

Vol. XIV. No. 5

May, 1922

THE PLEBS

AGITATE EDUCATE ORGANISE

THE man who
I doesn't know
WHY
he is a TRADE
UNIONIST is a
potential blackleg.

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THE PLEBS

“I can promise to be candid but not impartial.”

Vol. XIV

May, 1922

No. 5

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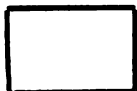
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OUR POINT of VIEW

IN the *New Statesman*, March 11th, 1922, Mr. G. D. H. Cole had an article on “The Education of Labour.” With the fundamental argument of that article—that it should be the business of the Trade Unions to look after the education of their members—the PLEBS, it goes without saying, is in full agreement. It also goes without saying—Plebs being Plebs, and Cole being Cole—that our agreement begins and ends at that point.

Mr. Cole is anxious about the future of working-class education. And he is afraid lest that future be jeopardised by a continuance of the controversy between the PLEBS and the W.E.A. There is room for both, he declares; since the one is concerned with “working-class propaganda,”

A blue X in this square means that your subscription has lapsed. Please renew without delay, as we can't afford either to lose you or to send you THE PLEBS gratis.



the teaching of "a particular set of opinions"; while the other is devoted to "education proper," *i.e.*, to giving the workers "an opportunity to make up their own minds, with knowledge as a basis for opinion." And "it would be a disaster if the dispute between them were to hold up the extension of working-class education."

* * *

Frankly, we don't believe that Mr. Cole is so muddle-headed as to accept this argument as sound. For tactical reasons he may think it desirable to hold out an olive branch to the I.W.-C.E. movement. But we feel

**Olive Branch
—or Lemon?**

sure he is perfectly well aware that he is handing us a lemon. It would, of course, be excellent policy for the W.E.A., now that (to speak conversationally) it is feeling a draught, to get I.W.-C.E.s to agree to some sort of demarcation line and to admit that they never really meant what they said when they denounced W.E.A. education as dangerous dope. But, as Mr. Cole knows perfectly well, they *did* mean it. W.E.A. supporters may, as he asserts, declare "that there is a sphere for the purely 'propagandist education' of the Marxians," but Marxians most emphatically deny that there is any sphere, in an organised, conscious Labour movement, for the purely spineless sort of talky-talkyness which he chooses to call "education proper."

* * *

He himself admits, in another paragraph, that this "education proper" is not wanted by the workers! Discussing the problem of teaching methods, he tells intending tutors to remember that "students will not come to the

**Knowledge
for Action**

classes unless they feel that *their distinctive needs will be met*; they are seeking, *not education in general, but education for a particular purpose.*" They are, in fact, seeking what Mr. Cole calls "propagandist education." They want, primarily, to get to know the facts about the social system under which they live, to find out why they are condemned to a servile status, and to discover *how* to alter the existing state of things. They don't need "an opportunity to make up their minds." The facts of their lives have done that for them already. What they require is not "knowledge as a basis for opinion," but *knowledge as a basis for action.* For them, the "particular purpose" which they are aiming at is an urgent matter. Which explains why the I.W.-C.E. movement, as Mr. Cole confesses, "has made great headway during recent years."

* * *

That movement is very much more than "a training college movement for working-class propagandists"; and the difference between it and the W.E.A. is *not* "the same as the difference between a Church of England or Wesleyan Training College and a University proper."

**"Merely
Marxian"**

"Merely Marxian education" is *not* just a sort of top-dressing to be applied to conventional University culture. It is a denial of the standards of that culture; and the conventionally educated man or woman has as much to unlearn as to learn when he sets to work to understand what Marxism means. Marxian education, if it means anything at all, means *a new point of view* on every subject which has any practical bearing on the problems of working-class emancipation. It is by no means a matter of "economics," in the

narrower sense of the term. It is a new way of looking at human history and at every department of human activity. The Church of England or Wesleyan Training College may take the teaching of the "University proper" as the basis of its own specialised education; the Marxian Labour College can do nothing of the kind (except as regards the "three R's"). Theology can be kept in its own little pigeon-hole without interfering with the contents of the others. Marxism is a bigger thing.

* * *

We end, then, as we began, by insisting that whether or not the dispute between ourselves and the W.E.A. "holds up the extension of working-class education," that dispute will (so far as we are concerned) continue until the W.E.A. surrenders on all points, as it has already been compelled to surrender on several. The PLEBS has not "enlisted the pugnacious instinct of its supporters by ceaseless denunciation of the W.E.A." as a mere tactic. It has consistently attacked an educational organisation which at its worst deliberately supplied counter-revolutionary dope to the workers, and at its best stood for ambiguity and muddle-headedness in preference to clear-cut views on actual problems.

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE

—and let your friends know—
that The PLEBS will shortly be
ENLARGED TO
48
PAGES MONTHLY
and that

THE PRICE WILL REMAIN THE SAME.

We ask all our readers to make as widely known as possible the forthcoming enlargement of the PLEBS to 48 pages monthly. From 16 pages (in 1919) to 32 (in 1920) and to 48 pages in 1922 is a significant progress.

**A Bigger
PLEBS**

The I.W.-C.E. movement is steadily making headway. Can we at the same time that we increase the size of the magazine by 50 per cent. *increase our circulation in the same ratio?* The answer to that question depends on our friends. Once again we have to point out that we can afford no extensive advertising. We have to rely on the voluntary efforts of Plebs Leaguers and N.C.L.Cers. We are going to produce a better magazine than ever before. Will you make a bigger effort on our behalf than ever before?

A SHORT SYLLABUS on IMPERIALISM

Here is another Syllabus for a course of six lectures which, together with that on "Revolution from 1789 to 1906," published last month, should be exceedingly useful to districts planning Summer Schools or short Summer Lecture Courses.

I.

Modern Imperialism: and Expansion in Ancient Civilisations

The purpose of this introductory lecture is to show the various meanings given to Imperialism by various writers, and to emphasise the distinguishing features of 20th century capitalist Imperialism.

1. *General Definition.*—"Imperialism" loosely used by many writers as meaning merely the expression of the instinct for domination. Pavlovitch* gives good examples of this broadening of the term which makes it meaningless. Growing recognition of the special relation between modern Imperialism and the conditions of modern society. In England the term came into use in the struggle against the Manchester School. It includes an idealistic view of the uniting of the whole of the British race and its Colonies. The growth of rivals in Germany and America, the use of tariffs as a weapon against commercial rivals, and the simultaneous rush for the protectorates and "spheres of influence" in Africa were attendant circumstances. Joseph Chamberlain and Cecil Rhodes prominent pioneers.

J. A. Hobson, the earliest and most able British critic; he exposed the causes of the S. African War. But unlike Socialist critics, he does not regard Imperialism as a necessary last phase of capitalist development, but as a social perversion, a survival of the animal struggle, of instincts of acquisition and domination. (See his *Imperialism*, 1905.) He scouted "the chosen people" theory which is made a basis of Imperialism, and argued that Imperialism did not pay.

2. *Marxian Definitions.*—(a) KAUTSKY defined I. as an attempt to annex *agrarian lands* by the more advanced capitalist Powers. This an incomplete picture. His later modification describes I. as the policy of finance capital against peaceful industrial capital.

(b) HILFERDING gave prominence to the huge power of the financiers, and explained I. as the result of their needs in promoting and controlling foreign enterprises.

(c) Writing later, LENIN completed the description of I. in the following points:—(1) Growth of Concentration and Monopoly. (2) Amalgamation of banking and industrial capital into finance capital, and huge power of a few financiers. (3) Export of capital (means of production) becomes of greater importance than export of commodities (means of consumption). (4) Formation of International Trusts which agree to partition among them the world market. (5) The complete territorial partition of the whole earth amongst the great capitalist Powers.

3. *Ancient and Modern Expansion.*—(a) Smaller extent of Ancient Empires. Large portions of earth unknown, e.g., bulk of Africa and Asia, and all America. Roman Empire not greater than present-day Canada.

(b) Different Purpose. Rome exported nothing in return for the food, slaves and precious metals sent her by conquered lands. Earlier wars

* *Foundations of Imperialist Policy.* (Postpaid from Plebs' Book Dept., 3s. 9d.)

had been caused by pressure of population, or by rivalries of sellers and buyers (e.g., in Greek and Phœnician civilisations, where merchant's capital had already done its disintegrating work). Rome did not want markets, but slaves, sought not to expand its own production, but to enjoy the fruits of others.

II.

Expansion in Early Capitalism

(a) Revolutionary effects of Merchant's Capital in 14th, 15th and 16th centuries. (b) Break up of Mediæval Europe into Warring Nations. (c) Search for Precious Metals in New World. Revival of slavery. (Compare with Rome, Lecture I., where labour-power was imported. Here chattel slaves shipped to the mines and plantations of New World.) (d) Struggle for (1) Markets (Canada, U.S.A., India), and (2) Waterways (Gibraltar, Cape route to India, etc.)

III.

Pre-Imperialism Period

(1) *Starting Points of Capitalism*:—(a) Accumulation of Wealth (see II.). (b) A "free" working class. (c) Technical development. (d) Command over markets.

(2) *Capitalism in the Manchester Period*:—(a) Its economic needs. (b) Its foreign policy. (c) Political theory and ideals.

IV.

Modern Imperialism

Can be surveyed from several aspects. But in giving diverse viewpoints it must be remembered that all are aspects of the same thing. In operation all the factors mentioned interlock and affect each other. Vested interests in armament firms and in government administration exert a powerful influence by control over the Press.

(a) *Changed Nature of the Surplus Product*. Machinery, iron and steel goods replace textiles as staples. These exported not as commodities, but as capital. Necessitates some political control to safeguard payment. Capitalism in old countries begets rivals and competitors to its own undoing.

(b) *Raw Materials*. To advanced nations most important of these are iron ore, coal and oil. Note now that right of entry is sought for the capitalist, who desires the mineral wealth of the land, and not for the slave trader, who merely captured its inhabitants. Cheap labour-power often at first obtained by systems of indentured or compulsory labour. Sometimes as in *China* unexplored mineral wealth lies close to huge masses of workers with a low standard of life. *Japan* the only country which suffers from "pressure of population" enough to make it covet the vast unoccupied spaces of *Australia*. Conditions of labour in Eastern countries (e.g., *India*) responsible for enormous dividends.

(c) *Struggle for Water Ways and Land Routes*. Note huge opportunity of expansion given to capitalism by railroads from 1830 onwards. In addition to commercial or military value, a railway means sale of commodities for particular sections of capitalism. *Berlin-Bagdad* proposal

a choice example of the close alliance between the Banks and Big Business, finding markets, spheres of investment, and options on minerals simultaneously.

Immense advantages the Panama Canal has brought to U.S.A. in her attempt to gain Pacific and Far Eastern markets.

V.

Imperialism and the World War (1914-18)

Nature of Peace Treaty that followed defeat of Central Powers provides ample evidence of economic forces behind Imperialism. Special attention can be given to:—(1) Rapid growth of German Pig-Iron Production. (2) Wealth of Alsace Lorraine, and Franco-German quarrels over Morocco. (3) Ruinous effect of the Versailles Treaty. The short-sighted sectional revenge that endangers the whole capitalist world.

VI.

Imperialism and the Future

Problems of British Imperialism are to devise scheme of federation which will knit the Empire into a permanent unit, and perpetuate domination of 65 million whites over some 355 millions of coloured peoples. Rejecting as we do every theory which Imperialism uses to defend itself and being forced to oppose this last as other stages of capitalism our hope is that Imperialism has no future. There are several lines of investigation that can be profitably followed:—

(1) Extent to which Trusts consist of respective nationals, or how far they will be international, and cut across national divisions.

(2) Exploitation of backward nations will produce rebellious nationalisms and new indigenous capitalisms.

