

THE PLEBS

December 1923

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THE PLEBS

I can promise to be candid but not impartial.

Vol. XV

December, 1923

No. 12

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A SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

COMMENCING with the February number, the price of The PLEBS will be reduced to FOURPENCE. We have come to this decision after long (and anxious) consideration of the best ways by which to reach a larger number of the students in the various Labour College classes. In these hard times, we know full well, sixpence is a high price. Many of our class-students are unemployed men. Many more have to think twice before spending even a few coppers on anything but absolute neces-

sities. It is up to a working-class journal, therefore, to take what steps it can to face the facts of the situation. If we could have made the change next month we should have done so. But existing contracts prevented. Hence the decision :—

FOURPENCE IN FEBRUARY.

* * * *

In order to make this decrease in price possible, we shall have to make some reduction in the number of our pages. But—this we can promise now—the reduction in size will *not* be proportionate to the reduction in price. We are knocking a third off the price. If practicable we shall reduce the number of pages by a sixth only—from 48 to 40. *Whether we can maintain this depends on the support we get from the classes.* Only an increased circulation will enable us to do it. Can we have that increase ?

*Forty Pages
if Possible*

We're taking the risk. Will you help ?

As it is, we are barely paying our way. Remember, we get no subsidies of any sort or kind, either from Parties, Trade Unions, or advertisers. The grants made by Unions to the National Council of Labour Colleges are devoted entirely to the financing and organising of *classes*. The PLEBS gets nothing. We have to pay our way on the voluntary support and subscriptions of our readers, and we want to go on—or go down—doing so.

But we're not content merely to "go on." We want to *extend* our appeal. We don't feel healthy unless we're growing. The movement for Independent Working-Class Education gets steadily bigger. We want the circulation of The PLEBS to get bigger with it. That is why we're taking a step which only an increased circulation will justify.

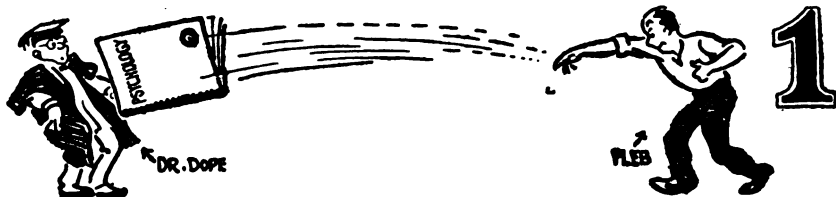
* * * *

It is this last fact which we want to emphasise. Unless we get that increased circulation, *and get it at once*, we must either revert to sixpence, or cut down the number of our pages.

*R.S.V.P.
—quickly !*

We have got to sell three PLEBS where now we sell two. Is that an impossibility ?

Will every literature secretary, and every individual Pleb who takes a parcel of magazines, *increase* his order in proportion to the *decrease* we are making in price ? Will he, that is,



order a dozen-and-a-half copies for every dozen he is taking now, thus keeping the *cash value* of his order—to us—at the same figure?

If that is practicable, then we can carry on. If not—well, as aforesaid, we have no subsidies, and must cut our coat accordingly. But we have never made an appeal in the past which has not been responded to. And we believe that in this case our friends up and down the country will rally to our support.

What (in our view) The PLEBS has to do is, not merely to *keep* the interest of convinced I.W.C.E.ers, but to *arouse* the interest of the men and women coming into the classes for the first time, and make them into propagandists of Independent Working-Class Education. We cannot get at these men and women unless *you* help us. We are certain that a reduction in the price of the Magazine will make your part of the work easier. Can we, as before, rely on you?

* * * *

Frankly, our liabilities are heavy. They get heavier as the movement grows and develops. During this year we have published two textbooks (*Economics* and *Economic Geography*),

£ s. d. *What to Read*, and Starr's "potted" textbook,
 Trade Unionism: Past and Future. Not, we think, a bad record—the best year's work yet anyhow.

But the money comes in O so slowly! Some of our best friends and keenest supporters seem to have got it into their heads that "The PLEBS can wait." And they keep us waiting! It's amazing how firmly fixed in the minds of some workers is the idea that a working-class organisation can be kept waiting indefinitely. Presumably the office fire is to be kept burning on the flames of our enthusiasm.

We need *cash*, and we need it now. If all our friends settled up their accounts within the next month we should end the year with a balance on the right side. How do *you* stand?

If you owe us anything, *pay up*.

And if you can afford to send us a donation towards a Fourpenny Fund—getting the Magazine on to its feet at the new price—*send now*.

Our Ticket

By the time this number of The PLEBS reaches the majority of readers the General Election will be over. We hope that the following proved friends of I.W.C.E. will by then all be M.P.s:—

MONMOUTH (ABERTILLERY) George Barker (returned unopposed); ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE, Ellen C. Wilkinson; GLOUCESTER, M. Phillips Price; LEEDS (SOUTH), H. C. Charleton; MANCHESTER (ARDWICK), T. Lowth; MANCHESTER (RUSHOLME), W. Paul; SOUTH SHIELDS, W. Lawther; WIMBLEDON, Mark Starr; WESTBURY, George Ward; GLASGOW (KELVINGROVE), A. Ferguson; LANARK (MOTHERWELL), J. T. W. Newbold; HARTLEPOOLS, Geo. Belt; MORPETH, Robt. Smillie; DONCASTER, W. Paling; WARWICK, The Countess of Warwick.

THE PLEBS

NUMBER FOUR

THE new Plebs textbook is one I find a little difficult to judge. Midwives are not good judges of babies: every baby is "such a bonny boy, deary" in every case. So too, as I assisted in bringing this book out I have rather forgotten what were my first impressions on reading the MS. Since then, one has had to help in correcting proofs, in re-reading and suggesting alterations. One's mind has been concentrated on details, the big outlines have receded. Nevertheless, I will attempt to indicate what I think are the main virtues of the book.

For it is "Praise of this Book" (as a truthful author once headed his Preface) that I wish to write, not a criticism. The book is good. I think on consideration and looking through them all, that it is the best of our textbooks. For this the credit is due to J. F. Horrabin. The forty-four maps in the *Outline of Economic Geography* are entirely his, and the first draft, which he wrote, has been subjected to much less revision by his colleagues than any other first draft in the series.

The title of the book is gloomy, compared with the book itself. Economic geography suggests tediousness at once. Lists of the longest rivers, the tallest mountains and so on. Information as to the various Coalfields of the World, Oil Resources, Theses by Comrade Tipanrunsky on Synthetic Imperialism. In fact, however, the *Outline* is not only easy, it is really deeply interesting reading. Our trouble has always been (in both the Imperialism and Economics *Outlines*) that we tended to be rather overweighted with knowledge and to put everything in. Horrabin is well on top of his material: he knows, and he writes easily because he knows all his subject inside out. It is only the partly learned man who is obscure in writing: the man who knows his subject thoroughly can always make himself clear even to the unpractised worker.

The book falls into two parts. The first is roughly historical geography, the second economic. The economic section deals with the face of the world as it is: its resources, and how they are controlled by various imperialist powers. It is an indispensable addition to the Imperialism textbook—indeed, provides a kind of conclusion which that book rather needs. The distinctive thesis of the book



here is not its general assumption that the world is moving to economic interdependence (that even our enemies see) or that only the workers can bring true internationalism (any Socialist orator says that) but that it makes more exact these generalities and shows where precisely we have got to to-day. There are, the book says, only five sovereign powers in the world to-day. The "sovereign states," like Nicaragua, Colombia, Latvia or Persia, do not exist. The realities are the five great groups—American Empire, British Empire, Japanese Empire (with China), Russian Soviet Union, French Empire. The British Empire includes Greece, the Portuguese colonies, and so on, quite as really as it includes India. The American Empire includes Colombia and Nicaragua quite as definitely as the Philippines. There is even a tabular list of the groups and their hidden and open dependencies, and a map of the *real* political world as opposed to the Versailles patterns.

The first part of the book, the historical section, is really not so immediately important, I suppose, but it is vastly interesting. The book divides history in a new way. Our rigid, what-did-Engels-say-in-1884 old Marxists will angrily wag their beavers, with bats in same. The division is not that given in the Preface to the Critique. Anyway, it is a true and just division, because it is based upon man's growing mastery of the tools of production. The first age is given as that of River Valleys, where if protected in certain ways discussed in the book, civilisation could grow up : as in the Nile. The second is the age of Inland Seas, and the age of the Greeks. The Mediterranean becomes a link, not a barrier, as soon as men learnt to navigate the small seas. Hence Athens and Rome. Here historical progress stops for a while until the navigation of the Ocean becomes possible—America, the Indies, and the age of mercantilism. The British Empire is a product of the "ocean age." Finally the last stage as yet is that of land transport, which made Germany and America, and is making Russia, great powers. All this is a bald and perhaps incomprehensible sketch of what is really a convincing and masterly narration.

Before closing, I must mention the maps. The forty-four charts do not take the place of an atlas and are not intended to. They are as good as J. F. H.'s always are, and better. They are the sort of map that never teases the eye, but makes suddenly and dramatically clear a particular point which you might stare at for an hour in a general atlas without seeing.

The book is written easily and simply, without pomposity. The Chinese proverb says : "To one inquiring the way of escape from a man-eating tiger, flowers of speech assume the appearance of entangling bindweed." This maxim has been duly observed.

R. W. POSTGATE.

THE PLEBS
TOM MANN

An Appreciation by George Lansbury

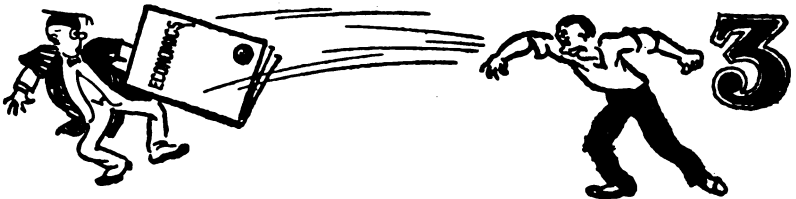
TOM MANN is sixty-seven years of age, and not out. He is three years my senior, yet the last time we spoke together he chaffed at me as if I were, compared with himself, a downright Methuselah. The fact is that through all the ups and downs of his varied career he has always retained the spirit of youth. Gerald Gould once said of me that I might, except for the grace of God, have been a Bishop. Tom Mann very narrowly escaped that fate, for it is certain that had Gardiner had his way, aided and abetted as he was by Cosmo Gordon Lang, present Archbishop of York, our dear comrade might have found himself well within the odour of sanctity living as a canon, dean or bishop.

The memoirs* our comrade has written should be read by all those who are actively engaged in the great task of rousing the workers of our land. The personal story he tells is the story of our movement during the past forty years. Like all men of his age who started life with inquiring minds, he read Ruskin, Thorold Rogers, and Henry George before he tackled Marx; and before he came under the spell of Morris or Hyndman he had admiringly sat at the feet of the lion-hearted, courageous Charles Bradlaugh and his colleague, Annie Besant, who still keeps the flag of liberty of conscience, freedom of thought and social justice for all races flying throughout the world.

Forty years ago the gospel of Free Thought, Republicanism and Birth Control was one which roused men's and women's passions even more than to-day. I can well remember how horrified I myself was at the publication by the two friends named above of the book *Fruits of Philosophy*. To-day, Marie Stopes has made the doctrine so respectable that the public libraries and bookstalls stock and advertise these publications.

Those who read his book will discover that when Tom Mann

* Labour Publishing Co., paper 3s. 6d., cloth, illustrated, 12/6.



turned to Socialism, all the problems which confront us now as to persons and policy were if anything more rampant than now. In those days, Fabians and Anarchists, Socialists who hated Parliamentary action and Socialists who approved that policy, appeared to hate each other much more than they hated capitalism ; and it is curious to notice that most of those who, with Morris, formed the Socialist League as a body antagonistic to Parliament, within a few years were found on the side, I won't say of the angels, but of those who invoked the aid of law to right social and industrial wrong.

Eleanor Marx and Edward Aveling were the founders of the Legal Eight Hour League, which for a series of years held demonstrations in Hyde Park. At first two gatherings were held, one supporting Trade Union voluntary action, the other relying on law to give effect to our desires. I remember Tom Mann was often our Legal-Eight-Hour chief marshal. He used to gallop along the Embankment either in a pony barrow or some other similar vehicle, ordering us all to get into fours and generally livening everybody up. Those were days when compositors met at the Society House and marched out in frock coats, bowlers and toppers. These processions have never been equalled since. I have seen both sides of the Embankment filled almost from end to end, the volunteerists marching off one way, the legalists the other, and always Tom Mann was to the fore.

But how can one review a life like this of our friend ? He has been in everything and always on the right side. I don't mean his methods have always been right, but his object always has been, because he has at all times ranged himself on the side of the down-and-outs, and always has been quite broad-minded and tolerant. I have heard him speak scores of times ; he has denounced capitalism and all its crimes ; he has advocated big bold policies against those of more moderate men, but he has never stooped to personal abuse of any kind.

H. M. Hyndman, speaking to me of him and some others said : " Tom Mann has the best brain in the whole Labour Movement. The difficulty with him is he will not remain constant to one method, one organisation." I think it was John Burns who said Tom had a tidal intellect ; perhaps John knew what he meant—I don't, except that perhaps he intended us to understand that Tom often changed his mind.

