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THE PLEBS MAGAZINE

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

Vol. X.

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The Class-Struggle in South Wales

This is the first of a series of articles. South Wales has been considered to be from the beginning the special preserve of the *Plebs*, so that they are singularly appropriate. It may come as a surprise to many Plebeians to know that our actual circulation in South Wales is—well! very little compared to the interest aroused, to the knowledge of our movement and, shall we add, to our power.

This series should provoke keen interest in South Wales, and also in all industrial areas where our propaganda permeates, and should add not only to the reputation of the author, but also to our circulation.—Ed.)

I.

Of all the industrial areas, that of Glamorgan, Caermarthen and Monmouth is the youngest, and whilst it shows a most vigorous growth of capitalist production and a considerable development of class consciousness amongst the working population, it has comparatively slender traditions, and presents conditions of a much simpler nature than the Clyde, South Lancashire, and the West Riding of Yorkshire. To all intents and purposes

we may say that what Marx describes as manufacture practically had no existence there apart from Bridgend, Abergavenny, Brecon (if we may include it in the area) and Monmouth, where there was a little making of caps, flannels and dressing of beaver-skins. Scarcely any coal was obtained from Glamorgan, and none from Monmouth until the close of the 18th Century, as Bristol, Bridgewater and Wellington could draw their supplies from the Somerset field. Iron was worked on an insignificant scale in the 17th and early 18th Centuries, when the timber reserves of the Severn began to fail the ironmasters of Worcestershire and Shropshire, and copper was smelted at Swansea and Neath in a small way. With these minor reservations we may assert that all the now densely populated and busy valleys of Monmouthshire and Glamorgan were wildernesses of "common and waste" prior to 1760. There were practically no roads and no towns between the coast and Brecon and Abergavenny. The woods, whose former location is denoted by the frequent use of the ending "coed" or "goed," were indeed disappearing somewhat rapidly, as tiny forges and little furnaces made their temporary home in some part of a valley, moving on the furnaces or bloomeries, at all events, when the timber was exhausted. The cottages and smaller farmhouses, which to-day nestle away on the slopes of the valleys like some relics of a bygone age, and the bare, little walled-off fields high up against the moorlands speak, how eloquently my Welsh readers well know, of the poverty, isolation and meagre livelihood which conditioned the social outlook and communal life of the years when crude tools and solitary family labour scarcely won a pittance from the inhospitable, rain-soaked ground. Then the land belonged in law to the families of Talbot, Windsor, Wyndham, Morgan, Neville, H. Lewis, and so forth, having fallen to them by the grant of the King or the Privy Council at various times, and at others being seized and the seizure legalised or tacitly assented to at a later date. But it remained and continued to be described in grants at Dowlais, Pontypool, and elsewhere as "common and waste," and to be let on lengthy leases at nominal sums for immense tracts of mineral property. The iron and the coal and the limestone were there, the more or less questionable title deeds confirmed the landowners, the lords of the manor or ward, in their occupation, but no labour had been applied to their surface cultivation or to their mining development, and they continued to have no value. To-day, Dowlais and the Rhondda are fabulously valuable tracts, and yet, in 1748, some 4,000 acres were leased by the Windsors to Thos. Morgan of Machen for £26 a year. A great tract at Hirwain was leased in 1757 for £23 rental, and, as late as the end of the forties, Crawshay Bailey acquired several farms in the Rhondda, having a yearly value of £160, which in 1888 were yielding £30,000.

Moorland, bogland, woodland, waste—such was the South Wales

Coalfield when, about 1760, John Guest came to be furnace manager at Dowlais Works and Richard Hill, founder of Hill's, Plymouth, took charge of a furnace at Cyfarthfa.

Operations were conducted at Dowlais, Cyfarthfa, Penydarren and Plymouth on a petty and insignificant scale, with furnaces like little lime-kilns, with tilt-hammers, bellows and cumbrous tools worked by hand labour, supplemented by lumbering, creaking waterwheels, with "patches" and "slants" or "levels" where coal and iron out-crops were worked near to the surface and abandoned as they filled with water; with no means of carrying the mineral but in hods on human backs or panniers on horses and mules, which latter sufficed to take the bars domestic and merchant iron ware (iron-mongery) across the hills to Swansea. Very little labour was required, and the forge-masters and furnace-owners in many cases superintended and participated in the operations themselves. At Cyfarthfa we learn that Anthony Bacon, a Virginia tobacco merchant investing his gains in industrial pursuits, bought a number of leases belonging to small copyholders for £100, which pile of golden sovereigns must have appeared the fabulous treasure of the Indies to these humble peasantry, but which did not last very long, and whose dissipation required them to go to the capitalist and solicit him to employ them to work, quarrying "literally in holes in the ground," getting out mineral and carrying it down to the furnaces. Such is the story, not only of the creation of an original proletariat—a class of workers having no tools or other means of production—at Merthyr, but of this social revolution in many a thousand other quarters in the early years of what we call the Industrial Revolution. We may, however, take the year 1785 as the commencement of the capitalist era in South Wales, for it was at that time that Richard Crawshay, ironmonger of York Yard, London, having leased Cyfarthfa furnaces to get a supply of iron for making cheap flat-irons and other domestic hardware, adopted Henry Cort's process of making malleable iron by "puddling." Other ironmasters followed suit, and, as a result of the adoption of this new device, of the possibility of deep mining for iron and coal now that James Watt's steam engine was being applied to pumping apparatus, and the demand for iron for textile and other machinery, new iron works quickly sprung up all along the iron outcrop from Herwain to Blaenavon. By 1800, the four works at Merthyr, those of Sirhowy, Tredegar, Ebbw Vale, Nantyglo, Varteg and Blaenavon were all actively producing iron. The Glamorgan and Monmouth Canals had been constructed; several "dram-ways" were being laid down, and the coal works near Abercarne, Risca and in the Beddewlty districts had either been started or were about to be sunk. Neath and Swansea Valleys were developing rapidly as copper-smelting, iron-founding and coal-producing areas, and capital was flowing into the whole district from Cornwall and

from Bath and Bristol (referred to in Vol. I. of *Capital* as the richest town in the West of Europe at the beginning of the 19th Century). In Monmouthshire, to a considerable extent, the capitalists were absentees, and no one could well be blamed for living outside the new industrial areas if they could by any means do so.

Before proceeding to detail the evidence of the appalling social conditions in Merthyr and in Monmouthshire in the first seventy years of industrial capitalism in that part of the world or describing the economic position of the new proletarians at the time when they commenced to pour into the empty valleys or to swell the ranks of those who had already arrived, we had better analyse the composition and origin of their enemies—for it was as enemies that the two classes regarded each other as we shall abundantly prove.

