

more important is the draft agreement for the creation of a United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration which the United States Government, after consultation with the British, the Soviet and the Chinese Governments, has recently put before the United Nations.

This comprehensive plan for administering relief in the wake of the armies of liberation is of importance in relation to food strategy, for several reasons. It is the first step towards a balanced economy in which a high level of consumption will prevent the piling up of great stocks of surplus goods in all the primary producing countries. Relief and rehabilitation is the opening phase of the post-war era, and the recent address of Herbert Lehman, at present director of the Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation Operations of the United States, who is expected to be the first director-general of the new organization, shows how American opinion is facing the situation.

Secondly, the proposals, like those of the Food Conference, indicate a clearer understanding of the continuity of war and peace. All such schemes imply the retention for some time after the War of controls over food, raw materials and transport, as well as some of the national rationing schemes. The organization of common action for peace as for war must be based on the pooling of available resources and a common policy, and a common control to govern their distribution. It should be the business of every citizen of goodwill to promote that understanding, and the Food Conference and the relief agreement supply abundant material for that work—a task which admittedly the British and American Governments should themselves undertake with more vigour and less diffidence than they have hitherto shown.

A third encouraging sign is not merely the shift in emphasis from the political and constitutional to the social and economic factors in post-war reconstruction, but also the attempt to work out the implications of this shift in emphasis on an international scale. These attempts to provide for the immediate needs of food, medical supplies and clothing, and then for the reconstitution of the economic life of Europe in a way offering means of livelihood to its peoples for the future, are far more urgent and far more hopeful than the fixing of frontiers, establishment or re-establishment of constitution and conclusion of international pacts which preoccupied the peace-makers at Versailles. The functional and strictly practical character of the organizations now being set up by the United Nations as the framework of their continued co-operation after the War encourages the hope that the lessons of the past are being learned. If further, profiting again by the failure in 1918 to use such tried machinery as the Allied Transport Council and Food Council, we turn to our post-war purposes such organizations as the various Combined Boards for Food, Shipping, Production and Raw Materials, and the regional organizations such as the Middle East Supply Centre, there should be every reason for confidence that, with the help of all this experience and this established machinery for advice and execution, it should be possible to gain time for the creation and growth of new loyalties and combina-

tions of interest, in addition to national ties. Such an outlook will be of immense importance when the time comes for the establishment of new international organizations endowed with full authority to deal with problems of health, food and agriculture, which can only be effectively handled over areas transcending national frontiers. Large as may be the responsibilities of the world's Governments, there still lies on each citizen the responsibility of endeavouring to understand the implications of the situation and of assisting his fellows to grasp it. By these means full support may be obtained for necessary action, even if it may appear to threaten sectional or even narrowly national interests. This is not to suggest that love of one's country is a thing of the past. There is still room for patriotism, but there must in addition be love of humanity; one can surely be built up on the well-tried foundations of the other, to provide an edifice in which there is safe lodging for world understanding and peace.

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## EDUCATION: FOR WHOM AND FOR WHAT?

SOME time ago a document which, rather inaccurately, became known as the Board of Education's "Green Book", was issued in order that ideas on the future shape of Great Britain's educational system might be discussed and clarified. Copies were not, for what seem to have been quite sound reasons, to be obtained by any save selected bodies. Almost inevitably, however, it appears to have become the most widely known 'secret' document of modern times. The result, nevertheless, has justified its preparation and circulation: for, ever since its issue, all kinds of bodies have embodied their own suggestions in pamphlets of varying hues. The National Union of Teachers was one of those bodies, and, more than a year ago, published its own "Green Book" under the title of "Educational Reconstruction".

The difficulty with all these documents, however, is that they are couched in the language—or is it the jargon?—which the expert tends to use when talking to other experts. Dipping at random among the pages we may find a sentence like this: "In the interim we recommend that the principles of the present Grant Formula, which is a combination of a per capita and percentage grant, be continued". That is, doubtless, an excellent recommendation, and its effect, if it be accepted, may profoundly influence the education and prospects of thousands of students. But it is very doubtful whether it will stimulate any great interest or excitement in the breasts of the majority of parents who want improvements in the educational opportunities of their children but know little or nothing of the intricacies of the system which should produce those opportunities.

Clearly, if educational reconstruction is to be successful, parents must know what it is all about and be anxious to see it put into operation. They cannot do that unless the matter be explained

to them in simpler and less technical terms than are normally used by teachers and administrators.

For that reason we believe a new pamphlet issued by the National Union of Teachers meets a very definite need. Its main title is "A Plan for Education"; but it also has a sub-title which gets right to the heart of the matter: "The National Union of Teachers discusses with parents the Kind of Education they want for their children and how to get it".

