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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 Sixth Annual Meet will be held in London (Bank Holiday), August, 1914

G. SIMS, Secretary-Treasurer

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

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In June No. we wrote: **WILL YOU HELP?**

We invite all our readers, who are sufficiently interested to make a little sacrifice to the Central Labour College, to obtain 4/- a month till July next, or pay £1 in the most convenient form.

We want £500. We want it immediately. You CAN help! If YOU cannot give it you can probably get it from your friends or workmates, or Union or Society.

	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>		<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
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Edinburgh Clarion Fellowship (3d. Levy) ...	8	6	Collected: p.p. J. T. Murphy—		
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Keating, A. (collected) ...	2	0	Cottam, J. ...	6	
†Lord, Ben ...	8	0	Howarth, J. ...	1	0
MacKay, Mrs. & B. Skene ...	20	0	Jennison, W. ...	1	0
Moore, C. ...	10	0	Jones, R. ...	6	
Robertson, Mr. & Mrs. J. ...	10	0	Kay, T. ...	1	0
Sale, B.S.P. Branch ...	4	0	Knott, J. ...	1	0
†T.W.M. ...	4	0	Knight, J. ...	1	0
†Walker, Arthur ...	8	0	Lismer, E. ...	2	6
Westrope, Mr. & Mrs. ...	10	0	Lowe, A. ...	6	
Collected: p.p. Mrs. Westrope,	2	0	Murphy, J. T. ...	1	6
Collected: p.p. H. Slack—			Oxley, R. ...	1	0
Sutton, J. H. ...	1	0	Storr, W. ...	1	0
Tomlinson, J. ...	1	0	Unwin, W. ...	2	0
			Ward, W. ...	1	6

†Instalment of £1 guarante.

Principles of Communism

A popular exposition by Frederick Engels. Edited by Edward Bernstein from his posthumous works.

PREFACE

THE document which is now made public was found among the posthumous works of Frederick Engels, written by his own hand on paper now yellowed with age. That it was a first rough draft for the Marx-Engels *Communist Manifesto* is at once evident. The identity of its author was also apparent—it could only have originated with Engels. Circumstances, too, pointed to this, since Engels had mentioned to me and to others that he and Marx had each independently outlined a scheme, afterwards collaborating in the final composition. When he informed me of this in 1884, Engels sent me a page of Marx's preliminary scheme, which I published for him in facsimile in the "True Jacob." He was silent as to the fact that his own scheme still existed, and there is no mark on the manuscript to indicate that this is the preliminary scheme composed by him. On the other hand, opposite the text of questions 22 and 23, instead of the answers, the words, "to remain," which undoubtedly signify that this is the revision of an earlier scheme, lead to the assumption that Marx had influenced this later draft; it may therefore be treated as a joint production. As giving colour to this assumption in the preface reference has also been made to the projected publication of a pamphlet, planned some years earlier, but put off to facilitate the publication of the Marx-Engels Correspondence.

In the Marx-Engels Correspondence there is a passage which seems to place the question of the authorship beyond dispute. On the 24th November, 1847, Engels writes to Marx from Paris, apparently at the end of a longer letter:—

Tuesday evening,

Think over the Confession of Faith a little. I believe it will be better to change the catechism-form, and call the thing the Communist Manifesto. As history must be more or less recorded in it, the earlier form is not at all suitable. I bring with me the above mentioned (draft) which I have made, it is simple in form but miserably revised, in a frightful hurry. I begin: What is Communism? and then at once introduce the proletariat, historical origins; divisions of earlier workers; develop the principle of the proletariat and of the bourgeoisie; crises; consequences—interspersed are all kinds of kindred matters and, finally, the political aims of the communists in general popular outlines. This has not yet been fully revised, but I think, except in unimportant details, is practically complete, and embodies our joint views.

That was a few days before Engels' journey to London to attend the Communist Conference, at which he and Marx were entrusted with the composition of a manifesto which they commenced immediately after their return; the plan of composition adopted differing considerably from that outlined in Engels' letter.* We can therefore definitely say: *first*, that Engels' statement that Marx and he had each drawn up a separate draft *after* the London Conference, is due to a confusion of dates; the separate drafts were prepared *before* the Conference; *secondly*, that the draft now published is the work of Frederick Engels—the table of contents given in his letter coinciding fully with the contents of the manuscript. And we are probably safe in assuming, *thirdly*, that this manuscript is a copy of the first rough draft, executed in a "frightful hurry," which Engels had submitted for the consideration of the Paris branch of the Communist Alliance. Although it is not suggested that it was sent there as a finished production—and would scarcely have been regarded as such by Engels,—it is noteworthy that, after one thorough revision, Engels again took up the pamphlet and revised it, without, as we see, the fundamental character of the whole or the general ordering of the contents being substantially altered. It may further be noted that two weeks previous to the date of the above letter (as he had informed Marx on November 10th, 1847,) he received a commission from the Paris branch of the Communist Alliance to write a pamphlet in place of one submitted by Moses Hess, entitled *Confession of Faith*, which Engels had criticised in detail. About eight days later his draft was discussed at a meeting of the Paris branch, and then sent on to London. The opening sentences of the letter of November 24th, 1847, give grounds for the assumption that an interchange of opinions had in the meantime taken place between Marx and Engels, and that the friends had decided to work together on the "confession of faith," and to publish it as a joint work.

