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THE PLEBS MAGAZINE

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

Vol. X.

January, 1919.

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On Words and Phrases.

Socialists have been accused of clouding the brains of the workers with a fog of words. That there is some truth in the charge one need not deny, for the decidedly cloudy utterances of many who should know better often confuse the issue—and the older generation are not, perhaps, alone guilty. Many of us, as someone recently remarked of Herve, "say what we think, but don't always think."

That there is magic in words none can question, and "England expects" or "Up, Larkin!" are a source of inspiration or disgust as the case may be. To-day, when government by newspapers is the established order, phrases—headlines—have become of paramount importance. At the moment we are to be roused or terrorised, according to our several points of view, by the sinister phrase—"The Dictatorship of the Proletariat." The word Bolshevik, since Mr. Lloyd George applied it to the Labour Party, has lost its terrors. It should have been reserved, if it were to rouse the unthinking to righteous fury, for unmistakable miscreants and villains; and not wasted on obviously respectable, though may be wrong-headed, British Labour M.P.'s. So the Man in the Street must be hypnotised by a new phrase; and "the dictatorship of the proletariat" is accordingly trotted out to make him shudder. Maybe he will take "proletariat" on trust, as he took "Bolshevik," and assume it to imply villainy of the deepest dye. Or he may look up the word in the dictionary, and in that case he will surely pause to think. For he will discover that a proletarian is "one belonging to the poorest labouring class, having little or no property; plebeian; vulgar. (From the Latin *proletarius*—in ancient Rome a citizen of the sixth and lowest class who served the State not with his property, but with his children; *proles*, offspring.)" Will he then grasp the full awfulness of the words, "The dictatorship of the proletariat"?

How many people have served the State, not with their property, since they possessed none, *but with their children*, during the past four years? Impious thought! that such people, even temporarily, should be vested with absolute authority in the State! The worst of a war for liberation is that it will not stop liberating; and obviously there can be too much liberty. "The dictatorship of the proletariat," indeed. Such people exist but to be dictated to; "their's not to reason why."

But it is, or was, a war to make the world safe for Democracy—and now comes Mr. Sidney Webb to tell us what Democracy is. Democracy is faith in Parliamentary institutions, whereas Bolshevism is "contempt for those institutions, reliance on 'direct action' . . . the Dictatorship of the Proletariat." This, says Mr. Webb, is the revolutionary epidemic which is now spreading westward over Europe. And we have got to prevent this "moral influenza." Had Fabianism been spreading over Europe, we should probably have been told that it was a new Renaissance of Learning. But Bolshevism—this awful prospect of the world being governed and owned by those who have served the State, not with their property, but with their children—this is "moral influenza." Well, perhaps if Mr. Webb spent an hour or two in the Labour Research Dept. turning over recent cuttings, he might discover that there are more aspects than one of his beloved Parliamentary Democracy. He might discover, for example, George Russell's ("A.E.") remarks on the subject in a recent *Herald*. Writing of the Russians he said:—

Their crimes I believe to be twofold. They desired to be at peace when the rest of the world was at war, a very serious offence as we in Ireland know. They also desired to have economic democracy when the Great Powers had got no further than a desire to make the world safe for political democracy and were, I believe, even a little dubious about that state of society, though experiment had proved that pure cultures of capitalism could be cultivated in political democracies and develop there with the rapidity of bacteria in a jug of Dublin milk.

Economic democracy—there's the rub! We can all stomach political democracy now—a duchess, for example, may almost enjoy driving dirty proletarians to the polling booth; but it is when the wives of the proletarians appear in fur coats, and look much like the duchess herself, that her Grace has qualms.

Yet if we insist on the obvious fact that political democracy is a futile farce without economic democracy, muddle-headed political democrats accuse us of "instigating a class war" and of being bitter. To which we may reply that the class war is our inheritance, not our creation, and that our bitterness is due to the fact that we hate it quite as much as any "industrial pacifist" does—and for better reasons. We know that John Drinkwater's words, in his preface to Morris's *Earthly Paradise* are true:—

All things of enduring beauty are wrought of love, not hate. We may not build a new world until we know rightly what new world we desire; we may not even destroy unloveliness save by a passion for the lovely, and with our eyes set always on wrong, even though it be in just hatred, how shall we learn righteousness?

It is not our fault that our eyes are, perforce, so much and so often "set on wrong"; and if we are bitter it is because we have caught a glimpse of what might be, and the unloveliness of the world about us is the more apparent. It is not merely our hatred of that unloveliness, but the passion of our desire for a new and fitter order that spurs us to our task.

