

The

APRIL
1925

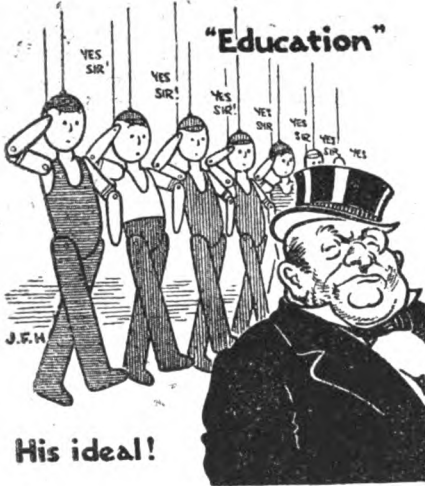


Plebs



*What are
Plebs*

See
within -



His ideal!

— This gentleman is very much opposed to the circulation of such books as

A WORKER LOOKS AT HISTORY

by *Mark Starr*

the new and revised edition of which is now on sale, price 1s. 6d. (postpaid 1s. 8d.) This book, since its original publication in 1917, has been widely used as an elementary textbook of English Industrial History in N.C.L.C. classes. The new edition has been carefully revised and partly re-written.

140 pages. Pictorial cover and 2 illustrations
Special price to classes: Per 12, postpaid, 15s. 9d.

PLEBS, 162a Buckingham Palace Rd., London, S.W.1.

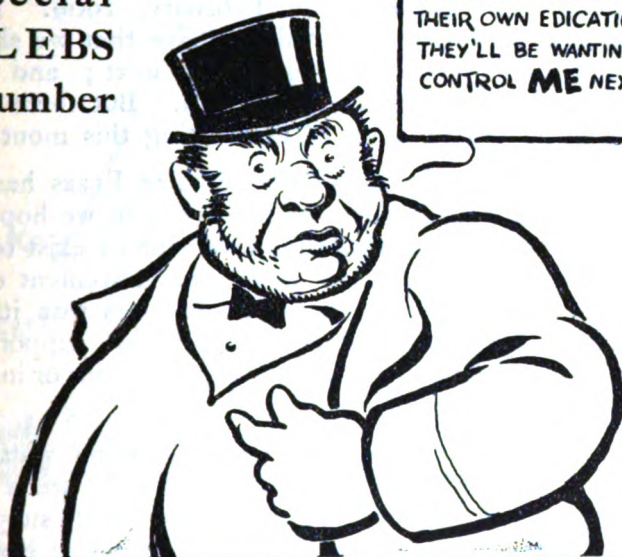
THE PLEBS

Vol. XVII

April, 1925

No. 4

Special
PLEBS
Number



CONTENTS

	PAGE
FOREWORD—BY WAY OF EXPLANATION	138
WHAT ARE PLEBS?	139
WHO'S WHO AND WHAT'S WHAT	143
COURAGE AND PIG-HEADEDNESS: SOME REFLECTIONS ON PLEBS HISTORY	144
WORKERS' EDUCATION AND PROPAGANDA. By A. Claessens	148
OURSELVES AND THE W.E.A.	150
SHOP-WINDOW DRESSING: THE NEW W.E.A. "CAMPAIGN." By J. P. M. Millar	152
OUR PUBLISHING RECORD: NOTES ON PLEBS PUBLICATIONS	154
THE GREAT COMMONER. By J. L. Gray	156
REVIEWS: Scientific Warfare; The Don as Revolutionist; British Railways; History Textbooks for Schools; etc., etc.	158
NOTES BY THE WAY FOR STUDENTS AND TUTORS	162
LETTERS: From A. Lucy, M. Half, M.H.D., L.W., and W.F... .. .	166
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LABOUR COLLEGES: Notes and News..	169
THIS YEAR'S SUMMER SCHOOLS	172
THE PLEBS BOOKSHELF. By J.F.H.	174

FOREWORD

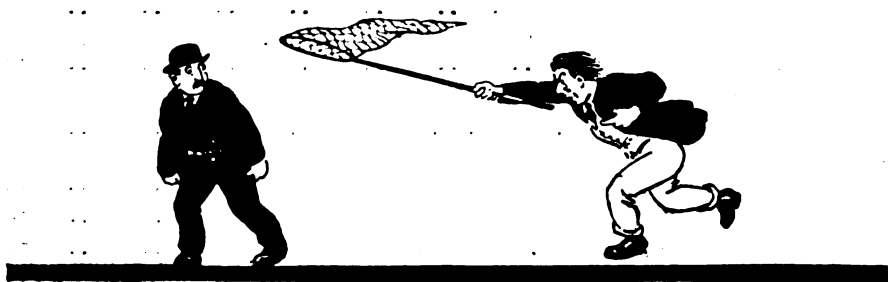
By Way of Explanation

THIS is our 195th number—No. 1, Vol. 1 of The PLEBS having been published in February, 1909. If you're quick at arithmetic you will perceive that we shall reach our 200th Number in September next; and we shall certainly issue a Special Birthday issue then. But there are good reasons why we should do a bit of celebrating this month, too.

One is that this year the circulation of The PLEBS has reached a higher figure than ever before—and this month we hope to beat our own record. Another is that the movement we exist to support—the Independent Working-Class Education movement organised in the National Council of Labour Colleges—has won its biggest triumphs recently by securing more Trade Union support than is accorded to all other workers' educational organisations or institutions put together.

Two excellent reasons, you'll agree, for feeling pleased with ourselves. But we don't want to stand still. So we've planned this Number with the primary aim of gaining fresh supporters—by explaining who and what we are, and why we're here at all. We hope old friends, also, will find plenty to interest them in these pages. But they'll help us materially if they'll pass on their copy—or better still, sell another one—to a likely new subscriber. We want to send that circulation up higher still. And we can do it—if *you'll* help, as before.

The price of liberty is eternal vigilance. The price of an increasing circulation is eternal pushing. And the price of The PLEBS is fourpence monthly. Pass the word along!



CATCH US A NEW SUBSCRIBER

WHAT ARE PLEBS?

Don't be a Robot!

**Think
for
yourself**



The following extracts are from the first PLEBS editorial, published sixteen years ago—in February, 1909. They answer the question at the top of this page. We have learned several things during those sixteen years; but our aims and ideals remain to-day what they were when the Plebs League was founded.

ENTER "The PLEBS," not from above but from below, not to fight a sham battle

among the shadows by the orders and for the interests of our masters, but to fight a real battle in the full light and with a clear knowledge of the issue before us. We hope we are sane enough and brave enough *not to accept our appointments for battle from the hands of those who stand to lose by our victory.* The Plebs League and its magazine is no graft movement from without, but a growth from within. To stimulate active interest in working-class education and to open out propoganda of an educational character from the working-class point of view—such will be the policy pursued in this magazine. Its management will be entirely free from any connection with existing organisations. We desire to emphasise the fact that we are not appealing to any party or section of the working class, but to *all workers* irrespective of whether they are I.L. Peers, S.D. Peers, Trade Unionists or Non-Unionists. . . .

(The writer proceeds to define the objects of the Plebs League and Magazine as "the education of the workers in the interests of the workers"; and then goes on to ask what those interests are.)

Society to-day is divided into two distinct economic classes: the producers and the non-producers. This is a plain and simple fact which might just as well be recognised at once. Truths are not put down by mental inhospitality—they are simply put off. We know that there are many, who, when this truth regarding class divisions

is presented to them, successfully emulate the pursued ostrich and burying their heads in the sand, pretend that what they do not see does not exist. Time is the only doctor that can cure ostrichitis.

Granted then that there are two economic classes in society, who is there that will deny that the only class essential to society are the producers, and who is there who will dispute the fact that they who produce nothing depend for their livelihood either upon the philanthropy or upon robbery of those who produce everything? Outside of actual working, all the experience of mankind does not show us any other way of obtaining a living. We know perfectly well that the non-producing class do not secure a maintenance by begging,

A line for Industrial Pacifists:

WOE to him
 who seeks to
 pour oil upon the
 waters when God
 has brewed them
 into a gale!
 "Moby Dick"

PLEBS
 MOTTOES

WE reproduce, on this and succeeding pages, some of the mottoes which used to appear on our front covers monthly. This one, from Melville's *Moby Dick*, sent quite a lot of people to the original book for more.

any more than they secure it by taking in each other's washing. There is only the other word for it. We are sorry we cannot call it by some more respectable name, such as kleptomania. The old-fashioned Saxon word, we feel, will express our meaning better. And surely it must be clear as noonday that if in society there is a class of people who produce nothing, and in order to live must have something, those who produce that something do not get all the produce.

Further, it must be equally obvious that the more of that something goes to those who produce nothing, the less will go to those who produce everything—the workers. A cake cannot be divided between two persons so that each shall have the larger share. Now the non-producers want more and more, and the producers want more and more. But in order that the former may get more, the latter must take less and inversely. From these pregnant economic facts we

deduce the principle that the interests of the producers—the working class—lie in the securing of the total wealth that they create. *In order that these interests may be promoted, it is essential that the teaching the workers receive shall be in harmony with those interests ; that it shall contain no apology for the existence of those "who toil not," that it shall not require of the student that particular mental condition known in "the home of lost causes" as "the open mind"—open, in order that the apologist may write his sweet will upon it and close it with the seal of the verbal juggler.*

If the education of the workers is to square with the ultimate object of the workers—social emancipation—then it is necessary that the control of workers' educational institutions must be in the hands of the workers. Any other kind of control means ultimate disaster. If the ship is to be safely steered into the haven of economic freedom then only they whose interests are centred in reaching that point must take the helm. To trust the safe passage of the vessel to those whose interests lie in an opposite direction is clearly to invite shipwreck.

We may be told that those people are "very sympathetic towards the working class," that they are anxious to "do something" for

JOHN BULL HAS A LOT TO LEARN!!



Cartoon from *The PLEBS* of a year ago, when the Loco men and Dockers threatened to strike despite the fact that a Labour Government was in office.

the welfare of workingmen. All this may be perfectly true ; but there are cases we know of, where if these professions were sincere something tangible would be done for the workingmen nearer home in the shape of higher wages and shorter hours. To learn, one must have leisure. Where then can be the consistency in an individual who gives a sum of money to an institution for the purpose of promoting the education of workingmen, as a proof of his desire to "do something" for them, when in his own industrial concern he makes

education for his employes impossible, by denying them sufficient leisure and by paying them a bare subsistence wage? If we might utter one warning it is this: Beware of the sounding brass and the tinkling cymbal of ruling class sympathies for Labour.* All history justifies us in sounding that warning note. Inability to recognise the class cleavage was responsible for the downfall of the Plebs of the Roman Empire. Let the Plebs of the twentieth century be not so deluded. The clear seeing of the field of battle will alone save us from the follies and tragedies of compromise.

The Plebs League's mandate clear and pronounced is nothing more or less than the *education of the workers in the interests of the workers*. If it were not that, then it is worthless. For after all there are but two sides to the medal, the obverse and the reverse. Especially in this is it true that "he who is not for us, is against us."

These extracts may fittingly conclude with this paragraph from the editorial in the following number of THE PLEBS (March, 1909):—

To the organised Labour Movement we appeal for support upon a question that lies at the very bottom of working-class organisation. We cannot trust our economic safety to the good intentions of the possessing class. We do not rely upon the politics of our employers for measures of progressive legislation. We establish our own economic fortifications, we have our own political weapons. Why then should we not as independently manage our own educational affairs? *Even as we have a platform of our own and a press of our own, let us have educational institutions of our own.*

* Who said "Baldwin"?—ED. (1925).

THOMAS HODGSKIN (1783—1869) was a pioneer of Independent Working-Class Education. For an account of his attempt, in 1823, to keep the control of the London Mechanics' Institute in the hands of working-men, see Chap. I. of J. F. & W. Horrabin's *Working-Class Education*.

I WOULD BE better for men to be deprived of education than to receive their education from their masters; for education, in that sense, is no better than the training of cattle that are broken to the yoke.

Thos. Hodgskin (1823).

WHO'S WHO— and What's What

In order to save valuable space in The PLEBS we often make use of the following abbreviations. Learn them off now—it will save you worrying over them in future.

A.E.U.—*Amalgamated Engineering Union*, one of the big Unions which have entrusted their Educational Schemes to the N.C.L.C.

A.U.B.T.W.—*Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers*, the pioneer of Educational Schemes designed for the rank and file of a Union's membership, and not merely providing scholarships for a selected few.

I.W.C.E.—*Independent Working-Class Education*.—What we stand for. Something quite distinct from "co-partnership" schemes depending on University or Government grants. Education controlled by workers, in the interests of the workers as a class.

N.C.L.C.—*National Council of Labour Colleges*, the central organising body of the I.W.C.E. movement, to which the various colleges and classes are affiliated.

