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January, 1923.

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THE PLEBS

I can promise to be candid but not impartial.

Vol. XV

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An OPEN LETTER to a LABOUR PARTY WORKER

DEAR COMRADE,—Now that the dust of the General Election has settled down a bit, all of us who took part in it are beginning to think about *next time*. Whether our man got in or whether he didn't, we have to take stock and think over plans for yet better results in future. Where we won we must consolidate our position—"dig in;" where we lost we must make new plans. A defeat properly understood may be the prelude to certain victory.

One lesson which must have forced itself on the mind of every election worker was the need for Education. How impossible it was, in a short and noisy campaign, to combat all the ignorance, the indifference and the prejudices on which our opponents played. How

A

often one found oneself up against the chap who believed fervently that the boss was a beneficent work-provider, without whom the race of workers would be lost entirely ! How many times was one told that Capital was the source of all the benefits of civilisation—so plentifully distributed among all grades of society ; and that to put a levy on Capital would infallibly result in tremendous hardships for all the non-capitalists. How many working-men did one meet, themselves condemned to insecure jobs at wretched wages, who yet waxed fierce in defence of Profit, Rent and Interest ! “ Nothing to lose but their chains ”—true ! But how many thousands of them hug their chains !

Fancy having to go into working-class constituencies and *persuade* workers to vote Labour !

Well, as all of us know, we've got it to do. We've got it to do because the education which these men and women have received has carefully kept them ignorant of a good many important things, and told them lies or half-truths about many others.

When the vote was given to the workers a prominent politician sarcastically remarked that it was now time to “ educate our masters.” What he really meant was that it was now high time to *mis-educate* them, lest, having votes, they became dangerous. And the mis-education has been carried on, with excellent results (so far !) for the owning and ruling classes. At one time, owing to their ignorance of economics, the workers can be made to swallow preposterous and dangerous proposals about “ making Germany pay.” At another time they can be frightened by the silliest bogey stories about the Capital Levy.

If only the workers *knew* !

Unfortunately the effects of ignorance are not only apparent at election times. What is the real explanation of slumps in Trade Unionism—of the weakness caused by “ fair weather ” and “ passenger ” trade unionists ? Simply that great numbers of workers have no understanding of the vital importance of labour organisation to their own welfare. They know nothing of what it has achieved in the past ; because the “ history ” they were taught said nothing of such things. And they are ready to believe what their mis-educators are only too eager to tell them—that bad trade and unemployment are the direct result of these self-same wicked Trade Unions.

Yes, we need Education badly. *But what sort of education ?*

A good many men and women in the Labour movement have an indiscriminating admiration for Education. There are even those who would say that just as there is no such thing as bad beer, so there can be no such thing as harmful education. You, comrade, have met within our movement, earnest, sincere people who have been so impressed by the need for education that they were ready and eager

to take anything that was offered, never pausing to look carefully first at what it was that was offered them. You have been asked in your organisation to affiliate to a body called the Workers' Educational Association, whose aim it is to bring the workers into close touch with the Universities, the homes and centres of learning. A very sensible-seeming sort of idea! We want education, and the Universities exist to supply it. Let us then apply to them.

But wait. *If the Universities are the fountains of learning which should be made accessible to the parched workers, how is it that they are the home of Anti-Labourism?*

Who put Sidney Webb into Parliament? The miners of Durham—after a University had again and again rejected him. Who put a man like H. G. Wells at the bottom of the poll? A University. Who rejected Leonard Woolf? A group of Universities. Who failed to return a single Labour representative? The Universities. In the case of some of them the position was so hopeless that a Labour candidate was never even seriously considered. In others, the Conservatives had an unopposed return. The Universities can boast that they send the most trusted reactionaries to the House of Commons. Well might Bernard Shaw urge us to raze the Public Schools and the Universities to the ground and sow salt upon their sites!

We want education. Yes, and we want newspapers; but we don't—if we are wise—go to the capitalists for them. We run our own press. *And we have got to run our own educational machinery*—free from all contact with the reactionary institutions which depend on the support of the capitalists.

We want education which will help on our movement; not education which results in returning fine old trusted Tories to Westminster.

A bishop has been airing his views about education recently. Says he, "Many business men are far from being completely satisfied with present-day elementary education." He knows quite well what he wants from education. He wants something satisfactory to the business man. He wants a committee of inquiry, to be composed "partly of educational experts and partly of men of business."

Well, we—as workers—*don't* want an education which will "completely satisfy" the men of business. They are the men we are up against, in our Trade Union struggles and in our election campaigns. We want an education which will help us to fight them; which will give us the facts they are anxious to keep from us; which will show us how to take control and manage the world for ourselves.

These are the aims of the educational movement on whose behalf we now appeal to you. The classes in all parts of the country linked up in the National Council of Labour Colleges aim at providing

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working-class education ; education, that is, based on a working-class point of view. And, make no mistake about it, education which is *not* based upon a working-class point of view will be based upon some-other-class point of view !

The Labour College movement, founded fifteen years ago and steadily increasing since in numbers and influence, is a real working-class effort to meet the needs of the working-class. You don't ask the State to subsidise your Trade Union. If you are wise, you won't ask it to subsidise your education—that is, if you're intent on getting the right kind of education. You'll set about “doing your own thinking,” and you'll see to it that, so far as you can do anything to assist it, Labour supplements its political and Trade Union organisations with an educational weapon *equally under its own control*.

Thousands of students are already enrolled in our classes, which are supported by Trades and Labour Councils in many towns. The South Wales Miners' Federation and the National Union of Railwaymen jointly own and control the London Labour College, to which various other Unions also send students. The Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers has an educational scheme for providing class facilities for its members under the auspices of the National Council of Labour Colleges. The National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers is considering a similar scheme.

Get busy—in your own town, and in your own organisation. Get support for Independent Working-Class Education—the soundest possible foundation for working-class victory.

Yours fraternally,

PLEB.

[We propose to issue the above “Open Letter” as a 4-pp. propaganda leaflet. Will N.C.L.C. districts, classes, and Plebs branches send in orders for as many copies as they can make use of locally, so that we shall know how many to print? The cost will be kept as low as possible.]

IF YOU WERE DOING SOME ELECTION CANVASSING, AND ANYBODY ASKED YOU “WHAT ABOUT THE PURCHASING POWER PARITY THEORY OF POST-WAR PRICES,” WHAT SHOULD YOU REPLY? . . . YOU'D BETTER READ IT UP IN THE ECONOMICS TEXTBOOK.

CAPITAL, CHINA, COLONIES, CONSORTIUM, CHAMBERLAIN, CLEMENCEAU, CONCESSIONS, CONSTANTINOPLE, CHARTERED CO., COLOMBIA, CONGO, CUBA. *Those few items from the Index to the Imperialism Textbook will give you some idea of the interest and fullness of its contents.*

THAT LIBRARY of OURS

IT grows, that Textbook Series—surely but slowly. Our publishing activity is not by a long chalk as great as it would be if our means equalled our plans and ideas. But we are building up gradually a useful little library. Plebs history and economics primers have found their way into every part of the globe. The cheap Student's Editions of *Creative Revolution*, of *Revolution, 1789–1906*, and of Philips Price have been appreciated. But the Textbook Series is our most cherished project.

It was launched a year ago with the *Outline of Psychology*. The original draft of that primer was almost the last piece of work which its able and devoted author was destined to do for our movement. Its success was speedy. In less than three months the first edition was sold out, and before the end of the year we had to reprint again. Which, for a textbook on a “new” subject, is a sufficiently encouraging record!

Then the “team work” idea was applied to the subject of Imperialism, and No. 2 Primer was born. Ashcroft's original draft had gathered together in concise form information otherwise obtainable only by painfully searching through a score of volumes. It did not merely gather those facts together. It set them out in perspective. The value of our *Outline of Imperialism* (as T. A. Jackson points out on a later page) is that it does not merely relate pre-war history, but shows how all these diverse events were moving to one dread culmination. Neither the World War nor the present post-war crisis are accidental things, but the logical sequence of the capitalist system itself. Could a greater or more important fact be emphasised? It is knowledge such as this which is the cause of what men like Farbman call the “fanaticism” of the Russian thinker-fighters.

Now No. 3, *An Outline of Economics*, is being issued. The Committee team has worked in due fear and trembling, for well they knew that every comma of a book on this subject would be scrutinised by fierce critics. Once their whole work was imperilled by an accident recalling the fate of the manuscripts of Carlyle's *French Revolution* and Olive Schreiner's *Women and Labour*. The typescript was being returned from its original author, Comrade Wm. McLaine, who had been examining the drastic cuts and changes proposed by the brazen-faced editorial committee; and it was *the only packet left unburnt in the registered postal bag!* After which nobody surely can say that the book is *dry!*

The Committee has tried, humbly, to follow the example of Marx. He began with the counting-house and went afterwards to his study; the Textbook starts with the company prospectus, with its various

kinds of shares as printed in the newspapers, in order to follow the peculiarities of capitalist production. To those who will miss the usual long treatises on Value we suggest that they will still be able to find them in *Capital*, Vol. I. Marginal Utility gets a larger proportionate share than in many Marxian primers because its persistence demands that, for a change, it should be treated seriously. A diagram is given to illustrate the modern phrase "what the traffic will bear." The Appendix includes the modern theorists and their chief works. Tables concerning the foreign exchange rates and the Bank of England and such like have been included because while in theory they are always available to the student, in practice the student has not easy access say to the *Economist*; the isolated country student has to be provided with a Textbook as near as possible self-sufficient. That thought made us regret the forced cutting of valuable statistical material in the chapter on *Export of Capital*, which McLaine had industriously expanded from its original appearance in PLEBS, Vol. 13.

All through, the editors have aimed not at the *letter* of Marxism, but at its *spirit*. They have tried to apply Marxist method to the treatment of modern happenings—dislocation of foreign exchanges, War Debts, and the present great crisis. No important economic feature of modern society has been ignored. The analysis leads to a recognition of the breakdown, and foretells the sheer impossibility of Bonar Law's "tranquility" or President Harding's "normalcy."

The editorial committee has tried to do its part amidst difficulties of many sorts. Now the rest lies with *you*. The success of each Textbook is the only basis for the issue of the next. Unsubsidised entirely, we live from hand to mouth, relying only upon the willing assistance of Plebeians.

What No. 4 will be is not clear. There are no two opinions that if the Editor could be taken from Mount Ararat (or is it Ararat Avenue?) and put into the quietness of Mount Everest, out of the sound of telephone bells, we should soon have *An Outline of Economic Geography*. Then we have in our ranks men who could furnish us with a first-class *Outline of Biology*. And there are one or two History schemes "in the air."

Our future plans are entirely dependent upon the reception given to these first ventures. Make the despatch side of our Publishing Department work overtime and the rest will follow.

WALL MAPS, FOR CLASS USE, ILLUSTRATING THE IMPERIALISM TEXTBOOK, CAN BE SUPPLIED BY THE PLEBS BOOK DEPT. SEE P. VII. OF THE TEXTBOOK FOR PARTICULARS.

FRANCE and BRITAIN TO-DAY

Two Studies of Iron and Imperialism

All our historical studies lead us up to the history which is being made to-day. We study the forces at work in past history in order to understand what forces are at work in the world we live in. These two articles on the central question of international politics at the present time, constitute an invaluable "Postscript" to the Plebs Textbook on Modern Imperialism.

IN 1914 the weight of France in world affairs was very much less than that of either Britain, Germany, or the U.S.A. There were several reasons for that, but the most important by far was France's industrial weakness—she lacked a big heavy industry. If we compare her iron and steel industry with that of Britain, Germany or the States, we find she was very far behind, and the same was true of her coal output. The following figures, taken from the *Labour International Handbook*, show her inferiority at a glance :—The monthly averages in thousands of metric tons in 1913 were :—

France	3,404*	(Coal)	;	434	(Pig Iron)	;	368	(Crude Steel)
Germany	14,383†	„		1,074‡	„		1,276‡	„
Britain	24,343	„		869	„		649	„
U.S.A.	43,100	„		2,623	„		2,651	„

France's industrial weakness did not arise as a result of lack of iron ore. Of that she had plenty : she had in fact more than she could use. In 1913 she produced twenty-two million tons of ore, nearly half of which she had to export. What France lacked was coal ; she had to import about one-third of the fuel she used.

Moreover, although France had the advantage of three protective sea frontiers, as well as of a practically impregnable mountain barrier cutting her off from Spain, her north-eastern frontier was a source of weakness. Here, not merely was there no natural obstacle between Germany and herself, but her principal industrial district was jammed right up against the exceedingly weak frontier.

France had another serious handicap. Her population was practically stationary, while that of Britain, Germany and the States was increasing.

* Including Lignite. † Excluding over 7,000,000 tons of Lignite.

‡ Exclusive of Alsace-Lorraine and Luxemburg.

In Germany, for instance, the birth-rate in 1913 was twenty-eight per thousand, in France nineteen*, with the result that 65,000,000 Germans, ever increasing in numbers, confronted 40,000,000 Frenchmen, whose numbers refused to grow. In consequence, France was becoming relatively weaker in military and industrial man-power and France's future looked anything but reassuring.

