Vol. XIII. No. 4 *April, 1921*

THE PLEBS

AGITATE EDUCATE ORGANISE

THE CASE FOR OUR SIDE

"...Not propaganda–except in so far as the statement of true facts is propaganda."

–The Home Secretary in the House of Commons, March 3rd, 1921.

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THE PLEBS

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

Vol. XIII April, 1921 No. 4

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OUR POINT OF VIEW

A MONTH or two ago the Plebs League received an invitation from a body calling itself the Workers' Educational Trades Union Committee to lay before that body, for the purposes of an investigation it was conducting into "the educational requirements of Trade Unionists," information as to Plebs educational aims and methods. The invitation was declined; and a request made that if the Report which the aforementioned Committee proposed to issue contained any reference to the Plebs League, a footnote should be appended stating that the League had not participated in any way in the Committee's researches.

Plebeians are entitled to an explanation of the E.C.'s action in the matter. It need not be a long one. Had the Committee of Inquirers

after Truth been appointed by the Labour Movement as a whole, or had its members consisted exclusively of Trade Union representatives, the Plebs E.C. would have welcomed the opportunity of stating the case for Independent Working-Class Education. But in this case they were of opinion that that case would be prejudged, since the "impartial investigators" numbered amongst them so many prominent representatives of our old and impartial friend, the W.E.A. The Committee's invitation to the Plebs was signed by Mr. J. M. Mactavish, Secretary of the W.E.A.; and the Committee's notepaper bore the names of two other well-known W.E.A.-ers. True, the names of a couple of T.U. officials also figured there. But the whole thing smelt too strongly of W.E.A.—despite the "Trade Union" camouflage. "The hands were the hands of Esau, but the voice was the voice of Jacob." And the Plebs E.C. suspected that Jacob's mind was likely to be made up beforehand, so far as "the educational requirements of Trade Unionists" were concerned.

Unduly suspicious? We don't think so. The PLEBS has not seldom had to question the W.E.A.'s "impartiality." And here is a recent instance of that impartiality, in full working order, for knowledge of which we are indebted to a Swindon correspondent: On February 19th last, Dr. Luboff, joint author of a widely-advertised book of anti-Bolshevik propaganda, and a well-known anti-Soviet champion, paid a *second* visit to the Swindon branch of the W.E.A. to lecture on Russia. Perhaps he ridded himself for this occasion of any partisan bias. But we shall be forgiven for wondering.

* * *

We ask every one of our readers, more especially those directly connected with classes, to ponder over the following letter:—

DEAR EDITOR,—According to to-day's *Daily Herald* (March 7th) the cuckoo has arrived. That is a reminder to all Plebeians that with summer the class season ends and the PLEBS' circulation is thereby affected.

No doubt every class-lecturer and every student recognises that it would not only help the PLEBS if students arranged to get it regularly during the summer, but it would be of tremendous value to themselves in preventing them from getting out of touch with a lot of what they have learned during the winter.

Here in Edinburgh we propose to get out of the difficulty which the summer brings by arranging for one or two keen students in every class to take up the job of distributing the PLEBS during the "close season." Perhaps other Districts would care to follow suit, and by helping the PLEBS help themselves.

Yours frat.,

J. P. M. MILLAR

And now that you have read it, what can you DO about it? There is no essential connection between the thermometer and Plebs' propaganda. Independent Working-Class Education is just as vital a matter between May and August as between September and April, even if some of its machinery is for the time being suspended. Precisely because of this latter fact, indeed, it is important that the PLEBS, as a link between students everywhere, should be as widely distributed as ever. Can we avoid even a slight drop in our circulation this year? We can—if YOU and our other friends make up your minds to it. Millar's letter points out the way to do it. (See also particulars of Circulation Competition, p. 123.)

PRODUCTION AND POLITICS

VI.—The High Court of Parliament

WE saw in our last article how, during the period from the end of the 8th to the beginning of the 12th century the sovereign lords of the English land set on a firm and lasting basis the centralised system of monarchy, transforming their household functionaries (*ministri*=servants) into officers of State. We must now consider how their simple machinery of doing justice, collecting fines and the equivalents of feudal service gave birth to parliamentary institutions.

Many myths have come to pass muster as good history in connection with the High Court of Parliament and extraordinary are the notions which are current about its origins and function. Hence it is a serious defect about all constitutional history books—including Professor Pollard's recent *Evolution of Parliament**—that they are so expensive as to place them almost beyond the reach of the victims of such quack productions as *Parliament and Revolution* and *Socialism and Government*. The illusions of democracy are so many, and their beginnings so difficult to explore, that we can forgive Professor Pollard his rhapsody on the enduring necessity of parliament since he so pitilessly dispels the superstitions of seven dead centuries. We will deal with parliament in the present if he will show us parliament in the past. We want facts, and he, following worthily in the footsteps of Stubbs and Maitland, gives us just the facts we have been craving.

Professor Pollard makes plain the non-popular, indeed the anti-popular, character of the early parliament. Parliament commenced as a court and, says he, "a court is not a popular institution." Parliament was the court of the king (*curia regis*), and to it every tenant-in-chief, i.e. everyone holding his lands direct from the king, was liable to be summoned in precisely the same way as their tenants were liable to be summoned to the courts over which they presided as manorial lords. Every tenant-in-chief could be summoned to the court or *parliamentum*, but none had the right to attend. It was a matter of summons, of duty and not of right.

The king in his court might be seeking advice, dispensing judgments, or demanding attendance in the field or its equivalent in money. He summoned his tenants to secure their consent, for mediæval theory required that a subject should give his willing consent (though he might have to be tortured before he became "willing") to whatever the king had in hand. He chose his counsellors from amongst his tenants—barons, ecclesiastical or secular. He appointed some to try cases in the Court of Exchequer, others in the Court of Chancery, others in the Court of King's Bench. These Courts—his courts—sat in Westminster Hall. Thither, in time, with the growth of the King's power, came freemen who could not get satisfaction in other courts, to receive the judgments of these lords of parliament, who interpreted the customs, handed down new decisions in new cases (acts of parliament), which being promulgated came to be new law and the beginnings of legislation.

Only lords, barons, men who held land by baronial tenure direct from the king, could adjudicate in the king's courts. Law, whether as affecting

* Longmans, Green & Co., 21s. net.

judge or petitioner, was a matter for the free-tenant, for the freeman. Villeins had no place in the king's courts; they had no place in law.

Attendance in the "High Court of Parliament" was an incident, a burden of feudal tenure. The House of Lords developed out of the assembly of tenants-in-chief summoned to counsel the king. The House of Commons evolved out of a gathering of men sent forward—not necessarily elected—in response to a royal summons to the "communes" of the free-tenants of shires and boroughs.

"In dealing with mediæval representation," says Professor Pollard, "we have always to think in terms of feudal service rather than in those of democratic principle. The boroughs are represented because they are collective tenants-in-chief on the king's demesne. . . ." (page 157). Again, "It was the land rather than men that parliament represented." The "communes" avoided their parliamentary services as much as they could. Boroughs dodged the duty of sending representatives, and were overjoyed at being forgotten. They only came to parliament when they wanted some confirmation or extension of their charters. That gained they shook the dust of Westminster off their feet as quickly as possible.

Parliament commenced, then, as a court of law and justice. Justice was administered for its emoluments, and laws were made to embody and to standardise the judgments. The king desired freedom in judgments in so far as this made for increased revenue. The tenant-in-chief desired confirmation of the charters standardising the laws and customs affecting his tenure. The king and his officers strengthened the machinery of the shire-court with a view to "search the pockets" of his tenants in every shire, hundred and manor of the realm.

During two centuries after the Norman Conquest pious tenants-in-chief and kings themselves were settling throughout the realm daughter communities of religious orders having their parent monasteries in France and Italy. The monasteries had introduced sheep rearing and provided a movable crop in the wool yield, which formed a medium of contributions to the parent abbeys and to Rome. Italian and German merchants collected the wool, advanced loans upon its security, built up the Florentine banks on such a basis and caused money to flow into and out of England. The Church availed itself of this trade and its monetary reflex to levy contributions for extravagant building, ornament and ceremonial. King and Church, with their courtiers and clerics, made huge exactions to rear the architectural masterpieces of Westminster and other of our Gothic churches, the palaces of the Savoy, of Lambeth, and of St. Stephen's. The new mechanism of the money economy was worked relentlessly to provide the means of royal aggrandisement, clerical magnificence and baronial consequence.

It was this new economy of wool trade and money loans and contributions which made the politics of Archbishop Langton and Simon de Montfort. The struggle for the Great Charter—Magna Carta—was an endeavour on the part of the tenants-in-chief to force upon the Crown a calendar of feudal rights in a document "manifestly conceived in the interests of a class." "Magna Carta," says Pollard, "was designed to secure the local independence of barons rather than the national responsibility of kings."

The "struggle for Parliament" in the next reign was the continuation of the baronial endeavour to restrain the king from tampering with "the

liberties" of the tenants-in-chief, with their right to lord it over their tenantry and villeins as they would, their privilege of being kings on their own. In the eventual "Barons' War," Simon de Montfort's gesture towards democracy consisted merely in his rallying the mass of the tenants, tenants-in-chief and tenants in boroughs in royal demesne. He called together the landlords *as a class*—regardless of their tenure being in a town or out of a town. The "Mad Parliament" had the consciousness of "an upper ten." Simon de Montfort and his faction had the consciousness of a class.

Both of them, unlike Mr. J. H. Thomas, were extra-constitutionalists. Both of them, unlike the Labour Party, "plumped" for the good old English method, the method of *free-born* Englishmen—Direct Action. They improvised their own constitution and met together, like all good Englishmen, *maintaining revolutionary order under arms*. Under arms, the barons of England won and held the Charter. Under arms, the barons of England established the principle of the House of Commons. Under arms, the new Model Army made the House of Commons the instrument of their class. Under arms, the oligarchs of 1689 established the precious "Constitution" worshipped by the Labour Party. Under arms, *every* class that has risen and ruled in England has made and maintained its own constitution.

The constitutional historians are all busy hammering home that, in the past, the great events of English politics have been those wherein a class has thought and acted as a class. No constitutional historian can so falsify the facts as completely to disguise the *class* character of our unfolding island story. No constitutional historian can hide the fact that Parliament was won by the propertied classes *under arms*. No constitutional historian can mitigate the *bias* of the actors in our English revolutions. Here is Bishop Stubbs saying of De Montfort's assembly that it—

> was not primarily and essentially a constitutional assembly. It was not a general convention of the tenants-in-chief, or of the three estates, but a parliamentary assembly of the supporters of the existing government. This was a matter of necessity. (*Constitutional History*, Vol. II., pp. 92–3.)

"A parliamentary assembly of the supporters of the existing government." Bolshevism! Dictatorship! "A matter of necessity." Where? In England! When? Before Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Thomas were born!

Parliament, in so far as it existed and expanded in succeeding reigns, did so at the instance of the kings who used its judicial and legislative functions to strengthen the central power of the monarchy, and developed its financial activities with the sole idea of increasing the amount of money they could extract from their subjects with the least cost of collection and accompanying discontent. Parliament remained till Tudor times a High Court, the grand assize of all the realm, sought by those requiring alleviation of judicial grievances, avoided by all whom the king desired exceedingly to tax.

J. T. WALTON NEWBOLD

(To be continued.)

AN ESSAY COMPETITION

THE PLEBS *offers a prize of £1 worth of books, to be supplied to the winner through the Plebs Book Department, for the best critical essay on "Creative Revolution," received before May 7th. Essays must be of not more than 800 words, and must be written on one side of the paper only. They must be signed by a nom-de-plume, and the author's actual name and address must be enclosed in a sealed envelope, with the nom-de-plume on the outside of the envelope. This competition is open to any student or tutor of a* PLEBS *or Labour College class, or to any* PLEBS *League member.*

A SUGGESTION TO CLASSES

THE purpose of this short article is to put forward a suggestion which I hope will be voted a useful and practical one. Its adoption would at any rate help the funds of the Plebs Publication Department; and if we can do that and at the same time get some extra intellectual benefit ourselves I think Plebs will agree that it is worth trying.

We may or may not be uncertain as to where the flies go in the winter-time; but at least we are sure where the classes, or most of them, go in the summer-time—viz., to pot. In a few weeks' time most class-work will be coming to a standstill. Some of us, of course, may be quite ready for a rest. But even with us a change (of subject) should be as good as a rest.