The Crawshays of Cyfarthfa belonged to a yeoman stock which lived at Normanton in Yorkshire in the early 18th Century. Richard Crawshay had proceeded to London, secured employment at an ironmonger's, succeeded in and to the business, and had then embarked on manufacture. His son remained in London, and from an ironmonger became, by logical sequence of prosperity, an iron merchant and a merchant prince, with huge properties in the West Indies and great holdings in the National Debt. Richard's grandson, William, no sooner succeeded to his father's tremendous fortune, reputed to be the largest of the time, than he built him a monstrous imitation of a baronial seat, the bourgeois castle of Cyfarthfa, from whose front windows you, like His Wealthiness, may look down upon the noisy, reeking, profit-producing helots at the furnaces and forges in the valley below.

Subsequently, he retired to a country residence near Reading, and his dependents, their wives, their man-children and their maid-children knew him no more. The Crawshays and their relatives, the Baileys of Nantyglo, Aberdare and, subsequently, Mardy and Ton-Pentre, never aspired to politics, but invested their colossal fortunes in land and the funded debt. They were conservatives, and stubborn, relentless task-masters.

The Guests of Dowlais, hail from Broseley, in Shropshire, where John, their progenitor, was farmer, inn-keeper, brewer, coal merchant, furnace-master, and general factotum at the White Horse Tavern in 1759. He and his immediate descendants were Wesleyans, and contrived to have their furnaces "suspended for several hours every Sunday, with the best (moral) effect, and without any diminution in the make of iron." (*Children's Employment. First Report of the Commissioners (Mines) 1842. p. 202, 848.*) They lived at Dowlais, participated in the religious life of the community, developed their business and in the fullness of time, John Josiah the third master of Dowlais, went to Parliament as a mild Conservative, learned better, and became the first Radical M.P. for Merthyr, married the sister of the Earl of Lindsay, and became a

baronet, fittingly (if one would regard him as does Wilkins in his *History of Merthyr*) to honour the Queen upon her Coronation in 1838.

The Homfrays, of Penydarran, and afterwards of Tredegar, the Formans of Penydarran, and the Thompsons of the same were, the first named, landed proprietors and ironmasters in Staffordshire, and all of them, iron or general merchants in London. They were Churchmen, men of the world, and quarrelled freely and frequently with their pious neighbours at Dowlais. The Halls of Plymouth were struggling iron masters, endeavouring to keep going, and hampered throughout their earlier career by heavy mortgages. The Harfords, of Ebbw Vale, Sirhowy, Melingriffith, Swansea, etc., were very prosperous Bristol merchants, who had made their fortunes as clothiers, West India tobacco growers, shippers, Cornish mine owners, and general merchants. They were Quakers, and had family or intimate business connections with the Harveys, the Partridges (Partridge Jones family), the Darbys, of Coalbrookdale (who bought Ebbw Vale when they went bankrupt) and other ironmasters in Monmouthshire. They became merchant princes, county gentlemen and Tories.

The large landowners of Monmouthshire leased out their land for collieries and iron mines, took up shares in the Canal, built tramways, and sometimes engaged in mining. For the most part, however, the coal owners were Bristol and Somerset investors, small landed farmers, or shopkeepers in Newport. Monmouthshire was, like Swansea, a great mineral estate developed by the capitalists of Bristol.

J. T. WALTON NEWBOLD.

(To be continued.)

The Test of Theory

IN no sphere of human activity does theory play a more important part than in those activities which have for their specific purpose the promoting of economic and social well-being. Yet, notwithstanding its vital importance, there appears to be sadly lacking any generally recognised and accepted standard or test whereby it would be possible irrefutably to prove that the theory advanced as to a question or subject is true or false. The absence of any such standard or test—in view of the existing empirical or rule of thumb kind of method—is in a large measure responsible for many of the contradictory theories on social questions. Thus arise the consequent confusion, friction, and dissipation of energy among “well-intentioned” men and women, both in their individual capacities and also as members of the various industrial and social organizations.

If this defect can be remedied, not only will individuals be better equipped for improving and strengthening themselves mentally, but our movement will thereby be immeasurably strengthened and accelerated. Can such a standard or test, capable of application to all theories, be formulated?

A recognised standard or test as to matters which are considered of a more practical every-day character has long since been applied. If, for example, any doubt arises as to the length or width, say, of a room or a table, the application of a two-foot rule will easily settle it. The weighing-machine is the recognised means of testing and proving the weight of all objects possessing weight. The measurement of liquids is universally accepted, and the enumeration of standards and tests for other things could be extended *ad infinitum*. Economic necessity, in order to regulate and facilitate business relations and transactions demanded the recognition and adoption of these respective standards and tests.

The promotion of economic and social well-being to-day imperatively demands the general recognition and acceptance of a standard or test for all theories upon social questions. We are frequently either reading books, pamphlets, magazines and newspapers, wherein theories of a more or less conflicting and contradictory character are advanced; listening to speeches, lectures, and debates; participating in discussions upon questions at trade union and socialist meetings, or are engaged in personal conversation and argument. When differing theories upon the same subject are advanced, it is quite possible for all to be false—but it is certain they cannot all be true.

How, then, are we to be able to detect the false from the true? The consideration of this question should occupy first place in the study of social problems. The correctness or otherwise of a theory does not depend upon personality—*i.e.*, the person who gives expression to it—not even such an intellectual giant as Marx. The test must be an impersonal one. Objective reality is, therefore, the only authority which we need either appeal to or rely upon for a sound and genuine standard or test of theory. This test is applicable both objectively (by experiment) and subjectively (mentally). The objective test is:—Will it work in practice? Provided the theory is applied in all its details and is found to work all right in practice its correctness is irrefutably proven. If it will not work in practice, then it is incorrect—hence, the old popular saying that—“It is all right in theory, but wrong in practice”—is obviously a false one.

In cases where an objective test is not possible, the subjective test can be applied by examining the theory and discovering whether or not it harmonizes and corresponds with—in another word, explains—the facts of the question or subject under consideration.

If some such method as the one suggested here were to be consciously adopted and generally accepted, many of the theories on social questions which are now advanced would disappear like the dew before the morning sun.

By means of the subjective method it is possible to test the truth or otherwise of some of the statements expressed by Eden and Cedar Paul in their article in last month's *Plebs*. On page 77 they state :—

“ In certain details, many of us who are glad to proclaim ourselves Marxists, would like a revision of terminology. We prefer to speak of ‘ the economic interpretation of history ’ rather than of ‘ the materialist conception, ’ *for he who talks of ‘ materialism ’ talks of a particular metaphysical view of the universe,* a conception which was useful as a counterblast to a narrow ‘ idealism ’ or ‘ spiritualism, ’ but whose terminology, unless we are discussing a purely philosophic problem, is better avoided. To speak (with Loria) of ‘ the economic foundations of society ’ does ‘ not commit us to any ontological theory whatever. . . . The error of ‘ Marxism ’ is to dwell too exclusively on the economic aspect of life. ” (Italics mine.)

Apart from the desire for a “ review of terminology ” (which will be considered later), it is not a case of which “ we prefer, ” be it either the “ economic interpretation ” or “ materialist conception, ” but, rather, which will the most thoroughly and correctly explain *all* the facts of the universe.

