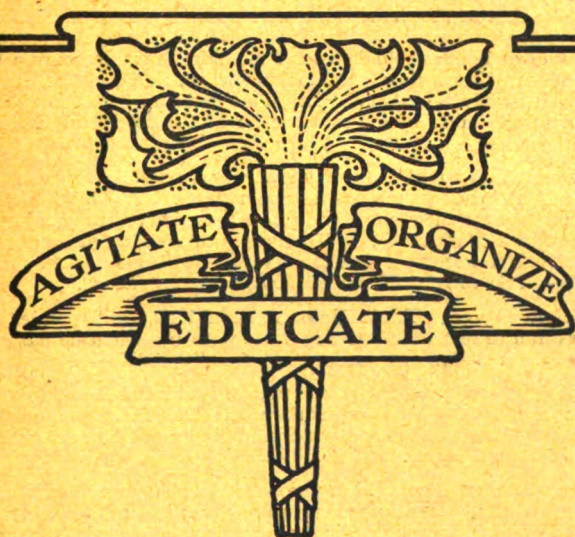


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THE PLEBS MAGAZINE

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

Vol. X.

March, 1918.

No. 2

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Mr. Hobson on Socialism*

MR. J. A. HOBSON is the cleverest non-socialist critic of Capitalism. He has never sought to use his undoubted knowledge of the chicanery of the ruling class as a means of imposing himself upon the working class movement. His analysis of Capitalism is much wiser and more scientific than that of any of the hot-air specialists of emotional Labourism who have written superficial books wherein they attempt to put Marx in his "proper place." Mr. Hobson's knowledge is as great as their ignorance.

The greatest fault we have to find with him is that he is unable to interpret the wonderful material which he always presents to us in his writings. That material, however, could only be adequately handled by a Marxian. Mr. Hobson's weakness, therefore, lies in his not being a Marxian; this, indeed, is his greatest misfortune—and grievously he has to answer for it. In his latest work,

* *Democracy After the War.* By J. A. Hobson. (Geo. Allen & Unwin, 4/6^{net}).

Democracy after the War, he returns to the attack upon capitalist education, which he so successfully made in his earlier volume, *The Crisis of Liberalism*.* But in the newer work his criticism of modern education is linked up with a terrific indictment of Capitalism and the modern state. Nevertheless, our author now admits :—

I am compelled to accept as substantially correct the general socialist analysis, presenting, as the main cause of what is wrong in politics and industry, the direction of human industry by capitalists in the pursuit of private profit (p. 7).

But, as though afraid that he has granted too much to the Socialists, he turns round and chides us for “ignoring or disparaging the importance of *non-economic* factors.” We beg to point out that as critics of Capitalism we do not *overlook* non-economic factors. This, however, does not prevent us from emphasising the importance of the economic factor as the *driving* or *guiding* force behind the complexus of non-economic factors. As a matter of fact, Mr. Hobson himself shows how non-economic relations are used by the economic factor as a stimulating force. Speaking of militarism, he says :—

For it will be found that, though the sentimental or instinctive passions of pugnacity, fear, patriotism, nationalism, humanitarianism, appear to generate a far larger volume of conscious energy for the support of militarism, alike in its defensive and its offensive work, the *guidance and direction of these sentiments mostly come from the economic motives* which fuse with them and *exploit* them (p. 37).

Again, when dealing with the South African War, our author most brilliantly demonstrates how non-economic motives, are only able to assert themselves when they are let loose, in the Imperialistic *interest* of the propertied class. When, therefore, he criticises the socialists for overlooking non-economic factors in their criticism of Capitalism, it is strange that his own criticism of militarism should proceed along the lines of the Marxian dialectic.

Mr. Hobson, as we have said, is not a Marxian. But like all clever non-socialist writers on sociological matters, he adopts the Marxian method. For example, when analysing the struggles for existence which takes place in the realm of ideas, he clearly expounds the economics of genius in the terms of Marxism :—

In the world of thought and action an immense output of new thoughts, theories and experiments is continually taking place. These thoughts, theories and experiments continually press upon the general mind, competing for acceptance and support. A constant selection and rejection goes on. What determines which ideas are selected, adopted, elaborated, and become orthodox, and which ideas fail? Not wholly, and not chiefly, their inherent truth or value. *In all thoughts or actions calculated to affect vested interests of power or property these interests exercise a rigorous selection. Ideas favourable to them receive recognition and flourish, ideas unfavourable wither and perish* (p. 113).

* See quotations from this in *Scientific Socialism* (S.L. Press, 2d.).

How many Marxians have stated these facts in the same way? Since Marx penned his celebrated preface to *The Critique of Political Economy* (1859), wherein he elaborated the law of social growth, the above truth has been emphasised by Marxians time after time. Let us, in proof of our statements, quote a passage dealing with the perversion of economic science from one of the most recent volumes contributed to the ever growing literature of Marxism :—

Time was when political economy bade fair to develop into a real science ; that was in the days of the classics, Petty, Smith, and Ricardo. . . . But historical development atrophied the nascent science. The awakened realisation of the workers that they constituted a distinct class having common interests *opposed* to those of the capitalist class, and the class struggle to which this realisation gave rise, paralysed a science having for its theme the laws governing the economic relations of warring classes. The frank investigator of the youthful days of capitalist society degenerated into the latter day professor, who no longer searches for truth, but for lawyer's arguments in conducting a defence. (Cahan's *Capital of To-Day* p. 188.)

We could, had we space, show from another standpoint how economic conditions and interests prevent the propertyless class from contributing its quota to the great storehouse of human culture ; but as that would take us beyond the limits of our present discussion, we must content ourselves by referring the reader to the latest great work on Marxism, where the point is dealt with, *Criminality and Economic Conditions*, by our distinguished Dutch comrade, Dr. William A. Bouger.*

Mr. Hobson, while employing the Marxian method in dissecting social phenomena, attempts to divert attention from this by a somewhat belated criticism of Marx :—

Democracy cannot be brought about by a *drift or tendency of unconscious purpose* ; it needs *conscious organization and direction* by the co-operative will of individuals and nations (p. 162).

We are further scolded because we have assumed that

democracy was a process so *inevitable and predestined* in the evolution of society that no *clearly conscious and purposive direction* was required (p. 162).

Mr. Hobson will find it difficult to show where Marxians have contended that Socialism is *inevitable* as the result of a "*drifting*" process, or where they have claimed that it would come *without the directive education and the conscious organization for a definite objective* on the part of the working class. What has confused him is the Marxian statement that Capitalism, in consequence of its destructive contradictions, must inevitably destroy itself. That this is true is proved by the facts compiled by Mr. Hobson to show how Capitalism is at its wits' end to preserve itself. If Capitalism is *not* breaking up, why is it that the propertied interests have been

* We hope to review this work later in the *Plebs*. In the meantime, the reader will find the book dealt with in the current issue of the *Socialist*.

compelled to re-enforce the State, *i.e.*, their executive committee : and why have they resorted to the many subtle subterfuges so brilliantly analysed and exposed by Mr. Hobson in this volume ? It has been one of the great gifts of Marxism to Sociology to show that a decadent social system *inevitably breaks up*, despite all efforts on the part of the ruling class to save it. It is the cardinal aim of a ruling class, seeking to preserve an obsolete social system, to attack the revolutionary class and to try and crush it. That is why revolutionary periods reveal the class struggle in its most intensified form. This leads to the intervention of Force, the mid-wife of revolution, in order to usher in the new system. The Marxian conception of the class struggle shows whether or not we believe in either " drifting " to Socialism, or in the " fatalism " so often charged against us. The " drifters " and the " fatalists " are the anti-Marxians who criticise us because we are not content to sit and await the fruits of a slow " predestined " evolutionary process. They contend that the social process cannot be hurried and that we must pass through certain evolutionary stages—hence their policy of opportunism and confusion regarding Revisionism, Reformism and State Socialism. These are the real drifters and fatalists. They reject Revolution and base their policy upon something which they have dubbed Evolution ; these are the people who have " revised " Marx, and who argue that evolution means an upward and forward process. Evolution means nothing of the sort. They have confused evolution with a flight of stairs. What the Marxians claim is that Capitalism must inevitably break down, but that Socialism presupposes (1) the education of the workers in order (2) to make them *conscious* of their historic mission, and (3) their organization upon the industrial and political field in order to give them the requisite power to *enforce* their will.