I suggest, therefore, a short course of study "off the beaten track"; to be precise, the formation of a small study or discussion circle to read *Creative Revolution*, and discuss it at, say, half a dozen weekly meetings. No better book could be found from the viewpoint of provoking discussion or stimulating thought. It would lead students to the threshold of half a dozen other subjects and arouse their desire to know more of these. It discusses the working-class movement in general, and so affords ample opportunity for "topical" arguments on tactics or policy. It introduces us to various writers not usually studied by proletarians, and whether or not we agree with the authors' estimate of these writers we shall be none the worse for trying to say just why. The Dietzgenians will be able to whet their dialectical carving-knives on the references to Bergson; the economists on the quotations from Loria. And both can learn from the book something of the New Psychology and its possible value from the point of view of Historical Materialism.

Just in order to encourage the adoption by Plebs groups of this idea I have ventured to draw up a rough syllabus. Please note that this is no more than a mere suggestion, which might be condensed or extended, altered, modified or rearranged, as "leader" or students thought fit.

(1) Social Solidarity (*Democracy*) *v.* Class Struggle (*Ergatocracy*).

(2) Methods of Working-Class Organisation: Political, Industrial, Educational.

(3) The Development of Modern Capitalism: The Significance of the Great War.

(4) The Russian Revolution: Its Effect on Theory and Practice.

(5) The Proletarian Point of View: "Creative Revolution": Darwin, Marx, Freud.

A few such discussions would help to clarify our ideas as to our general outlook, and would make us *apply* the knowledge we have gained in our classes to the solution of current problems. I end as I began, by pointing out that if we can derive intellectual benefit for ourselves, and at the same time help on the work of the Publication Department (and bring the publication of those much-needed textbooks nearer) by making the Plebs edition of *Creative Revolution* a financial success, we shall have done a good stroke of business. I hope any groups who adopt this suggestion will send along an account of how it works out to the PLEBS.

J. B.

AN EARLY 19TH CENTURY ECONOMIST

Richard Jones was born at Tunbridge Wells in 1790, of Welsh parentage. He was, at first, intended for a legal career, but owing to ill-health abandoned this in favour of the Church. He took up residence in 1812 at Caius College, Cambridge, where he had a good record, though without any conspicuous University honours. Leaving Cambridge in 1816 he took Holy Orders and was curate at various places in Sussex. It was while he was curate at Brasted, near Westerham, in 1822, that he first began to formulate the economic theories associated with his name.

His first published volume (1831) was entitled—*An Essay on the Distribution of Wealth*, Part I.—*Rent*. In 1833 he was made Professor of Political Economy at King's College, London, a post which he occupied till 1835, when he accepted an invitation to succeed Malthus as Professor of Political Economy at the East India College at Haileybury. He remained at Haileybury till his death in 1855.

Jones was a keen critic of the Ricardian theories, and of Malthus' theory of population. His first *Essay on Rent* was devoted to the justification of private property in land and its beneficial influence on society. The interest in this work for us consists in the able description of all the various forms of landowning, producing an historical survey of conditions of land tenure and labour of extreme value. Marx devoted no less than 60 pages of his *History of the Theories of Surplus Value* to Jones, the following being a few of his comments (translated for us by W. H. Mainwaring) :—

> Jones was the first English economist to realise that the inquiry into the origin and conditions of Rent must be considered historically. Ricardo and others make the rent of land rest upon surplus profit, and rent is treated as though it only existed in its capitalistic form, but Jones is not under this illusion. In his opinion each system of production has its own peculiar form of rent. The origin of rent under private property, he holds, is based upon the " power of the earth to yield even to the rudest labours of mankind more than is necessary

for the subsistence of the cultivator himself, thus enabling him to pay such a tribute."

Jones follows rent through all its forms from service rents (slave and serf) to farmers' rent. He discovered that a certain kind of labour and its conditions corresponded to the form of landed property and rent; hence a whole series of rents—slave, serf, payment in kind, metayer, negot. In all these forms of rent it is the landowner, not the capitalist, who is the direct appropriator of surplus labour. Rent, therefore, as with the Physiocrats, appears historically as a form of surplus labour (not as Ricardo and company would suppose in its capitalist form of surplus profit). Here exchange is not originated through the medium of the capitalist. The basis of the appropriation of rent is the forceful domination of one class over another, as with slavery, serfdom, or relations of political dependency. Jones confuses the forms of surplus labour under slavery and serfdom with rent; however they have this in common with wage-labour, that neither pays in products or gold.

In dealing with the capitalist farmer Jones is superior to the earlier economists in that he realises that rent, in the Ricardian sense, can only arise under capitalism, i.e. as surplus profit.

Another very interesting work of Jones' is his first lecture at King's College entitled *An Introductory Lecture on Political Economy*. In this he lays it down that the only possible method for the study of the subject is the inductive method. In places his outlook is almost Marxian. He proceeds to limit his inquiry into " wealth " to those things that—

> consist of such material objects as are appropriated by man before they are consumed By *Capital* I mean accumulated wealth employed with a view to profit.
>
> The first wants of mankind are food and raiment; but these can only be obtained from the earth; and, after a certain time, by labour bestowed upon the earth. Here the constitution of the globe we inhabit begins to act upon men as members of society, and to establish foundations for the distribution of their wealth and for their social institutions. . . . We see changes constantly affecting this economical conformation, and *the institutions and forms of society it gives birth to.*

Speaking of the introduction of capitalist relations of production, he says :—

> Now this change cannot take place without some alteration in the management and productiveness of labour; but when the change has become general, another and a most important change has taken place, and that is, a change in the ties which connect the different classes of society. . . . The ties which formerly bound the community together are worn out and fall to pieces; other bonds, other principles of cohesion connect the different classes; new economical relations spring into being, fresh and potent political elements mingle in the national system, and the tracing of the gradual introduction and the effects of these is one of the most important tasks of political economy.

And so on. Jones is still worth study. His arguments are in defiance of his conclusions. His method of presentation is forcible, simple and racy. Lucky the man who can obtain copies either of his collected Works, edited by Dr. Whewell (Murray, 1859) or of his original publications, still circulating, though very scarce. The *Essay on Rent* can be obtained through the PLEBS in a new issue, 5s. 6d. post free. GEO. SIMS

Query Two (this is a very important one) :—

DO YOU OWE US ANY MONEY?

THE GEOGRAPHIC CONCEPTION OR ——?

We publish this criticism of Fairgrieve's "Geography and World Power" in the hope that it will provoke further discussion in the pages of the PLEBS *of the value to the Marxian student of a study of Geography. Certain points raised by the writer of the article are referred to in "The Plebs Bookshelf."*

AMONGST the numerous objections which have been raised against the Materialist Conception of History is the plaint that full allowance has not been made for "the geographic and other natural conditions." This revisionist objection is now acquiring new importance, and this is not due to any intrinsic value that it possesses. Geography, it is claimed, is coming into its own. The redrafting of the map of Europe, with its economic, strategic, ethnic and national problems, coupled with New Russia's voluntary surrender of the conquest of Tsardom, has awakened new interest in geographical questions.

It also becomes invested with a new importance for the working class because it opens the door to a new Revisionism—or an old Revisionism in a new shroud. The study of Geography in relation to the expansion of modern Capitalism has become virtually necessary to the proletarian, but its study without the aid which Marxian method affords is akin to the art of navigation without a compass.

It cannot be too often emphasised that geographical factors may account for a *condition* of the race, but never for the *technical progression* of the race. This article is penned because the writer feels that that fact is being lost sight of in certain Plebeian circles. It is argued that the geographic factor *conditions* social development—particularly its rapid or slow development in certain areas—and upon the basis of this contention we are invited to undertake an intensive study of Geography.

The Manchester Plebs Conference rightly decided that Economic Geography was a subject that required more detailed study. Until a PLEBS textbook on the subject is published, we are recommended to use Fairgrieve's *Geography and World Power;* geography, that is, without the economic! What is being overlooked as a consequence is the fact that Economic Geography in its modern and more particular application is merely an economic survey of the international ramifications of Capital. Our "Geographical Footnotes to Current History" are but economic footnotes in Nature's setting. The geographic *conditions* because it provides the setting. That is only to say that the universe exists, therefore man must live in a part of it. Technical progress, not geographic conditions, has made history—as it has produced the innumerable "controls" over the forces of Nature which man now possesses.

Fairgrieve, impelled doubtless by the new significance of geography, attempts to formulate a Geographic Conception of History. To the new student, I suggest, this may mean much confusion in view of the disproportionate importance attached to geographical factors. Thus Fairgrieve:—

> Geographical conditions have in a very real if somewhat general sense controlled history, in that some places rather than others are suitable for human habitations. But history had been controlled by geographical conditions in a far more particular sense, in that geographical conditions of various kinds have controlled the actual course of history.

Against that we will put a short quotation from Lewis Morgan. Comment would be superfluous :—

> The important fact that mankind commenced at the bottom of the scale and worked up is revealed in an expressive manner by their successful arts of subsistence. Upon their *skill* in this direction the whole question of human supremacy on the earth depended. Mankind are the only beings who may be said to have gained an absolute control over the production of food. . . . Without enlarging the basis of subsistence, mankind could not have propagated themselves into other areas not possessing the same kinds of food, and ultimately over the whole surface of the earth ; and lastly, without obtaining an absolute control over both its variety and amount, they could not have multiplied into populous nations.—P. 19, *Ancient Society*.

It is perfectly obvious, of course, that if man is to live he must live in a place. Equally obvious is it that heat and rain, plus wind to bring moisture from the ocean to the land, must also exist. What the geographer apparently has little conception of is the fact that all his illustrations simply show Nature working as an economic force. The geographic " control " is present, but so is the fact that man is a tool-making animal, bringing geographic conditions more and more under his control. Land there must be for him to operate upon, and suitable climatic conditions, but history would never have been made had man not emerged from the animal world with power to mould his surroundings. His reaction upon Nature was at first primitive, but it is the crowning achievement of science that most of the geographic controls are now under man's control.

That geography has played an important part in the determination of the economic-political units of the world no serious student can deny. But it is the *technical use* to which geographical conditions have been put by man in his economic struggle—whether with Nature or his fellow-man—; which has created change. That is true alike of the ancient as of the modern world. Phœnicia felt the influence of geographic control, but it was her escape from it owing to technical discoveries which caused her rise to greatness. Carthage owed her position much more to merchants' capital than to geographic protection.

The real relation of the geographic factor to the other factors in technical progress was indicated by the strategic and economic problems created for France and Germany in 1871 by Lorraine (*see* Newbigin's *Aftermath*, pp. 18-19). Bismarck plumped for mineral deposits ; Thiers for room for fortifications. Both French and German views alike expressed man's control of geographic conditions.

If it be argued that all this is taken for granted by Marxians, surely the retort is obvious that the influence of land, climate, etc., is also taken for granted. What is in question is the relative importance of these geographic factors and the means and methods of production, plus the mental reflex of them, as determining factors in social change.

Let us be done with " antiquarian " business and settle down to the work in hand. " Antiquarian " culture can wait until after the revolution ; the spreading of proletcult cannot. We need an explicit statement of the materialist conception in relation to the economic-geographic growth of the capitalist international prior to and subsequent to the war. That statement, when written, will largely discount the claims of the geographers. Their claims as to the conditioning influence of geographical factors even in the ancient world are considerably exaggerated. As applied to the modern world they are enough to make even the geographic gods of history laugh in their long sleep.

E. ARCHBOLD

TEN-MINUTES' TALKS WITH NEW STUDENTS

VI.—The Antidote to Apathy

DO the workers like being sentenced to hard labour for life? Do they enjoy living in cramped little cottages or great barrack tenements? Do they delight in shedding their blood to make the world safe for some brand or other of Imperialism? Are they happy in seeing their wives wearing their souls out trying to make sixpence run a shilling's race?

By no means! They are apathetic, that's all. Apathy smothers them and they'll do nothing to mend matters. Why? Is it as useless to try to rouse them to right their wrongs as it would be to try to inspire the mummies in the British Museum to become passionate supporters of Egyptian Independence? Not at all.

