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June, 1921

THE PLEBS

AGITATE EDUCATE ORGANISE

He will be a
smart policeman
who can arrest the
spread of ideas.

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THE PLEBS LEAGUE

CONSTITUTION

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 aid in the abolition of wage-slavery.

METHODS

Assisting in the formation of classes in social science, such classes to be maintained and controlled, wherever possible, by Trade Unions, Trade Councils, or other working-class organisations. The issuing of a monthly magazine. 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

SUBSCRIPTION. Each member shall pay 2s. 6d. a year to the central fund of the League, subscriptions to run from January to December.

BRANCHES. Individual members shall wherever possible form branches. Every such branch to be responsible for its own expenses, and to have a voting strength at the Meet according to its membership. The work of a branch shall be to promote the establishment of social science classes, and when and where such classes are established to assist in the maintenance of a genuine working-class educational policy; to arrange for propaganda on the aims and objects of the League, by public meeting, visits to T.U. branches or other working-class organisations, press controversy, or any other method; to extend the sales of the Magazine and other Plebs publications; and to report to the E.C. on the activities of our own or other educational organisations.

ANNUAL MEET. An annual meet of members shall be held, at a convenient centre, in the early part of each year. Any alteration of the constitution shall be raised by resolution at the Meet and decided by postal ballot of all members taken afterwards.

ADMINISTRATION. The administration of the League shall be in the hands of an E.C. of seven members, meeting monthly, with, in addition, the Hon. Sec. and Editor of the Magazine. These all to be nominated, by not less than two members, a clear week before the date of the Meet, and elected by postal ballot of members, to be taken afterwards. The E.C. are empowered to decide on the practical application of League aims and policy, and to enforce same where necessary.

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THE PLEBS

“I can promise to be candid but not impartial.”

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OUR POINT OF VIEW

IT is not sufficient to say that Marx and Bakunin were wrong. Those who desire to maintain the existing economic system must demonstrate its superiority. . . .” Thus W. A. Appleton, in the Preface he contributes to the reprint of Dr. Shadwell’s *Times* articles on “The Revolutionary Movement in Great Britain.” Just at present, those who desire to maintain the existing economic system are *Hear, hear!* feverishly busy “demonstrating its superiority.” Lock-outs, raids, arrests—all the time-honoured devices by means of which Constitutionalism and Democracy seek to justify themselves in the eyes of a subject class—these are the order of the day. The demonstration is impressive; and instructive. And the workers of Britain, doubtless, will henceforth be convinced that Marx and Bakunin were wrong—quite wrong.

Those of them who were working for Independent Working-Class Education will realise that their cause is as good as lost. The aim of Independent Working-Class Education, as is well known, was merely to prove that Marx (it was not so insistent about Bakunin) was right. It accordingly adopted as its basis an alleged "antagonism of interests between Capital and Labour."

Groans This, of course, was a mere phrase out of Marx, and had no relation to actual facts. Lock-outs, raids and arrests, on the other hand, are emphatically facts—hard facts; and they clearly demonstrate that the Marxian idea of a Class Struggle was a myth and nothing more. Q.E.D. A ha'p'orth of fact is sufficient to explode a whole shipload of theory, and the theory of Independent Working-Class Education accordingly has gone west. R.I.P.

* * *

We regret its passing, because in our crude, cocksure way we believed in it. We really were deceived by those sounding phrases about "historic mission," "wage-slavery," "emancipation of the proletariat" and so on.

Shame! Shameful to confess, our perverse devotion to these rhetorical flourishes blinded us to the manifest superiority of the existing economic system. But our eyes have been opened, and we realise that we were kicking against the facts. We know now that our historic mission is to stay at home and starve quietly when the wise supporters of the existing economic system lock us out; or to do our six months hard, gladly and gratefully, when they lock us in. We recognise the fallacy of all those specious arguments by which we deluded ourselves and others into a belief in the desirability, let alone the possibility, of our "emancipation." We see now that we taught those things which we ought not to have taught, and left untaught those things which we ought to have taught, and there was absolutely no sense in us.

* * *

But of course we shall turn over a new leaf now. We intend to revise our curriculum immediately. No longer can we have it on our conscience that our teaching tended to hide the full beauty of the existing economic system from those whom it chiefly benefits—those to

Loud cheers whom it gives (now and then) employment, and so saves from the utter destitution which is their birthright. No. We intend, subject to the approval of the Mineowners' Association, Scotland Yard, the Federation of British Industries, and the other duly accredited organs of Democratic Government, to devote ourselves in future to the study of the works of Longfellow, Eskimo architecture, allotment gardening (theory of) and Pure Geometry. Such intellectual pursuits, we are convinced, are well suited to persons in our station of life, and none of them is likely to encourage baseless discontent with the existing economic system. Marx, needless to say, we shall forswear altogether; as well as every other tendencious writer who, while we were yet unregenerate, succeeded in persuading us to ignore Facts, and rest content with Phrases.

And all the time the existing economic system will go on Demonstrating its Superiority. So that we and the rest of the workers will be quite all right.

ARE OUR TEACHING METHODS OUT OF DATE ?

WHAT'S the best way of opening out . . . ? Do you think charts and diagrams good . . . ? Is essay-writing necessary . . . ? What about use of black-board, time allowed for discussion, advantages of examination papers, and so on and so on ? " These are the sort of questions that Plebs tutors, whenever two or three are gathered together, fall to discussing. And there is little doubt that the proposed conference on Teaching Methods, to be held at some convenient centre this autumn, will—if it is well attended, and if those who are present come prepared to put questions and take notes—have very valuable results.

Up to the present Plebeians have had little or no opportunity of considering such questions. We have had to concentrate simply on "delivering the goods"—somehow, or anyhow ! We have had no time to think about the most effective or most economical way of delivering them. Most of us have enlarged at one time or another on the "development of technique." But the *technique of teaching* was a matter we seldom considered—not because we wouldn't have liked to consider it, but because it took us most of our time to push our propaganda, and to get some sort of machinery for independent working-class education started. Even where a tutor here or there experimented in certain methods—of exposition, illustration, sequence of study, or what not—he had to work alone, unable to exchange ideas with other experimenters ; lacking, perhaps, the one "tip" that another man could have given him, the "tip" which may have meant all the difference between success and partial failure. A National Pool of ideas and methods is necessary. Such a Pool might, indeed, serve to show that—individually—we had thought quite a lot about the technique of teaching ; but had largely neutralised our efforts by not adding one individual's contribution to another's.

A conference on the lines proposed at Bradford might provide that National Pool. But a necessary condition of a successful conference is some preliminary discussion of the ground to be covered. And since other people's experience provides a good starting-off point, some extracts from recent reports of the scope and activities of the Workers' and Peasants' Universities in Russia may be helpful.

Of one of these, the Sverdlov University at Moscow, H. N. Brailsford tells us something in his new book, *The Russian Workers' Republic*.^{*} The Sverdlov University is, in effect, a Labour College—"the college in which the new ruling class is training its civil service." "Here about a thousand young men and women, drawn from the working class, receive a rapid course of instruction in political science. They study for six months, taking courses in political economy, the history of civilisation, Russian history, statistics and the history and doctrines of Marxism." After this first general course, each student specialises in some one department of practical administration (food, education, agriculture, etc.), but this latter branch need not concern us here.

It may be interesting to quote (from another report) the full programme of the General Educational Section, since this corresponds more or less

* Allen & Unwin, 6s. (Postpaid from PLEBS, 6s. 4d.).

exactly in aim and scope to our own Labour College and class curriculum :—

1. History of Culture (with musical, dramatic and other illustrations).
2. Natural Sciences : (A) Physics and Chemistry ; (B) Physical Geography ; (C) Biology, and the Theory of Evolution.
3. Political Economy.
4. World History and Russian History.
5. The History of European Revolutions.
6. The History of Russian Revolutions.
7. Statistics.
8. History and Theory of Marxism.

That is an eight to ten weeks' syllabus ! Its *sequence** is interesting, for note that "not until a sufficiently solid foundation has been laid in the realms of Natural Science, History and Political Economy" does the course in Scientific Socialism (Marxism) begin. Our own "primary subjects" were decided upon at the two Conferences held last year (at Manchester and Bradford) ; but the *sequence* in which those subjects can most effectively be taught and studied might well be one of the matters for discussion at the forthcoming conference. Should, for example, courses in Industrial History and Historical and Physical Geography precede any study of Economics ? Can we plan anything like a systematic two- or three-years' course for evening students ?

Turn, now, to the experience of the Russians as regards actual teaching "methods and tactics." The most striking thing here is "an unconditional condemnation of the *lecture* method of instruction." The lecture, we are told, has "outlived its age, and must be replaced by the demonstration [i.e. by visits to museums, the use of lantern-slides, the cinema, etc.], the discussion, and the study circle." It is impossible, we are told, for a lecturer to adapt himself to the differing intellectual levels of a large group of students ; moreover, he is unable to discover whether or not his points have been understood. Students with little or no previous training in study find it difficult, too, to concentrate their attention on a subject for an hour or more.

The plan the Russians evolved to meet these difficulties (and it is important to remember that with them *time* was an important factor, since capable, trained men were urgently needed) was to break up the students into a number of small study-circles, to retain a certain number of the ablest students from the previous half-year's course, and to make them into "circle leaders." New students are required to fill up a number of questionnaires, which are closely analysed and examined, and followed by personal interviews with the "circle leaders" ; and by this means it is possible to adapt or modify the courses of study to the special needs of individual students. "The rôle of the teaching staff," therefore, "is limited to the functions of general guides and advisers."

Now all this is of interest to us in Britain, since a shortage of tutors is one of our greatest handicaps. Can we, by developing study and discussion circles, get round this obstacle ? Is it possible, by providing full and detailed syllabuses of any subject, to be used along with a specified textbook, to make much more practical use of "senior students" than we have hitherto done ? Apart from these points, are we satisfied with the lecture system, modified (as we usually do modify it) by ample time for questions and discussion ?

* Some of the courses overlap, but this is the fixed order.

There is further the question of "demonstrations," under which head we can group the use of charts, diagrams or slides, and of visits to museums, factories, etc. Surely, in addition to the issue of textbooks, the Plebs League might usefully add to its publishing ventures a series of charts for class use; but until ideas and suggestions have been pooled and discussed it would be foolish to start actual work in this department.

Finally, there is the general question of the *technique of teaching*—the science (or art) of Pedagogy. Here, undoubtedly, some of the professional teachers—from S. Wales and other districts—who have recently come into close touch with our own educational movement ought to be able to help us. It is much to be hoped that, when the conference is held, they will be there in force.

Q

GEOGRAPHICAL FACTS AND PROLET CULTURAL FASHIONS

THERE were half a dozen fights rolling merrily through the columns of the May PLEBS, and as though that wasn't enough for a tanner, the Editor added a lament that nobody had "gone for" Archbold on the subject of his little geographical excursion of a month earlier. This is, of course, quite as it should be; and as it looks as though I shall have to take my stand in the queue before I can get a slice off the reckless and ruthless Postgate, I must in a spirit of fraternal joy ask Archbold to allow me a little practice at his expense.

There is a connection between them, because each in a different way has raised the question of what we are driving at—what exactly we include under the name "Proletcult." That ugly word (I cannot make myself like it) does not signify that we believe the Proletariat to possess an elaborated standard of morals and a complete apparatus of learning, which it is our special mission to impart in homœopathic doses to such as have the grace to accept our ministrations. It means that we have taken in hand the elaboration of a world-concept valid in general and in detail from the proletarian point of view; and, further, the development of the understanding thereof in minds prepared for its reception by the emotions and experiences resulting from their proletarian relation to things and institutions.

We have to develop positively a view of man and the universe of superior validity to that of the bourgeoisie, capable of more consistent practical application and far more universal and inclusive in its scope. And we have to communicate this to the greatest possible number of proletarians in order that it may serve as an intellectual tool for the creation of a new order of things.

When the defenders of the existing order charge us with being "prejudiced" or "partial," we are no more disturbed than we should be if they accused us of being conditioned by gravitation or of taking food with our meals. We are prejudiced as they are, partisan even as they; with this difference only—we *understand* alike the fact and the relative importance of the bias which sways us. The bourgeois theoretician, at best, allows for a personal bias. He has no conception of and makes no allowance for *class-bias*, or for prejudice in favour of an established order of society. His prejudices, being unsuspected, use him—ours, being known and understood, are tools that we use.

It does not follow that everything said by a bourgeois is necessarily wrong, or that everything said by a proletarian must of necessity be right. To suppose so would be to surrender to the very bourgeois illusion of finality we are fighting against. A proletarian may be, and generally is, tinged with bourgeois superstitions, a bourgeois may (and frequently does when gifted with originality) blunder unconsciously upon proletarian truths. Generally the difference arises not so much in the field of speculation as in that of practical application of formulated theories. The bourgeois is apt to think any theory *must* be wrong if it runs counter to current institutions. Contrariwise he has a way, when he does open up a new path, of explaining away its newness in order to pacify the fears of the timorously conservative, and of fitting the facts into the framework of an established conception.

