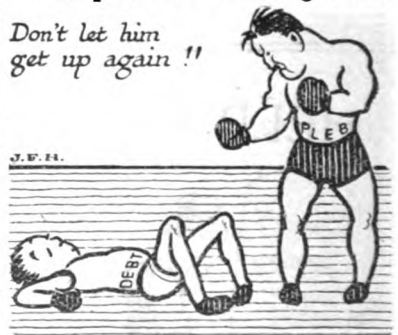
*It's coming along steadily—  
but can we speed it up a bit?*

hand. The Pound Fund inaugurated at the Meet has helped considerably; but as we are well aware that a good many Plebs are unable to contribute to a Pound Fund at the present time we have opened what is in effect a Penny Fund to supplement it. We are offering for sale 75,000 Penny PLEBS Stamps—we were offering 75,000, that is; but already a good number have been sold. Each stamp is a receipt for a penny subscribed to our Publications Fund. Send along just what you can afford (*plus* a penny for postage) and we send you stamps by return; six for sixpence, twelve for a bob, a hundred for 8s. 4d., and so on. They are printed in sheets of 36; why not send 3s. 1d. for a sheet, and sell them to your friends? Each stamp is a miniature poster, printed in two colours, advertising the PLEBS; make use of it accordingly, and help us to get in touch with new readers.

If you read your PLEBS last month you know all this already. *But have you sent for your stamps?* Orders have been coming in steadily (see diagram above), and everybody who has had the stamps is delighted with them. But we haven't yet heard from quite a lot of people. Are you one of these? Have you been *meaning* to send—and then forgotten all about it every time you passed the place where they sell the postal orders? Pull yourself together—for our sake. Don't let the ivy grow round your legs! Are you shy about sending because you can only afford a shillingsworth? Conquer your shyness without delay. If every Pleb would send us a bob we should sell out the 75,000 straight away—and feel happy. *It's the bobs we want.*

Next month is September—when the classes begin to get going again and our winter campaign is due to start. Independent Working-Class Education is going to boom this winter—we want to break all past records—number of classes up, circulation of PLEBS up, organisation put on a better footing, and some new textbooks on the market. We're hampered from the very beginning so long as we've a burden of debt round our necks. Are you going to help us get rid of it before next month? What about a big effort—and a knock-out blow? We can do the Dempsey on it all right—if you'll supply the penny-power. . . . What about it?

*Don't let him  
get up again !!*



### PLEBS CONFERENCE ON TEACHING METHODS

The Plebs E.C. suggests BIRMINGHAM as the place and a week-end during OCTOBER as the date of the above; and also that the general programme should be:—1st Session, Subjects (best sequence for study; possible new subjects, etc.). 2nd Session, Methods (aids to more effective teaching, etc.). 3rd Session, Co-ordination of Classes and Districts. Will all Plebs interested write Secretary before 15th inst., giving their comments or criticisms on the above suggested place, date and agenda?

## PROVINCIAL CLASS ORGANISATION AND CO-ORDINATION

The Governors of the Labour College at a meeting held at Cardiff, 1st July, passed the following resolution :—

*“ It was agreed to ask the Principal to get a return showing particulars of all Labour College classes held in London and the Provinces, with the object of discussing the matters raised at the Plebs Conference (at Bradford) at a meeting to be arranged between the Board of Governors and the Plebs Executive.”*

It is of the highest importance that the secretaries of all Labour College classes should communicate to the Principal of the College, before August 20th, full particulars of classes (last year's and, if possible, this next year's) subjects, tutors, number of students, affiliated organisations and method of control.

W. W. CRAIK, Principal,

The Labour College,

13, Penywern Road, Earl's Court, London, S.W.5.

We trust that all class secretaries will respond promptly to this invitation, and send along the data and suggestions necessary to ensure good results from such a meeting as is suggested above. What the Governors want to know is—*in what way the Labour College can help.*

—[ED. PLEBS.]

## GET ON OR GO UNDER

**E**VERY happening in the industrial world during the past few months has pointed unmistakably to the urgency of the need for spreading Labour College and PLEBS' teaching. Everywhere workers are throwing their hands up—not to surrender, but to grip hold of something more satisfactory in the way of a weapon. When we have allotted all the blame to the various supermen, we have still our future course to decide. And we must remember that it is only in the Kingdom of the Blind that the one-eyed men are leaders—and get to work, therefore, to shift the scales from the eyes of our fellows.

During the winter ahead of us the class-struggle will be waged more bitterly than ever. This in itself will help to kill the idea of education in “the humanities” being our primary need. We must accordingly get ready to put our case with more confidence and greater vigour than ever. The opportunity will be ripe for rubbing in the truth that the workers must rely on an *understanding* of social facts and factors, and not on supermen and emotions.

There is no more practical solution to hand for the problems confronting the workers' movement than an intensification of our partisan educational work. Nothing terrifies the other side so much as the growth of the classes. They don't worry about mass-meetings. Mass-meetings let off steam—and the tumult and the shouting dies. But steady, unremitting work in the classes in every district will result in a “conscious minority,” with some staying power. Labour is forming its General Staff, with a new conception of organisation, but with the same old “Generals” and the same old “citizenship” ideals; and it will all go to pieces in the same old-fashioned way unless this time the *units* of the organisation *understand*.

We need that national co-ordination of classes pleaded for in the

Manchester and Sheffield pronouncement last month. The country needs to be mapped into areas, linked up by a central organisation. Other people, with educational aims opposed to ours, have gone further in this direction than we have, so far. It is up to the movement to follow up Manchester and Sheffield's lead, and to get a move on this time. The development of our work is too vital a matter to be left to haphazard working. Now is the time to intensify our barrage on apathy, muddleheadedness and conservatism.

On with the classes!

WILL LAWTHER

(North-Eastern Labour College District)

### TEACHING METHODS

*In this short article an American reader of the PLEBS discusses some of the methods he has found useful during a lengthy experience as a lecturer.*

**I** REMEMBER realising with considerable dismay that oratory is both inefficient and ineffective as a method of teaching. The whole problem of effective speaking revolves around obtaining and holding the attention of the listener, but in this world of sensations and astounding events your average man finds even the most dramatic lecture dull. The cinema, newspapers and sports of all sorts are "too much with him."

I found after many trials and errors that the easiest way to get and hold attention is by the use of pictorial charts. Five such charts to a lecture is about right, pictures rather than diagrams having preference. On each of these charts I pictured the main idea and each of the leading sub-ideas to be expounded. For instance, in a lecture on "Modern Society," one of the charts showed an illustration like this:—The main and largest figure, an equilateral triangle, measuring 24 inches on each side with the apex at the bottom. This triangle, with a point for the base and widening as it ascended, represents the increase of wealth from the earliest times to the present. On the left-hand side, two inches inside the triangle draw a parallel line to the side extending the entire length. This indicates that portion of the wealth given in wages to the working class. The rest of the triangle shows that portion of wealth given over to the owning class, and is marked with the sign of the American dollar. Over the top of the triangle four figures are shown. On the extreme left, above the wages section, is represented a working man. On the extreme right, a "bloated plutocrat" holds sway; and between them, two figures representing the Physical Arm of the State and the Dominant Thought of the State; the first, a soldier with a gun, and the second an open book representing the School, Church, Stage, Press and other "persuasive" institutions.

Such a chart conveys to a working man a sort of psychological-cross-sectional view of the mechanism of Modern Society. Even the most abstract ideas can be pictured in some such manner.

Secondly, most propaganda lectures are excellent as to logic, truth and purpose, but psychologically are practically valueless. The average lecturer deliberately plans to violate every law of human interest. The most general and noticeable of these faults is what may be called "talking over the heads of the audience." That of course is bad enough; but he

often adds insult to injury by using a technical or unfamiliar vocabulary. That is, he manages somehow or another to remove himself and his theme as far from the experience of his hearers as possible. The listener finds no relationship between the lecture and his experiences in life, and naturally speedily resigns himself to slumber.

This fault can be overcome by using the principle of "Reference to Experience." If, for instance, one is speaking of the Theory of Value, it should be elaborately illustrated by referring to the common experiences of the listener, things he has seen, felt or done. When speaking to printers, for instance, get acquainted with their technical dialect, and employ such terms as "press," "rule," "stick," "em," "pica," etc. To do this is to get an open sesame to their attention and interest. And the same principle will apply to all other trades. A balance, however, must be struck between the dignity of the theme and the attention of the listener.

Third, most of our lecturers overlook the importance and necessity of restatement and "cumulation." If a teacher repeats his main idea frequently enough, it comes to be a part of the experience of the listener. All main and pivotal ideas in a lecture should be cast in such form that they can be stated with slight variations at least five times. In the beginning a clear and definite statement should be made. Then restate it in slightly different words; then give a specific instance or two, and finally quote some authority acceptable to the listener substantiating your original statement. Thus:—(*Statement*) "Greece had great men." (*Restatement*) "She had master minds." (*General Illustration*) "She had orators, philosophers, poets." (*Specific Instance*) "She had Demosthenes, Æschines, Aristotle, Plato, Homer and Euripides." (*Testimony*) "Macaulay says: 'Her intellectual empire is imperishable.'" Ideas restated and amplified in this manner, mindful of the listener's experience, will hold the attention and will go far in influencing and modifying his ideas.

Pictorial charts, lecture themes related to the listener's experience, and ideas amplified in the above way would improve our present lecturing and teaching. Further, it benefits the teacher. Practice in the above method makes a clear, impressive, convincing and entertaining speaker.

SAMUEL W. BALL (Chicago)

## LABOUR AND THE WORLD CRISIS

### II.

**I**N our last article, after illustrating the relation obtaining between different branches of production, we considered some of the assumptions contained in that illustration, and the real relation of supply and demand. Before proceeding to develop the problem further one other assumption must be mentioned; namely, that the capitalist consumed the whole of the surplus. This we know is not the case in actual practice, or no accumulation could take place, capitalism could not expand, and no fresh capital would be seeking a place of investment.

Proceeding now with our previous illustration as basis we shall assume the capitalist to consume but a portion of the surplus, the remainder being used for industrial expansion. But the problem now becomes more complicated. We must have regard to the relative extent of both branches of production. Do they employ a similar amount of capital and of men? Is there a uniform rate of exploitation? Is Labour as productive in the one as the other? The importance of these considerations becomes clear if

constant capital, machinery, raw materials, etc., are ignored and we deal only with variable capital, *i.e.*, wages.

Assuming the rate of exploitation to be 100 per cent., *i.e.*, that the labourers receive one-half of the value of their product as wages, the industry producing means of subsistence must employ as many men as there are outside it ; otherwise where would these others get their subsistence from ?

Both the relative amount of capital invested in machinery, etc., and the productivity of labour must affect the proportion in which industries stand related to one another. The needs of the one have to be supplied by the other. Whatever this proportion may be prior to the production of a surplus, some of it must apply to that part of the surplus which we now assume is to be used for the expansion of industry. As will readily be seen, the expansion of that industry which produces means of subsistence must be limited by the amount of surplus available in the form of means of production. Assume that the branch producing means of production has a capital of £4,000 constant (machinery, etc.) and £1,000 variable (wages) ; the surplus equals wages, another £1,000. One-half of this is now to be accumulated. For the branch producing means of subsistence we shall assume a capital of £1,500 constant and £750 variable, with £750 surplus. The total value of the product in the one is £6,000, and in the other £3,000.

No. 1 branch is accumulating and reinvesting one-half of its surplus. Let us follow step by step the course taken by the total product of £6,000. First of all, £4,000 of it will be required to replace the old means of production inside this branch itself. Secondly, £1,500 will be required to replace means of production in the other industry. The remaining £500 represents the amount to be accumulated.

Thirdly, in return for the £1,500 worth of means of production sent to the other branch it receives £1,500 worth of means of subsistence, which serves to maintain both capitalists and workmen. So far, so good. What now of the £500 surplus ? How is this to be treated ? It has to be invested in the same proportion of constant and variable capital as the already functioning capitals, namely, four to one. £400 must therefore be kept as means of production, and the remaining £100 used to provide means of subsistence for the additional workmen employed. This disposes of the surplus again.

Now turn to the other branch where the total product amounted to £3,000. First, as already mentioned, £1,500 of this went to the other industry in return for means of production. Secondly, £750 is consumed by the capitalists and workmen within the industry itself. Thirdly, £100 went to the other industry to feed the additional workmen employed by the newly invested surplus. But for the last £100 worth they have also received means of production which represent the limit to which this industry can expand. This £100 invested in new machinery requires the same proportional number of men as the existing capital and to feed these £50 worth of the product is now utilised. Putting these sums together we find that of the total product of £3,000, £2,400 has been disposed of, leaving £600 to be consumed by the capitalists.

