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PLEBS

And Then—What?

Ellen C. Wilkinson, M.P.

Independent Working-Class Education in Britain


M. Philips Price

The Left Wing Movement

J. T. Murphy

Reports of Summer Schools, Reviews,
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AND THEN—WHAT ?

A FEW days after the truce in the recent coal dispute, a prominent trade union leader who, without being exactly at the head of affairs, had been well behind the scenes, was telling the history of that exciting week to a party of friends. "But, father," remarked his ten year old son, "suppose the strike had come off and everyone had come out, what then?" "That," replied the father, "is the problem you will have to settle in your time."

But is it? Can we wait till the next generation? Is not this question the most pressing of our immediate problems?

It would, I think, be generally agreed that the spectacular success of 1925 was achieved because the Imperialist oligarchy after Black Friday did not believe that the leaders would unite for a fight to support the miners. Next time their problem will be a different one. The Coal Commission is expected to sit till about May. The Chairman of that Commission will not be Mr. Justice Sankey. Preparations are already being made to meet the situation that may arise if the Commission, at its best, does nothing, and, at its worst recommends the lowering of the standard of life of the miners. Are any counter preparations being made by the Labour Movement? Does the movement, as a whole, even realise the very temporary nature of the truce of July 31st?

Any strike in favour of the miners, even working on the "stay-in" principle of refusing to handle coal, means ultimately a general transport strike at least, and a general strike becoming immediately probable. The first porter sacked for obeying the instructions of his Executive Council is bound to become the signal to the whole movement.

A strike, or even the bare possibility of a strike, of these dimensions, means preparation, if it is to be a success. Any trade union official knows the care that has to be exercised to secure victory, even in a local strike of a thousand men in one factory. How much more so, when the challenge is thrown down to a capitalist class working through a completely docile Cabinet in charge of all the power and resources of Britain! We are told that the resistance-power of the community grows with every strike. This sounds well as a Press headline, but it simply means that the attacking power of our imperial oligarchy, with everything to lose, grows more desperate at each challenge. In 1921, the blockade of the mining areas was planned by them; but the problem of bleeding the workers during a possible strike was only being discussed a few hours before

the breakdown of a hastily improvised committee of the Triple Alliance. The Co-operative movement, owned by the workers, should be a great weapon in the hands of the workers, but its help can hardly be utilised properly if its assistance is only sought five minutes before it is desperately needed.

The securing of the support of public opinion among the workers is a vital necessity, not only at the moment of crisis, but in the intervening nine months. The leaders of the miners and the Trades Union Congress may have to face the most appalling press campaign of modern yellow journalism, if events seem to be moving to a breakdown. It is stupid to say that that doesn't matter with the example of the "Zinoviev letter" so fresh in our minds. It is the effect on our own ranks that is so important. We are too apt to test the temper of the workers by the attitude of an elected committee. Publicity and propaganda ought to be taken in hand in the early autumn. And if a crisis comes the transport and railway men who are asked to give up their jobs at the call of the Trades Union Congress, will have a right to demand of the affiliated printing and journalists' unions how long they are going to print or write the poisonous propaganda of the enemy, when their comrades are out on the field.

Now, with this very general sketch of the immediate problem there would, I think, be a large measure of agreement, but how are we to get done the things that we feel ought to be done? There is no lack of machinery, heaven knows. The power and prestige of the Labour Movement in Britain is enormous. But, inevitably, it has the defects of its qualities. Its resistance-power is magnificent, but its attacking power is correspondingly weak.

There is also general agreement that the victory of 1925 was a victory for the left-wing leaders among the Miners and the Trade Union Congress. That tribute at least would be paid by men of very different opinions to those of readers of *The PLEBS*. It is significant, also, that in all sections of the Labour Movement, the influence of the left wing has grown rapidly, no small part of this being due, we can frankly say, to the work of the Independent Working-Class Educational propagandists. While definitions are always difficult, the "left-wing" may be interpreted as being those people who base their work for Labour on a realisation that the class struggle is the dominant fact in our problems. Obviously, it is important that a situation such as is likely to arise in the next few months should not be in the control of people, however well-intentioned, who believe in the ultimate reconciliation of class interests. And if there is anyone who thinks that this doesn't matter so long as the leader is sincerely labour, let him get into the gallery of the House of Commons during a first-class industrial debate.

The problem therefore arises—given this undoubted increase in the influence of the Left Wing in the Trade Unions, the Labour Party, the Parliamentary Party, the I.L.P., etc., how is it to be utilised to stiffen the fight and to prevent the workers' magnificent capacity for resistance being wasted by confusion and divided counsels?

Now obviously, any formal organisation is impossible. Absolute loyalty, and full allegiance to the Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress are demanded of every whole-hearted worker in the movement. Nor would formal organisation with its dividing party labels give us what we want—which is unity among the left wing elements working in and through their respective organisations. But surely it is not an insuperable problem to get people with the same aims and outlook to work together without rigid rules and formulæ and directions?

Such a working-together could be secured on the simple recognition of the unity of purpose of left wing movements with a class-struggle basis, and the willingness of any one section to call upon others in the case of need with the certain knowledge that they would meet with a ready and whole-hearted response. The first of these conditions would mean that agreement would have to be secured in certain fundamental points—and under the inspiration of certain prominent trade union leaders. I understand that steps are being taken to formulate these essentials. The second condition brings us up against some of the real difficulties inherent in the last crisis.

It is not easy for those who are responsible for difficult and delicate negotiations to call upon others to help, or even accept help willingly offered, without feeling that more harm than good can so easily be done by people with the very best intentions.

The problem of utilising the considerable resources—propagandist, research, educational, journalistic, etc.—at the disposal of the left wing is one of the problems that have to be faced—and faced quickly.

Previous to the 1925 crisis, the most earnest left wingers were disposed to say—"This tendency must be left to grow. Even too formal a recognition of its existence might be fatal to its prospects." They were right there, but the situation is altered now. The mining ultimatum was not an isolated bolt from the blue. It was simply the signal for a general attack. Even if the miners' trouble is safely tided over after the Commission has reported, we are faced by crisis after crisis. The return to the gold standard alone makes it inevitable that the banks should force a general wage reduction. At the special Trade Union Congress on Unemployment, the chairman, Mr. Swales, when asked what remedy the General Council proposed for unemployment, very rightly said that it was

not our business to provide remedies to get the capitalist class out of their difficulties. But it is emphatically the job of the General Council to find a way out for the working class. They cannot give a call to action without answering the question "And what then?" It is the job of every man or woman who realises the gravity of the situation facing us, to use every fraction of influence they have or can get, to swing the opinions of the working class behind those men who are trying to work out the answer.

ELLEN C. WILKINSON, M.P.

INDEPENDENT WORKING- CLASS EDUCATION in BRITAIN

This article, written by Comrade Philips Price for a French workers' paper, is of especial interest as an attempt to relate our movement to the broad facts and factors operating in the British Labour Movement as a whole.

THE British Labour movement has long been a difficult movement to understand for our comrades on the continent of Europe.

England is the oldest industrial country of Europe. Here the capitalist class came into power on the ruins of feudalism long before it did on the continent. No doubt partly because of its long experience in the part of government the British ruling class understood from the first how to handle the working-class movement better than its counterparts in France, Germany, Austria or elsewhere in Europe, where capitalism is still relatively young. The British ruling-class can be violent and repressive in Ireland, India, Egypt and Africa; but it fights its class opponent at home, the British working class, not by Prussian police methods but by compromises on everything but the essential, by raising side issues, and by fostering a false educational outlook. Hence the working classes of this and the last two or three generations in England have fought for their rights not on the barricades but by means of the ballot-box in elections to the House of Commons and by means of trade union organisation for industrial purposes. England has become the classic country of dramatic elections to Parliament, and at the same time of gigantic mass strikes on questions of wages

and hours. These great political and industrial contests have been fought up to now with great heat but without violence.

There can be no doubt that the relative absence of repressive measures against the working-class organisations has tended to make the British Labour and Socialist movement less revolutionary by temperament, less subjectively rebellious than the proletariat in many other lands. On the other hand, it is not less revolutionary objectively in its final aims and purposes.

The net result of this has been to make the political organisations of the British working classes rather loose in their discipline and tolerant in their outlook. The idea of a strict military organisation with iron discipline is absolutely foreign to the mentality of the British worker. The repression in the time of Pitt and Castlereagh during and after the Napoleonic wars took place too long ago for any living British worker to remember. Not for one hundred years has England experienced anything like Bismarck's Socialist Law, which the German Socialdemocracy had to put up with until comparatively recently. The mental approach, therefore, of the British worker to social, industrial and political problems is broad. He is prepared to listen in a tolerant manner to all proposals and arguments which will help him to emancipate his class. He is not going to be dragooned into believing in a number of theses, which have been sent him in the form of manifestos by some semi-military body from outside. Still less is he going to act on them. To recognise this fact is not simply to give way to patriotic John Bullism, but is simply a realisation of the influence of industrial conditions, acting for decades, on the mentality of a class and giving it certain traditions. This is but the first principle of Marxism.

The capitalist class in England has for many decades tried, with considerable success, to educate the British worker according to capitalist outlook. For that object a great daily press has come into existence which has taken up the task of diverting the attention of the workers to sport and to non-essentials, away from the real issues which confront their class. It has even founded colleges and given grants of money to support educational movements which shall tend to give to the workers the impression that their interests and those of their employers are identical. The Workers' Educational Association and Ruskin College (Oxford), although containing many convinced Socialists and even some class-conscious fighters, have nevertheless received financial assistance from capitalist institutions and therefore cannot be expected to teach history and social science from the working-class standpoint.

It was to combat this attempt of the capitalist class in England to undermine the mentality of the workers and to penetrate into their educational institutions, that the National Council of Labour

Colleges was formed. Its principle is that there is no such thing as "impartial" education. It carries the conflict of class interests into the sphere of education.

At the same time it lays itself out to be strictly independent of political parties. The reason for this is that if it were to allow the domination of any Socialist political party, like the Independent Labour Party or the Communist Party, it would at once become involved in questions of immediate tactical policy. The organ of the educational movement, The PLEBS, would have to take sides in subjective party political issues, which may easily obscure the objective educational aims. The Labour Colleges are concerned with creating an *atmosphere* for Socialism among the workers, and not with splitting hairs over questions of immediate policy. This is the task of the political parties, which have arisen in the British Labour movement. It is essential to have at least one body which can be neutral ground to which anyone can come. The only discipline that is demanded from him is that he shall accept the principle of the class struggle and realise that this struggle is part of the historical development of Man and is the basis of society and human economy.

It is essential to realise that this is the type of working-class organisation which has the most chance of success in England to-day. The Labour Party is the great mass political party of the workers in Britain. Its constitution is not military, and it allows considerable latitude of thought. Being a federation of trade unions and Socialist societies, it represents the general opinion of the mass of the workers, as far as they are prepared to go at the present time. The task of those who see the full implication of the class struggle is to educate the masses, who make up the rank and file of the British Labour Party, to an understanding of history and of modern social and economic problems in the light of this struggle. This task is best performed by an educational and not by a political body. The Labour colleges fulfil this qualification. It is quite impossible for this work to be done by a body that exacts an iron party discipline and prescribes everything that a party member shall do from the management of his soul to his house drains. That may be necessary in a country which is living through the most critical period of a revolutionary situation. This was the case in Russia in 1917, and in Germany in 1918. It may be so in England and France in the future, but it is not at the moment.

