

ECONOMIC BASIS of EDUCATION

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I.

The Marxian Conception of Education.

“From the Factory System budded . . . the germ of the education of the future, an education that will, in the case of every child over a given age, *combine productive labor with instruction and gymnastics*¹ not only as one of the methods of adding to the efficiency of production, but *as the only method of producing fully developed human beings.*”² (Italics ours.)

With this observation, Karl Marx, the founder of scientific economy, framed what we may designate as the Marxian conception of education. Along with similar observations, Marx, in merely touching upon the education clause of the Factory Act of 1864 in England, set down squarely the fundamental proposition underlying a scientific view of education. The view expressed by Marx that education is combined with, and integrally related to, productive labor follows from his previous conclusion in Socialist science: viz., institutions of society are reflections of the productive process; the immense superstructure of society finds its roots in the materio-economic conditions of life. “The economic structure of society,” Marx observed in this connection, “is the real basis on which the juridical and political superstructure is raised, and to which definite social forms of thought correspond: in short, the mode of production determines the character of the social, political, and intellectual life generally.”³ He went on to

¹ Gymnastics, relating to disciplinary physical or mental exercises.

² *Capital*, p. 489, Swan Sonnenschein edition.

³ [Ibid., page 54, footnote.—*Editor*]

point out that with a change in the prevailing mode of production and, consequently, of the economic foundation of society, the entire character of that immense superstructure must eventually change to conform with it.

Guided by the light of this concept of historical materialism, the way is clear for an inquiry into the historical evolution of education. Let us bear in mind that we must first examine the productive process of a period—the way in which the means of life were procured—and that, by so doing, we shall have a key to the education of the period.

The materialist conception of history, like fundamental laws in the domain of the biological sciences, *although not formulated* until man reached a comparatively high stage in his development, nevertheless, *always* manifested its existence *in its effects*. The same reasoning holds in other domains. The world was most certainly round before Columbus proved it to be so. The laws of gravitation were “in effect” before Newton framed them. So with Darwin’s theory of biological evolution. Its effects were manifest throughout human development. Its corollaries and kindred laws, too, were “in force” as processes of adjustment and adaptation in the earliest forms of life to be found on this planet. Plant and animal organisms had to adjust themselves to their immediate surroundings in order to survive in the struggle for existence. The “penalty” for not doing so was extinction. In this process of adjustment and adaptation, permanent changes would naturally come about in the structures of these organisms. This accounts for the innumerable species in both the plant and animal kingdoms. With the evolution

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of man we see a similar process of adjustment and adaptation. Throughout the evolutionary climb of man, he had to adjust himself to his environment in an effort to maintain himself. Permanent modifications in his structure came about as a result of this adjustment process. In other words, our hands, our fingers, our feet, our nose, our breathing apparatus, etc., developed as reactions to our environmental surroundings. These changes in structure brought with them *new ways of behaving*. These new ways of behaving brought on further changes in structure in a process that finally evolved MAN. We may justly say, then, that man's various organs developed in response to the need for procuring the material necessities of life. Structurally, man has changed very little, if at all, since his emergence from the animal stage. At that time, man took to using TOOLS. Then it was the changes that took place in his TOOLS—the changes in his tools of production—that caused *new ways of behaving*. Karl Marx pointed to these changes in the tools of production as the propelling force in social evolution, in his materialist conception of history.

The acquisition of *new ways of behaving* is the learning process (a concept of relatively recent formulation, yet as old as man himself). Activity associated with the use of the tools of wealth-production and the experience gained therefrom constitutes education, or, as Marx phrased it, education is the combining of “productive labor with instruction and gymnastics.” Briefly, then, EDUCATION may be defined as LIFE ITSELF.

II.

Education in Primitive Society.

Let us, at this point, sketch the evolution of the human race, through savagery, barbarism and civilization. Let us note that the propelling force in this evolution is the change in the mode of production. Let us note further the increase in cultural and intellectual attainments as the human race develops. And, lastly, let us note that the observation of Marx, that education is the combining of productive labor with instruction and gymnastics, is evident at all stages of this evolutionary process. When the element of productive labor was removed from this combination—as it was at a certain stage—educational disintegration set in.

In broad outline, we may set down as steps in the development of the economic formation of society, (1) Primitive Society, (2) Ancient Society, (3) Feudal Society and (4) Modern Capitalist Society. Each of these systems of society has developed as a result of the particular mode of production then prevailing. By examining these, we examine the LIFE and, consequently, the EDUCATION of the time.

Primitive Society existed from the infancy of the human race through Savagery and Barbarism, up to Civilization. In the lowest stage of Savagery, human beings dwelt in their original habitation in tropical forests. Living in trees (in order to survive the attacks of wild beasts), they subsisted upon fruits, nuts and roots. The young were “educated” by being shown *how to obtain sustenance*. Those who learned their lessons well survived; others were eliminated by the “better educated.” In the Middle Stage of Savagery, where fish

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became the new kind of food, and fire was introduced, children were shown how to obtain and use these “good things in life.” With the invention of the club and spear, and the addition of venison to their food supply, the young were shown how to wield these weapons and obtain venison. That was their education. In the Upper Status of Savagery, with the invention of the bow and arrow and other implements, and with hunting becoming a regular occupation, we find institutions developing corresponding with the particular mode of procuring a livelihood. Education, too, reflected the productive process, and was combined with it.

This “method of education” was a “telling” and a “showing how” method. Children were told and shown how to capture food, make shelter, make tools, escape from enemies, etc., etc.; they were told how to participate in the productive process. The children *wanted* to know how to fish and hunt, because that enabled them to fit into the life in which they found themselves. The “pupils” made immediate use of the knowledge which they learned from their elders. Learning and application were one. Education, then, was a factor in survival, the acquiring of necessary ways of behaving—LIFE itself.

Marx framed his view of education of the future as a process which would “combine productive labor with instruction and gymnastics, not only as one of the methods of adding to the efficiency of production, but as the only method of producing fully developed human beings.” We begin to see the significance of this statement by our examination of the productive process in Savagery and the education of the period. The process of adjustment to the tribe constituted education. Children learned to “get a living” and protect

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themselves *without knowing they were being educated*, and *without their teachers knowing they were educating them*. Learning was a natural process—LIFE itself.

Productive Labor Combined With Instruction.

We have confirmation of the above in savage tribes that exist in various parts of the world today. Dr. Margaret Mead, of the American Museum of Natural History, who spent six months on the island of the Manus, a South Sea savage community, studying primitive education, writes in an article, "Savage Masters of the Sea":

"In a village of lagoon dwellers, people who raised their thatched houses on piles in a water village half a mile from shore, I watched the parents of the Manus tribe train their small children to meet . . . the continual challenge of their precarious water existence . . . managing canoes, hoisting sails, carrying great water pots. . . . Children of three are perfectly at home amid the perils of their water world. They can swim as well as they walk; they can climb up and down the slippery house-piles; . . . [etc.; etc.] The Manus are a busy people, ever up and about their fishing, their trading, their canoe building or voyaging; but they are never too busy to spare the time to properly train their small children. . . ."4

Dr. Mead has brought back many photographs showing the children of the Manus being trained to swim, handle canoes, climb slippery house-piles, etc. Without realizing it, these children of the Manus were being educated in the ways of life, in the prevailing mode

⁴ *Safety Education*, May 1931, page 228.

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of production. Without realizing that they were educating their young, the elder Manus were doing so by combining productive labor with instruction.

We find ourselves, now, on the threshold of Barbarism. In the early and middle periods, with the introduction of pottery, the taming and raising of animals, the use of metals, the cultivation of plants, etc.—with the further development of the productive process—education developed correspondingly.