N.U.D.A.W.—*National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers*, another of the Unions which works its Educational Scheme through the N.C.L.C.*

N.U.R.—*National Union of Railwaymen*, one of the two Unions owning and controlling the Labour College (London). The other is the

S.W.M.F.—*South Wales Miners' Federation*.

T.U.C.—*Trades Union Congress*, the central body of the workers' movement in Britain.

W.E.A.—*Workers' Educational Association*, an organisation standing for the extension of orthodox university education to the workers, and therefore unsatisfactory, if not dangerous, from the workers' point of view. Its work is largely financed by State and University grants, though it is also anxious to obtain grants from Trade Unions, too.

W.E.T.U.C.—*Workers' Education Trade Union Committee*, a department of the W.E.A., formed to gain more Trade Union support for that body. Sometimes announced as a quite separate organisation—sometimes as having been re-absorbed by its parent. Backed by the Iron and Steel Trades Federation, and one or two smaller Unions.

* There are several others, but we use their full names—so as not to have too many initials knocking about.

COURAGE— and PIG-HEADEDNESS! Some Reflections on Plebs History

A WRITER in *Lansbury's Labour Weekly*, commenting on the progress made recently by the Labour College movement, as evidenced in the Annual Report just issued by the N.C.L.C.,* remarks, after recalling the movement's small beginnings:—"To turn over these pages now of existing colleges, actual lectures, and real classes, brought out of nothing, is to gain new enthusiasm and courage, and to realise that with courage and pig-headedness things *can* be done even in this world."

Courage and pig-headedness! Two excellent qualities—especially when applied to the furtherance of a Real Idea. And the little bunch of Trade Union students who, sixteen years ago, realised the importance of the Idea of Independent Working-Class Education possessed an unlimited amount of both. If they hadn't—and if the men and women whom they converted later hadn't—the movement they founded would most assuredly not be where it is to-day. At every stage of its development "courage and pig-headedness"—praise be!—have been forthcoming in plenty.

In the early days they were applied, for the most part, to the maintenance of the Central Labour College, the institution founded by the student-strikers at Ruskin College when it became clear that there was little hope of their being able to realise their original aim of making Ruskin College itself a real Labour College. The new College, remember, was backed by no Unions. Only a few branches or lodges here and there gave their support. A score—or more—times a year, then, it appeared inevitable

It's up to us
to let him
know that there's
substance behind
the shadow!

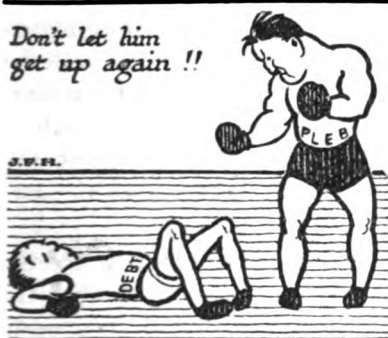


* Price 2d. Postpaid 3d. from J. P. M. Millar, 22, Elm Row, Edinburgh.

that the College must go down. It did not go down—though there were occasions when there can't have been much else in the place to eat for dinner but courage and pig-headedness !

No Government grants—no doles from the Universities—and the great mass of the Labour Movement as yet unconverted ; on this (materially speaking) precarious basis the Central Labour College was kept in existence until, in 1914, it was taken over by the National Union of Railwaymen and the South Wales Miners' Federation. More important still, because this meant that the idea of Independent Working-Class Education was growing and spreading, The PLEBS Magazine was kept going. We intend to name no names in this short sketch of the movement's history, be-

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



ONCE upon a time we had a Debt to get down. It took some doing, but it was accomplished at last ; and the event was celebrated in the soul-stirring picture here reproduced. So far, it is pleasant to relate, our friends have seen to it that the prostrate one hasn't got up again.

MORAL : *Keep on keeping on.*

cause if we did we should have to fill whole pages with the names of workers up and down the country whose ceaseless, unselfish efforts (courage and pig-headedness again !) gained more and more readers for the magazine and more and more converts for the cause. That cause owes just as much to these men and women as it does to the few whose names, by the accident of circumstance or position, came to be better known.

In those days, despite all our efforts, there was always a debt on the magazine. We had no subsidies of any sort and, as everyone who has ever had anything to do with propagandist journalism knows, it is a difficult job to pay one's way on circulation alone. So we asked our readers to take shares in the debt ; and the same men and women who were already giving us their scanty leisure by acting as "circulation agents" gladly paid two or three times the actual price of the magazine in order to get that debt down to zero. They did it because they believed in our Idea. They stuck to us just the same when after-War costs compelled us to reduce the size of the magazine. And when, later still, we "took the plunge" and doubled our size and price, they backed us more magnificently than ever. They are still backing us ; with the result

that the circulation of *The PLEBS* is now (1925) higher than it has ever been—between thirty and forty per cent. higher than it was this time last year ; and at last we are beginning to pay our way on circulation alone.

But we have jumped too far ahead in our outline of history. Let us hark back to the War years, and note the tremendous increase in the number of I.W.C.E. classes in all parts of the country which then took place. The London Labour College had to close down "for the duration," and the Army or Dartmoor claimed scores of our most active workers. But the bigger the odds, the more the movement grew. And, most important, the growth was in the healthiest possible direction—i.e., the actual establishment of class-centres in every industrial district, north and south of the Tweed. Concentration of effort on the London College was no longer necessary, and it came to be realised more and more that after all the classes were the main thing. But there was still no sort of national organisation—except for the fact that the active spirits everywhere were linked together in the Plebs League ; nor was there yet any national backing from Labour organisations. Every district had to carry on on its own resources.

Then, in 1921, more courage and pig-headedness led to the foundation of the National Council of Labour Colleges, and the appeal to the Trade Unions for support on a national basis—an appeal which appeared a decidedly Utopian vision at that time. Here were a bunch of unknown rank-and-filers—enthusiastic about a new way of spending Union money ! What chance had they of making themselves heard by Executive heads and officials ? Most of us looked forward to a good many years' more hard slogging before any notable measure of success in this direction was achieved. But the very next summer the A.U.B.T.W.* decided to entrust an Educational Scheme for its members to the newly-formed N.C.L.C. With this backing the work of organisation went forward at increased speed. The following year the N.U.D.A.W. followed the Building Workers' example ; later still came the A.E.U., the Steel Metal Workers, and other Unions. Courage and pig-headedness had won once more !

And they won again in the heavy task of persuading the heads of the Labour Movement—the General Council of the Trades Union Congress itself—that here was an Idea, and a movement behind it, which could not be ignored or treated as some sort of "irresponsible" outbreak on the part of a few people without prestige. The champions of Independent Working-Class Education

* See "Who's Who" on another page.

put up a fight for their Idea in Congress which startled both opponents and "neutrals." The debate they inaugurated at Plymouth a year and a half ago was almost the only feature of that year's Congress programme which gave evidence of a new spirit and live enthusiasm. These Plebs might be pig-headed—but at least it was clear that they were pig-headed about something worth while.

What of the position to-day?

Well, we need courage and pig-headedness still, if the victory is to go to *Independent Working-Class Education*. All along, we have had to fight against not merely the opponents of workers' education—their case was too poor to make them a serious obstacle—but also against the people who believed in education, but wished the workers to accept this from the Universities and the other educational institutions of the capitalist State. The PLEBS' long battle

WORKING-CLASS EDUCATION teaches you to look at facts in a working-class way. Any other way is SOME-OTHER-CLASS WAY

SOMEONE in the A.U.B.T.W. office invented or unearthed this particular slogan. It is a perfect example of that crudity of expression to which Plebs are so addicted, and which so annoys the more gentlemanly W.E.A.er.

with the W.E.A. is dealt with in following articles. All we need to say here is that, though we have won Congress support for the work of our movement, we have not yet convinced it that *only education such as we stand for—education of the workers in the interests of the workers—is worthy of Labour backing*. Labour has realised that it must have its own *independent* press, and has shouldered the financial responsibility entailed by such a decision. But, so far, it is still content to entrust part of its educational machinery to an organisation dependent upon funds granted by the (capitalist) Government and the (capitalist) Universities. So long as this remains the case, our battle is not won. We stand for *independence*, as opposed to *co-partnership*, in every one of Labour's activities. Imagine the Trades Union Congress running a Labour daily paper, and at the same time going half-shares with a capitalist firm in the

production of another daily! We want a unified workers' educational movement. But it must be a movement for *working-class* education; that is, for education of a particular kind, with specific aims, and absolutely and entirely under Labour control.

That is the task confronting us to-day. And if we put a tenth of the courage and pig-headedness into our efforts which we have shown in the past, we shall win out!

Meantime, remember that The PLEBS, the "voice" of our movement, depends now as it has always done, on the active support of every individual believer in our cause. Nobody subsidises it—not even the movement of which it forms a part; for every penny of the money entrusted to the N.C.L.C. by the Unions, local or national, which have Educational Schemes is expended in the actual work of class-organisation. It *is* subsidised, if you like, by the unpaid work of scores of enthusiastic I.W.C.Ers.—the men and women who have made our movement what it is.

If you are one of these you don't need our thanks, since work for a cause one believes in is its own reward. If you haven't hitherto been one of us, will you line up with us now? We're not looking for supermen. All we want are workers—with plenty of courage and pig-headedness!

WORKERS' EDUCATION AND PROPAGANDA

We reprint the following short article from the latest number of "The Labour Student," the monthly journal issued by the Rand School of Social Science, New York. It is not only interesting as a breezy statement of some home truths about working-class education, but also as evidence of the fact that some American workers share The PLEBS point of view.

ONE of the questions upon which discussion was invited in the first issue of *The Labour Student* was: Just how is purposeful education distinguished from propaganda? I would like to start a rumpus on this matter by stating most emphatically that there is no practical distinction between the two. If "workers' education" is not purposeful, then it is mere leisure-class culture. That is surely not our objective. If our aim is purposeful, then it must be full of a definite purpose. It must have a decided objective. It must be a striving towards some goal. That end necessarily must be either one of maintaining a *status quo* in our industrial and political environment; or, a measure of petty reforms within an accepted social order; or, it must be distinctly revolutionary

militant, and opposed to our present economic and social programme. Workers' education must have one of these objectives, and only one of them at any time. If workers' education has none of these, then it is aimless and meaningless.

Viewed from this angle, education, generally, is propaganda. Much as we may desire to stimulate independent thought and a critical state of mind in all students—and we should work overtime on that job—we must, however, present most subjects from an advanced working-class point of view. A point of view is a bias, a distinct slant upon life, an eye to a goal or a striving for a purpose or an ideal. And all this is essentially propaganda.

All ideas, theories, or viewpoints are partisan propaganda. You

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

but it must be practical
knowledge. There is nothing
less powerful than know-
ledge incapable of application.

Samuel Butler.

teach astronomy, physics, chemistry, botany, zoology, biology, and anthropology either from the viewpoint of Genesis or from the viewpoint of evolution. You teach history either from the viewpoint of the great-man theory, the theory of great ideals, or from the viewpoint of modern sociology and socialism. You either extol the exploiter, glorify the militarist and the political adventurer, and ignore the masses, or you view these elements from a totally opposite slant. You either proclaim the identity of interests between capitalists and workers, deny the existence of class distinctions, and interpret class struggles as the work of professional agitators, or else you propound the point of view of international labour theories. Your sociology is either static or dynamic ; its proposals are either rampant individualism, philanthropy, meliorism or socialisation. Your viewpoint colours your very analysis or description of any social, economic or political problem. You everlastingly propagandise, no matter how scientific you may want to be.

There is a lying propaganda and a truthful propaganda. Since there is no absolute truth in this relative social sphere of ours, the other side's propaganda is, of course, the lying one. Either the capitalist is right or the workers are right. Yes, they may be both right, but just try to convince them of that theory and both of them will be convinced of your type of mentality. True, they may agree on many things and compromise differences occasionally, but their bias is fundamental and it will disappear only when a class-divided society disappears.

If workers' education is not essentially a propaganda, a training for definite actions and progress, an inspiration for a more efficient, just and humane social order, and if it does not ultimately involve a training in industrial technique, management, co-operation and political control, then why in thunder bother about workers' education? If we are not propagandising for such a purpose, then let us convert our Labour institutions into trade schools, turn out our humble wage slaves and hang a wisp of alfalfa beyond their noses as an incentive. Gosh dern it, even that's propaganda!