The success of the Labour Colleges, therefore, is a reflection of the state in which the working-class movement in England finds itself to-day. The movement is ready to enter the class-room for study, not the parade ground for drill.

M. PHILIPS PRICE.

The LEFT WING Movement : Its History and Significance

The following article is a summary of the lecture delivered by Comrade J. T. Murphy at the opening of the Plebs Summer School at Cober Hill.

THE PLEBS is so much a part of what is known as the Left Wing movement in British Labour, that we ought to appreciate the part we are playing and its general direction.

It would be a mistake if we simply proceeded arbitrarily to divide the working-class movement into departments of "right", centre, left, with the Communist Party at the edge, and choosing the particular department to which we belong and to think that is the end of the matter. Nor will it suffice for us to attempt to take simply an outside view and explain the process historically, but mechanically. The value of any historical survey lies in the degree to which it enables us to understand the circumstances governing our struggle, and what we can consciously do to make history.

It is not without significance that the whole working-class movement is fiercely discussing the questions of class war, the dictatorship of the proletariat, physical force, and parliamentarism. No one can dispute that these are the burning questions of the day. But it is not the first time that most of these fundamental questions have agitated the working class of this country. A reference to the history of trade unionism in the first quarter of the last century will provide ample material regarding the "war of the classes"; and debates on the "use of force." We can all recollect the records of riots, mass demonstration, and the division of the Chartist into physical forcists and constitutionalists. This period was a revolutionary period of working-class history, when the working class stepped forward into the arena of class struggles as the only remaining revolutionary class of history. The rising capitalist class, with the aid of the masses, became the dominant ruling class. In the midst of these struggles the working class was too inexperienced in organisation, too politically immature, to do more than lay the foundations of an independent working-class movement. Nevertheless, we realise that this period was rich in revolutionary struggle, sharper in its class alignments and expression than the remaining years of the last century. We have also explained in our classes the change that came over the movement due to the changed objective conditions of capitalism and the consolidation of the strength

and power of the capitalist class. Indeed, many years pass after the collapse of the Chartist movement before the class-war note is sounded once again with any appreciable effect.

Now the situation is completely changed again. We are witnessing a big organised Minority Movement in the trade unions, proclaiming again in clearer notes the class-war message of early revolutionary trade union history. Coming a century after the latter, it has at its disposal the vast organisational and cultural experiences of the working class of the whole world accumulated in the interval, and answers more precisely many of the problems previously unsolved. We are witness to the remarkable growth of independent working-class education in the form of the Labour College movement, actually educating many thousands of students per year in the facts of the class war. There is still a big volume of opinion sympathetic to these movements, which finds expression in the trade unions and the Labour Party. Besides these manifestations, we have the rise of the Communist Party, which has great significance and importance in spite of the misrepresentations and misunderstandings concerning it.

We can say definitely that our aim, as Left Wingers, is not only a revolutionary aim, but the remarkable advance of this movement with all its manifestations is a product of a revolutionary period. Of course, it would not be difficult to establish the fact that we are living in a revolutionary epoch by relating other facts of supreme importance, economic, political, etc. But it is sufficient for the moment to develop this point from the narrower basis of the content and character of the Left Wing movement. The similarity with the expressions of the struggle of the workers in the previous period of sharp class conflict is a clear indication that this movement of which we are a part is an integral part of the process whereby the working class of Britain comes again on to the path of revolutionary struggle. Under these circumstances it will be readily recognised that the fierce discussions in the Labour movement as a whole, and even in the Left Wing movement, are not something to be deplored, but to be welcomed. It means the working-class movement is thinking aloud. In these discussions we, who claim to be revolutionaries, have to fight more keenly than any. But we should not obscure the points at issue by passionate prejudice. A movement such as ours which represents the process of change in the Labour movement in its most class-conscious form must not only think hard and fight for its opinions, but it must be able to see clearly the various points of view.

With this appreciation of the historical setting of the Left Wing movement, let us consider its principal manifestations and phases. It will be remembered that, after the collapse of the Chartist

movement, the trade union movement passed into its essentially non-revolutionary phase of development, adapted itself to collective bargaining and securing whatever it could within the framework of capitalist relations. It was not until the eighties of the last century that we get a new breath of revolutionary air into the movement when the new Unionism makes its appearance, and attempts are made to found socialist parties. It is not without significance that this development takes place just after British capitalism begins to lose its monopoly position in the world market and modern imperialism to get into its stride. We see in the struggle of this period the onslaught on old forms of trade union organisation, the demand for broadening the basis of the unions, for class action. The net result is to lay the foundation of general labour unions and later actually to broaden some of the unions. But the Party efforts are not so successful. They remain sects and do not embrace the mass of workers. They were not only sects so far as numerical strength is concerned, but were exceedingly sectarian in outlook. Abstract criticism of the unions combined with an abstract view of history and their relation to it, combined to make expert critics on the basis of principles, without any ability to relate revolutionary conceptions to immediate tasks. After battering the unions for years, describing them in all kinds of contemptuous terms, a process of adaptation of the socialist parties to the unions began. This brought its reactions in the decade before the war, and we witness the effect of the revolutionary ferment in America which gave rise to the I.W.W., and the Socialist Labour Party. When the S.D.P. split in 1903 and the Socialist Labour Party was formed, the foundation of a new Left Wing propaganda is laid which has had a profound effect upon the subsequent revolutionary movement. Criticism of the trade unions was revived and the theory of revolutionary industrial unionism took the field. The S.L.P. formed the Industrial Workers of Great Britain as a revolutionary opposition to the trade unions, seeking not to advocate the leaving of the trade unions, but joining the Industrial Workers of G.B. with a view to the supersession of the trade unions when strong enough. This did not succeed, and the S.L.P., under the influence of the experience of the war period, and the Russian revolution, changed its views.

In England the Industrialist Syndicalist League urged the amalgamation of the unions into industrial unions. It sought to make the questions of amalgamation and forms of organisation the burning questions before the labour movement. Meanwhile, the Labour College and Plebs movement began an educational work which in political content approximated to the teachings of the S.L.P., modified by the influence of the industrialists and syndicalists.

These were the forces which constituted the Left Wing movement at the outbreak of war.

Then came further tests on the unions and the political parties, and the outstanding defects, not so obvious at the time, but especially clear to-day. The parties which proclaimed themselves as revolutionary parties proved that they were nothing more than propaganda bodies, and did not understand the rôle of a revolutionary party as an organised leader of struggle. Membership of a political party was regarded simply as meaning a label indicating to which party programme one subscribed. Hence there was no co-ordinated action. The reformation of the Left Wing movement in the unions depended upon spontaneous developments in the factories leading to the creation of Shop Stewards and Workers' Committees.

First came the Clyde dispute, paving the way to the Clyde Workers' Committee. Then the Sheffield dispute of 1916, which gave an impetus to a similar development in England. A whole series of developments follow, leading to the formation of National Administrative Council, and an attempt to co-ordinate these committees and give them a definite line. The name of the national committee indicates at once the continuation of the decentralisation theory into this movement. The history of the movement from 1915 to the passing of the Workers' Committee into new forms in 1922, will show that we never overcame this defect and that it played no little part in hampering the activities of the movement and laid us open at many vulnerable points when we needed to have the whole weight of the organisation behind the national leadership. Each centre acted on its own and had to improvise national connections. And the great strike of May, 1917, started in Manchester and unfolded itself to national dimensions without drawing in the Clyde. Of course it can be argued that this dependence on spontaneous action of the masses ensured real strength in the locality in which it originated. But its weakness was felt when other centres had to be called into action. If one could guarantee that a spontaneous movement would be general and endure generally at the same tempo, the case would be stronger for this dependence on spontaneity. But it does not work out like that, as we proved many times. On the contrary, we were left to fight in fragments and the opposition forces were able to tackle us in sections very frequently with success.

Nevertheless, while these defects are glaring the Shop Stewards' Movement brought the revolutionaries down to the task of relating revolutionary aspirations to immediate demands. It raised the question of action on these issues as the means to changes, both in form of organisation and means of struggle. Industrial unionism was thus transformed from the propaganda of a form of

organisation with which to struggle at a later date, to a definite method of struggle now.

The next important stage came when those members of the Workers' Committee Movement and the Socialist Parties, who had felt the impacts of these experiences and the repercussions of the Russian Revolution formed the Communist Party. Then, for the first time the question of the rôle of a revolutionary party is raised and we are witness to the crystallisation of these experiences in a single party. As yet this is not a completed process ; but it is a process which is developing. And meantime the task of fusing the Left Wing forces into a single disciplined army is helped on by such discussions of immediate problems and methods as we are taking part in at this Summer School.

J. T. MURPHY.

BUILDINGS and BUILDERS

The following short article on the craft of the mason will be of special interest to the many building workers now associated with the movement for Independent Working-Class Education.

BUILDINGS loom large in our social life. To those condemned to live in our modern "wens" it is impossible to escape them. Even in rural areas a large part of our existence is spent within walls. Hence there is need to study this aspect of social activity, because in the future reconstruction of society the planning of buildings and cities will require a drastic alteration of our present methods and ideas. In short we shall build in harmony with the social conditions then prevailing.

This introductory paragraph will indicate the fact that a history of man's social relations can be reconstructed by a study of his buildings through the various ages. The art of building is concerned not only with single structures, but also with cities, as ancient civilisations were made up of groups of cities rather than geographical areas. The impress of the prevailing economic conditions, and the social instincts, conscious and unconscious, evolved therefrom, is evidenced in the types of building and architectural styles of various ages. Lewis Morgan, in *Ancient Society*, indicates the principal stages of human development under seven heads :

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------|
| 1. Subsistence. | 5. Religion. |
| 2. Government. | 6. <i>House Life and Architecture.</i> |
| 3. Language. | 7. Property. |
| 4. The Family. | |

" House Architecture, which connects itself with the form of the

Family, and the plan of domestic life, affords a tolerably complete illustration of progress from savagery to civilisation. Its growth can be traced from the hut of the savage through the communal houses of the barbarians to the house of the single family of civilised nations, with all the successive links by which one extreme is connected with the other."