And our task is the winning of economic freedom for men and women everywhere—the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, in order that neither Dictatorship nor Proletariat shall ever exist again.

WINIFRED HORRATIN.

Save Us from Our Friends

In these days of crumbling monarchies and working-class "anarchy" a considerable amount of confusion is inevitable. "Gas" is escaping in all directions, and some of us are anxious lest the workers of this and the other countries of the Entente will be overcome by the fumes. It is essential, therefore, that we keep close to basic principles as the only true safeguard against an undesirable state of coma.

Our contemporary, the *Cambridge Magazine*, recently persuaded the eminent explorer and publicist, Sir Harry Johnston, to write a series of articles for its columns entitled "Practical Politics." In his introductory remarks Sir Harry appeals for "a fully educated, reflective, cautious electorate"; given which "there would be a probability that the Legislature of the United Kingdom did represent and typify the educated, liberal-minded, just, moderate people of good character." He proceeds to justify his rôle as an authority on political matters by claiming that "few of the twenty millions of electors are likely to have travelled so far as I have done, to have seen so much of the world, and notably of the British Empire." Now observation and experiment are essential to scientific inquiry—geographical or social; but Sir Harry, whatever his qualifications in the former field of science, is notably lacking in these respects when he turns to social questions, as becomes apparent when he complains, in the course of his criticism of the Labour Party, that—

The Labour Programme, moreover, though it seeks quite rightly to relieve many working-class grievances . . . does not attempt to offer any solution of one burning question, the question of the hour—**STRIKES**—their Cause and Cure. If it would do that, face and solve that disease of the body-politic, it would deserve a long tenure of power.

A critic who can write of Strikes as "a disease of the body-politic," without searching any deeper for the causes of the disease, does not impress one. It must surely be obvious, even to so candid a friend of Labour as Sir Harry, that working-class grievances, of which Strikes are merely one manifestation, arise as a result of the iniquitous division of the products of Labour. Yet we find our arbitrator, in the course of a discussion on the limitation of incomes, remarking:—

I, with a desire to reconcile Labour with the Bourgeoisie and professional classes, have occasionally cited £2,000 as a limit you would not be afraid to confess to income tax collection; but I would even like the door of confraternity left open to Maecenases of £5,000, and even £10,000 a year. Life is, after all, more interesting and diversified if some are *moderately rich* and others *comfortably poor*.

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Sir Harry does not appear to have grasped the fact that "rich and poor" cannot be understood in isolation, but only in relation to each other; and that, although Mr. Lloyd George may consider himself relatively a poor man, to many other people he may appear fabulously rich. We must remind Sir Harry that only by the abolition of those conditions which produce rich and poor shall we be able to produce a "liberal-minded, just and moderate people of good character."

It is also necessary to remind him that Education, on which question he also holds and expresses "strong" opinions, cannot, under existing social conditions, be considered in its general sense, but must be viewed relatively. My ideas of good and bad are not in conformity with his, for the sufficient reason that we are criticising society from two very different points of view, and must remain apart so long as the present form of production lasts, or until Sir Harry acquires sufficient imagination to put himself in my place. The cause and cure of Strikes are not to be found in the mentality of the Labour Party, but in the economic conditions which produce a Labour Party (Sir Harry will doubtless agree that "life is, after all, more interesting and diversified" by reason of these opposing points of view.)

His contention that "the weakness of the Labour Party is that it is not as it should be, the Party of All Workers" is scarcely a criticism of the Labour Party; since the Constitution of that body makes it abundantly clear that, if it is not the Party of All Workers, then it is the Workers' and not the Party's fault. What is really wrong with the Constitution of the Labour Party is that it does not recognise the fact of the class-struggle—owing perhaps to its having put too much trust in those grandmotherly theories of society which emanate from Oxford and Cambridge. We do not doubt Sir Harry's (grandmotherly) sincerity, but we must ask him, when discussing social questions, to face facts as unflinchingly as he doubtless would do in his own particular sphere of science. The freedom of the working-class cannot be expressed in money terms. It can only find its true expression when money terms are abolished and it has free access to the full fruits of its labour. Whitley schemes are losing their glamour on the industrial field; "coalition" in the political field has been seen through, and the "jolly good fellowship" notion is coming to be seen for what it is in the sphere of Education. This state of affairs is due to irresistible economic law inherent in all social systems based on private property. So long as we have owners and non-owners we shall have strikes. When the workers become conscious of their economic power, that "disease of the body politic" will be "cured" once for all. We must quote to Sir Harry: "We want neither your crumbs nor your condescension, your guidance nor your glamour, your tuition nor tradition. We have our own historic way to follow, our own salvation to achieve, and 'by this sign we shall conquer.'"

