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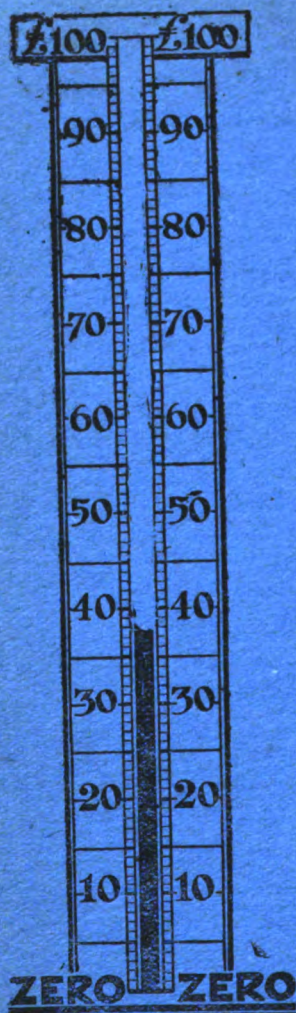
The
PLEBS
MAGAZINE



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MONTHLY

TWOPENCE



We have to
get this
down
to



Zero

Can we do it
by August 1st ?

It rests with you.

MEMBERS WHO ARE IN ARREARS WITH LEAGUE OR MAGAZINE SUSSCRIPTIONS SHOULD ENDEAVOUR TO CLEAR THEIR ACCOUNTS BEFORE AUGUST 3rd, TO ALLOW OF ACCOUNTS BEING PREPARED FOR THE ANNUAL MEET.

THE PLEBS MAGAZINE

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

Vol. VIII

July, 1916

No. 6

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An Open Letter to a Plebeian

DEAR COMRADE.—Writing begging letters is not altogether a pleasant job. However, it's got to be done. We know you don't want to see the *Plebs* go under, or you wouldn't have stood by it as you have done already. We've pulled through until now; and if we pull all together **now**, we're safe.

You'll see by the 'thermometer' that since we started the Special Appeal Fund last October we've raised over £60. Not a bad record! Month by month we've crept nearer to Zero. Month by month, too, our circulation has steadily improved. But if our efforts slacken now, it has all been to no purpose. We can't ask you for a big subscription; but we can—and do—ask you to send

us **something**. And we ask you, too, whether you can't get us **one** new subscriber. A journal like ours, which includes no millionaires among its readers, depends upon **all** its friends. During the past few months some of our friends have done the lion's share. Since the beginning of the year, for example, members of the Sheffield No. 8 Branch, A.S.E., have sent us, in instalments, between £6 and £7—more than a tenth of the total sum we've raised. (It's hardly necessary to mention that the members of that branch do **not** number one-tenth of our readers.) What they have done shows what co-operative effort can do. If every individual reader of the *Plebs* weighed in with a small subscription during the next week or two, we should be down at Zero by the time our next issue was due.

It's more than ever vital, in view of the inevitable partial suspension of the College's work, that the magazine should keep going. Now's the time for propaganda. Now's the time to point out the need for the workers to educate themselves. Now's the time to insist on the value of the work already accomplished by the Central Labour College, and on the vast possibilities of such work in the future. You and I and all Plebeians are quite convinced of the importance of that work; the magazine keeps us in touch with one another, and provides us with a medium for propaganda at the same time. **We cannot afford to lose it.** And we needn't lose it— if we're willing to make some small sacrifice for the cause.

We shall need some extra effort during the next few months. The Military Service Act will inevitably claim some of our keenest workers—some it has already claimed. Those of us who remain have to see to it that the *Plebs* does not suffer. We want volunteers. Our cause is the cause of the workers. We have neither the right nor the wish to **demand** your help. We only ask you whether the cause is not worth while? Yours for the *Plebs* ———

Blind Guides

IT is just two years ago since the Central Labour College failed, by a very small number of votes, to secure the support of the Northumberland Miners' Association. At that time the Association was sending two students to Ruskin College. The resolution submitted to the Association by its Ashington Branch asked that the two students be sent to the Central Labour College. The resolution was lost on the vote of the Council, and when submitted to the branches, it was voted down, as stated above, by a very small margin.

In 1915, it was decided that, under the circumstances, it was not opportune to renew our efforts for a reversal of the 1914 decision. This year, however, the Ashington Branch again put forward

a resolution on behalf of the Central Labour College. On this occasion, the resolution proposed not to send students to the College but to establish classes throughout the coalfield, to be run in conjunction with the College, and in conformity with its educational principles. Our readers are, of course, aware that the activities of the College do not begin and end at 13, Penywern Road, but that, in addition to the residential teaching and study, there are non-residential departments which enable men and women of the working-class to receive tuition from the College. One of those departments, and the most important of them, is that which provides for the institution of provincial classes directly tutored by Central Labour College teachers. Working-class education must educate the working class—not a chosen few who may form a kind of intellectual caste. The central institution is, therefore, only useful in so far as it serves as a means to this end. While the centre, in order to send out to the circumference, must draw from the circumference, the Ashington proposers, no doubt, recognized that the value of the College and the need to send students there, would be more extensively appreciated if, in the first place, these classes were established in the coalfield.

In accordance with the constitution of the Northumberland Miners' Association, the Ashington resolution recently came before the Council, prior to its being submitted to the branches. At the time of writing we have not yet been informed as to the result of the ballot. We have, however, learned something about the discussion which took place at the Council when the Ashington proposition was thrown out by 37 votes to 21.

From what we can gather, the President of the Association, Mr. Hogg, and one of its Agents, Mr. Cairns, were the leading spokesmen of the opposition. We regret to learn that the opposition, instead of conducting their case on critical and impersonal lines, contented themselves with appeals to narrow although popular prejudice and with petty personal attacks. We have a copy of the June Monthly Circular of the Association before us, which is written by another of the Association's Agents, Mr. W. Straker.

Mr. Straker deals in the Circular, both with the question and with the character of the discussion, and we have to thank him for his courageous and candid comments on the subject. He says:—

It is not often that either the supporters or opponents of a proposal in our Council Meetings charge those who differ from them with dishonesty; neither does it often happen that endeavours are made to arouse theological prejudice in order to defeat a proposal. Yet, rare and regrettable as this is, the discussion on this resolution descended to that level.

The Central Labour College, it was alleged, stood for an education of an anti-theological character. The Northumberland Miners, on the other hand, were reminded that they owed their good leaders

and good position as an Association to theological beliefs and institutions. *Ergo*, they could not consistently support the College.

If we desired a personal controversy on that point, we could point to the fact that there have been leaders of the Northumberland Miners, and still are, who have done, and still continue to do, good work for the miners and the workers generally, without the assistance of theology and frequently in the teeth of theological opposition. We prefer, however, to follow more critical and impersonal methods. We do not deny individual responsibility or the right to judge individuals; *but* the standard of judgment should be an objective one—what a man does, and not in what creeds he believes or disbelieves.