The art of architecture resulted from man's needs, the necessity of providing shelter from the elements, therefore climate largely determined style; minor factors being suitable material (or the only kinds of material to be obtained in a district), and harmony with general surroundings. When a building entirely fulfils the purpose for which it is intended, is of masterly structure and suitably embellished, it takes rank as an architectural work. Therefore the art is "something more than a view to mere utility and convenience, it is building in such a manner as to delight the eye by beauty of form, to captivate the imagination, and to satisfy that faculty of mind that we call taste." Hence sculpture and painting are inseparably bound up with architecture. Ruskin, in stressing the need for appreciation of the art, said "Architecture is an art for all men to learn, because all are concerned with it; and it is so simple, that there is no excuse for not being acquainted with its primary rules, any more than for ignorance of grammar or of spelling, which are both of them far more difficult sciences. Far less trouble than is necessary to learn how to play chess, or whist, or golf, tolerably,—far less than a schoolboy takes to win the meanest prize of the passing year, would acquaint you with all the main principles of the construction of a Gothic cathedral, and I believe you would hardly find the study less amusing."

The valleys of the Nile and Tigris, where the geographical factors were favourable to the development of agriculture and settled life, saw the art of building gathering power. Erections were essayed in improvement on caves, pits and other primitive dwellings. The discovery and use of the metals, with the consequent great improvement of the tools, resulted in hard and intractable materials, as granite and basalt, being amenable to cutting and embellishment for building purposes. The evolution of religion runs parallel with the development of human civilisation. The attainment of the idea of spirit was the result of reflection on physical and psychological experiences such as the ordinary happenings of everyday life, dreams, breath, sleep and death. This idea of a spiritual soul brought about, in the early and late stone ages, the development of ceremonial burial. The custom of primitive man placing mounds of stone and earth over graves resulted in some of the grandest monuments in world history—the Egyptian Pyramids, the Indian dagobas, the mystic circles of Stonehenge and Avebury, together

with innumerable dolmens and cromlechs scattered along the western coasts of Europe.

Egyptian architecture expresses the pride and power of the Pharaohs and the ruling caste, based on slave labour. "They built for immortality and obtained it." The cultured vanity of the Greek is expressed in their work. In the ruins of "Rome the Eternal" we see reflected the military might and domination of the patrician class.

Slave economy ran its course, the market for its produce was destroyed. Wanton waste and debauchery of the rich, poverty and degeneracy for the masses, resulted in the inevitable Nemesis. Feudalism slowly restored order in the chaotic conditions, but medieval night hung like a pall over Europe for many centuries, and progress practically ceased.

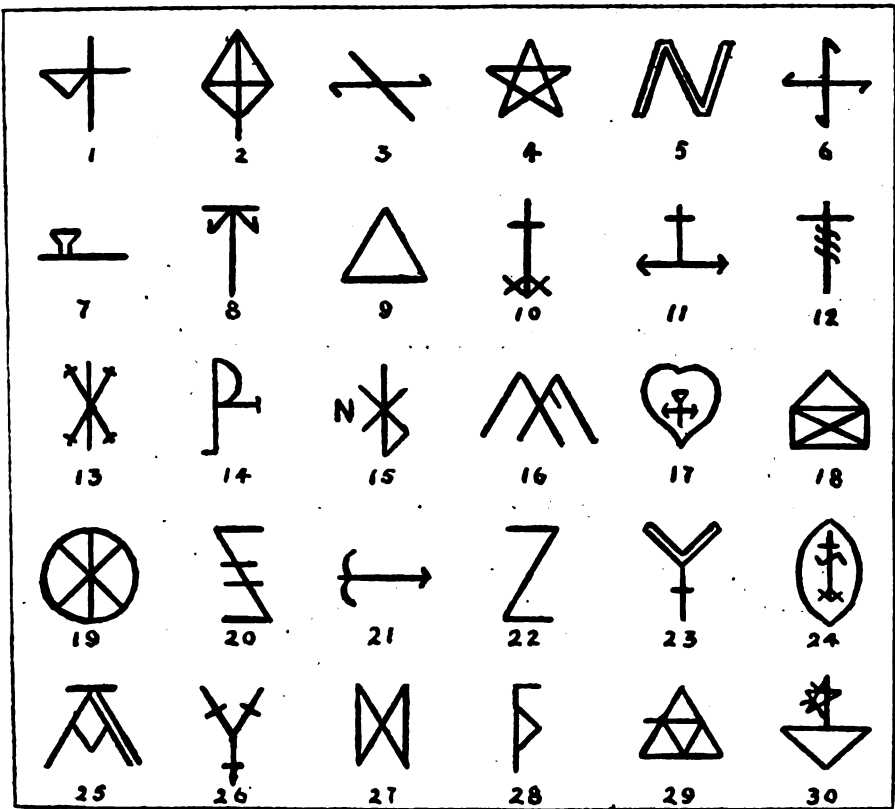
The Church, organised by Constantine in the third century, became the main prop of feudalism. By the sixteenth century, owning almost two-thirds of the land of Europe, the Church was the richest and most powerful landlord. The great cathedrals indicate the extent of that economic power, and the veneration and awe inspired by the magnificence of the buildings, the ceremonial enacted therein, gives us a clue to the intellectual control vested in the Church. Upton Sinclair has some pungent comments in *Mammonart*: "In the sentimental rubbish which historians and art critics write about the Middle Ages, we are told that mighty cathedrals and temples were produced by the co-operative devotion and reverence of whole communities of worshippers. When you come to investigate the facts, you find that they were produced amid a chaos of wrangling and cheating and lying, exactly as a modern public building, or a battleship, or a fleet of aeroplanes is produced." The thwarted lives of Michelangelo and Wren are typical of the social conditions of their times.

Certainly after the Black Death, 1348, the economic advantage lay with the workers for about a century. Thorold Rogers' *Six Centuries of Work and Wages* abounds in references to the workers' standard of life in the "Golden Age of Labour." In 1408, carpenters at Windsor got 5d. and 6d. per day. At York Minster six masons got £8 8s. a year each, six others £7 16s., and six more £6 3s. As their board at one penny per day came to only £1 10s. 5d. a year, the wage was obviously a good living one. The eight-hour working day was general; one proof is in the records of payment of masons employed at Hampton Court in 1536 at one penny per hour "ratyed for ivery eyght owres." In general the material conditions of the Middle Ages were favourable to the craftsman as compared with modern society. Hence the "Gothic" style (so named by the later Renaissance builders as an expression of contempt) flourished in the hands of the craft guilds. As Gwilt has

said, "There is more constructive skill shown in Salisbury and other of our cathedrals than in all the works of the ancient Grecian and Roman architects put together."

It is not surprising that the strong organisations of the craftsmen were struck at by the State. The combination of workmen, especially masons and carpenters, is attacked by a statute of Edward III., 1360, which declares all alliances and covines of those trades null and void. Evidently this Act was unsuccessful, for in 1425 another statute forbade "yearly congregations and confederacies" made by masons in their general "chapters."

Historians have given little attention to the lives and social conditions of those who do the real work. But we have the mute



MASON'S MARKS

1. From the Great Pyramid, Gizeh.
2. Herculaneum.
3. Melrose Abbey.
4. Roslyn Chapel.
5. Cheetham's College, Manchester.
6. Cologne Cathedral.
7. Furness Abbey.
8. Edinburgh Castle.
9. Roslyn Chapel.
- 10 & 11. Holyrood Palace.
12. Allahabad (India).
13. Linlithgow Palace.
14. Gloucester Cathedral.
15. Canterbury Cathedral.
16. Chapel, Holyrood.
17. Roslyn.
18. Glasgow Cathedral.
19. Jerusalem.
20. Dunkeld Cathedral.
21. Presburg Cathedral.
22. Malmesbury Abbey.
23. Inchcolme Abbey.
24. Strasburg Cathedral.
25. Jerusalem.
26. Strasburg.
27. Melrose.
- 28 & 29. Antwerp Cathedral.
30. Robt. Burns' mark.

testimony of the buildings themselves, and on the stones in many of these, no matter how ancient, you will find cut a few lines forming a simple design. Those lines are the craftsman's mark, and belong to a series of mason's marks having a continuous history from the first beginnings of the art of building expressed in stone. The craftsman's work could be distinguished and identified by his mark, and it also indicated his pride of workmanship.

It is interesting to note how military technique, the introduction of gunpowder and ordnance in Europe, destroyed the old baronial castles to be replaced by the mansions and country seats of the newer aristocracy. These were built of a lighter and more ornate style, providing for comforts and amenities unknown before the development of international trading had strengthened man's control of material resources and brought him into contact with the culture and ideas of other lands.

Decadence set in after the sixteenth century, builders became copyists, the rise of the merchant class and modern capitalism crushed out the guilds with competition and conspiracy laws. The small producer, a freeman, became a wage worker.

The principal styles of Architecture are as follows :—

<i>Ancient.</i>	}	Egyptian.
		Babylonian.
4,000 B.C. to 3rd Century A.D.		Assyrian.
		Persian.
		Grecian.
	Roman.	
<i>Medieval.</i>	}	Byzantine.
3rd to 16th Century A.D.		Romanesque.
		Saracenic.
	Gothic.	

Renaissance.: 13th to 19th Century.

Modern : "The treadmill of stylemongering."

Modern Architecture is mainly a rehash of past styles, buildings being designed deliberately, moreover, for machine production. The modern worker is a receiver of orders from a foreman whose main qualification is bullying and "speeding up." He in turn has to carry out instructions from a contractor whose principal purpose in life is to pile up profits. The architect must carry out the wishes of a client whose idea of the art is often vulgar ostentation. Modern building reflects modern capitalism—in fact, to again quote *Mammonart*, "all art is propaganda. It is universally and inescapably propaganda; sometimes unconsciously, but often deliberately propaganda."

Not until freedom is achieved, as a result of production for use, will we evolve an art of building, in fact all arts, in harmony with the oft quoted aspirations of Ruskin and Morris.

J. HAMILTON.

PLEBS across the CHANNEL

Wimereux : Aug. 8—15

FIRST and foremost, the Plebs Summer School at Wimereux was a holiday. No one owes anybody else any apologies on that account, since Plebs are as well entitled to holidays as other people. But this is hardly the place for an extended report of bathes, walks, or impromptu dances. Nor could such a report give any idea of the real joy of such a holiday—the fun of sharing one's pleasures with comrades instead of strangers, or the informal talks which are often so much more interesting than the formal discussions.

Space (and time) will not permit of illustrations this month, or we should have been proud to include pictures of the Chairman of the T.U.C. (Mr. A. B. Swales) and our friend George Hicks going bathing—with William Paul acting as swimming-instructor ; and of George Hicks as "The W.E.A.," and Winifred Horrabin as "The PLEBS," at the impromptu fancy-dress dance held one evening.

Every morning we had a lecture-discussion, and the weather was so good that each of these was held out of doors, on a quiet part of the beach, with the Channel breakers splashing soothingly a hundred yards away. George Hicks opened with a highly interesting account of the latest chapter in British working-class history—the negotiations between the miners, the T.U.C., and the Government, leading up to the victory which, to some extent at least, has wiped out the stain of Black Friday. R. W. Postgate took the next two mornings, outlining—with a wealth of vivid detail—the history of the British workers' movement from the eighteenth century down to our own day (the plan followed being that of a forthcoming PLEBS Textbook). J. F. Horrabin followed with a summary of another textbook—that on "Modern European History." And Ellen Wilkinson opened an interesting discussion on the Left-Wing Movement, and the possibilities of further unity of policy and action, in which A. B. Swales, George Hicks, Jack Hamilton, George Phippen, William Paul and others took part.

