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# THE PLEBS MAGAZINE

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

Vol. X.

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## CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE END OF THE CHARTIST MOVEMENT. W. H. MAINWARING	49
THE ROMANTIC REVIVAL IN POETRY AND HISTORICAL MATERIALISM W. G. COVE	54
LABOUR AND LANGUAGE. JAMES ROBERTSON	57
NEWS OF THE MOVEMENT	58
PLEBS PUBLICATIONS	60
A MATTER OF CONCERN TO N.U.R. MEN	61
RAILWAY WORKERS ONE-UNION MOVEMENT	61
CORRESPONDENCE	62
REVIEWS	64
PLEBS BOOKSHELF	69

## The End of the Chartist Movement

THE Chartist agitation began to decline after the Convention of 1848 had failed to realise expectations. The failure experienced on that occasion had a tremendous effect upon the mass of the workers, whose trust and confidence in the Chartist leaders was shaken. The workers—and not only they, but the whole of England—had been expecting a determined and decisive assault. Instead of which, when the critical moment arrived the leaders lost their heads completely. When they should have issued a call to the revolutionary workers of the north (where lay their chief strength) to march upon London, and thus with one blow create a revolutionary army and take possession of the capital they yielded to the orders of the Government, and the Conference, from which so much was expected, broke up in confusion.

Of the situation thus created, the Government made full use, and quickly arrested nearly 500 of the leaders, threw them into prison, and finally transported a large number. The masses were

thus left without their recognised leaders at a time when confidence and organization were more than ever needed. The movement, as a whole, had been losing ground since 1842. The Anti-Corn Law agitation, the conflict between the supporters of the rival policies of physical and moral force, the repeated expulsion of small middle class elements, and, more particularly, the personal antagonism between some of the leaders, had right up to 1847 been the cause of much dissension. The revival of the movement towards the end of 1847 and the beginning of 1848 was more the result of outside forces than of its own strength from within.

It was further weakened, as might be expected, during the February Revolution in France, when the workers of Paris issued their socialistic proclamation. The middle-class elements immediately withdrew from the Chartist ranks, and the whole movement was more or less disorganized. The French revolution in this way assisted in saving the English capitalist class.

The failure of the Convention followed a no less disaster in the breakdown of the Land Society, which brought moral and material discredit upon the movement. "Two such experiences never befell, or could befall, any political organization without bringing about its downfall." The great majority of Chartists were members of the Land Society and the discouragement that followed can well be imagined. After this came O'Connor's affliction, which for some time had been noticeable. With the failure of the Society, its members lost almost the whole of their contributions.

There took place again at this juncture the small middle-class agitation in favour of the "Little Charter." It is true in this instance again that the workers protested against this latest attempt to divide the movement. But the confidence of rank and file and leaders alike had been so far shaken as to make it apparently impossible to unite them again. Failure and disappointment brought along further internal dissension. The jealousies and antagonism between the leaders developed rapidly. Each leader had his particular faction and organization. Personal ambition, combined with the general lack of theoretical clarity, had their inevitable result.

And yet, do any or all of these various factors provide a satisfactory explanation as to why this one-time strong revolutionary movement disappeared? Scarcely. As already indicated, they were all factors making for the weakening of the movement, but they do not altogether account for the breakdown of a movement having its roots in prevailing economic conditions. However great the failure of the Convention and the Land Society, these effects might have been overcome. Oppression and persecution by the ruling class might have checked the movement for a time, but could hardly have crushed it altogether. Then, are we to seek for the causes that will satisfactorily account for the disappearance of the movement. ?

The Chartist movement (like the Labour movement in general) was the result of economic development. And since it came into existence under certain conditions, the cause of its disappearance must be sought or accounted for by a change in these conditions.

