

Vol. VI, No. 4

May, 1914

*The*  
**PLEBS**  
MAGAZINE



*Printed by Fox, Jones & Co., at Kemp  
Hall, High St., Oxford, & published  
by the Plebs League  
at the same address.*

**MONTHLY**

**TWOPENCE**

# The "Plebs" League

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## Object

To further the interests of the Central Labour College, for working men and women, at London, and to assist in the formation of similar institutions elsewhere, all of these institutions to be controlled by the organized Labour bodies.

## Methods

The holding of an Annual Meet: the issuing of a monthly Magazine, the pages of which shall be open to any proposed application of reason to human problems: and the formation of Local Branches to promote the object of the League, and for the study of Social Questions, History, and Economics—from the working-class standpoint.

## Membership

All Students (R. C. and C. L. C.), past and present (Resident and Corresponding) and Sympathizers are eligible for membership

Each Member shall pay 1/- a year towards the Central Fund for general expenses in connexion with the Annual Meet, &c.

## Management

An Executive of five members elected annually, and the Editor of Magazine, who shall be responsible as to publication and meets, &c.

The Magazine shall be 2d. per copy, 2½d. post free.

Subscriptions payable in advance: Quarterly 7½d., Half Yearly 1/3, Yearly 2/6

✉ The Sixth Annual Meet will be held in London (Bank Holiday), August, 1914

**G. SIMS, Secretary-Treasurer**

To whom all P.O.'s should be made payable

13 Penywern Road, Earls Court,  
London, S.W.

# The PLEBS MAGAZINE

Vol. VI

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## Will You Help?

In April No. we wrote:

**We invite all our readers, who are sufficiently interested to make a little sacrifice to save the Central Labour College, to obtain 4/- a month till July next, or pay £1 in the most convenient form.**

**We want £500 by July next! we should like it in monthly instalments of £100. If YOU cannot give it you can probably get it off your friends or workmates, or Union, or Society.**

## TRY!

The result has not been very encouraging to date—and the College is really hard up. So

## PAY UP AND SMILE

	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>		<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Dean, T. ....	20	0	+Keating, A. (2nd) ....	5	0
Engineers Club and Institute (Plumstead) ....	42	0	Keating, A. (collected) ....	6	6
Edwards, E. ....	20	0	+Lord, Ben (2nd) ....	4	0
+Fox, F. W. ....	5	0	+Pendrey, C. T. ....	3	0
			+Sale Branch, B.S.P. ....	4	0
			+F. W. M. (Manor Park, 2nd) ....	4	0

†Instalment of £1 guarantee.

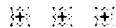
## EDITORIAL

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**J**UST as there is considerable controversy about what is right and what is wrong, what is just and what is unjust, what is moral and what is immoral, so has there developed the dispute as to what is education and what is not education. The

### **The Educational Controversy**

discussion of this latter subject has in the main been conducted between the partisans of the Central Labour College on the one hand, and those of the Workers' Educational Association and Ruskin College on the other hand. During the past two years this controversy has been invading a wider and wider area and an increasing number of the organized workers are daily becoming more familiar with the claims of the contending parties. In the public press there has, on a larger scale, been afforded opportunities for a discussion of the question. In the *Cotton Factory Times*, for example, for the past ten weeks, two or three columns have been devoted to a debate on whether the C.L.C. or the W.E.A. should be supported by working-class organizations. A very interesting summing up of the discussion was contributed to this paper on the 10th of April last, by "Bruce," under the regular heading of "The World of Work." We propose to consider one of the points made by this contributor as it serves admirably to set out the main contention of the disputing parties,



THUS "Bruce" writes in the above-mentioned article:—"The combatants fail to see that the W.E.A and the C.L.C are fundamentally distinct in their aims. The question is not, 'Does the

### **"Complementary" Institutions**

W.E.A. or the Central Labour College best serve the purpose of training working men and women to take their part in the class struggle?' but on the contrary, Is the working-class movement best served by the training of propagandists of working-class principles, or by a spreading of general culture and intelligence? The truth is that the two institutions—so far as their objects are concerned—are not antagonistic but complementary." And again:—"The work of the W.E.A. is not primarily to make propagandists. It is to make men and women take an intelligent interest in the world of thought and fact." This is the distinction according to "Bruce." The C.L.C. is propagandist: the W.E.A. gives a general education. If this distinction referred to the fact that the C.L.C. mainly made social science its speciality, while the

W.E.A. took within the range of its study, the physical sciences, such as Botany, Astronomy, Chemistry, &c., then the validity of the distinction might at once be admitted. But as the C.L.C. does not give special attention to those physical sciences, it can neither be complementary nor even antagonistic to the W.E.A. which does pursue those investigations. Besides, the working class, for the welfare of which both the C.L.C. and the W.E.A. profess to stand, cannot explain its existence as a wage-labouring class, or its problems, from any of the so-called natural sciences. Nature, whether it be viewed from the mechanical or chemical standpoint, does not create wage-labourers on the one hand, or capitalists on the other hand. Certainly the class struggle which "Bruce" admits as a fact, is not a determination for the explanation of which one should study astronomy, physics, or chemistry. If one wants to understand the relation of such economic categories as capital, wages, profit, interest and rent, he must turn to political economy and industrial history. To these two subjects the W.E.A. is, in so far as it succeeds in forming classes among the organized workmen, compelled to devote the major portion of its teaching. If in this respect therefore, the C.L.C. and the W.E.A. occupy common ground, i.e. the investigation of social relations in what way are they complementary, or in what way is the C.L.C. propagandist and the W.E.A. a general culturist?



THE distinction made by "Bruce," and the distinction made by the W.E.A. itself, although much more sharply drawn in the latter case, can only mean, and undoubtedly does only mean, that the C.L.C.