A. CLAESSENS.

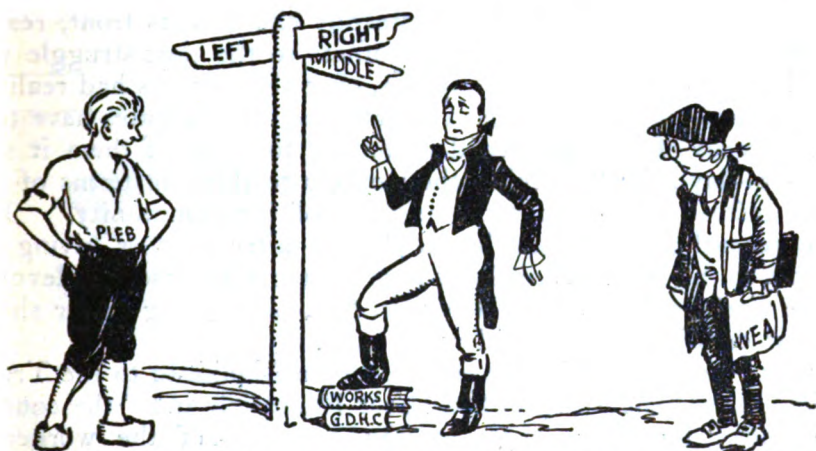
OURSELVES and the W.E.A.

AS remarked in a preceding article, the principal struggle Plebs have had to wage all along has not been against opponents of the idea of workers' education, but against the much more dangerous people who wanted Labour to accept "tainted goods," i.e., education provided by the Universities and subsidised by Government grants. Our age-long feud with the Workers' Educational Association has been deprecated by a number of people, who saw in it only a "regrettable split" in the Labour-educational forces; just as the Liberal press is always pained when a Labour man "splits the forces of progress" by standing against a Liberal candidate. The Labour Movement, so far as politics is concerned, has outgrown its Lib.-Lab. stage. But many Labour men who realise the importance of independence in political and industrial matters are still Lib.-Labs. as regards educational activities.

You can't "regret" the hostility of The PLEBS towards the W.E.A. if you realise the principles at stake. The PLEBS and Labour College case is based on the fact that it is *the kind* of education that matters; and that so far from any and every kind of education being necessarily good, certain kinds are a menace and a danger to the workers. We assert that only an education explicitly aimed at helping the workers to emancipate themselves—as a class—

from the yoke of capitalism is of importance to the Labour Movement. And we have pointed out, time and again, that the very fact that leading capitalist politicians, big employers, and practically the whole of the capitalist press have at one time or other praised and supported the W.E.A., is itself sufficient indication that the kind of education that Association stands for is no use to the workers.

Labour College education bases itself on the fact of the class-struggle. *It aims at being a weapon for one side in that struggle.* It teaches history and economics from the point of view of that



Mr. Sidney Carton Cole:—“It is a far, far better way that I tread, &c. &c.”

A cartoon from *The PLEBS* of March, 1924, depicting Mr. G. D. H. Cole in the act of pointing out to the Pleb and the W.E.A.er the beauties of a Middle Course, which would be neither so “narrow” as the way favoured by the former, nor so “broad” as the highway ensued by the latter.

struggle—because it believes that is the *true* point of view. The W.E.A.er says that this is “propaganda, not education”; just as a Tory or Liberal citizen always says of a Labour newspaper which tells the truth from the Labour point of view that it contains “propaganda, not news.” To the upholder of things as they are anything is “propaganda” which in any way questions or opposes the existing social order. And since the Labour Movement itself most emphatically opposes the existing social order, and exists to change it, any teaching of the ideas on which that Movement is based must be “propaganda”—or be useless.

Until, therefore, the W.E.A. makes a fundamental change in its educational policy, Plebs cannot but oppose it. That it has made no such change up to now is shown by the General Secretary of the National Council of Labour Colleges in the article which follows.

SHOP-WINDOW DRESSING

The New W.E.A. "Campaign"

FROM the outset the Plebs League, and later the N.C.L.C., has persistently criticised the W.E.A. and its educational policy of "co-partnership" with the educational machinery of capitalism. Under the fire of this criticism the W.E.A. has steadily changed its front, realising that its attitude of cultured aloofness to the class-struggle was little likely to win it Labour support, once the workers had realised the questions at issue. It used to stand, as its advocates have told us on scores of occasions (and according to some of them it still stands to-day), for "teaching the workers to think in terms of the whole instead of in terms of a section of the community." But more recently, seeing one Trade Union after another giving its support to the N.C.L.C., it has sought to represent itself as devoted to the workers' interests. It has, in fact, been going in for shop-window dressing on a considerable scale.

At the beginning of this year it issued a Manifesto to the Trade Union Movement which talked about Education and "the control of industry by the workers in the interests of the workers." How much these brave words really amounted to may be judged from the fact that when the N.C.L.C. representatives on the T.U.C. Education sub-committee sought to have them included as one of the aims of workers' education under the Congress scheme, the representatives of the W.E.A. declined to agree to this! As a matter of fact they dare not agree to any such thing, for the obvious reason that to make such a declaration would have been to risk the discontinuance of the Government and University grants on which the W.E.A. depends for three-fifths of its pretty considerable income.

But not only has the W.E.A. shop issued a prospectus—and declined to live up to it. By the election of a well-known and highly respected Trade Union leader as its President (in place of a Bishop), by the free hand given to a professed Left Winger, Mr. G. D. H. Cole, in a new propagandist publication, the *Students' Bulletin*, and by the appointment of Mr. J. W. Muir as temporary National Organiser to stump the country on its behalf, the W.E.A. is doing its best to give Trade Unionists the impression that it is a very working-class organisation indeed. Which reminds us that in the Chicago stockyards, tame steers are kept for the purpose of leading unsuspecting cattle into the killing pen. If erstwhile Left

Wingers choose to be employed in such a rôle—well, at least they add a little gaiety to working-class life. But the Trade Unionists who come to spend Trade Union money at the W.E.A. shop have every right to say, "Although you exhibit an odd Cole or Muir in the shop window, we cannot believe that the goods you stock are the real working-class stuff so long as your business is subsidised by the British ruling class, through its State machinery."

Mr. Cole has taken a very prominent part in the whole W.E.A. campaign, and has posed throughout as a reformer anxious to shatter the W.E.A. to bits—from inside—and remould it nearer to his heart's desire. In the March *Students' Bulletin*, however, he comes



If you agree with the gentleman here portrayed, you will not be interested in

AN OUTLINE OF ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY

(Plebs Textbook Series, No. 4)

with 44 maps

Price 2s. 6d.

Postpaid, 2s. 8d. Per 12, £1 16s.

out once more as a whole-hog W.E.A.er, and takes off his gloves for an attack on the N.C.L.C., which he accuses of having issued "libellous" statements about the W.E.A. We will try not to "libel" Mr. Cole. But we must confess we find it a little difficult to understand his position. We do not believe for a moment that he regards Government subsidies to the W.E.A. as any sort of testimonial from the workers' point of view. Why, then, does he lend his name and influence to the continuance of an educational policy based on the receipt of such subsidies? And lest any workers are misled by his outbursts in the *W.E.A. Bulletin*, we would draw their attention to the following quotations from articles written by Mr. Cole in a less "official" mood:—

The W.E.A. does not know where it is going and does not know who is going with it. (*Highway*, Winter, 1923.)

You know I am discontented with the W.E.A. . . . it doesn't seem to me to know at all clearly where it is going. It doesn't seem to realise that times have changed . . . and that new methods are required to deal with the new situation. . . . There are too many old women in the W.E.A. and there is too much bleating about education with a capital E and no sting in its tail. (*New Standards*, May, 1924.)

These are candid opinions, by one who ought to know, on the quality of the goods in the shop. We suggest to Mr. Cole that it is time he made up his mind which label he himself is going to wear—"W.E.A.er" or "Left Winger."

J. P. M. MILLAR.

OUR PUBLISHING RECORD

Notes on Plebs Publications

A VITALLY important part of our work as Independent Working-Class Educationists must necessarily be the writing and publishing of our own textbooks. Wherever books issued by capitalist publishers serve our purpose we shall, of course, make use of them. But the great majority of these books simply *do not tell the truth as we see it*; and our movement, therefore, has to provide its own.

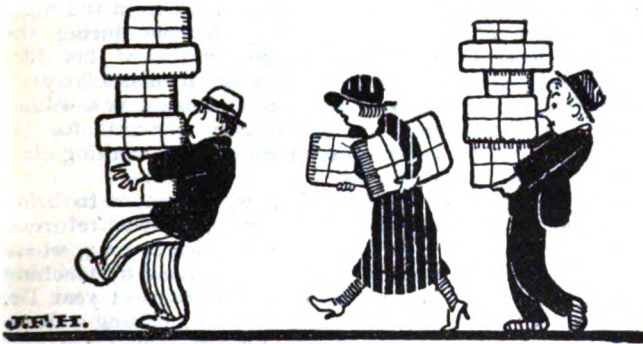
The PLEBS, as publisher to the Labour College Movement, has a record of which it has every reason to be proud. Up to four or five years ago most of the books used by students in our classes were frankly "makeshifts"; either they were not primarily intended for use as textbooks, or they were not written from the working-class point of view. To-day—though there is still heaps of work to be done in this direction—I.W.C.E. classes are able to depend for the most part on I.W.C.E. publications.

The success of The PLEBS Textbook Series, inaugurated by the publication of *An Outline of Psychology* just over three years ago, has been greater than any of us dared to hope. The *Psychology* book has been printed four times, *Economics* twice, and *Economic Geography* twice. In all, some 25,000 volumes in the series have been sold. Two new textbooks are at present "on the stocks," and we hope to have them ready for publication this autumn.

Mark Starr's *A Worker Looks at History*, 20,000 copies of which have been sold since it was first published by the Plebs League in

1917, is another book which has been extensively used by the classes. The new cheaper edition just issued has been extensively revised, the arrangement of chapters altered, and the later chapters very largely re-written and brought up-to-date. As an elementary introduction to British Social and Industrial History the book, as it now stands, will be invaluable to worker-students.

Another series useful to the beginner are the "PLEBS Sixpennies." *Trade Unionism: Past and Future*, by Mark Starr, and *The Co-operative Movement*, by Jack Hamilton, are two excellent textbooks-in-little for classes commencing operations. *Fascism*, by L. W., is a valuable summary of the main facts about a piece of present-day history of vital import to the workers of every country. We



PLEBS office staff, with enthusiastic volunteers, getting off parcels of the new edition of *A Worker Looks at History*.

Send your orders quickly, and keep them busy.

hope to add to this series in the very near future a revised and expanded edition of Philips Price's *Socialism as a Science*.

What to Read: A Guide to Books for Worker-Students (7d.) is another PLEBS publication of obvious usefulness to every I.W.C.Er., and it has probably brought us as many letters—containing criticisms, appreciations, and suggestions—as all our other books put together.

Besides these books of "our own," The PLEBS has issued special cheap editions of books only otherwise available at expensive prices—for example, R. W. Postgate's *Revolution: from 1789 to 1906* (18s. for 8s. 6d.); E. and C. Paul's *Creative Revolution* (8s. 6d. for 2s. 6d.); Philips Price's *Reminiscences of the Russian Revolution* (18s. for 6s.); and Ernst Toller's *Masses and Man* (6s. for 1s. 6d.). The two last-named are now out of print, but copies of the first two are still obtainable (postage extra to prices quoted).

We have also taken supplies of certain books issued by the Labour Publishing Co. which are of special interest to our readers; among them *Working-Class Education*, a short history of workers' education in Britain, by J. F. and Winifred Horrabin (1s.); *English for Home Students*, by F. J. Adkins (1s.); and *The Industrial Revolution in S. Wales*, by Ness Edwards (2s. 6d.).

For further developments of our publishing work we depend entirely on the support of I.W.C.Ers. You can help us by pushing the sale of the above-named books in your locality. Write to us for a supply of our latest Book List, and get busy in your shop or Trade Union branch. See that our books are on sale at any Labour bookstalls in your neighbourhood. *And buy them for your own bookshelf.*

The Great Commoner

WILLIAM COBBETT has been added to that all too small list of early working-class leaders of whom we have full and judicial biographies. Of Robert Owen, the greatest in intellect and vision, we have yet no satisfactory life, nor has anything at all been written about Feargus O'Connor. But Francis Place has been dealt with at length by Prof. Graham Wallas, and now Cobbett, the greatest figure of them all, has found his historian in Mr. G. D. H. Cole (*The Life of William Cobbett*, Collins, 458 pp., 18s.). The even temper and sparseness of the writing are wholly admirable, and the book reads, if I may say so, like a novel. Indeed, the only blemish is Mr. Cole's generous retention of a charming (no doubt), but discursive and incongruous chapter on the *Rural Rides* by the late Mr. F. E. Green. Mr. Cole's knowledge of the background of Cobbett's life, the period of the Industrial Revolution, the French Wars and their aftermath, has made the book not only a narrative of a leader's life, but a study of the condition of the English working-classes in the most bitter years of their struggle.