Here, again, the limitations of our illustration make themselves felt. Because we have assumed that one-half of the surplus of No. 1 is accumulated and reinvested in that industry, we have made it impossible for the same thing to be done in the other ; one of our groups of capitalists accordingly lives better than the other, consuming £600 out of a surplus of £750,



the other only £500 out of a surplus of £1,000. In practice this is obviously not the case. Each group of capitalists accumulates and invests in the proportion required in either industry, competing with each other for the right of investment. When this is done, and within the conditions here assumed, production would go on expanding year after year.

Our illustration might easily be altered to allow of the product of each industry being exchanged, permitting the respective capitalists to accumulate at the same rate, and to continue to do so while the assumed conditions lasted. In fact, all kinds of proportions might be assumed with correspondingly widely different results. But if the whole product is to be exchanged and production is to expand steadily and uniformly a certain definite proportion must be maintained.

Our problem is to explain how this is brought about in practice. No conscious power in capitalist society dictates to its members the requirements of each industry; nor are the relations of capitalist society simple enough to be adequately expressed in any formula. The illustrations used thus far are exceedingly limited and inadequate for our full purpose. Otherwise how could we explain whence come the people who purchase the annual surplus and enable production to expand?

So far, this remains an apparent contradiction, and it cannot be explained until we turn to the actual conditions of capitalist production. We assumed production to be going on for a whole year, at the end of which the product of each branch is exchanged and distributed before production resumes. In fact capitalists wait for no such thing to take place. Production goes on while commodities are being circulated. To the capitalist, while business pursues its normal course, commodities are as good as sold when produced. To keep production going during the period of circulation, additional capital is advanced and the actual functions of circulation handed over to other men, merchants, etc. The producing capitalist may have had the money in his possession long before the merchants have succeeded in getting rid of the product.

Banks, again, play an important part in the development of industry. The reserve capital and deposits of the one set of capitalists, loaned out by the banks, become available for the use of others. Credit assists largely in the general expansion. It grants purchasing power to one group for the purchase of materials, and this same credit purchasing power returns almost immediately as deposits from the sellers of these materials.

It must be remembered, too, that capitalism as an historically developed form of production is to be understood only in its relation to preceding forms and its own progressive movement. If for no other reason than that it is thus conditioned it has to be considered in relation to these preceding forms of production. Not to do this would be to make the same error so many orthodox economists have fallen into, and regard capitalism as the mode that "was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen."

Capitalism developing within and out of other forms must of necessity bear some relation to them. What is this relation? An exchange of products must have gone on between the producers of both systems; otherwise we must assume capitalism to have been born a complete system, capable of maintaining itself from the very commencement. The process of capitalist production and reproduction has always been dependent, to some degree, upon other forms, although its progress is made at their expense. To grasp the effect of these non-capitalist forms we need only consider that

class of independent producers who ply their craft and market their products regularly.

We have previously, by illustration, dealt with the simplest form of reproduction and the conditions which must be fulfilled. They are, that each branch must produce sufficient quantities of its own product for its own use, plus an amount sufficient to give in return for the product of other industries, required for the continuance of the process of production and reproduction. This holds good for all forms of production. Whatever they are, a part of the annual product must always be in the form of means of production.

The relations between two systems of economy carried on side by side are important for both, but more important for the new, expanding order than the old. The same principle of dependency exists here as does between the various industries inside the capitalist order. To the degree that one depends upon the other the whole means of production and of subsistence must be produced and replaced. To the extent that the new depends upon the old an expansion of the one is conditioned by an expansion of the other. It is not merely a proportional increase in the capitalist order; there must also be a proportional increase in the non-capitalist forms.

True, it is capitalism that makes this necessary; since it creates and accumulates surplus-value and so forms a driving force towards expansion. But how is this expansion to take place?

An expansion upon the same technical basis requires, at least, additional supplies of workmen. If the demand for them is greater than can be supplied from their natural increase, they must be added to by immigration. New sources of raw material must be found. This would possibly be necessary quite apart from expansion, on account of the exhaustion of the old sources. This leads to the opening up of new spheres. With this comes the need for an extension of the market. New sources of material, difficult to find as they may be, are not so difficult to discover as new markets; these, at any rate, are not sent to the earth ready-made with mouths agape for capitalist products.

Because of these conditions capitalism tends to spread itself over the known world and its continual progress tends to draw ever more men and nations into its circle. It has, as already observed, a disintegrating effect upon natural economy, everywhere asserting its superiority over the older forms of production. National and international divisions of labour bring into being a vast interdependent and connected system of world-production. This economic development and expansion is an unavoidable necessity for capitalism. We see everywhere to-day the economic needs of each nation determining its policy and relations toward the others. Economic need is the end that justifies every means.

The conversion of surplus-value into capital requires an additional supply of the goods previously circulating. How is this done? We have already seen that capitalism has a disintegrating effect upon the older economic systems. But capitalism is also revolutionising itself. New and improved machinery constantly makes its appearance. More capital is being invested in machinery, raw materials, etc., and less—relatively—in wages. Here workmen can see their relation to capital in the form of means of production. They are required to serve the needs of machinery and the process of production. If these could be operated by the aid of improved methods, with one-half of the present working population, the

other half could die out and so relieve the capitalist class of the problem of providing them with unemployment doles.

The working class suffers not because sufficient has not or cannot be produced, but because machinery can now be operated by a part of the present propertyless class. The right to live is limited in present-day society to those who possess property in one form or another and those required to serve this property. In so far as the working class produces more efficient machinery, the use of which will dispense with some of the labour previously employed, it is also creating conditions which make many of its members superfluous. In the past this has been of immense importance for capitalism; new and improved machinery has displaced men and women and created the surplus labour required for the extension of the system.

The more capitalism expands, the more it entrenches upon the older forms of production. These old systems of economy, independent producers, for example, may increase their product by accepting more efficient tools and implements supplied by capitalism. But they tend more and more to become dependent upon capitalism, and it may be only a question of time how soon this mightier form of production will have invaded every sphere and destroyed them altogether.

W. H. MAINWARING

(To be continued.)

## THE MELTING-POT

### RECENT WORKS ON SOVIET RUSSIA

*Russia in the Shadows.* By H. G. Wells. (Cassell, 6s.) *The Russian Workers' Republic.* By H. N. Brailsford. (Allen & Unwin, 6s.) *The Practice and Theory of Bolshevism.* By Bertrand Russell. (Allen & Unwin, 6s.) *Russian Portraits.* By Clare Sheridan. (Jonathan Cape, 10s. 6d.) *My Reminiscences of the Russian Revolution.* By M. Phillips Price. (Allen & Unwin, 18s.) *Deux Conséquences de la Révolution russe.* By Dridzo-Losovsky and Pierre Pascal. *Pendant la guerre civile.* Petrograd. Mai-juin, 1919. By Victor Serge. (These pamphlets, "Two Consequences of the Russian Revolution" and "During the Civil War, Petrograd, May and June, 1919," have not been translated. They are among the *Cahiers du Travail* published at one and a half francs each by the Librairie du Travail, 96 Quai Jemmapes, Paris, X.) *Die ethischen Ergebnisse der russischen Sovietmacht.* By Pierre Pascal. (This, "The Moral Achievements of the Russian Soviet Power," is a German translation of a French original. Published by Der Malik-Verlag, Berlin, price two marks.) *Azbuĥa Kommunizma.* By N. Buharin and E. Preobrazhensky. (An English translation, *The A B C of Communism*, is now in the press, and will shortly be published by the Communist Party of Great Britain.)

EVERY good Pleb (are there any bad Plebs?) should read some, at least, of the books in the foregoing list. They tot up to a considerable figure, quite beyond the command of ordinary plebeian purses. But even in the class State there are public libraries, whose librarians can be deafened with importunate demands for books. Plebs branches, too, have—or ought to have—libraries. And there are possibilities in the way of forming little local co-operatives for joint book-buying. Publishers both in Britain and the U.S. declare there is "no demand" for books on Soviet Russia. But happily they continue to publish such books, and it is up to us to show them that there really is an effective demand for volumes like those in our list. Three of these volumes, those by Wells, Russell, and Clare Sheridan, will have a sale independently of their merits owing to their authors' names, fame, and

social connections. But we of the Left Wing are interested mainly in their bearing on the social revolution.

The weakest of them all is the one by the writer with the widest reputation, H. G. Wells. *Russia in the Shadows* is a poor, thin book, almost as unworthy of its author as was *The War that will end War*. Sunday newspaper journalism, and very little more! It is not only the Great War and its consequences which have led H. G. Wells astray. Nor is the sole trouble the mental astigmatism (an inborn defect) which makes it impossible for him to focus the Marxist philosophy of history, and which makes "bourgeoisie" and "proletariat" seem to him incredibly hazy conceptions. His vision is likewise clouded by advancing years, by failure of accommodation, by what is familiarly called "old sight." Indeed, an American critic, H. L. Mencken, speaks of him somewhat cruelly as "the late Mr. Wells," and regards *The New Machiavelli* and all subsequent products of H. G. W.'s pen as posthumous works. Assuredly, when we read *Russia in the Shadows*, we are inclined to feel that nothing but a premature demise can account for the failure of the author of *A Modern Utopia* to recognise in the bolsheviks the living embodiments of the "samurai caste," the "voluntary nobility" of the fabled sister planet; but perhaps it would be better to describe this brilliant author as "45-years-old"—as one who has been incapable of further mental development since about the year 1910. Nevertheless *Russia in the Shadows* is a book to be read.

A far more painstaking volume is *The Russian Workers' Republic*. H. N. Brailsford was not content to *flâner les boulevards* of Petrograd and Moscow, lamenting that there were "no shops"! Two weeks out of the eight he spent in Russia last summer were passed in a small provincial town; and here, he tells us, he learned most. He has a nodding acquaintance with the Russian tongue, and he speaks French and German fluently, so he was largely independent of interpreters. As a result we have a studied picture by a very sympathetic critic, whereas Wells gives us an impressionist sketch by an unsympathetic observer. It is noteworthy that both Brailsford and Wells were forcibly impressed in 1920, just as two other bourgeois observers, Arthur Ransome and Raymond Robins, had been impressed in 1918-19, with the creative impetus of the revolution. Wells has a chapter on "The Creative Effort" in Russia. Brailsford's concluding chapter is entitled "The Creative Will."

To a third of these interpretations by a summer visitor, *The Practice and Theory of Bolshevism*, we can give less space than so thoughtful a volume deserves. Bertrand Russell is one of the keenest thinkers of the age; he has made, and is still making, some of the most significant contributions to contemporary knowledge; he is not to be dismissed in a breath as a "bourgeois philosopher" because he happens to be grandson of Lord John Russell and heir to an earldom. He is, in fact, a communist. He writes (p. 6): "I believe that communism is necessary to the world, and I believe that the heroism of Russia has fired men's hopes in a way which was essential to communism in the future. Regarded as a splendid attempt, without which subsequent success would have been very improbable, bolshevism deserves the gratitude and admiration of all the progressive part of mankind." But he has a chapter telling us "Why Russian Communism has failed." The reasons for the "failure" are summed up on p. 176: "The ultimate source of the whole train of evils lies in the bolshevik

outlook on life: in its dogmatism of hatred and its belief that human nature can be completely transformed by force." We should answer that assertion by showing Russell the Plebs badge, and by asking him three questions: (1) Has Russian Communism failed? (2) Does bolshevism represent a dogmatism of hatred? (3) Do bolshevists believe that human nature can be completely transformed by force? Our answer to all three queries is in the negative. And since, upon these matters, we differ so fundamentally from Russell as to premises, we cannot profitably enter into an argument with him. But we can explain him! He believes that human nature will be transformed by *reason*! He may have accepted the new psychology in philosophy, in the field of abstract thought; he has not accepted it in politics, in the sphere of concrete endeavour. Here he is still the pacifist and hyper-rationalist he was when he penned an eloquent pacifist tract in the early days of the war. And apparently he cannot understand that it is not the "dogmatism" of the bolsheviks which is making history, but their *imagination*, their imaginative foresight. The man whom Wells calls "The Dreamer of the Kremlin" [Lenin] is but one among many who have the (scientifically grounded) faith which moves mountains. It has moved mountains; and it continues to move mountains. Russell himself feels in Russia "the inspiration of the essential spirit of communism, the spirit of creative hope."