If Marxians contend that Socialism is inevitable, how comes it that they alone in the British Labour movement have seriously tackled the question of working class education ? What the Marxians have claimed is that side by side with the dissolution of Capitalism there is created the *revolutionary situation* which will drive the workers to realise the wisdom of our revolutionary policy on the political and industrial field. So clearly have the Marxians diagnosed the social problem that they know that Socialism is inevitable—because the workers will assimilate the teachings and adopt the tactics of revolutionary Socialism. Only in this sense is Socialism inevitable. But the Marxians have never suggested that the workers would " drift " into the Socialist republic, nor have they ever declared that Socialism would arrive automatically or " inevitably." They have always emphasised that the inauguration of Socialism depends upon the *conscious* action of the proletariat.

Mr. Hobson presses another argument against Socialism. He argues against the position that Capitalism should be attacked and overthrown. He says:—

It is a specious proposal, that of a single concentrated attack on capitalism as a profiteering system. But it is not practical. For it ignores two factors in the situation. The first is that many of the forces of reaction have strong supports in personal and social motives of interest, power and prestige, independent of their alliance with capitalism (p. 154).

But how could such forces operate against the politically and industrially triumphant revolutionary proletariat? No one has more clearly shown than Mr. Hobson that the capitalist class uses non-economic forces and elements, which do not make profit, but which, nevertheless, uphold Capitalism. For instance, he demonstrates that—

The propertied classes will not go into politics merely as selfish defenders of their own interests. They will contrive to *conceal* and *decorate* their underlying and directing principle with sentiments and policies of a disinterested or idealist character (p. 111).

In this passage Mr. Hobson replies to his own criticism that it is futile to concentrate upon destroying the economic foundation of Capitalism. He has brilliantly shown how the economic interests of the propertied class dominate the realms of politics, education, law, Church, and the Press. But he seems to overlook this argument when he denies that the destruction of Capitalism can best be accomplished by striking at the very root of modern society—its economic basis. For example, he admits, as regards the function of the State and the physical force which it controls, that:—

The new ruling classes in each State, a conjunction of the old feudal landlords and the new magnates of commerce and industry, *required these forces for their protection at home and their political conquests abroad.* . . . (p. 28).

Again, it is shown that the Capitalist class is strong because:—

The control of the party machinery, the Press and other instruments for making and dividing public opinion in the electorate has enabled *the forces of property* to keep a fairly reliable grip upon the legislature, and, what is even more important, the administrative machinery of the nation (p. 55).

Regarding education, Mr. Hobson emphasises its class nature by stating—

The modern technique of capitalism demands, not only a larger measure of specialised manual skill, but some slight scientific knowledge and some trained capacity of thinking, for large numbers of employees. Employers have learned that high technical efficiency requires some cultivation of general intelligence. *Their problem, as we saw, is to prevent the education of general intelligence from becoming a source of dangerous class-consciousness.* (p. 187).

How to keep the working-class education upon a *safe*, low level has become a serious problem for the *ruling and possessing classes* in every country (p. 55).

These extracts prove that the propertied interests are able to wield power over economic forces, because of their control over the means of production. Thus, Mr. Hobson indirectly demonstrates that the position of revolutionary Socialism, in directing its various activities in the political, industrial, and educational fields against the economic foundations of Capitalism, is sound.

Mr. Hobson's convincing argument against State Socialism, or Collective bureaucracy, does not apply to the attitude taken up by the Marxists or revolutionary socialists. It is in reality an unanswerable indictment of I.L.P.ism as exemplified in a recent pamphlet, *Socialism in Practice*.

Democracy After the War contains much valuable data. It is thought-provoking; but, like all non-socialist critiques of Capitalism, it offers no coherent solution of the social problem. The solution of that problem brings us back once again to Marxism.

W. PAUL.

Short Cuts in Social Evolution ?

II.

Bakunin, like Herzen, regarded the Russian people as predestined to establish the social revolution. In support of of this view he referred, in 1868, to the existence of the mir. In the opinion of the Russian folk, he said, the soil belongs to the folk alone, to the genuinely working masses, who till the ground with their own hands. Now this outlook, says Bakunin, enfolds all the social revolutions of the past and of the future. . . By instinct the Russians are socialistic; by nature they are revolutionary; the Russians, therefore, will initiate the federation of the world.—MASARYK.

THE article on *The Struggle for Peace and Power in Russia* appeared in the "Frauen-Beilage" of the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* for November 30th, 1917. This "Women's Supplement" was started last summer by the Leipzig Socialist paper shortly after Clara Zetkin was extruded from the editorship of *Gleichheit* by the German majority Socialists. The "Frauen-Beilage" appears bimonthly, "with the continuous collaboration of Clara Zetkin," and there can be little doubt that she was the writer of the unsigned leading article we are about to summarise. But whoever the author, the article is a striking comment, not merely on the second Russian revolution, but on Herzen's forecast of more than sixty years ago.

Once again, says the writer, from all over the world, the glances of those who long for peace are concentrated on Russia. In aims

and methods the new revolutionary movement is far more resolute, far more conscious, than the old. After the first revolution, the Mensheviks (the right or opportunist wing of the Russian Social Democracy) and the right wing of the Social Revolutionaries, believing that the proletariat and the peasantry were incompetent, unaided, to achieve the purposes of the revolution, made common cause with the liberal bourgeoisie, and thus the stormy days of March were followed by a honeymoon of the wedded "democratic forces" of Russia. The classes were to collaborate; the class struggle was laid aside. The upshot was that the revolution remained imperialist and nationalist in spirit; nationally united were those whose interests are severed by irreconcilable class contrasts, and internationally severed were those who ought to be fused into a compact mass by imperishable class solidarity. But class contrasts and class oppositions cannot thus be ignored with impunity; and the longer the duration of the alliance between the revolutionary democracy and the bourgeoisie, the more unmistakably did that alliance fetter the revolutionary forces of the country. The left wing of the Social Democrats, the Bolshevik section, gathered strength continually, attempted a second revolution in July, and successfully achieved it in November. Having gained control of the Soviet, the Bolsheviks were able in the end to rout the forces of the coalition between the right wing of the revolutionary democracy and the "advanced" section of the bourgeoisie. The November revolution established the dictatorship of the proletariat—or, rather (for the writer in the "Frauen-Beilage" thus amends her phrase), it established a dictatorship of the working people, seeing that round the industrial proletariat of the great centres of industry (the axis of crystallisation of revolutionary forces in Russia as elsewhere) there are grouped peasants and petty bourgeois in smocks and military tunics. The idyllic dream of the revolution as the work of all classes of society is at an end, and the revolutionary democracy has now to strive for the maintenance of its power by the stern methods of civil war.