Another aspect to the education of these primitives began to manifest itself. We shall call it the “intellectual” and “scientific” aspect. This consisted of the passing-on of legends, folk-tales, tribal ceremonies, law, religion, etc. This form of primitive schooling was the means of passing on the cultural accumulations of the tribe. After the daily activities were over, members of the tribe would sit about and exchange interesting experiences of the day. If they had none, they would relate the experience of others, sometimes of ancestors. A good story would bear repetition many times. A combination and multiplication of these became history. In the same way, literature developed. A great deal of knowledge was acquired through curiosity concerning the material world—sun, moon, storms, seasons—and all things which change. Curiosity prompted questions. What? Why? Answers were given. Science developed. Whenever these primitives saw causes, or could think of natural probable causes, they accepted them. If they could not find natural causes, they assigned spiritual ones. In this animistic system of thought is found the origin of religion. All this was part of the educational process of primitives. All this was based squarely on the

prevailing methods of production, on the prevailing ways of life.

Decay of Gentile Society and Rise of Political State.

It is necessary for a better comprehension of the evolution of education that we examine further the general economic conditions that were at the roots of gentile society; that gradually undermined it in the Upper Stage of Barbarism, and finally caused its overthrow, with the establishment of political society.

In the Early and Middle Stages of Barbarism, whatever was produced and used collectively was considered the common property of the group. Work was divided between the two sexes. The men hunted, fished and warred; the women attended to the duties of the household. Tribes that took up the domestication of animals gradually began to produce various products such as milk, meat, skins, furs, wool, woven goods, etc. This provided an extension of the exchange of these products from local to inter-tribal exchange. Exchange in this way became a communal or, what we today would call a social, institution.

Other tribes of this period devoted themselves to horticulture. Cultivation of the land caused a permanent settling down because of an assured food supply. Property and territory became basic elements in society, and gradually ownership of this property and territory was transferred, from the tribe, to the gens, to the households, and finally to individuals. In other words, lands held in common in gentile society became private property in political society.

Weaving and the use of some metals (iron was not yet

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known) provided the industrial activities at this stage of gentile society.

All products—stock, horticultural and handicrafts—were being produced in larger quantities. More was produced than was needed. Exchange of products was assuming larger and larger proportions. More labor was needed to keep up with the constantly increasing demand for goods. *Slaves—captives of war—filled this need.* And let us note, at this point, that, with the introduction of a slave class, society became divided into *two classes*: exploiters and exploited. This division of social labor was extremely significant in its effects upon the education of the period. We shall soon see.

Gentilism—the social organization generated in primitive society—was passing through a period of decay. The materio-economic basis of society was being revolutionized. A new social organism was being generated within the womb of gentile society—the Political State.

The growth of this new social organism received impetus during the Upper Stage of Barbarism. The use of iron brought about large-scale agriculture. Handicraftsmen were provided with better tools. Progress became the order of the day. The town developed, private wealth increased rapidly, agriculture and handicrafts improved their methods in production, private property became the common form, the monogamous family evolved, the Political State was taking form.

With property and territory forming the basis of a new social system, we find a new, and, up to this time, an unknown element arising in society. With the individual or private ownership of property and territory becoming

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common, an exclusive element, that of aristocracy, or a ruling class, arose in society—something entirely foreign to gentile society. With this arose a new struggle in human existence—the class struggle—a struggle between the owners and the producers of wealth, between the aristocracy and the slave class.

III.

Education in Ancient Society Divorced from Productive Process.

Now, what happened to education? How did this far-reaching economic transformation of society affect the education of the period? The changed mode of production developed a new social form. We should see a newly developed education process. What was it?

Up to the time of the introduction of a slave class, the education process was *the productive process*. With vastly improved tools of production, a portion of the human race could afford to call a halt to self-enslavement; *but only at the expense of an enslaved class*.

“Time is the room of human development”⁵ and the aristocracy demanded time at this point to expand along artistic and scientific lines, to take part in public affairs, to participate in war, to develop itself physically, and to occupy itself with “leisure activities” in general. It could make this demand for leisure because a new producing class—a slave class—was performing the greater part of the socially necessary manual labor.

We turn, now, to ancient Greece as a typical example of this second great step in the economic development of society. All that has been said above concerning the decay of gentile institutions, and the rise of the political State, applies to ancient Greece, to Greece of the heroic period.

Ancient Greece bequeathed to us philosophy, art, literature and the scientific spirit. These intellectual and

⁵ Karl Marx, *Value, Price and Profit*.

scientific contributions were made possible because of the leisure time of a small number of people. Only this small portion of the populace—the aristocracy—could take part in what was then newly conceived as the education process. Slavery reduced all forms of manual labor to a contemptible position (even though a large part of the free, but soon-to-be-enslaved, citizenry was engaged in manual occupations). This was reflected in the education of the period. *Only mental and recreational activities were considered respectable.*⁶ Productive labor was “dropped from the curriculum.”

Education thus became separate and apart from productive labor. School now became a *place* rather than a social relationship. The higher schools of ancient Greece became places for speeches, lectures and discussions. “Respectable” Greek youths were trained to take part in the practical duties of the newly exalted political State, in the civil and political affairs of the day. New educational institutions developed: The Assembly, in which the Greek youth listened to debates, speeches, etc.; the Theater, in which he saw some of the greatest dramas produced by the human mind; the Olympic Games, at which he saw the best that could be produced in athletics, art, oratory, drama, poetry, etc., etc. In the foregoing are seen the beginnings of developments that find their modern derivations in Schools of Medicine, Schools of Philosophy, Schools of Art, etc., etc.

The elementary education of the period was also divorced from productive labor. Attention was given to

⁶ It is interesting, in this connection, to point out that the dictionary meaning of the Greek word for “school” is “spare time, leisure, rest, ease.” Its secondary meaning is “that in which leisure is employed.”

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the training of the body, also to the training of the mind, with special emphasis on intellectual processes. Physical training was given in the palestra, an open-air gymnasium; mental training was given in the didascaleum, a music (cultural) school. Mental tedium was relieved by alternating work between the palestra and the music school.

All this training was given to prepare the youth of Ancient Greece for participation in the affairs of State. *That was the aim of the education of the day.* In time, with further social development, with the gradual dissolution of Grecian society, education, too, began to decline. It no longer aimed to prepare for the practical duties of political life.

Literature, oratory, composition, grammar—formerly studied as means of fitting into political life—became ends in themselves. A desire for perfection of *form*, without reference to the *real meaning and content of things*, manifested itself. To the child, this formalism was unattractive, unnatural. His interest naturally lagged. To revive it, corporal punishment was introduced. We want to stress this point. It is important. Up to the advent of civilization, education combined socially useful work (real, concrete, life situations) with instruction, to produce fully developed human beings. With the new departure brought on by civilization, pupils were presented, not with life situations, but with abstract, formal and unreal situations. Corporal punishment became necessary with this new development to assure constant “attention” and “application” of the child. Real, concrete, life situations did not demand this external and artificial force to hold the child’s interest.

In Roman society at the same stage of development, a similar direction was taken in social, and hence in educational, developments. The aim of Roman education was to produce a loyal Roman prepared for the practical duties of Roman life. In its early stage, it was largely a family education, in which the child was taught by his parents. Later, the *ludus*, a primary school, was set up, in which children learned reading, writing and counting. After the conquest of Greece by the Romans, the Grecian educational influence spread throughout Roman society. But, with the decline of Roman society, education declined, and formalism set in.

The main line in educational evolution had been diverted by the developments of civilization. We see a complete withdrawal from the work, play and general busy-ness of life—the education of primitive society. We shall soon see that this departure continued as the main line in education in feudal and modern capitalist society. It is *inherent* in class-divided society and therefore is destined to remain with it until class divisions are finally scrapped—cast into the refuse can of history.

The civilization of Greece and Rome found itself in a state of disintegration. Exploitation of the working (slave) class became more intense. Despotism set in. The proletariat of the period were being ground down under its iron heel. They were sinking deeper and deeper into hopeless poverty. Barbarian invasions gave impetus to the general dissolution of the vast Roman Empire. Life on earth became unbearable. Relief from these intolerable conditions was sought. A great vitalizing force was needed.