In choosing for this article the title of "The Melting-Pot," we were not only thinking of Russia as the crucible in which the dross of the old civilisation is being purged, and in which the fine gold of the new civilisation is being purified. In this Melting-Pot, likewise, the minds of the summer visitors are assayed. The mind of H. G. Wells proves to be the mind of a man who—as far as the possibility of seeing by new lights is concerned—passed painlessly away in the reign of Edward the Peacemaker. Russell cannot shake off the anarcho-rationalist Victorian heritage. Even Brailsford is still under the sway of the great democratic superstition. But many who are tried as with fire in Russia, emerge from the test with an entirely new outlook. Their bourgeois "complexes" have vanished, and their energies have been "sublimated" into revolutionary channels. This is what happened in the case of the Frenchmen, Pascal, Marchand, and Sadoul; in the case of the Englishman, Phillips Price. This, too, seems to have happened in the case of Clare Sheridan, sculptor of "the bolshevik busts" and first cousin to Winston Churchill. She was in Russia for barely seven weeks last autumn. Before she went, she was an artist rather than a bourgeoisie; she was possessed of exceptional courage and initiative, or she would not so readily have responded to Kameneff's invitation, have temporarily shaken off all domestic ties and family traditions, and have made the great adventure into a land dominated by what her cousin has called "the foul baboonery of bolshevism." In seven weeks she could learn little of the scientific basis of communism. Her naive surprise that atheists can be agreeable companions, and her bewilderment at the classic phrase "Religion is the Opium of the People," persist. But she has acquired, in the Melting-Pot, a fresh emotional outlook. In the seventh week of her stay she writes: "Civilisation has put on so many garments that one has trouble in getting down to reality. One needs to throw off civilisation and to begin anew, and begin better, and all that is needed is just courage. What Lenin thinks about nations applies to individuals. Before reconstruction can take place there must be a revolution

to obliterate everything in one that existed before. I am appalled by the realisation of my upbringing and the futile view-point instilled into me by an obsolete class tradition. . . . Now for the first time I feel morally and mentally free, and yet they say there is no freedom here. . . . Freedom is an illusion, there really is not any in the world except the freedom one creates intellectually for oneself." As a permanent record of her visit to Russia we have this artless diary, with photographic reproductions of the busts and with other illustrations. The net result is the most human of all the books we have yet read concerning the topic of Soviet Russia.

From the diary of an artist we pass, in conclusion, to the epic creation of a journalist. For in truth no less a word than epic will fit Phillips Price's magnificent book, *My Reminiscences of the Russian Revolution*. Not that the work is particularly well done from the standpoint of literary craftsmanship. Price does not write as atrocious a style as Marchand (it is strange how many slipshod and involved writers can get along as professional journalists); but in the matter of facility in the presentation of ideas and word-pictures the non-bolsheviks in our book list certainly bear the palm. Yet as to interest, sustained and intense, no other volume in the series can compare with Price's. And, as with Marchand's *Why I Support Bolshevism*, the interest of Price's book is two-fold: the objective interest of the incidents he recounts; and the subjective interest of their reaction upon the writer's own mentality.

Phillips Price had been collecting documents for a more ambitious work, a detailed history of the Russian revolution. When he left Russia for Germany at mid-winter 1918-19 these documents were seized by the German "revolutionary" authorities and have never been restored. While sympathising with the author in his loss, we feel that this personal volume is probably a more effective production than would have been his documented history. The *Reminiscences* begin with the March revolution and carry the account down to the close of 1918, with a summary of those subsequent developments which the author could no longer recount from first-hand experience. It is far from being a panegyric of the communists; and yet substantially it is a justification of the bolshevik policy throughout. Price has no blind admiration for Lenin; nevertheless the marvellous accuracy of Lenin's imaginative insight is apparent on almost every page. Of the crisis on February 24th, 1918, when the Germans were advancing after the breakdown of the first Brest-Litovsk negotiations, the author writes (p. 248): "Yet it would be a mistake to assume that his personality was the most important factor. . . . Lenin's strength at this time, as at every subsequent time, lay in his ability to interpret the psychology, both conscious and unconscious, of the Russian workmen and peasant masses." In like manner, the strength of Price's record lies in his ability to interpret the psychology of all the warring factions of revolutionary and counter-revolutionary Russia. A book to read and re-read, to study and discuss, this story of two years in the Melting-Pot by one who has himself been assayed in the cleansing fires!

EDEN & CEDAR PAUL

SEND FOR THOSE STAMPS.

## "G. B. S." TAKES THE VEIL

*Back to Methuselah.* A Metabiological Pentateuch. By G. Bernard Shaw.  
(Constable.)

**L**IKE ourselves (and Wells) Shaw regards education as the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night. Unlike Wells, who, if too advanced in years to be a revolutionary, is an earnest thinker and courteous in controversy—at least to unbearded contemporaries—Shaw has a transcendental disregard for fact which prevents him becoming anything but a boisterous rebel. If Wells's views on education are warped by the miasma of social solidarity, he must at any rate be credited with singularly profound insight on the less directly political aspects of teaching. Shaw's brisk excursions into the political issues of education leave him with no residual energy for useful comment in other directions.

Being politically an apostle of social solidarity he sees in deficient social education the sources of our political and economic evils; and being professionally an epigrammatist he contrasts this with the diabolical efficiency of our technical instruction, the gross defects of which (unlike Wells) he elects to ignore. Having overlooked the class structure of society he fails to recognise that our present system of social education—which sends young men in unthinking thousands to the shambles, keeps up a constant supply of labour leaders who preach increased production in the teeth of company reports showing hundred per cent. bonuses, and so befogs the minds of a large section of the community with celestial glories as to inhibit any intelligent attempts towards material benefit—is in point of fact most damnably efficient in fulfilling its function, i.e., in serving the needs and policies of the governing classes of Europe.

As the Play itself has neither coherence nor conspicuous dramatic power, the Preface chiefly invites comment. This is certainly not dull, since the author rarely uses mere argument where vituperation can be conveniently substituted. It contains a religion, an ethic and an epistemology, combining the more sinister defects of Christojudaic mysticism upholstered in a new mythological outfit.

The crux of the matter is that Shaw feels compelled to inflict a moral consciousness on the universe. Disregarding the objection of Dietzgen and the modern scientific philosophers (Ostwald, Mach, Whitehead *et alia*) that such a procedure lies outside the limits of verifiable knowledge, the only difficulty Shaw finds is the seeming imperfection of the works of God. This he contrives to get rid of (along with poor old Helmholtz's eye) by introducing evolution as likewise overcargoes with moral endeavour and purged of materialism. The latter achievement rests on the revitalisation of Lamarck, whose views on evolution are about as germane to modern biology as a discussion of what Christ would have thought about Einstein and the Morley-Michelson experiment if he had lived in the same house as Lord Haldane.

No experiments hitherto performed, Shaw declares (by that you understand since the eighties, when Weismann entered the lists and Shaw found the further pursuit of current scientific advances tedious), dispose of the Inheritance of Acquired Characters, because they consist of mutilations that have no regard for the animals' own moral preoccupations: therefore they

are not habits—also not acquirements. If you can follow this suggestive train of thought you may be able to understand why the mere disposal of certain experiments performed in the eighties (supposing they are discredited by this ingenious dialectical artifice) and the disregard of any evidence that has since appeared constitute a reason for accepting the Lamarckian principle. Presumably—evidence or no evidence—we must believe in Lamarck, because without such a belief evolution has no moral purpose, leads to none of the “humane conclusions” of Shaw’s incorrigible fellow dilettante Samuel Butler, and while “possible to many for whom Nature is nothing but a casual aggregation of inert and dead matter” is “eternally impossible to the spirits and souls of the righteous.”

But it would be an injustice to Shaw to state that he belongs to the nineteenth century merely in his total inability to throw off the teleological outlook. His attitude to truth is that of the eighteenth century in its remoteness from working values. Indeed, it leads him to insist that artists get there before the scientist. Nor does he pause to note *en passant* that artists get into so many surprising (and inconvenient) corners that the occasional success of an Empedocles in anticipating a scientific theory is inevitably lost sight of in the general confusion till experimentalists come to the rescue. Along with the mechanism of Modern Science, Karl Marx is brightly and summarily dropped into the tempestuous waters of inchoate invective. Marx was one of our materially-minded comrades, too gross to envisage the vital bond between the working-class demand to control its destinies and the revolt of Bayswater spinsters against chloroforming cats.

The indecency of coupling the proletarian movement with all these anti-vivisectionist—anti-vaccinationist—uric-acid—free-diet—sun-cooked-food and kindred reactions of the bourgeoisie to forces it has itself liberated, is only exceeded by the improbability of the working class ever achieving its emancipation until it throws off the slave ethic of humanitarianism for the robust and conscious Will to Power of men themselves about to become a governing class. When a younger man Shaw himself expressed this with vigour and dramatic force in the gospel of St. Andrew Undershaft. But the new Shavian ethic is a condensation of the decadence of Androcles. And if inspired by the earlier Shaw you will assuredly have no pity to waste on the author of *Major Barbara* living to witness his own intellectual putrefaction.

Thus Shaw, like his master Tolstoi, turns to end his pilgrimage in the convent. He accepts. He has become his old bogey, “the just man made perfect.” To this, at last, has his unrepentant amateurishness brought him!

P. L. E. B.

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## THE COMING WORLD WAR

*The PLEBS has not hitherto made any reference to the extremely valuable material published under the auspices of the Communist International in Germany. A very useful library of reference books is being built up, and were they available in English most Plebeians would welcome the opportunity to obtain copies. The following is the final chapter of a short book by E. Varga on "The Present World Crisis in Capitalist Economy," and has been translated for us by W. H. Mainwaring.*

**W**HILE during the next few years the European proletariat will be engaged in its struggle with capital, the three great Imperialistic Powers—the U.S., England and Japan—will be engaged in a struggle amongst themselves, a struggle for world power and dominion. It is impossible to avoid this conflict under the laws of capitalist society. By the elimination of Russia and the impoverishment of Central Europe the world market has been reduced. These Powers have now weapons in hand to decide who is to be master.

The conflict is already begun. The most aggressive at the moment is the United States. During the war she rose to the position of being the greatest industrial power in the world.\* Now the great bourgeoisie of America, with Harding at the helm, is engaged in the endeavour to reduce the political and maritime power of England.

Already the differences between England and Japan on the one side and of the U.S. on the other are becoming wider and more immediately pressing. The U.S. seeks to secure herself against England's monopoly in exploiting the oilfields of Mesopotamia. Strong speeches in the Senate have referred to the fact that England obtains cheap American petroleum and sells it at a much dearer rate to American ships in Asia. England is charged with attempting to create a monopoly outside of the U.S. There are continual references in the American press and periodicals to the possibility of war with England, and protestations were made against the creation of the League of Nations, which, through the abstention of America and the exclusion of Germany and Russia, has become a mere instrument for the exercise of world power by England—the award of the Pacific island of Yap to Japan being an example. England is embittered by the competition of American industry, which tends to force her out of the century old monopoly of the world markets, amongst others of the coal industry.†

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\*According to Garry's address to the Iron and Steel Institute (*The American Empire* by Scott Nearing, p. 187) the U.S. proportion of the total world economy in 1920 consisted of:—

6 per cent. of the total population.                     7 per cent. of the earth's surface.

While of the total world product it possessed:—

25 per cent. of the	Gold	52 per cent. of the	Coal
25   "   "   "	Wheat	60   "   "   "	Aluminium
40   "   "   "	Steel and Iron	60   "   "   "	Copper
40   "   "   "	Lead	60   "   "   "	Cotton
40   "   "   "	Silver	66   "   "   "	Petroleum
50   "   "   "	Zinc	75   "   "   "	Maize

† The coal exports of the United States in thousands of tons were:—

	To France.	To Italy.	To Holland.	To Sweden.
In 1914	47	776	—	—
" 1919	532	1,633	722	253
" 1920	3,646	2,388	2,147	1,247

The U.S. refusal to give favourable consideration to the question of the mutual cancellation of war debts amongst the allied nations has aroused considerable dissension in England. The stage is being prepared for open war. The U.S. naval construction programme has been so far increased that in a few years the English fleet will be outstripped by one half. The army is also to be enormously increased. The creation of new weapons of war, particularly the discovery of new deadly liquids and gases, is being fostered. The Panama Canal is to be fortified and defended with the most powerful artillery in the world.

General R. Lee Bullard, Commandant of the First Division of the American Expeditionary Forces in France, 1918, in an address to the Republican Club declared that America, since she was unprepared for war, was dependent during the war itself upon the British proletariat, and that British troops had to stand between American troops and the enemy until they became accustomed to the conditions. This state of things must not recur. America must have an army prepared for war. . . . It is the same kind of argument used in Germany before the war. Competition for the reduced markets and the enormous development of war industries tend to force on similar policies.

The coming war will, if the proletariat's victory does not intervene, completely destroy capitalism. As the last world war gave rise to the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia, and the impoverishment and partial breakdown of capitalism in Central Europe, so will the next war utterly destroy world capitalism.

## THE LABOUR INTERNATIONAL HANDBOOK, 1921.

Edited by R. Palme Dutt. Cr. 8vo. Cloth 12s. 6d.

Some Contributors :—Norman Angell, R. Page Arnot, H. N. Brailsford, C. Desisle Burns, Noel Buxton, Erskine Childers, E. M. Forster, R. W. Postgate, L. S. Woolf, George Young.

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## ECONOMICS WITHOUT HEADACHES

## VIII.

SO far, we have considered money in its various forms as the medium enabling people to get rid of things they did not want and to obtain those they did want. We have now to consider how money becomes capital.

Wealth production in its simplest form was the production of goods for the use of the producer. Later it took the form of the production of goods not necessarily wanted by him but useful in order to enable him to get goods he could not or would not produce himself. Money came in to assist him to calculate the values and facilitate the exchange of these goods. Money was only a means to the end—and the end was goods. It was an intermediary. For most of us it is that still.