People who read his book will judge this for themselves. I was angry when he helped form the London Reform Union, which might have landed him on to the L.C.C. with John Burns and others as a Progressive Labour man, and even have made him a Cabinet colleague of Asquith and Burns. That Coalition of the new Trade Unionism of 1889 with the Liberal Party, masquerading as Pro-

gressives working for Municipal Socialism, was, in my opinion, a colossal blunder and I and many others were relieved when we heard Tom Mann had chucked the job of Secretary.

His work for the I.L.P. and his parliamentary fights all show him at his best. The James Kitson he fought in the Colne Valley was the same gentleman who drove me out of the Radical Party by refusing to let me speak at a Liberal Conference held in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester. Liberalism then was exactly what it is to-day—a Party financed by rich iron, steel, coal and cotton lords for the express purpose of keeping the workers in subjection.

But these memoirs tell of work well done in Africa and Australia, as well as in Britain. They also tell of our comrade's great campaign against militarism. Long before the War he published the *Don't Shoot* pamphlet, calling on soldiers not to obey their officers when ordered to fire on strikers. Gustave Herve was with us in those days ; alas, he has recanted and now out-jingoes the most violent jingo in his patriotic tub-thumping.

Before the War Syndicalism had Tom Mann as its greatest prophet, but, as he explains, the fact that he journeyed through life finding his way from one organisation to another only proves that he has a receptive mind and is big enough to pass from one phase to another.

I hope he will live many more years and that some working-class constituency will adopt and return him as a member of the Labour Party to the House of Commons. He has a judgment of men and things which is needed in our movement and has the sort of courage and faith which removes mountains ; but it is his vital energising spirit we need. I have never seen him tired or worn-out, yet have been near him in strikes innumerable ; I have never seen him really angry, except with conditions ; and certainly have never met him downhearted or without hope.

He has travelled a long road ; his pilgrimage has brought him into contact with many minds in many lands ; he has knowledge, understanding, wisdom. We need all these.

But, reader, buy his memoirs and you will discover why I think my friend, comrade and colleague in many a hard-fought fight is one of God's good men who has done his day's work faithfully and well.

GEORGE LANSBURY.



GEOGRAPHICAL FOOTNOTES

to CURRENT HISTORY

THE FRENCH EMPIRE IN EUROPE



The above map, reproduced from the chapter on "The French Empire" in our Economic Geography Textbook, shows France and the French "spheres of influence" in Europe. It brings out two facts of first-rate importance: (i.) that the principal coalfields of Europe (apart from Britain and Russia) are now directly or indirectly under French control; and (ii.) that in order to make France and her Eastern and Central European vassals into a geographical *unity*, a permanently weakened Germany, dominated by France, is essential.

THE plans of French Imperialism are maturing and bearing fruit. What Fabians and Liberals have called merely French "folly" and "economic ignorance" is now seen to have been a deliberate policy devised in the interests of French capitalism. Under the cloak of the League of Nations and an "impartial" commission the gradual Francification of the Saar coalfield has been effected. The valuable Ruhr coalfield has been occupied by French troops and French engineers, and a careful policy of "eviction" of German inhabitants has been carried out. Under pressure of military occupation the German industrialists have come to an agreement with the French for a joint exploitation

of the Ruhr resources. Now by clever political intrigue a separate Rhineland Republic has been proclaimed under French inspiration and control. As for the rest of Germany, the Reich is breaking up. Bavaria is Fascist. Thuringia and Saxony have a Workers' Government, which, thanks to the treachery of the Social-Democrats (including the "Marxist" Dr. Hilferding), is being crushed by the machine-guns of the Reichswehr. The Government in Berlin is a puppet in the hands of the very industrialists, captained by Stinnes, who have made a covenant with the French in the Ruhr.

What is the significance of all this? It is that *French capitalism has secured both economic and political hegemony over Europe**. Under the Peace Treaty, France secured the Lorraine iron area and the Saar coalfield. Before the war she had only about a sixth of the coal production of Germany, a third of the pig-iron production, and a quarter of the steel production. Alsace-Lorraine, the Saar, and Upper Silesia together produced a third of the German pre-war coal production, and Lorraine alone produced seventy-five per cent. of Germany's iron-ore.

Further, France secured "political independence" for her puppet States, Poland and the Little Entente (see map); and French capital in league with French diplomacy proceeded to fasten a band of French control down the centre of Europe from Dantzic to the Black Sea. Then, by the clever manipulation of the results of a plebiscite most of the valuable Silesian coal area was detached from Germany and brought under Poland.

Now, although seventy-five per cent. of Germany's pre-war iron ore production was in Lorraine, Lorraine had produced an insignificant amount of coal (about 1.5 per cent.), and only twenty-five per cent. of the blast furnaces. Lorraine needs both coke from the Ruhr and the Ruhr blast furnaces to smelt its ore. Hence the latest move of French capitalism: the subjugation of the richest industrial area of Europe to the Comite des Forges and the Paris banking syndicates, with the German industrialists co-operating as junior partners!

On top of this comes the news that a special arrangement has been made for the exploitation of the valuable Galician oil resources. Special privileges are to be given to companies operating with French capital, and a new oil syndicate has been formed in Paris. So, with the oil of Galicia and Rumania at her command, France will no longer be dependent on the Royal Dutch-Shell or on Standard Oil for her oil supplies. The French Empire is as great a menace to British capitalism as the German Empire ever was—that is the "great

* See, for further discussion of the same forces and factors described here, Chapter XI. of the Economic Geography Textbook.

thought" with which the fifth anniversary of Armistice Day provides us!

Whereas the French Empire is fast becoming an economic unity and has the advantage of geographical proximity, the British Empire is not as yet a unit economically, and is geographically separated. Hence, the counter-move of British capitalism is the development of Empire Trade, the Imperial Conference, Protection plus Imperial Preference. Meanwhile unemployment grows, the standard of life of the workers falls, and international Fascism, the tool of international heavy industry, unblushingly throws aside democratic forms to crush the workers by force.

M. H. DOBB.

Should the POWERS of the T.U.C. GENERAL COUNCIL be increased?

Whether Labour wins or fails in the present General Election, the changing of its industrial organisation has still to be tackled. Here is a further contribution to the discussion initiated by George Barker and Will Lawther in the November issue. Ted Williams is an old supporter of I.W.C.E., Miners' Agent for the Garw District and an E.C. member of the South Wales Miners' Federation. We invite readers to take part.

THE Trade Union Movement as at present constituted cannot possibly hope to withstand the continued attacks of capitalism. Piecemeal methods are of no avail. Whilst the employers, through their associations, plan and scheme for position and power, we go gliding merrily down the slippery slope.

We make the fatal mistake of viewing each phase of capitalist activity as an entity, "something in itself," distinct and detached from every other. This grave illusion must be dropped in haste. Capitalism is a multiplicity of exploiting parts which depend upon the subjection of labour in general. Whatever form its activity may take, whether cutting wages, attacking working hours or depressing general labour conditions, no Union escapes. It is sound capitalistic tactics to tackle us in detail.

Much the same applies in the development of the Trade Union movement as to other social institutions. Man acts to satisfy a conscious need. He attempts to obtain most by least effort, until

his action results in the creation of new needs, which can only be satisfied by adopting bolder and better means and methods.

The first essential to the creation of such an organisation as we need is the abolition of our parochial and craft outlook. One is not desirous of throwing cold water upon past achievements. Everything beneficial to workmen generally has been obtained by organised effort in some form or other. But although a light hammer may be all right for a Spanish nut, it is no use for beating sheet iron or armour plate. The individual employer has passed. The owners of a particular industry are seldom found. The Trust extends its tentacles to all and sundry.

Look at the present situation in the Mining Industry. Nothing but a miracle can save us from a crisis. Unless the miners can obtain their demands they will remain for a generation from thirty per cent. to forty per cent. below their deplorable pre-war standard of existence. This crisis will be the aftermath of 1921, when, had the miners secured solid effective backing from the other Unions, they would have won through. Their success would have so conditioned events in the interim as to make easily attainable the demands advanced by other Unions. Conversely, their failure has meant further oppression, sapping of Trade Union vitality, depleted funds and decreased membership.

Since the debacle of the Triple Alliance in 1921 an attempt has been made to find means to meet the situation. The Standing Orders Committee of the Trade Union Congress issued a memorandum defining the functions of the newly elected General Council, which contained a proposal that it should keep watch on all industrial movements, and wherever possible co-ordinate industrial action, and also, that it should promote common action on general questions, such as wages and hours of labour.

In order that effect might be given to these proposals the General Council desired the affiliated bodies to send in all facts pertaining to any dispute; further, that the General Council should be called in by the Unions concerned at any period for consultative purposes. To carry out this work it was proposed to call a levy in order to found a fund for defensive purposes.

The idea underlying the scheme was certainly sound. If all the industrial units were properly co-ordinated with a General Staff fully grasping the points of vantage nothing could stop Labour winning any battle into which it might be precipitated. With such an instrument it could immediately change from purely defensive to aggressive tactics. The singular feature is that the objection to the scheme came from Labour's own servants. Their plea was that it would deprive the Unions of autonomy. (The Union in question being "My Union," this can be logically construed to mean "My autonomy.")

Of course the plea is preposterous. If a Union is entitled to claim autonomy, then the parts of that Union are equally entitled to autonomy. But this is not considered good argument from the objector's standpoint, for they would at once object to any section of their Union taking upon itself the right to act as it thought fit under given circumstances. One might carry the argument down to the branch or lodge, or even down to the individual member himself. Why should not he fix up an arrangement or make any bargain he cares with his employer? Why should this individuality be curbed by interference with his "autonomy?"

My view is that, from the General Staff down, each place could be properly departmentalised along certain arterial lines, so that pressure might at any moment be brought to bear upon some weak spot in the organisation. If at any moment a section of the movement is attacked regard should not be paid as to whether they can paddle their own canoe or not. Whether the number involved is large or small, whether in capitalistic phrasing they are important or not, they should merit equal treatment.

No Union, whether it be miners, railwaymen, or any other should be allowed to face the onslaught of capitalism unaided. If control of industry is not mere verbiage, but something to be made realisable in this generation, we must grant executive authority to a General Staff, who, after surveying the field of battle, can issue marching or fighting orders.

Where do you and your Union stand?

TED WILLIAMS.

The T.U.C. DEBATE on Working-Class Education

We quote below points made by our supporters during the debate at the Trade Union Congress at Plymouth in September last.

IN reply to Mr. Jack Jones' attack upon "sectarian education" and his plea "to educate citizens up to a sense of responsibility" and "to capture the whole educational machinery . . ." E. Williams (*S.W.M.F.*) said "if we could control the capitalist press there would be no need of a *Daily Herald* [a 'sectarian' paper]. If we could control the sources from which ideas are made and distributed there would be no need for an independent working-class education."

* * *

W. J. Nichol (*A.S.W.*):—"Instead of working-class education

being broad in conception, it ought to be working-class education, education in two or three specific subjects such as will fit the rank and file to take their part in the class struggle.”

H. Piper (*House and Ship Painters*):—“The broad education that is going on in Ruskin College to-day is not the education that will make a class-conscious proletariat.”

M. F. Titterington (*Stuff and Woollen Warehousemen*):—“If you analyse the ordinary educational system of English society to-day you will agree that it is merely making for efficiency *under the present system of production*; it makes us efficient wage slaves. . . . We must be able to read, write and calculate in order to get a situation under present conditions.” Secondary school education “will fit the worker for work of a supervisory character, and when one reaches the higher walks of education, the ancient and modern universities, the education there is provided for those who are likely to be called to administrative, technical and industrial controls.”

“We must face the inevitable issue of deciding whether education is to maintain the *status quo* . . . or to be used definitely for progressive purposes. . . . Each form of society sharpens the mental tool that it requires. . . . Many were in the organised Labour movement in spite of their education. . . . We can work out our educational salvation only by the creation of educated and organised workers in the study of social sciences outside our elementary and secondary school work.”

A TIP TO STUDENTS

In the last chapter of his “Memoirs”

TOM MANN writes:—

“I am aware that numerous books upon the coming revolution have recently issued from the press, but amongst many really good books the one I would advise the student to turn to without delay is *Creative Revolution* . . . In my judgment, if this volume could be broadcasted among the workers, it would do inestimable service.”

The only Cheap Edition of *Creative Revolution* is published by The PLEBS—2s. 6d. (postpaid 2s. 8d).

GERMANY during the NINETEENTH CENTURY

The third of a short series of articles describing German economic development and its main social and political reactions.

III.—THE EMPIRE: 1871—1914

Effects of the Treaty of Frankfort, May 10th, 1871

THE German Imperial Constitution was based on that of the North German Federation of 1867. It aimed at perpetuating the predominance of Prussia. Prussia possessed two-sevenths of the votes in the Bundesrat (Federal Council) but her real power, based on economic and military organisation and a centralised administration, was much greater. In turn she was dominated by the landowning magnates, now notorious as the Junkers; but this class was profoundly affected by the advance of capitalism during our present period.