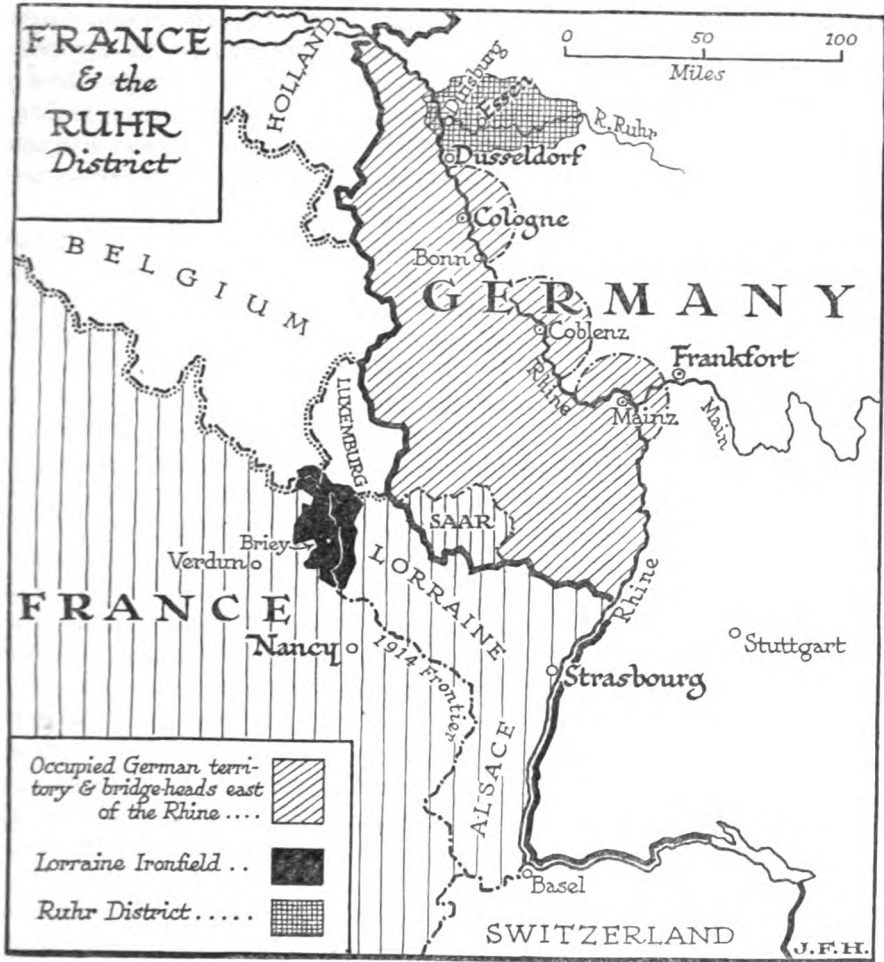
The war came, and after it the Peace Treaty. To what extent did the latter help France to overcome her three great weaknesses? The addition of Alsace-Lorraine gave her a population of nearly 2,000,000 which more than made up for her war losses, and, of course, weakened Germany. Moreover, it put France in possession of by far the biggest ore field in Europe, and the second biggest in the world, according to Eckel (*Coal, Iron, and War*). In 1913 the Lorraine output had reached the colossal figure of 40,000,000 tons. The whole of that field, along with some of Germany's most modern and scientifically equipped steelworks, was now entirely in French possession.

The addition of so much iron ore alone would have been little help to France, for what she needed above all was coal. That, however, was not overlooked, and the Saar mines, with an output in 1913 of 17½ million tons, were also handed to France; and in addition Germany was compelled to send France some 20,000,000 tons per annum for a considerable number of years as part of the reparations. Besides, thanks to the fact that the left bank of the Rhine was to be occupied by the Allies, with France as the chief occupant, for a period up to fifteen years, the Rhine now became temporarily the French frontier, and the Rhine as a natural obstacle is in these days of machine guns, as Marshal Foch said, a very formidable barrier. Altogether, then, the Peace Treaty went far to strengthen France materially. It gave her a good frontier temporarily at least; it gave her an increased population; and, moreover, it gave her the coal and the iron that offered her an opportunity of *challenging Britain's dominant industrial power over Europe*. France had now the chance of developing into a new and more formidable Germany, and that is the alluring prospect that beckons her on to-day.

Of course, there are difficulties in the way. First of all, there is hardly any world market for iron goods at present, and France, because of the relative strength of agriculture as compared with industry, has no extensive home market for iron and steel wares to give a really strong impetus to great extensions in the French heavy industries. Besides, iron pigs and steel billets are little use in themselves; they require to be turned into machinery, etc., and France has yet to develop an extensive engineering industry.

* The Labour Year Book, 1916.

But there is a more serious difficulty. Saar coal cannot provide sufficiently hard coke for smelting the Lorraine ore. That means that the Lorraine iron and steel industry is being kept alive on the coke coming from the Ruhr under the provisions of the Peace Treaty. "For seven to ten years to come Germany will be under obligation



to deliver coal and coke from the Ruhr. After that the deliveries will cease. When that takes place the position in the Lorraine may well become catastrophic." If France is to have the golden future that her new circumstances promise her, she must have coke from the Ruhr.

Were France to get the left bank of the Rhine her position would be strengthened enormously. It would give her a permanent frontier on the Rhine, a great increase in population (about 5½ millions)

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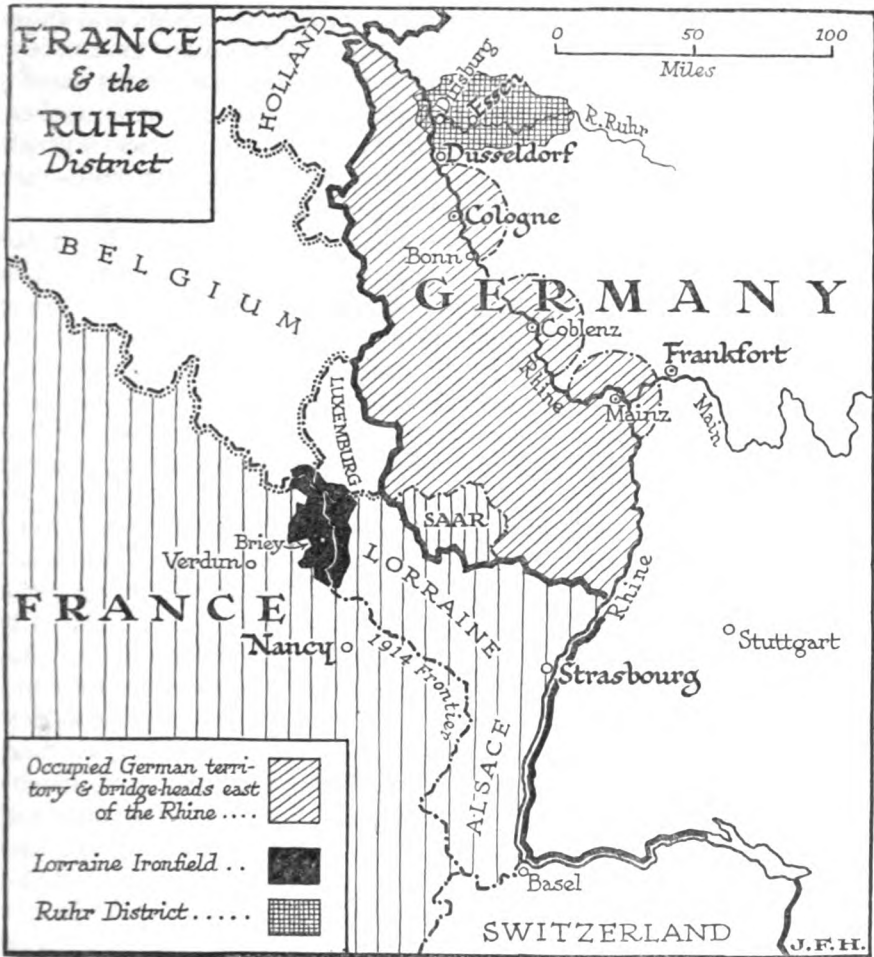
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and the increase would be in the highly industrialised population she requires, besides putting under her control one of the most highly developed parts of industrial Germany.

It may be suggested that the fact that the left bank is under allied occupation is a guarantee against permanent French occupation. That argument can only apply to the presence of American and British troops, for obviously the presence of French troops and those of her close ally Belgium is no guarantee. According to a recent *Guardian* article, there are only some 1,200 American troops there ; and the British troops, though they certainly exceed that number, are a mere handful as compared with the estimated 150,000 French troops in occupation. Besides, does not history show that temporary occupations have a habit of becoming permanent occupations ?

Some recently published notes, prepared by Marshal Foch for use at the Peace Conference, leave us no doubt about his view. The Rhine, he said, in effect is the only satisfactory frontier for France and the peoples to the west of that river should, in his view, be under "the same military organisation." Clemenceau also shared this opinion and the notes drawn up for his use at the Conference laid it down as a first point that Germany's frontier should stand "fixed at the Rhine." The allied occupation was a compromise that allowed France to put one foot on the left bank.

But perhaps the French interests have dropped that ambition ? Perhaps—and perhaps not. French statesmen have already announced that so long as Germany does not fully comply with the impossible Versailles Treaty France will maintain her watch on the Rhine. It is well known, too, that the propaganda conducted in the Rhineland with a view to persuading the population to demand autonomy from Germany has not been carried on without the assistance of the French authorities. Besides, thanks to the *Guardian*, we now know that recently Prime Minister Poincaré sent a Monsieur Dariac to report on the eastern situation, and the latter recommended that a Customs barrier be placed on the east of the occupied area (*i.e.*, cutting it off from the rest of Germany) and the razing of the Customs barrier on the west facing France ; that the left bank should have a separate budget from the rest of Germany ; and that the mark currency should be replaced by another. In addition to these economic means for detaching the left bank from Germany and adding it directly or indirectly to France, he urged that the Prussian Officials should be replaced by local officials, who have all been taught, no doubt, the value of obeying the French army of occupation. "These are doubtless ambitious projects," reports M. Dariac, "but if executed wisely and discerningly in proportion as Germany slips out of her engagements they would be amply justified. It is a *long-drawn out policy*, in which a well-considered diplomacy must apply one after

another the successive links of a well-thought-out course of action which, little by little, will detach from Germany a *free state* under the military control of France and Belgium." (Italics mine.)

Although the permanent control of the Left Bank would increase France's industrial power, it would not give her the Ruhr coke. That, alas, is over the Rhine. But if France got that—and it is only *just* over!—not merely would she have the precious coke and Germany's greatest coal field, but the backbone of Germany's economic system, for the Ruhr is the headquarters of the great German metal trusts. It produces not merely coal, but iron, steel and dye-stuffs and manures. In Germany, it is said, even the humble potato is a by-product of the coal industry.

But surely France will never attempt to cross the Rhine, it may be urged. Necessity knows no law. Without Ruhr coke France cannot develop her industrial might—she cannot make use of the "talents" that Fortune has placed in her hand. Ruhr coke is the magic wand that can turn the otherwise practically useless Lorraine ore into steel billets, machinery, big guns and—profits. *Capitalist France must therefore come to an understanding with Krupps, Thyssens, and Stinnes or she must get control by force.*

And please note that France is already in the Ruhr! In May last the Allies sent Germany an ultimatum on the reparations question and at the same time the French army crossed the Rhine and occupied Dusseldorf and two other important Ruhr towns. That was illegal. Germany accepted the ultimatum. Did France withdraw? Not a yard, and thus, in the words of a British capitalist daily, the occupation became doubly illegal.

M. Dariac in the report already referred to had also something to say of the Ruhr. After pointing out France's need for Ruhr coal, he said that in the existing French occupancy of part of the Ruhr, France had a pledge which she must not give up. By means of it, he said, France can "utterly destroy" the whole industry of the Ruhr, if she desires to. France, he urged, must get a definite control over the Ruhr industries.

In January, Germany owes France an indemnity payment which the latter well knows Germany can't pay and even now (December) France is threatening to occupy the remainder of the Ruhr, unless Britain helps Germany to make the payment. Thus is France placing British capitalism on the horns of a dilemma. It is being invited either to pay France an instalment of her German indemnity or allow France to become the possessor of Germany's biggest coalfield.

Is Britain anxious to see France owner of the Ruhr? If France either now or later is able to unite Lorraine ore with Ruhr coke, she will have the basis on which to build up an industrial power that will

enable her to dominate Europe and as an iron and steel state leave Britain far behind. That is a prospect anything but pleasing to capitalist Britain. Said the *Guardian* in a leading article on M. Dariac's report : " The report is a nightmare of brutality " (not of course to the French to whom it is a pleasant dream with prospects of realisation !). " If," continues the *Guardian*, in so many words, " this is the policy of France, the outlook is black indeed." Said the *Referee* a short time ago : " If the French plan were adopted, and France allowed to seize and exploit the rich coal and iron fields of Germany, . . . she would become the dominant industrial power on the continent. . . . We would be up against a powerful aggressive force in international markets, and be closed out of French spheres by high tariffs. . . . but we would oppose a new industrial concentration which would be distinctly hostile and detrimental to our industrial interests."

Exactly. But will Britain be able to resist if France insists ?

J. P. M. MILLAR.

IRON, IMPERIALISM, AND THE PASSING OF MR. LLOYD GEORGE.

IN the tangled problem of British-French-German relations one of the most significant " straws in the wind " recently has been the Dariac report. The report started with a description of the supreme economic importance of the Rhineland, which includes the Ruhr Valley. It points out that :—

The feature of this region of occupation is its very accentuated industrial character, which makes of it *a pledge in our hands of quite the first importance* for the recovery of the sums which Germany has undertaken to pay us. . . . The majority of the great German consortiums have been formed there, have their headquarters and their establishments there, and the *ten or twelve industrialists who direct them, rule directly or indirectly, but absolutely, the economic destinies of Germany.*

M. Dariac then proceeds to point out that the French occupation of the Rhine bridgeheads, and part of the Ruhr basin, together with the French Customs barrier on the Rhine gives them a stranglehold over Germany. By tightening the Customs barrier France can " separate from their coal, their ore, their cast iron and steel production, the connected and complementary establishments " of this area, and *can utterly disorganise the industry of the potentates of Dusseldorf, Duisberg, and Ruhrort.*

Therefore, M. Dariac proposed that this stranglehold should be used to give to France control over Germany's industrial production. **¶** Previous to this M. Delaisi had pointed out in " Reconstruction in Europe," No. 7, that the change in the French reparations policy

had been due to the changed interests of the French Union of Mining and Metallurgical Industries, which "exerts on the French press and consequently on the Government an influence equal to that of Hugo Stinnes in Germany." The famous association of French heavy industry (metal)—the Comité des Forges—is a dominant member of this Union. Formerly cheap coal had been their main need, and this was what they demanded of Germany. Then came the "slump" of 1920 and consequent oversupply of coal; and the Union of Metallurgical and Mining Industries turned its attention to securing supplies of coke, which the blast furnaces and steel works of Lorraine lacked, from the mines of Stinnes in the Ruhr. M. Delaisi concluded his article with the suggestion that the new tendency in the policy of French heavy industry would be to form an economic union of the industrial and mining establishments of the Ruhr with their own establishments in Lorraine.

The epitome of the whole matter is this : *German Capitalism in the Ruhr depends upon Lorraine ore ; French Capitalism in Lorraine depends upon Ruhr coke.*

While yesterday we saw M. Dariac voicing the interests of the Comité des Forges, to-day we see M. Poincaré translating M. Dariac's advice into practical politics. He goes to the Brussels Conference with a new policy. He is now ready to recognise what all the logic and persuasion of capitalism's "wise men," like Mr. Keynes, could not make him recognise so long as economic interests placed the telescope against the blind eye of the Comité des Forges. He is ready to recognise that Germany cannot pay; and that the demands made on her must be reduced. Consequently he is willing to consent to a moratorium and to a revision of Germany's total liabilities. But in return he demands for France control over German customs and over the industry of the Ruhr Valley. M. Poincaré proposes a system of financial control over Germany similar to that imposed on Austria through the League of Nations. The first signs of Germany's refusal to carry out the policy imposed upon her, the first wriggle of Stinnes from the bonds placed upon him, would be the excuse for the annexation of the whole of Germany's industrial area by France. Thus does M. Delaisi begin to find himself numbered among the prophets, and M. Dariac and the Comité des Forges begin to smile to see the curtain go up for the first act of the drama that they have so assiduously prepared.

