

Vol. XII. No. 9

September, 1920

# THE PLEBS

AGITATE - EDUCATE - ORGANISE



THE  
JOURNAL  
for  
THINKING  
WORKERS



Printed at the Pelican Press and Published  
by the Plebs League at 11a Penywern Road,  
Earl's Court, London, S.W.5

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# THE PLEBS

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

Vol. XII.

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## WE'RE LOOKING TO YOU

**W**ITH our next issue we inaugurate the PLEBS New Series—a magazine enlarged in size and with the price increased to 6d. monthly (8d. postpaid). It is hardly necessary for us to repeat what Mark Starr, on behalf of the PLEBS Executive, put with point and vigour in last month's issue; the sum and substance of which was—*We rely on you*. We can afford no extensive advertising and no free distribution of specimen copies. If we're to pay our way we need a bigger circulation. Will you do your bit towards securing it for us? Can't we break all records this coming winter?

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## THE LATEST CRITIC OF MARX

**T**HE so-called "Great Contradiction" still maintains its attraction for bourgeois economists. There still seems to be the same intense rivalry as to which of them shall finally demonstrate the supreme and fatal fallacy in Marxian Economics. The latest knight-errant is a certain Dr. Scott, Lecturer in Moral Philosophy at Glasgow University. In his little book—*Karl Marx on Value*\*—he is supposed to deliver the last shattering blow to the "central economic principle of Marxism."

He knows all about Böhm Bawerk, and yet he writes in his first paragraph:—

Seventy years and more have passed since he (Marx) began to write, and there is no Socialistic author to-day more widely read or with a larger following of believers.

What an obstinate fallacy! But Scott is going to assure what he calls the "uneasy conscience" of Capitalism, that this time at last the backbone of Marxism is to be broken.

His book is divided into three chapters—(1) The Law of Value: What it is; (2) The Fallacy in the Law of Value; and (3) The Significance of the Fallacy. We need not dwell on all the elementary misconceptions contained in Chapter I, except to remark that the chapter is an advance in clarity over most anti-Marxian expositions. The significant passages are contained on pp. 16—17. I quote in full:—

It all depends on the truth or otherwise of what Marx's Law of Value, when reduced to strict terms, asserts, which is this—*Under the capitalistic system, in the end, and as a rule, the value of a thing will be high if the labour spent on it is great, low if the labour is little.* Unless this is true, labour cannot be the whole source of value. Now, it would appear not to be true.

We shall go into the matter in our next chapter. But we may indicate at once the nature of the fallacy. If  $p$  is the source of  $q$  then when  $p$  is great  $q$  will be great, and when  $p$  is little  $q$  will be little. The two will maintain a proportion to each other all the time. If either varies the other will be found to have varied. Value, then, should vary with its source. When the labour is much the value should be much. When the labour is little the value should be little.

Now it would appear that value does not vary with labour; that it cannot, because it has got to vary with something else, something which goes independently, namely, price of production. The error is one of logic.

It appears that what Marx failed in was "minding his P's and Q's." But I imagine that, with the exception of the words—which constitute what is called a rhetorical verdict—"Now, it would appear not to be true," and the statement "The error is one of logic," Marx himself would not quarrel with this statement of a phase of the Law of Value. The reason is that Dr. Scott has been lucky in his choice of words. As we shall soon see, he is not always so lucky.

In Chapter II, "The Fallacy in the Law of Value" (p.23), Scott makes his attempt to state the problem:—

It is a commonplace of political economy that under the competitive system things tend to fetch a price a margin above their cost of production. Marx does not attempt to deny this, yet his system is built on the assumption that things fetch a price proportioned to the labour-time that is in them. The difficulty about having both these statements correct is that they are not compatible with one another.

Then on p. 25:—

The problem for Marx, then . . . is to show how the power of goods to exchange still depends on the amount of labour-time they contain; how the price of the article still follows the labour, although it admittedly follows the total amount of capital requisite for the thing's production.

If that is the problem, then undoubtedly it is insoluble. But before accepting this as the problem, let Scott show where Marx ever said (except where he deliberately assumes it) that "things (he means all commodities) fetch a

\*A. & C. Black, 3s. 6d. net.

price proportioned to the labour-time that is in them," or that he ever set out to show "how the price of the article still follows the labour" ? If Scott will try and answer this question he will undoubtedly understand Marx's system and method far better than he now does. But we cannot dismiss Dr. Scott like this. It would not be seemly. Let him develop his argument. He goes on to say (p. 30):—

No one has recognised the conditions of this problem more frankly than Marx himself. He sees that the proportion of the whole capital which is spent on labour varies. . . . In course of the progress of invention, the cost of plant becomes greater in proportion to the number of hands employed. . . . The digging of coal, for instance, is almost all labour. In some branches of modern engineering labour costs are very small compared with other costs. If, then, the price which the product fetches must tend to keep about enough to show an average profit on the whole capital, how can it vary with the labour, which is not a constant proportion of the whole capital? To answer this, Marx has recourse to many different turns of argument in the third volume of *Capital*; but he has no main line, for no line of argument can even approximate to a proof of a mathematical impossibility.

Poor Marx! And now comes the inevitable diagram, which we quote, as it may be of use later on.

	1		2	3	4	5
	Capitals		Rate of Surplus Value	Surplus Value	Value of Product	Rate of Profit
I.	80c	20v	100%	20	120	20
II.	70c	30v	"	30	130	30
III.	60c	40v	"	40	140	40
IV.	85c	15v	"	15	115	15
V.	95c	5v	"	5	105	5

This table, according to Scott, represents Marx making an effort—"one amongst many"—to get out of this impasse.

The first column shows the difference spent by the capitalist on machinery and raw materials (80c) and the amount spent on wages (20v), etc., the second shows the rate of exploitation: the third the amount of surplus value; the fourth, the value of product; and lastly the final column what ought to be the profits if the values went by labour.

"But," he continues, "they are not the profits. How does Marx get over this? He does it by making a distinction quite fatal to his theory. He distinguishes between the profits really made and the profits which actually come. The profits which actually come to the five capitals are all alike. . . . Through some contingency, by some side wind or other, there comes to each of the various capitals a profit of equal amount to all the others, so they all share an 'equal average rate of profit.'" So Marx has again failed! He goes on with more diagrams to illustrate this failure, and then gives us a hint as to the real source of Value. "On the data before us it plainly, as we said, does not come from labour alone. Equally plainly, labour has something to do with it. (Is not that rich?) The chances are that it comes from the labour and the constant capital together. At least it varies with that." But Marx makes another attempt, but this attempt is so poor that "there is some difficulty in so presenting it as to make it even look plausible." Still, Scott attempts in this way—"Even if value (and so profit) follows labour, there can still be an average rate of profit; because if you take all the capitals together and average the various amounts of labour they employ, you find that there is an average." "But," he says, "an argument like this has not even the appearance of plausibility. . . . We can argue nothing from the totality of commodities. If the difficulties cannot be got over by other means than that, they must remain."

