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The "Plebs" League

Object

To further the interests of Independent working-class education as a partizan effort to improve the position of Labour in the present, and ultimately to assist in the abolition of wage-slavery.

Methods

The holding of an Annual Meet: the issuing of a monthly Magazine, mainly devoted to the discussion of the various questions of Labour, theoretical and practical: the formation of local branches and classes for the study of the social science, in connexion with the Central Labour College, and in every way to assist in the development of the latter institution, and its maintenance of a definite educational policy.

Membership

Open to all who endorse the object of the League.

Each Member shall pay 1/- a year to the Central Fund towards meeting the 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 Seventh Annual Meet will be held in London (Bank Holiday), August, 1915

G. SIMS, Secretary-Treasurer

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

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EDITORIAL

IN any time of great upheaval men and movements get searchingly tested. We all find ourselves anxiously overhauling our nicely settled standards of values—hurriedly readjusting them to that irritating world of Facts, which seems to be animated by some ironical spirit with a diabolical delight in upsetting human Theories. For a time—perhaps until the world has settled down to the comfortable jog-trot which we all (even the revolutionaries) prefer—we find it terribly difficult to see things in any sort of perspective. Some one small fact or another looms up so large in the immediate foreground as to appear a veritable bogey, blotting out from our troubled sight all the rest of the universe. The Things that Matter

get all jumbled up with the Things that Don't Matter a D——. And in the thick of the hub-bub around us it is hard to sit down and think quietly.



In the *Clarion* a week or two ago Robert Blatchford had something to say on "Things that Matter." He, as we all know, had been sitting in a garden and thinking quietly for some time past. He had

The Clarion Call

settled down, he himself tells us, "into a quiet, old fogey, and was quite happy until the war broke out." Then callous editors dragged him from his lair and pushed him right into the thick of what is perhaps the most appalling hub-hub Europe has ever known. So that quite naturally Mr. Blatchford was thrown off his balance somewhat. In the article referred to, after some desultory musings on the horrors of war, the Labour Movement, the silent streets of gay Paris, &c., &c., he concludes in this manner:—

This war is a war for the things that matter. . . . It has got to be fought and won. It is the most tremendous issue in European history, and it will absorb most of us for a long time, *to the exclusion of all other subjects*. It is the most vital, the most serious, the most dreadful thing I have ever known; *it makes the Movement seem a long way off*.



"THE most tremendous issue in European history"! Mr. Blatchford, we repeat, has surely been thrown off his balance a little. Yet he assures that he is still, as always, a Communist Socialist. "But one must face the facts." One must, indeed.

Facing the Facts

And one of the facts Mr. Blatchford has apparently overlooked is the fact that if the war "makes the Movement seem a long way off," then it can scarcely be a war about things that matter. For the Movement, after all, is a more vital, more serious matter even than the war. It is the Movement, indeed—in its widest sense—that gives the war its greatest significance. That thousands of men are being slaughtered, that whole towns and countrysides are being laid waste—these things are serious and dreadful enough. But they do not make the war a *significant* event, any more than an earthquake or a shipwreck is significant. If the war is a tremendous issue in European history, it is not because of the horror of it nor because of the gigantic scale of it, but because it finally makes it plain—if that were needed—that Capitalism is not synonymous with Civilisation, and that not by way of Free Competition can men establish Peace upon Earth. Whether the war will go down to history as a significant event *depends* upon the Movement and its activities now and afterwards. And if we concentrate all our attention on the war itself, and forget for the time all about the Movement, we are doing our share towards robbing the war of most of its significance.

It is not our object here—especially in view of the article dealing directly with the subject on another page—to discuss the war. But, in passing, it is interesting to note that certain facts seem to have been revealed to a mere Radical which have been hidden from Mr. Blatchford. Writing in the *Daily News* recently, "A. G. G." made the following remarks :—

**The Comments
of a Radical**

Our ant-hill has gone to pieces by internal disruption—because we have not yet learned to build an ant-hill. . . . What has been the result of all the accumulated achievements of the ages? We have, through centuries of struggle, won the great principle of freedom only to find that political freedom is an illusion if it is accompanied by economic servitude. It may be doubted whether the position of Wamba* was inferior to that of the tragic crowds that you may see any morning at the London docks scrambling for the permits to earn a day's wage. . . . The great declaration of the freedom and equality of men with which the United States began its career seems like an ancient jest in a land given over to the exploitation of Mr. Rockefeller and the Trusts. . . . We have established a mastery over matter that would have been unthinkable a generation or two ago. . . . But this dominion over matter, so far from enlarging the scope of our lives, seems to have narrowed it. We have created a machine so vast and complex that we can neither understand nor control it. We have become the slaves of our own invention, and now that the crash has come we find that its terrors are increased by the artificial structure we have built, and which has collapsed about our heads. . . . And do not let us suppose that the victory over Germany means the victory over militarism. It means nothing of the sort, we shall beat Germany, but it is far less sure that we shall beat the war spirit. The religion of barbarism is too deeply rooted, its vested interests are too widespread, its relation to social injustice too intimate to be easily destroyed. . . . It will be seen that the true issue of this war is not the fate of this or that piece of territory. The true issue is the ideals with which the world will come out of the melting pot. . . . It is for the democracy of the world to save itself, and to see that the ant-hill is built in a new way.

The Movement, to this mere Radical—this unsaved soul!—does not "seem a long way off," but rather a matter of some immediate importance.



