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Economic basis of education

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Economic Basis of Education

A. M. ORANGE
by

With an Introductory Essay
by

OLIVE M. JOHNSON

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Economic Basis
of Education

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FOREWORD.

The two essays contained in this pamphlet are important contributions to a very vital subject, the subject of Education in its relation to past, present and future society. Time was when a worker's low economic status was ascribed to his lack of education. "Secure an education," thus chanted the "educators," "and rise in the world." That the worker's lack of education was the direct and logical consequence of his low economic status, which in turn was the result of his being exploited and robbed of the major portion of the fruits of his toil, did not occur to the educators. In an early essay Karl Marx quotes a Dr. Kay who in a pamphlet which he had written "reduces [says Marx] everything to neglected education." Marx adds: "Upon what grounds, think you? Owing to the lack of education, the worker fails to perceive the 'natural laws of trade,' laws which necessarily bring him to pauperism." In this biting sarcasm, the great Socialist thinker exposes the hollowness of the arguments of the Dr. Kays. Mass production has entered educational institutions, and "educated workers" are turned out by factory methods with the result that through increased competition, and lack of sufficient jobs of the kind for which these youngsters are specifically trained, their social status is lowered to the level of pauperism. That this is so is becoming

recognized even by upholders of the decadent capitalist system. Thus an editorial in the *Bridgeport Times-Star* recently commented:

AN OVERPRODUCTION OF EDUCATION.

A new slant on the possible effects of universal education in a world gripped by financial depression was furnished the other day by Dr. Robert A. Millikan, famous scientist, in an address to college students.

Dr. Millikan was sounding a warning that colleges and universities must not try to educate too many students. This, he said, is a practice that tax-supported schools are especially apt to adopt; and he pointed to conditions in Germany as an example.

In Germany, he said, young men are crowding into the universities as never before; and he added:

"The state has made such education practically free. (The easiest and cheapest thing to do in a time of unemployment is to go to the university. The result is that the professions are being flooded with men for whom there are no possible jobs; and jobless, educated men make for social unrest, for revolutions and for wars."

The implications of that remark are interesting. Teaching a man how to think, apparently, is fine business as long as there is something for the man to do with himself; but if you let him sit down in idleness he is apt to start thinking about the society in which he

The School to the Teacher

By Olive M. Johnson

**THE SCHOOL TO THE
TEACHER.**

By Olive M. Johnson.

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THE SCHOOL TO THE

TEACHER

By O. M. Johnson

The School to the Teacher

By Olive M. Johnson.

The hour is replete with "problems." The rich and the poor, the employed and the unemployed, the adult and the child—each has his own, and any attempt to solve any of these problems within the shell of capitalism resolves itself only in utter bewilderment of all concerned and greater chaos in the land.

Confusion.

One problem that everybody recognizes to be crashing in about us is the school problem, the entire educational situation. On all sides we hear complaints—the schools are getting worse and worse, the system is intolerable, it crushes the sensitive and original child, it makes mere automata of the pliable. Parents are in despair and make matters no better by making "cases" of their children against the teachers. Those who can afford it hasten to transfer their children from the public to the private schools—there to be made into either intolerable snobs or pitiful, sheltered, artificial flowers that will crush and fade the first time the wind of the world blows upon them—as blow it will in after-life.

Politicians tinker with the problem. To local politicians "school reform" has been one of the most

fruitful issues to divide and fool the voters before election — and, of course, to forget conveniently about the day after election, and wisely so, for any politician who knows anything knows that the more he would stir in the "problem," the deeper he would get himself into hot water.

Schools by Politics and Endowment.

In the meantime the situation grows steadily worse by the very fact that being as bad as it is drives the persons most fitted for the teaching profession and most sincerely interested in the child out of the schools. These people cannot stand it. They loathe the dirty politics rampant in every city school system; they loathe being bullied by principals and superintendents who are where they are because they are better politicians than educators; they loathe seeing climbers with push and pull getting up in the system; they loathe most of all seeing themselves transformed into automata, and if they persist in doing conscientious and individual work find themselves breaking down, harassed on the one side by their superiors and on the other by overwork in large classes of unruly children whose early

training has usually been neglected in a home where there is less and less time and place for the child. And the higher educational institutions are no better, for as politics rules the public schools, so the "endowment" and the necessity of endowments rule the colleges and universities.