The certainty of the authorship is sufficient reason for publishing the manuscript, but is by no means the only reason. Its own intrinsic value calls equally for its publication. The pamphlet may indeed be regarded as less comprehensive than the *Communist Manifesto*, whose clear-cut, epigrammatic sentences and rapid, orderly development of ideas it certainly does not attempt to emulate. But it has nevertheless its own peculiar qualities. It goes much more into detail, and its catechism form is better suited to the needs of the reader as yet uninitiated into Socialist theories; while its more extended treatment is not less scientific. One might well describe it as a popular presentation of the principles of the *Communist Manifesto*, and as a worthy supplement to the greater work. His clear statement of the distinctions between slaves, villeins and modern proletarians may be regarded as the last word on the subject, since it provides a critique of modern society, without falling into any modern romantic reactionary errors concerning the past. The section outlining the probable development of social relations when the

proletariat has achieved political power is doubly interesting; firstly, as an index to the ideas, at this particular time, of one of the authors the *Communist Manifesto*, and secondly as an able presentation of various theoretical questions. With remarkable insight, it is demonstrated that development can only proceed step by step; that each single step and each stage of the development will require time to prepare and accomplish; that the particular stage of the general development determines the value and efficacy of any of the means leading towards the final triumph of the movement; that the separate stages of this development may be shortened, but not avoided; and that not only, therefore, must conditions be changed but with the conditions, man himself.

Marx and Engels were undoubtedly of the opinion these developments would take place more rapidly than has actually been the case. Engels himself has admitted this, and evidence of it is so apparent to-day that no further comment on the fact is needed. We proceed to the more important question of the relation of their scientific teaching and their prophecies as regards the essential process of social development to the actual course of that development; and here the results are much more satisfactory. Naturally their teaching is not concerned with the outward political forms of the movement, but only with fundamental economic forms and tendencies. As regards these, all subsequent developments, however remote they may have then appeared, have justified their forecasts to a remarkable extent; and many of their proposals, startling enough at the time, are to-day universally accepted as necessary and practicable measures of reform.

Let us take, for example, that section of the pamphlet dealing with "The Industrial Armies, particularly of Agriculture." Its demands, at first sight, appear sufficiently startling. Yet in Germany to-day we see how, at regular periods of the year, whole armies of workers, partly, it is true, from foreign countries, but partly also from the German towns, are brought together for the purpose of agricultural industry in all its branches, only to be again scattered, at the end of the "campaign," to all points of the compass. The establishment of agricultural labour colonies by the state is to-day one of the demands of the most widely-varying schools of social reformers. In most cases, it is true, that demand is accompanied by reactionary tendencies and seeks to create new forms of bondage.

So far this demand arises from the needs of capitalist production, but the same demand would have to be met in the event of the working class attaining political power, or even as soon as it was powerful enough to influence legislation. Only the forms in which the demand expresses itself to-day will become obsolete. But even capitalist demands must inevitably produce far-reaching revolutionary results; the more imperatively as the arrested forms of development

in the older countries come into conflict with the development of agriculture overseas and the rapid progress of transportation,—and this factor we have always to take into consideration. The concentration of the population in the great towns, brought about by industrial development, must, at a certain stage of that development make a counter-movement necessary; and of this we have already a clear indication. But whenever the working class has become the political power, this counter-movement could not and would not take the form of a simple return to the villages. For in the meantime the material and spiritual needs even of the land-owner—and still more those of his communistic successors—have developed to a point far beyond the power of the old village life to satisfy.

* * * *

With regard to the editor's work, the following may be noted:—The title of the pamphlet follows Engels' manuscript. The sub-title is the editor's.

There are three gaps in the manuscript. In Question 9 the answer has not been filled in; and in Questions 22 and 23, instead of answers, there appear simply the words "to remain" (see above).

Considering that the pamphlet is not published merely on account of its historical interest, but for use as propaganda, it has seemed to me right to fill up these gaps to the best of my ability, as I think Engels would have done in like case. When there were omissions, I have either utilised the *Communist Manifesto* or other of their writings on the subjects dealt with, and have endeavoured in this way to allow Marx and Engels to speak for themselves.

A supplementary work appears to me to be called for. This pamphlet was written at a period when Marx and Engels held views on certain points of theory which they changed later. I have thought it advisable to point this out, in footnotes, to certain passages, by reference to their later views on the basis of the investigations outlined in *Capital*, which both accepted as a standard for their theories. In doing this, I believe I have acted as Engels would have wished—compare his own preface to Marx's *Wage, Labour and Capital*. Naturally, I could not presume to make any alteration in the text itself, as Engels did with Marx's pamphlet. Similarly, it is permissible here to enter upon any criticism of the work. But not to have completed his work on the lines indicated would have been contrary to the spirit of the man whose great ability, powerful scientific method, and keenness of thought are here combined with such simple propagandist power.

EDWARD BERNSTEIN

(To be continued.)

Translated for the *Plebs* by A. J. HACKING, M.A.

A FOOL'S PARADISE!



Oxford University (to Ruskin College) — "Come and dwell with me, my boy — and forget all about nasty things like wages and class struggles. They are so sordid!"

Letters on Logic

Economics

SECOND LETTER OF THE SECOND SERIES

IN the first part of my correspondence on logic, it was specially emphasized that the human spirit is not absolutely unique, but participates in common with all things in the world-nature. This is also true of economics, although the demonstration of this may at first sight seem superfluous. The production of goods is such a plain commonplace affair that it would occur to no one to attempt to separate it from the entire world-connexion. And yet so firmly established is the prejudiced outlook which considers world-matters as separated, that the connexion of economics with other sciences and with the entire world history is ignored by the most renowned authors in the department of economics, with consequent detriment to the proper understanding of the subject. Just as our philistines do not regard the morality of past times and of distant peoples as morality, just as they represent their philistine morals as morals *par excellence*, beside which all other species of morals are said to be immorality, just as they fail to appreciate the "historical moment" established by Hegel, so they fail to understand Marx, the pupil of Hegel, who introduced the historical moment into economics. Adam Smith and the whole Liberal school act and believe as if ancient and modern slavery, or the feudal fief, and gild systems, or any other system of production are in no way related to economics, and the system of free competition is of such lofty sublimity that it bears no resemblance, stands in no relationship, can be classed in no category with anything which has been before it or can come after it. For the economists of competition the modern capitalist system is a thing with which all economic science begins and ends. Capitalist economy according to this unhistorical outlook, has not developed historically but has had a hidden existence from the earliest times; which has at last been discovered by some cunning fellow and for all time to come will shine as the everlasting light. Idolaters give to a fragment of the world the adoration which belongs to the world as a whole. Political Economy has idolized the system of competition.

