

THE PLEBS

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

Vol. XIII.

January, 1921

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OUR POINT OF VIEW

(Which is Prejudiced, Partial and Partisan)

WITH this number of the PLEBS we begin a new yearly volume. We enter upon 1921 with brighter prospects than ever before. Our circulation is greater; the movement we stand for is gaining ground every day. That is because we are working *with*, and not against, the tide of social development. But let us remind Plebeians, as Marx himself reminded proletarians, that effort on their part is necessary if conditions are to be used to their full advantage. We are determinists, not fatalists. And the ultimate success of our movement depends on the personal energy and enthusiasm of every individual member of it. Our New Year greeting to every Pleb is—Are you doing your share? Or is undue modesty, self-distrust, or lethargy hindering you from being as useful as you could be? You and we have the honour to be co-workers in a big movement. Think about it.

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A bigger circulation means bigger liabilities. We appeal to all our supporters to settle their accounts promptly, and regularly. Don't leave it to us to write and remind you that you owe us something. That shouldn't be necessary—among proletarians.

OUR POINT OF VIEW

THE *Times* has once again been making investigations into the various activities of the more militant sections of the British working-class movement. On January 14 it published an article by Dr. Shadwell dealing with the educational work of the London and Scottish Labour Colleges, and the various provincial classes. Besides giving a very fair—indeed, a quite respectful—account of the origin and development of the two Colleges, and of their present activities, Dr. Shadwell was bold enough to conclude with a paragraph headed "Future Developments."

I confess that this movement, with its independence, its desire for knowledge and self-improvement, appeals to me. . . . *It is certainly going to have a future, and I think a great one.* The London College has acquired ground at Kew, where it already has an extension, and contemplates building on a considerable scale. It will not lack clients, for there is an immense reservoir of latent capacity and aspiration among the wage-earners.

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¶ *The circulation of the PLEBS last month was just under 6,500. We want a circulation of 7,000 at least. Are you helping us to get it—or only hoping that we shall do it? Naturally, we prefer helpers to hoppers! Also, though we do our best to love all our friends, we love those best who pay up promptly. An increased circulation means increased printer's bills. Don't let us have to write and ask you—postage is expensive these days. We shall like your compliments heaps better if they're accompanied by a postal order.*

OUR POINT OF VIEW

THE most important matter discussed at the Plebs Meet—apart from the business details of our various activities, which are necessarily of considerable importance to ourselves—was the relationship of the established Labour Colleges to the provincial classes. The subject was raised by a resolution moved by a representative of one of the oldest and most active class-centres—Halifax; and it was very clearly apparent from the discussion which followed that it expressed pretty accurately the general feeling of class organisers and

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OUR POINT OF VIEW

A MONTH or two ago the Plebs League received an invitation from a body calling itself the Workers' Educational Trades Union Committee to lay before that body, for the purposes of an investigation it was conducting into "the educational requirements of Trade Unionists," information as to Plebs educational aims and methods. The invitation was declined; and a request made that if the Report which the aforementioned Committee proposed to issue contained any reference to the Plebs League, a footnote should be appended stating that the League had not participated in any way in the Committee's researches.

Plebeians are entitled to an explanation of the E.C.'s action in the matter. It need not be a long one. Had the Committee of Inquirers

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TO MINERS—AND OTHERS

¶ *A good proportion of the readers of the PLEBS are miners. Unless something has happened between the time of writing these words and the date of publication, it is probable that many of them will be feeling that a sixpenny magazine is a luxury they cannot afford. We ask them to take their copies as usual. We'll give credit for as long as the strike lasts. And we appeal to our other readers to stand by us, and, by prompt payment, enable us to carry on.*

OUR POINT OF VIEW

A RECENT article by R. W. Postgate in the *Communist*,* on "Proletcult," affords us an admirable opportunity for a brief discussion of certain PLEBS' principles—or, shall we say, of certain PLEBS' "slogans" Are we of the PLEBS right in boasting of our "prejudice" and "partiality"? Is Proletcult "partisan"? To both questions Postgate answers No. And since we

* April 16th. Also referred to in a letter from Walton Newbold on another page.

