

Vol. XI. No. 10

November 1919

# THE PLEBS

AGITATE · EDUCATE · ORGANISE

CONTAINS

A "STATE" · ENDOWED  
ACADEMY OF SOCIALISM

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for "original research in socialist  
theory and the study of social science  
from the Marxist point of view."

& ARTICLES BY W. W. CRAIK,  
E. & C. PAUL, J. B. ASKEW, &c., &c.

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# THE PLEBS

“I can promise to be candid but not impartial”

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Vol. XI.

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### A SOCIALIST ACADEMY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

**A**MONG the numerous educational and scientific institutions established under the Soviet regime in Russia the most interesting is the Socialist Academy of Social Science, which has for its aim the encouragement of original research in socialist theory and the study of the social sciences from the Marxist point of view. It was Lenin himself, a practical revolutionary as well as a revolutionary theorist and thinker, who suggested the idea, with which he coupled a plan for using the Academy for teaching purposes. This double scheme was embodied in the Decree of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, which is printed below. The reader will note that this is the first endowment, out of State funds, of Socialist science and Socialist teaching. The Academy has now been in existence a year and, according to reports, is doing extremely valuable work. Professor Pokrovsky, the eminent historian, was President of the Academic Council during the first year, and Lenin himself was member of it. Rosa Luxemburg and Franz Mehring were among its Fellows abroad, while Karl Radek is both Fellow and Professor. The Academy also has members in other countries, including Great Britain.

The Academy was opened on October 1 by the Assistant Commissary for Education, Pokrovsky. It was announced that lectures for the first term would be grouped under three heads: historical, politico-juridical, financial-economic. The following courses of lectures were announced:—

Social Psychology. . . . . Professor BERGGERK  
History of Socialist Doctrine. . . . . Professor YOLGIN  
Political Economy in Connection with Economic History. . . . Professor SKVORTSOV  
History of Internal Politics and Imperialism. . . . . KARL RADEK  
Communist Socialism. . . . . KRIVNOV  
Foundations of the Theory of Law and the State. . . . . Professor REISNER

History of Russian Literature.....	BRIUSOV
History of the International .....	STEKLOV
The Financial Policy & the Economic Problems of War & Revolution ..	BRONSKY
The Finances of Soviet Russia .....	BOGOLEPOV
The Building-up of Socialism .....	N. OSINSKY
The Philosophy of Imperialism.....	M. PAVLOVITCH

DECREE OF THE ALL-RUSSIAN CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE SOVIETS  
(Promulgated June 23, 1919.)

1 The Socialist Academy of Social Sciences is a free association of persons engaged in the study and teaching of social science from the point of view of Scientific Socialism and Communism, as well as of other sciences related thereto.

2 The S.A.S.S. is formed of all the students in its various divisions and sections, Associate Members and Fellows, Professors, Lecturers and Assistant-Lecturers holding their respective fellowships and appointments by election.

3 The S.A.S.S. consists of two Divisions: (a) Academic, and (b) Educational. The former is engaged in research work, the latter in teaching and instruction.

4 With a view to the aforesaid purposes the S.A.S.S. announces subjects for prize competition and issues prizes, publishes the scientific works of its members, issues books and scientific works answering its objects, receives from abroad, without payment of any customs or other dues, all scientific and educational works and objects required by it, admits freely by invitation, as members, Russian citizens as well as foreigners, and establishes in all parts of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic branches, institutes, laboratories, museums, libraries, etc.

5 The S.A.S.S. is attached to the All-Russian C.E.C. of the Soviets, to which it submits reports of its work.

6 The estimates of the S.A.S.S. are adopted and carried out in the ordinary procedure as part of the estimates of the People's Commissariat for Public Instruction.

#### THE ACADEMIC DIVISION

7 The Academic Division of the S.A.S.S. has for its object the scientific study of problems of Socialism and Communism, scientific research in social sciences, philosophy and natural sciences, in so far as they are related to social science, and the training of scientific experts in the domain of social science.

8 The Division consists of Fellows and Associate Members engaged under the direction of the Academy, in improving their knowledge and in studying definite scientific problems.

9 For the purposes mentioned in Art. 7 the Division is divided periodically, but not less frequently than once a year, into the required number of sections and groups.

10 For the same purposes the Division gives its approval to the rules of learned societies attached to the S.A.S.S., appoints commissions, arranges public sessions, discussions, and disputes, sends out scientific expeditions, institutes inquiries, and takes all measures needful for the advancement of its scientific work.

11 Any person, without distinction of sex, age or State nationality, may become an Associate Member of the S.A.S.S., who wishes to devote himself to the study of the problems of Scientific Socialism and is possessed of sufficient knowledge on the subject to warrant successful work. The means of ascertaining the possession by the candidate of sufficient knowledge and aptitude are determined by each section and group in accordance with the character and method of the respective sciences, and are approved by the Division.

12 Associate Members admitted to the Division receive, for the period of their work, but not exceeding two years, a scholarship the amount of which is fixed by the S.A.S.S.; have access, in a manner determined by the section or group, to all the scientific works and appliances required by them in their work, and are entitled to receive help and suggestions from the Fellows in their respective special branches.

13 An Associate Member who wishes to engage in independent research work with the assistance of the S.A.S.S. is entitled not only to the scholarship mentioned

in the preceding articles, but also to the use of the scientific resources of his Division, provided he submits, for the information of his section or group, the plan of his work with a view to its co-ordination with that of the other members of the S.A.S.S.

14 Associate members must submit to their sections, or groups, half-yearly reports of their work, and may, on the completion of two years, be allowed to continue to participate in the scientific work of the Division as Associate Members for a further period of two years, provided their scientific work has been found sufficiently fruitful.

15 Fellows are elected by the sections and are confirmed by the Division, for a period of five years, from among such persons as have acquired a reputation by their research work in social sciences from the point of view of Scientific Socialism, or have, by their work, assisted in the spread of the theories of Scientific Socialism among the people.

16 Fellows lend scientific assistance to the Associate Members, but above all, devote their time to original research work in their respective special branches. They submit to their respective sections and the Division yearly reports of their work and may, at the end of five years, be re-elected for the same term.

17 Fellows who directly participate in the labours of the Academy receive from the Soviet Republic a maintenance salary in accordance with the Staff Schedule of the S.A.S.S. The number of Fellows above the scheduled figure is determined by the Division.

18 The organisation of the scientific labours of the Division, the sections, and groups is determined and controlled by their respective councils which must include both Fellows and Associate Members.

19 Sub-division into sections and groups is effected by the council of the Division on the application of the sections or groups or members of the S.A.S.S. The organisation of the work in the sections and groups, as well as the admission of Associate Members, are finally decided by the sections and groups.

### **THE EDUCATIONAL DIVISION**

20 The Educational Division of the S.A.S.S. is a free Superior School which has for its object the teaching of social science to all who may desire the popularisation of the doctrines of Scientific Socialism and Communism among the wide masses of the people, and the spread of education and knowledge on the basis of Socialist thought.

21 The Division consists of students, lecturers, assistants and professors associated for the above purposes.

22 The Division, with a view to the successful discharge of its labours, is organised in sections, institutes, courses, seminaries and other schools, organises lectures and practical studies, sends out its members to other educational institutions and bodies, establishes societies and clubs for educational work both for those who specially enrol themselves as students, and among the workers and labouring masses in general.

23 The Division distributes the chairs and subjects among the sections at least every three years. Supplementary special and other courses of a particular character may be introduced by the Division as required.