Capitalism received a powerful impetus from the war and the peace. Alsace-Lorraine was the centre of a flourishing textile industry; it possessed great virgin resources of iron ore, and large deposits of valuable potash salts. Again, the huge indemnity was rapidly paid off by France, largely in gold. As a result, the steady advance of industrialism was transformed into a feverish rush, further quickened by Government expenditure on armaments, railways, etc.; and the usual concomitants of industrial expansion presented themselves—over-development of manufactures, over-capitalisation and over-production! The more ultimate consequence was the inevitable depression. "Bankruptcies became as familiar as funerals." The period of depression had important political consequences, especially in the direction of fiscal changes. It was, however, only a temporary halt in the amazing march of modern Germany to industrial pre-eminence in Europe.

Political Parties

This rapid development and the peculiar character of the Constitution gave rise to a large number of interests and of parties, and to a tendency among the latter to be constantly splitting up and finding fresh labels. But in 1871, the principal parties were three in number.

- (a) The National Liberals, the more advanced wing of the capitalist class, who had been Bismarck's chief support in his task of unification; until 1878, they continued to support his aggressive national policy.

- (b) The Centre Party, confined in practice to Catholics, represented those sections of the propertied classes which were economically backward. It stood for authority and social order. Its programme was "to defend positive and historical law against Liberalism, and the rights of the individual states against the central power." Its chief strength lay in Westphalia, Bavaria and Polish Prussia.
- (c) The Conservatives. Part of the old Junker class had followed Bismarck and were rewarded with Government offices. But the body of them were alienated, and formed the party of the uncompromising feudal aristocracy of the north. It wielded great influence at Court, in the Army, and in the orthodox Lutheran Church.

The other Parties were the Social Democrats, reduced to two members, and various National Parties.

Liberal Legislation

For the time being, Bismarck relied on the Liberals in his work of welding the Empire into a living reality; and the early legislation bore the deep impress of its capitalist origin. Its essence was the establishment of a uniform system of law, currency, communications and military "defence." The claims of Liberalism were even carried into the camp of the Catholic Church itself in the "Kulturkampf"—the struggle for civilisation against the forces of reaction. Rome had seen in the domination of Prussia the downfall of her own power in Germany; she replied by scattering apples of discord wherever possible. The "May Laws" of 1873 show the earthly core of the struggle in forbidding the Church to interfere in civil affairs. Conservatives and Centrists allied to oppose this legislation, and the Government's difficulties were increased by the tariff controversy, at the very time when the progress of Social Democracy was loudly demanding solidarity on the part of the ruling class. The failure of the May Laws, the establishment of a compact Conservative-Centre party in opposition and the revival of Social Democracy all conspired with personal motives on the part of Bismarck to determine a drastic change of policy.

Revival of Social Democracy

From the close of 1873 to 1877, the full force of industrial depression was experienced. Moreover, there were new factors in this depression. Large-scale factory production had drawn workers from the countryside, and had increased woman and child labour. Thus the reaction was felt more widely than ever. The situation called for a more militant workers' movement; and the determination of the Socialists was stimulated by persecution. In 1875 the two groups united at the Gotha Congress. In 1874, the Social

Democrats had polled 351,952 votes and nine of the candidates were elected. These figures were increased to 493,288 votes and twelve members in 1877. These developments formed Bismarck's first problem when, after a brief retirement, he returned in 1877 to the Chancellorship. Another pressing problem was that of imperial finance. The growing deficit due to increased expenditure and decreased revenues could no longer be met by contributions from the States raised by direct taxation. A conference of the States ministers in 1878 agreed to a large increase in indirect taxation. Bismarck now reverted to the policy of protection, though the object was twofold—protection and revenue: to protect the great agriculturists, iron and cotton masters, and to raise revenue at the expense of the luxuries of the masses!

Meanwhile, the war on the Socialists was maturing. Two attempts were made on the life of the Emperor in May and June, 1878. The first of these was by a certain Hoedel, previously expelled from the Socialist party for embezzlement. The second was by Dr. Nobiling, well-known to the Socialists as a relentless opponent. However, he "confessed that he was a Socialist"! The whole affair wore a most suspicious appearance of being a "put up job." If so, Bismarck achieved his end, for a drastic law was passed under which judges inflicted the maximum sentence on the minimum evidence. In the elections, the Socialist vote was but little less than in that of 1877. The National Liberals lost heavily.

Bismarck had now two majorities at his disposal—a National Liberal Conservative majority for his Coercion Bill, and a Conservative-Centre majority, supported also by the right wing of the National Liberals for his Protectionist policy. The new era of the denial of political rights to the class-conscious workers and the burdening of the masses by means of customs' duties could now commence. (Bebel, *My Life*, p. 335).

But the persecution of the Socialists simply drove the movement underground. It left intact the underlying forces making for Socialism—the advance of capitalism and the steady proletarianisation of the masses; and its failure was soon manifest. A new policy was necessary to wean the masses from the "false and pernicious doctrines" of the Socialists. The policy adopted proposed an all-embracing system of insurance for the workers against sickness, accident, old age and incapacity. In announcing it, Bismarck expressed his belief that thereafter the Socialists would "sound their bird-call in vain." His real objects are thus summed up by a recent writer:—

The Alpha and Omega of Bismarck's "Socialism" were summed up in the determination to make the Empire self-sufficing, stronger than ever, and still more dependent on the government, still more impotent to place the control of policy under responsible parliamentary institutions (Grant Robertson, *Bismarck*, p. 369).

Bismarck's National Policy

But it was not merely Bismarck's "Socialism" which had those objects—his whole policy was dominated by the same motives. In re-organising the Imperial finances, he turned back to the Junkers for support in re-establishing a protective tariff system, though he was able to rely also upon the iron and cotton magnates, as against the commercial magnates and the farmers. Protection enabled him, temporarily at least, to meet the new needs of a large and growing Imperial expenditure without resorting to direct taxation—which would have met the solid opposition of the propertied classes. But it enabled him also to introduce important railway reforms. Bismarck himself wanted complete Imperial ownership and control. This the Socialists opposed on the significant grounds that it "would serve only the interests of the aristocratic and militarist State." The other States opposed it on financial grounds. But the railways passed into the hands of the several States and were often used consciously to encourage trade and industry. Apart from that, the new transport was both a necessary preliminary and a powerful stimulus to industry and intercourse. The bringing of the iron of Lorraine to the coal of Westphalia after 1871 was dependent on it. The result has been a vast development of the iron and steel trades—the foundation of the new Empire and its policy. Modern Germany is the creation of the economic forces of capitalism; and the railways formed the chief single factor in its final and living unity. The tendency towards separation of South from North, due to differences of geography, economics and history was overcome by their unifying influence. When the railways were carried to Southern and Eastern Europe, she became the pivot of the whole European economic system.

But if the march of capitalism was making Germany predominant in Europe, another factor must not be omitted. This was the purposeful and conscious direction which has inspired her policy. No doubt this could only have been perfected with the later developments of monopolistic capitalism. But with the experience of British capitalism before their eyes, the "makers" of modern Germany could assert a greater measure of direction; and the two factors, conscious direction and economic developments, acted and reacted upon each other. In Germany, as in England, the landed interests gained large control of capital, especially in certain big industries—armaments, railways, brewing and distilling. And in spite of traditional differences between them and the Junkers, the capitalist class had good reason, in the growing Socialist movement, to seek alliance with the Prussian magnates. A compromise was made. The capitalists won freedom from old restrictions on industry and communication; the Junkers were left in control of the army and administration. This compromise lasted until the Revolution of 1918.

Bismarck and William II

In all this the leading figure was Bismarck. But now his limitations began to manifest themselves; and above all his failure to understand the economic and social forces that he had done so much to quicken.

Bismarck had hardly understood the first syllable of the new economic gospel which he had himself inspired (Morton Fullerton, *Problems of Power*, p. 49).

Perhaps that assertion exaggerates the failure as well as the triumph. But it shows clearly the point at which Bismarck for all his greatness failed. His real interest lay in the internal unity of Germany. The necessity of isolating France had drawn him into a European policy. But its object was simply the maintenance of German unity and power. And yet Bismarck remained a Prussian. The Empire he saw in vision was simply a larger Prussia. Industry and commerce, to him, were never the life-blood of the State: rather they were an excrescence upon the body politic; and their vital problems, the necessity for expansion, the building up of an overseas Empire were alien to him. And now these problems began to overshadow Bismarck and his dreams. A new policy and a new man was needed to direct the new capitalist Germany. The contest was the old, ever-renewed struggle between tradition and progress. And the new man, William II., was a foeman not unworthy of Bismarck's steel—a man of extraordinary energy and versatility, capable at once of using traditional weapons for what they were worth, and of visualising and fulfilling the requirements of a progressive capitalist State.

Another Turning Point, 1890

The assumption of direction by William affected the whole life of Germany, internal and international.

In international affairs, the change was heralded by the agreement with England, 1890, by which, in return for a free hand in East Africa and Zanzibar, England ceded Heligoland Island, opposite the mouth of the Elbe. This made practicable the construction of the Kiel Canal, enabling Germany to assert her intention of becoming a great naval power. The further progress of industrial organisation, the failure of the home market to absorb the ever-expanding output, and the growth of a surplus of capital, derived from the exploitation of the masses at home and seeking more remunerative employment abroad, became in Germany as elsewhere the foundation of the policy of Imperialism. After having tried with indifferent success to establish herself in South America, in Africa, and with more satisfactory results, in China, she at last turned to the Middle

East, finding her "manifest destiny" in the attempted control of Turkey and the routes to the East.

Thus German capitalism, its development accelerated by the application of science to industry and aided by an unparalleled system of technical education, had advanced from free competition to a great and growing degree of combination. The Kartels aimed at limiting output for home consumption so as to maintain prices and profits; on the other hand they subsidised exports, thus gaining the advantages both of a protected home market, and of large-scale cheap production.

Changing Class Relations

This development of capitalism and its accompanying Imperialism profoundly transformed class relations. The failure of the Anti-Socialist Laws led to their abandonment in 1890. In the same year the General Commission of Trade Unions was founded, and the growth of the Unions became rapid and continuous. The following year the Erfurt programme was formulated. It was destined to remain down to 1914 the classic and accepted statement of world-Socialism. Yet in 1891 Engels detected in it the roots of opportunism—a criticism only too justified. True the movement built up a splendidly efficient party-machine, the wonder and envy of the world of Socialism: its centrally-controlled Trade Unionism; its official educational activities; its huge Press and unrivalled publishing houses. But while the letter of Socialism was preached, the spirit that giveth life—the belief that Socialism was sufficiently near to demand and deserve militant enthusiasm—was lacking. The political condition of the country, making no pretence of being a democracy, drove the workers to a struggle against political reaction rather than to industrial direct action. This faith in parliamentary democracy was confirmed by the relatively enlightened policy of their paternal government and also by the success of German Imperialism, which, with the greater security of employment it conferred for the time being, caught up the workers also into its meshes.

It is fitting to close this brief study with a summary of class relations on the eve of War:—

- (a) The landowning Junkers, essentially military and conservative. Their chief fears were the growth of Social Democracy and the danger of heavier direct taxation.
- (b) The capitalist magnates likewise feared the spread of Socialism. External war seemed the one avenue to social peace. Armament-mongers, merchants demanding more markets, bankers dreaming of indemnities were especially open to the appeals of the War-mongers.
- (c) Officials, attached to the posts under the existing regime

unhesitatingly supported the Government in whatever it did.

- (d) Intellectuals whose hopes of recognition, fame and fortune, could be realised only in service to the State.
- (e) Of the workers, dependent materially upon the propertied classes and intellectually upon the officials and intellectuals, we have already spoken. Their attitude on the outbreak of the War was a foregone conclusion since they were saturated with the Imperialist sentiments of the New Germany. But, exploited in peace, they had nothing to hope from war except deeper degradation and intense suffering.

T. ASHCROFT.

A WORKER looks at IRISH HISTORY

The two previous instalments of this series appeared in The PLEBS for October and November (7d. each post paid).

III.—IRELAND: 1600—1800

Consequences of the Invasions

IN the first half of the 17th century the last and greatest of the confiscations referred to previously took place. The Ulster confiscations were "legalised" by the Parliament of the Irish planters in 1613. But the Irish evicted in Ulster and elsewhere were never entirely driven out, for the foreigners often found it necessary to engage them as labourers and in certain cases as tenant farmers. Nothing could have deepened the Irishmen's sense of injury more than to be exploited upon their very own lands, and in 1641 a great rebellion "to recover their own" occurred.

The straits to which the Parliamentary Army reduced Charles I. forced him to make large concessions to the Confederates—as the organised rebels were called*. These concessions included the calling of the Irish Parliament, repealing of the penal laws and redress for all the Catholics' grievances. This won the rebels over to the Stuart cause, which by then, unfortunately for them, was a lost one. Indeed, the assistance of the Irish—about whom vile

*Cathal O'Shannon comments: The rising was planned by the Irish at home and on the Continent. At first it was actually opposed by the aristocratic Anglo-Irish Catholics of the Pale. Later they joined to make the Confederation of the Catholics of Ireland—a title which shows that the original national and social objective had been compromised.

atrocities had been circulated—strengthened the English animosity against Charles.

