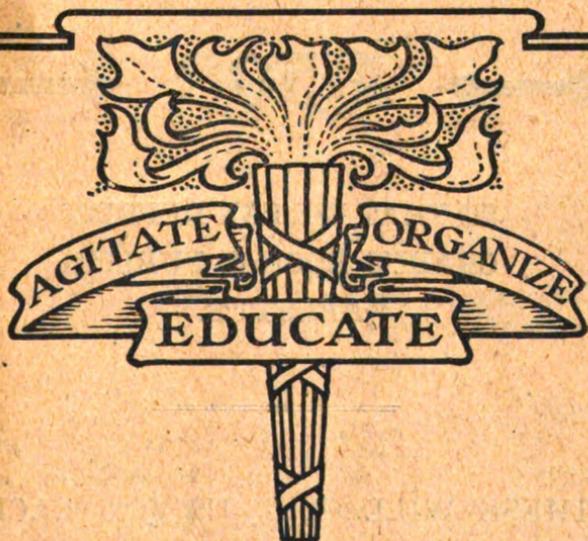


Vol. X., No. 7.

AUGUST 1918.

The
PLEBS
MAGAZINE



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THE PLEBS MAGAZINE

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

Vol. X.

August, 1918.

No. 7

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The Class-Struggle in South Wales

III.

THE MAKING OF MERTHYR.

In the preceding article we endeavoured to convey some adequate idea of the conditions which determined the social and religious life of the Welsh proletariat at the period of its migration from the land to the settlements around the forges and the mines. This movement eastwards, like the Wandering of the Barbarians, was by no means a systematic invasion or an immigration compressed into a few years. It extended over several generations and in the Rhondda and Cymore Valleys it was continuing until quite recently. But the environment into which these late arrivals have come bears no comparison with that which received and grew up with the original proletariat of Merthyr and the Monmouthshire Valleys. The condition of those primitive industrial settlements of the late 18th and early 19th Centuries was that of some backwoods lumber-camp without its romance and with a squalor all its own. It savoured somewhat of the serfdom of the Middle Ages, so utter was the dependence and degradation of the workers and so brutal the cynicism of the masters,

The Commissioners inquiring into the condition of Education in Wales in 1847 ask us to "suppose some 5,000 or 6,000 people collected at the top of a valley, forming a *cul de sac* and nearly cut off from the rest of the world," and tell us that such was the location of the mining villages along the iron outcrop which crosses the head of the seven valleys of the Cynon, Taff, Rhymney, Sirhowy, Ebbw, Tillery, and Afon. Here "the works have increased faster than adequate accommodation could be provided. The houses are all over-crowded. . . . The average of inhabitants is said to be nearly twelve to each house." When the furnaces were built and the mineral workings opened up there were only a few cottages scattered here and there about the "desolate valleys. The capitalists had to provide accommodation and did so grudging the outlay and limiting the expenditure to the barest possible needs. The King's Writ ran to these places, but it had to run on its own legs, unless the landlord or the capitalist had occasion to require its enforcement. There was no constabulary, and there were no mining or factory inspectors, and practically no laws or regulations, whilst such as there were had none but interested parties to administer them.

The spiritual provision made for the area dated from the pre-industrial period, and was utterly inadequate to meet the new conditions. *The Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian*, December 23rd, 1848, in commenting on the fewness of the Chartist outbreaks in Merthyr, remarked:—

Merthyr contains a large proportion of places of voluntary worship, set up from no love of dissent, but because the established Church then cared nothing for the people.

The newspaper thus quoted was Conservative and Anglican, and most virulently reactionary in tone. The Commissioners reported that the village of Rhymney was five miles distant from the parish church, but there the company had set aside a site for a place of worship. It seems also to have promoted a brewery in the following year. Not alone the *Merthyr Guardian*, but a doctor at Pontypool loudly lamented the lack of church-seating accommodation and of religious instruction. "A long experience," he wrote, "has convinced me of the more peaceful and submissive character of the lower orders who are members of the Church of England over those of other sects."—(Report, p. 295.)

The South Wales weekly papers in 1848 were much concerned about the lack of education and the Reports of 1847 were hotly canvassed. The Commissioners had been sent down following upon Chartist agitation, labour unrest and turnpike outrages which filled much of the time between 1839 and 1844 and their remedy, Plebeians will be interested to learn, was education. The Anglicans wanted Anglican training, some of the non-conformists wanted non-sectarian teaching, the employers were building and providing schools in the new mining towns and villages, and the *Merthyr*

Guardian reprinted with approval an article from the *Liverpool Courier* on "Chartism and Education," in which these excellent sentiments find expression:—

Had the State and the superior classes done their duty towards the uninstructed millions, we should never have heard of Chartism except as the abstract proposition of some theorist. . . . Thank God there is and has been for a long time past a movement among the most benevolent and enlightened of the aristocracy, aided by clergy and a large portion of the middle classes who are imbued with the highest motives of statesmanship for the purpose of filling the awful void thus left. . . . Those who feared for their property on the 10th of April may rest assured that education is the best police" (*Merthyr Guardian*, July 29th, 1848).

It was customary to thank not only God but Lady Guest for the benevolences that befell the workers of Dowlais. But unfortunately for the lick-spittles of South Wales scholarship, it is a historic fact that Sir John Guest and his lady did not provide schools until *after* the Chartist outbreak in the hills in 1839.

The means of education for the labouring classes in the large village of Dowlais, with a population of about 12,000, were, in the autumn 1839, very meagre and unsatisfactory. An important improvement made in the spring of 1844" (*Report on Education for Brecon and Monmouth*, p. 34).

The "benevolent efforts" of Lady Guest were described as too recent to "report their success or prophesy their result." When one recalls that the first Chartist outbreak was in the autumn of 1839 and the second in August, 1842, whilst there were disorders at Aberdare and in the Rhymney in 1843, the said "benevolent efforts" of the philanthropic Lady Charlotte and the most public-spirited Sir John Josiah shine with a lustre slightly less luminous than in the customary panegyrics of the glorious, gracious and generous alliance of the aristocrat Bertie and the bourgeois Guest. At Cyfarthfa, Plymouth and Penydarran, no schools were provided, but at Court-y-bella, Sirhowy and Tredegar—to name a number—schools were built, also *after* 1839. The Education Commissioner declared that two-thirds of the expenses of Monmouthshire schools were borne by the workers, that they had to submit to deductions from their wages to pay for instruction and for upkeep, that no account was rendered them, that they had no control, and that there was nothing to prevent the exactions becoming "a source of clandestine profit" to the firms. The Guests and their contemporaries completely neglected education till they became convinced of its urgency as a police measure, put off the cost as much as possible on to the workers, monopolised the control and the credit of fictitious good deeds, paraded their piety for electioneering purposes, boasted that by good business they had "no diminution in the make of iron," and distinguished themselves as scandalous rack-renters and ruthless union-smashers. Now, we will look a little closer at Merthyr and Dowlais in 1844, when they had a popula-

tion of 40,000 persons a number which had increased by more than 15,000 in ten years. The revolution in the methods of production which had followed upon the adoption of Cort's process for puddling iron, of Boulton and Watts' steam engine for draining pits and driving works machinery, and of canals and tramways for transporting materials had completely altered the social life of Glamorgan and Monmouthshire, and rendered obsolete the local government surviving from the 17th and 18th Centuries. The Education Report remarked :—

The gigantic character of these works is a feature not to be passed over. It has rendered the ancient divisions of the country a dead letter. The basis of the old parochial *terrier* was the manor ; the basis of the new one is the works (*Report on Glamorgan*, pp. 12, 13.)