The statement that “ he who talks of ‘ materialism ’ talks of a particular metaphysical view of the universe, ” indicates the lack of a clear and thorough understanding of what is meant by the term materialism as used by Marxians. Materialists, in the Marxian sense, view *all* things from the standpoint of their being inseparably interconnected and inter-related (divisions and separations only exist mentally for purposes of classification), whereas, on the other hand, the metaphysician views things as being as widely separated and disconnected as the theologian's heaven and hell.

The loftiest and noblest or most grotesque ideas and ideals have a material foundation and can only be expressed in terms or forms of material things. As Marx very tersely expresses it : “ The ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought. ” According to Engels, Marx and himself “ conceived of ideas as materialistic, as pictures of real things. . . . Thereupon, the dialectic became reduced to knowledge of the universal laws of motion—as well of the outer world as of the thought of man—two sets of laws which are identical as far as matter is concerned, but which differ as regards expression, in so far as the mind of man can employ them consciously, while, in nature, and up to now in human history, for the most part they

accomplish themselves, unconsciously in the form of external necessity, through an endless succession of accidents."

Materialism, from this standpoint, gives the death-blow to metaphysics, and is also something of a far greater value and use than as "a conception which was useful as a counterblast to a narrow idealism or spiritualism"; therefore, there is no need to avoid its terminology when we are discussing either "purely philosophic" or any other problems.

The materialist attaches due credence and importance to "the economic aspect of life" in the study of social problems. But to adopt the "economic interpretation" in preference to the "materialist conception" is to run the risk of committing the very error (which Eden and Cedar Paul quite rightly mention) of those Marxists who dwell too exclusively on the economic aspect of life. (Anyone who is inclined to accept Loria as their intellectual guide should read what Engels has to say about him and his book, *The Economic Foundations of Society*, in the Preface to *Capital* Vol. III.)

Do we need a "revision of terminology"? By all means let us have a revision of terminology if by so doing we can simplify the interpretation of facts and make our meaning clearer. But we don't want to waste time and energy splitting hairs about words for word's sake. Socialism, with many people to-day, like charity, is a cloak for a multitude of things; there would otherwise be no need to qualify it with any of the adjectives, christian, materialistic, evolutionary, revolutionary, scientific or real. A clear understanding of socialism would have avoided the old controversy over the question as to whether or not socialism should be termed evolutionary or revolutionary—the obvious fact is that it is both. The very term socialism implies a conscious recognition of the evolutionary character of the material and social forces of production and the consequent class antagonism arising therefrom, and that the development of these forces of production with the accompanying intensification of this class antagonism will eventually result in a revolution, or, what is only another expression of the same thing, a complete change in the economic foundation of society and all its social institutions. As to whether or not this revolution will be accomplished peacefully or with the shedding of blood will depend upon the strength and action of those who may be opposed to the change and has, therefore, nothing to do with the meaning of the term.

If our Movement is based upon a solid material foundation, guided by sound principles, and our policy and tactics are properly adjusted in accordance with the actual facts, then we shall not only be able to meet, but defeat the enemy, both within and without the gate.

J.R.

A Plea for the Minor Poet

IN reading the contribution on the impetus given to letters by quickening social changes, which appeared in last month's *Plebs*, I was pleased to see that your contributor had not followed the well-worn track of damning the poet on that account. It has become monotonously customary among rebels to sneer at the poet because his work has often been a response to, and therefore a reflex of, the conditions of his time. Rather, one might think, ought we to welcome the fact. Strange to say, it is no new fact, but was recognised long before Marx and Engels formulated their conception of History.

Mark Akenside, the eighteenth century minor poet, author of *Pleasures of Imagination*, in his verses on the Muse, ventured the almost hyperbolic lines :—

- “ Who trained by laws the future age?
 Who rescued nations from the rage
 Of partial factions power?
 My heart with distant homage views,
 Content if Thou celestial Muse,
 Didst rule my natal hour.
- “ Not far beneath the Hero's feet,
 Nor from the legislator's seat,
 Stands far removed the Bard.
-
- “ Lycurgus fashioned Sparta's fame,
 And Pompey to the Roman name
 Gave universal sway.
 Where are THEY? Homer's réverend page
 Holds empire to the fortieth age,
 And tongues and climes obey.”

In other words, it is precisely because the poets have been so peculiarly endowed that those who clung the more closely to mundane affairs for their inspiration, exerted the greatest influence on the actions of the race. In the concluding paragraphs of Shelley's *Essay on Poetry* we find the “ great ” poet harping on the same string :—

“ Poets sound the depths and measure the circumference of human nature with an all-penetrating spirit, and they are themselves, perhaps, the most sincerely astonished at its manifestations, for it is *less their spirit than the spirit of the age.*”

How perfectly true this was of the glorious renaissance which accompanied the Industrial Revolution your contributor made clear.

Shelley, however, was a “ great ” poet, and it is with the “ minor ” that I am here concerned. How much, I wonder, that is really

perfect in poetic art has been lost to the movement because mercenary publishers in the past boggled at the efforts of unheralded and impecunious genius.

How much more is lost owing to the non-translation of foreign minor poets, due partly to prejudice and partly to commercial reasons.

There are scores of cheap editions on the market at the present moment, of poems and elevated prose, selected from the works of Eastern writers, but one and all are the outpourings of sickening mystics and sentimental spook-intoxicated metaphysicians.

There is a sound economic reason for the publication of this cheap drivel—the growth of the so-called “Higher Thought”—Theosophical cult.

Very little of what is virile in the form of criticism in the work of foreign poets is ever re-written in the English language. Capitalism is hardly likely to encourage the reading of literature calculated to damage its prestige, therefore we cannot expect it to promote the efforts of those who would translate that literature by ensuring its publication. The minor poets of Italy are almost unknown in this country. Even the sonnets of Campanello, so beautifully rendered into English by J. A. Symonds, are practically unknown in the Socialist movement, there never having been a reasonably cheap edition.

What would not the Plebeian who finds recreation in poesy, give for an English copy of the poems of Guiseppe Guisti ?

It cannot be obtained. I can, however, give my readers a sample of “the goods” which, appropriately enough, although two generations old, reads like an onslaught upon modern Labour Cabinet ministers.

Gingilino is a biting satire on the toadying place-hunter that has flourished in all ages in all climes where corruption and parasitism received the homage of ignorance. It is a vivid picture of life in the Italy of political intrigue, the Italy that Mazzini combatted. *Gingilino* is the upstart, seeking the Samuel Smile’s philosophy from a fellow fox who measures it to him by the furlong. The never-failing prophylactic for vulgar obscurity, the positive path to political success, *i.e.*, hard cash and the limelight, is prescribed in the witty dialogue:—

“To Mass and Sermon never fail to go,
Be sure you’re seen before you make a prayer ;
And choose your time and bench to make most show,
When some great man’s, some commissary’s there,
Nay ! stand on guard just where the lustral vase is,
And give him holy water as he passes.