AND we want here simply to ask readers not to neglect matters of immediate importance, however overshadowed they may temporarily be

* The serf in *Ivanhoe*.

by world-shaking events; we want to ask them to face the facts—all the facts—and not to be absorbed by some facts "to the exclusion of all others." We, as Socialists, have sundry matters of moment to attend to; and we have got to find time to finish our game of bowls, and beat the Prussian too. To come right to the point, we have got to see to it that the flag of the C.L.C. is kept flying. As most of our readers will be aware, the money voted to the College by the N.U.R. and the S.W.M.F. cannot, for technical reasons, be immediately forthcoming. The money is there, and its owners wish that it should be handed over to the College. But the lawyers have discovered a difficulty, and the members of the Unions cannot do as they wish with their own property. Meantime the College must go on. It has pulled through the five difficult months of last summer; now it has simply to hold on until the help that has been promised is forthcoming. The College is not less one of the Things that Matter because the war-cloud has burst over Europe. It has never appealed to the *Plebs* in vain. And on its behalf we appeal yet once again in the *Plebs Magazine* for your help. Never mind the Prince of Wales' Fund—the Fat Men will see to that. Make one more effort for the College, and make it *now*.

J. F. H.

C.L.C. Class Report

BLACKBURN

DEAR COMRADE,

I have much pleasure in forwarding enclosed 10/-, granted by our Tutorial Class here, to assist you in holding out until you are relieved which we hope you are all determined to see accomplished. The N.U.R. No. 1 Branch have forwarded 5/- to us, as a result of our influence, which the members of the class decided to forward on to you, along with their small contribution, to express their sympathy and admiration for your efforts, in spite of wars, and other various counter-attacks, to keep in the true firing line.

Things are not very rosy here, and they will be worse, before we have digested Marx, if I am any philosopher; the boom of cannon is not going to produce anything similar in cotton. However, in spite of things not being quite normal, we have got a good class of 36 members together, all good fellows, and all inspired by a determination to extend the influence of the knowledge they have received. I believe our class would have been much larger this year if the outlook had not been so black, and the same cause has produced the same effect, on the sum I am now sending. I assure you it does not by any means express the measure of our sympathy.

P. MATHER.

The European Crisis

IT is just three months ago since the Socialists of the chief European countries raised their voices in unison and cried out, "Let there be peace." But there was no peace. The demon of war refused to be exorcised by resolution. And now the exorcists themselves have flung down their formulæ and picked up the sword. Of the strange things that have come to pass throughout the International Socialist Movement, there has been no prophecy. Such a prophet, had there been one, would probably have been accredited with "wheels in his head." Had we not the verified facts before us, some of those perplexing happenings would read like fictions of the Press. Yet true it is that in the Reichstag, the representatives of social democracy—although it is only fair to say a strong minority were opposed—voted in favour of the special war appropriation: a vote worth probably millions to the German Government. Vandervelde, the leader of the Belgian Socialists, with the approval of his party, has joined the Belgian Cabinet to work with the Clerical-Conservatives whom he previously fought. Jules Guesde, the French Marxist leader, and Marcel Sembat, have accepted portfolios and are associated with Briand, the strike-breaker, and Delcassé, the official whitewasher of the Russian Government. The arch-anti-militarist, Hervé, asked for a gun, and other pacifists of eminence have actually shouldered one. In England, the Liberal Cabinet has received the backing of the Labour Party. What strange force is at work which thus makes friends of enemies and enemies of friends?

That the people of Germany and Austria have no cause for war with the peoples of Russia, France and Britain, is of course true. But it does not help us much. To-day they are locked in deadly struggle. That they did not dictate the things which they do now, is only one of the many illustrations of the fact that they are but historical pawns to be moved hither and thither at the will of a handful of gamesters. The working class have hitherto had no hand in deciding the world's wars or in the conclusion of terms of peace.

"Theirs not to reason why
Theirs but to do or die"

are lines which give us something more than poetry. Some form of economic pressure underlies war in general. There is always at the bottom the powerful dynamic of private plunder. Just as true is it that the real motive force of war is invariably concealed under some plausible pretext. Good reasons are always found for bad deeds. And in the present instance we have the usual fertile crop. Each of the combatants claims that for him this is a "defensive" war, a fight against the "menace of barbarism," a "sacred" duty on behalf of "civilization," a war waged for the sake of "honour." "The sword has been thrust into our hands," say all. Each protests to the other,

"Thou canst not say I did it." Each washes its innocent hands in the blood of the other. And the pretensions of the International Socialist Movement in the way of putting the block on war, have dissolved in the smoke of battle.

Twice before have the Triple Alliance or the Triple Entente approached the brink of the European crisis. On the third occasion the war cloud has burst and there rains down upon Europe the hail of murderous ruin. The affair at Sarajevo was merely the occasion of the war. The assassination of the Crown Prince of Austria and his consort, at the hands of a Servian nationalist, afforded the pretext for the conversion of Europe into a shambles. The alleged plot against the House of Hapsburg, served as a match to ignite the combustible material that has for some time now been accumulating. And that combustible material may be summed up in one word, Capital.

In the early part of the last century, roughly a hundred years ago, England, and to a lesser extent, France, were the only countries in the world that had established to any appreciable degree, that system of economy which we call capitalist production. Except for periodical interruptions, the growing productive power of labour and the progressive accumulation of capital found room in the world for continued extension. The market was capable of expansion. But since then, other European nations, particularly Germany, as well as America, and more recently Japan, have developed the capitalist economy, with the ever intensifying result that the space for the extension of the national capital becomes more and more congested. The market slows down in the march of its extension, while the powers of production push forward with ever-quicker pace. With the growth of capital the difficulty increases of finding a profitable field for its investment at home, and the necessity develops for the opening up of new fields for the export of the national capital. In this way the political policy of Imperialism arises within the nation, which has for its aim either the direct national domination of the new fields, or at least the establishment of a powerful influence upon the Government that may already exist in the new industrial area. The extension of armaments, the development of diplomacy and national alliances, are means for the furtherance of this policy.