But to the capitalist money is quite a different thing. He does not use his money for the purpose of getting goods for himself; he uses it to get more money for himself—quite a different thing. No investor will put down £100 if the prospects are that he will only get that amount back again. He invests to get an increase on his wealth. He has no interest in commodities as such. He will just as cheerfully be interested in the manufacture of poison gas as of tonic wines; if poison gas pays best he will be more interested in that commodity than any other. To the capitalist, the commodity is the intermediary, the means to the end; and the end is more money. To the ordinary person money is the means; to the capitalist money is the end.

The definition of Capital given by the orthodox economists is usually "The results of past labour saved up and used in a form to assist future production." But in view of the fact that the capitalist is not concerned about assisting future production unless he can get a return on his outlay, we have to amend this definition to read "Capital is the results of past labour saved up and used in a form to assist future production *with a view to giving its owner a profit.*"

When money is spent by a person who desires commodities, the commodities are consumed, and there the process ends—so far as he is concerned. But money used by the capitalist comes back to him as money *plus* more money, and he can go on continuing the process. The additional money that comes to him is surplus value.

Whence comes this addition?

It is generally assumed that it is made out of the process of buying and selling. Everybody sees people buying cheap and selling dear, sees the small shopkeeper making a profit; and so the vague idea is formed that the capitalist's profit is made in this way. Let us consider this. Let us assume that people give for goods more than their value. But the man who sells is also a buyer, and in his capacity as buyer of other commodities

he will lose what he has gained. If everybody was giving £5 10s. in exchange for a £5 note, nobody would be any better off, and there would be no gain to anyone. If goods were sold above their values to a special body of people who only bought and did not sell, then that would simply be a case of getting a little back from those people of the money they had already got; which would not get us very far.

Of recent years, the statement that goods sell at their value has had to be modified somewhat. Recent investigations into the workings of the Trusts have shown us that the production of some commodities is almost entirely in the hands of great combines. Coats, the cotton people, provide practically the whole of the sewing cotton used in this country, and by a useful little arrangement they will not supply their goods to those shopkeepers who sell the products of other sewing-cotton firms. They are thus able to fix a monopoly price upon their wares. Similarly, the Lever Combine has such a hold upon the soap-producing business that it is well-nigh impossible for anyone to enter the field against them. They produce their own raw materials; they convey those materials in their own ships to their own factories in this country, and by means of their motor vans they distribute the finished product all over the country. Thus they also are able to put a monopoly price on their goods. But that price is limited to the amount that people will pay rather than go without soap.

But assuming that a monopolist or any other seller was so able to get the better of the customer to whom goods were sold, what then would happen? If I go into a shop with a £1 note and purchase a hat, the position is that before the transaction takes place, the pound note is at the front of the counter and the hat is at the back. After the transaction, the hat is on my side of the counter and the pound note is on the shopkeeper's side. Nothing new has been created. If we multiply this by all the purchases and sales that are taking place in a country or in the whole world, all that is happening is that goods and money are changing places, but nothing is added to the store of the world's wealth, and as we have seen, if the shopkeeper sells me a hat for a pound that is only worth fifteen shillings, he will presently have to buy a pair of boots or some other commodity, and if he is swindled out of 5s. then the position is the same as before. To sum up, then—the commodities cannot be sold below their value because then the capitalist would go out of business; if they are sold at their value, merely a transference of goods takes place; if in special cases they are sold at above their value, no new wealth is created, and goods and money simply change hands.

There is, however, one special commodity to which the above arguments do not apply. That commodity is labour power. If a pair of boots is bought all that happens is that the buyer has the pair of boots in his possession. They are dead, inanimate things, and in due course will be worn out. But the purchaser of labour power has in his possession a live thing that will certainly wear out some day, but which in the meantime is capable of doing something. Labour power is bought and sold in the market in the same way as any other commodity is bought and sold. Nowadays we have our stock exchanges, coal and corn exchanges and—labour exchanges. At the latter are to be found labourers waiting to be hired by those who want them, and no person wants them unless he can make a profit by using them. Labour power or the ability to work is contained in the labourer, and it is not the labourer that the capitalist buys but this ability. The commodity labour power is like all other commodities sold at its value, and its value is determined by the value of the commodities used up in producing and reproducing it.

The amount paid by the capitalist, then, to the labourer is the amount that the labourer will need to go on reproducing the energy used up while he performs his work. It is quite true that the single man or the man with no family may not use up the whole of this amount, and this is often used to prove that the worker receives more than his mere cost of subsistence. We all know that if we

consider the whole life of the worker and not a special period, and take into account his education, apprenticeship, married life, old age, etc., the worker receives just enough to allow him to go on working. Put into the form of a jingle, "The worker works for wages to enable him to go on working for wages to enable him to go on working," and so on *ad infinitum*.

Labour power like any other commodity has its two-fold character—it has use value and exchange value. The buyer of any commodity pays for its exchange value, its value on the market, and claims for himself the right to use it as he thinks fit. If he buys a coat, he may wear it or use it as a doormat or hang it in the wardrobe. The capitalist who buys labour power claims the right to have the full use of the commodity he has purchased, and his one desire is that the thing he has bought shall do for him what he has bought it for—namely, produce wealth in the form of disposable commodities. He has purchased the use value of labour power and is determined to have the best possible use out of it.

When the capitalist makes use of an ordinary commodity all the action is on his part, because the commodity has no life; but when he buys this special commodity, labour power, he has in his possession a commodity that can do things for him.

Next month we will see how it does them.

W. McLAINÉ

## STUDENTS' NOTES AND QUERIES

Class Student wants to know what we think of the Douglas Scheme. Major Douglas and his publisher apparently do not think the PLEBS worthy of review copies, and after having carefully listened to an exposition by Douglas himself we do not feel like buying the two books in which the scheme is set forth. The fallacies contained in the exposition were: (1) That the financier and banker are alone the villains. Already, by September, 1920, they had created a purchasing power 16 times bigger than the actual cash in existence. They, according to Douglas, send up prices and engineer gluts at will by their monopoly over the communal creation, credit.

(2) That the Quantity Theory is true.

(3) That the hostility of vested interests to any change can be avoided and the power of the financier abstracted by a kind of sleight-of-hand performance.

(4) That the workers would readily strike to enforce the acceptance of credit money based on their labour-power if the clearing-houses and the banks refused to accept them.

*Apropos* of (1) and showing how mistaken Major Douglas is in separating the power of creating credit from the control of the tools of production, there was an excellent article, with diagrams, in *Advance*, the New York

Clothing Workers' journal, April 8th, 1921. It showed in a convincing way how the banks and the big industries are interlocked in their directorates.

Douglas's legerdemain is the result of circumstances similar to those which caused Robert Owen's Labour Notes.

The Memorial Press, Hurst, Ashton-under-Lyne, is issuing a series of 1d. pamphlets on the Law, the State, the Church, etc. Others promise to deal faithfully with the School and the Press. Not much new in them for "the hard-baked ones," but quite excellent stuff to plant on likely converts to whom you can't afford to lend books in these days.

Students interested in the many modern devices of capitalism to prevent the worker wasting any part of the working day—such as the clocking systems and the registering of time spent in the lavatory—will smile at the instances given by Kautsky in a footnote of his *Ökonomische Lehren* (p. 105). He tells of a quarry-owner who deducted from a man's wages the time he had spent in the air, into which he had been blown by a premature explosion. Another case: in the building of a New York aqueduct, when the

workers in tunnelling had been made incapable of work for part of an hour by the discharge of dangerous gas, their wages were reduced to that extent. While in Zurich an amorous manufacturer actually deducted from the wages of women workers the time spent in the office in his company!

A friend calls our attention to a passage in the current *Socialist Review* (p. 277) which for sheer misstatement and ignorance would be hard to beat. Mr. MacDonald (surely he is the *Reader*) repeats the hoary lie that in the hands of Marx himself the theory of surplus value broke down. Is he growing so old that he thinks it a form of humour to refer to "the antiquated philosophers who still believe in the M.C.H."? Or is it mere jealousy born of the fact that the younger men and women are leaving him and his "biological" sociology marooned high and dry?

In the *Socialist* (23/6/21) appeared a fine summary by Jim Griffiths of the recent *Manchester Guardian* Japan Supplement. Those unable to get the Supplement would be well advised to get this summary for keeps. Another article in the same issue of the *Socialist*, on "Peace and War," lifts bodily—without inverted commas or acknowledgment of any sort—whole chunks out of one of our own textbooks. Readers can compare the said article with the XIX. Outline in *A Worker Looks at History*. This is hardly playing the game!

*Q.*—Can you inform me of any good books for use in work among juveniles in the Socialist Movement?

*A.*—The following will furnish material either for working up in lesson talks or as readers for the individual child:—

*Piers Plowman Histories*, edited by E. H. Spalding (Phillip & Son); Junior Book IV. *Social History of England from Earliest Times to 1485* (2s.), and Junior Book V., *Ditto from 1485 to Present Day* (2s. 6d.). Teachers say that while these books are not entirely written from our point of view they are very well done. "Very vividly written and excellently illustrated from contemporary sources" is one comment.

*Wonder Stories* (R.P.A., 8s.), by Gowans Whyte, might be used for younger children, as well as *Savage Survivals* (R.P.A., 2s.) by Howard Moore.

*Rebels and Reformers*, by A. and D. Ponsonby (Allen & Unwin, 6s.), has been praised for its treatment of some of the world's "great" men. Friends have also told us about a book more militant and working class in its character by John S. Clarke; we lack further particulars.

Probably Plebeians can furnish the names of additional books likely to be of use to those endeavouring to interest our young folk in the things that really matter.

M. S.

## TRA LA MONDO

ESPERANTO NOTES BY POPOLANO

### *The Latin of the Democracy*

A MIDDLE-CLASS lady of my acquaintance once remarked to me that she had always had a passion for Italian until she heard it spoken by peasants. Then she had reflected, "Imagine such a beautiful language on the lips of common peasants!" And from that time her admiration for the beautiful language ceased.

Similarly, many members of the learned classes regard Esperanto as a jargon for the common people, by no means fitted for persons of culture like themselves. A pre-war Austrian diplomatist is reported to have spoken of Esperanto as "a *lingua-franca* which any anarchist could learn in a few weeks."

In a sense these people are right. If Esperanto does not become the language of the international proletariat, it will be as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. Gorky says: "The necessity of a common language for the international proletariat is based on the unity of class desires and aims of the proletariat." And Barbusse has recently written: "If the universal language has to be now only vegetated, the reason is to be found in the fact that its use has been con-

finied mainly to bourgeois circles, to people who saw in it only an elegant and easy means of facilitating commercial and intellectual relations. But the universal language advances beyond these people, just as truth advances beyond them everywhere in the world. There will come a time when their Esperanto will terrify them, when they will begin to detest it, because of all the practical fraternity it brings in its train."

But apart from its special meaning and purpose for the international proletariat, there is very substantial evidence that the mental training afforded by the study of Esperanto is superior to that afforded by any other language. The writer of these notes wasted the usual number of years in learning exceptions to Latin rules (there wasn't time, of course, to learn the language), and he has since, as a desultory hobby, applied himself to dabbling in other languages, but he is strongly of opinion that he has profited most from his study of Esperanto. Besides, the acquirement of Esperanto is probably the best preparation for learning other languages. This is the opinion of Dr. Fisher, Headmistress of Bishop Auckland County Secondary School, who conducted an experiment in this sense at her school.

And the late Dr. A. E. Scougal, Chief Inspector of Schools for Scotland, said: "Had I to teach any foreign language, ancient or modern, I should, on what I am convinced are sound educational grounds, give my pupils a preliminary course of Esperanto. . . . To learn Esperanto as the first additional language is, from the method point of view, really to gain time, not to waste it."

The moral is for our independent working-class educationists to apply. After two or three years' study in *England*, the Labour student will learn little if anything of French or German (I am speaking of the average man). If he spent the first nine months in the study of Esperanto, he would be much better fitted to tackle French or German. Incidentally he would have at his disposal a ready means of communication with workers on the Continent and would have improved his knowledge of English (that is a common experience). *Al saĝulo sufiĉas aludo*, which, being interpreted, meaneth, *Verb. sap.*

#### Germanio

La urbo Offenbach donis la sumon de 7,000 markej por la laŭvola instruado de Esperanto en la lernejoj Funkcias 12 kursoj kun preskaŭ 350 lernantoj.

