

"I can promise to be candid, but not impartial"

GOETHE

THE
"Plebs" Magazine

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The "Plebs" League

Object

To further the interests of the Central Labour College, for working men and women, at London, and to assist in the formation of similar institutions elsewhere, all of these institutions to be controlled by the organized Labour bodies.

Methods

The holding of an Annual Meet: the issuing of a monthly Magazine, the pages of which shall be open to any proposed application of reason to human problems: and the formation of Local Branches to promote the object of the League, and for the study of Social Questions, History, and Economics—from the working-class standpoint.

Membership

All Students (R. C. and C. L. C.), past and present (Resident and Corresponding) and Sympathizers are eligible for membership

Each Member shall pay 1/- a year towards the Central Fund for general expenses in connexion with the Annual Meet, &c.

Management

An Executive of five members elected annually, and the Editor of Magazine, who shall be responsible as to publication and meets, &c.

The Magazine shall be 2d. per copy, 2½d. post free.

Subscriptions payable in advance: Quarterly 7½d., Half Yearly 1/3, Yearly 2/6

✉ The Fifth Annual Meet will be held in London (Bank Holiday), August, 1913

G. SIMS, Secretary-Treasurer

To whom all P.O.'s should be made payable

13 Penywern Road, Earls Court,
London, S.W.

THE
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Vol. IV.

January, 1913.

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The Railway Servants Union and the C.L.C.

ONCE again the A.S.R.S. have come to the support of the C.L.C. Owing, no doubt, to the recent publicity given to College affairs in the Press, the trades-people had become rather anxious about, and insistent upon, a settlement of their outstanding accounts. In response to a request from the College Staff Committee for a loan to tide over these immediate difficulties, **the Executive of the A.S.R.S. have agreed to advance the College a loan of £200.** So the College Staff breathe freely once more. But what of the future? Mr. Frank Horrabin, a “Plebeian,” has agreed to give the C.L.C. £10 if they can raise another £190. Mr. Horrabin is a workman, the sum promised by him, therefore, is no mean tribute to his belief in, and goodwill to, our movement.

What will YOU do, fellow
“Plebeians”?

All who are willing to help should send to the Editor for Collecting Cards. A list will be published in the Magazine from time to time of the results from this appeal.

Shout Yes! but PAY first.

Talk's cheap, but *money* will keep the C.L.C. going.

An Open Letter to the North-East Lancashire Weavers

FELLOW WORKERS.—I cannot claim, although I am taking the liberty of addressing you, to be a slave of the loom, and so my justification must be, that I at least, like yourselves, belong to the "masses." It is not my intention to belabour you with pious moralizings, or to attempt to "bulldoze" you, as the Yankees say with a specific doctrine, so that I hope no alarm will be created in your minds. Although I *am* writing this letter in order to belabour your educational policy, I will be quite content to allow reason to remain as the supreme arbiter. It is an almost generally accepted axiom that new times bring new conditions, and so demand new men. I do not think that you will be disposed to disagree with me when I say that this axiom assuredly applies to the educational field, nor for that matter, if I also include new educational institutions in the demands made by new conditions.

The above observations are occasioned by the fact, that, although you are keen to resent the encroachments, industrially, of the capitalist upon what you consider your justly won preserves, you still allow the capitalist to dominate you educationally. I am aware, of course, that you have scholarships endowed at a Labour (?) College at Oxford, but I wish to respectfully draw your attention to the fact, that if you think that this is the kind of educational provision that you require, you are indeed living in a "fool's paradise." In order that we may elucidate the wisdom or otherwise of your support of this institution—I propose to conduct an inquiry into the type of education that it dispenses.

You are organized upon the industrial field to further the interests of your members. Politically, you are represented in Parliament with the same end in view. I am therefore justified in assuming that you realize that there is a fly in the social ointment, which fly vulgar agitators call the class struggle. Your daily experience has convinced

you that it is necessary to continually stand with raised fist before the capitalist employer, lest he "takes you unawares" and begins to show fight. Then surely you will agree that if your interests are not identical with the employers industrially and politically, they cannot be educationally. As the capitalist mill-owner is mainly concerned about preserving and extending his economic interests, he cannot be expected to assist in providing education that will tend to preserve and extend *your* interests.

In short, as your interests as workers, industrially, politically, and educationally, are indivisible—a sort of monistic trinity—you are by that fact flung into opposition with the capitalist tool-owning but non-working class on all three fields. But list! The supposed Labour College that you support is based upon the contention that education is impartial, and thus uniform in its effects and benefits. It is no great matter for surprise, consequently, to find that some of your students have returned from this Labour (?) College, and are now publicly defending the half-time system.

Of course, they only desire to retain this system for the children of the *workers*, but then, if education is uniform in its effects and benefits, surely *work* is at least *equally* so. But I must leave you to wrestle with that "nutty" little problem for yourselves. The question of primary importance at present is, *can* education in *social science* be impartial?

Of course, if the worker were going to study chemistry, mechanics, or wood carving, he would arrive at just the same conclusion as the capitalist—unless the latter arrived at the conclusion that it was a "beastly bore," because he hadn't to earn his living by it—and so the effects would be impartial. But then the recipients of your scholarships do not receive this type of education. It is *social science*, including history, economics and sociology, that is their special object of study.

Can you not now perceive, that the student of this form of science must put on a pair of *class* spectacles, whether he wills it or not; that he must place either a working-class interpretation upon history, economics, and sociology, or a capitalist-class interpretation? There is no convenient half-way house for him who would vacillate. For purposes of comparison, and literary beauty and symmetry (?) we will place the two points of view side by side. Parallel columns, Mr. Printer, parallel columns!