Reform Impossible.

Modern educators like Professor Dewey recognize the evils. Professor Dewey may also realize that it takes a "complete reorganization of the social system" to effect any thoroughgoing "reform," but the true essential of that *fundamental change* Professor Dewey has not sensed—for if he had he would not have backed Norman Thomas's reform campaign. In his late mayoralty campaign in New York, Norman Thomas made a particular issue of the school system. Either Mr. Thomas, like any other politician, adopted that issue as a vote-catcher because it is "popular" or else if he believed, as he promised, that he would radically reform our city schools by a magic wand waved at the City Hall, he is a bigger fool than the average politician. They know it can't be done and so wisely leave the problems alone after they have served as campaign issues.

No politician, no matter how sincere, is able to eradicate the evils that are sprouting in our schools. These evils have their roots in the social system itself. Even a "Socialistic" political government, such as the S. P. envisions, a Social Democracy, or a "Labor Government," cannot begin to touch these problems. The school problem, any more than the mine problem, or the shoe

factory problem, or the railroad problem, is not a politician's job. The school system to fit our age must be "reformed," so all agree—so why not face it frankly and say it must be reorganized? No outside force can reorganize the school, no outside force can operate, manage and control the schools. The schools *belong* to the educators, the teachers and professors, and should in a certain manner and in any way feasible belong to the children. But to talk such language under the capitalist system or under any "reformed" or even "labor-governed" system is to talk a language that simply cannot be understood nor learned. The tax-paying capitalists support the schools to have them turn out willing wage slaves, automata for the shops and factories; the endowment-giving "captains of industry" make donations to universities for them to turn out managers, superintendents, engineers and other head slaves and slave drivers of industry and able apologists and propagandists for the capitalist system for newspapers, lecture platforms, politicians' jobs and not least as teachers and professors in the school system, and therefore both the lower and the higher schools are and must remain staunch upholders of capitalism as long as capitalism lasts.

Socialist Reorganization.

The Socialist who aims at the overthrow of capitalism and the reorganization of society into the Workers' Industrial Republic—and *no one else is a Socialist* no matter how much he may shout the word—embraces his attitude to the school problem in the slogan "the school to the teacher" — but like all slogans

this says both too much and too little.

In the future Industrial Democracy, which will be based on the ownership, control and operation of the means of production by the workers themselves, what will be true of the actual *physical means of production* will be true of every agency and pursuit essential to human life, hence it naturally will include such branches as education, recreation, etc. But, talking now about education, this branch in the future is bound to embrace far more than the mere school curriculum. The child's school day or year or life will be the care of the school. Hence the school workers will include more than the teachers. They will include all who work in the education department. There will be, therefore, besides the large and important body of educators, dieticians, cooks, doctors, nurses, room attendants, cleaning men or women, engineers, electricians and what not. Each of these in his separate department will form a deliberating and controlling council and together the elected representatives of all these will form the central school council; together the representatives from all schools will form the national school council; and the nationally elected delegates representing all the schools will sit on the National Council of Industry, there to champion and safeguard and make understood the needs and problems of education in relation to the nation at large.

It is easy to see that such a body springing out of the schools themselves, with its representatives and leaders springing right out of the school soil, and naturally the best-

fitted being selected for the directing and governing positions, will face the problems of education with wisdom and understanding, just directly opposite from what is the case in the politician-governed schools and school boards of today. Moreover, the revenues of the schools will not come from "taxes," as they do today, from an economically powerful class that expects a return from the schools in slaves and toadies. Education being a social necessity, it will be a part of the national budget. That is, education, recreation and all other so-called "non-productive" work will have an equal social standing with all other work, and hence when the Socialist says that every worker will receive the full *social* value of his labor that means that all useful workers are part of the social whole, "productive" and "non-productive" alike—that in fact such a wholly superficial distinction will disappear. The railroad engineer is as truly "productive" as is the industrial engineer, the artist who decorates the dining salon is as truly productive—for he gives us pleasure and hence adds something to our lives—as is the cook or the wheat grower.

*A New School—
A New Society.*

It is only such a school-governed and school-managed school in a worker-governed and worker-managed society that can institute a radical and beneficial change in the school system. Deplorable as it does seem, we shall have to peg along with the dreadful, worn-out, deplorable system of today as long as the workers—and they include the teachers—are willing to peg along with it.