Everywhere the new settlements began as mining villages, consisting of rows and clusters of houses erected, in the first instance, by the companies around their works and built without " the slightest attention to comfort, health, or decency, or any other consideration than that of realizing the largest amount of rent from the smallest amount of outlay." At most places there was but one works, or at most two, and neither was very large, but at Merthyr and Dowlais there were four proprietors and four establishments and about these there spring up four industrial villages to house the employes at Dowlais, Cyfarthfa, Penydarren, and Plymouth.

" Merthyr," said the *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian*, December 16th, 1848, " unfortunately is an appendage to no former nucleus, or rather to one, the institutions of which were wholly inadequate to regulate a large population ; fifty years ago Merthyr was an unconsiderable place. By the older inhabitants it is still called " the village," and its petty affairs were managed, or mismanaged, it mattered little which, by the neighbouring Welsh justice and a parish vestry."

It was, in fact, five villages, one manorial, and four others sheerly and anarchically industrial, and these it was which, running together into a straggling town, became the Merthyr Tydfil of the 19th Century.

It is impossible to reproduce some of the details in Sir H. T. de la Beche's *Report on the Sanitary Condition of Merthyr Tydfil*, printed as an appendix to the *Second Report of Inquiry into State of Large Towns and Populous Districts*, issued in 1845. They are too strong meat even for our candid pages. We will give a few extracts, however :— " Some parts of the town are complete networks of filth, emitting noxious exhalations. . . . During the rapid increase of this town no attention seems to have been paid to the drainage, and the streets and houses have been built at random, as it suited the views of those who speculated in them " (p. 143). The chairman of the Guardians gave evidence that " (The liquid refuse is) thrown into the water-courses " ; of the

deposit of refuse in the beds of the rivers Taff and Morlais ; and after a long drought the stench is almost intolerable in many places." A local lawyer said : " There are no public sewers." The landlord of the Bush Inn informed Sir H. Becke that " the streets are uneven, and retain stagnant waters, as also refuse thrown out of the houses. Many cellars or kitchens are used for slaughtering cattle." A local doctor stated that " no attention has been paid to drainage, except for a few yards, nearly opposite the Church " (p. 144). " Such a thing as a house-drain was never heard of here," and as for dustbins, the answer he gave was " not known here " (p. 144). Cottages, with one room up and one down, 8 ft. by 10 ft., were not uncommon, and for these monthly rents ranged from 6/- in Merthyr to 8/- in Dowlais under the benevolent rule of Lady Charlotte and Sir John Josiah. We learn that wages ranged in 1844 from 17/- a week for colliers to 12/- a week for labourers and 20/- for puddlers and firemen.

Sometimes, according to the *Merthyr Guardian*, persons were lying sixteen in a room, " sleeping there indiscriminately." Water was brought from springs on the mountain side, or lifted from the river, and we are mercilessly told by the Health Commissioner that whilst the Dowlais Company had surveyed for a water supply to obviate their tenants having to go a mile for water in summer they had done no more towards providing it.

Such was the condition of the working class and such the town where the Crawshays, the Guests, and the Thompsons were piling up immense fortunes and laying firm and broad the foundations of family pride and position. As we showed last month, there was practically no middle-class in the new mining villages. At Merthyr, however, things were somewhat different, and this was ascribed to the absence of the truck system, " thanks to the absence of which there had grown up to a considerable extent, a permanent middle-class of tradesmen and shopkeepers between the masters and the men." As a matter of fact, this explanation is not at all accurate. It was the presence of what the Commissioner took to be the effect that was, in reality, the cause of the absence of the truck system. There were four large iron-working establishments, each with iron-mines, collieries, furnaces and foundries. In addition there was a canal, and there were extensive tramways. Overseers, managers, mechanics, pit-sinkers, haulage, and mine-contractors were required at their several departments. Copyholders, like John Thomas, of Magor, ancestor of the late Lord Rhondda, gave up their farms and invested their small capitals in an employment intermediate between the works operator and the wage-worker, and their ranks were swollen by skilled engine-men, miners from Cornwall, and, at a later date, colliery experts from Durham or Northumberland.

The iron-masters had their iron and, sometimes, their coal worked for them by contractors who employed from ten to a

hundred men apiece and, in a town like Merthyr, where Crawshay was at economic war with Hill, and Guest with Homfray and Thompson, and where industrial anarchy and cut-throat competition were rampant, these intermediaries could easily attain a position of some independence and so transform themselves into a middle class. It was customary for them to speculate in house-property, and they either bought company rows or built the alley and court dwellings, which were so often to be the scandals of the future. They also paid their wage-workers at the beer-houses which they kept, and where the employee was expected to spend a part of his earnings or they added to their income by keeping a small shop. It was their presence and their eagerness to go into shop-keeping that enabled the employers of Merthyr to give up the company shop and the task of supplying their workers with the necessaries of life, ordinarily so hard to get in those out-of-the-way hill country settlements. This system of truck, whilst it was transformed into an extra source of income, or an illicit means of reducing wages at the same time that it enabled the masters to keep a hold upon their "free" labourers, was in origin an unavoidable expedient and a social burden that the manufacturing producer of commodities had been unwillingly compelled to shoulder, and which he was ready enough, as soon as he became a great magnate, to forego.

In Merthyr, therefore, by the middle of the 19th Century, the truck system had disappeared except where the "butty" still paid his men over the beer-house counter and a considerable middle-class had grown up, consisting in some measure of the smaller yeoman farmers whose capital had saved them from wage-work, but had not lifted them to industrial mastery, and also of the class of craftsmen and mineral experts. Some of these gave themselves up to trade and others went into the new colliery enterprise which developed about this time. They were the second generation of South Wales capitalists, and became the colliery proprietors of the Rhondda Valleys, the coal shippers of Cardiff, and the commercial and professional class in Merthyr, Aberdare and Pontypridd.

Only a relatively small proportion eventually made themselves economically powerful and politically influential. The great majority never rose out of the shopkeeper status or raised themselves out of their struggling and sordid environment. They became the natural breeding ground of Welsh Liberalism and non-conformity, of middle-class political and religious thought. At the same time, Merthyr drew to itself restless spirits and ardent personalities from many industrial areas, and so became in turn a storm centre of Jacobinism, Chartism, Trade Unionism, and Radicalism, and then of Independent Labour Politics. It has come to have a revolutionary tradition, but because from the first it, more than any other town in the industrial belt, developed a shopkeeper element with all

the characteristics of that element, and because it has economic conditions of production which rarely change and have become, as one might say, set, it tends rather to political activity than to industrial vigour. Its labour ranks must henceforth be swollen politically by recruits from this intermediate class, this lower middle-class, which economic changes are dissolving, and whose interests lie henceforth with the workers, though for some time to come its ideas will continue to be influenced unconsciously by its past.

J. T. WALTON-NEWBOLD.

GRATITUDE.