24 The instruction given by the Division has for its object to provide the students with a complete education in the spirit of Scientific Socialism in the domain of social sciences in general, and in individual branches or set of branches of social and political sciences. The plan of instruction both in essential and supplementary subjects is annually determined by the Division.

25 Admission as students is open to all, irrespective of sex, who have attained the age of 16. The conditions for admission to certain special courses as well as the order and method of study of objects in individual branches or sets of sciences are determined by the respective sections and confirmed by the Division.

26 No fees are charged on the students either for attending lectures or for the use of the educational material and appliances. Special rules are drawn up by the sections for the use of the libraries, laboratories, collections, etc.

*(To be continued.)*

## THE RAILWAY STRIKE

THE plot which the Government had been preparing for the last six months to depress the standard of living for the working class of this country, culminated in the precipitation of the railway strike. Despite all the attempts of the Government through its political and journalistic oracles to assume the part of injured innocence, the camouflage failed and the real rôle of the Government appeared in full view. Since the conclusion of the strike the Prime Minister has shown, in his admission of the fact of preparedness for strike breaking, that he does not allow the Future to interfere with the concrete requirements of capitalism in the present. The Future is a crystal into which the wizard invites the working class to peer while he engages, behind its back, in an attempt to make its present standard of livelihood disappear.

The Government renewed its old and familiar trick of making the worse appear the better reason. Its own sins were converted into the sins of the railwaymen. Black was made to appear as white, private interests as public interests, attack as defence, the criminal as the outraged victim. The Government assumed its ancient rôle of the friend of order and social service, and stigmatised the railway workers as anarchists and enemies of social well-being. Every capitalist organ, from the *Moaning Ghost* to the *Evening Nuisance*, propagated its daily policy of perversity with that easy looseness which comes from habitual lying. They ran thousands of trains daily—on the lines of their papers. Every evening they broke up the strike—as they broke up their type. Every day found the front of resistance unbroken. The cloud gas attacks of the Press failed to obscure the railway workers' outlook or to shake their determination to stand their ground.

The "divide and conquer" stunt is just about played out. It may succeed for a time with workmen who have only recently begun to realise the power of organisation—e.g., with the police—but with the workmen in the great branches of the division of labour, the thing is too apparent to admit of much deception. The "strong men" tried it with the railwaymen when they conceded the principle of "standardisation" to the locomotive men. It was hoped that this concession would enable the Government to defeat any extension of the same principle to the remaining grades by securing the loyalty of the loco. section to the Government. The locomotive enginemmen and firemen in both organisations did remain loyal—to their fellow workers. The locomotive men had nothing to gain in the way of more wages, but they showed to the Government that their standards of judgement and action are of quite a higher order than the sordid mercenary considerations to which alone the whole policy and practice of the Government responds. True those "statesmen" talk and write—when they are not whispering asides—in the language of the angels about "new worlds" and "social brotherhood." In this respect, they resemble the girl who, while she robbed her mistress' till, sang hymns in order to counter the noise of the coins in process of transfer. The workers are, however, learning by results to judge by results, and the magnificent exhibition of unity on the part of railwaymen during the nine days' strike indicates the measure of their capacity for distinguishing between the barometric readings of the daily press and the actual state of the social weather.

The ancient fetish of The Public was, of course, again paraded in the foreground of the fight and the old ritual phrases were repeated *ad lib* by the Fleet Street exorcists. The railwaymen had declared, without warning, a war on the community; the railwaymen were enemies of the social order; the railwaymen were Prussians, to be treated as such "with all the resources of the State"; the railwaymen were out to destroy the present fabric of Government; the public must not allow itself to be intimidated by a section of the community; the strike was a wanton attack on democratic government, civilisation, and the children's milk. With such phrases were the faithful "public" rallied to the fight against this latest piece of "frightfulness." The only "public" that hearkened to the call and "took up the cross" were a few ladies and gentlemen from Mayfair and from quarters which imitate Mayfair, some representatives from the "gentleman" strata of the Army, one or two coupon legislators, and a very few miserable creatures who preferred to be loyal to the

Government at a rate of pay per day which about equalled what the Government "definitively" offered as the rate of pay per week to the railwaymen. Mr. Lloyd George, having in a weak moment stated the truth about the issue, to the effect that the railwaymen's demand for wages could not be granted because it would involve making the same concessions to the rest of the working class, found that two-thirds of his "public" were on the side of the railwaymen, that a considerable part of this two-thirds were pressing their own Union Executives to take action on the side of the railwaymen, and that, with the exception of a few blackleg workmen, he must console himself and carry on with his lords and ladies and "men of independent station" as volunteers together with the compulsory labour of the Army and Navy. He succeeded with this material in making the railways about as safe for the public as in "making the world safe for democracy."

When the railwaymen returned to work the other day they found plenty of evidence of the difficulties experienced by the elite in adapting themselves to the unaccustomed rôle of productive work. It will take a good many weeks to clear up the mess. Still, we should welcome, crude as they are, those first attempts at useful labour. Hitherto "the ladies and gentlemen" have been enthusiastic only in recommending more work for other people. True, they were under the impression that they provided work for the workers and kept the wheels of industry moving. The action of the railwaymen however, made it apparent that when they stopped work the wheels of industry could not be set in motion again, even in the smallest way, by Mayfair in Mayfair, but only in so far as Mayfair left Mayfair and tried to do the work of the strikers. *Hic Rhodus, hic salta!*

In due season the railwaymen and the workers generally, who provide for the consumption of the unproductive ladies and gentlemen, will provide them also with productive work as a permanent and normal practice, at a standard of livelihood higher than the standard to impose which upon the workers, the said ladies and gentlemen essayed the rôle of strike-smashers. They did not smash the railway strike although they did their best to smash the railways. When they take up more regular employment the N.U.R. and the A.S.L.E. & F. will arrange to give them the training necessary for running the railways without ruining them.

Mr. Lloyd George made a great to-do about the impatient and impulsive attitude of the railway workers. If they had only waited, the public would not have had to suffer all the inconveniences and limitations involved by a strike. The railwaymen had waited for six months prior to the strike, hoping to be able to secure a settlement without inconveniencing the "public." During this period of "wait and see" on the part of the railwaymen, the Government's "strong men" were making preparations to utilise the military forces and the "volunteer" agencies in order to defeat any attempt to resist the Government's policy of reducing wages. No doubt, the Government would have preferred that the railwaymen should have waited another six months so that the blacklegging, strike-breaking preparations might have been perfected. Railwaymen, however, did not commit the inexcusable blunder of allowing the enemy to choose for them the hour of battle. All Mr. Lloyd George's fulminations on this point were merely the evidence of his annoyance that the railwaymen should have refused to be bluffed into waiting any longer. Mr. Garvin, of the *Observer*, complained of the fact that the Executives called their members out without a ballot. Did the Government consult the electorate in August, 1914, as to whether war should be declared on Germany? Ah! but that was war! We dare not give the enemy time to strengthen his forces against us! The same tactic applies to the Army of Labour in its struggle against its industrial and political enemies. On the other hand, if the Government was at all receptive for the lessons of experience it would have had sufficient warning during the past six months of the gathering storm. Not the railwaymen, but the Government, is responsible for the consequences to the community of its own blind folly and impotence. The working class part of the community must, of course, share in the responsibility in so far as it tolerates the existence of such a Government.