(1). History is a record of the mighty works of great men ; men of genius, military prowess, and (Empire) constructive ability.

Men like Drake, Hawkins, Fro-bisher, Wolfe, Clive and others were the founders of our national greatness. Without these and other great men, we might still have been wallowing in the slough of barbarism.

(2). History is the record of man's life in society ; it is a record of the labour-process.

"Great" men are only the products of the material forces of their time.

Drake, Hawkins and Frobisher, if alive to-day, would be "run in" for piracy with violence, on the high seas.

Wolfe and Clive were men who assisted in the creation of the world playground for the developing youth—capitalism. Like Lord Roberts in the S. African war, they got the glory, but left the gory to the workers.

Is it necessary for me to point out which of the two views is the working-class one? Or is it necessary to point out, that, accepting the ruling class interpretation, and applying it to capitalist society, we would have to maintain that without a Rockefeller there would have been no Standard Oil Trust, without a Beecham no pills "worth a guinea a box"?

But suppose we take a similar peep at economics. You will agree, I feel sure, that the worker who begins to think at all about economics, must be mightily puzzled as to why he should have to produce so much wealth for so small an equivalent in the shape of wages. If he examined the matter in detail, he would arrive at something like the following conclusion:—

The working day is divided into two parts.

(1). *Necessary Labour Time*, being the expenditure of *paid labour*,—payment being made in the shape of

Wages.

(2). *Surplus Labour Time*, being the expenditure of *unpaid labour*,—resulting in

Profits.

As a consequence of the dawning of the new light in his mind the studious worker would gradually realize that society was divided into

SLAVES

and

MASTERS.

But is this the conclusion that the capitalist economist arrives at?

Well, I smile! According to him, the worker is dependent upon the capitalist for his means of life, and so ought to be correspondingly grateful for the employment provided for him. Profits are made in some mysterious way by exchanging commodities, and so do not

represent "plunder." Plunder! Oh, no!! They are the wages of superintendance, of directive ability, and, oh yes, the reward of abstinence—from work.

Fellow-workers, I sincerely hope that you will not be too much shocked to remedy the mischief when I tell you that this latter is the education that your students are receiving at the chloroform factory at Oxford. The pompous verbiage of Prof. Marshall, an individual who accepts Stanley *Sunspot* Jevons as his economic papa, is accepted as the last possible expression of economic wisdom.

Upon these grounds, therefore, I suggest to you that it is high time that you considered the situation for yourselves. You can only blame yourselves when working-class students return from Ruskin College and become blackleg agency officials, Liberal election agents, and public advocates of reaction. You are directly participating in the manufacture of these enemies of your class at present. I say, at present, advisedly, because I sincerely trust that you are not yet beyond all hope of redemption. *When you desire to prevent their manufacture, you have only to cut off the supply of material.* When you desire to institute an independent, working-class educational policy, you have only to transfer your support to the Central Labour College. The Central Labour College exists for the sole purpose of providing trained workers for the Labour Movement. It is thus out, not to raise workers out of their class, but to raise the working class itself. It stands on the impregnable rock of proletarian science, heedless of all the winds that blow, offering to the workers the education necessary to achieve their emancipation. Will you slaves of the loom join your fellow slaves of the mine and the footplate, in the desirable task of driving nails into the coffin of the capitalist system? Think it over.

Yours fraternally,

E. ARCHBOLD.

Happiness unshared can scarcely be called happiness—it has no taste.—CHARLOTTE BRONTE.

Once was the spirit God, then it became man, and now it even becometh proletariat.—NIETZSCHE.

Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
These three lead life to sovereign power.—TENNYSON.

Foul cankering rust the hidden treasure frets;
But gold that's put to use more gold begets.—SHAKESPEARE.

"Wheresoever the Carcase is"

A MEMBER of Parliament, who is of the same opinion as the late John Bright, that the Public Service is a gigantic system of outdoor relief for the sons of the aristocracy, tells in *London* how the best Civil Service posts are filled. Open competition is a mere farce. Between 1906 and 1910 there were 473 candidates successful in the Class I examination, and of these 247 had come from Oxford and 142 from Cambridge. The scheme of examination for the Class I has been deliberately framed so as to give an advantage to the candidate from Oxford or Cambridge. Instances are as common as leaves in autumn of men in this select class jumping £300 to £500 a year at one step after a few years' service. A young man with three years' service, then receiving a salary of £260, was recently transferred to another office, to a post just made, at £500 a year. Immediately after he married the daughter of a highly-placed public official. A few other instances may be given to show the way in which fortune favours these young men who enter the Civil Service with the advantage of belonging to the exclusive set. The Treasury is a small department. Out of twenty-six Higher Division clerks serving in that office, no fewer than fifteen have, within the last eight years, had special promotion, and in every case the promotion sent up the salary at one step by about £400 a year. One of these, by no means an exceptional case, is that of a young man of invariably immaculate attire, with the most perfect Oxford manner and indispensable monocle, who entered the service about thirteen years ago. Commencing £200 a year, in six years he had reached £320. He was then promoted to a post carrying a salary of £700 rising to £900. Later he was advanced to another post, and his present salary is £1,150. The office of private secretary is intended to serve a double purpose. It provides an excuse for giving a few hundreds, or it may be only a modest hundred or so, to some junior Higher Division clerk, and it is a stepping-stone to a rapid promotion to some higher well-paid post. The Prime Minister has one private secretary at £500, one at £300, and one at £100 ;