Reference has been made in previous articles to the commercial and gold crisis of 1847 which affected the whole of England. Just before this the factory owners had brought to a successful issue the Anti-Corn Law agitation, and had made Free Trade the dominant political issue. By the beginning of 1848, industry began to recover, and between March and May the crisis had spent itself. The continental revolutions had driven a great deal of foreign capital over to England, and this assisted in some degree in relieving the effects of the crisis. Industry revived—the textile industry in particular; so much so, indeed, that exports in cotton goods increased during the year 1848 to the extent of nearly a million yards in excess of the previous year. This simultaneous ending of the crisis and the establishment of Free Trade led to the ascribing of the sudden expansion of trade to the policy of Free Trade rather than to the overcoming of the crisis itself. Had not Free Trade agitators prophesied this very thing? True, the Free Trade manufacturers had celebrated their victory by a general reduction of wages by 10 per cent. But this was now counteracted by an increased demand for hands, and by conditions which gave the possibility of increasing wages again. So that the facts in connection with the inauguration of Free Trade were forgotten, and the working class to some degree participated in the "good time." As a result they lost to a great measure their old spirit of discontent, becoming more reconciled to the Free Trade party.

This reconciliation weakened the forces of Chartism. The Chartist leaders had foreseen this, and had opposed the Free Traders with all their might. It will be remembered that both in speeches and writing they had warned the workers that Free Trade would in no way benefit them; that it would neither increase their wages nor reduce the price of bread. Now the facts were altogether in favour of the Free Traders. A series of events had combined to prove the Chartists to be but poor prophets. What wonder then that their influence with the workers declined?

One of the chief causes of the prosperous condition of English industry during the later 'forties and the beginning of the 'fifties was the discovery of new goldfields in California (June, 1848) and in Australia shortly afterwards. The gold of Sacramento, and of Victoria and N.S. Wales, was brought across to England. England exchanged her factory products for gold. The more gold came, the greater the number of spindles that turned in the textile industry of Lancashire. This reacted in its turn upon the working class, banishing the spirit of discontent and putting an end to

their alliance with the Chartists. The statement made by Marx "that the failure of the February Revolution was in the last instance due to California and Australia," is in a great measure true also of the Chartist movement.

The discovery of these new oversea gold-fields contributed in other ways as well to the overthrow of the English Labour movement. It led to an ever broadening stream of emigration into those regions, assisting in this way to reduce the ranks of the unemployed at home, and in the opening up of hitherto undeveloped regions, thus increasing the demand for English goods. It was the most energetic amongst the workers (and of the Chartists) who were thus attracted, by reason of the downfall of the movement at home and the ruin of their hopes and prospects, to seek across the seas the comfort and happiness denied to themselves and their class at home. Emigration increased when the Government introduced their schemes for free passage to Australia, &c. Two birds were thus killed with one stone. On the one hand, they relieved themselves of the most energetic amongst the discontented workers, and on the other created a new purchasing population for their own goods in the colonies who were compelled to obtain their wares from the mother country.

Engels, in his correspondence with Marx during the summer of 1852, referred to the part played by Australia, first by the export of gold and other products and secondly by her importation of English goods, and finally by attracting the surplus population at the rate of 5,000 a week. From now on the trade union movement ran side by side with the Government. Since 1842 they had adopted a policy of assisting intending emigrants, with a view to relieving the continued depression at home. Funds were established for the purpose—a policy kept up even to the present day. In doing so a heavy blow was struck at the political Labour movement—simply to serve what they considered to be an economic advantage at the time.

It was not, however, altogether a loss to the political Labour movement in general that these Chartists were driven by the failure at home to emigrate abroad. They were the first to raise the banner of Labour in Australia. Chartist songs and poetry were heard for many a year in the mines and cabins of the Australian gold diggers. The demand for an eight-hour day, both in Australia and later in America, was the work of these men, and they raised even the old banner of the Charter itself, which had been allowed to trail in the mud of the old country. During the struggle against unjust taxation in Australia in 1854, demonstrations were held at Bendigo and Ballarat, from which were formed the "Ballarat Reform League," the six points of the Charter occupying a prominent place in their programme. Not only in Australia but also

in the coal mining districts of Pennsylvania and the textile districts of New England there could be traced the effects of the agitation carried on by the old time Chartists.

Yet another factor on top of the increasing prosperity and expansion of trade in the breakdown of the movement was the Ten-Hour Bill becoming law. Its passing was due in some measure to the vengeful feelings engendered in the minds of the Conservatives by their defeat over Free Trade. The Bill enacted that from May 1st, 1848, the length of the working day for all young persons under 18 years of age should be reduced to 10 hours per day. This had been in the forefront of the workers demands for 20 years, the agitation reaching its highest point during the years 1846-7—the period in which the Chartist movement was most active after 1842. Before the Bill came into operation strong attempts were made to secure its repeal. It was defended mainly by the Trade Unions, which now took the place of the Chartists as the chief defenders of the working class. By their defeat of the manufacturers over the Ten-hour Bill they gained considerable strength and credit to themselves.