FRANK JACKSON.

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A Dream of Peace

Surely in this quiet spot
 One may dream awhile of peace,
 Where the war drum vexes not,
 And the city's turmoils cease ;
 Surely here, if anywhere,
 One may snatch respite from care.

Where the fertile valley lies
 Twixt hill and distant hill, serene,
 Where autumn writes its harmonies
 In brown and gold and sober green ;
 Surely in this tranquil place
 One may rest a little space.

Rest a little and forget
 All the turmoil and the strife,
 All the struggle and the fret,
 All the weariness of life ;
 Leave them all aside and find
 Rest for the too-troubled mind.

Comes a figure bowed and bent,
 Aged by years of toil and pain,
 Years of toil and hunger, spent
 Working for another's gain :
 Straightway all the visions fly
 And peace becomes a mockery.

While such things as this may be,
 Peace is but a coward's quest ;
 We must war incessantly,
 Though our hearts may long for rest :
We dare not dally, who are men ;
Come! Back to the old fight again. W. N. EWER.

(Reprinted from *The Herald* by permission of the author.)

Correspondence

THE NEW AGE AND THE BOLSHEVIKS.

TO THE EDITOR, *Plebs Magazine*.

SIR,—The letter set out below was sent to the *New Age* on September 13th last in reply to some paragraphs appearing in the issue of that weekly of the day before ; my letter was not published. I am led to understand that more than one writer is concerned with the compilation of " Notes of the Week," but evidently the same hand is at work, if one is to judge by the persistent misconceptions as to " Bolshevism " appearing in recent issues of the *New Age*, e.g., to mention only one, that of November 14th.

Under the circumstances my letter appearing below may be of interest to your readers. Yours, etc., A.P.L.

TO THE EDITOR, THE *New Age*.

SIR,—" Notes of the Week " in the current *New Age* (12th September) contain a column about the Bolsheviki, against which I should like to be allowed to protest.

The writer of the paragraphs derides, as one of the hideous manifestations of class-rule, the apportioning of foodstuffs by the Bolsheviks according to the occupation of the individual: but why should he, seeing that Russia is faced with the probability of a food shortage—a position not improved by our commitments in Siberia, etc. Is it not a scientific fact that eight hours mining absorbs more food calories than, say, eight hours bank-clerking? And is it not a fact that some such similar differentiation in food allowances is in operation at the present moment in Italy?

In spite of the deductions that the writer of the paragraphs makes from the doctrines of Karl Marx, Bolshevism is no more intrinsically an expression of class-domination than Menshevism, if the term had been used, is necessarily an expression of TALK-rule—for many months the Mensheviks or their "leaders" stood for little else than talk. The Bolsheviks have been merely endeavouring to bring about Marxian Social Democracy in the only way in which they have been ALLOWED to do it. Many persons have said, I know, that Russia was not ripe for Social-Democracy, and some, especially many of the supporters of Menshevism, have even gone the length of suggesting that Russia should go through the various phases of a properly developed "bourgeois" capitalism before attempting Socialism. This latter contention appears to me intensely grotesque. If I have run, for instance, my hand on to a poisoned knife, must I wait for my whole arm to be affected by blood-poisoning before dealing with the matter promptly and drastically? . . .

The writer of the paragraphs goes on to say: "Bolshevism is a definite theory aiming at the establishment of a particular kind of law; it is not anarchism, but class-rule; and it has exclusively in view the domination of the manual workers. . . ." The acknowledgment that Bolshevism is *NOT* anarchism is an advance on what the *New Age* has previously said on the subject, but it would be interesting to know the authority for the other statements just quoted. After all, "the dictatorship of the proletariat" is only a means to an end—a means which no Socialist desires in itself; the end in view, of which this would only be the transition stage, is the Social Democratic Commonwealth where *ALL* classes will co-operate for the common good. Lenin has himself made this quite clear in more than one of his speeches during the past few months.

If one could compress into a short period of time the LONG CENTURIES that Guild Socialism will take to permeate the "bourgeoisie" it might be possible to obviate the "proletarian dictatorship," but why should the Proletariat be expected to WAIT INDEFINITELY for this millennium? The Bolshevik Revolution affords a magnificent object lesson of how the "bourgeoisie" and the "intelligentsia" will endeavour to "sabotage" any real attempt of the proletariat to emancipate itself. . . . This entailed a "proletarian dictatorship," which, of course, involves certain other factors, of which, however, only "Tolstoyan conscientious objectors" can reasonably complain, and certainly not those people who favour the military method of making the world "safe for democracy."