the Chancellor of the Exchequer has one at £300, one at £200, one at £100; the Financial Secretary one at £150; the Parliamentary Secretary one at £300, and one at £100; the Permanent Secretary one at £150. These posts are usually held by Higher Division clerks, who are paid their usual salaries, and receive these allowances in addition, though they are taken away from their ordinary duties to serve as private secretaries. A short term as a private secretary is usually rewarded by a promotion to a very valuable post. One of the present Chancellor's private secretaries was appointed from that position to a post in India at £5,000 a year, an increase of over 500 per cent. in his wages. The present Permanent Secretary of a Government Department was private secretary to a former President of the Board of Trade, and from this post he was appointed to the position he holds to-day, the salary of which is £1,500 a year. Last month the present President of this Board (Mr. Runciman) announced that he intended to promote the clerk who was acting as his private secretary to the post of Assistant Secretary to the Board, a position carrying a salary of £800, rising to £1,000. A former Chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue had as private secretary, a young clerk whom he made a Principal Clerk, with only about five years' service. When this Chairman was appointed High Commissioner of South Africa, he made the young man Treasurer of the Province at a salary of £2,000. This young man had been at Balliol College, which was the college of his patron.

After retailing numerous other instances of favouritism, the author of this paper remarks that there is supposed to be a chance for the Second Division clerk to the Higher Division, but in practice this chance is very remote. There are over 3,000 Second Division clerks serving in Government offices, and in the last eighteen years there have been seventy-three promotions, and these have been confined to a small number of offices. Good care is taken that the pickings at the top are preserved for the superior caste.

Review of Reviews, October, 1912.

In statesmanship get the formalities right; never mind about the moralities.—Mark Twain.

Inter Nos

SO! The woolly-haired Scot from Elgin has become the public representative of the burgesses of Kensington. Thus we are informed. There are many "Plebs" who do not know him. He has been missing from the last two Meets. Yet we all wish him "good luck" in his public capacity. His help in the formation of The Central Labour College is well known. His functionings as a "Striker" were, apart from the seriousness of the affair, often dominated by the Comic Muse.

My first contact with Ben was in this wise. He is gifted with a *sostenuto-adagio* sort of a voice which has evidently been used to great effect in his election. This self same voice delighted the ears of the R.C. students in January, 1909, when to my amateur accompaniment he interpreted "Scots wha hae" in an atmosphere redolent of tobacco and coffee. Ah, Ben, they were happy days, lad. And then we recall those skirlings of the Scot at Plebs Socials and the days after, how we endeavoured to copy the agility and step with little success in the back quad! E. D. (which was to be shown) I always remember him as a rival to Carlyle's hero. Ben used to occupy the topmost room in R.C. No. 5 Cottage and the same trait repeated itself, for did he not reside in the topmost rooms in Bradmore Road, from which he oft startled into laughter those of us who were in the garden below by his "The ship is in the harbour now, Emily." An effort to show his appreciation of Shelley's "Epipsyehidion." There are many Plebeians who can recall the afternoons and evenings when Ben used to regale us with "Omar." And I've had many a cup of tea and a conflag with the Scots laddie fra Elgin. I shall never forget that evening at the Oxford Town Hall Meeting of Keir Hardie's, when MacKay in his capacity as steward challenged, in the way of "chucking out," the deeds of the Spartans.

Those are things of the past. Now you are taking a public office we extend our best wishes. We hope that genial disposition will never desert you. That the same traits of your student life, the open-hearted, free, generous, sympathetic conduct, which was always associated with your name, will continue in your public work in the uplifting of your fellows, and the development of your personality. Au revoir!

MEREDITH F. TITTERINGTON.

The Positive Outcome of Philosophy

IT may be that some attempt to justify the choice of title for this article is necessary at the outset. When we remember the length of time philosophers have been engaged in their art of elaborating world-systems, the conflicting theories these systems have contained, and the many nebulous and speculative ideas that are still being advanced by adherents of the various philosophical schools, it may appear as an unwarranted piece of optimism, to assume so readily that positive achievement has resulted from Philosophy.

Certainly, so far as many are concerned who still claim to speak for philosophy, there is not much sign of any great advance from the theories and methods of the earlier philosophers; and, if these are accepted as representative, the claim for a positive outcome cannot be maintained. But just as there are capitalists and economists who fail to recognize and appreciate the results of the material developments of society, so are there laggards among the philosophers who remain ignorant of the intellectual achievements of the race. It would indeed be rather remarkable if nothing of a positive nature had resulted from a pursuit that has engaged the more able minds throughout the centuries. What the value of this philosophic achievement has been, we will now endeavour to estimate and determine. While considering our subject it is necessary to remember that philosophy has hitherto been a pursuit mainly confined to representatives of the privileged order. It originated after the division of society into classes and the rise of a privileged leisured class, members of which were free to confine their efforts purely to objects of the mind. Consequently, philosophers have always been to a large extent divorced from material reality and the practical life of society; this was bound to have a vitiating effect on their methods of thought and it partly explains their inherent tendency to speculative reasoning. Not that this was the only cause, the lack of sufficient data until comparatively recent times must also have encouraged the tendency to extravagant and illegitimate speculation.

When we come to the main purpose of philosophy we find that the great question philosophers have made their own, is the question of what constitutes truth. It is this question of questions, that has formed the subject-matter of philosophy throughout the ages, and it is in the many attempts made to find an answer to this question that has led to the different theoretical world-systems that have been elaborated during successive stages of the world's history. The magnitude of the problem and the insufficiency as well as unreliability of the data available, led the philosophers to attempt by introspective and speculative means what was obviously then impossible of accomplishment by objective inductive means. Indeed, the problem

as it presented itself to the philosophers was greater than ever could be wholly solved by the human mind ; for, it was no particular relative truth they sought, but a knowledge of general absolute truth.