### **Propaganda or Culture?**

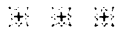
definitely affirms one particular view of society, and that the W.E.A. puts forward all the theoretical schools without definitely affirming any one of them. The first is thus called "propaganda." The second is styled "culture." But the W.E.A. *does not* (and neither does Ruskin College, which is a kindred spirit of the W.E.A.) set forth systematically all the theories of political economy and history. And we would add, *dare not*. There is one point of view in economic and historical theory that is not taught. And significantly enough this point of view is precisely the one affirmed by the C.L.C. Yet the W.E.A. claims to be a disinterested, non-partisan, impartial institution. Of course so does the Liberal Party make the same fashionable claim. It, too, professes to love everybody. In practice however, the shirt is nearer to the skin than the coat. Why does the W.E.A. neglect this point of view? For no other reason than that it happens to coincide with the true practice of existing society. "Tell the truth and shame the devil" runs the old maxim. But the W.E.A. is not propagandist; and so the devil is saved from the embarrassment of having to pay for being made ashamed of himself.

WE call this point of view a working class point of view, and the teaching of it, working class education. Why? First, because it originated out of the struggle of the working class; secondly, because

### **The Working Class Point of View**

it explains that struggle, its rhythm and direction, and therefore serves as a central point for the correct estimation of working class policy and tactics; and finally, because the working class are most accessible to this point of view. "Bruce" thinks "that it is futile to draw a hard and fast line between 'orthodox' and 'working class' economics and sociology." There are no hard and fast lines between things in the sense that one thing is absolutely severed from another. There is no hard and fast line between day and night. But yet it is valid to distinguish day from night. *What is general, or the rule, as distinguished from the exception, is the nature of all logical distinctions.* Between the solid and liquid matter we find the intermediate pulpiness, but yet solid and liquid are real, essential distinctions. "Bruce" would not, we feel sure, deny that there is a class who labour for wages distinct enough for all practical purposes, from a class that live on the surplus-labour of the wage-workers. But the latter class does not explain this matter in that way. Their explanation of profits and the explanation of their spokesmen is that profits are "the wages of superintendence," or "a reward for risk," or "the reward of abstinence." On the other hand, among the working class there develops quite an antagonistic view of this matter of profits. Every delegation that goes from a trade union to the board room of the employers for the purpose of presenting a programme for more wages and shorter hours, soon becomes aware that the point of view they bring with them from those they represent is something quite different from the point of view put forward against their claims by the employers' representatives. The "orthodox" explanation and the "working class" explanation are matter of fact distinctions. As for the statement made by "Bruce":—"If Marshall's economics are 'orthodox' and Marx's 'working class,' where does John A. Hobson stand"? we reply that if the latter may be regarded as intermediate, he is yet much more akin in general position to Marshall than he is to Marx. We certainly agree with "Bruce," however, when he says that "you can no more study Marx, without studying opposing theories, than you can study light without studying darkness." But just as a man may be in the darkness without ever realizing the light, so you can assimilate the economic theories of the "orthodox" apologists without a study of Marx's theoretical system. The W.E.A. gives us the proofs of this assertion. As a matter of fact the theoretical system of Marx receives no special treatment in those "seats of learning," from whence the W.E.A. teachers are drawn, and the University student who makes an independent examination of Marx's method and system is the exception. When he arrives at an acceptance of it he begins to realize how superfluous and confusion-creating has been

a great deal of the so-called learning he had previously spent much time in acquiring. But in general, the University student and teacher never emancipate themselves from the errors and prejudices they have absorbed. It is a great mistake, of which the W.E.A. education is guilty, to imagine that culture consists in the mass of ideas that one can assimilate. Already in the 18th century Helvetius exploded that academic conceit. He tells the story of the student of painting, who had studied many schools and assimilated many theories, and who having painted a picture, took it to Raphael, confidently anticipating his good opinion. "I think," said the master, "that if you knew nothing you would soon begin to know something." In the 18th century, both in France and in England, the Third Estate were engaged in the struggle to overthrow the estates of the nobility and clergy and to fashion society on capitalist lines. With their spokesmen, education and propaganda were identical. They were unmistakably partisan, and the necessity of clearing away the feudal rubbish and building up a new political framework in which the productive forces might find room to develop, historically justified their propaganda. But now-a-days, having long since accomplished that task, their interests are no longer served by promoting further social transformation, and in face of the gathering hosts of the Fourth Estate which is manifesting an increasing disposition to think its own thoughts, there comes out of the old camp, the spokesmen of the truce-seekers, bearing the banner on which is inscribed. "Not propaganda but education."

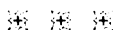


BUT we do not think that men of the type of the *Factory Times* contributor will be found very long under any illusions about this device. He gives evidence in his contributions on working class subjects of having worked his way out of the labyrinth of capitalist anarchy in theory and practice, too far, to be lured back into the meshes.

### The Facts

There remains with him just the fag-end as it were, of traditional thinking upon this subject of education. For him the class struggle is a fact. But the acceptance of this carries with it a revolution in the outlook upon society. If this point of view is a scientific truth then we feel sure that "Bruce" will agree that it should be propagated. He would not waste his time propagating errors. Errors are manifold and divide. Truth is single and unifies. If the immediate need of the working class is industrial and political unity, then surely the immediate requisite for this end is theoretical unity. This latter is the domain of working-class education. We submit therefore respectfully, that the question really is, "Does the W.E.A. or the C.L.C. best serve the purpose of training men and women to take their part in the class struggle?" Surely the intelligence and culture of the working class in so far as these can be realized within existing conditions, is developed, by teaching the actual facts and principles as they are in practical social life. The W.E.A. say that

they are out to teach the facts. Is the class struggle a fact? Is it a fact that capitalist wealth is appropriated unpaid labour? Is it a fact that Liberalism is the political expression of capitalist interests? These are all vital questions which a Labour College or a Worker's Educational Association should be prepared to answer plainly and without beating about the bush. It cannot be said that these are not matters of social science. It cannot be said that they are not questions essential to the Labour movement which the W.E.A. is so anxious to assist. And scientific knowledge is positive knowledge. But when these questions are addressed to the W.E.A. we are told that these are questions of propaganda, questions which are controversial, questions to answer which, involves taking sides. Then what earthly good is the W.E.A. to the working class movement? For indeed it is just these very controversial questions which underlie the movement's existence. Does not this controversy extend right through the whole sphere of social relations—industrial, political, moral, &c.? And is not this controversy, this theoretical antagonism rooted in the concrete antagonism within modern society itself? If the W.E.A. considers that all these controversial matters of social relationship do not warrant its giving positive and unequivocal answers thereto, then what is there left for them to educate on within the range of social subjects. General culture and intelligence! It must indeed be very general—possibly such truths as that all men seek pleasure and avoid pain, or that efficiency is the standard of progress, or that Napoleon died in 1821—certainly too general for the urgent and particular business that the Labour movement has on hand.