#### Rusio

La la—5a de junio havis lokon en Petrograd la IIIa Rusa Kongreso Esperantista. Ĝestis delegitoj el 73 urboj en diversaj partoj de Rusio kaj Siberio. La komunistoj nombris nur 34; dum 110 sin nomis senpartuloj kaj 10 socialistoj. Kelkaj delevitoj veturis 3000 ĝis 5000 kilometrojn por viziti la kongreson. La jena rezolucio, proponita de ESKI (Esperantista Sekcio de la Komunista Internaciano), estis akceptita:—

"Atentante la nunan precipitan disvastiĝon de Esperanto en proletariaj kaj laboristaj rondoj kaj la esencan utilon, kiun internacia lingvo devas kaj povas alporti por la unuiĝo de la laboristaj klasoj de l'homaro kaj por la triumfo de la principoj de Sovjeta Regosistemo, IIIa Tutruslanda Kongreso Esperantista opinias ke fundamenta tasko de la rusa esperanta movado estas laŭpova subtenado al la Sovjeta Registaro per la lingvo Esperanto kaj helpo al ĝi en aferoj de efektiviĝo de ĝiaj internaciaj taskoj. Kiel plej bonan formon de la esperanta movado Kongreso konfesas la organizon de esp. filioj kaj rondetoj ĉe ĉiuj proletarioj, profesiaj kaj klerigaj organizaĵoj de la Respubliko." (Laŭ "*Esperanto Triumfonta*," Cologne.)

## A BRIEF COURSE OF READING IN PSYCHOLOGY

**S**EVERAL readers have written to ask advice on this subject. The Plebs textbook of elementary psychology is now in course of completion, and should be issued in the autumn. But this will have to be supplemented by wider reading, and the book will contain recommendations for such reading. A provisional list is here attempted.

### A.—THE OLD PSYCHOLOGY.

A standard work is:

JAMES, WM. *A Textbook of Psychology*. (Macmillan 9s.) (For fuller treatment of certain points the same author's larger work, *The Principles of Psychology*, can be consulted in any good reference library.)

A more recent, cheaper, and excellent work is:

TITCHENER, E. B. *A Beginner's Psychology*. (Macmillan. 6s.)

Two valuable and inexpensive primers, treating the subject in a manner that is transitional to the standpoint of the New Psychology are:

WATT, H. J. *Psychology*. (Jack. 1s. 3d.)

McDOUGALL, W. *Psychology*. (Williams & Norgate. 2s.)

### B.—THE NEW PSYCHOLOGY.

We venture to think that the proletarian student will find useful matter in the two

last chapters of *Creative Revolution* (Plebs, 2s. 6d.) and in Chapter X. of *Proletcult* (Leonard Parsons, 4s. 6d.—in the press.)

The best general outline at present available is:

TANSLEY, A. G. *The New Psychology and its Relation to Life*. (Allen & Unwin. 10s. 6d.)

For the "behaviorist" outlook read: WATSON, JOHN B. *Psychology from the Standpoint of a Behaviorist*. (Lippincott, 8s. 6d.) (This volume gives an admirable account of the nervous mechanism—"the material basis of thought.")

The intelligent control of the subconscious is the theme of:

BAUDOUIN, CHARLES. *Suggestion and Auto-suggestion*. (Allen & Unwin. 12s. 6d.)

For a question-and-answer presentation of psychoanalysis see:

CORIAT, I. H. *What is Psychoanalysis?* (Kegan Paul. 3s. 6d. net.)

Two other useful "New Psychology" volumes are:

TROTTER, W. *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War*. (T. F. Unwin. 8s. 6d.)

HART, BERNARD. *The Psychology of Insanity*. (Cambridge Univ. Press. 4s. 6d.) (The former deals with important social aspects of psychology; the latter discusses the mutual relationships of "sane" thinking and "insane" thinking.)

C.—SCIENTIFIC METHOD AND THE PHILOSOPHICAL SETTING OF PSYCHOLOGY.

For the vital question of what we mean by scientific truth, which stands at the gateway of psychology as of all other sciences, there is no better book than the little known essay by George Shann:

SHANN, G. *The Criterion of Scientific Truth.* (Cassell. 1s. 6d.)

Few people realise that Mark Twain, the American humorist, was a philosopher and psychologist of note.

TWAIN, MARK. *What is Man?* (Chatto. 7s.) is a simple outline of determinism in question-and-answer, and an exposition of what we now call "rationalisation."

We have explained elsewhere our conviction that certain elements of Bergsonian philosophy are essential constituents of the new proletarian outlook. The best exposition of Bergson is by

CARR, H. WILDON. *The Philosophy of Change.* (Macmillan. 7s. 6d.)

A smaller book by the same author is: *Henri Bergson.* (Jack. 1s. 3d.)

To understand the borderland between philosophy, psychology, and general science, some knowledge of Einstein's theories is requisite. See:

HARROW, B. *From Newton to Einstein.* (Constable. 2s.)

SLOSSON, E. E. *Easy Lessons in Einstein.* (Routledge. 5s.)

A most valuable (and difficult) book for advanced students is:

RUSSELL, BERTRAND. *The Analysis of Mind.* (Allen & Unwin. 16s.)

To sum up, *all* the books named are good. Those we specially recommend to beginners are:

Titchener, McDougall, Tansley, Watson, and Shann.

E. & C. P.

NEWS OF THE MOVEMENT

*Will class-secretaries, tutors and organisers note that this page of the PLEBS can—if they choose to make it so—be of considerable value as a means for the interchange of ideas on methods of tuition, organisation, etc., etc.? A paragraph on subjects of this kind is of much more general interest, as well as of more use-value, than a mere formal report of normal activities—though of course we're glad to hear of these.*

The LONDON organiser has been visiting various South coast towns and reports first steps towards the formation of Plebs groups as follows:—

HASTINGS: J. Willard (Services Rendered Club).

DOVER: A. J. Plummer (Whittington Terrace, Shepherds Well).

RAMSGATE: J. J. Riley (62, Hardres Street).

CANTERBURY: H. Hulse (Labour Club).

The three last-named towns are contemplating starting I.W.-C.E. councils. There is also to be a council at Southend. This shows a big awakening in the South, and we look forward to a big increase in PLEBS sales in consequence.

The London organiser is anxious to link up various activities, and among other things suggests the formation of a collection of lantern slides for loan to classes next winter; he would be glad to get the name of any comrade willing to make slides from photographs, or to hear from any comrades interested in this idea. Write London Organiser, c/o PLEBS Office.

The excellent work done by Fred Casey (old and tried Plebeian) is having good results at BURY. Com. Casey has been training students with the special object of making them into tutors for further classes. The secretary of the group reports success in another interesting direction worthy of

imitation. Two class members have recently been successful in getting the editors of their respective Trade Union monthly journals to reprint from the PLEBS "Ten Minutes' Talks with New Students." The membership of the two unions is roughly 12,000 and 16,000, so that is good propaganda. We recommend the idea to all readers. The various T.U. journals are good mediums through which to stress the need for I.W.-C.E.

FERNDALE Plebs group continues its activities. Gwyn Hughes has given four lectures, two on "The Essentials of Revolution," and two on Bergson. The group is concentrating now on a series of lectures on Economic Geography which are very popular, and the attendance and interest is well maintained.

The North Eastern Area are busy preparing for next session and the outlook points to a record number of classes. Teachers are urgently needed, and W. Coxon, 5, Byron Street, NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE, will be glad to hear from comrades willing and qualified to take classes. Preparations are well in hand for the Annual Meeting on September 17th. All comrades in the district are asked to rally for the winter's work.

If the EDINBURGH District (Scottish Labour, College) gets almost monthly mention in these notes it is because it really is a centre of

activity and consequently has items of interest to report. Last month it beat its own record by selling

30 dozen PLEBS.

Twelve months ago it was selling 36 copies monthly! A 900 per cent. advance in a year—just ponder over that, S. Wales, Sheffield, Newcastle and you other centres! *And the PLEBS account paid promptly every time!!!* 360 readers, and the great bulk of them new students; and then some of our critics say the PLEBS' job is merely to interest the already initiated! It may be immodest, but we're bound to point out the moral Edinburgh teaches:—The PLEBS is all right if our friends will PUSH it. Don't go around *apologising* for it, and for yourself, and for I.W.-C.E.—PUSH it. A 100 per cent. increase in our total circulation this winter will put the PLEBS on a sound footing, once and for all. That's the task ahead of us. Are you going to take part in the PUSH—or are you going to stand aside because in some respect or other the PLEBS doesn't quite come up to what you think it should be? If Edinburgh can not merely hold its circulation, but increase it, during the "off" summer months, why can't you send the sales up in your district? Are you quite sure it's our fault, anyhow, if you haven't done so?

Another centre where real hard work is done (and the PLEBS well PUSHED!) is HALIFAX, where J. Thomas and M. Collins are the moving spirits. We gave a brief report last month of last winter's class activities; and these have not been slackened during the present summer. Halifax has been able to send teachers to various outlying towns and districts—Siddal, Spenbury, Cleckheaton, Farsley, and the great city of Bradford itself.

Sincere apologies to the PADHAM Trades and Labour Council for delay in publishing report of the successful class in Economics conducted under their auspices last session (Jan.—April) by Com. R. Pickersgill (Sec. N. Lancs. League for I.W.-C.E.). The class was financially supported by the Weavers, Textile Warehousemen, N.U.R., Miners, Co.-Op. Society and Socialist Party. A discussion circle has been arranged, to keep students in touch during summer months. The class sec. is T. Thompson, 2, Starkie Street, Padham.

If you see it in *John Bull* it isn't always so! The issue of that well-known comic weekly for July 23rd contained an article by the editor—isn't his name Bottomley?—entitled "Training Little Traitors," in which he got sadly mixed in his "facts" about the Labour College. But of course he knows more about Training little Dubbs!

SHEFFIELD Labour College sends us an admirably got-up prospectus which is itself sufficient evidence that I.W.-C.E. is now on its feet in that centre. A conference, at which plans for the coming winter were outlined and discussed, was held on July 23rd (after these notes were written). . . . One word on a "local" matter:—We understand that there have been differences of opinion between sections of the movement—"our" movement—in Sheffield. It is not our place to sit in judgment. But we are at any rate entitled to appeal to all the Sheffield comrades—and we do so in full view of the whole movement, so to speak—to settle their differences and buckle down to the great work. Otherwise, the movement suffers; and the PLEBS suffers.

Plebs everywhere will join with us in good wishes to Mark Starr and Kathleen Horrabin (the Plebs Office Sec.) who were married on July 23rd. May their Starr . . . [No, better not.—Ed.]

#### SIGNS OF THE TIMES

SOUTHPORT Trades Council and Labour Party has decided to secede from the W.E.A., on the ground that that organisation is not in sympathy with the true interests of the working class. It has decided, instead, to affiliate with the Liverpool Council for I.W.-C.E., through which it is hoped to secure teachers who have been through the Central Labour College.—*Daily Herald*, July 11th.

Have you sent for your stamps? You've no idea how classy a common-or-garden sheet of notepaper looks with a PLEBS stamp in red and blue, stuck in the top left-hand corner. And as a bookplate the stamp is equally effective. Take a sheet (36 for 3s. 1d.) away with you on holiday, and do a bit of advertising for us. W. H.

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## CORRESPONDENCE

## FICTION FOR PLEBS

DEAR COMRADE,—I was hoping that Comrade Johns' letter on the subject of useful fiction would have resulted in something ere now. It would appear to have been overshadowed by various little squabbles.

As our comrade points out, none of us want our noses dug into *Capital* every leisure minute we have, but find relaxation in fiction of one sort or another. Those of us who have not been over-blessed with education need some sort of guide in the matter of fiction, otherwise we spend half our limited leisure reading books to find out whether we like them or not.

We need a guide as much to tell us what is good and bad fiction and why it is so, as upon such matters as historical accuracy, etc. I wish, therefore, you could adopt Johns' suggestion of half a page monthly devoted to one novel.

Yours frat., E. A. OLIVER

DEAR EDITOR,—Congratulations on recent issues. And, by way of counterblast to "F. P.," not too much "utilitarianism"! It has a flavour of Manchesterism. The PLEBS ought to contain some lighter reading, and enable us to take a busman's holiday by studying the more human and generally interesting sides of our subjects.

What about Johns' suggestion of a series of notes on good novels? I wish you'd turn Postgate loose on *Alton Locke* or *John Halifax, Gentleman*. And I'd like to recommend Beresford's *A World of Women*. Don't let us neglect this valuable field of literature.

Yours frat., H. B.

## "UTILITARIAN" HISTORY

DEAR COMRADE,—In controversy with any ordinary antagonist a month's delay in reply would have seemed unbecoming, a reproach to me and a rudeness to him. But knowing well that Postgate, who reels off challenges to the principles and professions of all and sundry with the regularity of the lunar phases and the rapidity of an expert operator working an ultra-modern cyclostyle, was sure to have several other fights in progress, I hied me on holiday with never a thought upon the urgency of my encounter with this pugnacious person.

Postgate is not serious. He merely enjoys the spectacle of us all toppling over each other defending the things which are the fundamentals of "Plebs" philosophy and practice. If he was serious would he put down such a sentence as this: "That economics matter more than ancient history I don't suppose N. denies." What antagonism, what antithesis is there between economics and any period of social history?