Cobbett was born in 1763, the son of Surrey peasants farming their own land, and was early turned into the fields. At twenty-one, after various adventures and with some self-acquired education, he joined the army. His regiment was drafted to New Brunswick in 1785, where he became a sergeant-major and met his future wife. He returned to England in 1791, determined to expose the corruption he had seen in the army. Meanwhile great changes had been taking place at home, where the Industrial Revolution was

in full swing and the enclosure movement fast gaining momentum. Cobbett's complete isolation from the main stream of social changes during the first twenty-eight years of his life, first as a farmer's son, then as a lawyer's clerk in London, and again as a soldier in a foreign station, accounts for his early unawareness of working-class problems.

Frustrated in his attempts to bring his officers to justice, Cobbett returned with his wife to America in 1793, where he began to earn his living by teaching and translating. In the next year Dr. Priestly stung him into writing a fierce attack on the French Revolution and on all Radical principles, an act which showed his great courage, for the United States were with the French at the time. Cobbett knew nothing of English Radicalism, he was still a stranger to the real England of 1794, his peasant blood made him hate anything new, while his military training inclined him to take the "patriotic" view in foreign affairs. Moreover, he dearly loved a fight, and the French Revolution when it had lost its early promise, and become a bloody and chaotic shambles, offered him an easy target.

But as a political pamphleteer he had found his way of life. After losing a libel action (the first of many), he returned to England in 1800, now famous, and was met by the Government's offer to keep him if he continued writing against the French and Reform. Cobbett refused, and started journalism on his own, beginning the famous *Political Register* in 1802. Thereafter he continued to pour out until the end of his life multitudes of pamphlets, tracts, lay sermons, manuals on all

sorts of subjects, grammars, polemical histories, etc., and a great mass of daily and weekly journalism.

In four years he was converted from Jingoism to Radicalism. This miracle was really inevitable; he only needed experience of the actual lot of the common people to become their ardent champion. But he reached the truth by a curious path. No doubt the intrigues of Whig and Tory ruling-class politicians over Catholic emancipation and peace with France, and the failure of the war to do anything except enrich the landlord and financier, had disgusted him. But it was the plain and shameless corruption of public life that opened his eyes to reality. He had never forgotten what he had seen in the army; now he was confronted with a vast system of organised jobbery, place-hunting, speculation, election scoundrelism and financial aggrandisement. It was the last that he always saw as the worst abuse of his time; he had always the "funding system" as a bee in his bonnet. The financing of the war by huge borrowings at high interest, the burden of which, as prices fell, grew heavier and heavier on the infamously-taxed poor, struck him as monstrously unjust. As a peasant born (and he had now become a farmer), he resented indirect taxation because it was both oppressive and novel, at least in its severity. He thought that only political reform and democratic Parliaments would end this new and complex tyranny. He wanted the commons of England to be left alone to till their fields free from the hideous spectre of taxes.

The new factory capitalism, busily transforming the North and Midlands into a hell of foul towns packed with a degraded proletariat, he barely knew of and never analysed. He failed equally to see that enclosures and evictions were part of an agrarian revolution which was making his England a dream of the past. Indeed as a self-made man he always admired enterprise, mistaking the sturdy small

farmer and the thrifty craftsman become capitalist for the normal type of the new system. Causes were hidden from him; it was the effects he witnessed which drove him to anger and partisanship. And so he was not of the new industrial order, nor could he lead its victims. He failed to see the use of trade unions, although like Francis Place he defended them. Except in the case of the National Debt and "Parson Malthus" he adopted the catchwords of the capitalist economists. He was a "great tribune of the proletariat" who had nowhere to lead them to, no socialist Utopia or co-operative store, not even a machineless Arcadia of the fancied past. He wanted universal suffrage to destroy the injustice of taxes and the indignity of pauperism, the oppression of rich men and the corruption of politics, so that Honest Worth could come into its own.

Cobbett thus became the greatest figure in the agitation for Reform, and for that he fought singlemindedly, despite imprisonment and bankruptcy and flight to America in 1817, and quarrels with nearly all the middle-class Radicals. The whole history of the movement, the chagrin of the reformers at the Act of 1832 and the workers' resort to the industrial weapon, the connection of the Radicals with the Irish agitation (this for the first time clearly), are fully related in Mr. Cole's book. Full justice is done, too, to Cobbett as a writer of English prose of a vigour and colour unequalled except by Swift and Shaw.

Cobbett died in 1835, shortly after his election to Parliament. His political ideals have no message for us, but he is not to be regarded merely as the "last great tribune of the agrarians," as a survival from conditions which have now completely passed away. It is as a personality, as a man of the common people, intimately of the soil, the epitome of working-class virtues, that we should always remember him.

J. L. GRAY.

Our next number will include special articles on Trotsky's book on Lenin, Upton Sinclair's new book, "Mammonart," the third article of Mark Starr's series "Capitalism To-day"; and other features.

REVIEWS

SCIENTIFIC WARFARE

Callinicus. By J. B. S. Haldane
(Kegan Paul, 2s. 6d.).

THE author of this little book was a physiologist who was also a soldier. He was wounded, buried alive, poisoned by gas, and voluntarily poisoned several times in the study of chemical warfare. He (with his colleagues who subjected themselves to very unpleasant tests) was rewarded for their illnesses consequent on breathing chlorine, phosgene, etc., by the presentation of the Military Cross to the beautifully dressed young staff officer who opened the door of the motor-car of the General who "inspected" the chemical warfare gas laboratory. But he had experience which enabled him to write a book singularly free from humbug and sloppy thinking.

That experience convinced him that being poisoned by military gases and noxious liquids is not nearly so painful as being shot in the stomach, or lacerated by high explosive shells, or having septic wounds, or being buried alive—methods of being incapacitated which receive general approval from people who object to poison gases and liquids and smoke in warfare. It convinced him also that it is simply stupid to object to chemists "prostituting" their science in this kind of work while saying nothing of the workers who make high explosive and machine-guns and all that sort of thing. We, who object to the use of poison gas in war and condemn the scientists who evolve these weapons, should also condemn the engineers who do the other kinds of munition-preparations (which maim and kill immensely more men than all the mustard gas, etc., invented by the chemists).

One more point: in the scientific-physiological warfare the defence is as good as the attack. For every new kind of noxious substance that will be used in war there is sure to be a good defence. Now that doesn't mean that the two kinds of scientific elaboration of war will simply cancel each other; it means that the next war will be enormously more costly. Poison

methods are very expensive and their counter-methods will be more so and their combination will lead to no decisive result and will go far to ruin the belligerents.

Another curious and significant point raised by the author: black troops are said to be immune to mustard gas. This is worth thinking about. I advise PLEBS readers to see this little book.

J. J.

THE DON AS REVOLUTIONIST

An Introduction to Modern Political Theory. By C. E. M. Joad (Oxford University Press, 2s. 6d.).

Mr. Joad has flattered the Oxford dons by adorning this volume with portraits of revolutionaries. (The Press has revenged itself by bad printing, and gives us a golliwoggy Marx and a leering Lenin). But it becomes clear very soon that Mr. Joad's advanced ideas are limited to such skittishness. He has substituted for the usual subjects of the philosophical don subjects like Marxism, Anarchism, etc., which are not usually considered quite the thing. But his whole treatment remains donnish in form and ideas.

This book is wholly idealist in its underlying assumptions, and is of the same family as such old-fashioned Oxford favourites as Sidgwick's. Each theory is described separately as held by a given philosopher and his followers; it is isolated like a specimen egg. The only difference is that whereas the old philosophy book began with Greek philosophers who believed that the world was made of water and the souls of the departed were to be found in broad beans, and ended with Hegel, whose views were unintelligible, Mr. Joad begins with John Stuart Mill and ends with G. D. H. Cole.

He seems to assume that one must hold the whole set of views labelled "Anarchism" or "Syndicalism"—just as one has mumps or measles—as a fixed bundle of symptoms. To hold all these views at once would be absurd. But in fact, that is what every sane class-conscious worker does. He takes whatever weapon is immediately useful for the class war. In certain circum-

CHEAP EDITIONS

- AMERICANISM W. T. COLYER Paper, 2s. 6d.
- THE CIVIL WAR IN FRANCE Paper, 1s.
KARL MARX *Introduction by R. W. POSTGATE*
- OUT OF THE PAST R. W. POSTGATE Paper, 2s. 6d.
*Studies of past revolutionary leaders with
frontispiece by J. F. HERRABIN* Cloth, 3s. 6d.
- THE WORKERS' INTERNATIONAL Paper, 1s.
R. W. POSTGATE
- THE LABOUR INTERNATIONAL HAND-
BOOK, 1921 *Edited by R. PALME DUTT* 6s.

APPLY FOR FULL LIST OF ALTERATIONS IN PRICES

NEW BOOKS from the SPRING LIST

Ready April—May

- SINCE LENIN DIED Paper, 2s. 6d. Cloth, 4s.
MAX EASTMAN
The full story of the events leading to the fall of Trotsky, including the Testament of Lenin and several further documents hitherto suppressed
- THIS SLAVERY 2s. 6d.
ETHEL CARNIE HOLDSWORTH
*A thrilling story of industrial life by the authoress of "Helen of Four Gates."
286 pages; cloth bound*
- HOW BRITAIN IS GOVERNED Paper 1s.
KATE ROSENBERG Cloth, 2s. 6d.
Introduction by VISCOUNT HALDANE OF CLOAN
A concise explanation of the constitution we live under at present
- FROM CAPITALISM TO FREEDOM 12s. 6d.
H. W. PARKINSON
A keen and critical study of Marxism and a masterly survey of economic history
- THE LEGAL MINIMUM Paper, 1s.
J. HALLSWORTH Cloth, 2s. 6d.
The whole problem and working of the statutory minimum wage set out by the author of "Commercial Employees and Protective Maintenance"
- LABOUR IN POLITICS Paper, 1s. 6d.
KEITH HUTCHISON Cloth, 3s.
A comprehensive, but concise, history of the progress and accomplishments of Labour in the political field from the days of Chartism to the recent election

THE LABOUR PUBLISHING COMPANY, LTD.,
38 GREAT ORMOND STREET, LONDON, W.C.1.

stances he is syndicalist, in others revolutionary and Parliamentary, almost always anarchist at bottom, and sometimes Communist in the sense that Mr. Joad uses the word.

To isolate these views for the purpose of argument, might of course, be useful—if it had been well done. But there are grave faults in Mr. Joad's book. For example, his account of syndicalism has strayed from a pre-war pamphlet. It is out of date (he seems unaware that there are three C. G. T.s now) and his one reference to 1919 rouses a suspicion that he forgot that "syndicalisme" is only French for Trade Unionism. Guild Socialism occupies a disproportionate space. Very valuable ideas were resurrected and set on their travels by Guild Socialism, but it died down and became in its old age a sort of flypaper for cranks, from Major Douglas downwards. Marxism (in my opinion) he does not fundamentally understand, though his account is not unfair.

Scraps of history of the queerest kind, appear in the book. Thus, the "localist" character of French Trade Unionism was not due—as one had thought—to the slow development of French industry, but to books written by Proudhon fifty years before.

You will not be surprised to learn that in a last chapter, some rather trite reflections lead up to the conclusion that "wise men" will not use the "methods of the class war." Is this all the case for Mr. Joad's views? Is Right-wing labour philosophy really only amicable woolly-mindedness?

R. W. P.

THE RAILWAYS

Railways and Socialism. By F. E. Lawley (I.L.P. Study Course, 6d.).

Almost from their inception British railways have been saddled with huge burdens of debt and over-capitalisation, which still claim their quota of dividends. This little pamphlet certainly brings this out very clearly and would provide a very profitable basis for discussion in our class-rooms.

But it is difficult to share the author's optimism with regard to nationalisation. To a railwayman the statement that "When the railways are publicly owned a strike will tend to appear as being against the community" reads like a warning! A socialist govern-

ment might bring nationalisation, but that in no way precludes the possibility of a reactionary government using the railways and the railwaymen in the same way as they were used in France in 1910. An "impartial" Council of Administration or a decentralised General Executive will hardly fill the bill.

Realising the amount of watered capital and the tribute it has drawn from the railways for years, one is not enamoured of the idea that "repudiation of the obligation would be unwise", or "holders of railway stock could receive a certain amount of Government Railway Stock", this "being for them excellent security". The pamphlet will certainly stimulate thought on the question of Confiscation *v.* Compensation. The reading lists and the questions appended to each chapter are good.

A. G. H.

HISTORY TEXTBOOKS FOR SCHOOLS

The Building of the Modern World:

Book II, *The Age of Discovery;*

Book III, *The Expansion of Europe.*

By J. A. Brendon (Edward Arnold, 2s. 6d. each).