IV.

Feudal Education Identified with Church.

The desperate social conditions at the close of antiquity paved the way for the appearance of this vitalizing force, CHRISTIANITY, a religion for the proletariat. Since life on earth was so unbearable, Christianity spread the doctrine that earthly existence was merely a preparation for an after-life—for a life in another, more pleasant world—in which rewards and punishment were to be meted out according to one's conduct on earth. Christianity, thus, brought hope and inspiration to the millions of slaves who had given up all hope under the empire. It was the poor and downtrodden in society who became adherents of the Christian religion until it was turned into organized religion and embodied in the Church.

Thenceforth, and until recent times, education was identified with the Church. Pagan culture—the literature, art, philosophy and religion of ancient Rome and Greece—was anathema. As the school was the stronghold of this pagan culture, it gradually became regarded as an enemy to the Church. Education approved by the pagan—literature, art, science, philosophy, bodily training, etc.—was dropped; moral training and religious instruction—omitted by the pagan—were emphasized. Schools were organized by the Church to spread the faith. Cathedral and monastic schools divided between them the field of education during the entire medieval period. The monasteries became the publishing houses, the libraries, the centers of literary activity, and the schools, during the Middle Ages. Reading and writing (Latin)—essential to the

study of the sacred books—singing and reckoning were the subjects taught. Here “the seven liberal arts” were introduced, first in bare rudimentary form, developing throughout the Middle Ages.

Mention has been made of barbarian invasions. The conquered territory of the empire was divided up by these barbarian warriors. They, in time, became medieval knights. In the further course of time, these knights developed into the medieval nobility. Thus, we see that feudal society, in its infancy, developed three great “estates”: the serfs, the nobles and the clergy. The nobles had their particular education with religious leanings. The clergy had its education. The serfs were practically neglected, except for certain religious teachings, couched in obedience.

It is not the purpose of this treatise to go into too much detail concerning the history of education throughout this and subsequent periods. It should be noted, however, that education remained separate and apart from the productive process—with the producers eliminated from established cultural pursuits. Education remained an artificial and life-less process. Formalism was its basis.

It should also be noted that throughout this entire period, the wage-working class evolved. The productive process in which the working class was, and is yet, engaged has built up an industrial machine that today is able to provide the good things of life for all in abundance. This process is in reality the “educational” force that has organized that same working class. This industrial organization, built up by the working class, will prove to be the means of its emancipation from an enslavement of thousands of years. It will be the

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working class, in performing its historical mission, that will prove itself to be the “educated” portion of society, in that it will be the only class in society able to bring order and sense out of the existing chaos.

The thirteenth century was a period of remarkable progress in human history. Christianity had spread throughout Western Europe. Trade and commerce were stimulated, cities grew. The Crusades accelerated this growth. The educational movement, logically enough, took on a reform aspect. Nothing else was possible under the then existing social conditions.

We shall try to cover, very briefly, some of the outstanding reform movements in education from that time onward.

Note that the Church preempted the field of education. The order of gray friars, founded by St. Francis of Assisi (1212), and the order of black friars, founded by St. Dominic (1217), worked among the masses preaching the gospel and “awakening spirituality” among the faithful. The Franciscan and Dominican Orders were soon in control of the universities and higher education in general. The masses, however, were denied education.

During the Renaissance, the tyrants of the cities established court schools to train young nobles for political and social life. One of the most characteristic was that founded by the Prince of Mantua. Vittorino da Feltre, a scholar, was in control. The educational ideals of Greece and Rome provided the basis for his school. One innovation (reform) was the attempt to introduce the “interest” of the pupils in their studies (where active interest was not possible) and eliminate the harsh discipline prevalent in that day. As with other reform

movements, reaction and formalism soon gained control.

The Brethren of the Common Life attempted to combat the ignorance of the lower classes by establishing schools, based on the New Learning, throughout northern Europe. They frowned upon the rigid and formal methods of the established schools. Their method was to spread the gospel. Erasmus, a product of their schools, became a noted educator. He also attempted to reform the existing schools by introducing “interest” as a motivating force in learning.

We must note the futility of these reform movements. Interest cannot be introduced artificially. It is only through the introduction of *socially useful work as the basis of a curriculum that real interest can be aroused*. During the fourteenth century, new economic forces sprang into life, which did for a time vitally affect education. With the increase of commerce and trading, and the growth of science, inventions, discoveries, etc., a burgher class arose composed of merchants and guild masters. This class was distinct from the nobles, clergy and serfs. They were, in fact, the germ of the modern capitalist class. Their education provided elementary instruction as a basis for the industrial education received by the apprentices in the guilds. Their schools were known as guild schools—and later as burgher schools. Even these schools were under religious influence.

V.

Educational Currents of Early Capitalism.

With the dawn of capitalism during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, new social forces appeared. The Catholic Church had become an instrument for the exploitation of the entire world. The various social layers of the period gathered together to fight this common enemy. Martin Luther, a monk, precipitated this revolt by protesting against the use of [“Letters of Indulgence.”](#) Hence—the Protestant Reformation and consequently far-reaching educational reforms. Luther, in his “letters” and sermons advocated State-supported schools, compulsory education for boys *and girls*, education in the native tongue (not in Latin, the language of the Catholic Church), and *a trade to accompany education*. However, his reforms were too advanced for his day and fell short of their desired mark. Here, again, reaction and formalism resulted. In fact, Luther’s religious and educational ideals became equally as formal as those from which he revolted.

During this period, the Catholic Church was very active in combating the spread of Protestantism. Their teaching orders appeared all over the world. Their influence was profound. The Order of Jesuits (1534) reflected the organization and efficiency of its parent, the Church, in spreading Catholic teachings. Many reforms were introduced into their schools, among them competition among pupils, corporal punishment (inflicted by others than Jesuit teachers), repetition and memorization in studies, almost exclusive devotion to Latin, formalism in method, etc., etc. Elementary

education was well organized for the Catholics by the Institute of the Christian Brothers (1684).

All these movements claimed to oppose formalism in education, but in vain. They all agreed that education was to prepare for the realities of life, but none of them was able to rise above the social-economic system prevailing. It was *that* which dictated their educational postures.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Milton, Montaigne, Mulcaster and Bacon stood out as educational reformers. By way of rebelling against the formalism prevalent in education, these “realists,” like others before them, advocated “natural methods,” “interest,” etc. They were not, and could not be, clear as to what these reforms implied. Their reforms were in harmony with sound and scientific principles of learning, but only the course of social evolution could bring about their realization. This, they did not know.

Comenius and Locke worked along similar reformistic lines. Schemes of organization were devised which today form the basis of educational systems throughout the world. Rousseau, of pre-French Revolution fame, influenced by the social and political movement of his day, advocated a utopian form of natural education, in which the child was to be brought into contact with experience. All teaching was to be done along *natural* lines. The *child*, rather than subject-matter, was to be the center about which the school revolved. Interest in nature study, the A B C of science, was encouraged. This was the starting point of science in the school curriculum during the nineteenth century. Pestalozzi continued the work of Rousseau. He experimented with industrial education and developed new methods of teaching,

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teacher training, etc. Herbart and Froebel were two other educational reformers of the nineteenth century, whose theories have influenced content and methods of teaching, particularly in the United States.

The educational theories of Pestalozzi, Herbart and Froebel were reflections of nineteenth century capitalism. Modern capitalist society was in full swing. All that was *established* became lawful, good, orderly, right, sacred, God-ordained and *fixed for all time*. Teaching methods became *fixed*. Education became a process of learning “fixed-in-advance subject-matter” in fixed, formal ways. This fixity was reflected in Herbart’s main contribution to educational method, entitled: “The Formal Recitation,” or “Five Steps of Formal Recitation,” a FIXED method of teaching. The Herbartian influence reached the United States in the early nineties of the last century, brought here by De Garmo, and Charles and Frank McMurry, American educators. The traditional schools in America, today, continue to use the Herbartian method, essentially. Consequently, extreme formalism exists in our educational system.