Cromwell confirmed his success in Ireland by a ferocious campaign (1649) which made his name a by-word for cruelty; women were killed and other prisoners shipped as slaves; the peasant in the East was given the choice of "To hell or Connacht." His soldiery and those who had financed his campaign by loans were awarded the lands of the defeated Irish, and the Stuart Restoration (1660) did not restore the land to its previous owners. Some was restored by the Act of Settlement, but in 1665 out of the total arable land of 12 million acres, Cromwellian and Old English Colonists possessed $8\frac{1}{2}$ millions; hardly a sixth, according to J. R. Green, remained in possession of the Catholics. The Pope had tried to use Ireland from the time of Elizabeth, during the English Civil War and after, as a stepping-stone to the Roman Catholic reconquest of England.* But his hopes and also those of James II. were finally crushed by the Battle of the Boyne (1690) and the surrender of Limerick in the next year. This defeat meant further expulsions of Catholic landlords. For the workers, a newer alien aristocracy took the place of that which went to France after the Orange successes.†

Differences of religion and language still accentuated the hate between the foreign landlords and "the ill equipped, ill educated and often oppressed and starving peasants." The Irish Protestants ever feared more rebellions and, after the English Parliament had closed the Irish Parliament and all other public offices to Catholics, they deprived the Catholics of voting rights, and instituted the odious Penal Laws against them, attempting completely to destroy Catholicism in Ireland. However, the Ascendancy Party also excluded from all offices the numerous Ulster Presbyterians who thus became allies of the Catholics. So closely did the few ruling, plundering, Protestant families control the rotten boroughs that three of them—Downshire, Ponsonby and Beresford—possessed more than sixty seats in the Irish House of Commons until the Union.

The following figures further illustrate the result of the invasions. In 1671, out of a population of 1,100,000, the Irish numbered 800,000; the Scotch and the English 300,000. But the latter

* It is wrong to regard Papal ambition as the real issue at stake in the Williamite Wars. They were really fought between two sections each anxious to secure Irish property. Concerning the general relation between the Popes and Ireland, C.O'S. says, "From Henry VIII. onwards, Irish leaders stressed their Catholicism in order to gain Papal, Spanish, or French help, and it would be difficult to say whether the Irish or the Popes hoped to gain most from these alliances."

† For King William's division of his spoil of $1\frac{1}{2}$ million acres amongst his friends and paramour see *Labour in Irish History*, p. 17.

owned three-quarters of the land, five-sixths of the houses, and two-thirds of the foreign trade. Three-fourths of the Irish suffered abject poverty.

The absentee landlords were the bloodsuckers of Ireland. Here are statistics to illustrate the drain upon Irish resources made by these absentees alone. (In addition there were pensions and "salaries" paid to the male and female friends of English royalty.) :

1682	..	£78,752	1779	..	£732,000 (A. Young)
1692	..	91,652	1783	..	1,227,480
1729	..	389,000	1796	..	1,500,000
1769	..	631,000	1804	..	2,000,000 (Newenham)

(Quoted by Wm. McLaine from J. M. McDonnell.)

Pastoral Ireland

These two centuries witnessed a ruthless suppression of Irish development for the sake of England's success.* Ireland—despite the suitability of its soil for tillage—was turned into a grazing ground until well into the 18th century. Some of the influences encouraging cattle raising were indirect. For example, as part of their persecution, no Catholics were allowed to purchase land or hold leases of more than thirty-one years, and so the Catholic farmed for quick returns obtained by cattle raising. Grazing lands were exempt from the tithes that had to be paid to the hated alien church. The Jacobite elements too were not entirely suppressed and in a country where disturbances are likely, settled tillage is unprofitable.

Therefore cattle was the chief export, and even the import of this into England was prohibited for a while by the English graziers in 1666. This forced the Irish to develop an international trade in salted provisions and wool. Petty—who opposed the above legislation—gives figures concerning the population which prove how few were occupied in tillage compared with those occupied in tending cattle and sheep. The total population he estimated at 1,100,000, out of which 780,000 were capable of work. 100,000 tilled 500,000 acres of corn, 75,000 worked in wool and made cloth, while 120,000 were engaged on sheep and cattle ranches. Corn production in England had been stimulated by bounties for exports and taxes on imports of corn which again placed Irish agriculture in a difficult position which did not receive such treatment until 1784.

Condition of the People

The people were no better off during the 17th and 18th centuries than in the 16th. Milk and potatoes had become the staple diet. Chart writes of this period:—"Poverty, religious intolerance,

* cf. "Geographical Footnotes to Current History: Ireland," by T. A. Jackson (PLEBS, Dec., 1920.)

political and intellectual apathy, a lifeless Parliament meeting at long intervals, the country a huge cattle run diversified only by the miserable villages of potato-growing cottars, the great landlords becoming absentees and leaving their estates to be managed by hirelings, who cared for neither the landlords' nor the tenants' interest so long as they could maintain their own positions." Goldsmith had his native land in mind when he wrote !

" Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay."

Famines decimated the population in 1727, 1729, 1741, and 1742. The country did not grow enough corn to meet its own needs. The Dublin Society (1721) made suggestions for improvement, and Dean Swift and Bishop Berkeley attacked the slothful Irish gentry ; it was in 1729 that the former, in biting sarcasm, proposed to fatten and eat the children of the Irish poor. The Irish Parliament tried to force land into tillage and provided a system of bounties. Afterwards, the Industrial Revolution in England, by opening up a market close at hand for Irish products, brought a prosperity in which, however, the cottar did not share. The landlords built great mansions but were careless and indifferent about the welfare of the poor ; they knew that Britain would help them to suppress any uprising. The cottar rented a potato patch and grazing land for one or two cows from a middleman to whom he paid a rent of labour which swallowed up the most of his energy ; he just lived from hand to mouth and if robbed of his holding became at once completely destitute.

‡ The Oakboys (1761-62) were the first to protest against such conditions. This movement was composed of the poorer layers of the workers in Ulster, and was exclusively Protestant. The name came from the oak branches they wore in their hats and their organisation was precipitated by the attempt to extend the " duty work " of repairing the roads.

The Steelboys (about 1771) ran an organisation on the same lines. In their case, action was provoked because Chichester evicted tenants in Ulster who refused to pay him a large sum to renew their leases. Emigration removed the more valiant spirits of these organisations and some of their grievances were redressed. The Whiteboys of the South were significantly known at first as Levellers—like the extreme left element of Cromwell's Army—but their later name came from their use of white shirts as a disguise in their raids to drive away the cattle and tenants from the confiscated common land. Their grievance was greater and deeper than that of the Ulster Protestant associations and their outbursts correspondingly more desperate.

Sullivan* summarises the sad lot of the Irish peasant prior to the outbreak in Munster (1762) thus : He was rackrented by his land-

* *Two Centuries of Irish History*, p. 66.

lord ; persecuted by the tithe-farmer ; obliged to work on the Holy days of his Church ; forbidden to play games on Sunday and subject to the searching of his house for arms, game and sticks. Imprisonment, fines and public whippings enforced these regulations and hanging was the only cure tried for poverty.

The prosperity of agriculture and tillage prompted the landlords to enclose further the common lands ; in the South, cottars were evicted to make room for larger scale pasturage.

Irish Industry

Corn growing in Ireland had been sacrificed for England's sake, but Irish industry was penalised to an even greater extent. In the 16th century coarse linens and woollens had been exported from Ireland. Linen manufacture was encouraged in the colony of Ireland but 17th century England was jealous of any attempt to set up in Ireland a woollen manufacture. The Irish were also forced to stop all exports of wool to foreign countries. And later, while the linen industry in Ulster was given financial assistance and skilled Huguenots encouraged to settle there, the servile Irish Parliament imposed a ruinous export duty on woollen goods and the Irish were not allowed under an English act to send woollen goods to any outside country. English hops had to be used in brewing. Export of glass, silk, and cotton goods, also of manufactured iron goods into England, was either prohibited or placed under heavy duties. The Navigation Acts (1660) previously had been ruinous for Irish shipping and seaports, for they stopped any direct trade between Ireland and the colonies. Goods exported to any country had to be sent in English ships. The success of the Ulster linen industry, or the development of the production of beer and whiskey for export, could not compensate the whole of Ireland for its stifled development, and only nearness to England and lack of military power prevented Ireland from imitating the rebellion of the U.S.A.

These restrictive measures were repealed in 1779 after much agitation for an independent Irish Parliament and many threats of an armed rebellion. The Irish Volunteers (1778) were 80,000 strong, and England's troops were engaged in America. Also there was a boycott organised of all foreign products. The parliamentary leaders, Grattan and Flood, encouraged both these movements although, as Connolly shows, they were afraid of the proletarian elements in them and later betrayed them for the legislative independence of the Irish Parliament secured in 1782.*

* C.O'S. comments. It was a Parliament of the garrison. Originating in Ulster the Volunteers were joined by Catholics, but on the whole the movement was a revolt of colonial nationalism, not of Irish nationalism. See Connolly's *Labour in Irish History*, chap. 6-8, for betrayal of Irish Volunteers.

But by the time Free Trade was allowed British weaving had firmly established itself and it could dump its cheap goods into the Irish market ; the later machine products merely completed the smashing up of the Irish weaving which a century before had employed 12,000 families in Dublin and 30,000 elsewhere in Ireland.

Revolts

Just as Ireland had been influenced by America's revolt, so was it affected by the French Revolution, and the United Irish Society was formed in Belfast (October, 1791) and in Dublin (November) by Ulster Dissenters, Dublin Catholics and Liberal Protestants—who forgot their differences for a while.* The alarms caused by this union forced the English politicians in 1793 to repeal many of the most oppressive features of the Penal Code. Led by Wolfe Tone, the first objects of the Society were a complete reform of legislature to effect civil and religious liberty. The Society endeavoured to revive the Volunteers. Professing republicans were included in its membership only after 1794 when it became a secret military organisation. Division occurred between those members who did not want a complete break with England and those who hoped to win a complete Irish Republic by French help. Abortive rebellions in 1798, precipitated by the outrages of the Protestant yeomanry and the British troops, were followed by the shooting of unarmed prisoners and the lashing of others to obtain false evidence. The Wexford peasants kept 15,000 trained soldiers at bay for two months before being crushed at Vinegar Hill (June 21st) and there for weeks the corpses of peasants dangled from trees along the roadside and for a long time after women and children fled at the sight of a British uniform. There was a short but stiff struggle in the Northern counties, Down and Antrim, where Catholic and Presbyterian workers and peasants combined. In the West the French army under Humbert was forced to surrender in Sligo and two other French expeditions did not even effect a landing. Wolfe Tone took his own life as the only alternative to a hanging by the British. The Irish Catholic gentry had allied themselves with the Protestants to crush the proletarian rebels.

Fear of a repetition of '98 was a factor in bringing into being the ill-fated Union which marked the end of the 18th century. The Protestant minority favoured the destruction of the Irish Parliament to retain its domination.† Pitt promised the Catholics that the

* Documents 28-33, Postgate's *Revolution* (PLEBS Edition, 9s. 3d. post paid) are valuable on this point and include oaths and proclamations of the United Irishmen and the later Robert Emmet rising.

† It would be a grievous mistake to imagine that the whole Irish nation was greatly grieved at the loss of the Irish Parliament. The latter had been the property of alien confiscators and the motives of these in "selling out" are made clear by one

Union should be accompanied by their free right to enter Parliament and the removal of other civil disabilities ; when their support had been won the promise remained unfulfilled. The greatest factor operating in the Irish Parliament itself, however, was the wholesale bribery exercised therein—no less than £1,260,000 being spent to lubricate the passage of the Act of Union. There had always been difficulties in arranging the commercial relations between Ireland and England, and the English manufacturers had pleaded for the retention of the Mercantilist restrictions, because, according to them, aided by low wages and taxes, the Irish manufacturers would sweep them from the field. They had thus opposed all the attempts made by Pitt to introduce Free Trade. On the other hand, the British Government alleged that only the Union would save Ireland from bankruptcy and keep her within the British Empire.

Summary

We will summarise briefly the chief effects of the Union, for they explain the long agitations of the following century ending in the transference of political power back to Dublin once more.

The Union put Great Britain and Ireland on a nominally equal footing in respect of trade, navigation and treaties with foreign powers, and the two National Debts were consolidated. But economic and real equality are not created by Acts of Parliament, and it proved to be the harnessing together of a full grown horse with an industrial colt. Again, however sincere Pitt as an individual may have been in his promise of Catholic emancipation, and in his hope of frustrating French plots by binding Ireland into the Empire through Free Trade, it was not his view which triumphed but that of the Protestant Ascendancy. The first act of the United Parliament in relation to Ireland was the suspension of *Habeas Corpus* and the continuance of the Insurrection Acts. Dire penalties followed the discovery of any secret societies among the Catholic peasants while the Orangemen's secret leagues were encouraged. The Union intensified the evils of rackrents and absentee landlords by absentee politicians. The plight of the peasant became more terrible than ever ; if any of the various middlemen defaulted after he had paid

of the architects of the Union, the Earl of Clare, in a speech defending it. "The whole power and property of the country has been conferred by successive monarchs of England upon an English colony composed of three sets of English adventurers who poured into this country at the termination of three successive rebellions. Confiscation is their common title, and from their first settlement they have been hemmed in on every side by the old inhabitants of the island, brooding over their discontents in sullen indignation. What was the security of the English settlers for their physical existence at the Revolution ? And what is the security of their descendants at this day ? The powerful and commanding protector of Great Britain. If, by any fatality, it fails you are at the mercy of the old inhabitants of the island."

his rent, his stock was sold up to pay the rent again. The landlord had also the right to make the peasant work for 6d. per day paid at six-monthly intervals. The peasant—in the great majority of cases, (5 to 1) a Catholic—also had to pay until 1838 the hateful and elastic tithe to support the Protestant clergy, and this tithe was farmed out to proctors who often received a commission of 2s. in the £.