With the Bolshevik "coup" in November, 1917, the intelligentsia, the doctors, the officials, the bank-clerks, in fact, practically all the "respectable" elements went on strike—the fear of the man who might possibly eat "kasha" with his fingers (the equivalent of, say, eating peas with a knife) was too much for them; and I am afraid so it will always be! A dear old lady friend of mine—a descendant of a long line of Admirals—who, because she is a really "good sort," imagined she was a Socialist, was "horrified" when I explained that Socialism involved the idea that the stoker on an Atlantic liner was as much entitled to "first-class" accommodation as any passenger on the boat out for health or business.

The Guild Socialists, as I understand them, always stand for action as against mere parliamentary talk. They should therefore be able to stand

apart from Mr. Brailsford and Dr. Salter and their friends of the I.L.P. who "approve" of the Bolshevik ideas, but object to Bolshevik "methods," overlooking the fact that "methods" are forced by circumstances.

When the Social Revolution does come, whether *via* Marxism, Guild Socialism, or any other "ism," there will always be the opposition of the property "classes." Do the writers on the *New Age* and Mr. Brailsford and others imagine these people will surrender their "rights" without a blow? All my connections and friends up and down the country will join the counter-revolution, and so, of course, will the members of the College of Surgeons, the staffs of Banks and Insurance and Government Offices, the members of the Inns of Court, etc., etc.; Hampstead, Mayfair, Kensington, Westminster, Ealing, etc., will pour out their "White Guards" by the thousand; their equivalents in the provincial towns and in the country will do likewise. How, for instance, does Mr. Brailsford propose to deal with this horde of White Guards and their attempts at "sabotaging" the emancipation of the people?

That during the past eighteen months (and even long before) numberless deeds of violence have been committed by returning starving soldiers and others in what was the Tsarist Empire is doubtless true, but this state of affairs is not directly envisaged in the Marxian (or Bolshevik) or any other socialist theory; it is a result of the long years of oppression which the Russian people had to suffer—Macaulay long ago pointed out that the violence associated with a revolution bore a direct ratio to the opposition thereto and to the amount of oppression previously imposed.

Whatever the Bolsheviks may or may not have done, whatever their failings and whatever their faults in circumstances of extreme difficulty, it may not be inappropriate to conclude with a quotation from the poem of Hégésippe in defence of the 1830 revolution:—

"Oubliez-vous
Que leur Âme de feu purifiait leurs œuvres ?
Oui, d'un pied gigantesque écrasant les couleuvres
Par le fer et la flamme ils voulaient aplanir
Une route aux Français vers un bel avenir
Ils marchaient pleins de foi, pleins d'amour, et l'histoire
Absoudra, comme Dieu, qui sut aimer et croire."

Yours, etc.

A.P.L.

ABLETT APOLOGISES.

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News of the Movement

Our appeal to Plebs League Branch Secretaries for full lists of members names and addresses in last month's Magazine fell on deaf ears, for only one secretary complied with our request. Will secretaries please note and forward as soon as convenient.

Also secretaries of S. Wales classes are asked to send in short reports of the work in their districts. It is no use expecting the Editor to have second-sight, and we have no means of registering progress unless such reports are sent in.

The only two class reports we have this month are from London and from Garndiffaith (S. Wales).

LONDON (North Kent District) is running two Industrial History classes one at Well Hall Institute, Eltham, Tutor, C. T. Pendrey; Sec., H. G. Ballard, 28 Whinyates Road, Eltham; the other at the Jewish Club and Institute, 5 Georges Street, Woolwich, Tutor, Frank Jackson; Sec., Grace Neal 93 Eglinton Road, Plumstead. The text-books are *The State*, by W. Paul (S.L.P.)—*A Worker Looks at History*, by Mark Starr, and Craik's *History of the Working-Class Movement*. A very good list of books appears on the back of the handbill announcing the classes, and the Woolwich and Eltham comrades should take full advantage of this opportunity for study.

At GARNDIFFAITH our comrade, Arthur Jenkins, is taking a class under the auspices of the Eastern Valleys District of the S. Wales Miners. Almost the first result of the class was an increase in the order for the Magazine, and the secretary sends a glowing account of the interest aroused.