We cannot agree that the C.L.C. and the W.E.A. are complementary institutions on the field of social science. Both institutions are in the same sociological field. But both have not the same conceptions of that field. Hence their methods and results differ. Between the two, there is opposition.

### **Antagonistic**

What the C.L.C. affirms as an objective truth, the W.E.A. either does not know or will not say. This opposition is not a purely subjective opposition but springs up from the soil of antagonistic economic relations. Both institutions style their teaching as working-class education. But both have not the same conceptions of that class. The C.L.C. takes the workman as he is,—in the concrete. The W.E.A. abstracts from his workman role and reduces him to an abstract man. In its own words, education "is to be desired for its own sake and not because it has any direct bearing upon his wage-earning capacity"; "it concerns life not livelihood," it shows unmistakably that it does not understand the problem. It cannot therefore solve the problem. It clings to the husk but divests it of its contents. Hence its co-partnership in education. In the same way as it reduces the wage-worker to an abstract man so does it regard the capitalist—as a man, not the man as a capitalist. Similarly the University is



stripped of all its historical contents and is seen only as an abstract educational institution. The best proof of the maturity of the Central Labour College is that not only does it develop and promote a scientific knowledge of society, but it can also explain its own origin from the social conditions themselves. With the development of those conditions, the cleavage between the C.L.C. and the W.E.A. must become wider. Working class education is as inevitably a historical result as the trade-union movement and the political labour party. It has come to stay and to grow. If it propagates only one point of view, then so long as that is the true point of view its propagandist character is the highest form of education. Narrow, working class education may be, in the sense that it confines itself to the needs and requirements of that class. But such a narrowness is forced upon it by the circumstances of modern society, just as this narrowness is imposed as a necessity upon the industrial and political organizations of the working class. But it cannot be said that the knowledge which it promotes is narrow. It does not, as has frequently been represented either by those who are its enemies or by those who are only adulterated with the new outlook, reduce the whole of society to a few economic formulæ and regard ethics, art, religion, etc., as so much phantasmagoria, but rather comprehends all the manifold and complex interlacings of social being in their movement, in their interconnexion, in their unity. In this comprehension it towers above and triumphs over those who measure history by the yardstick of petty personality, or who think that history is made with a definition and a syllogism and guaranteed as authentic by a voucher of the academy. This new point of view is, we repeat, the positive outcome of the historical process itself; and just as history has appointed the working class as the bearer of further social progress, the agent of the impending material revolution, so has it also provided that corresponding mental revolution which is in process of accomplishing the complete overthrow of the entire system of traditional thought.

W.W.C.

## Tools, Thought and Language

*FOREWORD.*—Being Chapter VIII. of *Marxism and Darwinism* by Anton Pannekoek (4d. post free Plebs), a clear statement in simple language of the theoretical relationship between Scientific Socialism and natural Science.

**S**OOCIABILITY, with its consequences, the moral feelings, is a peculiarity which distinguishes man from some, but not from all, animals. There are, however, some peculiarities which belong to man only, and which separates him from the entire animal world. These, in the first instance, are language, then reason. Man is also the only animal that makes use of self-made tools. For all these things, animals have but the slightest propensity, but among men,

these have developed essentially new characteristics. Many animals have some kind of voice, and by means of sounds they can come to some understanding, but only man has such sounds as serve as a medium for naming things and actions. Animals also have brains with which they think, but the human mind shows, as we shall see later, an entirely new departure, which we designate as reasonable or abstract thinking. Animals, too, make use of inanimate things which they use for certain purposes; for instance, the building of nests. Monkeys sometimes use sticks or stones, but only man uses tools which he himself deliberately makes for particular purposes. These primitive tendencies among animals show us that the peculiarities possessed by man came to him, not by means of some wonderful creation, but by continuous development.

Animals living isolated can not arrive at such a stage of development. It is only as a social being that man can reach this stage. Outside the pale of society, language is just as useless as an eye in darkness, and is bound to die, language is possible only in society, and only there is it needed as a means by which members may understand one another. All social animals possess some means of understanding each other, otherwise they would not be able to execute certain plans conjointly. The sounds that were necessary as a means of communication for the primitive man while at his tasks must have developed into names of activities, and later into names of things.

The use of tools also presupposes a society, for it is only through society that attainments can be preserved. In a state of isolated life every one has to make discoveries for himself; with the death of the discoverer the discovery also becomes extinct, and each has to start anew from the very beginning. It is only through society that the experience and knowledge of former generations can be preserved, perpetuated, and developed. In a group or body a few may die, but the group, as such, does not. It remains. Knowledge in the use of tools is not born with man, but is acquired later. Mental tradition, such as is possible only in society, is therefore necessary.

While these special characteristics of man are inseparable from his social life, they also stand in strong relation to each other. These characteristics have not been developed singly, but all have progressed in common. That thought and language can exist and develop only in common is known to everyone who has but tried to think of the nature of his own thoughts. When we think or consider, we, in fact, talk to ourselves; we observe then that it is impossible for us to think clearly without using words. Where we do not think with words our thoughts remain indistinct and we can not combine the various thoughts. Every one can realize this from his own experience. This is because so-called abstract reason is perceptive thought and can take place only by means of perceptions. Percep-

tions we can designate and hold only by means of names. Every attempt to broaden our minds, every attempt to advance our knowledge must begin by distinguishing and classifying by means of names or by giving to the old ones a more precise meaning. Language is the body of the mind, the material by which all human science can be built up.