And what of the attitude of Mr. Bonar Law to this first step towards a union of Ruhr with Lorraine industry in a combine of wider scope than Europe has hitherto seen? M. Delaisi declared that Britain "will never favour a rapprochement between the minette of Lorraine and the coke of the Ruhr." "If she has broken the wings of German industry," he said, "it was not to see France soar

in its place." But it was three months ago that he wrote that, and three months ago Mr. Lloyd George was still the political figurehead of British capitalism. The advent of Mr. Bonar Law and his Conservative Government with its policy of "digging in," of maintaining friendship with France, reducing British commitments in Europe and the Near East, and concentrating on the development of Empire trade, alters the whole face of the European situation.

It is always difficult and dangerous in judging contemporary events to label parties and policies too rigidly. The events are so close to us and our knowledge of them is so inadequate. But it is not far from the truth to say that the policy which Mr. Lloyd George represented was the policy of the aggressive and progressive element in British capitalism, of British heavy industry as expressed through the Federation of British Industries. Or, if it is preferred, it represented British capitalism at a time when conditions inspired in it an aggressive and progressive mood. Mr. Lloyd George reflected the growing antagonism of Vickers, General Electric, Armstrong Whitworth, Cammell Laird, etc., to the rising power of the *Comité des Forges*. "If (British capitalism) had broken the wings of German industry, it was not to see France soar in its place." Reconstruction of the markets of Central Europe was the policy behind the Cannes, Genoa, Hague, and London Conferences, so bitterly ridiculed by the more conservative element at home as "the Prime Minister's travelling circus." Washington forced the issue between France and Britain into the open, and as conference succeeded conference, the breach in the Entente grew wider. As an "*arrière pensée*" there was British expansion in the Near East; and the climax came in those critical days of September, when British troops awaited hourly an attack from the victorious troops of Mustafa Kemal; and when that magnificent piece of "bluff"—the bellicose note to the Dominions on the 23rd—was greeted with a howl of execration by the Francophile and pacific press at home.

Now the reckoning has come. Mr. Lloyd George has joined Mr. Asquith upon the Opposition Benches, with but half a hundred satellites to show of the glory that once was his. Enthroned in his place are those who represent the passive, conservative elements of British capitalism—the banks and the finance houses of the "City," the bondholders and the "rentier" class, old-established business firms, which have their glory in the past and wish to preserve it, dreading the losses of war and revolution more than they yearn for the profits of new conquests.

It is therefore very unlikely that Mr. Bonar Law will offer a very strenuous opposition to the proposals of M. Poincaré; and M. Poincaré is likely to be unbending, for he has before him as warning the fate of M. Briand when he compromised the interests of the

Comité des Forges by conceding too much to Mr. Lloyd George at Cannes. At Lausanne Lord Curzon has been at great pains to preserve Allied unity, and he has preserved it at the expense of considerable concessions. And what is done at Lausanne will be inevitably interwoven with what is done at Brussels. The *Observer* tersely comments :

“ France is far more interested in the Ruhr than in the Straits, and therefore the conditions for a bargain or for blackmail are complete ” (Dec. 10th).

Britain is likely at Brussels to purchase peace and tranquillity at the price of handing over to the Comité des Forges the Ruhr and Rhine industry of their heart's desire. Meanwhile British capitalism will attempt to consolidate itself. It will undertake a drastic economy and reduction of taxation, a clipping of the wings of labour, a development of the resources of the Empire, and a restoration of the prestige of “ The City ” by a stabilisation of the pound sterling at its pre-war parity, if possible, and by a courageous fulfilment of our debt obligations to America.

The significance of the Brussels Conference will be, therefore, as an important landmark in the history of post-war Imperialism. The true significance of the stabilisation of Austria was cloaked behind an appearance of beneficence. To the Liberals, who dreamed of a Cobdenite Europe, it seemed that the League of Nations was really fulfilling the “ ideal ” role which the “ Presbyterian ” of Washington created it to fulfil in his visions. With the adoption of the same policy towards Germany we have the naked appearance of the policy of the “ Africanising ” of Central Europe. If M. Poincaré's proposals are accepted at Brussels, the imperialist world will have sealed with its approval this new phase of its activity ; the death knell of the Liberal dreams of a reconstruction of Europe on Cobdenite principles will have sounded.

If Brussels gives to the Comité des Forges a free hand to buy out Stinnes, Krupp, and Thyssen on its own terms and allows the financial syndicates of Paris to fasten their hold on Central Europe as they fastened it on Tunis and Morocco forty years ago, the reconstruction of Central Europe by an international finance consortium, in which the London banks will be content to be “ sleeping partners,” will begin ; and the League of Nations will be used as its instrument. Among its first actions is likely to be the sweeping away, as in Austria, of most of the concessions won by the workers, such as workers' control, and a wholesale reduction of the standard of life. A stabilisation of the mark is bound to involve an industrial crisis on a huge scale and widespread unemployment.

Meanwhile the resolve of “ The City ” that Britain must shoulder her obligations to U.S.A., even if nothing can be obtained from her

European debtors, will mean that Britain will have to increase her exports to U.S.A. and decrease her imports ; for the repayment of debt or the payment of interest on it involves as a necessary condition an export surplus. Hence British workers will be made to work harder on a lower standard of life. For the moment it seems as though Brussels is to give Europe a taste of the Servile State. At any rate it marks the threshold of a new stage in the concentration of capital and centralisation of power on an international scale.

But it does not seem probable that Mr. Bonar Law's ideal of "tranquillity" will remain enthroned for long. The raising of the Comité des Forges to the chief place among the heavy industry of Europe and the establishment of French hegemony across Central and Eastern Europe is likely before long to sting British capitalism into activity again. Once British heavy industry has passed its period of greatest depression, and has shaken itself free from dependence on the banks, which a period of deflation imposes on it, it is likely to rear its head once more, and to engage in the imperialist struggle more desperately than before. And may not U.S.A., too, want a finger in the pie, as J. P. Morgan have already had theirs in the Austrian pie? What if J. P. Morgan and Co. think of Africanising their debtors, Britain and France, as the Comité des Forges is Africanising Germany? And then there is always China!

Perhaps deep down in his unconscious Mr. Lloyd George knows this, and reclines on the Opposition Bench—waiting ; waiting for the day when British capitalism will need him at the helm once more.

MAURICE H. DOBB.

CHAPTERS from WORKING-CLASS HISTORY in SOUTH WALES

IV.—VINCENT ORGANISES THE WELSH CHARTISTS

This is our final instalment of Ness Edwards' unpublished history of the Industrial Revolution in South Wales. It deals with the organisation of the Chartist Lodges in 1839 prior to the Newport Rebellion. We cannot close this series (previous numbers appeared in The PLEBS of October, November, December) without expressing our hope that it may soon be possible to arrange for the publication of the whole book.

IN order that the Charter might become the official programme of the various local Associations, it had been decided that a National Convention should be called in 1839, and that organisers should be sent out to the provinces to enrol the workers in Chartist organisations. Henry Vincent was appointed to organise

the West of England and South Wales. He was then about twenty-five years old and Gamage gives the following description of him :—

“ His person, however, was extremely graceful and he appeared on the platform to considerable advantage. With a fine mellow flexible voice, a florid complexion, and excepting in intervals of passion, a most winning expression, he had only to present himself in order to win all hearts over to his side. His attitude was perhaps the most easy and graceful of any popular orator of the time. For fluency of speech he rivalled all his contemporaries, few of whom were anxious to stand beside him on the platform. His rare powers of imitation irresistibly drew peals of laughter from the gravest audience. His versatility which enabled him to change from the grave to the gay, and *vice-versa*, and to assume a dozen different characters in almost as many minutes was one of the secrets of his success. With the fair sex, his slight handsome figure, the merry twinkle of his eye, his incomparable mimicry, his passionate bursts of enthusiasm, the rich music of his voice, and, above all, his appeals for the elevation of woman, rendered him as an universal favourite, and the Democrats of both sexes regarded him as the young Demosthenes of English Democracy.”

To South Wales went Vincent, and his burning passion for the freedom of the workers found enthusiastic echoes in the hearts of the colliers and ironworkers. Everywhere he was received with great enthusiasm, torchlights, banners and bands, being prominent at his receptions. Reporting an account of this first tour, the *Merthyr Guardian* (Jan. 19th, 1838) said “ It appears that Vincent has made a tour into South Wales to agitate in favour of the ‘ People’s Charter.’ If we are to believe the reports which he has, we have reason to believe, himself supplied to the *Sun*, he has been tolerably successful. At Pontypool the numbers at the meeting were 7,000 ; at Merthyr Tydfil, 10,000 ; and there have also been meetings at Newport and Caerleon. Mr. Frost was appointed the delegate to the National Convention. Vincent tells the *Sun* :—Associations are forming all over the hills of Monmouthshire, Glamorganshire and Breconshire ; and in a short time there will not be a village in the western part of Monmouthshire and the eastern part of Glamorganshire, which will not have its association for the obtaining of the ‘ People’s Charter.’ ”

Frost reported a few days later that in the short space of three months, twenty branches of the Working Men’s Association had been formed in Monmouthshire, and that “ there were 15,000 to 20,000 men determined to have their rights.”* The National Petition which demanded the passing of the Charter was being widely signed, and one of the local newspapers reported that the “ Merthyr Branch has obtained 10,000 signatures.”

In Glamorganshire Hugh Williams and Reuben Wingrove were the Chartist leaders, whilst John Frost was the active head of the Monmouthshire section and the appointed representatives for South Wales at the National Convention. Each branch had its own membership card, whilst each considerable area had its printer and literature of its own. There are preserved three membership cards, the

* *Merthyr Guardian*, 14/1/38.

first being the card of the Newport branch, the second evidently a county membership card, whilst the third appears to be the card of "Members at large."

1. NEWPORT, MONMOUTHSHIRE: WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATION
IS IT SAFE TO DO RIGHT?

THIS TICKET TO BE RENEWED QUARTERLY.

No. 79. EDWARD FROST, TREASURER.

John Partridge, Printer, Newport.

2. MONMOUTHSHIRE WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATION.

PEACE, LAW AND ORDER.

Equal laws and Equal Right we advocate and claim as our inalienable birthright ; and as citizens Universal Suffrage, Vote by Ballot, Annual Parls. and No Property Qualification. Intellectual fitness and moral worth are the only qualifications we advocate for the electors and the elected.

No. 635. James Rose, S.E. Secretary.

John Partridge, Printer.
Newport.

3. The Working Men's Association,

for benefiting politically, socially and morally the useful classes.

Motto :

The man who evades his share of useful labour diminishes the public wealth, and throws his own burden on his neighbour.

Monthly Payment.

Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
			4d.	4d.	4d.						

No. 2601.

The sons of Chartists were also organised, and one or two of the larger centres had their "Youths' Democratic Associations" whilst other had their "Boys' Chartist Society." These appear to have been built up on much the same lines as the Boys' Brigades of to-day. The distribution of pamphlets, the selling of Chartist papers, and making meetings known were the main function of these youthful Chartists. The fifteen-year-old son of John Frost was the treasurer of the branch at Newport. This is a copy of their membership card.

NEWPORT YOUTHS' DEMOCRATIC ASSOCIATION.

Union is strength ; knowledge is power.

Entered June 4th, 1839. Bo.

John Ball, Secretary.

Each member paid 3d. on joining and 1d. per week afterwards.

The organisation was now getting on to a strong basis, and as the economic conditions became worse, the movement gathered strength.

NESS EDWARDS.

In MEMORIAM: A. J. HACKING

THE death of Alfred Joseph Hacking on December 2nd will be felt as a personal blow by all those Labour College men who had benefited by his teaching. Some of us have known him intimately for nearly a quarter of a century and can recall how, in the early days, when Ruskin Hall came into being, he stimulated us by his thoroughness in correcting and criticising our first attempts at writing an essay.

A. J. Hacking graduated in 1887 at Exeter College, Oxford, a college which claims as her son one of the greatest of socialists, William Morris. Hacking was proud of Morris's residence there, and perhaps that may have influenced him in his choice of a college. He was himself a staunch socialist, and never missed an opportunity of trying to influence those with whom he came in contact. He had a quiet, unassuming way, never sought cheap popularity, nor forced himself on people; but the friendships he made were lasting ones.

In October, 1899, the first number of *Young Oxford* appeared, edited, illustrated, published, and sold by the students of Ruskin Hall. In that first number A. J. Hacking wrote a stimulating article on "Some Uses of History." Number Two came out in November with the name of A. J. Hacking on the title page as editor, and his name appeared in that capacity as long as the magazine existed. As editor he was able to reach a larger public, and the editorial talks were eagerly read, being full of sound sense and good advice to students of social reform.

Early in the history of Ruskin Hall, A. J. Hacking was appointed to the staff and put in charge of the work of corresponding students, and he remained in that post until the present Labour College was started. He joined the staff of the new college in a similar capacity. He was well suited for the work, being a thorough master of English, and a linguist of no mean repute, knowing Hebrew, Greek, Latin, French, and German. He spoke sometimes with great disdain of dry-as-dust scholastic learning, yet he realised the great advantage classical scholarship gives to a man when rightly employed. He himself and his old friend, Dennis Hird, were good examples of the way in which such knowledge may be utilised in elucidating facts in every department of life. PLEBS readers have been indebted to him again and again for translations of valuable pieces of socialist theory or historical writing.

He retired from active work at the College only in the summer of 1921. He leaves behind him a record of single-hearted loyalty and quiet, unquestioning devotion to the causes in which he believed.

W. G. E. P.

Is REVOLUTION Inevitable ?

WE have many of us been brought up on the comforting theory that the concentration of workers in manufacturing centres, the instability of capitalism and the increasing misery of the workers, will one day cause revolution to burst over this country like a long pent up flood, and sweeping all opposition away leave the field clear for the dictatorship of the proletariat. If the more thoughtful Marxians would add their qualifications, the majority of lusty rank and file Communists certainly hold views of this sort.

There was a certain boy who once worked out a mathematical problem with inaccurate results and then found that he had "neglected the weight of the elephant." I have no wish to dispute the accurate estimation of the economic factors in the coming crisis of capitalist society. But there are others which we are apt to overlook. Firstly there are the external as opposed to the internal conditions of revolution and then there is a further series of internal forces, the psychological, running parallel to the economic. With regard to the external factors it is not my job at the moment to do more than mention them. They are the Historical and Geographical. A good example of the former was the preoccupation of capitalist Europe with the world war which left Russia much freer than she would otherwise have been to establish the rule of the workers. Of the latter, the isolation of Russia owing to huge distances (imagine how easily a revolution in Belgium would be crushed and remember the fate of Hungary) and her ability to become a self-sufficient economic unit, compare Russia with a country utterly dependent on foreign imports.