NOAH ABLETT

(To be continued.)

## PRODUCTION AND POLITICS

## III

## THE OX AND THE PLOUGH

**H**ITHERTO we have traced the rudimentary methods of production from that vague and indefinite period of antiquity in which the ancestors of the commingled peoples who now inhabit these islands devised clay vessels, hardening them with fire; began to make leather from skins and to weave garments of fibres, vegetable or animal; commenced the cultivation of the soil by means of the digging-stick, and from it slowly evolved a more effective, if cumbersome, implement, and, taming certain beasts of the field, tended them for the milk which they afforded for making butter and cheese. Intimately connected with this tedious development of the productive processes we have observed the social organisation of mankind proceeding from the matriarchal groupings of a pre-family relationship to the pairing of man and woman, conscious, when in continuous intercourse, of their sexual inter-dependence, and so becoming, with the segregation of erstwhile hunted cattle into manageable herds, patriarchal groups of descendants from a common father giving cows to his children with which they came to win "their daily bread." The possession of the primitive means of production and their operation, whether digging tool, churn, or oven, did not recommend themselves to the men-folk, who were quite content, as among the Kaffirs, to have the hometied mothers do the work. As long as the tools of agriculture were such as a woman could quite well handle she might use them, but when they required the greater physical strength of a man to direct them, and his greater freedom of movement to push them out across the waste behind the cattle which were his charge and his possession, the productive processes had increasingly to be taken over by the man.

When man had to labour hard and continuously, organisation on a Kin basis began to pass into decline, and the authority of the father to partake of the disciplinary powers of the master.

We have noticed the grazing economy as it showed itself amongst the Cymric Celts in the social organisation of the gwely and the territorial reflex of the tref. In Ireland it resulted in a veritable hierarchy, based first on Kinship and then on possession of cows and of land adequate to their maintenance. Commencing with the freeman or *midboth* without a hearth and the mere fodder-allowance of "milk and stir-about," men rose to *og-aire* with seven cows and a bull, seven sheep, seven pigs and a cow-land for seven cows in payment for which one cow yearly was given to the chief; to a *bo-aire* with twelve cows received from his chief and land adequate for forty-two cows, which surplus of land and beasts he might hire out to the *og-aire* or to non-tribesmen; to an *aire-desa* with ten tenants and certain other proportionate dependants; to an *aire-ard* with twenty tenants; to an *aire-tinsi* with twenty-seven tenants, and an *aire-forgaill* with forty tenants. The last two took their stock from the *Ri-tuaithe* or King of a *Tuath*.

A *bo-aire*, or giver of cattle, having twice as much as an *aire-desa*, could become a *flaith* or chief if he had a green about his house and a fortified place within which he could give protection to the cattle of his tenantry. Chieftain-

ship in Ireland passed from mere Kinship precedence to precedence in wealth of cattle. There were similar qualifying gradations of descent through successive generations for non-freemen in Ireland to what there were in Wales, but, as in Scandinavia and in Scotland, possession of cattle became more and more the test of rank and rights.

Now, besides cows and the bull for breeding, the pastoral groups or grazing tenants had their proportion of *oxen* for purposes of ploughing.

In Wales, as we have seen, each trefgordd had its common plough to which the tribesmen contributed their oxen to make up the team of eight. Mr. Seebohm says that, with the Welsh, their agriculture was secondary, and consisted of the right to plough up portions of the waste yearly for the corn crop. In Ireland, the *og-aire* had one ox or a fourth-part of a four-ox team, and the *bo-aire* had two oxen or half of a plough team. In all probability, corn growing was carried on as an auxiliary to grazing, and was intended to contribute to the fodder supply of the animals as much as to the fare of the people. Be that as it might, agriculture at this stage was very crude and amongst both Celts and Germans was of the *open-field* type.

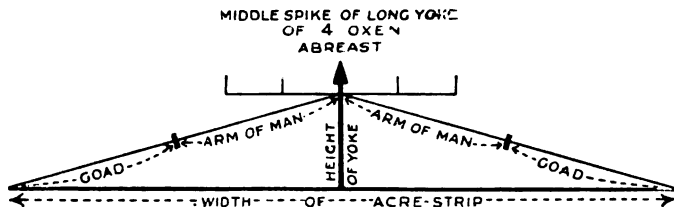
The tribe, whilst still unsettled and wandering from place to place, did not devote itself to the careful working of any patch of ground. Now, however, we must leave the pre-eminently pastoral economy with its tribal system in social organisation, and observe the development of agrarian economy and of the family group as it became so rooted in a particular settlement as to transfer more and more of its rights from itself through the herd to the land.

The word *hide* which, in Anglo-Saxon custom and law, was the term applied to the land pertaining to a free family and as much as it could bring under cultivation in a single year with an eight ox plough, may, in the opinion of Mr. Seebohm, have had reference at one time to an area devoted to grazing rather than to arable culture. The word was derived from *hiw* (=family), and so takes us right back to the same kind of social organisation as we saw in the Welsh *gwely*. The *ceorlisc man*, or husbandman, having an enclosure or hedge about the homestead of his family, rendered no week-work, and was, until the manorial system was well developed, by no means a servile tenant. He paid a *gafol* or something akin to a food rent to his superior, but paid no labour-service or week-work, and his status was higher than that of the *gebur* or tenant of the *yardland* or *virgate*, the land supporting two plough oxen who rendered not only *gafol*, but also a servile rent. The *gebur* would seem to be the successor of a non-tribesman who received crops and stock from the chieftain on whose land he had settled, and who gave for it not only the food-rent of a kinsman, but the unfree labour of a man without rights. Above the ordinary *ceorl* or *twyhyndman* were, at first, the *six-hyndman* and the *twelf-hyndman*. These became, as holders of five hides and of ten, noble not so much in blood as in possession of wealth in landed property. Beginning with rank in the Kin, nobility came to require reinforcement by territorial estate. The *six-hyndman* became a *thane*, and the *twelf-hyndman*, holding the fiscal unit of a King's food rent and attending on the monarch as his companion with coat of mail and helm and gilded sword, attained *gesithcund* status as a *royal thane*. A man with the full complement of twelve Kinsmen, with ten legal areas of plough-land and with Kingly recognition, the *gesithcundman* bridged the narrowing gulf between non-political and political society.