That was of course bound to prove itself an impossible and futile undertaking, not only for any individual, but even for the whole human race. Yet this insoluble problem has been, if not solved, at least laid to rest in a satisfactory way as we shall now endeavour to prove. While it is now recognized that the human mind, however great its powers and potentialities, can never arrive at absolute truth, we also know that by infinite striving we may be continually advancing towards the knowledge of the absolute. The philosophers of old time, by their attempts to gain a complete grasp of absolute truth at one gulp, as it were, not only failed in their purpose, as they were bound to do, but neglected the only means by which they could approach their object. They imagined that their purpose could be fulfilled, not by objective study and with material perceived by the senses, but by pure reasoning alone, with the mind free from the contamination of objects of the outside world.

This attempt to arrive at truth by introspective means led, however, to a very important result, and one which constituted the first great step in the positive achievement of philosophy. By turning the mind in on itself to discover the truth it sought, philosophy, in time, began to make the human mind its main object of study. Thus by purely negative means the unscientific philosopher reached a position which placed him fairly on the highway to science—his speciality henceforward being the instrument used in all the sciences, the organ of reason and understanding. Kant was the first great philosopher to consciously engage in this new departure and his *Critique of Pure Reason* reached the sensible, and—at that time, revolutionary—conclusion, that the indispensable requisite for all correct knowledge is the sense-perceived material, derived from the outside world. It is true that Kant also was unable to altogether free himself from the metaphysical influences of the old Philosophy, but that does not detract very seriously from the merits of his great achievement. There was some excuse for Kant too, as the accumulated data even in his day was still very meagre. Hence Kant also had to fall back on that metaphysical supersensuous world to solve, to his own satisfaction, some of the more profound problems of existence. In spite of this relapse he had accomplished a great work, for once it was realized that only by objective study could man arrive at correct and definite knowledge, then the way to a rational development of human thought, was made fairly clear. After Kant, came Hegel, the Napoleon of the intellectual world. Hegel will always be remembered as the systematizer of the dialectic or evolutionary principle in human thought.

A knowledge of this principal is essential to a clear understanding of external nature, equally to a proper solution of some of the more vital problems of thought. The dialectic helps us to realize that the

instrument of human thought and understanding is, like all other special things, simply a part of universal nature, and is what it is through its connexions and inter-relations with other parts. Its special characteristic lies in its power and ability to connect itself, and obtain, with the aid of the senses, correct impressions of external objects in the Universe, and, by the function of generalization, form true conceptions of things that go to make up the material Universe.

While the dialectic method of Hegel constituted a revolutionary advance, the system of philosophy which he elaborated proved itself reactionary, owing to its irrational and contradictory idealism.

Hegel believed, not that mind and ideas were attributes of the world, but that they constituted the original and fundamental principle of the Universe, and that the material phenomena were simply the manifestations of the pre-existent mind or idea. This was scarcely an advance on the Mosaic account of creation which also gave precedence to the idea: "Let there be light, and there was light;" first the idea, and then its material manifestations. Following Hegel, appeared the formidable school of "Young Hegelians," which quickly turned its analytic and destructive powers of criticism upon the more irrational and untenable parts of the Hegelian system. The greatest and most revolutionary of these "Young Hegelians" was Karl Marx, who completely reversed the conceptions of Hegel by giving them a materialist basis. According to Marx, the material world is the fundamental reality, and forms the basis of all our ideal conceptions; ideas, indeed, being but the reflections of the material objects in the Universe. The intellectual developments so far outlined were simply a part of the general developments going on in society, and were not solely attributable to the philosophers, however able some of these might have been. The newly-arising capitalist system was demanding with an ever-increasing insistency, a more detailed and exact knowledge of the physical properties of nature, in order that these might be successfully utilized in the development of the productive forces. Specialists were therefore arising in response to this demand, and because they were specialists who confined their efforts to clearly-defined limits, were achieving results in obtaining knowledge of the material Universe of which, so far, philosophers had only dreamed. These special investigations eventually encroached so much on what had hitherto been the domain of the philosophers that the latter were driven in course of time to likewise engage in the art of specialization, their speciality being the organ and faculty of the understanding.

The reduction of philosophy to narrower boundaries, and to the specialized form of investigation, by no means lessened its importance; rather did it raise it to a more exalted position, from whence ultimately it became the premier science. It is in gaining an insight and understanding of the organ of the understanding and the general

processes of human thought, that the way is found to a solution of that great question which has hitherto baffled the philosophers, the question of absolute truth.

The man who has helped most in the solution of this question is Joseph Dietzgen, a German working man, and a contemporary and associate of Karl Marx. Dietzgen not only cleared away the metaphysical rubbish woven about the subject by the old philosophers, but he went further than anyone before him in giving a rational explanation of the hidden mystery which had hitherto caused the philosophers so much trouble. Briefly, he showed that the faculty of the understanding, is the faculty of generalization, and declared that we have fully grasped the nature of human reason as soon as we conceive of it as the faculty of deriving the general out of the concrete.