The difference between the human mind and the animal mind was very aptly shown by Schopenhauer. This citation is quoted by Kautsky in his *Ethics and the Materialist Conception of History* (pages 139:40 Kerr's edition). The animal's actions are dependent upon visual motives, it is only by these that it sees, hears or observes in any other way. We can always tell what induced the animal to do this or the other act, for we, too, can see it if we look. With man, however, it is entirely different. We can not foretell what he will do, for we do not know the motives that induce him to act; they are thoughts in his head. Man considers, and in so doing, all his knowledge, the result of former experience, comes into play, and it is then that he decides how to act. The acts of an animal depend upon immediate impression, while those of man depend upon abstract conceptions, upon his thinking and perceiving. Man is at the same time influenced by finer invisible motives. Thus all his movements bear the impress of being guided by principles and intentions which give them the appearance of independence and obviously distinguishes them from those of animals.

Owing to their having bodily wants, men and animals are forced to seek to satisfy them in the natural objects surrounding them. The impression on the mind is the immediate impulse and beginning; the satisfaction of the wants is the aim and end of the act. With the animal, action follows immediately after impression. It sees its prey or food and immediately it jumps, grasps, eats, or does that which is necessary for grasping, and this is inherited as an instinct. The animal hears some hostile sound, and immediately it runs away if its legs are so developed to run quickly, or lies down like dead so as not to be seen if its color serves as a protector. Between man's impressions and acts, however there comes into his head a long chain of thoughts and considerations. His actions will depend upon the result of these considerations.

Whence comes this difference? It is not hard to see that it is closely associated with the use of tools. In the same manner that thought arises between man's impressions and acts, the tool comes in between man and that which he seeks to attain. Furthermore, since the tool stands between man and outside objects, thought must arise between the impression and the performance. Man does not start empty-handed against his enemy or tear down fruit, but he goes about it in a roundabout manner, he takes a tool, a weapon (weapons are also tools) which he uses against the hostile animal; therefore

his mind must also make the same circuit, not follow the first impressions, but it must think of the tools and then follow to the object. This material circuit causes the mental circuit; the thoughts leading to a certain act are the result of the tools necessary for the performance of the act.

Here we took a very simple case of primitive tools and the first stages of mental development. The more complicated technique becomes, the greater is the material circuit, and as a result the mind has to make greater circuits. When each made his own tools, the thought of hunger and struggle must have directed the human mind to the making of tools. Here we have a longer chain of thoughts between the impressions and the ultimate satisfaction of men's needs. When we come down to our own times, we find that this chain is very long and complicated. The worker who is discharged foresees the hunger that is bound to come; he buys a newspaper in order to see whether there is any demand for labourers; he goes to the railway, offers himself for a wage which he will get only long afterwards, so that he may be in a position to buy food and thus protect himself from starvation. What a long circuitous chain the mind must make before it reaches its destiny. But it agrees with our highly developed technique, by means of which man can satisfy his wants.

Man, however, does not rule over one tool only, but over many, which he applies for different purposes, and from which he can choose. Man, because of these tools, is not like the animal. The animal never advances beyond the tools and weapons with which it was born, while man makes his tools and changes them at will. Man, being an animal using different tools, must possess the mental ability to choose them. In his head various thoughts come and go, his mind considers all the tools and the consequences of their application, and his actions depend upon these considerations. He also combines one thought with another, and holds fast to the idea that fits in with his purpose.

Animals have not this capacity; it would be useless for them for they would not know what to do with it. On account of their bodily form, their actions are circumscribed within narrow bounds. The lion can only jump upon his prey, but can not think of catching it by running after it. The hare is so formed that it can run; it has no other means of defence although it may like to have. These animals have nothing to consider except the moment of jumping or running. Every animal is so formed as to fit into some definite place. Their actions must become strong habits. These habits are not unchangeable. Animals are not machines, when brought into different circumstances they may acquire different habits. It is not in the quality of brains, but in the formation of their bodies that animal restrictions lie. The animal's action is limited by its bodily form and surroundings, and consequently it has little need for reflection. To reason would therefore be useless for it and would only lead to harm rather than to good.

Man, on the other hand, must possess this ability because he exercises discretion in the use of tools and weapons, which he chooses according to particular requirements. If he wants to kill the fleet hare, he takes the bow and arrow; if he meets the bear, he uses the axe. and if he wants to break open a certain fruit he takes a hammer. When threatened by danger, man must consider whether he shall run away or defend himself by fighting with weapons. This ability to think and to consider is indispensable to man in his use of artificial tools.

This strong connexion between thoughts, language, and tools, each of which is impossible without the other, shows that they must have developed at the same time. How this development took place, we can only conjecture. Undoubtedly it was a change in the circumstances of life that changed men from our apelike ancestors. Having migrated from the woods, the original habitat of apes, to the plain, man had to undergo an entire change of life. The difference between hands and feet must have developed then. Sociability and the ape-like hand, well adapted for grasping, had a due share in the new development. The first rough objects, such as stones or sticks, came to hand unsought, and were thrown away. This must have been repeated so often that it must have left an impression on the minds of those primitive men.

To the animal, surrounding nature is a single unit, of the details of which it is unconscious. It can not distinguish between various objects. Our primitive man, at his lowest stage, must have been at the same level of consciousness. From the great mass surrounding him, some objects (tools) come into his hands which he used in procuring his existence. These tools, being very important objects, soon were given some designation, were designated by a sound which at the same time named the particular activity. Owing to this sound, or designation, the tool and the particular kind of activity stands out from the rest of the surroundings. Man begins to analyze the world by concepts and names, self-consciousness makes its appearance, artificial objects are purposely sought and knowingly made use of while working.

This process—for it is a very slow process—marks the beginning of our becoming men. As soon as men deliberately seek and apply certain tools, we can say that these are being developed; from this stage to the manufacturing of tools, there is only one step. The first crude tools differ according to use; from the sharp stone we get the knife, the bolt, the drill, and the spear; from the stick we get the hatchet. With the further differentiation of tools, serving later for the division of labour, language and thought develop into richer and newer forms, while thought leads man to use the tools in a better way, to improve old and invent new ones.