The workers can cast apathy to the winds. Watch them at football! No barrier will prevent them going. Are the cars to the ground full? Then they will cling to the platform. Is it a working day? Then they will sacrifice half a day's pay. No apathy there—thousands of throbbing enthusiasts. Harness that enthusiasm, direct it against the walls of capitalism and that system will be unknown to the next generation.

The workers then are not apathetic over all things. But they *are* apathetic over the thing that counts. They are slow to take up the task that History has set them—of building a new system on the ruins of the old. And our problem is—What is the remedy for their apathy? Can the energy they expend in other directions be attracted to the main issue, and used to knock capitalism to pieces and lay the foundations of a new world?

The workers are apathetic because they don't feel that they can improve things. Our business then is to *make them feel* that they can break out of their prison-house; and we can only do that by robbing them of the ideas which make them devoid of hope and confidence. We believe that it is only because they do not know the facts of to-day and yesterday that they have no vision to fire them into striking a blow for something better than the life of a rich man's drudge. Ignorance is the mother of apathy.

It is here that History will help us. Intelligently studied, it shows that things were not always as they are now. Ours is the age of the Business Man. We workers work when he allows us to, starve when he doesn't. Noble lords of ancient lineage are proud to marry their daughters to him and to sit on his boards. Statesmen canvass foreign lands for orders for him. And Kings on his behalf distract the "rabble" from their wrongs by royal pageants and hand-shakings.

But History will make it clear to the dullest of workers that things were not always so. It will show him that not so many generations ago there was an age of Land Lords, and that then the Business Man was an "under-dog." Even in the beginning of the 17th century in Scotland a master-plumber who repaired a fountain for a Lord of the Land was clapped into that gentleman's dungeon for daring to expect payment! To-day, if one of our old nobility wants a loan from a Rothschild, he goes cap in hand and offers six, eight or more per cent. for the favour; but his forefathers of feudal days would have commanded their men-at-arms to roast the Jew financier on an iron grating until he agreed to bid his money an eternal farewell.

Working-class apathy can be cured by tactful application of historical facts. If the age of the Land Lord gave way to the age of the Business Man why should not this again give way to the Age of the Worker? The Land Lords went down because they became superfluous. *And the Business Man will be superfluous, too, when once the workers shake out of their heads the idea that they can't get on without him.*

We must make the workers *know*. When they know they will *feel*. When they feel they will *act*. Ignorance is the mother of apathy.

J. P. M. MILLAR

SURPLUS VALUES IN THE WOOLLEN INDUSTRY

¶ *The following analyses of profits made in the wool trade, made by a Yorkshire student, will be of interest (and of value, as illustrative material) to tutors and students of economics generally.*

THESE four tables are based on the figures as to wages, etc., obtaining in October, 1919,* in the particular section of the woollen industry known as the spinning trade, in which "tops" are converted into yarn ready for the weavers. The spinner buys tops at 9s. 2d. and 9s. 9d. per lb. Cost of conversion—including wages, fuel, oil, rent, depreciation, etc.—varies from 1s. to 1s. 10d. per lb., according to quality. I have taken as a basis a production of 12,000 lbs. of yarn per week of 48 hours. The first table, given in full, shows the way in which the final figures have been arrived at; in the other three these final figures only are quoted:—

2/32's *Yarn.* 60's *Quality Tops.*

		£	s.	d.
28	operatives, drawing (4 sets machines) at 35s.	49	0	0
38	spinning frames (160 spindles) 26 girls ,, 31s. 6d. ..	40	19	0
19	twisting ,, ,, ,, 26 ,, ,, 33s. 6d. ..	43	11	0
24	lads for doffing, etc. ,, 28s.	33	12	0
8	winders ,, 36s.	14	8	0
4	beamers, reelers, etc. ,, 36s.	7	4	0
3	warehousemen ,, £3	9	0	0
1	engineman £4, 1 assistant £2 15s.	6	15	0
	Manager £5, 6 overlookers at £4	29	0	0
1	carter	3	11	0
	Clerical staff, directive ability, etc.	34	0	0
	New values paid to Labour	£271	0	0

		s.	d.
	Selling price per lb.	12	6
	Cost of 60's Quality Tops per lb. .. 9s. 2d.		
	Cost of conversion, per lb. .. .. 1s. 2d.	10	4
	Profits per lb.	2	2

* Prices reached their highest point in May and June, 1920.

12,000 lbs. weekly output at 2s. 2d. per lb. =£1,300 weekly profit.
Wages paid to secure this output, £271.
Rate of Surplus Value =480%.
Labour produces all the value it receives in 8 hrs. 20 mins.
The remainder goes to the capitalist— 39 hrs. 40 mins.

2/24's *Yarn from* 64's *Quality Tops.*

Selling price per lb., 12s. 9d. Cost of Tops per lb., 9s. 9d. Cost of conversion per lb., 1s. Profit per lb., 2s.

12,000 lbs. at 2s. =£1,200 weekly profit. Wages paid to secure this output, £215. Rate of S.V., 558%. Labour produces value it receives in 7 hrs. 20 mins. Remaining 40 hrs. 40 mins. go to the capitalist.

2/40's *Yarn from* 60's *Quality Tops.*

Selling price per lb., 13s. 3d. Cost of Tops per lb., 9s. 2d. Cost of conversion, 1s. 6d. per lb. Profit per lb., 2s. 7d.

12,000 lbs. at 2s. 7d. =£1,550 weekly profit. Wages paid to secure this output, £313. Rate of S.V., 495%. Labour produces value it receives in 8 hrs. Remaining 40 hrs. go to the capitalist.

2/48's *Yarn from* 64's *Quality Tops.*

Selling price per lb., 14s. 3d. Cost of Tops per lb., 9s. 9d. Cost of conversion, 1s. 10d. Profit per lb., 2s. 8d.

12,000 lbs. at 2s. 8d. =£1,600 weekly profit. Wages paid to secure this output, £320. Rate of S.V., 500%. Labour produces value it receives in 8 hrs.—40 hrs. go to capitalist.

A SAD BUT TRUE STORY

ONCE UPON A TIME there was a Worthy Man who was interested in a certain Cause. It was a good Cause, though its supporters were always short of Funds. To push the Cause they put together and caused to be printed a Monthly Magazine. And of course the People Who Printed It weren't in the Printing business for their health, so they demanded payment. And so did the Post Office People who carried it around.

When the Worthy Man came across the Magazine, he said, "This appears to be quite an Admirable Publication, and one deserving of support." So he wrote to the Magazine People, and said, "Send along half-a-dozen copies monthly of your Admirable Publication, as I think it decidedly deserving of support."

The Magazine People accordingly sent him half-a-dozen copies monthly, and they paid the Printers for printing them, and the Post Office People for carrying them along, and this went on for Quite a Time. And at last the Magazine People wrote to the Worthy Man and pointed out, apologetically, that they were always short of Funds, so that they would Esteem it a Favour if he could let them have a Little on Account.

And the Worthy Man replied, "I am a Very Busy Person, and I find I haven't time to do much with your Magazine, which, however, I regard as an Admirable Publication and deserving of support. So please cancel my order." And he sent Nothing on Account.

Which as you'll agree was Very Helpful to the Magazine, and to the Cause, we don't think. Still, there it is!

THE POET OF THE FINAL PHASE

EVEN in the etherealised air of Olympus we do not altogether lose sight of those base material conditions which form the foundation of our workaday world. And certain poets may even be said to reflect—in idealised form—the needs and aspirations of a given class at a certain stage of its economic development. Swinburne's republicanism, atheism, and, above all, his freedom-worship mirror perfectly the political, religious and commercial requirements of the rising capitalist class on the continent of Europe. Britain had long ago passed this stage, and the erstwhile revolutionary English capitalists had settled down to respectability and orthodoxy; though not until their early struggles had inspired a poet of revolt in the person of Shelley. Swinburne found his inspiration abroad, and his poetry consequently reflects the contemporary conditions of France and Italy rather than of his own country.

In Kipling we have a poet whose "economic basis" is most prosaically prominent. Universally recognised as "the Poet of Imperialism," it is only when we understand that this "Imperialism" is nothing more or less than the political expression of the Second Warlike Period of British Capitalism (the stage when Iron and Steel assume industrial predominance) that we have the true key to the economic interpretation of Kipling.

Modern Imperialism is a very recent growth. Boudin cites Lord Salisbury's cession of Heligoland to Germany in 1890 to show how slowly pacifist ideals were expelled from English politics by the oncoming tide of Jingoism. *Barrack-Room Ballads* was published in 1894, and the complete triumph of Imperialism was signalised in 1895, by the promotion of Mr. Chamberlain to the post of Colonial Secretary. When Kipling made his first appearance popular thought was still tinged with the peaceful ideology of the period of textile predominance. The red-coated soldier was regarded as unfit for respectable company, and his profession as the last resort of the wastrel and criminal. In the very early verses, "Tommy," Kipling indignantly protests against this attitude, and both in his soldier songs and stories he set himself to popularise his adored "Mr. Atkins." His propaganda of militarism and the military life played an important part in the achievement of the militaristic atmosphere so urgently required.

Much more important, however, is his magnificent expression of Imperialist ideals in such poems as "The English Flag" and "The Song of the English."

> Fair is our lot—O goodly is our heritage!
> (Humble ye, my people, and be fearful in your mirth!)
> For the Lord our God Most High
> He hath made the deep as dry.
> He hath smote for us a pathway to the ends of all the Earth!

Such lines stir the subconscious pride of race which still persists in many who think they have subdued all feeling of nationality.

But it is not only the soldier and Empire-builder who appeal to Kipling's sympathies; he is equally inspired by the merchant and the engineer. The romance of commerce and the poetry of machinery find expression in "The Mary Gloster" and "McAndrew's Hymn"—to mention no others. In the latter, the old Scots engineer translates the song of the engines :—

Lord, send a man like Robbie Burns to sing the Song o' Steam !
To match wi' Scotia's noblest speech yon orchestra sublime
Whaurto—uplifted like the Just—the tail-rods mark the time.
The crank-throws give the double-bass, the feed-pump sobs an' heaves,
An' now the main eccentrics start their quarrel on the sheaves :
Her time, her own appointed time, the rocking link-head bides,
Till—hear that note ?—the rod's return whings glimmerin' through the guides.
They're all awa ! True beat, full power, the clangin' chorus goes
Clear to the tunnel where they sit, my purring dynamoes.
Interdependence absolute, foreseen, ordained, decreed,
To work, ye'll note, at any tilt an' every rate o' speed.
Fra skylight-lift to furnace bars, backed, bolted, braced an' stayed,
An' singin' like the Mornin' Stars for joy that they are made.

As this extract shows, it is to some extent true of Kipling what Stefan Zweig claims for the great Belgian poet :—

> Verhaeren has transformed into rhythm not only the voice of Nature, but also the new noises, the grumbling of the multitude, the raging of cities, the rumbling of workshops. Often in his rhythm can be heard the beat of hammers, the hard, edged, regular whizzing of wheels ; the whirring of looms ; the hissing of locomotives. . . . Poets before him imitated in the harmony of their verse the monotony of sources and the babbling of water over pebbles, or the soughing voice of the wind. . . . The new, the industrial noises have here become the music of poetry.

Although Kipling cannot rival Verhaeren in this respect, these " new, industrial noises " are sufficiently evident in his verse to show that he is moved by the economic *Zeitgeist.*

Kipling's defects are as typical of advanced capitalistic development as are his virtues. His work is marred by spiritual vacuity and intellectual narrowness, by vulgarity and brutality. He even falls so low as to take a commercialist view of his art, and to give it expression in the abominable " Story of Ung." He can be void of any human feeling whatsoever—as witness the following jingle :—

For you all love the screw-guns—the screw-guns they all love you !
So when we call around with a few guns, o' course you will know what to do—hoo ! hoo !
Just send in your Chief an' surrender—it's worse if you fights or you runs :
You can go where you please, you can skid up the trees, but you don't get away from the guns !

A pretty expression of the true Black-and-Tan spirit !

In *The Five Nations,* published just after the South African War, we find a significant spirit of unrest, a premonition of coming peril, reflecting very clearly the precarious position in which British industry found itself owing to the rapid advance of its competitors. In " The Dykes " for instance, we read :—

Look you, our foreshore stretches far through sea-gate, dyke, and groin—
Made land all, that our fathers made, where the flats and the fairway join.
They forced the sea a sea-league back. They died, and their work stood fast.
We were born to peace in the lee of the dykes, but the time of our peace is past.

