

**PROLET CULT  
(PROLETARIAN  
CULTURE)**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649682355

Proletcult (Proletarian Culture) by Eden Paul & Cedar Paul

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**EDEN PAUL & CEDAR PAUL**

**PROLET CULT  
(PROLETARIAN  
CULTURE)**



# PROLET CULT

(PROLETARIAN CULTURE)

BY

EDEN & CEDAR PAUL

AUTHORS OF "CREATIVE REVOLUTION"

When labour strikes, it says to its master: I shall no longer work at your command.

When it votes for a party of its own, it says: I shall no longer vote at your command.

When it creates its own classes and colleges, it says: I shall no longer think at your command.

Labour's challenge to education is the most fundamental of the three.—  
*Henry de Man.*

NEW YORK  
THOMAS SELTZER, INC.  
5 WEST 50th STREET

—  
1921

TO ALL THE  
COMRADES AND FRIENDS  
WHO HAVE HELPED US  
WITH MATERIALS  
AND COUNSEL

## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
<b>I EDUCATION &amp; THE CLASS STRUGGLE</b>	9
DO YOUR OWN THINKING - - - -	9
CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS IMPERATIVE - - -	11
SIMPLIFICATION AND CONCENTRATION OF AIM -	13
TENDENCY IN SCIENCE AND IN EDUCATION -	15
PROLETARIAN ECONOMICS AS A CALL TO ARMS -	17
<b>II WHAT IS PROLET CULT?</b> - - - -	19
TERMINOLOGY - - - -	19
CULTURE - - - -	23
PHASEOLOGY OF CULTURE - - - -	26
<b>III WANDERINGS IN THE EDUCATIONAL WILDERNESS</b> - - - -	31
FROM ECCLESIASTICUS TO MARX - - - -	31
DOWN AMONG THE MASSES - - - -	36
<b>IV FALSE ROUTES</b> - - - -	41
THE ELEMENTARY EDUCATION ACT OF 1870 -	41
THE ADULT SCHOOL MOVEMENT - - - -	42
COOPERATIVE EDUCATION - - - -	44
RUSKIN COLLEGE - - - -	47
THE WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION -	48
<b>V THE PLEBS LEAGUE &amp; THE CENTRAL LABOUR COLLEGE</b> - - - -	53
EDUCATIONAL WORK OF THE SOCIALIST LABOUR PARTY - - - -	53
THE RIFT IN THE LUTE AT RUSKIN - - -	54
THE PLEBS MAGAZINE AND THE PLEBS LEAGUE -	57
THE CENTRAL LABOUR COLLEGE - - - -	61
<b>VI THE FERMENT OF THE WORLD REVOLUTION</b> - - - -	64
FERRER AND THE MODERN SCHOOLS - - -	64
THE FRENCH SYNDICALISTS - - - -	67
WORKERS' EDUCATION IN THE AMERICAS - -	68
GERMANY: 1, THEORY - - - -	75
GERMANY: 2, PRACTICE - - - -	77

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CONTENTS

---

CHAPTER		PAGE
VII	PROLET CULT IN CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH - - - - -	80
	GENERAL PRINCIPLES - - - - -	80
	THE SOCIALIST SUNDAY SCHOOL AND THE PROLETARIAN SCHOOL - - - - -	81
	SOCIALIST AND COMMUNIST YOUTH - - - - -	86
VIII	PROLET CULT IN RUSSIA - - - - -	90
	LUNACHARSKY, ULIANOVA, AND POLIANSKY - - - - -	90
	BOGDANOFF - - - - -	94
	PROLETARIAN ETHICS - - - - -	98
	PROLETARIAN ART - - - - -	102
	PROLET CULT AT WORK - - - - -	104
IX	YEAST IN THE BRITISH ISLES - - - - -	108
	PROLET CULT CLASSES - - - - -	108
	THE NEW LABOUR COLLEGES - - - - -	109
	PROLET CULT COUNCILS - - - - -	111
	THE PLEBS LEAGUE IN 1920-21 - - - - -	113
	THE BURSTON STRIKE SCHOOL - - - - -	116
	THE WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL TRADE UNION COMMITTEE - - - - -	118
	MORE TROUBLE BREWING AT RUSKIN COLLEGE - - - - -	121
X	THE NEW PSYCHOLOGY - - - - -	123
	METHODS OF TEACHING - - - - -	123
	THE PROLETARIAN HERITAGE - - - - -	125
	WHAT IS THE NEW PSYCHOLOGY? - - - - -	126
	THE EGO COMPLEX AND THE HERD COMPLEX - - - - -	127
	THE CONTROL OF THE SUBCONSCIOUS - - - - -	130
XI	THE REVEILLE - - - - -	134
	APPENDIX - - - - -	143
	1. BIBLIOGRAPHY - - - - -	143
	2. EDUCATIONAL AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS CONCERNING ADULTS - - - - -	151
	3. LABOUR COLLEGES & PROLET CULT COUNCILS - - - - -	153
	4. SOCIALIST AND COMMUNIST YOUTH (INCLUDING CHILD EDUCATION) - - - - -	154
	5. MISCELLANEOUS - - - - -	157