Productive Process and Education in Revolutionary Period.

About the time of the American Revolution of 1776, and thereafter for a brief period, education in the United States assumed *real* and *natural* proportions. Agriculture and simple domestic handicrafts formed the general groundwork of production. The institutions of capitalist society began to take definite form with the inception of the republic in 1787, in response to the

needs of the productive process. The form of government, the education, the press, the literature—all institutions—grew out of, and with, that elementary productive process, furnishing impetus to its further development.

The child of that period found two aspects to his education. The *informal* aspect was his *home life*, in which he performed *useful functions* as a useful worker in the family productive process. He planned, created, constructed and DID things, cooperating with the other members of his family in producing the material necessities of life. The *formal* aspect to his education consisted of the training he received in the “little red school house.” Here he learned the “three R’s,” the necessary tools to carry on his work in the family productive process. To be able to read, write and figure was a requirement for all in that mode of production. The simple elementary subjects of the school curriculum were, naturally enough, reflections of that productive process. The reading primers of the day described the activities of “the miller, the baker and candlestick maker.” Here again Marx’s contention that education should “combine productive labor with instruction and gymnastics, not only as one of the methods of adding to the efficiency of production, but as the only method of producing fully developed human beings,” fits in with the facts of life.

However, over a period of one hundred and fifty years, the mode of production underwent a complete change, from a simple elementary form to a complex advanced form, from an individualistic handicrafts civilization to a highly developed interdependent machine civilization. The family productive process gave way to modern

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industrial methods, and, by so doing, eliminated the child from production. Along with that was eliminated one-half of the education of the child—the informal activities of his agrarian and simple handicrafts life. *The formal schooling was retained.* Other subjects were added to the curriculum. The entire system of education was patched up—reformed—until the school system of today resulted, a large-scale reproduction of the “little red school house”—a mass education system, completely formalized.

Is Child-Labor an Educational Force?

We have pointed to the fact that with the development of modern industrial methods, the child was eliminated from production—i.e., from the family productive process of a century ago. The question may arise at this time: Is not child-labor in the factory system an educational force, since it allows the child to make use of his school instruction and at the same time engage in the productive process?

Marx answered that question. He pointed out that when the capitalist system was in its infancy—

“the factory children, although receiving only one half the education of the regular day scholars, yet learnt quite as much and often more. ‘This can be accounted for by the simple fact that, with only being at school for one half of the day, they are always fresh, and nearly always ready and willing to receive instruction. The system on which they work, half manual labor, and half school renders each employment a rest and a relief to the other; consequently, both are far more congenial to the child, than would be the case were he kept constantly at one. . . .’ [However, with the development of modern

industrial methods] a great part of the children employed in modern factories and manufactures are, from their earliest years, riveted to the most simple manipulations, and exploited for years, without being taught a single sort of work that would afterwards make them of use, even in the same manufactory or factory . . . [and with the intensification of exploitation] the tension and the amount of labor-power expended become monstrous, and especially so in the case of the children who are condemned to this torture. . . . [Furthermore] ‘To qualify them for the work which they have to do, they require no intellectual training; there is little room in it for skill, and less for judgment.’”⁷

In short, child labor in the factory system, because of the nature of capitalist exploitation, becomes a process of degradation rather than education.

Conventional Education Reflects Capitalism in Infancy.

However, to resume, conventional educational methods have neither grown out of, nor do they keep step with, modern industrial methods. Let us illustrate:

Reading primers used in many conventional schools betray the fact that our educational system reflects capitalist society in its infancy. In a first year reading primer, we find a story of “The Cat and the Mouse.” We shall examine this story to make our point clear. A cat bit off a mouse’s tail and promised to return it if she were given some milk. The mouse asked a cow for milk, who promised it, in return for some hay. The mouse then asked a farmer for some hay, who promised to give some to it “if you will get me some bread.” The mouse then

⁷ *Capital*, pages 488, 490, 491, Swan Sonnenschein edition.

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went to the baker, who demanded flour. The mouse went to the miller to get flour, and said:

“Please, Miller, give me some flour.
I will give the flour to the baker.
The baker will give me some bread.
I will give the farmer the bread.
The farmer will give me some hay.
I will give the hay to the cow.
The cow will give me some milk.
I will give the milk to the cat.
Then the cat will give me back my tail.”

Another story, entitled “The Little Gray Pony,” tells of a man who had a little gray pony who lost his shoe. He ran to the blacksmith:

“Blacksmith! Blacksmith!
I have come to you
My little gray pony
Has lost a shoe.”

The blacksmith had no coal to heat his iron, and the man ran to the storekeeper, the farmer, the miller, and finally the miner, in order to get—

“. . . some coal
The iron to heat,
That the blacksmith may shoe
My pony’s feet.”

Both the above stories point undeniably to the truth of the assertion that reading primers used in our school system today reflect a productive process which included the farmer, the baker, the miller, the blacksmith, etc., etc.—useful workers of a century and more ago. The

reading primer reflects an antiquated school system, which, in turn, reflects an antiquated social system.

Socially useful activities are practically unknown today in our large city schools.⁸ Formal, dull, antiquated and half-useless “tool subjects” are drilled into the child, apart from their meaning-connections, as “education.” Where to apply the “tools” is the question confronting the child. Unable to find the answer, he is forced to lead an abnormal life. The formal aspect to his education, essential to the learning process in colonial days, has changed *from a form of development* of his creative powers *into a fetter*. The child continually strives to burst forth from this formalism. This striving manifests itself in the restlessness of the youth of today. School life is monotonous. This monotony not only wastes the time, health and energy of children, but also adds to the burdens of teachers. It is the bane of the uninformed teacher’s existence.

Children, today, are not actively interested in outworn productive methods any more than in outworn toys. Now, it is the airplane, the radio, the locomotive, the steamship, the factory and other modern developments that are of real interest to the child. It is in modern

⁸ This is so notwithstanding the introduction of special vocational subjects (such as wood-working, metal-working, etc.) into the traditional school organization in recent years. The introduction of vocational subjects does not alter the fundamental subject-matter basis of the traditional school. Socially useful work (productive labor combined with instruction and gymnastics) must become the *basis* of the educational system before a fundamental (revolutionary) change is effected. However, the fact that vocational education has been introduced at all is a tribute to the efficacy of productive labor as an educational instrument.

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industrial life that he finds the *action* that every normal child craves.

Naturally enough, disintegration has set into our school system, with its usual dire consequences. Petty thievery, disregard for law and order, and a certain “wildness” prevail throughout the system. Teachers are at their wit’s end seeking solutions.

VI.

Reformers Cannot Reconstruct Education Within Framework of Capitalism.

As in the past, educational reformers are engaged in the futile task of making a decayed system operate. They recognize the evils of the education of today, but they are unable to see whence they flow. They recognize effects, but not the causes of those effects. These reformers, like those of old, claim that education fails to stress reality. They, too, are attempting to devise methods with an eye to obtaining the “interest” of the child. Professor John Dewey, eminent twentieth century educator in the United States, has as his fundamental premise that “the school cannot be a preparation for life except as it reproduces the typical conditions of social life.” Professor William H. Kilpatrick, of Columbia University, follows the same line of thought. They attack the traditional methods of education, and propose all sorts of *reforms*. Professor Dewey proposes the “problem method”; Professor Kilpatrick, the “project method.” Professor Harold Rugg, also of Columbia University, proposes (as the sub-title to one of his publications indicates) “social reconstruction *through* educational reconstruction,” not realizing that his cart is placed before his horse. All these educators are blind to the fact that their reforms are impossible of realization within capitalist society.