New methods and a militant, progressive Imperial policy were required : mere conservatism was no longer of service. In " The Lesson," " The Old Men " and " Rimmon " this new development found energetic expression.

All the obese, unchallenged old things that stifle and overly us

were denounced with an almost revolutionary fervour. The unreal Party squabbles of Liberal and Tory were seen to be only—

The flaccid tissues of long-dead issues offensive to God and mankind.

The way was being paved for the new orientation now politically manifest in the capitalist Coalition.

Most of Kipling's recent work is negligible, both as regards its literary form and its intellectual content. He will be judged as a poet by the three volumes previously cited, and it cannot be denied that his best work fulfils the essentials of a great and "necessary" poet as laid down by Stefan Zweig in his suggestive book on Emile Verhaeren :—

> For only that poet can be necessary to our time who himself feels that everything in this time is necessary, and therefore beautiful. He must be one whose whole endeavour as poet and man it is to make his own sensations vibrate in unison with contemporary sensations.

ERNEST JOHNS

REVOLUTIONARY TACTICS

By FRIEDRICH ENGELS

(Translated from the German by Eden & Cedar Paul—continued.)

To this concluding instalment of Engels' preface to Marx's *Class-Struggles in France from 1848 to 1850*, it may be as well to add, by way of commentary, certain sentences from the translators' Foreword (January PLEBS) : "Engels' aim was to show how the views held by Marx and himself 45 years earlier required revision in the light of subsequent history. . . . Our interest is increased by the fact that we who read in 1920 what Engels wrote in 1895, cannot fail to see that in certain respects his views of that year are now as obsolete as he himself then found his earlier views of 1848-50. . . . If 'Time trieth Troth,' it is no less true that time trieth Socialist theory. . . . The French were on the wrong road, such is Engels' teaching. The German method, the upbuilding of a great Parliamentary party, is the one to follow. In 1920 we look farther east, and draw example and encouragement from Russia. . . . To each generation its own struggle."—E. & C. P.

EVEN in Romance countries our comrades are coming to recognise that the old tactics must be revised. Everywhere the German example has been imitated; everywhere the aim has been to make use of universal suffrage, to conquer all the positions that are open to attack. In France, where for more than a hundred years the ground has been mined by revolution after revolution, where there is not a single party which has not contributed its quota in the way of conspiracies, revolts, and other revolutionary activities; in France, where for these reasons the Government can never depend upon the Army, and where, generally speaking, conditions are far more favourable than in Germany for achieving a revolutionary *coup de main;* even in France the Socialists are recognising more and more clearly that they can never expect to secure a lasting victory unless beforehand they win over to their side the great masses of the people, which in France means the peasantry.

In France no less than in Germany it has come to be recognised that the first duty of the party is the painstaking work of propaganda and parliamentary activity. Nor has success been lacking. Not merely have numerous municipalities been won over; there are fifty Socialists in the Chamber of Deputies, and these have already overthrown three Ministries and one President. In Belgium last year* the workers enforced the granting of the suffrage, and were victorious in a fourth of the constituencies. In Switzerland, in Italy, in Denmark, and even in Bulgaria and Rumania, there are Socialist Members of Parliament. In Austria, all parties are agreed that it is no longer permissible to forbid us access to the Reichsrath. Even in Russia, when there meets in that country the famous Zemskii Sobor, the national assembly whose summoning the young Tsar Nicholas has so vainly resisted, even in Russia, we can count with certainty upon Socialist representation.

* 1894.

It need hardly be said that our foreign comrades are far from renouncing their right to revolution. This right to revolution is, indeed, the only real "historic right," the only one upon which are based all modern States without exception. . . .

But whatever may be happening in other countries, the German social democracy occupies a peculiar position, and has therefore first of all to perform a peculiar task. Its growth proceeds with the spontaneous, irresistible, and tranquil advance of a natural force. All governmental attempts to check it have proved unavailing, and by to-day we can certainly count upon two and a quarter million voters. If this movement continues, by the end of the century we shall have conquered the greater part of the intermediate strata of society; the lower middle classes and the poorer peasants will be on our side; we shall have become the decisive power in the country, a power to which all other powers will have to yield whether they like it or not. Our most important task is to maintain this progress in numbers until the rising flood overwhelms the system of government now dominant. And there is only one way in which the continuous increase in the fighting forces of German Socialism can be temporarily arrested, nay for the moment even converted into a decline. I mean, an extensive collision with the Army, a blood-letting like that which occurred in Paris in 1871. In the long run we should outlive even that reverse. Not all the magazine rifles of Europe and America can shoot out of the world a party whose adherents are numbered by millions. But normal evolutionary processes would be hindered; the decisive hour would be postponed.

The irony of history turns everything topsyturvy. We, the "revolutionists," thrive better by the use of constitutional means than by unconstitutional and revolutionary methods. The parties of law and order, as they term themselves, are being destroyed by the constitutional implements which they themselves have fashioned. Despairingly they cry with Odilon Barrot, "*La légalité nous tue*" (Constitutional methods are killing us). We, on our side, find that constitutionalism gives us health and strength. Unless we are such idiots as to please our adversaries by letting them force street fighting upon us, they will have at last no resource but to tamper with the legality which is proving so disastrous to themselves.

From time to time they pass fresh anti-revolutionary legislation. Once more everything seems topsyturvy. These fanatics of the counter-revolution to-day, were they not themselves revolutionists yesterday? Was it a conspiracy of ours which led to the civil war of 1866? Was it we who expelled the King of Hanover, the Elector of Hesse, and the Duke of Nassau from their lawfully inherited territorial possessions, and then proceeded to annex these possessions? Yet the revolutionists who overthrew the Germanic Federation and who dispossessed three monarchs by God's grace of their crowns, now complain of revolution. *Quis tulerit Gracchos de seditione querentes?* (Is it for the Gracchi to whine about sedition?) Who can allow the worshippers of Bismarck to rail at revolution?

The Socialist movement, now so well suited by its law-abiding methods, can only be dealt with by revolutionary proceedings carried out by the party of law and order, which cannot continue to exist without breaking the laws. . . . Breach of the constitution, dictatorship, a return to absolutism, *regis voluntas suprema lex* (the King's will to be the supreme law)! . . .

It is almost exactly sixteen hundred years since, in like manner, a dangerous revolutionary party was at work in the Roman Empire. The members of this party mined the foundations of religion, and indeed all the foundations of the State. They flatly denied that the Emperor's will was the supreme law; they were internationalists, *sans-patrie* enthusiasts; they were scattered throughout all the Imperial territories from Gaul in the west to Asia in the east, even overflowing the confines of the Empire. At first, and for a long time, their activities had been carried on beneath the surface, but now for a considerable period they had felt themselves strong enough to challenge the daylight. This revolutionary party, whose adherents were known by the name of "Christians," had a strong following in the Army, where entire legions professed their beliefs. When they were ordered to take part in the sacrificial ceremonies of the Pagan national church, the revolutionist soldiers carried their effrontery so far as to wear upon their helmets their own peculiar emblem, the cross.

The authorities were at their wits' end. Emperor Diocletian could no longer remain inactive while order, obedience, and discipline were utterly disregarded throughout his Army. He took energetic measures, before it should be too late. He issued a "Socialist Law," or I should rather say, a "Christian Law." The meetings of the revolutionists were prohibited; their assembly halls were closed, in some cases even razed to the ground; Christian insignia, such as the cross, etc., were forbidden, just as in Saxony not very long ago the use of red pocket-handkerchiefs was forbidden. The Christians were declared incompetent to fill posts in the national service, and were not even entitled to become freedmen. In those days the State could not count upon the service of magistrates so well drilled concerning "respect of persons" as would be requisite for the carrying out of Herr von Köller's proposed anti-revolutionary legislation. The Christians, therefore, were simply forbidden to plead their rights before the courts.

But this exceptional law remained utterly ineffectual. The Christians contemptuously tore the proclamations from the walls, and it is even recorded that in Nicomedia they burned the palace over the Emperor's head. Diocletian's vengeance took the form of the great persecution of the year 303. This persecution was the last of its kind. So unavailing did it prove, that seventeen years later the great majority of the legionaries were Christians, and the next Emperor of the united realm, Constantine by name, by the priests denominated Constantine the Great, declared Christianity the State religion.

F. ENGELS

London, March 6th, 1895.

[The preceding instalments of "Revolutionary Tactics" have appeared in the January, February and March PLEBS, all obtainable from PLEBS Office, price 7½d. each, post paid.]

GEOGRAPHICAL FOOTNOTES TO CURRENT HISTORY

VI.—Upper Silesia

AS in the case of Alsace-Lorraine, on Germany's western frontier, it is modern economic development which has given to Silesia, on her eastern border, an immense importance. "There are few places in the world," declares Sidney Osborne in *The Upper Silesian Question and Germany's Coal Problem* (Allen & Unwin, 12s. 6d.)* "where we find so many of the earth's treasures in one and the same spot and where at the same time the strata are so easily worked as in Upper Silesia. Its coalbeds are among the largest in the world. At the present time its coal production amounts to a fourth† of the production of Germany. It is two and a half times as large as the former production of Austria-Hungary and double that of Russia and Belgium. With the exception of England, America and the Rhenish-Westphalian coal district, it is equalled only by France. And it is able to yield a much larger quantity still, for the store of coal in Upper Silesia is greater than in the Rhenish-Westphalian coal district. In all probability it cannot, at the present rate of consumption, be exhausted under one thousand years."

When in the middle of the 18th century Frederick the Great defeated Austria and annexed Silesia to Prussia, he set to work immediately to develop the smelting of iron, with the object of making Prussia independent of Sweden. But it was coal, as Osborne writes, "which in Germany caused changes in regional relations which were practically revolutionary. The coal-mining regions, like those of Upper Silesia, formerly barren and sparsely populated, now became the dynamic centres of society." (It was this

* This book is, in effect, German Government propaganda, and tends to spoil a good case by over-stating it. But is a very full and useful book of reference on the subject, and contains much material of interest to economic-geographers.

† In 1912, 46,584,468 tons, or 28 per cent. of the output of Prussia. (*Upper Silesia*, Foreign Office Handbook, No. 40.)

economic development, in fact, which gave the deathblow, in Germany as in the United States, to political separatism; since "it produced in each country a regional specialisation and a regional interdependence" —"division of labour" as between the various districts making up the nation.)

Coal made Silesia a very vital portion of the new German industrial-military Empire; as iron-ore made Lorraine another vital portion. And accordingly both provinces became objects of covetous interest to Germany's neighbours. When, after the Russian Revolution of 1917, the emergence of an independent Poland—independent of the Tsar, that is, though not of Allied capital—was assured, the Poles at once began to formulate Polish claims to Silesia—which had never been Polish since the 14th century. "Why," Osborne asks, "did they never waste the bones of a single Polish lancer for the possession of Upper Silesia during all the centuries when Poland was establishing and consolidating her Empire? The answer is that Poland never had the remotest idea of laying claim to it so long as it was supposed to be a poor and mainly barren country."

It is interesting to note, from the geographer's point of view, that the "natural" connections of Silesia—an inland area—were with Germany. Her outlets were via her main waterway, the river Oder,* to the North Sea (through Prussia) and via Oder and Elbe to the North Sea. And accordingly the industries of Eastern Germany have been built up on Silesian coal.

The first draft of the Peace Treaty (see Newbigin, *Aftermath*, page 32) gave Upper Silesia to Poland. But in the final version its fate was made dependent on a plebiscite, which has just been taken. Propaganda by the rival claimants has already led to fighting in various districts, and Dr. Newbigin opines that "the final settlement is perhaps more likely to be on the basis of some kind of adjustment, than merely on a vote." The Polish champions are able to declare with some plausibility that "in Upper Silesia the Poles are proletarians in revolt against German junkerdom, capitalism, oppression and exploitation." (*Manchester Guardian Weekly*, March 4th, 1921.) On the other hand, it is significant that French capitalists have been and are busy "penetrating" Upper Silesia; and it is at least open to doubt whether these same Polish leaders would encourage a proletarian revolt against French capitalism and junkerdom. Whatever the immediate destiny of Upper Silesia, it is fairly clear that her proletariat will still have their main struggle in front of them.