War, with its inroads upon the manhood of the Kindred and its insecurity

for the ordinary freeman, made more and more insecure the freedom of the lower grades of tribal society. In the laws of Ine in the beginning of the eighth century, the freedmen had ceased to rise and in the tenth century the six-hyndman had disappeared and the twy-hyndman or ceorl was being depressed to servile status. The men of the Kindred became divided into classes—the owners of land and the toilers upon the land. The owners of land, in gaining freedom from the responsibilities of Kinsmen lost also the strength of independence which their pledges gave them, and had to depend much more upon the King. On the other hand, the authority which they so derived from a law outside the Kindred enabled them to modify the tribal custom so as to readjust their relations with their dependants, and to change into something approaching villeinage or even serfdom the tenures of their geburs or husbandmen. The gesithcund man was transforming his King's fiscal unit into a *manor* to enable him—so he would have argued—more successfully to pay his dues to his superior. Professor Maitland defined the manor as the fiscal unit from which *gafol* was paid direct to the King, whilst the lord received payments and services from his tenants. It was an institution clamped down from above, a *quid pro quo* of royal sanction, a legal recognition of a usurped lordship. Besides the King, it had the endorsement of the Church. "The influence of the Church," says Mr. Seebohm, "also told in favour of the artificial and anti-tribal division of the people into great men and small men," and again, in discussing the development of the Anglo-Saxon laws, he urges "it must not be forgotten how much of the modification of custom found in the laws was due to the influence of Romanised ecclesiastical power." This new order of society, establishing its responsibilities, its rights and duties on the tenure of land and estimating their value not in cows, as heretofore, but in ox-lands as fractional plough-lands, had, so to speak, dug itself into the soil. It had its *botl*, its *burh* and its *flet* firmly planted upon its *hid* or its *yardland*. Unlike the Welsh *gwely*, the Anglo-Saxon *mægdh*, or Kindred, did not take up its hearth-flags and move from ground to ground. It stayed to win from the land the sustenance of its families, and this could only be obtained by strenuous exercise of human labour-power. Even before their settlement in England and lowland Scotland, it is probable that the Anglo-Saxons were substituting agriculture for grazing, and on their arrival here continued and developed their economy.

The *hid*, we have seen, was a plough-land, the area of land to be cultivated in a year by means of a plough and a team of eight oxen. It was divided into either four or six *yardlands*, and they again into two *oxgangs* apiece. The latter was the amount of land which an ox could plough in a year. The *acre* was the amount of land which an eight-ox plough-team could furrow in a day. The *furlong*, as its name implies, was the length of a furrow in the open-fields, and the breadth of the acre-strip was obtained—at any rate in Wales—by means which this diagram, taken from Mr. Seebohm's *Customary Acres*, will serve to make clearer than it might otherwise be.





This represents the teamster who, with one hand on the middle spike of the long yoke of eight oxen, stretches out his other arm to its full extent and, holding in that hand a goad as long as the long yoke, just touches the ground and so marks the edge of the acre strip now on one side and now on the other. Between these two edges is the breadth of the "small end" of the customary Welsh acre. Now the length of the goad or rod was equal to the "long yoke," and that was sixteen feet, which was also the length of the English "rod, pole or perch." Thus the linear and square measurements used to this day and evolved in the *hidage* of the village community of the *gwely* or of the Anglo-Saxon group of *hiws* are seen to have been multiples of the plough-yoke and of the plough-furrow. The smallest measurements were reckoned in lengths of wheat seed, whose weight, again, was taken to estimate the grains of silver and of gold to be equated with cows in the pastoral and with plough-land yields in the agricultural period. Lengths and areas, weights and values—all the means of calculating things tangible; titles and nobility; the chief constellation in the northern sky and the whole firmament of heaven revolving round the Pole of the Plough—these are some of the evidences that the prevailing means of production do influence predominantly the thoughts and institutions of mankind.

It is the areas determined by the habitations of the kinship fractions, or by the agricultural economy underlying territorial adjustments, which to this day bind society within the limitations of an archaic and outworn production and haunt our conservative minds with the ghosts of vanished social systems.

J. T. WALTON NEWBOLD

(To be continued)

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## WITH YOUR HELP

## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LABOUR VALUE THEORY

**I**N reading the very interesting and suggestive book, *Karl Marx*, translated by Eden and Cedar Paul from the Italian of Prof. Loria, which was recently reviewed in THE PLEBS, I was very surprised that Loria should throw over the Marxian labour value theory as untenable, and still more surprised that Eden and Cedar Paul should acquiesce in this, and state in their Foreword that the theory is not an essential part of the proof of "surplus-value" as capitalist exploitation.

Now, it seems to me, although I am not of the orthodox Marxian "school" but a supposed student of "bourgeois vulgar economy," that the conception of the equivalence of labour and value is the very kernel of the Marxian theory. It has been truly said that the conception of value is the most fundamental of all [in economics. Surely without the labour value theory Marxian economics lack a basic foundation; they are "in the air," and must either become a mere appendage of "bourgeois" economics, or fall disastrously to the ground? It was by rejecting the labour value theory that Böhm-Bawerk and the "Austrian school" sought to combat the Marxian theory of "capitalist exploitation." If Marxians themselves abandon the labour value theory, do not they surrender everything into the hands of the "Austrian school"?

Loria's theory of "differentiated income," similarly to Dr. Graziadei's theory of "surplus product," may be an important contribution to Marxian economics, and no doubt investigates a very important aspect of "surplus value." But without the theory of labour value as a foundation, it offers absolutely no proof of the existence of "surplus value" in the sense in which Marx used it, namely, as a measure of "exploitation." Without such a basis it is very far from being "proof against enemy attack." The "bourgeois" economists themselves admit the existence of this "surplus product," to use Graziadei's term. But since they make utility instead of labour the underlying principle of value, they see this "surplus product" not as "exploitation," but as the product and hence the rightful reward of the capitalist class. Mallock formulated in his *Critical Examination of Socialism* a theory based, as is Loria's, on the difference between the product of isolated labour and the product of associated labour. But, taking utility as his principle of value, he asserted that the superior productivity of labour under capitalism was solely due to the organising ability and the foresight of the capitalist class, and that, therefore, on the contrary to labour (the proletariat) getting less than it produced (measured in utility), it got considerably more. Likewise, Mr. Hartley Withers, in his new book, *The Case for Capitalism*, since he starts by making the keystone of his case the measurement of value by utility, fully accepts the existence of a "surplus product," but seeks to refute the claim that this "surplus" is "exploitation," by showing that, without the help of "capital," labour would not have produced it, and that, therefore, this "surplus product" is the product of "capital."

The only real and fundamental refutation of these arguments is the Marxian theory of the equivalence of value and labour: the theory that the value of a commodity is determined by the cost in abstract labour of producing that commodity—a *quantitative* relation; and not by the utility arising from the social demand for that commodity—a *qualitative* relation. The "contradictions" of this theory do not seem to me to exist. Even "bourgeois" economists admit that the natural law of value in a society free from "class stratification" and with

free competition ruling would be a labour value theory. Prof. Taussig, of Harvard, says:—

If competition were perfectly free—if there were no non-competing groups [*i.e.*, “classes”] . . . it would be possible to maintain a labour theory of value: that the value of commodities measured or embodied the labour given to producing them.—(*Principles* Vol. ii.)