I must remind you here that we have taken political economy second in order of treatment, having first studied the value of the thought process. Now, then, that you understand the "art of making categories," we proceed to apply it to economics, to the very important wages-category.

Every human effort is rewarded by its results, and in its widest sense this reward may be termed wages. In this sense of course, the fishers' fish and the hunters' game, are wages. Economic science, however demands a more precise language, a specific classification. It must know how to distinguish between the economy of a nomad and the economy of a petty employer, and again between the petty

employer economy and that of the capitalist on a large scale. It is, therefore, necessary to distinguish the labour that rewards itself, from wage labour. All labour is more or less rewarded: one kind rewards itself, while the other is rewarded by capitalists. Without capitalists there can be no wage labourers and without the latter the former are inconceivable, and the economic concept of capital is inconceivable. These two categories (capital and wage-labour) are inseparable.

A recognition of the differences within the connexion and the connexion of the differences is what Henry George lacks. In an excellent way he brings out in his first chapter that the question as to the cause of the paradoxical phenomenon of increasing poverty alongside increasing production of wealth, is identical with the politico-economic question:—"why, in spite of increase in productive power, do wages tend to a minimum which will give but a bare living?"

His answer to the question is unsatisfactory, since he confuses self-rewarded free labour with the servile wage labour which must give up to capital the most considerable part of its product. True, servile labour bears a free title; the labourer is no serf but a "free" seller of his particular power. But this freedom produces no equivalent, but just wage labour.

Already in the first chapter this lack of differentiation throws the author off the track. He disputes with the capitalist and their spokesmen not because they are advocates of the slavery of wage-labour, but as to when and where the slave-wage is high or low, whether with greater accumulation of capital or with lesser accumulation, whether in old countries or in new colonies.

Such questions are very interesting for science but in the latter case they are to be separated, like fringes and tassels from a mantle, as secondary things from the primary matter. So logic, the supreme mistress on scientific grounds, wills it. If in the first place wage-labour is included in the general nature of slave labour, then it may be discussed whether in Berlin or in Potsdam the best wages can be obtained. These latter points concern us little, but for the fact that Henry George's repeated use of them, shows that he mistakes the economic starting point. The labourer considers that the capitalist takes from him the fat off the soup. The advocates of capital desire to remove this "odious" conception. They teach that since where there is much capital, so much will be paid in wages, low wages are a consequence of a lack of capital. Henry George refuses to be imposed upon by the fallacy, but straightway falls into another. For example: since in California high wages exist simultaneously with high interest, and generally in "hard times" low wages with low interests, he concludes therefrom an identity of interest between capital and labour. A certain brotherliness there is to be sure: the labourer has a common interest with the capitalist in "good times." When the master prospers the burden of the slave is lightened. Yet, nevertheless the slavery of the worker continues. Whether the time

is good or bad, wages and interest, high or low, the wage-labourer continues to be cheated of a part of the value he creates.

The causal connexion of high interests with high wages is produced neither by an abundance nor a scarcity of capital, but by higher exploitation, be it by the grace of nature, or by combination. One kind of capitalist pays the other, the borrower to the lender, a part of that which labour produces. Even when a larger crumb is left for the labourer the combination of limited good and protracted ills proves that the entire capitalist economy has outlived its day.

Henry George inquires how poverty comes about: it comes not from low wages, and cannot be removed by high wages, but is at the most increased or diminished thereby. Poverty comes from wages-labour. Wealth is not produced from high or low rates of interest—but from "Interest"; this the author of *Progress and Poverty* does not appear to realise, nor that interest is but a form of surplus-value. Interest is paid among the capitalists mutually; but surplus-value, which is squeezed out of wage-labour, is the essence of the entire system of competition.

Henry George conceives the human labours, of agriculture, cattle breeding, building, weaving, tailoring, &c., as a part of social labour which is politico-economic and international. In several places in his book, he declares capital to be "a mere form of labour." However, in order to arrive at a real understanding of the different forms of labour, and particularly that called "capital," I want to advise you to first generalize the labour still further. Not only are the value-capitals labour, but likewise sunshine, rain, valueless virgin forests, &c., all are in the last analysis labour, although only natural labour. These are called indeed the works of nature, and work is labour. But in this way things appear generalized until finally the whole world is a single category.

On the other hand it must be recognized that to get a clearer understanding, the generalization itself must likewise be specialized. As infinite as the world-unity is the world-difference.

We have already seen that marketable wage-labour differs from free labour, and we shall now see how the form of labour called capital differs.

Thus speaks Henry George:

Because wages are generally paid in money, and in many of the operations of production are paid before the product is fully completed, or can be utilized, it is inferred that wages are drawn from pre-existing capital, and, therefore, that industry is limited by capital—that is to say, that labour cannot be employed until capital has been accumulated, Yet in the very treatise in which the limitation of industry by capital is laid down without reservation and made the basis for the most important reasonings

and elaborate theories, we are told that capital is stored-up or accumulated labour—"that part of wealth which is used to assist future production." If we substitute for the word 'capital' this definition of the word, the proposition carries its own refutation that labour cannot be employed until the results of labour are saved, becomes too absurd for discussion.'