The opponents of the Ashington resolution, instead of basing any criticism of the College upon its principles, relieved themselves of the necessity of such an effort by singling out for attack the Principal of the College, Mr. Dennis Hird. His lack of theology and a belief in Neo-Malthusianism were the two chief counts in the indictment. Holding such anti-trade union and anti-working-class (!) views as these, the College of which Mr. Hird was Principal must be opposed.

Mr. Straker on this point says:—

... The Principal of the College is suspected of not being quite 'sound in the faith,' and therefore it was necessary to institute a sort of heresy hunt in order to down such a dangerous man.

He goes on to say that, for him, "character," what a man's actions are in relation to the needs of other men, is the decisive test; and that there are men, who have been under the "evil eye" of this "dangerous man," actively engaged in useful work for the Association, "whose character will compare favourably with any trained in the most orthodox church or chapel we have." "I feel strongly," he continues, "that if this sort of thing is not checked it will eat into the very vitals of our Association."

Now one who opposes a principle cannot avoid opposing the person who practises it. This must be so in view of the fact that principles can only be expressed through men. The principle, however, is the fundamental fact which must first be taken in hand. With the opponents to the Ashington resolution, it is different. They begin and end with the *principal*. For them, the question of the Central Labour College is evidently a personal as well as a theological question.

We know quite well who started the heresy hunt. We remember very clearly how, in the year 1909, the authorities at Ruskin College "stooped to conquer" by means of carefully prepared and circulated stories as to Mr. Hird's theological defections. [Neither are we in ignorance of the fact that, during the 1914 campaign in the Northumberland coalfield, the agents of Ruskin College made

further progress in the same direction. All the more then are we glad to find at least one of the Northumberland Miners' leaders who not only refuses to fill his eyes with this theological dust but is prepared to enter an outspoken protest against the employment of such methods of controversy. Speaking of Mr. Hird, Mr. Straker says :—

I believe his character is unimpeachable, and so far as I have read his books on religious questions, while he has denounced in no measured terms deeds done by professors of Christianity, yet he has held practical Christianity up in the highest light.

But the theologians could never stand practical Christianity ! Preaching brotherly love is one thing, but making it a fact is quite another thing.

The Central Labour College has no more to do with theology than has, say, a medical college. The time was, certainly, when people believed that all disease was the outcome of divine wrath, that Providence provided the pest. Medical science has discovered otherwise, and we doubt not that even the theologians send for the doctor. If this is anti-theological, so much the worse for theology. It used to be decidedly anti-theological. When Sir James Y. Simpson introduced the use of chloroform as an anaesthetic to women in the pains of child-birth, the Scots ministers mounted their pulpits and denounced him because it had been pronounced in Genesis, "In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children." The medical chloroform won !

The Central Labour College is an institution for the study of *social* diseases and their cures. Time was, too, when the disease of poverty was regarded as heaven-sent ; when, according to theology, man was condemned to eat his bread "in the sweat of his brow." Theology did not however, prevent a few people from doing very well in the bread-eating line without being under the painful necessity of sweating : and the "rich man in his castle" was naturally a great believer in theology. People with vested interests to preserve have invariably availed themselves of its protection.

If to assert that the social ills to which the working class is heir to-day are man-made, and can be by man unmade, is anti-theological, then, truly, the Central Labour College falls within that classification ; but then so does the Trade Union Movement and the Labour Party. The same kind of association to which our theological opponents belong was, in its early days, faced with the same miserable opposition as they now measure out to the College. More recently, the Labour Party had to encounter the same prejudices. It would be interesting to know what the original attitude of those leaders of the Northumberland Miners who led the attack on the C.L.C., was to the Labour Party.

The Central Labour College is non-theological. It is a Labour College wholly concerned with Labour problems and exists only to extend the understanding of those problems among the people who can alone apply the solution—the working class. No other standard of judgment can justifiably be employed *in criticism of the persons* connected with the College in its work than that of how they carry out that work: and whoever would *oppose the Central Labour College* must undertake to prove that its principles and practice are of such a character as to impede the progress of the working class.

Mr. Straker concludes his thoughtful contribution on this subject:—

The College trains men and women for the industrial, political and social work of the organised Labour Movement; therefore, we as organised workers ought to give all the support we can to this independent Labour educational institution. The surprise to me is that any Labour leader should be in opposition to it. *The only explanation is that such a one does not yet understand either what this College or the Labour Movement stands for.*

The italics are ours. These words accurately sum up the situation. There is of course one alternative to the charge of ignorance. If those people who are in opposition do understand “what this College, or the Labour Movement stands for,” then their theological veneration is simply a hypocritical subterfuge, a cloak under which they seek to conceal something that evidently cannot be productive of progress for the Labour Movement.

For the rest, we would remind those “heresy hunters” that it was the theologians who crucified Jesus and that his crime, according to the report, consisted in teaching “contrary to Moses and the Prophets.” “Ye Pharisees! hypocrites!” . . . “Blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.” W. W. CRAIK.

The Third International

The following article is a translation, reprinted from the American *New Review*, of the editorial introduction to the first issue of Anton Pannekoek's new magazine, *Forbote*. That journal stands for the point of view of the extreme left wing of the German Social Democrats, and aims (as will be seen below) at the propaganda of a “live revolutionary” Marxism as the theory which must inspire the Third International in its struggle against imperialism and “social patriotism.” We have italicised certain passages; but *Plebs* readers will, we think, agree that the whole article might well be printed in italics. It forms a valuable supplement to Boudin's arguments, summarized by Mr. Craik in the last two issues of our magazine.

WE are standing in the midst of a catastrophe of the working-class movement such as it has never experienced in all its history. The collapse of the International due to the world war is not simply a surrender of international sentiment

before the power of intensified nationalism. It is at the same time a collapse of tactics, of methods of fighting, of the entire system which had been incorporated into the social-democracy and the working-class movement during the last few decades.

The knowledge and the tactics which, during the early rise of capitalism, were of great service to the proletariat, failed in the face of the new imperialistic development. Outwardly this was apparent in the increasing impotency of the parliamentary and the trade union movement, spiritually in the substitution of tradition and declamation for clear insight and militant tactics, in stultification of tactics and the forms of organization, in the transformation of the revolutionary theory of Marxism into a doctrine of passive expectation.

During the period when capitalism was developing into imperialism, establishing new aims for itself, and energetically arming for the struggle for world supremacy, this development of the majority of the Social Democracy remained unobserved. It allowed itself to be fooled by the dream of immediate social reforms and did nothing to increase the power of the proletariat to fight against imperialism.

Hence the present catastrophe does not mean only that the proletariat was too weak to prevent the outbreak of war. It means that the methods of the era of the second International were not capable of increasing the spiritual and material power of the proletariat to the necessary extent of breaking the power of the ruling classes. Therefore the world war must be a turning point in the history of the working class movement.