The pamphlet explains that, since we are fighting for the democratic way of life, it is imperative that, in the very midst of the battle, we should plan such post-war conditions as will enable us to reap the fruits of victory. There are numerous aspects of the general plan now being prepared, but its base must be the provision of a good education.

What, however, is this 'good education' which all parents would like their children to have? The pamphlet answers the question not in a learned discourse but in simple sentences which he who runs may read. "There are few of us," concludes one paragraph, "who do not constantly feel a sense of our own limitation in the enjoyment of life and in the power to seize interesting opportunities when they come our way. We feel we are only half-educated." That is the kind of approach which ought to be successful because it says plainly what so many thousands of inarticulate people feel vaguely but never attempt to express.

In the same simple language this notion of a good education is amplified. The importance of physical as well as mental growth is brought out. "If you are not a hundred per cent fit and healthy, you can't enjoy life to the full." From that point of view the importance of nursery education, school buildings, the school medical and the welfare services are fitted to the picture.

Mental growth is obviously more difficult to assess, but the pamphlet goes on to explain why it is so often retarded. To that end causes in the present educational system which result in failures who ought never to be failures are indicated. Finally, the part played by inequality of opportunity is vigorously discussed. "Some children are taught in splendid buildings, others in disgraceful buildings; some in large classes, others in small; some stay at school until 18, others must leave at 14; some have the chance . . . of going to the university or technical college, others must work at uninteresting jobs . . . and feel defrauded all the rest of their lives."

But the matter is not allowed to rest there. The parents to whom the pamphlet is addressed are told that it is no use always blaming someone else for these shortcomings. If they want this "good education" for their children they must try intelligently to secure it. The job, they are told, comes back to them. "Not 'theirs', 'ours', is the task of seeing that the boys and girls of this generation have an education worthy of the democratic ideal for which their fathers are fighting."

If after so plain a statement, ordinary men and women who read the pamphlet still fail to turn their opportunities to account, the fault at any rate will not rest with those responsible for this pamphlet.

## A STUDY OF THE ROBIN

### The Life of the Robin

By David Lack. (Bird-Lovers' Manuals.) Pp. 200+6 plates. (London: H. F. and G. Witherby, Ltd., 1943.) 7s. 6d. net.

ORNITHOLOGY has made notable contributions to general biology during the present century. The student of species-formation, of adaptation, of animal population, of ecology, of behaviour, or of courtship and sexual selection cannot neglect the ornithological literature, for it is there that he is likely to find many of his clearest and best worked out examples. Field-work has been as important as museum or laboratory study, and the contributions of British field-workers have been among the most important.

Lack's book on the robin is in the best traditions of modern British ornithology. It is the result of intensive field observation, backed by scientific method and combined with experiment, and once again demonstrates how much of value there is to learn about our most familiar wild species.

He definitely explodes the myth that the parent robin fights with its young, and finally demonstrates that the elaborate posturing, so often described as courtship display, is found in both sexes, and is entirely concerned with aggressive threat towards intruders. He makes the interesting suggestion that the recrudescence of full song found in the robin and many other species, just after the young have left the nest but are still under parental care, is an adaptation to teach the young birds the proper song of the species. This suggestion could be checked by discovering whether this recrudescence of song is absent in species where the song does not have to be learnt in whole or in part, but is wholly innate.

His study of courtship in the robin has led him to an interesting extension of the idea first thrown out by the present reviewer thirty years ago, that the main biological function of certain types of courtship (for example, mutual display in grebes) lies in their providing an emotional bond between the pair. Lack is now inclined to think that courtship feeding, wherever it occurs, has a bond-forming function, as opposed to the stimulative function of display and certain symbolic actions. One is tempted to generalize this still further and to suggest that bond-forming courtship is likely to occur, in addition to stimulative courtship, in all or most bird species in which the co-operation of the pair is needed to rear the brood.

Lack's ringing methods have established that the British robin is partly migratory, and he suggests that it is in process of transition from a migratory to a non-migratory status. Extending the work of American ornithologists with stuffed mounts, he has shown that, although a robin is capable of extraordinary visual discrimination, such as the recognition of its mate at a considerable distance, yet its aggressive behaviour, normally directed against intruders on its territory, is elicited by the crude "signal" constituted by the red breast. While a stuffed adult whose red breast had been painted a dull brown failed to elicit attack, an isolated red breast, "sans head, sans wings, sans tail, sans everything", was attacked in fifty per cent of the trials. Like other intensive field-studies, but perhaps with special force, Lack's has demonstrated the extent of variability in temperament and behaviour: this constitutes an important section of the reservoir of evolutionary