Current political economy makes out of capital an eternal category: to this our author opposes that the fish which the first fisher caught with his bare hand, and the game which the first hunter killed with a thrown stone, were pure products of labour, secured without previous work, without capital, without fishing rod, without bow and arrow. This, however, was not wage-labour, nor was it paid labour, at least, not in the modern sense of the words. Capital, as the accumulated product of expended labour, serves as an instrument, as a means of production; but this appertains to all labour, no matter whether it pays itself or is paid. Capital, however, in the present historical moment has a specific character, that of competitively employed means of production. The labour process, carried on in the case of the primitive fisher and the primitive hunter without capital or wage-labour, has now become so complex a thing that it is difficult to say whether the labourer pays the capitalist or the capitalist pays the labourer. He who takes the greatest part is matador and diction therefore entitles one, in opposition to Henry George, to describe capital as the source of wage-labour—but then wage-labour is also the source of ever growing capitals. Both wage-labour and capital are mutually dependent and they are only to be distinguished as moments or parts of existence, in the same way as dogs and cats are both domestic animals. That however is only the present day state of the case, not the eternal. In order to understand present industry—understanding, comprehension, the thought process, is indeed our continual theme—it must first be recognised that accumulated dead labour, which serves living labour as a means of production, if not eternally existent is still much older than that "original condition, which according to Adam Smith, preceded the appropriation of land and the accumulation of capital." Before capital and capitalists arose, and also when these have been at length swept away by socialism, accumulated labour has been employed and will be employed as a means of making labour more productive.

The Indian hordes the Pyramid builders, the Roman slave-drivers, the feudal barons and the guild masters, worked with accumulated labour, but they were not capitalists. Altered circumstances necessitate the logical thinker to characterize with the special name of "capital" the means of production in free competition, which pay themselves and grant to the wage-labourer scarcely a bare existence.

1 Progress and Poverty (Everyman) Ch. i. Book 1.

The quotations given by J. D. are evidently taken from an earlier edition and we take the liberty of rendering them as they appear in the above English edition.

In savagery, there Henry George is right, the labourer requires no capital, no previous labour, there he digs the ground without spade and turns it over with the branch of a tree. But in civilization the matter is otherwise. We choose to labour in a more civilized way. A tree-stem no longer suffices for us. The spade itself and the plough are our conquered tools of labour. Society in its present form requires a large mass of accumulated labour. It requires capital. Without that, wage-labour would not be remunerative. In so far the capitalist economists are right, capital is the basis of wage-labour.

Although Socialists are hostile to capital they are not enemies of accumulated labour. They quite understand that these large masses of accumulated labour in the hands of capitalists are only capitals so long as they force labour into the form of wage-labour.

I close with the logical sequel: If the inquiry after the cause of riches and poverty is to be brought to a clear issue, the different forms of labour, the means of production and social organization, must become generalized, and at the same time be also specialized; specialized and be at the same time also generalized.

Translated for the *Plebs' Magazine* from the German of Joseph Dietzgen by W. W. Craik.

Edward Bernstein .

WE have been favoured by a visit from one of the most prominent figures of the German Socialist movement, Edward Bernstein, a man whose name is connected with a remarkable period of history. A man of venerable appearance, whose smiling face and figure suggest a German University Professor, one would hardly credit him with having been, during a decade of its most strenuous career—when the German ruling class under the leadership of Bismark used every means to suppress it,—a leader of the Socialist movement. The Exceptional laws rendered a movement on legal and constitutional lines impossible, the Press especially being singled out as an object of persecution. No paper advocating Socialist opinions was allowed to appear throughout the whole German Empire, Bismark hoping by these means to effectively crush Socialism.

The "Iron Chancellor" was quite right in the belief that no mass movement could exist without a Press, but he failed to appreciate the fact that it was possible to publish the German papers outside the German Empire. The Socialists expelled from their native country published a newspaper "The Social Democrat"

in Zurich. The editor and the leading spirit of this paper, which fought keenly against the Exceptional laws, was Edward Bernstein. Bernstein and Bismark fought this duel 10 long years with very unequal weapons, Bismark having the whole resources of the German Government, the whole bureaucratic and judicial machines at his disposal, and Bernstein only one weapon, his pen.

Social development swept away the Exceptional laws, and Bismark too; and amongst those who helped to forward this historical development, the tools in this necessary process, the place next to Bebel belongs to Edward Bernstein. Those who knew the heroic struggle of the German working class in this period, their devotion, sacrifices and perseverance, could not but view the old man, who had fought in the forefront of this battle, with feelings of veneration.

But the young comrades who had not lived through this great period of the German working class, saw Edward Bernstein in a different light. For them, he was one of the greatest scientific explorers of Socialism, one of the greatest and most prolific of socialist writers. His works: *Socialism and Democracy in the English Revolution*; *History of the Workingmen's Movement in Berlin*; *On Theory and Practice*, and many other smaller works and articles, form a small library.

But it is not these works that have made Bernstein world-famous; that is due to his critical work: *Evolutionary Socialism*. The book advocates the necessity of revising the Socialist programme based on the theories of Marx, and it was the starting point of that movement in the socialist ranks, known to the whole world as "Revisionism."