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OUR POINT OF VIEW

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

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PENCE—AS WELL AS POUNDS

A HEART-TO-HEART TALK WITH PLEBEIANS

DO you collect stamps? If so, we are going to bring to your notice an entirely new and particularly interesting variety. If not—well, you can begin now. Every Pleb with his heart in the right place will, for the next month or two, be an assiduous stamp collector—and stamp distributor. Little you dreamed, as you opened this number of your favourite monthly and prepared to peruse a dignified editorial article on Partiality in Education, of the fate in store for you. “Stamps?” you are thinking to yourself, “stamps? What the —.” Be patient. You'll find two excellent articles on Partiality, etc., later on in this issue. But don't start on them yet. Let's talk of stamps.

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HELP US TO BURY THAT DEBT



We hate to have to return to this horrid subject—particularly in the holiday month of the year. But we can't help ourselves. A debt really is a serious matter—the weight of it has made the staff hotter and hotter all through July. We do want you to realise that the success of the forthcoming winter's work depends in no small measure on our starting with a clean slate—with that debt buried, once and for all. We want to be able to make a definite announcement next month about the first of our new textbooks; but we can make no definite plans until our bank balance is all right.

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The FIRST PLEBS TEXTBOOKS

AN ANNOUNCEMENT

Q The manuscript of the first of the new series of PLEBS Class Textbooks is now completed, and the book will be in the printer's hands this month. We hope to publish it during October. Prices, terms for quantities, and full details will be announced next month.

Q Its title is

AN OUTLINE OF PSYCHOLOGY

and we will content ourselves for the present by saying that every student of Dietzgen and of the Science of Understanding will want this clear, simple, scientific exposition of the actual mechanism of human thinking and feeling. The book has been carefully considered and discussed in detail by a special Editorial Committee of teachers, students, and specialists in

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10,000

Please take a good look at this figure. It's going to be the PLEBS circulation this winter—with your help. Yes, we

know times are hard. They're hard on us as well as on you! But what of it? *When can there be a better time to drive home the aims and the lessons of Independent Working-Class Education than just when times are hard for the workers?* Now is precisely the time when every keen Pleb will put his back into the work more energetically, and more hopefully, than ever.

And the I.W.-C.E. movement needs the PLEBS—there's no need here to labour that point. 10,000 a month would give us a margin to spend on propaganda leaflets and other kinds of publicity, as well as help finance those Textbooks. This winter we have to hold our own against two monthly “rivals”—both good journals, too. But the PLEBS alone concentrates on I.W.-C.E. It's YOUR mag.—boost it.

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10,000

We print these figures again this month—a size larger than last time—just to remind you! They represent the goal we're aiming at this winter—10,000

readers. There are considerably more than 10,000 students in the Labour Colleges and Classes. If tutors, organisers and secretaries everywhere will PUSH THE "PLEBS," energetically and perseveringly, we can reach that figure quickly. If a beginner pleads that the PLEBS is too advanced for him, remind him that it *won't* be in a few months' time, and that then in all probability he will be spending extra pence on postage to buy back numbers.

We haven't fixed on this figure just for fun. We've fixed on it because it's necessary to give us a margin to help finance other, equally important, activities. The movement needs textbooks, propaganda leaflets and sundry other weapons in the war against proletarian ignorance and indifference. The only way in which the Plebs League can raise funds for this work is by increasing the sales of the PLEBS. And the only way in which it can do that is by asking its friends to PUSH as never before!

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LOOKING BACKWARD—*and* FORWARD

WITH this issue we complete our 13th annual volume. We can look back on 1921 with some pride. The circulation of the PLEBS has been higher than ever before; and the movement for which we stand has grown—and is growing—by leaps and bounds. The formation of the National Council of Labour Colleges is the essential first step towards far bigger developments in the near future.

We can, therefore, look forward with confidence. But we need the support of every I.W.-C.E.r, now as much as ever. *We have to reach that 10,000*—in order to pay our way, and leave a margin for additional propaganda work. We are launching our new Textbook Series; and whether or not we can follow up the first book with others depends on the extent to which our supporters push the *Outline of Psychology*. We have still a debt to clear, and you can help to clear it by selling our Stamps. We don't want well-wishers—we want WORKERS.

We shall do our best to make the New Volume, beginning next month, better worth while than ever.

CATCH US A NEW SUBSCRIBER.