Although the issue in the strike was a plain wages issue, Mr. Lloyd George with his usual sophistry proclaimed, with an arrogance that only ignorance could mistake

for wisdom, that the issue was a political one. His press, ever faithful to the memory of Ananias, took up the cue and discovered all kinds of weird and wonderful proofs of the anarchist plot. The fact of the matter is that the Prime Minister and his "strong men" chose this purely wages dispute as the occasion for fortifying their own political domination, and, therefore, perpetuating the existing industrial system. The latter is being challenged to-day by the working class as never before, and in some of the industries this challenge has already translated itself into a fight for public ownership with participation by the workmen in the executive control of the industry. In this issue the Government has plainly shown that it puts consideration for private interests above all regard for the interests and well-being of the public. No one who gives his intelligence a chance to profit by experience can fail to see that the Government is the buckler and shield of capitalism. Mr. Lloyd George's platform pictures of the new world cease to win admiration, but excite an ever-increasing contempt because of his practical opposition to every proposal and demand that would give reality to the new world. Like the prayers of the King of Denmark, his "words fly up," his "thoughts remain below." So much is he, in fact, resolved to prevent a realisation of the new world, that he pursues a policy of making use of the troubles of the old world in order to show that the new one is impossible. In order to discredit the Coal Commission and the miners' demands for nationalisation, he encourages and protracts a purely wages dispute in Yorkshire. This dispute was made to appear as a political dispute, a "fight against the community," in order that this may be taken as evidence against the prospect of peace under community ownership. Precisely with the same object, although on a larger scale, was the railway crisis allowed to develop. Here are Lloyd George's own words in reply to the deputation on the nationalisation of mines (Thursday, October 9):—

There never was a more inopportune moment for pressing the claim of nationalisation than the present moment. Here we had the most dangerous labour dispute with which we have ever been confronted a fortnight ago. It was not a dispute between capital and labour, it was not a dispute where private profit was concerned. . . . It was a dispute between Labour and the Community.

In these words the Prime Minister has made it self-evident who are the real political plotters.

The recent strike has shown (1) that the Government is the custodian of private and not public interests; (2) that it has been privately preparing to defeat public interests as against private interests; (3) that it relies on the representatives of private interest to smash any attempt to make public interests the predominant consideration. Lloyd George is not a public representative but a privateer. W. W. CRAIK.

## ERGATOCRACY AND THE SHOP STEWARDS' MOVEMENT

### IV.

WE have now to summarise and restate the argument, and also to answer some of the letters which the earlier articles in this series have evoked. But first let us correct an error. We appear to have been misinformed when we wrote in the August issue that the Greeks have recently started a periodical entitled *The Ergatocrat*. The left-wing organ in Greece is known as *Agon Ergatis*—the Workers' Struggle. All the better! It is up to the British working-class movement to pre-empt the new name, to create a journal which shall expound the philosophy of the workers' struggle. Could it do so under a better caption than the one above suggested? When the Communist Party is inaugurated here this winter, when the British Section of the Third International takes its place beside the other sections, it will require three periodicals—a daily, a weekly, and a monthly. The first of these will probably be called *The Communist*, but assuredly the weekly or the monthly will do well to style itself *The Ergatocrat*. In something, at least, leaden-footed old Britain might lead the way!



Rothstein will say we are too sanguine, but we trust he will be gratified that we have the grace to admit we were wrong when we wrote (June PLEBS, p. 74)—“We incline to the view that the purely political type of socialist organisation has outlived its usefulness.” It is this pronunciamiento, rather than anything said in the Ergatocracy articles, that Rothstein controverts when he declares that we need in England a “unified Communist Left, with one paper, one executive committee, one programme.” Agreed! The arguments in Rothstein’s letter, and many other considerations, have made us realise that *at this juncture* the movement cannot get on without a political party, and that the unification of the left wing forces is one of the most crying needs of the hour. As we ourselves said, the only practicable “socialist unity” is the unified activity of the revolutionary left wing. Whether the Communist Party, once formed, shall or shall not, for propaganda purposes, engage in the parliamentary struggle, is a minor question of tactics. The obvious fact is that any left-wing party formed to-day in this country will work for the realisation of communism through Soviets and not through parliament. And the Soviets or workers’ committees are grounded upon the shop stewards’ movement and analogous developments. This brings us back to our main text.

The shop stewards’ movement, apart from the ideas that animate the class-conscious communists within it, in so far as it has a definite aim, desires to secure the control of industry by the workers. We know that the full realisation of self-government in industry is incompatible with the continued existence of capitalism, for capitalism is maintained by the rule of the owners in the factory and workshop no less than in the state. The shop stewards’ movement, therefore, is an expression of the revolutionary will of the workers, and is one of the means by which that revolutionary will is rapidly creating a revolutionary situation. When we wrote (August PLEBS, p. 99): “Capitalism is doomed. Behind its solid seeming front, the entire structure is crumbling to ruin,” we were not guided solely, or even mainly, by such arguments as those of Kahn; we were not basing our opinion exclusively on a recognition of the perplexities of post-war capitalist finance, or on the increasing difficulties of disposing abroad of the surplus which is essential to capitalist production. John Maclean declares, in effect, that capitalism will not break up of itself, but that the revolutionary workers must take the task in hand. Perhaps Maclean is right, and maybe Kahn is wrong. Let time settle, for time can decide when the economists disagree.

Whatever the merits of this dispute, in our view the imminence of the revolutionary situation results in large part from the operation of the collective will, is an outcome of the vital impulses of the bulk of the workers, who even in such a land as our own, where comparative prosperity has prevailed throughout the war, are showing greater and greater unwillingness to continue running the capitalist machine in the interests of an owning class. But when that unwillingness culminates in a revolutionary situation, the workers, if they are not to starve, will have to take control of the machinery of production in order to run it in their own interests, and will have (we quote Rothstein) “to replace the capitalist state by a proletarian state for the purpose of securing the ultimate death of any form of the state whatever.” Now the carrying on of production and the carrying on of political life, when the revolutionary situation has culminated, are tasks for the workers’ councils, and cannot be performed by any purely political party organised on the lines of a Communist Party. That is the essence of our contention. The Communist Party will function as a guiding, an educative, a political force. One of the most valuable elements of its work will be to keep us in touch with the International. But we must not expect too much from the International whilst capitalism continues to dominate large areas of the world. Each country will have in the first place to make good its own revolution, and to this end the organisation of men and women by *working units* instead of by *residential units* is absolutely indispensable. One of the primary aims of the Communist Party must be to promote the new type of organisation, to further the growth of the shop stewards’ and workers committees’ movement, to encourage in every possible way the spread among the workers’ committees of the ideas of that new political synthesis which is destined ultimately,

we believe, to render political parties, as we now know them, no less obsolete than parliament.

Our other chief critic, Comrade Jackson, quotes with approval an echo from a proletarian dispute: "We want the workers on top and—how they get there!" Quite so; we, too, wish to see the workers on top. But we do care how they get there; we want them to get there quickly; and when they have got the power, we want them to use that power wisely in their own interest, which, after the revolution, will be the interest of the whole community. Agreed that emotion is the driving force, reason must be the guide. Reason displays itself in the intelligent adaptation of means to ends. Workers' rule must have a philosophy as well as a motive force, a carefully fashioned tool as well as a hand to hold it. In addition to being a tool-using animal, man is distinguished from the animals whose life is predominantly instinctive in that he has developed speech and writing for the expression and clarification of his intellectual life. If we may sum up the drift of these articles in a single phrase, while the shop stewards' movement, the workers committees' movement, the soviet movement, is the highly specialised tool for the fulfilment of the desire to get the workers on top, the philosophy of that impending revolution is a new aspect of working-class philosophy and requires a new name. Ergatocracy means something more than "proletarian dictatorship translated into Greek," for much has happened since Marx and Engels died. The soviet, the new revolutionary tool and the new unit of political organisation, embodies the application of Marxism for the effective carrying on of the class struggle under conditions which even Marx and Engels, men of three generations ago, could see only as in a glass darkly. We have to meet these conditions face to face. The shop stewards' movement is an instrument for the administration of the workers, by the workers, for the workers; through the workers' committees we shall realise ergatocracy. EDEN and CEDAR PAUL.