The greatest economic rivals in Europe are England and Germany. Around those two centres the Triple Entente and the Triple Alliance have formed. Germany to-day is an industrial power of the first-class. Her industrial development, especially in recent years, has been remarkable. This development nevertheless demands a continuous extension of Germany's foreign commerce. The accumulation of German capital overflows her present limitations. The need for more room in which to find profitable investment for this surplus capital has been making itself in recent years more acutely felt. In China and Asia Minor particularly, has German imperialist policy been insinuating itself, and frequently colliding with the English commercial

interests. Unfortunately for Germany, England had a long start in the game of globe-snatching. To a lesser extent the same is true of France. Certainly the members of the Triple Entente are far richer colonially than those of the Triple Alliance. In that sense the latter have shown themselves the aggressors. And hence the last fifteen years of extension of armaments in Germany,—an extension which has caused England to be more and more suspicious and vigilant.

Anton Pannekoek, of Bremen, has recently remarked with truth, that economically considered, the antagonism is not so great between France and Germany as that between England and Germany. He instances how in Turkey, French capital has worked hand in hand with German capital, their co-operation in Asia Minor against Anglo-American concerns, and also the fraternal financial relations between Germany and France in Europe. The French, however, have never forgotten Alsace-Lorraine, nor forgiven the appropriators. The annexation of those provinces has driven the French bourgeoisie to its not very creditable courtship of the Russian autocracy. Billions of French savings have come to be invested in Russian Government-bonds, thus strengthening the mutual relations between France and Russia against Germany. No doubt there is something to be said for the claim of the German Government that the policy of Russia has been in recent years to weaken and isolate Germany. But that does not do away with the very important fact that Germany, by her 1870—71 war of conquest, drove France into the arms of Russia, a consequence foreseen by Marx and Engels, and announced in the first manifesto of the General Council of the International in 1870. And Engels was keen-sighted enough to be able to assert in 1891, that Germany, if she "did not become the acknowledged vassal of Russia, would have, after a short respite, to arm herself for a new war. And what a war? A race war of the Germans against the coalesced Slavs and Latins. . . . Does not the "Damocles sword" overhang us of a war, on the first day of which, all written treaties will be blown into the wind like chaff; a war of which nothing is certain but the absolute uncertainty of its issue; a race war which will expose all Europe to the devastation of fifteen or twenty millions of armed men."

In the communication made by the German Chancellor to Sir Edward Goschen on the 29th of July, which contains the German bid for English neutrality, some indication is given of what Germany hoped to gain out of the war. The Chancellor was *unable to give any undertaking that no French colonial territory would be acquired*. As for Belgium, Germany has for some time turned an envious eye Congo-wards. For strategical reasons she required to move through Belgium to France. If Belgium refused Germany's terms, then there was for Germany "the promise of things hoped for" being realized in the acquisition of Belgian colonial territory in Africa.

The violation of Belgian neutrality was the *occasion* of England's declaration of a state of war with Germany. But it would be superficial indeed to imagine that merely the "scrap of paper" constitutes the real motive force that drove England into the field of battle. Undoubtedly, however, the war of "honour" slogan served to catch the ear of public opinion, and move the multitude to endorse the war against the German "vandals." With France and Russia beaten, England would have found herself in a very unfavourable situation for the defence of her world-power and position. The young hungry wolf Germany, to use Pannekoek's apt figure, would have gained immense vantage-ground for the struggle with the old full-fed wolf England. On the other hand, the German attack on Belgium provided England with an opportunity of weakening the menacing power of her great economic rival.

Unless one, in seeking for the general causes of the present imbroglia, consider the general economic and political conditions of Europe, any estimation of the motive forces of the war, or the rights and the wrongs of it, must be of a very flimsy and superficial character. And we certainly have no lack of these latter notions. None of them are more shallow than the assertion that the cause of this war is based upon the cupidity, vanity, and God knows what other egoistic vices, of the German Emperor. This view, that measures history by the individual yard-stick is truly characteristic of the bourgeois Press and Platform. Even some Socialists of repute have not emancipated themselves from it. Robert Blatchford for instance, writing in his weekly reviews of the war in the *Dispatch*, has the following in the issue dated October 18th :—

The villages are in ruins ; scores of thousands of innocent, poor people are homeless ; the fields are thick with dead, the roads are lined with trains of wounded ; all day and every day thousands of canon thunder, and kill and maim and destroy ; it is a monstrous horror ; it is a ghastly humiliation of the whole civilized world ; *and it is all due to the insane vanity of a contemptible little Emperor bursting like a blown frog in his desire to play the part of a Cæsar.*

The italics are mine. This is from Blatchford, Socialist, Determinist, Materialist ! Well ! Well ! It may make good melodrama, but it is bad history. That this present war is "all due" to the Kaiser, is just as false as that the Labour Unrest in South Africa was all due to some nine individuals, as Botha and Smuts thought ; or that the Socialist Movement in England is due to the Editor of the *Clarion*. I see that the view is already in circulation to the effect that this war is due to Atheistic teaching ; and perhaps Robert Blatchford may live long enough to hear this European War, which he attributes to Wilhelm of Potsdam, charged to the account of Socialist agitation. Individuals can certainly do a great deal for their time, but that is always dependent on what their time does for

them. It is an exaggerated view, which surely would be more appropriate in the days of the gods and the heroes, that would make the general social forces subordinate to the "ego" even of an Emperor.

This war is no accident. It is not due to a mad man but a mad system, which I will at once grant has the effect of creating various forms of madness. It has a general cause, not a particular one. Particular only are the events and occasions which have served as pretexts. There, are the several European States, each carrying on capitalist production on an ascending scale. Within the national framework, capital accumulates to the point of colliding with the framework and threatens to burst it, unless, somewhere outside of it, room for extension can be found. But the number of the States which experience this limitation multiply. The political policy of each, develops more and more along the same Imperialist road of finding relief from the pressure within by means of extension without. But for this very reason it becomes more and more impossible for all to find this outlet. The sphere of extension contracts. Someone must give way. The internal pressure within each State becomes translated into a general antagonism of States and into the pressure of one upon the other. Those who hold, strive to retain, and those who have not, scheme to take from those who have. There is reproduced on an international scale the antagonisms that prevail within each nation. The final arbiter is war. Shedding tears upon the iniquity of such a resort, wasting rhetoric upon the barbarous character of a doctrine that "might makes right," is fatuous and futile. The necessity inheres in the things themselves, in the present economy of the world, and until that condition is dissolved in a conscious-social world-economy, the barbarous effects will remain, as surely as where the temperature is below zero water will freeze. It may be pertinent on this point, to quote from a speech made by James R. Mann, the leader of the Republican Party of U.S.A., on October 1st, in the House of Representatives :—

I have no doubt that it is as certain as that the sun will rise tomorrow morning that a conflict will come between the Far East and the Far West across the Pacific Ocean. All history teaches us that avoidance of this conflict is impossible.