J. F. HORRABIN

* Note that *Upper* Silesia means *southern* Silesia, i.e. higher *up* the river.

ECONOMICS WITHOUT HEADACHES

IV.

WHEN the organisation of Society was much simpler than it is to-day men made goods for their own use. There was no market and no buying and selling. At the most there was a little exchange by means of barter. Now it is usual to think of barter-exchange as a very simple business, but it is really quite complicated.

Suppose that one man has a sheep he wishes to dispose of, and for which he desires a dog in exchange. He has to find a man who will take his sheep and *who also has a dog he wishes to part with* not an easy matter. The seller of our day sells for money, and with the money can look round and buy from whom he pleases.

As man's desires became more numerous, and as the means of satisfying them became more highly developed, men commenced to specialise in the production of goods they did not want for themselves at all, but for which they could obtain goods they did need. So was born our commercial system.

The first specialised producers had still to dispose of their products by means of barter. At first they "swopped" goods with people they knew and came into daily contact with, and later with people from a distance. The great difficulty they were always confronted with—in addition to having to find "customers" with specified wants who could also meet *their* wants—was to know how to compare the values of their goods with the goods of the other party. In some parts of the world, this difficulty still exists, and it enables enterprising traders to obtain ivory, silks, and all kinds of valuable goods in exchange for Brummagem alarm clocks, looking-glasses, beads, and such like.

Through the ages men have searched for a medium in which could be expressed the values of any number of commodities. All kinds of things have served the purpose—shells, iron, copper, cattle, and even slaves. Whatever the article has been at any particular period, that article has been *money*, or in other words, the "Universal Equivalent," the article by means of which any commodity could be compared with any other.

By the process of the "survival of the fittest," gold has come to be recognised almost all over the world as the best "Universal Equivalent." There is nothing remarkable about gold. Some people have, so to speak, placed a halo round its head, and fallen down to worship it—in the economic sense. At any rate, they are so blind to its ordinariness that, like other worshippers, they see in it all kinds of mystic qualities.

Gold is a commodity. That is to say, it is produced to be sold. It is quarried, crushed, melted, refined, and so on. Its value is determined in the same way as the value of any other commodity—by the amount of socially necessary labour-time embodied in its production. We all know that a large quantity of labour-time has to be spent in gold production, therefore the value of gold is very high. If some lucky Australian wanderer stumbles upon a "Welcome Stranger" nugget, it is true that no labour-time has been expended; but we cannot discuss special cases. We must take the subject as a whole. If we all of us found "Welcome Strangers," the value of gold would fall very rapidly. If gold was produced as easily as iron, its value would be the same as iron—perhaps less, because iron is more useful than gold.

Gold has come to be regarded as the most useful "Universal Equivalent," or "Measure of Value," because it possesses: (1) *Divisibility*—it can be divided and reunited with little trouble and little or no loss (jewels cannot be reunited); (2) *Indestructibility*—it does not rust away like iron, though, of course, it can be destroyed; (3) *Stability of Value*—it does not fluctuate in value to the same extent as many other commodities; (4) *Cognisability*—it is much easier to detect imitation than in the case of jewels; (5) *Utility*—it is prized for its own sake, because it can be made into ornamental and decorative articles; and (7) *Portability*—a little has great value and can be easily transferred from place to place.

Gold, the universal money commodity, is real value. It is not a "symbol" of value, but sound "hard cash." The British sovereign is worth 20s. as a sovereign, and worth 20s. if melted down to a shapeless mass of gold.* The sovereign is only the British form of using gold as the measure of value—nationalising it, so to speak, by means of the embossed King's head, but when melted down it becomes gold and can be sold by weight and accepted anywhere in the world.

Gold is a peculiar commodity in the sense that it has no price. Of course, the price of gold is quoted day after day on the markets of the world, but since gold measures its own value as well as the value of other things, to speak of the price of gold is just the same as saying that the price of a new hat is a new hat. Because gold measures itself, its price is the number of sovereigns that a given quantity will make. Now an ounce of gold will make sovereigns to the value of £3 17s. 10½d., therefore that is its price.†

If students will read this last paragraph over again carefully, they will understand

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* We are dealing with pre-war matters for the time being, and ignoring the complications of paper money.

† Again let me emphasise that is calculated without the paper money complication.

clearly the Marxian statement about gold having no price.

People who take gold to the Mint will receive £3 17s. 10½d. per ounce for it. This is the Mint price of gold. It is customary, however, to take it to the Bank of England, and they pay £3 17s. 9d. per ounce—the Bank price of gold—reserving the 1½d. difference as their expenses charge. The Mint charges nothing for making gold into sovereigns, and of course loses on the business of manufacture, but makes it up in another way.

W. McLAINE

STUDENTS' NOTES AND QUERIES

Q.—P. Werner asks—*Is the Materialist Conception of History the only conception whereby we can rightly interpret history and the progress of mankind?*

A.—Used as a *guide*, as a *method* for explaining historical movements, the M.C.H. is the only one yet put forward which fits the facts. Do not, however, simply learn it off by heart, or jump to the conclusion that ideas are denied importance, or that they are evolved mechanically—like sausages out of a machine. No better examples of the M.C.H. in actual application can be found than Meilly's *Puritanism* and Boudin's *Socialism and War*.

Q.—Swansea Industrial History Class has been discussing *whether man has anything to do in determining his character and destiny. Is he entirely governed by environment and conditions? Can he form an idea without an external stimulating object?*

A.—This is the old problem of "free will." The M.C.H. denies absolute choice of action on man's part. Kautsky (p. 59-65 *Ethics*) is worth reading on this point. About the past no illusions exist. We can explain and trace the cause and effect of our actions. But in relation to present and future there is a "subjective inevitable feeling of freedom." Here comes in the problem of "making up our minds."

To answer the last question first: As the lungs to air so the mind to objects and experience. Certainly the imagination has the power of blending certain pictures it has received from the external world, e.g. a horse and a man are made into a centaur, a girl and a fish into a mermaid. The idea is the portrait which the mind (the camera) has made from the object (the thing photographed). And it has the power of making "composite" photographs—of "idealising" things and blending one with another.

In reply to the former part of the question: A recognition of man as the product of his heredity and social environment does not make him into a mere passive puppet or relieve him of individual responsibility. Out of A comes B, but when B exists it can react upon A and change it within certain limits. No man or body of men can divert society from its general course of development—say turn it back from capitalism to feudalism. But by that development certain thoughts and actions are produced. Only in the ideas of men can those experiences find recognition. And it is quite possible to advance or hinder the process. Thus we rightly try to persuade our fellows to take their own destiny in hand, and censure weakness which plays into the hands of our opponents.

Q.—Is a rent strike a good line of action?

A.—It is quite possible for such a strike to be useful from a demonstration point of view. It might put a healthy fear into the mind of the would-be rack-renter, and in some cases there may be an internal division in the ranks of the capitalists and the house-owners of which use could be made. Again local feeling can be stirred by attempted evictions. A "chuck out" is easier to resist than a lock-out.

Against a rent strike are the facts that the mass action necessary for success cannot be achieved by organising people as *consumers* of a particular commodity. To a greater extent than in production, a personal relation (between small landlord and tenant) exists. Again, many individual workers own their houses, and hence in some districts no sense of a general grievance would be felt and no need for action could arise.

Therefore, whatever propaganda opportunities such a strike might afford, it would be hopeless as a permanent line of action. Organisation at the point of production and a strike against exploitation there promise more lasting results.

Q.—Can the War be traced to economic causes?

A.—Certainly. Imperialist interests are centred on the control of raw materials—coal, iron, oil, etc. All three were vital matters for France, Germany, and Great Britain. Germany's control of the greater portion of iron ore in Europe and her Bagdad Railway scheme, having for its objects (1) the bringing of all Central and S.E. Europe, and Near East, into one big trade *bloc*, dominated by her; (2) control of Eastern oil supplies; (3) control of the Dardanelles trade route to the Black Sea and Russian supplies; (4) the breaking of Great Britain's Eastern Empire monopoly in trade exploitation, etc.—these were the elements of menace.

France wanted the iron ore of Lorraine, and was short of coal, hence annexation of the Saar Valley. *Great Britain*—world trade and empire, both threatened by Germany. *Italy*—control of the Adriatic coast, ports, etc. *Russia* (pre-Revolution)—the dominance of the *Straits* (Constantinople, Bosphorus, Dardanelles) and access to the Mediterranean. For the smaller belligerents the need to be in favour with the victorious

Great Powers as a condition of being allowed to live, and, in addition, in the Balkans, the necessity for the long overdue "national" settlement of lands once held by the Turks; and in Austria-Hungary, by the Hapsburgs. These are a few of the vital economic issues at stake in the Great War.

Elaboration of the foregoing brief statement may be obtained from the following: *Labour and the Empire*, by Wm. Paul (S.L.P.); *Capitalism and the War*, by Newbold (Nat. Lab. Press); *Essays in Socialism and War* by John Bryan (Communist Party); and *The War of Steel and Gold*, by H. N. Brailsford (Bell, 4s. 6d.).

A Norwich student raises an apparent contradiction between a line in Newbold's article (p. 203, Nov. PLEBS) and a statement in Gibbins' *Industrial History*. The cotter had no oxen, plough or plough land, but he had other land, and Gibbins' figure of 5 to 10 acres is higher than the figure given by some other historians. Townsend Warner gives "2 to 5 acres or more" Newbold does not infer a landless class. M. S.

TRA LA MONDO

ESPERANTO NOTES BY POPOLANO

"The A B C of the International"

HENRI BARBUSSE has contributed to *L'Ecole Emancipée* a rousing appeal on behalf of Esperanto, which he calls the "A B C of the International." I can quote only a few lines:—

> "The universal language exists. It already has its adepts, its defenders, its propagandists, and it is beginning to spread. It is Esperanto. Esperanto fulfils all requirements. Its merits are abundantly proved. It is a good instrument, simple and nicely balanced. Don't waste your time listening to those who tell you that there is something else or that there is something better. . . . It is the weapon of peace which will conquer war."

May Day

Comrades Mark Starr and T. Ashcroft, of the Labour College, are, I understand, to speak in Esperanto on the international platform in Hyde Park.

Seamen and the International Language

I have received a copy of the New Zealand *Auckland Labour News* containing a column of Esperanto notes. At the end there is a casual reference to a visit paid by an Italian seaman who knew Esperanto, without which he would have found himself deaf and dumb in the Antipodes. I wonder why it is that seamen generally do not realise that they have ready at hand in Esperanto a *lingua franca* which, even at the present time, might make every port they touch at hospitable and homelike. I suggest that the Seamen's Union might appoint a committee to investigate the matter.

La registaro de Cehoslovakio postulas disigon de eklezio kaj s'tato kaj forigon de religia instruado en lernejoj. Lau socialistaj gazetoj, en la distrikto de Grand-Praha eksig'is en du semajnoj c'irkau 100,000 personoj el la katolika eklezio.

Munchen (Germ.). La 20. febr. okazis nova Esp. ekspozicio en salono disponigita de la imperia pos'tministerio, sekcio VII. La du paroladoj de s-ro sup. pos't-administr. Jacob kaj la ekspozicioj rezultigis kursojn kun pli ol 300 gepos'toficistoj. Certe tre rimarkinda sukceso.

(El *Esperanto Triumfonta*, Köln.)

Esperanto en c'iuj medioj.—Por observanto estas tre signifa la mirinda disvastigo de Esperanto en plej diversaj medioj. . . . Mi konas la kazon de servistino de plej malalta klaso de hoteloj, t. e. de kafejac'o, en kiu la manlaboristoj kus'as po du en sama lito kaj kie estas multegaj litoj en sama c'ambreto, kiu atingis bonan scion de la lingvo lernante tutsola sens'eligante la terpomojn, alia kazo estas tiu de simpla domkovristo, kiu vojag'is pli ol 20 km. por c'eesti kurson de Esperanto kaj mirinde flue g'in parolis. Nova kazo estas donita hodiaŭ de S-ro Elten el Hildesheim. Li gvidas kurson, en kiu partoprenas 2 manlaboristoj, 3 ministoj, 2 seruristoj, 1 kanalfosisto, 1 tajlorhelpanto kaj 3 filinoj de ministoj. Ni gratulu tiujn kurag'ajn kaj idealoplenajn homojn, kiuj donas al si penon lerni la internacian lingvon dum instruitaj personoj havas nur mokojn kaj mals'aton por Esperanto kaj g'iaj adeptoj.—*Mekol.*

(El *Esperanto*, G'enevo.)