(THE END)

## THE EVOLUTION OF ECONOMIC THEORIES

*Translated for THE PLEBS by W. H. Mainwaring, The Labour College*

**T**O the old school of capitalist economists (the Classical School) Ricardo amongst them, the existing order appeared to be not only the best but also the only one possible. Their knowledge of History was sufficient to enable them to realise that mankind had not always lived and worked under a capitalist mode of production. Ancient slavery and the economy of the Middle Ages, with its serfs and craft guilds, were essentially different from the mode of production upon which the classical school based their theories, and could not but be known to them. But they had no difficulty in disposing of these phenomena as deviations from the normal course of development, or as products of force or of ignorance.

Ricardo makes his hypothetical primitive hunter exchange his product in accordance with the laws of capitalist commodity circulation. His attention having been drawn to the absurdity of this, he calmly replied that it did not alter the situation in the least; he knew that savages were generally stupid, but if compelled to organise society according to the dictates of reason then they would be bound to follow the lines adopted by present-day society. The economists, in fact, had as little regard for historical accuracy as had the philosophers of the 18th century who regarded all things as the result of a natural process, everything that contradicted this theory being an accident.

This standpoint, however, in no way prevented a conscientious, if otherwise superficial, inquiry into the economic life of capitalist society, any more than the belief in the impossibility of any change taking place in the animal world prevented the development of zoology; one might even go farther, and say that this point of view was to some extent necessary, in so far as they required to have Economics as their subject matter objectively before them.

So long as they foresaw no danger ahead for the existing order, they had no fear of the logical consequences of their teachings. Dangerous questions are asked only when a doubt has arisen as to the eternal character of the existing form of society.

As long as it is believed that society is incapable of change no danger need be apprehended with respect to the possibility of a revolution.

They realised that the all-round applications of the Natural Law theory gave rise to difficulties. Ricardo saw that the introduction of machinery reduced the demand for labourers and so created a surplus; and as an honest man could not justify himself in remaining silent upon what was to him a somewhat sad phenomenon. To what extent, then, did he feel called upon to do something on account of his pessimistic view of the struggle between the labourers and the machine? To no extent at all. No country in the world, he said, can, without injury to itself, prevent the introduction of machinery, for not only would such a course fail to benefit the workers, but it would decidedly be against their interests.

Similarly with the division of the product of labour. He saw clearly enough that the income of the capitalist class was the result of the labour of the workers, and he expressed this quite as clearly, not conceiving even the remote possibility of this theory becoming dangerous. What if Rent and Profit were the result of unpaid labour? It was impossible for it to be otherwise. We could never go on without landlords and capitalists. They were indispensable, and to see clearly the real source of their income could not endanger their position.

It is difficult to bring oneself to believe that a man like Ricardo deliberately expressed only such ideas as would be approved by a capitalist society. Were that so no one could respect him. We can only say that the general conceptions of his time regarding the unchangeable character of society inevitably limited his vision. In conflict with defenders of the pre-capitalist order he vigorously defended the interests of the capitalists. And let it be remembered that in all these polemics against a reactionary opposition capitalist economy had truth on its side.

With the appearance of the labour question, however, the situation changes. To the proletarian capitalist society could appear neither just nor reasonable. Instead of a belief in its eternal nature it is now challenged at every point. Socialistic ideas are propagated which the capitalists regard as dangerous to the state. The development of socialistic ideas had a far-reaching effect upon political economy and brought its hitherto fruitful course to an end. Instead of remaining in the hands of men who pursued their investigation in the interests of real understanding, it passed into those representative of the existing order who no longer sought for understanding, but only for means of confusing and, if possible, defeating the aims of the socialists. Since this conflict between Capital and Labour has taken definite form, no serious contribution to economic thought has been made by bourgeois economists. And those who were not content to be mere sycophants had to apply themselves to special aspects or problems of the science, and because of this failed to formulate general theories.

During this period began the decline of capitalist economy. After Ricardo there appeared but one outstanding thinker amongst them—Sismondi. But it was Sismondi who passed judgement upon classical political economy. "I know well that the existing order is of the worst possible kind, but I cannot see how we are to replace it with a better." This is the result of all Sismondi's investigations, a result which naturally disappointed the hopes of the capitalist. Social development has also brought about a state of intellectual inactivity within the bourgeoisie. Henceforth, all progress in economic thought depended upon the Socialists. Being opposed to the capitalist form of society they revealed all its weaknesses. Above all they were concerned with emancipating the suffering masses, and did not shrink, therefore, from a chain of reasoning which led them to discover the true cause of their poverty. So that the great Socialist thinkers, the founders of the Socialist schools, Saint-Simon, Fourier and Robert Owen, accomplished a great deal for social science in general and political economy in particular. The history of European literature has not, up to the present time, paid them their just due. They wielded considerable influence upon political economy (Saint-Simon, Fourier, Robert Owen) history and philosophy (Saint-Simon), and even on psychology (R. Owen and Fourier). It is therefore of some importance to know what their position is with respect to economic science.

So long as capitalism was accepted as a natural order, serious investigation into economic history was impossible. The so-called "Natural Laws" were in reality the capitalist laws of production. These laws and these alone were the subject of inquiry. Capitalist economists made some real contribution to the study of some of these laws, others were somewhat onesidedly considered. Many of their categories were undeveloped, others were vague, others still in contradiction one with the other. This was the case with such important divisions of the science as the nature of Commodities, Money, Exchange-value, Capital, Profit and Wages, all of which required severe tests, examination, and elucidation. As a science, therefore, with the exception of its necessary groundwork, *economic science is a proletarian science, developed by socialist economists.*

Its further development depended upon whether the socialists succeeded—(i) in filling up the gaps left by the Classical School; and (ii) in formulating a scientific theory of historical progress, and in showing what rôle capitalist production plays within it. For obvious reasons the first of these questions could not be solved before the second had been answered.

One of the chief signs of a scientific treatment of both natural and social phenomena is the admission that they are subject to clearly definable laws. This was admitted in connection with natural phenomena long before it was perceived with regard to social phenomena. The philosophers of the 18th century had accepted the existence of natural laws and had used this as their chief weapon in their struggle against feudalism and feudal ideas. Their historical views are, however, sufficient to show how far they were from recognising social phenomena as also subject to given laws. The social activities of men they regarded as a province where reason, subject only to the laws of logic, decided everything.

We have already seen that the capitalist economists—who partly adhered to the prevailing notions and had partly inherited their views of history—were satisfied with this conception of economic history. Mankind had certainly lived previously under abnormal economic conditions, and this because they had not correctly grasped the nature of the Laws of social production. We find this same satisfaction amongst the Socialists of the first half of the 19th century. The origin of the capitalist order, which they regarded as unjust and unreasonable, was sought for in some mental blunder and explained as a mistake on the part of men. To the question how or why this mistake had been made, the answer was—Ignorance. To the further question why had men blundered in this particular direction and not in some other, they gave no satisfactory reply.