I hope that it may be only a commercial conflict. I hope that war may not come. I hope there will be no conflict of arms. But I have little faith that in this world of ours, people and races are able to meet in competition for a long period without armed conflict. A fight for commercial supremacy leads in the end to a fight with arms because that is the final arbiter between the nations.

The great truth illustrated by the present war consists in this, that Capitalism is no longer historically possible. It has grown "too big for its boots". Not Socialism is an impossible dream, but Capitalism an impossible reality. Many workmen have simply been in-

different to Socialism. This war cannot but show the peril of such a posture. If that results, as it surely must, the murdered millions will not have fallen in vain.

From what has been said, it follows that in fixing the responsibility for the economic and political conditions that have rendered the present war imminent, not one of the countries concerned in this crisis can be reasonably excluded. Each must bear its share of responsibility. Each State is an accessory before the fact. It remains to fix the responsibility for the actual precipitancy of the war, and thereafter we may better appreciate the present breakdown of International Socialism.

Even amid all the perplexing complications of the present crisis, and the circumstances leading thereto, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion, that Germany applied the torch to the combustible material. Her mighty industrial development made imminent her aggression, and her political policy kindled it. It is essential in gaining a clear recognition of Germany's role as aggressor, to understand the character of her political structure. I can only offer a broad and rough outline within the space of this article. The political development of Germany has not kept logical step with her industrial and commercial development. She has not been able to throw off the shadow of her past. She has carried a political corpse in her economic cargo. Along with Austria, Germany presents the most paradoxical and abnormal polity of Western Europe. Austria is, as is well known, economically and politically subordinate to Germany.

In Britain, the growth of production from petty handicraft and commerce to capitalist manufacture and commerce, brought with it the passage from monarchical absolutism to constitutional government. The Industrial Revolution of the 18th century spurred on the growth of constitutionalism. It is undeniable, of course, that even in this country the whole of the old institutions were not completely swept away. Some feudal or semi-feudal relics have been preserved, e.g., the House of Lords. While logically, constitutionalism should develop into republicanism, while the retention of old squirearchy elements is not convenient for the unimpeded development of capitalist economy, yet the capitalist class has found that it would be better to put up with that inconvenience lest a worse evil should befall it. The capitalist class had to stop short in the work of revolution against its old reactionary enemy, and by compromise with the re-action, endeavour to stop short the work of its new revolutionary enemy—the proletariat. The so-called middle class are doomed to be caught between two fires. They inevitably find themselves between the devil and the deep sea. And of two evils they choose the least. Which is the least? The evil that is most akin to their own aims! The proletariat is the absolute evil, because it would put an end to all forms of exploitation.

With France, the transition from the politics of feudalism to those of capitalism was more abrupt. It required an internal conflagration because the political structure had become rotten ripe for change. After she had declared for the Republic, many ups and downs followed, and the timidity of the bourgeoisie manifested itself more than once during the 19th century, in the return of the rule of reaction. To smother the discontent of the proletariat was a service to business for which the mercantile class was prepared to smile upon the government of Louis Bonaparte. The French bourgeoisie, however, came to find that they had resigned too much into the hands of the guardian of "economic peace between the classes." The Second Empire came to an end. The bourgeoisie seized the political power and established the Republic, but only after it had conquered the heroic Commune which flung itself across the bourgeois path.

Republicanism in France and Constitutionalism in Britain are relatively normal to the evolution of capitalism in those countries. Germany on the other hand, presents the most illogical and abnormal superstructure in Western Europe relatively to her economic development. She was still largely in feudalism when Britain and France carried through their bourgeois revolutions. These however, influenced some parts of Germany in the early years of the 19th century, particularly the Rhine provinces and South Germany. Capitalist production took root there and a radical movement against the monarchical absolutism which fettered industrial development arose. Had this movement succeeded in 1848, a republic might have been established, but the land-holding aristocracy of Central and Eastern Prussia was too powerful and the counter-revolution triumphed. This radical movement largely disappeared in Germany during the following ten years. Two and a half millions emigrated in that period of time to America, while whatever radical aspirations remained were absorbed in the rising Social Democracy. But the latter did not rise quick enough to take a hand in solving the problem of German unity. Toward the sixties, the further industrial and commercial development demanded the end of the separate states and leagues and the establishment of a German union. Normally, this should have been a Liberal union.

But there was no Liberal party strong enough to accomplish this, and while the rising Social-Democratic movement and the small party of Liberals agitated for a constitutional and democratic unity, the union of the German states was accomplished by the Junkers, the squirearchy and their military forces. And into the arms of this political monstrosity—this political nightmare at industrial noon-day—the German capitalist sections have flung themselves. And all the more devotedly have they clung to these Prussian Junkers as the march of Social Democracy sounded more audibly in their ears. And in return for Liberal resignation, the oligarchy has conducted its series of diplomatic adventures and those peculiar wars of "defence" against

her neighbours which had the prosaic sequel of plunder of her neighbours. The precipitancy of the present crisis is part of the same policy that engineered the raid on Denmark, the swindles with Austria, and the appropriation of two French provinces in 1871.