So we see that one thing brings on the other. The practice of sociability and the application to labour are the springs in which technique, thought, tools and science have their origin and continually develop. By his labour, the primitive ape-like man has risen to real manhood. The use of tools marks the great departure that is ever more widening between men and animals.

## C.L.C. Provincial Classes

### N.E. LANCS. AREA

We have now finished our 2nd year's course, viz., Marxian Economics. Though the attendance at the classes has not been up to the standard set last year, nevertheless, those in attendance have benefited greatly from the lectures. Some of the classes have been worried with finance but in spite of all difficulties they have all managed to pull through.

A month ago, a conference was called of all students in the area, and about 60 students turned up. At that conference it was decided to continue for another winter and the subjects chosen for study were

12 Lectures on "Industrial History" (Advanced).

12 Lectures on "Dietzgen or Formal Logic."

I would suggest that Comrade Archbold (the lecturer) give a report of his opinions re "Tutorial class work" for a resumé of his views would in all probability be interesting to other districts.

W. H. BARTON,

Gen. Sec., 38 Scott Street, Burnley

### Birmingham Economic Class

This class has proved a greater success than was anticipated. During the term—October to end of March—24 members joined and there was an average attendance of 12. Under the able guidance of Comrade William Paul of the S.L.P., "Wage-Labour & Capital," "Value, Price & Profit," and a few chapters of "Capital" were successively studied. Lectures on Industrial History were given once a month by our Tutor.

Beginning March 16th, a fine series of Lantern Lectures on the "Martyrdom of Labour" were organised by the class at the Priory Rooms, Upper Priory. Comrade Paul was the lecturer, and in dealing with such subjects as "The Paris Commune," "The Peasants Revolt," "The Land Enclosures" and "The Industrial Revolution," he displayed wide knowledge, sound argument, and an eloquence which frequently elicited applause. Although expenses were not covered, the lectures were well attended and collections were good.

Next October the class will be resumed and later on it is proposed to hold a further series of Lantern Lectures by Comrade Paul: Subject: "From the Amœba up to Man."

F. B. SILVESTER, Secretary,

8 Evelyn Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham



YOURS FOR THE RESOLUTION.

*The Platform* (in chorus):—"Comrades, stand firm! The day of victory is at hand! The Promised Land is in sight . . . Let us pass another resolution."

[The Rank and File cannot reply, being snowed under.]

## Shaw's "Romance"



WHEN, six months ago, Shaw's play, *Pygmalion*, was produced at the Lessing Theatre, Berlin, an English newspaper sent a reporter round to the author to ask why the play had been produced abroad before it had been seen in London. Mr. Shaw replied—"It is the custom of the English Press, when a play of mine is produced, to inform the world that it is not a play—that it is dull, blasphemous, unpopular, and financially unsuccessful. This news is duly telegraphed to Berlin and Vienna, with the result that the managers there have been compelled to postpone its production until a later play of mine was undergoing the same treatment, by which time the previous play was established as a masterpiece of wit and brilliancy in contrast to its wretched successor. . . . I cannot pretend that the situation is flattering to London journalism; but there it is!"

And there it is still. For despite this very plain warning, the London critics, almost without exception, have made themselves look foolish by saying, once again, now that Sir Herbert Tree has produced *Pygmalion*, exactly what Shaw said they always did say. "*Pygmalion* is an amusing, irresponsible farce," declared one of the most pontifical of them all (Mr. E. A. Baughan of the *Daily News*); "but to have acclaimed it as a masterpiece only proves that Berlin, Vienna, and Stockholm do not understand their Shaw (!!). *At his best he was capable of much better work, wittier, deeper, and more stimulating.*" Yet however witty, deep, and stimulating Mr. Baughan and his colleagues came to believe Shaw "at his best" (whenever that was) to be, they almost invariably applied quite other adjectives to his work on its first production. It is surprising to find so sane a critic as A. M. Thompson, in the *Clarion*, making the same stock comment; contrasting *Pygmalion* with "the great playwright's really significant plays"; and declaring that in it Shaw has conformed to the legend inscribed in gold over the portals of the commercial theatre—"Abandon aim all ye that enter here." "Except to boil the pot," he goes on, "and evoke effects like the crackling of thorns under the pot, there is no purpose visible in *Pygmalion.*" Well, that too, like Mr. Baughan's, is an impressive pontifical pronouncement; but if A.M.T. is really unable to disentangle any sort of a purpose



from the "abundance of bold and startling wit" which he admits *Pygmalion* contains, then one must reluctantly request him to take his seat in the galley, manned by the muddled moralists of the great English Press.

Most of these latter gentlemen were of course very grateful for the naughty word in the third act of *Pygmalion*, since that gave them something quite definite to write about; and to discuss Shaw's ideas—ideas which find expression in every one of his plays, novels, or prefaces (including *Pygmalion*, Mr. Thompson)—is a task requiring some concentration and as much hard thinking as an average man or woman is capable of. So the critics chose an easier task, and confined themselves for the most part to squealing in chorus because the heroine of *Pygmalion* used the word "bloody.\*" Few of them dared even to print the word. "It is one which good taste does not permit to be printed in these columns," wrote the chaste representative of the *Daily Chronicle*. "It is a word which has remained the monopoly of the most foul-mouthed and blackguardly," declared the *Star*. "Its use stamps the man who utters it in mixed company as a blackguard," said one or the other of the stately Tory journals, which cost a penny and count for nothing. Poor horrified Pressmen! (Such language, of course, is never, never heard in newspaper offices). They trembled for national morality; which is in much more imminent danger, though they may not realize it, from some of Mr. Shaw's quite unobjectionably-phrased comments on it, than from the nightly repetition of that dreadful word on the stage of His Majesty's Theatre.