Until society is reorganized along the lines laid down by social evolution, school life cannot reproduce “the typical conditions of social life.” To institute the reforms along educational lines necessary to reproduce those conditions *demands* a complete reorganization of the social system. This will come about only after the

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accomplishment of the impending Social Revolution. Marxists reverse Dr. Rugg's theory in order to set it on a firm scientific basis, and make it read: "*Educational reconstruction through social reconstruction.*"

Some of the more zealous among the educational "revolutionaries" were forced, by the logic of events, to come to the conclusion that educators would have to take a more active part in "reconstructing" society. These organized "social frontier" reform groups with a view to pointing the way to a "new social order." Professor George S. Counts of Teachers College, Columbia University, in a pamphlet entitled, *Dare the School Build a New Social Order?* wrote:

"We have a haunting feeling that we were born for better things and that the nation itself is falling far short of its powers. The fact that other groups refuse to deal boldly and realistically with the present situation does not justify the teachers of the country in their customary policy of hesitation and equivocation.

"The times are literally crying for a new vision of American destiny. The teaching profession, or at least its progressive elements, should eagerly grasp the opportunity which the fates have placed in their hands."

The dean of Teachers College expressed doubt as to whether the "revolutionaries" on his staff could attain their objective under the existing social set-up. We reproduce extracts from the New York *Times* report of his observations on February 27, 1936:

"At the dinner tonight of delegates from Teachers College, Columbia University, Dean William F. Russell expressed doubt of the success of efforts of educators to reform the world. Even the idealistic plans of some of his

own faculty, he implied, were doomed to be 'twisted by the money changers to their own ends.' He mentioned the social frontier group, which is headed by Professor George S. Counts.

"I know some clever investors in New York today who have representatives in Soviet Russia, and I think they are planning to invest part of their fortunes there,' he said. 'I know that our most radical reformers have ideals pure and of a high purpose. Our social frontier group in their attack on capital and privilege think that they approach the millennium if they are like Mirabeau and Robespierre, like Thomas Paine, Jefferson and Madison.

"This very people whom they are now attacking, or their successors, will flock behind them to gather up the spoils where they see there is any prospect of success. The cormorant brings back to the boat the fish that he has caught and cannot eat because the ring around his neck prevents him from swallowing it. Reformers have always been trained cormorants for the predatory.

"I wish no one to mistake my position,' he continued. 'I oppose no effort to achieve social justice. As keenly as any one else I wish to see government improved, poverty decreased, disease diminished, security abound, opportunity equal, justice nation-wide, war at an end, and peace on earth and good-will amongst men. I wish to do my part in achieving these ends, and as a schoolmaster, I hope to see them gained in part through education. But I know that these are no new ideas. I know that reform has been tried over and over again and never has there been complete success.'"

Marxian Socialists have pointed out for a century that there is no specially gifted portion of the working class of the nation that will guide us into a new social order. The Socialist movement is "the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority," and the educators of the nation as

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an integral portion of the working class would constitute but one section of the working class in its effort to build a new social order. Educators must learn that as “social reconstructionists” their place is in the Socialist Labor Party, where they must urge the working class as a class to build the Socialist Industrial Union to take, hold and operate the industries, schools, hospitals—the means of production—and operate them for the benefit of all under the Socialist Industrial Republic of Labor.

Schools Today Are Capitalist Institutions.

So long as the capitalist system survives, the profit motive compels the capitalist class to behave in a prescribed manner toward the education of the workers. What is the capitalists’ motive in providing education? The vast majority of the workers must be trained to serve as automata, tenders of machines, etc. For these, the traditional elementary education is considered sufficient. It prepares them to follow simple directions, to obey simple orders, to punch a time-clock, or to tend machinery. A few workers receive secondary-school training, while still fewer enter the colleges and institutions of higher learning, to be trained as specialists. These latter become the engineers, chemists, inventors, managers, etc., who are also necessary cogs in the industrial set-up. In short, the motive of the capitalist class in providing education is simply to train workers for industry. When they have “overproduced” “educated” workers, they shut down the institutions that grind them out.

The capitalist class would have us glorify their “philanthropy,” when they “bequeath” large sums

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(taken out of the surplus value produced by the workers) for education. When we examine this “philanthropy” we see it as a permanent advertisement for the individual capitalists. The *Carnegie* Institute, *Duke* University, *Rockefeller* Institute, *Drexel* University, and other schools on which the names of “philanthropic” capitalists are inscribed in granite serve as such advertisements.

Then, again, it is known that advertisers are able to determine policies. This is true of newspapers and magazines, as well as of institutions of learning. To preserve the capitalist system, the schools must deal *dishonestly* with those fields of learning which, if absorbed by the workers, would pave the way for the abolition of the capitalist system. History, Sociology and Economics fall into this category. Marxism is banned from our institutions of learning. In fact, it borders upon the criminal to hear, read or speak Marxism within their walls. However, the profit motive forces the educational institutions to deal *honestly* with those fields of learning that must be tapped in order to turn out profits. Physics, Chemistry, Geography, Biology, Arithmetic, Spelling, and others fall into this latter category.

In the words of that great Marxian scholar and Socialist educator, Daniel De Leon: “Lecture rooms on mineralogy, on astronomy, on the differential calculus, on law, on electricity, on anatomy, on all of these and similar subjects, are not liable to become centers from which mental corruption radiates. True, there may be, as there often is, corruption in the appointment of the professors in these, as in all other, branches—but the corruption ends there. The reason is obvious. *There is no motive for misdirecting instruction.* [Italics ours.] There

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may be lack of up-to-dateness; there may be even ignorance; a set purpose to corrupt and mislead is not likely.

“It is otherwise with regard to the social sciences. Some indirectly, most of them directly, bear upon the class struggle. Indeed, it would go hard to pick out one branch of the social sciences that is not begotten of the palpitations of the class struggle. Where the class struggle palpitates, material interests are at stake. *It is an established principle that the material interests of a ruling class, in part, promote immorality. To promote incapacity to reason upon the domain of sociology is one of the corrupt practices of ruling class material interests.*”⁹ (Italics ours.)

And there we have it! The schools today are capitalist institutions, managed with a view to preserving capitalism, with all that that implies. If the material interests of the capitalist class require that education be misdirected, or that incapacity to reason be promoted, those material interests must be served. Educational reformers who desire to “reorganize” the educational system within the framework of capitalism must be prepared to demonstrate how their patchwork can maintain or increase profits. With that in mind, we again warn the would-be educational “revolutionaries” that educational reconstruction must be preceded by social reconstruction. Capitalism, the system of wage slavery, the system of production for profit, must be destroyed!

⁹ Daniel De Leon, *Marxian Science and the Colleges*, New York Labor News publishers.

VII.

Soviet Schools Afflicted by Stalinist Corruption.

In the early days of the revolution in Soviet Russia, education was undoubtedly inspired by, and largely directed in the spirit of, Marxian science. The educational system reflected the developing industrial system; it followed from, and was shaped by, the productive process; it combined “productive labor with instruction and gymnastics” in conformity with the Marxian conception of education. Russian educators introduced the “reforms” of twentieth century educators. School in Russia reproduced “the typical conditions of social life,” since school in Russia was life itself. “Problems” and “projects” proposed by American educational reformers became realities in the schools of Soviet Russia as the problems and projects of Russian life. “Interest” of the child became a real, vital, throbbing thing, and corporal punishment and artificial driving forces were unnecessary to hold the child’s attention to the life activities in which he engaged. It was apparent to students of the Soviet educational system that school in Russia was not merely a place, nor a room for recitations, but LIFE ITSELF. American educators—among them Professors Dewey and Kilpatrick—after visiting Russia to study its educational system, returned with unqualified praise of the system being developed there. They observed that school not merely reproduced “the typical conditions of social life” (Dewey), but that “school is life itself” (Kilpatrick). They saw “their theories” in operation, even though they were unable to draw the logical conclusion that Socialism (or

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the Socialist premise) is the only basis upon which their modern educational theories could be placed in operation.