In the early 'nineties of the last century the working-class movement everywhere made enormous strides, and was particularly successful in Germany. The Trade Unions increased rapidly, while on the other hand the employers had not yet begun to organize effectively. The working class carried on their struggles most successfully and their conditions were improved by the shortening of the hours of labour and increases of wages. The political movement received fresh impetus; representatives of the workers were elected to Parliaments and to Municipal Bodies and succeeded in pushing forward some very important social reforms. The Co-operative movement also made remarkable progress and protected the workers in their capacity as buyers and consumers. In addition to this it must be remembered that in this period the cost of food showed a striking decrease. From America large

quantities of cheap corn and meat flooded the European markets, and bread could be purchased at half its present cost. This decreased cost of food allied with the increased wages improved the workers' standard of life. And this period lasted a fairly long time. During 20 years there had been no war in Europe, and economic crises had but a slight effect. Bernstein was of course a close observer of all these facts, and reached the conclusion that the Marx's theory,—that the capitalist system would rapidly culminate in a revolution,—was wrong. He maintained that a slow but continuous progress in favour of the working class was going on within the capitalist system, and, as a logical thinker, he advocated the revision and reconstruction of the Socialist programme on this new basis. The chief points of the new programme were : instead of revolution there should be reform—instead of class struggle should be co-operation with the left or more advanced wing of the middle class parties—instead of Socialism a movement of the workers. "The end is nothing, the movement is everything"—that was Bernstein's world-famous declaration.

Against this new theory a counter movement arose in Germany, which defended the old revolutionary standpoint. It was evident that these incompatible opinions would come into collision.

The scientific controversies which followed within the ranks of the German Socialist Party aroused the greatest interest even outside the working class. The middle class hoped that the controversy would result in the break up of the German Socialist party. All those who were afraid of the unitedly powerful German Social Democratic Party based their hopes upon Bernstein and Revisionism, but they were doomed to disappointment. In justice to Bernstein it must be mentioned that not for a single moment, not even when the battle between him and his antagonists was at its height and words of bitterness and passion were exchanged, did he entertain the idea of splitting the German Social Democrats. He exhausted all the methods of science and eloquence to win over his antagonists, and the great mass of the workers to his opinions, but never did he seek to achieve success at the cost of splitting the party.

The dialectical battle is now over, and has ended with the defeat of Revisionism. But the controversy it caused had stimulated thousands of comrades to go deeply into the scientific theories of Socialism and the pros and cons of Revisionism ; and its opponents gave to many workers the opportunity of obtaining a thorough grasp of the theories of Socialism, who previously had not been able to master Marx's clear exposition.

What was the fundamental error of Revisionism? Revisionism had built up its theories on an inadequate survey of industrial evolution. The experience of a few years only formed the material on which Bernstein constructed his Revisionist theories. But the experience of the last 20 years has shown that Revisionism was based on insufficient data.

All the facts on which Bernstein had based his reasonings have proved to be ephemeral. The class division has not been bridged, but, on the contrary, the gulf has everywhere widened. The antagonism between labour and capital is becoming ever more apparent and few now believe that the new society will be ushered in by means of reform, of a continuous amelioration of the lot of the working class. With every increase in the strength of the Social Democratic Party, the political system becomes more and more unstable. The ruling Bourgeoisie abandon the constitution which they created, as soon as there is any possibility that it may be used by the Socialist as a weapon against them.

The organizations of the employers have more than held their own against the trade unions of the workers. In the place of cheap food which the workers enjoyed at the time when Revisionism was promulgated, has come the serious increase in the cost of living, which altogether nullifies any benefit of higher wages. The shortening of the hours of labour goes hand in hand with increased speeding up and intensification of labour: social reforms have come to a standstill, legislation for the protection of the life and limb of the worker makes but little progress: Kartels, Trusts, and the increased power of the financiers have shaken the previous sanguine belief in the efficacy of the co-operative movement. Industrial crises and wars have followed each other in rapid succession during the last 15 years.

In contrast to Revisionism, Marxism has been proved to be right, not as a theory based on the experience of a few years but on the general trend of the capitalist system.

Bernstein's second lecture in Budapest dealt with these questions, and therefore was of quite extraordinary interest; because the founder of Revisionism and critic of Marx accepted and,—apart from some points—acknowledged the entire correctness of the Marxian theories. It is not the arguments of opponents that have triumphed over Revisionism, not by printed page or written word was the battle between Revisionism and Marxism decided; but actual experience, the hard facts, have compelled all those who have the cause of the workers sincerely at heart to come back to the old theory and practice.

But although Revisionism has been refuted we must mention that this movement—like all those rooted in the workers' movement—has not been without advantage to their cause. Revisionism has proved that its way cannot lead the workers to victory, and if at another time there comes a period of cheap food, peace and prosperity, a time of temporary political and industrial advancement, we shall avoid falling into the old error.

The example of Bernstein, who, more convincingly than anyone before in Budapest, has preached the truth of Marxism, stands as a lasting tribute to the advantage which the whole working class has gained from the Revisionist movement.

The Volkstimme, March 19th, 1914.

Translated for the *Plebs Magazine* by Miss B. BRAMTHAL

The National Union of Railwaymen and the C.L.C.

SINCE the inception of the C.L.C. in 1909, there have been no more enthusiastic supporters of that institution than the organized railwaymen. Foremost, industrially and politically, one need not wonder why they are to the fore in their championship of independent working-class education. At the Leicester A.G.M. in 1909, they first decided by 45 votes to 5 to transfer their two scholarships from Ruskin College to the Central Labour College, and, in 1910, at the Barry A.G.M. they re-affirmed their previous decision by an almost unanimous vote. During the five years in which the College has existed, many of the branches have taken a lively interest in the work of the College, and have time and again generously responded in the direction of meeting the financial difficulties of the institution.