Fairgrieve, for example, perceives, as all men do more or less, a connection between the rise of States and certain forces not under the control of the Governments thereof. He follows up the clue and sees in the natural distribution of sunlight and moisture, and of the animal and vegetable life they make possible, a basis for race distribution. He sees in the natural facilities for intercourse—well-watered plains, mountain passes, rivers, inland seas, and outer oceans—a natural basis for points of contact between differentiated cultures and States. He sees that in a period of commercial intercourse facility of commodity production depends at any rate in part upon ease of access to raw materials; and, seeing all this, sets it out in a book.

So far he has proceeded in sound, scientific and positively materialist fashion; but, faced with the problem of presenting his case, his bourgeois preconceptions come into play. With the facts before him which show that Man's relation to Nature determines his relation to his fellow men, and that this latter relation involves social differentiations and antagonisms which in turn determine forms of government and the scope of States, he can see only the two ends of the process—Nature and the State. Hence his book appears as *Geography and World Power*, or, in other words, How Geography decided the Rise of the British Empire, and how those who strive against it are fighting in the teeth of Nature's decree. An older generation would have traced the descent of the aboriginal Briton from Noah and shown from Scripture that God designed the British Empire to set forth his power and his glory.

We, who see in the State a temporary form of the machinery of social government—one born of class antagonisms and doomed to pass—can afford to be lenient to Fairgrieve and his illusions, because his prejudices are refuted by the very facts he has himself collected. What we cannot afford to do is to dismiss his work with contempt simply because its title and phrasing are not exactly to our liking. To do that, as Archbold does, is to "empty out the baby with the bath water." If we are to wait before learning anything until our reading matter has survived the scrutiny of a committee of severe-minded Marxists we shall, I fear, wake up one morning to find that the ill-mannered proletariat has accomplished its emancipation without waiting for our ultra-righteous selves.

Suppose it be true that the subject matter of Fairgrieve's book is as much economics as geography—what then? Does that prove that Economic Geography—the concrete study of the earth as a manifold display

of economic potentialities—is a study of no worth? In our ordinary economics courses we, being concerned with the general laws and conditions of commodity production, make abstraction from all the innumerable concrete differences of price, of soils, sites, and climatic conditions. When elucidating the law of value, the functions of money, and the general law of accumulation, we are concerned only incidentally with these differences. But when we pass to the application of these general laws to particular cases at once the concrete differences and variations become vastly important.

Marxism is first, last, and all the time an historical conception. It sees every thought and everything as the product of a process involving action and reaction throughout all its multiple details. We must, of course, observe some sense of proportion in our studies. Twenty years devoted solely to a study of the *gens* among Kelts and Germans, or the Administrations of Ancient Akkad, would be overdoing it. All the same, *some* knowledge of the past is necessary—how much depends upon circumstances. Even Archbold is familiar enough with ancient Carthage to use it as an illustration (inaccurately by the way!). The culmination of capitalism can only be understood in the light of its whole history, and its special peculiarities by contrast with preceding epochs. There must be proportion, but a Proletcult teacher can hardly know too much.

Upon the question of "Revisionist" geography and Archbold's objection thereto I shall, in charity, say little. The *old* geography used to divide the earth by *frontier lines* and study it piecemeal as a mere matter of space relations; the *newer* geography introduced us to the conception of *regions* determined by differences of rainfall, sunlight, prevailing winds and natural products. The *newest* geography views the earth as a whole, differentiated by its varying social potentialities—hygienic, commercial, economic and strategical. Quite obviously the completeness of the work of this school will depend upon the quality of the economics and sociology possessed by the geographer; but it is equally obvious that the whole school have (albeit unconsciously) landed themselves on the threshold of Marxism.

"In making their livelihood together," says Marx, "men enter into certain necessary definite relations; relations which *do not depend upon their wills*, but which correspond to and grow out of whatever stage has been reached in the development of the material productive forces of Nature." It is, in a sense, true (as Archbold insists) that man has brought geographical conditions "under his control," yet the need so to bring them was a fact of prime importance, and the need to keep them so remains as a permanent conditioning social fact now and henceforward. The geographical fact that Britain is an island has not the *same* significance to-day as in the past; but it has as much significance, though of a different *kind*. To escape dependence upon home climatic influences we must produce things which for *natural* and social reasons others find a difficulty in producing; and to effect the exchange of goods for food we must negotiate successfully all sorts of natural difficulties. It is hardly true to say that "most of the geographical controls are now under man's control." True, instead of freezing to death or contracting pneumonia at the dictates of the "brave North-Easter" we can put on overcoats and survive. But the overcoat is there to remind us that the *need* to do certain things, make

such and such, and wear so and so, is created not by our wills but by the forces of Nature that we like to think we are "bossing."

Nobody can possibly study any aspect of social development without a knowledge, the fuller the better, of the earth from which man emerged, upon which he depends, and to which he will return when at long last he (ceasing to bother about theories or issues, and from inability to consume losing all connection with economics) becomes once again a mere geographical incident.

I agree cordially that we want more and better work upon modern history. But are we likely to get it if we regard so much of Marx as has been translated into English as the whole Law and the Prophets which it were blasphemy to add to or extend? There is good proletarian work to be done in the way of assimilating and rearranging the materials gathered by even the bourgeois giants of learning, which is after all just what Marx and Engels, being sensible men, did themselves.

T. A. JACKSON

PLEBS COMPETITIONS

THE prize offered to the class-sec., student or League member who sent us, before May 18th, the greatest number of new Postal Subscriptions to the PLEBS is awarded to HENRY P. WALLACE, 46, Craigiehall Street, Planatation, Glasgow, who obtained 31 new subscribers for us. He is hereby invited to send his choice of books up to £5 in value to the Plebs Book Dept., and they will be forwarded with as little delay as possible. We also tender him our best thanks for his energetic efforts on our behalf; and although we are not "flush" enough to offer any more £5 prizes just now, we hope that he—and other comrades—will continue the good work of sending up our circulation.

The Motto Competition is won this month by "one of the staff," and the 10/- is being forwarded to a Miners' Children Fund.

We offer 10s. worth of books monthly for the best propaganda phrase, of not more than 24 words, suitable for use on the PLEBS cover.

The Essay Competition—£1 worth of books for the best critical essay, of not more than 800 words, on E. & C. P.'s *Creative Revolution*—is extended until

JUNE 15TH.

The competition is open to all class-secs., organisers, students or League members, and essays should be signed with a *nom de plume* only, the competitor's name and address being enclosed in a sealed envelope. The winning essay will be published in the PLEBS.

N.B.—We want a *critical* essay—not just a panegyric for advertisement purposes. So don't refrain from sending in because you feel like cutting up the authors.

OUR POUND FUND—LIST OF FURTHER DONATIONS NEXT MONTH. HAVE YOU SENT YOURS?

MR. SMITH

(Concluded from last month)

OWENISM just then was swept into a new and important movement. The Reform Bill of 1832 had shown the workers the spectacle of a bloodless revolution. The English middle class, by a combination of threats, disorder, and political manœuvring, had destroyed the political power of the aristocracy. At the same time they had cheated the working classes of the hopes that they had pinned upon the Reform Bill. Now, a year later, the workers were in effect going to try to "rush" the bourgeois Government as the middle class had rushed the Duke of Wellington's. To the Parliamentary agitation of 1832 succeeded immediately a revolutionary Trades Union movement—in fact, though not in name, a more powerful Syndicalist movement. At the time at which Smith took over the *Crisis* this movement was only represented by one enormous union, the Builders' Union, which had, however, succeeded in gravely disquieting the employers. The flood-tide of Trades* Unionism did not come till the winter of 1833 was well on. It swept up into itself all the small Owenite societies, and accepted the Owenite programme in its entirety.

The Builders' Union already had an unofficial organ, the *Pioneer*, edited by James Morrison. This and the *Crisis* became the national unionist journals. Smith and Morrison found that their views more or less coincided and they worked together on a common policy. The circulation of the *Pioneer*, says Smith in one of his letters, reached the then astounding figure of 30,000.

In January of 1834 there was forged the instrument which was to break down capitalist rule in England and usher in the Socialist State outlined by Robert Owen. The GRAND NATIONAL CONSOLIDATED TRADES UNION was formed, by delegates from trades unions and groups all over the country. Into it were sucked up practically all the existing local bodies. There remained outside it only five unions of any importance or energy and they were completely dwarfed by it. In two months its membership reached half a million—a dizzying total never attained after or before by any union in the century. It was a monstrous growth, this union with its militant Socialist policy; it fills the journals of the time as though it were some pestilence or other natural disaster. The employers were well and thoroughly frightened.

In February the Union had assumed a permanent constitution, had elected an Executive, formed local lodges (generally by crafts) and put its finances on a reasonable basis. It meant business.

It had three leaders. First and most powerful by far was the justly respected Robert Owen. But beside him, and more and more opposed to him, were the two left-wingers, Smith and Morrison. Owen, in spite of his self-confidence, was obviously unfit for his position. It is hard to say it of so great and good a man, but it is the fact that he talked twaddle. Having placed himself at the head of a great and militant union, having given it for its aim the destruction of capitalism, he now attempted to forbid any verbal or other attack upon the employers. He attempted to

* A *trade* union is one covering a single trade, a *trades* union one covering all or many. Say, the London Society of Compositors and the I.W.W.

run a strike policy on an avowed "class peace" basis. As his difficulties increased, he seemed to become more crotchety and difficult to work with; he indulged in attacks on Christianity and turned from Union work to the exposition of his philosophy of life. He became more and more tactless, more and more short-tempered, arrogant and contemptuous of advice.

Smith, compared with him, stands out as a brilliant leader. He was as competent as Owen was incompetent, as clear-headed as he was muddled. He at once saw both the fundamentals of the class-struggle (this is in the year 1834, mind you, not 1884), and the only possible tactics for the Union. Morrison, who became an Executive member of the Union, followed his advice and acted as his spokesman. Thus, for a brief period, Smith was the most competent leader of some 500,000 revolutionary-minded Englishmen—a unique position in modern history.

In the *Pioneer*, in a series of "Letters on Associated Labour" he writes* :

We know that the operative manufacturer [i.e. factory worker] and in fact the labourer of every description, requires sustenance, raw materials and tools. These are derived from the reserved produce of former labour, which is termed *capital*. That amount of capital in this country is very great, but, brethren, it was you that gave it existence. What hours out of every twenty-four have you not employed in building it up! . . . Reflect, though in the reflection, brethren, I know there is much anguish, how many of your fellow labourers, how many with whom you have communed in friendship, how many connected with you by the respected and the endeared ties of relationship, have sunk in toil and want; pale, sickening and starving; while all the energies of their bodies and of their minds was given to the rearing of this mighty mass, this boasted *capital*! "It is reserved labour," cries McCulloch. "Ay, reserved," shout a hundred bloated capitalists over their French and Spanish wines, "reserved for our present and future prosperity!" From whom and out of what was it reserved? From the clothing and food of the wretched—from the refreshment of the weary—from the wages of those who sink exhausted on their hard pallets after sixteen hours of almost ceaseless labour.

This vivid, almost ferocious, Socialist teaching we find scattered about the pages of the *Pioneer*, at a time when Owen, commonly supposed to be the most advanced and clear-headed Labour thinker of those days, was still exhorting his followers to base their actions on a realisation "that both masters and men were producers."

Smith will perhaps be best remembered for the lecture which he delivered on March 30th, entitled "On the Prospects of Society." In this lecture he outlined for the first time the Soviet idea, and it required no small force of mind and character to be able, at so early a date as this, to pass beyond the common revolutionary aspiration towards Parliamentary democracy. He exposed, in a passage now fairly well known† the unsuitability of geographical constituencies for the representation of the modern industrial proletariat, and outlined the real House of Commons, the "House of Trades," in which "every trade shall be a borough and every trade shall have its council and representatives to conduct its affairs."

But the brief period of high hopes in which such schemes could be taken seriously was coming near to its close. The Government, alarmed beyond measure, turned savagely upon the Union and struck it a heavy blow by seizing some Dorchester agricultural labourers, who had enrolled members, and having them sentenced to transportation under an old statute. All efforts were unsuccessful to reverse this monstrous decision.

* See my *Revolution*, p. 94.

† It is quoted in Max Beer's *History of British Socialism*, I., 339, and in my own *Revolution*, p. 98.

The Union involved itself in further and worse difficulties. It enrolled every worker who cared to join, and therefore in every town where there was a "turn out" the strikers naturally joined the Union and claimed its assistance. In addition every lodge of the Union was filled with ardent enthusiasm and fighting spirit, and almost courted conflicts with the employers. The Union was involved in innumerable petty and useless strikes; from the 9th of May onwards it was practically bankrupt and subsisted on levies, which of course helped to cool the enthusiasm of the rank and file.