A Brief History of Civilisation. By J. S. Hoyland (Oxford University Press, 3s. 6d.).

The two books listed first above are succeeding volumes of a series of which Book I. (*The Childhood of the Western Nations*) was reviewed in *THE PLEBS* last September. As then stated, the series aims at meeting H. G. Wells' demand for school histories which should not be simply histories of England alone, but which should relate this to European history as a whole. What we said of Book I. is true also of these later volumes—too much space, for our taste, is taken up with the genealogies of monarchs. Apart from this, there is much that is of interest—and significance—in these columns, which undoubtedly represent a big advance on the old-style history textbook. They are very fully illustrated with maps and portraits.

Mr. Hoyland's book is still more ambitious. He sets out to tell in 280 pages—of which quite a third are filled by pictures—the story of the development of civilisation, East and West, since the beginnings of recorded history.

He defines civilisation as being something more than "a merely material 'culture.'" It is a "spiritual thing, involving freedom and conscious service and self-subordination." Obviously, a writer with such an outlook is not likely to see any such sordid things as class-struggles when he looks at history; and this book is rather a short account of the ideas of idealists in all ages about Man and his Duty to God (or The Race) than a history of the actual facts about social development. It jumps about in a rather puzzling way, for some reason discussing Christianity and Islam before it talks about Greece or Rome; and after a chapter on Internationalism (League of Nations brand) it goes back to discuss the Renaissance and "The return of Greece" to the world—this last referring to the revival of science and scientific thought in the nineteenth century. A very different book, of course, to the old-style red, white and blue patriotic histories; but on the whole its illustrations are more interesting than its reading-matter.

J. F. H.

RULING CLASSES

The Grammar of Power. By G. W. Thomson (Labour Publishing Co., 5s.).

This is an interesting and thoughtful survey of the various controls to which society has been subjected. Mr. Thomson has provided for the student rather than the active rank-and-file a re-statement of the Guild ideal of a functional society, in which *ownership* of the means of production will belong to the State and *control* to the workers, organised by industry. Good summaries of historical development are made to show how early class struggles created the need for the State; the auxiliary modern powers of finance, the Press, Law and education are also treated.

Despite a tendency to schematise the future and arrange bodies with dual sovereignty; to ignore the problem of the *seizure* of power; and to imagine that the University Extension and the W.E.A. are out for workers' control of education, the book is useful because it directs attention to workshop organisation, which is often over-shadowed by the more spectacular political contests. Mr. Thomson anticipates the creation

The book for every Labour man or woman who wants to "get the hang" of the issues involved in the controversy on Workers' Education is

WORKING-CLASS EDUCATION

by J. F. & Winifred Horrabin

LABOUR PUBLISHING CO. 1s.
From PLEBS postpaid 1s. 8d.

of a reformist Labour Party separated from the trade unions, and has no illusion about the bias and spurious nationalism of the elementary schools.
M. S.

SOME PAGEANT

Dramatisations of History. By Prof. Patrick Geddes (London: Sociological Publications, Ltd., 2s.).

If this little book had descended to practical details it might have been useful to anyone planning a Labour pageant. It consists of a description, with comments—lots of comments—of "A Masque of Learning" presented, so far as one may gather from Prof. Geddes' anything but lucid style, at Edinburgh University some time before the War. The idea seems to have been to include everybody, historical or mythical, who ever made, or is alleged to have made, any sort of contribution to human knowledge; and as every sort of contribution seems to be regarded by the author as of equal importance, and everything seems to be symbolic of something else, the spectators must have been worked up to a fine muddled frenzy by the time the final tableau—entitled "University and City," and introducing Alma Mater, the Torch of Learning, the City's Craftsmen, etc., etc.—had been presented. Prof. Geddes himself seems to be a wonderful synthesis of Mediaevalist, Buddhist, Carlylean, Physical Scientist and Uplifter. After a score or two pages a mere wage-worker longs to get back to earth.

Q.

0

AN ANTIDOTE

The Diplomacy of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. By "U. D. C." (Labour Monthly, 3d.).

Whoever "U. D. C." is—and the only official information on this point has confined itself to telling us, in advertisements, who he isn't—he can write, and he knows what he is writing about. Anybody who bought Mrs. Mary Agnes Hamilton's book on the ex-Premier should certainly have this pamphlet bound up with it. It (the pamphlet) is literature; and even if one disagreed with its political criticisms, one could still read and enjoy it as a lifelike pen-portrait of a very ordinary mortal, as distinct from a demi-god. *This* portrait, one feels, is a good deal more like that

which posterity will recognise as the first Labour Premier's than Mrs. Hamilton's was.

X. Y. Z.

GOOD, BUT DEAR

Watch Your English: Common Errors in Speech and Writing. By H. Herd. *Everybody's Guide to Punctuation.* By H. Herd (Allen and Unwin. 2s. net each).

Two quite useful little books, which at 6d. each we could recommend to people with limited pockets. But fifty small pages of large-ish type for two shillings. . . . The cost of living has indeed gone up.

Q.

NOTES BY THE WAY for Students and Tutors

The Bank Rate

THE American bankers want Europe to return to a gold standard, because having invested in large reserves of gold during the last few years they now want to sell some of it or to convert it into more remunerative forms of investment in Europe. The English bankers, on the other hand, are also keen for Britain to return to the gold standard in order that the "prestige" of the £, and with it of London as a financial centre, shall not be dimmed by the gold dollar. In studying the return to the gold standard for which our bankers are struggling, the following two basic facts must be borne in mind:—

1. It will only be possible to restore the gold standard when the £ is back at its pre-war value in terms of gold, and can, therefore, be made freely exchangeable into gold at the old pre-war price of £3 17s. 9d. per ounce (troy) of gold.

2. America being the only important market for gold at present, the world value of gold depends upon the value of the dollar, falling if the dollar falls relatively to things in general. Hence, to restore the £ to its pre-war parity with gold, is the same thing as restoring the rate of exchange between pounds and dollars to its pre-war rate. (£1 = \$4.86).

Now, in recent months the foreign-

exchange value of the £ has risen, at one time touching the rate of £1 = \$4.80. This was due:—(a) To a rise of prices in U.S.A., lowering the purchasing power of the dollar and so making it worth less in terms of everything else, including pounds; (b) To an investment in £'s in London under the attraction of a higher rate on short-term money loans in the London Money Market; this "buying" of £'s for investment purposes raising the value of the £.

Then stage No. 2:—A month ago the New York Federal Reserve Bank raised its Bank Rate—the price charged for bank-loans—from 3 to 3½ per cent. This, by diminishing the volume of bank-loans and hence the general power to buy goods, tended to stop (a) and even to lower the price-level. Also, it tended to stop (b) by removing the attraction of London's relatively higher rate obtainable for money-loans. In both these ways it tended to put a set back to the movement of the foreign exchange in favour of the £. For this reason the Bank of England immediately answered by raising its Rate from 4 to 5 per cent.

This step is the logical outcome of the desire of the conservative financial elements in British capitalism to "stabilise" by restoring the gold standard, in a last attempt of the £ to rival the "almighty dollar." This

can only be done by going "one better" —or "one worse!"—than U.S.A. The raising of the Bank Rate is disliked by the industrial interests because it makes credit-loans to business dear. Thereby it hampers revival of production, causes further unemployment; and by lessening bank-loans it reduces the power to buy and tends to lower prices, and this discourages trade and production still further. The F.B.I. wants "cheap credit," trade revival and quick profits; "the City" wants conservative stabilisation by gold first of all. The fact of the matter is that British finance can only continue to compete with U.S.A. finance by sacrificing industrial capital and putting the fetters of "dear credit" on industry. The alternative is the increasing indebtedness of British capitalism to U.S.A. finance, and the "encroachment" of American finance-capital in Europe. Needless to say both tendencies are at the expense of the workers and must be opposed by them. The whole position is explored in detail in the editorial of the *March Labour Monthly*.

British Capitalism in 1924

In *A Review of 1924* published with the *Manchester Guardian Commercial*, of January 29th, there is an informative article by Mr. J. W. F. Rowe on "Production and Employment in 1924." First, he points out that unemployment has not decreased as optimistic prophets foretold that it would. "As compared with the second half of 1923, unemployment has only been from half to three-quarter per cent. less. In some cases, as in coal, steel, ship-building, unemployment has actually increased. The effect of the Dawes Scheme on British coal-mining is shown by the following table, in which the first and second columns show British production and exports as percentages of 1913, and the third and fourth columns show the actual tonnage produced in France and Germany:—

Great Britain.			
Production.		Exports.	
1913 100	100	
1923 (3rd qtr.) 94.1	110.4	
" (4th qtr.) 102.7	114.5	
1924 (1st qtr.) 102.2	91.4	
" (2nd qtr.) 97.3	87.8	
" (3rd qtr.) 91.0	91.3	
" (4th qtr.) 94.0	84.6	

To Speakers, Tutors, and Students

Comrades! How often have you been held up for want of just that one little fact which would clinch your argument?

You Know that capitalist concerns are paying large dividends on watered capital.

You Know that the workers' standard of life is steadily going down.

You Know that international capitalism controls international politics. But when that tiresome fellow at the back of the hall shouts out "Can the speaker give us a single instance?" well, you just can't lay your hands on one.

This is where the LABOUR RESEARCH DEPARTMENT comes in.

The L.R.D. is the workers' research organisation, owned and controlled by Labour organisations and their members.

It exists to collect and distribute the information which every worker who wants to educate himself or to work out a policy for the movement *must have*.

It answers the questions which the workers are asking to-day and prepares the answers to those which they will ask to-morrow.

And it publishes the only Labour journal of workers' research in the United Kingdom.

Every I.W.C.Er ought to be in the closest possible touch with the L.R.D., for Research is the essential hand-maid of Education.

The capitalists know this. Look at the thousands of pounds they give to endow University chairs of research.

Come and see the Labour Chair of Research. Look at the work we are doing, and see how you can help us to make it better. Or if you can't come

WRITE for samples and specimen copy of the *Monthly Circular* (free, to members only) from

The LABOUR RESEARCH DEPARTMENT
162 Buckingham Palace Rd., London, S.W.1

	France.	Germany.
	Production.	Production.
	(million tons.)	
1923 (3rd qtr.)	.. 9.7	15.6
" (4th qtr.)	.. 10.3	15.8
1924 (1st qtr.)	.. 10.9	29.3
" (2nd qtr.)	.. 10.6	22.1
" (3rd qtr.)	.. 11.1	33.5
" (4th qtr.)	.. 11.8	—

This shows the temporary stimulus given to British coal exports in 1923 owing to the Ruhr occupation and disturbance of German coal supplies, and the decline of such exports in 1924 with the increase of German output.

In the same way the output of steel and pig-iron in Britain declined as compared with 1923, while at the same time French output increased by 40 per cent. over 1923! The pressure of foreign competition, following on "stabilisation," is even being felt in the home market; since "the tonnage of iron and steel imports will probably amount to between eighty and ninety per cent. more than in 1923, and will therefore exceed the 1913 figure. On the other hand, iron and steel exports will be at least ten per cent. less than in 1923, and nearly twenty-five per cent. less than in 1913."

Mr. Rowe estimates the total annual volume of production in 1923 and 1924 as "approximately ninety per cent. of that in 1913."

The *Monthly Circular* of the Labour Research Department for March also contains (in addition to the special summary of the T.U.C. Report on Russia) a survey of the chief facts and figures of British capitalism in 1924—output, prices, imports and exports, profits, wages, etc.—which are invaluable for tutors of classes and their students.

Marx and Philosophy

No. 8 of *The Communist International* contains an interesting review by Riazanoff of the first number of the *Archive* published by the Marx and Engels Institute in Moscow, and containing unpublished manuscripts of Marx and Engels. In commenting on some views expressed by Marx on philosophy Riazanoff says:—"Marx's

view on philosophy as a special science, or as he describes it, as a '*summa summarium*' of all sciences, in my opinion, is a fundamental idea of Marx and Engels . . . and much more attention should be paid to it than is done at present by our Marxians. *The Marxian method should be applied in a greater degree than hitherto in fields to which up till now Marxists have devoted relatively little attention*, such as ethnography, history of civilisation, art, religion, psycho-physiology, etc. It should be applied as a fundamental method for scientific understanding of psychical phenomena, and *less attention should be devoted to pure philosophy*, i.e., philosophy isolated from living science" (italics ours). This seems to justify the line which *The Plebs* has taken in recent years in such matters, and to give additional indication of our need for a textbook on Scientific Method.