With the world war we have entered into a new period of capitalism, the period of its intensive extension by force over the entire earth, accompanied by embittered struggles between nationalities and huge destruction of capital and men; a period therefore, of the heaviest oppression and suffering for the working classes. But the masses are thereby driven to aspiration; they must raise themselves if they are not to be completely submerged.

In great struggles, alongside of which former struggles and methods will seem merely child's play, they must grapple with imperialism. This struggle for indispensable rights and liberties, for the most urgent reforms, often for mere life itself, against reaction and the oppression of the employing class, against war and poverty, can only end with the overthrow of imperialism and the victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie. It will at the same time be the struggle for Socialism, for the emancipation of the proletariat. Therefore with the present world war there also dawns a new period for Socialism.

For the new struggle our spiritual bearings must be taken anew. Lack of clear socialistic insight was one of the chief causes of the

weakness of the proletariat when the war began—it understood neither imperialism nor its own tactics. The fight against imperialism this most recent and most powerful form of capitalism, made demands upon the highest spiritual and material, moral and organizational, qualities of the proletariat. It could not succumb to stupid, impotent desperation; but it was not enough that it break out into spontaneous actions against the unbearable pressure. If these are to lead anywhere and to gain new stages on the climb to power it is necessary that they be inspired with spiritual clarity in regard to the aims, the possibilities and the meaning of such actions. *Theory must go hand in hand with practice, theory which transforms blind acts to conscious ones and spreads light over the path.*

“Material force can only be broken by material force. But even theory becomes material force when it takes hold on the masses.” (Marx.) The germs of this theory, this new spiritual weapon, were already at hand in the spiritual defeat of the former practice of imperialism and mass actions. The world war has brought much new insight and has shaken minds out of the sleep of tradition. Now is the time to gather together everything in the way of new ideas, new solutions, new propositions, to inspect them, to prove them, to clarify them by means of discussion and thus to make them of service in the new struggle. That is the purpose of our review.

An immense number of new questions lie before us. First of all the questions of imperialism, its economic roots, its connection with the export of capital, procuring of raw material, its effect upon politics, government and bureaucracy, its spiritual power upon the bourgeoisie and the press, its significance as a new ideology of the bourgeois. Then those questions which relate to the proletariat, the causes of their weakness, their psychology, and the phenomena of social-imperialism and social-patriotism. Added to these are the questions of proletarian tactics, the significance and possibilities of parliamentarianism, of mass action, of trade union tactics, reforms and immediate demands, the significance and the future role of organization; also the questions of nationalism of militarism and colonial policies.

Upon many of these questions the old Socialism had settled answers, which had already crystallized into formulae—but with the collapse of the second International even its formulae have gone by the board. In the old rules and ideas of the pre-imperialistic era the proletariat can find no guides for its actions under new conditions. Nor can the social-democratic parties furnish it with a firm foot-hold. They have in the great majority surrendered to imperialism; the conscious, active or passive, support of war policies by the party and trade union representatives has dug too deep to make possible a simple return to the old pre-bellum point of view.

This support of imperialism in its most important and vital phases characterizes these working-class organizations, no matter how strongly they subscribe to the old socialist solutions and combat the most obvious effects of imperialism. For in this way they come into conflict with the necessarily revolutionary aims of the proletariat and are themselves forced into a difficult crisis of their own. Between those who would make of the social-democracy a tool of imperialism and those who want to see it a weapon of revolution no unity is possible any longer.

The task of elucidating those problems, of offering solutions, of formulating the proper direction for the new struggle, falls to those who have not allowed themselves to be misled by war conditions and who have held fast to internationalism and the class struggle. In this their weapon will be Marxism. Marxism, regarded by the theoreticians of Socialism as a means of explaining the past and the present, and in their hands degraded more and more into a dry doctrine of mechanical fatalism, again is to come into its birthright as a theory of revolutionary acts. "The philosophers have interpreted the world in a number of differing ways: the real necessity is to alter it." *As a live revolutionary method this sort of Marxism again becomes the most solid principle, the sharpest spiritual weapon of Socialism.*

There is no more pressing task than this elucidation of the new problems. For it is a life and death question for the proletariat—and hence for the entire development of humanity—that it should see its way clear and bright before it leading to new heights. *And there are no questions of the future whose solution can be postponed until we can once more discuss them in peace and quietness. They are not capable of postponement.* Even during the war and after its conclusion they form the most important and immediate vital questions for the working class of all nations.

Not merely the important question, which everywhere is the kernel of the object of struggle, whether and how the proletariat can hasten the end of the war and influence the terms of peace. At the conclusion of the war the immense economic shattering of the world will first be felt in its entirety, when, under conditions of general exhaustion, lack of capital, and unemployment, industry must be organized anew, when the fearful debts of all nations necessitate colossal taxes, state socialism, and the militarization of agricultural pursuits, as the only way out of financial difficulties. Then the problem must be met with or without theory; but then the lack of theoretical insight will entail the most disastrous errors.

There lies the greatest task of our journal: by discussion and elucidation of these questions it will support the material struggle of the proletariat against imperialism. As an organ of discussion

and elucidation it is at the same time an organ of battle—the publisher and the contributors to the journal have the common will to give battle, the same point of view in regard to these chief questions of the practice to be adopted at this time.

First of all the struggle against imperialism the chief enemy of the proletariat. But this struggle is only made possible by a simultaneous relentless struggle against all the elements of the former social-democracy, which would bind the proletariat to the chariot of imperialism ; not only the open imperialism which has become the mere agent of the bourgeoisie, but that social patriotism of all shades which would gloss over undisputable antagonisms and would rob the proletariat of the sharpest weapons in its struggle against imperialism. The reconstitution of the Third International will only be made possible by an absolute break with social-patriotism.

With this knowledge we stand upon the same ground as the left wing of the Zimmerwald Conference. The principles put forth by this group of international socialists as their aim our journal will support by theoretical work; by the most intense struggle against social-patriotism, by merciless analysis of the errors of the old revisionism and radical socialism to pave the way for the new International. If the proletariat recognizes the weaknesses and mistakes of the old points of view, the practical collapse of which it is now suffering from, it will gain the foresight necessary for the new struggle and the new Socialism.

Food for Thought

(About the only Food which is still Cheap.)

Sir G. Paish lately estimated the national income, which before the war stood at £2,400,000,000, had been increased for the year 1915 to £3,000,000,000. This estimate makes no allowance for the rise in prices ; but even with this deduction it is a remarkable tribute to the work of the civilian population. Moreover, of the extra values thus created, considerably the lesser proportion has found its way into working-class pockets. The Board of Trade returns record an addition of £45,000,000 to the wages bill in 1915 ; independent authorities, calculating for additional sources of increase not covered by the official figures, raise the sum to between £150,000,000 and £200,000,000, or even higher ; *but even this leaves some two-thirds of the extra value to the other factors in production.* In other words the working class, faced with a situation in which its bargaining power was greater than at any time since the Black Death, has not only had its own monopoly value curtailed by legal enactment, in the Compulsory Arbitration and leaving certificate clauses of the Munitions Act, but has acquiesced in a serious reduction of the rate of wages in comparison with prices.