From MELBOURNE, W. P. Earsman, the secretary of the Victorian College, writes:—"We have six subjects to study—Literature, Economics, Industrial Strategy, Industrial History, English Grammar, Principles of the Labour Movement—and the students are coming along in good fashion. We have opened out at Geelong, . . . and all classes are as good and healthy as one could wish. We have just completed our first year, and are all proud of our work both from the students' standpoint and also the financial one." He encloses a leaflet which we should like to publish in full, but space does not permit; suffice it to say the Victorian Labour College is modelled *exactly* on the lines of the C.L.C. Twelve unions are affiliated and the Melbourne and Geelong Trades Councils. Altogether the movement gives promise of fine things. Congratulations and all good wishes to our comrades across the seas.

Congratulations to the DURHAM miners on their class-consciousness. They have granted £50 to the North of England C.L.C. This will be a great help to the classes and an encouragement to comrades in the district who have worked hard to spread the light.

Have **YOU** read EDEN AND CEDAR PAUL's pamphlet—

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Plebs Publications

We had hoped that Ablett's book would have been off the press before Christmas, but press of election work has hindered us, and we shall have to ask all those who have ordered it to possess their souls in patience for a little longer.

Only eighty copies remain of Mark Starr's book, and these will probably be sold out before this appears. It is no use urging us to re-print; as soon as cash is forthcoming and paper prices permit we shall only be too glad to do so.

PLEASE NOTE—TO SINGLE-COPY SUBSCRIBERS.

One way of really helping the Magazine is to pay up your yearly subscription as soon as your red-cross appears. We have been sending a red-crossed copy for *six months* to some of our friends, and only an intimate knowledge of their characters keeps us sending. We do not put the red cross on because we think the Magazine needs a little colour, but because **YOU OWE US MONEY**. Perhaps it would interest you to know, gentle debtor, that we have not yet paid for the December Magazine. The bill is £40, so begin the New Year well by **PAYING UP!**

We are starting our New Year with a horrid load of debts, and if any member has not yet asked his or her Trade Union Branch for a donation to the Magazine, let him (or her) send at once for our leaflet, "An Appeal to Trade Unionists." We need help as much as ever we did, and only by getting help (and, incidentally, our accounts paid up) can we hope to struggle through the coming months. If you only owe us a shilling send it and get our blessing.

We hope all who pay up will have A Happy New Year!

Reviews

SOULFUL EDUCATION.

Living Water: Chapters from the Romance of the Poor Student. By Harold Begbie. (Headley, 2/6 net.)

We all get a little tired at times of that "feud" (as Cole calls it in his new *Introduction to Trade Unionism*) between ourselves and the W.E.A. Yet how, in the face of books such as this, can one help oneself? It is dedicated to the W.E.A., and the sketches which form the body of the book "are written to convince the sceptical and to persuade the indifferent that there is a craving in the mind of our working-class for the noblest benefits of education, and that education has power to enlarge, to dignify, and to intensify the life of the humblest of our fellow-creatures." That is to say, they are written in exactly the kindly, condescending tone one would use in enlisting sympathy for the sufferings, and drawing attention to the pathetic dignity, of the "lower" animals.

Mr. Begbie is Fleet Street's greatest exponent of the "human touch"—what our American brethren call the "sob stunt." He can write—has written—with a lump in his throat on sundry great subjects—Marriage, Recruiting, Christianity, the British Navy. He touches nothing that he does

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And Support the S.L. Press (50 Renfrew St., Glasgow)

not (liberally) adorn. Here he relates "true stories gathered in the course of a recent tour thro' industrial England"—"Materialism in Leeds" (I should think so!); "Idealism in Birmingham," "A Collier's Philosophy," "The Mind of a Clerk," etc., etc. Some of the stories are touching enough—if only Mr. Begbie had not the telling of them.