Most of them, too, unwisely drew attention to their own shockingly-bad memories (it is at least charitable to put it down to bad memory) by declaring that this was the first time the word had been used by a modern British dramatist. Surely some of them have seen R. L. Stevenson and W. E. Henley's *Admiral Guinea*. If not, they should read it; and in due course the blush will be brought to the cheek of innocence by the sight of that vulgar word, spoken, without any apology, by a wicked old pirate. At all events, none of them will dare to confess himself unacquainted with such a masterpiece of modern drama as *The Playboy of the Western World*; and, shocking to relate, the playboy himself uses the word—in a conversation with a lady. The British drama, it is obvious, is even more depraved than the critics had suspected. How will the bold expert of the *Westminster Gazette*, who has been endeavouring to persuade Non-conformists to reconsider their fine old crusted attitude to the theatre, have the heart now to go on with his mission? The *Daily News*, stalwart champion of liberty of thought and speech, and fierce

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\* I need hardly say that "A. M. T." was not with them here. But even his "middle-class morality" got shocked by another incident in the play, which we have hardly space to discuss here.

opponent of censorship in any form, has already been indignantly inquiring what the Censor of Plays was about to let such a word pass un-blue-pencilled.

But we shall write ourselves down as devoid of a sense of proportion, or of humour, as the professional play-tasters if we devote all our space (and notes of exclamation) to talking round and about that fascinating adjective. It is unnecessary here to tell again the story of *Pygmalion*, which, in a hundred more or less mutilated versions, has been told already in every really high-class daily or weekly journal in the kingdom. Everybody knows that the Pygmalion of the play is a professor of phonetics, who picks up a Cockney flower-girl and in six months trains her to speak like a "lady," at the end of the experiment showing unmistakable signs of having fallen in love with his Galatea. Shaw as a writer of romance! "I call it a romance," he informed an interviewer, "because it is a story of a poor girl who meets a gentleman at a church door, and is transformed by him, like Cinderella, into a beautiful lady. That is what I call romance. It is also what everybody else calls romance; so we are all agreed for once . . . No, she does not marry anybody. I draw the line at that. She may marry anybody she likes when the curtain comes down: I have something better for her to do while it is up." Most of the critics were horribly cross because there was no sound of wedding-bells at the final curtain. It was an "enigmatic ending," and it left them very unsatisfied; whereas the whole thing would have been as nicely rounded off as the best type of novelette if Henry had kissed his Eliza as the curtain fell. But Henry didn't—although once or twice he got very near it. So the poor critics went away wounded in their romantic feelings. Yet the curtain *did* go down to the sound of wedding bells; but for the heroine's father's wedding, alas! and not for her own. And there is nothing romantic about an elderly parent: particularly as this one had been living with his bride for some time previously—without the blessing of Holy Church, or even the permission of a Registrar.

I have been grumbling because the critics don't praise Shaw enough. But when they do praise him, they praise him for the wrong things!

After all, of course, even a sentimental dramatic critic could hardly expect romance from Shaw. "But he's so witty, you know!" ("An abundance of bold and startling wit"—*vide* A. M. T.) It is his own fault, one knows, for sugaring the pill so attractively; but one would dearly love to use much worse language than Eliza's about the people who talk and write unceasingly of Shaw's wit. Give a dog a bad (or a good) name, &c., &c. Ibsen was "morbid"; so that you could shut your eyes and ears to his onslaughts on your flimsy ideals, and just go on murmuring "morbid." Shaw is "witty"; so that you can laugh yourself hysterical at his "wit," in which condition you

will be safely immune from understanding its meaning. Eliza, and Mr. Doolittle, and Henry Higgins are all so deliciously funny! Of course, they are; but the people who can laugh at them without ever for a moment dreaming that they have been laughing at themselves, at their own morality, their own social institutions, their own modes of thought (so-called) and their own ways of life, are by a long way funnier! No purpose in *Pygmalion*? Well, if to make an average audience rock with laughter by exposing the idiotic futility and emptiness of half the things that same audience is accustomed to regard as too sacred for criticism—if this be purposeless, then for the sake of Sweetness and Light let us have a lot more plays without purposes. "What am I up against, all the time?" asks Mr. Doolittle, after proudly describing himself as one of the Undeserving Poor; "Why, against middle-class morality!" And the middle-class audience, and the middle-class critics, exclaim, "How witty!" In the course of his little oration Mr. Doolittle makes their "middle-class morality" look the poor old bundle of sentimentality, ignorance, and prejudice which it actually is; and they applaud him! "For heaven's sake, give the fellow his money and turn him out," remarks Higgins' friend, Pickering, "or we shan't have a single conviction left!" Obviously, Pickering was an exceptionally intelligent individual—too intelligent for a military man! His social "equals" and "inferiors" in the audience never once realize that any of their convictions (to call them by a polite name) have ever been mentioned, let alone challenged.

It is such a "witty" idea, too, to suggest that the only difference between Eliza Doolittle, who sells flowers at the corner of the Tottenham Court Road, and a real live Duchess, is merely one of verbal accent! So you enjoy the joke; and don't pause to reflect that it is a statement of fact—a statement which makes your multifarious social barriers and distinctions look particularly foolish. And when one character remarks quite seriously that "the difference between a flower-girl and a Duchess is not how she behaves but how she is treated," you ignore the remark altogether, as you are only looking for "wit." When Eliza, speaking faultless English, staggers the suburban drawing-room by describing how her aunt died of influenza—or was supposed to have died of influenza—going on to mention her own suspicions that the old lady was "done in," you can suppress your mirth no more than the cheerful idiot of a Society "nut" in the play suppresses his; rendering yourself conveniently blind to the fact that beside Eliza's conversation the customary chatter of drawing-rooms sounds even more than usually inane. And when she swears, you laugh uncontrollably, not perceiving that your laughter is in reality directed at all the thousand and one unbelievably silly little conventions which effectually hinder you from ever expressing your own thoughts and feelings—even to yourself. Certainly there is an "abundance of bold and startling wit." But

the wit is aimed at something; and, at any rate to people who have not entirely lost the power to think (even while they are smiling) Shaw's wit appears as deadly a weapon as Ibsen's savage irony. If so many playgoers (and critics) did not for the time relinquish all claim to be considered rational beings when they enter a theatre, they might even find themselves laughing on the wrong side of their face.