“Get introduced, and every blessed night
Visit some lout they’ve made a minister ;

Then pick your tune and work your stops aright,
 According as his tastes or whims prefer—
 And if tomfoolery's the thing for winning,
 Play the tomfool and set the folks agrinning.

“ Then humbly beg and serve well every day,
 Take all they give you so they let you serve,
 But beg—the toad refused to beg they say
 And therefore got no tail—besides observe,
 That if not propped and fostered by our need,
 Great men's authority's a dream indeed.

“ A Premier's soul's made of the self-same trash
 As serves for yours or mine or pretty nigh ;
 And the vain fool who spends the public cash,
 Takes credit for the sunshine in July :
 Deeming in pompous nullity of mind,
 There's nothing he can't do if so inclined.

The theme is held to throughout the poem with a persistence which arouses the admiration and never surfeits. This is due, in some measure, to the trick seldom practiced among British literateurs, of altering the form of stanza to suit the mood of the reader. The conclusion of the rhyme describes the triumph of the lickspittle in a style which is well adapted for the expression of withering contempt :—

“ With profit Gingilino did attend
 To the sage preachment of his vulpine friend,
 He went, he bared his crown, he knuckled down,
 And coaxed, crawled, cringed, to sword and gown ;
 And when they'd tried him, dried him, shifted him, drifted
 him,
 From Dan to Beersheba at last they lifted him :
 When the whole process they'd gone through and through,
 With rites baptismal and with chrysmal too,
 Their heaven of three-fold roguedom to ascend
 Took him within their fold—and that's his end.”

This veritable *Gil Blas* in verse circulated, as most of Guisti's work did—in manuscript. It was vigorously hunted down by the police, and its author was proscribed. Guisti eluded the police throughout Italy and poured forth his offensive manuscripts with amazing prolificity. But what of our own minor poets? One gets tired of reading panegyrics upon the “immortals,” when all the time grand work is left unmentioned, because forsooth, the critics of bourgeoisdom do not clamour to have it read. Tom Hood, for example, is sometimes patronised by the movement because he penned the *Song of the Shirt* and the *Bridge of Sighs*, but I have questioned scores of poetry lovers among socialists and have only found one, as yet, who had even heard of that marvellous satire

on the industrial system, *Miss Kilmansegg and her Precious Leg*. Then there are the several works of James Thomson (B.V.) John Davidson, James Slimmon, Robert Buchannan, Charlotte P. Gilman, and scores of others, dead and alive, whose work might be of incalculable good to the movement, if it was only mentioned a little oftener.

Many of the most beautiful flowers grow beneath the great oaks of the forest—it is the same in literature.

Seek among the "minors" for fresh flowers of song, their fragrance will reward you well. JOHN S. CLARKE.

Plebs Publications

At last! the promised second edition of Mark Starr's book is out, and half, more than half, already sold! So if you are not prepared to wait another four months or longer for your copy you had better hurry up and send your cash with order at once, also a little over, if you are generous, because we shall have an enormous postage bill. We have had a limited edition bound in cloth (price 2s. 6d. 2s. 9d., post free). Orders for these will be taken strictly in rotation, and the "Sold Out" notice will, in all probability, be up by next month. Publishing nowadays reminds one of the buns at a school treat—long awaited, but quickly despatched on appearance.

Will readers who sent orders and have not received them please communicate with the Sec. at once.

We have been very gratified at the remarks made by readers upon the Marx number. "The best centenary number produced in England," said a rival editor, but to paraphrase an old adage, "A little help is worth a lot of praise," and we have not yet paid the bill. It meant double postage as well as a doubled printing bill. We thank those friends who sent immediately, and suggest to those who did not that the payment of their account for "magazines received" would help, even if their war bonus did not run to anything extra.

And just here we want to make yet another appeal. (Is there a disease called "Editor's Knee," we wonder, got by constantly kneeling asking for this, that, or the other?) Any number of our single copy subscribers go on receiving copy after copy marked with the sign of the red cross! We do not stop their supply, because we know that they will send ultimately, but we wish that they would send *now*—it would all help to relieve the strain. Then, single-copy readers could start a catch-my-pal movement—so many of our parcel agents are being "roped in" and "combed out" that we shall need the help of *all* our supporters. Make a dead set at all the over-age men you know, then those in protected occupations, and last, but not least—the women. Two-shillings-and-sixpence is not a great sum, and if you talk hard and fast enough quite a number of people will give it to you to get rid of you! Afterwards, when the *Plebs* arrives each month they will be glad!! We need every single individual as never before. The next few months will probably be the most critical in the history of the magazine.

The PUBLICATIONS DEPARTMENT is flourishing, and we hope to issue a report that will please everyone and show that our efforts have not been in vain. For various reasons we have to announce that the publication of Noah Ablett's *Outlines of Economics* is in abeyance. Being possessed of an optimistic nature, which no amount of damping can destroy, we still hope to

be able to announce it later on, but for the present, and unluckily, we believe, for the winter classes, it can't be done just now. However, given the necessary support, we could issue a little booklet, which would help to fill the gap before the autumn, and the following "Foreword" is intended to draw opinion upon the scheme. Mark Starr's book for the Industrial History classes and this proposed booklet for the economic classes, and it would not matter very much if our teachers were taken away—we could still "carry on."

FOREWORD.—HELPS TO THE STUDY OF CAPITAL.
OUTLINES, SUMMARIES AND NOTES FOR BEGINNERS
AND STUDENTS.

"Very few have either the time or the inclination to make a careful study of these ponderous volumes."—Phillip Snowden. We wish to help even those who have neither time nor inclination, and those who have time and inclination. We hope to *make* the time by stimulating the inclination.

Our method? Well, we have tried it in classes of beginners, and it is therefore the result of experience. We take each paragraph and first find its main point. Next we summarise the paragraph under this heading, and then write brief explanatory notes.

We lay no claim to being expert Marxists, but we are strongly of the opinion that in order to understand Marx, *Capital* itself must be read. No lectures, pamphlets, or articles can take its place. Our method compels the student to read the book, gives him a method of reading it, and we hope, will help him to master it.

The "Helps" can be used in class, and are designed to partially make up for the shortage of teachers. A splendid exercise can be set in finding other headings to the paragraphs than those suggested. Can we venture to publish them in readiness for the winter classes? Help is wanted to publish the "Helps."

D. W. THOMAS. W. G. COVE.

We wish to call the attention of our readers to the advert. page on the front cover. This will be a source of income to the Magazine if there is a good response to the appeals. The Reformers' Bookstall have promised to advertise often, if it is worth their while, and we want you to make it so. Their goods do not need any comment upon them.

Papers for the Present promise to be very interesting, and we had hoped to review the first three in this issue, but space forbids. We hope to publish a review later on, and urge all readers to purchase what is, we believe, a statement of the whole plan of campaign of the "Reconstruction" School. It is necessary that we should understand the position of those who are trying to reconcile the irreconcilable!

READ **The Workers' Dreadnought**

for International Socialism in the light of current Politics.