(3) Possibilities of future imperialistic wars. World War gave U.S.A. opportunity to aim at world supremacy. *Britain* and *Japan* will not allow this without a struggle. Factors pointing to World War are:— (a) Changed position of U.S.A. in relation to Europe owing to the War; debtor transformed into creditor. (b) U.S.A.'s greatly increased productivity and the consequent greater problem of its disposal. (c) The rapid industrialisation of every part of the earth which has hitherto given capitalism a chance of expansion.

N.C.L.C.

A POSTSCRIPT—*with a Moral which Plebs will appreciate!*

Since my article in last month's PLEBS was written, the Editors of the Cambridge Economic Handbooks have declined to publish Barbara Wootton's book on *Control of Industry*, of which I made mention, on the ground that among other things it was too "propagandist"! Mrs. Wootton's book, therefore, will not appear in this series; although there is a chance that it may be published in some other form.

M. H. D.

SUMMER PROPAGANDA

"He whom you have to convince, you must regard as master of the situation."

THE month of May generally begins the open-air work of the movement. Live propagandists get busy at the job of nobbling recruits for the next winter's classes.

Why should not class students use their knowledge in order to reach numbers who so far are untouched by the Labour College and Plebeian point of view, and stimulate interest in the cause that matters? Let six students or tutors get together and map out six centres to be "converted." Different week-nights can be selected according to the needs of each locality, and a suitable handbill or poster issued announcing the subject to be covered.

I suggest the following subjects as pre-eminently suitable for effective propaganda:—

(1) *What is I.W.-C.E.?*

Plebeians need not be told where to find the goods for this lecture. The PLEBS, Plebs' pamphlets and *Proletcult* provide plenty of material.

(2) *Working-Class History.*

This ought to be put in such a way that the dullest hearer will grip it. Contrast the *real* history of the working class with the drum and trumpet history he has had and is having dinned into him every day. If there is a need for contrasts of the "great" men, put Robert Owen and his work against Wellington's. Other instances will occur to the student.

(3) *Working-Class Economics.*

This subject, too, will have to be dealt with so as to grip the man in the street. It's no use explaining to him all the class-room terms; but what can and ought to be done is to explain to him how unemployment is as natural to capitalism as sight to the eye. Mary Marcy's *Shop Talks* will provide suggestions on how this can be done in order to ensure understanding. Foreign Exchanges, High Prices, these also should be dealt with. Examples should be given of our modern "great" economists, showing how they are never heard of during a strike or lock-out without putting the case for the boss.

(4) *What is Imperialism?*

Woolf's *Economic Imperialism* and Boudin's *Socialism and War* should be worked in here. And there are the hosts of pamphlets issued week by week, not to mention the everyday examples from the newspapers; e.g., Genoa—to patch capitalism together; Japan and U.S.A., and the struggle for China. Point out how the real issue is hidden, and a veil drawn over the ugly features. (Only a grounding in numbers 2 and 3 can ensure this subject being treated properly, hence the need for I.W.-C.E. to understand it.)

(5) *Economic Geography.*

Nothing can help here better than the maps and footnotes that have appeared in the PLEBS recently. These examples ought to be used, as they admit of no ambiguity.

(6) *Labour Unrest, Its beginning and end.*

Last, but not least, the old wine—but in a new bottle. The end of labour unrest is usually held to be the election of some one to the House of Commons or the hanging of some “agitators,” both of which are wrong. Here is the golden opportunity to put the M.C.H. into everyday language, and to show that the conditions alone are the cause of unrest, and the end will be—*when the conditions that brought it forward are no more.*

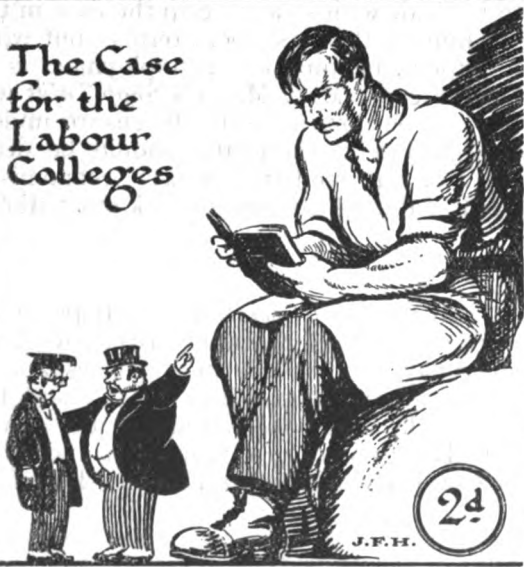
I put these few hints forward in order to urge other districts to break new ground, as we are doing up North. Not merely is it an opportunity of reaching the “man in the street,” but literature can be pushed, and the orthodox Socialist parties shown that after all there must be a *method* of putting our case forward. Already the other educational bodies that claim to express the needs of the workers are attempting to collar the stakes! Their students cannot satisfactorily handle the subjects enumerated above, for the reason that they have never studied their root causes. We have; let us explain them to others.

WILL LAWTHER

(North-Eastern Labour College)

**MORE PRODUCTION
— & MORE POVERTY**

The Case
for the
Labour
Colleges



The Boss, (to his University Person)—‘Ere, we can’t
‘ave this feller thinkin’ for ‘imself’!

The New Pamphlet

(12 pages, with coloured cover and
three illustrations)

issued for the N.C.L.C. by
the Edinburgh District
(Scottish Labour College).

This pamphlet, written by
J. P. M. Millar, and with a
Foreword by

ROBERT SMILLIE

puts the case for Independent Working-Class Education freshly and pithily.

EVERY N.C.L.C. DISTRICT
AND CLASS SHOULD
ORDER A SUPPLY FOR
SUMMER PROPAGANDA.

The T.U.C. GENERAL COUNCIL and the NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LABOUR COLLEGES: A REPORT

As it is obviously important that every I.W.-C.Er should be well informed of all proposals for the development or extension of Labour Education we give the following report, summarised from circulars issued to N.C.L.C. affiliated bodies, of the discussions which have taken place to date on the question of some sort of "unified control" by the Trade Union Congress of the various Labour Colleges and working-class educational organisations.

ABOUT the middle of March the Executive Committee of the N.C.L.C. received a letter from the T.U.C. General Council, asking for the views of the Council on the subject of endeavouring to combine the running and financial responsibilities of the various Labour Colleges* under the auspices of the T.U. Congress.

The Executive was informed that the Governors of the Labour College (London) were to be *interviewed* on this same question by the General Council on March 30th, and they felt it to be of vital importance—

- (i.) That the Governors of the Labour College (London), the Scottish Labour College, and the N.C.L.C. should have a preliminary meeting to discuss, and agree upon, joint action.
- (ii.) That the N.C.L.C. and the Scottish Labour College, as well as the Labour College (London), should be represented at the interview with the T.U.C. General Council, in order that the I.W.-C.E. movement should present a "united front."

The Executive accordingly asked the N.C.L.C. President (J. Hamilton) and Press Secretary (J. P. M. Millar) to negotiate with the Governors of the Labour College and with the General Council. The Scottish Labour College also appointed J. P. M. Millar to represent its views to both.

On the morning of March 30th the two N.C.L.C. representatives met the Governors of the Labour College, who agreed to make the deputation to the General Council a joint one. In the afternoon this deputation met a Committee of the General Council entitled the "Joint Committee on Education Facilities for Trade Unions."†

This Committee is composed as follows:—

Representing the Gen. Council Sub-Committee:—Messrs. A. Pugh (Chairman), Geo. Hicks, J. W. Bowen, A. H. Findlay and C. W. Bowerman (Sec.).

Representing the T.U. Education Inquiry Committee:—Messrs. J. M. Mactavish, T. W. Burden, G. D. H. Cole, A. Creech Jones and Mrs. E. Calthrop.

* This term, of course, includes all Colleges or organisations *professing* to provide education for the workers; e.g., Ruskin College.

† See the T.U.C. Circular printed on a later page.

All were present except Mr. T. W. Burden. *It will be noted that a very large proportion of the Committee is officially connected with the W.E.T.U.C. and the W.E.A.**

After a discussion in which the I.W.-C.E. spokesmen made it clear that they would not agree for a moment to any interference with the principles on which our movement has been built up, the deputation was invited to send in details of the Labour Colleges' curriculum, and to submit answers to these two questions :—

(a) Is the Labour College Movement prepared to accept Government grants provided there are no conditions attached to them ?

(b) Is it willing to be run under the T.U.C., provided that its principles, policy and curriculum are guaranteed against interference ?

These questions were discussed later by a sub-committee of the Governors of the Labour College and the N.C.L.C. representatives, and it was decided to take a ballot of N.C.L.C. affiliated bodies on the two questions, rephrased for the sake of added clearness thus :—

1. *Are you prepared to accept Government grants on condition they do not involve any interference with or modification of the present educational policy of the N.C.L.C. ?*

2. *Are you prepared to participate in the proposed T.U.C. scheme on condition that our present policy and standpoint in education remain unchanged ; which involves the liberty to run N.C.L.C. classes in any area and to take the necessary steps to obtain Trade Union support ?*

The Governors' sub-committee decided to reply "Yes" to these questions ; and the Executive of the N.C.L.C., when circularising its affiliated bodies, recommended that the N.C.L.C. should do the same.

Replies have not been received from all the affiliated bodies. But of those who have communicated their decision, the large majority are in favour of the Executive's recommendation. A formal answer, conveying a reply in the affirmative to the two questions *as redrafted*, has accordingly been sent to the Secretary of the Gen. Council Committee (Mr. C. W. Bowerman).

THE PLEBS LEAGUE

As one of the affiliated bodies of the N.C.L.C., the Plebs League was called upon to register its opinion on the course recommended by the N.C.L.C. There being no time to take any ballot of members, the matter was discussed by the Plebs E.C. on April 5th. The following answers were decided upon :—

In reply to Question 1 (*re Government Grants*) :—

"We are prepared to take unconditional grants from any source, even the Government, but we regard this question as frivolous, since we are aware that the Government will not subsidise any genuine independent working-class education."

In reply to Question 2 (*re participation in the proposed T.U.C. Scheme*) :—

"We are not prepared to participate in any scheme which sets out to enlist the assistance of the Universities,† or to co-operate with any

* Note also that no representative of either of the two Trade Unions which have been to the fore in supporting I.W.-C.E. by financing the Labour College—the N.U. Railwaymen and the S. Wales Miners' Federation—is included.

† See "Recommendations of T.U. Inquiry Committee" included in T.U.C. Circular printed below.

educational organisation except under the conditions stated in the Handforth Resolution *re* W.E.T.U.C. (see April PLEBS, p. 115) which in this case are not fulfilled."

In view of the fact that the whole matter would have to be settled without the opportunity of any discussion in the magazine, the Plebs E.C. further decided to circularise all other affiliated bodies of the N.C.L.C., informing them of these decisions.

This resulted in a further statement by the N.C.L.C. Executive, emphatically declaring that participation in the T.U.C. scheme, on the lines recommended by them,

"DOES NOT INVOLVE OUR ENLISTING THE SUPPORT OF THE UNIVERSITIES . . . NOR CO-OPERATION WITH ANY EDUCATIONAL ORGANISATION WHICH DOES NOT ACCEPT THE 'HANDFORTH RESOLUTION.'"

The difficulty faced by the N.C.L.C. Executive in deciding on its answer to the two questions asked by the General Council—and by the Plebs League E.C., also—lay here:—How far did "participation in the T.U.C. scheme" mean participation in *the scheme recommended by the T.U. Inquiry Committee*, referred to and approved of in the Congress resolution, and printed in the T.U.C. Circular on the subject?