Here again Smith was practically the only leader to perceive the practical policy. While the Executive was still maundering about the possibilities of co-operative production, he published (May 3rd) a denunciation of the system of "partial strikes" and independent action, and urged the necessity of refusing battle until the Union was prepared for a general strike—"a long strike, and a strong strike, and a strike altogether."

Conceivably, he might have carried out his proposals and saved the Union, had not the employers delivered a concerted offensive. All over England and Scotland they began to present the "Document" to their employees to sign. This was an assurance that they neither belonged nor would belong to the Union. If they refused, they were locked out. Thus upon the already tottering Union was thrust an enormous number of further conflicts.

Internal dissensions brought the end. Owen decided that the open opposition to his views by Smith and Morrison must be silenced. In April he began publicly to denounce the *Pioneer*; in June he forced Morrison off the Executive, and started a rival journal, also called the *Pioneer*. Morrison's *Pioneer* ceased publication on July 5th. In August Owen closed down the *Crisis* to prevent Smith continuing to write.

Owen had won in his vendetta, but at the cost of the Union's life. It was by now in complete collapse, and on August 20th abandoned the pretence of being a Trade Union, and became "The British and Foreign Consolidated Association of Industry, Humanity and Knowledge," an Owenite propagandist body. The first mass frontal attack on Capital by British workers had failed.

The psychological effect on Smith was strange. During the struggle the sanest part of him had been supreme. In defeat he became again the mystic Smith, the disciple of John Wroe. He started a paper called the *Shepherd*, which purveyed general information of the irrelevant kind now provided by Harmsworth encyclopædias. In it he also began to deal again with religion. There was no mention of any economic or political subject. Nor was there much more in the *Shepherd*'s successor, the *Penny Satirist*. In the end he became editor of the *Family Herald*.

The *Family Herald* was a new venture in journalism, being illustrated, and almost entirely consisting of fiction. Smith, as editor, had little to do but write occasional articles, answers to correspondents, and religious matter. His lively style was unimpaired and the *Family Herald* rose to a circulation of 250,000. His answers to correspondents were particularly praised, and no doubt deserved it, for he had to answer letters from women who desired to know if they should wear stays, others who believed him to be the Messiah, others who were outraged by his religious eccentricities,

others who wanted household recipes—in short, every question which a successful journalist could possibly be asked.

Nothing now was left of his old opinions. He was now Smith the mystic; Smith the revolutionary was dead. He was solely concerned with proving the numerical theory of the universe and the predominance of the feminine principle in history—whatever those words may mean. His mind had retired into the darkest recesses of modern occultism, and of his old ideas nothing was left but a vague dislike of Parliament and an equally vague idea that a man ought to belong to his Union.

Twenty years later, in 1857, he visited Scotland, where he died of a decline, sincerely lamented by many as a respectable and worthy, if eccentric, clergyman. An account of him was inserted in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, all reference to his past revolutionary activities being omitted.

R. W. POSTGATE

A PLEB IN MAYFAIR

Andrew Clarke, the Notts. miner who accepted an invitation to put the men's case to an audience of Upper Class Unemployed in Lady Markham's drawing-room on May 12th, is a first-year student at the Labour College, Kew. Invited to record his impressions for the benefit of PLEBS' readers, he writes:—

AN American gentleman and myself arrived at Lady M.'s shortly before 3 p.m., the time fixed for the "meeting." We passed a few minutes testing the spring of the library carpet and the resilience of the easy chairs; and in gazing awestruck through the windows at the cushy motor cars arriving outside. A brief introduction to our hostess and her really handsome and intelligent-looking daughter followed; after which I was ushered into the drawing-room. Lady M. took the chair and introduced me.

I opened by putting the human side of the dispute, and went on to show that our distrust of the Government was not unwarranted. Food Controller manipulating butter prices (*silence*); coal freightage from Tyne to London up 3s. to 17s. (*shame*); Sankey fraud (*some dissent*); Decontrol trick (*interruption*)—I discovered afterwards that the particularly noisy gentleman was Mr. Evan Williams, the Coal King. By order of the chair, further interruptions were to be bottled until question time, and by that time Mr. Williams was almost boiling over—naturally.

Questions were many and various, of course. I was asked what wages were required to keep a miner, *one* wife, and three children. I could not resist asking in return how many wives per husband were customary in Society. Lady M. found the chair too "warm," and changed places with one of the questioners.

Then tea, during which a dear old lady assured me they all meant well by the miners, but that we did not realise *their* difficulties—maintaining social status, educating children, and subsidising them (!) after starting "work" at nominal salaries.

I emerged unscathed, and at 6 p.m. popped in and had one—to steady me after the afternoon's excitement. It was an interesting glimpse of the manners and customs of the Iron Heeled Ones, and I trust they benefited as much as I did.

A. CLARKE

GEOGRAPHICAL FOOTNOTES TO CURRENT HISTORY

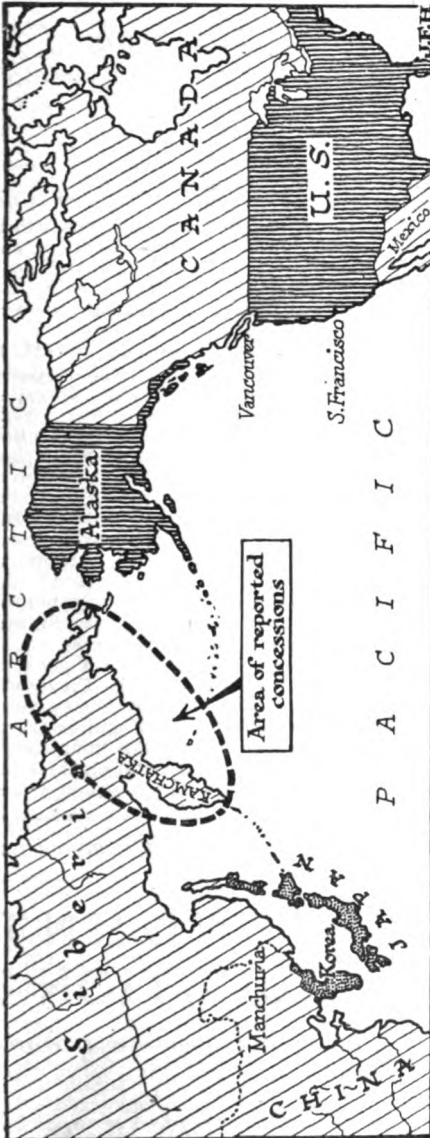
VII.—THE NORTHERN PACIFIC

MENTION was made in the Plebs Bookshelf last month of two excellent pamphlets recently published—*Big Navies and Cheap Labour*, by "Deucalion" (Labour Publishing Co., 6d.) and *Capitalism and the Far East*, by G. Horwill (I.L.P., 2d.). These two pamphlets, read carefully and with an atlas alongside, will give the student a good grip of the Pacific Problem—the great world problem, in all

likelihood, of the 20th century. Four hundred years ago the world centre shifted from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic. To-day it is moving to the Pacific. And the struggle has already begun between the two great Powers on either shore of that vast ocean—America and Japan.

Another Pacific Power—the British Empire—must inevitably be affected by that struggle. Australia, New Zealand and Canada must perforce "take sides," and already we are being told that "the safety of the Empire" demands a strong Far Eastern Fleet. Lord Jellicoe has been made Governor of New Zealand. In "Deucalion's" words—"We are on the eve of a new orientation in world politics and naval strategy, similar to that initiated by Lord Fisher in 1904, when he transferred our main strength from the Mediterranean to the North Sea."

And yet another factor—a startlingly uncertain factor—in the Pacific Problem must be taken into account: the factor of a New Russia. Our map is designed to illustrate one recent development in the course of events which may yet prove to be of far-reaching importance—the concession stated to have been obtained by Vanderlip, representing certain American big business interests, from the Soviet Government of Russia. That concession is reported to have granted to the American syndicate a 60 years' lease of a great slice of North-Eastern Siberia, including the peninsula of Kamchatka. America, already firmly based in Alaska, would thus step across to the western shore of the Pacific; and it is easy to see how



such a step would be a strategical menace to Japan, as well as a big economic gain to her great commercial rival.

That the precise location of this concession (if actually settled) was not carefully taken into account by the heads of the Soviet Republic is scarcely likely. Nor is it possible to exaggerate its probable importance as a source of friction between the two capitalist Powers. On the whole, therefore, the transaction—if it is ratified—hardly lends colour to H. N. Brailsford's fears (expressed in the *Daily Herald*, May 10th) that Lenin may find himself outwitted in his dealings with foreign capital.

J. F. HORRABIN

A FRENCH SCHEME OF WORKING-CLASS EDUCATION

We print this month the second syllabus of lectures, for more advanced students, drawn up by a French comrade, M. Léon Clément. This should be found interesting and suggestive by our own class-tutors.

2ND SYLLABUS

HISTORY OF LABOUR (CONTEMPORARY)

1.—Survey of nineteenth century down to the formation of the International in 1864.

2, 3 & 4.—From 1864 to the Commune—Social environment—Industrial conditions: France, England, Germany, United States—Science applied to industry, inventions, results of transport development, international relationships—Proudhon—Marx—The International—The right of combination—Labour movements—Employers' organisations, workers' organisations—Political parties—Bakunin—Movement of ideas; Catholicism, freethought, liberalism—Art, literature—The war of 1870, causes, consequences.

5, 6 & 7.—From the Commune to 1884—Genesis of the Commune, achievements, consequences—Survey of industry and the social classes throughout the world—Workers' congresses—Trade unions and trades councils—Industrial struggles—Socialist parties in various lands—Philosophy, art, literature.

8 to 13.—From the law of 1884 to the foundation of the C.G.T.—The law of 1884—Large-scale industry: mining, the iron industry, transport, power, agriculture, banking, credit—The employer's point of view;

the worker's point of view—Labour legislation; Germany, France, England, U.S.A.; hours, insurance, hygiene, etc.—Workers' congresses—Working-class movements, palliative or revolutionary?—Co-operation, historical survey; production; distribution—Socialist parties—The Anarchist movement—The movement of ideas, individualism—Art, literature.

14 to 19.—From the birth of the C.G.T. to the Congress of Amiens—Characteristics—Federation of the Bour-es du Travail—Federation of industries—Trends: trade unionism as means; trade unionism as end in itself—Aims: social transformation; class struggle (wages, hours)—Methods: collective bargaining, local or general strikes, boycott, etc.—Revolutionary general strike—Trade unionism in various lands—Industrial developments—Labour legislation; technical education—Working-class movements: co-operation; socialist parties; communist anarchism (Kropotkin)—Movement of ideas, Tolstoyanism, etc.—Art, literature.

20 to 27.—From the Amiens Congress to the War 1914: The Congress—Prevailing and independent spirit of revolutionary trade unionism (syndicalism)—Aims and methods—Trade unionism in various countries—Employers' federations—Corruption of labour leaders by the government, etc.—Congresses,

Two recent verdicts on our new pamphlet are discussed in "Bookshelf" this month. What's your opinion?

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CASH WITH ORDER. Price, 3d. Post paid, 3½d. Per dozen, 2s. 3d. Per 50, 8s. 6d.

—Trade-union publication activities independent of political parties—Industrial developments—Legislation—Technical education—Co-operation—Socialist parties—Anarchist communism—Movement of ideas: new notions on education; international language—Art, literature.

28 to 30.—The War—Economic situation—Responsibilities: economic, political, moral—Two trends: Germany responsible? Deductions from this view. General social situation of the nations responsible? Deductions from this view.

31 to 33.—Present situation; economic, political, moral—Revolutions; Russia, Germany, Austria, Hungary—New ideas for the

organisation of labour—Two trends in trade unionism; France, abroad—The Internationals—Sovietism.

34 to 36.—General trends: social (communism *versus* democracy, etc.); economic (enforcement of specialised labour *versus* partial individualism, profit-sharing, workers' control); intellectual (complete transformation of present methods of schooling, technical school, "the unified school" *versus* partial reforms within the existing educational system—New ideas on decorative arts applied to trades; return to mass demonstrations, popular festivals, social universities, people's houses).

This series is to be illustrated by films and diagrams, by visits to museums, factories, and schools. The aim is to show the evolution of labour within the framework of the stage of civilisation to which it belongs.

LÉON CLÉMENT

WHERE'S THAT CUTTING?

IN the April PLEBS "S. F. G." asks me to suggest simple and speedy methods of mastering a text-book, taking notes of lectures and keeping press-cuttings. The following hints may be of use. They are *not* meant to describe the only methods, nor yet the most scientific!

The best way to tackle a text-book is first of all rapidly to read it right through; if it's very difficult read it right through twice. That will give you a general idea of its contents. After that it can be taken chapter by chapter. As for marking, it all depends on the book's importance. If it's of secondary importance, a line drawn in the margin opposite the most valuable points is sufficient. If, however, the book is of first importance, it will be worth while also to sum up, in a phrase in the margin, the main idea of every important paragraph. That will not only make it easier to refer to the book, but will also fix its matter more securely in your mind.