And there does not appear to me to be any valid reason why this theory should not apply as much to products of brain as of hand labour.

Now, it is unnecessary for me to point out that Marx dealt with three forms of value—“use-value” or utility, “exchange-value,” and “value”—and it was the latter which he asserted to be determined by labour. This conception of value, it appears to me, is an abstract, underlying principle, but is not for that reason any the less important; whereas “exchange-value” is a more or less concrete reality, which is always tending to be equal to “value,” by which it is governed; just as the surface of the sea, to quote an oft-repeated analogy, always *tends* to be, but seldom actually is equal to the abstraction, the “sea level,” which is governed by the law of gravity. Hence I see no contradiction of this law in the fact that “exchange-value” does not in many cases exactly coincide with labour value. It is sufficient to show that the *tendency* is there.

Space and the patience of my readers will not permit me to examine fully the important question of how far this principle, which Marx used in order to show in the simple and in the abstract the nature of capitalism, governs “exchange value” and the creation of “surplus value” in the concrete under the conditions of class-stratification and class-monopoly of capitalism, where free and equal competition does not exist. But, perhaps, the following hasty and incomplete observation will give sufficient reasons to uphold the truth of the theory.

“Surplus value,” in the “parlance” of bourgeois economics, is in the nature of a “scarcity rent” accruing to holders of scarce factors of production. This “rent” does not determine, but is determined by, the exchange-value of commodities. What, then, determines this exchange-value? The Austrian school say utility. But utility is an unstable basis, for it itself varies with and depends upon the amount of money in the hands of consumers, and this in its turn depends upon the income of the capitalist class, and we are arguing in a circle. To discover the primary determinant of the exchange-value of commodities, and hence of “surplus value,” we must go back to the condition—the historical condition of the first development of capitalism—of a capitalist community exchanging its products with a non-capitalist community. How will the exchange-value in this case be determined? Obviously, by the labour cost of producing them, since this will be the real cost to, and hence value of, the commodities to the non-capitalist, free and equal community. The standard of value will, therefore, in this way be established in the capitalist community in equivalence to labour cost, and this will in turn determine the ratio and amount of “surplus value”—the total value of commodities, minus the value of the labour-power expended in producing them.

Therefore, I maintain that the labour value theory is the very essence of the Marxian theory of “capital,” as the underlying principle of value, which illustrates the fundamental nature and mechanism of capitalism in the simple and in the abstract, to which principle the concrete tends to approximate, in so far as varying circumstances do not impose obstacles to the working of this principle. Hence I cannot see the “contradictions” which Loria asserts to exist. For Marx, in addition to exploding “the sacred theory of profit” and showing the

true nature of capitalism, also solved the problem of "the just price," which the mediæval canonists debated ethically from an unstable, ideological and sentimental standpoint, by establishing a scientific economic principle, which is the fundamental basis of all value.

MAURICE H. DOBB (*Sec., Cambridge Univ. Labour Club*)

### EXTENSION OF THE LABOUR COLLEGE

PLEBS readers will be interested to learn that the number of Trade Union Scholarships tenable at the Labour College has increased so considerably as to necessitate an immediate extension of premises. The present buildings in Penywern Road are not capable of accommodating more than the number of students in residence during the past year—28—together with the resident staff; and the new students due to appear this month would have been confronted with "Standing Room Only" notices, had not steps been taken to meet the growing demand for seats at the feet of Our Own Gamaliels.

The Governors are to be heartily congratulated on having decided upon a scheme which will not merely meet immediate requirements, but will afford ample opportunity for further development as the need arises. They recommended to the Executives of the two Unions owning the College the purchase of a house and grounds at Kew; and the Executives, acting with praiseworthy promptitude, decided a fortnight ago to proceed at once with the purchase of this property.

The existing buildings at Kew afford about the same accommodation as the present College buildings at Earl's Court. New buildings are, therefore, necessitated at once, and the scheme authorises the erection of one block which would permit of the College having 70 students in residence. Sufficient land has been acquired, however, to add further buildings as required, and at a rough estimate it will be possible ultimately to accommodate about 300 students.

The initial cost, covering the purchase of the property and the erection of one block of new buildings, will amount to £21,000. Every further extension would cost, approximately, £15,000 for every additional 40 resident students. The scheme authorised by the N.U.R. and S.W.M.F. Executives provides that Trade Unions desirous of joining in the ownership and control of the College may do so on the basis of financial shares proportionate to the number of Scholarships they desire to endow. Trade Unionists anxious to interest their own Unions in the work of the College should write the Secretary (Labour College, Penywern Road, Earl's Court, S.W.5) and request that full particulars be forwarded to their head offices.

We of the PLEBS, who have watched the growth of the College from its "tremulous beginnings," cannot but congratulate all concerned on this notable step forward. The site and location of the new premises, the plans suggested for the new buildings—based on the experience gained during the past few years of actual College work—and the provision made for further development, all these points have been dealt with admirably. The Labour College, indeed, may now quickly become the first Labour University.

Prologue: Ruskin College. Act I, Bradmore Road, Oxford. Act II, Penywern Road, Earl's Court. Act III, The Royal Borough of Kew. The curtain will go up

shortly on what promises to be the most notable scene in the powerful drama (it's going to be a tragedy for some folks)—*Labour Looks After Itself, or Independence First and Impartiality Also Ran*.

And there is satisfactory news, too, from Glasgow, where the Scottish College is expecting a better year than ever. Let the good work go on!

## CORRESPONDENCE

## A POSTCARD REVIEW

**D**EAR COMRADE,—Please give me a line or two of space to recommend Geo. Daggar's book, *Increased Production*, to Plebeians. It is a very useful collection of information, and (a not unimportant point) its price is exceedingly reasonable.

Yours, etc., S.

[We owe Comrade Daggar apologies, and he owes us the same; we, for not having reviewed his book, and he for never having sent us a copy to review.—Ed. PLEBS.]

## ANTI-LEWIS

**DEAR COMRADE**,—Now that Lenin, in *The State and Revolution*, has placed F. Engels securely by the side of Marx as a co-equal in the formulation of proletarian principles, I take leave to air a grievance which I have long waited to see expressed by some other scientific Socialist.

Messrs. C. H. Kerr publish Engels' *Anti-Duehring* under the title of *Landmarks of Scientific Socialism*—so far as I know the only English form of this work. It has an "Introduction" and an "Appendix" by Austin Lewis. My complaint is that a work such as this, sandwiched between Austin Lewis's "criticism," and the guts taken out of it to form another book, is sent out to the reading public as a work of Engels'.