"Haven't you any morals, man?" Pickering indignantly inquiries of the glorious dustman, Mr. Doolittle. "No, I ain't, gav'ner," replies the Undeserving One promptly. "Can't afford 'em! Neither could you if you was as poor as me!" Poor old Middle-Class Morality! If it goes on laughing at jokes like that the fate of the Cheshire Cat will overtake it, and there will be nothing left of it but a broad grin!

J. F. HORRABIN.

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## Letters on Logic

### Economics

*FOREWORD.*—The fifteen letters of the second series on Logic, the first of which appears below, were written by Joseph Dietzgen to his son Eugene. These were written in the early 'eighties and constitute a critical review of Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*. Apart from their general value they will be specially appropriate at this time in view of the recent revival of the Land and Single-Tax policy. Joseph Dietzgen died at Chicago in the year 1888. To commemorate the twentieth anniversary of his death, Eugene Dietzgen published a volume of his father's miscellaneous writings, of which the Letters on Logic form a part, under the title *Erkenntnis und Wahrheit (Knowledge and Truth)* published by J. H. W. Dietz, Stuttgart. These letters are now translated from the German for the first time, directly for publication in the *Plebs Magazine*.—TRANSLATOR.

#### FIRST LETTER OF THE SECOND SERIES

**T**O-DAY, my son, I am going to deal with a subject as yet untouched upon in my letters to you; a subject leading us into a new field in which you are as yet an amateur, but which on account of its general significance in our day you must be recommended most urgently to study. I mean political economy.

You sent me a short time ago a highly interesting new book, *Progress and Poverty*, by Henry George, which presents itself in this

field with a clearness and confidence only too rare ; and I am glad that you have in this way received some stimulus to become acquainted with this important question.

You have learned much, you say, from this little work, and you mention also that you have already made yourself acquainted to some extent with economic problems and conceptions. I set out from this assumption. With your natural sympathy for the author and his work I cordially agree, although I write this letter with the object of proving his incompetence by applying some logic to his work.

I have already fully explained and I hope to make it still clearer, that the quintessence of all scientific thinking is the concept of unity, the concept, and it is pure nonsense to give it any other meaning, that there can be two different things which may not be at the same time of a common nature. This concept of the unity of all differences, Henry George has not grasped. He introduces therefore into political economy, differences that need solution. I set myself accordingly the task of proving that not in economic circumstances, but only in the mind of the author of *Progress and Poverty*, are there any contradictions or differences not easily adjusted by the help of better logic.

Economics deals with the production and distribution of wealth. Its most essential agent or principal factor is human labour. This labour is not suspended in the air but stands with its two legs on the earth ; that men cannot work without objects, i.e., materials, means of production, is self evident. If someone teaches that labour is the creator of wealth, and another comes with ; "No ! labour can create nothing if nature and its wealth are not already to hand," then this other is only affirming what nobody disputes.

After we know once and for all that there is nothing particular in the world which is absolute, if we know that the absolute is a name for the All, or the Universal which like to the good God has no other beside him, then we also know that labour only relatively "creates," and can produce only in collaboration with the materials of nature and the historical acquisitions of wealth.

This is the core of the matter, on account of which I disagree with the author of *Progress and Poverty*. He opposes the proposition ; labour alone creates wealth. He asserts that nature co-operates with labour in making, in the course of time, the sour wines sweet and out of a calf a cow. (Book III. Chapter III) We do not dispute this, we only dispute that this "capital" which

naturally co-operates with labour should "naturally" participate in the fruits of labour. The dispute about the production of wealth is, in fact, only a dispute about its distribution.

Until now, progress in the art of producing wealth has been at the same time a progress in the poverty of the working class. This little book points this out so clearly and in so many ways that we need waste no more words on it. Although the worker of our day is as well or even better nourished than the worker of the 16th, 17th and 18th, centuries, nevertheless his proportionate share in the total produce of labour is much smaller. Something must be done to put an end to this paradoxical state of affairs; and Henry George, accordingly is an advocate of the ideas of the Irish Land League, which vainly imagines that by transforming *land* into communal property every social problem will be solved.

You know, my son, that I am a Socialist of the Marxian school. We hold a different opinion. We believe, of course, that land, like every other kind of capital, is a means of production; but we assert that it is not sufficient to transform this or that means of production into common property, but the logic of things forces us to transform property in land, as well as every other kind of capitalist property, from being the tool of individual owners to be the tool of human society in general.

The science of economics can, as a matter of fact, only study the production of wealth as it is and will be carried on by civilised peoples. This method of production is co-operative and social; and at last men are coming to realise this. Economic science is still comparatively young—dating back not much more than a couple of centuries; and it still, in the main, is incapable of surveying things from the broad point of view of general social welfare. It is not as yet sufficiently decided as to its own social character, or completely conscious of its own task. Henry George himself manifests this lack of conscious purpose. Thus, e.g., he remarks, in Book I, Chapter II, "The man who cultivates the soil for himself receives his wages in its produce . . . . the hunters' wages are the game he kills; the fishermen's wages are the fish he takes." In a passage like this he shows clearly that he has neither adequately nor logically distinguished *political* economy from the *domestic* economy of a Robinson Crusoe, or of the primitive hunter and fisher. The man who tills the soil "for himself," or catches game and fish "for himself," receives no *wages*; his property, his labour and his capital are not distinct economic categories.

Tho' it may appear pedantic, let me once more define what categories are: i.e., distinctions. Just as mankind is divided into four great races, so White, Black, Indian and Mongol are human categories. Logic is the science of making distinctions; its instrument, the intellect, is an instrument which distinguishes things from one another. By its aid we are able to draw clear pictures of things. We are now considering political economy, with the object of gaining, by means of clear distinctions, clearer ideas respecting it. In this way we kill two or even three birds with one stone;—criticise Henry George, gain some insight into political economy, and once more demonstrate the nature of true logic. The first series of these letters dealt with logic in relation to the human mind; this second series will illustrate it by applying it to the problems of human labour. The mind, or thought-activity, is a subject linked up not only with all that is human, but with the whole universe also. The subject of this second series of letters, human labour, is no less universal and far-reaching, and broadly viewed, it serves to illustrate our special study, the nature of the mind itself.