In taking notes of lectures some students prefer to take down rough jottings and then afterwards arrange them in the form of heads and subheads in another book. This means two writings. It is better to jot down the lecture in a notebook with wide pages (e.g. quarto), leaving every left-hand page blank and allowing not less than an inch of margin on the pages on which the notes are being taken. The student should then later on enter the main point of each paragraph in the margin opposite it. The blank page can be used for noting additional material, as the student meets with it during the course of his reading.

About nine out of ten of those who collect newspaper cuttings either lose them after three months or can't find them when they're

wanted, and yet cuttings are essential to serious students. Pasting them in a scrap-book is neither convenient, cheap nor time-saving. Cuttings should not be arranged chronologically but by subject. The best simple method I know of is to use envelopes 9 inches long by 6 wide—they needn't be new; those that have done service in the past are quite as good! The subject should be written across the top of each envelope in blue pencil and the cuttings can be slipped in *after they've been marked with their source and date*. Don't forget this last point.

Every student must arrange his envelopes according to the subjects in which he is interested. Suppose you're gathering material for economics and economic geography. You'll find, of course, that some cuttings are not "pure-breds"—one may be two-thirds economic geography and one-third economics. That one should go into the geography section, but a slip should be filed in the other section noting the economic point and in which envelope the cutting has been placed.

If you are just beginning, one envelope for economics will be sufficient for the first month or two. You can examine your cuttings later and make separate envelopes for those branches of the subject about which you have gathered most material. At the end of six months your economic envelopes may read: "Economics (General)" followed by "Banking," "Crisis," "Prices and Wages," "Scientific Management," "Trusts" (note the alphabetical order). It is of course necessary to weed your cuttings occasionally, but this needn't be made a special job; it can be done whenever you happen to be referring to any envelope.

J. P. M. MILLAR

ECONOMICS WITHOUT HEADACHES

VI.

THE amount of money in circulation is very small compared with the amount of business done in the world. It would probably be true to say that all the money in the world would have to change hands every day if every sale and purchase was effected by means of money proper. But this is not necessary because capitalism has provided itself with numerous substitutes for money that do duty under normal circumstances.

Everyone is familiar with the Postal Order. If we wish to send a sum of money to another part of the country we obtain an order at the local Post Office and it can be cashed at the office nominated by the sender or at any office if none is mentioned. If it is crossed /& Co./ it must be paid into a bank. We know that at most Post Offices orders are issued and cashed in such proportions that, speaking generally, the accounts balance. Taking the system as a whole, the accounts do balance, plus the commission charged for the orders.

Cheques.—Cheques are in many ways similar to Postal Orders, except that the money represented by them is in the hands of a banker instead of the G.P.O. Cheques as such are pieces of paper of no value except for the twopenny stamps embossed upon them. The owner of a cheque-book may burn it if he chooses and be none the worse off except for the several twopenny stamps. Nevertheless, as business tools cheques are very important.

If a man wished to buy coal from South Wales to the value of £1,000, and have it delivered in London, he would find it a troublesome business to withdraw the £1,000 from the bank, count it and send it by registered post to the seller of the coal—and it is possible that the money might fall into the wrong hands. So he makes out his cheque, which is an order to his banker to pay to the person named in the cheque (or to that person's order) the sum of money in question. The recipient of the cheque can pay it into his bank, and be credited with the amount, or he can use it as money by endorsing (signing) it on the back, and passing it on to some person to whom he owes money. The cheque of a person of good standing is usually accepted, but cheques are not legal tender—that is, one cannot be forced to accept them. In most hotels and at many railway stations there are notices to the effect that cheques will not be accepted.

Cheques are passing up and down the country every day and it is highly probable that on the day the London dealer sends his £1,000 cheque to South Wales, some Welsh coalowner is sending one for a similar amount to some London tradesman. As this kind of thing happens thousands of times daily, all that is necessary is for the bankers to

arrange that all cheques drawn upon accounts in their keeping be given to them in exchange for the cheques they hold upon other banks. To facilitate this, cheques are exchanged at the bankers' *Clearing House*.*

By this means all that is done when payments are made by cheque is that in the books of one bank a given amount is subtracted from the account of the person paying, and added in the books of the same or another bank to the account of the person to whom payment is made. Money, in the legal-tender sense, is not handled at all.

Bills of Exchange.—A bill of exchange has been defined as "A written order transferring a certain sum of money at a certain date from the debtor to the creditor." As defined by the Bills of Exchange Act of 1882, it is an "unconditional order in writing

* During 1918 business passed through the London Bankers' Clearing House to the amount of £21,198,000,000, and the daily average was £69,700,000. This was the record year. The record day was October 30th, 1912, when the amount was £131,042,000. (Todd, *Mechanism of Exchange*, 1919.) The total amount of money in circulation in July, 1918, in gold coin, currency notes and Bank of England notes, was £133,868,000

EVENTS

lend a particular interest to certain books. Recent happenings in the British Labour Movement have given a special significance to the critical chapters of

DIRECT ACTION

By WILLIAM MELLOR

You can get this book, as well as many others of interest to working-class students, from the PLEBS BOOK DEPARTMENT (Postpaid 4s. 10d.).

addressed by one person to another, signed by the person giving it, requiring the person to whom it is addressed to pay on demand, or at a fixed or determinable future time, a sum certain in money to or to the order of a specified person or bearer." Bills are usually made out in one or other of the following forms :—

England is adopted by all other banks. The raising or lowering of the Bank Rate is a kind of barometrical indication of the state of the financial weather. When the rate is high, trade slackens and business men are more cautious, but when it is low money flows more easily.

(2) *Avoiding the risk of transporting the*

London.

May 1st, 1921.

£50.

Two months after date, pay to James Smith or order Fifty Pounds for value received.

(6d.) Stamp.

To Messrs. Alfred Brown and Co.,
Birmingham.

George Williams.

Manchester.

May 1st, 1921.

£240

Three months after date pay to me or my order the sum of Two Hundred and Forty Pounds for value received.

(3/-) Stamp.

To Mr. Samuel Smiles,
Leeds.

Alfred Smithson.

It is possible that more commercial transactions are facilitated by means of bills of exchange than any other means. They can be used for internal and external transactions.

precious metals from place to place.—Let us take four merchants :—

In New York.

In London.

A.
C.

B.
D.

Bills are useful for: (1) *The extension of credit.* Taking the first specimen bill above, we will assume that Brown and Co. have purchased cloth to the value of £50 from Williams but cannot or do not want to pay for it at once. Williams therefore has given Brown's a bill which Brown's, after signing it, are recognised as the "acceptors" of. But the bill says that the money is to be paid to Smith, and it is certain that Williams owes this money to Smith. Thus Brown's take over Williams' debt to Smith in return for value received. The bill having been signed by Brown's can be passed on to other people as quittance for debt—it is not legal tender—and becomes to all intents and purposes money. By this means merchants buy and sell without having the money to do so. So long as they feel certain that two or three months' hence they will be able to meet their obligations they use their credit instead of money. Sometimes they find themselves with goods on their hands that cannot be sold, and then comes either a sale at sacrifice prices or the bankruptcy court. If a merchant's credit is normally good, a banker will accept the bill for cash, less the amount due for interest for the time the bill has to run.

Suppose that A in New York owes B in London £1,000 for goods sent to America, and that D in London owes C in New York a similar sum, then in order that both debts may be settled it will be necessary for £1,000 to be sent from America to London and £1,000 from London to America. Now these two sums of £1,000 will not fly across the Atlantic of their own accord, but must be packed and have freight and insurance charges paid upon them. Obviously, in the two cases taken, two people would be engaged in mutually cancelling out each other's efforts, and while doing so would be paying the cost of sending their amounts of gold. Instead of all this what would happen would be that A in New York would buy the bill in the possession of C in New York and D in London would buy the Bill held by B. Thus the debtor and creditor on either side of the Atlantic would settle debts—not exactly their own—and save the trouble of sending money from place to place.

B in London has not to tramp the streets looking for a person with whom he can exchange his bill. Bill brokers undertake this work, and for commission they will buy and sell bills. Their charges must be *no more* than what it would cost to transmit gold or otherwise the merchants would take the latter course, since it would be cheaper.

The discount charged by the Bank of England for accepting bills of exchange or making short loans is known as the Bank Rate, and the rate fixed by the Bank of

W. McLAINÉ

STUDENTS' NOTES AND QUERIES

WEST HARTLEPOOL class sends a question concerning money as a means of payment.

. . . If a commodity has been sold and the seller refuses to accept "legal tender" coins, Treasury or Bank of England notes, then the buyer is free from his debt. The seller could, however, legally refuse "means of payment" (cheques, bills of exchange, promissory notes) and use the machinery of the State to enforce his claim.

BRIDGEND class has been discussing "whether a commercial traveller adds value to a commodity." Such discussions should not be allowed to obscure the main facts of the exploitation of the producer. The commercial traveller's wages are expenses of distribution which the producing capitalist would like to avoid (see answer given in Jan. PLEBS, and refer to *Capital*, Vol. III., p. 353-4).

Another questioner asks, "Does advertising add value?" Contrary to the *Vulgarist*, we reply "No." It is an expense of circulation needed to procure a speedier turnover. Just as it has been argued before on this page that the individual producer would count the time lost that he had to stand by his stall in the market, so in the same way he would regard time spent in "boosting" his commodities.

Q.—Will you explain why leaders "sell out"?

A.—This charge is all too easily made. It is, sometimes, a very superficial way of explaining the failure of a movement or an agitation. What actually does happen is usually a rather more gradual process than the phraseology used in the question would suggest. A leader, when he gets into office, has not merely to represent the militant left wing of his union (to which he probably formerly belonged) but to decide on policies likely to be favourably received by all sections. Then, unless he is an exceptional man, his outlook is inevitably affected by his new environment. His actual *personal* relations with employers tend to loom larger than the old *class* antagonisms. A sudden crisis reveals the gap between him and the rank and file he is supposed to represent—a gap which has been steadily widening for a considerable time. The cure? Educated leaders and an educated rank and file—

educated in class-consciousness, that is. The more a reasoned, clearly understood class outlook supersedes mere emotionalism the less will changed environment be likely to modify a leader's convictions.

Q.—If religion is a reflex of prevailing material conditions, what is the significance of the present-day "boom" in Spiritualism?

A.—Our own opinion is that Spiritualists are juggling with psychic phenomena which need scientific investigation. There is nothing in the least *super-natural* about them, and they are as much part of the universe as the ponderable brick—and are therefore included in Dietzgen's Absolute. Certainly the "vision" of the medium reflects prevailing material conditions. The spirit friends of Raymond Lodge, for example, did not use the prehistoric flint to light their very modern cigars. Challenge your spiritualist to mention anything which you cannot trace back to everyday life. Notice also that recourse is most made to such agencies just when individual or social insecurity makes the need for solace. The break up of orthodox organised religion into many sects indicates that social change is in process and old beliefs are dissolving.*

Q.—If a change in the form of society is predetermined (too fatalistic a word) by change in the tool, on what grounds may a change from capitalist society, which is based on *machin-facture*, be anticipated?

A.—The change may be anticipated because of the ceaseless expansion of the productive forces, the continuous development of *machino-facture*, the use of new sources of power, speeding-up methods, and further applications of science to industry. All these must result in large-scale production, impersonal capital, and increased production of commodities which their makers cannot buy. The change this brings in social relations—absentee capitalists and great masses of workers—indicates the way out. Also, Big Business needs financial machinery which in many ways helps us to anticipate, and hence works more effectively for, a change in the form of society. M. S.

* Compare, for interesting instances of this, R. W. Postgate's article on "Mr. Smith" last month.

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TRA LA MONDO

ESPERANTO NOTES BY POPOLANO

SCIENTISTS AND ESPERANTO

TWENTY-ONE members of the French Academy of Sciences have signed a plea for the adoption of Esperanto at international science congresses and for the teaching of the language in science schools. While welcoming their support, we internationalists can only deplore their narrowness of vision when they claim for the international language that "elle permettrait d'entendre le rayonnement de la science française au-dehors et, par là, l'influence intellectuelle de notre pays." Such altruism! It's all for the benefit of the foreigner!

Rusio

Nijni-Novgorod.—Sub prezido de la konata esp. poeto V. Devjatnin, okazis prepara konferenco dum Majo (? Marto), en Petrograd. Inter la raportoj estis tiu de K-do Kopilevič, el Kronstadt, demandanta la forĵeton de esperantista senpartieco kaj la aliĝon al la revolucia movado. Tiun ideon ankaŭ subtenis Devjatnin—unu el la plej agemaj esp-istoj de la esp. sekcio de la III-a Internacio. La akceptita rezolucio deziras la koncentrigon de la tuta esp. movado rusia en E. S. K. I. (Esp. Sekcio de la Komunista Internacio). La Komunista Sekcio en N.-Novgorod havas 150 membrojn, el kiuj 47% bone parolas. Bedaŭrinde mankas lernolibroj kaj literaturo.