But there are priceless pearls on almost every page. W.E.A. life would appear to be an orgy of emotionalism. "It began in 1907 (a Swindon Labour councillor is speaking). That is the golden year of my life, the unforgettable year of my soul. It was then I got into contact with the W.E.A., and we came together at Oxford. . . . Mister, I've touched my soul. I know I've got a soul. Oxford! Why, it was like coming into the light. . . . Every year since . . . I've taken my wife and children either to Oxford or Cambridge. I go there to keep my soul alive." "I refuse to be a party to the class war," the same gentleman declares. "Education has taught me there is no class. . . . If I wanted a title for my life, I'd call it 'From the Soap-Box to the University.' On the soap-box a man sees no further than his own nose. At a University a man looks up to Infinity." (The "soap-box" is always associated in Mr. Begbie's mind with the class war and economics.) Arnold, Mill, Emerson, Mazzini—not Marx. "I hate to see a man giving up his mind to economics; it's like suicide. Life is bigger than economics." Economics and class war are "repellent" to all these students, in fact; or, at any rate, to all those with "noble brows" and "glowing eyes" and features "of a singular beauty." A few with "long, pale, monotonous" faces, "almost without vitality," notable "omissions in their toilet"—partial to the soap-box but not to soap—talked class war; but then what could you expect from such crude persons? The idealist in Birmingham (he of the "face of singular beauty") assured Mr. Begbie that "Nothing can be done so long as economics are divorced from religion." "The Socialism of the future is not an economic revolution," declared the Manchester Socialist; "it's not the Marxian idea; it's the movement of man's soul towards a more enjoyable existence through and for his reason." And so on—yards and yards of it; concluding with an interview with Mr. Mansbridge, a reprint of Mr. MacTavish's speech at the Oxford Conference, 1907, and an interview with Lord Leverhulme on the "failure" of Guild—and other forms of—Socialism. Living "Water," indeed—and about as stimulating!

By the way, Mr. Begbie, Ruskin's work (referred to on p. 76) was entitled *Unto* (not *Until*) *This Last*; and Mr. Blatchford, in the title of his best-known piece of propaganda, spells it "Merrie" (not Merry). Trivial points, perhaps, but so earnest an apostle of sweetness and light ought to be accurate in these matters.

J.F.H.

INDUSTRIAL RECONSTRUCTION

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The Plebs Bookshelf

We're becoming notorious. Quite a pile of cuttings, extracts, etc., lies in front of me, all referring, in more or less interesting fashion, to the work of the C.L.C. and the Plebs League. Let us give ourselves the pleasure—and, we may hope, the edification—of considering a few quotations. We will begin, as is only right and proper, with the *Morning Post*, which has been publishing a series of hair-raising articles on "Bolshevism in Great Britain." Article No. VI., on "The Bolsheviks of South Wales," ticks us off—thus:—

No account of the S. Wales Labour movement would be complete without some reference to the Plebs League and the Central Labour College. I have mentioned the classes on the Clyde and the similar classes run by Paul in the Midlands, and how they are a kind of preparatory school for the future Labour agitator. In S. Wales these Marxist classes are the most important factor in the unrest that always prevails in this part of the country. They are run by the Central Labour College (the Plebs League is the propaganda body of the College). . . . The official organ of this educational movement is the *Plebs Magazine*, a monthly journal to which all the leading rebels contribute.

Please take note of *that* testimonial, and pat yourself on the back for having the good taste to be one of our subscribers! The *Post's* correspondent goes on to quote from our Aims and Objects, and from *What does Education Mean to the Worker?*, italicising—the better to express his horror, of course—our statement that the education with which the Labour movement is concerned must be based on a recognition of the antagonism of interests existing between Capital and Labour. "No system of education is right," he explains, "unless it is founded on the works of the German-Jew Socialist, Karl Marx. All our Bolshevik agitators have been fed on the philosophy of German Jews." It pains him deeply to have to record the fact that "these Marxian classes are certainly on the increase"—"outside S. Wales, in the Midlands, in Lancashire, in Yorkshire, Durham, and Northumberland, these classes are to be found in ever-increasing numbers, particularly within the branches of the N.U.R." And, alas! such classes "make any reconciliation between Capital and Labour impossible."

* * * * *

The *Morning Post* man's true-blue British reference to "the philosophy of German Jews" brings me to an exquisite paragraph in the December issue of *Industrial Peace*. It is the peroration of a dissertation on "The Origin and Fallacies of Extremist Propaganda":—

Doctrinaire Socialism emanating from Continental intellectuals is alien to the temperament of the average Englishman. If he desires to consider a new conception of society, then he can do no better than study the works of Sir Thomas More, Robert Owen, Kingsley, Maurice, Shaftesbury, and the modern school that gathered round the earlier Fabian movement. In the works emanating from the English school he will find a higher ethical conception, a nobler vision, a wider view, and a more genuine appreciation of the full possibilities of human nature than could ever come from those whose basic philosophy was the crudest materialism.

It always brings the tears to my eyes to hear the *Industrial Peace* people talking about "crude materialism"!

* * * * *

The Labour correspondent of the *Observer* (December 8th, 1918) had a column on "Labour and the Universities." After a description of the activities of the W.E.A., the writer concludes:

The future depends on the Universities. They must not think they are without competitors. An organisation as active, if not so wide-

spread, as the Workers' Educational Association, has its hundreds of classes and thousands of students to whom Universities are anathema. The Central Labour College is propagating, by the methods of education, its consistent and clear-cut philosophy of the class war, which, applied to education, accuses all existing institutions for higher education in social studies of bias—unconscious if not conscious—against Labour, and urges working men to associate under teachers of their own class exclusively. It rests with the Universities to show whether the Central Labour College is right or wrong.