" Little as I know of Labour."—CAPT. THE HON. FREDERICK GUEST, M.P.

Where the fires of Dowlais glare
Under a smoky canopy,
Poisoning the valley air,
Making earth a purgatory,
Weary toilers spend their days,
Give their strength and give their health,
In the savage furnace blaze,
Heaping up another's wealth.
Turning God's gift of life to gold
For Guest and Keen and Nettlefold.

With the wealth that they got from the workers' toil
The Guests have purchased them power and place,
Have bought them broad acres of English soil,
And rulership over the English race.
All that they have, all they may be,
Jobs and offices, titles and ranks,
Viceroys and Lords of the Treasury,
Labour has made them—and these are their thanks,
To Labour that lifted them over the rest.

" I know little of labour," says Freddie Guest.—W. N. EWER.

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NOTICE.

" News of the Movement," " Bookshelf " and further correspondence are held over until next month, but we wish to call the attention of Plebeians to the following, from Comrade Mrs. Sutton, of Derby:—" With regard to the T.U. Congress the Clarion Club will be open to delegates and those who wish can be made temporary members of same, free, for period of Conference if they will forward names and addresses to the Sec. Also congenial accommodation could be found for Plebs members among Plebs readers, if any who write would prefer it." Do not forget to make full use of this generous offer. Write Sec. Clarion Club, Wardwick, Derby.

The Freedom of Small Nations

We have received from the Lord Mayor of Dublin a copy of Ireland's Appeal to America. It was to have been taken direct in person by the Lord Mayor, but the Foreign Office refused to allow this unless the appeal was first submitted to Lord French. The Lord Mayor refused to comply with this and recourse was made to the American Embassy in London, through which the message was sent to America.

It is a moving document. A resume of history which must make every Britain pause and think. We cannot give it in full for reasons of space, but we feel we have the support of our readers in quoting, as a comment upon this appeal, the following letter from Marx to Kugelmann, written in 1869, recently published in *Irish Opinion*.

"I have more and more arrived at the conviction, though this conviction has not entered the mind of the English working class, that we shall never be able to do anything decisive in England if we do not resolutely separate its policy in all that concerns Ireland from the policy of the dominant classes, so that not only will she be able to make common cause with Ireland, but even take the initiative in dissolving the union of 1800 and replacing it by an independent federative bond, and this aim should be followed, not as a matter of sympathy with Ireland, but as a necessity based on the interests of the English proletariat. . . .

Nevertheless the English people remain in the tow of the dominant classes because they must make common cause with them before Ireland. The first condition of emancipation in this country, the overthrow of the English moneyed oligarchy—remains impossible, for the position cannot be raised much while the oligarchy retains strongly-fortified advance posts in Ireland. But there, as soon as the matter is placed in the hands of the Irish people, so soon will the latter become its own legislator and governor, and the downfall of the English moneyed aristocracy, in great part the same people as the Irish landlords, become infinitely more easy than here in England, for the reason that in Ireland it is not only an economic, but a Nationalist question, because the landlords are not, as in England, the traditional dignitaries and representatives, but oppressors of a Nationality which they hate. But as on the other hand, *it is the English working class who will incontestably throw the decisive weight in the balance of social emancipation*, it is they who must act as a lever. The English Republic, under Cromwell, found its stumbling block in Ireland. Do not let us fall into the same error again. In truth, England never has and never can govern Ireland, while the present relations last other than by the most fearful terror and the most odious repressions."

There are those who, wishing to decry the German Socialists, put forward the plea that no word of dissent came from them while Prussia trod Belgium under its iron heel. Whether this be true or not will be revealed after the war, but let us at least lift our voices in protest against the treatment of Ireland. There are Socialists who sneer at Patriotism—the love of one's own country, unless that country be Wales or Ireland, but if the idea exists and exist it does, that England *could* stand for truth and right and justice, then let us join together to *make* it stand for that.

If, as a writer oddly enough in *The Observer* said recently, "Our patriotism is not a sinister and immoral insistence on the right of our country to predominance, but a faith in the ideal of liberty and life for which this country at present stands: an ideal for which *in one way or another*, martyrs have died from the beginning of the world"—if our patriotism is not immoral, then let us do our utmost to help Ireland. Not wholly as Marx suggests, for love of Ireland, but partly for love of England, and mostly for love of the oppressed of all nationalities.

Materialism v. Metaphysics

The frequency with which Comrades Eden and Cedar Paul, in their views upon history and the universe, "ring the changes" on the terms "economic interpretation," "economic foundations of society," "materialist conception," and "metaphysical view of the universe" has a tendency to convey the impression to the average person that these terms are interchangeable. Beyond merely reiterating that they prefer the economic interpretation to the materialist conception, and stating that the latter is a metaphysical conception, they fail to favour us with the necessary illustrations to demonstrate the superiority of either the economic interpretation over the materialist conception, or that the materialist conception of the universe is metaphysical.

It is essential that we should not confuse the particular with the general, the part with the whole. The "materialist conception" includes the "economic interpretation," but by no means can we say that the latter includes the former. The "materialist conception" is, therefore, the general term which can be the most adequately applied to the *whole* of both social history and the universe. The "economic" is a *particular* term applied to those forces and relations of production which constitute the dynamic responsible for social changes. What about the substratum of which these forces and relations are expressions or manifestations? One can agree with E. & C.P. that by means of an "economic" interpretation it is possible "to convey to the average mind *part* of the essential core of Marxist ideas." But why limit the interpretation to only a "part"? Why not interpret the *whole* "core"? If we admire the Portico, why refuse to enter the Temple?

While, as E. & C.P. state that "we do not find the actual terms 'historical materialism' and 'materialist conception of history' in the preface to Marx's *Critique of Political Economy*," neither do we find there the term "economic interpretation," but there is ample evidence therein in support of the "materialist conception." Even the statement of Bernstein's quoted from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* is more favourable to my contention than that of E. & C.P. Though to quote Bernstein as if he were to be taken as

the "final" authority on Marx is to place too great a tax on our credulity. Intimate friend and literary executor of Marx he may have been, but his article on Marx in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* is anything but a correct interpretation of Marx's theories, as the following excerpt will prove:—"The theory of labour-value as the determining factor of exchange or market value of commodities can with justification be disputed, and is surely no more true than these theories of value based on social demand or utility"!! It is only right to add that Bernstein has abandoned his revisionist views of Marx, see June and July *Plebs*, 1914.

Instead of invoking the authority of Bernstein, it would have been more to the point to have consulted the actual writings of Marx to see what he had to say upon the question. In the author's preface, xxvii. of *Capital*, Marx refers to the *Critique of Political Economy* as "where I discuss the materialistic basis of my method." This should be clear enough to the "average mind" if it goes to the fountain-head to quench its thirst for knowledge. Though, as Marx says, "I pre-suppose, of course, a reader who is willing to learn something new and therefore to think for himself."