There was good reason from the point of view of German foreign-policy for hurrying on the world-war although she doubtless did not seek it in its present dimensions. Time was not with Germany. The stars in their courses were not with Sisera of the Black Eagle. Turkey had been defeated, the Balkan supremacy had grown and the German pressure to the East was being barred. Austria without and within was becoming increasingly menaced and weakened. And Italy's support looked more and more doubtful. To delay longer rendered the obstacles *without* more formidable and the proletarian obstacles *within* more powerful. Some pretext had to be found for kindling the dry grass as soon as possible. The assassination of the Crown Prince of Austria-Hungary by a Servian nationalist, served the purpose. No one can reasonably follow the course of negotiations between Austria and Servia, can consider the demands of Austria and the replies of Servia, without concluding that Austria was playing for a fight. Neither can one consider the part played by Germany and escape the conclusion that Austria's attitude towards Servia and Austria's declaration against Russia, was but the expression of Germany's determination to get on with the business of Armageddon. The subsequent events, so far as we know them, serve to confirm this view.

W. W. C.

(*To be continued*).

"Plebs" Concert & Distribution of Gifts

Will all friends who have received supplies of tickets on behalf of above, kindly return all duplicates and cash together with any unsold tickets.

In order to participate in distribution of gifts all duplicates must be in hand by November 4th.

Donations which any friends may be disposed to make towards this Fund will be thankfully received.

W. H. MAINWARING,

(Hon. Concert Secretary),

13 Penywern Road, Earls Court, S.W.

Principles of Communism

by FREDERICK ENGELS

(Continued)

Question 17.—Will it be possible to abolish private property at one stroke?

Answer.—No. Since the existing mode of production must be allowed to develop to a degree at which it can meet the demands of the whole community, it is more probable that even after the revolution has begun the proletariat will only be able to transform society gradually. It can only abolish private property entirely when the mode of production is sufficiently developed to make this possible.

Question 18.—What course of development will the Revolution take?

*Answer.**—First and foremost, it will set up a democratic political constitution, thereby ensuring, directly or indirectly, the political sovereignty of the proletariat. Directly in England, where the proletariat already form the majority of the people. Indirectly in France and Germany, where the majority consists not wholly of the proletariat proper, but also of peasants and small bourgeois, whose political interests, however, must depend more and more upon those of the proletariat, and who must therefore inevitably submit themselves to the proletarian will. This may indeed involve a second struggle, but the ultimate victory of the proletariat would not be long delayed. A democratic constitution, of course, would be entirely useless to the proletariat if it did not immediately take further measures aimed directly at private property and thereby making the existence of the proletariat more secure. The most important of these measures, *as suggested by existing relations*, are as follows:—

1.—The gradual limitation of private property by means of progressive taxation, heavy estate duties, the abolition of inheritance by collaterals (brothers, nephews, &c.), forced loans, and so forth.

*The outline of the measures necessary for the revolutionising of the mode of production given in this answer coincides in general content with the programme of probable transitional measures in the *Communist Manifesto*. Of this programme, Marx and Engels, writing in 1872 (in the preface to the new issue of the *Manifesto*) observed that in the interim it might have "become obsolete here and there," but they point out that in the *Manifesto* itself it was declared that the actual application of the principles developed in the programme must "always and above all depend on existing historical circumstances." The particular interest of this answer is that it shows us that Marx and Engels, at the time of the drawing up of the *Manifesto*, were carefully considering the probable method of transition from Capitalism to Communism; it must be left for time to decide how much of their programme will actually be realised—
EDITOR.

2.—The gradual expropriation of ground landlords, manufacturers, railroad and ship owners, partly through the competition of State industry, partly directly in exchange for assignats (State paper money).

3.—The confiscation of the property of all emigrants and rebels against the majority of the people.

4.—The organisation of work for all the proletariat upon national estates or in factories and workshops, in order that the competition of the workers amongst themselves may be abolished. Private owners, so long as they are allowed to remain so, will be compelled to pay the State rate of wages.

5.—The compulsion of every member of society to work, and the organisation of industrial armies, especially for agriculture.

6. The centralisation of the credit-system and the money market under the control of the State, by means of a national bank with State capital; and the suppression of all private banks and bankers.

7.—The extension of State factories, railroads, and shipping; the bringing into cultivation of all waste land; and the improvement of all land already cultivated in proportion to the increased capital and greater number of workers at the disposal of the nation.

8.—The education of every child in national institutions at the national expense.*

9.—The erection of large buildings on national estates as communal dwellings for groups of citizens following industrial as well as agricultural pursuits.

10.—The destruction of all insanitary and badly built slums and dwellings.

11.—Equal opportunities for all children.

12.—The concentration of all means of transport in the hands of the State.

Obviously, all these measures cannot be carried through at once. But one will necessitate another. Once the first attack on private property has taken place, the proletariat will find itself compelled to go ever further, until finally all capital, all agriculture, all industry, all transport, and all exchange are in the hands of the State. All the above measures inevitably lead in that direction, and will be practicable enough as they are proceeded with. Then, if all capital production, and exchange are in the hands of the State, private

*There is a note here in the manuscript—"Education and manufacture together." This evidently refers to the idea (referred to in the *Manifesto* and previously developed by Robert Owen) that technical, industrial education and actual productive work should be combined with general scientific studies.—EDITOR.

property has not so much been abolished as been enabled to disappear of itself, money has become superfluous, production so far changed, and mankind so far altered that all remaining forms of the old society can also be permitted to perish.

Question 19.—Will this revolution be confined to a single country?

Answer.—No. The great industry, by creating the world-market, has already brought the people of every country (and particular of civilized countries), into such close touch with each other, that each separate nation is affected by events in any other one. It has further so far levelled social development, that in every country the struggle between the Bourgeoisie and the Proletariat has become the most important matter of the day. The communist revolution will not merely be national: it will take place simultaneously in every civilized country, that is, in England, France, America, and Germany, at least. It will develop in each country more quickly or more slowly according as that country possesses a more highly developed industry, greater wealth, or more perfected productive forces. It will, therefore, probably come about most slowly in Germany, most quickly and easily in England. It will at once have an important reaction on other countries, altering or accelerating their development. It is a universal revolution, and must have, therefore, a universal sphere of action.