Confiscation of holdings and common lands, eviction of peasants, the ferocious crushing of the consequent rebellions, religious and social persecution crowned by the illusory benefits of the Union—this sums up the story of the two centuries.*

MARK STARR.

NOTES BY THE WAY for Students and Tutors

Protection and Imperialism

THE Imperial Conference was an attempt to weld together the economically heterogeneous British Empire by political and emotional ties. A fiscal tie is now to be added by Mr. Baldwin's policy of Protection with Imperial Preference. This, says Mr. Baldwin, will benefit Labour.

Protection, however, is not likely to benefit the workers for the following reasons:—

1.—Protection will exclude foreign imports, and foster industries at home which do not produce those goods so efficiently as foreign industries. (For that was why we imported the goods hitherto.) Hence Labour will be transferred from more productive export industries to the less productive protected industries; and as a result, probably, either less workers will be employed, or lower wages will be paid.

2.—If we shut out imports, foreigners will not buy our exports, which they used to buy with the money we paid them for our imports. Therefore, as much or more unemployment will be created in the *exporting* industries as is destroyed in the *protected* industries.

3.—The shutting out of the competition of foreign goods from the home

market will tend to raise prices; and consequently real wages will tend to fall.

The orthodox Free Trade objection to Protection is that by restricting Trade it will destroy the advantages of international trade and international division of labour (see *Economics Text-book*, Chapter 11.). Hence the wealth of the world will be less. But a country can get a *larger share* of this wealth by means of a protective tariff, if *other countries need its goods more than it needs the goods of other countries* (i.e., if it has a position of advantage in international trade). In this case, a tariff, though it will restrict trade, will restrict exports more than it will restrict imports, and hence the country will get its imports more cheaply. For, foreigners, being eager to sell, will have to pay the tax themselves, and will sell their goods in our market nearly as cheaply as before. On the other hand, British exporters will be able to get high prices for their exports*.

* The way this works out is a little complicated. It works through the foreign exchanges. The effect of a tariff in restricting imports is to make the exchanges favourable, because of an export surplus. This, in turn, will check exports. If, however, foreigners still send us imports, even if they have to pay the tariff, the result may be that exports will be checked more than imports.

* C.O'S. thus summarises the two centuries. "Really there was no conquest of Irish lands and Irish liberties till after 1600 and the 17th century was the struggle of the Irish people to regain what they had lost while the 18th century, *politically*, was the struggle between the conquerors and England."

Now, Britain was in this position last century, and U.S.A. is to-day. But Britain is probably *not* in this position to-day; we need raw materials and food from abroad more than other countries need our manufactured goods. Hence British consumers, not foreigners, will have to pay any tariff—they will get less goods at a dearer price.

But although it is important for the worker-student to understand this issue, it is not his business to trouble himself to take sides. The real cause for Protection is *political*: the desire to strengthen the Empire, both as a weapon against French capitalism, and in order to provide "safe" raw material supplies and fields of investment for heavy industry. It is a logical step in the development of Imperialism. The commercial interests and the producers of finished goods for export oppose this. It is not our business to side with them and show that "Free Trade makes capitalism more efficient." It is our business to show to the workers that Protection is but another way in which capitalism in its declining phase increases the exploitation of the workers. We must use it to rally the working class against capitalist imperialism. Baldwin's Protection is merely the erection of another political barrier, preventing the economic unity of "One World Group" (see *Economic Geography Textbook*), and so hastening capitalism's decline.

The Vote

H. W. wants to know how the right of voting has been given to the British electorate. These figures are approximate and it should be noticed that prior to 1832, owing to unequal electoral districts, power was in the hands of even a smaller number than the figures indicate.

Year.	Per cent. of population with vote.
Before 1832 ..	3
1832 ..	4.5
1852 ..	9
1867 ..	16
1917 ..	33

These are figures showing the percentage of voters who exercised their right:—

	Per cent.
1910 (Jan.)	92
1910	89
1918	64
1922	74

By the time this is in print it is hoped that a larger percentage will have increased the number of Labour gains.

Higher Wages Cure for Unemployment.

Frank Hodges' return from America caused a great deal of talk about the "Higher Wages Cure." In so far as it endeavours to persuade the *employers* that higher wages will benefit them, the "Cure," is doomed to failure. Capitalist scribes will have no difficulty in proving that America's superior mineral and agricultural wealth, her freedom from a drain of debt—which in the case of Britain amounts to nearly a million pounds a day—the tariffs, the intensity of work, and the new methods of scientific management there—that these and not high wages are the cause of American prosperity. The inflationists will say it was the extension of credit which caused the boom.

The Economy of High Wages still holds good, but granted labour of equal intensity and duration, the capitalist will, as before, keep wages as low and profits as high as ever he possibly can. When we ask capitalists to pay higher wages so that a larger number of workers can be profitably employed to satisfy each other's needs, we are asking capitalism to abdicate.

The argument is based on a study of after effects and the intensification of a slump by the lessened purchasing power of the workers. Surely capitalists would be happiest if they could produce without paying any wages at all, for then they could undercut their competitors and at the same time make greater profits—the purpose of capitalist production. The problems of the disposal of a surplus product and of surplus workers under such conditions would be the end of capitalism, but that is another story.

Lord Shaftesbury

Concerning the "Bookshelf" note on Lord Shaftesbury, R. J. quotes an interesting passage from *Capital*, Vol. III., p. 736 (Kerr edn.):—

"When Count [Lord] Shaftesbury, then Lord Ashley, one of the philanthropic aristocrats, was so extraordinarily moved by the conditions of the English factory labourers, and acted as their spokesman in Parliament during the agitation for a ten hours day, the spokesmen of the industrials got their revenge by publishing statistics on the wages of the agricultural labourers in the villages belonging to him, which showed clearly that a portion of the ground-rent of this philanthropist consisted of the loot which his agents filched for him out of the wages of the agricultural labourers."

Marx was not entirely just to Lord Shaftesbury in this passage. The exposure of the terrible conditions in the Shaftesbury estates was made when they were under the control of the old Lord, an eighteenth-century-like "gentleman" who lived extravagantly by rack-renting his tenants and reducing them to terrible misery. When Shaftesbury, heavily in debt, succeeded to the mortgaged, entailed and ruined estates, he did make genuine and persistent efforts to improve the conditions.

R. J. adds that philanthropic capitalists never agitate on behalf of the workers in their own industries. This is often true, but we have our Fords and Cadburys who realise that money and security can be got from a petted proletariat in their factories.

* * *

Lifelike!

Here is a Birkenhead student's description of how international trade is carried on:—A Brazilian village buys Lancashire cotton, or soap made in Port Sunlight, because it is selling coffee to a German town which buys it because it is selling telephone instruments to a Danish Co-operative Society, which buys them because it is selling butter to Birkenhead boilermakers engaged in building ships for carrying Indian jute used in packing Tchecko-Slovakian sugar bought by a Liverpool jam factory making jam sold to dockers' wives for the purpose of giving dry bread a peaceful passage.

* * *

G. K. Chesterton—*Marxist*

E. J. writes:—About the time of the great Dublin strike, G. K. Chester-

ton wrote in the *Illustrated London News* that in spite of the fact that he had never read a line of Marx, he (and all educated men of his generation) had been influenced, intellectually and emotionally, by Marx's theories.

The short Syllabus on "Historical Materialism and Literature" published in *The PLEBS* for June last, rightly stresses the "importance of *individual temperament* in all arts," and says "This makes the arts a much less direct reflex of social conditions than are Law, Ethics, or Religion—forms of *social consciousness*." And yet we have Chesterton—temperamentally the last man in the world to favour the M.C.H.—writing a book on *The Victorian Age in Literature* which positively reeks of Marxism.

This little book (Home University Series) should be better known to PLEBS students of literature. It shows that a non-Marxian cannot deal adequately with the literature of an important epoch without constantly referring literary developments to political and social causes. It should give us courage to apply the M.C.H. to the domain of Art more freely than we have ventured to do previously.

The book consists of four chapters:—The Victorian Compromise and its Enemies, The Great Victorian Novelists, The Great Victorian Poets, The Break-up of the Compromise. The "Compromise" referred to is that between the great Whig landowning aristocracy and the rising industrial capitalists. "The fundamental fact of early Victorian history was this: the decision of the middle classes to employ their wealth in backing up a sort of aristocratical compromise, and not (like the middle class in the French Revolution) insisting on a clean sweep and a clear democratic programme. It went along with the decision of the aristocracy to recruit itself more freely from the middle class. It was then that Victorian 'prudery' began: the great lords yielded on this as on Free Trade. These two decisions have made the doubtful England to-day; and Macaulay is typical of them: he is the *bourgeois* in Belgravia. The alliance is marked by his great speeches for Lord Grey's Reform Bill; it is marked even more significantly in his speech against the

Chartists." That could scarcely be put more plainly by a PLEBS textbook, could it ?

And here's an epigram that might serve as a PLEBS slogan:—*The nearest that any honest man can come to the thing called "impartiality" is to confess that he is partial.*

Po'try

The following 'Murrigan Pome (adapted) appeared in the October A.U.B.T.W. Circular:—

"Dubb was a 'bone-head' through
and through;
Always happy with lots to do.
He buttered bricks from morn till
night
And never disputed his master's
right.
Dubb went to Heaven (he travelled
straight)
But stood dejected within the gate.
Saint Peter said, "Here's a harp for
you;
A golden harp, well strung and
new."
Dubb scratched his head, and his
face fell flat.
"What the Hell can I do with a
thing like that?
Give me a golden trowel I pray,
With eternal work and an endless
day."

The W.E.A. Way

The following is a quote from "compliments" given to the W.E.A. in one of its official leaflets: "Now I find that education imparts to me a new life, a joy, a something constantly to strive for but never attained, *in fact it is life itself*. . . . I can quite believe the story of the philosopher *who was just as happy when they cast him into prison as he was when free*." Just so. Instead of suggesting the idea of walking out of prison, W.E.A. education makes one hug one's chains!

At a W.E.A. Class in Wimbledon the teacher has solemnly assured his students that Adam Smith is still the last and best word in Economics and that any working man having a stock of jam at home is a capitalist. Blessed for capitalism is pale neutrality and the educational road that has no aim or ending!

Recruits for I.W.C.E.

As Socialism spreads inside the Universities, the number of University men who come over to our side of the educational movement increases. The current issue of the *University Socialist*—which includes several interesting, if exceedingly short, articles, and a very able editorial—contains an appeal to University students to help in the work of the National Council of Labour Colleges and the Plebs League. This gives a "lead" which a good many other (non-University) Socialists might, with advantage to their reputations, follow.

Filing on the Cheap

No doubt many Plebs will be interested to hear of a cheap filing system for their notes, pamphlets, etc. Recently I decided to overhaul my filing methods and to instal a number of box files. I found that I needed about 30, and as these would cost 2s. 6d. each, I was faced with the prospect of laying down £3 15s. 0d.—an impossible amount for the job.

I then interviewed several confectioners and secured from them a number of chocolate boxes—Fry's, Cadbury's, Carson's, etc. These are all about quarto size. I have pasted green leather paper on the backs of the boxes and they now stand labelled and orderly on the shelves. Leather paper costs 2½d. per sheet (20" × 40") and three sheets were needed. I have now 33 box files obtained at a total cost of 7½d. It is true they have no springs or metal fittings, but they are 75% as efficient as files at 2s. 6d. each. (W. M.)

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

BOOKWORM.—Yes, we did note the publication of the same review (of the Webbs' last book) in the *Communist International* (No. 26) and the *Labour Monthly* (November); and we also noted the inclusion of a scornful sentence about The PLEBS in the latter—unofficial—organ, which was omitted from the former. We are unable to inform you (i.) why the same review appeared in two journals—unless it was that the author was particularly proud of it; or (ii.) why that particular sentence appeared in one journal and not in the other—unless this was due to the fact that in the latter case the editorial blue pencil was in someone else's hands.

BOOKS REVIEWED

by PLEBS reviewers

THE F.B.I.

The Federation of British Industries: Studies in Capital and Labour. Vol. V. By the Labour Research Department (Lab. Pub. Co., Is.).

THIS cheap book is of high value to all workers and particularly to all propagandists. The authors have—naturally—no “startling revelations” to bring forward, nor have they been behind the scenes or under the table while any offensives against the workers were being arranged. Their material is all public information, or information, at least, that is not especially secret. It is from the accumulation and arrangement of the information that the “revelations” come.