"Do not these happenings," continues our author "turn topsyturvy all that we have learned and taught concerning a particular course of social evolution as an indispensable precondition to any such revolution as now proposes in Eastern Europe to change the whole structure of the world? Does not the 'backwardness' of economic evolution in Russia, does not the retrograde state of the masses of its population, does not the tension between historical reality and historical aim, condemn to ineffectiveness the Bolshevik movement, and thus involve the total collapse of the revolution? Such is the opinion, not only of many foreign Socialists, but also of the moderate Social Democrats and Social Revolutionaries of Russia herself. These latter, pusillanimously distrusting the revolutionary capabilities of the working masses,

have, upon the fall of Kerenski's regime, transferred their hopes to the liberal bourgeoisie. Russia, they say, is to the extent of three-fourths an agricultural land. Great centres of capitalist industry, with a modern proletariat, are few and far between. The development of modern means of communication is for the most part in an infantile stage. Even the proletarians still to a large extent feel and think as peasants. Most of them are illiterates; they lack strong trade unions with ample reserve funds; they have had no political schooling such as has been secured in other countries by the use of the suffrage, by participation in electoral struggles, and by the study of parliamentary speeches. How audacious, how absurd, under these conditions, to attempt the dictatorship of the proletariat!

"This sounds convincing—and yet I am not convinced, frankly as I admit the colossal difficulties that have to be encountered. The 'necessary course' of things and men on the way to revolution is a formula whose content and life are dependent upon historical reality, and historical reality must not be judged by mere rule of thumb. Historical materialism is not a collection of ready-made recipes for social physicians, apothecaries, and quacks. It is the most perfect instrument hitherto produced for the discovery and illumination, for the understanding, of the historical process of human development. Economic and social evolution in Russia must be adjudged by its own standards, and must not be appraised in accordance with the models furnished by the lands of the older European civilisations. If the Russian people has not passed through the particular civilising school which in middle and western Europe was mainly constituted by the guildsmen of the towns (as is demonstrated in the fine arts, and, above all, in architecture, the most social of all the arts), it follows that Russia is not hampered with the bourgeois traditions and shackles whereby among us the masses' native hue of resolution is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought. But apart from this, and in especial, we must remember that things and men are ripe for revolution whenever broad masses of the population feel that certain conditions are intolerable; when they have ceased to believe in the goodwill and capacity of classes placed above them in the social hierarchy; when they have acquired confidence in their own powers. Among the rank and file of those who were Cromwell's chief supporters, a large proportion, doubtless, were psalm-singing illiterates; and few, probably, of those who took part in the storming of the Bastille were competent to read the revolutionary journals which became current after its fall. The Russian proletarians and peasants are ripe for revolution, are ripe for the seizure of the powers of the state, because they desire revolution, because they desire to seize the powers of the state, and because they do not fear the struggle.

“ But for the complete conquest of political power there is an indispensable prerequisite. The revolution cannot content itself with the political transformation of Russia ; it must also philosophise with the hammer, must forge anew in the economic and social smithies. The social content of this revolution is a vital necessity. The Soviet government wishes to convey the land to the peasants, and desires to give the industrial workers control of the means of production. Difficulties mountain-high stand in the way of these transformations ; but the proposal to undertake them gives the Bolshevik uprising the most far-reaching historical significance, at once for Russia and for the entire world. The chief essential to the carrying out of the revolutionary programme is peace. The revolutionary government is attempting to secure peace, true to the conception which since the outbreak of the war the Bolsheviks have consistently endeavoured to inculcate on the masses. That conception is as follows :—‘ The Russian proletariat is united in intimate solidarity, not only with the workers of the Allied powers, but with the workers of the whole world, those of the Central powers not excepted.’ Guided by this conception, the revolutionary government of Russia is resolute for peace, and has taken the first steps towards securing an armistice, disregarding the secret treaties whereby the Russian imperialists had harnessed land and people to the war-chariot of western European imperialism.”

Thus far the “ Beilage ” article, whose author [if, as we believe, she is Clara Zetkin] has in her own land never ceased to sound the Bolshevik note through the storm of battle. May we, who are likewise Maximalists, be permitted to quote as a pendant our own words written in Vienna three and a-half years ago, little more than a month after the beginning of the world war ?

“ War, which necessitates the extremity of iron discipline imposed from without and the sedulous cultivation of the emotion of ‘ patriotism,’ is the polar opposite of Socialism, whose bases are self-discipline, resistance to irrational ‘ authority,’ and the assertion of a reasoned spirit of internationalism. Hence the Socialist is equally ‘ at war ’ with Russian Tsardom, German and Austrian Kaiserdom, French bourgeois Republicanism, and English Cabinet rule—all of which are equally responsible for the present war, and all of which, in their several ways, are equally representative of capitalist and class domination. For German and Austrian Socialists to contend, in a national quarrel, with those of England, Belgium, France and Russia, under the delusion that either party is ‘ fighting in the noble cause of national existence,’ is preposterous. *Our* quarrel is with capitalism and capitalist government, not with one another. *Our* task is the organization of the co-operative commonwealth.”

That, in a nutshell, is the Bolshevick position. Through time alone can our Russian comrades be justified by success. But for ourselves, despite our dubiety concerning the dictatorship of the proletariat, we should not have been slow, had we been in Petrograd four months ago, to back Lenin and Trotsky in their hazard of the short cut.

EDEN AND CEDAR PAUL.

Students' Page

(1) G. Bazin (London) writes concerning Answer to Question 4 in January Number :—The capitalist expends his wealth in purchasing labour-power, raw material, machinery, tools, &c., with a view to the commodity resulting from the application of labour-power to the material being sold and thus realising profit. Surely then the clerk's pen and the miner's mandrill are as much part of capital as is a typewriter, a mechanical calculating machine or an electric coal-cutting machine?

Answer.—In most cases the miner has to provide his own mandrill. But that does not, as is often asserted, make him a capitalist, nor his tool part of capital. It is a survival of a time when the worker owned all the tools—then chiefly hand ones. The tendency is to displace hand tools by such costly machines as are instanced above. Even the working clothes of the "uniform men" are part of a company's capital, as would be the pen of the clerk if supplied by the employer.

(2) John Paton (Aberdeen) forwarded some time ago some interesting Questions *re* working-class education. He is a working-man student in a W.E.A. I.H. Class, and from his experience "can quite recognise the dangers of such teaching when socialist criticism is absent." Among other things he asks :—

Question I.—Is teaching with a working-class bias likely to prove an effective training?

Answer.—Yes. All teaching aims to give us a bias in favour of what is thought to be good. As teaching with a capitalist class bias has been effective in training docile workers, so teaching of another sort will be effective in training us, not for training's sake, but that we shall be capable of controlling our organizations, and, later, industry through them.

Question II.—Would it not be better to base your mode of instruction on an avoidance of all *conscious* bias, but at the same time clearly draw the legitimate inferences from the subject-matter?

Answer.—The question implies that "bias" is something unworthy. To have a conscious bias for truth and against being gulled is something to be proud of, and because of this it is rightly used as a basis for instruction.

Question III.—In actual teaching, do you use the writings of any of the commonly accepted writers on economics and history, or do you use specially written text-books based on original research?

Answer.—Perforce we have to largely rely upon the former, making due allowance for their one-sidedness. In Economics the first vol. of *Capital* is used with supplementary pamphlets. Difficulties of time and money have hitherto hindered the writing of special text-books based on original research.

Question IV.—Do your methods of tuition allow for opportunity of studying the criticisms of opponents, and, if not, would it not tend to stereotype teaching and prevent progressive thought?

Answer.—Ample opportunity is given to opponents, and the latter fear is entirely without foundation.

MARK STARR.

News of the Movement

The closing paragraph of the January "News," which appealed to secretaries to forward reports *separate* from letters has been very useful. Quite a number have enclosed a report when settling their accounts (others please note those significant words, *when settling their accounts*). We beg to offer them our sincere thanks. Sent in this way the "copy" is much easier to handle.