And that is as long as the workers—including the educators—are willing to accept the system of private ownership of the means of production for private exploitation of the workers, with its concomitant evils of misery, poverty, unemployment, strikes, strife, thievery, murder and war, and along with it also the rotten, worn-out and graft-ridden Political State — municipal, state or federal, which has become but a festering boil on society today.

“Socialistic” and “liberal” politi-

cians may promise reform, sincere educators attempt it here and there; but the evils and problems of the school system will multiply as the evils and problems of capitalism itself grow and multiply—which inevitably they will and must until the workers rise in their might, organize industrially in all branches of useful work and sweep the entire capitalist system into the historic dust-bin where it belongs, erecting on its ruins the **WORKERS' INDUSTRIAL REPUBLIC.**

*ECONOMIC BASIS OF
EDUCATION.*

By A. M. Orange.



Economic Basis of Education

By A. M. Orange.

"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*, 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.*" (Emphasis 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 (Capital: page 489, Sonnenschein edition), 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. Said Marx in this connection: "The economic structure of society

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." He went on to 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 change to conform with it.

Guided by the light of this concept of historical materialism, the way seems 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.

Necessity the Mother of Structure.

The materialist conception of history, like all natural laws, *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 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 structures 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 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.

Education is Life.

In defining *learning* as the acquisition of *new ways of behaving*, we may justly conclude that mankind *learned* (technically speaking) his structure in his evolutionary climb; and *learned* his tools as he continued to march onward. Thus, we may define *education* as LIFE ITSELF.

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, holds true 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

had 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.

The Earliest Stage.

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 lived 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 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 all types of 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. In short, they

were told how to participate in the productive process. The children *wanted* to know how to fish and hunt, because we know that meant that they could fit into the situation 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.

Learning—A Natural Process.

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 light now, as to the significance of this statement, by our examination of the productive process in Savagery and the education of the period. The process of "fitting or adjusting" to the tribe constituted education. Children learned to "get a living" and protect themselves *without knowing they were being educated*, and *without their teachers knowing they were educating them*. Learning was a natural process—LIFE itself.

We have evidence 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, peo-

ple 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. . . .

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

Training Gets More Complicated.

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 “in-

tellectual” 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 of this was part of the educational process of primitives. All of this was based squarely on the prevailing methods of production, on the prevailing ways of life.

A New Factor Enters.

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 intertribal exchange. Exchange in this way became an 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 an important, a basic element in society, and gradually 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 metals (iron was not yet 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 we pause here just long enough to mention 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 monogamian 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 common, an element of aristocracy 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.

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?

New Educational Process.

Up to the time of the introduction of a slave class, the education process was the productive process. With vastly improved tools of production, certain portions 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" (Marx), and humanity 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.

Leisure Education.

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

*It is interesting, in this connection, to point out that the dictionary meaning of the Greek word for "school" (pronounced: sholee), is "spare time, leisure, rest, ease." Its secondary meaning is, "that in which leisure is employed."

ductive labor. Attention was given to 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 of 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.

*Education Becomes a
Mere Veneer.*

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 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 pun-

ishment 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. We shall have occasion later to dwell further upon this.

Formalism Sets In.

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 (146 B.C.) the Grecian educational influence spread throughout Roman society. But, with the decline of Roman society, education declined. Like causes lead to like results. 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 in existence as the main line in education in feudal and modern capitalist society. It is *inherent* in the Political State and therefore is destined to remain with it until the state is finally scrapped—cast into the refuse can of history.

Education Turns to Life Beyond.

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 added 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.

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.

Education Controlled by the Church.

Thenceforth—and until recently—education was identified with the Church. Pagan culture—the literature, art, philosophy and religion of ancient Rome and Greece—was ana-

thema. 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 started 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 gradually throughout the Middle Ages.

Medieval Class Society.

Mention was made above of the invasions of the German barbarians. The conquered territory of the empire was divided up by these German 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 obedi-

It is not the purpose of this pa-

per 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 bound to set in.

The Workers' Education.

It should also be noted that throughout this entire period, the working class was engaged in producing the necessities of life—in the productive process. This process in which the working class was, and is yet engaged, has built up an industrial machine that 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 *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.

Educational Reform.