The College, since it moved to London, has been heavily burdened by the Bank overdraft and the charges that have to be paid on the same; and this year it has had to face the necessity to liquidate the overdraft—a condition of affairs which threatened it with extinction unless financial assistance from the Trade Unions was forthcoming. An appeal was made to the N.U.R. and the South Wales Miners' Federation to take over the property of the C.L.C., and thus clear it from the £2,300 Bank Overdraft. A sub-committee from the two aforementioned trade unions was appointed to consider the matter and report back. The urgency

of the question led to its being brought before the Annual General Meeting of the N.U.R. which met at Swansea a couple of weeks ago, and, in addition to that body deciding to increase its students from two to six, it also decided to advance the sum of £1,150 to meet the financial difficulty stated above on condition that the South Wales Miners' Federation advanced a similar sum.

The following are the terms of the resolution, which was carried by 40 votes to 12:—

CENTRAL LABOUR COLLEGE.

That this Congress decides to increase the number of our Students at the Central Labour College from two to six, the additional four to take up residence at the beginning of the next College term.

Further, in view of the financial difficulties of the College, the removal of which requires the sum of £2,300, this A.G.M. resolves, *on condition that the South Wales Miners' Federation will advance a similar sum*, to increase the N.U.R. scholarship fees for this year by an additional £1,150, in return for which it be understood that the two organizations will jointly hold the title deeds of the property. This decision to be at once communicated to the Secretary of the South Wales Miners' Federation.

We, further, instruct the Finance Committee that on receipt of favourable decision from the South Wales to at once give effect to this resolution.

The N.U.R. are to be most heartily congratulated on so decisively taking such a step, and the Central Labour College may well feel encouraged by this generous and timely action.

The South Wales Miners are to consider the question at a Delegate Meeting called for the 13th of July, and, with this lead of the N.U.R. before them, they cannot fail to respond. The miners gave the railwaymen the lead to the industrial alliance. And now the railwaymen are inviting the miners of South Wales to join with them in an educational alliance.

Northumberland Miners and the C.L.C.

FOR some years past, the Northumberland Miners' Association have been sending two students each year to Ruskin College, Oxford. In 1911, a motion to send only one student to Ruskin College and one to the Central Labour College was defeated by a small majority. At that time the backers of this motion felt, that

by dividing the scholarships and sending one student to the C.L.C., there would be established a more practical means of judging the merits of the respective institutions. This year, however, the partizans of the C.L.C. resolved to fight on the direct issue. Accordingly the Ashington Lodge put forward a resolution to withdraw the N.M.A. Scholarships at Ruskin College and transfer them to the C.L.C.

So far as the debate at the half-yearly Delegate Meeting, in May, was concerned, the chief argument of the opposers of the transfer was, that as the C.L.C. was a partizan educational institution it could not serve the Labour movement so effectively as the non-partizan Ruskin College. This certainly appealed to the majority of the delegates on whose brains the alp of Liberal tradition still weighs heavily. Of course a great many irrelevancies were introduced into the discussion by the Ruskin advocates, e.g. the new buildings at Oxford, their cost, the fact that trade union labour was employed. Mr. Cairns, the N.M.A. representative at Ruskin College, and one of the miner's agents, gave an elaborate recital of the lectures given at R.C., of those who gave them, and so on in the same irrelevant strain. That lowest form of all prejudice, the charge of atheism, was insidiously introduced into the discussion, and this vulgar prejudice did the work that it was intended to do, namely, defend the indefensible. The resolution to transfer was handicapped in many ways, and the question to put the resolution was moved and carried before some of its supporters could find an opportunity to speak. All things considered, it was not surprising that the resolution was defeated at the delegate meeting by 42 votes to 21. The matter was then referred to the lodges for the final vote. Although for the first time, the C.L.C. was able to place an organizer in the coal-field for a few weeks prior to the vote being taken, it soon became evident to him that the task was a very difficult one. The chief difficulty was experienced in getting the lodges to arrange meetings for the purpose of hearing the case. Only a small number responded, and these meetings were very badly attended. Circulars were sent out to every lodge on two occasions with the request that they would hear a C.L.C. representative and a Ruskin representative *at the same time*. But the request was never granted. Nevertheless, the Ruskin organizers carried on a "back door" campaign, and its supporters circulated the grossest falsehoods against the C.L.C. One can well understand that this way of "stating the case" is indispensable to an institution of the Ruskin type. And it was exceedingly difficult, and, in many cases, impossible, for the C.L.C. representatives to meet this form of misrepresentation. They certainly never stooped to the cadging methods of the R.C.

organizers. Yet, in spite of all those very considerable obstacles, the Central Labour College case was made known to men who had hitherto either heard nothing of it or who had very vague notions of its work. And the Ashington resolution, although it was defeated, yet ran up to within 40 votes of the opposition, the figures of the proxy vote being :—

Against the Ashington resolution	...	362
For the Ashington resolution	322

Another year should find that adverse deficit wiped out and a good majority the other way substituted. There is no doubt that the transfer will yet be accomplished. Had the Northumberland miners been more developed politically, the C.L.C. point of view would have been better understood. However, the next twelve months should see some measure of progress made in the direction of "partizan" political organization, and this will undoubtedly awaken a great interest in "partizan" educational organization. Although the propagandists of the C.L.C. are few in number among the members of the N.M.A., yet those few have rendered excellent service in the recent campaign, and they are entitled to the warmest thanks of the College authorities. Their swords will not rust between now and May, 1915.

The Jewish Question

(Continued from April No.)

THE truth, in order to be "genuinely experienced" by man, must shake his "inmost soul"; it must reach that "inmost soul," not through his coarse material body, but through idealistic intestinal canals! Absolute criticism, it is true, gives the masses the testimonial that they have been influenced in their own peculiar way, i.e. superficially, by the truths which history was so kind to bring to their notice; but it also prophesies that the relation between the masses and historical progress will have to change its character completely. The mysterious nature of this prophecy is certainly not "clear as daylight" to us.