However, just as students of the science of Marxism lamented over the inconsistencies, deviations and departures from Marxian principle in the building of the proletarian dictatorship, so did students of the Marxian conception of education note some rather strange observations and indications of erroneous notions of Soviet educators. For example, Albert P. Pinkevitch, president of the Second State University of Moscow, in his preface to the American edition to *The New Education in the Soviet Republic* (1929), stated that “. . . the mere enumeration of the names of Hall, Dewey, Russell, Monroe, Judd, Thorndike, Kilpatrick, and many others, known to every educator in our country, is a sufficient reminder of the tremendous influence which American education has exerted upon us.” To place this observation in its proper perspective, and to get its full flavor, let us paraphrase slightly the observation of John Reed that “Premier Lenin is a great admirer of Daniel De Leon, considering him the greatest of modern Socialists—the only one who has added anything to Socialist thought since Marx,” and read it as follows: Premier Lenin is a great admirer of Wilson, Thomas, Taft, Harding Coolidge, Roosevelt, De Leon, and many others, considering them the greatest, etc., etc. Pinkevitch’s “tribute” to American educators, whose educational theories were as widely separated as the poles, and of several hues and shades of conservatism and “radicalism,” just didn’t make sense!

During the past decade Marxian Socialists have come to realize that Soviet Russia under Stalin’s leadership

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has betrayed the international proletariat, has basely corrupted the principles of Marxism, and has forsaken its goal of Socialism—despite lip-service rendered it. And just as Stalinist policies were formulated in disregard of the interests of the working class, so were Soviet educational policies formulated in disregard of the interests of the children of Russia. Soviet education has departed from the Marxian principle. Where in the early days of the Soviet Republic the “project” and “socially useful work” were the *basis* of the educational system, by 1935 Professor Pinkevitch was able to write in his *Science and Education in the U.S.S.R.* that:

“Until quite recently, the American ‘Project’ method was extensively applied in Soviet Schools, their entire work being based on the principles of ‘socially useful work.’ Many Soviet educationalists thought at the time that education should consist of the fulfilment of a certain number of ‘socially useful projects,’ and that only in the course of fulfilling these projects should the children obtain knowledge about other subjects. In 1931 this method of work was sharply condemned by the Communist Party and the Government. The Project Method is no longer adopted in the Soviet Schools. This does not mean, however, that socially useful work, as such, has been condemned. The schools still engage in socially useful activity, but care is taken not to overburden the children with this work in such a way that it interferes with their studies.”

The schools in Soviet Russia have adopted the traditional, conventional methods of capitalist educational systems, with a dash of “socially useful work” thrown in—“*but care is taken not to overburden the children with this work in such a way that it*

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interferes with their studies”! Confirmation of the contention that Soviet Russia has returned to the traditional capitalist educational methods is provided by Professor Pinkevitch in the same work when he admits that “The chief method of instruction in the school is the lesson. In the decision passed by the Central Committee of the Communist Party on August 25, 1932, it was strongly emphasized that the lesson should be carried out with a definite group of pupils according to a definite time-table; . . . At the end of the year examinations are held.”¹⁰ And to complete this process of degeneration, Pinkevitch informs us that “. . . the program of the party puts the chief stress on the *political tasks* of the school. The Soviet school is a vehicle for the principles of communism [Soviet conception!]” (Italics ours). Paraphrasing De Leon: It is an established principle that the political interests of a ruling bureaucracy, in part, promote immorality. To promote incapacity to reason upon the domain of sociology, by teaching the Soviet conception of communism, is one of the corrupt practices of the ruling bureaucracy of Soviet Russia.

Soviet Russia, which, for a time, had assumed world leadership in the building of Socialism, departed from Marxian principles and dashed the hopes of those who looked to it for inspiration. Soviet Russia, which, for a time, had assumed world leadership in the application of Marxism in its educational system, departed from Marxian principles and dashed the hopes of those educators who looked to it for inspiration.

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¹⁰ Shades of Herbartianism in the Soviet schools! See page 24.

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Educational reconstructionists in America must look to the program of the Socialist Labor Party, as the only possible way of accomplishing their objective, by first educating and organizing the working class to abolish capitalism and inaugurate the Socialist Industrial Republic. Then, in the natural course of events, they may establish “new schools,” and introduce their “progressive,” which is to say Marxian, theories. To accomplish the “educational revolution,” they must first accomplish the impending social revolution. Only Socialist society—in which all these sources of society will be at the disposal of educational activity—will give rise to a system of education that springs from Socialist philosophy. Only a new social order, reflecting the new highly industrialized system of production, can serve as a basis for a Socialist system of education.

It will be a revival, in a higher form, of the educational principle of primitive society.

Capitalism's Professional Educators and the War¹¹

“He who would look for the revolutionary youth of America must look for it in America's revolutionary class—the workingman; he who would look for the real colleges and universities of the land must look to the academics in which the workingman is trained—the classconscious trade union and the Socialist Labor Party. . . .

“The real American universities and colleges of today are not the scattered buildings said to be of learning, and that go by these names. Infinitely of vaster proportions and reared upon national bases are the universities and colleges that are today kindling the flame needed to light the torch for the next further step in civilization. . . .”

—*De Leon.*

Daniel De Leon, foremost Socialist educator, repeatedly stressed the point that “material interests” are the determining factor in shaping the views of capitalism's professional educators. As stated by the present National Secretary of the Socialist Labor Party, Arnold Petersen: “Patiently, brilliantly, with profound understanding and insight, he [De Leon] exposed the falsity of the teachings of the capitalist professors, tore off their masks of pretended learning and scholarship, reducing them to their real status of sycophants and servitors of property interests.” The present international slaughter, and the reaction of capitalist educators thereto, confirm the Party's estimate of them as servitors of the capitalist class and its system of private property.

From Yale University's Professor Thurman Arnold, who asks: “Do you mean that, from an economic point of

¹¹ [Aaron M. Orange, *Weekly People*, August 30, 1941.—*Editor*]

view, it's a grand war?" to Columbia University's Professor Rexford Tugwell, who replies: "Yes, if we don't get into it." From Harvard University's President James Bryant Conant, one of the first to call for compulsory peacetime conscription and "all-out aid to Britain," and one of the first to drop the tag "short of war," who urged war because he was convinced "that if Hitler wins, men will have no more freedom than horses have now" (while he helps prepare a domestic brand of Hitlerism for the United States), to Dartmouth University's President Ernest Hopkins, who states: ". . . each student should explore the possibility of combining with his major interest at Dartmouth—which must be primarily a liberal education—some training in elective courses which would qualify him for maximum usefulness in the present emergency should his college career be interrupted." From the "professors" of the Henry Ford type, characterized as "an industrialist of progressive inclinations" because of his establishment of several schools for training mechanics, one of which can accommodate 10,000 student mechanics, another with a capacity of 3,000 students, and a third with an enrollment of 4,000, to the educational theorists of the Professors Dewey, Rugg and Kilpatrick brand, who are framing post-war plans for educational reconstruction *under capitalism*. All of capitalism's professional educators, with an eye on material interests, either whooped it up for war, adjusted their curricula to include war-training and "defense" courses, or are planning post-war "social reconstruction through educational reconstruction[!]." All of capitalism's professional educators are stamping themselves as faithful watchdogs of the capitalist system.

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We need not dwell at any great length upon the point that these servitors of property interests proceed from the impossible premise that capitalism must be preserved. And therein lies their Waterloo. The Socialist Labor Party warns that *capitalism must be destroyed*, its collapse being inevitable in any event, and urges the workers of the nation to enroll in the “university of the working class,” drink deep at its fountain of Socialist principles, and take an active part in the building of the Socialist Industrial Republic of Labor.