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 most of the great schoolmen of the period were associated with the Church.

In the twelfth century St. Francis of Assisi founded the order of gray friars, and St. Dominic the order of black friars. The Franciscan and Dominican orders soon were in control of the universities and higher education in general.

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 interest was not possible) and eliminate the harsh discipline prevalent in that day. As with other reform movements, reaction and formalism soon gained control.

Battle with Ignorance.

The Brethren of the Common Life attempted to combat the ignorance of the lower classes by establishing schools throughout Northern Europe. They also 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 see 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 had a scientific foundation in that it 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 influences.

A New Order— New Demands.

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." Thus—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 ideas became *equally as formal as those from which he revolted*.

The Old Order Struggles for Existence.

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 of 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 were able to rise above the social-economic system prevailing. It was *that* which dictated their educational postures.

New Philosophies.

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 principles were in harmony with a sound and scientific psychology 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 French revolutionary 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, teacher training, etc. Herbart and Froebel were two other educational reformers of the nineteenth century, whose theories have influenced content and methods of teaching, especially in the United States.

Capitalist Methods Triumph.

The educational theories of Pes-

talozzi, 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** way 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 in our educational system.

In the Early Days.

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 political government 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." This is just one case in point. 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 social-collective machine civilization. The family productive process gave way to modern 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.

Modern Child Labor Degrades.

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 the child-labor in our modern 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 labour, 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 labour-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.

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

However, to return to the subject, modern educational methods have neither grown out of nor do they keep in step with modern industrial methods. Let us illustrate:

Reading primers used in our modern conventional schools betray the fact that our educational system fits in with capitalist society in its infancy. In a first year reader, 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 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 of the above stories point to the undeniable truth of the assertion that the 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.

Abnormal Education.

Socially useful activities are unknown today in our large city schools. Formal, dull, antiquated

and half-useless tools 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 answer it, 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 unapprehending teacher's existence.

A New Life Beckons.

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 the modern industrial methods 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 wits' ends seeking solutions.

As in the past, educational reformers are engaged in the futile task of upholding a decayed system. They recognize the evils of the education today, but they are unable to

see from whence they flow. 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, the outstanding 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 his latest publication indicates) "social reconstruction *through* educational reconstruction." His cart is placed before his horse. All of the above educators are blind to the fact that their reforms are impossible of realization within capitalist society.

Social Reconstruction Must Precede.

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 only come about after the accomplishment of the impending Social Revolution. Thus, naturally, we are compelled to reverse Dr. Rugg's theory, set it on a firm scientific basis, and make it

read: "*Educational reconstruction through social reconstruction.*"

Marxian Influence in Russia.

Russian education stands out today as an example to the world. It also stands out as a vindication of the Marxian conception of education. After scrapping the decayed czaristic autocracy, and establishing a working class government along Marxian lines, the working class of Russia, despite its undeveloped state, because of its adherence to Marxian Socialist science, set up institutions, political, social and intellectual, that are the natural expression of their class interests. They are shaping society according to their will, and their educational system is a shining example of that fact. The educational system reflects the developing industrial system. It follows from, and is shaped by, the productive process. More than that, it is the only educational system in the world that has been able to introduce the "reforms" of twentieth century educators. School in Russia "reproduces the typical conditions of social life," *since school is life itself.* "Problems" and "projects," *proposed* by American educational reformers, *become realities* in Russia as the problems and projects of Russian life. "Interest," merely a proposal—and a vain one at that—of American educational reformers, becomes a real, vital, throbbing thing in the schools of Russia. As a result, the need to *drive* children to study, or to attend school is absent. No external artificial driving force is necessary in the "new schools" of new Russia. Corporal punishment as a driving force is no longer utilized to hold the child's interest. As

a matter of actual fact, it is entirely possible that *a certain force may be required to drive the child away from his all-absorbing school work.*

School and Life United.

In Russia, education is at the disposal of all. Children in industrial centers attend school to learn "tool" subjects, but are required to spend certain days each week in a factory, to which the school is assigned, for manual training. The school children are acquainted with methods of production in various industries, and with the Five-Year Plan in general. There are special schools for those showing talent in music and art.

Adult Education.