(The Round Table.)

Breaking the Spell of Marxism

or, THE CONSUMER TO THE RESCUE

The History of the Fabian Society. By E. R. Pease. (Fifield, 5/- net.)

"The Fabians here in London are a band of ambitious folk who have sufficient understanding to comprehend the inevitableness of the social revolution, but who cannot trust this gigantic work to the rough proletariat alone, and therefore have the kindness to place themselves at the head of it.

Dread of the revolution is their fundamental principle. . . .

This Socialism of theirs is presented as an extreme but inevitable consequence of middle-class Liberalism, and hence their tactics are to fight the Liberals, not as decided opponents, but to drive them on to socialistic consequences . . . to trick them, to permeate Liberalism with Socialism. . .

They have supplied, amidst all kinds of trash, good propaganda writings—in fact, the best that the English have accomplished in this direction. But when they come to their specific tactics—to gloss over the class struggle—all is rotten. Hence their hatred of Marx and all of us—on account of the class struggle.

(Letter from Engels to Sorge, January 18th, 1893.)

"The S.D.F. here shares with your German American Socialists the distinction of being the only parties to accomplish the bringing down of the Marxian theory of development to a rigid orthodoxy. According to them, the working-man is not to attain to this complete development through a process set in operation by his own class-feeling, but he has to swallow it down immediately as an article of faith, and without development. Therefore, both remain only sects and come, as Hegel says, from nothing, through nothing, to nothing."

(Letter from Engels to Sorge, May 12th 1894. Both letters quoted from the *Socialist Review*, Vol. I, No. I March, '08.)

"Only the fast-dwindling band of pioneer Socialists, who lived through the movement in its earliest days, can fully realise the environment of ideas from which *Fabian Essays* showed a way of escape.

The Socialism of the S.D.F. and the Socialist League . . . was altogether revolutionary. Socialism was to be the result of an outbreak of violence, engineered by a great popular organization like that of the Chartists or the Anti-Corn Law League, and the Commune of Paris in 1871 was regarded as a premature attempt which pointed the way to future success. The Socialist Government thus established was to reconstruct the social and industrial life of the nation according to a plan supposed to be outlined by Karl Marx. 'On the morrow of the revolution' all things would be new, and at a bound the nation was expected to reach something very like the millenium.

The case for this project was based, strange to say, not on any history but on the Marxian analysis of the origin of the value of commodities, and no man who did not understand this analysis, or pretend to understand it, was fit to be called a 'comrade.' The economic reasoning which 'proved' this 'law' was expressed in obscure and technical language, peculiar to the propagandists of the movement, and every page of Socialist writings was studded with the then strange words, 'proletariat' and 'bourgeoisie.' . . .

Fabian Essays presented the case for Socialism in language which everybody could understand. . . . It built up the edifice of Socialism on the foundations of our existing political and social institutions; it proved that Socialism was but the next step in the development of society, rendered inevitable by the changes which followed from the industrial revolution of the 18th century."

(Mr. Pease—Chapter V.)

I TRUST that everybody will read these parallel quotations carefully, whether they proceed to scan this article or not. Really, there is little need for an article, after printing those passages side by side; for they contain pretty nearly everything there is to be said on the subject. But for my own pleasure, if for nobody else's, I am going to fill two or three *Plebs* pages with more quotations from, and comments upon, Mr. Pease's most entertaining book.

One expected that a history of the Fabian Society by its Secretary for 25 years would prove interesting. And interesting it is—in all sorts of ways. Begin at the very beginning, at page 1 of the Preface:—

Two of my colleagues, Sidney Webb and Bernard Shaw, have been good enough to revise this volume, and I have to thank them for innumerable corrections in style, countless suggestions of better words and phrases, and a number of amplifications and additions, some of which I have accepted without specific acknowledgment, whilst others for one reason or another are to be found in (foot) notes. . .

What a picture that conjures up of G. B. S. ringing up Sidney Webb, and gasping hoarsely, "My God! Webb, Pease is going to publish a book about us! . . ." Hurried consultations . . . "We must go through it somehow or other before it's too late, or . . ." Mr. Pease's manuscript arrives—comic despair in Adelphi Terrace . . . Footnotes to every other one of Mr. Pease's innocent remarks. . . . And all the time Mr. Pease smiling proudly at the thought of the illustriousness of his collaborators, and murmuring, "What a good boy am I!"—or words to that effect . . .

And he *is*, and apparently always has been, a good boy. A perfectly model secretary; convinced that his Society is the greatest thing that ever was, and rapturously treasuring every word that fell from the lips of his world-famous fellow-members. There is more than a little of the Boswell in his mental make-up; who but a Boswell, for example, would have carefully preserved (for 20 years) the terrible drawing of respectable Fabians posing as Arcadians which is reproduced as the frontispiece to this book? He reminds one of some faithful old family servant, who never refers to *the* family but with a glow of pride, and just a touch of pity for the remaining 99·99% of mankind.

Very rarely in the history of voluntary organizations has a group of such exceptional people come together. . . . It was this exceptional group of leaders . . . that in a few years turned an obscure drawing-room society into a factor in national politics. . . .

We are *the* people, in fact.

There is no evidence, however, that the Essayists supposed that they were about to make an epoch in the history of Socialism.

No-one would have expected such modesty in a group of people which had G. B. S. for a leader. Mr. Pease has something, too, of the ancient retainer's deprecating attitude towards the younger generation:—

In the 'eighties the rebels were Communist Anarchists, and to us at any rate they seemed more portentous than the mixed crowd of suffragettes and gentlemen from Oxford who before the war seemed to be leading the syndicalist rebels.

You can't deny, after that, that our Mr. Pease can curl his lip almost like a real aristocrat. You will also be beginning to understand by now why his publisher should say of the book that "its gay, amusing style might be envied by a successful novelist." "It mout," as Uncle Remus used to remark, "and then agen it mout't."

But it is when he falls to discoursing upon Marx and Marxism that Mr. Pease is most entertaining of all. Sublimely oblivious to the fact that anything at all has happened in the world since the eighteen-nineties, Rip van Pease actually boasts of the fact (he says it is a fact, anyway) that the Fabian Society is the proud progenitor of Revisionism.