The very heartiest thanks of all those who attended the School are due to Hubert Arkwright, who made all the arrangements and carried them through not merely efficiently—which is a cold sort of a word—but so enthusiastically as to make everybody happy from the very outset.

An interesting little "postscript" to the School happened on the

following Sunday morning, in Paris, when several of those who had been at Wimereux made a pilgrimage to the Wall of the Communards, in the cemetery of Pere Lachaise, under the guidance of R. W. Postgate. Mr. Swales, on behalf of The PLEBS, placed a wreath of red roses on the wall; and Winifred Horrabin laid flowers on the grave of Paul and Laura Lafargue.

PLEBS ANNUAL MEET

"Woodlands", Whaley Bridge, Derbyshire: Sept. 12—13.

We are booking up for September 12th and 13th so that any comrades who wish to attend, must write at once. Local comrades who are desirous of attending for the day only, or for one or two meals, are requested to write direct to Robert Moores, 134, Alexandra Road, Moss Side, Manchester, giving full particulars of their requirements. If you do not let us know your wishes, we cannot make the necessary arrangements.

It has been found impossible for Manchester Plebeians to meet all trains, so visitors are asked to make their way to London Road Station and thence to Whaley Bridge. Plebeians will be on duty at Whaley Bridge and at Chinley.

Should anyone not find a guide, the house "Woodlands" is situated on the Eccles Pike Road, being the house before Ollershaw Hall.

There are through trains from London to Buxton, where one changes into a local train, so that it may be possible to get a weekend ticket to Buxton. Please note that arrival at Chinley will mean a three mile walk, this may appeal to the robust!

The following is an outline of the programme.

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Saturday afternoon .. | Assemble for tea. |
| „ evening .. | Social and informal discussion. |
| Sunday morning .. | Chairman's address.
Secretary's Report and Balance Sheet.
Editor's Report. |
| Sunday afternoon .. | General discussion on the work of the groups. |

No resolutions from groups have been received.

Will comrades take special notice of the above particulars and those published in last month's magazine, and so save themselves trouble?

W. H.

WORKERS' EDUCATION IN DENMARK

Comrade Bertolt has made his lecture at the N.C.L.C. Training Centre available to our readers. He himself is a tutor and writer in the Danish Workers' Education Movement as distinct from the People's High Schools about which we hear so much.

THE rise of the working-class movement in Denmark dates much later than that of England, and can be stated as taking definite shape from 1880, coinciding with the growth of dairy-farming and industry on a larger scale in the towns. The Trade Union Congress was formed in 1898. The movement for workers' education began about 1910.

Education in its widest sense, the providing of general education to all, was effected by the Education Act of 1814, but that was not very effective until the end of the nineteenth century. In the year 1844 was founded the first of the People's High Schools, promoted by a bishop, which catered for adult students from the new farming and land-owning class, who were in the economic and political ascendancy. Great interest was taken in these schools; visitors from other countries in Europe and from America inspected them and in some cases helped to form similar schools in their home country. The highest percentage of students coming from the towns was only four per cent., and not all of these were wage-workers. These were not at home in that environment. As the High Schools prospered, there was no over-keenness on the part of the governors to entice workers as students, but when an economic depression set in they became more anxious to get workers to take up residence as students. The extension of the People's High School to Copenhagen was not too successful, because, like those in the country, it was rather religious and nationalistic in character. The establishment after the war of the International High School by P. Manniche, a Utopian and Co-operator, which appeals for worker-students, has not been very effective from a working-class point of view.

The year 1910 saw a change in the educational development, when the Trades Council in Esbjerg set up a residential college for trade union students. Situated on the west coast of Denmark facing the North Sea, where the farm produce is shipped to England, the town of Esbjerg provides an excellent background for the College. This is still to-day the only real working-class school in Denmark, and is known all over the country as the Red High School! Two

sessions are held yearly, one from November to April, for male workers, and one from May to August, for female workers. Holiday sessions and special courses are also arranged, specially for Trade-Unionists, Municipal Councillors, etc. While entirely governed by the Trades Council and financed in some measure by the affiliated bodies, the Red School has qualified for a State grant by being in existence for three years with a certain minimum number of students, but the State does not interfere with the teaching in the school. The subjects taught, include Modern History, Social Economy, Trade Unionism, Natural Science, Hygiene, Literature, etc. Accommodation exists for fifty students.

In the same year the Trades and Labour Council in Copenhagen opened a non-residential training centre for prospective trade union and labour party officials, etc. The pupils must all obtain scholarships from the different unions in Copenhagen, and study a course lasting over two winters. In several other towns the local labour organisations succeeded in arranging provincial classes, but in the villages the efforts in this direction were very few and ineffective. It was felt that a more co-ordinated form of organisation was needed, and a Committee was formed by delegates from the labour and co-operative organisations. This Committee was represented at the annual Conferences of the Trade Union Congress, the Labour

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Party, the Co-operative and the Youth Movement, and succeeded in getting these bodies to agree to the formation of the Workers' Education Association. This began its work in January, 1924. It is controlled by the working-class organisations with an Executive of eighteen members, of which the chairman is C. V. Bramsnæs, Minister of Finance, in the Labour Government, and the Secretary is Harald Jensen, M.P. Finance is obtained by a levy varying with different unions on each member of the organised labour movement. Classes are arranged all over the country, with special attention to the country villages, tutors being obtained and every assistance given in the work. Local committees are set up and co-ordinated into the national organisation. During last winter, classes were held in about seventy localities, with a course entitled "The Danish Commonwealth," consisting of an analysis of economic and political problems, statistics, local government, etc. It hopes to provide to a larger degree for study circles, evening classes, day schools for the unemployed and special courses for propagandists and organisers. The W.E.A. has no stated definite political aim, but simply to assist members to be effective in their various labour organisations. The difficulties lie in the lack of tutors and the scarcity of textbooks (this latter owing to the small population, making it uneconomic to publish). It is to be hoped that some arrangement can be made for the translation, and adaptation, of the Plebs Textbooks for the Danish Workers' Education Association.

O. BERTOLT.

PROBLEMS of the LABOUR MOVEMENT

DEAR COMRADE,—In The PLEBS of July, you publish a review of my pamphlet *Problems of the Labour Movement*.

The reviewer agrees with A. J. Cook's statement in the preface that the pamphlet "brings home to us in a forceful manner the questions that must be dealt with." But the reviewer does not believe that I succeeded in bringing home the answers to those questions. In social life, as in medicine, the most difficult thing is the diagnosis. Once the diagnosis is made, it is much easier to find the proper cure. Still, I am under the impression that the reviewer's criticisms of my

answers are not convincing, and I hope that you will give me a chance to defend these answers in your magazine.

In order to avoid any misunderstandings, I want to state at the beginning that I am not afraid of rude remarks. But I do not agree with the author of the review that I have taken upon myself "the role of Guide, Philosopher and Friend to the Left Wing." The object of my pamphlet was, and is, much more modest. All I endeavoured to do was to formulate the urgent needs of our movement at the present stage of its development.

Now let us come to the answers. My general answer reads:—

The general problem before the Labour movement at the present time is just this: to re-equip itself for battle in accordance with the requirements of the new situation.

I understand that the reviewer fully agrees with this. But she adds that the "mosaic" of our movement should be very carefully studied, and that this task can hardly be done for us by outsiders. Unfortunately, I cannot understand where and how the reviewer draws the line between "outsiders" and "insiders." In my judgment we must consider as "insiders" all those who are honestly devoted to the movement and to its goal. From this point of view, we should consider as "outsiders" even those who are in the movement itself, but who, instead of helping it, are trying to transform the Labour movement into a tool of the ruling class. If this interpretation of "outsiders" and "insiders" is correct, we can at least try to continue our discussion as *insiders*.

In my pamphlet, I attempted to formulate certain pressing questions which, in my opinion, require immediate answer.

(1) The reviewer agrees with me that *International Trade Union Unity* comes first. Instead of criticising or even analysing the remarks I made about the difficulties confronting us along the path to unity, the reviewer prefers to attack the Communist Party of Great Britain, insisting that this Party "has not yet won the confidence of the working class in this country." The question itself—the role of the Communist Party in Great Britain in the future—is undoubtedly a very interesting problem for every student of the working-class movement in this country. But I do not see how or why this problem should be combined with the question of *International Trade Union Unity*. I do not see that, in order to achieve *Trade Union Unity*, it is necessary to find out where the source of all common sense, reason and knowledge lies. These two questions can be, and should be separated. In other words, I dare to conclude that the author of the review has no objections to the last lines of the chapter dealing with *International Trade Union Unity*, which read:—"It is

essential, without losing a single moment, to begin an energetic struggle against 'Amsterdamism' whether it comes from Berlin or London."

(2) *The question of unity with the Colonies*. Again, I do not see any practical objections to the suggestions which I made in my pamphlet. The reviewer objects, however, to the following paragraph:—"Our Left Wing elements, except the Communists, have hitherto not bothered to work out their definite attitude to this burning question of our daily lives." The reviewer denies this statement, reminding us that the I.W.C.E. movement has stressed this point in the classes on *Economic Geography and Imperialism*. I fully agree that at least one of the textbooks—the textbook on *Economic Geography*—is an asset to our literature on *Imperialism*—I know there have also been many other efforts to take a right stand on the problem of imperialism. Still, my statement remains true. We have in this country a certain number of political organisations who claim to represent the interests of the working class, and I ask the reviewer with every respect to show me a single one of those organisations—again except the Communist Party—which has a clear and concrete working-class programme on this vital problem. My pamphlet was written long before the famous vote on *Colonial Preference* took place. In face of this vote, I think it is unnecessary for me to waste a single word more to prove that the movement has not as yet worked out a "definite attitude to this burning question of our daily lives."

(3) The objection to my suggestions concerning *unity of the Trade Union movement* is much more serious. The reviewer is convinced that the factory committees look well enough on paper, but is afraid that "such committees merely enable the boss more easily to spot and get rid of the active men and women in his employ." I think this argument is rather poor. In the past the employer used the tool of victimisation against the trade union movement as a whole, but one of the greatest achievements of that movement is its power to interfere with the right of the employer to "hire and fire." Now the workers

in this country are in such a position that they are unable to resist the offensive of the ruling class. *A factory with forty unions is weaker than a non-union factory.* And the great problem is how to mobilise and organise the workers. The history of the working-class movement in this country as well as in other countries, proves that success is impossible without struggle, and struggle means victimisation. To be afraid of factory committees, which are an urgent necessity, just because in certain factories the employers will be in a position to discriminate against the most active men and women, means in actual practice to accept the present position without any challenge. Such an argument would be quite convincing if used by an "outsider." But those who consider themselves *inside* the Labour movement should never resort to such arguments. I take the liberty to repeat:—"The only organisation of mass action can be factory committees, which should be set up on the initiative of the Trades Councils, with the backing of the General Council."