Arnold, the “social science” professor of Yale Law School, now serves as assistant to the Attorney General of the United States in the New Deal Administration. Tugwell, the professor of economics at Columbia University, now serves as the Governor of Porto Rico, a West Indies island possession of the United States, considered a keypoint in the American “defense” set-up. Conant, the professor of chemistry and president of Harvard University (who manufactured poison gas, [Lewisite](#), in the first World War), now serves as chairman of the National Defense Research Committee, mobilizing the physical scientists of the nation for the discovery and perfection of more destructive weapons of war. Hopkins, the business man turned president of a “liberals arts” college, Dartmouth, served as sub-chairman of the now defunct Office of Production Management, assisting in the regimentation of industry and placing it on a wartime basis. All these, and others, are engaged in an “all-out” campaign to preserve the system which has so well kept them. With all due respect to whatever contributions any or all of them may make in the academic world (more specifically in the field of the physical and “exact” sciences), they tread

upon soil with which they are obviously unfamiliar when they enter the domain of political economy. Some ignore the effects, and the cause of the effects of the collapsing capitalist system; some recognize the effects but attempt to deal with them within the framework of the system. Some, bewildered by events they do not understand, attempt to reshape their institutions of learning to conform with the ever-shifting social scene. The Arnolds, Tugwells and Conants have rushed to Washington, D.C., to do their bit. The Hopkinses have remained in their academic precincts, and, fearing that perhaps the “liberal arts” curriculum would come out second best in competition with universities offering technological courses for “defense” workers, now exhort their students to shape their careers on the foundations of “national defense” with an academic flavor. Said Hopkins: “. . . in this time of national emergency it is perhaps not unnatural for the historical colleges of the country to feel a sense of special responsibility . . . more than 50 per cent of the categories [for junior professional and scientific positions in the Federal government] are satisfied by the usual major requirements in Dartmouth College.” And in his effort to prove that the “liberal arts” training will prepare students for careers in a wartime economy, he continues: “The Department of Art and English, for example, may seem remote from {the} war effort; but the specifications for certain United States Civil Service examinations call for thirty hours of English composition, and the ability to write clear and forceful English is notoriously in demand at headquarters in the armed forces . . . the Department of Romance languages, through its regular courses dealing with Latin America can contribute appreciably to the

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government's policy of hemisphere defense, and liberal arts courses in psychology are now proving of great value in both military and industrial organization. Thus one could continue with Dartmouth's twenty-five departments of instruction, citing the more obvious connections with national defense of certain courses in the social sciences and in the humanities. Undergraduate instruction in chemistry, physics, mathematics, astronomy, geology and other sciences covers a wide scientific field in a rigid discipline, and national defense requires little alteration of normal procedures in these departments." In short, the president of Dartmouth says, in effect: Dartmouth is an academic college. Since it seems inevitable that for a long time to come we are going to live in a militaristic world, and must train an army, and build armaments, etc., you students who may feel inclined to go to technological schools to carve out a career in a militaristic world may be surprised to learn that the academic courses offered by Dartmouth will train you for war work. *Yes, indeed, material interests are at stake.* De Leon had the likes of Hopkins in mind when he said: "As a factory is not run 'for the health' of its owners, as a newspaper is not operated 'for the fun' it affords its stockholders, neither is a privately owned 'institution of learning' conducted for 'patriotism.' They are all run for the profit of their owners."¹²

President Hopkins Lifts Mask of Hypocrisy.

However, to prove that he had developed a long-range view, and was as *devoted to the system of production for*

¹² Daniel De Leon, *Marxian Science and the Colleges.*

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profit as to the immediate material interests of the college he heads, Dartmouth's President Hopkins addressed himself to the alumni of the institution as follows:

“Gentlemen, your college has failed you. It has failed you and me, and the nation to which it has always been so fiercely and eagerly loyal. The fault is ours—we who have charge of supervising its instruction. It is now obvious that we—all colleges, or most of them, at any rate—have been following the wrong course.

“We have thought the right way was to advise our young men to look at all things objectively, to take nothing for granted, but to examine all sides of every question and make up their own minds. We have allowed certain scepticisms to grow up unchallenged. We have permitted minds to take liberties with things that are vital and venerable in our American way of life. We have let students believe that America was propagandized into the last war, that the college students of that past and glorious generation went like dumb, driven cattle to their destruction and death.

“We have stressed the ingratitude of Europe, the repudiation of the war debts, the expense, the futility, the enormous and lasting burden of it all. *We have even permitted students and instructors to examine our democratic form of government critically, and to discuss the possibility that maybe some other ways are better.* [The Socialist Labor Party program was presented before the Student Round Table at Dartmouth in 1931 by Verne L. Reynolds, and created quite a stir.¹³]

“We are now reaping the tragedy of our error. Of course, we never saw the possibility of the thing that has happened in the world. We thought we were building and teaching for peace. We hoped our students would

¹³ [See “The S.L.P. Heard at Dartmouth College, *Weekly People*, Nov. 14, 1931.—*Editor*]

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become broader, better educated and better thinking Americans, less likely to be trapped in the same set of circumstances.

“Don’t blame them for these peace demonstrations, the recent mass meeting against registration [for peacetime military service], the petition for peace recently sent to President Roosevelt. Blame us who didn’t prepare them for this sort of crisis. Naturally they’re bewildered and confused and unstable. It’s easy to see now, in terms of solid value to America, where, a few years ago instead of allowing the myth to run unchecked that the college students who went to war in ’17 went like a lot of sheep, we should have taken a long step in the other direction.

“We should have affirmed our pride in those patriots, should have honored them, eulogized them, even glorified them, and their brave and keenly conscious sacrifice. We should have accorded recognition to the American Legion as a gallant and vital force in our American system, instead of the smart-Aleck treatment it sometimes received. But the trouble was, we couldn’t see what was ahead for the world. *We thought we were building intelligence. It didn’t strike us that perhaps we were building it at the sacrifice of loyalty. . . .*¹⁴ (Italics ours.)

Through this revealing self-photography, Mr. Hopkins lifts the mask of hypocrisy covering the “liberal” front of his type of professional educator. And while he and his kind “couldn’t see what was ahead for the world,” the Socialist Labor Party pointed to the impending collapse of the capitalist system (best of all possible systems to the Hopkins crowd), and pointed to the Industrial Republic of Labor as the only way to avert a social catastrophe.

¹⁴ *The American Legion Magazine*, July, 1941, page 9.

Columbia University, through its provost, Dr. Frank D. Fackenthal, has also recently announced readjustment of its curriculum to conform with the needs of the national “emergency,” in this fashion: “In pursuance of its primary function of educating youth for service to society, the university now stands ready to prepare its students for prompt and effective aid to such emergency needs as can be served.”

The University of Pennsylvania is now conducting a course in “Production Engineering for Defense Industries,” because, it states, “defense industry is faced with an increased need of production managers—men who supervise and control the actual work of a plant.” Dr. Victor Karabasz, in charge of the program, announces that the University is cooperating “with the O.P.M., the Engineering Defense Training Program of the United States Office of Education, which is bearing all costs of the program except textbooks, and a number of important defense manufacturers.” Business is business. And notice that the government is investing in “education” plants as well as munitions plants.

Capitalism’s “Isolationist” Educators.

The “isolationist” professors regard the present international madness as “a blessing in disguise,” insofar as it enables them to put their pet theories on educational “reorganization” into operation. The President of the University of Chicago, Robert Maynard Hutchins, who not long ago broadcast views that labelled him as an ardent “isolationist,” writes quite enthusiastically about present possibilities: “Hitler has compelled us to adopt universal military service.