The book covers several aspects of the Federation. Its history and origin from a group of “war-profiteers” in the strict sense of the phrase, are covered. Its main functions are then outlined. These are not, as yet, mainly direct interferences in industrial disputes. They are chiefly concerned with forcing the government to respond more immediately, directly and exactly to the interests and demands of the F.B.I.'s constituents. The instances which are given in the sphere of taxation commence with the famous extinction of the Excess Profits Duty. Its successful de-nationalisation policy is also touched on, its influence in keeping up prices and its attempts to organise foreign trade. More interesting still, however, is the chapter upon its subsidiary organs, one of which, the Confederation of Employers' Organisation, exists definitely to reply in kind to Trade Union organisation. In important cases (such as the threatened Triple Alliance strike) the F.B.I. itself will take action. Another bastard from this prolific stock is the “National Alliance of Employers and Employed.”

The book concludes with an interesting discussion of the probable future, and future policy, of the organisation. There is no index.

R. W. P.

THE GREAT DELUSION

The League of Nations To-day: Its Growth, Record, and Relation to British Foreign Policy. By Roth Williams (Allen and Unwin, 6s. net).

A useful but expensive work explaining what the League is, what it has done and what its supporters hope it will do. Well printed, with bibliography, appendices and a good index. The book is interesting, from The PLEBS standpoint, as a commentary on contemporary international politics and is well worth reading in conjunction with The PLEBS Textbook on Imperialism. The author's chief points are (1) if the League fails, then another world war is inevitable; (2) to become a going concern the U.S.A., Russia and Germany must join the League; (3) the relative insignificance and feebleness of the League are due to the policies pursued by the Allies since the war; (4) the only solution of international problems lies in “an intelligent will in governments and public opinion” to use the machinery of the League as the sole instrument for international relations and to scrap the Supreme Council of the Allies. Why this policy has not been adopted by the interested “Allied and Associated Powers” may perhaps be understood after reading the following significant passage:—

“The Allies have given expression to their war-inflated nationalism by refusing to deal with any important decision through the League system on a variety of grounds that may be summed up as a general disinclination to practise methods of equal co-operation and all-round discussion, and a general preference for dictation by two or three leading Allies to the rest of the world. As a corollary the Allies refused to entertain Germany's application at the Peace Conference to be admitted to the League. In this spirit, too, the Covenant's stipulations concerning mandates were stretched—not to say twisted—to mean that the Allies

should allocate the mandates among themselves and then each mandatory power draw up the terms of its own mandate as it saw fit. The role of the League Council was confined to approving and ratifying the result. One consequence of this attitude is that the provisions for a phosphates monopoly in the British Nauru mandate and the French arrangements for drawing black armies from their mandated territories are dead against the spirit, if not the letter, of the Covenant" (pp.107-8).

A further instance is then given of how the Allied Powers have acted in utter defiance of the Covenant they have signed, and have thus added that precious document to the numerous "scraps of paper" with which the diplomatic w.p.b. is filled. Article xviii. of the Covenant prescribes that "all treaties and international agreements must be registered with the secretariat and are not binding until so registered." The signing of the Covenant did not prevent secret military agreements being concluded between France and Belgium, Poland and Roumania, and probably Poland and France, and these have not been registered—for obvious reasons!

The plain truth is that the League is entirely at the mercy of the big Two—or Three. It is a clever piece of make-believe with which they delude their respective nationals, and lead them to think that the Allied statesmen are striving to secure reconstruction and peace. It will be well to point out to those who put any faith in a league of capitalist Governments that its principles are based upon an entire misconception as to the nature of modern industrial society. The principal tenets of the League are that we are members one of another, and that to pull together is the only way to secure peace, prosperity (!) and a "progressive" form of civilisation. The advocates of the League entirely fail to realise what it is that is hindering the attainment of this desirable state of things. In short, they ignore the class struggle with all that it implies; they are ignorant of the fact of the class ownership, and the consequent fight for world markets and

world power which is being carried on ceaselessly by competing groups of international capitalists and which finds expression in the rival forms of imperialism, leading in turn to militarism and world wars. To attempt to form a League of Nations in the true sense of the term under such conditions is like trying to found a Garden City on the top of an active volcano. That is the trouble of the League of Nations' Union—they are ignoring the volcano. And in view of Poincaré's activities in the Ruhr, and Mussolini's at Corfu, it would appear that some people are not particularly interested in Garden Cities either!

H. W. C.

AGRONOMICS

The Town versus The Countryside. S. L. Bensusan (P. S. King & Son, 6d.).
The Agricultural Tragedy. A. B. Johnson (Simpkin Marshall & Co., 1s.).

Articles, pamphlets and books on the agricultural situation continue to appear, but few of them throw much light on this very distressing subject. Here we have two small publications: one by a well-known journalist, the other by a disillusioned farmer: neither is of much value in spite of forewords in each case by K.B.E.s who ought to know, and I feel sure that all would benefit from a few weeks' attendance at a N.C.L.C. Economics class.

Bensusan—and the others—seems to regard it as a truism that agriculture needs and deserves a State subsidy of some sort. Such a proposition is not self-evident and writers would do much greater service by endeavouring to prove it than by assuming it. However, they do nothing of the sort.

Lord Bledisloe's preface to the first begins: "Probably no better diagnosis of the deep-seated malady of the British countryside has ever been made than that contained in the admirable pamphlet." Mr. Bensusan's diagnosis is contained in his first sentence: "One of the most distressing symptoms associated with our home affairs is the antagonism between the town and country;" and later: "There is no State support in Great Britain for a forward agricultural policy, the reason being that the townsman as a class is opposed to effective assistance to agriculture," and still

later: "One and all should recognise that the real obstacle to the progress of their industry is the townsman." Bensusan's chief remedy then is a campaign of enlightenment directed from London, Cambridge and Oxford, the object of the campaign to be the securing of the townsman's acquiescence in a policy of State assistance.

This second pamphlet is the diatribe of a farmer who during the war reclaimed nearly a thousand acres of derelict land and was badly let down by the untimely repeal of the Corn Production Act. Words fail him in his condemnation of this "disgracefully dishonest act" and he falls back on silly doggerel and copious quotations from Omar Khayyam, Goldsmith, Shakespeare, Gray, etc. His own real and lasting remedy is a small subsidy per acre on wheat and oats or a bonus per bushel.

On one statement of fact the two authors are agreed though most strangely to both it is a fact of no fundamental importance. They both point out "that a bonus or import duty would mean only a halfpenny or so on the price of bread while the consumer pays unnecessary pennies to the middleman abroad" and apparently then should not object to another. Why he should gratuitously make a further present, the consumer naturally fails to understand. The only honest course for the British farmer to take is not to suck a little more out of the underpaid, underfed worker, but to tackle the task of diverting some of those superfluous ha'pence out of the middleman's pocket into his own. He will find it a big job; but if he tackles it and succeeds he will have some reason to boast of agriculture as our "Greatest National Industry."

LEKOV.

LOGIC—AND LACK OF IT

First Lessons in Logic. By D. J. Waite and E. F. Row (Harrap, 2s.).

Elements of Economics. By E. F. Row (Harrap, 1s. 6d.).

Capitalism: What is It? What has it Done? Economic Study Club (given away by wealthy patrons of British Commonwealth Union).

The first of these books, while intended for children, would be useful to anyone seeking to brush up his mental

machinery. Mr. Row has written a next step, book to *Work, Wealth and Wages* whose bluff of "pale neutrality" was called in *The PLEBS* (April, 1923). He still insists on regarding the carpenter's tools as capital which according to him is only "wealth used to make more wealth," and he repeats the story of the fish being saved and stored so that the first capitalist could make his canoe. He states wrongly that Treasury notes are inconvertible—this may be in practice but the right to get gold for them is still in existence. Then, again, a teacher of economics is not expected to believe that in co-operation—a movement largely consisting of retail stores—the consumers are the producers. Economics is not a question of urgency to Mr. Row but a protracted weighing up of both sides without any final decision.

It is not surprising they give the last book away. Capital is defined as "the saving out of income used with brains" and the "dark wild road" of Lady Astor's imagination is traversed. The first capitalist has only a little Paleolithic flint. But is he scared? Not a bit. He just goes on increasing the comforts of mankind until as a luxury he can run would-be comedians as lecturers for Economic Study Clubs in order to combat the nasty people who refuse to accept the capitalist as the saviour of the human race. According to this fable, the introduction of any new machine or process must first benefit the consumer, second the worker and then the capitalist, who would be prevented by nationalisation from showering further blessings upon our ungrateful heads.

Plebeians will note with interest that the Economic Study Club decided to make the basic subject matter of its leaflets "*economic statements emanating from Oxford. . .*" This is a sample!

M. S.

THE PRICE OF IMPERIALISM

The Burden of Armaments. By A. E. Enock (McMillan, 6s.).

In this interesting and factful little book, the author seeks to lay before his readers the extent of the problem of armament-construction, its causes and its remedies. The best part of his work lies in his demonstration, with many telling tables of statistics,

of the extent of the problem. Here we have a mass of data which has cost laborious research but which is very carefully arranged in a series of tables showing the total expenditures of various countries, and the proportion taken up by their offensive and defensive departments, the numbers of fighting ships launched by the principal Powers, 1900-1920, an estimated cost of the Great War, 1914-1918, etc.

Some of these and the conclusions they lead to will be sufficiently startling even to the student of Imperialism and its military preparations. Take, for example, the statistics of expenditure by the fourteen chief Powers upon armaments as compared with their total expenditure, 1900-1920. "According to these figures over sixty-one thousand millions have been spent on the fighting departments and forty-six thousand millions for all other purposes. The latter includes large sums for interest on previous accumulations of war debt, and, recently, heavy pensions payments, both properly chargeable to warlike expenditure" (p. 40). The estimated total cost, direct and indirect, of the Great War is over £70,000,000,000.

Unfortunately this careful and valuable collection of data is not accompanied by any satisfactory insight into or interpretation of it. To our author war is the offspring of armaments, and armaments the offspring of fear. There is no appreciation of the relation of armaments to our modern economic system. Neither capitalism, Imperialism nor Socialism are even mentioned! Inevitably the solution is sought in an ethical appeal to work as well as to watch and pray.

T. A.

MUNICIPAL

An Outline of Local Government. By J. Scurr (L.R.D. Syllabus, 6d.).

This pamphlet's short introduction glimpses at the time "when there wasn't a 'bus or a tram," and at 1883 when Local Government was described as a chaos of authorities, areas and rates; and an indication is given of the growing conflict between Municipalisation and Anti-Municipalisation and the implications of those movements. The control of Central Government, with its chief departments affected, like

Ministry of Health, of Education, are briefly and concisely surveyed. The structure of Local Government, the Parish, Borough, County and a short account of Finance gives one an insight into the machinery of civics. Qualifications for representatives and kindred matters, Justices, Overseers, Guardians are not overlooked.

This contribution to Local Government literature will certainly enable students to grasp the essentials of Local Government and municipal administration. In his pithy conclusion the author shows how Local Authorities may redress many inequalities in our social system, a sentiment with which anyone associated with a progressive municipality will cordially agree.

(Coun.) M. F. TITTERINGTON.

A SYLLABUS

The French Revolution. By Sydney Herbert (Labour Research Department Syllabuses, No. 11, 6d., 24 pp.).

This brief syllabus is in many ways excellent. It will serve as a very useful basis for class tutors' lectures. Mr. Herbert is a scholar of weight and knowledge, and has done his work well. I feel that perhaps he has given too much space to events after 1794: the history of the Empire, as he remarks, is "interesting only to blood-thirsty dons." His remarks on the earlier history of the Revolution, on the other hand, could well have been expanded. Indeed, the booklet as a whole could well have been a little longer.

R. W. P.

AMERICA

The American Revolution. By H. E. Egerton (Oxford University Press, 8s. 6d.)

This book is a series of essays, or written-down lectures, upon the American Revolution of 1776. It deals with a number of aspects of the Revolution, neither very well nor very badly. It is accurate, but uninspired in unity. It is not a history at all; it is a rather disconnected commentary upon a history which is presumed to be known, and the matter of that commentary is rather slight. It gives no indication for example, of the relative economic positions of England and America, nor any proper survey of the constitutional

difficulties on the American side, nor of the economic divisions between north and south, nor of the military history. Indeed, it is little more than re-written notes on various secondary points. As such, while it contains hints and suggestions of striking interest, it is on the whole a disappointment.

Q.

SEX

Free Thought in Sex. By George Whitehead (34, Holly Park Road, New Southgate, N.11. 9d.).

This is the first half of a book dealing with personal and social aspects. Mr. Whitehead makes a plea for a greater knowledge to be given in schools about the body and its needs, and finishes up his slight treatment by advice on matters of food and cleanliness.

M. S.

SCREECHING IN THE RUINS

Angkor; Ruins in Cambodia. By P. Jeannerat de Beerski (Grant Richards, 18s.).