This was their conception of social evolution, and they held fast to it despite the fact that their own theories contained elements which would ultimately lead to a more correct and scientific understanding. But these elements had not yet been harmonised into a system and still remained in a fragmentary form—*e.g.*, Fourier said that there were certain necessary stages of economic progress—Savagery, Barbarism, Patriarchate, and Civilisation—each stage representing the degree to which the principle of association had been recognised. How far, however, Fourier still attributed the origin of his own theories to chance may be seen in his writings. He could not understand why his discoveries had not been made many centuries before. Now that the discovery had been made, it was the duty of everyone to co-operate in working for its realisation. How that was to be done he worked out with great care—having in his mind all the time the possibility of making another error and thus bringing further disaster and ruin upon mankind.

He confidently looked forward to his scheme being generally accepted provided it was proved to be reasonable. To do this the scheme had to be presented and put forward in a manner likely to appeal to men of all types and disposition. For example:—

You are covetous or even greedy, but you have no desire to practise usury—good! Help the new order, and it will enable you to receive interest upon your capital of which present-day society knows nothing.

You have an inconstant heart and frequently change the object of your affections—very good! In the future society, the most inconsistent and capri-

cious of men will have the fullest satisfaction; it is, therefore, in your interest to assist in establishing this society. . . . Or, perhaps, you have a liking for good and rich foods? We shall have in the new society cuisines of a kind that the greatest gourmands have not the faintest notion of.

All of which may sound ridiculous, but men of high esteem and standing held these views. We have to show how the defects in their conception of social evolution made them utopians; at the same time to point out that this view was not peculiar to them but was shared in by the philosophers of the 18th century and the Classical economists. Neither philosophers nor economists had any need for utopias, seeing that the capitalist order was already victorious and in the ascendancy. The socialists required a utopia because they were opposed to the existing order. It would be unjust and unreasonable to jeer at their utopias. The philistines who do that merely give expression to their own bourgeois prejudices and in no way detract from the value of their work. It is no reproach to them that their systems contain defects; defects which, after all, were shared, with very rare exceptions, by all men of their day.

So long as the fact that Society was subject to laws had not been recognised, and that these laws had not been given their places as the corner-stone of social science, every reformer was of necessity a utopian. The whole history of political and social science emphasises that fact. What is a utopia? An ideal form of society, which, without regard to present or past historical conditions, is set forth as applicable to a whole people without distinction. But historical conditions received little consideration at a period when social phenomena were generally understood to be the result of men's thoughts. There are still many men to-day who sneer at the utopias of the past, but are utopians themselves. It is not necessary in order to be a utopian to go into fantastic details about a new social order. He is a utopian who instead of taking objective historical conditions as his starting point, commences with personal or so-called national ideals.

(To be continued.)

## KAUTSKY'S "ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY"

**A**N English translation of this important work has been prepared by the present writer for the S.L. Press, and will appear, it is hoped, shortly. It is, perhaps, the maturest work of Kautsky's pen, and certainly one of the finest examples of the practical application of Marx's historical materialism to the elucidation of historical problems. As he rightly says in his opening chapter, whatever our attitude to Christianity, we all must allow that it is one of the most important elements in the history of mankind, an element which no historical student can afford to ignore. Kautsky's aim is to show what was the soil on which Christianity grew—the social and economic development of Jews, Romans, and Greeks, and what were the social conditions of the Græco-Roman world at the time when the Christian Church came into being; from that to show what human and social needs Christianity sprang from, and how what was originally a movement of the oppressed became the most efficient weapon in the hands of the oppressors.

He tells us in his preface that the subject has for long engaged his attention, and he refers to two articles of his dealing with it which appeared about 25 years before this book was published (in 1908). He makes the claim that the key to the understanding of Christianity lies in a knowledge of the class struggles of the time, and that it will be easier for anyone who has had practical experience of the present-day labour movement to understand these than for one who is a mere book student. In fact, he quotes a remark from Jean Jacques Rousseau's *Julie*, to the effect that a man who essays to study Society as a mere observer will never succeed. To understand Society one must be a practical worker inside it. The practical application of which is very clear in the later chapters on the development of the Christian community, in which Kautsky makes some very striking parallels—and notes also the great contrasts—with the modern labour movement.

The two opening chapters deal with the sources of our knowledge of the primitive

Christians and their founder. Here Kautsky shows very clearly and concisely the extraordinary falsifications and forgeries of which Christian writers have been guilty. In the third he shows us how, when what is allowed to be mythical is put on one side, very little remains of that personality on whom liberal theologians are so prone to dwell—though it is clear from later chapters that he thinks there was such a personality. He points out, in regard to this question, that those men who make most impression by their personality are precisely those whose memory dies soonest. The great speaker or actor is practically forgotten so soon as those die out who actually saw or heard him. On the other hand, Kautsky points out that purely mythical personalities such as Goethe's Werder have made the deepest impression on society when the historical conditions were there. Referring to the historical value of the gospels, he avers that this lies in the light these throw for the critical reader on the social conditions of the time, and he points out that very frequently works which are avowedly fiction, give in their way a truer picture of their time than actual historical works.

These chapters, however, are relatively the shorter and less important section of the book. The chapters on the Economics of Slavery and the nature of the Roman State are particularly valuable because they show the profound difference, despite superficial similarity, between ancient and modern Imperialism, as well as between ancient and modern communism, or the proletariat then and now. Kautsky has no difficulty in showing that the proletariat of Rome had nothing in common with the proletariat of to-day, but that it corresponded far more to what the Germans call "Lumpen-proletariat," that is the parasitic elements who live in the main from begging and stealing, or as paupers. Space does not permit us to follow his argument in detail, but in view of the many attempts to draw awful warnings from the fate of Rome for the edification of anybody who attempts to improve the conditions of the masses, it may be mentioned that Kautsky shows very clearly that the ancient world civilisation was not ruined by the exorbitant demands of a pampered working class, but because a slave class, having no power to defend themselves against the exploitation of their labour power, died like flies. Then, when the supply of slaves had dried up, Italy, for instance, was left depopulated, the peasants and handworkers having all been ruined.

The chapter on thought in the Roman Imperial period shows the gradual decay of all intellectual life under Cæsarism, and the growth of corruption, superstition and vice in every form. Especially interesting to my mind is the close connection traced between the growth of superstition and of all kinds of swindling; although it is not without a certain bitterness that we watch the gradual degeneration of Grecian philosophy into the grosser forms of superstition or mere charlatanry—easy though it be to see that the philosophy of Plato opened the way for these later developments.

The history of Israel and Judaism up to and after the Babylonian Exile forms two long and illuminating chapters, in which the author goes very fully into the question of the origin of the Jews, and shows how the so-called racial characteristics on which so much stress has been laid by Anti-Semites and Philo-Semites, or Zionists, alike are all to be explained by the peculiar circumstances of their historical development. Jesus, he concludes, was in all probability a Jewish patriot, who led an armed rising against the Roman oppressor. The evidence for this is largely based on the contradictory, and in more than one respect quite absurd impossibilities of the gospel record, which point to falsification of the story by those who first put the oral tradition into writing, as well as by the later copyists. Kautsky explains from the peculiar position of the Jewish people and the Christians in regard to the all-powerful Romans the main reason for those falsifications—namely, the wish to stand well with the Roman authorities. At this later period Christianity had developed from a small Jewish Sect into one whose followers were mainly drawn from the non-Jewish world, and as these latter got the upper hand, anti-semitic tendencies showed themselves and the desire arose to make the Jews and not the Romans responsible for Jesus' death on the cross. The doctrine of non-resistance was brought in—so far as I understand Kautsky—for the same reason. Kautsky also shows how the gospels themselves

give hints of the development of the Christians from a proletarian sect to one which tried to attract richer members, and how the outspoken communism of Jesus in the earlier gospels as well as his diatribes against the rich, were either omitted or watered down later.