Its first achievement, as already mentioned, was to break the spell of Marxism in England . . . Socialism, as first preached to the English people by the Social-Democrats, was as narrow, as bigoted, as exclusive as the strictest of Scotch religious sects. *Das Kapital*, Vol. I. was its bible; and the thoughts and schemes of English Socialists were to be approved or condemned according as they could or could not be justified by a quoted text. The Fabian Society freed English Socialism from this intellectual bondage, and freed it sooner and more completely than Revisionists have succeeded in doing anywhere else. . . .

Now no sane person will want to quarrel with Mr. Pease for his strictures on the sort of "Marxism" which characterized the S. D. F. of the 'eighties. I have already quoted at the head of this article Engels' comments on the "rigid orthodoxy" of that particular "sect." But Mr. Pease appears to be labouring under the delusion that, having demolished that particular variety of Marxism, he has exploded Marxism altogether. If he did not expressly tell us (p.64) that he had once been a member of a reading circle formed to discuss *Capital*, one would have assumed that he knew nothing of Marx but what he had gathered from S. D. F. literature. At any rate, he seems quite certain that the S. D. F. brand is the only Marxism which ever had, or will have, an actual as apart from a theoretical existence; and therefore the only variety which need concern a "practical-minded" Fabian. He accordingly persistently confuses Marx with S. D. F. Marxism, and the paragraphs in his final chapter, under the sub-heading "Breaking the spell of Marxism," are as pretty specimens of muddled thinking as one could hope to come across:—

Public opinion altogether failed to recognise the greatness of Marx during his lifetime, but every year that passes adds strength to the conviction that the broad principles he promulgated will guide the evolution of society during the present century.

So far, so good. It's rather like turning Marxism upside down to talk about "principles guiding the evolution" of society; but let that pass. Mr. Pease proceeds:—

Neither Marx himself nor his immediate followers recognised the real basis of his future fame; they thought he was a brilliant and original economist, and a profound student of history.

Well, what in heaven's name *was* he? What *is* a man who "promulgates broad principles" which incontestably forecast "the evolution of society"? Mr. Pease does not tell us. He regrets "this misapprehension" on the part of the Marxians, but in what precisely the misapprehension consisted he makes no attempt to explain. Still, he seems quite sure that it is to be counted unto the Fabians for righteousness that they had no part nor lot in the misapprehension—whatever it was. And despite the indisputability of Marx's "broad principles," the Fabians, he proudly declares:—

refused to regard as articles of faith either the economic and historical analyses which Marx made use of, or the political evolution which he predicted.

He goes on babbling about Marxism being based on the idea of a "revolutionary cataclysm"—"a successful repetition of the Commune of Paris"—long after Shaw has told him, in a footnote to an early page, that "Marx had been under no delusion as to the Commune, and did *not* bequeath a tradition of its repetition." In contrast to this blood-and-thunder Marxism, *Fabian Essays*, says Mr. Pease, showed that:—

Socialism was a living principle which could be applied to existing social and political conditions without a cataclysm either insurrectionary or even political. ("Dread of the revolution is their fundamental principle"!) . . . The work of the Fabian Society was *the interpretation of an existing movement*.

And what in heaven's name, once more, was the work of Marx? Some of this "criticism" may be due to ignorance—or innocence; but it comes perilously near to dishonesty when it asserts (page 239) that the revolt against Marxism in Germany—

came from England in the person of Edward Bernstein, who, exiled by Bismarck, took refuge in London, and was for years intimately acquainted with the Fabian leaders. Soon after his return to Germany he published, in 1899, a volume criticising Marxism, and thence grew up the Revisionist movement for free thought in Socialism which has attracted all the younger men. . .

Not a word of Bernstein's recantation a couple of years ago. Mr. Pease must have heard of it. But it would rather spoil his effect to mention it.

"No man," as Mr. Pease sagely observes of Marx, "is great enough to be made into a god." That, however, is no justification for metamorphosing that man into a bogey—a sort of god, after all; and proceeding to attribute to him monstrous fatuity instead of moral and intellectual infallibility. To remark that "the actual problems of modern politics cannot be solved by quotations from a German philosopher" is to write oneself down an ass, not a critic; and to assert, after admitting the essential rightness of Marx's broad principles, that the first business of the Fabian Society,

after "breaking the spell of Marxism," was "to put something in the place of Marx," is to confess oneself a very muddled ass. And what, O what, is one to make of stuff like this :—

Other Socialists then, and many Socialists now, endeavoured by all means to accentuate their differences from other people. Not content with forming societies to advocate their policy, they insisted that it was based on *a science peculiar to themselves*, the Marxian analysis of value, and the economic interpretation of history. . . . The Fabians, on the other hand, held that *the pronouncements of science must be either right or wrong*, and that in any case science was not a matter of party : they endeavoured to show that *on their opponents' own principles* they were logically compelled to be Socialists. . . .

(1) The pronouncements of science must be either right or wrong.
 (2) If you insist on the rightness of a particular scientific theory, you are merely foolishly "accentuating your differences from other people."
 (3) Science is not a matter of party ; nevertheless your opponent has principles of his own (presumably a matter of party) and these are plenty good enough to convince him with.
 (4) So that although science must be either right or wrong, its rightness or wrongness doesn't matter a kick. Use any argument that happens along ; but get *something done*. Fabianism in a nutshell !

And then what of this :—

Fabian Essays based Socialism, not on the speculations of a German philosopher, but . . . it accepted economic science as taught by THE ACCREDITED BRITISH PROFESSORS.

None of your dirty foreigners—alien enemies and so forth ! The accredited British . . . I give it up. No one but Shaw could do full justice to the beautiful simplicity, the characteristic insular fatheadedness of that remark...

So we come back to Engel's summing-up of the Fabians—ladies and gentlemen intelligent enough to perceive the inevitability of the social revolution, but loth to trust the job to the rough proletarian. A group, in short, of very able middle-class people, anxious to be useful and ready to work hard ; typical *consumers*, and therefore no more able to help viewing things from their own (consuming) point of view than an intelligent working man producer can avoid seeing the fundamental rightness of the Marxian analysis of society and social classes. It is interesting to note, by the way, that Fabian Tract No. 2, a "Manifesto" drawn up by G. B. S. a fortnight after he joined the Society, contained the following clause :—

That the most striking result of our present system of farming out the national land and Capital to private persons has been *the division of Society into hostile classes*, with large appetites and no dinners at one extreme, and large dinners and no appetites at the other.

"The most striking result of our present system" was, however, subsequently ignored by G. B. S. along with the rest of the consumers. (G. B. S., by the way, can wax eloquent enough about the "rights of the producer" when the product in question happens to be one of his own plays, and the consumers under discussion are

his audiences.) There is one other proposition in this same Manifesto which is also interesting in view of later developments :—

That the established Government has no more right to call itself the State than the smoke of London has to call itself the weather.

But this article is long enough. There is sufficient matter in the two appendices by Shaw (on Fabian Economics and on Guild Socialism) to make another article later. Let me conclude by quoting one sentence of Mr. Pease's with which many non-Fabians will heartily agree :—

There has never been a Fabian orthodoxy, because no-one was in a position to assert what the true faith was.