We await the issue with equanimity.

* * * * *

Next, please. In the *Welsh Outlook* for November Mr. Frank Hodges had an article on "Adult Education in S. Wales." He describes the W.E.A.'s efforts "to make it possible for men and women to eat the fruit of the Immortal Tree in the most vicious surroundings and in the most deadly of economic systems." But—

it cannot be said to have succeeded in getting the men and women of industry to strive towards the ideal of "Knowledge for its own sake." To the Organisers, Lecturers and Tutors of the W.E.A. we all owe a great debt of gratitude for their sacrifices in pursuit of their inspiring ideal. Their comparative failure is none of their own making. The social and industrial conditions are more than a match for their enthusiasm.

There follows a brief account of the activities and policy of the C.L.C.—though for some reason or other Mr. Hodges pays no tribute to the C.L.C. men who have made sacrifices in pursuit of *their* ideal. He is nevertheless driven to the conclusion that "All that is vital in adult education in Wales appears in those institutions which are interested in primarily destroying the industrial and social disabilities in which and under which the people live."

* * * * *

Mr. J. M. MacTavish's essay, "A Worker's Conception of Education," in the October–December *Socialist Review*, contained nothing more helpful than the remark, "Indeed, there is no item in our school curricula that has higher educational value than a good mother's kiss"; and his conclusion that—

Labour must seek to give to our educational system a new and definite purpose, suited to the needs of a free self-governing community, thereby inspiring our Education Authorities and teachers to equip our children, not merely to adjust themselves to the technicalities of a trade or calling, but to adjust themselves to all that is best in their spiritual environment, thus developing mental powers, and acquiring an attitude towards life that will make for human progress.

That passage, in style and content, is characteristically MacTavishish. But is not Mr. MacTavish running some risk in contributing signed articles to so decidedly partisan an organ as the *Socialist Review*; thereby conveying the impression to his readers, not merely that his passion for strict impartiality has momentarily forsaken him but that he even has leanings towards a Socialist solution of certain problems, thus imperilling the fair name of the organization with which his name is usually associated, and hinting at an attitude towards the facts of life that may conceivably make for proletarian progress?

* * * * *

For the following quotations I am indebted to a Liverpool correspondent. The first is from *The Passman*, by R. L. Archer (Professor of Education, Bangor University):—

A new kind of movement is on foot which stands to the old parties as Sinn Fein stands to the older Irish Nationalism, or as Maximalism

stands to the moderate Democratic party in Russia. The doctrine of the "class war" is being preached among the workmen in certain parts of the country with all the fanaticism of a hideous religion. The movement is spreading and has evolved a propagandist machinery which regards itself as educational. These students of Marx meet by themselves, hear only their own point of view, and teach one another that the University and School History, Political Economy and Political Philosophy are the party weapons of their capitalist enemies. They regard their refusal to listen to any other point of view as a virtue, and any dallying with orthodox economics as weakness and treachery. It must be remembered that the party has renounced all the restraint imposed on the bulk of the community by the accepted canons of morality and by all forms of religion. There is no smiling tolerance of standpoints opposed to their own, and no good-natured belief that there is some good in the Englishmen of all classes, parties and creeds, nothing of the attitude which we have in the past come to regard as characteristic of the "average" Englishman. In its place is a vindictiveness and a feeling of injury which we have hitherto associated with the subjects of despotism—of Naples in the 'forties or of Russia in more recent years.

All the elements of melodrama! "Meet by themselves," "teach one another," "renounced all restraints," etc., etc. We shall have to go to our secret conclaves masked, friends, and devise some ritual with berud in it. But what Plebeian has been riling the Professor so? . . . The second extract is from the Annual Report of the University of Liverpool, Vice-Chancellor's Report (p. 23). The *Observer's* correspondent, quoted above, will note with pleasure that one at least of our Universities is realising that it is "up to it":

Day continuation classes, when established, will raise up a new constituency that we shall disregard at our peril. We shall have to reach them and deal with them through the University Tutorial Classes, some of which, though not all, are associated with the Workers' Educational Association. Along what lines their studies may develop only experience can show. But we may be sure that whatever else they may wish to learn, Literature, History and Economics will have a foremost place on their list. What genius has thought and felt and dreamed; the forces that moulded the framework of our national life; the conflicting interests and influences that have made social conditions such as they are, and the ways in which these conditions can be modified or transformed; *all that touches the core and heart of life*—these are the studies to which they will instinctively turn.