(4) With regard to the relations between the Trade Unions and the Labour Party, the reviewer does not agree with my suggestion that the right tactics after the last election would have been to demand (a) the dissolution of Parliament and (b) the bringing to trial of all those who par-

ticipated in the Red Letter plot. Instead of analysing this proposal, the reviewer simply declares: "This would have been just about as effective as throwing one's cap at a train." This remark must be de-cyphered. It appears that the reviewer considers the Tory Government to be a powerful train, against which the fighting spirit of the Labour movement can be compared only with a cap. If this is the case, our position would be rather hopeless. Fortunately, I believe, the reviewer is greatly mistaken.

The results of the General Election have placed a dilemma before the workers of this country—either to accept the "verdict of the country," as MacDonald has done, or to challenge the results of the election, fighting the plot and all those who participated in it. The Right Wing accepted the verdict. The Left Wing—again except the Communists—did not act at all. This in actual fact meant the passive support of MacDonald's position. In other words, instead of looking for watchwords which would mobilise the workers for future battles, the Left Wing preferred to keep silent.

The reviewer also criticises another suggestion made in the part which deals with Trade Unions and the Labour Party—namely, the necessity of withdrawing the expulsion laws against Communists. The writer of the review considers this suggestion simply

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as naive, insisting that it is of no importance to the average trade unionist.

In order to avoid any misunderstandings, let us first state the facts. It was on October 7th, 1924, that MacDonald led the fight against the Communists at the 24th Annual Conference of the Labour Party. He was successful. The Communists were excluded. Thus the Labour Party lost its greatest pride—the unity of the British Labour movement, which tolerates all shades of opinions, including those of middle-class Liberals. One day later Ramsay MacDonald declared in Parliament that "His Majesty's Government is determined that, so far as it can help it, the propaganda of Communism is to have no chance in this country." And Thomas, supporting him, added: "Honourable Members opposite will pay a heavy price if they drive the constitutional Trade Union movement in this country into the hands of the Communists." In other words, the leaders of the Labour Party asked the dominant class to allow them to remain in office, promising that they would do their very best to fight Communism. In order to make this promise effective, they quoted the decision of the Labour Party Conference regarding the expulsion of the Communists. Now, if the re-

viewer agrees with me that it is necessary for our movement to re-equip itself in accordance with the requirements of the new situation, then it is necessary to get rid of this spirit of servility, which is the final link in the chain of the activities of the MacDonald Government. It does not matter whether we like or dislike the Communists. Their expulsion is one of the greatest crimes committed by the Labour movement, and forms a part of the dead weight round the neck of the British worker to which I referred in my pamphlet.

In the concluding part of my pamphlet I referred to the Labour Press. The writer of the review thinks that we should not be pessimistic about our workers' press, pointing out that we have *Lansbury's Weekly*, the *Sunday Worker*, the *New Leader*, the *Workers' Weekly*, and so on. Well, I am prepared to admit that modesty is a virtue in private life, but I do not think that the Labour movement of this country, which is the oldest movement so far as the Trade Unions are concerned, and which has gone through big battles for many decades, should be modestly content with that poor press which it has at its disposal against the powerful press of the ruling class. Yours fraternally,

P. BRAUN.

"W. H." writes:—To the introductory query "What was meant by 'outsider'?" I agree with Comrade Braun's definition, and do not consider him an outsider in that sense. But I still maintain that one who has not been brought up or worked for years amongst our organised workers will find difficulties that he never dreamed of and which, theoretically, should not exist. I think Braun understands better than he pretends to. Our movement will solve its problems from inside, not from outside, and any theoretically "direction" must be exceedingly tactful and good.

(1) I deny that I "preferred to attack the Communist Party" rather than criticise or analyse Braun's remarks about T.U. unity. I pointed out what was true, that the C.P. did not yet possess the confidence of the English trade unions, and that because

of that fact T.U. unity could best be accomplished by some other agency.

(2) *Colonies*. I agree that the Left Wing elements are "patchy" about Imperialism, but I maintain that there are big sections of the British working class which could be mobilised on this question. I cannot for the reason given above (lack of confidence by the organised workers) see the C.P. taking this lead "officially." I admit that the C.P. has been the soundest of all the workers' *political* parties on this point, but I want to emphasise the fact that large sections of all the workers' parties are still 'sound, and that the same tactic might be employed as that in Trade Union Unity.

(3) *Factory committees*. Here Comrade Braun becomes so innocent, that one imagines his little cherub's wings sprouting from his shoulders! He tells us that factory committees should be

'set up on the initiative of the Trades Councils, with the backing of the General Council.' Just so. The sting is in the tail—"with the backing of the General Council." I have no objection whatever to anyone taking any action with the backing of the General Council. What I do object to is the individual worker being asked to take action in his factory with the backing only of King Street! Not only because that would mean the sack, but because I want mass support of individuals and mass action.

(4) My metaphor about the train was just to show that I considered Braun's suggestions futile. It is not true to say that the Left Wing "*preferred*" to keep silent. Comrade Braun knows that the Left Wing is too nebulous at present to give effective voice to what it feels. My contention is, that it is better to peg away at making something out of this amorphous mass than for one section to keep on chirping "Look at me—I'm right, always." This latter tactic is just irritating.

(5) It still remains a fact that this "greatest crime" produces no thrill of horror in the breast of the British Trade Unionist or member of the Labour Party. He still regards the thing with boredom, except (*and this is the vital point*), where individual C.P.ers have gained the respect and trust of their fellow workers. It will be from such groups that the demand for the admission of the C.P. will come—not from the organised T.U. movement as a whole. If the C.P. is admitted to affiliation, it will be because these workers have worked with their comrades and proved themselves worthy of trust, not (a) because of shouting at the top or (b) because the organised workers realise the truth of C.P. theory.

I want to repeat—the test of the C.P. will be whether it can enter into this "unity" movement, and whether it can forget its "correctness" and remember only that wise tactics now may mean complete victory later on.

THE FIRST N.C.L.C. TRAINING CENTRE

WE wish all our students, and especially the teachers could have "listened in" to the Labour College during the three weeks August 1st to 21st. The many talks and lectures have been followed by discussion long and lively, but our conference has never become a cockpit. There has been a valuable pooling of experiences. The organisers and teachers have gained a welcome fellowship with their colleagues, which will be of tremendous importance for our work.

At the Reception Social, George Hicks and A. B. Swales gave us first-hand impressions of their interviews with Mr. Baldwin and others in those recent momentous days in which the rot of retreat and wage reductions had been stopped. They appealed to us to live up to our educational opportunities and increase the number of necessary thinker-fighters. On the

Sunday hardly had the course lectures began, when Principal W. T. Goode, to his and our great regret, had to abandon his duties and he removed to West London Hospital. [He has since undergone an operation, and Plebeians generally will welcome the satisfactory progress he is making.] M. Starr was called upon to supervise, and F. J. Adkins came in at short notice to render great service in dealing with Teaching Methods.

To those in our ranks who contentedly dismiss the theories of the orthodox economists as "damn rot," Maurice Dobb's set of lectures in the mornings of the first week would have been a waste of time. But he maintained rightly that it was worth while understanding the new developments of bourgeois theory in order to more effectively combat it. While bat-eyed university professors could only ignore or misrepresent the Marxian Theories,

we could understand and explain their own position effectively.

The final lectures were devoted to the Marxian Theories of surplus value, concentration, crises and class struggle and the attempts of the Revisionists to modify them. These Socialists had over-emphasised the political form of workers' agitation, separated their theory and practice, thought that capitalism would continue to grant reforms, and were blind to the menace of Imperialism. A plea was made for a concentration on the concrete problems of the workers' struggle.

R. W. Postgate, with his own piquant asides, covered the growth of the British Labour Movement from the time of Wilkes onward. As the subject matter will appear later as a textbook there is no need to summarise it here. Rutland Boughton made an effective appeal in his talk on "Music and the Masses" for a recognition of the importance of music to Labour. He showed how choral singing encouraged "emotional communism" and he explained the difficulties under which the art of music struggles in capitalist society.

The one and only J. F. H. not merely showed the assistance of Economic Geography in explaining past and present social happenings, but also directed the play-readings on the Thursday evening. In addition to *The Little Stone House* and *The Rising of The Moon*, we had the never before produced *A Parcel for Solomon*, written by Phillips Russell, of *The Sunday Worker*. [The £2 collection received for this, our only Sunday Labour paper, was an indirect author's royalty paid by an appreciative audience.] As everybody in time will see this at our Plebs Schools, there is, again, no need to tell you here of Solomon's struggle with a harem on strike.

Comrade F. J. Adkins, on Friday, gave us some advice interspersed with good stories on teaching. Know your subject; arrange all points to a definite conclusion; use as few notes as possible, and give student your skeleton outline to be copied into his book as an alternative to the hopeless job of "listening with one ear and writing with the other"; introduce humour, but with discretion—these were a few of his suggestions.

At the Social on Saturday, the 8th, the Prolet-Marxano Band indulged in polyphonics and some additional verses to "It Ain't Gonna Rain No Mo." In addition to some good dancing and jolly games under M. C. Creed, we had "The Oration of Sportacus," by C. Gibbins.

The regular morning course in the second week was by M. Starr on "Materials, Method and Meaning of History in N.C.L.C. Work." As these possibly will run as a series of articles in *The PLEBS*, there is no need to remark upon them here. Interesting visits were made during the week to the L.R.D., to the Joint Research Department at Eccleston Square, to the British Museum (under the guidance of V. Gordon Childe), and to the *Daily Herald* Office. Arthur Greenwood, M.P., and W. W. Henderson, explained the information and publicity work at the Labour Party H.O. Margaret Cole made clear to two batches of students the principles of research work and the method of producing such valuable documents as the *White Papers*, No. 1 and 12. Her proposal for a closer connection between educational and research work should receive practical attention, not only in the residential, but in the local colleges.

T. Ashcroft, in the third week, showed how the post-war dislocation of industry had influenced views of the crisis and replaced the over-production explanation by the disproportionate development of industry. He explained the Marxian formulae of the crisis, dealt with the effects of credit and combines, and the present state of world industry.

During the session we welcomed such early staunch supporters as Miss C. M. Bunn, who came to teach us how to be heard, to be understood and to be felt, and explained to us the rules of inflection and how the pitch and pace of the voice and gesture can be best used. T. A. Jackson dealt with "Capitalism in Decay," and, after giving the symptoms, he maintained that economic conditions were not the gas meter out of which automatically came man the gas; men's intelligence, will and organisation were necessary to remove a bankrupt social system. W. Coxon, drew from his experiences, professional and otherwise, to suggest

ways and means of retaining the interest of class members. Will Paul sang to us as only he can. [Another collection of £2 for the S.W.] Huntly Carter showed us by lantern slides what could be done in workers' theatres. Comrade O. Bertolt gave us a survey (see p. 355) of workers' education in Denmark, and K. Kuessner did the same in relation to Germany. Thus we had an appropriate international flavour.