In this outpost of Socialism we are not fitted for critique writing, and I wish some British comrade would expose this "editing" of Socialist classics. We all have to pass our period of priggishness, but later we have the sense to burn all traces of it in the kitchen grate. Austin Lewis has either not acquired that sense, or has had the misfortune to have his first schoolboy

priggishness embalmed for all time by his publishers.

"Much of this work," says Lewis, "is valueless to-day. . . . The battle has long since rolled away from the ground on which Engels fought. His arguments on the dialectic are common-places to-day. . . ." "Engels," we are further told, "cannot release himself altogether from the bonds of the bourgeois doctrine which he is so anxious to despise. He is in many respects . . . a bourgeois politician possessed at intervals with a proletarian ghost." Nevertheless, "since the days of 1875, the world has come to accept the general correctness of Engels' point of view" (p. 17). But don't swell your chest too much, because by the time you come to the Appendix you will be assured once more "that much of Engels' argument is now antiquated."

Now I don't ask for hero-worship; but I do want some tendentious definite-point-of-view criticism, not mere carping.

In conclusion, I don't know much about the dialectic. I cannot myself formulate it so as to give it vivid expression. But Austin Lewis ends this Appendix of his with the most amateurish handling of the word "dialectic." Can it be scientific to say that "the dialectic of the United States is in course of development" (p. 265). "The development of the United States is in course of development" would be better!

In short, the whole of Austin Lewis's book (I cannot call it Engels') is an attempt, a priggish attempt, to belittle Engels. And if this work is needed for social science classes, an edition more worthy of the Engels that Lenin shows should be contemplated.

Yours fraternally

D. I. JONES

(Editor, *The International*, Johannesburg).

**Q, IMPORTANT:** Will you let us have your orders for next month's issue (New Series, 32 pp., 6d.) by the 15th inst. *at latest*? We want a record circulation next month, and we can do it *easily* if our friends will all shove together. While we're about it, let's have a RECORD WINTER—classes, text-books and Magazine. Enough of Modest Violet business! Let's show the Non-Partisan People

**WHAT WE CAN DO!**

## STUDENTS' PAGE

## ECONOMICS

(1) Q.—Can you enumerate some of the most frequently used objections to the Labour Theory of Value?

A.—The following are fairly typical examples. The older ones are based on a complete ignorance of the all-important "socially necessary" part of the definition. The confusion between value and price leads more modern critics into all kinds of intricate re-statements of the very simple law of supply and demand. Prof. W. S. Jevons gives in his *Primer* (1892) the case of a book that nobody buys, of a Thames Tunnel that nobody used until the railways required it, of gold which is just as valuable whether picked up by an Australian shepherd on the hill-side or produced by varying quantities of labour owing to the differences in particular mines, and of pearls which, like gold, have value, because of "the eagerness of want" for them.

Then there are also virgin soil, antique furniture, and the masterpieces of artists, which, as has been repeatedly explained by Marxians, take the price form in capitalist society when they are privately owned.

The Fabians, who think that the Marxian theories are fast becoming superseded by the more "accurate generalisations" of Marginal Utility, use the umbrella illustration (Fabian Pamphlet 142) as a forerunner of many attempts to show that value is determined by the state of mind of the purchaser, who does not want in this case a second umbrella. The man who is very cold and so would be willing to pay a high price for a ton of coal—the man who is very hungry and hence will pay a high sum for a meal—there are many variants of the same idea. Cahn satirises a Professor Seager who discusses the "value" of the twentieth cartridge which saves a man's life compared to the other 19 used before it. These so-called investigations into exchange value are in the pre-Sir William Petty period; and he, in 1699, resolved to leave to others, non-economists, "the mutable Minds, Opinions, Appetites and Passions of particular Men" (*Critique*, p. 57). The comment of our American comrade on these "marginal utility" explanations is worth quoting. "This latter (marginal utility) is nothing but a clever mask which, when raised a little, reveals the old stupid face of 'the demand and supply theory of value.'"

The reverse argument to that which in the case of the picked-up gold nugget, discerned value without labour, is used in the ingenious story of the man who spends labour carrying a discovered half-crown to a bank only to find that it will not increase his account because it is a bad one. There, say the objectors, labour has been expended, but no value has been created. In the Economics of the Vulgarists all kinds of unlikely things, such as picking up gold nuggets and carrying bad sixpences to banks happen. If these people would only read Marx and understand once for all what the words "socially

necessary" cover, they might save their brain cudgelling in search of fantastic exceptions.

Gide, in his *Principles of Political Economy* (pp. 61-63) strikes another trail. The best rib steak of a beast is of more value than its tail or its head when sold in the butcher's shop. Now, since the same amount of labour was necessary to produce the head as the steak they should be the same in value, and as they are not the Labour Theory is false. It is hard to know why Gide chose the parts of a beast when he might have found a greater contrast, say, in a filleted haddock or in stoned raisins; he can get the bones or the stones for the asking! The relation between the palate and the various parts of a cow is the natural basis of cattle breeding, just as the time needed for fermentation (natural labour as distinct from human labour) is the natural basis of wine production. The economists, who cannot separate particular labours from labour in general, or distinguish exchange value from use value, are yet very keen in making such impossible separations as the one instanced above.

But it has been left to Mr. Harold Cox, speaking at Merthyr in May last, to demonstrate finally the absurdity of the Labour Theory. He is reported to have told his audience that, according to the Marxian Law, a demolished house would be more valuable than one fit for residence, because more labour has been spent upon it! Obviously, the reply is that society certainly does not think the labour of pulling down *inhabitable* houses "necessary." Mr. Cox confuses two distinct processes. (1) The labour socially necessary to build a house, (2) the labour socially necessary to turn an uninhabitable house into stacks of material available for some future use. His *reductio ad absurdum* is a truly piteous failure.

The "chaplains of the pirate ship" have a hard life!

## GEOGRAPHIC CONTROL

Arising out of the reply concerning "geographic control" and the static state of China it is interesting to note what Marx says about these factors when he discusses (Vol. I, pp. 520-524) the natural basis of surplus-value. To those who think that Marx paid no regard to these things the following passage should be of interest. "Capitalist production once assumed, then, all other circumstances remaining the same, and given the length of the working day, the quantity of surplus labour will vary with the *physical conditions of labour and the fertility of the soil*. But it by no means follows from this that the most fruitful soil is the most fitted for the capitalist mode of production. This mode is based on the dominion of man over nature. Where nature is too lavish, she 'keeps him in hand, like a child in leading strings.' She does not impose upon him any necessity to develop himself. Not the tropics with their luxuriant vegetation, but the temperate zone is the mother country of capital. It is not the mere fertility of the soil, but the differentiation of the soil, the variety of its natural products, the changes of the seasons

which form the physical basis for the social division of labour and which, by changes in the natural surroundings, spur man on to the multiplication of his wants, his capabilities, his means and modes of labour." Then he passes on to show how these possibilities are converted into realities by the control by society over these natural forces. Man lives not only in nature, but in society.