All I.W.C.Ers agree that it is the business of organised Labour, and of the T.U. Congress as the authoritative head of the Labour movement, to take steps to provide *working-class education for the workers*. They are equally agreed that "utilising the services of the Universities" would be fatal to any scheme of *genuine working-class education*. It was therefore vital that (i.) the I.W.-C.E. movement should make it clear to the General Council that it is ready to co-operate whole-heartedly and enthusiastically in any scheme for real working-class education, and that, indeed, it looks to the General Council to put such a scheme into operation; (ii.) that real working-class education involves opposition to the Universities, as capitalist-controlled institutions, and to any educational bodies basing their activities on University assistance. The Plebs E.C.'s resolution was designed to emphasise more strongly this latter point. We think that N.C.L.Cers and Plebeians everywhere will agree that it cannot be emphasised too strongly. It would obviously be impossible for I.W.-C.Ers to co-operate in any such scheme as that outlined in the "Recommendations" below.

The T.U.C. CIRCULAR

We here reprint the circular on "Educational Facilities for Trade Unions" issued by the T.U.C. General Council to its Affiliated Societies. It should be understood that the N.C.L.C. decision to participate in a T.U.C. scheme of working-class education does NOT mean agreement with the Recommendations of the T.U. Education Inquiry Committee here set out.

TRADES UNION CONGRESS GENERAL COUNCIL

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES FOR TRADE UNIONS

To the Officers and Executive Committees of Affiliated Societies.

FELLOW MEMBERS,

At the Congress held in Cardiff the following resolution was adopted:—

"That this Congress is of opinion the time has arrived when the Trade Union movement should consider the best means of providing for

the educational needs of its members. It declares that the recommendations of the Trade Union Education Inquiry Committee offer the basis of a scheme whereby the varied educational needs and demands of Trade Unionists may be met.

"It, therefore, instructs the General Council to co-operate with the Trade Union Education Inquiry Committee as to the best means of giving effect to the aims and objects of the inquiry, including the taking over and running of existing Trade Union Colleges, including the Central Labour College and Ruskin College."

In pursuance of this proposition the General Council appointed a sub-committee to co-operate with the T.U. Education Inquiry Committee. A meeting of the two bodies has been held, and in the course of discussion inquiry was made as to how many Trade Unions at the present time were providing educational facilities for their members, and to what extent Trade Unions were prepared to participate in the proposals that would be the outcome of the joint committee's consideration. This information, it was felt, would be most useful when laying the groundwork of any future centralised system devised for adequately meeting the educational requirements of members of affiliated Trade Unions.

To enable the General Council to be furnished with accurate information, will you be good enough to reply to the following questions :—

- (1) What provision is now being made or being contemplated by your Union to meet the educational needs of its members ?
- (2) The financial responsibilities entailed thereby ?
- (3) Do the rules of your Union provide for a portion of its funds to be used for educational purposes ?
- (4) How far would your Union be prepared to co-operate in carrying out any scheme formulated on the lines laid down in the resolution ?

Appended herewith is a copy of the recommendations of the Trade Union Education Inquiry Committee ; also a description of this organisation, which was originally established by the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation, and is recommended as offering the basis of the scheme which the General Council has been instructed to prepare.

The next meeting of the Joint Committee will be held at the end of this month, and your reply by the 27th of March will, therefore, be a great convenience.

On behalf of the General Council, Yours fraternally,

R. B. WALKER, *President.*

C. W. BOWERMAN, *Secretary.*

March 1st, 1922.

[Pp. iii. and iv. of the Circular were occupied with the following scheme recommended by the T.U. Education Inquiry Committee. This scheme was NOT discussed during the negotiations between the T.U.C. Committee and the N.C.L.C. Executive.]

RECOMMENDATIONS OF TRADE UNION EDUCATION INQUIRY COMMITTEE

1. The endorsement of the organisation set up by the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation as an experiment which offers the basis of a scheme providing the best and most economical means of :—

(A) Co-ordinating the educational activities of Trade Unions.

(B) Enabling Trade Unions to meet the varied needs of their members by utilising the services of Universities, Ruskin College, the Labour College, the Scottish Labour College and the Workers' Educational Association.

(C) Providing conditions that permit of Trade Unions supplementing the activities of these bodies in any way they may deem necessary in the interest of their members.

(D) Retaining control over finance, policy and the education provided.

2. That educational institutions or organisations supported by Trade Union funds must provide for adequate working-class control.

3. That the rules of each Trade Union should provide for a portion of its funds being available for educational purposes.

4. That while each Trade Union must be free to make such arrangements as it believes to be in the best interests of its members as a whole, the following general principles should govern any educational scheme in which Trade Union funds are being expended :—

(A) The scheme should be of such a character as will enable the Trade Union to retain control over its own expenditure and the education provided for its members.

(B) Classes attended by Trade Union students should be regarded as self-governing bodies, *i.e.*, the students to have the right to select their own subject and the final voice in the appointment of the tutor, such classes to come under the auspices of a *bona fide* working-class organisation.

(C) That education schemes approved by Trade Unions should, so far as possible aim at providing for the varied needs of their members.

(D) That, apart from those colleges and classes which prefer not to use public funds to meet the costs of tuition, public grants in aid of education should be utilised as far as possible—subject to the provisos contained in these recommendations—in meeting the cost of tuition.

5. That the General Council of the Trades Union Congress be requested to make representation to the Board of Education as to :—

(A) The importance of universities and local education authorities giving effect to the recommendations of the Committee on adult education.

(B) Establishing an adult education fund to be administered by the Board working in conjunction with voluntary bodies concerned in adult working-class education. This fund to be devoted to assisting the

education work of organisations undertaking the provision of facilities which are eligible for ordinary State grants and for pioneer work.

(C) Providing adequate maintenance for lads following the sea who are desirous of pursuing a continuous course of study.

6. That Trades Councils make representation to their local education authorities with a view to their giving effect to the recommendations of the Committee on adult education.

THE WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL TRADE UNION COMMITTEE

The W.E.T.U.C. consists of a central committee and seven divisional committees, which operate over all parts of England, Scotland and Wales in which there are branches of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation. Each of these committees consists of representatives of the Confederation and the W.E.A., the Confederation in each case having the majority representation. The practice is for a member of the Confederation to be appointed as chairman and for the W.E.A. district secretary to be appointed as organising secretary. Each divisional committee is responsible for organising the educational activities of the Confederation within its own division. They submit to the central committee schemes of work, with estimates of cost, for which, if approved, the costs are met from funds provided by the Confederation.

By this method the Confederation has established an organisation which enables it to utilise the services of all educational organisations and institutions. It is thus able to organise and make provision for the most varied demands of its members in all parts of the country, while public funds are made available to meet the cost of tuition of those of its members attending classes complying with the Board of Education regulations. It retains control over finance, policy and the kind of education provided for its members. It has avoided the heavy costs and dislocation of trade union business involved in building up an educational organisation of its own by using the W.E.A. organisation for this purpose, while retaining complete control over its own educational machinery.

The FUTURE is with US!

Mr. Arthur Greenwood, Vice-Chairman of the W.E.A., says so! Writing in the *Labor Age* (New York) on the British working-class educational work, he concludes: "The Labour College movement, however, is not nearly so extensive as the W.E.A. *Its large work is of the future.*" (Italics ours.) And that's a darned sight better than having only a glorious past to maunder about!

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOTES *by* MARX

MAX BEER sends to the PLEBS, along with a very much-appreciated message of congratulation on our magazine, the following extracts from some biographical notes written by Marx himself, for his counsel, on the occasion of the libel action brought by him against Karl Vogt, a German democratic leader. They were found among the literary remains of Ferdinand Lassalle by Prof. Dr. Gustav Meyer, and published by him in the latest issue of "Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus."

BEING myself the son of a barrister, the late Heinrich Marx, *bâtonnier* of the *barreau* (leader of the Bar) at Treves, I know how important it is for counsel to know the character of his client.

In 1842, at the age of 24 years, I was chief editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, which was first subjected to the simple censorship and then to a double one, until the paper was finally suppressed by the Prussian Government in 1843. One of my co-editors was Herr Camphausen, Prime Minister of Prussia in 1848. It was the *Rheinische Zeitung* which broke the power of the Prussian Press Censorship. After the suppression of that paper the Prussian Government, through the intermediary of Herr Esser, Counsellor at the Court of Appeal, made me an offer. This was in the summer, 1843, in the watering-place of Kreuznach, where I married my present wife. After this I left Prussia for Paris, where I edited the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, in collaboration with Friedrich Engels, Georg Herwegh, Heinrich Heine and Arnold Ruge. At the end of 1844 the Guizot Government, at the instance of the Prussian Government, expelled me from France. I settled at Brussels. The position which I had occupied among the revolutionary elements of Paris is shown by the letter of M. Flocon, dated March 1, 1848, inviting me in the name of the Provisional Government to return to Paris.

In Brussels I lived from the beginning of 1845 to the beginning of March, 1848, when I was also expelled from Belgium. I left for Paris. At Brussels I wrote, besides various papers for the Radical and Socialist Press of Paris and Brussels, the book *Holy Family* (together with Friedrich Engels); then the *Misère de la Philosophie* (1847); *Discours sur le libre-échange* (1847). At Brussels I gave a series of lectures on political economy to the German Working Men's Association. My newspaper writing and lecturing were all free of charge. The position I occupied at Brussels among the Radical elements of various denominations is shown by my election to the Committee of the *Société internationale*, among whom were Joachim Lelewel, the Polish historian and veteran of the Polish Insurrection of 1830-31, M. Imbert (later governor of the Paris Tuileries), M. Juttrand, barrister and late member of the Constituent Assembly.

In Paris I lived from March to the end of May, 1848. M. Flocon offered me and Engels a certain sum of money for the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, the editorship of which we were going to assume at Cologne. We declined his offer, since we, as Germans, could not accept any subsidies even from a friendly French Government.

From May, 1848, to the end of May, 1849, I edited the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* at Cologne, where I was elected one of the three chairmen of the "Rhenish Westphalian Democracy." On my arrival at Cologne, Herr Camphausen, as Prussian Prime Minister, invited me to go with him to Berlin. I declined.

From June, 1849, to August, 1849, I lived at Paris, but was expelled.

From the end of 1849 till now (1860) I have been living in London. I published in 1850 the *Revue der Neuen Rheinischen Zeitung*, the *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (New York, 1852), *Diplomatic Revelations of the 18th Century* (London, 1856), *Kritik der politischen Oekonomie* (Berlin, 1859). From 1851 till now I have been London correspondent of the *New York Tribune*. As member of the London German Working Men's Association (from the end of 1849 to September, 1850) I lectured (free of charge). From the enclosed documents you will see my relation to Mr. David Urquhart. I wrote since then for his *Free Press*. I am with him in his policy towards the Russian Government and Bonaparte, but I am against him in all matters of Chartism. For the Chartist papers, particularly *People's Paper*, I wrote for six years, free of charge.

My articles written in 1853 in the *New York Tribune* against Palmerston have repeatedly been published in pamphlet form, of which from 15,000 to 20,000 copies have been sold.

My position among the Chartists you will see from the enclosed letter of Mr. Ernest Jones, himself a barrister and acknowledged leader of the Chartist Party.

KARL MARX

The DOUGLAS FALLACY:

A Reply to "Out-of-Work's" article in the PLEBS last month.

AT the outset we would congratulate "Out-of-Work" on his clear exposition of the Douglas position. The very clearness, however, makes all the easier the exposure of the fallacies of the Douglas Theory.