The movement flourishes to such an extent that it is increasingly difficult to condense all the news into the small space available. From everywhere come demands either for advice or (worse still !) for teachers, till one wishes it were possible to buy Social Science teachers six or eight in a box (like lead soldiers). However, so healthy is the movement that the little matter of no-one to teach does not deter keen students. They teach themselves with the help of Craik's and Mark Starr's books.

LIVERPOOL has now three flourishing classes, Comrade J. Hamilton of the B.W.I.U. lecturing. One is under the auspices of the N.U.R. Liverpool & N. Wales Council, held Sundays, 2.45 p.m. Birkenhead Trades & Labour Council Rooms, Argyle Street; Sec., J. Couldhard, 82 Bentinck Street, Birkenhead. Another is held at the B.W.I.U. Social Club, 10 Mill Lane, Islington, Liverpool, Thursdays, at 8; Sec., E. Ilsley, 82 Whitefield Road, Everton. The third is held Sundays at 8, at Garston Woodcutting Machinists' Club; Sec., W. Bewley, 49 Lincoln Street, Garston. The secretaries are all old Plebeians, and much praise and gratitude is due to Comrade Hamilton. It is no small sacrifice after a full working week to sacrifice all Sunday. It is of such that our movement is made. All Plebeians in Liverpool should avail themselves of the opportunity offered by these classes. The subject is "The Modern Working Class Movement."

From GLASGOW comes the following :—" Under the auspices of the Glasgow Central Plebs League a class has been formed for the study of the international language, Esperanto; it meets on Saturday, S.L.P. rooms, 50 Renfrew Street, at 3.30 p.m. We have an enthusiastic class of 50 members. The teacher is Comrade J. A. Ferguson." So that we shall probably hear much Esperanto (with a flavour of Scots accent) at the next International Conference. "The Economics Class has now commenced work for the second half session under the able tutorship of Comrade M'Clure. The attendance has been satisfactory, and we hope by the end of the session to turn out a number of capable teachers. We are looking forward to great things next winter." Sec. is Francis Rafter, 78 Stratford Street, Maryhill, Glasgow. The number of available teachers is so small that we would urge classes in all districts to make the training of teachers and lecturers their main object. Our mission is to pass on the torch, and Glasgow is a fine example of what can be done to educate, agitate and organize public opinion.

Comrade John MacLean, who, it is needless to say, never wearies in well-doing, sends us a cheering message. Speaking of the Sheffield Conference he says :—" We had a good conference, and Lawther has invited me to one in Durham. I'm anxious to see conferences held in all the large centres in England to force forward classes and get unions to support the C.L.C.—or, as Sheffield calls it—the *National Labour College*." (The Board of Governors call it *THE Labour College*, which seems rather nice and exclusive to us!) " You see, if this goes forward well and strong, we've a better chance for one in Scotland. We must have all our machinery ready when the "bhoys" come home. I'm, therefore, open to speak at conferences wherever you can

get someone to take the lead." So don't all speak at once. Comrade MacLean is busy, but he evidently likes work. Keep him at it!

He wishes me to publish the following paragraph. I hope other district committees and trade union branches will take notice:—"On behalf of the Scottish Labour College Committee, I have to thank Comrades Hall and Hinselwood for handing over to me £35, the balance of the Prize Draw organized by the Clyde Lower Reaches Committee. Support of this kind will soon see a flourishing college established."

EDINBURGH, LEITH and MUSSELBURGH are (I believe) organizing a lantern lecture some time in February, but as we only heard a rumour the facts are not available. Suffice it to say that Glasgow does not have it all its own way in its support of independent working class education. Comrades Nixon and Kilpatrick see to that.

The SHEFFIELD Conference went off very well. It was held under the auspices of the Joint Committee on Working Class Education, and was well attended by delegates, 98 being present representing Trade Unions, Co-operative and Socialist Societies. John Maclean gave an address. Resolutions were agreed to pledging the conference to support and maintain the Labour College; to encourage the formation of similar institutions in the large industrial centres, urging the formation of classes and a central literature emporium for wholesale and retail distribution of pamphlets essential to the development of the minds of the workers; and also agreeing to call a further conference to unify and consolidate the movement in the Sheffield district. Walton Newbold, in speaking to the third resolution, gave a most interesting description of the development of capitalism in the district, and showed how the industrial magnates everywhere were establishing and supporting educational schemes conducive to their class rule. Fred Shaw emphasised the need and importance of the workers having ready access to suitable literature on Economics and Social Science. A representative committee of ten was elected, and the secretary adds, "The end of 1917 sees the movement definitely established on a sound footing, and it only needs the backing of the rank and file membership to place Sheffield in the forefront of the modern movement." This then is only the beginning, but what a good one. Sheffield offers unlimited opportunities, and judging by the names of the committee these opportunities will not be missed. Leeds will have to look out.

LEEDS classes still maintain a very fine average attendance. J. F. Richardson is secretary of one which numbers forty students. They have been studying a series of S.L.P. pamphlets, and are now starting a second session with Mark Starr's book. The interest has been well sustained, and our Leeds friends have every reason to be proud of their efforts.

BARROW-IN-FURNESS is falling into line, and Comrade J. W. Deakin (6 Newcastle Street) will be glad to hear of Plebeians (or others) who desire to form a class or to join the existing one. He writes—"I intend to conduct the class along what I conceive to be approved C.L.C. lines. At least it will provide an opportunity to let the Barrow trade unionists know that a Labour College does exist, distinct from the W.E.A. Our men know little of the C.L.C., but I intend to let them know something at an early date. Through lack of a competent teacher (an attack of modesty this.—ED.) our efforts are bound to be rather amateur at first, but we shall start in the right spirit and hope to succeed. Should I get into difficulties I shall not hesitate to appeal for information through the columns of the *Plebs*. On the other hand, if we progress I shall only be too pleased to forward information for the benefit of those who are similarly situated." We wish the Barrow class every success. Barrow, like Sheffield, is almost untouched from our point of view, and a splendid field for propaganda.

The LONDON movement is still going strong (in spite of air raids and minor difficulties). The first half-session of the class held at Water Lane Schools, Stratford, E., came to close with a membership of one hundred students. "The lectures," writes Comrade J. Andrews, "have been listened to very attentively and followed by keen discussion. At the conclusion of the lecture W. Edwards (A.S.E.) on behalf of the committee and students presented to Mr. Edmunds a copy of Shelley's poems (signed by the committee and all the students present) as a mark of appreciation, for the services he had rendered." The class re-opened on Sunday, January 6th, with a series of five lectures on Political Evolution, by L. T. Hogben and H. E. Cousens. To be followed by five on Industrial History. Fee for the ten, 1/-. Write J. Andrews, 62 Windsor Road, Forest Gate, E. 7.

The bacillus of working class education seems to be spreading in the east of London, for an Economics Class, Sec. C. G. Mitchell, 3 Saxon Road, East Ham, E. (6) started on January 6th, at 3.15, and will be continued for nine Sundays. The teacher is H. P. Clements, an ardent Plebeian, and the class is to be conducted under the auspices of the East Ham Men's Co-operative Guild. Our comrade adds—"The fee is 1/-, and all are welcome (male and female). The lectures are to be absolutely Marxian."

Not to be outdone by Leeds or Sheffield, MANCHESTER is giving a good account of itself. The Crossley Motors Economic Class numbers 109 members, and Geo. Holt, who has been the motive power behind the movement says—"We look forward to the time when some of our members will take a leading part in the work of organization." Training teachers in the workers' own universities, that is the right way. The workshop classes are the hope of the Trade Union Movement.