CORRESPONDENCE

J. P. M. M. Please Note

DEAR EDITOR,—Will J. P. M. Millar or some other comrade devote ten minutes, for the edification of some of us *green* students, to such extreme Elementaries as :—

(1) How to read with profit and how to mark textbooks.

(2) How to take notes at lectures and how to arrange and index a notebook.

(3) How to preserve, arrange and/or file press cuttings. Is a pasting scrapbook the best way of fixing them, and should they be arranged chronologically or by subjects ?

In dealing with these matters, remember it's a case of men with little spare time appealing for simple, easy methods, and trusting to the guidance of old hands whose experience might save wasted labour.

Yours fraternally, S. F. G.

The Tolemain System

DEAR COMRADE,—What exactly is the Tolemain method of presentation referred to by W. W. Craik in his preface to *A Short History of the Modern Working-Class Movement* (latest edition, p. iii.) ?

Yours fraternally, N. PARKER

[We hope our correspondent will not be disappointed to learn that Tolemainism is *not* a rival to Pelmanism. "Tolemain," alas, is only a misprint for "the main."—ED. PLEBS.]

H. G. Wells and Marxian Terminology

DEAR COMRADE,—The terms "proletarian" and "bourgeois" may be silly jargon in the estimation of Mr. H. G. Wells, but why are they as terms more silly than "geography," "palæolithic," "thermometer" or even "propaganda" ? The words "proletarian" and "bourgeois" are easily understandable, and if they convey little to Mr. Wells, they convey much to millions of people throughout the world.

In any case Mr. Wells is in error in implying that Marx invented the term "bourgeois." It was a term in general use throughout France in the 18th century in political discussion and especially in the latter half of the century when the growls of the "have-nots" began to grow loud. The word occurs in old social-revolutionary songs that date back to the great French Revolution of that time, for instance in *La Carmagnole* and in *Ca Ira*. The first four lines of the *Carmagnole*, roughly translated, run as follows :—

> In the great town of Paris
> There are bourgeois well nourished,
> There are the poverty-stricken
> Who have empty stomachs. . . .

In regard to Mr. Wells' position as a "Socialist" I agree with J. G. Crowther that Mr. Wells "might have made a grand proletarian" ; and I can see no harm in indulging with T. A. Jackson in a wish to win him. But I see little prospect of this wish being fulfilled. Mr. Wells knows practically nothing of our working-class movement and still less about the International movement. He moves only in "intellectual" circles ; his interests are centred in them—see his articles on his recent visit to Russia ; his books on "Socialism" are mainly concerned with "The Great State," great people and so on, whilst the *economic* subjection of the masses of the people to capitalism is barely touched upon. What can one expect from a "Socialist" who regards William Morris as reactionary ?

So that he may not be too "angry" with me, if he chances to read this letter, I should like to tell Mr. Wells that I have read his *History of Mr. Polly* more often than any other book, that I have laughed more heartily over it than all the other books I have ever read, that I laugh now at my eleventh time of reading it as much as ever I did, that a copy of it has always accompanied me on my travels, and that I hope still to be able to chuckle over it for many a long year to come.

Yours fraternally, A. P. L.

P.S.—Mr. Wells himself uses the term "proletariat" at least twice in his book, *An Englishman Looks at the World*.—A. P. L.

DEAR COMRADE,—H. G. Wells may be "worth salvaging." But I still think that relentless criticism, with the object of curing his great vice—mental slackness—will make him still better worth our efforts. I think his special quality is *breadth*—a capacity of understanding a little of everything. But breadth and slackness often go together, e.g. Coleridge.

It is sheer mental slackness to say that "proletariat" is vague. H. G. W. is an intellectual example of Kerensky confusionism. I assure T. A. Jackson that I know—and treasure—the *Liberator*. But to bracket the PLEBS with the *Liberator* is another instance of Wells' loose grasp of things. The two journals are so different in style and appeal that the "compliment" is meaningless. Presumably the fact that they both use the term "proletariat" is as far as Wells has got.

As for J. Pollock and H. A. Jones, I had never heard of either of them before. I don't read the *Evening Standard*, and I suggest that if H. G. W. left off reading it and really read some Marx instead—or even Beer's *Life of Marx*—he would learn something.

Yours frat., J. G. CROWTHER

MARX'S BEARD

DEAR COMRADE,—*Apropos* of H. G. Wells' dislike of Marx's beard. In the course of his historical researches Mr. Wells may not have run across the following little sidelight on the Beard Question which I quote from a footnote to *Garibaldi's Defence of the Roman Republic*, by G. M. Trevelyan :—

> "The wearing of beards was a sign of advanced principles; it was prohibited in Sicily as late as the time of the Crimean War, when the Sardinian Consul at Frapani had to invoke his consular rights to save himself from being forcibly shaved by the police."

So that H. G. W. himself, had he been born a quarter of a century earlier, might have overcome his natural distaste and defiantly taken his place in the ranks of the bearded!

Yours frat., F. RATCLIFFE

MARX AND ENGELS

DEAR COMRADE,—Here is an amazing contribution to the recent discussion of the relations between Marx and Engels, from Julius West's *History of the Chartist Movement* (p. 228) :—"By the middle of the forties Friedrich Engels had settled in England, and was hard at work formulating the *theories* he was to teach his friend, master and pupil, Karl Marx."

What Engels *did* "teach" Marx is surely sufficiently well known. And Marx's collaboration with the practical Engels makes a remark of Dr. Arthur Shadwell's in the current *Edinburgh Review* sound particularly foolish. Dr. Shadwell doubts if Marx, who wrote so much about factories, ever actually entered one; and implies that this seriously discounts the value of Marx's criticisms! As if a man could not write about the stars unless he had washed his feet in the Milky Way!

Yours fraternally, READER

MCLAINE AND METAPHYSICS

DEAR COMRADE,—Pars. 5 and 6 in the March instalment of McLaine's "Economics" are likely to induce the headaches he is out to prevent. What does he mean by presenting—to beginners, too!—a "value" which is neither exchange nor use value? And all the definition we get is that this "value" is "something metaphysical." In other words, something outside and independent of Nature and man.

Nothing can be metaphysical. Has McLaine never studied Dietzgen? Or does his Scottish blood still yearn for "metaphysical" existence? This "value" he talks about is nothing more than a "value" idea generalised by his thinking apparatus from certain definite kinds of value—value in exchange and value in use. I hope he will do some blue-pencilling if there are any more remarks about metaphysical abstractions in future chapters.

Yours fraternally, STUDENT

P.S.—In his definition of value, "production" should read "reproduction"—otherwise certain criticisms are valid.—S.

NEWS OF THE MOVEMENT

At the Plebs E.C. meeting on March 10th, Winifred Horrabin resigned the Treasuring half of her duties as Sec.-Treasurer, and Geo. Sims was elected to fill that part of the bill in future. The E.C. also drew up the ballot-paper on the alterations to constitution, etc., discussed at Bradford. This should be in the hands of members soon after these words are in print, and we trust that they will fill in and return promptly.

* * *

In view of the ever-increasing work at the PLEBS Office, the E.C. appeal to London readers for voluntary helpers *who can give an hour or two weekly, regularly.* Casual help is worse than no help at all; but a few keen (and punctual) volunteers would be of great assistance. Write Sec.

For the same reason, too, the E.C. call attention to the fact that the hours for visitors are 3.30 to 5.30 p.m., and 6.30 to 8.30 p.m. on Mondays and Thursdays, and *these hours only.* The office-sec. doesn't like to be rude if you call at other times; but the E.C. wish to point out, on her behalf, that it's quite hard enough to get through the work if you're left alone, and if you're buttonholed for conversation about the weather or the movement by affable visitors at all hours, it's a flat impossibility. So—forgive our bluntness—kindly oblige by staying away, unless you come to work.

* * *

Our Pound Fund grows apace—see list below. May we explain that there's nothing hard-and-fast about the scheme—you may *loan* the money, or *donate* it, or *advance* it on account of books to be supplied to you later—just as you prefer. So long as you do what you can for us, you are free to make your own conditions.

* * *

Plebeians will be interested to learn, in view of a recent article in these pages suggesting this very scheme, that a special "strike school" for its members has been organised by the Amalgamated Clothing Workers' Union in New York. Ninety per cent. attendance was the record for the opening classes.

* * *

We have gratefully to acknowledge a donation of 10s. from the Eltham Women's section of the Labour Party, sent to the PLEBS "in memory of Eric Pendrey, and as a mark of respect to Mabel and Charlie Pendrey."

Alex. Evans writes enthusiastically from WIGAN :—" Average attendance at Hay's classes 50. . . . Hay is splendid as a teacher, not to mention his speaking abilities. Unfortunately we have been let down as regards finance, so that C. L. Gibbons has had to return to Cardiff, but I feel sure we shall see good results soon from the last few months' work." Wigan's loss was CARDIFF's gain, for Allen Pope, Sec. Cardiff branch, Plebs League, writes : " Since Gibbons' instalment our average attendance has increased. Com. Pearce, our delegate to Bradford, reported to the branch on the Meet, but unemployment here is so acute that I fear we shall not be able to respond as we should like to the Pound Fund. The Cardiff members, however, send 2s. 6d. each in anticipation of the raised sub." Congratulations and thanks. To send along the " extra " without waiting for the result of the ballot is the sort of little thing that shows folks are keen.

* * *

T. D. Smith (12, Old Meeting Street, West Bromwich) wonders " if it might be possible for a party of a dozen Plebeians to go over to Paris during the summer, say for five days or so. It would give budding Esperantists sleepless nights." We leave it to readers to communicate with T. D. S. direct. We are all in favour of Plebs Summer Schools—in Paris or elsewhere.

* * *

We learn with regret that the Scottish Labour College is urgently in need of funds, and trust that Plebeians north of the Tweed will do all in their power to help. The men who give " whole time " to the practical business of working-class education don't exactly live on the fat of the land.

* * *

The syllabus of the WALSALL Soc. Science class has been unavoidably held over until now—when the class will be just finishing. If the programme has been adhered to, Comrades Hindle, Sylvester, Pearsall, Palmer and Smith have all taken a share in the term's lectures—we hope with successful results.

* * *

One of the LONDON branches is breaking out in a fresh place—building a " runabout " literature stall, to be used at meetings, indoors and outdoors, for sale of The Goods . . The London Sales Organiser will be glad to get in touch with branches or individual members and discuss ways and means of reaching that 7,000 mark (address, c/o PLEBS Office). Give him—and us—a hand.

* * *

" The local police inspector, who is a relic of the Stone Age, knows our little crowd as a hen knows its chickens, and it tickles us to note the scorn on his face as he passes us in the street." This from a letter from a South Wales correspondent—we won't give any more detailed geographical references, lest that police inspector might get rude. Despite Robert's scorn, however, there's a class going strong, and a Plebs branch looming in the near future. So that Robert's scorn is somewhat ineffectual.

* * *

The proposal made at the Meet to hold a Plebs Conference this autumn on Methods of Tuition ought to arouse the keen interest of all class workers. It would make an excellent send-off for the winter's work, and the interchange of ideas on all sorts of questions of practical importance to teachers would be of immense value. In order to prepare the ground for the Conference, therefore, we propose to devote some space in ensuing numbers to contributions from class-teachers on the methods they themselves have found most useful. Do you use the blackboard ? Do you use diagrams or charts ? Do you preface every lesson by a summary of the preceding one ? Do you get your students to write essays, or do you favour *viva voce* questions and discussion ?

To set the ball rolling we publish this month the following contribution from Com. H. Braun, of the BLAYDON-ON-TYNE class :—

For the course on Trades Unionism, Its History and Future (syllabus of which was published in December PLEBS), we are setting a series of questions, to be answered in writing. We find this a more satisfactory method than asking questions in class, and I enclose a few specimens in the hope that other tutors may find the idea useful :—

Does the capitalist support the working man ? If not, explain why not.

How do you account for the antagonism of interests between the capitalist and working classes ? Why does the struggle become keener ?

What part has machinery played in intensifying the class struggle ? Give one or two examples of this from history.

HELPERS—NOT HOPERS!