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# PROLET CULT

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## CHAPTER ONE

### EDUCATION AND THE CLASS STRUGGLE

*The communists never cease . . . to instil into the working class the clearest possible recognition of the hostile antagonism between bourgeoisie and proletariat.*

—KARL MARX and FRIEDRICH ENGELS, 1848.  
(Manifesto of the Communist Party, § V.)

#### DO YOUR OWN THINKING

A FEW weeks ago the authors were discussing the ground plan of this book with one of the good friends and comrades to whom it is dedicated. "Your first chapter," he said, "should contain an outline of the general characteristics of the claim for Independent Working-Class Education. You should discuss the nature of the need; should describe the material our system of working-class education has to deal with; should explain the fundamental requirements of the modern working class and of the working-class movement. A chap leaves school at fourteen, and in most cases he gets no further education in any purposive sense until he is twenty. It is not until he is about twenty

that we [our comrade was speaking in the Labour College] have a chance of getting hold of him. Then, from our point of view and his, the first need of the education he is craving for, and of the education which we want to give him, is to show him his place in the fighting organisation of trade unionism. That is why it is out of the question for us to think of giving him what is called 'an all-round education.' There is no time for that; and if we attempted anything of the kind we should defeat our own ends."

What, then, is the fundamental requirement of the modern working class? Unhesitatingly we reply: It is to use the economic power of the workers for the overthrow of the capitalist system, the abolition of wagery, and the inauguration of a classless commonwealth. Consciously or unconsciously, that has been the aim of the modern working-class movement since it first came to life. The struggle for higher wages, shorter hours, better working conditions, and latterly the struggle for workers' control in industry, have all been parts of the struggle for the ending of the dominant social system. For this purpose, the workers organise on the economic field, at first in small craft unions and subsequently in the larger industrial unions. For this purpose, they organise on the political field in the endeavour to wrest from the master class the political machinery of the bourgeois State. For this purpose, they are creating a press of their own which shall inform them regarding current events without the capitalist bias which pervades the press owned and controlled by the plutocracy. Quite recently, during the last ten

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## EDUCATION AND THE CLASS STRUGGLE 11

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years or so, the workers' vanguard has come clearly to recognise that all other efforts will be mis-directed unless guided by knowledge. The workers' demand for education is no longer a demand for graduated doses of bourgeois culture. It is a demand for an education which shall make the workers understand their place in the economic and social system, and shall help them in the successful waging of the class war. It is a demand for Independent Working-Class Education. To satisfy this demand, the workers have to do their own thinking. The hirelings of the master class, of the class which is economically organised in employers' federations and politically organised as the "democratic" State, will continue to fool the workers so long as they are permitted to think for the workers, and to sing the soothing lullabies of social solidarity and harmony of interests between employers and employed.

### CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS IMPERATIVE

But we are outrunning the mass of the workers when we say that they no longer demand graduated doses of bourgeois culture. We shall see in subsequent chapters that, historically considered, the demand for adult education was nothing more than this for nearly three generations. Even to-day, the demand is often enough no more than this, in so far as it finds conscious expression. Apart from the Labour Colleges in London, Glasgow, and elsewhere, apart from the Plebs League, which is the most effective exponent of the demand for a distinctively proletarian culture, the network of British organisations through which the craving