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Workshop Notes of the Rank and File Movement. By W. F. WATSON, each week.

Correspondence

"FREETHOUGHT" AND THE LABOUR MOVEMENT.

DEAR COMRADE,

"Tillery" contends that freethought is a side issue, if not a positive red herring. Many more of your readers must share this opinion, seeing that his first letter (of December) has remained unanswered till June. But there is another reason for the neglect. Freethinkers who are not class-conscious socialists are unlikely to read the *Plebs*. Plebeians who are also convinced freethinkers (and we take it most of us are) find that the propaganda of class-conscious socialism and independent working-class education occupies most of the time and energy they are able to spare from the pursuit of a sufficiency of depreciated currency notes to enable them to buy their rations.

But we agree with "Tillery" that his letter needs an answer, and we will take up the challenge.

We share his view that freethought (unqualified) will not emancipate the working class. Neither will education (unqualified) emancipate the working class. Education as provided in the state elementary schools, and as continued under the auspices of the W.E.A. and similar bodies, obviously needs to be supplemented, and in due course, one may hope, to be replaced by independent working-class education—hence the existence of the Plebs League. But a Plebs Leaguer will find that one who has been taught to read, to write, to think after a fashion, in a public elementary school, offers more promising material to the socialist propagandist than does one who has remained perfectly illiterate. We do not want to waste our time teaching our fellow-proletarians the alphabet before we can hope to do any good by giving them a copy of "The Plebs Magazine" (Centenary Issue!) or of *What Education means to the Workers*."

Similarly with the religious question. "Does not the Materialist Conception, as enunciated by Marx, cover the whole issue of freethought in such a way as to keep the worker's issue clearly to the fore?" Perhaps it does, but a worker whose mind is still filled with the fogs of medievalism will not hearken to the voice of the Marxist, charm he never so wisely. Freethought propaganda may not be an end in itself, but it clears the ground. We would ask "Tillery" to note that all the hard-shelled Marxist movements are cheerfully atheistic and this-worldly. It is true of England, Germany, France, Italy and Russia; it is true of the U.S.A. The hard-shelled Marxists do not spend their time upon freethought propaganda, but most of them approve that propaganda as an indirect help to their own. And they know that wherever, among socialists, you get people with religious leanings, other-worldly people, there revisionists and sentimental socialists will abound. A worker must be a realist about mundane life before he can be a realist about socialism.

What is the real position of religion in society? It is one of the main pillars of the established order, one of the main instruments of class rule. That is why religion is "good for the lower orders." Let us quote three celebrated Russians on this point. Leontiev declared that the state could get along

well enough without morality, but could not do without religion; Pobiedonostsev denounced unbelief as the direct negation of the state; Tihomirov said that a clever police force would suffice to maintain the existing system, provided independent thought upon religious matters were made impossible.

These reactionaries are singularly frank; but still franker, still more to the point, is an economist who, though a university professor, practically belongs to our own camp, Achille Loria. In *The Economic Foundations of Society* (p. 20), he tells us how capitalist domination is maintained by religion:—

The unproductive labourers [this is Loria's term for the intellectuals who are hirelings of the capitalist class, those who, with nothing to do, are still richly paid, and are therefore interested in defending the property system]—the unproductive labourers . . . are now employed in giving a false direction to the egoism of the subjugated classes, and in perverting the calculation upon which it is based. This is effected by setting up a fanciful moral sanction over and against the labourers' revolutionary tendencies, causing the disinherited classes to dread the idea of revolt, and to look upon rebellion as more abhorrent even than submission. In this way, the bearing of the proletarians towards their masters . . . comes under the discipline of a moral law, which is exactly calculated to pervert their egoism and render them tolerant under capitalist usurpation."

Again and again in Loria's writings this idea recurs, the idea that religion, that the priestly caste, exists to pervert the healthy egoism of the workers, to make them imagine they are pursuing their own "better" interests when submissively and diligently producing surplus value for the master class.

There may be but one main line of attack, but the wise general does not wholly neglect subsidiary onslaughts which may help to weaken the enemy. And some of us think that freethought is a positive good here and now, while we are writing and working for the social revolution. "I would not give a rush for political freedom," wrote Feuerbach, "if I were to remain the slave of my religious fancies and prejudices; true freedom exists only where man is free also in respect of religion."

"Tillery's" selection from among the honorary associates of the Rationalist Press Association is amusing; but the bourgeois connections of these distinguished persons hardly affect the general drift of the present argument. That body may be doing, we believe it is doing, useful work of enlightenment, despite the "upper class" sympathies of its "big bugs." Perhaps the same remark applies to the W.E.A.!

May we not hope to find—we modify the words of our great namesake—that while the R.P.A. soweth and the W.E.A. watereth, the Plebs League will garner the increase? Yours fraternally. E. & C.P.

A CORRECTION.

SIR,—I wish to correct an error which I find in Gibbin's *Industrial History of England*. Where he got the particulars from to make such a mistake I do not know. I have had twenty years in the factory, and therefore know what one man is capable of doing on the mule, or the spinning jenny, and

12,000 spindles for one man is impossible. There is not a mule in this country, or the world, that can hold that number of spindles. I have been making inquiries about the longest mule, which is known in this country. I got a friend of mine to write the *Colton Factory Times*, and this is the reply they give to the questions I gave him.

The longest mules we have heard of are now in use at the Hurst Mill Co., Ltd., Ashton-under-Lyne. There are 1,560 spindles in one mule. The makers are Messrs. Tayler & Lang, Ltd. The normal staff is one spinner and three piecers.

There is a great contrast to these figures, and one which is very misleading to a student who does not know from experience what a mule is like or the capabilities of such a machine. I can say from experience that the time will never come for a mule of that number of spindles. The short mule is more profitable, as it is less likely to break down, as the strain would be great on a long mule. Divide the 1,560 by four, it will give you, roughly, 400 spindles for one man on page 159 in Gibbins' *Industrial History of England* you will find the mistake.

Yours sincerely, H. T. ASHWORTH.

"SUPPLY AND DEMAND," ETC.

SIR,—A "beginner" is apt to be guilty of prolixity, but your request to be as "brief as possible" will, I hope, save me from such charge.

The Marxist Teacher, of Casey's creation, seems to have looked at the questions with which he has dealt from a concrete and individualistic point of view, and not, as he should have, from an abstract and social one. Further, in his statements, he seems to put the cart before the horse; is guilty of expressing half-truths, and has failed to appreciate the social significance of the phenomena of which he treats. He has mixed the substance of value with the measure of value, and tantalises one with his mixtures of correct and incorrect statements. One (at any rate, a beginner) hardly knows where to get him. Let us attempt his tabulated points.