But of equal importance are those mental conditions in the workers, which have so far received but slight attention from anyone.

In 1848, the year of continental upheavals, Marx was greatly impressed with two facts. 1. The revolutionary sentiment of the workers ; 2. The exploitation of this by the bourgeoisie to secure *their* enfranchisement but not the workers' emancipation. As we are all aware, in England, France, Germany, Italy, and elsewhere the middle classes including the manufacturers rose against the old aristocracy and demanded control of the Government machine, Europe was seething with revolt, despotism tottered ; and in every case the effective instrument in securing political reform was the working class mob, who were deluded into imagining that this democratic advance would bring with it their deliverance from economic slavery. Of course it never did. As soon as these reforms were secured, the Liberals turned on their working class supporters and disarmed and suppressed them. Marx saw at once that the

mistake had been to trust the Liberal revolutionaries, in future therefore every revolution must be pressed on by the workers far past the trifling objectives of the bourgeoisie to the complete assumption of political power by themselves. This is the thesis of the address to the Communist League. Unfortunately, no disciple of Marx had a chance of putting his precepts into practice from 1850 to 1917. Then the chance came and with extraordinary fidelity to the predictions and instructions of Marx, the Bolsheviks did overwhelm the Liberal revolution with the uprising of the whole proletariat to seize absolute power for itself.

In consequence our British Marxians have begun to anticipate a similar possibility here.

But there is a vital difference.

In 1848 the factory system was new. Only a few years previously the factory workers had been free men, not happy and prosperous artisans in most cases, but certainly not wage slaves. Even the poverty stricken agricultural labourers who were flocking into the towns had never experienced the slavery of the factory.

The Hammonds point out that the riots of these early days were by no means only due to unemployment owing to the introduction of machinery but were spontaneous revolts against the galling conditions of factory life to those unaccustomed to it.

Now this was the proletariat which poured out into the streets in revolt in 1848. It was an unspoiled proletariat, as enraged at their captivity as lions from the forest. And note that the Russian proletariat was of a similar character, it was of recent enslavement, thousands of the workers had begun life as peasants and still worked for part of the year in the villages where the old traditions of the commune were still alive and vigorous and freedom, though poverty stricken, still lived.

But now compare the proletariat of Europe in 1848 and Russia in 1917 with that of Britain in 1922. For three generations we have known no freedom, we were born to the cry of the factory siren and it is our last post. We are reconciled to factory discipline, used to the slums, taught to read only that we might be doped by the press, provided with footballs and cinemas only that we might be distracted from our real misery. We have neither the independence, nor the virility of our fathers and the vision of the British workers behind the barricades can never be more than the dream of the arm-chair revolutionists until the psychology of the proletariat has been radically altered. As a matter of fact misery and factory discipline does not make revolutionaries, it makes hopeless slaves, and the longer it goes on the less and not the more likely is a working class revolution. The question all revolutionaries have got to ask is "How to overcome the paralysing effect of our industrial system on the psychology of the workers?"

JOHN LEWIS.

SOME OLD UNION RECORDS

AS a sequel to Fred Shaw's notes upon an old Steam Engine Makers' minute book, some extracts from the Stonemasons' old *Returns* might be of interest. The Operative Stonemasons (General Union) was founded in 1833 and amalgamated last year with the two Bricklayers Societies to form the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers (A.U.B.T.W.) Their journal took the form of a fortnightly "Return" or letter from the Secretary to the members. Some entries give a curious light upon the relations of master and men then.

Nov. 25th, 1836. "Mr. Stafford, who is erecting a Catholic Chapel at Birkenhead, has reduced his men's wages from 26s. to 24s. per week, which they have resisted, but the priest is determined the job shall not stand still and in all probability ere this they will have returned to work at their former wages. Mr. Watson, another employer at Birkenhead, attempted to reduce his men's wages which they resisted, and he being fearful of losing them, treated them with some ale and promised them their full wages when all returned to work, only losing half a day."

It is doubtful whether Holland and Hannen and Cubitt would settle a dispute as wisely to-day!

1838. "The Brothers of Birkenhead solicit the society to allow them to give tramps, who may apply, the sum of 3d. to pay their fare across the river Mersey to Liverpool, as a number who come from Chester are destitute of the means of conveying them across the river."

(Members in those days travelling in search of employment were dubbed "tramps").

1839. "Mr. Walker, of Birkenhead, reduced his masons' wages last November from 26s. to 24s. per week, with an understanding that it should be raised again on the 1st of March, which when the time arrived he refused to do. A deputation waited on him upon the subject which he treated as not worthy his notice, consequently twenty-three of them struck. But the haughty tyrant conceiving it to be his wisest policy surrendered the same day to their just demands."

Some of this spirit would be a wholesome tonic nowadays. Here is a draught from the same bottle :

1839. Mr. Pattison, of Manchester, has called in his men at 5s. per day. The four blacks he had employed the week previous he has been compelled to discharge. Thus an unsullied victory has been achieved over one of the greatest tyrants of the district.

The four blacks were not, of course, "coloured gentlemen," but white men of a deeper and dirtier dye—scabs.

The following two extracts are echoes of the Chartist days :

July 18th, 1839. "The lateness of the Returns in which there are many

errors, is occasioned by an attack that was made on our Lodge House, on Thursday evening, by a body of Chartists in pursuit of some policemen who had taken refuge in it, which compelled the Committee to suspend its proceedings. The house was guarded by the military until a late hour next morning."

The rebellious spirit evidently permeated the younger ranks as the following will show :

1839. "The Brothers of Liverpool request us to publish Tom Smitton and George Blythin, two runaway apprentices from Mr. Tomkinson. They have taken their master's tools with them which are plainly marked I.T., the initials of his name. It is an incumbent duty of the members of our Society to endeavour to send them back to serve out their apprenticeship."

We wonder did they ?

The concluding extract is the address of the newly-appointed Executive Committee, Liverpool, April 18th, 1844, and the sentiments expressed are not inapplicable to-day :—

"Worthy Brothers,

"The honour you have conferred upon us, by appointing us your Executive, and the remarks of our predecessors in last 'Return' cannot be allowed to pass without an expression of our gratitude for the confidence reposed in us ; also to acknowledge the clear and correct state the affairs of the Society have been placed in our hands ; yet we feel our humble abilities are far from meriting the eulogium passed upon us. However, we are determined to do our utmost, and if the members generally do their duty we fear not but that progress looked forward to will be realized. *What is the duty of every member ? Is it to profess or to perform ? The latter must be the answer. Let then every one of you bestir yourselves, and no longer linger in stupid admiration of your principle ; for he who labours not in the cause must as a consequence be laboured for,** and although we are aware there are too many of this class we trust their number will diminish and a spirit of determination be spread amongst them that will soon shake off the lethargy from those who have so long kept aloof from us. To press much further our remarks is, we think unnecessary ; but suffice to say that having elected us your Executive induces us to flatter ourselves we have the confidence of a majority, and trust those who favoured us with their votes will be as prompt in their endeavours to assist us in carrying out the objects of the work we are engaged in."

J. HAMILTON.

* Italics ours.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT A "GUINEA PIG" DIRECTOR IS? G. L. BEVAN KNEW—AND SO WILL YOU, IF YOU READ OUR ECONOMICS TEXTBOOK.

CONCERNING AUTHORITY

An Article by Friedrich Engels

Translated by Eden and Cedar Paul.

This article by Engels appeared originally, with that by Marx published in The PLEBS two months ago, in an Italian year book, 1873. A translation of it appeared in The PLEBS for June, 1914 (following on the publication a few months earlier of a translation of Bakunin's "Policy of the International"). It is re-printed here as only a few of our present-day readers will have the 1914 PLEBS by them, and it is interesting to study the two articles by Marx and Engels side by side.

SOME time ago a number of Socialists began a crusade against what they termed "the principle of authority." It seemed to them that if they stigmatised any action as "authoritarian," this sufficed to condemn it. So much mischief has been done by these summary methods that it is necessary to look into the matter more closely. Authority, in the sense in which the term is used here, signifies the subjection of another's will to our own. Thus the obverse of authority is subordination. Now in so far as both these words have a disagreeable sound, and in so far as the relationship implied by them is disagreeable to the subordinated party, the question arises whether there be any means of abolishing the relationship altogether; whether, in existing social conditions, we can bring about a different social state wherein there will be no scope for the exercise of such authority, and where therefore it will disappear.

When we study the economic, industrial, and agrarian conditions which underlie contemporary capitalist society, we find that their tendency is to replace the isolated action of individuals by the associated action of a number of individuals. Instead of petty industries carried on by isolated producers, we have the great factories and workshops of modern industrial life. In these, hundreds of workers supervise the activities of complex power-driven machines. Similarly, railway trains have replaced hand-carts and wagons, and steamships have replaced galleys and sailing ships. Agriculture, likewise, is gradually passing under the dominion of machinery and the steam-engine; and concomitantly the peasants tilling their own little farms are being slowly but inexorably driven off the land by the big capitalists who cultivate huge estates with the aid of hired labourers.

Thus the independent action of isolated individuals is yielding ground to associated activities, to interrelated and interdependent

activities. But associated labour implies organisation. Now is it possible to have organisation without authority?

Let us suppose that a social revolution has occurred, dethroning the capitalists whose authority now controls the entire production and distribution of wealth. In order to consider the question from the outlook of the anti-authoritarians let us assume that the land and all the means of production have become the collective property of the workers who use them. Will authority in that case disappear, or will it merely undergo a change in form? Let us look into the matter.

Cotton-spinning may serve as an example. The transformation of cotton into yarn requires at least six successive operations, and these have for the most part to be effected in different departments. Moreover, that the machines may be kept running, we need an engineer who looks after the steam-engine; a number of skilled mechanics to attend to the daily work of machine repair; and a great many unskilled labourers to carry the products from one department to another; and so on, and so on. All these workers, men, women and children, must begin and end their labours at the same hour, at an hour determined by the authority of King Steam, who cares little for individual autonomy. It is essential, to begin with, that the workers shall come to an agreement as to working hours; and once these hours have been fixed, all must keep good time.

In each part of the factory and from moment to moment there arise problems of detail concerning the methods of production, the distribution of materials, etc.; and unless the work of production is to be suddenly interrupted, these questions must be promptly answered. Now whether the decision be left to a delegate in charge of a particular branch of work, or settled by a majority vote, the individual worker will have to comply with the decision, and, in short, authority will have to prevail. The automatic mechanism of a great factory is to a far larger extent tyrannical than is the authority of the petty capitalists who sweat a small number of workers. As far, at least, as working hours are concerned, we might well write over the portals of such great factories, *Lasciate ogni autonomia, voi ch'entrate*. ("Abandon autonomy, all ye who enter here"). Whilst man, through science and the use of his inventive faculties, is able to subject the forces of nature to his will, these forces exact their revenge, for they in turn subdue their master by compelling him to submit to a despotism quite independent of social conditions. As far as large-scale industry is concerned, to abolish authority would mean abolishing the industry itself; it would mean the destruction of the steam-engine and a return to the hand spinning-wheel.

Let us consider another example, a railway. Here the co-operation of a great number of persons is absolutely essential, and this co-operation must take place at precisely defined hours if disasters are to be avoided. The very first pre-requisite for the whole undertaking is that there should be a single dominant will, deciding all subsidiary questions. It is of no moment whether this will be represented by an individual delegate or by an elected committee which has to carry out the decisions of the majority of those interested. In either case we have to do with authority. Furthermore, let us ask what would happen to the first train we should despatch, were the authority of the railway staff over the passengers to be abrogated.

But nowhere is the need for authority, for absolute power, so obvious as upon a ship on the high seas. Here, when danger threatens, the lives of all on board depend upon the absolute and instant obedience of everyone else to the orders of one individual.

When I adduce these arguments to the more rabid anti-authoritarians of my acquaintance, the only answer they make is: "What you say is true enough, but under the new conditions the delegates will not exercise authority but only a mandate." Such people believe that they can change a thing by changing its name. And thinkers of this calibre only make themselves ridiculous.

Thus we have seen that, on the one hand, a certain authority, by whomever delegated, and, on the other hand, a certain degree of subordination, force themselves on us independently of the nature of social organisation, and *as an outcome of the material conditions under which commodities are produced and distributed.*

We have further seen that the material conditions of production and distribution inevitably pass more and more under the control of large-scale industry and large-scale agriculture, and that the domain of the aforesaid authority is thus continually widened. It is, therefore, utterly absurd to look upon the principle of authority as absolutely evil, and to look upon the principle of autonomy as absolutely good. Authority and autonomy are relative concepts, and the limits within which they are valid vary concomitantly with variations in the phases of social evolution.

Had the autonomists been content to say that in the social organisation of the future there will be scope for the exercise of authority in so far as this is rendered inevitable by the conditions of production, it would have been possible to come to terms with them. But they remain blind to all the facts which make authority indispensable, and they run a tilt passionately against the mere word.

Why do not the anti-authoritarians content themselves with attacking political authority, with attacking the State? All socialists agree that the coming social revolution will lead to the disappearance of the State, and will put an end to political authority. This means

that public functions will lose their political character and will undergo transformation into simple administrative functions which will concern the supervision of social interests. But the anti-authoritarians demand the abolition of the political state at one stroke; they demand its abolition before the disappearance of the social conditions which created it. They demand that the abolition of authority shall be the very first act of the social revolution.

Have these gentlemen ever seen a revolution? Beyond question, a revolution is the most authoritarian thing in the world. It is an act whereby a part of the population enforces its will upon the rest of the population; enforces its will by rifles, bayonets, and big guns—all things of a highly authoritarian character. The party that gains the victory must maintain its dominion by virtue of the terror which its weapons inspire in the hearts of the reactionaries. Would the Commune of Paris have lasted more than a day if it had not kept the bourgeoisie in subjection by the authority of the armed people? Must we not, indeed, blame it for failing to make a sufficiently vigorous use of this authority?

We come to a rigidly defined alternative. Either the anti-authoritarians do not know what they are talking about, and in that case they are promoting confusionism; or else they know what they are talking about, and in that case they are betraying the cause of the proletariat. In either case, they are servants of the reaction.