The ideas and customs persisting from primitive communism and the laws and

institutions derived from other ideas and customs which have now disappeared, as these are to be found in the history of Ireland, Scotland and Wales, are, I contend, more important to us than what happened in a revolution in a city whose economic development and whose social and political life were utterly different from those of our industrial areas. The notion that the British Labour Movement should be seriously influenced by Parisian experience and ideas in 1871 is almost as fatuous as the suggestion (made by another Oxonian) that industrial unionist opinion in South Wales and Scotland between 1907 and 1917 was inspired by Sorel and French literature. Such nonsense may seem reasonable in Oxford, but it is fantastic and absurd to those who have had a first-hand acquaintance with the men and movement in the industrial areas of Great Britain.

Let Postgate cut out the French Revolutions, and come to his own country, not because he and his readers are English, but because he and we are agitating and organising in a country with a widely different social and political outlook consequent on a widely different economic evolution. In this country we have to carry on an incessant propaganda against the general acceptance of the constitutional practice of our Parliamentary Government of King, Lords and Commons, with their attendant and subordinate institutions and all that they cloak and assist. This cannot be done by mere denunciation or by ridicule but by systematic examination and explanation of why and how they came to be as they are and why they are anachronisms.

We have deliberately to destroy ideas—political, social and religious myths—and this can only be done by going to the source of these ideas, to their justification in history and their condemnation in history. In "primitive communism" in "the origins of the family," in manor and lordship, we can show to our people the vanished reality of ideas that are now either empty symbols or perpetuated falsehoods. In "medieval guilds" we can show the "principle of association" fighting a ceaseless if variable battle against "the usurpation of lordship," we can drive home morals regarding craft and trade sectionalism and the dead hand of "officialism."

May we pray that Postgate may some day escape from his study, get away from his academic atmosphere and associates, and mingle with workers who were born not only little Liberals and Tories, but little Anglicans and Catholics and Nonconformists; little boys and girls leaving school at 12 to 13; little victims of church and chapel, Sunday school, elementary school and every other intellectual "dope" factory?

Yours frat., J. T. WALTON NEWBOLD,

## MARXYVARSY

DEAR EDITOR,—Whenever Mr. Gerald Gould writes to a paper a letter beginning, "I never, under any circumstances, reply to reviews, but in this case . . ." look out for trouble. This is a rule to which I find there is no exception. Therefore, I shall be discreet in replying to his attack on my review of his book.

He is annoyed because I accuse him of seeing the Labour world through rose-tinted glasses. Well, I am afraid I still think he does. For him, the institution of the Council of Action marks a great revolutionary advance. For me it marks the greatest triumph of the do-nothing Labour leaders. That is where Mr. Gould and I differ: and where I differ from the policy of the *Herald*. The *Herald* blames (say) Black Friday upon the faults of organisation, the weather, or even the rank and file. I blame it on certain nameable cowards and traitors, and I see them working against and checking, with regular success, the Labour movement.

Whether I am right in my criticism of Mr. Gould's book can best be settled by buying it and reading it.

As for the rest of Mr. Gould's letter, I say that he is *not* as good a Marxian as I am, and I further offer him five to one (in pound notes) that if he re-reads Marx straight and not arsyvary, he will discover that nowhere did Marx say that "through its trade union structure British Labour was likely to be able to establish a peaceful economic revolution." (He would hardly have talked of "establishing a revolution," anyway.)

In the rest of your last number I seem to be a sort of public Aunt Sally: every writer on every subject has a passing shy at me. Dutt remarks that I call everything I don't wish to discuss "metaphysics," which is untrue, though I cannot prove it. "F. P." criticises broadly my style, matter and competence, although he is so ignorant of working-class history that he can call Ferré and Smith "obscure." "Tutor" attacks me for saying that "primitive Communism" was not an integral part of Marxism, when all I said was that it was not a practically important part. J. B. Askew wakes from slumber to gibber wrathfully at me, but why and what about I do not know.

These are too many to answer: therefore I shall claim the privilege of an Aunt Sally, and remain silent.

Yours frat., R. W. POSTGATE

## STATISTICS

DEAR EDITOR,—The suggestion of J. Flower in the July PLEBS deserves immediate attention. Material of the utmost value to your movement is contained in the published Statistics of Trade, public medicine, etc. Unfortunately no compendium of statistics exists, and the data have, as a rule, to be extracted from Parliamentary Papers. Anyone who lives in a big town where there is a good library can consult the terrific array

of volumes published during the last century or so—but the material exists nowhere else.

On the treatment of statistical data there are hundreds of books. Perhaps the best all-round one is A. L. Bowley's *Elements of Statistics* (P. S. King). The manner of treating statistics is most important, as nowhere else can one be so completely dishonest, consciously or unconsciously, as in dealing with such data in an incomplete or partial way. Worse still, this dishonesty invariably recoils on the head of the workers who lapse into it. With the exception of public registration, actuarial work and pure science, statistical investigations are usually inadequate and more or less fallacious (one of the very first things I was taught in beginning my study of public medicine was how to detect such fallacies).

The work of extracting data relating to trade and industrial statistics, etc., from the Parliamentary Papers is too great for any one person, and it would be a great thing if a number of researchers could be got together for this purpose. It is risky to accept data from any other source than official ones, and the labour of so getting them is immense—I know that from personal experience of only one line. Nothing need yet be published, but the PLEBS, or the Labour College, might keep manuscript records which could be copied and lent. A bibliography, with directions how to use the public libraries, might also be prepared, "Roneo-ed" and issued at a small charge. Really, the Labour Research Department ought to do all this, but until it does so a small group of people interested in working-class education might take up the matter. I shall be very pleased to get in touch with any one who cares to spend some time doing this kind of research, and I am prepared to assist more particularly in the treatment and presentation of the data.

It is an utterly silly thing to say you can prove anything by statistics—my experience is that more often you can prove nothing if you are quite critical and honest. But there are heaps of material buried in official documents that would be of use in social reconstruction, in the hands of people not afraid of much arithmetical drudgery. Yours, etc., J. J.

DEAR COMRADE,—With reference to J. Flower's letter; I suggest that he will find a mass of statistics relating to mortality in England and Wales in the Registrar-General's Annual Report (obtainable from H.M. Stationery Office, Kingsway, W.C., price 7s. net). Copies of past years' reports can be obtained at lower prices (about 5s.) Large masses of statistics are published by various Government Departments. It might be possible to obtain information about them from Plebeians who work in the Departments concerned; I know that many Civil Servants are readers—though of course they would have to remain in the background so far as publicity is concerned.

Yours frat., O.H.M.S.

## CO-ORDINATION OF CLASSES NEEDED

DEAR COMRADE,—Co-ordination and generally improved organisation of our classes cannot be tackled too soon.

Standardisation of lecture courses, syllabuses, and textbooks is urgent, and would instantly result in economising time, energy and money. It would go a long way to solve the difficulty of the shortage of teachers.

But such standardisation must be carried out nationally. And of course it would take time to achieve.

Why not—as well as proceeding with the details of co-ordination—draw up lecture syllabuses now, and allot to teachers in different districts the task of amplifying and elaborating one or two lectures each? Then have the whole series of synopsis lectures typed or printed, and sent round to every district?

We MUST have “mass production”—for economy's sake. This need not prevent individual teachers or particular districts from striking out on their own lines, where they feel equal to it. But a whole lot of the “ground work” could be done once, done well, and used in common all over the country.

Yrs. frat.,

P. G. ABRAHAM

Newport, Mon.

DEAR COMRADE,—May I, as an ordinary student, venture a comment or two on the Newbold-Postgate discussion as to the usefulness of a study of early history?

Plebs' teaching aims at stirring the student to ask the “Why?” of present society; and at furnishing him with an answer to his “Why?” Now if the study of earlier social forms does throw light on present society, if it assists a right understanding of modern institutions, then it is surely worth while.

The first job of the propagandist is usually to counter such statements as that “private property (more or less in its modern form) has always existed.” And we cannot get the facts we want to use here from a study of the bourgeois period alone. I've tried hard to see R. W. P.'s point about no serious consequences ensuing from a neglect of other historical periods. But it seems to me they provide us with a whole armoury of useful facts.

To concentrate exclusively on any one period would be, I think, to deliberately limit our range of attack.

Yrs. frat.,

S. H. M.

Blyth, Northumberland.

DEAR COMRADE,—Co-ordination of our provincial class-work is now a vitally urgent matter.

It is necessary in order (1) to provide sufficient lecturers and (2) to make the best and fullest use of those we have. We shall continue to waste a good deal of energy, and some money, until such time as the job of

organisation is tackled. I trust comrades in every district are preparing definite practical suggestions in this direction; so that as soon as a step is made we shall be able to keep on moving—and not merely stand telling one another how desirable it would be to move.

Apart from this matter of co-ordination, may I point out that some of the older students of our classes would be doing better service to the movement and to their fellows if they prepared themselves to conduct a class in their own locality instead of merely discussing the possibility or otherwise of being able to finance a full-time lecturer? Some of these people will sit and argue for hours to prove their knowledge of Marxism, and yet plead inability to take a class. Man is a product of conditions; but if he stands aside when favourable conditions present themselves he is not going to get rid of economic and social bondage.

Yours frat.,

FRANK JACKSON

Rochdale.

## PROLET CULT AND PARTIALITY

DEAR COMRADE,—Having read with interest the discussion on the above subject by some of the “heid yins,” I should like to add my humble effort.

I think we make a grave mistake in asserting that we are “partial” and “biased.” A glance at the situation will show this. History, the study of past events, is the groundwork and foundation of bourgeois educational corruption. They have been and still are careful that the average student should not become acquainted with the whole story.

It is *they* who are partial, *they* who are biased. We, the hoodwinked and blindfolded, have nothing to fear from probing and studying for ourselves. To get at the Truth—which is impartiality itself—we must break away from bourgeois control of education. In short, we must be INDEPENDENT. But that does not in any way imply that we are partial. On the other hand, we are breaking away from Partiality and becoming IMPartial; free from the narrow educational limits of the ruling class.

The only excuse for professing partiality is one of tactic. There may be something to be said for this; but it does not add to clearness of thought, and is the cause of much argument and needless debate.

Yours frat.,

SYDNEY WALKER

Glasgow.

## DIETZGEN

DEAR EDITOR,—I'm afraid “P. L. E. B.” makes rather too much of the omission of philosophy from the Sverdlov University curriculum, and the inclusion therein of the physical sciences.

With his remarks about the desirability of soaking ourselves in scientific method all of

us will agree. But when he says, in effect, "Dietzgen should be relegated to the preface of a textbook, say, of biology," I for one part company with him. A training in scientific method as applied to a particular science does not make any less necessary a proper understanding of the general nature and thought. Bertrand Russell as a mathematician may leave the ordinary man miles behind. But any class-student who has grasped the A B C of Dietzgen can see his errors as a philosopher in such a book as his *Problems of Philosophy* (H. U. Series).

Scientists can be exceedingly unscientific outside their own special study. Why? Because their scientific "method" is largely unconscious; and when they turn to other subjects they are apt to forget it altogether.

Maybe "detailed perusal of the works of Dietzgen" will be less needed when the forthcoming textbook by W. W. Craik is in our hands; but we shall—and rightly—be studying the Science of Understanding.

One other point while I am discussing this subject, on which I should like to "draw" Eden Paul or any other champion of Psychology. However much we learn of the nervous mechanism of the mind, and of how it registers and stores its impressions, and whatever may be the relative importance of Conscious or Unconscious mind, we still need—despite the psychologist, New or old—the "philosopher." A careful study of the weaving loom will not make clear to me the nature of the cloth. The psychologist, surely, can only supplement, not modify, much less supplant, the findings of proletarian philosophy.

Yours, TUTOR

#### A QUERY

DEAR EDITOR,—In reading the June PLEBS I came across a sentence in R. W. Postgate's article, "Mr. Smith," which has placed me in doubt as to the purchase of books.

Postgate says of Smith: "He started a paper called the *Shepherd*, which purveyed general information of the irrelevant kind now provided by Harmsworth encyclopædias."

What does Postgate object to in the Harmsworth encyclopædias? As a purchaser of the fortnightly parts this last fifteen months I have got good value out of the work. If Postgate will take the trouble to show me in what way they are inadequate, he will save me some money.

Yours frat., W. D. H.

#### IN DEFENCE OF SHELLEY

DEAR COMRADE,—As I suppose that Ernest Johns does not intend us to believe that Shelley was inspired by the revolutions of 1648 and 1688 I don't quite see why he dragged them into his reply to my letter in the May PLEBS. My question was related entirely to his contention that Shelley was the prophet of the early revolutionary struggles of English capitalism; and I claimed, and still do claim, two things, firstly,

that Shelley was not the poet of revolting capitalism and, secondly, that capitalism from 1789 to 1832 was revolutionary in name only.