Moskvo.—Generala kunsido de komunistoj de Hodinska regiono, post raportoj de Evstifejev kaj Jodko, voĉdonis rezolucion pri esp-o, ke ĝi fariĝu la of. lingvo por interrilatoj de la Rusa Federacia Socialista Respubliko kun la III-a Internacio kaj la R. K. P. (Rusa Komunista Partio).—(*La Esperantista Laborista*, Paris.)

Germanio

Munheno.—La laborista grupo nune gvidas kursojn en kvin kvartaloj de la urbo kun sume 90 geanoj.—Kiu deziras korespondadi skribu al la centra grupo per jena adreso: Laborista Grupo, München, Holzstr. 24. Rest.: "Westermühle," Bavario.

Transilvanio

La Esp.-Centro por *Transilvanio* kaj *Banato* komencis leterkurson por provincaĵoj. Tre vigla interesiĝo. Ĝar la militistaj estraroj malpermesis la tre bone prosperintajn kursojn, la multnombraj interesigantoj, inter ili multe da profesoroj, estas devigataj lerni private.

Portugalia

Lisboa.—*Federacio de l'Sindikataj Gejunularoj* alvokas al ĉiuj rev. organizaĵoj, ke ili sendu informojn pri la tutmonda movado de rev. gejunuloj helpe al redakcio de la organo "O Despertar" (La Vekiĝo). Oni akceptas korespondadon en franca, hispana, angla, itala kaj esperanto sed oni respondas nur en esp-o. Represo de tiu alvoko en ĉiuj naciaj gazetoj estas varme petata. Oni alsendu ekzempleron.

La Sekretario: JOSÉ ANTUNES,
Rua António Maria Tardoso, 20, Lisboa.

Centra Ameriko

La nacia kongreso de Guatemala konfirmis la traktaton de San José, laŭ kiu estas kreata la unuigo de la mez-amerikaj respublikoj. Ĝis nun subsignis Guatemala, Honduras kaj San Salvador; subsigno per Kostarika okazos baldaŭ. La teritorio de la Unuigitaj Statoj de Meza Ameriko havas areon de pli ol 300,000 km. kun ĉirkaŭ 4 milionoj da enloĝantoj.

NEWS OF THE MOVEMENT

The result of the postal ballot on alterations to Constitution, etc., discussed at the Meet was as follows:—

Papers returned, 234. In favour of all three new clauses, 223. In favour of one or two clauses only, 4. Against all three clauses, 1. Six papers had no votes in this section. The new clauses are therefore carried.

The voting on the amount of the Annual Subscription was:—For the E.C.'s proposal (to raise the subscription from 1s. to 2s. 6d.)—133. For the Bradford amendment, 90. Against raising the subscription, 11.

The new constitution will be found in full on page ii. of our cover this month.

* * *

Once again we appeal to Plebeians in CHESTERFIELD to get into touch with C. W. Delicate. Chesterfield used to be a very good

district with much enthusiasm in educational activities, and there must be many in the district who would derive benefit by getting into touch again with comrades anxious to run classes. Sheffield is also anxious to help, and we are looking for a revival of PLEBS sales in the near future. Don't forget—C. W. Delicate, 57, Sterland Street, Brampton Chesterfield . . . and for SHEFFIELD, where a summer class is in full swing—E. Gethin, 20, Rising Road, Pitsmoor.

* * *

The NORWICH Branch is continuing activities during the summer, running two classes, one (other classes please copy!) for the study and discussion of *Creative Revolution*, Sunday mornings; the other on Tuesday evenings, in Psychology. Particulars from A. A. Segon, 41, Stafford Street, who by his enthusiasm and support has held the group together since it was inaugurated.

Plebeians in the ILFORD district should try to be present at the local I.L.P. meeting on Sunday, June 5th, when Geo. Deacon will speak on Education and the Workers. He would be glad to hear from comrades willing to form a Plebs group for that district. Write G. D., 46, Farnham Road, Seven Kings.

EDINBURGH really deserves a whole page to itself for the good work it has done during the past few months. Our two comrades Millar and a very able band of helpers have by dint of hard work and perseverance in well-doing worked up support for the Scottish Labour College, inaugurated and conducted several successful classes, and now, as a result, an Edinburgh branch of the League has been formed. Will all supporters of Independent Working-Class Education in Auld Reekie write W. Kay, League Sec., 2, Lorne Square, Leith? Congratulations to all concerned. After some years' experience, we feel convinced that what is needed in many parts of Scotland is not so much initial propaganda as the gathering of the harvest. The seed has been quietly sown during recent years, and, as J. P. M. M. and "Jock" Millar have found, not all of it fell on stony ground.

The Second Annual Conference of the Scottish Labour College, Edinburgh district, held recently, had a fine record of work to discuss. One hundred delegates attended, and it was reported by the Secretary that as compared with 120 students in 1919-20, they now had nearly 700. The number of classes had increased from 3 to 21; 36 organisations had affiliated to the committee (representing a membership of 23,000), the sum of £247 had been taken for the sale of literature, and the committee had been able to appoint a full-time lecturer as well as to avail itself of the services of eight part-time lecturers.

J. P. M. Millar, who took the chair, said that prior to 1919 there was very little interest in independent working-class education in Scotland amongst trade unionists, but that to-day their committee was supported by miners, engineers, railway men, printers, textile workers, woodworkers, Co-operative bodies and Socialist branches. Mr. Tom Drummond delivered a rousing address, and at the close of the Conference a collection was taken for the Miners' Children Fund.

The summer class in Science of Understanding is going strong—nearly 100 students having been enrolled. W. H.

CORRESPONDENCE

*Readers are cordially invited to join in any of these little arguments.
Don't be shy—butt straight in!*

THE M.C.H. AND POETRY

DEAR COMRADE,—Ralph Fox rebukes me very sternly for a "misuse" of the Materialist Conception, of which he says: "It is a method of research, an acid test, a widening of outlook, and a great contribution to human knowledge. But that is all. It has its limits." True; but did I suggest anything else? In my article on Kipling I tentatively endeavoured to use it as a "method of research" in the field of poetry. Am I wrong in so doing? Fox himself admits earlier in his letter that he has no quarrel with my application of the M.C.H. to Kipling, and he even goes so far as to allow that "possibly" it could be applied to Swinburne and Shelley—by a worthier pen. In view of this admission his concluding harangue is rather meaningless.

To avoid misunderstanding I would like to say that I approach the subject with a very vivid realisation of the limitations of the M.C.H. in connection with the study of poetry and art; but I still think that it can throw great illumination upon all great creative artists, since their work as a whole is only understandable in relation to the social development of their time.

I hope on some future occasion to develop my intentionally provocative references to Shelley and Swinburne as fully as the Editor's

generosity and the limited space at his disposal will permit. In the meanwhile a few brief suggestions in reply to Fox will suffice to show that my claims are not entirely groundless.

Does Fox seriously class Shelley as a "proletarian poet"? Is it not a more reasonable proposition that his atheism and republicanism are significant of the ideals of the advanced section of the revolutionary capitalist class, which had still to wrest complete political dominance from the hands of the landed proprietors? Fox asks "When, O when, were our early capitalists revolutionary?"—a rather foolish question from a Marxian! The answer, of course, is: The English capitalists, like every other rising class, were revolutionary until they overturned the dominant class which blocked their way to power. They were quite actively revolutionary in 1649 when they cut off King Charles' head, and in 1688 when they deposed King James; not to mention 1832 when they easily terrorised the weakened forces of landlordism into passing the Reform Bill. But all this is elementary history! Even the W.E.A. recognise such politico-economic events at their true value!

To return to Shelley. The humanistic sentiments in the "Song to the Men of England" can be matched from the works of many poets whom even Fox would not

term "proletarian," e.g. Goldsmith and Gray. Mary Shelley's testimony is inconclusive: that everyone is entitled to "the necessities of life when fairly earned" was not a very startling claim even in the opening years of the 19th century. Prof. Saintsbury sums up Shelley as "an enthusiast for humanity generally"—which seems about the mark! Rossetti pictures Shelley as a rather mild revolutionary: "In politics he was genuinely a republican; but not a courtier of the mob, nor at all disposed to ignore the practical difficulties which would beset a transfer of power from the few to the many, prior to full preparation of the many to use it with justice and understanding."

Shelley was the disciple of Godwin, an eminent bourgeois political philosopher; and the friend of Byron and Leigh Hunt—also non-proletarian radicals. As regards Robert Owen, his influence on Shelley's opinions must certainly have been negligible; for the latter died early in 1822 and had completed all his important work by the end of 1819, while Owen, according to Fox, "was first becoming articulate" in 1819-1823!

On Swinburne my critic is still more at sea. He presents the author of *Poems and Ballads* as voicing the "hatred" of the landowning aristocrats for the upstart industrialists. Such an interpretation will not stand even cursory examination, for Swinburne's work teems with wild tirades against Kings, Priests, and Nobles. Fox admits his "sentimental enthusiasm for the European nationalist movements," and these movements were essentially inspired by capitalist requirements. Prof. Loria in *The Economic Foundations of Society* proves conclusively that the motive force behind the struggle for Italian unity was predominantly capitalist. The Italian patriots are conspicuous in Swinburne's gallery of heroes. Of course there are proletarian elements in every revolutionary movement, but it is surely unnecessary to labour the point that while control is exercised by the interests of another class it can never be a proletarian movement.

One more point. Swinburne was undoubtedly born an aristocrat—but it is an extraordinary "materialistic misconception" on Fox's part to assume a sort of theory of class confinements! On this doctrine Marx must have clung to the philosophy of the lesser bourgeoisie, while Kropotkin could only express the intellectual outlook of the Russian aristocracy.

Yours frat., ERNEST JOHNS

SIMPLIFIED ECONOMICS

DEAR COMRADE,—To write for PLEBS is a task to make the boldest shrink. In the May number, Ralph Fox has a go at Ernest Johns; J. T. W. N., and R. Reynolds are after Postgate's blood; G. S. has to ask that his reviews shall be read in the right spirit, and Mainwaring refers to me as a Marxian (with inverted commas and an exclamation mark).

When I undertook to write the "Economics" notes I expected to get no quarter if I did not repeat all the usual phrases in the usual way. I knew that I should be expected to say, or chant:—

There are two kinds of value.

Lord have mercy upon us.

Use Value and Exchange Value.

Lord have mercy upon us.

If one was able to sit down at a desk, surrounded by one's own books, with several of the best Marxian teachers within hailing distance, it might be possible for one to make quite sure that every word was correct. It may interest Mainwaring and others to know that Note 1 was written in Glasgow, 2 and 3 in London, 4 in a hotel smokeroom in Newcastle, 5 in South Wales, and the one for this issue in a garret of a back-to-back house in "Brum." This letter is being penned in a café smokeroom, also in "Brum," and all around are draughts-players and other public nuisances.

This does not mean of course that sloppy writing should be allowed to go unchallenged, but the challenge should be helpful. Our business is to try to help each other to help some other body in his or her studies. This can be done without the aid of exclamation marks or violent writing.

Now for Mainwaring's points:—

(1) "If gold was produced as easily as iron its value would be the same as iron—perhaps less, because iron is more useful than gold." W. H. M. underlines the last part of this statement and appears to think that I wish to play up to the utilitarian theory. That is because he does not detach himself from his pure theory—not even for long enough to allow a writer to indulge in an aside.

The first half of the statement is correct, and W. H. M. will agree that if gold was produced as easily as iron, very few people would want it. Watches made of such cheap metal would not be in great demand, and one cannot build bridges or make railway engines of gold, and so, although its value *per se* would be the same as iron, it would be a drug on the market.

(2) "Gold is a peculiar commodity—it has no price."

I hope I know that gold must measure itself against other commodities, but I am trying—without saying that if A or B or C or D are equal to each other they are equal to the same thing—to show that gold in the ordinary world—as distinct from on the blackboard—has to be its own measure of value. We say for conventional reasons that an ounce of gold is worth £3 17s. 10½d., but that is just the same as saying that an ounce of gold is worth an ounce of gold, because sovereigns to the value of £3 17s. 10½d. contain an ounce of gold.

(3) Since I made use of the word "metaphysical" I have felt as if perhaps

it was not the best word, but a talk with Eden Paul bucked me up a bit, and I am letting the word stand.

Finally, if Mainwaring wants to help, no one will be more grateful than myself. The pitch is vacant if there are any comrades anxious to occupy it. The wandering propagandist perhaps ought not to take on work like this, but if no one else will, he must. I waited for a year with the plan in my mind hoping that someone else would get a move on. The thanks I have had from comrades all over the country has more than repaid me for the adventure.

Yours frat., W. McLAINÉ

DEAR COMRADE,—In the May number of the PLEBS, W. McLaine in his "Economics Without Headaches" says:—"In 1694 a number of merchants agreed to take over the Royal debts of £11,000,000, on condition that they were allowed to issue bank notes to that amount. Later, the figure was increased to £14,000,000, and in 1905 it was brought up to £18,450,000. This is known as the Fiduciary Issue. Against this amount securities are lodged by the State. . . ."