I. The first fallacy comes in the second paragraph of his article, where he says that what is "true of any firm is true of all industry." Not a bit! Each industry may buy things from outside itself, but this will not be true of a self-contained industrial community. It is true that in one industry only part of the money realised in Price of goods is distributed directly to *persons* in the shape of wages, salaries and dividends, and that the other part is distributed to *organisations*—to firms producing plant, raw material, etc. But what is paid to firms producing plant, etc., also becomes ultimately payments to persons, being paid out by those firms as wages, salaries, and dividends. The end of one cycle (*e.g.*, the sale of leather) is the beginning of another (the production of boots). "Out-of-Work" argues that because there is some element of plant charges in every industry, however far you trace the elements of the cost of a commodity back to the various subsidiary processes, therefore all the money represented in Price will never be wholly distributed to persons. Can he show any part of the annual National Dividend—the aggregate prices of commodities produced in the year—that is not represented in incomes of persons paid during that year?

Industrial Crises under Capitalism are *not* caused by any *absolute* over-production in excess of the purchasing power distributed in the production process to consumers. Hence they cannot be cured merely by giving to all consumers more purchasing power. They are caused by a maladjustment between the various parts of industry (mainly between industries producing means of production and industries producing direct means of consumption). This maladjustment results in an over-production in one *part* of industry *relative* to others. A slowing down of production in those parts that have relatively over-expanded has to take place, until the maladjustment is corrected. Under competitive capitalism this process of readjustment reacts upon and disorganises the rest of the industrial machine in the form of a general trade depression. (See Borchardt's *People's Marx*, pp. 264—284.)

2. Nor are Douglasists on any sounder ground when they try to argue the same claim—that the root evil is that there is never enough purchasing power to buy the goods produced—in another way; this argument "Out-of-Work" merely hints at. It is said that the creation of Bank Credits, necessary to finance capital development, inflates prices, and rising prices have as their effect a "dilution of existing purchasing power." Hence when finished goods come on the market purchasing power in the hands of consumers has been "diluted" and cannot buy the goods at Cost Price.

This is entirely fallacious, because it confuses two distinct things:—
 (a) a decrease of *total* purchasing power in the hands of *all* consumers,
 (b) a decrease in the purchasing power of a *single unit* of currency. Expansion of Credit inflates *total* purchasing power, and as a result prices rise, and the purchasing power of the *single unit* of currency declines. But this latter is not the same thing as a decline in the *total* quantity of purchasing power. How, forsooth, could an inflation of purchasing power (which has as its result a rise in prices) produce the opposite of itself—a corresponding and parallel *deflation* of aggregate purchasing power?

3. The Douglas Scheme, "Out-of-Work" tells us, proposes that "Producers' Banks" should issue credit to finance capital development on the basis of Real Credit, defined as the capacity to produce goods. At the same time prices of finished commodities are to be regulated, so that Price is the same fraction of Cost as National Consumption is of National Production. This will have the result of reducing Price below Cost so long as there is any capital development in progress. There are two fundamental difficulties here:—

(a) No Douglasist has yet made clear whether his glib phrase, Real Credit, includes the ability to procure the necessary plant, raw material, etc., and if so, how he is going to estimate that ability, and according to what price of raw materials he is going to measure this ability to buy raw materials. The point is an important one. The ability of one industry to procure the raw materials it needs, either now or twelve months hence, depends on the demands likely to be made for raw materials by other industries. At any one time there is only a fixed flow of raw materials into the markets of a country. If the Producers' Banks in all industries decide that their Real Credit is sufficient to expand production, and so issue Financial Credit on that basis, the result will be a keen competition among industries for raw materials, which will drive up their price. Are the Producers' Banks, in order

to buy raw materials at this higher price, going to issue yet more Credit? And if not, what limits are to be set to this shadowy conception of Real Credit defined as "capacity to produce"? If they do, we shall have the ordinary phenomenon of Inflation—prices of raw material soaring at an ever-increasing rate, with a consequent violent slumping of our foreign exchange. Since in the production of raw materials the Law of Diminishing Returns comes into operation fairly fast, the increased supply is likely to be progressively slower, while the rise of prices and issues of fresh Credit will increase at a progressively greater rate.

(b) But while the issue of Credit, and hence of purchasing power to consumers, is being expanded (*i.e.*, before any new supply of goods arrives) prices of finished goods are being reduced! As a result consumers will find themselves with an excess of purchasing power in their hands. This is likely to increase their demand for imported goods with the result that the foreign exchanges will turn violently against us, because we are consuming more than we can produce in payment. Also, since prices of home commodities are not allowed to rise to offset the increase of purchasing power, rationing will have to be resorted to, in order to ensure equitable distribution; otherwise there will be no guarantee that the incidence of the shortage may not be very unequal, giving plenty to some persons and nothing to others. This will not be merely temporary, but will continue so long as capital development goes on.

The result of the Douglas Scheme consequently will be that, in order to remedy its ill-effects, if private competition still persists, wholesale rationing of raw material, etc., would have to be resorted to. These measures may be all very good, but if you are going to have them any way, why all the paraphernalia of Price Regulation and Producers' Banks as well?

4. The walls of the "financial oligarchy" will not fall down before Major Douglas's trumpet. To fight the financial oligarchy the *methods* will have to be those of the Class Struggle. But Douglasism renounces all such nasty Marxian ideas, and weakens the militant power of the working-class movement by middle-class nonsense such as "the grievance of the workers is not a producers' but a consumers' grievance." Not even, therefore, as a *method* is Douglasism likely to have any advantage. Actually Douglas propaganda *weakens* ability to secure any fundamental economic change, by "diluting" the working-class movement with middle-class ideas and methods.

It was Attwood's currency fallacies which helped to confuse the Chartist movement and so made it a prey to the middle-class movements which finally completely side-tracked it. Let us beware lest Douglas do the same to-day.

THE PLEBS E.C.

The PLEBS invites contributions on Labour problems in general and on subjects of interest to Working-Class Educationists in particular. No contribution should exceed 2,000 words. (This is a maximum—not a minimum.) Articles or letters intended for following month's issue should be sent in not later than the 15th. 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?

A MARXIST *looks at* LITERATURE

Art is inevitably the expression of external conditions, modified though they be by the genius and personality of the artist. The painter's inspiration must ultimately be derived to a large extent from what he sees and hears around him in daily life and from the traditions which he has imbibed from childhood.—ROBERT CLERMONT WITT, *How to look at Pictures*.

THIS suggestive pronouncement—coming from a perfectly “impartial” Art critic, who had probably never heard of the Materialist Conception of History—is interesting as showing how the inductive reasoning of a specialist bears out the truth of Marxian theories. Mr. Witt's contention, of course, holds good in all Arts: it is true of the painter, the musician, the sculptor, the poet.

We are in the present instance concerned only with the last of these. Our problem is: How far may we apply the Marxian conception of history to the elucidation and explanation of imaginative literature?

First, we must not for a moment allow our intellectual enthusiasms to run away with us to the extent of dreaming that all poetry can be confined within the four walls of Marxian or any other social theory; there is a great deal of poetry that transcends political and economic generalisations, that deals with things which were before society and which will continue while humanity exists, independently of social organisation. This we may term the Permanent element in poetry. It deals with certain constantly recurring aspects of Nature, the sun's rising or setting, the appearance of the moon and stars, the changing sea, the seasons, the song of birds, and so on. All these have amazed and delighted the souls of individual men throughout the ages: they are “eternal,” as far as anything is eternal. They do *not* come within the province of sociology. But the poet brings to Nature *an intelligence which social influences have moulded*, and (nearly always) this is to be traced in his interpretations. This topical setting is very proper subject matter for the sociologist.

Keats' ever lovely “Ode to a Nightingale” springs to mind instantly as a striking example of a poem in which the two elements, the Permanent and the Topical, are both present in unmistakable form. Much of the poem is *timeless* :—

Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Yet that last word “*forlorn*,” which adds such a mournful beauty to the lines, is itself traceable to a melancholy at least partly due to the contemplation of social ills :—

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down.

And surely it was not purely personal wretchedness which made the poet declare that :—

. . . but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs.

Besides Nature, the Permanent element in poetry may take the subject of human passion: the elementary feelings of hate, love, desire, etc., and tragic situations as “the eternal triangle” or “a pair of star-crossed lovers.” These passions and tragedies have existed from pre-historic times to the present day: they will still continue under any imaginable form of society.

The two forms of the Permanent element which we have so far noted (Nature and the Individual) must be supplemented by a third to render

our analysis complete. Man has not always lived in society, but he has lived in it long enough for certain social feelings to have become second nature to him. These simple social or political impulses make our third form of the Permanent element in poetry. As examples we may give: Solidarity, Liberty, Equality. Originating in the homogeneity of all members of the primitive tribe these ideas take different shapes in different conditions, but they are fundamentally the same in all times and countries. We are, however, on slightly less secure ground here; for, as these ideas are social in origin, so is it possible that they may disappear through social changes. To this extent they are legitimate game for the Marxian student, but as previously pointed out, their fundamental essences are comparatively constant: they begin early in the history of society and the extinction lies in the very remote future. In the few hundred thousands of years between, they persist, in essence the same, but subject to rapid changes of exterior due to social developments. Poets of every period and every nation have hymned the glories of Liberty, but what various forms has that Liberty taken! Even "Free Trade" had its laureates, and the "liberty" of non-union labour has recently been advocated with almost lyrical frenzy by freedom-loving employers.

It is in the study of these topical variations in the social division of the Permanent element that Marxian research is most needed.

ERNEST JOHNS

Two "WORTH WHILE" NOVELS

Despite differing tastes in fiction, and the widely varying artistic power of various authors, we believe that Plebs could help each other by sharing their "finds." This short article describes two novels of interest to all students of nineteenth century social history.

TWO novels, about whose power there can be no question, have recently helped the writer to get "atmosphere" for the early struggles of the working class in the nineteenth century. They are Maurice Hewlett's *The Stooping Lady* (Nelson) and Mark Rutherford's *The Revolution in Tanner's Lane* (Hodder & Stoughton). They give a picture of the time before Charles Kingsley in *Alton Locke* personified Thomas Cooper as his hero, caricatured O'Connor as Flynn, and brought to the light of day the suffering and wretchedness of the rebel Chartists.

One of Rutherford's failings is that although in the second half of his book he deals with the Corn Law agitation, he makes no mention of the doings of the Chartists. And in the first and more important part of his book he chooses the March of the Blanketeers (1817) rather than the greater Peterloo (1819) as the turning point of his story. His rebels are all deists; he does not mention the atheist Chartists, with their slogan "More pigs and less parsons."

In Rutherford's book, as in all his novels, the action does not fill the stage, and the author's reflections are given a greater place. His own hard life struggle and painful break with theology give his usual sombre touch. His is the philosophy of failure; he does not judge men and movements by the success achieved.

The deep social discontent, the starvation of the people by the high cost of bread taxed for the landlords' sake, the mixing of Methodism in its early courageous days with the demand for reform which became a religion in itself, and the divisions among the hunted agitators, are contrasted with the boozing and whoring Prince Regent, and the pompous phrases and optimism of the well-fed rulers with their many spies. So crushed were the workers and so enslaved that it was a difficult task to convince them that they would be happier if free. Rutherford's heroes had to recognise bitterly that the men they wanted to help did not themselves wish to be helped. How many of us at the present moment, suffering from the atrocity of unemployment, would echo Rutherford where he says:—

Talk about the atrocities of the Revolution! All the atrocities of the democracy heaped together ever since the world began would not equal, if we had any gauge by which to measure them, the atrocities perpetrated in a week upon the poor, simply because they are poor; and the marvel rather is, not that every now and then there is a September Massacre at which all the world shrieks, but that such horrors are so infrequent. Again, I say, let no man judge communist or anarchist till he has asked for leave to work, and a "Damn your eyes!" has rung in his ears.

Rutherford looked beneath the "undisciplined wildness" of the workers' movement, feeble and unorganised. He saw that the very absurdity of the expression was a sign and measure of the desperation of the goaded, writhing, starving mass. It might be a case of those who knew least about the social machine being the most eager to smash it. But conditions were unbearable. The apparent premature outbreak does not put back the hands of the clock, but in most cases is "the direct progenitor of success." Such reflections as these are frequent in the book.