In the *Critique* we are told that "legal relations as well as forms of state . . . are rooted in the *material* conditions of life, which are summed up by Hegel under the name of 'civic society,' the anatomy of that civic society is to be sought in political economy." Thus by means of the special science of economics it may be possible to explain the *anatomy* of society. But the history of society does not consist only of the economic anatomy; it includes all that clothes the anatomy as well. History itself is a general term applicable to both social and natural phenomena, and can be subdivided into many parts, *e.g.*, industrial, political, religious, natural history. Reference is often made to the "works of Nature." Is the "economic interpretation" all-sufficient to explain natural history or the works of Nature? If not, how are we to explain "the relations of man with regard to his fellowmen and to nature," which, according to Marx, must be done before the religious reflex of the real world can finally vanish? (*Capital*, Vol. I., p. 51.)

To term materialism as being metaphysical because both may be similar, in so far as it is a question of attempting to explain "What really exists?" is to commit the error of exaggerating the resemblance and ignoring the difference. It is not sufficient to simply say that "metaphysics is the general name given to the vast number of premature attempts to give an answer to 'what really exists.'" What is required is an explanation of the nature and method of these "premature attempts" and why they failed to explain "what really exists," otherwise the "average mind" will not receive much enlightenment as to whether or not materialism and metaphysics are, as E. & C.P. seem to imply, only different terms for one and the same thing. We must not exaggerate the

ends and ignore the means for the end is conditioned in the means.

The metaphysicians failed because they were unable to perceive the relation between "Mind and Matter," "Thought and Being," "Spirit and Substance." They exalted the one and debased the other. In their speculative utterances the metaphysicians try to square the facts in accordance with their preconceived ideas and theories. The ideas and theories of the materialists have to square with the material fact, hence the vital distinction between the two schools. In the language of the economists we might say that:—"The metaphysician is a merchant who speculates boldly, but without the necessary convertible capital which can enable him to meet his engagements. He gives bills, yet has no gold, no commodities to answer for them; these bills are not representative of wealth which exist in any warehouse. Magnificent as his speculations seem, the first obstinate creditor who insists on payment makes him bankrupt." On the other hand, the materialist, in whatever branch of business he may be specially engaged, can always meet all his engagements, and pay twenty shillings in the pound. therefore, unlike the metaphysician, he is in no danger of being made a bankrupt.

The reference to "F. A. Lange, the historian of materialism (and a socialist) to boot), maintaining that 'Neither materialism nor any other metaphysical system has a valid claim to ultimate truth,'" provokes a smile when we consider that his history of materialism was published in Berlin in 1866. To paraphrase Marx we can say:—"There has been a history of materialism, but since 1866 there has not been any." The materialism with which Lange deals is the scholastic materialism which culminated in the mechanical materialism of the French school in the 18th Century. The "materialist conception" of Marx abolishes the quest for "ultimate" truths. It recognises that truth is relative—the only absolute truth is the Universe. All our knowledge consists of the classification and arrangement of our experiences, through observation, experiment and verification of the *relative* parts of the universe. Thought itself is only a form of work and like all forms of work requires some material, either natural or social, upon which to work. Our ideas (mental pictures) cannot be separated from material objects any more than the wind can be separated from the air. The existence of the mind is possible only through the natural combination with other materials. Thus I maintain that, if we are to have a concept that will thoroughly and adequately express the whole content of natural and social phenomena then the "materialist conception" is the best.

In conclusion, may I ask E. & C.P. "If it is metaphysical to require an explanation of *all* the facts of the Universe, what facts must be left unexplained so as to avoid the reproach of being metaphysical?"

J.R.

A WAGE-SLAVE TO HIS WIFE.

You hear my step at the gate,
 My sigh as I rest within ;
 You know that I, toil all day,
 Year out, year in.

I see your face in the light,
 So lined and worn and thin ;
 I know that you weep at night,
 Year out, year in.

They hear my step on the stairs,
 They laugh as I call within
 There only I leave my cares,
 Year out, year in. . . .

And when I shall have to go
 From a pitiless world of sin,
 Shall *they* have to suffer so,
 Year out, year in ?

CAMILLA STEWART.

Correspondence

SUPPLY AND DEMAND, ETC.

SIR,—In the April *Plebs* I raised the question whether or not it was good for Marxist teachers to use the phrase "supply and demand," and suggested that "supply against supply" would be better for our purpose. This was the only point raised for discussion. All other points were merely subsidiary for the purpose in view. The question is exclusively concerned with terminology as a point in teaching ; it arises out of the deviations of price from value and reaches down to the causes of price fluctuations. It is therefore not concerned with the *nature* of economic categories (value, price, etc.), but takes them as understood in the Marxian sense, and uses them as a foundation.

My question was not addressed to beginners, but rather to teachers who have to deal with beginners. From the nature of the inquiry it should be evident that opinions concerning such a question could only be satisfactorily formed by fairly advanced Marxist students, and I should be very pleased to read any such opinions in the *Plebs*.

But, aside from the above, will you please let me know what's wrong with W. G. Cove ? Has he had a Marxian nightmare, and is it serious ?—Of course, the word "labour" as used by me in relation to value (in the Marxian sense) *must* mean the simple, abstract, social human labour embodied in commodities (the substance), and likewise the word "quantity" used in the same relationship *must* mean the quantity that is socially necessary (the magnitude) ; measured by any kind of clock that will measure "weeks, days and hours." What else *could* these two words mean, used as they were

in my April letter, by one Marxist to another, and through such a publication as the *Plebs*? Also, why should any intelligent person want me to elaborate the obvious when, as in this case, it does not form the chief subject of discussion, and we are asked to bear in mind that space is tight?

Again, value *must* be expressed in (by or through) price, because it isn't expressed in anything else. But just because of this, the phrase cannot be understood in any but a social sense, that is, as referring to the totality of prices. Of course, it may be *misunderstood*. If it *could* be understood in the sense of the value of a commodity being expressed in the price paid for that commodity, how *could* I ask a question that arises wholly and solely out of the *difference* between price and value? Will Cove's brain not take him as far as the conception of a "theoretical" or abstract price which equals abstract value and from which the actual price may be conceived as a deviation? If it won't, might I beg to tell him that this is only another way of speaking of the deviation of price from value. If it will, why does he attack on this point?

Finally, in the letter that seems to have been a red rag to our friend, social labour time is mentioned quite often enough for anybody with half the wit of a first year Marxian student to understand "What labour, and how?" The rest of Mr. Cove's remarks are not worth an answer of any sort, so I can't thank him for his letter because I have got nothing new out of it. Now I do hope that W.G.C. won't force me to ask for good space in the *Plebs* to answer any more of such stuff; but, should he really be spoiling for a fight, then, as sure as I have a reputation for kindness, I won't see him left lamenting, and if he likes he may write to me privately. If he does I think he will find me fairly alive to the complex social phenomena that appears to give him delight.

Yours faithfully, FRED CASEY.

CONFUSION OF TERMS AND IDEAS.

SIR,—This malady is one which requires careful diagnosis and vigorous treatment. Your correspondent, F. Casey, in his letter, "Market Prices, Supply and Demand, Supply against Supply," furnishes evidence to prove that he is suffering from the above disease.

The paradoxical position arrived at—

I. If Labour determines Value, then Supply and Demand cannot; or II. If Supply and Demand determine value then Labour cannot. F. Casey seeks to explain simply by an alteration of words, see last paragraph in his letter—"substitute Supply against Supply" for the words Supply and Demand," and Hey!! Presto! The trick is done.

To F.C. "Supply and Demand" is only a convenient phrase to use in discussion, the same applies to "Supply against Supply," but nothing is proven except there has been a waste of time!