MOSTON C.L.C. class is advancing by leaps and bounds, enthusiasm running so high that none of the students would listen to the proposition to cancel the class for either Xmas or New Year holidays. The class meets on Sunday at 7 p.m. at the Co-op Hall., Highbourne Road, Moston. Leslie Galbraith, the Sec., writes that "if there are any comrades who desire to attend a class but cannot do so on Sunday nights, and they will write me and tell me their requirements, I will do my best to make arrangements for their convenience." He adds, "Also, comrades, hurry up and give us that opportunity to send a speaker to your T. Union branch meeting; 20 minutes and we can put the case for Independent Working-Class Education." T.U. secretaries please note Leslie Galbraith, 26 Ivy Street, Moston, Manchester.

DONCASTER Trades Council has now got to business. A class for the study of "Industrial History and Economics" is in full swing, and growing so rapidly that the question of another class will have to be considered. Mr. T. M. Williams is the teacher, and the class feels proud that it has secured a man of such marked ability and whole-hearted sympathy with the workers' cause. The class is held in the Trades Hall, every Sunday afternoon, and the Sec. is E. Heaton, 55 Carr View Avenue, Doncaster.

The S. Wales classes are all in full swing, and continue to send in orders for Mark Starr's book. Cwmillery Industrial History class have also sent a donation to the publishing fund, and we do not mind how soon other classes feel that they must do the same. We can help the classes to help themselves if they will only help us. Our thanks to all comrades who have so generously contributed to the donation.

Comrade G. Powell asks that the following particulars be published:—
Tredegar Industrial History class is conducted by Sydney Jones. All interested write G. Powell, 26 Woodfield Road, Tredegar.

The NORTH-EAST is keeping its end up. "On the whole," writes Will Lawther, "the second year classes are going strong, and the first year students

are keen to catch them up. We have suffered a reverse or two through teachers having to leave the district. But the students have put their knowledge to the test, and helped to fill the vacancies. As there are still places where the new message of educate, educate, educate, has not been heard, we are to hold a further educational conference on Saturday, April 6th. The chief speakers will be John MacLean, and our comrade E. Edwards (to be held at Miners Hall, Red Hill, Durham, time, 3.30). Will any organization which has not received a circular apply at once to T. Ethell, Hon. Sec., 76 James Street, Newcastle. J. T. Wallon Newbold will be in the district from Feb. 25th to March 3rd.

The Lancashire classes are being re-organized, and though there are many obstacles the secretary of the ROCHDALE class seems very optimistic. He writes, "We have got a class going at Castleton, and, taking all things into consideration, are not doing badly." These are difficult times, but the support and help of the Lancashire comrades has always been unflinching, and we feel sure the re-organization our comrade speaks of will have good results.

Already at Blackpool the return of Will Pickles has caused a flutter, and may be a re-awakening. The local comrades have carried things on loyally and well during his absence, and now that he is back once more the study, circle he conducted has been revived. They are taking Craik's book to study and hope to get the support of trade unionists and others in the town. Will anyone interested call at the White House, Room 14, Promenade, any Sunday during February or March, at 2.30. They will be welcomed. The class secretary is J. Carter, 2 Bloomfield Road, Wytham Road.

At BLETCHLEY (Bucks.) a class has been formed by members of the N.U.R. J. Busler, 10 George Street, is the sec., and after studying the "Education" pamphlet they are to take Industrial History. This is one of the cases where no teacher being available the class proposes to "carry on" by itself. There is no doubt what ever that it will be a success, for where there's a will there's a way, and the fact that the class has come into existence proves that there is a will.

A Social Science class has just been formed in Exeter, and C. Lucy (12 Exwick Road) the secretary, is keen enough Plebeian to say, "I shall take the first opportunity of bringing the *Plebs* before the class members, and shall try my best to get them to utilise the literature you publish." This is the very beginning of a Plebs movement in Exeter, and all who are interested should join up at once.

Comrade J. W. Hudson, writing from PRINCETOWN, says: "We are only few in number compared to the whole of the settlers here, but we have created an interest that is growing in the principles of the C.L.C. We are doing our very best to convert industrial pacifists into revolutionary socialists. We let every one know of the existence of the C.L.C. and the *Plebs Magazine*."

HULL.—A class has been started, and R. Mell, 54 Carlton Street, Hessele Road, will gladly supply particulars. Will Plebeians in the district who would like to form a branch of the League write to J. Higgins, 54 Trinity Street.

SOMETHING FOR S. WALES TO THINK OVER.—The circulation of the *Plebs* is now *greater in Scotland than in S. Wales*. What has the Rhondda to say about this?

I.L.P.(lebeans) will be interested to know that Walton Newbold has been nominated for the Nat. Council of the I.L.P. The *Plebs* has been steadily gaining increased support among I.L.P.'ers, and Newbold's candidature will give them an opportunity of showing their appreciation of his work for the movement.

Plebs Publications

SPECIAL NUMBER OF THE MAGAZINE.

The May number is to be a Marx Centenary number, and will contain special articles. All Plebeians are *expected* to increase their orders beforehand. We shall try, if possible, to have a larger magazine, but this will depend upon the paper supply, and, incidentally, the number of orders that we get. We dare not venture far without solid backing.

There was never a greater need than at present to bring forward Scientific Socialism. The demand for light, and yet more light, increases as the darkness of the world around us deepens. Help us to spread the light. We shall be glad to get orders early in April. We must make our special number a great success.

It is hoped that demonstrations and conferences to celebrate the Marx Centenary will be held all over England, and the E.C. have decided to recommend Plebs League secretaries and class secretaries to get into touch with other Marxian organizations in the different districts, so that joint committees may be formed with a view to co-ordinating effort. It was felt that local conferences had a much better chance of success than a national one, and in order to obtain this success all the Marxian organizations should be represented.

First Edition of Mark Starr's book sold out. It went like hot cakes, and already we have ordered our second edition. We have a long list of people in our book queue, and first come, first served, being the order of the day, if you don't send your order along quickly you'll just have to wait all the longer. Everyone is delighted with the book, and enthusiastic praise (see cover) comes from all sides. Let us have your order *with cash* now.

Circumstances over which we have no control have delayed the issue of a statement about Ablett's book. We hope, however, to be in a position to do this next month. . . . The Third Edition of the Pamphlet is now out. The orders which are waiting will be attended to as soon as possible. We have every reason to believe that this edition will have the ready sale of its predecessors. We have had very reluctantly to raise the price to 1½d. (9/- per 100).

We must ask the indulgence of all supporters, if replies to letters are a little longer delayed this month. This will be due to a change of address at headquarters. After March 18th the address of the Secretary will be 178 Springvale Road, Sheffield.

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Correspondence

"IMPARTIALITY AT " BIRMINGHAM.

DEAR SIR,—My attention has just been called to the article in the January issue of your Magazine entitled "Impartiality at Birmingham," which (whether intentionally or not) was so worded as to convey the impression to many of your readers that the W.E.A. was in some way connected with the postponement of lectures on "The Russian Revolution" at Birmingham University. I should be glad if you would allow me to say that the W.E.A. was not concerned in the incident in the remotest degree. Probably your contributor will, in your next issue, also assure your readers that they have misunderstood him.

The lectures in question were included with the special lectures which are arranged every winter by the University and societies connected with it. These lectures are open to the public, but as they are given at 5.30 or 5.45 in the afternoon, they are mainly attended by members of the University and their friends; I leave Mr. Silvester to explain how, on the occasion of the lecture on "The Russian Revolution," the audience came to be "mainly working class."