Casey says: "The Marxist teacher says that the quantity of labour determines value." Here there is surely a confusing of the substance of value with the measure of value, and a beginner would naturally assume from it that value labour is concrete and individual—that you can sort of have lumps of it. There is no recognition in this statement of the complex social phenomena—fluid and arbitrary in action—that determines the value of commodities. I believe the more correct statement to be, "Abstract labour forms the substance of value," while the magnitude of value is, in Marx's words, "measured by its duration, and labour time, in its turn, finds its standard in weeks, days, and hours." Even this must again be qualified, for the clock that ticks out Marx's standard of time measurement is not a Grandfather's clock, but a social one. It is the socially necessary labour time needed for its making that determines the value of commodities. Here again we are up against the complexity and mobility of modern social economic phenomena. What is S.N.L.T.? It would necessitate breaking the

injunction of "brevity" to make a full analysis, but perhaps a brief quotation from *Capital* will suffice: "The labour time socially necessary is that required to produce an article under normal conditions of production, and with the average degree of skill and intensity prevalent at the time."

Again, "the Marxist Teacher says: Value is expressed in price." Now the Marxist teacher is not Marx, for on page 74 of *Capital* we find the following:—

"But although price, being the exponent of the magnitude of a commodity's value, is the exponent of its exchange ratio with money, it does not follow that the exponent of this exchange ratio is necessarily the exponent of the magnitude of the commodity's value. . . ."

"Magnitude of value expresses a relation of social production, it expresses the connection that necessarily exists between a certain article and the portion of the total labour-time of society required to produce it. As soon as the magnitude of value is converted into price, the above necessary relation takes the shape of a more or less accidental exchange ratio between a single commodity and another, the money commodity. . . . The possibility, therefore, of quantitative incongruity between price and magnitude of value, or the deviation of the former from the latter is inherent in the price form itself."

To say that "price is the monetary expression of value" is very different from saying that "value is expressed in price." The former allows for "the accidental exchange ratio," admits its quantitative inadequacy, and implies its general truth. The latter fits the glove to the hand. It gives the beginner no conception of the chaos of capitalist production and exchange. Value is an elusive abstraction, and depends upon changing social relationships of production, and to state that "value is expressed in price" makes a new beginner regard value as definite, static and concrete.

How is price determined? Before answering, it may be well to state that no commodity has an intrinsic and absolute price, and therefore it cannot be correct to say, "Deviations from this price are caused by supply and demand being unequal." "Labour determines price?" What labour, and how? In *Wage-Labour and Capital* (Chap. III.) Marx says:

"By what is the price of a commodity determined? By the competition between buyers and sellers, by the relation (not law) of supply and demand. . . . The determination of price by the cost of production is not to be understood in the sense of the bourgeois economists. . . . The anarchic movement, in which the rise is compensated for by a fall and the fall by a rise, they regard as an accident. . . . But it is precisely these fluctuations which, viewed more closely, carry the most frightful devastations in their train. . . . It is precisely these fluctuations that force the price to conform to the cost of production. In the totality of this disorderly movement is to be found its order."

I expect I have already written too much, and only hope that others will take up the points. As "a beginner" I thank Fred Casey for his letter. It has been a test of my reading, and Marx is rather difficult to explain.

Yours faithfully,

W. G. COVIL.

News of the Movement

Space is very tight this month, so that we must ask our readers to pardon curtailed reports and to rest assured that everything goes from good to better. In spite of Military Service Acts, we are rapidly consolidating our position during these summer months, so that we shall be able to look forward with confidence to the coming winter.

* * * * *

Glasgow is, of course, one of the most active of the storm centres, and A. J. Solomons reports—Our classes are all finished for the session. We are keeping the delegates together by monthly meetings, so that we can make an early start next session, when we hope to run 50 classes. As a result of last winter's classes, we have many new instructors, who will receive lectures from one of our Socialist M.A.'s on the art of teaching. The pamphlets are nearly all sold out, and if we can get the paper we intend publishing a second edition shortly. Taking everything into consideration we have every reason to feel proud of our first session's work.

* * * * *

Comrade MacLean's temporary absence should stir up all educational activity in Glasgow and the Clyde. Classes, classes, and yet more classes, should be the cry—nothing will give our comrade better hope than to know that the movement marches on. We congratulate the rank and file in Glasgow, not only on their enthusiasm and work, but also on their leaders. If it is true that the workers get the leaders they deserve—well, then, Glasgow must be very deserving! What about a Scottish Labour College in full swing to welcome John when he returns. *Some presentation!*

* * * * *

The classes in EDINBURGH and District closed the Winter Session by taking part in the Edinburgh May Day and Marx Centenary Demonstration. Comrade Drummoud, of the Leith class, spoke from the Trade Union platform, and emphasised the importance to the working class of Karl Marx's teachings. A feature of the Edinburgh demonstration was the subsequent procession of a large section of the crowd, headed by a piper, to the Carlton Jail, to convey a May Day greeting to John MacLean, who was waiting his trial there. David Kirkwood, Glasgow, made a speech, and then we sang the "Red Flag." As the first strains of the song arose, a hand appeared at one of the cell windows waving a response to our greeting.

* * * * *

V.L.T. sends us this report from DURHAM:—Following along the strictly orthodox lines of counting the end of April the end of our first session as a NORTH-EASTERN DISTRICT, we can truly say that the results are such that we are spurred on to greater glories for the next session. We have held classes at Newcastle (4); Cramlington, Ashington, Pegswood, Chopwell (2); Consett, South Shields, Marsden, Wallsend and Burnhope. Away in Cleveland Will Lewcock has held others, so "we've done our bit."

J. T. Walton Newbold has been twice in the last two months round the district, breaking in many cases new ground, and further tilling the land in plots already taken up.

And the last places John Maclean spoke at, prior to his sojourn under His Majesty's care, was following the Conference we held at Durham on April 6th, in our area, and John lacks nothing in his method and treatment of the independent working-class education case. May he soon be with us again is the hope of all Nor'-Easters.

We intend to continue the work during the summer months by holding District Conferences and a start was made with Stanley on May 11th, when Will Lawther held forth to a good representation of miners lodges.

The Durham miners, on the recommendation of their E.C., have again made a grant of £50 to their bosses' educational firm, the W.E.A. Surely Durhamites, this joke is too bad, after the Industrial Unrest Commissioners report for South Wales! Plebeians, attend then to the task you are set, and let us have the decision reversed, by giving your grants to they who matter, the C.L.C.

LEEDS, BRADFORD AND SHEFFIELD are all progressing, the first named having organised an Easter Saturday afternoon district conference of local Plebeians, at West Ward B.S.P. rooms. Delegates were present from many different bodies, and made a good audience. Comrade Lew Davis (S.L.P.) presided, and addresses were given by John Maclean and Fred Shaw. We are looking forward to big events in the near future. The Central class has now a new Secretary, H. Jones.

In SHEFFIELD Fred Shaw's classes have terminated, and local Plebeians and friends are busy planning the winter session, when it is hoped to run a further series of classes and to issue another syllabus. The outlines and the list of books should prove useful for students. A series of such outlines, and the worker who is not properly educated from our point of view will have to be reckoned a slacker. Fred Shaw is doing a splendid service to the workers, and Sheffield should rally to his support.