Perhaps the most valuable feature of the Centre was the Criticism-Demonstration Class, which was run every evening at 5.30. Students were assigned topics on which they had to speak for not more than thirty minutes. Then followed a co-operative criticism of grammar, style and presentation, by the students and the supervisor, F. J. Adkins. Afterwards a discussion took place on the matter of the speech. C. Gibbins led off with a spirited exposition of the thesis that a revolution was only possible in a defeated capitalist country. C. Brown, W. J. Owen, S. Rees, S. Walker and D. W. Thomas, dealt with the teaching methods in their particular areas. A. L. Williams dealt with the qualities of an ideal teacher and E. Redfern endeavoured to prove that the working out of the average rate of profit helped to explain the success of men like Henry Ford and the urge of capitalist nations to trade with countries undeveloped or with capital of a low organic composition. The most encouraging feature of the discussion was the willingness to pool ideas and experiences concerning lesson aids. We were told about match-stick men,

impromptu maps, and the use of the pantograph for making the necessary charts. The communal construction of specimen lectures by class-members with the teacher as a "psychological bandmaster"; the place and method of teaching Evolution; the abandonment of the old heart-breaking academic way of treating surplus value and the M.C.H.; the need for organising the short courses into a three years' course; the folly of thinking by direct attack to remove in five minutes theological ideas cherished through fifty years; the need for concrete illustrations and local colour; the use of written work and the question and answer method in class work; and the textbooks required—these were only a few of the matters discussed. We heard about Glasgow's difficulty of getting class rooms because on local bodies there sit ministers whose brains are like their collars—the wrong way round, and how the students there tackle both Social History and Economics in one evening. The last discussion was occupied by the subject "An Ideal Training Centre," and it was unanimously agreed that this "try out" must be followed by many such similar efforts.

Thanks are due to the Labour College Governors who placed the building (and the tennis courts) at our disposal, to the household staff, who made us comfortable, to the guides and lecturers, who gave us of their best, and to the students who did everything to make the Centre the success it was.

We go "back to t' battlefield" encouraged and refreshed.

M. S.

The NATIONAL COUNCIL of LABOUR COLLEGES

HEAD OFFICE—62 HANOVER ST., EDINBURGH

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

DAILY HERALD *Travel Scholarships*.—The winner of the youngest student prize was Jack Burke, of Sutton, St. Helens. Congratulations to him and to Liverpool and Dist. L.C.

Another N.C.L.C. student, Agnes Gilroy, of Glasgow, won the prize for the youngest Woman Trade Union Organiser. Miss Gilroy is a N.U.D.A.W. organiser. This Union had another success in its member Fred Aitken,

who won the scholarship as the youngest shop steward. Another N.C.L.C. Union (Furnishing Trades' Association) also scored a success through its member N. L. Ford, who won the prize for the youngest Trade Union Branch Secretary.

New E.C. Member.—Barton Wild is acting as the A.S.L.E. & F. representative.

Training Centre.—A separate report appears elsewhere.

Winter Classes.—College Secretaries are again advised to send out particulars of the winter classes at the earliest possible date, and for this purpose use should be made of the N.C.L.C. leaflets. Every class secretary must be provided with a copy of the official register, and tutors should in all cases see that the register is marked each week. Stock enrolment slips can be had from Head Office.

What the Divisions are doing

Div. 3.—A. S. Bools, Secretary of the Peterborough Class Group, reports an exceedingly successful first session's work.

Div. 4.—Conferences have been arranged for the early part of the winter with A. J. Cook, A. A. Purcell, G. Hicks, Phillips Price and T. A. Jackson as speakers.

Div. 6.—Although the attendance at the Sheldon School was small, those present were keenly interested in the lectures on "Metals in History," "Economic Geography," and "Law." Among the students was a newcomer sent by the Worcester Trades and Labour Council, who was very appreciative of our educational work.

Arrangements are being made to run classes in the Potteries at Hanley and Longton, and also at Newcastle, commencing early in September. Full particulars will be circulated to all Trade Union Branches and Labour Organisations before this note is in print.

The Organiser has arranged to lecture on "Workers and the Law" to Trades and Labour Councils in Coventry, Nuneaton, Stafford, Northampton, Wolverhampton and Smethwick, with a view to calling attention to the value

The following books by
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The Goose-Step 3/6 each

The Goslings (postpaid 3/8)

Singing Jailbirds 1/- ,, (1/1)

Also a limited number of copies of *The Brass Check*, cloth bound, at special price—1s. (1/3).

of the N.C.L.C. Classes which will be running.

Div. 7.—Division 7 is holding a conference at Wakefield on 5th September, with A. J. Cook as speaker, and another conference at Barnsley on 6th September.

Div. 8.—A Local Committee has been formed at Crewe connected with Liverpool and District L.C. The Secretary is H. R. Wilde, 96, Edleston Road, Crewe, to whom all inquiries should be addressed. A new district has been formed at Wigan with W. Postlethwaite, 14, Freckleton Street, Wigan, as Secretary.

Div. 10.—*Scotland.*—Sydney Walker has been assisting the first strike in Lochaber—which, although lasting but two days, was successful. During that period he addressed over one hundred strikers (members of the Workers' Union and A.S.W.) on "Trade Unionism: Its Growth and Function."

Directory.—Additions and Corrections
Div. 10.—Scotland.—Fife L.C., Sec.:
Mr. J. F. Mitchell, 35,
Forth Street, Dunfermline,
Fife.

Div. 8.—Crewe Local Committee: Sec.:
Mr. H. R. Wilde, 96,
Edleston Road, Crewe.

NOTES BY THE WAY

for Students and Tutors

Labour and Capital

A VERY valuable article calculating the change since pre-war in the relative shares of Capital and the workers in the national dividend, which appeared in the Labour Research Dept. *Monthly Circular* for July, is being reprinted as L.R.D. White Paper No. 12. The figures show that whereas real earnings of workers are four-fifths of what they were in 1900, total interest and profits on capital are double what they were in 1914. The *Circular* for August contains among other things one of the valuable periodic surveys of World Trade and British Capitalism, which the *Circular* produces from time to time. Both of these should be invaluable material, not only for tutors, but for actual classes to handle themselves and work upon.

Bourgeois "Science" v. Marxism

No Pleb should miss the admirable summing up in the August *Labour Monthly* of the root differences between the Marxian outlook and the various shades of bourgeois and petit-bourgeois points of view. It is a model of succinct and clear expression, so necessary in our classes to "get across" to the elementary student; and each point is illustrated by an apt quotation epitomising the opposing point of view. The basic fallacy of the bourgeois viewpoint is summarised as follows: "Bourgeois social science is built on the assumption of Capitalism as the natural permanent order of things (just as Aristotelian science was built on the assumption of Slavery). The province of the scientist is regarded as to analyse it, explain it and find its laws. Any other treatment is regarded as 'propaganda' and 'unsound.'"

The Conservative fallacy is defined as assuming or taking for granted "existing institutions"; the Liberal fallacy as built on "the myth that capitalism is a classless society, and that under wage slavery all 'citizens' are free and equal." Opportunism is use-

fully defined as being "the advocacy of an alleged immediate gain through co-operation with capitalism as more important to the workers than the interests of the Revolution which is regarded as distant."

The Left-Wing

Recent numbers of *The Communist International* (Nos. 8, 9, 10 and 12) have contained important articles on the relations between the Communists and the developing Left-wing in Britain, which should be of interest to all Left-wingers eager to study the Left-wing problem of the future. The articles do not propound a dogmatic policy, but are contributions to a critical discussion, in which on certain points difference of opinion arises. The contributors are: R. P. Dutt, J. T. Murphy, A. Martinov, C. M. Roebuck. No. 12, in addition to a second article by Dutt, contains a very valuable survey by Zinoviev of the world position in view of temporary capitalist stabilisation and a discussion of the correct tactics to be adopted, in the course of which echoes of the Trotsky controversy appear. Another article on "The New Tasks in the Rural Districts of the U.S.S.R." throws important light on the new N.E.P. and the peasant question.

Economics

Advanced students of economics should find interest in an article by W. Keilhau of Oslo University in the June number of *The Economic Journal*. It discusses Cassel's theory of foreign exchanges and supplements it in some important respects. An article on "North Carolina and the New Industrial Revolution" provides some useful facts about the recent industrial expansion in that part of U.S.A., to which capital is moving because labour there is cheap ("nearly half as cheap as Northern labour"), children can be worked eight hours a day, "there are no labour unions," and hours are ten a day. The outcome seems to be—

another dread competitor for Lancashire!

Out of the Past

Recently there was published details concerning the Canadian adventures of George Loveless, one of the famous six labourers of Dorchester. *The O.B.U. Bulletin* (11/7/25) has now found that the convict ship, the "Success," which was used to transport them, is lying moored in Phicage River. One of the nephews of James Brine, one of the deportees, had compiled records and photographs which have been handed over to the ship. Apparently Brine must have left his Essex farm and followed Loveless to Canada. The article in various points differs from Webb and Selley's account in *Village Trade Unions in Two Centuries*, which suggests that descendants are not always reliable informers.

We are told by the *I.F.T.U. Press Service* that world trade in 1924 was less than in 1913 by four per cent. The U.S. has an increasing proportion of the total. In 1913 she had only 16.2 per cent. of the exports and 10.9 per cent. of the imports. In 1924 the shares were 14.1 per cent. of imports, and 19 per cent. of the exports.

The I.L.P. Information Committee, amongst other useful information collected, has given the various estimates concerning the cost of the last war. Prof. Bogart puts the grand total of property and the capitalised value of the lives lost at over £70,000 millions. Despite that loss the five great Allied Powers are spending more by £100,000,000 on military expenditure than they were in 1913—the totals being £266 millions and £366 millions.

Doing Away with Class-Consciousness

The Economics Departments of Columbia and Harvard University have joined hands with Big Business and its "kept" press to prove that at present there is proceeding a "rapid diffusion of ownership." Some of the companies there are increasing their capital by deductions from the pay-roll to make their employees shareholders. The Labour Banks are welcomed because they increase the power of ownership,

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By A. M. ROBERTSON

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and Hillman and other U.S. Labour leaders talk and act exactly in the same spirit as the Model Union leaders did here in the fifties. Prof. T. N. Carver says that the tendency of concentration has been reversed and prophesies (*Journal of National City Bank*, July, 1925): "It is at least reasonable to expect that when the labouring and the capitalist classes become somewhat blended, there will be less class-conscious antagonism between them, even though there remain many labourers who are not capitalists and many capitalists who are not labourers. . . . Wage controversies of the future in this country will probably be much less rancorous and destructive than they have been in the past because the element of class-consciousness will be eliminated." All these desired effects are based upon the fact that in a selected group of industries the number of stockholders have doubled in the last seven years.

Already in Great Britain we are being told about the great number of little shareholders in the railway industry. Emil Davies in the *Railway Review* (24/7/25) makes these assertions look very sick by showing that 700,000 shareholders supposed to own the railways are reduced to 252,000 by an addressing agency which has discovered that the same individual is often a shareholder in all of the four railway groups (not to mention other concerns outside). This brings up even the average holding to £4,000. The railway companies do not now publish lists of shareholders, but in 1922 the Alliance Insurance Co. and the Phoenix Assurance held £3½ and £6 millions of railway

stock respectively. These are the "little men" amongst whom diffusion of property has taken place.