Mr. Silvester tells your readers that the Russian lecturer, Dr. Segal, is not "tarred with the W.E.A. brush," whereas Professor Muirhead is. Apparently Mr. Silvester goes upon the simple plan of labelling all opinions he does not like as "W.E.A." I can assure him, however, that, tarred or untarred, we are quite satisfied with Dr. Segal, and hope he will lecture for us in the future as he has done in the past. Further, no better example of what the W.E.A. means by "non-partizan teaching" could be found than Dr. Segal's lecture. Dr. Segal is not a Bolshevik—he belongs to one of the revolutionary parties opposing them—yet he claimed justice for them, and insisted upon their honesty of purpose, thus sinking the partizan in the lecturer and telling the *whole* truth. I trust that Mr. Silvester will take a lesson from the lecturer and try to arrive at that state of mind which can meet opposite opinions without regarding them as deliberate perversions of fact. When he has succeeded in doing this he, too, will be "tarred with the W.E.A. brush."

I am not concerned to defend the action of the Senate, which, from the first, I have regarded as a regrettable and dangerous error of judgment. But just as Dr. Segal claimed justice for the Bolsheviks, so I claim that all the facts should be considered before declaring the Senate guilty of deliberate suppression of free speech. Mr. Silvester's description of Dr. Segal's lecture as "amazing professorial outspokenness" is quite misleading; there was nothing "amazing" about it. From the commencement of his connection with the University, over a year ago, Dr. Segal has made no secret of his revolutionary sentiments, and the views expressed in his lecture on November 14th differed in no way from those expressed in other lectures he has given, both for the W.E.A. and for the University societies. The Senate, therefore, could be under no misapprehension as to the line Dr. Segal would take in the lectures, and had they really wished to gag him they would surely have

adopted a much less clumsy method than intervening after the course had commenced ; they would simply have withheld their sanction to the course in the first place.

As your readers will be aware, the period immediately succeeding the first lecture was one of deepening mystery so far as the Russian situation was concerned ; the most conflicting reports reached this country, and those who knew Russia best confessed themselves at a loss. This being so, there would appear to be no reason to doubt the *bona fides* of the University authorities' assurance that, " The arrangement with Dr. Segal is a friendly one, whereby part of a responsible historical course is impeded until the facts are clearer and the present obscurity in which events in Russia are shrouded is relieved." Moreover, Dr. Segal himself wrote to the local newspaper which was promoting the agitation, asking that the suggestion of public protests and deputations be dropped as he did not consider himself wronged by anyone, and stating that he had decided neither to lecture nor to write on the Revolution for some time. As Dr. Segal is the last person in the world to allow himself to be gagged, all who knew him accepted his statement, and the agitation at once collapsed.

I may say that had Dr. Segal been willing to give the deferred lectures the W.E.A. was prepared to arrange them under its auspices, at a time when working men and women could attend.

Yours faithfully,

L. W. PRICE,
(Secretary, Midland District W.E.A.)

In reply to above letter, I append a selection of Mr. Price's " opposite opinions " side by side with the facts and my comments thereon.

Opinion : That my article conveyed impression that W.E.A. was connected with postponement of Dr. Segal's lectures. *Fact* : The article clearly states that University Senate clapped its autocratic hand over Dr. Segal's mouth. *Comment* : The only connection which Birmingham Branch of W.E.A. had with this outrage on free speech is the Secretary's condonation of same.

Opinion : That Dr. Segal's lecture was an exceptionally good example of what W.E.A. means by non-partisan teaching. *Fact* : Dr. Segal, as partisan of Russian Revolution, exposed in his lecture the lies uttered by capitalist press regarding the Bolsheviks or Extremists, and the Mensheviks or Moderates. *Comment* : Mr. Price's statement that he sunk the partisan in the lecturer by telling the whole truth implies the opposite—that he united the partisan with the lecturer by using the truth as a weapon against capitalist press liars.

Opinion : " I am not concerned to defend action of Senate, which I regard as regrettable and dangerous error of judgment." *Fact* : The Senate, which controls local W.E.A. education, was unanimous in its decision to defer the lectures. *Comment* : Mr. Price, despite his assurance to the contrary, defends the Senate's arbitrary action by declining to doubt its *bona fides*.

Opinion : That the period immediately succeeding the first lecture was one of deepening mystery so far as Russian situation was concerned. *Facts* : According to the newspapers :—

November 9th (before lecture was given). Bolshevik *coup d'etat* with declaration :—(a) Offer of immediate democratic peace ; (b) Immediate transfer of large estates to peasants ; (c) Transmission of all authority to the Soviets.

November 14th. Defeat of counter-revolutionary forces of Kerensky and Korniloff by Bolshevik forces.

November 22nd. Definite offer of Bolshevik Government of armistice on all fronts.

November 24th. Trotsky announces publication of secret treaties, also manifesto for peace came from Government of Russia not from a party. *Comment*: These facts prove that mystery surrounding Russian affairs immediately preceding the Bolshevik *coup d'état* and Dr. Segal's lecture was after date of latter (November 14th) rapidly dissipated, not deepened by the publication of Russian Socialist Governments' wireless communications.

Hence there was absolutely no excuse for the Senate's action in deferring Dr. Segal's lectures on the grounds stated, nor for Mr. Price's palliation of same.

F. B. SILVESTER.

CAMOUFLAGE ABOUT RUSSIA.

DEAR SIR,—This letter will deal with Russian matters and J.F.H.'s comments thereon in the February *Plebs*.

At the outset I wish to correct the mistake so frequently found, even in our Socialist and Labour Press, of referring to members of the party of which Tchernov is one of the leaders, as Revolutionary Socialists; this is precisely what they have not been, as will be shown later on. The official title of the party is—PARTIYA SOTZIALISTOV REVOLYUTIONEROV; *i.e.*, the party of Socialist Revolutionaries, generally called ESERI (or ESER in the singular) from the initial letters S.R. of their name.

J.F.H. very properly "goes for" Julius West and his egregious Fabian tract on the Russian Revolution. He, however, omits to point out a gross error in West's assertion that "the Eseri, Mensheviks and Bolsheviks are all Marxist," for this is exactly what the Eseri are *not*. The Eseri have practically only concerned themselves with the land question and the extinction of the autocracy, and, as a party, have never stood for Marxism. Some of their leaders have actually expressed loathing for it. Kerensky, who was merely a Lib-Lab politician (and a *lip* one at that) and who managed to camouflage the British public into believing he was an Eser, declared many months ago in one of those "passionate" speeches of his (Kerensky always spoke "passionately") reported in our Press that the Eseri were opposed to Marx and his doctrines—a declaration which was largely true. Since those days the Eseri, especially the rapidly-growing Left Wing, have undoubtedly leaned more and more towards Marxism under the inspiring influence of Lenin; but this could not be obvious to Julius West in August last when he wrote the tract.

I was pleased to see J.F.H. praising Arthur Ransome for his conversion from "the intellectual" semi-capitalist attitude—perhaps all the more because I think I have "done my bit" towards his conversion. Often, very often, in the past have I had to controvert his statements in the *Daily News*, whether they referred to Tsarism, Bolshevism, or Russian geography.

West's caddish remarks about Lenin are beyond contempt, and have scarcely been equalled even by such papers as *Justice* or the *Morning Post*.

I still look back with pleasure to letters I wrote last summer to two of our best known calumniators of the Russian Revolution. In one letter, dated 26th July, 1917, I said, *inter alia* " . . . They (the Bolsheviks) cannot be considered negligible when they include such men as Lenin and Trotsky," and in another letter, dated 1st August, 1917, I stated " . . . Until I am proved wrong I shall believe in Lenin as one of the most whole-hearted, clear-sighted and idealistic revolutionaries of our time."