F. ENGELS.

CLASS ROOM NOTES for Students and Tutors

IS the Marquess of Carisbrooke (grandson of Queen Victoria and cousin of George Windsor) feeling that the "king business" is played out? According to an interesting par (*D. Herald*, 27/11/22) both he and his Marchioness are now "guinea pig" directors. The Marquess helps to direct not only Lever Bros., but also Lamport & Holt (the shipping firm), and the Eagle, Star and British Dominions, Ltd. The Marchioness has only begun as director of Moor Park, Ltd. (a company to develop Hertfordshire estates bought from Lord Leverhulme). Interesting animals—these "guinea pigs." Any reader wanting to know more of their habits and characteristics is referred to Chapter I., *Outline of Economics*, available in a few days' time.

The *R.P.A. Annual* referred to in last month's Notes is the 1923 issue, and not 1913 as stated. William Archer's contribution in

the same issue is well worth while. We notice that Lenin has been advising Marxians to use the satire of the 18th century materialists as an even more effective vacuum cleaner for "god-webs" than the criticisms of the Historical Materialists; Archer's examination of the claims of Christianity would well serve this same purpose. (Lenin's article is in the 1922 Congress Number of the *Communist International*, and incidentally has the only reference we have come across in Lenin's writings to the work of the Dietzgens, father and son.)

Apropos of the article on China in the December PLEBS, the following paragraphs are full of interest. They come from the spacious pages of the *Saturday Evening Post* (Philadelphia) which boasts a weekly circulation of over two and a quarter millions. Isaac F. Marcossou has been studying "The Changing East" on the spot and he is shouting as loudly as possible "Wake up America! and China can be yours." In the eleventh article of the series (18/11/22) Marcossou emphasises the tremendous opportunity facing Uncle Sam. He says:—

The Washington Conference was the culminating evidence of the goodwill we have always had for China. It not only proved our friendship, but made the "open door"—likewise an American suggestion—a condition not a theory. To a greater degree than has ever obtained before, economic China awaits the impress and the guidance of the Yankee hand.

To show how this can be done Marcossou gives full details of the methods of Britain, whose "close team-work between the banker and the selling concern" he greatly admires. He holds up Standard Oil as the one big American company which has really set itself out to develop the Chinese market: "On every Chinese river and in every port you see the Stars and Stripes flying from the American tank steamers or launches. . . . The Chinese name for Standard Oil—*Mei Foo*—is a household word in China and every coolie understands it." It would have gone further but for opposition from the Japanese who had for years the idea that China was "their particular mutton."

The British-American Tobacco Company is a good second to Standard Oil, for it has a factory at Pootung which employs 10,000 employees and a capacity of 20,000,000 cigarettes a day.

No comment could improve the following:—

When all is said and done, however, one really big American opportunity in China is in railway construction. The country cries for steam transport. The 7,000 existing miles are not a patch on what is needed; 20,000 miles more are absolutely essential, and at least 30,000 additional are almost as urgently required. Americans are the best railroad builders in the world. Hence the opening.

China's hope lies in industrialisation. The country aches for machinery of every kind, especially cotton and flour mills and power plants for public utilities. . . .

The domain of the Pacific with its vast and unplumbed potentialities for trade and traffic is plastic as never before. The next few years will be the decisive ones. In the fierce struggle for economic existence Europe, still groggy from the effects of the World War, is concentrating on the Orient. The last untapped reservoir of purchasing power is becoming the scene of a significant struggle for business supremacy. With intelligence and perseverance America can make the China domain her own. But we must be up and doing. It is a case of now or never.

Forward, oil kings, steel kings, and merchant princes, on the Great Crusade for Bigger Profits !

Ilford Plebeians have no intention of fading away. They have a Publicity Committee, and Comrade Okey has written a series of twelve Chats on Economics which has appeared in the *Ilford Argus*. His Chat seven on *Surplus Value* raises a point which certainly needs clearing up. He suggests that there is an absolute over-production which cannot be got rid of by "swapping" the surpluses of different capitalist countries. The difficulty arises we think that no conscious swapping yet exists nor is likely to under capitalism, and it is in the transforming of surplus goods into such a form in which their owners can enjoy them that the causes of Imperialism are to be found. The dynamic competition forces the greater use of machinery, the surplus in that form is greater and its disposal hence more difficult. Although the heavy industrialists solve their problem they make it more difficult for the concerns producing commodities for consumption to solve their disposal problem. More competitors, lessening markets, a World Trust after an indescribably terrible World War or the triumph of the Workers International—that is the vista opening before us.

Finance, by Emil Burns, is No. 3 in the Labour Research Dept. Syllabus Series. It is an exceedingly valuable summary and would well serve as a course. Many of its sections are expanded in our Economics Textbook.

Burns does not suggest, as Cahn does, that the huge masses of "money of account" in relation to the small amount of real money (gold and silver) is the Achilles heel of Capitalism, but he does show how the present financial system will be superseded.

And so the Harold Coxes and the Lovat Frasers are afraid the Labour Party will crush private enterprise ! They should direct their reproaches to the great financial merger now being discussed by the three great meat packing firms—Armours, Wilsons and Morris—involves a sum of £100 millions ; or the new Southern Railway scheme, which has a capital of £144 millions and power to raise another £3½ millions, and which absorbs the Brighton Railway and smaller companies. (*Daily Herald*, 17/11/22).

COM. J. F. DEAKIN gives an answer in reply to our question as to the "obscene circular" given to members of the Trade Union Congress. For the circumstances, he says, see W. J. Davies' *History of the T.U.C.*, vol. i., 71-72, 86-90, 93-94, also Broadhurst's *Life*, 158-160. These don't explain whether the circular was by the "Fair Trade"—Protectionist—crowd led by Peters and Kelly. But Comrade Deakin goes on to give other references:—"Reynolds, Sept., 1881, Sept., 1882; Bonner and Robertson, *Life of Bradlaugh* II., pp. 385-6, 392-4, 396-7—read these two last and smile! . . . If you haven't a copy of W. J. Davies, hie thee to Gentleman Charlie and buy the two volumes at 6d. each."

An interesting note of a case under the Combination Laws was printed in the "100 Years Ago" column of the *Observer* recently. It was dated 24/11/1822, R. v. Keen and others. The defendants formed part of the "Weavers' Fund or Aggregate Committee" of Coventry and were summoned for assault and riot, sentenced to four and nine months respectively, and heavy fines. The society's subscription had been 1d. weekly and the punishment for cutting rates, etc., was to put the offender on a donkey, face to the tail and chase him about the town.

A. P.—George Potter, Applegarth's opponent, was a working carpenter originally. He was born in Kenilworth in 1832. He was editor of the *Beehive* and a very considerable figure until he was beaten by the "Junta." There is no life of him, and we cannot say when he died. It is said he died of drink. He was living in 1886. Perhaps some Pleb can furnish more details; if so we wish he would write in.

J. L. M.—J. George Eccarius was a German tailor, a great friend of Marx and an able economist. John Stuart Mill once told an audience that "a tailor friend of mine in the East End knows more political economy than all of you put together." He was for many years secretary of the International. Fred Willis, of the Communist Party is the best person to tell you more about him. By the by, Comrade Willis was supposed to be writing a history of Socialism in England from the eighties onward, but we have heard now't o't for some time. Some of us would like to see it very much.

F. J. Smith (Harringay) raises the question of whether labour is displaced by machinery. He will find the whole matter treated in Chapter VIII. of the Economics Textbook. Surely if labour were not displaced there would be no purpose in the introduction of the machine.

Those students and teachers who have already sampled Varga's work will be sure to obtain his latest pamphlet in English *The Process of Capitalist Decline*. His analysis of the present world situation (marred only by careless proof reading) backed up by a huge mass of valuable statistical material leads him to the conclusion of his title. Later references will be made to him in these pages.

We like the reply of the Plebs student who, when the Anti-Labour candidate prophesied that capital would leave the country, showed that while "real" capital (machinery, buildings, etc.) could not be smuggled through the Customs quite so easily as suggested money capital was already in pre-war days, being sent abroad at the rate of £200 millions a year. According to Mr. Lloyd George, the total in 1915 of British foreign investments amounted to £4,000 millions. And a direct result of this export of capital is the Hell of World War—the most colossal waste the human mind can conceive.

Next month's PLEBS will be a

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IT is, when you come to think of it, exactly as it should be for the Plebs Textbook on "Imperialism" to follow next upon that on "Psychology"; after the Mechanism of Mind the process whence springs the ideology from which it is the immediate task of PLEBS activity to rescue the workers.

The function of the Press as an engine for the manufacture of a "Public Opinion" favourable to the existing order is gross and obvious. The function of the elementary school in preparing victims for the Press to operate upon is in nothing more effective than in the common words and symbols which are by constant use woven inextricably into the mental texture of each pupil.

Chief of these words of late has been "Empire,"; and the very zeal and energy with which its propagandists have toiled to make it a word of high and awe-compelling significance, testifies to the fact that it implied a new concept and a new set of relations to which there was a great and growing need for adjustment.

Students of the by-ways of political history cannot fail to light upon the controversy which raged when in 1876 Disraeli hit upon the expedient of making the British Monarch, "Empress of India." It was said to be "shoddy tinsel," and worthy of a race whose spiritual home was Houndsditch. "Empire," then was a word that all good Englishmen detested as "foreign flummery" and many were the forebodings of gloom in the Tory ranks when in imitation of the new "German Emperor," Queen Victoria became "Empress of India."!

Disraeli was before his time. He knew what was coming; but he could only half convince his own party of the inevitability of the development he foresaw. But for that we should have had in 1876 a British Empire

formally and legally established as the counter and rival to the German one.

Time and economic development have wrought the change that Disraeli failed to effect. The British Monarch is still only "King" in Britain, but the British "Empire" is a fact accepted in popular speech, newspaper propaganda, and political argumentation.

What this means to the worker is not easy to compress within reasonable compass. When, in the early mercantile period wars were fought in places half a world away, the worker (knowing little and caring less of these far away things) was under no temptation to regard them as other than what they were—sheer plunder raids to the glory and advantage of trade and commerce. If they made available for him work and wages he cared no more. Britain was a "right little, tight little island," and it was left to the old-fashioned foxhunting Tory squires, whom Addison satirised, to swear that "trade would be the ruin of the English nation," and add "two or three curses upon the London Merchants not forgetting the directors of the Bank."

Now the Empire, its defence, its maintenance, its trade, its enemies, and its conduct, are all things upon which every worker knows (or thinks he knows) his whole life depends.

Addison's Tory foxhunter did not think the "foreigner" could ever acquire the "wit and breeding" of "we English"—but then the foxhunter "made it a rule never to believe any of your printed news." The British worker when he is not busy claiming Indians, Africans, Arabians, Australians, and Americans, as fellow-subjects of the greatest of Empires, is deep in his concern as to what are the motives and forces behind the fight for Mosul, Mesopotamia, and the whole of the near and further East.

Empire has come and with it Imperialism—the creed and cult of Imperial expansion and consolidation.

Once it was "the King"; then it was the "Nation"; now it is the "Empire" before which all men must bow and to whose compelling need common men must be offered up either piece-meal or in holocausts.

A text book on Imperialism is therefore one of the things most urgently needed by all who have set themselves to the work of rousing the workers for their class defence and advancement. If for no other reason, it is needed to shelter the twin delusions, first that the Empire has been "built" to a preconceived plan evolved in the brains of great men—like Beaconsfield, Rhodes, or Bismarck—second, that it is an appalling result of the foolish "foreign policy" of wrong headed men like Grey, Poincaré, or whoever it is that the union of Democratic Control elects to its awful pre-eminence.

Modern Empires and Imperialisms are a natural growth; as natural and inevitable as the Pacifism that poses as Angel to their Devil. Would you learn how these twins were conceived, brought to birth, and set upon their contrasted careers? Would you learn whence they came and the gulf into which both will finally fall?

All these things you will learn from the new textbook, with such point and particularity as will for ever prevent you from mistaking the orthodox Pacifist rage at the triumph of its brother for the genuine proletarian drive towards a new world in which Empires of all kinds will have gone to join all "dead disastrous things" in the limbo of the lost.

It is superfluous to say that the work is well done. One expects that from a PLEBS production. But only those who have worked over it page by page can know just how very well done it is.

Especially noteworthy is the device of making the War the pivot of the work. Avoiding ten thousand and one temptations to launch upon a

logical presentation of the content of the concept "Imperialism" and the critical appraisal of alternative theories of its "true" nature, the author and his collaborators have chosen the method of taking the concrete fact of the War as the jumping-off point and (after a preliminary chapter on the economics of imperialism) giving chapter by chapter the historical record of the growth into Imperialism of each of the contending States involved. Then the war, and so to after the war and the world that has emerged and lo! before you, as fine a working instrument for the handling of the existing world problems as you could wish to have.

I confess that the studiously plain and business-like manner in which the facts are set out pleases me much more than any of the "brilliant" writing with which we are wont to be choked. This is a workman-like book for workers' use. Those who best can appreciate workmanship will best appreciate this excellent book. One puts it down after a first reading with a sense of how vastly the world has changed since that fateful August, 1914—how futile and empty all the slogan, battle-cries and party names that have lasted over from the previous period. Those who read this textbook, having grown up to reading age since that date, will never be able to understand how sudden and appalling, how vast and all submerging the calamity seemed when the crash came. They will think us all the fools imaginable for not having seen—as this text book shows we might have seen—just what was coming.

Let them be warned by our fate—other and greater crises are developing. It will be their work (and ours) to meet them when they come. That they need not do so without understanding, this textbook is a guarantee.

THOS. A. JACKSON.

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REVIEWS

AN ECONOMIC HANDBOOK.
The Founders of Political Economy.
 By Jan. St. Lewinski, D.Ec.Sc.,
 Prof. Pol. Ec. Univ. Lub. in Poland.
 (P. S. King. 6s. 6d.)

THIS little book on the history of Economics traces the successive additions to the science of economics by each school as it enters the historical field. The schools are typified in their most successful exponents and the real advances made by each school are traced under the separate heads of the science.

The outstanding value of this book is that it connects theory with its inevitable historical environment. Just as to-day we are getting numerous books on unemployment, crises, and world Capitalism, so "the first branch of economic theory which took a definite shape was the theory of money. This treatise (Oresme's) was written at a moment when France was passing through a most grave economic crisis. The whole system had been deeply shaken by the continuous debasement of the currency. In 1348 the monetary standard was altered eleven times, in 1349 nine times, in 1381 eighteen times. Has the Prince the right to debase the currency in such a manner? This is the question to which Oresme tries to give an answer." So with the quantity theory of money and the revolution in prices after the influx of gold and silver from America in the second half of the sixteenth century and the Ricardian rent theory after the rise in agricultural prices and rent in England during the Napoleonic Wars. Theories of Production and of Distribution could only come in the 18th and 19th centuries when their problems arose.