Reformist "Faking"

An article by our friend, D. Riazonoff, of the Marx-Engels Institute, in his journal makes the disquieting suggestion that Engels' work, and possibly even Marx's, was "bowdlerised" by Bernstein, who had charge of their MSS. after their death. The example taken is Engels' introduction to the "Class Struggles in France, 1848—1850." The first extract is from page 19 of the German edition:

"And finally, the newly built (since 1848) quarters of the great cities with their long, broad streets are constructed as though designed for the working of the latest artillery and weapons. The revolutionary who selects the new working-class districts north and east of Berlin for barricade fighting must be mad.

"Does that signify that the street-fight will play no further role? Certainly not. It only signifies that since 1848 the conditions have become more unfavourable for civil wars, whilst becoming more favourable for the military. Thus a future street-fight can only triumph when this unpropitiousness of the position is counterbalanced by other factors. It will therefore seldom happen at the beginning of a great revolution but rather in the future course of events, and must necessarily be undertaken with great powers. But this, as in the great French revolution on September 4th and October 31st, 1870, in Paris will probably draw forth the open assault from the passive barricade tactics."

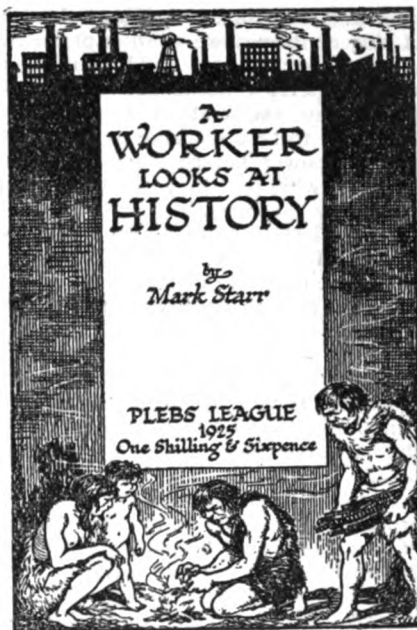
The whole of the italicised portion was cut out. Riazonoff has restored it from the MSS.

On page 20 a whole passage was inserted:—

"In the Latin countries it becomes increasingly obvious that the old tactics must be revised. Everywhere the unprepared opening of hostilities is relegated to the background, everywhere the German example of the utilisation of the franchise for the capturing of all the available positions has been followed."

On page 21 the proof-sheets show yet another insertion was made:—

"To-day we can already reckon on



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two and a quarter million electors. If this continues we shall capture the greater part of the middle layers of society—petty bourgeoisie and small holder—by the end of the century, and grow to be a decisive power in the land, a power before which all other powers, whether they wish or not, must bow the knee."

Immediately after these words a sentence follows in which the following words are crossed out:—

"This growth to continue unbroken until it gains the ascendancy and becomes the dominating government system, while this daily strengthened multitude should not be harassed with vanguard-actions but held intact until the decisive day, that is our chief task."

Possibly these alterations may have proceeded from Engels, but the omission of the following sentence is without doubt the work of the party censor. In this Engels snaps his fingers at the Prussian reactionaries. He leads off:—

"But do not forget that the German state, like all little states and certainly all modern states, is a product of treaties; firstly, the treaties of the princes with one another, secondly the princes with the people. If one part of the treaty is broken, the whole is broken, as Bismarck so cleverly showed in 1866. When the constitution is thus broken the social democracy is free, they can do and permit what they will. But what they will do binds them heavily to you for the present."

The object of such changes is perfectly clear to everybody.

The text published in *The PLEBS* in the first months of 1921 must be emended accordingly.

Why Join the W.E.A.?

Some remarks made at Beds. County Education Committee (reported in *Beds. and Herts. Saturday Telegraph*, 1-8-25), deserve a wider circle. Adult education was under discussion and it seems at Luton thirty-two students have taken a course in health, and twenty-nine students a course in biology. It was decided to assist by grants three women and "a straw hat blocker" to attend tutorial classes. But let the report speak for itself by the help of our italics:

"Some comment was passed by

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Alderman H. Arnold that this might be a means of advancing Socialist ideas.

Mr. P. S. Neil: Why not?

Alderman Arnold: If Socialists want to propagate their own ideas, let them pay for it. [Note this does not apply to capitalists.]

Mr. C. Negus said it was because they were doing a good work and educating people against Socialism that he belonged to the W.E.A. and people attending the classes should be encouraged."

Cut this out and use it in your branch when the W.E.A. applies for an affiliation fee.

In continuing the above discussion, a Dr. Fowler quoted with approval the advice "If you want to cure a Communist, give him a course of economics." However, he did not say whose economics, but evidently those of the W.E.A. were in his mind.

A Smoky Flame

As one of the first Labour journals to support Esperanto, we are glad to welcome *The Shop Assistant* and *The Flame* amongst the journals who run lessons and notes in the international language. The latter is the recently commenced organ of the I.L.P. Guild of Youth, which is well produced and brightly written and marred only by a silly reference by a Japanese professor to "Russian Marxism" which is "inadequate in theory and misleading in action," and which is going to be replaced in Japan because "the young Japanese are learning the progressive

history and constructive policy of *English Socialism*." Anyway, youth will live long enough to see such superficial nonsense completely exploded.

Empire Responsibilities

The lead given by the recent Minority Conference on the necessity for the General Council of the T.U.C. to shoulder the special responsibility of assisting trade union organisation among the colonial and semi-colonial workers is a commendable and urgent one. Just as practical experience has forced the General Council to help the agricultural workers in the backward areas, so it will force a solidarity between all the workers everywhere exploited by British capital. If the proposal to set up a special department were put into operation, it would save an immense amount of suffering. It would be the most effective line of action for those who now repeat that "the British Empire is a fact" and from that attempt to let it remain a *capitalist* fact.

Italy

Since my article on Italy in *The Plebs* of February (writes R. W. P.) the reasons for hope which I gave then seem almost entirely to have disappeared.

The Fascist government appears to have regained its grip, and the weakness which permitted the exposure of Fascist crimes in *Avanti!* and *Unità* has wholly disappeared. No paper now dares to criticize.

Moreover, quarrels between the two class war parties (the Maximalist Socialists and the Communists) have grown worse. At present (for those who care to know about muck-raking) the charges are (1) that the Maximalist *Avanti!* published an article by a Fascist journalist approving of the Fascist financial policy (2) that the Communists have entered into a corrupt understanding with the metallurgical employers. (Both are probably lying. And to read their editorials—God, how these revolutionaries hate each other!)

The Communist Party is faced with a grave internal scission. Bordiga, Repossi, and a number more of its most eminent leaders have formed a Committee of Understanding, on the ground that the Executive's policy and the International's has been disastrous for the Italian workers. The controversy has been carried on with a wealth of invective on both sides and the Bordiga group may be expelled.

LETTERS

NEWBOLD SALUTES THE UNION JACK

SIR,—Whilst my heart may be lacerated and my tear glands exercised by the iniquities of the British Empire's origin and administration, I recognise those reactions to derive rather from a subconscious sentimentalism than a conscious Marxism.

It may be shameful to be British, but why cannot someone who thinks so give a historical materialist's instead of a sloppy sentimentalist's reason?

Where is the Marxism in this talk of "nothing short of an absolute break with the old order?"

It is upon the basis provided us by the old order that we are to build the new. The building is—or used to be,

before some folk lost all sense of proportion—more important than the struggle for the scaffolding and the bricklayers' tools.

The Empire, like the United Kingdom, is one of the great products of history. It has come into being as a political and social entity arising naturally in the course of economic evolution. Just as the bourgeoisie made use of the framework of feudal manor and monarchic state, so will the proletariat—now naturally and properly joined by so many detestable recruits from the bourgeois parties—modify but not destroy the heritage of Kingdom and Empire.

It may be that in the period of transition the relations of the several Dominions and Great Britain will be

temporarily ruptured but they should not be permanently broken.

It is as contrary to reason that the young nations that are but our very selves settled across the seas, akin in race, alike in speech, almost identical in institutions and ideas, should be separated from us as Lancashire is divided from Yorkshire. We may, also, hope that Labour can—there is no question of retaining certain privileges for our own race in any but our critics' ever fecund imagination—secure that many of the older Colonies and India, long bound with us economically as well as politically, will want to enter into free federation with Great Britain.

That is the outrageous jingoism and infamous treachery to the working class of which pleads gladly today.

Yours fraternally,

J. T. WALTON NEWBOLD.

THE BALKANS

We have received from A.E.E. Reade (at present somewhere in the Balkans) a letter, much too long to print, commenting upon C. L. Malone's pamphlet on "Bulgaria." We asked Malone to summarise Reade's main points, which he has done below:—

DEAR COMRADE EDITOR,—Reade really raises two points, of which the first seems to me a trifle hair-splitting, and though interesting, yet not of great moment; and the second is a piece of very useful information.

1. He objects to my saying that Austria created an "artificial Albanian State," as a counterstroke to Serbia's success in the Balkan War. He admits that the Albanian State then created was artificial, in that it excluded more than half the Albanians from Albania—a considerable portion of the rest being thrown to Montenegro and Serbia. He interprets my word "artificial" as meaning that I think that the Albanians have no claim to nationality—and as justifying Serbian Imperialism at Albanian expense.

It seems to me clear from my article that I include Serbian attempts on Albania as an aspect of her swollen-headed Imperialism comparable with her doings in Macedonia.

2. Reade says that Ahmed Bey Zogu, the President of the Albanian

Republic, is not the agent of our agent Serbia, but the direct agent of British Imperialism. He says—what I am aware of—that Zogu has just granted the largest oil concession in Albania to the Anglo-Persian Oil Company.

Then comes his interesting piece of information. Ahmed Bey has divided Albania into four military zones, each under two British Majors acting respectively as Inspector and Assistant: Inspector of Gendarmerie, superior in rank to all native officers except Colonels (the highest rank in the country)—*i.e.*, Zogu allows the Gendarmerie to be officered by British, to preserve law and order for the Anglo-Persian Oil Co.

Reade also tells us that the Yugo-Slavs are busy building a great military road from Monastir to the Albanian frontier, obviously with the object of attacking Albania. A further point he makes is that Yugo-Slavia has now turned against Zogu and is starting a campaign against him. This is not surprising. The Serbs find that he is not willing to be merely their tool. He has, as Reade says, a good native backing among the Albanian peasants as a tribal chief.

Yours fraternally,

C. L. MALONE.

"BEN O'BILLS"

DEAR COMRADE,—If ever you receive inquiries re the book *Ben O'Bill's: The Luddite*, by D. E. F. Sykes, there are about thirty copies left at Hanson's Bookstall, Market Hall, Halifax. The book is out of print and scarce. 1s. paper back.

Yours fraternally,

FRED SHAW.