The Trade Unions had already taken up the demand for increase in wages. The increase obtained during the beginning and middle of 1848 (made possible as already referred to by the condition arising out of the overcoming of the crisis and the general prosperity) was now put down to the credit of the unions. This circumstance, with the failure of the political movement, developed the conviction that the Trade Unions were the only organizations that the workers could effectively use, and that political movements led to nothing. During the 'forties the industrial movement gained considerable strength. The interests of the Unions led them away from, and to some extent to oppose, the Chartists, who had with so much sacrifice and energy upheld the cause of Labour.

The manufacturers also now attempted to bring about a better understanding between themselves and Labour—which sounds quite "modern." Having vainly opposed the Factory Acts, they now expressed great willingness to accept them. The new period of prosperity helped them in this, and gave them an opportunity to pose as the friends of Labour, and a new spirit arose amongst them which did not shrink from giving consideration to proposals for social reform. This spirit in turn reacted upon the attitude adopted by Trade Unionists towards the Chartists. The English workers thus deserted the flag of political action, turning for many years to the Trade Union and Co-operative movements as the only organizations of the working class.

The cause of the failure of the Chartist movement lay also in the fact that there was no clear notion of what to fight for. The Charter

was only a means to be used for the emancipation of the working class, but none of them were clear as to how it was to be done or what they were to strive for. The movement was everything—the end nothing. The result was that it had no end at all. No working class party can endure unless based upon sound principles. Of this the Chartist movement affords sufficient proof. The theoretical position of the working class had not as yet been formulated, and when it was done the Chartist movement had passed away.

W. H. MAINWARING.

## The Romantic Revival in Poetry and Historical Materialism

We look before and after,  
And pine for what is not.—SHELLEY.

**N**URSED in the cradle of idealism; exercised in the knighterrantry of imaginative pursuits; enamoured by the glories of an age that is gone, it is somewhat difficult to realise the truth that the dynamic of human progress is man's mastery over the technique of production. It implies a revolutionary change in the outlook of the ordinary reader of poetry to seek an explanation of social phenomena in the changes that have been experienced in the material productive forces. Surely such a grossly materialised explanation will not account for the passionate and etherealised poetry of the English Romantics? It cannot be true that the spirit of beauty which dominates the work of Shelley was conditioned by the material conditions of his time? Much less can this be true of Keats with his:—

Beauty is truth, truth beauty; that is all  
We know on earth, and all we need to know.

Yet a little thought will convince even the ordinary reader that the poetry of the imaginative Romantics has an economic foundation.

The time during which the Romantics wrote was that immediately succeeding the Napoleonic Wars. Europe, in the words of one of them (Byron) had "borne in vain, years of death, depopulation, bondage, fears." England had just emerged from the birth pangs of the industrial revolution. Industry had passed definitely from the domestic to the factory system. The application of steam to machine-facture had added cubits to the nation's economic stature. The revolution in the means of production, the radical change in the tools used by men, and the immense promise of the productive power of steam had changed the whole fabric of society, and with it had revolutionised its mode of thinking. It is surely



more than a mere coincidence that the poetry of this period marks a revolution in all that we designate as literary style. In the period preceding it, we have the cold formalism and the academic spirit of the Classical School. This school crushed all individualism in style and treatment of subject. Pope, with his respectable proprieties, his metallic jingles and dead level of thought and expression, was the characteristic product of the period. Classicism instituted a sort of aristocracy of form and of words. Only words that had a poetic pedigree were to be used, and the only form of drama sanctioned was that based upon the Greek model of the Augustan period, with its Trinity of Unities. But a change came that amounted to a revolution—a change that affected the style of poetry both in regard to its form and the use of words. This change coincided with the completion of the transition of industry to the factory, and its first fruits of chaotic over-production.