These statements need correction. The amount lent to the Government by the founders of the Bank of England was £1,200,000 (not £11,000,000), which formed the limit of the note issue. Furthermore, the Government debt to the Bank has never reached £18,450,000; it is still £11,015,100, an amount which was reached in 1833. The point to be noted is that a distinction must be made between the Government debt and the Fiduciary Issue. The former represents loans made by the bank to the Government—loans which do not, as McLaine suggests, exist in the form of securities covering the note issue, but merely as a book entry. The latter, amounting to £18,450,000, is the amount of notes which the Bank may issue without a covering of gold—an amount issued against both the Government debt and securities. These securities, which at the present time amount to £7,434,900, need not necessarily be Government securities; they can be any kind that the Bank authorities think desirable. The Fiduciary Issue could disappear altogether without affecting the amount of the Government debt to the Bank and vice versa.

With reference to the fluctuations in the price of silver, may I add that the 1917 price of 55d. per ounce has been very much exceeded; on February 11th, 1920, it rose to 80½d. per ounce.

Yours frat., G. P

THE "PLEBS"—FOUND WANTING

DEAR COMRADE,—I wish to express a critical opinion of the nature of many recent contributions to the PLEBS. This opinion, if not always publicly articulated, is, I feel sure, shared by a fair number of PLEBS' readers.

Far too much attention is being paid to

the attempted elucidation of petty fragments of past history. I take it that the avowed policy of the PLEBS is to seek to understand the many problems that face us to-day, and suggest to the workers solutions born of understanding. We dig into the past to aid us in this task, not to make historical pursuit the one and only end.

The editorial test, then, to which any article should be put ought to be the degree of its utility in helping to explain or solve a present-day problem. Under the scrutiny of this test many PLEBS' contributions, I fear, will be found wanting.

Is it any part of PLEBS' policy to waste space upon the technique of a bust? or whether H. G. Wells is worthy of reverence? Is it very useful to us to know that Engels thought such and such a tactic good, bad or indifferent? The world continues to move on, let us remember.

Again, much pardonable objection is being made to the comparative non-use value to *practical* Plebeians of articles appearing above the name of one "Postgate." Surely, we cannot afford to investigate the religious and political opinions and associates of every "Mr. Smith" who happens to stumble to the conclusion that socialism is desirable!

The fact that a man has made a compilation (however useful) of revolutionary proclamations, does not, surely, entitle him to rummage from a second-hand bookshop the details of a personage now dead, and thrust them upon PLEBS' readers. The kind of matter and the mode of presentation of such a fragment of history inevitably recalls to the reader's mind the sensations experienced while riding in a primitive waggon which goes jolting along a rough and muddy road.

The PLEBS is the only organ we have by means of which we can cast aside the coat of propagandist superficiality and lay bare the vitals of the numberless issues that face us to-day. Utility must be our watchword. Any non-utilitarian matter inevitably excludes from the PLEBS the useful and everyday matter. Space being limited, the PLEBS must judiciously choose its contributions, the less important giving way to the more important.

The PLEBS plays much too important a part on the educational side of the modern Labour movement for its pages to be misused by attempts at raising from the dust of obscurity matters that are of little value in solving present-day problems. There are many questions to be thrashed out to-day, which are almost too numerous to mention, but which are almost untouched by the PLEBS. Why is this so? Not because there are no contributors to deal with them, but because those who are able and willing to do so have not previously made a reputation for erudition. Reputation holds the sword of justice. Surely the status of the writer should not be the only consideration or even the most important one; some regard, at

least, should be paid to the nature of the subject-matter dealt with.

So I would suggest that the PLEBS undertakes a critical revision of its policy, and gives some consideration to the cardinal question as to its *place* and *aim* in the workers' educational movement.

Yours for Utilitarian Education,

F. P.

[This letter is replied to in this month's "Bookshelf."—ED.]

THE ABSOLUTE

DEAR EDITOR,—I have twisted the tail of Walton Newbold and over Horrabin have I cast out my shoe! Even so I am undismayed.

Newbold is angry with me because I called primitive communism and mediæval guilds "frillery," for the purposes of Plebs teaching. This was a hit, and a hit in a tender spot; so Newbold suggests that I "revise all my methods of approaching, learning and applying history." I regret that I have no use for the suggestion, but sincerely hope that J. T. W. N. will find a place for those plain but kindly words of advice nearer (much nearer) home.

He complains that while I neglect his pet subjects I shall not "understand the origins of the State," nor "examine the origins of the bourgeoisie," nor "have appreciation of the forms of association by which the oppressed of earlier days conducted the class struggles of their times" nor have any "use for the epics of our peasantry." Also, maybe, I shall tend not to understand the Einstein theory, to have no appreciation of Charlie Chaplin, and to eat peas off a knife.

No, J. T. W. N., it won't do. No serious consequences follow on a neglect of primitive and mediæval history. Suppose it were proved that primitive communism was a myth, would that affect us to-day in the very least bit? Would it alter our tactics in any way? Hasten or defer or make impossible a revolution? Affect the shop-stewards, or make our industrial or other policy vary a hairbreadth? Of course not. If the whole history of mediæval guilds was found to be wrongly understood, would it matter much more? Again, dear friend, the answer is a lemon.

But when we come to the epochs of bourgeois and proletarian revolutions, we do really bite on something. If we found that the Paris Commune had never existed and that the whole story of the rise and growth of the proletariat was completely misconceived, our tactics *would* be seriously affected. If the class war is shown to have got steadily less instead of more acute, for example, are we not landed right into Bernstein's reformism? The study of modern history might alter and dissolve the whole of our present plans and tactics.

That economics matter more than ancient history I don't suppose Newbold denies.

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11a Penywern Rd., Earl's Court, S.W.5

Economics, after all, is what we exist to talk about. But primitive communism—oh, come to the pictures!

* * *

You, dear Editor, make a much more serious charge and one in which I am far more interested. I said, in the article you attack, that the basis of our opposition to the learning and culture taught to-day was that it was wrong—untrue. I charged our modern historians and economists with incompetence or untruthfulness. If we read, for example, any short history (including the much-praised Wells' *Outline*) of modern times we find that the main underlying fact in all the story—the rise and progress of Labour—is slurred over, and the course of history distorted and altered correspondingly.

The attempt to disguise and hide the advance of the proletariat produces one result only—lying. The history so written is just inaccurate, untrue—no more. What the PLEBS stands for is accurate, true—no more. And in underlining this fact I remarked that therefore your description of Plebs teaching as "prejudiced and partial," though arresting as propaganda, was strictly inaccurate. We believed (I said) in Marxism because we thought it *true*, not because we thought it prejudiced and partial.

You came out after my blood. You said, in effect, that the whole of Plebs teaching was partial and prejudiced and that was why you believed it. You just avoided saying that you were a Marxist because you thought

Marxism was a lie, but that was the whole trend of your argument.

You defended this by saying that there was no such thing as Absolute Truth. Now when I found that you denounced me in the name of the Absolute (with a capital A) I felt that I had as good as defeated you. For, after all, that sort of denunciation (which you hopefully called "avoiding a philosophical dispute") is practically meaningless.

If you will descend from the Absolute (there is no time in the Absolute, so they won't miss you there) and cease talking like an Indian mystic, I would ask you to point out one single concrete item of Plebs information which you regard as "prejudiced and partial," say why it is so, and why you yet believe it. Or if that be thought unfair, will you do this? You say in effect that when the workers' civilisation is achieved this phase of prejudicedness and partiality will pass. (I am not sure if I understand you, for it is some time since I read any metaphysics.) Can you point to any portion of our historical teaching which will be then seen to be untrue? Will it cease to be true (as all truth depends on "class interests and outlook") that the main phenomenon of European history from 1789 to 1871 was the Industrial Revolution and the consequent production of opposed capitalist and wage-earning classes? Will it cease to be true that from 1871 to 1917 the main motive force of European history was the resistance of capital to the encroaching working class at home, and its expansion into undeveloped countries abroad? Are these statements to be welcomed as being prejudiced, or as being merely *true*, though truths that some may prefer to be concealed? Answer please!

I see that a little of this poisonous love of the Absolute is spreading to me too, so I had better stop. All I would like to add is that I would agree that PLEBS education is "partial" in the sense that it only deals in *part* of the available knowledge, since only part (roughly, modern history and economics) is of real value to the workers while they are still not victorious. But that it is partial in the sense of neglecting unpleasant facts, or prejudiced in any way, that I deny.

And if you are going to deny that there are such things as facts—well, I ask you!

Yrs.,

R. W. POSTGATE

[Newbold will of course reply for himself; at any rate I hope so, since discussion of the particular fields of study on which we can most usefully concentrate seems to me to be distinctly useful. As for the argument with me (if I may be allowed to drop the editorial "we" in order to shoulder responsibility for my own statements), I only want to say (i.) that I agree in the main with Postgate's contentions, but (ii.) that I still think it right to stress the "prejudiced and partial" character of I.W.-C.E. I don't agree that "partiality" and "truth" are, as Postgate

seems to imply, incompatible. On the contrary, a stern regard for truth appears to me to prejudice one strongly in favour of the working class; and, at the present time and under existing conditions, forces one to attack the very notion of Impartiality. It is "impartiality" (self-styled) which nowadays "neglects unpleasant facts." Partial, prejudiced proletarians alone look facts in the face—that is precisely why they become partial and prejudiced. And so long as words have their present-day meanings—so long, that is, as the present little struggle between the classes is on—I should be sorry to call myself anything else.—J. F. H.]

WANTED—GOOD FICTION

DEAR COMRADE.—I suppose most Plebeians seek occasional diversion in the realms of romance and poesy. A certain able and well-known lecturer on Marxian economics used to sit up late every night reading "penny dreadfuls"! We need scarcely go to such lengths in pursuit of mental relaxation, but the occasional reading of imaginative literature should prove helpful in many ways. It cannot but tend to broaden the mind and to ward off the deadly sin of priggishness, and there is no reason why our "recreative" reading should not also assist us wonderfully in our studies by making important historical periods "live again" for us and by providing useful illustrations to the M.C.H. Marx himself was extremely fond of quoting illustrative passages from classical authors. His references to *Don Quixote* and *Robinson Crusoe* in Vol. I. of *Capital* will be readily recalled.

Readers of *Huckleberry Finn* will remember how Huck argues with himself that he is breaking all the laws of God and man in not delivering up the runaway slave to his pursuers; and yet cannot bring himself to do so. He attributes his sympathetic impulse to innate wickedness, and is almost heart-broken at his own depravity! The pathos of this situation must appeal to every reader, but it is only when we return to the volume after Marx has opened our eyes that we fully realise the tremendous social implications involved. It is then we see Huck's struggle in its true light as a conflict between class morality and elementary human solidarity.

It is unnecessary to spend any more time in emphasising the value of novel reading to PLEBS students, but there are certain dangers on the road which move me to make a suggestion. It would be quite easy to imbibe altogether false notions from many so-called "historical" novels in circulation to-day, and even from many really fine works of fiction from the purely literary standpoint. We need a guide, and if the PLEBS can spare say half a page monthly for this purpose, its many able contributors are quite capable of the task. One novel a month is sufficient, but we want to know that it is a novel worth the reading and that it

has special value to us as Marxian students. We want to know the period with which it deals, and whether the author writes from contemporary knowledge or from research. Whether his picture of the period can be relied upon as accurate, or whether we would be wise to make certain allowances for bias or inadequate scholarship, etc. This much is essential if the suggested new feature is to be of service, but of course much further information might be included. We might be warned by our guide of certain passages or incidents to which he attaches particular importance, and so on. I would suggest that our mentor change his identity monthly, and that the range of subjects and periods be made as wide as possible. A few comments by Postgate on Hugo's *Ninety-Three* would be priceless, and I am sure Newbold would be equal to giving us some valuable "pointers" on Dickens's *Hard Times*.

Yours frat.,

ERNEST JOHNS

HINTS TO STUDENTS

DEAR EDITOR,—In reply to "S. F. G." :—

(1) Reading and marking books :—

Read a short set portion regularly, in that part of the day when the mind is most fresh and distractions absent. If you do it before work you can reflect upon it during the day or endeavour to make it plain to somebody else. Mark sparingly with the idea of making clear for reference the chief part of the paragraph. Make cross references to other parts of the book, or to other books if they supplement or contradict. It is good practice to sum up each paragraph in a marginal phrase. Comments should be made in pencil—you may want to rub them out later.

(2) Take lecture notes on any old scrap-paper, aiming at picking out "peg" words from the lecturer's sentences. Then write them up while the lecture is still fresh in the mind in a *loose-leaf* notebook. If you can't afford an outfit like the Globe Wernicke Filing System, you can make something of the same sort for yourself by getting a cardboard box, with cardboard index sheets, for collecting and arranging the leaves from the notebook when the course is completed.

(3) A loose-leaf newspaper-cutting book is also the best way of storing cuttings. If you paste in a scrapbook they are not available for carrying to meetings. Keeping them loose in a letter index case would be preferable. Arrangement by subject with the date and source of cutting always attached is best.