A month ago the Halifax Plebs Branch sent along an advance order—WITH THE CASH—for two dozen copies of *Creative Revolution*, and one dozen each of the forthcoming Plebs Textbooks (to be ready, if possible, for the autumn) on *The Science of Understanding and *Economic Geography*.***

That's practical co-operation. That's worth a truck-load of good wishes. WHAT CAN YOUR BRANCH DO ABOUT IT?

* Same price as *Creative Revolution*. If we manage to do them cheaper we shall return you the balance or send more books.

What were the chief failures in the recent miners' strike? What lessons should they teach us?

How is Labour to organise? Why has the old-fashioned craft union failed?

Why is the working class struggling in the political arena as well as in the industrial field? Are politics separate from Trades Unionism?

What is the difference between a reform and a revolution? Give examples of each.

What is the meaning of the word "State"? Has the State always existed in its present form? Mention any forms the State has taken. Do you think the State will, in future, take any other form?

We hope PLEBS readers will lose no time in sending along suggestions for the agenda of the Teaching Methods Conference. The more preliminary discussion we have, the more successful the Conference is likely to be.

W. H.

OUR POUND FUND

Since the Meet we have received £1 each from :—

Ed. Archbold, J. T. Walton Newbold, E. Collins, S. W. Hudson, R. Page Arnot, J. E. Matthews, F. Lord, A. Taylor, P. Thomas, H. Chivers, J. D. Walmsley, G. W. Brown, F. A. Hazell-Brown, Jno. James, K. Horrabin, R. Winstone, Sam Farrant, W. P. R. Davies, E. Wright, Lily Clayman, W. Shaw, "Clydachite."

*** Halifax Plebs Branch, £5.

Cash total to date :—£55, irrespective of further I.O.U.'s and promises.

HAVE YOU ENTERED FOR

our Circulation Competition? We are offering a prize of £5 worth of books to the class-secretary, organiser or League member, who sends us, before April 15th, the greatest number of *new postal subscriptions* to the PLEBS. Subscriptions may be for six months (3s. 9d.) or twelve months (7s. 6d.). Cash must, of course, accompany the names and addresses you send. Mark your lists "Competition."

OUR MOTTO COMPETITION

We offer a monthly prize of 10s. worth of books (to be chosen by the winner and supplied through the Plebs Book Dept.) for the best motto, *of not more than 24 words*, suitable for use on our front cover, received before the 16th of the month. The motto may be original, or a quotation, but should be appropriate to Plebs propaganda. Send in your entries on postcards, marked "Motto," and bearing your name and address.

This month's prize has been awarded to—

THE HOME SECRETARY,
House of Commons, S.W.

for the phrase used on our cover, which we have "lifted" from the report of his speech in Parliament in defence of the printing of imitation *Pravdas* in this country, for circulation in Russia. This, he explained—in a phrase worth far more than 10s.—was "not propaganda" (see cover for remainder of sentence). We love to reward true merit, so if Mr. Shortt will let us know his choice of books, we will forward at once. May we recommend him to try *Red Europe* for one?

We have received from Plebeians several excellent mottoes which we hope to use in time. If Mr. Shortt fails to claim his prize, we shall award two prizes next month to *bona fide* competitors.

REVIEWS

A BOOK TO PUSH

Red Europe. By F. Ansty. (S.L. Press. 3s. 3d. From PLEBS, post paid 3s. 7d.)

The general statement which this book sets out to prove—and proves up to the hilt—is that wars, under capitalism, have an economic basis; and that economic interests, in war-time, speedily result in acts on the part of all the belligerents which contradict flatly those abstract principles of Right, Justice, and so forth to which governments appeal when addressing their own or other peoples. Not a new thesis, perhaps; but one which there was never such an opportunity of illustrating, and driving home, as that afforded by the Great War. Never were acts and "ideals" so glaringly at variance. Never was capitalism's cynical disregard of the principles it professes to respect more apparent. The author of this book had ample material on which to work—and a magnificent opportunity.

He has seized it, and the result is a piece of fine propaganda. Ansty writes vigorously, and he has, moreover, the knack of getting to the heart of things in a single sentence. *Red Europe* is an unsparing exposure of the governing classes of every State, and their satellites.

It might well have been entitled "The Yellow World *versus* Red Russia," for of course it is in their dealings with Russia that the champions of Freedom and Democracy have most fully revealed their duplicity. Ansty traces the relations of Russia and the Allies from the beginning of the War, and reminds us of the fulsome adulation heaped upon the Tsar's government when half-armed, half-fed and half-clothed Russian troops were being butchered in East Russia,

in heroic and successful efforts to divert German troops from the Western Front. There was a saying in the British Army in those days that " We'll go on with this fight to the last drop of Russian blood " ; and that sentiment—a joke amongst soldiers—appears to have been the guiding principle of Allied statesmen far removed from the firing line.

When internal treachery and corruption, *plus* Allied disregard for human limitations, forced the Russian people into revolution, capitalism within and without showed itself in all its ugly brutality. It is a sordid story of a great crime which Ansty tells, and should be a sufficient answer to those who argue that " peaceful persuasion " is likely to transform capitalism into a thing of beauty. All the propertied interests—Russian, German and Allied—united in efforts to break the Russian Workers' Republic. Yet its ill-equipped armies, inspired and dauntless, won through again and again. And the end is not yet. . . .

The story of a great crime ; and an epic of an even greater heroism and endurance. Get a copy of this book *now*, and make its contents known.

G. S.

Goulden Vanity

The Coming Revolution. By Gerald Gould. (Collins. 6s. net.)

Mr. Gould's writing, in this new book, reminds me of nothing so much as of two classical scholars—the late Dr. Verrall and the living Professor Gilbert Murray. Dr. Verrall, while he was alive, was able to prove that in every Greek play which he edited there was a secret plot, which he had discovered, and that all previous readings of the play were nonsense. Although these plots were almost without exception of the kind that were invented by Sardou, or even less-known French mechanical writers, Verrall's power of writing and his extraordinary ingenuity in the accumulation of small facts pointing in the right direction made great numbers of people believe him, until his death broke the spell and people recovered their sanity.

To-day, Professor Murray, with greater caution, is playing the same game. Recent researches into Greek superstitions have so impressed him that he has claimed that these same plays are disguised fertility rituals and phallic songs. No great classical work is now free from the danger of being proclaimed a litany to the Jubjub bird, or some equally ridiculous deity, for Mr. Cornford has now dragged into the crowd of misinterpreted authors the historian Thucydides. Professor Murray, when he saw his pupil dressing up a respectable historian as a priest of Mumbo Jumbo, should have felt as Sin did when she gave birth to Death, but instead has approved, and told Mr. Cornford to go further and do, if possible, worse. Therefore I await every day the publication of the edition of *Alice through the Looking Glass* which will prove that because some folk think dreams of oysters mean children, therefore the song of " the Walrus and the Carpenter " is a phallic chant.

Mr. Gould is an equally expert illusionist. And his task is more difficult. He persuades us that everything is lovely in the Labour garden. His thesis is that there is an enormous and irresistible, mainly peaceful, urge towards revolution. In his book the serried ranks of Labour march steadily on in column after column ; Mr. Thomas strews roses before ; the Parliamentary Committee plays in tune on wind instruments ; and the vast bulk of Mr. Bevin brings up the rear. This is because Mr. Gould takes everything at its face value. The speeches of J. H. Thomas, the speeches and resolutions of the Council of Action, the announcements of the Miners' Executive, the programmes of the Labour Party, the speeches on Direct Action, etc.—all these are treated by Mr. Gould as real vital documents, every word of which is meant.

Now it is undeniable that no single word of them is really meant. These verbal fireworks burn out as soon as they are sent forth. They are toys—vain things imagined to amuse and delude the followers of Moderate Labour Leaders when they become restless. But when Mr. Gould recites them, taking them at their face value, one almost believes with him in the great, conscious, peaceful, idealist, English Revolution.

An unhappy thought has made him collect in an appendix some of the hollowest of these documents. There you may read Mr. Thomas's declarations on the Council of Action, the full text of the Trade Union resolutions on Direct Action, the whole miners' Nationalisation Bill sprawling its weary length along the pages, and many other derelict rotting hulks. They are too obviously soothers—toys made to amuse the grumbling child, Labour, and thrown aside when the baby has chewed them sufficiently and forgotten his trouble.

After this warning against Mr. Gould, one may praise the book. There is really valuable matter about the mind and attitude of the middle and upper classes in this book. There is a most interesting and timely account of the recent developments in the British Labour movement—and after all the last two years have seen more remarkable developments than the previous twenty. And there is a good deal of very sound and sensible reflection on the class war as it is in England to-day. Therefore the book is clearly one to be read.

But all the same, do not let Mr. Gould cast his black magic on you, or he will show you a molehill and you shall call it a mountain, and in the end he will fix his claws into you and race off with your soul to hell.

R. W. P.

Bolshevik Busts

[We do not usually review anything but books in the PLEBS, but think our readers will agree that the peculiar interest of this Art Exhibition makes the following notes quite appropriate to our columns.—ED. PLEBS.]

The exhibition of the Modern Society of Portrait Painters held during February, at the Princes Galleries, Piccadilly, was enlivened by the portrait busts of Zinoviev, Trotsky, Krassin, Dserzhinsky and Kamenev (in bronze) and Lenin (in marble), modelled from life by Mrs. Clare Sheridan during her visit to Russia last autumn.

A first glance at these busts shows that they are neither so poor nor so "woolly" as one was led to expect from the pictures appearing in the illustrated papers; a closer study impresses one with a sense of power and character conveyed—qualities often lacking in the work of sculptors with more technique. The "orthodox" school would probably say that Mrs. Sheridan's technical accomplishment scarcely does credit to her training under Harold Stabler and F. Blundstone, but Plebeians are not inclined to accept the dicta of "orthodox" schools as being necessarily the last word on any subject.

Mrs. Sheridan affects a rough and sketchy style of modelling which is all very well when combined with the power and vision of a Rodin, the erratic genius of an Epstein, or the skilful touch of a Derwent Wood; but in her case I am afraid it only tends to disguise her lack of knowledge of form—this being particularly noticeable when her work is translated into marble by individual chisel strokes (as in the case of Lenin's bust) and less noticeable in "poured" metal. For instance in her treatment of the back part of the jaw she seems to be unaware that behind the *masseter* muscle—the muscle which enables one to close the jaw, masticate one's food, and grind one's teeth at the pueriliti:es of Labour leaders—the form falls away backwards towards the centre line of the head. This failing appears always specially marked on the dexter side (i.e. the bust's right side) of the face, as if Mrs. Sheridan had done her modelling with the light coming in mainly from one side. Zinoviev's eyelids are modelled as half covering the eyeball, a position entirely unwarranted by the general pose of the head. In technique Trotsky and Krassin are the two best busts and Kamenev probably the worst. The last mentioned shows two formless fleshy cheeks of the same "texture" as the coat he is wearing, and one is left with an impression of weakness scarcely compatible with the character of a man who in August, 1914, when all the other Socialists in Europe were busily voting war credits, dared as a Bolshevik deputy of the Russian Duma to stand up against the initiation of the awful slaughter—he and the other five Bolshevik deputies being promptly sent to penal servitude in Siberia.

Despite the "failings" referred to one feels in general a considerable satisfaction, as said above, at the sense of power and character portrayed. Of course the subjects are all remarkable men; and Zinoviev and Trotsky by no means suffered from the fact that between them was hung a very large and undistinguished portrait (quite unworthy of Mr. Glyn Philpot's talents as a painter) of the Marquess of Londonderry dressed up in official robes.

Zinoviev appears as the embodiment of power and concentration. Krassin's is a clever head which when studied shows determination and even pugnacity—eminently suitable qualities in fighting the bellicosity of Winston Churchill, the diplomacy of Curzon, and the "democracy" of Lloyd George. This is the bust I liked best. Dserzhinsky has a thoughtful face with upper features reminiscent of the classical busts in the British Museum, and a lower jaw and beard which rather remind one of "Uncle Sam" as usually depicted. Trotsky's bust is one of the best, but suffers somewhat from the fact that it has been coloured with a green hue of too vivid a shade, which gives an effect of pretty-prettiness that detracts from the general strength.