The little exclusive clique of the Whig families, the scandals of the Court, the broadsides of Cobbett, the agitations of the reformers, and the meetings at the Crown and Anchor form the background to the story of *The Stopping Lady*.

For their intrinsic value and for their usefulness to students and teachers who want to make their studies "live," these two books are worth while.

MARK STARR

N. C. L. C. NOTES

I believe that three things are absolutely essential—whole-hearted enthusiasm, an honest outlook, on the part of our people, and a fuller knowledge of economic, social and industrial history. . . . I would fain hope that every young worker will take the opportunity of grounding himself in those subjects, and that Trade Union branches and other Labour bodies will contribute generously to the support of the Labour Colleges.—From ROBERT SMILLIE'S Preface to the new N.C.L.C. pamphlet.

HAVE you ordered a supply of *More Production—and More Poverty: The Case for the Labour Colleges*, the new N.C.L.C. pamphlet by J. P. M. Millar, with a striking pictorial cover and three small illustrations by J. F. H.? You can get a 1,000 for £4 10s., with 2 pp. devoted to particulars of your own local activities. Don't wait until next winter to get busy with it—use it for propaganda NOW. (Write J. Millar, 30, Newhaven Road, Leith.)

been forestalled by the W.E.T.U.C. This is our field of operations—but we've got to work it. . . . S.-E. Lancs. has already formed an Area Council "to deal with the demands of the A.U.B.T.W.," and, moreover, the Council is "to remain in force apart from this immediate object." Rochdale, Ashton-under-Lyne, Oldham, Blackburn, Altrincham and Manchester have fallen into line. The Sec. is E. Redfern, 1, Langdale Avenue, Reddish, Stockport, and he, along with Com. J. Hamilton (Liverpool), has already interviewed the A.U.B.T.W. District Committee on the subject of educational facilities.

Districts are urged to get to work at once on the Building Trade Workers' branches. Unless they do so, they'll find they have

SCOTLAND is also well after the Builders. Already a class has been started at Motherwell, and others are under way in Edinburgh and other centres. The S.L.C. are also making a big show at the Scottish T.U. Congress, both with issues of N.C.L.C. and PLEBS' literature, and by an address to the delegates.*

The voting on the N.C.L.C. Executive's recommendations *re* the T.U.C. Education Scheme (for full account of which see Report earlier in the Magazine) was as follows:—Question 1 (*re* Government grants), Yes, 10; No, 2. Question 2 (*re* running under T.U.C.), Yes, 9; No, 3.

Thanks largely to the enthusiasm of J. B. Barney (Asst. Sec., G.P.O. Branch, Union of P.O. Workers) a resolution urging that the Union undertakes a share of responsibility for the provision of I.W.-C.E. is to come up at the Annual Conference this month. All Plebeian P.O. Workers are urged to do whatever they can to ensure that the resolution goes through. . . . Congratulations to the N.U.D.A.W. delegates who, at their Annual Meeting, carried the resolution in favour of an educational policy for the Union on *Labour College lines*. And best thanks to Clark of Manchester for his efforts.

DUKINFIELD N.U.R. branch has been working out a scheme for utilising the services of ex-London Labour College students for the Union—a highly desirable aim. The co-operation of other N.U.R. branches and members is invited. Write Sec., Dukinfield N.U.R., 90, Chapel Street, Dukinfield, for full particulars.

N.C.L.C. Literature.

Printed copies of the Syllabuses on W. W. Craik's and R. W. Postgate's books are now available. The Short Glossary of Economic Terms and the Syllabus on Imperialism will be out by the middle of this month.

Copies of the Building Trade Workers' pamphlet (*Our Next Step—Education*) are now available for the use of affiliated bodies wishing to extend their activities by circularising T.U. branches, etc., in their districts; a special edition having been printed (by kind permission of the A.U.B.T.W. Executive) by the Governors of the Labour College for this purpose. They will be forwarded for *cost of postage only*. When ordering, state purpose for which you intend to use them, and number required.

A highly successful Easter Week-end School was held under the auspices of the

North-Eastern Labour College, at the Marsden Miners' Hall, S. Shields. Mark Starr was the lecturer, and he reports a thoroughly enjoyable time.

The LONDON Council I.W.-C.E. have drawn up an ambitious programme for summer work. The subjects include Imperialism, Economics, Revolution, courses on Craik's and Starr's books, Economic Geography and Philosophy. Among the lecturers available are students of the Labour College, J. F. Horrabin, Mark Starr, R. W. Postgate, and C. Terry. The methods suggested, besides classes, include lectures at T.U. branches, at the Labour College and other centres; public meetings, club lectures, unemployed groups and classes for tutors. London should grow in Labour stature after this "forcible feeding!" . . . WEST RIDING Council have almost similar plans for summer season and have issued a very attractive leaflet advertising the scheme. They are "some" advertisers! . . . LIVERPOOL are not only ready with their summer courses, but have also issued their programme for the winter season, 1922-3. In addition to most of the courses mentioned in London Council list, they have lecture courses announced for Biology and Evolution, International and Diplomatic History, Public Speaking, Esperanto and Mathematics. The Liverpool Committee, which was asked at the Handforth Conference to undertake the job, have made progress with the National Lantern Slides Scheme, and we hope to be able to make a definite announcement about completed sets next month.

BRADFORD District are arranging for a summer school at Ingletton (in conjunction with Halifax, Huddersfield, Leeds, Farsley, etc.); and for a Conference of delegates from affiliated Trade Unions to fix up a Constitution and arrange for winter lecturing season. For further particulars of either of these events write to W. Brooke, 75, Laisterdyke, Bradford.

BIRMINGHAM College (which is linked up with the Midlands Council) has just concluded a good session. A. D. M. Taylor (Economics) and T. D. Smith (History) both did splendid work. Building Workers have been attending the classes, and Mr. O. Lane, the B.T.W. District representative, has taken an active interest in the work. Fred Silvester (8, Evelyn Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham), the Chairman of the College, is delivering a Summer Course of lectures under the auspices of the Water Orton Labour Party; and another series of lectures (by T. D. Smith) has been fixed up at the request of the Leamington N.U.R. branch. The Birmingham Sec. is A. W. Morris, 58, Colville Road, Sparkbrook.

More next month !!

* Note, in this connection, that the Plebs' Book Dept. is prepared to send supplies of literature, on sale or return, to any of our districts holding or attending Conferences and desirous of pushing literature sales.

The PLEBS Page

THAT fellow with the knot in his handkerchief last month did quite a lot of good. His picture reminded any number of Leaguers to send along their subscriptions. If you haven't already done so, just remember that knot and get on the roll call. Wouldn't you like to be a member of the "small clique of intellectuals," as the Hee-Haws style us?

The result of the ballot on the proposal to form a Joint Publications Committee with the N.C.L.C. was a unanimous vote in favour. Any member who did not get a ballot paper must have sent his subscription in after the papers had been duplicated ready to be sent out.

We are getting news of a good many Plebs' groups forming up to keep together during the summer. Some are organising regular meetings for propaganda, others country rambles or discussion circles. It is a shame to let comrades scatter after a good class has been run, and it is hard to collect them again for the next winter's work. A Plebs' group does service in many ways in holding together for mutual benefit the I.W.-C.Ers in any district.

Plebs in the following areas should link up:—

DERBY.—Write Sec., Plebs League, Clarion Club, The Wardwick, Derby.

STAFFORD.—Write Sec., 4, Browning Street, Stafford.

YNYSHIR.—Write Sec., 1A, Standard View, Ynyshir.

FERNDALE.—Write Sec., 46, Fountain Street, Ferndale.

Don't be afraid to form a group in your district, however small. We have just reprinted our 4 pp. leaflet, *What is the Plebs' League?* (having disposed of 15,000), and secretaries of classes are asked specially to see that no member leaves the class without a copy. We can supply a parcel free (of course we should be grateful for postage, and it is almost certain that we should not return any small amount to defray cost sent for them), but the fact is they are here for the asking. Remember

also that parcels of back numbers of PLEBS for free distribution as propaganda can also be obtained on application.

Our special thanks are due to FERNDALE branch, who, owing to the very bad conditions in S. Wales last year, were unable to send their subscriptions along, but have now paid in full for all members for last year—at last year's rates. Everybody knows what conditions in S. Wales are, so the action of our comrades is the more appreciated.

Congratulations, also, to the ILFORD Plebs, who have been waging a highly successful little controversy in the *Ilford Recorder* with no less a Person than the Secretary of the Primrose League. They got quite a few points home!

The Book Department is going strong. We have a nice little stream of orders for Postgate's *Revolution*. (There will be some weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth when this edition is sold out, so don't think too long about buying it or you'll be amongst the gnashers for a cert!) We have a parcel of *Liberators* for disposal each month now. The *Liberator* has good pictures, good poems, and good sense; also, a sense of humour in good working order, which is rare among Socialist magazines. We can supply at 1s. 2d. postpaid, and it is well worth the money.

One word more. Among the important things for you to remember is that we are going to refuse to have a summer slump this year. We never liked it, and we have decided not to put up with it any longer. Friends who really are friends are going to guarantee their orders. If this means you, thank you very much! We have been affected only slightly by the present crisis, and in order to prove our vitality we intend to . . . but you will see on another page what we intend to do. It's UP PLEBS! from now on. You can put your very last button on the "small clique of intellectuals." The PLEBS does not intend to be an "also ran," so if you can't do anything else keep on shouting!

W. H.

STUDENTS' NOTES and QUERIES

Q. A Merthyr student has been puzzled over Rates of Exchange and Specie Points, and wonders if these matters can be made plain.

A. We assume that he knows how the money-commodity, gold, when used in each country as a measure of value, expresses itself or is measured in different national standards or units of price, and "par" is determined by taking various quantities of

national units which all contain the same quantity of gold. For example in 20.43 gold marks, in 25.22 gold francs, in 4.86 gold dollars there is the same amount of gold as in our British gold sovereign (£1).

Now in order to save the cost and wear and tear of transporting gold as a medium of circulation in international trade the Bill of Exchange is used. This is a piece of

paper which bears witness to the indebtedness of, say, A in London to B in New York to the extent of £1,000 (\$4,860) because B has sent to London £1,000 worth of machinery. If, instead of sending £1,000 in gold to New York (which would cost him in freight charges and insurance about £6), A could find C in London who had sent £1,000 worth of commodities to D in New York, then A could hand over the £1,000 to C and D in New York would pay over to B the \$4,860 which A owed him.

Here, exports and imports just equal each other; B would sell his Bill of Exchange to D, who would send it to C in London, and C would carry it to A and get it paid. Here, £2,000 worth of commodities have been sent from one country to another, but no money has left either country. [It does not interfere with our illustration that the £150,000,000 of bills estimated to be in circulation in pre-war days might individually wander to and fro from many countries and settle many debts before they were finally cashed; or that the banks and discounting houses and the bill-brokers handle them and not the actual trading firms.]

If the simplicity we have assumed above actually existed then the "rates of exchange" would always be at par. But they are always varying above or below that central point. In normal times they could only range between the "gold points." In London gold was exported to New York when the £1 could only buy \$4.83 and gold was sent to London when \$4.89 bought only £1. (Do not be confused if different books give slightly different "gold points," for the figures can only be approximate ones owing to the continual small variations in the cost of transport and insurance.)

Let us revert to our illustration to explain. Suppose A could find no C, he would be faced with the cost of sending 1,000 sovereigns to New York, which would be £6. He would thus be really paying £1,006 for £1,000 (\$4,860). Stated in another way, £1 no longer can be reckoned as equal to \$4.86 in New York, but something less (i.e., \$4.86—cost of sending = \$4.83).