(To be continued).

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

“Profit-sharing and Labour Co-partnership, to be fully efficient, must, on the employer’s part, proceed from altruistic and not selfish motives . . . The employer who really holds all men his brothers in Christ cannot be other than a profit-sharer at heart.” (!)

ANEURIN WILLIAMS, M.A., M.P.,
in *Co-partnership and Profit-sharing*.

“The materialistic doctrine that men are the products of conditions and education, different men therefore the products of other conditions and changed education, forgets that circumstances may be altered by men and that the educator has himself to be educated.”

MARX.

“All successive historical conditions are only places of pilgrimage in the endless evolutionary progress of human society from the lower to the higher.”

ENGELS.

Testimony

WHAT ha' you done, said the Angel to Smith.
That you vex the sacred door ?
Never a one of your rawspun kith
Has asked for the keys before !

.

Open or shut ! said the stranger shade,
 I would test my chance or quit ;
 And a salted pelt from the old fly belt
 Should yarely weather the Pit.

My time-sheet's signed in the Shops of Time
 And the harvest's reaped and sowed—
 Is your fairway closed to the vagrant's grime
 And the bitter brand of the road ?

Here at the gates you may cast the scale
 To mete revenge or ruth,
 To measure the cost of the beakers tossed
 From the foaming vats of youth.

For it's little we recked of the holy script
 Or the musty creeds of eld,
 When the magic lure of the outskirts gripped
 And the wander lust impelled ;

And it's little we heeded the burdened soul
 While the godly hugged the rear,
 And the hungry wild took tithe and toil
 Of the foolish pioneer.

But we kept the frontier code throughout,
 And the only code they keep
 Who blaze the trail where the weaklings fail
 And the cowards rot like sheep !

So runs the Law : That ye lead the van
 By the sign of staff and pack ;
 That ye ever seek the farthest peak
 And scorn the well-worn track,

That ye force the ford and bridge the ditch
 And hail the desert bride
 With an open hand when the strike pans rich
 And a laugh when blows betide.

Open or shut ! Have you aught in store
 For us in your Paradise,
 Who have known the worth of the good raw earth
 Beneath the sapphire skies—

Who have seen day's swooning crimson sped
 And the golden plains grow pale
 Till the moon like a silver lamp o'erhead
 Revealed the northward trail ?

Reckon the cost ! I ha' paid my shout
 So long as my thews were whole—
 'Fore God ! I'd as lief be dammed without
 As whine for a shriven soul—

But where and wherever my race was run
 My race was run on the straight ;
 And this—and the like—is the whole I ha' done
 Might stead me now at the gate

.

*I'll ha' you done, said the Angel to Smith,
 And your hide is scared with sin ;
 But how shall I measure with script or creed
 The old, tough souls of the frontier breed ?—
 Sooth you may enter in !*

LEWIS MACDONALD HASTINGS.

Reprinted from *The Poetry Review*.

“One nation can and should learn from others, and even when a society has got upon the right track for the discovery of the natural laws of its movement . . . it can neither clear by bold leaps, nor remove by legal enactments, the obstacles offered by the successive phases of its normal development. But it can shorten and lessen the birth pangs.”
 MARX.

Oldest Story of the Flood

ONE of the most important archæological discoveries which have been made for centuries is that of the "Nippur Tablet," which was recently announced by Dr. Stephen Langdon, the Reader in Assyriology at Oxford. Among the early Babylonian tablets unearthed at Nippur and now in the Philadelphia Museum, Dr. Langdon found a pre-Semitic account of the Deluge which is supposed to be the original of that contained in the Book of Genesis. The tablet also contained a reference to the Fall of Man, in which it is Noah and not Adam who is tempted. The inscriptions are in Sumerian, a cuneiform alphabet of the pre-Semitic Babylonian.

Dr. Langdon made a further interesting statement:—

"Since I announced in the Press the translation of the fragment which I copied in Philadelphia last autumn," he said, "the University authorities have found two large fragments which join the original fragment (of which Dr. Langdon has photographs), and it is very evident that the tablet as now completed will contain a complete pre-Semitic version of the Flood and also of the Temptation.

"The Press have always universally misunderstood the importance of the original announcement, in that they seem to think that Eve, or the woman, was not concerned in the Temptation. As a matter of fact, in the fragment which I had at first that portion of the Temptation is broken away, but from the remainder of my original fragment I must infer it is possible that the woman was concerned in the Temptation in the eating of the forbidden fruit as well as the man, and that almost certainly a serpent figured in the Temptation.

"Consequently we shall soon have in our hands the most ancient version, from which the entire Biblical version has come. The Fall of Man was originally attached to Noah and not to Adam, because it was Noah who 'lost eternal life,' in the sense that eternal life was considered as longevity. The Bible also makes Noah the last of the long-lived demi-gods, so that it is very evident that the original pre-Semitic Sumerian, as well as the Bible, regarded Noah as the first great sinner, who ate of the fruit of the forbidden tree of life and lost the longevity of the pre-diluvian age."

Daily Chronicle, July 15th, 1914.

"Co-partnership as an engine of social peace strikes, and is meant to strike, at a social ideal based on the war of classes with intervals of armed neutrality."

C. R. FAY, in *Co-partnership in Industry*.

Letters on Logic

Economics

SIXTH LETTER OF THE SECOND SERIES

THE ECONOMISTS of capitalism, including Henry George, try to define capital as the accumulated product of labour, which is to living labour a means of production quite apart from the means of consumption.