Amidst the complexity of the universal phenomena, man has to pick his way in order to avoid disaster, and so as to fulfil his necessary purpose of preserving and perpetuating his existence. With the light of human reason in his head as the only guide, he fulfils his object by distinguishing things by their differences and uniting them by their common features. In this way he is able to "take his bearings" in the Universe, and avoid the mistakes and the disasters that otherwise would befall him. In an ordinary way, human reason reasons rationally; that is, it proceeds, either instinctively or consciously, from the particular, to the general. Any attempt, after the manner of the philosophers, to artificially reverse the process leads, not to understanding and truth, but to misunderstanding and error. A comparison of the theories of the old philosophy with those of modern science, will amply prove the correctness of this contention. The method of the old philosophy was to make speculation and previous reasoning a substitute for objective study and research; this method failed, except in a negative way, to achieve any positive results. But by its new methods and outlooks, philosophy offers itself, not as a substitute or makeshift, but as a supplement and complement to science; along these lines its success is now assured. The function of philosophy is now to appropriate the special truths of all the special sciences, and fuse and blend these into one general concept of truth. In this manner all knowledge of the world, and indeed all phenomena of the Universe, may be brought together and combined under one general heading and one universal concept—the concept of universal or absolute truth. Thus by another road and other methods do the philosophers at last approach their long sought *absolute*; albeit with a more modest and humble spirit than of yore, in the consciousness that however far the road may be travelled by present and future generations, finality will never be reached owing to the unending nature of the journey. The finite can never completely grasp and comprehend the infinite; the inexhaustible Universe can never be exhausted however exhaustive may be our efforts.

This, however, need cause dismay to no one except the metaphysicians; the dismay would arise if we ever reached a position from which there could be no further progress. The progress so far made in the acquirement of knowledge is already considerable and is amply repaid, and the possibilities of further progress in the same direction are as infinite as is the area for investigation. And now we are assured that the knowledge we gain will be real and substantial, every grain of truth garnered will be of help in improving our mode of existence on this planet, and in furthering the general advancement of the race. When it is clearly recognized that the Universe is the one and only absolute genus, whose all-embracing nature contains within itself all phenomena, including all their causes as well as their effects, the irrationality of looking beyond the Universe for the cause and explanation of existence will begin to dawn on people. The people will then realize that God, Cosmos, Nature and Universe are synonymous terms which describe the one Absolute and Universal Truth,—the truth of universal nature. To speak of a Being outside the Universe, is as illogical and absurd as to speak of the bottom of a bottomless pit, or of two hills existing without a valley. The generalizations of the human mind necessarily reach their limit as soon as a conception is reached which is all embracing enough to include everything else within it. Such a conception is represented by the term Universe, and any attempt to get outside its boundaries is an unpardonable breach of the fundamental principles of logic. Under the general term of Universe all things must be classified, worldly as well as the so-called other-worldly—the inhabitants of this world, as well as the phantoms of an hypothetical world of spirit. This new theory of the understanding which provides us with the method by which truth may be found, is destined not only to solve all our problems in philosophy and religion, but also those of morality and social life. Considered in relation to the Universe, all things are relative, morality included, as well as the social systems upon which morality is based. Hence there can be no eternal and absolute principles in the sense that our ruling-class moralists and statesmen would have us believe. Moral principles are derived out of the definite and concrete needs of man and these needs change with the changing material conditions of society. Consequently, no principle is sacred that has ceased to harmonize with man's higher needs. The ruling principles hitherto have been the principles in accord with the needs of the ruling class. These have been superimposed upon the masses, and given divine sanction by those claiming to have their authority from heaven.

As long as there was a reasonable justification in the nature of things for the existence of a ruling class no complaint need be made against it adopting all those moral safeguards, found necessary from time to time, to ensure and preserve its authority. Now, however, material developments have reached that stage when it is found possible, and has become desirable to put an end to the rule of the

majority by an exploiting minority. The existence of a small class which, by its privileged social position, is able to appropriate to itself an ever-increasing proportion of the wealth produced by social labour, has now become a positive menace to the future development of society. Moreover, the productive forces have now developed far enough to make it possible, nay easy, to bring about such a scientific organization for the production and distribution of wealth as will readily solve the poverty problem, and provide the necessary wealth to satisfy the needs of the people; all this without requiring excessive labour from a single individual. It would therefore be no real hardship to take from the present possessors their class privileges, and superfluities. In any case the working class, urged on by its growing needs, is already knocking at the gate of wealth and privilege. It is also organizing itself and developing its power, and it will not much longer be denied admittance to its rightful share of the results flowing from the collective labour of society.

If the present monopolizers of the world's treasures persist in refusing admittance to the latest arrivals at the feast, the battering ram of working-class power, generated by solidarity, will be called into use and a way will be forced. The walls surrounding wealth and privilege must be razed to the ground in order that there may be common enjoyment of what, after all, is a social product. The application of our new theory of the understanding to the economic and social life of the present day, thus leads irresistibly to our social theory which demands that what has been socially produced and is socially needed shall be socially owned and used for the benefit of society.

Under this new social order which will arise with the victory of the working-class, wealth and leisure will be the common property of all in return for the active participation of all in the necessary social labour. Then will a new era begin in the world's history, for the world's workers will then be the world's thinkers, and the world's thinkers will be the world's workers. And thus finally will be solved the contradiction hitherto existing between being and thinking, between fact and theory; and the natural relations of these two aspects of universal existence will be duly exemplified in worldly practice.

CHARLES WATKINS.

He that writeth in blood and apophthegms, doth not want to be read, but learnt by heart.—NIETZSCHE.

The state, I call it, where all are poison-drinkers, the good and the bad; the state, where all loose themselves, the good and the bad; the state, where the slow suicide of all—is called "life."—NIETZSCHE.

The New Comrade

(With apologies to Auberon Herbert)

If Heart and Tongue be true, be true,
Would scorn to trick or trip,
If Heart be gay through the toil of day,
And jest be ready on lip ;

If Hand and Eye be quick to guard,
And Foot be slow to flee,—
Then fare with us, and share with us
We folks of the C. L. C.

A Soul Born Again

For ah ! those changes of soul, my friend,
That are born by a special grace,
When the old life comes to its sudden end,
And the new slips into its place.