What happened was that when there were a lot of A's (i.e., when Britain had imported more goods or had more debts of any sort to pay in America than America had claims against Britain) then the rate went against us; £1 no longer bought \$4.86. The extent of its fall was determined by the competition of the London people wanting to buy claims on America and undercutting each other by offering to take less dollars for each £1 than the other fellow. If the Rate stood at \$4.85 or \$4.84 there was still some advantage, but below nothing was saved from the £1,006 needed to buy and send gold to New York to settle the debt of £1,000.

That explains the export gold point of London; the import point is easier to understand. Now the situation is different.

America is in debt to Britain. The D's outnumber the B's of our illustration. The New York debtor knows it will cost him .03 for every \$4.86 (£1) he has to send to London, and hence he will buy a bill at any rate up to \$4.89. At that point the advantage of the bill disappears, for it costs him no more to buy gold to the value of \$4,860 (£1,000) to which he will have to add the expense of transport, making him pay in effect \$4,890 for his £1,000 worth of goods.

The many and intricate factors which normally influence the Rate of Exchange arise chiefly from trade relations, mercantile and banking, services rendered, payments due as loans or as dividends on investments and from the relative soundness of the respective currencies. In the above illustration the forces which would "correct" the exchanges in normal times can be seen. A finding that his £1 only buys \$4.83 will as far as possible stop buying things in New York, and that in time will reduce the British imports from America and the number of claims against London. Likewise D in New York objects to paying \$4.89 for £1, and he will lessen his purchases in London and thus lessen the claims on New York.

But we are far from the normal now. Latest foreign exchange rates (*Daily Herald*, 11/4/22) for New York were:—4.41½ and 4.42. This means that if I am changing £1's into dollars (i.e., buying dollars), I shall get 4.41½ for each £1. While if I am changing dollars into £1's (i.e., selling dollars), I shall have to give 4.42 for each £1 that I get. It means that I shall get a little more than 18s. for my £1 if I spend it in America.

Stabilising the exchanges means getting the rates back between the old gold points. Why cannot we do this in relation to America? Because of the food and munitions imported during the war and unbalanced by any export from us; it is true there was an organised sale of American securities held by Britishers, but it was not sufficient. Before the War, the huge returns on oversea British capital and the payments for the mercantile service of British ships and for banking services performed by British bankers at the chief financial centre of the world, gave to a bill on London universal acceptance. Now that is all gone. It is Britain that has borrowed and has to pay out interest while she has sold her investments in America. The British mercantile service is being challenged by American lines. New York with its gold dollar is replacing London with its paper inflated £1. That is why the £1 remains below par on the New York exchange.

The deviation from par is much greater between England and Germany than the case taken above. So great is the deviation that Central Europe will have soon been bought out owing to the huge purchasing power of the £1 and \$1 there. The workers in countries with the rates so much against them are being over-worked and under-paid into revolution. England and America are

producing the same result by under-work and starvation.

Thanks to D. W. T. for pointing out that the sentence attributed to Hilferding in the opening lines of the article on his *Finanzkapital* (March PLEBS) is to be found on p. 61, Vol. I., of *Capital*—there again, apparently, as a quotation. The absence of quotation marks in Hilferding's text misled me into assuming that the sentence was his own.

One correspondent has raised the question of the recent strike at Johannesburg where the mining workers bravely defended their section of the working-class battle line all in vain because of the tanks, bombs and aeroplanes placed at the disposal of the mine-owners by the Smuts Government. Undoubtedly, the employers will now secure their objective of taking from the workers the control they won during the European war and of replacing white labour by cheaper coloured labour. After all, the partly racial *form* taken by the struggle was caused

by the economic fact of two standards of life out of which the employer was and is determined to choose the lower.

The comments of the financial papers revealed their great anxiety about the effect that a decreased production of gold would have upon world currencies and their desired return to normalcy. (They evidently do not want to agree with Prof. Cassel, who thinks that the old rates are only of historic interest.) The price of gold in the British currency has fallen from 130s. to 95s.

The mine-owners alleged that this price was only 9 per cent. above normal, while costs were still up more than 39 per cent.; and they anticipated further reductions until the normal price of 85s. would be again reached. Because of this and the decreased productivity of the old Rand mines they determined to crush the miners once and for all. The *Economist* (18/3/22) pointed out that gold must become cheap in relation to goods or there can be no return to the gold basis at pre-war parity.

M. S.

TRA LA MONDO : *Esperanto* Notes

Vive L'Internationale !

In Berlin, within the last few months, there took place an Anarchist Congress. We did not observe a report of it in the *Daily Mail*, but the *Sennacieca Revuo* quotes the following note concerning the work of the congress which appeared in *Le Liberaire* :

"We must tender our heartiest thanks to Comrade Souchy, who undertook the work of translating all the speeches, although really the work was too heavy for him. It is regrettable that the organisers did not engage several interpreters to undertake this very necessary work."

"Very necessary work"—ye gods ! Why, in a few months anyone could learn sufficient of the international language to understand speeches made directly in it.

Alvoko al la tipografistaro !

Karaj kolegoj ! La tipografistoj estis la unuaj, kiuj fondis internacion profesion. Ili kvazaŭ estis pioniroj inter la laboristaro. Laŭ tiu ĉi tradicio ni zorgu, ke ni ankaŭ estu pioniroj rilate la esp. an movadon. Tial ni proponas, ke en ĉiuj terlokoj la esp.-tipografistoj ataku sian tipografistan asociojn proponante, ke la Tipografista Interacio akceptu kaj propagandu esp. on. Sekve de tio la esp.-kolegoj devas prezenti siajn servojn kiel tradukantoj al la koncernaj asocioj. Ni kuraĝu prilabori kiel eble plej vastan kampon por detruu la ekzistantan opinionon ĉe kelkaj ke la esp.-istoj kvazaŭ nur estas sektuloj.

*Tipografista Esperanta Grupo,
Leipzig, Germ.*

Rusio.

Sovjetlanda Esperanto-Servo stariĝis laŭ decido de la 3a *Tutruslanda Kongreso* okazinta en Petrograd, en 1921. Gi celas

interrilatigi ĉiujn grupojn kaj izolulojn. La ĉefdelegito de tiu organizaĵo estas kdo *A. Radnikov*. Adreso : *Moskvo, Poŝtkesto 666.*

Italio.

La movado ĉi-tie estas nun "halta." Nia : *Roma Internaciista Esp. Grupo* enalkulas ĉirkaŭ 60 membrojn. Sed malmulte da ili bone scias nian lingvon. Pro tio ili ankoraŭ ĉiuj ne aliĝas S. A. T., sed tuj post plena esperantistiĝo ilicerte "Satanigoj." El la provincoj ni ricevas bonajn sciigojn pri la vigleco de nia movado : Grupoj stariĝis en *Piacenz Imola* (Bologna). Komunista Sekcio de *Torre Annunzio* (Napoli) aliĝis unuvoĉe al nia esp. propagando. Baldaŭ stariĝos aliaj grupoj en *Sicilio, Apulio, Liguria, Giliannov* (prov. de Teramo) kaj *Ancona.*

El *Sennacieca Revuo*

Budapest.

La Laborista Esp. Societo bone laboras. En Budapest estas 21 kursoj, ĉiuj el ili kun pli ol dekkvin partoprenantoj. La Societo havas proksimume 500 membrojn en Budapest kaj ĉirkaŭaĵo, do multe pli ol la Landa Esp. Societo en la tuta lando. Komprenoble oni ne trotaksu tian sukceson. La laboristoj pro sia bonega organizeco povas en ĉiuj fakorganizaĵoj propagandi kaj havas, kiel plejparte unulingvuloj, sentantaj la neceson de alia lingvo, emon lerni. Kontraŭe la nelaboristaj Esperantistoj ne estas organizitaj, ne komprenas la efikon kaj necescon de organizo, kaj multaj Esperantistoj ne estas en ia ajn societo. Ili ankaŭ ne laboras tiel konscie por Esperanto en siaj rondo, kiel tion faras la plimulto de la laboristaro.

El *Esperanto Triumfonta*

LETTERS from PLEBS

MARX AND MARSHALL

DEAR EDITOR,—Comrade Dobb's comparison of the methods used by Marx and Marshall seems liable to give the reader a confused impression, and, in my opinion, needs further explanation.

When he states that Marshall arrives at his concept of Value "as an empirical generalisation," one gets the impression that Marshall and not Marx used the scientific method. According to Dietzgen, the only true method is that which arrives at generalised concepts by abstraction from concrete experiences; and the term "empirical generalisation" seems to imply that.

I trust Com. Dobb will consider this point of sufficient importance to be worthy of further elucidation.

Yours frat.,

H. KERSHAW

DEAR COMRADE,—Whilst agreeing that Marxists, being scientists, should study the orthodox economists, I do not see how it is possible to combine the theory of Marginal Utility with the Marxian theory of Value as attempted by M. H. Dobb in the April PLEBS.

The sole function of a theory of Value is to explain the principle by which quantities of commodities are measured in exchange. Measurement implies a unit quantity by which to measure other quantities. Therefore, whatever Value is, it must be reducible to a quantitative unit.

According to the Marxian theory, Value is the Socially Necessary Labour embodied in commodities, measured by any unit length of time we like to employ. Price is this Value expressed in money.

According to the Utilitarian theory, Value is the Marginal Utility of a commodity to the consumer. But by what is it measured? What is the unit of utility? Utility is the desire to possess. It is a mental feeling of anticipated satisfaction and cannot be expressed as a quantitative unit. Accordingly, how can we use such a conception as Marginal Utility to measure price fluctuations?

Since Value is measured and Utility cannot be measured, it cannot be a fact that Price equals Marginal Utility.

From this it follows that the orthodox theory of Supply and Demand is not sound, even within its own limits, because it does not explain what determines Price when Supply and Demand are equal.

Marx says—*Wage, Labour and Capital*, S.L.P. edition, p. 16:—"We could show,

how not only the supply, but also the demand, is determined by the cost of production" (Soc. Nec. Lab.), which means that price fluctuations—deviations from

Value, which appear to be due to the action of Supply and Demand—are themselves but the visible working of the Law of Value itself.

Yours frat.,

C. JACKSON

Bury.

IS THE "PLEBS" ON THE WRONG TRACK?

DEAR PLEBS,—I find myself in general agreement with the contention that many of your articles are too highly intellectual. One has naturally no objection to the quality of intellectuality in itself; the objection is to the manner of its application. In not a few of the articles in the PLEBS the intellect is addressed to points altogether too fine, nebulous and eminently unpractical.

I think I can contrive in some degree to illustrate what I mean by a reference to "Students' Notes and Queries" in the February number. Some one asks "Do workers pay rates?" The answer given is: "The theoretical reply is No." But it is stated that the reply is subject to certain conditions. These are set out and discussed in an excessively doctrinaire way, and in a way, too, which has no connection with the actual facts of life as we live it to-day. The conditions referred to in the reply may arrive in the sweet by and by, but they are not here yet. Hence the answer given has no practical value. It is irrelevant.

I have also something to say concerning the notice on page 63, of *Oil: Its Influence on Politics*. "J. F. H." evidently considered that in the volume he had "struck it." It is a pity he did not give his readers some (or more) of it. He might have quoted verbatim some illuminating passage of 15 or 20 lines from the book itself. Instead he used the subject as a pretext for lugging in two lists of lecture titles. He should have stuck to the book, given us an illustrative quotation from it, and so have made his review more serviceable.

Yours in the cause,

JACOBUS

[We think our correspondent overlooks the fact that the PLEBS is primarily a journal for students and tutors. The answer he quotes from "Students' Notes and Queries" dealt with certain points of economic theory; which, although they may appear "nebulous" to men in the street, are certainly not without interest and value to the student of economics. So, too, in the "Bookshelf" review alluded to, the two lists of lecture titles were "lugged" in with the object of assisting tutors to make immediate, practical use of a book like Delaisi's *Oil*.—ED., PLEBS.]