At BRADFORD, which has been rather backward from our standpoint, a class in Industrial History has been started by an old friend. There have been seventeen lectures (finishing Whit Sunday), and the class has numbered thirty to forty each Sunday. All Plebeians in Bradford willing to help should write Class Sec.: J. Norton, 26 Lyon Street, Bradford. It is hoped to form a branch of the Plebs League in order to facilitate propaganda.

The DONCASTER Trades Council Class concluded its first and very successful season on Sunday, April 28th. It is hoped to keep the members together during summer by means of rambles, etc., and recommence the class Sunday October 6th, when we have great plans for extending our educational activities. All interested, write: Sec., E. Heaton, 56 Carr View Av., Doncaster.

MIDDLESBROUGH is now in the forefront of the active movement, the Sec., Geo. Wright, reporting that the work is advancing by leaps and bounds. "We have," he writes, "gone through a course of the History of Modern Working Class, and are now on "The State." Keen discussion has been aroused and Will Lewcock, of Newcastle, very ably deals with all questions. We have a membership of eighty students, and the numbers still increase. Summer rambles are to be organized to keep the students together, and we suggest that this course might prove useful in other districts. I should like to add that we have derived great benefit from W. Paul's book, *The State*, and consider it an absolutely indispensable text-book for classes."

It is not very often that we say a good word for a parson in these pages, but the Rev. R. W. Cummings, of HURST, ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE really deserves it! He has a Plebs class in his Sunday School—addressed by Comrade McGee, Manchester. He issues leaflets, which must utterly shock the whole countryside, and he sticks so close to the *spirit* of Christianity (instead of the letter) that we tremble for his safety. Hearty congratulations. A parson who really believes that "Thy kingdom come on earth" means something, and translates it into attack on the economics of Capitalism is asking for trouble on one side—and help on the other. We hope he'll get both! since, as G.B.S. says, "hot water is the revolutionist's element"—Our comrades in the district will, we hope, supply the healing balm.

Comrade McGee is secretary of the Plebs League, MANCHESTER District Council, and a demonstration was organized there on May 5th. No report to hand, but excellent work is being done by the council, so we can easily guess as to the success of the demonstration. McGee reports that there are demands for speakers from Trade Union branches, and that nine classes, of 291 students, have been held.

BIRMINGHAM Plebs League celebrated the Marx Centenary, and it was a conspicuous success. This was due to the extremely able manner in which Mark Starr dealt with the subject of "The Education of the Workers." Our other speaker, J. H. Pratt, of the N.U.R., could not come because of work. We are also to be congratulated on the fact that the President of the Birmingham Trades Council took the Chair. This body have heard the case for education of the workers put forward by the W.E.A., and we are waiting an opportunity of putting the case for the C.L.C.

The classes are being continued through the summer. Economics: *Wage Labour and Capital*. Industrial History: Mark Starr's book. They are held in Room 14, No. 110 John Bright, Street, Birmingham, at 8 p.m., on Mondays, Comrade T. D. Smith being the class leader.

COVENTRY, too, claimed Mark Starr on May 5th (he certainly got busy) on that day travelling from South Wales to Birmingham on to Coventry for the night meeting). The meeting was a great success, and the Sec., H. King, says that "it is sure to be fruitful. Mark's address was a very good one, and was much appreciated and will certainly lead to something better in our educational activities. The C.L.C. is now much better known and our hopes run high."

The LONDON Plebs Dist. Sec. writes:—"At the termination of the course of lectures on Socialist Philosophy by Comrade C. Terry, it was decided to give four supplementary lectures on Marxian Economics on Sunday mornings in April at 11 o'clock. Just after Easter another very successful Social was held at the C.L.C., at which the students turned up in good numbers. Comrades T. C. Hollowell and Johns have arranged to hold a Study Circle at the Christadelphian Hall, Cassidy Road, Walham Green, S.W., on Wednesday evenings at 7.30. Only a nominal fee will be charged to cover expenses. The subjects studied will be Industrial History and Marxian Economics, the object, as usual, being to turn out as great a number of class-conscious workers as possible.

SOUTH WALES classes are mostly suspended for the summer months. Mark Starr says: "Eight classes of Aberdare miners a complete success. Attendance and interest kept high throughout despite distractions of our times. New enthusiasts for Social Science made, as well as helping the older ones to get the right and proper understanding. Many of the students sat for the exams., which our official, Ed. Committee, arranged. The stalwart Plebeian, Mainwaring, is going to appraise the papers, and it is believed that they will give a concrete testimony to the advance our students have made. The immediate future, though threatening disturbance of our work, can never undo it, for, like the spirit of the Soviets, it can never die. As far as possible, unofficial study groups will be carried on through the summer."

At BARRY a most successful session has just terminated, and the students are keen enough to go on meeting every second Sunday to hear addresses given or read a paper. A Library has been started, and any Plebeian wishing to help by giving either a new or old book (of interest to working-class students) will receive the grateful thanks of the Sec., J. Jones, 71 High Street, Barry. It is hoped to run a second class at Barry Dock during next winter. Things look rosy in Barry for the near future.

There was a Conference of classes of the C.L.C. (South Wales) held at the Ruskin Institute Royal Arcade, Cardiff, on Whit Tuesday at 11 a.m. As we go to Press it is too early to give any of the results, but the agenda will be of interest to all Plebeians.

1. In order to co-ordinate the work throughout the districts and to assist both Teacher and Student alike, an uniform Syllabus to be drafted for use at all the classes.
2. That a Committee be appointed to consider and frame some kind of scheme for the organization and management of classes.
3. To consider any suggestions as to the best method of selecting students for residence at the COLLEGE.
4. To consider the advisability of organising a SUMMER School at any of the South Wales Seaside Resorts.
5. In view of the anticipated great shortage of Teachers during the next class season, that a proficiency test be set to some of the abler Students so as to decide their fitness for class leadership.
6. Any other business.

The Plebs Bookshelf

Mr. R. H. Tawney, not unknown in W.E.A. circles, had an interesting article in the *Daily News* of April 29th on "Works' Schools." Provision is made in the Continuation School Clauses of the new Education Bill, Mr. Tawney pointed out, for State recognition of "works' schools established by employers as places of continued education."

If the Bill becomes law in its present form, it will be lawful for part of the new system of continued education to be carried on in schools established on the premises of employers. Such semi-private schools will become part of the educational organization of the country.

Now such a prospect, it seems, is distinctly unpleasing—even to a W.E.A.'er. Mr. Tawney protests that it is no 'narrow-minded prejudice' which makes him regard the policy embodied in this proposal as "highly objectionable." Despite the existence of certain "successful Works' Schools offering education to young persons in the employment of a firm," he foresees danger in attendance at such schools, wherever established by benevolent bosses, if made compulsory.

Consider first the practical difficulties If the relations between a firm and its adult employees are bad, are the children of those adults to be compelled by law to attend a school conducted on the premises of a firm which they distrust and dislike? If there is a dispute, are the children, including young persons of 16 and 17, who will often belong to their respective trade unions, to continue in attendance at the school of the firm which has locked out their parents?