To the hall of pictures he idly went—
Just one of the idlers he—
And little to him their language meant,
For his soul was dead to see.

When a woman and child—do you know it there?—
With a sad far look in her face,
Just fixed his listless wandering stare,
And held him fast to his place.

And while he looked, a new world rose,
From which he had lived apart,
And a strange soft light grew out of the night,
And dawned on his careless heart.

AUBERON HERBERT

The Material of Economic Theories

ECONOMICS, as is known, was born by fragments, and its origin was associated with that of the first bourgeoisie, which was that of commerce and the great geographical discoveries, that is to say, it was contemporary with the first and second phases of mercantilism. And it was born to answer special questions: for example, Is interest legitimate? Is it advantageous for states and for nations to accumulate money? It continued to grow, it occupied itself with the most complex sides of the problem of wealth; it developed in the passage from mercantilism to manufacture, and then more rapidly and more resolutely in the passage from the latter to the great industry. It was the intellectual soul of the bourgeoisie which was conquering society. It had already, as discipline, almost defined its general lines on the eve of the French Revolution: it was the sign of the rebellion against the old forms of feudalism, the guild, privilege, limitations of labour; that is to say, it was a sign of liberty. The theory of "natural right" which developed from the precursors of Grotius to Rousseau, Kant, and the Constitution of '93, was nothing else than a duplicate and the ideological complement of economics, to the extent that often the thing and its complement are confounded in one in the mind and in the postulates of writers; of this we have a typical example in the Physiocrats.

In so far as it was a doctrine it separated, distinguished, and analysed the elements and the forms of the process of production, of circulation and of distribution and reduced them all into categories; money, money-capital, interest, profit, land rent, wages, &c. It marched, sure of itself, accumulating its analyses from Petty to Ricardo. The sole mistress of the field, it met only rare objections. It started from two hypotheses which it did not take the trouble to justify, since they appeared so evident; namely, that the social order which it illustrated was the natural order, and that private property in the means of production was one and the same thing with human liberty; all of which made wage labour and the inferiority of the wage labourers into necessary conditions. In other terms, it did not recognize the historic character of the forms which it studied. The antitheses which it met on its way in its attempt at systematization, after several vain attempts it tried to eliminate logically as was the case with Ricardo in his struggle against the income from land rents.

The beginning of the nineteenth century is marked by violent crises and by those first labour movements which have their immediate

origin in the distress attending lock-outs. The ideal of the "natural order" is overthrown. Wealth has engendered poverty. The great industry in changing all social relations has increased vices, maladies and subjection. It has, in a word, caused degeneration. Progress has engendered retrogression. What must be done that progress may engender nothing else but progress, that is to say, prosperity, health, security, education and intellectual development equal for all? With this question Owen is wholly concerned, and he shares with Fourier and Saint Simon this characteristic, that he no longer appeals to self-sacrifice and to religion, and that he wishes to resolve and surmount the social antitheses without diminishing the technical and industrial energy of man, but rather to increase this. It is by this road that Owen became a communist, and he is the first who became so in the environment created by modern industry. The antithesis rests entirely on the contradiction between the mode of production and the mode of distribution. This antithesis must, then, be suppressed in a society which produces collectively. Owen becomes utopian. This perfect society must needs be realized experimentally, and to this he devotes himself with a heroic constancy and unequalled self-sacrifice, bringing a mathematical precision even into his thoughts of its details.

The antithesis between production and distribution once discovered, there arose in England from Thompson to Bray a series of writers of a socialism which is not strictly utopian, but which should be qualified as one-sided, for its object is to correct the manifest vices of society by as many appropriate remedies.

In fact the first stage of all those who are on the road toward socialism is the discovery of the contradiction between production and distribution. Then these ingenuous questions arise? Why not abolish poverty? Why not illiminate lock-outs? Why not suppress the middle man? Why not favour the direct exchange of products in consideration of the labour that they contain? Why not give the worker the entire product of his labour, &c.? These demands reduce the *things*, tenacious and resistant, of real life, into as many reasonings, and they have for their object to combat the capitalist system as if it were a machine from which one can take away or to which one can add pieces, wheels and gearings.

The partisans of critical communism have broken definitely with all these tendencies. They have been the successors and the continuers of classical economics. What is the doctrine of the structure of present society? No one can combat this structure in practice, in politics or in revolution without first taking an exact account of its elements and its relations and making a fundamental study of the doctrine which explains it. These forms, these elements and these relations arise in certain historic conditions but they constitute a system and a necessity. How can it be hoped to

destroy such a system by an act of logical negation and how eliminate it by reasoning? Eliminate pauperism? But it is a necessary condition of capitalism. Give the worker the entire product of his labour? But what would become of the profit of capital, and where and how could the money expended in the purchase of commodities be increased if among all the commodities which it meets and with which it makes exchanges there were not a particular one which returns to the buyer more than it costs him; and is not this commodity precisely the labour power of the wage worker? The economic system is not a tissue of reasonings, but it is a sum and a complexus of facts which engenders a complex tissue of relations. It is a foolish thing to assume that this system of facts which the ruling class has established with great pains through the centuries by violence, by sagacity, by talent, and by science will confess itself vanquished, will destroy itself to give way to the demands of the poor to the reasonings of their advocates. How demand the suppression of poverty without demanding the overthrow of all the rest? To demand of this society that it shall change its law which constitutes its defence is to demand an absurd thing. To demand of this State that it shall cease to be the buckler and the defence of this society and of this law is plunging into absurdities. The one-sided socialism which without being clearly utopian starts from the hypothesis that society admits of certain errata without revolution, that is to say, without a fundamental change in the general elementary structure of society itself, is a mere piece of ingenuity. This contradiction with the rigid laws of the process of things is shown in all its evidence in Proudhon, who, reproducing without knowing it, or copying directly, some of the one-sided English socialists, wished to arrest and change history, armed with a definition and a syllogism.