Here is also another interesting reference (pp. 350-2) to the unchangeableness of Asiatic societies as explained by the simple division of labour and the self-sufficing nature of these communities. The Indian village community is quoted as an illustration and Marx contrasts "the constant dissolution and refounding of the Asiatic States and the never-ceasing changes of

dynasty" with unaltered economic life of the village community. "The structure of the economical elements of society remains untouched by the storm-clouds of the political sky."

But foreign trade succeeds in doing what warring dynasties failed to do. Rent in kind was one of the secrets of the conservation of the Ottoman Empire." Marx wrote (p. 118 *ibid*) with keen foresight of actual happenings:—"If the foreign trade, forced upon Japan by Europeans, should lead to the substitution of money rents for rents in kind, it will be all up with the exemplary agriculture of that country. The narrow economical conditions under which that agriculture is carried on will be swept away."

M. S.

## NEWS OF THE MOVEMENT

### BRANCH DIRECTORY

**A**NY Plebs League member willing to form a branch in his or her locality should write to the Secretary at once, and get his address added to this list. It is more than ever necessary to have a Plebs Centre in every district.

**LONDON.**—**HACKNEY.**—G. Vandome (*protém.*), 32 Queensdown Road, E.5. **STRATFORD.**—A. E. Dennington, 518 Romford Road, Forest Gate, E.7. **HAMPSTEAD.**—Miss Ivy Collins, 6 Brookside Road, Golders Green, N. **WALTHAMSTOW.**—G. W. Brain, 51 Cleveland Park Avenue, E.17. **WOOLWICH.**—L. Barnard, 84 Granby Road, Eltham, **BARKING.**—R. F. Martin, 47 Clarkson Road, Barking.

**LIVERPOOL.**—D. O'Hagan, 74B Limekiln Lane.

**CHESTERFIELD.**—F. Rogers, Rock Side, Brimington Road, Tapton.

**HALIFAX.**—Miss A. Crabtree, 1 Tyson Street, Parkinson Lane.

**WORTHING.**—H. H. Hellier, Claremont, Browning Road.

**BURY.**—J. Ainsworth, 24 Openshaw Street.

**TREDEGAR.**—F. W. Francis, 132 Charles Street, Tredegar.

**LEIGH.**—T. Macwalter, 86 Firs Lane.

**BRADFORD.**—Mrs. A. Coates, 141 Girlington Road.

**MANSFIELD.**—G. J. Williams, 48 St. Andrews Terrace, Littleworth.

**DERBY.**—W. Ellison, 184 Brighton Road.

**COVENTRY.**—H. Hinksman, 11 George Eliot Road.

**MANCHESTER.**—J. McGee, Woodlands Lodge, Crescent Road, Crumpsall.

**NORWICH.**—A. Segon, 41 Stafford Street.

**WORKINGTON.**—M. Campbell, Rose Cottage, Stainburn.

**SHEFFIELD.**—J. Madin, 109 Devonshire Street.

**UPPER RHONDDA.**—D. W. Thomas, 29 Clark Street, Treorchy.

**PONTNEWNYDD.**—W. G. Davies, Myrtle House, Pontrepiod.

**GARNANT.**—D. R. Owen, Stepney Villas.

The vote for the Executive Committee has resulted as follows:—

George Sims .. .. .	254 votes
Mark Starr .. .. .	254 "
Lancelot Hogben .. .. .	196 "
R. W. Postgate .. .. .	179 "
C. T. Pendrey .. .. .	171 "
J. Burns .. .. .	166 "
B. Skene McKay .. .. .	136 "

C. Terry .. .. .	120 "
T. Ashcroft .. .. .	115 "
G. Mason .. .. .	110 "
Tom McKay .. .. .	107 "
J. Oxley .. .. .	74 "

The first seven are accordingly elected for the current year.

\* \* \*

**MANSFIELD** is busy organising a Special Conference to be held at the Baptist Lecture Hall, Stockwell Gate, on Saturday, September 25, at 2.30 p.m., and the Secretary, G. J. Williams, 48 St. Andrew's Terrace, Littleworth (the fellow who sells the PLEBS in that district), will be glad to supply particulars and receive donations towards cost from all interested Trade Unionists in the district. W. W. Craik and W. H. Mainwaring are billed to speak. Comrade Williams writes: "In June you told us Sheffield had increased their sale of PLEBS by 100. We at Mansfield have increased our sale by sixty since December last. Sheffield is at least ten times larger than Mansfield, so they will have to get a move on or they'll be a back number." We like this sort of rivalry. Go it, little 'un!

\* \* \*

The **NOTTINGHAM** district is particularly lively just now. Stapleford class has been recommenced, and the Secretary, A. E. Burrows, 5 South Terrace, Eaton's Road, Stapleford, will be glad to hear from local comrades. Two classes are to be held, one in Philosophy [Dietzgen], tutor: Com. Holland of Long Eaton; the other in Economics [Marxian], tutor: Com. E. Grooms of Sandiacre. The forthcoming conference at Mansfield should bring all the ardent spirits in this district together, and all Plebeians are urged to do their utmost to help. This is a

good district for propoganda, and we are lucky in having a nucleus of good workers.

\* \* \*

LEIGH Plebs branch has met each week during the summer and had a discussion class which has—to quote the secretary—“kept an edge on” things educational in that district. Meetings are held at the Leigh Socialist Club at 7.30 p.m. on Thursdays, until September 23, when an Industrial History Class will begin and run till Christmas. It is hoped to arrange for an economics class after Christmas, all classes being under the auspices of the Leigh and District Independent Working-Class Education Council, to which the Leigh Plebs branch is affiliated.

\* \* \*

Comrade Will Hewitt, Hon. Sec. of the “West Yorkshire Council of the Labour College,” reports enthusiasm and high hopes for a good winter session in the Bradford districts.

Heckmondwike, Cleckheaton, and Liversedge (these really are places in Yorkshire, strange as their names may seem) are all anxious to have classes and to link up. PLEBS will be pushed, and the Yorkshire tykes know good value when they see it, so that there is no fear of the Sixpenny PLEBS failing in this district! Congratulations and good wishes.

\* \* \*

SHEFFIELD Labour College sends a wonderfully encouraging report of recent activities.