A remark of Marx is quoted which very aptly epitomises the fundamental essence of Marxism as the union of *thought and action*, instead of their rigid separation which is the tendency of orthodox academic method. "Division of labour really becomes such," wrote Marx, "only when a division into physical and mental labour takes place. From that moment consciousness may really imagine itself to be something different from the consciousness of existing practice. From the moment that consciousness begins really to represent something, without representing something real, it is able to liberate itself from the world and proceed to form 'pure theory,' theology, philosophy, ethics, etc.; but when this theory, theology, philosophy, ethics, etc., comes into conflict with existing relations it is due only to the fact that the existing social relations have come into conflict with the existing forces of production." Here, indeed, is the main distinction between our own method and the so-called "impartiality" of W. E. A. and university learning; the latter thinks of impartiality as *separation from action*; we base our method on the belief that theory can only be saved from artificiality and action from quackery if there is *union of thought and action*, close contact between education and actual struggle.

China

The issue also contains a very interesting analysis of the situation in China. This article traces the influence of Japanese capital, on the one hand, and of English and American capital, on the other hand, in the Chinese Civil War. The writer's conclusion is that Japanese influence has gained a partial success by the overthrow of the Peking Government. But Japanese capital is scarce at present as compared with American, and this weakens the influence of the former; and "England and America will strive to restore the former Peking Government." Against these influences stands the Chinese national revolutionary movement, with its base in South China, led, until his death, by Dr. Sun-Yat-Sen. In a final message before his death Sun-Yat-Sen exhorts his followers to continue their policy of close co-operation with Soviet Russia.

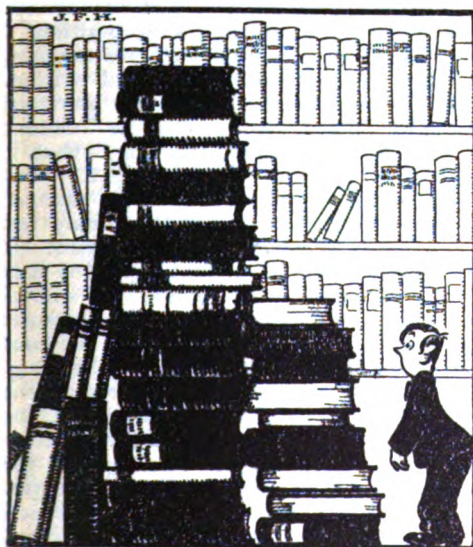
The Rate of Surplus Value

Inprecorr (5-3-25) quotes the official figures of the U.S. Census Bureau concerning 1923 which show according to the capitalist's own reckoning that every worker created in new values \$2950.00. This, reckoned on the

average wage of \$1,253.00 gives a rate of surplus value of 136%; out of a working day of eight hours just a little over three is necessary to produce the value of the worker's labour-power—the others go to provide rent, interest and profit.

"Mildewed Straw"

A Welsh comrade engaged in the iron and steel industry suggests the need of re-discussing Free Trade v. Protection. We do not think it is worth lengthy treatment. Free Trade is not a principle but a tactic of capitalism, suitable in the case of Britain to her temporary world supremacy of the middle of last century. When that is challenged, tariffs, dumping and trusts come in Britain as elsewhere. The professed desire of Big Business to protect British Labour from foreign sweated competition is just eyewash in view of the sweating it practises at home. In the Baldwin proposal to introduce Protection by instalments, the Labour M.P.s will have an opportunity to bring that to the front. While we would favour the prohibition of all imports made by any industry in which the eight-hour day was not observed, we feel that it can only be



"Yes, but **which** am I to read?"

ONE of the most useful of PLEBS publications is *What to Read: A Guide to Books for Worker-Students* (64 pp., 7d., postpaid 8d.). It consists of lists—with comments—of "worth while" books on the subjects of first importance to Labour students—Economics, History, Geography, International Problems of To-day, Trade Unionism, the Physical Sciences, English, and Esperanto. With this little book in his hand no worker need find himself in the position of the person in the accompanying diagram.

effectively accomplished by international workers' organisation and not by any bargaining between Labour and the British section of Big Business. If the world were under the control of a Workers' Group, Free Trade would be adopted as being most beneficial to all concerned. It is only when it is divided up into Imperial divisions that Protection has a case. In the *People's Year Book* (1925) there is an interesting survey of the question from various viewpoints.

Capitalism Talks Out Loud

"As the world slips into 1925 we have all become—every one of us—the owners of hundreds of millions of able-bodied serfs. We have a mortgage

on the lives of both the living and the unborn in practically every nation of Europe except Russia. We shall have, if not gold pouring in, then its equivalent in merchandise. Each one of us can hope to have more to spend. With such wealth we can hope to do one of two things. We can waste it, individually, in vain and effete living, as every great empire has finally wasted its resources in the past; or else, utilising the modern invention called capitalism, we can mass it in ways that will enable us . . . to remold the entire world nearer to the heart's desire. With money—and the labour of bonded slaves."

(From *Commerce and Finance*, an American journal, quoted by the *New York Nation*, Feb. 18th.)

LETTERS

"TOWARDS TRADE UNION UNITY"

DEAR COMRADE,—Will you allow me to ask R. W. P., in reference to the review of *Towards Trade Union Unity*, if it is not correct that the Fife Miners' Reform Union was formed mostly by I.L.P.ers and before the R.I.L.U. was formed? Also if the same is not true of the continental unions—that the splits (most of them) took place before the formation of the R.I.L.U.?

I remember R. W. P. in the old *Communist* reviewing R.I.L.U. literature in a different light to the above pamphlet. I do not say his criticism is not correct. I believe now it was a mistake to form another International, although many of us could not see it then (1920-21) especially as many of our best leaders supported it, such as Tom Mann, Ellen Wilkinson, A. J. Cook, Will Lawther, Purcell and many another Pleb.

So I think his criticism—I had better not say sneers—was quite uncalled for.

Yours fraternally,

A. LUCY.

CRITICISM OF "THE THIRD"

DEAR COMRADE,—Communists naturally "resent" (i.e. try to reply to) any "criticisms, direct or implied," whenever they disagree with such criticism. That they are "extraordinarily quick" in replying is merely a compliment and

not at all contradictory with their policy of fully criticising, when necessary, any other section of the working-class movement.

May I therefore "demand the right to criticise" R. W. Postgate's review of Zinoviev's pamphlet on T.U. unity? His scattered sneers about Communists in general we can ignore. They are merely the unpleasant screen under which a commonplace turncoat always retreats from an impossible position.

The last paragraph deserves mention as a piece of specially spiteful writing. Postgate, before quoting a sentence from Zinoviev, states that he "cannot decide on its exact meaning," that it only "suggests, at first sight," that Zinoviev himself is wondering whether the British Communist Party may not have to be written off as a failure. If this is so only "at first sight," if it is so doubtful, why include the quotation? We cannot expect whole pages to be quoted, but if only the previous sentence had been included ("In England we are now going through the beginning of a new chapter in the labour movement") a different complexion would have been put on the quotation, at any rate by most people.

I disagree with Philips Price's review on the Dawes Report in the same issue, but I welcome it as a piece of direct criticism. Postgate's review is neither

criticism, "direct or implied," and as such I "resent" it.

Yours fraternally, M. HALFF,

DEAR COMRADE EDITOR,—I must say I sympathise with Com. Taylor's complaint in your last issue concerning the increasing number of direct or veiled attacks on the Comintern which The PLEBS is beginning to harbour. Your reply to his letter is, to say the least, rather a weak evasion of the issue. For you know quite well that there is a world of difference between mere criticism and open attack.

R. W. P.'s review of Zinoviev's pamphlet seems to have no other intention, and certainly bears no other character than a concerted onslaught on the British C.P. and the R.I.L.U. It aligns itself with Amsterdam in all the silly Social-Democrat accusations about Communists "splitting the unions"; and appearing at the time it does, one can only accept it as a calculated attack on the Minority Movement and its struggle for T.U. unity.

You remark in effect: why this sensitiveness to attacks on the C.P. and R.I.L.U. when these latter so frequently attack others? But you omit the essential difference between attacks on "those in authority" and on fellow revolutionaries—a distinction which your "Bookshelf" in the same issue heartily endorses in the policy of the pre-war *Herald*. Moreover, my memory is not so short as to forget an occasion about two years ago when The PLEBS showed much sensitiveness to some strong criticism by the editor of a left-wing contemporary. Yet the kind of attack which R. W. P. resented with such spleen then, and which in the case of Italy he condemned as recently as in the February PLEBS for weakening the revolutionary front, he himself now practises—and as an accredited reviewer in a non-party educational journal! Up till recently The PLEBS left attacks on Communism to those much more practised hands at Eccleston Square and Amsterdam. Is it now, in its haste to disown the Red Label, also becoming "respectable"?

Now, we most of us know that our E.C. chairman is unhappy unless he can practise on someone his gift for trenchant abuse; and we all enjoy

and are amused by these facile exercises. From The PLEBS we all of us expect candid revolutionary criticisms. I most firmly believe in our paper remaining non-party as it has always been; but that does not mean that it should be anti-party.

Let The PLEBS remain non-party, except as between the revolutionary and the reformist; but we want it to devote its energies to giving a lead to education for the class struggle, and we want book reviews in particular, on which so many of us rely for information as to what to read, to be devised to give us that information and not to be twisted into platforms from which to vent personal antipathies.

Yours fraternally,

M. H. D.

[We can only repeat, in reply to "M.H.D." and our other correspondents, that in our opinion a good deal of "candid revolutionary criticism" is necessary before any real working-class unity can be achieved. Our pages are now, as heretofore, open to all sides. Why not reply to criticism instead of merely abusing the critic?—ED., PLEBS.]

FASCISM

DEAR COMRADE,—I should like to make a few observations on Postgate's well-written article on Fascism, much of which I found informative and useful. He has made a valiant attempt to unravel the thread of current Italian affairs, for which we must all be grate-

The fortnightly
YOUNG WORKER
One Penny

The young workers' *OWN*
newspaper. The leader and
platform of their struggle

Young workers! Read it!
Write to it! Push it! It is
YOURS

Y.C.L. Publications
38, Great Ormond St., London, W.C.1

ful. I cannot agree, however, that he has so far succeeded as to be justified in his strictures, by innuendo and otherwise, on the one working-class party that has remained true to its class-war principles throughout the trying days of Fascist tyranny.

After the Matteotti murder the essential thing was to develop a clear line of distinction between the bourgeois and the proletarian opposition to Fascism; and in the Communist demand for a general strike this objective was achieved.

The essentially reformist character of the Maximalists is plain enough. The Unitary Socialists fall under Postgate's lash, and the Maximalists have in numerous issues co-operated with them. A final indication of their non-proletarian bias is seen in the decision of their last national council (*Avanti* 3-3-25) to participate in a sort of *cartel des gauches*—a policy whose disastrous consequences have been made abundantly clear in France.

Mussolini has no intention of keeping to the rules of the Parliamentary game. Accordingly, as Postgate himself says, "new tactics are needed." And the only workers' party ready with new tactics is the Italian Communist Party. Mussolini will not confine himself to legal methods, and the workers must act accordingly. For this reason, the Communists have fostered the formation of Workers' and Peasants' Committees to revive the revolutionary feeling of the workers and to give them the weapon they need most—a most important development which Postgate's studies of the Italian socialist press should have led him to mention in his article.

The Italian situation may be "a class phenomenon of a very odd character," but it is none the less a class phenomenon. Fascism, in spite of all the qualifications urged by Postgate, is a phenomenon of capitalist repression; the Aventine opposition is out to establish another form of capitalist repression; and the workers want neither the one nor the other, but their own government.

Postgate's final "hopes" for the Italian workers are illuminating. He hopes first for the union of the Maximalists and the Communists. Agreed, provided that unity can be realised

on a basis of uncompromising *practice* of the class struggle. But his second hope is more startling. He wants the Royal Court to assent to the destruction of the Fascist militia. This implies that his hopes for the future of the Italian workers are based on the supposition that the military apparatus of the bourgeois state will crush another form of armed capitalism, that is, that one form of capitalist domination will be succeeded by another. The Crown may go far in the bidding of its instinct of self-preservation, but it is not likely to do great service to the cause of the revolutionary working class. For this the Italian workers would do better to turn to the Communist International.

Yours fraternally,
L. W.

ANOTHER "WANT"

DEAR COMRADE,—Some time back you included in PLEBS several good pages of matter on the Drama, but since then you have barely touched on the subject. The publication of a cheap edition of *Masses and Man* and *Education* was a splendid effort, and if this could be followed by a cheap edition of *R.U.R.* you will have earned the eternal gratitude of quite a large number of Plebs. But what is really wanted is a textbook on Drama written from a purely working-class angle as distinct

FAMILY LIMITATION

by

Margaret Sanger

Handbook for Working Mothers

Gives in simple language the knowledge that every working mother should have of how to limit her family

32 pages

PRICE SIXPENCE (By post 7½d.)