We learn that

all great historical movements up to the present time have failed in the beginning, or been without any definite result, because the masses have taken an interest in and shown enthusiasm for them; or they have come to an evil end because the ideas which inspired them were capable of being superficially understood, and depended upon the approval of the masses.

Surely an understanding which satisfactorily grasps an idea, and thus corresponds to an idea, ceases to be superficial. Bruno is merely considering the relation between an idea and the understanding of it, just as he merely considers the relation of abortive historical movements to the masses. If, therefore, absolute criticism condemns something as superficial, then it simply condemns previous history, whose actions and ideas were the actions and ideas of "the masses." It ignores the history of "the masses," replacing it by the "critical history." According to previous "uncritical" history, which was not written in the spirit of absolute criticism, we have further to decide exactly how far the masses have "taken an interest in" and "shown enthusiasm" for these great movements. The "Idea" has always appeared ridiculous in so far as it was separated from "Interest." On the other hand, it is surely apparent that every "Interest" of the masses historically presenting itself, first appeared merely as an "Idea" or "Concept," thereby losing its own distinctive "class" character and thus confusing itself with some vague "human" ideal. This illusory "Idea" is what Fourier calls the dominant feature of every historical epoch. The "Interest" of the Bourgeoisie in the Revolution in 1789—far from having "failed"—"won" everything and had "the most practical results," however dulled the "sentiment" and however faded the flowers of "enthusiasm" with which their "Interest" wreathed its cradle. So powerful was this "Interest" that it gained the victory over the pen of a Marat, the guillotine of the Terrorists, the sword of Napoleon, as well as the crucifixes and the blue blood of the Bourbons. The Revolution "failed" only so far as the masses were concerned, for they lost sight of their real "Interest" in the political "Idea"; their life-principle did not coincide with the life-principle of the Revolution, and the conditions of their emancipation were substantially different from the conditions by which the Bourgeoisie could emancipate themselves and society. The Revolution therefore failed, and it failed, like all great historical "actions," because the "masses" whose vital "Interests" determined its limits were exclusive and restrictive "masses" who did not include the whole. Not because the masses "took an interest in and showed enthusiasm for" the Revolution, but because the great majority of the masses, those distinct from the Bourgeoisie, did not comprehend in the principle of the Revolution their real "Interest," their own peculiar revolutionary principle, but only an "Idea," an object of momentary enthusiasm and an apparent interest.

The effectiveness of historical action will increase with the degree of unity among the masses, whose action it is. From the

point of view of critical history—which in considering historical action is concerned not with the acting masses, not with empirical treatment, nor with the treatment of empirical interests, but rather with the "Idea" in them—these events must take place quite otherwise.

Critical history declares that "only in the masses, contrary to what former liberal spokesmen have thought, is the real enemy of intellect to be found."

The enemies of progress, apart from the masses, are just the direct products, endowed with independent life, of the self-renunciation, self-condemnation, and self-degradation of the masses. The masses, therefore, attack their own shortcomings when they attack these independently existing products of their own self-degradation; just as man, when he attacks the existence of God, attacks his own religiosity. But since these self-renunciations of the masses have an actual external existence, so the masses must also fight them externally. They must not regard self-renunciation as merely imaginary, or as itself merely a renunciation of their self-assurance, and they must not expect to nullify the material alienation through purely spiritual action. Even *Loustalots' Journal* in the year 1789 has the motto :

The great only seem to be great
Because we are on our knees.
Let us rise !

But in order to raise oneself, it is not sufficient to rise in thought only, and let the actual, material yoke, which cannot be removed by merely taking thought, continue to hang over one's actual material head. Absolute criticism, however, has at least learned from the Hegelian phenomenology the art of changing all actual, objective, externally-existing fetters into merely imaginary, subjective, internally-existing ones, and therefore of transforming the external, material struggle into a struggle of pure ideas.

This transformation is the basis of the harmony which exists between critical criticism and the censorship. From the point of view of critical criticism, the battle between author and censor is not a battle of man against man; the censor, on the contrary, is merely my own tact—personified by a watchful guardian—my own tact which is constantly at war with my tactlessness and lack of self-criticism. The battle between author and censor is a mere appearance; only to the miserable perceptive faculty is it anything different from the struggle which takes place within the author himself. In so far as the censor is an individual, actually distinguishable from me, who abuses my intellectual

products by applying to them an external standard quite foreign to them, he is merely an illusion created by the masses—an uncritical chimera! When Feuerbach's thesis on the reform of philosophy was banned by the censor, it was not due to the censor's barbarism but to the lack of culture in Feuerbach's thesis. Pure criticism, uncontaminated by the masses or by any gross matter whatever, sees in the censor an ethereal figure, also far removed from all contact with actuality.

Absolute criticism has pronounced the "masses" to be the real enemy of intellect. It asserts this somewhat in this way:—"Intellect now knows where to find its opponent—in the phrasemongering, self-deception, and shallowness of the masses."

Absolute criticism springs from the dogma of the absolute sovereignty of intellect; or, further, from the dogma of extramundane intelligence, i.e., an intelligence existing outside the masses of humanity. Finally, it transforms, on the one side, "genius" and "progress" into actualities, and on the other side, the "masses," into notions; and then it incites these, as obvious polarities, one against the other. Absolute criticism never realizes the need to investigate "genius" itself, to ascertain if the "phrasemongering, self-deception, and shallowness" have not their origin in its own spiritual nature and windy pretensions. Intellect may be nearer to the absolute, but at the same time it frequently degenerates into shallowness; it invariably tends to reckon without its host. For this reason, therefore, it must have an opponent, against whom it plots and schemes. This opponent is the masses.