At the same time the lineal descent or the historical sequence of ideas is here shown in a clear and interesting manner without complicating detail. The book stops practically at Ricardo, though there is one chapter on "The Post-Ricardian Period." Lewinski says "Ricardo's Principles are the last stage of great theoretical discoveries for which we ransack in vain more recent publications."

Talking of interest and profit and their modern economic apologists who claim that they are the result of technical productivity of Capital or the reward of abstinence or the difference between the values of present and future goods, he says, "All these theories overlook one fact that interest on Capital is a historical phenomenon, while the productivity of Capital and the psychological motives which have been advanced may be found among all societies the most rude as well as the most advanced. Only socialist writers like Marx and Rodbertus saw in the interest on Capital a comparatively modern institution but they failed equally in attempt to formulate a theory which could be accepted."

Apart from the assumption above that Capital has existed from all time and in spite of the fact that Lewinski does not state why he can't accept Marx, this is the best and most simply written little book on the History of Economics I have seen. R.

CHRISTIANS.

The Return of Christendom. By a Group of Churchmen. Introduction by Bishop Gore. Epilogue by G. K. Chesterton. (Allen and Unwin, 7s. 6d.)

Bishop Gore says, in his introduction to this book, that of the writers "None would accept the description 'Socialist' save in its most general sense." A cursory perusal of the book bears out the foreboding that so general is the "Socialism" of the writers that it is no more Socialism than it is devil-worship. Most of these Churchmen are very hot and bothered over a thing they call "mechanism" or "materialism"—Mr. Maurice Reckitt once read an article by "Nordicus" in *THE PLEBS*, and it evidently gave him the horrors. All through the book we get the continually recurring theme—how these Bolsheviks, these "materialists", will never bring happiness to the human race, because they omit the "spiritual" factor. The writers gaze longingly back at the Middle Ages—they bewail the destruction of the "medieval standards

of Vocation and Fraternity" which is involved in Capitalist Industrialism. "Proletarian Culture," they tell us, glorifies the machine—Communism will be built on the "old values of plutocracy" (!)

After this, we are not surprised to find, in a chapter entitled "The Moralisation of Property," that the Douglas Scheme of Social Credit finds favour in the eyes of the Lord.

For Plebs the most illuminating chapter will no doubt be that on "The Failure of Marxism." The reverend gentleman who discourses on this subject is careful to tell us what a nice old man Karl Marx was—and then proceeds in the following vein, "The class war is an unholy war. Its motives are envy and greed and blind revenge. Its weapons are trickery and terror and brute force. Its philosophy is the deliberate denial of morality. Its objective is mere destruction." However, all his arguments fail to explain away Marxism, and so he is driven to the inexpressibly lame admission that "The persistence of Marxism, despite its errors and fallacies, [is] due (i) to the half-truths which it embodies; (ii) its moral baseness." So speaks the reverend instructor and tutor in Social Ethics at Harvard University, U.S.A. And much more, oh! much more, in the same strain. If this is the best Christianity can do—and one is forced to admit that these are very superior Churchmen—then its utter intellectual bankruptcy in the face of the present world situation must be greater than the most sanguine "materialist" can ever have anticipated. G. A. H.

DETHRONEMENTS.

England under Edward VII. J. A. Farrer. (Allen & Unwin, 10s. 6d.)
Memoirs of an Ambassador. F. von Schoen. (Allen & Unwin, 10s. 6d.)
Military Preparations for the Great War. E. D. Morel. (Labour Publishing Company, 6d.)

It was, we believe, Lord Rosebery, who prophesied in the early days of the war that it would be fifty years before the true story of the origins of the War was fully known—a nasty jab in the eye for the multitude of writers then busy piling up their mountains of the irrefutable proof of Germany's guilt.

This turned out a needlessly pessimistic forecast. Since the fear of the Hun, and of popular opinion was removed in November, 1918, even our orthodox historians have been disposed to take a rather more sober view of the international situation during the decade or two preceding 1914. Yet it must be admitted that a vast deal of reading of orthodox historians has to be done in order to extract the kernels of historical knowledge. This is true of two books of the kind before us.

Mr. Farrer deliberately confines his history of the reign of Edward VII. to its foreign and diplomatic side. His subject is "England" but he is far more concerned with the King of England; and that confusion of history with mere biography is here, as so often, the essential and far-reaching weakness. Judging it as biography, the book is interesting and informative; as history, it must be classed as "thin."

One of the most interesting features is the treatment of the reputation of King Edward for peacemaking. The late King has been canonised as the Peacemaker. Mr. Farrer provides evidence enough of the justice of that epithet—providing only that we accept the current doctrine that the best way to ensure peace is to prepare for war! The title was won by Edward's policy of alliance with France and Russia; but this, in the then condition of the world inevitably meant hostility to, and isolation of, Germany. The "encirclement" of Germany marked a highly important stage in the international relations of pre-war Europe; in turn it became a powerful weapon in the hands of German militarists and so played its own part in creating the conditions for war. It is interesting to have orthodox confirmation concerning the official British attitude in the days before the War. "The whole reign was a preparation and an education for a war accepted as inevitable." Our author leaves us in no manner of doubt as to the general result of the reign. "During nearly the whole of his reign the world had trembled on the brink of war; on several occasions it had only just been averted; and how closely the King's life was bound up with that condition of things was shown by the sudden relaxation of tension

which followed his decease." A singular epitaph for the Peacemaker!

As with the previous book, so with that of Herr von Schoen. It is in discussing War origins that the author most succeeds in arousing the interest of the reader. There is here a much more serious attempt to probe into "Realpolitik"; and the conclusions are as valuable as any from similar sources. In reply to the usual charge of Germany's sole guilt, he asserts that while not free from blame, Germany was "not to blame in the sense and to the extent to which she is accused. . . . she was the apparent but not the real aggressor." To demonstrate this, he proceeds to examine the part of the other Powers in creating the conditions for war, devoting chief attention to France and Russia. In France there were the demands of the Nationalists for the recovery of Alsace-Lorraine, and the fears of her capitalists regarding the flooding of France and her colonies with German goods, German labour and German industrial undertakings; to the latter was added "alarm at Germany's increasing share in the exploitation of her natural resources, particularly of her mineral wealth." These two forces conspired to drive French policy into channels that inevitably led to war. On the other side was Russia's demand for Constantinople, and the growth of her nationalist movement which "struggled, not without outside help, against the still influential German element of the good old days" (by which he means the happy days before the 1905 Revolution)! Finally, England "agreed to bury the Asiatic hatchet and make common cause with Russia." But the relations between Britain and Germany before the War are dealt with frankly.

In spite of his own part in the diplomatic history of the decisive period, von Schoen is apparently so little conscious of the great forces at work that he actually believes that a general war might have been averted if only Austria had been better prepared. His final summing up is that Russia was most to blame—a verdict which (to the extent that it is possible to separate one nation from another in this way) seems to be confirmed by more recent disclosures. At least the author has

no difficulty in disposing of the wartime "argument" about the German descending like a wolf on the fold.

And that brings us to Mr. Morel's latest booklet, in which he continues his exposure of the "myth of Germany's sole guilt"; a self-imposed task which, he asserts, with a not wholly unjustified pride, he commenced within twenty-four hours of the outbreak of hostilities. His general attitude is too well known to need emphasis here. To the Marxist his failing is his inveterate Liberalism and his consequent absorption in politics and diplomacy. But even so, he disposes effectively of the apologists of patriotism. Few of the political gods of orthodoxy survive his shattering iconoclasm, morally speaking; it is as direct and destructive as anything could well be.

T. A.

AMERICANISM.

Americanism. By W. T. Colyer (Lab. Pub. Co., 6s.).

For those who were ever misled by President Wilson's Notes on the Washington Conference, who have ever hailed America as the land of the free or think that a policy of tranquility is even remotely possible in world politics, we advise a reading of this book. The trickery of "democracy," the "frame ups," the gunmen, the graft naked and unashamed, the anticipation of the Fascisti, the persecution of trade unions, the excesses of the Ku Klux Klan and other atrocious features of American life are set down to form an astounding and gravely disturbing array. It proves all the worst chapters of books like *Jimmy Higgins* to be true.

In Great Britain the universities—the goal of the W.E.A. highway—only distinguish themselves by sending the most reactionary men to the House of Commons. In the U.S. the lecturers and students who favour even the Labour Party would have been "shot or shipped," or at least have been kicked out of their position. However, Mr. Colyer, despite his attractive antithesis of Americanism *v.* Bolshevism, would not have us concentrate our attention solely on the country which, for very good reasons, is the present leader of the Imperialist procession. Excesses of educational

dope will bring into being healthy resistance—this book itself is a proof of that. British Imperialist dope is none the less dangerous for being more successfully camouflaged.

Comrade Colyer has seen and felt a vile thing and hit it hard. But he is no Blatchford, for he realises that the only way is in successful international solidarity. America but anticipates the other capitalist sections. The least we can do is to give the widest publicity to *Americanism* to avoid the dangers of the British brand of the same thing. K.

AN INDIAN CONNOLLY ?

India's Problem. By M. N. Roy. (4 annas).

A useful analysis of the present situation supplementing the larger *India in Transition*. Roy is to *Swaraj* what Connolly was to *Sinn Fein*. No mystical non-resistance, no simple dependence upon boycott of British schools and courts, no going back to the spinning wheel, but forwards to end all exploitation, using the destruction of *British* exploitation as a stepping stone. He fears that the trade unions and the peasants organisations disappointed with the timidity and failure of the National Congress, will be misled by "humanitarian reformists, self-seeking leaders and government Agents." M. S.

PSYCHO-ANALYSIS.

Studies in Psycho-analysis. By Charles Baudouin. Trans. by E. & C. Paul. (Allen & Unwin, 10s. 6d.).

The major part of this book consists of a record of actual "cases" treated by psycho-analysis, the interpretation of dreams of the patient being the main method of analysis in each case. These will be of considerable interest to those who like to start study from the end of concrete experience, and have distrust for abstract generalisations.

The other third of the book consists of a theoretical statement, which is difficult reading for the beginner; but presents a point of view which is original and suggestive and well repays study. Baudouin makes an important distinction between two elements in psychology, often confused :

(a) Structural Psychology, which "analyses the phenomena (and) endeavours to discover their mechanism." This consists in Psycho-analysis of the claim that our thinking is controlled by the association of ideas and thoughts according to emotions often sub-conscious; (b) Functional Psychology, which is "concerned with the purport of these same phenomena and seeks to elucidate their biologic role." In Psycho-analysis this consists of the theory that "the higher sentiments appear to be products of the evolution of a crude instinct." Says Baudouin: "When people begin to give functional explanations in default of a sufficient descriptive foundation, they must never forget that they are formulating mere hypotheses. These may of course be extremely useful in research as guiding ideas, but they are dangerous, for many people are inclined to make of them a slippery descent into an unscientific finalism."

Prof. Baudouin also tries to effect a synthesis of some ideas of the schools of Freud and Jung (the Zurich school); and also claims that Suggestion and Psycho-analysis are complementary methods. Eden and Cedar Paul contribute an interesting preface, in which they claim that "auto-suggestion must owe a large part of its power and its extraordinary vogue to the fact that it enables those who practise it to find *within themselves* the guide of whom they are in search, and enables them in many instances to free themselves from fixations without recourse to the aid of the psycho-analyst"; and they conclude with the remark, "May we not hope that man the tool-using animal is on the eve of learning how to use the most stupendous of all tools—his own mind?"

Readers of the Plebs Psychology Textbook should add this book to the list of references given there.

M. H. D.

HOUSING.

The Housing Question. By a Former Housing Commissioner. (Allen and Unwin, 3s. 6d.)

This book on Housing is an armoury of facts and quotations which could be used by political propagandists. It has its faults, the chief of which lies in Part IV. True, the Housing Problem

is responsible for a vast number of evils in this world, but to say that the bad faith of the late Government "is a principal cause of the disaster that has overtaken our trade" is, to say the least, rather wide of the mark. Surely the loss of the continental coal market was not due to the bad faith of Mr. Lloyd George, or of his Government, in regard to the question of "housing" in South Wales. Is it not also true that "our trade" had been overtaken by disaster before the late Government

broke faith in this matter? No, bad housing is responsible for much, but the bad "Peace" is responsible for more.

Apart from this, the book is a good one and should be widely read; it is a terrible indictment against the "unholy alliance" which was responsible for the governing of Britain from 1916 to 1922. An index would be a great improvement and would make the book far more useful.

F. A. D. S.

LETTERS from PLEBS

HOUSMAN AND CAPITALISM.

DEAR COMRADE.—All of us who are propagandists or have had to listen to propagandists are only too familiar with a certain type of Social Regenerator—the type which describes all human evils to a neglect of his pet principle. Such a one will say: "The buttons came off

my trousers because the site-value of the land is not fully taxed," or "There is too much professionalism in English football because we have not yet adopted the system of Proportional Representation." Misguided enthusiasm of this kind is unfortunately to be found even among those who accept the materialist conception of history and damn the

The NATIONAL COUNCIL of LABOUR COLLEGES

is composed of Educational Organisations (such as the Labour College, London, the Scottish Labour College and the Plebs League) providing *independent working-class education* by means of

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capitalist system. They will apply the M.C.H., which is a theory covering the *general trend* of events over a long period, to explain why Mr. So-and-So did or did not get in at a by-election in Balham, and will ascribe Tennyson's bad temper to the evils of the capitalist system. These are the enemies of all good propaganda, for they make a sound theory appear ridiculous and a great man look a fool.

It grieves me, therefore, to see R. W. Postgate, in the course of an appreciative article on Professor Housman's poetry, join the one-eyed band. Postgate's argument is apparently: "Housman is a good poet, but a poet who has produced very little, and that little very pessimistic in tone. Housman has been destroyed by capitalism." The first part of his statement is true enough; but where in the world is the proof of the second? I challenge anyone to find, in the whole of Postgate's article, a single quotation in support of it. Apparently, Postgate himself finds the capitalist system so much more depressing than anything else that he cannot conceive any other reason for depression. So he reasons thus: "Housman is a poet of depression and disappointment. What could depress a man nowadays but capitalism? *Ergo*, Housman is depressed by the capitalist system." But that is not logic; it is not even sense. True, Housman does not appear to like large towns, or the "apathy and lack of desire for truth" of his fellowmen; and these troubles appear under capitalism. Unfortunately they are not peculiar to capitalism; there was once an Athenian called Socrates who regarded it as his mission in life to upset the "apathy" of his fellows. But Athens was hardly "capitalist" in the modern sense. As a matter of fact the poet to whom Housman is most allied, both in temperament and feeling for phrase, is Omar Khayyam (and the Rubaiyat is popular as the Shropshire Lad is popular). But what about Persian capitalism? And if Postgate really believes that a profound pessimism like that of Housman and Omar Khayyam

is curable by the disappearance of capitalism, he is more of a ruddy optimist than anyone has a right to be.