The development of the Christian Church as traced in this book, from proletarian sect to the most powerful instrument of government in the world, is most amusingly described in a passage of Engels' preface to Marx's *Civil War in France*, a passage which does not appear in the abridged version published in English. In this passage, which Kautsky quotes in full, Engels makes a comparison between the repressive measures undertaken by the Roman Empire and those of the German Government of his day. But Kautsky, taking up the parable, points out to those who draw the conclusion that Socialism can look forward to an easy triumph, that Christianity won by the sacrifice of its own principles, becoming, instead of an organisation of the oppressed, an instrument of the oppressing classes.

It is impossible, of course, to do justice in a short summary to such a book. Especially in the English-speaking world, a study which treats Christianity as a social phenomenon, to be explained as such by its social and economical roots and developments, ought to be especially valuable; since with us even so-called Marxists have been disposed to dwell on the inadequacy of Marxism to explain such phenomena, and the field has, in consequence, been left to the champions of bourgeois Christianity on the one hand or bourgeois free thought on the other.

J. B. ASKEW.

## A G.H.Q. FOR LABOUR

**T**HE experience of the Trade Union Movement during the recent Railway-men's strike has brought the need of a permanent home for the Movement right to the front. Such a need has long been felt in certain quarters, and in 1906 the Trades Union Congress decided "that the various sections of the Labour Movement should have their offices in one building so as to be in close communication with each other."

In 1907 the P.C. of the T.U.C. brought the matter before the "Joint Board," which was then representative of the various industrial and political working-class movements. The Joint Conference held in 1905, representing the P.C. of the T.U.C. and the executive of the G.F. of T.U., together with the National Committee of the Labour Representation Committee, considered it advisable, when practicable, that the offices of the three organisations should be in the same building.

In 1907 it was clear that the members of the P.C. were prepared to recommend any practical plan for the purpose of erecting one large central building devoted exclusively to Labour purposes.

The determined assault of the Government upon Trade Unionism in 1919 found the movement with its forces imperfectly co-ordinated, to the disadvantage of all concerned. The railwaymen, who were called upon to bear the first shock of the attack, had their G.H.Q. in Euston Road. The rest of the Transport Workers' staff had pitched their tent in Trafalgar Square, while the miners had established their office in Russell Square. The Publicity Department, which rendered such signal service to the railwaymen and the rest of the workers, had its quarters in Eccleston Square. During the week the delegates representing the industries immediately concerned were persons of no fixed abode. Sometimes they gathered in Caxton Hall, then they were speeding away to the Memorial Hall in Farringdon Street, only to journey back a little later to the Fabian Hall. The time, energy, and money spent in bringing Labour's staff together throughout the fight, might have been used to infinitely greater advantage, for it is obvious that a staff can only be effective when it acts in co-operation.

It is not the purpose of this article to suggest that you have only to create a National Labour Institute to solve all the difficulties of trade unionism, but it is intended to urge the point that a large central building, with provision for carrying on the executive work of industrial organisations and for housing the staff of a unified movement,

is bound to be more economical, more efficient and more fruitful of good results than the present haphazard arrangement, which is wasteful in every way.

Joint conferences held at Nottingham (22/1/18) and Derby (3/9/18) definitely determined to go on with the work of realising a permanent home for the Labour Movement. It was decided to associate it with the memory of the men of the Labour Movement who had fallen in the War. To those who have no desire to be associated with institutions which in any way glorify militarism, it should be pointed out that the Labour Memorial, although associated with the memory of our men who died in the war, is to be the home of the British section of the only movement that, fundamentally, can end war and bring to humanity freedom and peace. The Memorial is to take the form of a beautiful building, within whose walls is to be a great hall for gatherings of a national character. There will be smaller conference rooms and all the necessary offices for carrying on the Executive work of industrial and political organisation. A great library is to be built up, and working-class students will have ample facilities to borrow works which are at present beyond their reach; study or reading rooms being provided for all working men and women who care to take advantage of the opportunity opened up to them. There will also be provision made for research work, and by every possible means Labour's activities will be unified beneath the Memorial roof. It is further proposed, for the benefit of delegates of working-class bodies attending London on Labour business, to open hotel premises as an integral part of the Memorial.

Apart from the impetus that a permanent home would give to the Movement, it should not be forgotten that an enormous sum of money is expended annually by democratic organisations having business in London in the form of rent for halls and offices, eating and sleeping accommodation, etc., practically the whole of which goes into the pockets of people who have no sympathy with Labour's aims. It is contended that the Movement has sufficient ability to do these necessary services itself, and that if the principle of co-operation is given full play, that Labour can perform them more efficiently as well as more economically.

Since the inception of the scheme, there has been a suggestion that the Co-operative Movement may fall into line and try to make the Memorial wider in its scope, although embodying all that Labour has planned. Such a rapprochement is to be heartily welcomed for many reasons, but the Labour Movement must hurry forward with its own plans, always of course being prepared to enlarge them should the occasion arise. The Conferences held at Nottingham and Derby in 1918 recommended the Trade Union and other Labour bodies to raise from their membership a contribution of 1s. per male and 6d. per female member to be devoted to the building fund of the Memorial. In round figures this should produce the sum of £300,000, which is the minimum fixed for a building worthy of the Labour Movement. The upkeep of the building and administrative expenses will be met by reasonable rates charged for purposes for which the Movement now pays high prices to private persons. Undoubtedly the saving would be great, while the social results would be splendid. Working class students will be keenly alive to the possibilities of such an institution, and it is hoped that they will play their part to make the project an unqualified success.

The Organiser (the undersigned) will be glad to answer any questions that may be addressed to him at 34 Eccleston Square, S.W. E. GILL.

## CORRESPONDENCE

JOHN S. CLARKE'S POEMS.

**D**EAR COMRADE,—I am afraid the "good old row" to which J. F. H. looks forward with such pleasurable anticipation is not going to be of long duration. I suppose the aim of anyone who engages in a controversy is to convert his opponent to his way of thinking. There does not seem much prospect of such conversion in the present case, for, as he truly says, we should disagree as to which are the important or unimportant pieces in a collection of poems; and failing agreement on that point, there is not much likelihood of harmony on others.



To say, as J. F. H. does, that music is magic does not help us to an understanding of our subject, any more than the rustic witness's description of the stone "with which the awful deed was committed," as being "about the size of a lump of chalk," assisted the court in its endeavours to get at the facts of the case. However, I must thank him for his forbearance in not asking me to define music; which, I agree, is difficult. And I suppose his definition is as good as any other.

To take only one of the poems he mentions as being musical—Morris's "A Death Song." In the second verse we have:—

"We craved to speak to tell our woeful learning;  
We come back speechless, bearing back our dead."

Had this been written by a working-class poet, I rather fancy J. F. H.'s criticism would have run something like this:—

"I cannot understand why the writer should have marred an otherwise fine poem by using the word 'speechless' here. Is he not aware that its association with a condition that inevitably follows upon hard drinking renders it totally unfit for use on such a solemn occasion? A real artist in words would have written 'voiceless' or some such word. And why the redundant use of the word 'back' in the same line?"

Yours fraternally, P. LAVIN.

J. F. H. writes:—Comrade Lavin's critical commentary on the lines from Morris's "Death Song" is so neat that I should be quite pleased to have written it myself. But what justification has he for the suggestion that, in my humble capacity as reviewer, I use different standards for "working-class" poets and "real" artists? I think I have the right to demand that, before this correspondence ceases, he either withdraws or substantiates what amounts to a charge of peculiarly detestable snobbishness.