“ Free thought in Socialism,” in short. Opportunism ; or making a virtue of having no principles.

J. F. HORRABIN.

Outlines of Political Economy

(Concluded.)

STUDY OUTLINE No. 22.—INFLUENCE OF GROWTH OF CAPITAL ON THE WORKING CLASS.—THE COMPOSITION OF CAPITAL.—

Every capital consists of so much *material* and so much *value*. Materially, a capital is composed of so much means of production and so much labour-power. This is its *technical composition*. Considered as value, a capital is composed of so much constant and so much variable capital. This is its *value composition*. The value composition and the technical composition are correlated, the former reflecting the changes which take place in the latter. It is, primarily, with the value composition that we are now concerned.

In every branch of production, a number of individual capitals are invested. These capitals have different compositions, e.g. (1) 80c. + 20v.; (2) 70c. + 30v.; (3) 60c. + 40v.; (4) 35c. + 65v.; (5) 25c. + 75v.. The composition of the total capital invested in any one branch of production is the average of the individual compositions. In the example given, the composition of the total capital is ascertained by dividing the total constant and the total variable by the number of the capitals, viz. $270c. + 230v. \div 5 = 54c. + 46v.$ Finally, *the composition of the total capital of a country, is the average of the averages in all branches of production.* It is the composition of the total social capital that is considered in the following investigation.

If the composition of the total social capital is considered as remaining the same, e.g., that every £100 is divided into 50c. and 50v., then it follows that every increase in the magnitude of the total capital, say an increase from 10 millions to 12 millions, must involve an increase of variable capital and, therefore, an increase in the demand for labour-power. Under these conditions, *the accumulation of capital means an increase of the wage-labouring class.* These are conditions most favourable for the wage-labourer. The growth of capital has, here, only extensive effects upon the labourers, and the relation of dependence is, under such circumstances, most endurable.

The relation of dependence is not set aside. The labourer must still produce surplus-value. Exploitation is still a fact. Only, a larger portion of the value produced returns to the wage-labourer. There are, however, limits to this rise in wages.

TWO CONSEQUENCES OF A RISE IN WAGES.—(1) If the price of labour-power continues to rise, it is because the rise does not interfere with the continued accumulation of capital. (2) The rise in the price of labour-power may, on the other hand, have the result of reducing the rate of accumulation, on account of the increased wages decreasing the gain to be derived by the capitalist, from further extension. Wages will then fall.

It is not, however, the insufficiency of labour-power that makes capital to be in excess, or the excess of labour-power that makes capital insufficient; that wages rise because now there are *too few*, and that now wages fall because there are *too many* labourers. The movements in the mass of labour-power do not precede but *follow* the movements of capital. *It is the excess of capital that makes the labourers too few. It is the insufficiency of capital that makes the labourers too many.* There is here, therefore, no "natural law of population," such as the economists have pretended to see. The relation of the accumulation of capital to the rate of wages, rests upon the relation between the surplus-value turned into capital and the additional labour-power required to work this additional capital, *a relation between the labour for which the labourer is paid and the labour for which he is not paid.*

RELATIVE DECREASE IN VARIABLE CAPITAL WITH THE GROWTH OF CAPITAL.—We have now to consider the case where the accumulation of the total capital does not mean a corresponding increase in the variable capital and, therefore, in the demand for labour power, i.e. where every £100, in the additional 2 millions, (see previous example) does *not* mean £50 invested in variable capital, but where now, a greater portion of each £100 is invested in constant and a lesser portion in variable. A greater mass of the means of production is operated by a proportionately diminished mass of labour. This implies *a growth in the productive power of labour*, a growth that plays a role of primary importance in accumulation.

The increased productivity of labour may be *the cause of an increase in means of production*, e.g., in raw materials or, it may be *the consequence of increased means of production*, e.g., in machinery.

Whether cause or consequence, the technical composition of capital changes, a change which is mirrored in the value composition. The constant part of capital increases. The variable part, in relation to the increase in constant, diminishes. In turn, these changes reflect themselves in the prices of commodities, the element of price which represents means of production increasing, the element which represents labour-power, proportionately diminishing.

Capitalist production presupposes as its starting point, a preliminary or *primitive accumulation*. How this was formed, falls to be considered at another place. Capitalist production, once on its feet, accelerates accumulation and both so act that variable capital diminishes as compared with constant capital.

CONCENTRATION, CENTRALISATION, ETC., IN RELATION TO ACCUMULATION.—The concentration of capital is limited by the amount of social wealth. At the outset, the growth of social wealth is accompanied by a growth in the number of individual capitalists. This necessarily leads to a growth of competition between them, in the various branches of production.

In the battle of competition, *cheapness* is the decisive weapon. Cheapness depends upon the productive power of labour. The latter, in turn, depends upon the scale of production. The capitalist producing on a large scale defeats the small capitalist. The latter is driven out of the field because he cannot find the capital necessary to produce on a larger scale. The big fish swallows the little fish. This is *centralisation of capital*. Every progress in the scale of production raises the minimum amount of capital required by the individual capitalist and this accelerates the growth of centralisation. The growth of centralisation is accompanied by the growth of accumulation. They mutually help each other. The growth of the *credit system* also becomes a powerful lever of centralisation and accumulation. And, for the working class, the result is that a smaller number of labourers turn over a larger mass of means of production. On our railways, for example, one set of trainmen accomplish the work which formerly would have involved the employment of two or three sets of trainmen.

THE INDUSTRIAL RESERVE ARMY.—Accumulation has, at first, only extensive effects upon the working class. Later, intensive effects follow. We have seen that the constant part of capital increases at the expense of the variable part. The progress of accumulation and the centralisation which accompanies it, accelerates the relative diminution of the variable capital and produces a *surplus-labour-population*. Under capitalist production, the actual producers produce the means which, relatively, make themselves more and more superfluous. And this surplus-population, on the other hand, accelerates the accumulation of capital.

The absolute increase of variable capital does not necessarily mean an increased number of labourers. *The demand for labour is not identical with the demand for labourers*. More labour can be supplied even with the same or a decreased number of labourers if the individual labourers has become as productive as were, formerly, two or more labourers.

The more productive the employed army of labour, the harder it works, then the more can the reserve army of labour be increased. Wages fluctuate according to the fluctuations, the expansion and contraction of the reserve.

THE FORMS OF THE RESERVE.—In times of crises, the reserve army assumes an acute form. In times of prolonged dullness, it assumes a chronic form. Aside from these, there are always three forms of the reserve in evidence :—

(1) **The floating surplus-population.** In factories, ironworks, mines, etc., capital now attracts and now repels, a number of labourers. Even if the number of labourers employed increases, the increase is not proportionate to the increased scale of production, i.e. there is a relative decrease. With the extension of industry, therefore, the floating surplus-population grows.