For purposes of correct analysis terms are more than "convenient phrases." They are an actual necessity to enable us to obtain correct understanding of the object under observation.

"There may be no serious reason for the use of such a term as demand" equally so may the use of the words "supply against supply" be questioned.

Let us walk with F.C. into his boot-stores:—

Man enters boot-stores : " I request a pair of boots."

Owner replies : " 15s. please." The man is void of £ s. d., due to some cause. The boots to him are an urgent necessity, so he resolves to appeal on sentimental grounds to the owner.

The owner is a disciple of Jay^oGould, who said, " There's no damned sentiment about business." Final result !—No transaction.

Admitting this instance as being sound argument. Well, " Jevons and his Sun Spots " is perfectly rational reasoning !

Take the General Rule—Business minus Sentiment.

Man enter's shop. Purchases boots, 15s. A slight examination will show

Man demands boots.

Owner supplies boots.

Owner demands money.

Man supplies money.

This transaction is similar to all Sales and Purchases. In the strict economic sense the transaction—sale and purchase—is a relation between Commodity on one hand and Money on the other, the respective owners meeting as such.

F.C. creates confusion with his discovery, " Supply against Supply." With equal justice it could be said, " The relation between traders is, in essence, not a relation between supply and demand, or supply against supply, as such, but between demand and demand. Here we have confusion worse confounded through a further application of F.C.'s logic.

" Supply against Supply. " Demand against Demand," as such, is tautology and pure nonsense.

Further on he says : " When the producers of one class of commodities have supplied more than the rest of society is willing to buy by means of things it can supply." Here he divides society into two—Producers and Purchasers.

The Producer sells his product at a profit whether Price, due to fluctuation, is above or below Value.

" *Much* is supplied against *little*," therefore Prices tend to depreciate below Value. Supply exceeds demand ! Shortly, however, a Revolution is accomplished ; the situation is inverted. The Producer is pictured as being exploited by the hitherto Purchaser.

The Producer works short time to reduce output. The rest of society works full or " maybe overtime " in order to increase output. Formerly society was composed of Producers and Purchasers ; now all are Purchasers, for what purpose is beyond my comprehension. Maybe I am at fault.

But the kernel of the question is in the following statement :—" *Deviations from real price are caused by Supply and Demand being unequal*," says F.C.

This is a bald and a purely formal statement. The obvious conclusion is that *real price*, and therefore *value*, is determined by the higgling of the market. Consequently we arrive at the conclusion of the utilitarian and vulgar economists—*e.g.*, that value is determined outside of production by some other property than Labour.

To follow that argument one is precluded at the present moment. " Go as you please, and the Devil take the hindmost," is the motto of all Capitalists. The object of each is to produce as cheap as he can, and sell as fast and as many commodities as he can, quite regardless of the effects upon society's welfare.

Each individual is ignorant of his neighbour's doings, of society's requirements. Those with the best advantages, high technique, proximity to sea coast, or the market, and better organization, etc., stand the chance of most success in the pace of competition. Production proceeds blindly. Consumption lags behind. The inevitable arrives: slump on trade, over-production, crises, markets glutted, society is panic-struck. Violent competition ensues. Prices tumble down. Those with the advantages sell at lowest possible figure, thereby crushing out their weaker brethren. Gradually bad times pass away; things become normal; another period of prosperity, a boom in trade. Thus society proceeds in recurring cycles, alternating periods of inflation and depression, high prices to low prices. Can this be explained by the law of Supply and Demand? Can the violent fluctuations in market prices, the deviations from real price, be explained by the law of "Supply against Supply"? Certainly not! No Marxist worthy of the name will venture anything so ridiculous.

Supply and Demand, in the economic sense, is accidental, not a stable condition of things—to change its name does not alter its nature. Strictly speaking, it is no economic category. The deviations, fluctuations of market prices, the law of Supply and Demand, the absurdity, "Supply against Supply," can only be understood when we take away the surface and expose and examine the inner workings of Capitalism and its contradictions.

Yours fraternally, ALEX EVANS.

SIR,—In reference to your correspondent, F. Casey, may I suggest the following:—

Relative form of value.	"Price" form of value	Equivalent form of value.
One pair of boots.	15s.	84.0762 grs. pure gold.

A quantity of labour possessing the quality of bootmaking is expressed relatively in price form without the commodity, boots, changing hands at all.

England loaned the Czar's government armoured cars, guns, ammunition, bullion, etc., the values of which are expressed in price form by arabic characters thus—£600,000,000—that the expression of relative value is one thing and the exchange of commodities another is shown by Mr. Bonar Law voicing the sentiments of an Imperialist government, and saying that he "intends to treat it as a recoverable quantity."

Are value and price synonymous terms? No! value is quality and quantity, owing to the two-fold character of labour power, something material and concrete, boots, labour power crystallised in leather. Price is purely an idea of quantity, a relation of quantity is something else. Qualities cannot be measured; quantities and number stand in a certain ratio to one another, but in order to express the ratio in any particular case, quantities must be brought to the same common denominator. Before electricity, gas, labour-power can become commodities, and, consequently, have their values expressed relatively; they must be commensurable. Because labour determines value, time is the measure of value; price is the measure of value inherent in commodities,

Bourgeois economy thinks the price idea is absolute without beginning or end, unlimited by any conditions. The Marxist knows it to be relative to capitalist production.

Yours, etc. E. R. ROBINSON.

SIR,—As one who also had a little training in bourgeois economics before tackling Marx, may I, in answer to Fred Casey, give the version I have gathered of how exchange-value expresses itself in price.

The first point, on which both orthodox and Marxism economists seem to agree, is that supply and demand determine price. The demand meant here is *effective* demand, *i.e.*, with a backing of hard cash, and not the other kind, without this backing, beloved of social reformers, and of which we are all well aware.

Except in a few exceptional cases supply and demand always balance, and it is price that balances them. A thousand buyers are willing to give 5s. for an article ; if a thousand are supplied, the price will be 5s. ; if two thousand are supplied the price may fall to 2s. 6d., or whatever the two thousand are willing to give without going without the article. But for any considerable period price ranges around *cost of production*. This consists of expenses of production (labour, machinery, etc.), plus average rate of profits, which is surplus-value shared out amongst the capitalists. If the price at any time is above cost of production, it gives more than average rate of profit, and then capital flows into this particular industry. If it is cotton, then the output of cotton is increased and prices fall ; if the rate of profit is below the average then capital flows to where it can get a better return, the output falls and prices rise.

But even this does not fully explain prices. In one industry a larger amount of capital per labourer may be required than in another. Iron and steel production may require £500 capital to employ one man, where the farmer may only need £100. The averaging of the rate of profit would then require prices to be a little over value in iron and steel, and under value in the farmer's products. Fred Casey's formula should therefore be

Supply and Demand at any given time, } Determines price.
But cost of production in the long run }

Cost of production expresses necessary value and surplus-value. Therefore, Price is the expression of a quantity of Labour or Value in gold.

Yours, &c., L. BENSON.

SUPPLY AND DEMAND OR SUPPLY AGAINST SUPPLY.