Why West should go out of his way (in the tract) to praise Dr. Harold William's writings about Russia I do not know. I have no intention of reading the particular book mentioned, for not even in the *Morning Post* have I seen such misconceptions and misrepresentations of the two Russian Revolutions as have appeared over Dr. Williams' signature in the *Daily Chronicle*. As long ago as 19th November he was talking of Lenin's government having split, and that although the Bolsheviks controlled Petrograd, they were unable to govern Russia !! And how often since then have not the above-mentioned journals stated that " The Maximalist influence is on the wane " !!

For more camouflage, please note the following :—One of the " bourgeois " accounts of the March Revolution in book form—*The Re-birth of Russia*, by Isaac Marcossou—was recently given to me. If anyone wants to learn how the Revolution was *not* made, and further, wants to know interesting details of a number of Cadets, who had little to do with the Revolution except that they tried to *stop* it, the book is quite excellent. But for sheer camouflage of the worst description let me recommend the book on the Revolution by one Stinton Jones—not an American this time. I have not read the book—a glance at one of the pictures was quite sufficient. It is a photograph, page 216, of one of the large and frequent processions, composed of soldiers and civilians, which marched through the Petrograd streets in those early days of their glorious, newly-won liberty ; a banner is carried along bearing the legend : " ДА ЗДРАВСТВУЕТ ВСЯ НАРОДНАЯ СОЦИАЛИСТИЧЕСКАЯ РЕСПУБЛИКА " ; which means : " Long live the All-national Socialist Republic." In the book, at the foot of the picture, the legend is translated as :— " Long live the United Russian Republic," a deliberate omission of the word " Socialist," which can be quite clearly made out on the banner, and an insertion of the word " Russian," which does not appear at all ! 'Nuff said.

Yours, &c.,

MAZEPPA.

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Review

International Finance. By Hartley Withers. (Cheap edition W.E.A., 1/4), while giving a readable description of banking machinery, the adventures of a bill of exchange, the doings on the Stock Exchange, how loans are raised, and so on, naively presents, without a blush, the primitive savage as a capitalist exercising abstinence and enduring risk—functions still being performed by his capitalist descendants. A doctor is pictured earning £800 a year, out of which, by abstinence, he saves £200, and thus enables railways, &c., to be built and civilisation extended farther yet. Perhaps it was owing to reading the book on the day of the Minnie Pit disaster that the arguments about risk endured failed to carry conviction. One thought of men lying on their sides in water in narrow seams, working beneath gaping holes with the twinkling safety lamp, facing the glare of furnace and torch with resultant loss of sight, braving the elements on land and sea, suffering from industrial diseases—indeed, the catalogue of risks is endless, even in times of peace. From the fact that his commodity labour-power is inseparable from his life, does not the labourer really take the "risks"? Mr. Withers, though admitting that international finance has its evils, is out to prove its benefits. Needless to say, he is unaware of the real source of interest. He is dubious concerning a future control of capital and, in conclusion, appeals to all to worship at the shrine of Abstinence, so that England may recover her threatened financial supremacy. Economic students will find much suggestive information—grist for their mental mills—in this book, especially as our literature is somewhat backward in this connection. M.S.

The Plebs Bookshelf

Wm. Paul's *The State: Its Origin and Function*, is, indeed, as Walton Newbold remarked in last month's *Plebs*, "a masterpiece of scholarship and painstaking investigation." The amount of reading Paul has evidently done staggers me. And what I like not least about his book is his frequent use of apt quotations from, and reference to, other books—which leave one anxious to get hold of those other books at the first opportunity. The book lists at the end of each chapter are exceedingly useful—in fact, with these and Fred Shaw's Syllabus on "Marxism" in front of one, one could plan out a nice little course of reading (say for the next five years or so). Of course I was exceedingly glad to find a reference to the work and aims of the *Plebs League* (p. 88)—as also in Paul's admirable pamphlet (the latest publication of the S.L. Press), *Scientific Socialism: Its Revolutionary Aims and Methods*. (2d.)* In his article elsewhere in this number, Paul refers to his quotation, in this pamphlet, from J. A. Hobson's *Crisis of Liberalism*; and as this particular passage is worth "filing for reference" by all Plebeians, I may be permitted to give it here:—

In order to divide and degrade the moral and intellectual force of democracy, an *informal* Sociology is required. Those who watch carefully the influence exercised by the possessing classes over our universities, churches, political parties, press, and even our literature, art and drama, can see how this body of social theory is consolidated for its defensive work. . . .

* Both book and pamphlet are obtainable from S.L. Press, 50 Renfrew Street, Glasgow.

To this Sociology of the vested interests Biology, Psychology, Economics, Ethics, Philosophy, Religion, are all made to contribute special aids. But the staple consists in an illicit extension of certain teachings of Biology, and a fabrication of certain premises of Economics. . . . Since the *real battle* is waged round the fortress of economic privilege, it was only to be expected that the new plastic science of political economy should be *moulded and utilised for weapons of defence*. . . .

The immediate peril . . . lies in the temptation to rely upon the financial patronage of rich men, millionaire endowments, for the means of establishing universities and colleges for the higher education of the people. . . . Education sustained by such means will never be really free, or fully disinterested. The economics, the ethics, even the biology taught in these privately bounty-fed institutions, will carry in various subtle but certain ways the badge of servitude to the special business interests that are their paymasters. . . .

A notable passage, indeed ! One almost wonders why Mr. Hobson is not a member of the Plebs League. . . . Paul's pamphlet, by the way, contains the best and clearest elucidation of the distinction between "revolutionary political action" and parliamentary action that I remember to have read.

* * * * *

Here is an interesting illustration from "real life" of Mr. Hobson's generalisations :—

At a meeting of the Cardiff *Chamber of Commerce* yesterday, Sir Thos. E. Watson, the president, said he had received a private letter with regard to the nomination of the new principal of the University College of S. Wales and Monmouthshire. *It was a matter of great importance to the Chamber who and what class of principal was appointed*. . . . It being a *delicate matter*, he moved the letter should be referred to the Council to make recommendations.

Mr. W. H. Diamond . . . understood that there were influences at work for the appointment of a *gentleman who might not perhaps be acceptable, and they ought to take action*.—(*S. Wales Echo*, January, 31st, 1918.)

"A matter of great importance" to the Chamber of Commerce, observe, "who and what class of principal was appointed." Behold the "paymasters," taking counsel together lest the "badge of servitude" should be conferred upon the wrong sort of man.

From Cardiff travel to the Land of the Almighty Dollar, where sundry ructions have been taking place over the dismissal of certain university professors for holding—and expressing—opinions on the war which were not regarded as sufficiently patriotic. A writer in the *New York Nation* (quoted in *Cambridge Magazine*, December 22nd, 1917) proceeds to discuss the whole question of free speech in universities :—

If freedom of legitimate criticism is denied within college walls, it will not be safe anywhere. If councils of defence can order the removal of professors they dislike, why should chambers of commerce, merchants' associations, and commercial travellers' societies hesitate to lay down what they think should be taught in war and eace ?

Why not, indeed ? But *do* they hesitate in America ? I wonder Perhaps they do, if they really believe the following, from an article by Prof. H. L. Stewart (*N.Y. Nation*, quoted in *Cambridge Magazine*, "The Conception of a University," November 24th, 1917) :—

. . . . Do we want to quench all intellectual originality? It can be done by a commercialised, plutocratic management. But, thank God, it is not done in England, or the British dominions. A university there is not "a business proposition"; it is a centre of learning, with the free atmosphere in which alone learning can thrive.

I don't know about the "free atmosphere." But the Professor supplies the "hot air" all right!