DEAR COMRADE,—You amuse me by your tiresome disquisitions on the quality of Clarke's genius. In fact, I think both you and Lavin are b—— (which means unmitigated) humbugs. We of the less educated species of 'Enerys care not whether the heights of an ideal poet laureate are reached or not, we care not if the finesse is missing, but we do know it gets home with its brutal thrust and its human bite. Chuck it, and give the book a boost. He (Clarke) is a propagandist, and that is what matters.

Yours fraternally, E. RAYNER.

#### PHILOSOPHICAL TERMINOLOGY.

DEAR COMRADE,—Alexander Evans, pillorying a poor sentence of ours, quotes with approval from McManus his objection to truth being "dressed in the repellent garb of abstract terms." And Thos. A. Jackson asks how one can expect to influence the working man if one goes to him "with strange tongues, talking of abstract concepts he can neither touch, taste, or handle." For our part, had we quoted McManus in criticism of our own efforts (efforts to clear our own minds on the philosophy of the working-class movement, and not attempts from a lofty pinnacle to diffuse the light of our wisdom), we should have quoted rather his remark on the desirability of "a more generous attempt to emulate Lenin and Trotsky in their devotion to the task of having difficult theories propounded in the most popular terms." We have just been translating Trotsky's pamphlet, *The Soviet Government and International Imperialism*, and have been amazed at his genius for the lucid handling of abstractions. But even Trotsky, while calling a spade a spade, and while calling a plough a plough, has to use "abstract terms" when he is talking of "digging" and "ploughing." And even Lenin and Trotsky would have to use a new and perchance repellent abstract term if they should wish to convey a new abstract idea, or if they should wish to find some more convenient designation for "the dictatorship of the proletariat," should wish to range that abstraction in its place beside the abstraction "democracy." We wager that neither of our illustrious Russian comrades will jib at the word "ergatocracy."

Permit us to quote Dietzgen (*Philosophical Essays*, p. 137): "It is but fair to mention that there are a good many among you who blame me for being too 'scholarly' or not 'popular' enough. To that I reply that only trite sayings and truisms are easily comprehensible. The so-called popular things always move in the old ruts, while social democracy has a new doctrine, based on principles which are generally misunderstood and require a total transformation of our mode of thinking, and, therefore, cannot be comprehended without a certain mental effort."

A modicum of native pugnacity has roused us to reply to the strictures of Comrades Jackson and Evans. But far be it from us to maintain that their admonitions were superfluous. If we write again in the PLEBS it will be in a chastened spirit, and we shall endeavour to bear in mind the aphorism of our distinguished namesake (I. Corinthians, xiv, 2):—"He that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him." Yours fraternally,  
E. and C. P.

### THE RE-OPENING

**D**ER TAG at last! After many deferrings of hope and lengthy delays the College is again open.

Noah Ablett, as chairman, was in reminiscent mood, and briefly referred to the 10 years of struggle. Mr. Charlton spoke for his colleagues of the N.U.R. Executive, and coupled with his good wishes and advice recollections of "the old German" Marx, whom he had often seen in his boyhood. The one and only George Barker gave a characteristic speech, and was proud to claim to have been the first official in S. Wales to recognise the vital issue at stake in the memorable '09 split. By the warmth of their welcome the audience well showed its appreciation of the valuable services Vice-Principal W. W. Craik has given to our movement. Very interestingly he narrated how the need for education had become so recognised that the problem now was to find sufficient teachers for the classes springing up on every side. More students must return to their fellows, and give them correct knowledge of past and present social relations. Messrs. Hodges, Winstone, Edwards, Thomas and others sent their regrets for unavoidable absence.

Inspection of the College, eating and drinking, dancing and music, filled a pleasant and memorable evening. Old friends met again, and new friends were made. The Meet—of which the above was but a foretaste—will find the College busily "carrying on." Well done railwaymen, miners of S. Wales, and postmen! Who will be the next to attack the dictatorship of capitalism at its base?

M. S.

### "PLEBS" NOTES AND NEWS

**A**S announced last month, THE MEET will be held on Saturday, November 8th, at 2 o'clock. We have found it impossible to have the Agenda ready in time for publication in this issue, but the matters to be discussed include the Constitution of the League and its relation to the Classes and to the College; the future of the Magazine; and the question of a League badge. Districts and Classes are cordially invited to send delegates. We want a good and, so far as possible, a representative Conference. Accommodation is scarce in London just now, so make your arrangements beforehand. (Don't rely on us—we've got our hands more than full already.)

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**TO MEMBERS OF THE PLEBS LEAGUE.**—A new list of members is being compiled. Only those will be included who send in their names and addresses, together with 1s., being the annual subscription, September 1919 to August 1920. *No others!* Executive Committee members are reminded that their obligations are the same as those of plain, ordinary people! Branch secretaries are urged to send addresses, as well as names, of members. We want this list to be complete. And please note, *the Secretary will not accept money at the Meet.*

This is the only "off day" for receipt of cash. Intending members are hereby reminded that membership of the League is open to everyone in sympathy with our objects, and entails an annual subscription of 1s. No entrance forms necessary. Name, address—and a bob.

Please read the above paragraph carefully, and don't go away and forget all about it.

The matter for the List of Classes (see notice last month) is coming in slowly but steadily, and we shall publish it as soon as complete. If your class is not included, it will be your fault, not ours.

Our October issue sold right out—and more were wanted. If anyone has any surplus unsold copies we should be glad to give credit for them. . . . Moral, to those who were disappointed:—Order early in the month, and give us an idea of how many to print. We're not well enough off to print a few extra hundreds purely "on spec."

Orders can now be booked for bound vols. of PLEBS, 1918 (Vol. 10), price 5s., postpaid. A few 1917 vols. are still for sale.

At the conference of delegates from all Plebs classes in Leeds and Bradford, held October 11th, it was decided to combine all activities in the West Riding. Extension of the work anticipated everywhere. If you want to link up write C. G. Oakley, 26 Westbury Place, Hunslet, Leeds.

W. W. Craik and W. Paul gave a fine send-off to the Birmingham class, which starts its winter programme confident of a record success. T. D. Smith is tutor, and B. V. Rowland (120 Winson Street, Winson Green, Birmingham), is secretary.

Matt Campbell writes that the Workington class is going stronger than ever and that Cumberland is awakening! Tutor and students gave practical proof of the real value of independent working-class education by earning the congratulations of the rank and file for their activities during the Railway Strike.

The prospectus of the James Connolly Labour College, which has been sent us from Dublin, is a heartening document, and we are glad to see our own motto in big type in a prominent position. The purpose of the college is "to commemorate James Connolly by carrying on his work," and a more sensible form of commemoration would be impossible.

Good luck to the International Socialist Club and Institute to be opened at 28 East Road, City Road, E.C.1, early in November. There will be a large hall to seat 600, and several rooms for library and branch meetings. Lectures on political, economic, and scientific subjects are to be a prominent feature, and the club, its promoters hope, will be an active centre of working-class educational work.

Jack Hamilton sends us a whole parcel of propaganda leaflets, time-tables, syllabuses, &c., &c., issued by the Lancs. and Cheshire League for Independent Working-Class Education and by the Liverpool and District Council. Space is terribly tight this month, so we can only briefly refer to Newbold's admirable little *Industrial History Syllabus*, which can be obtained (3½d. post paid, or 2s. 2d. per doz.) from J. Hamilton, 99 Botanic Road, Wavertree Road, Liverpool. It is well worth possessing.