From ROSE WITCOP, 31 Sinclair Gardens, Kensington, London, W.14

POINTS FROM REVIEWS:

The author writes well and clearly and the whole tone of the publication is on a high level.

An interesting booklet and a useful contribution to the subject of Birth Control.

A good pamphlet and gives trustworthy information. Comrade Rose Witcop has done good service in reprinting Margaret Sanger's pamphlet.

from the numbers of books covering present day commercial drama. I am, of course, not losing sight of Romain Rolland's *The People's Theatre*, but that is not a satisfactory book from our special standpoint, and would be practically useless as a textbook.

If there is one branch of education of supreme importance to us to-day it is that of the drama and the theatre, a branch of social life that has been left absolutely in the hands of our enemies. It has surprised me that more has not been done through the Drama to place the philosophic and economic basis of working-class politics before the world in a form that would make a strong and vivid appeal to both the imagination and the reason of the people.

We need not concern ourselves over-much with the old standards of dramatic criticism which state that Propaganda is not Art, though we have yet to learn that Galsworthy's *Justice* (which influenced Winston Churchill towards prison reform) or his *Strife* is not as artistic, from the most aesthetic standpoint, as is, for instance, Pinero's *Iris*—the presentation of a woman who is no better than a prostitute without the economic excuse of the ordinary prostitute—which is shortly to be revived.

I think it is of the utmost importance that a textbook on Drama should be included in our series.

Yours fraternally,
Port Talbot. W. F.

The NATIONAL COUNCIL of LABOUR COLLEGES

HEAD OFFICE—22 ELM ROW, EDINBURGH

Gen. Sec., J. P. M. Millar (to whom all reports should be sent)

Another Victory!

THE National Amalgamated Furnishing Trades Association after taking a ballot of its membership has decided in favour of an N.C.L.C. Educational Scheme to provide for free classes and free correspondence courses. The result of the voting was: against, 494; in favour, 1389; majority in favour, 895.

Liverpool and District Carters' and Motormen's Union: Extract from 1924 Annual Report:—

"We were able to provide, through the National Council of Labour Colleges, a course of twelve lectures on 'Industrial History.' The lecturer was Mr. J. Hamilton (N.C.L.C.). . . . It has been a pleasure to the Education Sub-Committee to find the lectures well attended; there is, however, ample accommodation for more students. I am pleased to state the lectures were delivered in such simple and breezy language that the interest never waned, and I feel sure those members who attended the course

have obtained considerable knowledge in industrial matters which might not otherwise have been acquired. The discussion during the lectures reached a very high level, and was most gratifying to both the lecturer and those who have advocated for some time this branch of our activities for our members.

"On January 11th, 1925, we commence a further course of twelve lectures on 'Economics,' and we sincerely hope these will be attended as well, if not better, than the previous lectures. As before, the lecturer will be Mr. J. Hamilton. We have arranged, through the National Council of Labour Colleges, special facilities for our members in Birkenhead, Wigan, Preston, Widnes, etc., to attend free classes in those areas, and we believe these have been much appreciated."

National League of the Blind.—The articles on Economics that Fred Casey is writing for the *Rochdale Labour News* are to appear in *The Horizon*, a monthly journal printed in Braille type for the blind. Will PLEBS readers

convey this information to members of the National League of the Blind who, in many parts of the country, are interested in our movement? The magazine can be ordered from Mr. D. B. Lawley, 5, Infirmary Road, Blackburn, 1s. per month, plus postage.

W. W. Craik.—Mr. Craik is no longer Principal of the Labour College, London.

W.E.A. seeks N.C.L.C. Lecturers in vain.—Recently a W.E.A. official approached an N.C.L.C. Lecturer with a view to getting the latter to give a course of lectures for the W.E.A. Although payment was offered the proposal was of course definitely turned down. N.C.L.C. Lecturers do not lecture for the W.E.A.

May Day.—By error last month "John Ball" was printed as "John Bull." Edinburgh was *not* proposing to have a tableau advertising the latter gentleman!

Amalgamated Society of Dyers.—Congratulations to our old friend W. Brooke on his success in being elected Parliamentary Candidate for the Dyers.

International Summer Schools.—The I.F.T.U. is running a Summer School at Prague and another at Brunnsvik (Sweden). We understand that Mr. R. Coppock, General Secretary of the N.F.B.T.O., who is one of the N.C.L.C.'s Trustees is likely to be amongst the Lecturers. Particulars of the Schools may be had by applying to Mr. J. W. Brown, International Federation of Trade Unions, 31, Tesselschadestraat, Amsterdam.

New Lantern Lecture.—Jack Hamilton has prepared a new lantern lecture

on "Man and His Buildings" which he is prepared to give at Week-end Schools (along with other lectures if desired). The lecture is a survey of building from the most primitive times to the Weir Houses, with comments on the standard of living and economic conditions of the building workers of all ages.

Campaign among the Unions.—Will readers of this page please note that no opportunity should be lost by putting forward for Union Conferences resolutions asking for N.C.L.C. Educational Schemes? Will they also please note that it is most important that they should advise the N.C.L.C. office of any success, and that particulars should be sent of the date of the Annual Conference together, if possible, with a copy of the Preliminary Agenda containing the resolution.

Rothsay National Summer School—30th May to 6th June, 1925.—Those who desire to attend this School are asked to forward 15s. booking fee immediately. This sum, of course, is counted as part payment.

Training Centre.—A Centre for training Tutors has been arranged for three weeks from 1st August to 22nd August. Mr. W. T. Goode, M.A. (well known for his lectures and book on Russia), who has had many years' experience in the training of teachers, will deal especially with Teaching Methods, the Psychology of Teaching, etc. W. Coxon may give a series of Lectures on Teaching Methods in Workers' Classes. It is hoped that Tom Ashcroft and Maurice Dobb will lecture on the points in which Marxism Economics differ from orthodox economic theories. In addition, we are hoping to have J. P.



Read Plebs Textbook No. 2—

AN OUTLINE OF MODERN IMPERIALISM

A history of the Great Game of Grab played by the Great Powers, 1880-1920

Horrabin lecturing on Economic Geography and Mark Starr and R. W. Postgate on History. Other lecturers will be announced later. Although special attention will be devoted to Teaching Methods, the School is *not confined* to tutors or those who desire to be tutors. The charges are as noted below and as accommodation

Albans and Yarmouth. Lantern lectures at Leighton Buzzard, Hitchin and Lowestoft have gone well. More N.U.R. members would be welcomed at Peterboro' on Sunday afternoons. Norwich is hoping to equal the great meetings of Miss Wilkinson on March 22nd by those fixed for the visit of George Hicks on April 5th. The

THIS picture depicts the half-hearted gentleman who thinks that the summer months are no time for Education. It is meant sarcastic. Fortunately for our movement this sort of supporter is getting rarer. His place is being filled by enthusiastic all-the-year-rounders.



at the Labour College, London, which has been hired for the purpose, is very limited, applications along with booking fee of 15s. should be forwarded immediately to the N.C.L.C. :-

Students coming as a result of Scholarships from Unions, etc., £2 16s. per week.

Students paying their own expenses who are training as tutors, and undertake to tutor at least one Class during next Winter, £2 10s. for one week or £2 5s. per week for two or more weeks.

N.U.R.—A number of branches are endeavouring to alter the Rules of the N.U.R. so that an N.C.L.C. Educational Scheme will be arranged for next year. The Preliminary Agenda is now in the hands of the branches and all N.U.R. supporters are asked to do the needful. As the rules are only altered once in three years, steps should be taken immediately.

The "N.C.L.C. and its Work."—If your College has not yet ordered supplies of this booklet, please raise the matter. Single copies can be had for 3d. post free.

What the Divisions are Doing

Div. 3.—Luton Economics Class started by local Transport and General Workers Union branch is booming. Comrades Gardner, Lay and Stephenson started a new series of Lectures at St.

A.U.B.T.W. Rothesay Scholarship will probably be awarded to Bro. Bright, who has done so much to make the Brentwood class a success.

Div. 4.—With the assistance of Comrades Heap and Jones great progress has recently been made in Newport District. Two very useful Conferences have been held in Blaina and Gorseinon. The Cardiff District Committee of the Transport Workers is giving strong support.

Div. 5.—The Bath Trades Council has affiliated.

Div. 6.—Taking advantage of the Tories' threat to interfere with the Trade Union Political Levy, Organiser Smith has issued a circular to Working-class Organisations offering to provide a lecture on the Law in relation to Trade Unions.

Div. 7.—Division 7 is making arrangements for a number of Summer Schools, especially with a view to assisting in the training of voluntary tutors. Leeds Labour College has been carrying on an extensive campaign in favour of I.W.C.E. As part of the campaign two highly successful debates have taken place.

Div. 8.—Manchester Labour College is running a series of lectures on "Psychology" by J. A. Brewin, the attendance on the average being fully seventy. The South East Lancs. Area

has an excellent list of classes for the current session.

Div. 10.—Scotland.—Bo'ness Trades and Labour Council has affiliated to the Edinburgh S.L.C. Fife College has held a successful series of meetings with A. J. Cook as Tutor, while Lanarkshire has had J. S. Clarke lecturing to crowded audiences. This reminds us that J. S. C.'s pamphlet on Burns (published by the Glasgow College) is now in its second edition. The Purcell lectures in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow were a tremendous success.

Div. 11.—Ireland.—Recent affiliations to the Belfast Labour College on the basis of 2d. per member per annum (which entitles all members of the affiliated organisation to attend classes free) include: Nat. Amal. Society of Painters No. 1 Branch; Belfast Journeymen Butchers Association; Transport and General Workers' Union No. 12 Branch; North I.L.P. Branch; Central I.L.P. Branch; and Court Ward, West Belfast, and East Belfast Labour Parties; while in addition to the affiliation and "blessing" of the Belfast Trades and Labour Council, the District Committee of the Workers' Union has affiliated and recommended its branches to do likewise. Classes which commenced with ten students in January have now a roll call of fifty and

sixty, and there are many indications that the "Motherland" has got in Belfast a notable addition to the N.C.L.C. family.

- Directory.—Additions and Corrections*
- Div. 2.*—Eastleigh C.G., Sec.: Mr. A. H. Quilley, 83, The Crescent, Eastleigh, Hants.
- Div. 4.*—Newport and District Labour College, Sec.: Mr. G. Heap, 5, Godfrey Road, Newport, Monmouth, South Wales.
- Div. 7.*—Elland Labour College, Sec.: Mr. S. Burgess, 43, New Street, Elland, Yorks.
- Div. 9.*—Darlington Labour College, Sec.: Mr. R. S. Hunt, 44, Princes Road, Middlesbrough.
- " Windermere C.G., Sec.: Mr. S. Turner, 10, College Road, Windermere, Westmorland.
- Div. 10.*—Dundee Labour College, Sec.: Mr. G. L. Rough, 98, Dens Road, Dundee.

ANOTHER LONDON PLEBS GROUP

Comrade P. Weiner (72, Davis Mansions, Aldgate, E. 1), asks us to state that a Plebs Group has been formed and will meet occasionally at Circle House, 15, Great Alie Street, Aldgate. Will comrades in the district get into touch with him?

This Year's Summer Schools

HAVE you booked yet? If not, take our advice and make up your mind quickly. The only "regrets" in connection with our Summer Schools come from the folks who don't come—either because they decide too late, or because they don't realise what good times they're missing.

This year you have three to choose from—or if you're greedy and want to attend the lot, we shan't say you Nay.

The first, to be held at Rothesay (Scotland) in Whit-Week, is under N.C.L.C. auspices. It opens with the N.C.L.C. annual Conference, and as this is the first time this has been held north of the Border we expect to meet

a whole lot of wild men from the Clyde and Highlands for the first time. But safe-conducts will be issued to English and Welsh visitors, and these will include Geo. Hicks, A. A. Purcell, W. H. Hutchinson, A. J. Cook, John Jagger and other men of weight. You book for this event with J. P. M. Millar, 22, Elm Row, Edinburgh.

The other two Schools are being arranged by The PLEBS. For the week July 4th-11th, we have booked accommodation at the Cober Hill Guest House, Cloughton (near Scarborough), where we held a tremendously successful School last year. Nobody who has visited Cober Hill needs any tempting to go again; and in July we *ought* to get what was the only

thing lacking for perfect bliss last year—viz., real summer weather. (If we get it this year we'll have Bathing Parades daily, and lectures on the beach.) We have not yet worked out a programme, but our idea is to get

Don't forget:—

For ROTHESAY, write J. P. M. Millar.

For COBER HILL, write PLEBS Office.

For BOULOGNE, write PLEBS Office.