Eleven classes with 250 students attending, a good sound financial backing with 75 organisations affiliated, and a fine sale of literature, make up a record. All trade union branches in the district are now being circularised with a view to spreading a network of classes next session, and great credit is due to E. Bradshaw, F. Horsfield, and the unnamed band of comrades who must have given their whole hearts to the work. The winter session is sure to bring its reward in increased support. The following very interesting Syllabus of Lectures (now drawing to a close) will give some idea of the sort of lecture course adopted:—

#### “INDUSTRIAL HISTORY”

##### (REVOLUTIONARY PERIODS)

(1) Revolutions: (B. Rollins), (2) Slavery: Slave Revolts (W. Sorby), (3) Feudalism: Conflict between King and Barons (J. Bowns), (4) Villeinage: Peasants' Revolts (A. V. Williams), (5) The Communes of the Middle Ages: Revolution of the Burghers, (6) The Commercial Revolution (F. Horsfield), (7) Divine Right Monarchy: The “Glorious” Revolution (Miss E. Bennett), (8) The Industrial Revolution (J. W. Ibbotson), (9) The French Revolution (E. Bradshaw), (10) The Chartist Movement (J. Madin), (11) Europe in Revolution, 1848 (J. Royle), (12) The Paris Commune (Mrs. Rollins), (13) The Russian Revolution (Dr. Chandler).

## REVIEWS

### ABOUT GEOGRAPHY

*The Lure of the Map.* By W. P. JAMES. (Methuen. 5s. net.)

THIS little book is not a textbook of economic or historical geography. It should, nevertheless, prove of absorbing interest to teachers or students of the subject. In half-a-dozen essays the author packs a tremendous mass of useful and informative matter under such headings as “Pilgrims, Pirates, and Merchant Adventurers,” “Odysseys Old and New,” and “The Lure of the Map.” And he writes in a way calculated to arouse an answering enthusiasm in his readers. He loves maps.

If you are lucky enough to have a mind stored with literature and history, each page of your Atlas should bring with it a wealth of imaginative recreation to cheat time in your solitude. . . . Meditate just for a minute or two on what the map meant to a mind like Gibbon's, as his eye travelled from Rome to Ravenna and back to Pavia and Milan, or swept from Bagdad to Cordova, or from Scandinavia to Apulia and Sicily. It meant the vast procession of European history, the Empire, the Church, the wanderings and invasions of the barbarians, the birth of the modern nations. . . .

These essays are full of the fascination of maps, and of information about the men who

## A FABLE

“SIXPENNY,” said a Worker who called himself Class-Conscious, “is a lot of money for a Mere Magazine.” And he went to the Movies. And he paid one-and-threepence for a seat—Without a Murmur. And all he brought away with him was a Headache.

Think it over.



have made them—explorers, writers, navigators, merchants, soldiers. And there are some suggestive comments, too, on historical happenings.

The Crusades make the dividing line between the old geography and the new, between the old world of the Mediterranean and the new world of ocean travel. . . . As wars of religion, the Crusades were a failure. . . . But their fruits were none the less real; and they were the fruits of travel and human intercourse. Pope Urban and Peter the Hermit sowed; but it was science and discovery, the scholastic philosophers and the men of the Renaissance, Marco Polo, Vasco da Gama, Columbus, who gathered the harvest.

Or again—

The mightiest Crusaders came from Norman (Northman) France and Norman England. The Crusades were the culmination of the Viking raids as much as of the Christian pilgrimages.

These essays, I repeat, do not make up a textbook. But they assuredly do contain a good deal of valuable *illustrative* matter. And a book which fires the student—as this book does—with a keen desire to know more of his subject, is certainly not without educational value.

J. F. H.

#### I.L.P. PAMPHLETS

*The Trusts Grip Cotton.* By ZEPH. HUTCHINSON. (I.L.P., Johnson's Court, E.C.4. 3d.)

Recent big deals in the cotton industry—to the extent of millions of pounds—are having a two-fold effect. One is the concentration of the ownership and control of the textile industry in a relatively few hands. The other is the over-capitalisation of the industry—to such an extent that one can already hear the cotton lords pleading a low rate of profit in reply to the demands of the textile workers. Both aspects are lucidly treated in this excellent pamphlet, which goes on to advocate "One Big Union" for the textile industry and a whole-heartedly militant policy for its members. Plebeians should make a point of getting and reading it.

*Co-Operation, An Economic and Political Force.* By J. Penny. (I.L.P. 2d.)

Mr. Penny's efforts to reconcile "divi" hunting with Socialist ideals are not without humour. But they are unconvincing. And his economics are weird and wonderful.

A. B.

#### REAL DEMOCRACY

*Real Democracy in Operation.* By FELIX BONJOUR. (Allen and Unwin. 7s. 6d. net.)

Swiss democracy, according to our author, is *real* democracy. (Whether the implied condemnation of all other brands is intended or not, we are not quite sure.) This description of it is presumably written to emphasize its superiority over "ocracies" of other kinds—Bolshevik tyrannies and so forth. Nothing like exhibiting existing institutions in the most favourable light at a time when stupid workers all over Europe

are threatening to throw the lot into the melting-pot! Strange that in Switzerland itself (*vide* Appendix) there should have been "revolutionary assaults" on so perfect a system. But the outbreak was met with the full force of the "democratic State." The "law-abiding men" got together, and announced their determination to defend "real democracy" to the last drop. . . . You can read all about it for *seven-and-six*. But it's scarcely value for money.

E. C. S.

#### THREE PAMPHLETS

*Tariffs and the Workers.* By BROUGHAM VILLIERS. (Labour Party, 33 Eccleston Square, S.W.1.)

So far as workers need trouble themselves about Tariff Reform, they will find this pamphlet a valuable antidote to the cackle of those who seek to hide capitalist inefficiency under the cloak of "Protection for Home Industries."

*An Appeal to the Young.* By JAS. STUART. (W.S.F., 400 Old Ford Road, E.3.)

The simplicity of style and of argument should ensure this pamphlet a wide circulation—not only amongst the young to whom it is addressed, but amongst all Socialists.

*The Logic of the Machine.* By W. F. HAY. (W.S.F., 400 Old Ford Road, E.3.)

A brilliant analysis of capitalist society. Comrade Hay traces the development of the machine, demonstrates its effects upon social relations, and shows how men, having subdued the forces of Nature by means of the machine, have become the slaves of their own creation. This pamphlet should be read by all who realise that the first step towards mastering a thing is to understand it.

W. P. C.

#### LANSBURY ON RUSSIA

*What I saw in Russia.* By GEO. LANSBURY. (Parsons. 4s. 6d. net.)

For those who have already studied all the evidence available about Soviet Russia, including the writings of the Bolshevik leaders, there is little that is really new in George Lansbury's book. Nevertheless, it is a particularly interesting contribution to the literature of the subject, because it enables one, to a greater extent than a much more skilfully written book might do, to get a first-hand impression of what Russia is like to-day.

The next best thing to seeing a country for oneself is, at all events, to see it through the eyes of someone whose character, predilections, and habits of mind one knows fairly well. We in this country know George Lansbury. And with our knowledge of him to help us we get a decidedly *living* impression of the people and scenes he describes. We know—more or less—the standards he will judge by; we have a fairly definite notion of what things are likely to appeal to him and what are not. And since he never either speaks or writes without revealing his honesty of purpose and singleness of heart, his account of

what he saw in Russia was bound to have a special interest of its own.