**PUSH "THE PLEBS."** We hate Special Appeals. They hurt us even more than they do you, as father said to the Young Hopeful he was about to spank. And we shouldn't need to make them if our circulation was a bit bigger. We want to increase our size. *The first essential is to increase our circulation.* We ask you to get busy, and find us new subscribers. We want Agents—pushers—chaps who'll do a bit of slogging for us. Will YOU be one? We're giving value for money these days. In fact, we're carrying on at a small loss—for lack of a few hundred new readers. **PUSH "THE PLEBS"**—in your class, in your branch, at meetings, and at home! Can we get 1,000 NEW SUBSCRIBERS this month?

#### DONATIONS TO "KEEN-A-BOB" FUND

*(We still need them)*

H. Thompson, 6d.; W. G. Davies, £1; Alice Pratt, 7s. 6d.; T. Reece, 3s.; A Tight-fisted Housewife, £1; T. Jones, 1s. 3d.; E. Collins, 1s. 6d.; Tom Mann, 5s.; J. D. W., 4s.; F. J. Adkins, £1; L.B., H.O.B., and L.H.O., 7s. 6d. Total, £4 10s. 3d.

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## REVIEWS

*The Guild State.* By G. R. S. TAYLOR. (Allen and Unwin. 3s. 6d.)

**T**HE author of this book held out a helping hand to the College in its early days, and we are not ungrateful. Rather we deplore his subsequent lapse from grace in not continuing the connection. It would have helped us and it would not have harmed him—judging by this book. Guild Socialism seems a most elusive thing since everyone who writes upon it puts forward his own particular interpretation. It is to be hoped, for charity's sake, that G.R.S.T. represents only a small number of believers.

In the section on the "Historical Basis of the Guild System," one wonders at the prefix, the more so as the author himself says he has no intention of arguing the case "historically." Which is doubtless his justification for the view that the guildsman of the Middle Ages was the possessor of a "freedom" which no workers ever enjoyed. In those days, apparently, the producers were supreme; no "laws" existed, and man was captain of his soul.

In the section on the "Relations between Guilds and State" we learn that the "complete Guild State" is to have an Army and Navy, but they will be the directly-controlled servants of the State, since "had it not been for the generals and diplomatists there would have been very few dangers from which to be saved." History again!

In a footnote on p. 32 G. R. S. T., commenting upon a statement that the ancient communism of Russia is the principle of the present Revolution, says: "It may be necessary to add that the principles of the Russian Revolution are very probably a long, long way from the ideals of M. Trotsky and his Jewish friends. The thought of any Jew representing Russia can arouse nothing but bitter laughter in the historical mind." If the "historical mind" here referred to is G. R. S. T.'s own, we must confess to complete indifference whether its laughter is bitter or not. But we should like to know what other principles have been evolved in the Russian Revolution apart from those of "M. Trotsky and his Jewish friends." If ever G. R. S. T. writes a work as logical and as sanely practical as Trotsky's *The Russian Revolution to Brest-Litovsk* we shall be happy to read it.

Further, we suggest to him that a course of study of the works of a certain German Jew might help in clarifying his views upon history and other subjects, including the State. That G. R. S. T. has no illusions about the undemocratic nature of the existing State is quite evident from this book, but it is likewise evident that the necessary class-function of all States has not yet been perceived by him. What "necessary" functions of the class State could not be democratically carried out by the Industrial Commonwealth of the future? A "citizen's" board would be an absurdity when already all but the aged, infirm or the very young would be represented on the producers' council. That form of exhaustive representation which permitted the smooth carrying on of the productive process, the most intimate relation of society, as G. R. S. T. admits, might surely be trusted satisfactorily to arrange the rest of its life-interests, without needing to camouflage itself under any other form or title. . . . What some Guildsmen have to do is to lose their bourgeois life to save their Socialist soul.

G. S.  
*Commerce and History: A Historical Review.* Edited by W. Page. Preface by Sir William Ashley. (Constable. 3s. net.)

A historical review of British commerce and industry from 1815 to 1914, based upon Parliamentary debates. A record of events rather than an attempt to explain their history, a description of conditions rather than an explanation of how they came about. Here and there the "debates" give what are sufficient reasons for the passing or repeal of certain laws by the propertied interests.

The function of Parliament is clearly shown by the attitude adopted towards many of the subjects dealt with, more particularly perhaps the Labour Movement, which is described wholly from the point of view of the employers. Some of the admissions made by members, Hon. and Right Hon., are decidedly refreshing.

Despite its limitations, the work is a valuable one and contains an enormous

store of detailed information of which use can be made by students of history and economics; and it can be recommended for a place in all our reference libraries. Its value has been increased by an exceedingly good index, by means of which the reader can readily look up any point of interest; and by a series of maps illustrating British interests and spheres of operation.

W. H. M.  
Further Facts from the Coal Commission. Compiled by R. PAGE ARNOT. (The Labour Party, 34 Eccleston Square, S.W.1. 6d.)

The ready sale of *Facts from the Interim Report of the Coal Commission* (6d.) has evidently encouraged Page Arnot to compile a further useful document setting forth in lucid manner all the salient points brought out during the subsequent sittings of the Committee investigating the Miners' demand for Nationalisation. No one engaged in Nationalisation propaganda should be without a copy of this excellent pamphlet.

E. G.

\* \* \* \* \*

The first use Mark Starr has made of his second term at the Labour College has been to revise *A Worker Looks at History* in order to improve it for a new permanent edition. It is our hope to place this soon at the service of the classes, some of which have already sent orders. The matter has been enlarged by the inclusion of the formerly missing outline on the Three Phases of Capitalism, and of an additional chapter dealing with recent developments. In addition to minor improvements and expansions the book will contain an Index. Let us know if you are behind us in this matter by the size of your orders. And please note that Craik's *Short History* will really and truly be ready shortly—apologies for delay.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb have re-written their *History of Trade Unionism*, which, published in 1894, has been for some time out of print. Brought right up to date, including the recent Railway Strike, it will be published early in 1920 at 21s. net. The authors have considerably made arrangements for Trade Unionists to purchase cheap copies at the bare cost of machining and paper; and the same privilege is offered to the Labour College for copies, plainly bound in cloth, purchased before the 30th November, 1919, only. To enable our Classes to take advantage of this offer, the Secretary of the Labour College will receive orders accompanied by the amount of the price up to that date; for single copies, 5s. 6d. post paid; for class orders of six or more copies, 5s. each, post paid. After publication there will be no cheap copies available.

\* \* \* \* \*

The S.L. Press have not sent us a copy of W. M. Wheeldon's *ABC of Economics*, but we hope to review it next month.

#### PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

- From NATIONAL LABOUR PRESS:—*Parliament and Revolution*. By J. Ramsay MacDonald. (Socialist Library, XII. 1s. 6d. net.) *Red Rubber*. By E. D. Morel. (New and revised edition, paper 3s. 6d.; cloth 5s.)
- From PALMER AND HAYWARD:—*The Meaning of the World Revolution*. By Hamilton Fyfe. (3s. 6d.)
- From the I.L.P.:—*Socialist Review*. Oct.-Dec. (1s.) *The Menace of Trusts*. By Philip Snowden. (2d.) *The Profiteering Act Explained*. By W. H. Thompson. (1d.)
- From THE LABOUR PARTY:—*Labour Women on International Legislation*. By Gertrude Tuckwell, Marion Phillips, and Susan Lawrence. (3d.) *Labour Policy and the Famine*. (2d.)
- From the PEOPLE'S RUSSIAN INFORMATION BUREAU:—*The Soviet Republic of Russia: Its Rise and Organisation*. By Capt. Jacques Sadoul. (2d.)

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