DEAR COMRADE,—Will you please allow another new beginner to attempt to unravel the proposition put up by friend Casey. His definitions of what a Marxist teacher says are new to me. The correct term for the first line is that the quantity of socially necessary labour embodied in the commodities determines its value. Price is the monetary expression of exchange value, therefore Labour does not determine price, as the labourer's price for his

commodity, labour power, bears no relation to the values created, but what he, as a live, efficient wealth producer costs to maintain and reproduce. Price, the exchange value fluctuates round about cost of production, supply and demand causing the variations. Neither the capitalist nor the labourer can deliver the goods for very long below cost of production, but the capitalist has the advantage in this respect as he can cease production, *i.e.* to say, he can close down, whereas the labourer cannot cease living; out of this arises the fact that the working class sell their commodity at the bare cost of production, not to mention reproduction. In that, on the average, an article exchanges for that of another containing an equal amount of socially necessary labour embodied, it may be said that supply equals supply, but owing to the inequality of quantities arising out of an unorganized state of production, the ratio of exchange varies considerably, sometimes above and then below. As, however, modern methods of production cannot of their very size be conducted by barter, but exercised through a medium of imperishable exchange, in neither cases does or can the worker figure in the deal. Whether his employer exchanges the produce for coin or contra makes no difference. That his employer is enabled to realise this exchange value ceasing to produce when his "supply" does not exchange favourably with other supplies, renders him, the worker, a negligible factor. He cannot participate in the favourable conditions, and must in that of the adverse, by "standing down" while the market readjusts itself. To ensure economic fine weather the capitalist in some cases organize their production by monopoly and form a combine, whereby favourable exchange winds always blow, but the worker does not share in the even stream of supply operating continually above cost of production.

If society chooses to recognise a medium of exchange, having a demand, owing to the facility with which it may be converted into any other form, the legal title of possession of the said medium may eventually be determined by the amount of socially necessary labour given in exchange, and not by the arbitrary method now prevailing. This can only be done by the working class stepping out of their commodity status by the abolition of wage slavery.

Social development has rendered the capitalist class socially unnecessary. Their directive ability is all a myth, and the so-called reward of abstinence a low form of usury.

F. L. RMINGTON.

SIR,—In the statement, "labour determines price," I have attempted to express in a few words what would take a capable Marxist teacher as many hours to explain thoroughly. Such a statement, even though accurate, is ambiguous, but such ambiguity is (*re* space) unavoidable. As most of your correspondents' confusion arises from this ambiguity, I will now try to be more explicit by being more complex.

Refer to *Capital*, Vol. III., Chap. X., "Market Prices and Market Values, etc."

In a given industry there will be some producers with up-to-date methods taking little time *per commodity* (1); others with methods less so (2); and still others less so again (3). If the threes balance the ones, the market value

(not price) of commodities in this industry is determined by length of time taken by the twos, *i.e.*, the average. If the threes outbalance the ones, the average time and therefore market value, will be higher than (2); but if the ones outbalance the threes, the average time, and likewise market value, will be lower than two. When the commodities come on the market they will all sell at the same price, which means that part of the labour actually put into the commodities produced by (3), passes over through the medium of money in the hiatus of circulation, and forms part of the value of the commodities by (1). Marx calls this a "surplus profit" (p. 210), realised by (1). This process is the socialising of the labour in this industry.

Now if we treat this social labour or market value in this industry as being individual in respect to other industries, we see that the further socialising as between industries cannot take place in the same way because of the different commodities having different "specific values" (p. 220) (*e.g.*, £1,000 might buy only one machine, but 1,000 watches), and by the fact that engineering requires a greater proportion of machinery to human labour than does, say, baking. This means that much value is produced in the bakery and relatively little in the engine shop. But the engineer will not invest unless he gets at least an average rate of profit, irrespective of whether his capital takes the form of machinery or not; and since society requires engines, it must pay him a price that gives him this rate of profit. Therefore the labour actually put in the bakery passes over through the medium of money, as before, and forms part of the value of engines. This process socialises the different market values or industry labours, into one social value or social labour. This social labour is what it costs society to satisfy its requirements, and when this "cost of production" is expressed in terms of gold we get the "price of production around which the daily market prices fluctuate" (p. 211).

In what form are society's requirements manifested? "That part of society, to which the division of labour assigns the task of employing its labour in the production of the desired article, must be given an equivalent for it by other social labour incorporated in articles which it wants" (p. 220). Society's requirements are expressed by purchasing, and, according to Marx, one part of society makes its purchases from another part, by supplying commodities which embody social labour and getting other commodities in return. What else can this be but supply against supply?

So, if the supply of engines is equal to what society requires, the price will equal the price of production. If the supply is greater, society gives little and the engineer gives much. In other words, the price of each engine is below the ideal price of production. It is a market price which, for the time, being is below the normal social value of engines. When supplies of products are ill balanced, it is because supplies of labour are ill-balanced; therefore that labour determines price and is expressed through the ever-varying market prices, can be satisfactorily explained from this basis alone.

To say that the connection between supplies is accidental doesn't do away with the connection. And to introduce money gets no different result be-

cause, from the moment the gold enters circulation, "it always represents the realised price of some commodity" (Vol. I., p. 82). It is only social labour in the independent form of value.

A. Evans' letter is too long and too rambling to be answered in the *Plebs*. I agree with him concerning the importance of terms. Indeed that is why I opened this discussion. His *reductio ad absurdum*, is absurd. All the same, I shall be pleased to answer in detail if he will send his address.

E. R. Robinson gives two price forms, one in 22 carat (15/- or $\frac{3}{4}$ of £1), the other in 24 carat (pure gold), but these have nothing to do with this discussion. The quality of the labour that forms value is the *common* quality of its being human; the *special* quality of bootmaking has nothing to do with it. England *supplied* guns, etc.; Mr. Law intends somebody to *supply* something in return—that's all right. Labour power is not crystallised in leather; he ~~means~~ labour. Anyhow, 'the Marxist knows it (price) to be relative to capitalist production.' So, being a question of production, may be it's a question of "supply against supply." I think that at the bottom he is really on my side, though I can't quite tell.

L. Benson says, "The output of cotton is increased and prices fall . . . the output falls and prices rise." Now the price can't come from nowhere; it is nothing else but the monetary expression of the value of other commodities that were previously supplied to society; *per contra* or otherwise, of course, makes no difference. He further says, "Cost of production, *in the long run*, determines price (italics mine). Since there is no beginning or end to this thing, cost of production must be doing it *all the time*; so why drag in "demand" to account for what is already explained? Cost of production is social necessary labour embodied in commodities, so, at the bottom, labour determines price.

F. L. Rimington gets the best possible point against me when he, after admitting the main contention, "In that, on the average . . . supply equals supply, but . . . inequality of quantities (causes) the ratio of exchange (to) vary," refers to "the arbitrary method now prevailing." Of course it is true that the connection between supply and supply takes place accidentally (this by the way is the *only* point of view from which demand may be said to differ from supply), but my point is that though the conflict of supplies is accidental, *it is still a conflict of supplies*.

After reading what your correspondents say, I still think that "supply against supply" more accurately describes the principle at work in governing prices, than does "supply and demand."

Thanks very much for use of the Magazine.

Yours fraternally, FRED CASEY.

56 BOLTON STREET, BURY, LANCs.

June 7th, 1918.