During the short time at his disposal, he travelled a good deal and observed many and varied phases of Russian life. His admiration for the Soviet leaders, and for the gigantic tasks they have already achieved, is whole-hearted. Particularly was he impressed by the educational

work which is being carried on everywhere, and by the efforts made on behalf of the children.

This is certainly a book to put into the hands of any worker—if any such still exists—who is inclined to swallow Capitalist Press dope about Bolshevism and what it actually means.

E. J. E.

## THE PLEBS BOOKSHELF

ONE of the most interesting items in next month's PLEBS will be the first instalment of an essay by Lunacharsky, the Soviet Commissary for Education, on "Working Class Culture." This has been specially translated for the PLEBS, and we hope—if our finances permit—to issue it later in pamphlet form. Its theme is the need for a new culture, a proletarian culture, and the extent to which this new culture must necessarily grow out of those which have preceded it—a highly appropriate subject, as Plebeians will agree, with which to inaugurate the new series of a journal devoted to working-class education. Other features of the October number will be a contribution by "A Biologist"; further instalments of Newbold's "Production and Politics" series and of Ablett's onslaught on The Latest Marx Critic; an article on "Economic Geography," being a discussion of the ground to be covered in the forthcoming Plebs textbook on that subject; and reviews of recent books and pamphlets. Mark Starr will continue the "Student's Page," and tutors and students are invited to suggest points to be dealt with. Finally, we hope our readers will make use of the Correspondence section for the discussion of matters interesting to the classes—arrangement of syllabuses, methods of presentation, etc., etc. We are only too glad to publish letters from correspondents who have something to say, and who say it tersely and clearly. Cost of production necessitates deletion of all rhetoric.

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J. P. M. Millar, whose initials will be familiar to PLEBS readers, having completed his term of residence at the Labour College, is now engaged in tutorial work in the Edinburgh district, and we confidently anticipate excellent reports on his abilities in this direction. Millar's notes and comments on H. G. Wells' *Outline of History* have embodied a good deal of useful criticism, and Plebeians might do worse than bind or paste them into their copies of that work. We are looking forward to his review of Part 21, with its discussion of Marx and Owen, and of the Mechanical Revolution. Which reminds us that the *Manchester Guardian* of August 23 briefly reported an address delivered by Mr. Wells at a History Summer School at Birmingham, entitled "An Apology for Utopians." In the course of this address, Mr. Wells said that "he regarded the failure of the Soviet Government

to establish Socialism as due to their non-Utopian methods. They came into power *with a doctrine instead of a vision.*" Now, without wishing to commit ourselves as to the implied antithesis between "doctrine" and "vision," may we ask Mr. Wells this question:—President Wilson—so, at least, Mr. Wells has often told us—was a man with a vision when he came to Europe at the end of 1918. Leaving aside all question of the merits or otherwise of his "vision," did he—the Man of Vision—fare any better when he came face to face with realities? Has he made any better showing than the Russian "Doctrinaires" have done in their fight against the obstacles in their path? Admit that Russia to-day falls short in a thousand respects of one's ideal Socialist Republic; and assume that President Wilson's League of Nations was a desirable "vision"; which of the two—the Soviet Republic, built by Doctrinaires, or the League of Nations, planned by a Man with a Vision—would appear to be based on the soundest foundations? . . . But we must leave it to J. P. M. M. to deal further with Mr. Wells' criticisms of Marxism; only observing that in our opinion the footnotes, which are not the least interesting part of *The Outline of History*, ought in some future edition to include one or two by a capable Marxian scholar.

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Zinovieff's booklet, *N. Lenin: His Life and Work* (Communist Party, 7d. net), affords ample evidence that Lenin, though he be no Utopian, is assuredly a Man with a Vision. Take the description of him sitting "high up in the balcony and unperceived by the public, looking down on the delegates" to the Petrograd Workers' Committee (Soviet) during the revolution of 1905. "I believe," says Zinovieff, "that in those days he already foresaw the time when . . . the Soviets, prototypes of the Socialist proletarian State, would become the supreme authority in the country." Had the man no vision who could see in these workers' committees, crude and half-conscious though they might be, the nucleus of a new social order? Zinovieff compares Lenin with Marat; and it is interesting to note that of all the French Revolutionary leaders it is Marat whom Mr. Wells appears most to admire. . . . But this paragraph is written to commend Zinovieff's book to all Plebs, and not to discuss Visionaries or Doctrinaires. (Interesting to note that both words carry a suspicion of contempt with them.)

J. F. H.

# THE PLEBS LEAGUE

## OBJECT

To further the interests of independent working-class education as a partisan effort to improve the position of Labour in the present and to assist in the abolition of wage-slavery.

## METHODS

To assist in the formation of classes in social science, such classes to be maintained and controlled, wherever possible, by Trade Unions, Trade Councils, and other working-class organisations.

The issuing of a monthly magazine, mainly devoted to the discussion of Labour questions, theoretical and practical.

The assistance in every way of the development of the Labour College or any other working-class educational institution with the same educational policy.

## MEMBERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Each member shall pay 1s. a year to the Central

Fund of the League, subscriptions to date from January to December.

Individual members, wherever possible, shall form branches to which local organisations can affiliate. Every such branch to be responsible for its own expenses and to have a voting strength at the Annual Meeting according to its membership.

Any alteration in the constitution shall be decided by a Postal Ballot of the individual members.

The seven Executive Members of the League, the Secretary and the Editor of the Magazine shall be elected by Postal Ballot.

Membership is open to everyone in sympathy with the object of the League. Write for propaganda leaflet to the Hon. Sec., Plebs League, 11A Penywern Road, Earl's Court, S.W.5.

## STOP PRESS ITEMS

### S. WALES

Don't forget PLEBS Conference, Cory Hall, Cardiff, Saturday, September 4, 2.30.

\* \* \*

### MANSFIELD

PLEBS Conference, Saturday, September 25, 2.30. Write G. J. Williams, 48 St. Andrew's Terrace, Littleworth.

\* \* \*

### FINANCE

The response to our appeal for CASH last month was prompt and generous. But we're not yet—by a long way!—out of the wood. We've some big printers' bills to meet, and we want to settle them *soon*, so that we can start the New Textbook Series with a clean slate. On another page of this issue you'll read about the thousands of pounds now being spent on the Labour College. Don't confuse us with the College—we've not been taken over by wealthy Trade Unions, and though we are more than glad to know of the College's prosperity, we would point out that the propaganda work which is our own particular job is as much needed as ever—and costs a good deal more than ever! If you can get your T.U. branch to make us a grant towards our Publication Fund, or if you can yourself send us a donation, our Secretary will think of you with gratitude.

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