We pass to still more interesting possibilities:—

What security, again, will there be for the independence of the teacher? Part of the system of Continued Education will include presumably, elementary instruction in citizenship, history and economics. Will only teachers whose views are acceptable to the firm on whose premises the school is conducted be appointed to teach them? If so, if only "safe" teachers are appointed, what about the views of the parents whose children will be compelled to attend? . . . If a private firm contributes the premises upon which education is given, then that firm will almost certainly have a voice in saying what that education is to be, over and above the voice which the members properly exercise as citizens in common with all other citizens.

All of which, from a W.E.A.'er, is particularly interesting. There is, for instance, full recognition of the fact that there *are* divergent views on such subjects as "citizenship, history, and economics"; and, further, that in actual practice "impartiality" is a little difficult of attainment. The views of the parents of the children attending the schools may not, it is admitted, coincide with those of the employers on whose premises, &c., &c. And---another admission---the power behind the purse (and the premises) will "almost certainly" have a voice in saying what sort of education is to be given. . . . It would almost appear that one W.E.A.'er, at least, has begun to see the light. True, Mr. Tawney's intellectual awakening is limited to the perception of the fact that an employer would, in all probability, exercise some influence over the curriculum of a school run on his own premises. But who knows? He may go on to perceive that an employer's influence is not necessarily limited to his own premises---or even to see that schools, colleges, and universities endowed by employers are in a very real sense their "own premises," too, and that there is a distinct probability of only "safe" teachers being appointed thereto. In fact, Mr. Tawney---and the W.E.A.'ers after him---may conceivably yet come to realise the pathetic futility of talking about "impartiality" and "unsectarianism" and "non-partisanship," in face of the actual facts of the modern world; to see that the danger he speaks of later in his article---"the putting of a new private interest in close contact with the springs of education"---is by no means a new one; and possibly to understand that the State which they regard as so entirely above and aloof from all "private interests" is possibly as susceptible to the influence of the employers as schools, established on their own premises would be. Education ought, indeed, as Mr. Tawney says, to be "the noviciate of the citizen." Let us hope that he will pursue his researches as to what is hindering education from being anything of the sort---and will continue so to hinder until it is done away with. He may then come to see the superiority of education definitely aiming at assisting in the "doing-away-with" process to a kind professing to aim at "impartiality."

* * * * *

The War-Time Comradeship! number of *The Highway*, our W.E.A. monthly contemporary, must be, we suppose, interesting to W.E.A.'ers, but the following will also interest Plebeians. It is from a soldier W.E.A.'er. "I received your very splendid message from the W.E.A., and read it on the Mount of Olives after the stiff Christmas fighting, and just before our further advance." Could the message have been Peace on earth, good will towards men? We wonder!

* * * * *

We, too, have our soldier Plebeians, and one of them is busy in the *Postal Telegraph Record* defending the Plebs and the C.L.C. Mr. Mactavish replies rather heatedly, and almost bitterly, considering the fact that his is the broad humane outlook (ours, of course, we all know, is the narrow one). Apropos of which, while reading the other day a book of absorbing interest and wonderful writing, I came across the following and took great comfort from it:—

" Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction . . . and narrow is the way which leadeth to life—and few there be that find it."

A quaint little sidelight on the M.C.H.:—A book recently published by John Murray on *The Herring: Its Effect on the History of Britain*. According to advertisement, the book "tells the story of an ancient key industry over a period of 1000 years, in archaeology, history, and economics . . . explains the 17th Century international disputes round the herring, and the Freedom of the Seas, and will show in this connection what Germany now means when she talks about the Freedom of the Seas."

Those who have read or seen, and argued about, Galsworthy's *Strife* will be interested in a letter of the author's, quoted in the *Times Literary Supplement*, April 17th: "People have been known," Galsworthy writes, "to think that I wrote this play as a deliberate study of the relations between Capital and Labour. No such thing. The setting is incidental. It was conceived as a fight between extremists—a variation on the old Greek theme." Which (I am naturally pleased to say) confirms my own view of the play as a study of individual character rather than of "social forces"—the precise reverse being true of such plays as *Justice* or *The Silver Box*.

I'm glad to see in the *Herald's* list of "New Books in Preparation" a volume of three plays by Miles Malleson, and another selection of verses, satirical and sentimental, by W. N. Ewer. The *Herald's* Book Department does not, like mere capitalist publishers, favour such insignificant organs as ourselves with review copies. But, on the other hand, its publications are usually issued at a price within our reach, and are, as a rule, worth the money.

That was a bright and breezy letter of E. Byford's in the *Call* of April 18th (on "The B.S.P. & the Labour Party"). The last paragraph particularly so.

On this theory (the abandonment of all palliatives) half our propaganda has been conducted for twenty years or more. On this theory Albert Ward makes speeches in blank verse on historic materialism, while his giddy audiences wonder what it is all about. . . . He says he is a Bolshevik. Nonsense; he is a Sorbonne professor pretending to be a miner.

I forbear all comment on the point at issue, merely expressing my appreciation of Byford's "ginger."
J.F.H.

The following quotes from Kautsky's *Ethics*, pp. 32 and 34, are of interest, taken in conjunction with Eden and Cedar Paul's remarks concerning the apparent conflict between Russia's economic development and her ideas. Kautsky is contrasting French and English materialism and, after an explanation of England's early development, writes:—

But when new classes and new class antagonisms, and, with that, new social problems, arise in a country at an earlier date than elsewhere, the new classes only attain a small degree of class-consciousness,

and still remain to a large degree imprisoned in the old methods of thought, so that the class antagonisms only appear in a very undeveloped form. . . . So that it seems to be a general law of social development, that countries which are pioneers in the economic development are tempted to put compromise in the place of radical solutions.

A little later he writes;—

. . . it is necessary to be on our guard against the popular interpretation of the historical materialism which holds that the land which takes the lead in the economic development invariably also brings the corresponding forms of the class war to the sharpest and most decisive expression.

The Russian Socialists benefited by the slower and longer experience of their comrades in other lands. There are some Plebeians who would like chapter and verse for this charge gently made by inference against Engels. by the Pauls in their thought-provoking contribution to our centenary issue

M.S.

BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS RECEIVED.

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Labour and Capital after the War. By S. J. Chapman. John Murray. 6s.
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The Socialism of Karl Marx. By A. E. Cook. Glasgow Plebs League.
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Can any reader supply a second-hand copy of *Life and Work of Eugene Debs*? If so, will they write direct to F. G. Temple, 114, Astley Street, Duckenfield, Cheshire.

Apologies to "H.A.,"—our correspondents J.W.M., Bonnie Scotland, W. Walker, E.R.R., L. Benson, Will Lawther, J. Hamilton, ALEX EVANS, and Mark Starr, all of whose valuable contributions we have had to hold over till next month owing to lack of space.

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