I have protested thus at length because Postgate's article is a glaring example of the really "sectarian" propaganda, which does so much harm. "Let not your good be evil spoken of" is a sound motto for excitable propagandists.

Yours fraternally,
LEMCO.

PARSON MALTHUS.

SIR,—In his admirable article on "Parson Malthus" in the September PLEBS, M. H. D. wrote:—"Malthus certainly made an important contribution to thought by indicating the importance of the population question; and we only put ourselves in a weak position if we deny this."

It is unnecessary for us to deny anyone full credit for contributions made in the progress of scientific thought. But in accepting a given idea or theory as a contribution to scientific thought one need not give credit for its appearance to everybody who chooses to write upon it; in the interest of historical accuracy, if for no other, it should be given to the real author.

M. H. D. is evidently filled with a commendable desire to be fair, possibly generous, to orthodox economists, and in the above statement pays his tribute to Parson Malthus. It may be of some interest therefore to give something of Marx's views upon how far the "Parson" is entitled seriously to be considered as an economist.

Marx says (Vol. I., p. 345, footnote): "...the admirers of Malthus do not even know that the first edition of the latter's work on population contains, except in the purely declamatory part, very little but extracts from Steuart, and in a less degree from Wallace and Townsend." There is another footnote much longer (*ibid* 629), in which the *Essay* is called "a school-boyish, superficial plagiary," and said to contain not a single sentence thought out by

GOOD WINE NEEDS NO BUSH. BUT GOOD BOOKS
NEED PUSH, AND WE LOOK TO YOU TO DO IT FOR
OUR TWO NEW TEXTBOOKS.

Malthus himself. Marx thought that the sensation caused by the essay was "due entirely to party interests"—those of the landed aristocracy. Malthus in later editions "astonished by his success gave himself to stuffing into his books materials superficially compiled, and adding new matter, *not discovered but annexed by him.*" These materials, thus contributed, made the final form of the essay very different from the first.

The sources from which Malthus derived his "theories" are detailed and commented upon by Marx in his *Theorien Über den Mehrwert*. Marx is convinced that it is the Rent theory of a Scotsman named Anderson who wrote two books, 1777—1802, chiefly on agricultural problems, which is so boldly put forward by Malthus in his *Inquiry into the Nature and Progress of Rent*, and which Marx further states "as shown in his controversy with Ricardo, Malthus fails even to understand." This is the same theory which was utilised to provide something approaching a historical and theoretical basis for the so-called "Law of Population." The other parts of this "law" postulating the geometric and arithmetic ratio of progress had already been "lifted" from others. He was, says Marx, "a plagiarist by profession, and one need only compare the first edition of his essay with that of the Rev. Townsend to be convinced that far from being an independent work it is really nothing but a slavish copy, in some parts, and paraphrasing in others, of the essay by Townsend."

Malthus was not content merely to plagiarise. In his character of a pillar of the Church and "professional sycophant" of the landed aristocracy, he found a use for these ideas far different to that for which they were intended by their authors. Thus Anderson advocated premiums and tariffs for the export and import of corn respectively, believing that in this way agriculture would be developed, its productive power increased and the price of production lowered. The "Mountebank Parson," as Cobbett once called him, saw in these proposals a means for protecting and securing the revenue, sinecures and extravagances of landowners and the Church. These were

the interests which he always served. Capital is defended only in so far as its interests coincide with those of land, etc., whenever it became necessary to choose between them capital was sacrificed.

Likewise with the theory of rent, in direct contradiction with the views of Anderson, it was used as a basis for the presumed law of population. "He never discovered nor developed a single point in these theories but simply, as far as they were applicable, used them in the interest of landed property."

It is the same when dealing with the general principles of political economy. Marx refers to the exceedingly childish and trivial manner he endeavours to construct a new theory of value with which to oppose Ricardo. "No more comic spectacle can be found than Malthus dealing with value." According to Marx, Malthus's *Principles of Political Economy* is nothing but a Malthusian translation of Sismondi's *Nouveaux Principes de L'economie politique*. Malthus's book on population was a pamphlet against the French Revolution, Godwin and contemporary English reformers, and an apology for the sufferings of the working-class. "*Principles of Political Economy* was a pamphlet (1) in the interest of capital against that of the labourers, (2) in the interest of the aristocracy and the Church against that of the capitalists."

In conclusion, it might be said with Marx that the discoverer of a new idea may with the best intentions and from honourable motives stress and exaggerate its importance, but a plagiariser makes this into a business.

MYCHEL.

[I was not concerned in my article with the purely academic question of the origin of Malthus's theories. I was concerned with the practical importance of the theories usually associated with his name. The antiquarian aspects of it I am content to leave to leisured professors of our seats of learning. Whether Malthus was a plagiarist or not seems to me to be of as little *practical* importance as the multitudinous claims that everything in Marx was "pinched" from somebody else.—M. H. D.]

"MARX PERVERTED."

DEAR COMRADE,—I do not charge E. and C. P. with mis-translating, but it is common knowledge that a translator may clothe a subject in words to fit his tendencies. The seven-line introduction is probably the key of the situation. Here we have an article written by Marx in an Italian year book of 1873. This is published in Nov., 1922, and the group of Anti-Parliamentarians known as Bakuninists are compared to those censured by Lenin as Infantile Leftists. What for? Is it as a warning or as an admonition? If the latter, can you point to any school of consequence in this country upholding such views? To my mind it would appear comparable to castigating upholders of the Ptolemaic theory of the Universe.

But I do object to the use to which such an article may be put. On the strength of vanquishing an obsolete form we are asked indirectly to replace it by one equally effete, viz., rampant reformism. I referred to the article as a historical document. Do you suppose that Marx would have us take the article as written by himself in an Italian year book of 1873 as our political guide in England, 1922. Although I was not on earth at the time, from what I have read I can gather some idea of conditions in Italy then. Economically it would be further back by a long way than Russia, 1917. Working class political expression was practically non-existent, hence the Bakuninist "no Politics" would be aimed mainly at bourgeois parliamentarianism. True, the article is very interesting, but its political utility is almost equalled by a Pompeian excavation, and we might pass a vote of thanks to our friends E. and C. P. for their activities as political archæologists.

Without a word in time, imagine what the merry band of political twisters can do with this 1873 discovery. Carrying this "tooth" of Marx in front of them, just as the Roman Catholic priests do a molar of one of their saints to allay an eruption of Vesuvius, they embark on a sea of palliatives. Now do you see what I am getting at, and I hope you will realise the capital that Reformists are likely to make of such a transla-

tion, unless it has its proper historical setting.

Yours fraternally,
F. L. RIMINGTON.

[All writings, whether by Marx or anyone else, need to be read "in their proper historical setting." That is taken for granted by intelligent students. The point is—Was the article a plea for "rampant reformism"? If it was, then Marx was the rampant reformist, and Com. Rimington must transfer his allegiance to some more fiery leader.—ED. PLEBS.]

COMRADE,—With reference to Comrade Rimington's attack on E. & C. P.'s translation of the "No Politics" article, you may be interested to know that the first seven paragraphs of it were published in the *New York Radical Review* for October—December, 1918. With the exception of two omitted sentences (the omission of which is indicated, and the content of which is pure satire) E. & C. P.'s translation is, in substance, identical with that of the *Review*.

As far as the rest of the article is concerned,—the criticism of Bray, Proudhon, etc.—surely no one familiar with the dialectical viewpoint from which Marx examined the relation of *working class* reform to revolution can doubt its authenticity.

Yours,
DOUGLAS S. BROWETT.

EDUCATION—& PROPAGANDA.

DEAR COMRADE,—Just a short letter to tell you of an experience I've had at a W.E.A. class at Liskeard, Cornwall.

It was a large class, about eighty, most of whom were the big bugs of the town. The lecturer was a secondary school teacher, and he dealt with the Nationalisation of Land as part of a series of lectures on Economics. He opposed it, and one of his arguments was that if land were nationalised all arguments against nationalising all capital would vanish. Naturally, I urged that nationalisation of land was one step towards the ultimate socialisation of all means of production. I thoroughly enjoyed myself. The students forgot the lecturer and turned their whole attention to me.

But the richest point about the business was this :—the lecturer's opposition to Nationalisation was proclaimed to be *Education*, while my support of it was deemed "extremist propaganda." The lecturer and audience told me so. Moreover, the lecturer was pretty fully reported, the heading being "Justification of Private Ownership." At the

tail of the report reference was made to the "intervention of a young South Wales Socialist who saw fit to introduce extremist propaganda into what is essentially an educational class." Wonderful, eh?

Best wishes,

F. PHIPPEN.

ESPERANTO NOTES

A *N Official Report on Esperanto.* (Report of the General Secretariat of the League of Nations adopted by the Third Assembly 1922, 60 pp. Price 6d., from B.L.E.S., 6, Windermere Avenue, N.W. 6.)

Teachers and lecturers who in the past have had to collect their current facts relating to the International Language movement from correspondence, leaflets, pamphlets and the Press have now in one volume a compendium of information which has been compiled by an external official body.

The book is packed with up-to-date facts. We learn, for instance, that "in Great Britain, Esperanto is taught as a compulsory subject in thirteen primary schools at Barry, Bedworth, Coatbridge, Eccles, Huddersfield, Keighley, Leeds, Leigh, Liverpool, Rosyth, Stroud, Tottenham and Worcester, and in four secondary schools or Bishop Auckland, Bournemouth, Burntisland and Kilsyth, and as an optional subject in the continuation courses in twenty towns. There are unofficial evening classes in schools in 100 towns. Esperanto is also taught in the Labour Colleges in Manchester, Edinburgh, and Glasgow, and in the Home for the Blind in Birmingham and Edinburgh."

Twenty-seven textbooks and eight dictionaries have been published in English, and 661,000 copies have been sold. The number of adults who have learned Esperanto is estimated at 50,000.

There are chapters on the reasons adduced for the selection of an artificial language in preference to a classical or modern national tongue, with an account of the practical merits of Esperanto over other projects; on the history of the movement and its

present position throughout the world; on the results of teaching; and on the widespread practical use of the language as appendices are given the reports of the British Government and the Paris Chamber of Commerce. Unfortunately, the volume has no index.

The Secretariat of the League of Nations has noted that in scientific, commercial, "and even more, in working class circles there is a feeling that it is urgently necessary to escape from linguistic complications." In Germany there are ninety workers' groups; during the winter 1921-22 courses were attended by 40,256 adults, of whom 20,456 were workers. "In Germany and Spain, where there are many Trade Union courses, manual labourers, knowing only their mother-tongue, manage to speak Esperanto at the end of a winter's course, working two evenings a week." In Finland it is taught in the workers' university in fifteen districts. There are classes in almost all the workers' clubs in Lisbon (Portugal).

"Technical dictionaries have been published dealing with anatomy, chemistry, mathematics, navigation, music, photography, philately and ornithology".... but not yet with economics.

Union of Postal Workers. The Post will publish a series of articles, which are to be translated in postal workers' organs in other countries. Address manuscripts and periodicals in connection with this work to W. J. Westmancote, 15, Ashfield Road, The Chessels, Bristol.

Ilford. The Plebs Esperanto class now meets at the I.M.M. Institute, Richmond Road, on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m.

The PLEBS Page

BY the time this issue of the magazine is in our readers' hands, the Annual Meet will have been held. A full report will be printed in the February number, but we can say now that from correspondence received to date the Meet promises to be a representative one, and an enthusiastic one. The number of delegates attending is more than was hoped and there is every prospect of a very successful gathering.

Up to the time of going to Press the following have been nominated for the Plebs Executive Committee:—Frank Ayres, M. H. Dobb, J. T. Walton Newbold, A. J. H. Okey, C. T. Pendrey, R. W. Postgate, Geo. Sims, Mark Starr, C. Terry, A. Vandome. Ballot papers will be sent out during January, along with questions arising out of the Meet. **WILL LEAGUERS PLEASE NOTE THAT THEIR 1923 BOBS ARE NOW DUE?**

Comrade Will Revitt, of Bradford, has asked us to print the following appeal. He writes, "I have got a letter published in a monthly journal we have (Painters Society) and my object is to work up discussion and get our members interested and so get support for the classes. We want some backing in the February issue, so Plebs painters please note! Keep it up." Plebeians who are members of the Painters Society should do their best to keep up discussion and work up support. The amount of propaganda that one can accomplish through the medium of a Trade Journal is immense. Isolated members who cannot work in any other way, may thus find a means of "spreading the light."

We have to acknowledge from Bishop Brown, of Gelion, Ohio, U.S.A., a number of copies of his book *Communism and Christianity* which he has given to the Plebs League. To quote from his letter, "You are to have all the copies free, carriage prepaid, which you can sell on behalf of the Plebs Fund." The prices are 1s. paper and 2s. 6d. cloth,

and Plebs should note that all receipts from the sale of these books will go direct as a donation to The PLEBS.

The attention of London Plebs is specially called to a Social and Dance to assist the funds of the London Council. It is to be held at the College on January 20th, at 7.30, and the low price of the ticket, 1s., is fixed so that all can do their best to sell a large quantity. Never mind if your friends say they are engaged; get a shilling off them! The London Council needs it. Tickets from 13, Penywern Road, Earls Court, or 162a, Buckingham Palace Road.

Liverpool Plebeians please note. A special meeting of the Liverpool group of the Plebs League will be held in Walton College, 2, Stuart Road, Walton, Liverpool, on Friday, January 5th, at 8 p.m.

In Memoriam—Tommy Kerri-gan. Attended the usual Tuesday night class on October 31st; died November 7th. Tommy was not known much outside Rochdale, but in Rochdale his name was known to every worker in the labour ranks, also to certain sections of the capitalist class. He was a keen debater, and could take a class on any working class subject. To work with him was a delight. We can ill afford to lose him. May the seeds he sowed bear fruit in the coming years!!

MARX GRAVE FUND.

The Communist Party have sent £2 10s. to the fund for the restoration of Marx's grave, and Bishop Brown, the Communist Bishop of America, has very generously given £5 10s. These two donations, with £2 from comrades of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, leave enough balance on the right side after paying expenses to enable us to keep the grave in a decent condition

for some years to come. The following letter will interest Plebeians:—

New York, Nov. 25th, 1922.

DEAR COMRADES,—

The note in your September issue on the deplorable condition of the grave of Marx in Highgate Cemetery calls perhaps more for reflection than for action. It is a trifling matter to get the five pounds and the bit more that is needed to keep the grave in the proper condition from now on. So many people would give more than one pound to make sure to their own conscience that Marx is dead and well buried. But that is just it; that is what calls for some thinking.