Lenin was in a room by himself. His bust is in marble, and suffers thereby for the reasons already stated. Lenin's great force of character is mainly brought out by Mrs. Sheridan's treatment of the eyes, which she represents as screwed up and half-closed. —the sort of look one can imagine Lenin using when summing up a visitor or weighing the pros and cons of some proposed course of action.

Turning away from the bust of this the greatest figure and strongest personality in modern history, I could not help recalling the eloquent words of William Hard, giving in the American *Metropolitan Magazine* (in 1919) Colonel Robins' own description of his departure from Russia via Siberia the previous year in May, 1918:—

"The paper [carried by Robins] was a wish by Lenin. He could not physically enforce it; at that time his Red Army was not large enough to reach so far; but it was a wish by Lenin. It said in effect that courtesy to Col. Robins of the American Red Cross was desired by Lenin. It bore the words Vladimir Ulianov and then in parentheses the word Lenin. It was enough

on the Volga, it was enough on the Amur. At Habarovsk, on the Amur, Robins came to a Soviet farther away from Moscow than any other Soviet on Russian soil. It was "the Soviet of the Far Eastern District" bordering the Arctic, bordering the Pacific. Its President Commissioner, Krasnotchokov, read Lenin's letter and at once gave Robins the official freedom of the City of Habarovsk. . . . On the Amur 4,500 miles beyond the farthest line then reached by any soldier in Lenin's Guard, the name of Lenin was enough. It was the name of the Revolution, of the Soviet idea."

A. P. L.

BRUCE GLASIER

On the Road to Liberty. By Bruce Glasier. (Nat. Labour Press. 5s. net.)

All old friends of J. Bruce Glasier will be glad to have the collection of his poems and ballads which has just been issued in this handsome little volume. Many who knew Bruce as a propagandist were hardly aware that he was likewise a poet, for throughout his more active years he felt it necessary to concentrate on the urgent task of spreading the gospel from the public platform, and upon his work in the Second International and as a Socialist pressman. A wise choice, perhaps, though one that would hardly have been made had the impulse to creative imagination been of that irresistible force characteristic of the born poet.

His most marked originality was displayed, we think, in his private letters. As a poet his work recalls that of his two chief inspirers, William Morris and Robert Burns, but has none the less a distinctly individual touch. Perhaps the most interesting poems in the volume are "The Oracles of Night," written when Glasier was in the agnostic phase, and "A Fragment: May, 1920," when he had returned, with a broader vision, to something approaching the religious faith of his earliest manhood. Never, we believe, and certainly not during the days when we were numbered among his intimates, was he one of those "cheerful atheists" and "crass materialists," who are among the most strenuous up-builders of the new world. Ardent Socialist though he was, he was never of the stuff of which proletarian revolutionaries are made. He disbelieved "wi' deefeeculty," and was probably happier on his death-bed than during his years of unfaith. Such, at least, would seem to be the purport of these poems.

E. & C. P.

THE VOID

Problems of a New World. By J. A. Hobson. (Allen & Unwin. 7s. 6d.)

This is a book to make one gloomy. Mr. Hobson is an able writer, and one of the few non-Socialist economic writers of merit, and this is neither a badly written nor a stupid book. It is just hopelessly unreal—a book written by a foolish dreamer.

A "real" League of Nations, federalism, advanced democracy, a touch of Guild Socialism, all the programme of left-wing Liberalism. These Mr. Hobson advances, and they are grey with dust; they crumble tastelessly in the mouth. They are not even Dead Sea fruit—they are nothing.

And this terrible second half to a book which starts brilliantly, pungently, with a cruel analysis of war-psychology and the ideals of the governing class.

I respect Mr. Hobson. I cannot write more than that I wish he had torn full half of his book up.

R. W. P.

Query Three :—

HAVE YOU ORDERED YOUR SUPPLY OF THE SPECIAL PLEBS EDITION OF "CREATIVE REVOLUTION"? *(see p. ii. of cover).*

THE PLEBS BOOKSHELF

IT'S up to me to reply, without delay, to certain points raised by Archbold in his article on "The Geographic Conception" on another page—though I hope my doing so won't restrain others interested in the subject from joining in next month. So far as the article is a criticism of Fairgrieve it is—up to a point—justified. Fairgrieve, despite his own careful limitation in his opening chapter of the influence of geographic factors, *does* tend in certain sections of his book to treat of those factors as though they were the dominant influence on the course of human history. In brief, he is not a Marxist. What of it? Archbold would not, I presume, suggest that we should make no use of books by non-Marxians. Does he never make use of Gibbins' *Industrial History?* And couldn't a case be made out as to the "dangers" of putting Gibbins into the hands of new students? For that matter, was Lewis Morgan a Marxist—or does his work cover anything like the whole content of Marxism?

But I fancy Archbold is out for the scalps of other people besides Fairgrieve—people nearer home! He mentions "certain Plebeian circles," and rather more than hints that those circles have swallowed Fairgrieve too uncritically. I can only speak for myself, of course. I have never used or recommended Fairgrieve without pointing out that, being a geographer pure and simple, he exaggerated the importance of geographical factors and ignored others, more important, altogether. Fairgrieve's is an exceedingly useful book—for Marxians; for they bring to it a knowledge of the factors which it ignores.

"Geography," says Archbold with a shudder, "opens the door to a new Revisionism." Now—even if it were true that any of us interested in the study of geography were parties to some sinister Revisionist conspiracy—I suggest that this horror of "Revisionism" hardly befits a Marxian. The man who in one breath declares "Nothing is; everything is becoming," and then uses "revisionist" as a term of abuse can hardly have ever realised what that first declaration implies! Revisionism does not necessarily mean watering down—even though one set of people who called themselves Revisionists chiefly distinguished themselves in that particular direction. However, in this instance none of us are out to "revise," but at the most to "extend." We want to *use* the key Marx gave us, to use it for further study; not to sit in a corner hugging it to our bosom, and merely describing its virtues over and over again.

We suggest that human history is the result of the *interaction* and interrelation of certain factors, among which *technical development* is the dynamic force, the force which makes for change. But that technical development is assisted or retarded, turned in certain directions rather than in others by certain other factors, the geographic factor among them. We suggest that a study of the actual working of the geographic factor in history throws fresh light on, and brings added support to, the Materialist Conception of History. We know perfectly well that our "Geographical Footnotes" are only "Economic Footnotes" seen from another angle. We insist, as Marx insisted, on the *interrelation* of factors—and I therefore urge that Archbold, when he singles out the economic factor and regards it as a thing apart, is as much at fault—and as un-Marxian—as is Fairgrieve, when he separates the geographical factor from the rest and studies that alone. True, to take Archbold's example, it was Merchants' Capital which made Carthage what she was. But the technical development which resulted in the accumulation of that Merchants' Capital was most emphatically conditioned by the fact that the Phœnicians lived on the coasts of a large inland sea. Merchants' Capital had not been accumulated by the barbarians who, centuries later, came down to that sea from the north and east. Why? (As for "anti-quarianism"—well that term surely applies, if you're so unintelligent as to apply it, as much to a study of the rise of Merchants' Capital as to a study of the sea and its influence on human development.)

* * *

I must leave it at that for the moment. I only want to ask Archbold one other question: Who or what were "the geographic gods of history," and when and where did they go to sleep?

* * *

Being, as will be seen, quite unrepentant as regards geography, I shall now proceed to recommend to all Plebeians an atlas just issued by Philip's at a price well within the reach even of proletarian purses. *Philip's Atlas of Modern Geography* (new and revised edition, 2s. 3d. net) contains 26 coloured maps, and an index. It has been brought up to date as regards frontiers, etc., and forms a most useful class-book for lectures on the geography of to-day. Czecho-Slovakia, Poland, Greater Greece, Abbreviated Austria, Georgia and Azerbaijan—all the new "features" are here well and truly shown. The only error I have discovered is the omission on p. 9 of Trentino and Tyrol from the new Italy, but this can easily be put right with a little red ink.

* * *

Why, ask one or two correspondents, is the PLEBS issuing a special edition of *Creative Revolution*, and does its issue, ahead of those long-desired and much-needed text-books, imply that it is a book of superior importance to these? The answer is that it implies nothing of the sort; but merely that we had the opportunity of publishing a cheap

edition of an exceedingly interesting book, a ready sale for which will help to provide funds for the printing of the textbooks. Moreover none of the textbooks are yet completed, though three or four are well in hand. So that we ask every Pleb to do his or her utmost to make our experiment a success. *Creative Revolution* is a fine, discursive piece of propaganda, and I hope that not a few study-groups will be formed to discuss it on the lines suggested by "J. B." in his article on another page.

* * *

The PLEBS Book Department is proving a big success—so emphatically a success, in fact, that overtime (which we don't pay for) is worked almost daily in the PLEBS office. One point about the Book Department I should like to bring to the notice of class and branch library secretaries, i.e. that the Department not only obtains books to order, but is prepared—being in touch with people well qualified for the job—to advise on lists of good books in every branch of literature, educational or general. A big order, for instance, was recently booked from a South Wales library which wanted so many pounds' worth of good modern fiction—and left it to us to advise on the selection. An informal "sub-committee" prepared that list, and though it doesn't pretend to be a veritable Hundred Best Novels, I am prepared to claim for it that it's a good representative collection, and that the members of that library won't have spent their money wastefully. Just make a note of this.

* * *

I imagine that no serious student of the working-class movement will need to be pressed to buy the half-dozen twopenny pamphlets, issued by the Communist Party, containing the Thesis of the Communist International (Second Congress, 1920). These are historical documents—contemporary "Socialist Classics." Two of them are prefaced by useful introductions by the E.C. of the British Communist Party; that to the Thesis on *National and Colonial Questions* being a concise account and analysis of modern Imperialism. The six pamphlets are also obtainable bound together in linen cover, 1s. 7½d. post paid. . . . Two other publications of the Communist Party will be noted by all students of history-as-it-is-being-made:—*Russia To-day:* A Survey of Facts and Figures for British Trade Unionists (2d.) and *The Economic Organisation of Soviet Russia*, by V. P. Miliutin, with a double-page chart showing the Supreme Economic Council's scheme of administration (1s.)

And here let me take the opportunity of congratulating all those responsible for the new *Communist*, which has very definitely "got a kick in it," and well deserves the circulation it has gained. I expect every Pleb will have bought—and filed—an extra copy of the Commune Special Number.

* * *

My space will only permit me to refer very briefly to two recent books of interest, in different ways, to Plebeians. *Debs and the Poets* (Henderson's, 3s. 6d.) is a collection of tributes to Eugene Debs, now, to the honour of America—where the Rights of Man come from—and the lasting fame of Mr. Woodrow Wilson, a common felon in the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary. The contributors include Henri Barbusse, Max Eastman, Israel Zangwill, Edwin Markham, Upton Sinclair, and a score or more of American poets whose names are not well known to me, but whose verses do honour to them, as well as to Debs. . . . Dr. Arthur Shadwell's recent *Times* articles have been issued as a booklet—*The Revolutionary Movement in Great Britain* (Grant Richards, 1s.)—with a preface by W. A. Appleton. (It is presumably in Appleton's honour that the cover is coloured a striking yellow.) Since the booklet reached me I have turned several times to those beautiful words of Dr. Shadwell's on p. 46, beginning "When the young Plebs lions are fully grown . . ." and thought how *lovely* it must be to be a real grown-up Shadwell (M.A., M.D., LL.D.) capable of writing about The Marxian Theory or the Revolutionary Movement or Bolshevism or the Class War, without omniscience, cocksureness, or forgetfulness of the fact that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy!

J. F. H.

THIRTY-FOUR POUNDS IN TEN MINUTES

AND ANOTHER THIRTY SINCE

¶ When we appealed at the Plebs Meet on Feb. 12th for suggestions as to how we were to finance the publication of our new Text Books, we had a pleasant surprise.

¶ *£34 in ten minutes, in fact!*

¶ "Ask Plebs to provide the money," replied two or three delegates at once. "And open the Fund NOW," put in another comrade; "here's my pound to start with."

¶ We opened the Fund. Within ten minutes £34—in cash or I.O.U.'s—was in the hat! And since then another thirty has come along.

¶ In brief, the idea of the Fund is this: You deposit a pound with us. You're in credit with us to that amount, and are entitled to a copy of each book we publish, as they are issued, up to the full value of your deposit. You get your money back, that is—in time. Meantime, you make our Text Book Scheme a Practicable Proposition by providing

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