Walton Newbold's new pamphlet, *Capitalism and the War: The Economic Aims of the Great Powers* (Nat. Labour Press) is a good sixpennyworth. It contains, in condensed form the substance of a good many of his articles in the *Call*, *Labour Leader*, and *Plebs*. The chapters on Germany's March to the East, the Passing of the Turk, Imperial Italy, the Lorraine Problem ("the crux of the whole struggle"), American and Japanese aims and interests &c., &c., give one the essential facts in regard to each subject. And every now and again Newbold gets on top of the statistics—the lists of figures, firms, and fiscal facts which occasionally weigh him down—and lets himself, go. I like, for example, the restrained irony of the following:—

Liberalism is the creed of the capitalist class. When this class was endeavouring to gain political power from the old-established landed class and the Crown, it practised Liberalism at home. Now that the capitalist class rules in every allied nation, and has all the social and political power it can obtain, and is, moreover, menaced by the rise of the Socialist working-class, it practises Liberalism away from home.

There was a pungent sentence, by the way, in a recent *Daily News* review of *Abdul Hamid*, by Sir Edwin Pears:—

He (the much-lamented Sultan) shocked Europe now and then by his murders, but he did not shock Europe by his Imperialism, which produced the murders.

Any reader whose interest in Wm. Godwin may have been aroused—or revived—by my references to *Shelley, Godwin, and their Circle* in the January *Plebs* should note that a little volume of Selections from his writings has recently been published by C. W. Daniel, Ltd., Graham House, Tudor Street, E.C. (4) (4d. net, postage ½d.).

We hope to publish a review shortly, by a writer who has made a special study of the subject, of *The Chartist Movement*, by the late Mark Hovell (Longman's, 7/6 net). The writer was a Manchester University and W.E.A. lecturer, killed in France in 1916, and the book has been completed and edited by Prof. Tout. It would hardly be good manners in me to anticipate the verdict of the reviewer, but I may be allowed to quote a couple of interesting passages. The first, in which the author is describing the foundation of the Birmingham Political Union, led by Attwood, the "currency crank," reads somewhat strangely—coming from the pen of a W.E.A.er.

The Union was an *anachronism*, a resurrection from the days before militant Owenism had *inculcated the idea of a class war*. It was a body *whose rank and file were working people and whose leaders were middle-class men*. As such it was opposed to the prevailing tendency amongst working people. (Italics mine.)

"An anachronism"! I thank thee for that word! . . . This next passage is also of interest to Plebeians. Mr. Hovell has described how, in the early days of the movement, John Black, editor of the *Morning Chronicle*, who had assisted enthusiastically in the campaign for a free press, tried to form London artisans into a study circle. But he found Lovett and the rest "cold and especially guarded." Lovett's own account was:—

. . . . The question arose among us whether we could form and maintain a union formed *exclusively of this class* (the workers). We were the more induced to try the experiment as the working classes had not hitherto evinced that discrimination and *independent spirit* . . . which we were desirous to see. . . . They were always looking up to *leadership*. . . . In fact, the masses in their political organizations were taught to look up to great men. . . . rather than to *great principles*.

A Yorkshire correspondent writes:—"May I bear out J.F.H.'s statement regarding the "meaty" character of some of the Home University volumes? Have just finished *Liberalism*, by L. T. Hobhouse. Two chapters are, I think, specially interesting to Plebeians—those on the "Movement of Theory" and "Laissez-Faire," dealing briefly with the Natural Rights Theories of Tom Paine, the Greatest-Happiness-of-the-Greatest Number ideas of Bentham and the Mills, down to Cobden and the present day. Then on to the "Future of Liberalism," which appears to me to be a sort of Socialism. The book is a most refreshing contrast to that brilliant piece of sophistry in the same series—*Conservatism*, by Lord Hugh Cecil; though perhaps that, too, is sincere enough, and it is only a matter of a different point of view."

I should like to have seen the production of *Fanny's First Play* at the Wakefield H.O. Work Centre last month. The parts were, of course, all taken by men—Darling Dora with a deep bass voice (?) would be especially "fetching." There was at least one Plebeian in the cast.

From a whole sheaf of interesting notes and jottings sent me by a S. Wales "Bookworm," I must select the following, reserving the remainder for some future occasion:—"Have Plebeians appreciated the wonderful comparison between the gods of man and the gods of a dog in paragraph 2, Chap. II., Part III. of *White Fang*? It is worth re-reading. . . .

"So Dandelion, as he is familiarly called by many who have learnt to know and value his work, came from a wealthy South American stock, and he, too, discovered that the University holds no career to the man—no matter how capable—who shows an inclination to look at things through proletarian spectacles. It was his sympathy with the work of Henry George that brought the rupture to a head and helped to produce that Marxian expert whose work is of a higher value than *Progress and Poverty*.

"A query for Lancashire:—Gibbin's *Industrial History* is now in its 21st or 22nd edition. In Section 2, Chap. II., Period V., anent Crompton's mule, he writes: "This invention affected an enormous increase in production, for nowadays 12,000 spindles are often worked by it at once and by one spinner." An Oldham student says this number is a great exaggeration. Beard in his *Industrial Revolution* (p. 40) differs considerably in his estimate:

"The Jenny has now more than a 1,000 spindles, each revolving at the rate of 10,000 revolutions per minute. A man and two piecers can work 2,000 spindles." What is the explanation, and why has no correction been attempted? The results of the machine are so vast that they stand in need of no exaggeration. By the way, can not a new edition of Beard's book be arranged? This splendid little monograph should be made more accessible. Again, is Hammond's *Town Labourer* ever coming within proletarian reach?

"Teachers and students—especially in S. Wales—searching for "local colour," can be recommended to send to the I.L.P. Book Shop, Merthyr, for a remainder copy of *Democrat's Handbook to Merthyr* (1d., by post 1½d.). This booklet was issued as a Souvenir at the I.L.P. Conference in 1912, and contains several fine articles written by competent persons with working-class sympathies. 'Merthyr Tydvil in the Making' follows the town through Roman, Norman, and later times. But as Merthyr was one of the mushroom towns of the Industrial Revolution the 'Industrial History' of the place by Hugh Jones is of more than local interest. Early trading at Waun Fair—Bristol luxuries in return for wool, cattle, ponies and oatmeal—the smelting of the 13th Century, and mule transport of coal and iron to Cardiff as late as 1801, are followed by figures concerning the output and profits of the iron and coal masters, and details concerning the desperate struggles of the trade unionists in the neighbourhood. While in the 'Political History' article an interesting paragraph outlines Merthyr's share in the Chartist activity."

My best thanks to "Bookworm" for sending on his gleanings.

Reviews of the following are unavoidably held over until next month:—G. D. H. Cole's *Self-Government in Industry* (by G.S.); *Women in the Engineering Trades* (by M. Howarth); Geo. Harvey's *Industrial Unionism & the Mining Industry* (by W. Lawther); and *Marxian Socialism*, W. P. Larkin (by Mark Starr).

One word of apology. The reference on p. 17 (Students' Page) last month, to "many wageworkers" being "able to purchase slaves in joint-stock companies" was not a startling revelation of another social evil. "Slaves," of course, should have been "shares." J.F.H.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

The Chartist Movement. By the late Mark Hovell. Edited and completed by Prof. T. P. Tout. (Manchester University Press, and Longman's. 7/6 net.)

Industrial Unionism and the Mining Industry. By Geo. Harvey. (1s. 2d post paid, from Author, Miners' Hall, Wardley Colliery, Pelaw-on-Tyne, co. Durham.)

Capitalism and the War: The Economic Aims of the Great Powers. By J. T. Walton Newbold, M.A. (Nat. Labour Press. 6d.)

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