Buxton Forman speaks as follows of the *Proposal for putting Reform to the Vote*: "When Shelley wrote his Proposal, the mere reference to Major Cartwright was sufficient to carry with it four clear and very advanced ideas, to wit, universal suffrage, equal representation, vote by ballot and annual parliaments." He then speaks of a statue erected to Cartwright just before the Reform Bill of 1832: "This was under the administration of Earl Grey who was an old adherent of Major Cartwright, however much it may have been found expedient to water these principles in the work of 1832, so as to give the power to the middle class and not to the people." These last words are tremendously important if we remember that those four ideas of Cartwright's formed the demands of the revolutionary, proletarian Chartists. Engels says very truly that if the Chartists gained all these four in full the consequence must have been a proletarian revolution in England.

While not denying the radical flavour in Horne Tooke, Hardy, Cartwright and the rest. I yet claim, and I think the facts are on my side, that they represented not struggling capitalism, but a vast proletarian unrest. The middle class gave lip service to the movement but took no active part, and in 1832 betrayed the workers greatly, as later they betrayed the Chartists. The constitution of the volunteers raised in the Napoleonic wars shows the real position of the middle class. This force was raised not to fight the French invaders but to keep down the English workers, and, in the West Riding at least, was recruited largely from manufacturers and their sons. The reason of the tameness of our own bourgeoisie in the epic European bourgeois revolt is simple. We were nearly fifty years ahead of other countries industrially in 1789 and had a very large industrial proletariat. In consequence only the extreme left of the Jacobins ever got any hold in England—a left wing which faded into the definitely communist Enragés and Babeuvists.

Are we then to class Shelley as a liberal, a sort of humanitarian Byron, or is he as Beer indexes him in the *History of English Socialism*, "the poet of labour and communism"? There is, I think, only one certain test to distinguish the liberal from the socialist revolutionary. The first wants only political equality, the second demands in addition economic equality. In this way Shelley was beyond all equivocation a socialist, for the very basis of his philosophy was economic communism. That is why he was a human outcast when Byron was a popular and rather naughty hero. Of course, as Johns says, Shelley was Godwin's disciple, Godwin who, according to Kropotkin, was "the first to expound the ideas of anarchist

communism," and again was mentioned by him as being inspired along with Fourier, Owen and Proudhon by the communist wing of the French Revolution. Shelley got all his ideas on communism from Godwin, the first Englishman not a Utopian to analyse and find wanting the system of private property. Here are some of the things Shelley wrote under his inspiration: "There is no real wealth but the labour of men." "The true pension-list is the rent-roll of the landed proprietors: wealth is a power usurped by the few to compel the many to labour for their benefit." (*Queen Mab*, notes.) Shelley divides the population in two, 9,500,000 exploited and 500,000 exploiters, and then writes, having Godwin's communism in mind: "Is it not worth while that the remaining 9,500,000 should make some exertions in favour of a system evidently founded on the first principles of natural justice?" (Letter to Eliza Hitchener.) This is what a contemporary historian thought of Godwin: "I have lived to see all the doctrines of Godwin revived—they are the same as those which now infest the world and disgrace the human understanding, delivered by Mr. Owen, the Chartists and the St. Simonites." (Prof. Smyth *Lectures on the French Revolution*.)

I grant Shelley was a socialist of the pacifist, humanitarian type. But read what the respectable bourgeois who edited one of his pamphlets for the Aungervyle Society says of Shelley's connection with the outlaw cause of the worker's revolution, and then doubt if you can his devotion to that cause. Of course old men like Saintsbury, W. M. Rossetti, etc., have an interest in sneering at and glossing over the essence of Shelley, but that a communist should help them—as Johns does—is a painful surprise to me.

Yours frat.,  
RALPH FOX

### YOUNG PLEBS

DEAR COMRADE,—I enclose, for review, copies of Nos. 2 and 3 of the *Young Worker*, dated June and July, 1921 (1d. monthly, 2d. postpaid, from 152, Fleet Street, E.C. 4). The Young Workers' League is an organisation of young people, built up, officered and administered by young people themselves, and is an attempt to win converts to Socialism. Naturally, in such a society education must be the chief method, and the Y.W.L. is gradually feeling its way to a sound educational policy of the proletarian type.

In this task we look to the help of PLEBS. It is extremely difficult to us to make our paper known throughout the country, which is essential if we are to get a circulation sufficient to enable us to pay our way. We therefore ask you at least to mention us in the PLEBS—our big brother—in order that we may appeal for the support of the right people.

Yours frat.,  
B. WOOLF  
(Secretary, Editorial Committee,  
*Young Worker*)

[We wish our "little brother" the best of luck, and urge all Plebs to make use of the *Young Worker* for propaganda purposes.—ED. PLEBS.]

C. B. Snelling writes (1) to take sides with Newbold on the importance of the study of early history; and (2) to point out that Postgate was in error (p. 171, June PLEBS) in stating that the *Family Herald* was illustrated. Com. Snelling writes in a new and terrifying Simplified Spelling of his own invention, and as we haven't space to print his explanatory glossary along with his letter, we are compelled to summarise the latter.—ED. PLEBS.

[We have to apologise to many correspondents whose letters are unavoidably held over.—ED.]

## REVIEWS

### THE NATURAL INEQUALITY OF MAN

*Human Efficiency and Levels of Intelligence.*

By H. H. Goddard. (Princeton University Press: London, Humphrey Milford.)

In this book Dr. Goddard develops the theory of mental levels in man, reference to which was made in my review of his book, *The Psychology of the Normal and Sub-Normal*, in the PLEBS of Oct., 1920. Since that book was written the results obtained by the application of Standard Intelligence Tests to 1,700,000 men drafted into the American Army during the late war have become available. These tests are so devised that they afford a measure of general intelligence that appears to be but little effected by the education acquired by the individual during his lifetime. Such cautions as are necessary in attempting to apply the results chiefly centre around

(1) the degree to which extreme illiteracy, or ignorance of the "American" language (in foreign immigrants) tends to drag these classes down rather below their proper level in the scale; and (2) the extent to which the particular kind of "intelligence" which succeeds in modern conditions is correlated with other superior mental qualities.

The most surprising result obtained is undoubtedly the low average of intelligence of this body of men; which, presumably, is fairly representative of the general population of the United States, or of any Western European nation.

As a result of testing, the men were arranged in a number of groups, according to "mental age"; that is to say, according to the age in the normal child at which that level of intelligence is found. It is well known that the intelligence, the capacity to form mental associations, like the stature,

weight, and other physical features, increases in children from year to year, and that, just as there is an average height or weight for the normal child or young person of 6, 10, 14 or 16 years, so there is a corresponding average level of intelligence. Mentally defective persons are those the growth of whose mental mechanism stops at one of the early stages, corresponding to five, seven or nine years; the most brilliantly clever man or woman is the one whose mental mechanism goes on growing to the 18th or 20th year or longer.

The figures show that of the men drafted into the American Army, 10 per cent. were of the mental level of children below ten years of age, that is to say, they were either mentally defective, or on the border-line of mental deficiency. The highest group, from whom most of the men of high officer type were drawn, represented only 4½ per cent. of the total; while the second highest group, whose brain mechanism had continued to develop till about the 17th year, comprised only a further 9 per cent. The numbers of individuals in the 11th-12th year group and in the 15th-16th year group were larger; and the biggest group, comprising a quarter of the total number examined, and representing the level of intelligence of the "average man," corresponded to the normal child of 13 to 14 years of age.

There are suggestive chapters on Efficiency, dealing with the question of using the mental level of the individual in order to find the right man for the job, and the right job for the man; and on the relation between mental level and crime.

In his last chapter the author considers the bearing of the facts he sets forth on *democracy*. He is probably right in saying that the management of affairs, to be effective, will always have to be assigned largely to the small minority of individuals who possess high intelligence. We see this to-day; our rulers are continually engaged in picking out, through their educational machine and other devices, the cleverest members of the proletariat, to be trained and used as instruments to maintain and extend the privileges of the Capitalist class.

Given a genuine democracy, how, asks Dr. Goddard, are we to secure that the other 86 per cent. or 96 per cent. will appoint the 14 per cent. or 4 per cent. of highest intelligence as their leaders? He says (p. 97): "Lower intelligence will invariably and inevitably seek and follow the advice of higher intelligence so long as it has confidence in the individuals having the higher intelligence." And he adds (p. 99): "Whenever the four million choose to devote their superior intelligence to understanding the lower mental levels and to the problem of the comfort and happiness of the other ninety-six millions, they will be elected the rulers of the realm and then will come perfect government—aristocracy *in* democracy."

Note how, under the influence of his capitalist society "Complex," Dr. Goddard, the hard-shelled scientific determinist, puts the problem of behaviour, where class relations are concerned, as one of "choice," or free will, on the part of the intelligent minority. His unconscious mental habits, which have grown to recognise the existing structure of society, based on personal profit, as natural and "final," shut out the idea that such a "choice" can only be made when such a radical transformation of the economic basis of society takes place that the enrichment of one class by the exploitation of another ceases to be the necessary source of livelihood and power to the governing minority.

Goddard goes out of his way to attack socialism and bolshevism, neither of which he understands. If he would study first hand the principles on which scientific socialism (or bolshevism) is based, he would find that they aim not at creating such an artificial uniformity among men as he suggests, but at attaining the very ends he advocates, by rendering the exploitation of men for the profit of individuals impossible, by seeing that each individual does the work for which he is best suited, and receives a fair share of the product of the work of all, and by giving to the intelligent minority, who are now largely employed to exploit the masses, a different environment, in which their instinctive desire for self-expansion will find its easiest outlet in service for the good of all. We would even venture to predict that, if Dr. Goddard found out what "bolshevism" really stands for, he would want to go to Russia, where those institutions which most of all impede the coming of the co-operative commonwealth are being swept away, and where the ends towards which he is striving will not be defeated by the inevitable working of the Capitalist machine; a machine which, so long as it exists, will use such knowledge as men like Dr. Goddard produce solely for the greater exploitation of the mass of the people for the enrichment of a small privileged class.

NORDICUS

#### A GROPER

*The Wages of Labour.* By Wm. Graham, M.P., M.A. (Hons.), LL.B. (Cassell, 5s.)

We are informed on the cover of this book that "it is a summary of the leading problems of the wages system in Great Britain, presented from the point of view of employers and employed, as well as that of consumers."

One would have thought that an essential prerequisite to any really helpful discussion of the wages question would be an examination of the economic position of the worker in capitalist society. Mr. Graham, however, finds "these economic distinctions ('proletariat,' 'wage-slave,' 'labour-power') very amusing—but of little service in the merciless logic of Economic Science!" He accordingly starts on his wanderings into the labyrinth of

Capitalism without an historic perspective, and with no definite economic view-point. One is not surprised, therefore, to find him describing the sustenance wrested by primitive man from Nature as "wages"; or the surplus value of the capitalist as the "wages of capital."

Having begun in a hopeless muddle, Mr. Graham wanders through 160 pp., talking about minimum wages, standard rates, scientific management and such-like subjects, without saying anything new or helpful on any of them. He pins his faith in "the emergence of the labour code of the League of Nations" as a guarantee for the establishment of a minimum wage principle; and this at the very time when the employers are making onslaughts upon it, as witness the plight of the farm labourers. He fails even to appreciate, at any rate fully, the manifold objections of the workers to being more firmly chained in the name of Scientific Management.

Borrowing Marshall's dictum that wages (he prefers to call them incomings!) come from "the national income," and assuming that "in some shape or form there must be a system of remuneration, governed by a contract," the whole problem of wages, for him, resolves itself into one of trying "to make the contract complete, just, and productive of the best for the country"—"always remembering that unless output is maintained or improved, there cannot be any gain in real income!"

Were this a book from the enemy's camp it would be merely comic; but written, as it is, by "one of the most promising of our younger Labour M.P.'s" it is too much like a tragedy. No wonder Mr. Graham and his like feel that "we are fated to grope our way into a better economic system."

If we had no recourse but to textbooks such as this one, we should have to "grope" indeed.

J. G.

#### THINKING ABOUT THINKING

*The Analysis of Mind.* By Bertrand Russell. (Allen & Unwin. 16s.) *Easy Lessons in Einstein.* By Edwin E. Slosson. (Routledge. 5s.)

There are certain fundamental questions with which all are concerned who do not merely think, but think about thought. Not every mind is teased by the problems, "What really exists?"—"How do we know?"—"How do we think?" Perhaps it is as well, for the answers vary from age to age, and possibly the questions are unanswerable. And yet all of us assume a knowledge of the answers in that we presume to think at all. Dietzgen attempted answers fifty years ago in *The Nature of Human Brainwork*. The intervention of half a century has brought newer lights, and Russell has made a valiant effort to wrestle with the same problems. We have only space to string together a few of his conclusions. "There is no enemy to

thinking so deadly as a false simplicity." (p. 16).—"Moral considerations are the worst enemies of the scientific spirit, and we must dismiss them from the mind if we wish to arrive at truth" (p. 32).—"A man's actions and beliefs may be wholly dominated by a desire of which he is quite unconscious, and which he indignantly repudiates when it is suggested to him" (p. 33).—"Matter is not so material and mind is not so mental as is generally supposed" (p. 36).