Much is being done for the elimination of illiteracy among the adult population of Russia. In the town of Red Way, a peasant village in the Ukraine, for example, a vast program of education has been instituted as a result of a "cultural competition" with a neighboring town. Lectures on collective farming, science, hygiene, sanitation; publication of newspapers; reading of newspapers; discussions; concerts; theatrical performances; radio programs, etc., are included in the educational campaigns of these towns. The work of the elementary schools is closely integrated with the above campaigns. The following extract from one town's program points to the part that school children play. One could wish for no better project than this:

Literacy: book-carriers' brigade of seventeen children, visiting peasant homes once a week to leave books; forty read-

ers—literate children organized to read to the illiterate peasants and urge them to learn how to read and write.....

Motivated by the desire to help toward the success of the Five-Year Plan—of which an educational phase appears above—learning in Russian schools is not forced, artificial or unnatural. Interest is genuine, *inherent* in the program of social activity throughout Russia. Children understand that peasants and other illiterates must be taught to read and study to insure the further success of the plan. Thus, an incentive is provided for their own learning.

New Russia's Primer.

Russia's "Great Plan" places upon its schools a great responsibility in the work of improving the material, cultural and spiritual condition of all. One of the finest works in that connection that has come to our attention is "New Russia's Primer," a story of the Five-Year Plan, by M. Ilin, as prepared for the school children of Russia. This work has been translated into English by Professor George Counts of Columbia University. It presents the fundamental provisions of the plan in a most fascinating manner, in a language that is entirely intelligible to children. Thus, the Russian children are further familiarized with the new methods of production. The book also urges children to "see and touch" for themselves, to "discover" the country in which they live, to take part in the productive process. The book concludes with the suggestion that all children can help achieve the Five-Year Plan, can

take an active part in the process of building a Socialist society. We must quote:

..... your Five-Year Plan:

1. To discover beds of lime and phosphorus.

2. To gather useful junk: rags, ropes, wool, bones, scraps of metal, and so on. All of these things will come in handy in our factories.....

3. To build radios and loudspeakers.Not one school should be without a loudspeaker.

4. To sort and treat with insecticide one hundred percent of all grain on the farms of your parents.

5. To gather ashes for fertilizing fields. Each troop of Pioneers should gather two tons of ashes a year.

6. to destroy all injurers on one fruit tree to catch or destroy five rats and ten mice.

7. To build one starling house and two feeding houses a year

8. To organize in five years, five thousand children's bird brotherhoods poultry yards chicken houses.

9. To add two good laying hens to the possessions of every peasant household.

10. To plant ten trees each in five years

11. To destroy bedbugs, roaches and flies in five hundred thousand houses.....

12. To teach the illiterate to read and write. Each troop should endeavor to wipe out illiteracy in its region.

It is apparent from all of the foregoing that school in Russia is not a place, nor a room for recitations, but LIFE ITSELF.

*School-Life Only Possible in
Social-Collective Society.*

American educators—among them Professors Dewey and Kilpatrick—after visiting Russia to study its educational system, returned with unqualified praise of the work being done there. They observed that school not merely reproduced “the typical conditions of social life” (Dewey), but that “school is life itself” (Kilpatrick). They see “their theories” in practical application. Yet, neither seems able to understand that the educational system of Russia could only become a reality in the *social-collective society* which they now have, and are building. Both still continue to propose their “reforms” in the existing capitalist society, thus ignoring the obvious signs of the times. By so doing, they serve as props, and tend to bolster up a decayed social system, which cannot tolerate their educational reforms.

Let it be noted, however, that although Russia is being guided by the Marxian principle in its educational program—as well as in its industrial development—we are not here proposing the adoption of Russia's educational methods in American schools. Progressive and forward-looking as is the new Russian system compared with the antiquated methods of capitalist countries, it is nevertheless incapable of reflecting

any but *Russia's undeveloped economic conditions*. With a new order of society in America, gigantic strides forward ought to be made. In other words, and in accord with Marxian philosophy, the educational program is bound to take a different expression on different levels of economic development of society.

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 bring about the Socialist Industrial Republic. Then, in the natural course of events, they may establish “new schools,” introduce their theories, and actually discover that they fit in better, even, than in undeveloped Russia. To accomplish their “educational revolution,” they must first accomplish the impending social revolution. Only Socialist society—in which all the resources 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 social-collective mode of production, can serve as a basis for a social-collective system of education.

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