We give Mr. Casey's address so that teachers and students who wish to do so may continue the argument as he suggests. Our space is much too limited to continue this discussion.—ED.)

RALLY TO HELP THE S.L.P.

We had hoped to publish a full account of the police raid on the S.L. Press, but our space is limited and most Plebeians will be in possession of the facts.

An essential part of modern warfare are the raids upon enemy trenches. You go out in small but enthusiastic bands and play hell ! It isn't so costly as a frontal attack, but it makes all the line " jumpy." That kind of warfare has now commenced on the home front. Comrades, the S.L.P. is one of our main outposts ; if the enemy take it then they outflank a good portion of our movement. Shall we let them ? If you agree that we must hold every position then send cash at once to the S.L.P. It is not that the S.L.P. care anything for the police, hot water is their natural element, but that their machinery has been taken away and it will have to be replaced. Years of toil built up the press, but since the past is past we must look to the future. It is the future that is jeopardised. Our classes need the press, and the press needs your money.

A week after the press was dismantled our comrades, James Stewart and Julia Kaslovsky were arrested (under D.O.R.A.) for the publication of " The Young Rebel." Comrade Stewart has worked for the C.L.C. and the Plebs League for years and is known for his efforts to link up the Socialist Sunday Schools with the Labour College. A fund has been started for his defence. Send to Mrs. Stewart, 15 Woodbine Avenue, Wallsend.

Our comrades have all the grit and endurance that is necessary in the fight. What they need is ammunition and you can supply it. If you have no money send for a collecting sheet and collect other people's money ! But do something quickly, because the position is critical. REMEMBER 50 RENFREW STREET, GLASGOW, OUTPOST No. 1, MUST NOT GO DOWN.

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Reviews

Papers for the Present. Complete First Series and part of Second and Third. (6d. each). Headley Bros.

These papers, while in places inclined to be mystical, are thought provoking. They state what men like William Morris have been saying for a long while. In the first papers, the banker and the financier are exposed for using public credit for private profits as if they were the only section of the capitalist class which appropriates to their individual selves what is socially created, and as if the control of credit were something more evil and entirely unconnected with the control of the railways, land, workshops and machinery. That the financier is of great importance both in wiping out smaller businesses internally, tempting greedy investors of "the new middle-class," bullying or bribing feeble or corrupt governments in order to obtain "spheres of influence" and "concessions" and raw materials, we agree. But this new development is but the modern phase of the old evil and points to the foretold concentration of all real power in the hands of a few and the accelerating of "the iron and steeling" of the world. Boudin, in his *Theoretical System*, (Chap. VIII.), written in 1906, already had perceived "the skillful manipulator of the rate of interest" and the immense power wielded by little "coterie of banker financiers who had established themselves in each of the great metropolitan capitals." Then we are shown how credit might be utilised if the power of those "financial oligarchies" (Revisionists, please note the "*oligos*") was used for other purposes—if Midas became Midas no longer. Credit, or anticipation of goods or services to be produced or rendered, cannot, however, be separated from ownership or power over the means whereby these goods and services come into being. And every word against the use of credit for profit applies also against similar use of the tools. Banking does not stand by itself. Long ago we were told by Hobson that "The triangle of forces in American capitalism represented by railroad amalgamations, industrial trusts and banking corporations tends more and more to assume the shape of a purely financial power; a mass of credit directed to any point of the economic system where it is required to force an industrial combination, to finance a railway or mining coup or to crush some threatened invasion upon one of its spheres of influence." The writers lack a clear recognition of what determines exchange value or its relation to price.

The two first are the most practical; the others often soar up away from present realities because they do not show us any dynamic by which "the spirit creature" will be given a chance. They neglect to point out that we can never combine mental and manual labour and collectively find high expression in art, craftsmanship and citizenship until a world-wide Renaissance has come and the majority of men are no longer commodities as they are to-day. It is well that individuals shall have an Alasdair Geddes education—without its ending—to show what can, and will be, done, but how Utopian and faraway it must read to many of those teachers who have to struggle with classes of seventy. One of the papers suggests that adults need the re-education given to soldiers suffering from shell-shock. Comte's division

of the people from the chiefs, the intellectuals, and " emotionals " is adopted in surveying the past and the future while a blending of the four in the future is more probable. But perhaps this—like the references to Germany—is a trace of " the shell shock " of the present still affecting the author. Summed up in shorter, less ambiguous, form they say that : Creative genius is damned, the top and bottom dogs and society itself are ill at ease ; book learning is divorced from life ; specialisation and division of labour both in knowledge, in countries, and men, have an immeasurable narrowing effect ; centralisation can become top-heavy, and direct action is necessary to a full life. These papers confirm the belief that the present system offends not only our physical senses but our mental, moral and aesthetic tastes too—so on with the fight.

M.S.

Central Africa and the League of Nations. By R. C. Hawkin, Fabian Tract, No. 186. Price 2d.

At long last the Fabian Society have done something intensely dramatic and really useful, while the cost is within reach of the Plebian who has not received the 12½ per cent. to keep him from talking about Peace by Negotiation. The latter rude remark is to remind us that there is a political aspect of the wage question ! I do not know whether the author is a Marxian, but he who reads will not complain of this brilliant interpretation of the Materialist Conception, which should be read with E. D. Morel's eloquent exposure of imperialism, *Africa and the Peace of Europe*. We are thrown back on the origins of International Sanction, vide the 14th chapter of *Genesis*, where Melchizedek held " that all property belongs to an International God." Later imperial Rome objected, and devised another explanation for its right of conquest. The Reformation left us where we were and gave its blessing to the first capitalist forms of Foreign Investments. We come to the Berlin Conference, where moral courage went into bankruptcy and Bismarck became angry with the Monroe Doctrine, which confined the American capitalist to his own shores. In the twilight of the last century Imperialism gained the saddle, and we see some of the effective beginnings of the present war. On March 11th, 1899, Rhodes and the Kaiser had a duel at Potsdam, and both won the fight. We see Capitalism preparing its present war to make the world safe for democracy and Liebknecht getting a foretaste of his present punishment. August, 1914, finds all the public agreements in the melting-pot, and hardly is the first shot fired when the secret process begins again. Lloyd George accepts *our* war aims, and then sends a message from Versailles. As a remedy for the African problem we are offered the League of Nations, and certainly Hawkin gives a summary of the position which makes one hopeful. They have all sinned, and it would appear as if they were now all repentant but we, as Plebeians, have yet to set our minds to the problem of developing a proletarian international consciousness, for even Socialism will have its psychological machinery. Yes, it is a great pamphlet, but ought it not to be suppressed ?

B. SKENE MACKAY.

1920—*Dips into the Near Future*. By Lucian. 2s. Headley Bros., Kingsway, W.C.

There are many kinds of books, and this is the kind that one makes a mental note of and determines to give as a present for birthday or Christmas to one's friends. It is a series of eight satirical essays on the future possibilities of civil freedom if the war continues till 1920. The great joke is that though the essays were only written last year, already they are beginning to read (except for the fact that they are good English) like a leading article in one of the more rabid of the yellow press!

They are brilliantly written, delightful in their easy satire, and sound in their criticism of the tendency, or at least the logical outcome, of much of the win-the-war talk.