Russell's is not an easy book to read, but he writes lucidly, and it is probably as easy as any book on these fundamentals can be. At any rate it does not err by false simplicity! Slosson's booklet on Einstein deals far more simply, in conversational language, with other aspects of the same fundamentals, approached rather from the "physical" than from the "mental" side. Einstein's work on physical theory, like Russell's own work on the borderland between philosophy and psychology, and like the Freudian and post-Freudian work on the subconscious, are among the influences that will make the broad generalisations of 1921 as greatly in need of review in 1971, as those of 1871 are to-day. But from time to time we have to take stock, and Russell's is a master mind at this process.

The sentence in his book which bears most intimately on our peculiar point of view as Plebeians, upon what may be termed the Plebs Theory of Knowledge, or, more modestly, the Plebs Theory of Education, is the following. Pilate asked, "What is truth?" Russell says in effect that we can only know what truth is when we understand why we prefer true beliefs to false ones. He continues (p. 278): "This preference is only explicable by taking account of the causal efficacy of beliefs, and of the greater appropriateness of the response resulting from true beliefs. But appropriateness depends upon purpose, and *purpose thus becomes a vital part of the theory of knowledge.*"

Could you find a more explicit justification of tendency in education?

E. & C. P.

#### A MILLIONAIRE ON "MECHANISATION"

*In Days to Come.* By Walter Rathenau. Translated from the German by Eden & Cedar Paul. (Allen & Unwin. 12s. 6d.)

For Rathenau's credentials and status readers are referred to E. & C. P.'s review of his *The New Society* in the PLEBS of March last.

On the critical side this book is good. Its indictment of the many evil phases of capitalism, or "Mechanisation," as Rathenau prefers to call it, is telling and forcible at times. On its constructive side, however, the book is a failure. The writer opposes Socialism because it is too materialistic—"the way leads from earth to the earth, its most intimate faith is revolt, its strongest force is a common sentiment of hatred and its ultimate hope is earthly well-being."

Rathenau's income, it may be remarked, is large enough to permit him to hold mere bread and butter in proper scorn.

His remedy is the Salvation Army orator's change of heart. Moreover, the plain and unadorned appeal of the often illiterate Salvationist is preferable to the laborious reasoning of this German scholar—reasoning clothed in such difficult and abstract terminology that an ordinary man might almost at times be tempted to accept it as an original contribution to the solution of present-day problems. It was presumably this terminology which impressed the *Times* reviewer, who commends the book to all "thinking men."

Dr. Rathenau's soaring away from "mechanistic," earthly things to the sphere where the "hot soul urges," should be cured by placing him in the position of one of the present unemployed. Standing for hours in a queue, tramping around seeking for work and food, and watching his family waste away for want of nutrition, would quite literally bring him back to earth—and, incidentally, clarify his thinking. Both of which effects would be much to the good.

G. P.

## A LOST LEADER

*The Evolution of Revolution.* By H. M. Hyndman. (Grant Richards, Ltd.)

This is not really one book but two. The first, consisting of 29 chapters extending over more than 300 pages, is by Hyndman the revolutionary historian; the second (about 80 pages in five chapters) is the work of

Hyndman the militant jingo and social pacifist.

Apart from an attempt to modify the Materialist Conception in the interest of an independent ideological force, there is little in our author's survey of the development of society from the primitive *gens* to modern civilisation to which any Communist need take exception. The abject misery of the mass of mankind in every epoch since private property made its appearance is given its rightful place in the picture; while the ruthless butcheries that followed every abortive rising on the part of the enslaved masses, from Spartacus to the Commune, are faithfully recorded.

Concerning Hyndman's enthusiasm for all the rebels of the past there can be no two opinions. It is only when he comes to deal with the events of his own political lifetime that he confesses himself a convert to the gospel of peaceful persuasion, and adopts, unconsciously, perhaps, the rôle of apologist for the pitiful group of renegades with whom he has seen fit to associate himself.

Thus he prefers the "restraint, capacity and common sense" of Geneva to the "mental terrorism" of Moscow, and solemnly advances the presence of Branting and Vandervelde in their respective Cabinets as conclusive evidence that "a successful revolution need not necessarily be a forcible and bloody one."

Some kind friend would be well advised to delicately suggest to this "social democrat of 40 years' standing" that it is time he sat down.

FRANK TANNER

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## ROMANTIC HISTORY

THE revival of *Abraham Lincoln* at the Lyceum, London, is not without interest to working-class students of history. Drinkwater's play is an excellent specimen of stage "history" at its best (or worst).

Its idyllic picture of Lincoln would certainly lead the unsophisticated to believe that there was actually once an American President who was a complete altruist, and who led the North in a costly and bloody war purely on behalf of humanitarian principles. Not a hint is given of the fact that the Northern party was dominated by the factory owners, and that bitter political warfare had long been waged over the duties levied on foreign manufactures, which were so high as to act as protective duties in favour of the manufacturing States, and were in the

same degree prejudicial to the tobacco and cotton-growing States of the South.

During Buchanan's presidency (1857-61) this question was debated with an ever-increasing acrimony and in no small degree contributed to the bringing about of the final rupture.

Details such as these are altogether too prosaic for a Liberal poet-playwright, and so we get a Lincoln full of the unadulterated milk of human kindness, making speeches reminiscent of the Lloyd George of pre-Coalition days.

The play is well written; and the acting is so good that it may have the unfortunate result of ensuring another long run for a very deplorable travesty of history.

A. S. C.

## THE PLEBS' BOOKSHELF

TWO more correspondents this month urge us to adopt Ernest Johns' suggestion of half a page each month devoted to Notes on Novels. Nobody has asked me to turn myself loose on the subject. But "fools rush in . . ." etc., etc. So just to encourage the angels to tread the same path, I herewith offer a few observations on one of the earliest (and oftenest neglected) English novels—*Robinson Crusoe*.

Students of Historical Materialism ought, it seems to me, to get more pleasure as well as more benefit out of general literature than the ordinary reader does; since they are in a position to see books and their authors not as isolated phenomena which just "happened," but against their proper historical background; to place them in their actual "environment"—the social structure which gave a special direction to their aims and qualities.

From this point of view, *Crusoe* is especially interesting: (i.) as a kind of *Bourgeois Manifesto*, written just after the long struggle of the bourgeoisie for power had been triumphantly ended by the "bloodless revolution" of 1688, and bourgeois forms of government had at length been firmly established in Britain; (ii.) as one of the very earliest examples of the novel, the literary art-form which was to be the contribution *par excellence* of the bourgeoisie to literature. This latter point is mainly important from the point of view of the history of literature, and is, therefore, somewhat outside the scope of this brief note.

But read *Crusoe*—and enjoy him—as one of the first expressions of the bourgeois spirit, the bourgeois outlook on the world, in literature. Contrast its very opening paragraph, and its matter-of-fact account of *Crusoe's* family descent, with the Tamburlaines and Faustuses, Richards and Macbeths, Princes of Denmark and Moors of Venice, of Elizabethan drama; or with the rakes and

wits of the courtiers' drama of the Restoration period, the period of aristocracy run to seed. Read the eulogy of "the middle station of life," with its attendant (bourgeois) blessings of "peace and plenty," "temperance, moderation, quietness, health," on the third or fourth page of the book. Note the precision with which Defoe states the exact amount of money young Robinson took with him on his first voyage, and the price he received on his return for the gold dust on which he laid it out. And smile over the moral tags peppered all over the book—the "petty shopkeeper morality" which Charles Lamb so disliked in Defoe.

Every other page of *Crusoe* has some characteristically bourgeois comment or illustrates some typical bourgeois trait. You will remember Marx's reference (Vol. I., p. 48) to "our friend Robinson" rescuing "a ledger and pen and ink from the wreck, and commencing, like a true-born Briton, to keep a set of books." Like a true-born 18th Century bourgeois Briton, indeed! "Defoe," wrote Leslie Stephen,\* as a thorough type of the class to which he belonged, could not do otherwise than make his creation a perfect embodiment of his own qualities. . . . *Crusoe* is the very incarnation of individualism; thrown entirely upon his own resources, he takes the position with indomitable pluck; adapts himself to the inevitable as quietly and sturdily as may be; makes himself thoroughly at home in a desert island, and as soon as he meets a native, summarily annexes him, and makes him thoroughly useful. . . . This exemplary person not only embodies the type of middle-class Briton but represents his most romantic aspirations."

And he has, therefore, an especial interest for the proletarian student of literature. If

\* *English Literature and Society in the 19th Century*. (Duckworth's.)

you have neglected *Crusoe*, as a book you had "grown out of," get it down from the shelf and read it again—as a social document. I think you will find it worth while.

\* \* \*

I wish we had 93 pp. monthly—and our readers could afford the bob to pay for them! This is *apropos* of the *Labour Monthly*, the first number of which lies before me. Congratulations to editors and printers. It is a first-rate piece of work and a good shillingsworth. There was ample room for a monthly "devoted primarily to reporting and explaining to British workers the developments of the Labour movement in other countries." Lenin's manifesto on "The Meaning of the Agricultural Tax"; Barbusse's article on the French movement; L. S. Woolf's on Economic Imperialism in British East Africa (Kenya); Potofsky's on the New Unionism in America; and the Secret Report on International Counter-Strike Organisation—all these items really do fulfil the *Monthly's* declared aim. And R. Palme Dutt's short review of Shaw's latest work is a little masterpiece.

\* \* \*

I must make a bare list of the pile of pamphlets on my table which have already waited overlong for mention. Ben Griffiths' *Reflections on the Organisation of Brain Workers* (Clerical and Admin. Workers' Confederation, 50, Loraine Road, Holloway, N. 7; 4d.) is a well-reasoned plea for modern methods of industrial organisation as applied to the special needs of clerical workers. I hope Griffiths will write us something on this subject for the PLEBS some time soon. . . . *The Open Shop Drive*, by S. Zimand (Bureau of Indust. Research, 289, 4th Avenue, New York; 50 cents) is an account of the great American capitalist offensive against organised Labour. ["In every district and industry the campaign for the 'open shop'—euphemism for non-Union shop—is being pushed with all the tremendous economic and political power of American capitalist organisation. It is not too much to say that on the issue of this 'open shop' struggle in America depends the future of Labour in the Western World."—*Labour Monthly*, p. 8]. . . . *The War for Coal and Iron*, by Dorothy F. Buxton (Labour Party, 33, Eccleston Square, S.W.1; 4d.) has much material of interest

to students of current economics and economic geography. . . . *The Policy of Guild Socialism* (Lab. Pub. Co.; 6d.) is an exceedingly interesting exposition of the Guild Socialism of 1921, which has developed considerably in various respects as compared with the Guild Socialism of a year or two back. But there is a characteristically idealistic sort of remark on p. 23, where, after remarking that "the workers, through their independent organisations must educate themselves," the authors go on to declare that "schools and universities must be rescued [!] from their subjection to Capitalism, and made centres of living thought. . . ." They will be "rescued" when there's nothing to rescue them from—that is, when Capitalism is no more; and not before! . . . *Nut Crackers*, by Tom Anderson (S.L.P.; 3d.) is a reprint of a selection of Anderson's propaganda pars. in the *Socialist*, and should be useful to lecturers and speakers looking for homely, humorous illustrations.

Nos. 3, 4 and 5 of the Labour Booklets Series (Lab. Pub. Co.; 6d. each) are *Communism*, by E. & C. Paul; *Control of Industry*, by Margaret Cole; and *The Government of Ireland*, by Mrs. J. R. Green. E. & C. P.'s pamphlet is less a discussion of theoretical problems than an easy-flowing talk about Communists and Communist ideals, ancient and modern, with plentiful references to general literature, and a list of books recommended for study. Mrs. Cole's essay is an able, if ultra-restrained, discussion of the lack of incentive under decaying Capitalism and the consequent need (and opportunity) for Workers' Control. She shows what this would mean by taking the Mining Industry as her example and effectively retorts on many current criticisms and objections. . . . The Assurance Agents' Press (132, Great Ancoats St., Manchester) issues *What is Education?* (1d.), a report of a debate at Halifax between Rev. P. Gough and Coun. M. F. Titterton, speaking respectively for the I.L.P. and the Plebs points of view.

I must add to this list T. A. Jackson's special supplement on the British Empire (*Communist*, July 2nd). This was a notable piece of work, which all working-class students of world affairs will file for reference until such time as it is republished in handier form.

J. F. H.

*The PLEBS* invites contributions on Labour problems in general and on subjects of interest to Working-Class Educationists in particular. All contributions should be as concise as possible, as space is limited, and "cutting" is a thankless (and tiresome) job. Articles or letters intended for following month's issue should be sent in not later than the 15th of the month. Will correspondents also remember to write on one side of the paper only, and to enclose full name and address, whether for publication or not? N.B.—No payment is made for any contribution—you get your reward in heaven.

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