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Universal military service gives us a chance to reorganize our program of universal free education. That program has needed reorganization for fifty years. If we are at last driven to it, Hitler will have been, within very narrow limits, a blessing in disguise.”¹⁵ The reorganization proposed by this “distinguished educator” is purely and simply an *administrative one based on the military needs of the nation*. This should not surprise us if we know the gentleman’s record as a servant of capitalist property interests. Hutchins proposes this administrative reorganization because “with conscription, which we must assume will be with us for a long time, some sort of reorganization of the school system is imperative. When both education and military service are compulsory for the young, they must be adjusted to each other. From the educational point of view the present minimum draft age of twenty-one is just precisely wrong. The student should be drafted at some natural break in his educational career. That is at the end of his sophomore year, at graduation from the junior college. This is the time for him to do his military stint.” And he concludes that “the exigencies of national defense leave us no alternative. We must reorganize our educational system. Hitler must be given credit for an unintentional assist.” We wonder if it ever occurred to the professor that what we must “reorganize” is the social system, and that Hitler and Hitlerism are evidence of the complete collapse of capitalism.

And the ladies are not to be neglected! Dr. Harriet M. Allyn, academic dean at Mt. Holyoke College, announces

¹⁵ Robert Maynard Hutchins, *Liberty*, “Conscription and Education,” August 23, 1941.

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the addition of such courses as the “Economics of War,” an “Introduction to Politics,” a course on the “political principles and problems underlying the present world crisis,” as well as courses in geology, chemistry, physics, etc., “which furnish specific training for important defense demands and a basis for clear thinking in today’s world.”

“Defense” Hastening Elimination of Small Colleges.

The defense program is hastening the process of elimination of small capital in industry. According to the president of the Pennsylvania College Presidents’ Association, Dr. Fred Pierce Corson, it is having the same effect on small colleges. He pleads for “sympathetic consideration” for “the hundreds of American colleges facing serious curtailment and, in many instances, annihilation because of the effects of the defense program upon their work. . . . American colleges this year will show a decrease of from 15 to 30 per cent [in enrollment] . . . because such a large percentage of college men are drained off for war pursuits . . . the ‘little fellows’ in the college world . . . will be forced to close their college doors.”¹⁶ His appeal to prevent this shutting down of some of the “institutions of learning” in the nation winds up with, “the independent American college, small as well as great, is still looked on as an essential industry in preparing for war.” True, indeed, Professor Corson, but priorities are priorities! And like the “big fellows” in your education industry of the Hopkins type, you “couldn’t see what was ahead for the

¹⁶ New York Times, August 5, 1941.

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world,” while the Socialist Labor Party taught that big capital (in the education industry as in all industry) always beat small capital in the battle of competition, and that wealth would inevitably concentrate in fewer and fewer hands. It is the *capitalist system* that must be destroyed, Professor!

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Counterfeits of Marxism in Education.

The educational theorists of the Dewey, Rugg and Kilpatrick type are employing their energies in devising ways and means of “reconstructing” the post-war world. At the July, 1941, meeting of the New Education Fellowship, held at Ann Arbor, Mich., Professor Dewey pontificated as follows: “Fellowship is more than the opposite of war, discord, hatred and intolerance. It provides the only sure and enduring guarantee that these evils will not continue to plague mankind. Education in and for and by fellowship, through cooperation, and with a cooperative society as its aim, is an imperatively required factor in an education that will arise in contrast to the world now engaged in destroying itself.”¹⁷

Yet, despite the honeyed words concerning education in a “cooperative society,” Professor Dewey denies the prerequisite—the destruction of capitalist society. About fifteen years ago, the present writer was a student under Dewey. He heard the professor speak in unqualified praise of the educational system of Soviet Russia—*then* based on the Marxian principle. In reply to the question: “Do you believe it possible to apply in the United States

¹⁷ New York Times, July 13, 1941.

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the principle underlying Soviet education, without first abolishing capitalism here?" Dewey stated that he did not believe a social revolution was necessary prior to the adoption of the Soviet educational principle. And since then, as before, Professor Dewey has been preaching what we may designate as a *counterfeit of Marxism in education*. The position he holds in the educational field is that of a Norman Thomas (whom, incidentally, he endorsed in the Presidential campaign in 1932).

At the same meeting of the New Education Fellowship, aims for post-war education were set forth under the high-sounding title: "A proposal to men of goodwill for educational reconstruction after the war." This was described as the first organized challenge to Hitlerism in the field of education, and was presented by a committee of twenty educators of six countries headed by Dr. William H. Kilpatrick of Teachers College, Columbia University. The "challenge" reads, in part, "Reconstruction after this war will fail unless it is also re-education. By education we understand here not schooling alone, but the influence on man of all that helps him to live decently, productively, and happily with his fellows. . . . Reconstruction in post-war education must reach into every form of our economic, political and social life. . . . Reconstruction through education depends upon increasing the cooperation of all in the common civilization. A vindictive policy defeats itself. Only by reconstruction through education will youth be reassured against a new betrayal and their full energies enlisted in this cause. . . . the phenomenon called Hitlerism is an extreme form of a world-wide disease. Its recommendations reach to the very causes of

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which Hitlerism is a symptom and are, therefore, world-wide in their application.”¹⁸

Now, then, for the information of the Kilpatricks, the Socialist Labor Party holds that *capitalism* is the root and cause of the evils that confront us in the world today. To help man “live decently, productively and happily with his fellows,” to increase “the cooperation of all in the common civilization,” to reassure youth “against a new betrayal,” to destroy the “phenomenon called Hitlerism” CAPITALISM MUST BE DESTROYED! (When the present writer stated this program in a seminar conducted a few years ago by Professor Kilpatrick, the gentleman replied: “Well, you are entitled to your opinion!” Another counterfeit!)

Professor Rugg, also present at the meeting of the New Education Fellowship, as a member of the Committee on Latin-American Relations, reported: “A way must be found in the economic realm as well as in those of art, science and general culture so to implement the idea of the ‘good neighbor’ and to abolish for all time the fear of Yankee imperialism. . . .”¹⁹ The report expressed opposition to systems of education which passed on “ideals of privilege and imperialism to future generations. . . .” But, Professor, need we remind you that business is business! Need we remind you that Yankee imperialism’s “good neighbor” policy is based on the “good neighbor” being good customers for American-made products! And need we remind you that the schools of the nation, under capitalism (based on class divisions and production for profit) of necessity will

¹⁸ *New York Times*, July 13, 1941.

¹⁹ *New York Times*, July 13, 1941.

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teach and pass on the “ideals of privilege and imperialism to future generations,” and of necessity, as a safeguard to “material interests,” will teach that capitalism is the best of all possible systems! (When the present writer expressed the conviction that “*capitalism must be destroyed*” to Professor Rugg, in Columbia University classes some years ago, the professor hid his rage in the wrinkle of a sneer.)

De Leon did not err. By exposing the falsity of the teachings of the capitalist professors, he tore off their masks of pretended learning and scholarship, and reduced them to their real status of sycophants and servitors of property interests. The Second World War and the reaction of capitalism’s professional educators thereto merely produce additional evidence to support our contention that the present crop who hold down chairs in the “institutions of learning” are servitors of the capitalist class and its system of private property.

The Socialist Labor Party of the United States, university of the workers of America, teaches that capitalism and its institutions must be destroyed if progress is to be the law of the future as it has been of the past.

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Not until the robber system of capitalism is destroyed, and the sane system of Socialism has been universally established, shall we have an educational system which is likewise sane and logical and not, like the present one, a corrupt and corrupting system, the system of which Emerson wrote (speaking of “the deadness of its details”) that it was “a system of despair.”

To Socialism alone is reserved the task of rescuing

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education from the hand of death placed upon it by a ruling class grown corrupt and grossly materialistic through the decadence of their social system, and restoring to education new life and purposes worthy free men and women in a free society—the Commonwealth of Labor, the Brotherhood of Man.

(The End.)