Don't have too many subjects or use the scissors too often. Remember the Labour Research Department files information and the Museum collects newspapers. The wife or the landlady will object if you get the cutting habit too badly. Besides you'll throw heaps of it away when you shift your lodgings.

Yours frat.,

M. S.

AN APPEAL

DEAR COMRADE,—My loneliness in this capitalist paradise, with blacks and whites in their "proper places," is lightened every time I get your magazine.

Do you think any of your readers would be willing to exchange views now and then on Philosophy and the Materialist Conception of History?

I am particularly interested in these two subjects, and though I have plenty of time for reading, I feel I ought to compare notes with other, more advanced, students.

Yours frat.,

P. HANSEN

(Address)

P.O. Box 72,

Inhambane,

Portuguese East Africa

WHO NEXT ?

DEAR EDITOR,—I think it was W. Paul who remarked at a meeting here recently that the most reactionary trade unionists in Russia were the printers. This is certainly not true of their fellows in the Scotch centre of the printing industry, for the other day when I called on Mr. Hampton, the energetic secretary of the Edinburgh Typographical Society, he produced a proof of its new rules, number 16 of which reads as follows :—

"The Society shall be affiliated to the Scottish Labour College, Edinburgh District, an honorary delegate to the Committee being appointed at February Quarterly Meeting."

That is brief, but all-inclusive. It means that the Society pays an affiliation fee of 2s. 6d. as well as 2d. per member per annum in return for which it has a representative on the District Committee and all its members are entitled to free tuition at the Winter Session classes.

Bravo, printers! Who's next to *show* it in the rules?

Fraternally,

J. P. M. MILLAR

WE KNOW YOU MEANT TO SETTLE YOUR A/C

—BUT DID YOU?

REVIEWS

STILL THEY COME!

Karl Marx and Modern Socialism. By F. R. Salter, M.A. (Macmillan, 6s.)

Yet another addition to the 700 volumes written—mainly by University dons—to prove the Marxian theories wrong. There ought really to be a "close season."

Mr. Harold Cox has shown us that according to Marx's Theory of Value a house pulled down contains more value than a house still standing, because more labour has been expended on it. Another don, Mr. Henry Clay, in his popularised Marshall, inverted the order of Marx's pages in order to prove the Labour Theory to be nonsense. Prof. Nicholson lost his temper and called Marx a mad Mullah. Mr. Salter, on the other hand, tries to be kind to him; Marx was "a very lovable, very exasperating, but essentially real, though often wrong-headed enthusiast." His theories have of course been finally discredited—Mr. Salter relies on Mr. Clay to prove how dead they are.

This book, like most of its kind, is chock-full of unwarrantable assumptions and misused terms. Its quality may be gauged from such sentences as "Capital is only labour-power dead or alive," or "Marx did not allow for competition." Value, for this author, is determined by "want," mixed up with cost of production. One cannot help thinking that at the present time the unemployed "want" quite a lot; but will that affect the exchange value of bread?

Of course Mr. Salter finds the Materialist Conception of History "too narrow." History is much too complex, etc., etc., don't you know! But will he tell us just where Marx *did* claim that the economic factor was the only one to be taken into account?

Finally Mr. Salter reviews the present state of European Socialism. His conclusion is that the proletariat took the wrong turning when it followed Marx instead of Mazzini. What it needs is a "psychology"—not better food, clothes, houses or a National Pool, but Ideas of Duty, Justice, Morality and that kind of thing. He'd better go and tell that to the miners.

M. S.

DURHAM

The Story of the Durham Miners. By Sidney Webb. (Labour Publishing Co. 5s. cloth, 2s. 6d. paper.)

The law of life is change. So that, reading this book, one is not surprised to learn that the Durham Miners were once revolutionaries. Once upon a time, the northern miner was the prize fighter of the British working-class movement. He was an "extremist," even as the S. Welshman is to-day. But all that is changed. His leaders to-day turn down the Labour College and the Red T.U. International; and Durham lags at the rear of the working-class movement.

The *Times* in 1916 discovered this "change of heart" on the part of the northern miner, and attributed it mainly to the University-inspired teaching which was being ladled out to him; proceeding to recommend the Masters of S. Wales to establish classes for the "impartial" study of History and Economics under the "guidance" of properly-equipped tutors. The *Times'* man hit the nail on the head. "Impartial" education is responsible for the northern miner's backwardness and apathy. He was told by his leaders in the seventies to discard "socialistic" theories and let Selling Prices (datum line) determine wages; to vote Liberal—later, Lib.-Lab.; to "think things out" through Conciliation, Arbitration and Joint Boards, rather than fight them out; and always to remember that he had the best set of masters on earth. No wonder the *class* spirit died out; and it will never flourish again until Labour College classes are recognised as more important than Brotherhood meetings, and until the W.E.A. is seen to be exactly what the *Times* said it was.

In this small book of 150 pp. Mr. Webb tells the story of the Durham miner from 1662 to 1921. But he tells it too much from the orthodox, official point of view for it to be very interesting. He does not relate the spirit of the workers, revolutionary or apathetic, to the historical background. He tells us nothing of the silent but effective revolution being brought about by "unrecognised" movements. Only a working miner—a class-conscious miner—can write the book we want; that is why we must look to the Labour College.

Mr. Webb's book is a plea for Constitutionalism—for Parliament, Council, Co-operative Society and religious life. While, therefore, we can be grateful for it as a handy compilation of certain facts, we are left still waiting for the history which shall be an inspiration as well as a record—a battle-cry rather than an epitaph. GEO. HARVEY

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THE AGRICULTURAL PROLETARIAN

The Tyranny of the Countryside. F. E. Green. (Labour Publishing Company, 2s. 6d.)
The Farm Worker: His Past and Future. (National Union of Agricultural Workers, 2d.)

Mr. Green's book was originally published in 1913, when it created quite a stir. It is an eloquent and often moving indictment, from the labourers' standpoint, of our modern method—or lack of method—in agriculture, concluding with a passionate appeal to the agriculturists to assert their manhood and womanhood. A noteworthy feature of the last chapter is the call to the town-workers to assist their comrades of the countryside. The same appeal occurs elsewhere in the book: "To-day a general strike amongst labourers should be easier to organise if the great industrial trade unions directed the revolt." The author has a greater respect for the town-workers' directive ability than certain recent events would justify!

For its particular purpose, as set forth in its title, the book is doubtless admirable; and Mr. Green says that in essentials it is still a faithful picture of the oppressive conditions under which the rural worker lives and labours. Yet we cannot but wonder at its republication by the L.P. Co. It is not indictments or mere abstract appeals, however eloquent, that we want. The greatest need of the Labour movement is clear light on the policy to be pursued—a

policy whose immediate tactics shall always subserve the final aim. In agriculture we are especially benighted; and while we shall require facts and figures such as are contained in this book, the fundamental business of the Labour Press is to hammer out our policy: whenever we require the other things—well, Mr. Lloyd George's Budget speeches are always available.

It was with mingled hopes and fears that one turned to the N.U.A.W.'s pamphlet. The title is decidedly attractive, but the origin not encouraging, for T.U. offices are notorious rather than famous for their publications. The first half at any rate provided an agreeable surprise—an admirable summary of the landworker's "Past." The second part dealing with the future was, alas! what we expected—a plea for T.U. organisation with only the most general hints as to the aims and method of such an organisation once achieved. However, it was at least a genuine advocacy of industrial unionism and demand for workers' control; and we can certainly find encouragement in that. Plebeians will further be interested to hear that in the correspondence columns of the March number of the *Land Worker* the claims of the Labour College were being urged. And hark to this for optimism: "If our Union would affiliate to the C.L.C. and send up students—it may be but two or three from a county—these men would come back . . ." etc. "But two or three from a county"! The S.W.M.F. had better look to its laurels!

T. A.

A CLASSIC

The Civil War in France. By Karl Marx. (Labour Publishing Co. Post aid, 3s. 3d.)

This book is No. 1 in a series to be issued by the new Labour Publishing Co., whose aim, we understand, is to get a complete English library of the most famous Socialist classics. This is a good start. In addition to Marx's brochure it contains two documents, new to the present generation, and a valuable historical introduction by that indefatigable Plebeian scholar, R. W. Postgate.

The two manifestoes of the International, now republished for the first time since their original issue in July and September, 1870, are documents of absorbing interest. The first describes the reception by the working class of the countries involved of the news of the declaration of the Franco-German War, and the conditions under which this or any other war could hope for the sanction and support of proletarians.

The second manifesto is even more important. It traces the evolution of the militarist spirit, unmasks its pretensions and apologetics, shows its ultimate aims, and forecasts with deadly accuracy its future consequences. Reading it, and remembering that it was written almost while events were still shaping, one realises afresh what a magnificent instrument for the true interpretation of events the Materialist Conception of History is. A speaker remarked recently, at a meeting of University men and women in Oxford, that scores of English working-class Marxists "ignorant" men from the orthodox point of view, were able to read the real aims and motives behind the Great War far more accurately than University professors and scholars who had access to numberless sources of information denied to proletarians.

The Civil War in France deals, as many Plebeians know, with the events leading up to the Paris Commune, its work, and its final suppression in an orgy of bloody massacre. Neither in his *Life of Lord Palmerston* nor in his *Secret Diplomatic History of the 18th Century* is Marx's analytical and satirical power so apparent as in the series of Manifestoes now first made available in this book for present-day readers. Postgate's introduction is all that was required for its completion.

If this is a sample of future items in this series, all we need say is that we hope they will be available at the earliest possible moment. Congratulations to Postgate, to the L.P. Co., and to the English working-class movement on this initial venture, both in matter, style and form.

G. S.

PSYCHO-ANALYSIS

A correspondent in the December PLEBS sought to warn proletarian students off the "unsavoury subject" of psycho-analysis. "D. J.W." in March, gave a sufficient answer:

"The working class must supply itself with a knowledge, not only of economics and history, but of every aspect of social life." Proletarian students might as well ignore evolution and Marxist economics, as ignore the new psychology. Each is revolutionary in its own field; together they are transforming not merely our outlook on life, but life itself. Here are two recent books which can be confidently recommended. *What is Psycho-Analysis?* by Isador H. Coriat, M.D. (Kegan Paul, 3s. 6d. net.) is a volume of 120 pp. in the form of question and answer, which gives a clear and concise exposition of the aims and purposes of psycho-analysis. It is a guide to the terminology, rapidly becoming current in general literature, which must be understood by all who would master the new psychology. *Abnormal Psychology and its Educational Applications*, by Frank Watts (Allen & Unwin, 7s. 6d.) is less concerned with the "abnormal" than its title implies. Its discussion of the mob-mind and the group-mind, its study of the educational applications of suggestibility and sympathy and imitation, and its account of the bearings of the new psychology upon the development of personality, will be invaluable to Plebeian educationists and propagandists.

E. & C. P.

DOPE FOR BABES

Work, Wealth and Wages. By E. F. Row, B.Sc. (Econ.). *An Introductory Reader in Civics.* By E. E. Houseley, B.Sc. (Econ.). (Harrap & Co. 1s. 3d. and 2s. 3d. respectively.)

These slim volumes,—*slim* in more than one sense—are sufficient proof that capitalist control of juvenile education is a very real thing; and, moreover, that the capitalists are becoming increasingly conscious of the opportunities such control affords them of counteracting in advance the "insidious propaganda" of "agitators" and Plebs teachers. Elementary economics (you can guess the brand) and "civics" are to be instilled into the minds of working-class children, with a view to helping them to grow up loyal supporters of the existing order. So that it is up to Plebs teachers to take note of volumes like these, since theirs will be the task of helping the luckless victims of this tuition to grow up into loyal members of the working class.

Mr. Row—note his degree—repeats all the hoary old legends about "capital being savings," etc., etc., in suitably simple language. And his skill in dodging round awkward questions would earn a W.E.A. diploma.

Mr. Houseley—note his degree, also—defends profits in the same old way. He expatiates quite a lot on the need for the "civic spirit" and for "loyalty to the community," and these pages might well be used as a basis for a few lessons to the coal-owners

and their puppet Government. Mr. Houseley is a perverid patriot—everything British, from Parliament to Prisons, is entirely admirable. He always, of course, refers to the British Empire, where mere crude proletarians would speak of the Federation of British Industries; and Wordsworth and Tennyson are called in to help hymn the glories of Worldwide Exploitation—*alias* Imperial Destiny. Labour members of Education Committees will do well to watch that "civic instruction" is kept out of school curriculums. It sounds harmless enough, but it's as nasty and dirty a dope as B.Sc.'s (Econ.) can devise at their masters' bidding. Q.

BRIGHT'S DISEASE.

From Liberalism to Labour. By Charles Trevelyan. (Allen & Unwin. 1s. 6d.)

Apart from a trenchant but somewhat superfluous exposure of the duplicity of the Liberal leaders during 1914-18, this booklet contains little or nothing likely to help towards a solution of the social problem.