DEAR COMRADE,—I don't think we need take A. E. Cook's criticism seriously. South Wales tutors who become fakirs or pompous pedants may annoy Cook but they don't

explain "Why we are not getting the right results from our educational activity." That explanation is to be found in the fact that the I.W.-C.E. movement is not yet a component part of the Labour Movement.

Marxist education is not yet the pivot on which any of our labour political organisations rest. Individuals from them all are giving service to the Plebs movement, but none of their organisations generally support it. Nevertheless it is progressing, and, looking ahead, one may confidently predict that Marxist education will ere long be firmly established as the educational wing of the Labour Movement.

About 10 years ago I joined the Plebs League because I felt convinced that a potent cause of British Labour's backwardness was its lack of Marxian ideology, from which alone can spring the faith, the hope, the courage, the mental strength and clarity—the psychic force required to enable the workers to convert the class struggle into a social revolution.

Viewing the contemporary political situation and the deplorable weakness existing in the Labour movement I see no reason to change this opinion. Indeed, I am more convinced than ever that Labour College education should be fostered and supported by all Marxists.

Comrade Cook's slighting reference to the Plebs' *Outline of Psychology* surprises me. I should have thought that he, knowing so well the mental state of the masses—doped by capitalism—would readily perceive to what fine uses a course of psychology could be put by a Labour College tutor.

Yours fraternally,

FRED. SILVESTER
(Chairman Birmingham Labour College.)

THE "DAILY HERALD" LITERARY PAGE

DEAR COMRADE.—Jackson gets so hopelessly involved in self-contradiction (my specific charge of which, your readers will have noticed, he could not even attempt to refute), and so completely fails to distract attention from the real point by his irrelevant dissertation on William James (since, of course, he has to withdraw his charge that I accused anybody of embracing William James's views) that I can safely leave your readers to draw their own conclusions from his defence of the textbook.

It is quite untrue that I read the textbook with any prejudice.

I appreciate Jackson's evident desire to be fair, and his personal courtesy. The abruptness of this final rejoinder of mine is due to space restriction.

As for the *Daily Herald* Literary Page:

(1) It is absurd to keep on suggesting that all workers are necessarily deterred from being interested in a book because its price is outside their means; have you never heard of free libraries? (2) An anonymous member of the Plebs E.C. is good enough to

assert that I am "talking rubbish" when I say that the PLEBS assumes the workers "are a special kind of thing without the common human appreciation of excellence." Anonymous abuse is immune from reasoned reply. But when he goes on to say there are no good translations of Villon, he gives me my whole point.

This dogmatic opinion, being anonymous, is not interesting; but no honest man, named or unnamed, would risk the statement unless he had read Villon in the original, and every translation that has been made of any poem of Villon's. Will my critic, then, tell me what essential difference from the workers he can boast in himself which makes it worth while for him to spend time and trouble in studying Villon, whereas it is waste of time and trouble to tell the workers anything about Villon?

I could not have asked for a more perfect illustration of my original contention that some of the people at PLEBS' headquarters are "blinded by spiritual pride" and regard the workers as a different kind of creature—to be told from above what is good for them.

Yours, etc.,

GERALD GOULD

J. F. H. writes:—As I first criticised the *D.H.* Literary Page, I may be permitted a line or two in reply to Gould's laboured and disingenuous defence of it. Then, at all events, he won't be able to ride off at a tangent by making smug remarks about "anonymous abuse."

(1) Of course, workers are not "necessarily" deterred from being interested in a book because its price is outside their means. But workers do prefer to possess books of their own; and if Gould had ever had any experience of free libraries—which he seems to suggest are "good enough for workers"—he would know why. Our main charge against the books reviewed in the *D.H.* is their frequent worthlessness—at any price!—to workers; who, having less leisure than the patrons of the Café Royal to devote to literature, don't want to waste their time on second-rate clevernesses by the latest pets of the coterie. (I am a worker, and I know.)

(2) As a worker, I want to say that I do, very emphatically, regard myself as "a different kind of creature" from most writers of *D.H.* reviews. I want to get something out of literature—not to play about with it, in however "cultured" a way. If this is "spiritual pride," then I am not the least ashamed of it.

PLEBARBARIANS

DEAR COMRADE.—I make a practice of ignoring all criticism couched in the hostile spirit in which your references to the *Daily Herald* Literary Page have been made; and I should have made no comment now had not Mr. Gould paid you the compliment of taking your remarks seriously.

It is quite obvious from the tone of your remarks that you are not really interested in whether the *Daily Herald's* Literary Page is good or bad, but are just using it to advertise your own immense superiority.

It is very easy to take a single number of the Literary Page and tear it to bits—I could do the same with any single number of PLEBS.

It is a curious thing that people who are supposed to be leading the world in the way it should go, and who are presumably, therefore, more civilised than their fellows, should so frequently act towards each other like barbarians.

Yours in brotherly love,
W. J. TURNER
(Literary Editor, *Daily Herald*)

THE PROBLEM OF CONTROL

DEAR COMRADE,—I have followed with interest the correspondence in recent numbers of the PLEBS on the "Problem of Control," and have been surprised at the superficial way in which it has been treated.

Plebeians are famed or ridiculed for their reliance upon scientific method and their desire for enlightenment on every phase and section of Industrialism. Surely the position of the technical and administrative worker during the transition stage is worthy of some attention from the movement?

In Russia there were in opposition to the Revolutionaries two great factors to be contended with, the huge agrarian population and the misguided support of Commercialism, the non-manual worker. In our own country the farm labourer is a Trade Unionist, and is as class-conscious as the manual worker, but we shall have to deal with the technical, supervisory, administrative and clerical worker.

Must we follow the lead of the Bolsheviki and pay the non-manual an exceptionally high salary or a bounty to guard against possible sabotage of the Revolution? The only logical alternative is a Trade Union for non-manual workers.

We have two distinct Unions catering for non-manuals, the National Union of Clerks and the Clerical and Administrative Workers Confederation. The basis of organisation in the N.U.C. was Craft; it was an association of those who use the pen, or a machine that performs similar functions, in order to obtain a livelihood.

The birth of the Clerical and Administrative Workers' Confederation heralded a new day in the organisation of the non-manual worker. Two years ago the Confederation was founded, and the fact that it still survives, though we have come through the darkest period in the history of Trade Unionism, proves that the black-coated worker is ripe for Trade Unionism, and that the best form of Trade Unionism is industrial.

The Confederation is, as its name denotes, a confederation of a number of organisations embracing all the administrative, super-

visory and clerical workers in each industry, trade or service in the country. Each of these organisations, of which there are twelve, has been established on the principle that it should correspond as far as is possible with the employers' association in the same industry, trade or service. Being quite autonomous, each organisation is able to devote all its time and attention to the particular needs of its own members.

The protection of the common interests of black-coated workers, and general propaganda, is undertaken by the Confederation, to which each Guild pays a small affiliation fee. It has also the power to affiliate with the manual workers' organisation in the industry, and the ultimate object is to become a section of the manual workers' Union. This is an organisation that all Plebeians should support.

Yours frat.,

MAURICE L. ORBACH
(General Secretary, Clothing, Textile and Allied Trades Clerical and Administrative Workers' Guild)

"WHY THIS UNEMPLOYMENT?"

DEAR COMRADE,—I have read the pamphlet reviewed by D. S. Browett, *Why this Unemployment?* by Tom Bell, and I cannot quite agree with the criticism, though I have little time to take issue with the reviewer.

I would suggest that Comrade Browett obtain a copy of the *International Journal of Ethics* for January. Therein he will find a very instructive article by Professor A. B. Wolfe, University of Texas, on "Emotion, Blame and the Scientific Attitude in relation to Radical Leadership."

If I understand Bell correctly he was writing for the masses. Viewing his pamphlet in that light, it is a good contribution to radical literature.

Anyhow you are getting out a damned good magazine. Just a word of praise for those "Geographical Footnotes" of Horrabin's. They're the goods.

Yours, JACK CARNEY
(Editor, *Voice of Labor*, Chicago.)

THE PSYCHOLOGY TEXTBOOK

DEAR COMRADE,—I was surprised to see the authors of the *Outline of Psychology* attempting to "Dispense with the free-will hypothesis." Existence being made up of its parts, *i.e.*, anything that exists, free-will being a part of existence must be *explained*, and not "denied" or dispensed with in that easy manner.

Further, if everything is determined (a proposition I don't deny), then free-will must be determined. *Ergo*, if the authors would find out how things in general are determined, they at the same moment would solve the problem of free-will. It seems to me that they are camp-followers of Blatchford and Cohen rather than students of Marx, Engels and Dietzgen. Is it this "partial" stunt that is doing them down?

Yours frat.,

WM. WALKER

REVIEWS

NEWS FROM AMERICA

COMRADE SCOTT NEARING (sometime university professor, and "chucked" because his economics did not please the bosses) has sent us a 10-cent pamphlet, *Irrepressible America*. It is published by an organisation known as the League for Industrial Democracy, whose object is "education for a new social order based on production for use and not for profit." That's the object of the Plebs League, too—but it also reminds us of days before the war, when the *Clarion* used to tell us that the one thing needed was to "make Socialists." Section I. of the educational programme of the League is "the organisation and strengthening of groups for the thoughtful discussion of problems of industrial democracy in centres of population, and in colleges, and in other educational institutions." That might mean "communist nuclei"; it also might mean—W.E.A. It probably does mean something betwixt and between, something of a "he-dunno-where-he-are" nature. This suspicion is confirmed when we note that Morris Hillquit is on the Council of the League as well as Louis B. Boudin. In fact, there's a very long list of names, most of which are unknown "on this side." Some names of those who do profess and call themselves Socialist, names that would certainly have damned the League to utter futility, are happily absent. Spargo, for instance, and Walling.

Does Nearing's pamphlet throw light on the real character of the organisation? Not much. But it's an interesting document, well written, like all this author's work. But for its title, we should have said the picture was one of unmitigated gloom. The Iron Heel on top, and "acquiescence" the motto of the under-dogs. The latter term is Nearing's, but he does not use Jack London's phrase for the bosses. He says that the Chambers of Commerce form the Essential Government. "In the average town, the chamber of commerce acts as though it were the official guardian of the community, and the citizens respond as though they agreed with the assumption." Throughout the middle west, where Nearing has been on tour, the revolutionists ("radicals" they are called in the U.S.) are acquiescent. There is no organisation. All the radicalism there is "is under men's hats"—and in the cells of Leavenworth Prison, where the "politicals," the I.W.W. crowd, are doing time. These men impressed Nearing more than any by their sanity of spirit. "They have not abated their zeal; their vision is as keen as ever, but they realise that the tactics of 1912 will not win points in the next decade. They face five, ten, twenty years in the penitentiary, but they are bright, hopeful and dead in earnest."

(This item has a personal interest for us. Charles Ashleigh, recently discharged from Leavenworth and deported from the States, has volunteered to get us the "prison copy" of *Creative Revolution* with 35 cell numbers and 50 or 60 prison numbers inscribed on the fly-leaf. It was sent to the "politicals"—with other books—by W. N. Ewer. We're sending two copies of the Plebs edition in exchange.)

But Nearing's main impression is that the vast majority of the American population has still to grow up. They are children, whose chief interest is in games—baseball there, just as it is football and cricket and horse-racing here. "Baseball, press stunts, film stars—here was the nation's centre of attention; its lode-star." The author's hope is in the League which is to carry the message of industrial democracy to "Main Street," i.e., to the masses. Then we shall see what we shall see. Yes! And then Nearing and his friends will learn something about "mental levels and democracy."