The romantics were at once revolutionary and reactionary. They were revolutionary in style and language, in thought and in spirit; they were reactionary in their aspirations and in their imaginative construction of an ideal society. Wordsworth was a revolutionary in that he used the words of common folk in his poetry, words which had been denied by the classical school the fellowship of poetic association; he was revolutionary, too, in his discovery of nature,

One impulse from a vernal wood,  
Will teach you more of man,  
Of moral evil and of good,  
Than all the sages can.

He was reactionary in the sense that he visualised the modern industrial world in terms of rustic beauty and simplicity. He did not face fairly the new methods of production and organization in industry. It is true that in his abandonment of the classical form we have a reflex of the abandonment of the domestic technique of production, and in this sense he admirably illustrates the materialist conception. His return to nature was a reaction from the crushing ugliness of the life of his times.

Coleridge brought the spirit of wonder into literature. His *Ancient Mariner* sailed on seas that never had material existence. Here again we have a true reflex of the wonder of the inventions of the age. The steam engine had, prior to Coleridge's poetry, brought wonder into the economic life of the times. It symbolised the infinite possibilities of man's productive capacity, and shocked the slumbering national imagination to such an extent that it found exercise in passive wonderment or active riotous imaginativeness. The changes in the means of production had created a feeling that can be summed up in the phrase "What next?" This anticipatory feeling, with its vague suggestiveness of the immense possibilities of the future, finds expression in the poetry of the

Romantics. Their power and beauty is not to be found in definitive construction, but in alluring and elusive suggestion. Shelley,

Like a poet, hidden In the light of thought  
Singing hymns, unbidden, Till the world is wrought  
To sympathy, with hopes and fears it heeded not.

Shelley, who says,

... Most wretched souls,  
Are cradled into poetry by wrong,  
They learn in suffering, what they teach in song.

was the most anarchical of them all. His poetry signifies a change deeper than any change in fashion or style; it signifies a fundamental change in outlook. The bard of freedom, of intense individualism, and of beauty, saw very clearly the injustices of his day, and escaped from them in revolutionary song. Is this singer of the "Spirit World" a product of the social economy? Did his flights of fancy and superb lyrical intensity find a basis in the material mode of production?

Yes, we think so. Anarchy there surely was in the economic life of his times. Production proceeded apace; wealth accumulated as if with magic speed; yet poverty "stalked through the land"; national exports trebled in value; military prestige was enhanced at Waterloo; but common folk starved and rioted at Peterloo. Nothing could be a truer reflex of the economy of the time than Shelley's—

Last came Anarchy: he rode  
On a white horse, splashed with blood:  
He was pale even to the lips,  
Like death in the Apocalypse.

His poetry expressed what "the children of the revolution" thought about the economic and political life of the time. Castle-reagh and Peterloo were to him the dramatic personification of the anarchy of production and distribution, and his lyrical flights were but the reaction of a spirit in revolt against the economic, philosophical, and religious systems of his day.

Romanticism, then, was a natural product of a revolutionary era in the material conditions of production. Its essence is the translation of revolutionary material facts into a virile and imaginative poetic idealism. It is the literary form of the *Zeitgeist* which was generated in the factories of Britain. Even its wistful longing, its melancholy, its harking back to nature, its glorification of the simple life of other days, were but reactions from the sordidness of the life of the impoverished wage slaves, and its pictures of an ideal future life, were the poet's attempts to "fling forgetfulness around me," and "in creating, live a being more intense."

W. G. COVE

## Labour and Language

A new connotation has recently been given to the phrase, "the governing classes"—one flattering to all those who earn their bread by the sweat of their brow. The new version is:

"OUR GOVERNING CLASS—LABOUR."

For this illuminating rendering we are indebted to Sir Harry Johnston, himself an ex-bureaucrat, but one of enlightened and progressive mind. Whether the term is simply an attempt to indicate who are the real governing classes, or is prophetic of the time when Labour shall have come into its own, and shall have taken industry into its own keeping, one does not know. Nor does it matter. It is the phrase itself which matters, and Labour ought to endeavour to live up to its significance.

It may be explained that the words: "Our governing class—Labour," appear in the review of a book bearing the title *The Great Problems of British Statesmanship*; and in course of the review mention is made of the "defective education" of the other (and older) "governing classes." It is pointed out that the members of these classes would in the past have made fewer blunders if, in the days of their youth, they had been drilled in modern European languages instead of being employed in turning out "Latin verses." This brings me to a point which I wish to make with regard to the new governing class, namely, Labour. Its members require a speaking knowledge of some other language than their own to fit them for their work in the world. In the main the interests and the aspirations of Labour are the same, whether the workers be those of America, France, Italy, Russia, Germany, or Great Britain.