This book deals with the ancient and extinct civilisation of the Khmers in Cambodia, and is the description of a visit to the most important of their vast but decaying temples and palaces. It is well produced, with some excellent photographs and moderate drawings by the author, whose name is surely a joke. Unfortunately its educational value is low. It contains many anecdotes of interest and one that is distinctly indelicate. It does give an impression of vastness, strangeness and beauty: it brings to you, however faintly, some impression of the tiers of stone, the carved monsters, the balustrades of Nagas or stone cobras, the battles of monkeys and devils carved on the walls. But it gives no coherent account of these: it is a talk around the temples, not a description of them. Nor is it even that: it is a subjective account, a description, in the writer's words, "of imaginings that have made me moist."

When you have overcome the difficulty of the style, modelled apparently upon the demented howlings of the monkeys in Angkor, there is definitely a certain impression left: the book is so far not a failure. But educationally or archæologically it has little value.

R. P.

TRADE UNIONISM: Past & Future

BY
MARK
STARR

Robert Owen
1771-1858

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"This admirably written booklet...conveys with conviction and force the main points of the story of the rise, hopes, battles and victories of Trade Unionism...Even the seasoned reader will find that it presents and impels fresh thoughts."

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The Railway Review.

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V. BRODZKY, in the *Daily Herald.*

40 pages. 6d. (Postpaid 7d.)

PLEBS, 162a Buckingham Palace Road,
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THE PLEBS LETTERS

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"PROLETARIAN ACADEMICISM" AND JOSEF DIETZGEN

DEAR COMRADE,—M. H. D. may have no time to waste "searching in a dark room for a black hat that is not there," but he might profitably effect further economies in this direction by abandoning the bad practice of pretending to find something in what someone else has written which is not there, and then to ask why it is there. There is a delightful appropriateness in his "why in heaven's name" which has a long-standing association with the conjurer's art. Those who read p. 59 of *What to Read* will not find anything that either explicitly or implicitly conveys the idea that either Mach or Pearson are "disciples of Comte." They are not "summarily disposed of as 'Positivists,'" but expressly designated as "modern Positivists."

The philosophy section may be the worst section in *What to Read*, but the first condition which would make such judgment worthy of attention is that it be made by an intelligent reader, which is a "grave omission" in M. H. D.'s case.

The philosophy section is only an outline, and an abridged outline at that. Sufficient, however, has been written concerning the fundamental theory of Mach and his school, to make it abundantly clear how different is the content of Mach's philosophy from that of Comte's philosophy. For Comte, an independent theory of knowledge was neither possible nor necessary. Occupation with such questions was, for him, nothing but pure metaphysics. Mach and his school have this in common with Comte, that they are animated by anti-metaphysical motives. But Mach in his theory of the elements propounds a theory of knowledge. (His most im-

portant philosophical work is *Knowledge and Error*.) And it is a theory that works with a highly suggestive force upon the reader. Furthermore, up to a point, it bears a resemblance to the outlook of Josef Dietzgen. But only up to a point. And that point is indicated in the last section of the outline on Philosophy. "What Positivism regards as world elements are in reality only elements of a part of the world." It is not, therefore, Dietzgen's world-outlook which is in need of development but that of the modern Positivist school, which is inadequate, and leads men like Pearson to agnosticism, or like Thomson, to religion with its truths "for ourselves."

When M. H. D. says that "the 'purported' refutation of Mach's theory of the elements on pp. 57-8, seems to me a meaningless repetition of irrelevant truisms which Mach himself would readily admit," it does not merely seem to me but it is perfectly plain to me that he knows as little about Mach as he does about Dietzgen.

Metaphysical speculation is not eliminated by simply calling it such, and by refusing to waste one's time in discussing it. Josef Dietzgen's critical and monistic theory of knowledge, with its clear insight into the fundamental importance of the universal inter-connexion of things, can alone enable us to break through the magic circle of subjective idealism and banish all ghosts from the field of human thought. To believe that metaphysics is overcome by saying "Get thee behind me Satan!" is to confess one's self a metaphysician, an idealist, a believer in miracles. Metaphysical speculation is overcome by the science of metaphysics, which is at the same time anti-metaphysical. It neither shuts its eyes to the Absolute and calls

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it unknowable, nor squints at the Absolute and calls it God, but knows that the nature of the absolute and the nature of its relative parts, including human knowledge, are one and the same. The philosophers, apart from Dietzgen, have failed to make anything of the Absolute other than a mystery, or they stand staring at it vacantly like a cow before a new door. And as long as the Absolute and its nature are left in obscurity, just so long will obscurity remain in the understanding of its relative inter-connexions. The truth of this statement is eloquently illustrated among scientific specialists like Lodge and Thomson, who lose their scientific step as soon as they begin to speculate about the general and more abstract relations of things, about mind and matter, beginning and end, the "how" and the "why," etc., etc.

In the last paragraph in his letter M. H. D., with scorn for academicism in his mouth and saturated with academicism in his manner, issues a recipe for winning "the class war." In effect, it consists in imposing his own subjective limitations upon the studies of other people. Wisdom did not die with Josef Dietzgen in the nineteenth century. Neither did it begin with M. H. D. in the twentieth!

Yours, etc.,

W. W. CRAIK.

DEAR COMRADE,—I heartily endorse—as a member of the Textbook Committee on *What to Read*—M. H. D.'s criticising of the philosophy section of that book. While I think he makes too much of the slip of dealing with Pearson and others under the heading of Positivists, I certainly agree with his plea: "Let us get away from mid-19th century philosophy and academic dissertations on the Absolute and get just a few clear and essential notions about the scientific method and modern science."

But if it is said that we ought not to have "passed" that section for *What to Read* at all, I say the matter goes deeper. As an outline of Dietzgen the section is good enough. The question is: "Is Dietzgen, and all Dietzgen stands for, worth studying at all?" Many Plebs, probably, hold that the study of these particular metaphysics is valuable. I cannot myself see what practical use it has at all. Will not

some comrade who believes in teaching Dietzgen state for us briefly and in clear language, what good it is to us?

If not, I suggest that the next edition of *What to Read* drops this particular section, that we abandon Dietzgen teaching altogether, and respectfully, but firmly, put old Joseph on the shelf.

Yours fraternally,

R. W. P.

TOO MUCH MARX

DEAR COMRADE,—As a keen I.W.C.Er I am surprised at the bias permeating our movement.

We place Marx on a pedestal, and in fanatical hero-worship overlook his many obvious failings. We make him the Alpha and Omega of revolutionary thought. So great is our obsession that we overlook such stalwarts as Bakunin, Kropotkin, and Proudhon.

I plead for more freedom of thought in our ranks, and for more consideration of the Anarchist Ideal. We seek Truth—perhaps it may lie in the rejected works of Bakunin or Proudhon, who knows? In that handy publication, *What to Read*, there is not a word to show that such idealists as Bakunin, etc., ever existed.

Yours fraternally,

Birkenhead.

D. E. PUDE.

ENGLISH FOR HOME STUDENTS

DEAR SIR,—Thank you for your lengthy review of my little English book in the November issue of PLEBS.

I feel, however, that your reviewer has taken me rather too seriously as regards the derivation of the word Education. It is true that I say: "Perhaps we might imagine more of a connexion with the Latin *Edo*: I eat, than with *Duco*: I draw," but that is hardly the same thing as asserting that Education comes from *Edo*. I meant it to indicate my dislike of *Duco* rather than my support of *Edo*.

He complains further that the rise of "Only" is not explained fully anywhere in the book. As a matter of fact it has nine lines to itself on page 36.

I quite agree that the second appendix is capable of improvement, but since I say "This appendix is intended to be the growing part of the book," improvement at that end of the book will, I hope, be continuous and practical.

Yours faithfully,

F. J. ADKINS.

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DEAR COMRADE EDITOR,—Glad to read in this month's PLEBS the review of Adkins' *English for Home Students*.

But do be careful yourself of the laws of grammar, for I notice at least one glaring breach, which you will find in your remarks under the rubric: "Our New Textbook." Permit me to quote: "No one but the printer and the block-maker get paid anything for their share," etc. . . .

Would it not be more correct to say? "No one but the printer gets paid anything for his (or her) share," etc.?

Yours fraternally,

A. A.

[We plead guilty, and promise to study Adkins' book for ourselves.—Ed. PLEBS.]

STUDENTS' REPRESENTATION

DEAR COMRADE,—Your references to the request of the students for representation on the Governing Board of the Labour College (London) reminds me that the original Board of Management (see PLEBS, September, 1909), included one resident student.

Surely the Governors, engrossed as they must be by their industrial and political activities, and while retaining control over expenditure as trustees of the supporting Unions, would benefit by keeping in touch with the students' point of view as expressed by their representative.

Yours,

EX-STUDENT.

The NATIONAL COUNCIL of LABOUR COLLEGES

HEAD OFFICE—22 ELM ROW, EDINBURGH

J. P. M. Millar, *General Secretary*
(to whom all reports should be sent)

WHAT'S in a name?—A very great deal sometimes especially if it is embodied in a resolution! A good deal of confusion has recently been caused by our supporters using the name "Central Labour College" when they intended "the National Council of Labour Colleges." The name "Central Labour College" is the superseded name of what is now called "The Labour College, London," the main work of which is to deal with residential students. If you mean that College say "the Labour College, London": if you mean the N.C.L.C. say it! A little point like that saves lots of trouble.

The A.U.B.T.W. and the N.U.D.A.W. Schemes.—These schemes are now well under way and the members of the latter Union are taking a great interest in the Correspondence Courses. Stanley Preston, of Middlewich, Cheshire, holds the blue ribbon for his activities in getting his fellow members of N.U.D.A.W. to take up correspondence

courses. Districts are reminded that it is important that they should send speakers to give short lectures at the branches of the A.U.B.T.W. and that a record should be kept of the number of lectures so given and the attendance.

New Outline Lectures.—Thanks to the assistance given by T. Ashcroft and F. Phippen, the N.C.L.C. has now Outline Lectures available (for the use of Class Leaders and Tutors only) on Elementary Economics and Imperialism. Many thanks are due to the A.U.B.T.W. and the N.U.D.A.W. for their assistance in duplicating.

"The Builders' History."—In reply to an inquiry:—The cheap edition of R. W. Postgate's book may be had by any *bona fide* class student of the N.C.L.C. Students or secretaries of Labour Colleges should write for their copies to the Plebs League.

N.C.L.C. Directory—Additions and Corrections.

Div. 5. Gloucester L.C. Sec.: T. G. Peckett, 42, Alma Place, Bristol Road, Gloucester.

Div. 7. Delete Yorkshire Council—now part of Divisional Council.

Hull and District L.C. Sec. : T. E. Bryan, 83, Charles Street, Hull.

Castleford L.C. Sec. : G. H. Cooling, 11, York Street, Castleford.

York District L.C. Sec. : W. L. Collins, 33, Newbiggin Street, York.

Div. 8. N. Lancs. Area Council. Sec. : H. Sharpe, 24, Hudson Street, Accrington.

What the Divisions are Doing

Division 1.—After addresses by G. Phippen and Mark Starr, the London District Delegate Meeting of the A.S.W. adopted by 79 votes to 4 the resolution of the Kentish Town Branch asking the E.C. to adopt a National Education Scheme on the lines of the A.U.B.T.W. It is now up to other areas to get busy.

Division 2.—In the meantime Dorset will be worked by this Division. Later, it will be part of Division 5. Are there any Plebs willing to give Organiser Thomas assistance in forming Labour Colleges in Division 2? Write him.

Division 3.—Nineteen Classes being run. Wanted: more affiliations from Local Organisations throughout the Division. Five dozen PLEBS sold each month.

Division 4.—The Day Schools in Cardiff and Swansea were a great success, and it is hoped they will stimulate further interest in class work. Oliver Harris, Financial Secretary of the S.W.M.F. spoke on "The South Wales Coal Trade: its National and International Relations"; W. W. Craik spoke on "Industrial Re-organisation"; and Mr. S. Rees discussed "Functions of Trade Unions, Old and New." South Wales is now asking why not a S.W. Summer School, and why not a Conference to bring further support to the N.C.L.C. Divisional Council and to co-ordinate the class work?

Division 5.—The affiliation (at the rate of 2d. per member per annum with free access to classes) of the Painters and the A.S.W. in the Bristol area has been secured, an excellent piece of work. Gloucester Labour Col-

lege is arranging a lecture by M. Phillips Price. No one will want to miss that.

Division 6.—Wanted: more Labour Colleges. Will you give a hand? Write Organiser Smith.

Division 7.—In view of the formation of a Divisional Council, the Yorkshire Council is no longer required and has merged itself in the Divisional Council. Fully twenty-two Trade Councils are affiliated to the Labour Colleges in the Division. Steps are being taken to wean the Clubs away from W.E.A.ism. Things in Yorkshire are well on the move.

Division 8.—This area is making fine headway with the N.U.D.A.W., and A.E.U. supporters are urgently wanting to know when the Union is going to put its educational rule into operation. A new class has been started at Crewe where there is a considerable number of N.U.D.A.W. members. The Liverpool Labour College was successful in obtaining a considerable amount of publicity at a special Housing Meeting at which Jack Hamilton opposed Professor Clarke's proposals for solving the housing problem. Liverpool is giving a special course of Lectures on the Builders' History. Manchester Labour College has also been doing good publicity work, and much work is being done in addressing Trade Union branches. The support of Manchester Trades Council is being put to good use. Gorton Trades Council is also arranging L.C. classes.