PLEASE FOLLOW SUIT

DEAR COMRADE,—I feel sure you will be pleased to know that we in Leeds have succeeded in getting the magazine placed regularly on the table at the local Public News Room. We did not experience any opposition from the Libraries Committee, as we created a demand for it by arranging for several comrades to go up at different times and ask for it.

I feel certain that other Colleges and Plebs groups will be encouraged to act likewise.

Yours fraternally,

HARRY BURBEY.

IT MAKES ME SMILE TO THINK OF
PLEBS

A Reply to Leonora Thomas

It makes me smile to think of Plebs,
They are so happy
Throwing stones at teachers,
They don't notice
That the walls of their houses
Are made of glass.
With their neat little textbooks,
They are so solemn,
They can't conceive of life
Except in terms of Marx, and the
Materialist Conception of History.
In ordinary travelling
A lot of Plebs have to walk,
Quite a number go by bus
A few ride on the railway,
And one or two Big Plebs,
(Tell it not in Gath),
Even have cars.
But when it comes to thinking,
Nearly all Plebs
Travel on tramlines,
And call that being independent.
They are so busy understanding
Dietzgen,
(That for a Pleb is Life),
They have no time for
Shakespeare's Sonnets,
Or the pictures of Cézanne,
Or The Unfinished Symphony.

Of course some Plebs read Shelley,
He was nearly a Pleb himself;
Peter Bell the Third,
And the Masque of Anarchy,
Are fine,
But Intellectual Beauty
And the Cloud,
Are so Bourgeois.
Once I knew a Pleb,
(True he was a Welshman),
Who applied the M.C.H.
To Keats' Ode to a Grecian Urn.
Oh, my God!

It makes me smile
To think of Plebs.
They think because teachers
Teach in state-owned schools,
That they must condone
Injustice and slavery.
They can't conceive of Independence
Outside Cober Hill,
And Buckingham Palace Road.

Once there was a Pleb,
Who was very angry with teachers
For teaching Capitalist Truth.
He had only half finished
His Economic Geography Course,
And swore blind that Spain
Was right inland.
When he was shown a map
And all the coast line of that country
He snorted
"Oh, that's a Capitalist map."

No wonder people say, in public
houses,
"What are those?"
It makes me smile
To think of Plebs.
B. A. (LONDON). *Hard Boiled.*

SUMMER SCHOOLS

DEAR COMRADE,—When reading the
summary in The PLEBS, of the dis-
cussions that took place at the Cober
Hill School on the various problems
confronting the working class, it
occurred to me that it might be a good
policy to publish a verbatim report
of the discussions in the form of a
pamphlet.

Its propaganda value would be
immense, and it could be said that
while there was only a few attending
the lectures that thousands had bene-
fited by them.

Yours fraternally,

W. F.

[We wish our correspondent's scheme
were practicable. But unfortunately
no shorthand-writer was present at

New "Plebs" Pamphlet

THE BANKS
& THE
WORKERS

By Arthur Woodburn

24 pp.

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An admirable introductory "textbook-in-
little" for Economics Classes.

the School, and a summary was all that was possible.—ED.]

A TIP FOR TUTORS

DEAR COMRADE,—At the London Training Centre (N.C.L.C.), great importance was attached to the use of graphs, charts, and maps in our class work.

Most tutors, however, feel very embarrassed if circumstances demand that they should attempt to draw a map. This inability to draw can be overcome very largely by the use of a Pantograph. This is an enlarging instrument, simple in construction and use, and obtainable for a few shillings. Armed with this instrument, the tutor

can enlarge graphs and maps, etc. with ease and speed. The enlargement can be made to "stand out" by the use of paints or crayons. This method is not perfect, but it does enable the tutor to produce something between the extremes of a J. F. H. production and nothing at all.

Tutors can, instead of quoting long lists of figures, plot them on squared paper and then enlarge the graph. *e.g.*, "The Workers Standard," No. 1, L.R.D. Labour White Paper. Maps can be enlarged in the same way and the Pantograph will enable some sense of proportion to be maintained.

Yours fraternally,

A. ELLIS.

REVIEWS

A HANDY SHAKESPEARE

The New Readers' Shakespeare, edited by G. B. Harrison, M.A., and F. H. Pritchard (Harrap, 1s. per vol.).

AN admirable pocket edition of the plays, beautifully printed on good paper and suitably bound in limp cloth. Each volume contains one play.

The editors have made a bold experiment by discarding the usual brief stage directions and substituting in their place something more in the manner of Bernard Shaw or Granville Barker. They make out a good case for this innovation in their General Introduction, and it certainly renders the plays more readable. The absence of notes is rather a virtue than otherwise in a reprint designed for easy reading. A brief but sufficient Glossary follows each play.

E. J.

EMPIRE SOCIALISM

British Agriculture versus Foreign Tributes. By Joseph Burgess (Francis Johnson, 14, Great George Street, S.W. 1. Paper 2s. 6d.).

The author's general proposals are to prohibit all future foreign investments (other than those in the British Empire), to tax all interest on existing foreign investments, and all Bankers' Commissions and receipts for "Other Services" in connection with such foreign investments at the rate of two-

fifths of the total sums received. Estimating that the interest amounts to £125,000,000 per annum this would yield a tax of £50,000,000 per annum which he proposes to earmark for the development of British agriculture. He further estimates that by using the £50,000,000 for increasing the wheat growing area in Great Britain to 8,000,000 acres, with its consequent stimulating of other types of farming, 500,000 persons now drawing the "dole" would find work on the land at an average wage of 50s. od. per week, and that the remainder of the unemployed will find work in the manufacturing and building trades in providing agricultural machinery and housing for the re-populated countryside.

In view of this naive scheme, we will accept the author's claim to be "a mere amateur in finance!"

The author is keenly in favour of Empire Development; he wants "all capital sums withdrawn from foreign investments to be re-invested in British Dominions and Colonies." He conveniently terms the British Empire the British Commonwealth, whilst carefully ignoring the fact that Canada and Australia are gradually slipping out of the Empire, and India, Egypt, etc., only kept in by an overwhelming display of armed force.

His collection of statistics showing the huge international investments of

the British capitalists is very useful; but although he sees "Foreign Investments as the dynamic force precipitating modern wars," he limits "dangerous" investments to those outside the Empire.

Although past and present experience clearly show that British Capitalism is prepared to foment national and civil wars to safeguard its foreign investments (China, Mexico, etc.) its opposition to the author's proposals is to be easily dealt with by re-instating a war-time law that "issues or participations in issues for undertakings carried on or to be carried on outside the British Empire shall not be allowed!"

With regard to the agricultural problem he states:—"Assuming that we have a solid Labour majority in the House of Commons, and everything depends on that, an Act nationalising all agricultural land in the United Kingdom (with compensation) could be passed in the first session of the Labour Parliament."

In spite of his very useful collection of statistics and expert opinions dealing with wheat supplies, the author does not face the fact that increasing the present wheat-growing area in Britain to 8,000,000 acres, whilst possibly ensuring Britain's wheat supplies, would mean a lessening of the available grass land with its consequent effect on cattle raising and a smaller production of meat, milk, butter, cheese, etc., which would necessitate still greater imports of these commodities from abroad.

Significantly enough, in his condemnation of foreign investments, the author makes no mention of the Dawes Plan, nor with regard to feeding Britain under a Labour Government does he once touch on the possibility of assistance from Soviet Russia—two very vital factors which cannot be left out of any discussion of this nature.

Altogether this is a very muddled book, which, starting from a failure to face the facts of the class struggle, leads its author to consider Britain, the Dominions and Colonies as united peoples pursuing common aims, and not as capitalist nations in various stages of development in which the class struggle between the exploiters and exploited grows daily in intensity, and will sooner or later, by revolutionary

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action on the part of the exploited masses, render of no avail all the plans of the author and his reformist friends for what after all only amounts to the stabilisation of British Empire Capitalism.

J. E. M.

MORALISTIC FRAGMENTS

The Conduct of Life. By Benedetto Croce. Authorised Translation by Arthur Livington (Harrap, 7s. 6d.).

In his *Æsthetic*, one of the volumes comprising that *Philosophy of the Spirit* which is reputed to have had an extraordinary effect on the cultural life of Italy and for which in 1920 its author was awarded the Butler Medal, Benedetto Croce says "... The demonstration of the unreality of the physical world has not only been proved, in an indisputable manner, but is admitted by all philosophers (who are not crass materialists and are not involved in the strident contradictions of materialism.) ... Thus physical facts reveal themselves, by their internal logic and by common consent, *not as reality but as a construction of our intellect for the purposes of science.*"

Of the essays contained in *The Conduct of Life*, he says, "They are independent and separate investigations of certain problems in our spiritual lives which needed to be analysed and reduced to the principles I had previously propounded. Between the idealistic interpretation of the universe and some of these moralistic fragments, however, there is no particularly vital connection."

There are forty of them, essays on such topics as "Religion and Peace of Mind," "Our Dead," "Sex," etc.

Similar essays, written in popular language or crystallized into aphorisms, may be found in the columns of provincial newspapers or in journals intended for family reading. Such efforts are undoubtedly less profound than Croce's but their effect is much the same.

One group of essays, however, is deserving of more attention, being concerned with political philosophy (Signor Croce was Minister of Education in the cabinet of Giollitti.) Here the philosopher sets forth his conception of the State as an economic institution. "The State knows no law except its own power." Politicians must learn to think philosophically—must learn, that is, that Christian virtues have no part in politics and that *business is business!*

"There is no rest for man on this earth except rest in struggle and through struggle. . . . There is no peace except in war and through war." To this truth humanity is not commonly reconciled: it makes verbal denial of struggle and pays verbal homage to the ideal of inertia—"social justice," "equality," "co-operation of classes," "leagues of nations."

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L. M.

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Socialism and Freedom. H. J. Laski (Fabian Tract 216, 2d.) is not so useful as the biographical series to our classes. However, it would be useful to plant on a middle-class friend to finish an argument about Socialism destroying freedom.

Social Insurance and the Worker (I.L.P. Information Committee, 2d.) is an analysis of existing schemes of insurance, with constructive criticism and

proposals for the establishment of a unified system. Mr. Cohen says that "workmen want a simple straightforward scheme to provide them with adequate protection against their emergencies." He favours a contributory scheme, but neglects to note the Trade Unions as agencies in Insurance Schemes; and also that with socialised industry the need for insurance at all would be gone.

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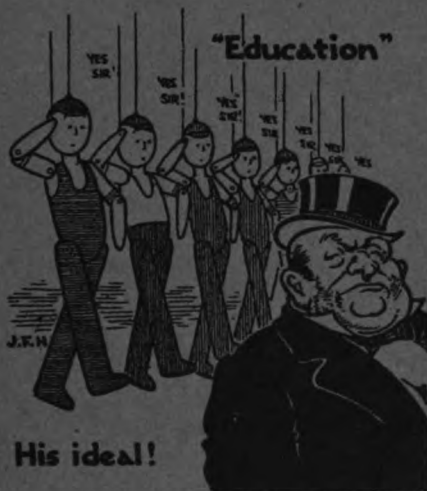
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