There have, during the past two decades, been many international Labour and Socialist Conferences. Of necessity, these have been polyglot. Most of them have, unfortunately, been painful affairs in the sense that many present have listened to fervid eloquence in a language the majority did not understand. There are translations, of course, but translations, however good, have not the true ring, and are slow and become monotonous. This aspect of international intercourse is so patent in its disadvantages that little need be said regarding it. It may, however, be recalled that the Inter-Allied Conference held in London last August or September was, in spite of the momentous issues discussed, a wearisome and unsatisfactory gathering because of the necessity for "doing" the speeches into English or other European languages.

The question is: How is the difficulty to be overcome? Clearly Labour in all countries requires a common language, so that international relations may be facilitated. Labour leaders need not set about learning half a dozen foreign languages. (What an awful waste of time in these hurrying days that would involve!) First of all, let there be an agreement as to the use of one particular speech or language for international purposes, and let that be mastered. I hold no brief for any sort of Volapuk, for Esperanto, or for Latin-brought-up-to-date. But if the producers of different lands are to work together for their own good and hammer out a general policy, they

must have a "lingua franca." The value of a common language is too obvious to require argument. I know nothing of the construction or technicalities of Esperanto, but it holds the field at present as an international language, and conferences are held in that medium of speech. Why should not Labour adopt it? At any rate, let something be adopted to meet a clamant need. The need is the greater, for international Labour will confer more frequently in future than in the past.

JAMES ROBERTSON.

## News of the Movement

The classes are all going with such a swing that the secretaries have no time to send in reports! A very hurried "Everything is going on O.K.," or "Things continue to be lively in our neighbourhood," at the end of a letter has to suffice. The woes of a secretary burdened with considerable correspondence and copy for the Magazine are thereby lightened, and the health of the movement may be judged by actions rather than words, for one branch is daring enough to launch a publication of its own (see front cover page). It seems as if there might be some truth about the revolutionary fervour and activity of the "Celtic fringe" after all.

GLASGOW has been very active during the winter, and the publication of the Marx pamphlet comes after months of strenuous work. In all, nineteen successful classes have been conducted in Glasgow and the west of Scotland. Only lack of tutors prevented double that number being run. A. J. Solomans says: "We wish to record our thanks to those comrades who rallied so readily to our call for instructors, and also to the S.L.P. We owe a debt of gratitude to the party for the help they have rendered in supplying tutors and lending us their halls.

A class will be held during the summer for those who have acquired a knowledge of History and Economics, but who need training as teachers. When we first called our Conference in October we were told that we should run counter to the Scottish Labour College, but events have proved that the opposite is true; we have been actually instrumental in creating a desire for a Labour College in Scotland, and we have had the most cordial relations with the S.L.C Committee. We are sure our record for the session is good, and challenge other towns to show a better one, even South Wales! (The gage of battle). Our cry is "Education must precede Emancipation," and we invite all Society and T.U. branches to rally to our support.

A young people's class for girls and boys of 14 and upwards with *A Worker Looks at History* as their text book meets every Sunday at 1.30 at 60, Renfrew Street, Glasgow, with Com. Main as teacher. Full particulars from Sec., J. McCorricken, 4, Ardoch Street, Possilpark.

EDINBURGH class Sec., Bruce Whyte, 55, Albert Street, writes:—"We are advancing in knowledge but not in numbers, so, in conjunction with the Leith and Musselburgh classes, we are organizing lectures in the district with a view to advertising the movement." All interested are invited to join in this propaganda campaign.

NORTHUMBERLAND and DURHAM show "liveliness." A C.L.C. class has been formed at West Cramlington under the leadership of J. Parkes, a stalwart Plebeian. The class will study Industrial History. Sec., J. McRae, 11, Bar-

racks, W. Cramlington. This is an entirely new venture in a new district, and, considering the fact that only a very few persons have heard of or taken part in anything of the kind before, it is particularly courageous. Our best wishes for success and congratulations go to the organisers.