E. & C. P.

HYNDMAN ON MARX

The Economics of Socialism—Marx Made Easy. By H. M. Hyndman. (Grant Richards, 10s. 6d.)

This is a reissue of the older *Economics of Socialism*, with the addition of three chapters—one on "Wages," one on "Objections to the Labour Theory of Value," and the last on "Synthesis of Analysis."

The older book is well known and was worth reissuing; but the new chapters are not worth the new price. The last is a short outline of how by progressive communalisation, co-operation and nationalisation the new society may be gradually evolved, though Hyndman thinks that "the tendency of those who fix upon municipalities as the limit is to crystallise the towns as they are."

The chapter on the "Objections" is too general. It isn't enough, especially when one is writing a book on the matter, simply to say in answer to objections to the Concentration of Capital theory that the concentration is obvious. The sceptic wants something a little more satisfying.

But the chapter on "Wages" seems to me mistaken in theory and is certainly at one point bad arithmetic (and the latter doesn't seem to be due to the printer). The "total national revenue" is taken as £1,844,000,000 (C. money) and £543,000,000 is calculated as "the total amount of wages paid to the actual necessary workers of the community," and it is then stated that "the proportion of *paid* to *unpaid* labour in Great Britain is represented by the ratio of

£543,000,000 to £1,844,000,000," which of course is not the case.

The other point is that from the £603,000,000 paid to "the necessary and useful wage earners," he deducts "house rent paid to the possessing and employing class," to the extent of £60,000,000, and so gets £543,000,000. Now, houses are commodities and are produced capitalistically and their price, though paid in a different way, contains like that of other commodities, surplus value which contains ground rent—unless one builds castles in the air. It is really a matter only of making sure that an item is not reckoned twice and I should say that if rent should be deducted from wage-workers, it should also be deducted from a capitalist's profits when he pays his house rent, and also from the land-owners' total toll taken from society if he occupies a house built on land not owned by him. Occupying his own land his toll will be so much the less. But Hyndman here makes no distinction whatever between house rent and ground rent.

There is no index to the book.

A. M. R.

THE GREAT STEEL STRIKE

Men and Steel. By Mary Heaton Vorse.
(Labour Pub. Co. 3s. 6d.)

The author of this work has not aimed at showing the importance of the growth of the U.S. Steel Trust in the light of Imperialism, but she has succeeded in proving that the full development of such an industry makes a militaristic policy just as inevitable in Home as in Foreign relations. Her picture of the "Principality of Steel," though brief, is clear and devoid of sensationalism.

We are not presented with a mass of figures relating to the wealth, power and greed of the Trust (though a few more figures might have been appreciated by some), neither are we confronted by a cold analysis of the reasons for the remarkable and almost instinctive revolt against it. Nor does empty emotionalism harrow us with a story of unparalleled oppression, dumb helplessness, hope, revolt, treachery, violence and defeat. Yet all these aspects of the struggle are there, skilfully woven into one logical whole.

The author lived in the heart of the Principality of Steel before, during and after the great strike. She saw the Steel Process and felt it. She will convince her readers that "the means of production employ man, not man the means of production." And she will convince them that where this degradation of man is accentuated, man's resentment can take on some startling forms.

The devotion of Mother Jones, contrasted to the attitude of the orthodox "White" American Trade Unionist, will be of interest to English readers, portraying as it does the complexity of the race problem in the American Labour movement. For the steel workers are not "white" men; they are mostly southern or eastern Europeans!

A good story of a good fight.

D. S. BROWETT

COMMUNISM AND SOCIETY

While W. Paul's *Communism and Society* (C.P., 2s. 6d.) has not the permanent value of his *The State*, it will be of use to newcomers who want to know about the origin of Communism and its present problems and tactics. The "hardbaked" ones will find its repetition of familiar truths beneficial, and if they are inclined to want something of greater depth they must remember the general audience for which it was intended.

In the first three sections Paul sketches very briefly the breakdown of the Clan and the coming of the State. The rest of the book is a telling exposure of the capitalist control exerted through schools, cinema and Press over the minds of the workers. He reveals the chicanery of party politics, the sale of honours and other evils which attend the decadence of the Parliamentary system. The capitalists can quite safely shelter behind "democracy" while their grip over it is so sure by virtue of their economic power and prestige. He uses the Curragh incident to prove that those who think the capitalists are going to be "counted out" are living in a dream world. And all this is proven from the mouth of the enemy, by effective quotations from capitalist papers and books.

In one or two particulars the book is out of date; notably in its references to the power



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wielded by the active groups inside the miners' lodges in the Rhondda, and to the educational organisation of I.W.-C.E. But that does not lessen its general worth.

M. A.

"INASMUCH AS YE HAVE DONE IT UNTO THESE . . ."

In the Volga Valley. By Evelyn Sharp. (Friends Relief Committee, 10, Fetter Lane, E.C.4. 6d.)

We are getting accustomed to hearing about the Famine, and so our feelings become blunt; but Evelyn Sharp's brief diary of two weeks in the famine area, should rouse us again. The writing is cool and dispassionate, all the more moving because of its plainness, and there is a good little map on the cover.

Not to be moved by the sight of 400 frozen corpses, unburied in a cemetery, thinking that they at least have escaped further horrors, is a terrible thing.

After reading the book one cannot sit down to a meal without a qualm, and that is a right frame of mind at the present time. Force yourselves to think about it all and translate your feeling of despair and pity into a donation.

W. H.

Under New Management. By Hugh P. Vowles, M.I.M.E.ch.E. (Allen & Unwin. 6s.)

A mixture of political criticism and a business man's war-cry. Political jobbery is shown as putting the business men in the position of maggots on the cheese. A knowledge of sociology may be a good business asset, but business under Capital does not express many social attributes, each struggle against the other for supremacy. The remarks on education are good as a general statement, and the chapter on the "Human Element" is superior to the usual twaddle on this elusive subject. On page 73 we get the old fallacy, "profits made in circulation," served up in another form as follows, "Since all profits must be made out of the consumer."

The author finally reveals himself as a true worshipper of the school of Douglas and schemes a social revolution on a feather-bed.

Six shillings for the book may be well afforded by a business manager, but the money would be more usefully devoted to the Russian Famine Fund.

A. W.

AN ESPERANTO GRAMMAR

Leaky's Introduction to Esperanto. (Dreadnought Publishers, 152, Fleet Street, E.C.4. Price 3d.)

The course of lessons in Esperanto which appeared in the *Workers' Dreadnought* has now been reissued in this tiny volume of 30 pages. The booklet attempts to give in a simple form the whole of the grammar of Esperanto, and it admirably succeeds in the attempt. Any reader possessing the most elementary notions of grammar could work through this booklet in two hours or so, and would then have a *general idea* of the international language. It would be fatal to imagine that a larger book of exercises could be dispensed with; but it must, I think, be refreshing to have the whole grammar of a language, with some simple exercises, presented in such a small compass as this. A fuller text-book—say, the *Esperanto Teacher*—should afterwards present little difficulty. The booklet is by no means without errors, and it is a pity that the author did not submit the proof to an expert. The errors are, however, not serious, and scarcely detract from its value as a brief introduction to the subject.

POPOLANO

A Straight Talk to the Miners. (Communist Party, 1d.)

Don't judge a book by its title! If this pamphlet is addressed to the mass body of miners, then it is "double dutch" rather than a straight talk; if to the advanced section, then it is superfluous, for it contains little or nothing with which they were not familiar before. One is forced to assume that it is aimed at the few "backwoods" organisers in backward districts who have not yet mastered the elementary principles of working-class organisation and policy.

There are good points here and there, however—and anyway it only costs a penny.

A. CLARKE

The PLEBS BOOKSHELF

And the Plebs Book Department

THE *Proletarian*, official organ of the Proletarian Party of America (which appears to consist of "few but chosen" hardshell Marxians), published in its March number a 3 pp. review of the *Plebs Psychology Textbook*. In it, the "pseudo-Marxists of the Plebs League" come in for some stern handling. They are "new Duehrings," guilty of trying to "distort the revolutionary theory of socialism

into the latest pseudo-scientific, pigeon-hole—psychoanalysis." And as Engels, Dietzgen Lafargue and Labriola have said all there is to say about Marxism, it is obviously flat blasphemy for anybody to-day to do anything but read and re-read their works, and recite passages therefrom at intervals. (This is also much easier than trying to do any thinking on your own account.)

Not only was the Textbook itself put under the ban as not conforming to the strict Letter of the Marxian Law, but the editor of the *Voice of Labour* (Chicago) was very severely chided for having recommended it to proletarian students. The said editor is apparently unrepentant. In a recent issue of the *Voice* he "earnestly advises the reviewer to read his Dietzgen more and his Labriola less." And he makes a neat retort to one of the reviewer's particular criticisms. You may remember a phrase on p. 134 of the Textbook about the possibility, when capitalism collapsed, of western civilisation "relapsing into mediæval barbarism." A somewhat loosely-worded phrase, perhaps, but clear enough, surely, in meaning. The *Proletarian* reviewer pounced upon it as an indication that the writers knew nothing at all about Historical Materialism. The editor of the *Voice of Labour* points out to this High Priest of Orthodox Marxism that in Trotsky's work, *The Changed World Situation*, the Balkan countries are described as having "relapsed into a condition of economic and cultural barbarism." So that Trotsky, too, sins against the light, and must obviously be excommunicated as an ignorant heretic. He, as a Marxist, ought to know that if machinery breaks down or locomotives lack fuel, Historical Materialism will of itself set the wheels going round once more!

* * *

But the *Proletarian* reviewer did stick to criticism, or attempted criticism, of the book. He did not stoop to this sort of thing:—

Capitalism, by its need of trained and educated workers in special branches of industry, produced a surplus of "intellectuals," who, finding the competition for posts in the capitalist market too keen, have turned their attention to the writing of books for "Plebs."

That is from a so-called "commentary" on the Plebs Psychology Textbook, published in the *Socialist* (April 13th). Pretty sentiments, aren't they?—symptoms of a really nice nature!

* * *

A month or two ago I recommended to students of present-day international problems a little book by P. Leckie, *Economic Causes of War* (published by the *Western Clarion*, of Vancouver). We have since ascertained the price of this book, and the Plebs Book Dept. is getting a supply. Single copies will cost 1s. 1d. each (1s. 2d. postpaid); a dozen copies can be supplied for 11s. 6d. postpaid. I strongly recommend classes or individual students taking courses on Imperialism to get copies, as the book deals briefly but effectively with the essential economic and geographical facts underlying all the more important world questions of the day. Place your order at once, as we are only getting a limited supply.

And also remember to order copies of T. A. Jackson's short account of *The British Empire*, now at last available in pamphlet form (35 pp., 6d.; postpaid 7d.). When this brilliant little study first appeared as a special supplement to the *Communist* last July, I advised Plebeians to file it—and use it. It is indispensable, if only for its able summing-up of the "Pacific Problem," about which we British proletarians need to know—and teach our fellows—all we can possibly learn. The tutor who could not get material for three or four effective lectures out of this pamphlet would be a poor hand at his job. And with Leckie's book (see above) and Trotsky and Varga's pamphlet, *The International Situation* (postpaid 4d.), it makes up a little pocket library on Imperialism in Action—at a total cost (postpaid) of 2s. 1d.

* * *

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* * *

From a report of the new Geographical School at Cambridge (*Times*, April 18th):—

In the old days, geography was the answer to the question, "Where is it?" But modern geography aims at more than this; it attempts also to explain why the subject of the question is where it is and not elsewhere, and at times it even forecasts future changes. Since the matter under consideration may be, for instance, a political boundary, a great industry, or a mountain range, it will be evident that geography in this sense affords scope for inquiries in many branches of knowledge and for many different types of mind.

And it should also be evident that geography ought to be studied, and studied carefully, by proletarian students.

J. F. H.

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