The partisans of critical communism recognized that history has the right to follow its course. The bourgeois phase can be outgrown and it will be. But as long as it exists it has its laws. The relativity of these consists in the fact that they grow and develop in certain determined conditions, but their relativity is not simply the opposite of necessity, a mere appearance, a soap bubble. These laws may disappear and they will disappear by the very fact of the change of society, but they do not yield to the arbitrary suggestion which demands a change, proclaims a reform, or formulates a programme. Communism makes common cause with the proletariat because in this resides the revolutionary force which bursts, breaks, shakes, and dissolves the present social form and creates in it, little by little, new conditions; or to be more exact, the very fact of its movement shows to us that these new conditions are already born.

The theory of the class struggle was found. It was seen to appear both in the origins of the bourgeoisie (whose intrinsic *processus* was already illustrated by the science of economics), and in this new

appearance of the proletariat. The relativity of economic laws was discovered, but at the same time, their relative necessity was understood. Herein lies the whole method and justification of the new materialistic conception of history. Those deceive themselves who, calling it the economic interpretation of history, think they understand it completely. That designation is better suited, and is only suited to certain analytic attempts, which, taking separately and in a distinct fashion on the one side the economic forms and categories, and on the other, for example, law, legislation, politics, customs,—proceed to study the reciprocal influences of the different sides of life considered in an abstract fashion. Quite different is our position. Ours is the organic conception of history. The totality of the unity of social life is the subject matter present to our minds. It is economics itself which dissolves in the course of one process, to reappear in as many morphological stages, in each of which it serves as a substructure for all the rest. Finally, it is not our method to extend the so-called economic factor isolated in an abstract fashion over all the rest, as our adversaries imagine, but it is, before everything else, to form an historic conception of economics and to explain the other changes by means of its changes. Therein lies our answer to all the criticisms which come to us from all the domains of learned ignorance, not excepting the socialists who are insufficiently grounded and who are sentimental or hysterical. And we explain our position thus as Marx has done in his *Capital*, not the first book of critical communism, but the last great book of bourgeois economics.

ANTONIO LABRIOLA.

Essays on the Materialist Conception of History.

We have a few sets left of the plaster-cast busts, 6½ inches high, of Dennis Hird, Darwin, Huxley, Spencer and Ruskin—to clear stock we will supply them at 1/3 each, or 5/- the set, carriage paid. Address:—

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Neo-Bedology

Being a new discovery of an all-powerful factor towards reform, and as such I heartily recommend to the Revisionist School.

PROBABLY the greatest and most vicious crime to be laid at the door of capitalism is the divorcement of man from his bed. This may seem to those minds constructed upon Reformist lines, to savour somewhat of an extremist declaration, and it may be argued that man is not *divorced* from his bed, though the tendency of capitalism is to prolong the interval between man's rising and retiring.

This argument, ingenious though it may be, is as fallacious as it is contemptuous, a statement which I propose to prove up to the hilt as this article proceeds.

That the divorcement of man from bed is the greatest injury capitalism could be guilty of is my first proposition, my second (and here the careful reader will suspect the reason for this article)—my second proposition I repeat, is that the proposal of the Labour Party for a universal eight-hour day, carrying with it as it does the possibility of an extra hour or two in bed, is the greatest and most far-reaching proposal ever promulgated by a Progressive Party.

These two propositions connote to me far more vividly the class struggle existing in society, than any number of poles erected by Marx. It has been a perpetual source of worry to me to see streams of pamphlets issued upon such unimportant things as the "Nebular Hypothesis," "The Adulteration of Butter," or the "Transportation of Lloyd George," whilst the vital question of bed is entirely neglected. "To bed or not to bed," that *should* be the question, and the writer herein takes oath that he will not rest from the obvious path of duty until the Sociological Society have for their principal paper, "The civilizing effect of feather beds upon Savage Psychology": the British Medical Association, discussing the cardinal points in favour of feather, as against flock beds, and

the Fabian Society issuing a tract on "The Feather-bed as a contributing factor to the Social Revolution." To describe the appreciation of bed as an art is to degrade it, for art tends to become subservient to commercialism, and even the most biased would agree that the faintest suspicion of profit-mongering in connexion with bed would be an injustice. Perhaps the nearest approach to the morbid spirit of modernism ever allowed has been the folding bed, a concession to capitalism that shamefully (and rightly so) hides its face behind the guise of a cupboard, a true index, by the way, to the mean and niggardly character of the owner that encourages such deception.

To return to our original propositions we repeat (conscious of the scorn that will be poured on our heads and accepting such as the fate of the pioneer) the fundamental struggle going on in society and responsible for the Labour Unrest, the modern eye, &c., is the Struggle between BED AND CAPITAL. Whittington, we are told, hesitated thrice before finally succumbing to the demand of the London Bells to "turn again," but what self-respecting citizen (between the sheets) with only the slightest gleam of human feeling, could fail to instantly obey the fervent appeal, "Turn again, 'wid in turn," thereupon defying the crude blast of the factory buzzer?

That there are persons of a debased type of mind who sneer at the soft allurements of man's greatest invention, I do not deny, in fact I have met many of them and they are a source of abomination to me; to hear, for example, some misguided wage-slave declare proudly that he has "never missed a quarter sin' the last big fire at Brown's, an' that nigh ten years ago." Such boasts of punctuality indicate the symptoms of Lunacy—they are skirmishers on the borderland of rank servility, *not* the triumphant shout of mind victories over mattress.