Is Marx well dead, indeed, now that history itself is, in actual record of events, an exhaustive corroboration of Marxism? Of course, we are living in days of intense action, and it is but

natural and inevitable that theory and theorising should take a back seat. But Marx is no name for a theory, and Marxism is no system of philosophy, but a clarion call for action,—for planned, purposeful action.

The workers in the country of the mighty dollar could easily send the money that you want, but you want many comrades to be given a chance to contribute something to a cause to which it is a privilege to contribute. So we send you only a portion of what you want. The following people, engaged in the work of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, contributed one dollar each:—J. Schlossberg, J. B. Salutsky, J. S. Potofsky, E. Rabkin, F. Rosenblum, P. Passikoff, M. Weinzweig, and M. Kolchin.

Yours for the Plebs of to-day, the patricians of to-morrow.

J. B. SALUTSKY.

N.C.L.C. ITEMS and NOTES

PRESTON LABOUR COLLEGE commenced a course of twenty lectures on "Economics" in November. Tutor, Com. A. Evans, of Wigan. Fifty students were present, including members of affiliated societies and of the A.U.B.T.W. In the new year twelve lectures on "Capitalist Imperialism," by T. Ashcroft, are to be given. The classes are held in the I.L.P. rooms, these having been lent free of charge by the Exec. Com. of the Preston I.L.P. The Trade Unions have been circularised, and the Trades and Labour Council approached for support. Many copies of the pamphlets, *Do Your Own Thinking and More Production and More Poverty*, have been sold, and on the whole the new venture is exceedingly promising. The Sec. is Constance S. Taylor, 17, Rose Terrace, Ashton, Preston.

Rochdale Labour College ran three classes last winter season and one during the summer months. The classes were well attended, an encouraging feature being the accession of young members. The subjects were History, Science of Understanding,

Materialist Conception of History and Economics. Tutors were J. Bamford, B. Feeney and A. Fletcher. Sales of PLEBS during the year, 645 copies; also placed one in the Pioneers' Co-operative Newsroom. This season's work opened in October with classes on Industrial History (H. Kershaw), Science of Understanding (B. Feeney), Economics (F. Jackson). Comrade Feeney is repeating his subject to a class at Oldham. Rochdale is also running a series of twelve lantern lectures, those given to date being well attended and much appreciated.

Liverpool Labour College.—J. Hamilton is conducting a series of public lectures monthly for the Woolton Labour Party on "Commercial Crises and Unemployment," "Labour and Capital in the Newspaper World," "Trade Unionism: Old and New," "The Co-operative Movement; Past and Present," and "The Case for Capitalism." This "line" is a good one for our groups everywhere, and gives us an opportunity of displaying the quality of our "goods." In this connection a critical lecture on books is effective. Recently I attended a

lecture at a Labour Church on *The Wonderful Century*, by Russell Wallace, the lecturer being T. D. Smith, of Midlands District Council N.C.L.C. It was the goods! There are many avenues of appeal open to us, and we must use them all.

The *North-East Lancs Area Council* has been successfully launched. The Secretary is Herbert Crossley, 64, Chapel Street, Rishton, near Blackburn. Area groups who have not already linked up should get into touch with Comrade Crossley without delay—like-wise individual I.W.C.E.ers and Plebs who are anxious for honorary distinctions—and work.

SCOTLAND.

Aberdeen District.—We understand that Comrade Fergusson has been appointed full-time tutor. *Edinburgh District* has one class with an attendance of 116! During November W. W. Craik addressed an open meeting on Working-class Education, and R. W. Postgate delivered three lectures on the History of the British Working-class. Edinburgh, in common with all N.C.L.C. groups, suspended lectures during the General Election, to allow students to make use of their education by putting principles into practice. Judging by the Scottish returns, the S.L.C. seems to have created an impression!

Glasgow District Committee—S.L.C., is now going strong, with two lectures nightly (at their headquarters) from Monday to Friday, two at the S.L.P. rooms, Renfrew Street, on Tuesday, and two on Sunday afternoon at the M.E.A. rooms in Ingram Street. The subjects include Economics, Industrial History, Esperanto, Grammar and Composition, Shorthand, Public Speaking, German (tell it not in Gath!), Trade Union Law and History, World History (good!), and Economic Geography. But what about Imperialism? Pleased to note the return to harness of J. MacLean, who is lecturing on Economics. The District Committee has issued a fine manifesto on the Education Question, which emphasises the fact that while the second city is second to none in industrial and political

activity, it lags behind educationally. The Committee appeals to organised Labour to get its I.W.C.E. movement into line with its Industrial and Political status, and Glasgow Trades and Labour Council gives the lead by joining up with the District Committee on the basis of its full membership.

Lantern Slides.—Comrade J. Hamilton, of Liverpool, announces that the following sets of lantern slides are ready for hire:—"Primitive Man," "The Paris Commune," "The Co-Operative Movement," and "The History of the Labour College Movement." (As regards the latter, if this notice meets the eye of any ex-students, etc., possessing any photo of special interest, will they please let J. H. have particulars of subject-matter?) Charges for hire to N.C.L.C. groups only is 5s. per lecture set, plus postage; for purchase 1s. 6d. each slide—easy payments spread over period of six weeks if desired. Full particulars from J. Hamilton, 99, Botanic Road, Liverpool.

Gloucester Labour College held a very successful conference recently, resulting in fresh affiliations and fifty new students. They have also secured the services of J. B. Allen, an ex-Labour College student now resident in Gloucester, as lecturer. Things ought to be brighter for the next attempt on the constituency by Philips Price, to say nowt about local industrial activities. The Secretary is R. F. Tiley, 75, Rosebery Avenue, Gloucester.

A *N.C.L.C. Manifesto* is in course of preparation, and will be issued to all affiliated bodies shortly. It deals with the matter of securing the support of other labour organisations for an educational policy on the lines of the A.U.B.T.W. scheme. The circular should be sent out to all labour organisations with a request to receive a deputation for the purpose of explaining our educational policy and local activities. It's up to us!!

The No. 11 (Irish) Division of the A.U.B.T.W. is being organised in readiness for a start to be made with classes early in the year. Anyone in Ireland willing to undertake lecturing

work under the scheme is invited to communicate at once with Nat. Sec., N.C.L.C. 11 Penywern Rd., London, S.W.5.

The South-East Lancs Area Council (Secretary E. Redfern, 1, Langdale Avenue, Reddish, Stockport) has sent in a fine graphic report of the work of the Council. The Council has been very successful in securing the support of Labour bodies. Among these are the South-East Lancs District of the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers; Rossendale Valley Boot, Shoe and Slipper Operatives; Bacup and Rawtenstall Trades and Labour Councils, each making themselves responsible for classes. The Bacup class has started with forty students, and Rawtenstall expects fifty present when the class starts on December 18th; New Mills Labour Party, with a class of twenty-six, and of course the A.U.B.T.W. The latter and the A.S.W. are jointly arranging for the whole of their area membership to attend classes free—the real difficulty here, as elsewhere, is to get any large percentage of the members to avail themselves of the facilities supplied. The Council has about thirty (voluntary) tutors "all in harness." The report also contains some reflections and suggestions on the subjects of teaching and teachers which, being too late to print for the purpose of discussion at the annual meet, are held over for future use. Well done, South-East Lancs; we wish space permitted of your report appearing in full. The Joint Education Committee's letter issued in this area is reproduced for reference in other districts:—

THE JOINT EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE AMALGAMATED SOCIETY OF WOODWORKERS, (SOUTH-EAST LANCASHIRE DISTRICT) AND THE AMALGAMATED UNION OF BUILDING TRADE WORKERS (DIVISION 8).

SIR AND BROTHER,

The above bodies, having decided that Education shall be the next step, are calling upon Trades Councils, Labour Parties, Co-operative Societies

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and the organised workers generally, for help in this direction.

Whilst we have an Education Fund which will be used to give our own members the full benefits of the Education provided by the Labour Colleges, yet, to meet with full success, the scheme must be extended beyond the bounds of our organisations.

We have allied ourselves with the National Council of Labour Colleges in conjunction with the Labour College, London, and classes will be conducted in many centres this winter.

With the co-operation of the organised workers through the Trades Councils, etc., it would be possible to conduct classes in every town or small industrial centre.

We ask you to give us the opportunity of sending a speaker to explain what we mean by Education and to give full details of our scheme.

On behalf of the Joint Council,

E. REDFERN, N.C.L. Colleges.

L. FAWCETT, A.U.B.T. Workers.

G. SCHOFIELD, A.S. Woodworkers.

Show this letter—and emphasise its significance—to your fellow-workers!
S.

The PLEBS Bookshelf

ADURHAM Pleb writes to ask us whether we read "C. P. D.'s," review of Barton's *World History for the Workers in the Labour Monthly* for December, and wants to know how we square his criticisms with our own commendations of the book. Well, we agree with most of "C. P. D.'s" criticisms, but none the less repeat our commendations. And this is simply because, in this world—and more especially in a young movement like our own—we are compelled to make all possible use of the best tools available, even though we are quite conscious of their imperfections and shortcomings.

Barton's book does not do away with the necessity for a Plebs Textbook of World History—a history written from the *working-class view-point* as distinct from a "worker's view-point." But Social Evolution knows how long we shall have to wait for such a book—and in all probability we shall have a dozen gallant failures before we get the book we want! Barton, if you like, has made the first gallant failure. But, as C. P. D. points out—

The book is in many ways an achievement to be proud of. It is eminently readable, it contains a wealth of interesting quotations, it covers an enormous field, and is written in simple and graphic language.

Our commendations were based on just these considerations. The need for a simply written outline of general world history for use in our classes was obvious. Barton's book, though a long way from the book we hope to see written some day, was a step on the road. Though his is not a working-class point of view, but rather (as "C. P. D." puts it) "a reflection of the views of the Labour Movement of this country, i.e., of a heterogeneous body with a miscellaneous collection of vague ideals and no clear philosophy," yet any Marxian teacher worth his salt could, using Barton as a textbook, correct its faulty conclusions and sharpen its "philosophy." Standards of judgment are *relative*. Compared to the book that might be written, Barton's

little work may be—is—weak. But compared to any other book of similar scope available—well, read it and judge for yourself.

Another world-history recently published, and one containing a good deal of useful material for tutors, is Mr. H. G. Wells' *Short History of the World* (Cassells, 15s. net). This is a volume of 400 odd pages, plentifully illustrated with photographs and maps. It is, the Preface tells us "not an abstract or condensation" of *The Outline of History*, but "a much more generalised History, planned and written afresh." It is not, one need hardly remark, written from a working-class point of view. But it comes, perhaps, much nearer to such a point of view than the *Outline* did. The smaller limits have necessitated concentration on essential things; and so we get fewer excursions into the biography of particular individuals (the home life of Alexander the Great and so on) than in the earlier book. Instead, one does get from the book as a whole a fairly clear idea of a steadily developing process of technical development and of man's increasing control of natural forces. "Politically," writes Mr. Wells, "the United States embodied, and its constitution crystallized, the liberal ideas of the middle eighteenth century." But he also perceives that, "the United States of to-day were made first by the river steamboat, and then by the railway. Without these things, the present United States, this vast continental nation, would have been altogether impossible." Now this recognition of material bases, as apart from crystallizations of ideas, is one part of the working-class view of history. For the other part, which sees in the struggle of classes and in "property relations" the main dynamic of political developments, one has to go elsewhere than to Mr. Wells. But the teacher or the student who is meditating on world history from the working-class point of view will find a lot of stimulating material in this *Short History*.

The modern historical-geographers are also working on lines very close to,

if not quite identical with, our own. I have just been reading *The Expansion of Britain*, a "geographical history," by W. H. Kermack (Oxford Univ. Press, 2s. 6d.) The geographer, by the very nature of his subject, is bound to look for the "material bases"; and this short sketch (112 pp., with maps) of the growth of the British Empire will be found full of meat for every lecturer on Imperialism and Economic Geography. It contains instance after instance of the way in which, *when considered in relation to technical development*, geographical facts throw floods of light on historical events. And the author's knowledge of these facts of technical development enables him to explode a few ancient and beavered myths. Weren't you taught at school that a small fleet of little boats, manned by hearts of oak, British bulldogs, etc., etc., defeated a great Armada—by sheer grit, British pluck, and so forth? Listen to this:—

The reigns of the successive Tudor monarchs saw successive advances in shipbuilding; and gradually the sailing galleon, with broadside fire of a heavy weight of metal, became established as the ship of war of the northern nations. In comparison, Spanish naval architects were backward. Galleys [*i.e.*, vessels of obsolete type] formed part even of the Armada in 1588; and that great expedition was *outmanœuvred and outgunned by a fleet superior in numbers* (English 197 ships, Spanish 132) *vastly handier*, and commanded by seamen who had gained their experience, not in the restricted waters of the Mediterranean, but on the ocean highways of the world.

A Pleb who has bread-and-butter connections with the Oxford University Press writes telling me that a forthcoming volume in the World's Classics Series is Anthony Trollope's *Autobiography*. "It is a wonderfully interesting and human document," says he. "Students who wish to get a good picture of the Victorian era would do well to read it, as well as two or three of Trollope's novels...." And, by the way, talking of the World's Classics

Series, do you know the two volumes of *English Short Stories* included therein? Both are good. The second I've only struck just lately; it contains some first-class stuff; including three O. Henry tales, and a little story by G. Warre Cornish, which, for its quiet irony at the expense of "Empire," might almost be issued as a Labour propaganda pamphlet.

The following letter received from an Austrian professor—not a Marxist—who was recently in England, will be read with interest by all Plebs:—

"So kind of you to let me have your last copy of *THE PLEBS*, which I at once studied from one end to the other. I was extremely interested to be reminded of the class I attended by the articles on Imperialism and China, and in the fine criticism of Housman.

"I have seen very much of different Adult School movements in London. But I have never found such a clear recognition as in your movement of the fact that the working class—as any other historical class—will have to build up its own education in order to create its own new culture. Whether the future civilisation will only be realised in a Marxist state, or not, I am unable to decide. But it seems to me that *labour's contribution to that new civilization must be achieved by working on labour lines*, and I think the sooner people realise that such lines cannot be the old ones—the better.

"Many thanks once more,
"Sincerely yours."

Best wishes to *The Shetlander*, a monthly for Shetland workers, the first two numbers of which have just reached this office. There are Plebs in Shetland!! The opening article on p. i., No. 1, is on "Education from a Working Man's Point of View." No. 2 opens with an article on "Products and Politics," and contains some "Notes about History," an open Letter to Shetland School Teachers, urging them to line up with their fellow-workers, and another article headed "Do Your Own Thinking." Oh yes, there *are* Plebs in Shetland—and they're not hiding THE light under a bushel either.

J. F. H.

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