This sharp separation of production from consumption cannot logically be justified. Those who produce wheat must consume ploughing implements; those who produce boots must consume leather. Man produces by means of his labour and he cannot work without consuming. There is no production without consumption. Henry George wants to consider that part of the harvest which is issued as food for the servants as capital, and yet he objects to his predecessors describing the food, clothing and lodgings of the worker as elements of production. He says these things are elements of consumption. Because Henry George has no idea of the contrasts flowing into each other he cannot get over the logical division.

I can well understand that the assumption that our whole time and whole world are mere appendages of capital may be too wide for some people. They will say that the appendages are not the thing itself; that accidental accompaniments are not the substance, and that you must distinguish between predicate and subject. Well, to do this thoroughly you must know that all predicates are relative subjects, each subject a relative predicate, an appendage; only the universe itself can be regarded as an absolute subject, the substance which has nothing outside of itself, and which is an appendage to nothing. The 3rd Chapter of the first volume of *Progress and Poverty* discusses the fact that wages are not drawn from capital, but that the worker himself creates them before he receives them. Before the capitalist pays the worker out of his fortune, the latter has already created by his labour more than an equivalent for the wage. The worker does not live on the capitalist, but the capitalist on the worker. Chapters 4 and 5 discuss this subject further. They show very clearly that capital only decides the *form* of industry. Whether the soil is ploughed by the branch of a tree, by a spade, plough, or steam plough, depends on the existing capital, on its magnitude. But the fact that the soil is ploughed at all does not depend on capital; this the worker can accomplish without capital—with his hand alone, thinks Henry George. Therefore, conventional economy is wrong to pretend that capital is master; labour is the important factor. From the fact that the labourer cannot go to work without breakfast and clothes, these economists infer that he cannot work

until the capitalist has provided him with breakfast and clothes. Our author replies that the worker generally eats his own breakfast and wears his own clothes. It is an exception for the capitalist to give an advance.

It is the old quarrel as to which came first—the hen or the egg. Spinoza settled it when he said that for the making of a hammer it is not necessary that a hammer should already exist, since some stone, or a man's fist, was the first hammer.

Henry George is right in affirming that not capital, but labour, is the real master. But we have not to deal with "something in general," but with an actual "free competitive society." Here the capitalist *is* master, the wages *are* drawn from capital, the worker *cannot* eat breakfast or wear clothes without the capitalist, and not only the form of industry and its productivity, but the whole of industry depends upon the magnitude of the capital. I have my own labour power, my own money to buy skins and tan, and I know the trade of tanning; but I cannot work because I have not the necessary amount of capital to compete—because I am without those means, which are called "capital" in the present system of production.

Not the means of production only, as Henry George declares, but the sufficient competitive means are capital. They rule society; without them there is no labour, no breakfast, and no clothes. Yet, instead of joining us in our opposition to the competitive system, the American, confused by capitalism, will only help by half measures to obtain a more humane wage for the worker. He will give him free nature—free access to land. And there he must start afresh, like the primitive fisherman and the primitive hunter, with his bare hand. Hail, fisherman!

Political Economy contends that, according to their use, the same things are sometimes capital and sometimes not. "Money put aside from the owner for business purposes is considered as capital; on the other hand, money for the house management or personal use is not considered as capital."

Therefore capital is means of production, says Economy; but it cannot dispense with Logic, because there is still the question where to begin with the definition of means of production; whether this only comprises the poor living of the producer or a more humane one (i.e., one in proportion to the development of the productive forces), or whether even a luxurious living is understood by this term.

In order to explain economic relations it is certainly not sufficient to call the whole world capital. The thing must be particularized. It is still too vague to call the means of production capital. The privately appropriated means of production of our time, those

exploiting wage labour, and of these only the competitive ones can be called capital. The stock of the small bourgeois is not capital in the categoric sense of the term,

We live in the stream of time. Yesterday we described as capital what to-morrow may be capital no longer. The fortune which yielded sufficient revenues ten years ago yields no more to-day, as it has become too small to be competitive. A small capital, together with its interest, must now serve in many cases merely as a fund of consumption for the owner; it does not increase—it is eaten up. The small people mostly consume their possessions; they swim a little while against the tide and then surrender. They are driven to sell their labour power, which previously they used for themselves, and become wage labourers.

The "free competitive society," with which we have to deal, has not descended from heaven. It is descended from savages, serfs, and the handicraftsmen of the guilds—none of them "free" men. When at last labour was "freed" the peasant could work for himself—if he had sufficient money to buy land and tools; the journeyman could become a master—if he had the capital. Capital was "freed"—but the wage-labourer? He toils now in the freed concern, which must have huge means in order to perform its enormous task. Here the small means cease to be capital, and the small bourgeois are not even workers but small tenants, who have no place in commerce and are thrown by competition into the ranks of the bought and sold workers.

If you have £100 in a bank or in a business, and if you draw interest therefrom, you are a capitalist; but you are not a categoric capitalist until the moment when your interest and your capital have become so big that you can compete with your colleagues on the field of consumption. Such capitalists become fewer every day in consequence of competition. Therefore, capitalism is historical, transient; and disappears while yet developing. Capital must increase in order to remain capital. The capitalists must every day grow fatter and more arrogant, and therefore more unbearable.

In the same way as you cannot believe in ghosts without legs, so you cannot believe in capital and profit without labour. It is true, of course, that wage-labour yields revenues, but only meagrely. In spite of it, labour is the only creator of wealth in the existing world. If capital claims its share of co-operation, we can grant it a transient, historical, and peculiar share, without injuring the main claim of labour in the least.

Man can work with the priceless means of the soil, it is true, but how? Work worthy of humanity needs economized accumulated means. These are precious things which contain past labour. Work worthy of humanity needs at present enormous means, or it is not worthy of humanity—neither productive nor competitive. In

competitive society there must be capital; without it labour is nothing, and without labour capital is naught. So far, the apostles of harmony are right; but logic is also right in contending that competitive society has developed the great capital, and that now it is time to abolish capital and wage labour in order to reform the distribution of the products and to increase the productiveness.