Such stuff is difficult, even dangerous to handle. There is dynamite in it that may shatter and rend. The task needs a steady hand, a clear eye, a balanced mind. The Universities may be timid; may stand aside and leave the task to others. But those who care for such knowledge will get what they seek elsewhere if they do not get it from us. If we are faint-hearted and leave the new generations to drift to other teachers, we shall let slip a priceless opportunity, and shall be false to a supreme duty.

That completes our selection of cuttings on this particular subject for the time being. Here is one, on a topic of equal interest to *Plebs* readers, from the *Daily Express*:—

Henry Hellesten, the brilliant Danish journalist, who has an exceptionally close knowledge of Germany's former mighty ones, says that Ludendorff owed his former power not so much to his brain as to his being the "representative" of Germany's iron industry. The old Germany was ruled by four great industrial families—the Stinnes, the Thyssens, the Halbachs, and the Krupps. These people spurred Germany on to war in 1914 and kept her at it long after she was beaten, their placards

covering Berlin up to a few weeks ago and inciting the people to fight to the last ditch. But their patriotism was a money patriotism, the Stinnes, it is said, earning 400 million marks by the war.

All these people had sons-in-law or other connections on Ludendorff's staff. Every syndicate, Hellesen says, had its representative at Headquarters, Press propaganda, foreign policy all being directed by young bloods who had one foot in the High Command and the other in the Rhine-Westphalian foundries.

So that "Militarism's" connections with Capitalism were fairly intimate. It may be of interest to note in this connection that, according to the *Daily News* of December 9th, Herren August and Fritz Thyssen and Herr Hugo Stinnes have been arrested by the German Government's orders, on a charge of having participated in negotiations with the Entente for the occupation of industrial districts near the Rhine. An interesting article in the *Daily News* of December 17th on "The Rise and Fall of Krupps," mentioned that the great Essen firm "maintained one of the most highly organized intelligence departments and Press Bureaus in the world. It controlled newspapers and dominated statesmen."

This seems an appropriate point at which to refer, to, to the article in the *Financial News* (November 20th) on "The Future of Russia," in the course of which it remarked:—

In the city it is realised that events are shaping more and more towards an international suzerainty over Russia, modelled on the British surveillance of Egypt. Such an event would transform Russian bonds into the cream of the international market.

Making the world safe for . . . ?

* * * * *

I trust that Plebeians everywhere will secure a copy of *The People's Calendar*, compiled by Mrs. Montefiore and published by the B.S.P. (1/- net). A fine catholic collection of authors have been drawn upon. I open a page at random and find quotations from Oscar Wilde, Walton Newbold, Ruskin, Carpenter, Tom Mann and Ibsen. Craik, Murphy, Starr, Ablett, Paul—all are represented, along with Omar and Kipling, Marx and Webb, De Leon and Plato, Mactierlinck and Joe Hill. It is not a big volume, but as the Vice-Chancellor quoted above puts it, "There is dynamite in it that may shatter and rend." Moreover (see advt.) all profits from its sale are to be divided between *The Call* and *The Plebs*. So send your one-and-threehalfpences to the B.S.P. (21a Maiden Lane, Strand, W.C. 2.)

* * * * *

Eden and Cedar Paul's article in our October issue, "New Tactics for the Social Revolution," has been issued as a leaflet by the London Workers' Committee (7, Featherstone Buildings, Holborn, W.C. 1. 1d.) under the title "Bolshevism in Industry and Politics." Its insistence on Bolshevism in Education" should make it useful propaganda for Plebeians. J.F.H.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

The Economic History of Ireland in the 18th Century. By George O'Brien. (Maunsel & Co., 10/6 net.)

Living Water. By Harold Begbie. (Headley, 2/6 net.)

An Introduction to Trade Unionism. (2/6 net). *The Payment of Wages: A Study in Payment by Results under the Wage-System.* (3/6 net.) By G. D. H. Cole. (Fabian Research Dept. Special T.U. Editions.)

Labour in the Commonwealth. By G. D. H. Cole. (Headley, 5/6 net.)

An Introduction to the Study of Social Problems. (Revised Edition.) By Arnold Freeman. (W.E.A., 16 Harpur Street, W.C. 1. 1/-)

The People's Calendar. Compiled by Dora B. Montefiore. (B.S.P., 21a Maiden Lane, W.C. 2. 1/- net.)