PLEBS & N.C.L.C. SUMMER SCHOOLS 1925

ROTHESAY (SCOTLAND) May 30th—June 6th

(apply to J. P. M. Millar, 22, Elm Row, Edinburgh)

COBER HILL, CLOUGHTON (nr. SCARBORO') July 4th—11th

BOULOGNE (or neighbourhood) August 8th—15th

(apply to PLEBS Office, 162a Buckingham Rd., London, S.W.1)

Lectures — Discussions — Sports — and Good Company

BOOK AT ONCE

together a bunch of Left Wingers belonging to various groups and discuss ways and means of making I.W.C.E. a more vital part than ever of Labour activities. Book your place without delay if you want to be one of the Happy Family. Terms, £3 3s. for the week—board, lodging, lectures, bathing, and bright conversation all included. You look after your own railway fare.

August 8th to 15th we are trying a new experiment, and are arranging for a week in or near Boulogne. The cost of this will be about £7 from London, including rail and boat fares, board and lodging, etc. Your fare between your little old home town and London will be additional to this, but we shall be able to arrange for fare-and-a-third rates for the return journey. There will probably be more holiday than "school" about this little outing; but we hope to meet and have talks with some French comrades.

LABOUR COLLEGE (LONDON) STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

THE residential students have decided to run the annual Re-union for ex-students during the Whitsuntide holidays.

A garden party will be held on the Saturday afternoon at Kew, and the usual social in the evening at the Labour College. On the Sunday morning a meeting of students and ex-students will be held to discuss the present situation of the College.

With reference to the Enquiry held last year, the students are still in the dark regarding the findings arrived at by the Enquiry Committee. A report has been printed, but we are told that it is being withheld until the Union executives have discussed it.

Will all ex-students who intend to participate in the Re-union please send in their names and addresses to J. T. Derricott, Labour College, Earl's Court, London, S.W. 5.

The PLEBS Bookshelf

BY some mischance, review copies of Upton Sinclair's two books on American education, *The Goose-Step* (1923) and *The Goslings* (1924), failed to reach us at the time they were published. But good stuff is none the worse for keeping; and now that they have come to hand and we have had a chance of looking through them, we're hastening to arrange with the author for a further supply.

Both books are chock-full of interest for Plebs. I haven't read anything for some time quite so definitely up *our* street. I suppose it's hopeless to wish that Upton Sinclair would leave California's sunny clime and spend a year or two in flu-ridden Albion; but one would give a lot to have studies of our British educational machine carried through on similar lines to these. Maybe there wouldn't be quite so much melodramatic material—such first-class "copy" from the stunt-journalist's point of view; still, capitalism is capitalism, here as in America, and though in Britain its manners may be a little milder and its motives a little more carefully camouflaged, there must be quite a lot of little happenings in our schools and universities which would repay investigation by a "muck-raker" of Sinclair's quality.

Meantime, we can derive considerable pleasure and profit, and much useful propaganda material, from these two studies of education as-it-actually-is-under-capitalism in those United States. Sinclair's aim in both books is to show "how the 'invisible Government' of Big Business which controls the rest of America has also taken over the charge of schools and universities." *The Goose-Step* is a study of the universities, *The Goslings* of the elementary schools;

and both are also invaluable for the thousand and one sidelights they throw on American history and economic geography, on the organisation of capitalism, and on "democracy" in full working order in a twentieth century capitalist State.

I can't make up my mind which is the better book of the two. I think I like *The Goslings* best; but that may be only because I read it first, and my interest was fresher. (Each of them contains over 450 pages.) Also, *The Goslings* opens with a vivid account of the dock strike at San Pedro (Los Angeles) which Sinclair made such magnificent use of in *Singing Jailbirds*, and that whets the appetite of anyone who has read that magnificent play. Also again *The Goslings* (chapters 49 to 54) contains that superbly ironic account of how the common or garden class-teachers—the "school proletariat"—being suspected of "Bolshevik" tendencies, were done out of the control of the National Education Association, the professional organisation of the educators of the United States, by the "upper" grades—the superintendents, inspectors, and boss's men generally. This last is a wonderful picture of official wangling, and shows to what great heights the art has been carried in America; indeed, with all due disrespect to our homegrown platform-controllers, one is driven to the conclusion that they are but babes compared to some of their Yankee brethren. (Still, everything over here is being Americanised; so we may all of us live to see developments.)

Much of what Sinclair has to tell, particularly of the teachers' struggle for higher wages, in the post-war years when *real* wages fell rapidly, and the

THE COMMUNIST BOOKSHOP

16, King Street, Covent Garden, W.C.2.

OUR WELL-STOCKED SHELVES ARE AT YOUR DISPOSAL
WE SUPPLY EVERYTHING READABLE

Send for Catalogue

Mail Orders a Speciality

way in which business interests on the education committees fought them, could be paralleled in this country. And what about this—the remark of a teacher who was barred by the authorities from talking, in an “open forum” conducted at a New York school, about any subject of vital interest:—“What they want people to lecture about is *Moonlight in Venice!*” Don’t we know the *Moonlight-in-Venice* merchants over here? That’s the sort of subject Government grants are given for! Or here’s another little extract of interest to ourselves:—

In 1911 the workers of Berkeley [seat of the University of California] took thought of their own interests and elected a Socialist clergyman as their mayor. This, of course, was terrible to the plutocracy, and they waged incessant war upon the Socialists, one of their principal agencies being the political science department of their university. You understand that the purpose of “political science” is to maintain the capitalist state; and what better practice for the students than to hold down the working-class of their university town?

It was in this same university town that the school-children were required to answer a questionnaire, disguised as a “social survey.”

Among fifty questions were such as these: “How does your father spend his spare time? What does he do Sundays? What books does your mother read?” The child was assured that all this would be “confidential”; but he was not permitted to take the questions home to his parents!

You can add to the “*Moonlight-in-Venice*” quotation given above one of Sinclair’s stories about Clark University (the temple of learning whose principal interrupted a lecture by Scott Nearing and ordered him off the platform and out of the hall):—

Clark University is sending out bulletins offering “home study courses” to people who want to learn to talk about the weather! You may think that just one of my hideous jokes, but here is the Supplement for April, 1923, listing “Courses Now Ready,” and the first

course is entitled “The Passing Weather.” Says the description: “This course will prove of interest and value to all who wish to know the simple, scientific facts which underlie that ever-present widely discussed subject, the weather.” The advertisement goes on to explain that “the person who finds pleasure in observing and anticipating the ever-changing face of the sky will find this study interesting and profitable.”

Quite! And, of course, Clark University will have no trouble about getting its Government grants so long as it keeps *The Weather* in the forefront of its curriculum. . . . Sinclair has also collected a good many interesting facts about school textbooks, their authors and publishers. Some firms run two editions of books, “adjusted” to the prejudices of different customers. Thus, there will be one version of Civil War history for Northern schools, another for Southern; while as regards biology textbooks “you may believe in evolution in your editions for New England; but if you want to sell to the far South, you must have an edition in which Darwinism is repudiated.” Nowhere, of course, are you permitted to believe in any such idea as that capitalist society is capable of improvement.

The situation confronting a would-be writer of school textbooks in the United States is as follows: If he writes on astronomy, engineering, or Spanish grammar, he may write the truth; but if he writes on history, economics, or literature, he either writes dishonest books, or he writes no books.

Speaking of a certain university he remarks, “The trustees may not pay much attention to the teaching of Greek, but they watch the economics and history departments like hawks.”

Lastly—for I mustn’t go on quoting all night—here is one of Sinclair’s little sidelights on the “economic basis” of social institutions under capitalism (he is talking about Salt Lake City):—

This is not a work on religion, but on economics, and what here concerns us are the two great Mormon virtues of industry and submissiveness. Seldom has a priestly caste evolved

a more perfect system for separating its devotees from their cash. The Mormon hierarchy is a Big Business institution, which works hand in glove with the great corporations of Utah, and their political representative, the Republican Party. The Mormon church is practically the same thing as the Sugar Trust in the state, and also the Smelter Trust and the railroads; their two representatives in the U.S. Senate are equally active in the affairs of God and Mammon. The church machine has its own educational institutions, and at the same time, like the Catholic church in other parts of the United States, it controls the public schools.

I hope I've quoted enough to convince keen Plebs that these are books to get—and chortle over. As already stated, we've sent to Upton Sinclair for a supply. I'm not sure what the price will be; probably 3s. or 3s. 6d. each. But they're value for money. And I suggest to the author that if he can ever find time to put together a smaller volume made up of selections from these two, to sell over here at 1s. 6d. or thereabouts, we shall be able to find him even more customers.

P.S.—School teachers would of course be especially interested in these books. I suppose there are many of them over here who have "felt a draught" on account of Labour sympathies. We should be very glad to hear from them, if they care to send us any particulars of their experiences. We should, of course, name no

names, nor publish anything likely to further endanger their livelihood or position. But it is part of our job to show just what capitalist control of education means, and the "school proletariat"—if they will—can help us in this direction.

Congratulations to all concerned in the successful first appearance of the *Sunday Worker*—and may it soon be possible to double the number of its pages. Now that Labour has encroached on the last press preserve of the capitalists—the Sunday newspaper—it's up to all of us to see that there's no defeat.

We are discovered! *The Outlook* of a few weeks ago gave us away thus:—

"The old tub-thumping incendiarism of five years ago, which frightened so many and convinced so few, has given way to a *very carefully devised* campaign of 'educational infiltration.' No longer do the seedy intellectuals of the Plebs League and the Labour College sally forth in person to recommend their wares to the reluctant trade unionist; some carefully coached trade union leader of unmistakably proletarian origin does the work instead. Then come the trained 'tutors' and 'experts' to complete the process. In this way they have penetrated to the most unlikely quarters. . . ."

Which shows you what cunning devils we are. But I shall have to see to the crease in my trousers—I just hate to think I look a "seedy intellectual."

J. F. H.

If you are in sympathy with the aims and objects of The PLEBS, as set forth in these pages,
JOIN THE PLEBS LEAGUE

Subscription: 1s. per annum

and become a subscriber to this Magazine
*4d. monthly at all Labour bookstalls. Or 5s. a year postpaid
 from*

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

EDUCATION IS *NOT* THE KEY TO POWER

unless it is of the *right kind*. Education as provided either directly by the Universities (strongholds of anti-Labour sentiment) or indirectly through so-called workers' educational bodies dependent on Universities, trains workers for

**GREATER AND FINER SOCIAL
SERVICE—IN THE INTERESTS OF
THE EMPLOYERS!**

The Trade Union Movement stands for a new social order and thus for a new type of education—Independent Working-Class Education. It is because the

**NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LABOUR
COLLEGES**

provides that kind of education that it has more financial support from the Trade Union Movement and conducts more Trade Union Educational Schemes than all other Workers' Educational Bodies put together.

**OVER 35,000 STUDENTS ATTENDED
N.C.L.C. CLASSES AND LECTURES
DURING 1923-4**

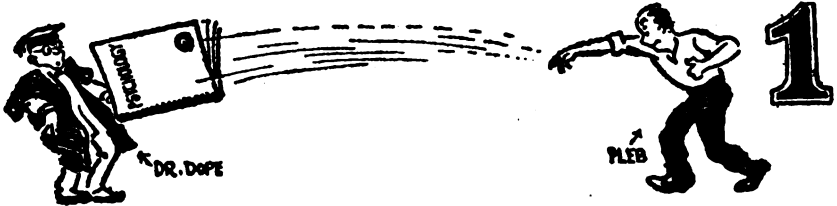
For particulars of Classes, Correspondence Tuition, Residential Tuition, Public Lectures, etc., send 2d. stamp to J. P. M. Millar, General Secretary, National Council of Labour Colleges, 22, Elm Row, Edinburgh.

PLEBS TEXTBOOKS

2s. 6d. each (postpaid 2s. 7½d.)

AN OUTLINE OF PSYCHOLOGY

(with diagrams and illustrations)



AN OUTLINE OF MODERN IMPERIALISM

(with 4 maps)

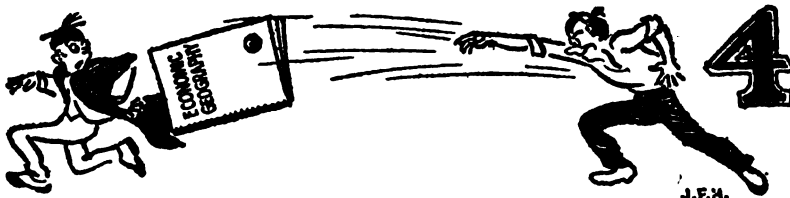


AN OUTLINE OF ECONOMICS



AN OUTLINE OF ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY

(with 44 maps)



162a BUCKINGHAM PALACE ROAD, LONDON, S.W.1.

Printed at the Athenæum Printing Works, Redhill.