It is precisely the same with "progress." In spite of the pretensions of "progress," retrogressions and movements in circles are constantly manifest. Absolute criticism, far from repudiating the concept of "progress" as wholly worthless and abstract, is sensible enough to insist that progress is absolute, in order that it can, when explaining the retrogressions, introduce a "personal opponent" of progress, namely the masses. The "masses" being meaningless as opposed to "intellect, progress, and criticism," can only be determined by means of an imaginary opposition of this kind; apart from this opposition, criticism of the existence and character of the masses is also quite meaningless, because it is wholly indefinite. For example—"The masses, in that sense in which the word also embraces the so-called cultured world." An "also" and a "so-called" suffice for a critical definition! Thus the "masses" are distinguished from the real masses; they exist only as *the* "masses" for *the* criticism,

Former communistic and socialistic writers started with the assumption : first, that even the most praiseworthy acts seemed to be without any beneficial results, and to dwindle down into mere trivialities ; and second, that all intellectual progress was progress at the expense of the bulk of mankind, who were constantly forced into a more and more degraded condition. They declared therefore (see Fourier) "progress" to be an unsatisfactory, abstract phrase ; they suspected (see, among others, Owen) a fundamental defect in the civilized world ; they subjected, therefore, the real foundation of society to a searching criticism. This communistic criticism corresponded to the movement of the great masses, in opposition to whom the historical development, up till then, had taken place. One must have experienced the studiousness, the thirst for knowledge, the moral energy, the restless impulse towards development of the French and English workers, in order to be able to form any idea of the real nobility of the movement. How infinitely ingenious is absolute criticism which, in the face of these intellectual and practical facts, only conceives one side of the situation, viz., the constant shipwreck of intellect ; and in its vexation at this, and seeking ever the enemy of intellect, finds that enemy in "the masses" ! Finally, this great critical discovery degenerates into tautology : according to it, intellect always had an obstacle, a hindrance—an enemy, in fact—*because* it had an enemy ! What is the enemy of intellect ?—Shallowness. The masses, therefore, were set in opposition to intellect, as personified shallowness, and as such further extensions of shallowness, as "indolence," "superficiality" and "quiescence." What lofty superiority over the communistic writers is here—to have discovered shallowness, indolence, superficiality and quiescence, and instead of attacking them, merely to have rebuked them as opposed to intellect and progress ! When these attributes are declared to be attributes of the masses—the masses being regarded as a subject of contradistinction—this contradistinction is a mere illusion of critical criticism : for apart from these abstract attributes (of shallowness, indolence, &c.), absolute criticism possesses really only one perceptible, concrete subject ; "the masses" being for the critical conception nothing but a fantastical personification of these abstract attributes—merely another name for them.

The relation of "intellect" and "the masses" has, however, yet another significance which will in the course of evolution be made plain. We merely mention it here : that relation, discovered by Bruno, is nothing but a critical caricature of the Hegelian conception of history, which again is nothing but a speculative expression of the Christian-Germanic dogma of the opposition of

spirit and matter, of God and the World. This opposition is historically expressed by a few "elect" individuals, personifying "spirit," standing opposed to the rest of the world, the shallow masses, personifying "matter."

Hegel's conception of history presupposes an abstract or absolute spirit, of whose development humanity in the mass is but the conscious or unconscious means of expression. He therefore makes a speculative "spiritual" history precede empirical material history. The history of humanity is thereby transformed into a history of the abstract spirit of humanity, which consequently precedes the actual man.

Parallel with this Hegelian conception there was evolved in France the theory of those doctrinaires who, in order that they might rule alone, proclaimed the sovereignty of intellect in opposition to the sovereignty of the people. If the activity of humanity in general is nothing but the activity of a mass of individuals, then, on the other hand, abstract universality—the "intellect," the spirit—must find expression through a few individuals. Whether or not any individual will pass for a representative of the "spirit" depends, therefore, on his position and his power of imagination.

Already, with Hegel, the absolute spirit of history, as opposed to the masses, finds its fitting material expression in philosophy. The philosopher himself figures only as the agent by which that absolute spirit comes ultimately to consciousness, *after* the historical event has taken place. If the absolute spirit accomplishes the actual movement through the unconscious masses, then the subsequent consciousness of the philosopher—and his importance in history, likewise—is negligible. He appears only *post festum* ("after the banquet is over.")

Hegel himself is doubly guilty of inconsistency, first when he declares philosophy to be the expression of the absolute spirit and at the same time avoids declaring the actual philosopher to be the absolute spirit; and secondly, when he suggests that the absolute spirit, as absolute spirit, only makes history in order to express itself. Now if the absolute spirit, as creative ruling spirit of the world, does not come to consciousness in the philosopher until *post festum*, then the history it has made exists only in the consciousness and opinion of the philosopher—only in his speculative imagination.

(*To be continued.*)

Translated for the *Plebs Magazine* by S. JONSSON,

ANNUAL MEETINGS
CENTRAL LABOUR COLLEGE
 AND
"PLEBS" LEAGUE

On Bank Holiday, Monday, August, 3rd, 1914

MEETING OF C.L.C.

at 11 o'clock sharp.

"PLEBS" LEAGUE at 3 o'clock.

AGENDA :

Secretary's Report
 Financial Statement
 Other Business

N.B.—Members who are in arrears with League or Magazine Subs. should endeavour to clear their accounts before July 30th next, to allow of Accounts being prepared up to the end of July.

—◆◆◆—

SOCIAL EVENING

Commencing at 7 p.m.,
under the direction of the Women's League, C.L.C.

MUSIC DANCING REFRESHMENTS

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