Henry George is quite aware of the fact that capital makes labour profitable. But as the primitive man could work with bare nature, and without accumulated means, he thinks it is now sufficient to make nature free for labour in order to render the latter profitable and competitive. This is a gross historical error. Under capitalism wage-labour cannot be made profitable. By competition it is reduced to the poorest living, and must leave the true reward to the so-called free labour, that labour which creates "for itself."

Logic teaches that you must not, like Henry George, build up an airy fabric of generalization without specification; but that at the same time you must not particularize without taking the general view into consideration. This is the first rule of the art of thinking.

Justice, freedom and fraternity exist as ideas; but owing to the indistinct conceptions of men about these ideas they are not realized and continue to exist merely in idea. That is why the worker is considered as a commodity, which has to be created and replaced as cheaply as possible. Our radicalism is opposed to such treatment of men. Neither the high or low price of labour-power is the cause of disgrace and misery, but the fact that the worker has to-day to exchange his personal strength as a product—has to get wage instead of reward. Even the best wage is no equivalent for the worker's share in the social product, in which he co-operated; it is only the equivalent for the cost of labour-power.

The doctrine that the wage which the labourer gets at the end of the day or the week is the same reward as the harvest which the peasant gets in, that it is in any sense a reward for his labour, is an illogical doctrine, because clear thinking requires the distinction as well as the generalization of things. According to Hegel it is not possible to define the truth in one sentence; truth is too full, is as much negative as positive, as much positive as negative.

Therefore you will understand that economic distinctions like use value and exchange value, value and price, wage and revenue, commodity and money, are not separated so widely that all connexion is destroyed. The essential of my logic consists in absolutely proving that all differences are relative and connected; ordinary metaphysical logic, on the other hand, separates the differences as far from each other as the curate separates heaven and hell.

The logic which I am teaching you is a unifying kind of thinking. Wage and revenue flow into each other, so that one is the same as the

other, and yet in spite of this they are separate and distinct. Such a kind of thinking is called dialectic. Opposed to it is the metaphysical kind of thinking which keeps things as far separated as if they were all frozen icicles.

Translated for the *Plebs Magazine* from the German of Joseph Dietzgen by Miss B. BRAUNTHAL.

A Pygmalion Anthem

That vivacious periodical, the *Book Lover*, of Sydney, has just printed what it regards as the real Australian National Anthem. Its author's name is given as "Den," and, although it is cryptic, it is immeasurably superior to most national anthems, and especially to the Canadian song, *The Maple Leaf*, of which both the words and the music are vapid to the last degree. The *Australaise* is too long to be quoted in full, but here is a typical verse and the chorus :

Fellers of Australia :
 Blokes an' coves an' coots,
 Shift yer —— carcasses,
 Move yer —— boots,
 Gird yer —— loins up,
 Get yer —— gun,
 Set the —— enemy
 An' watch the —— run.

CHORUS.

Get a —— move on,
 Have some —— sense ;
 Learn the —— art of
 Self de —— fence.

I cannot for the life of me fill in the missing words, but probably most of my readers will be quicker-witted than I. Mr. Shaw might, perhaps, be able to suggest something.

SOLOMON EAGLE in *The New Statesman*, September 19th, 1914.

"When men have once acquiesced in untrue opinions and registered them as authentic records in their minds, it is no less impossible to speak intelligibly to such men than to write legibly on paper already scribbled over."
 HOBBS.

"A man who would endeavour to fix an enthusiast by argument, might as well try to spread quicksilver with his fingers."

OLIVER GOLDSMITH,

A Fable

The following extract is reprinted, without permission, from Mr. H. M. Tomlinson's book of travel, *The Sea and the Jungle* (Duckworth & Co.). Mr. Tomlinson shares Cunninghame Graham's gift of irony, and also his power of vivid descriptive writing. *Plebs* readers will appreciate this passage.

The day before we left for the Madeira we took aboard sixty head of cattle. They were wild things, which had been collected in the camps with great difficulty, and driven into lighters. A rope was dropped over the horns of each beast; this was attached to a crane hook, the winch was started, and up the poor wretch came, all its weight on its horns, bumping inertly against the ship's side in its passage like a bale, and was then dumped in a heap on deck. This treatment seemed to subdue it. Each quietly submitted to a halter. Several lost horns, and one hurt its leg, and had to be dragged to its place. But to our great joy—we were watching the scene from the bridge—the Brazilian herdsmen on the lighter shouted an anxious warning to their fellows on our deck as a small black heifer, a pot-bellied lump with a stretched neck, rotated in her unusual efforts to free her horns. She even bellowed. She bumped heavily against the ship's side, and tried desperately to find her feet. She was, and I offered up thanks for this, most plainly an implacable rebel. The cattlemen, as punishment for the trouble she had given them ashore, kept her dangling over the deck, and one got level with her face and mocked her, slapping her nose. She actually defied him, though she was quite helpless, with some minatory sounds. She was no cow. She was insurrection, she was hate for tyrants incarnated. They dropped her. She was up and away like a cat, straight for the winchman, and tried to get the winch out of her path, bellowing as she worked. She put everybody on that deck in the shrouds or on the forecastle head as she trotted round, with her tail up, looking for brutes to put them to death. None of the cows (of course) helped her. By a trick she was caught, and her horns were lashed down to a ring bolt in a hatch coaming. Then she tried to kick all who passed. If the rest of the cattle had been like her, none would have suffered. Alas! They were probably all scientific evolutionists, content to wait for men to become kindly apple-lovers by slow and natural uplift; and gravely deprecated the action of the heifer, from which, as peaceful cows, they disassociated themselves.

The Indian says that if he eats a morsel of tiger he becomes fierce and strong. I have not the faith of the Indian, or I would have begged the heart of that heifer, and of it I would have brewed gallons of precious liquor, and brought it home in jars for incomparable gifts to the meek at heart who always do what the herdsmen tell them,

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