The reason is not far to seek. One of the most brilliant among the motley crowd of "intellectuals" who since the war have migrated from the Liberal to the Labour camp, Mr. Trevelyan has nevertheless still the distorted outlook of a middle-class idealist reared in the traditions of Gladstone and Bright. His quarrel is not so much with Liberalism as with the decadence of latter-day Liberals, and his desertion is due to a conviction that the mantle of the prophets has in some measure descended upon Clynes, Thomas and MacDonald. (It is even hinted that were Bright alive to-day he, too, would find a "spiritual home" in the same fold.)

To such a mind it is inevitable that the Socialist movement should be based not on sordid class antagonisms, but on "the ethical objection to the private enjoyment of communally-created wealth."

Once only does our author show signs of tackling the problem at its roots. He acknowledges that "a very sensible danger is that the progress of a Labour Government will be made almost impossible by the sabotage of the possessing classes." But having, for a moment, come to grips with reality, he immediately lets go again and airily explains away the danger in question by a casual reference to the "sense of fair play and responsibility" of the mass of the British people; which, he assures us, "is unlikely to tolerate open or veiled rebellion." By way of finally clinching the matter it is explained that "if Capitalism falls back on physical force for its defence it shows itself more patently bankrupt than ever."

How eloquent is that "if" of the deep chasm that must ever separate bourgeois ideology from the grim fact of the class struggle!

FRANK TANNER

AN OPTIMIST

The Anglo-American Future. By A. G. Gardiner. (Oxford University Press. 2s. 6d.)

This little book sets out to "review the various factors which make for strife between this country and the United States, and discusses the methods by which a better feeling may be established." It is scarcely necessary, in view of its author and its publisher, to remark that it omits all reference, among "the factors which make for strife" between the two great industrial Powers, to the economic system upon which the whole State organisation of each is based; and does not discuss, as "a method by which a better feeling may be established," the abolition of that system and its supersession by an order of society more likely to make for peace upon earth and goodwill amongst men.

Yet Mr. Gardiner can see that the United States is "in population, natural resources, and accumulated wealth, the most powerful nation on earth." And, moreover, that its geographical position forces it to take considerable interest in two oceans, with (at present) "the British Navy dominant in the one and the Japanese Navy in the other." But he is sure that "the tide of American idealism will flow again," and he looks to that tide to wash all warships off both oceans.

J. F. H.

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THE PLEBS BOOKSHELF

STRAIGHT criticism and open discussion of aims and methods being interesting as well as desirable, I welcome "F. P.'s" contribution to our Correspondence columns this month, and after I've said my say in defence of our present policy I trust that he—and others—will reply. Criticism which is not "publicly articulated" (to use his phrase) is, to say the least, unhelpful. And apparently he is in touch with other readers who feel the same way about us as he does.

"F. P." is out for "utilitarian education." "The editorial test, then," says he, "to which any article should be put ought to be the degree of its utility in helping to explain or solve a present-day problem." By this test he finds many recent contributions to the PLEBS wanting. Let us first of all consider his general attitude before discussing the particular instances he quotes in support of his case.

* * *

We, like him, are out for Utilitarian Education—i.e. for education as a means to an end (working-class emancipation) and not as an end in itself. But we look to that Education, and not to the 32 pp. monthly organ known as the PLEBS, for the solution of the problems confronting us. Those problems are so numerous and various that you really can't solve them in 32 pages monthly. "F. P." would doubtless answer that that is no reason why you shouldn't try to solve one or two of them. My reply to which is that it is not, primarily, the PLEBS' job to solve these problems. Our job—in this small magazine—is to advocate the importance of *independent working-class education* as a means for their satisfactory solution; and, in the limited space at our disposal, to try and bring as many workers as possible round to our point of view (i.) by argument, and (ii.) by making i.w.-c.e. appear attractive and interesting to very varied types of readers. We aim, e.g. by publishing "petty fragments of past history," at whetting people's appetite for a more serious study of the subject—at an i.w.-c.e. class. If we had space to cover the whole ground and solve all the problems in the pages of the PLEBS, there'd be no need for classes. Let's aim at something we've a reasonable chance of achieving. We *can't* supply while-you-wait solutions to all the problems the working-class is heir to; we *can* push the cause of i.w.-c.e.—by all such methods as will appeal to studiously-inclined workers.

* * *

This brings me to my second line of defence. "F. P." insists that the contents of the PLEBS must be strictly "utilitarian" in tone. But may I ask whether he has, ready for use, any Absolute Standard of what

is utilitarian and what is not? Different people—even different class-conscious workers—have quite different opinions as to what is useful and what isn't. "F. P." in his letter confines himself to telling us what he thinks *isn't*, and very carefully steers clear of even the least hint of what we ought to substitute for the offending contributions. That is adroit debating tactics on his part, but not particularly helpful to us. So I don't know which, if any, recent contributions to our pages would pass his test. He regards a biographical sketch of J. E. Smith as a waste of space; what is his verdict on the sketch of Richard Jones ("An Early 19th Century Economist") published in April? I'm compelled to argue in the dark here, since, as aforesaid, "F. P." refers only to his dislikes and gives no clue to his likes. But, assuming that he's keenly interested in economics and in the history of economic theory, he would probably regard that short account of Richard Jones as quite worth while (and if he didn't, other economics students did). Will he believe me when I state that many Plebeians, though they admit that some general knowledge of economics is essential, do not agree that detailed study of the history of economic theory is in the least useful to present-day workers; and doubtless, therefore, regarded the quotation of Marx's comments on Jones (both men being dead) as unnecessary and unhelpful?

* * *

In the same issue as the article on J. E. Smith there appeared an article by "Nordicus" on "Marxian Determinism; and Fatalism"—unmentioned by "F. P." Does "F. P." consider that article as worthy of the space it occupied; or not? I'm prepared to bet him half-a-crown that some Plebeians considered it the best and most useful thing in the May PLEBS, and that others thought its subject anything but "utilitarian." My point is simply that there are widely varying standards of utilitarianism. If you happen to have—as "F. P." appears to have—a somewhat prosaic and unimaginative sort of mind, you will probably regard a critical account of a prominent figure in the British working-class movement of 80 years ago as of no possible use or value to members of the British working-class movement of to-day; whereas if you are interested in the study of men and movements you will find even such "petty fragments" of history both interesting and informative.

* * *

So much—to be going on with!—for "F.P.'s" general criticism. I must say something, however, about his more direct onslaught on one particular contributor, whom he chooses to refer to as "one 'Postgate'"

—in the manner of Mr. Belloc alluding to "Morel." "Much pardonable objection" is being taken in the circles (of "practical Plebeians") in which "F. P." moves to this particular writer's shortcomings; while his style recalls to "F. P." "the sensations experienced while riding in a primitive waggon along a rough and muddy road." I don't know that this metaphor is altogether uncomplimentary; for such a waggon (on such a road) would doubtless shake one up, and I have encountered—even in the PLEBS—literary styles which tended more in the direction of sending one to sleep. But we won't discuss style; because, after all, style is scarcely a matter of supreme importance to utilitarians. "F. P." proceeds to suggest that, because of a "reputation for erudition" which this "Postgate" has won for himself by "making a compilation of revolutionary proclamations," he is given preference in the pages of the PLEBS over other people "able and willing" to contribute much better stuff. Now I hope I've kept my temper up to this point; but I feel sure I shall lose it if I try to express my opinion of "F. P.'s" very feeble efforts to belittle a writer who has already earned a reputation by sheer good work; a man whom we're quite proud of having on the Plebs E.C.; a scholar to whose ability a critic of Wm. Paul's calibre has paid well-deserved tribute—though the "practical Plebeians" of "F. P.'s" acquaintance have no use for him. So I'll hold myself in and merely ask "F. P." why all those "able and willing" contributors he alludes to don't forward their contributions? Are they waiting for gilt-edged cards of invitation from the Editor? If so they'll have to go on being mute, inglorious Miltons, because we've no time for such formalities. And if we had, we don't know the mute, inglorious ones' addresses, since they've never risked earning any reputation by giving us a taste of their quality. Will he let them know, from us, that the pages of the PLEBS are now, as before, open to good stuff; and that though we make no claim to infallibility of judgment we shall do our humble best (in that station of life to which it has pleased Plebeians to call us) to "judiciously choose" from among their contributions those which appear to us likely to interest PLEBS readers?

* * *

It's more than a little quaint, isn't it, that while "F. P." is condemning Postgate as not sufficiently utilitarian, Postgate is insisting, to Newbold's disgust, that only modern history has any utilitarian value to working-class students. It should serve, at any rate, to bring home to "F. P." the fact that, while it's comparatively easy to compose quite well-sounding generalisations about the need for judging all contributions by their "practical," "utilitarian" value, it's going to be no soft job for the luckless Editor who has to come to some decision between the lot of them.

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Ernest Johns' appeal (in our Correspondence columns) for some serious guidance in novel-reading "touches me home," as Blanco Posnet put it. I'm convinced (a) that we can make much more use of good novels than we've hitherto done, for getting hold of, and encouraging, new students; and (b) that the rest of us need to train our tastes somewhat, so that even if relaxation be our main object in novel-reading, we may get ourselves acquainted with good stuff in preference to doping ourselves with blood-and-thunders—or Dell-and-Garvices. I see no reason why a class-conscious proletarian shouldn't have a good taste in literature; why, for instance, he shouldn't be able to enjoy Conrad, and even to see that Conrad is a greater artist than Jack London, even though Conrad doesn't seem ever to have heard of such a thing as the class-struggle.

I hope the particular PLEBS contributors he refers to will see their way to doing some notes of the kind he suggests. Meantime I'll set the ball rolling by commending to Johns and others a novel I've enjoyed lately—*Three Black Pennys*, by Joseph Hergesheimer (Heinemann—no cheap edition yet available, though one lives and hopes). It is a study, somewhat after the manner of *Milestones*, of three generations of a family of New England ironmasters; first, the pretty rough and virile pioneers of the mid-18th century, the days of water-power; then the practical business men of the mid-19th, with the railroad just emerging; and finally the super-civilised descendants of to-day, living lives far removed from the industrial places of the earth, but—Mr. Hergesheimer is a romanticist—longing, in the person of one young woman, to get back to "stern realities." Not, certainly, a supremely great book, but a decidedly interesting one; and "F. P.," as a connoisseur of such matters, would appreciate Hergesheimer's style.

Since we publicly promise to be candid, I feel bound to quote the verdict passed by a Labour College student, in his capacity as tutor of a class in the London district, on our new pamphlet (*What is Independent Working-Class Education?*). It was brief but blistering: "Not worth the paper it's printed on!" said he. He did not, so far as I can discover, explain what was wrong with it—whether he wanted more pages, more pictures, more rhetoric, or what. So I hereby invite him to write to the PLEBS and give his reasons. We shall listen attentively. We did our little best with that pamphlet, and took a bit of time over it. Our aim was something strictly utilitarian; no fine writing, purple patches or anything of that sort. Just a straight answer to the

straight question put in the title, and no trimmings. We don't flatter ourselves that even our best efforts are above criticism. But we want *criticism*—not *obiter dicta**; which last help us neither to sell our wares nor mend our ways. . . . Another Labour College student, reviewing the pamphlet in the *Socialist*, delivered quite a different verdict. He said: "This pamphlet puts forward, briefly but concisely, in language understandable by the average trade unionist, the reasons why the working class must have an education of its own." Now if he was speaking the truth here, we succeeded in doing exactly what we set out to do. He said several other things, complimentary or explanatory; and very evidently thought the pamphlet decidedly worth the price charged for it. So that Labour College Education obviously doesn't deserve the reproach so often brought against it by hostile critics—that it turns out men who all think the same way and are incapable of arriving at individual conclusions.

I've been reading some of Graham Wallas's *Our Social Heritage* (Allen & Unwin, 12s. 6d.). I haven't read all of it; I don't somehow think I ever shall. It's such a strain. It's like turning aside out of the noisy, roaring street in which you live your life, and meeting, in a deathly quiet graveyard, someone not quite dead who is saying things about the street and its inhabitants in a faint (but awfully cultured) whisper. You listen and listen and listen, and strain to catch the drift of what the far-away voice is saying, and here you are conscious of gentle irony, there of wide learning, and there again of a critical faculty so fine that its point is almost invisible—or should it be inaudible?—this metaphor is getting out of hand. . . . But the book is all so faint and far away, so aloof from the real, rowdy world. You feel that its author must have been sitting in his cloister for years and years and years, reading everything that everybody has ever written, but never going out into the street and becoming himself, if only for a minute or two, a mere Man in the Street. He must be just all Mind—and a pen! . . . There are quite a lot of interesting things in *Our Social Heritage*, but life—a proletarian's life, anyhow—is too short for the task of picking out the gems from the bales of cotton-wool in which they lie hid. And 12s. 6d. is a long price for cotton-wool, even though it be of superfine texture.

J. F. H.

* *Obiter dicta*. Things said by the way; cursory (!) remarks.

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