(2) The latent surplus-population. To the extent that capital invades agriculture and revolutionises it, the agricultural population declines absolutely, and a growing part of it is continually on the point of passing into the population of the towns.

(3) The stagnant surplus-population includes those who find only casual and irregular employment. This class "furnishes to capital an inexhaustible reservoir of disposable labour-power" and is characterised by "maximum of working-time and minimum of wages."

At the bottom of the surplus-population are three categories :—

- (1) those fit to work but without work, (2) orphan and pauper children, (3) the physically unfit.

In general, the law can be affirmed, that the industrial reserve army grows with the growth of social wealth and that as labour becomes more productive the lot of the labourer becomes more precarious.

Chapter 25. Volume I.—*Capital*.

STUDY OUTLINE, No. 23.—**PRIMITIVE ACCUMULATION**.—*THE CIRCULAR MOVEMENT*.—The accumulation of capital presupposes surplus-value, but surplus-value, which presupposes the capitalist mode of production, presupposes also an accumulation of capital. To get out of this circle, we are forced to assume an original or primitive accumulation, i.e., an accumulation which was *not the result* of capitalist production but its *starting point*.

ACCORDING TO FICTION.—The spokesmen of capitalist economy represent the original accumulation as having resulted from the *industry and thrift* of the original capitalists.

ACCORDING TO FACT.—The original accumulation is represented by historical fact as having been formed out of the proceeds, not of thrift but of *plunder*, the plunder and brutal enslavement of uncivilised peoples in America, Africa and Asia; the thieving of land and the forcing down of wages at home, as well as by the merciless exploitation of children in mines and factories. The same process that forcibly produced the original funds for capital, produced also the separation of the producers from the means of production, i.e., created a labour-market. The *fundamental fact* in the process of primitive accumulation is to be found in the *forcible expropriation of the peasantry from the soil*.

Chapters 26-33. Volume I. *Capital*.

(Conclusion of Part I.)

W.W.C.

"In the domain of Political Economy, free scientific enquiry meets not merely the same enemies as in all other domains. The peculiar nature of the material it deals with, summons as foes into the field of battle the most violent, mean and malignant passions of the human breast, the Furies of private interest.—MARX.

Doesn't our success or failure concern YOU ?

Correspondence

THE RAILWAY CLERK'S POINT OF VIEW.

Sir,—Mr. Rand evidently does not want us to take his letter seriously, judging by the arguments he puts forward. However, in case some of your readers should fail to appreciate his subtle humour, we will assume for the moment he is opposed to industrial unionism.

He says that although the N. U. R. has rendered inestimable services to the R. C. A., he considers that the latter body has a just claim to all the assistance it can get without being under any obligation to render a *quid pro quo*. There you have a gem of sectionalistic thought. Get all you can and give no return. Does Mr. Rand think the N. U. R. is always going to fight the battle for the clerks? The present officials will not be at Unity House indefinitely; their successors may tell the R. C. A. to settle their grievances with the Railways themselves. How will the R. C. A. get on then? With their present policy they would be helpless even with a membership of 100% eligibles.

Mr. Rand maintains that the R. C. A. is not ready to amalgamate, but how does he know this? I cannot find his name on the Executive, Divisional Councils, or any other body; he is not even a branch secretary. I repeat, how can he be in a position to know the feeling of the R. C. A.? Perhaps he has a nodding acquaintance with the office boy at Headquarters, and hears a few "tips."

Regarding the branch at which they are unable to fill the list of offices:— Two men, both members of the N. U. R. and strong industrial unionists, resigned the posts of secretary and treasurer; no one else would take the vacancies pleading that they would be victimised, and doubting if the R. C. A. could prevent it. The membership of this branch is 327, not 450.

Mr. Rand thinks I might accept the challenge repeated at two successive branch meetings challenging me to demonstrate that even a considerable minority of my own branch is in favour of immediate amalgamation with the N. U. R. Now, sir, these challenges were issued by a garrulous individual who is not even a member of our branch, nor does he occupy any position of note in the Association; therefore, I did not consider it incumbent upon myself to take any notice of such invitations. However, our resolution passed unanimously for the Annual Conference was "Amalgamation to be considered at once;" and last month the branch again unanimously condemned the Executive's policy of federation with other clerical unions.

Space will not allow me to deal with what Mr. Rand terms the successful "lone trail" policy of the R.C.A. I might enquire what has become of the National Movement for 25% increase in railway clerks' salaries which was

Will YOU send us something THIS MONTH ?

pushed off with a flourish of trumpets some time prior to the N. U. R. procuring the War Bonus for us. Did the companies bury the "Movement" in the waste paper basket?

In conclusion, I should be one of the last to suggest that the principal grievance the craft union clerks have against those who support industrial unionism, is that the latter have forgotten more about Trade Unionism than the former ever knew.

(London).

E. M. NEWHOUSE.

(As we published Mr. Rand's letter we have, in fairness to Mr. Newhouse, published his reply. But we would point out to both our correspondents that the question at issue—the question, at all events, in which *Plebs* readers are interested—is the practicability or the desirability of Industrial Unionism, considered in relation to a particular Union; and that while we are anxious that the discussion of this subject should continue, we cannot afford space in the *Plebs* for controversy on purely local and individual matters.—Ed.)

Report

ROCHDALE C. L. C. CLASS.

A fairly successful year has just terminated for the Rochdale Branch of the C. L. C. Nineteen lectures were given during the winter by a local student, Comrade W. Horsfield, on Economics. The average attendance was 17 per lecture, the largest being 29, the smallest 6. The classes began very well, exceptional interest being manifested by the N. U. R. members, but owing to the requirements of the military authorities, interest somewhat diminished towards the close. The last three months have been devoted to the giving of essays by the various students. This also proved very successful. Twelve labour organizations are affiliated, three new societies affiliating in place of three who have withdrawn.