“The fundamental principle” (i.e., the law, which to political economy is what the law of gravitation is to physics) “is that men seek to gratify their needs with the least possible exertion.” (Book III, Chapter VI). The gratification of our needs, the production of the means of life, in the widest sense of the words—that is the content of economics. Gratification with the least exertion necessary is its immediate object. Yet in this way the subject is only partially expressed. Man and his needs are not static; they develop—and the problem of their gratification develops with them, and becomes ‘how best to gratify the more highly-developed needs with the same amount of exertion as previously.’ Nay more, a decreasing amount of exertion is sought after, and man’s aim becomes ‘the least possible labour and the greatest possible produce.’

It is a fact (and Henry George fails to recognise it) that this aim will be accomplished not by means of man working “for himself,” not individually, but only socially, by means of co-operation. Crusoe on his land practised economy. He too strove for much produce and little labour; land, natural forces, tools, &c., had to assist him. But he had to share the product of his labour with no-one else, or, at any rate, only with his man Friday; so that no calculation or knowledge was required—and the only question which science might concern itself with was to decide how much of the total product came from land, how much from instruments

of production, and how much from Crusoe's own labour. Such a science of economy needs no distinctions, no categories; for it, no such things as exchange-value, wage-labour, capital, rent, interest, exist as yet.

And, equally, if a people like the Greeks or the Romans make helots or slaves of other races, and distribute this enslaved labour-power among the ruling nation, each family of which now works with the assistance of slave-labour, and hands over to the slaves only so much as the will or pleasure of the owner decrees, then again it is nonsensical to use modern economic terms and categories in describing that state of affairs.

To-day, however, we can study the science of *political* economy in actual operation. The *domestic* economy of these earlier peoples was in the main governed by private production; i.e., the labourer worked to supply his own needs, and exchange was only concerned with the surplus left over when his own needs had been gratified. The principal items of political economy, as it concerns us to-day,—value, money, capital, wages, rent, buying, selling, supply, demand and so forth—were indeed present, but only as it were in swaddling clothes.

By the time of the craft guilds the infant was well nigh grown up; but he could only become a full-grown, free-acting citizen of the world in the era of free competition.

Its most recent critic, Henry George, and all economists before him, are agreed that these economic categories and laws have no value except in connexion with an age in which free competition holds sway.

And it is this particular point that we shall next consider more closely.

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Who is he that speaks of defeat?  
And tells you that a cause like ours  
Is greater than defeat can know;  
It is the power of powers!

FRANCIS ADAMS,  
*The Army of the Night.*

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Him whom we must convince we recognize as the master of the situation.—MARX.

To recommend thrift to the poor is both grotesque and insulting. It is like advising a starving man to eat less.—O. WILDE.



## The Legend of Pygmalion

(A free rendering from Ovids' "Metamorphoses")

**N**OW, since Pygmalion had seen so many women passing their lives in sin, and was shocked by the vices which Nature has implanted in the hearts of women, he lived unwed. Meanwhile he carved the snow-white marble with consummate art, and created a form more lovely than that with which any woman had been born; and a great love for the figure he had carved sprang up in him. Its face was the face of a maiden whom one would have thought to be alive, and, if modesty had not forbidden it, would have wished to see move; for Pygmalion's was the art which conceals art.

The sculptor was intoxicated, and in his breast the passion for the marble form he had shaped grew ever greater. Often he would stretch out his hands to test afresh whether it was indeed marble and not living flesh; and he would not let himself think that it had no life. He would kiss the marble lips, and imagine that his kisses were returned; he would speak to the lovely figure and embrace it. He would bring gifts of a kind pleasing to maidens—shells and polished stones, small birds and flowers of a thousand colours, lilies, and amber from the tree of the Heliadæ. He adorned the statue with robes, placed gems on the fingers, chains around the neck, gems in the ears, and a chaplet on the breast.

The feast day of Venus, most popular throughout Cyprus, came; censers smoked, and snowy-necked heifers with gilded horns were sacrificed. When, having offered his gifts, Pygmalion stood at the altar, he spoke timidly thus: "If, O ye gods, ye are able to grant all requests, let me now have for my wife the maiden who is like marble"—he dare not say the marble maiden. Venus herself was present at the feast, and knew what his prayer imported; and a flame, the omen of the kindly goddess, shone three times through the air.

When he returned he sought the figure he loved, and kissed it. It seemed to glow, and as he held her to him, the marble softened and grew warm. He was afraid to rejoice, dreading to be deceived. But at length, as he kissed her lips, her eyes opened and she blushed deeply. . . . And afterwards she bore Pygmalion a son, Paphos, from whom the island takes its name.

## Pioneers, O Pioneers !

I heard a Singer singing by the sea,  
 The while he paced a wild and rugged shore ;  
 His song of Life was music unto me,  
 But to the sea no more than breakers' roar.

I heard a Speaker in a crowded street  
 Pleading for justice for oppressed mankind ;  
 To me his words were eloquent and sweet  
 But to the crowd no more than passing wind.

I heard a Poet singing to his lyre  
 An ode of wrath against the slaves of gold ;  
 His lips divine expressed my soul's desire,  
 But ah, to him, the world was deaf and cold.

I saw a Man who many minds set free  
 Slain by the hate of bigots' lying breath ;  
 And while I mourned that Son of Liberty,  
 Tyrants and priests exulted in his death.

O Singer, Teacher, Orator and Bard !  
 Who nobly fought 'gainst hate, neglect and wrong,  
 The world you loved is not all cold and hard,  
 Not always deaf to Freedom's vital song.

For lo, thy words and deeds have kindled flame ;  
 A million torches glare where few did gleam ;  
 A million tongues thy lofty themes proclaim ;  
 A million hearts now dream thy dearest dream.

O Souls, who paved the way we march along,  
 With beckoning hands thy spirits move before us ;  
 Our hearts responsive sing stern Freedom's song  
 With Revolution for its mighty chorus.

—F. B. SILVESTER.

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