The chapter headings should provoke interest—I. *The Aged Service Act* (getting rid of the old people); II. *Reprisals in 1920* (the logic of revenge); III. *The Laboratory of War Truth* (we recommend this for study to the Ministry of Information); IV. *D.O.R.A. in 1920* (Dora given her head); V. *The Military Service (Females) Act, 1920* (making sure of the birth-rate); VI. *War Bondage* (capitalism given its head); VII. *War Aims in 1920* (a very sliding scale!), and VIII. *The New Jerusalem* (an amusing skit on capturing the Holy Land and the New Crusaders). It is quite the best "light" production since the war.

The Socialist Review for July-September (1/- I.L.P., 9 Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, E.C., 4) contains four articles of special interest to Plebeians. "Reconstruction in Education," a rather naive treatment of elementary education, by M. E. Coates; "Confessions of a Capitalist," informative and useful for reference; "The Bolsheviks and the Marxians," by H. Weber, translated from *Kumpf*, wherein Herr Weber has a hard job to keep his balance on the fence about Bolshevism, and is left leaning over towards the opposite side, and "Owenism in Scotland," by Janet Hodge, specially interesting for its final conclusions.

The Necessity of Poetry. (An address given to the Tredegar and District Co-operative Society. Uniform with an address given to the Swindon W.E.A., already issued). A meandering dissertation by Robert Bridges. Considering the scarcity of paper it is a scandal that so much good money has been wasted on this production. It is printed beautifully on good paper by the Clarendon Press, Oxford. Whatever our opinion about the necessity of poetry, at least, we contend that it is not at all necessary to issue a pamphlet in this get-up while good propaganda literature languishes for want of money to publish it!

The Best of Both Worlds. Poems of spirit and sense. By Henry Vaughan 1621-1695, and Andrew Marvell, 1621-1678. Published by *The Herald*, Messrs. G. Allen & Unwin, 3/-.⁷ Here is a beautiful collection of poems selected by Francis Meynell. We suggest to the W.E.A. and the Co-Operative Society that, if they feel they *must* spend money, they should produce good poetry such as this, instead of perpetuating boring discourses in a dull manner (even by the Poet Laureate).

Young Heaven. By Miles Malleon. Printed by the Pelican Press. G. Allen & Unwin, 3/6. In the halcyon days before the deluge of the war, when plays were produced at the C.L.C., we played almost exclusively Irish plays because, alas! England had not many good one-act plays for us to offer. Miles Malleon is rapidly supplying this need of short, easily-acted plays. Socialist Dramatic Societies should be playing them. They are full of ideas and good propoganda. This little volume contains "A Man of Ideas," and "Young Heaven," by Miles Malleon; "Michael," a lovely adaptation of Tolstoy's "What Men Live By," and "The Artist," a one-act play by Anton Tchekov. The binding and printing caused pangs of regret that we are not yet wealthy enough to turn out the right stuff well printed. The Pelican Press is doing in printing what we should like the *Plebs* Press to do.

The Helping Hand. By the same press and publisher, 2/-, is a series of sermons by Gerald Gould, described as "an essay in Philosophy and Religion for the unhappy."

The Next Step in Social and Industrial Reconstruction, "being papers prepared for meetings of the Committee on War and the social order (appointed by London Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends)," gives a very good little article, "Quakerism and Capitalism," by Walton Newbold, which would make an excellent four-page leaflet to be administered as an antidote in any case of attack by "Reconstructionitis."

The Shops Stewards and Workers Committee Movement. A pamphlet by Tom Dingley. A plea for unity and a description of the Shop Stewards' movement as it affects Coventry. 2d. Coventry, S.S., and Workers' Committee.

Karl Marx: The Man and His Work. By Karl Dannenberg, (Radical Rev. Pub. Association, New York (30 cents).

Reform or Revolution, or Socialism and Socialist Politics (same author and publisher) (10 cents).

Both brilliant additions to Marx literature. The first gives three lectures on Marx and an outline for the study of Marxism, finishing up by two lectures on the constructive elements of Socialism. We could sell both these pamphlets if we could get them across. We have a growing demand for this kind of pamphlet — working out Marxian theories in practice and not merely "beating around." American Marxism is to be congratulated on the production of these pamphlets, both in printing matter and the material with which they deal.

The Workers' Dreadnought

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Shall the Plebs continue to Exist?

DEAR COMRADE,—

You will read in the Magazine a Report of the work we have been able to do during the past year. You will notice that there is in the financial statement no charge for office-rent, or salaries, and this is because up to November, 1917, all our work has been done voluntarily. The success of our organization was the only reward that was ever looked for by those comrades who have devoted their time to, and slowly built up, our Movement. During the last four years the work of the League and Magazine has increased so much that it is now impossible for anyone to carry it on in their spare time. You will notice in the Report that in March our Editor was sent abroad on Active Service, so that the entire work of carrying on the Magazine and Publications Department fell upon the shoulders of the Sec.-Treas. It is hardly necessary to state that *this entails whole-time work of an arduous nature*, and a number of friends guaranteed that a salary should be paid in order that the work could be done until the Annual Meeting.

The following resolution was passed at the Meet :—“ That this Meeting calls upon the E.C. to start an Organizing Fund for the purpose of paying a salary to the Secretary,” for it was felt that the League, as a whole (and possibly readers of the Magazine) would like to show their appreciation of the work already done by contributing to such a Fund. The work to be done is not only a great responsibility but entails the expenditure of many hours a day. The Plebs must be kept growing, and without some such Fund we can no longer exist.

The E.C. suggest that members (and friends) try to guarantee a small sum weekly, either individually or in groups, and so make the Fund a charge on the whole Organization. **REGULAR CONTRIBUTIONS**, however small, will be the most useful, but any sum will be welcome.

We regret that owing to a falling off in the contributions no salary has been paid to the Sec. for eight weeks, and we urge all to send cash or promises as soon as possible to

**Sec. Organizing Fund : J. H. Pratt, 13, Havelock Road,
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We make this statement so that all may know exactly where we stand. The Sec. is to be paid 30/- per week. If it were not for the cost of paper and printing we could meet this expense out of current receipts, so that in making our appeal we feel sure our Comrades will understand that the Organizing Fund at the present time is the life-blood of the Magazine.

SHALL THE PLEBS CONTINUE TO EXIST?

We are, yours in the Cause,

J. T. W. NEWBOLD
GEORGE MASON
C. T. PENDREY

B. SKENE MACKAY
C. TERRY
FRANK JACKSON

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 formation of local branches and classes for the study of social science, in connection with the Central Labour College (now the Labour College), such classes to be maintained and controlled, wherever possible, by Trades Unions, Trades Councils, or other working-class organizations; and the linking-up of these branches into Districts (or Divisions) with a District (or Divisional) Committee appointed by the branches.

The issuing of a monthly magazine, mainly devoted to the discussion of Labour questions, theoretical and practical.

The assistance in every way of the development of the Central Labour College (now the Labour College), or of any other working-class educational institution, and their maintenance of a definitely working-class educational policy.

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Open to all who endorse the object of the League.

Each Member shall pay 1/- a year to the Central Fund towards general expenses, publications, &c.

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MANAGEMENT.

An Executive, together with a Secretary-Treasurer and Magazine Editor, elected at the Annual Meet.

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(Sec.-Treasurer)

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