Division 9.—James Stewart has been appointed Organiser for the North-Eastern Labour College. This College is anticipating a record year as the classes arranged are more numerous than ever. A special Conference with our old friends Lawther and Coxon as speakers is being held to push I.W.C.E. Darlington L.C. has also got its shoulder to the wheel.

Division 10, Scottish Labour College.—As the result of a Conference addressed by Arthur Woodburn, a Local Committee has been formed at Greenock. It will later form part of the Renfrew District. Conferences for the purpose of forming local Committees are to be held in Cowdenbeath on the 24th November and in Paisley on the 15th December, the speaker being J. P. M.

Millar. T. M. Williams, of Pontypridd has been appointed full-time tutor for the winter for the Ayrshire District, and by the time these notes appear, Glasgow District will also have appointed a full-time man. This means that the Scottish Labour College will have five full-time tutors. Professor Soddy addressed one of the big Sunday Evening Educational Lectures run by the Edinburgh District. Question time and the subsequent discussion indicated that the Professor's views were not acceptable to the bulk of the audience, and the case against his opinions was so well stated by S.L.C. supporters that the Professor seemed a little surprised, to say the least of it.

Division II, Ireland.—Are there any Plebs in or around Belfast who are capable and willing to take a class for the N.C.L.C.? Please write General Secretary. Proofs are being kept of PLEBS articles on Ireland to serve as Outlines.

The Unions for I.W.C.E. I

General.—As stated in these notes last month, every endeavour should be made to get other Unions to adopt educational schemes and thus every active supporter should *now* be busy drafting a resolution to be sent on by his Branch for the forthcoming annual conference of his Union. Here are two samples:—

(a) This Conference instructs the Executive Council to prepare immediately an educational scheme for the members of the Union by allocating a sum of 1s. per member per annum from the _____ fund, seventy-five per cent. to be used for the provision of free tuition for our members at the classes of the National Council of Labour Colleges and twenty-five per cent. to be used for educational administrative expenses and for the provision of residential scholarships at the Labour College, London.

(b) This Conference instructs the Executive to prepare immediately an educational scheme on independent working-class educational lines for the benefit of the members of the Union by allocating a sum of 3d. per member per annum for the provision of free classes and other facilities through the medium of the National Council of Labour Colleges.

Naturally our Trade Union supporters in submitting such resolutions will have to bear in mind not to put in a sum that will arouse instant and wide-spread opposition—better half a loaf than no bread at all. Immediately such a resolution is passed a copy should be sent to the N.C.L.C.

The A.E.U.—The following resolution is being moved in a number of A.E.U. branches: "That this Branch desires to know what has been done by the E.C. to give effect to Rule 1, Section 3, Sub-section (v.), Clause (c.) *re* education, and recommends strongly that the E.C. immediately approach the National Council of Labour Colleges with a view to arranging a National Education Scheme with the Labour Colleges on lines similar to the scheme adopted by the A.U.B.T.W. and the N.U.D.A.W." The following is the wording of another resolution passed by A.E.U. members: "That in the opinion of this Branch the time has now arrived when the E.C. should show the members a good example by adhering to the rules of the Organisation. We therefore call on the E.C. to sever all connection with Ruskin College and link our Society with those bodies which provide the only Independent Working-Class Education in this country, *e.g.*, the *bona fide* Labour Colleges affiliated to the National Council of Labour Colleges. As Ruskin College is subsidised by the capitalist state it can be of no service to the operative engineers and does not come within the scope of the Rule." J. P. M. M.

Lantern Slides Scheme.

Will comrades please note that it is impossible to loan or make slides for individuals. The scheme as explained at the outset is only intended for Labour Colleges and Councils, etc., directly affiliated with the N.C.L.C.

We also wish to apologise to some districts in not being able to meet their requests for loans of particular sets. Several were very badly damaged by the carelessness of Districts last winter, and owing to "house shifting," it has been impossible to find time, as yet, to replace them. The terms for hiring slides to Colleges and District Councils are 5s. plus postage.—J. HAMILTON, 11, Channell Road., Fairfield, Liverpool.

Labour College (London) Students' Association

ALITERARY and debating Society has been formed by the students at the College, and invitations sent to a number of prominent members of the Labour Movement. We are looking forward to hearing lectures dealing with every phase of the movement, especially the theoretical differences between the sections within the movement itself. The aim: A united front.

At an I.L.P. conference held on November 12th, an educational policy was being discussed. Mr. McTavish waved the W.E.A. standard. A few pithy questions concerning the W.E.A. and government grants were put by one of our students. These were very unsatisfactorily answered.

But why was there not an I.W.C.E. representative?

This year again a General Election gives the signal for cessation of regular lectures, and for concentration on outside activities. After a fortnight we shall all return to work with no voices left, but doubtless with some valuable experience.

No further information is to hand regarding the Inquiry which, in response to the students' agitation, the controlling Unions have decided to conduct; except the names of the six representatives appointed to the Committee. They are, for the N.U.R., Messrs. Marchbanks, Cramp, and Charlton; and for the S.W.M.F., Messrs. Hartshorn, O. Harris, and Morrell. What the method of procedure is to be, or at what date proceedings will begin, we have not yet been informed.

A. G. E. (Sec.).

ESPERANTO NOTES

Among the Postal Workers

ESPERANTO was considered at a meeting of the International P.T.T. Executive Committee held at Vienna in September. The subject was brought forward by the British Union of Post Office Workers. The committee's discussion showed that the value of Esperanto was fully appreciated, but its adoption would appear to add to the already heavy burden of translation, and it appeared impracticable as a complete solution of their difficulties—until a larger number of people studied it. The matter will be further discussed later. In the meantime, individual postal workers can make a start by reading *Esperanto and Labour* (1s. 6d. per dozen, from 13, Dewsbury Road, N.W. 10).

There are still a few copies left.

Soviet Support for S.A.T.

The S.A.T. Congress was held this year at Cassel under the presidency of Drezén, Vice-Director of All-Russian

Central Executive Committee of Soviets. Now the Communist members have formed their own section within the Workers' International Union. The London address of the section is 195, Ladbrooke Grove, W. 10.

New Classes

Newcastle branch of the North-Eastern Labour College is starting an Esperanto class, meeting every Tuesday at 7.30 p.m. Secretary, J. Basey, 474, Shields Road, Heaton.

Becontree Guild Co-operative Council has a class in the Ilford Men's Meeting Institute, 2, Richmond Road, Ilford, every Wednesday at 8.

Press Notices

The Post (29th September). *Workers' Weekly* (2nd November). *The Young Socialist* (November). *British Esperantist* ("Esperanto among the workers," October, November). *The Wheat-sheaf* (August and September). *Freedom* (No. 410). *Germinal* (No. 1).

The PLEBS Bookshelf

I HAVE never had the honour of meeting Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. The nearest I ever came to it was when, selling PLEBS at the Labour Party Fete at Easton Lodge, last July (every editor his own hawk!), I became conscious that a Scowl was approaching. In my unaccustomed job I was feeling acutely sensitive to Scowls, and this one was unmistakably hostile. It lasted for quite a long time, too, for even after its wearer had passed my "stand" he turned round and displayed it again. I recognised Mr. MacDonald.

Of course I know one ought not to let such trivial occurrences influence one's judgment. All the same they do. Especially when one relates them to other little facts. Mr. MacDonald's dislike of the Plebs movement is a good many years old now, dating, I believe, from the time when Ablett, in his *Easy Outlines of Economics* (PLEBS, Vol. I.) said disrespectful things about *Socialism and Society*. He has expressed his dislike on various occasions; but never more effectively (though to a regrettably small audience) than in that Scowl. Looks often speak more meaningfully than words!

I could not help recalling it—and understanding it better—as I read *The Man of To-morrow: J. Ramsay MacDonald*, by "Iconoclast" (I.L.P., 3s. 6d.). Mr. MacDonald's smiles are reserved for those who approach him in the spirit of this book, which is described as "a revealing personal study." It "reveals" quite a lot of things; notably that awful, sickening, slobbering, uncritical worship of one or two "leaders" which, in certain I.L.P. circles, is the first article of Socialist faith. (I say, please note, "in certain circles"; I am well aware that scores of I.L.P.ers are as repelled by this *claque* of devotees as are Socialists of other schools.) Who "Iconoclast" actually is I don't know. But he is a very perfect specimen of the Liberal-snob-turned "Labour" whose plaudits fill all the air Mr. MacDonald breathes. He learned to write, one would guess, in

the school of "A. G. G."; he has just that easy facility, that apparently inexhaustible store of wise-sounding commonplaces.

But a quotation or two will "reveal" him better than a column of comment. In his opening chapter, in which he sets the note of unrelieved adulation kept up throughout all his 300 odd pages, he concludes a brief account of his hero's recent political triumphs with the remark that "an invitation to dine at Buckingham Palace has given the highest sanction (*sic*) to his present rank and future claims." Chapter Two purports to record a conversation between certain friends of the author's which gave him the initial impulse to write his book; the friends are a banker ("with the face of a visionary"), a stockbroker, a major, a journalist, &c. The opening sentences of this chapter set the correct social atmosphere: "It was a Sunday afternoon; we were sitting in the garden in that richest of uncounted hours when, tea left behind, dinner is still a distant prospect." (But not *too* distant, one reflects—in these particular circles.) "The sun shone through the trees and made fascinating shadow-lines across the lawn Some of us had played golf and were agreeably somnolent, etc., etc." All designed to impress the humble proletarian, of course, with a sense of being in the presence of his social betters. And all indicative of the same state of mind which talks (p. 14) of the new Labour Party constitution of 1918, "removing from it the earlier reproach of being a class party."

So much for the "Iconoclast." His book, as I have already said, is mere unrelieved adulation. "Westminster since 1922 has become the most interesting place in the British Isles . . . the focus of intelligent interest and concern." It is Mr. MacDonald who has made it so. The Labour Party between 1918 and 1922 "counted for little The difference between its status then and now is not in its numbers but in its leadership." Mr. MacDonald has "an architectural mind—mysterious as a

cathedral is mysterious." He has "a baritone voice of rare beauty with notes in it as moving as those of a violoncello"; also "a firm jaw, and flashing eyes"; he moves with "an easy expressive grace." He is "dogmatic at times," but there is in him "none of the rigidity of Marxian dogmatism." He "prefers old books to new ones" (all the copy-book heroes do!) but one of his characteristics is "hospitality to new streams of thought." In his writings there is "the brooding melancholy of the Celt," and "the wonder of the romantic." He writes "a sustained flow of level, just and beautiful prose, simple and liquid as water, perfectly adapted to its purpose." That fearsome mixture of John Knox, Herbert Spencer, "natural sympathy with the moral idealism of Gladstone," and raw Scottish sentimentality which is Mr. MacDonald's intellectual stock-in-trade is rhapsodised about as though it were a sort of Portent in the History of Thought. If there is a climax in all this monotonous chanting, it comes when the duel between MacDonald and Radek at the Conference of the Second and Third Internationals at Berlin, 1922, is described. A verbatim report of that debate has been published and is easily obtainable. In spite of that fact, "Iconoclast's" unblushing comment is, "Radek is probably one of the cleverest men in Europe; but put mere cleverness against an intellect like MacDonald's and it shivers like fine glass."

One is not surprised that a man who breathes this sort of atmosphere should scowl when he catches sight of THE PLEBS. Whatever our errors or shortcomings we do not stand for sycophancy. The I.W.C.E. movement *has* achieved something, and it is a genuine workers' movement. Has Mr. MacDonald, whose passionate belief in the supreme importance of education is again and again referred to in this book, ever given our educational movement a single word of encouragement? Has he ever mixed praise with blame, or generosity with his criticism? He has not. He has, on the contrary, consistently scowled at us. This book helps one to understand why.

Two items in the *Labour Magazine* for November were especially interesting—in different ways. The first was the really fine and moving poem by

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James Welsh on the Redding Colliery disaster. The second was the article by Kautsky entitled "The Task of the Jewish Proletariat in Soviet Russia." The *Labour Magazine*, so its advertisements inform us, stands for the OFFICIAL Labour view. I want to know whether this article represents the OFFICIAL Labour view on Russia. One hesitates to say some things about a man who has done as much for Socialism as Kautsky admittedly has. But "renegade" would be a mild word to apply to the writer of this hysterical, vicious, bitterly prejudiced onslaught on the Soviet Government. The *Morning Post* at its worst never improved on it. Why did the *Labour Magazine* print it?

The *Socialist Review* (edited by J. Ramsay MacDonald) had a very characteristic review of our *What to Read* in its November issue. The book, we were told, "is more interesting for its omissions than for its directions . . . Carlyle, Ruskin, Thorold Rogers, Bernard Shaw, Norman Angell, J. R. MacDonald, Snowden, and Bruce Glasier are all omitted, along with all the modern war books." An amazing list! I don't know what "the modern war books" referred to are—Col. Repington's *Memoirs*? "It would require a specially Plebs mind (*sic*) to cover the rather arid grounds surveyed." What is a "specially Plebs mind?" I suppose—I hope!—it is the sort of mind which shrinks from bracketing "J. R. MacDonald, Snowden and Bruce Glasier" with Carlyle, Ruskin and Shaw.

J. F. H.

THE PLEBS

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