F. HORSFIELD. (Hon. Sec.)

The *Plebs'* Bookshelf

The Workers and Education is the title of a book just published by Allen and Unwin (1/- net.). It is described as "a record of some present-day experiments," but it does not include any reference to the particular "experiment" in which *Plebs* readers are mainly interested. It is all about sundry Settlements, Guest Houses, Lecture Schools and Study Circles organized in connection with the Society of Friends, the Adult School Union, and the W.E.A., and if I were not anxious to avoid any appearance of being merely contemptuous of honest and sincere people, I should describe its ideal as "Mealy-orism." It is full of the old, old phrases about "an all-round enrichment of life," "a broadening of the outlook," "master and man learning to understand each other and side by side seeking for the common good," "a true social order," "the study of those things which make life more abundant and more rich in service," and the need for "a real unity of life . . . springing

up and overcoming the differences of class and sect and condition that menace us to-day, a unity not of any material uniformity but of a common spirit of life animating all." If it were not all so obviously well-meaning, it would be funny. As it is, it is more than a little tragic. In describing the activities of the non-residential Settlement at "Beechcroft," Birkenhead, the author, Mr. F. J. Gillman, mentions Sunday classes for Trade Unionists (A.S.L.E. and F., and N.U.R.—meeting separately) on such subjects as "The Industrial Revolution," and "The Rise of the British Empire"; evidently he feels that something in the nature of an apology is required, for he goes on:—

With so much overtime on the railways, Sunday is the only possible day of meeting, and even a casual sight of a class at work calls to mind the old proverb, "The better the day, the better the deed;" for it would be a great mistake to suppose that the time is occupied in discussing the minutiae of Trade Union activities, or the utilitarian or political issues of industrialism. (Oh, no!) *Rather is one introduced into the realms of idealism.*

And he lingers over a joint Sunday afternoon meeting of N.U.R. men and Enginemen at which

it was wonderful to see the keenness and enjoyment with which such deep subjects were faced as the transcendent need in this country of men of richness of heart and mind, the replacement of social fear (whatever that is) by a "community of friends," the surrendering of self to the common weal, and—central problem of all (!)—the mastery of the soul.

Practical Trade Unionists would doubtless, also, be very greatly helped by the lecturer's "pithy maxim"—

Every Trade Union meeting should be a sacrament, a communion of earnest souls seeking to express the highest within them.

Another Settlement described is that at Lemington-on-Tyne—a district where "the impression left on a visitor is not of squalor, but of drab monotony"; but where "the people, though *imprisoned in a mean environment*, possess the strong, hard-headed characteristics for which Northumbria is famed." (Cf. W.W.C.'s article elsewhere in this issue.) At Lemington economic questions are not directly dealt with. It has been felt that the workers of Lemington are only too familiar from hard experience with such problems, and it would be more helpful to them if their attention could be drawn away, after the hard day's work, to Art, Literature, Philosophy and "whatsoever things are lovely and of good report."

So the hard-headed Tynesiders re-create themselves by means of lectures on Greek Political Theories and Elizabethan Literature, and courses of lessons on Folk Dancing.

Probably, however, in the near future some definite subject such as the History of Trade Unionism will be added, as it is realised that *detailed guidance will be needed* to face the industrial complications which the war will bequeath to the toilers.

But I have quoted enough to show that the book will be useful to C.L.C. propagandists. "The Lord hath delivered them into our hand." As Mr. Arnold Rowntree, M.P., profoundly observes in an Introduction to the book—"Life is so terribly complex." And unless one can come forward with

a rather more convincing solution of our "disquieting problems" than this book offers, then one's reception by intelligent proletarians will be increasingly doubtful.

* * * * *

A good many people must have grown a little tired of Mr. Wells' prophecies, preachings, and proclamations since the war began. He seems to have taken Mr. Kipling's place as the Voice of England; and a shrill voice it is, too. "R.H.C." of the *New Age* has recently been saying of him a few things that badly needed saying—and repeating:—

Mr. Wells, we all know, was before the war a light-minded effervescent sort of talented intellectual who could never give himself the pains to rock-bottom anything. Essentially he was an impressionist, who from a hint could deduce a volume whose value was no more than the hint from which it was drawn. Mr. Wells during the war is the same Mr. Wells, and not all his pro-Allyism will make him what he was not and can never become—a man of balance, weight and measure. "Intellect," he somewhere says, "without faith is the devil." Well, intellect without common sense is Mr. Wells.

* * * * *

A hearty welcome—though it be a little late—to the *Call*, now the official organ of the B.S.P. An "organ of International Socialism" is sorely needed in this country, and I sincerely hope that the *Call* will soon double its size—and more than double its circulation. It is refreshing to find in an English Socialist journal such an article as that on "Small Nationalities," by John Bryan, in the issue of June 8th, or that in the following week's number containing an admirable summary of a discussion between Chas. Dumas, ex-French Socialist deputy, and C. Racovsky, Roumanian delegate to the International Bureau, on "Socialist Principles v. Socialist Interest." The International notes and news are also invaluable; they are really well done, and not, as in certain other cases one could mention, so scrappy as to be almost comic. One wishes that they could be given a better place and bigger type; but that, of course, may be remedied later, when the size of the journal permits. The *Call* is published at 21a, Maiden Lane, Strand, W.C., and its price is 1d. weekly.

* * * * *

In a publisher's list the other day I came across a section headed "Novels of the Play and Cinema;" and among them was the following item—

Melrod Danning's *Peer Gynt* (see the Jury Film.)

I have never before heard of Mr. Melrod Danning's novel—or of Mr. Melrod Danning—though I seem to remember a play by one Ibsen with the same title. But then Ibsen, as everyone knows, is both unreadable and unactable; so that perhaps Mr. Melrod Danning is one of those kind persons who deserve the gratitude of us common people for bringing down the great masterpieces to our intellectual level.

* * * * *

I referred in the February Bookshelf to Mr. Gilbert Cannan's *Three Pretty Men*, described by his publishers as "the first of a series of novels which the author hopes to complete in three or four volumes to form a history of in-

dustrialism in England." Since then I have had the opportunity of reading—and enjoying—the book. But I don't think I should recommend it as an introduction to the study of industrial history. Natural History—in this particular book the Natural History of Scotsmen seeking their fortune in England—is more in Mr. Cannan's line; he is much more interested in persons than in "isms." And one feels at times as though the references to John Bright and the great middle class and Colonial markets were dragged in for the sake of "local colour," rather than because Mr. Cannan was especially interested in the particular period which forms the *background* of the story. (I italicise 'background' purposely.)

J.F.H.

BOOK RECEIVED.

Economics: An Introduction for the General Reader. By Henry Clay, M.A.
(Macmillan, 3/6 net)

* * * * *

Cheap editions of novels worth noting:—Galsworthy's *The Dark Flower* (Heinemann, 1/-); Mrs. Havelock Ellis's *Kit's Woman* (Werner Laurie, 1/-); Arnold Bennett's *Buried Alive* (Nelson, 7d.)

PLEBS' LEAGUE ANNUAL MEET,

SUNDAY AUGUST 6th, at 3 p.m.

13, PENYWERN ROAD, EARLS' COURT,
LONDON, S.W.

AGENDA :

Secretary's Report
Financial Statement
Election of Officials
Other Business

All Members and Sympathisers are requested to notify the Secretary on or before August 3rd, if they intend being present at the "MEET,"

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 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 Eighth Annual Meet will be held in London, (Bank Holiday) August, 1916.

P.O.'s to be forwarded to

J. REYNOLDS, Secretary-Treasurer,

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

The "Plebs" League

(Organ : "PLEBS" MAGAZINE, Published Monthly,
Price 2d.)

Executive and Officers of "Plebs" League :

SECRETARY-TREASURER

J. REYNOLDS

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