A man who gloats over his time-keeping feats, who tells you with pride that he always gets up, *even on Sunday*, seems like unto a stone wall, he is devoid of feeling, and the common failings that differentiate man from all other animals, he is food only for the Eugenist; he is unnatural and should be ticketed with other time-keeping things such as Halley's Comet. Throughout history the

prophecy "He will die with his boots on"! has been one of reproach, not because (as hitherto supposed) there is anything shocking in leaving for the Great Journey well shod, not because of the fear, entertained by some of the devout, that in the event of your clattering up to Heaven in a pair of double-welted hand-sewn's, you might disturb the venerable St. Peter, who during the rise in the mortality among millionaires, has spent most of his time as guardian of the gate in slumber, not, we repeat, because of these reasons but for something more subtle and far more important, namely, the failure to pay final respect to man's true friend—bed.

Poets of yesterday and poets of to-day have raved and continue in their misguided manner to rave about the eccentric whirling of the cloud or of the lunacy-inspiring effect of a maid's blue eyes, but no poet will ever achieve immortal fame until his subject be bed.

What soft round arm, what peach bloomed cheek could be more inviting, more seductive, than that goddess of comfort; that material expression of the very essence of aesthetic langour, the good solid-looking "four-poster?"

The popular conception of the function of bed is that of being an instrument of sleep. Never was there a more mistaken notion!

Sleep! What does sleep convey? Total annihilation! The sleeper is a senseless log incapable of comprehension, appreciation, or realization. He lies in bed with no other idea than that of sleep! forgetting his manhood, he loses it and becomes a mere animal.

Prof. Lester Ward, of America, tells us that the differentiating factor between man and the lower animals consists of the application of the telic factor, utilizing the psychic powers in order to accomplish a perceived end; can the sleeper be said to be safely over the foregoing line of demarcation? Can he be designated a sentient thinking entity when his mentality is absorbed in a common dross? Emphatically the answer must be No! And herein lies the true line of differentiation between the artist of the Higher Life and the degraded follower of the stupefying Morpheus.

The true artist does not flop into unconsciousness, he glides, as it were, upon a billowy surface of prolonged realization, he brings the whole poetry of his emotions to bear upon the fact that he is in

bed. In this spirit he feels its soft caress, its gentle nursing; the hug of the bed and the kiss of the pillow; he is no longer the care-worn wage slave, he becomes a revolutionary—despising all things regular. As such he is plastic material in the hands of Labour.

Thus not only does the glorious institution of bed present itself as a medium of the purest forms of human ecstasy, but also shows itself to be a factor of the utmost importance in the forthcoming Social Revolution, and (in confidence) the writer, as he lies in bed, is of the opinion that the State that is to be, in order to be successful should be erected upon pillars as strong and reliable and to a great extent resembling those of my own venerable four-poster.

*NITUS.

[* From the Greek—*nit* or *nits*, meaning to crawl.—ED.]

Notes

Councillor Ben Mackay was busy recently at Kensington Boro' Council anent the late disastrous fire at Barker's. "Protection for wage-slaves' lives on business premises" was his slogan. The Ancient and Royal Councillors were previously shocked at his want of consideration for "Business interests."

"Merry" Titterton has been lecturing for Bradford B.S.P. on Evolution, and to Batley Co-operators on Industrial History. Good reports from both places of the quality of M.F.T.'s work.

Great reports from Lancashire of the work being done by the C.L.C. lecturers, Gibbons at Rochdale and District, and Ted Archbold at Burnley and District. Had a chat with Will Hay recently and gathered that Wales does not lag behind in this Lecture Classes work. But what about the Fourth Commandment? Assuredly we shall have to reconsider our views on the subject of the extension of the working-day.

Following letter to hand:—"I enclose P.O. for 1/9, being sub. for "Plebs" Mag. for six months, ending next March. I notice that in report of "Plebs" Meet some comrade suggested reducing price of Mag. to one penny. I would rather suggest it being raised another penny until, at least, debt is cleared. Hence my 1/9. Mag. as good as ever."—VERB. SAP.

Reports

North-East Lancashire C.L.C. Classes

The work in connexion with the classes is going on quite satisfactory, attendance up to the mark and a keen interest being taken in the lectures by the students.

The other Saturday evening a meeting was held of the Class Secretaries and myself, to discuss the question of improving the position of the C.L.C. in this area.

We decided to proceed on the following lines:—

1st.—That in each place, where a class is being held in our area, a notice of motion be sent in simultaneously to the Weavers' Association calling upon them to transfer their students from Ruskin College to the C.L.C.

2nd.—That every Trade Union branch in this area should be approached with a view to becoming affiliated to the local classes.

For this purpose we have drafted a letter and also arranged for speakers to visit these Unions, if necessary, to put the C.L.C. position.

W. H. BARTON, General Secretary.

BRIGHTON

Notwithstanding the difficulties which beset the path of real working-class education in the Tory-ridden and flunkey town of Brighton, good progress is being made with the Central Labour College Class. A course of written lectures by Mr. Craik, varied by an occasional personal visit, is the method adopted. The average attendance is 18 students. A strong point of the class is the manner in which all the students are prepared to state their views and difficulties, thus rendering the discussions, not only interesting, but instructive. Another pleasing feature is the support given by the Brighton Trades and Labour Council, to which body no less than ten students are delegates. In addition, several local Trade Union officials are members, therefore we can confidently hope that the knowledge which is being gained by the class will be used to advantage inside the branches.

E. MARSH, Secretary.

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