DURHAM, not to be outdone by Halifax or Sheffield, has organized an Educational Conference, to take place on April 6th, at 2.30, in The Miners' Hall, Red Hill. The following resolution will be put to the meeting :—

"That this Conference pledges itself to support the principles of Independent Working Class Education as advocated and taught by the C.L.C." Mover: John MacLean, M.A., Glasgow. Seconder: E. Edwards, E.C. North. Miners, Ashington. Chair to be taken by Will Lawther, Pres. Chopwell Lodge, D.M.A. Particulars of delegation, &c from T. Ethell, 76, St. James Street, Newcastle. Meetings will be addressed by John MacLean, as follows: Stanley I.L.P. Co-op. Hall, April 7th; Spen Co-op. Hall, April 8th; Chopwell Workmen's Institute, April 9th; Newcastle Socialist Soc., April 10th. All Plebeians please note and support.

COVENTRY Branch Plebs League, Sec., H. King, Welland Road, Stoke, is selling a good number of Magazines and pamphlets, and is also busy organizing an Industrial History class. "We shall make things hum," writes the Sec., sending an order for 12 dozen of "that" pamphlet. (Others, please note. We have sold 20,000, and we want to double that number before August.)

The HULL N.U.R. Industrial History class has now a membership of close on 50, and the interest is well maintained. The meetings are held on Sunday at 7 p.m., at Argyle House. Sec., A. H. Fuller, 5, Glaisdale, Sterling Street. Already a large increase in the sale of the Magazine has taken place, as a result of this class, and it is hoped that a branch of the Plebs League will be formed at no distant date.

The Economics classes of MANCHESTER and district have formed a Plebs District Council, and appointed Literature Sec. Com. E. Bradshaw; Treas., Com. Taylor and Council Sec., Com. J. McGee, Woodlands Lodge, Crumpsall. Branches in the district not already affiliated are invited to do so, or where there are opportunities to open new classes to communicate with the Sec. Both time and money will be gained by co-ordinating effort, and we recommend other districts to adopt this method of organization.

BIRMINGHAM Plebs League have decided to hold a demonstration on May 5th to take the form of a public meeting in celebration of the Centenary of Marx. All desiring to assist are asked to write to T. D. Smith, 12, Old Meeting Street, West Bromwich.

In LONDON, on the initiative of the B.S.P., a committee has been formed of representatives of the different classes in the district with the same object in view. The sec., Lancelot Hogben, says: "We shall act in close co-operation with the London Plebs, which is represented on the committee. At present we are trying to get a census of possible teachers and to re-organize on a local basis, so as to have our machinery ready for more vigorous work next autumn."

The C.L.C., N.U.R. class run at the College has been most successful, and a very enjoyable social evening was held at the close of the first session in February. Mr. C. Terry was presented with an illuminated address, signed by all the students in recognition of the good work he has done, with the thanks and gratitude of the students, for the admirable way in which he has conducted the class. Another session is now proceeding at the College.

Secretaries of classes are asked to send their reports as early in the month as they can. We cannot afford to run a secret service department, so that we must continue to depend for our information about what is happenings upon the ordinary sources, pen, ink, and paper. Let us know how things go in your district so that we can spread the glad tidings.

## Plebs Publications

A variety of circumstances delayed the distribution of the Magazine last month. We wish to assure our readers that this delay was unavoidable, and to express our regret if any inconvenience was caused thereby. Please note :

The Secretary's address is now—

176, SPRINGVALE ROAD,  
SHEFFIELD.

The answers to letters forwarded to London will be delayed. Write direct.

The Marx Centenary number is rapidly materializing. Our chief anxiety is the paper shortage, and the cost of production, but we hope to be able to publish a double number, for which **NO EXTRA CHARGE WILL BE MADE**. We must have advance orders for extra copies to do this, for we cannot afford to run the risk of returned copies or "left-overs" on this venture. If all who take a parcel of Magazines will order an extra dozen the success of the centenary number will be assured. Send a p.c. at once.

The advertisements on the back of the front cover page are not put there to fill in space! We want orders—orders—and yet more orders. Our publications are needed now more than ever. Mark Starr's book is still booming; "that" pamphlet is selling as well as ever, and more than usual interest will be aroused by the Marx pamphlet to be published by the Glasgow Plebs League. Orders for quantities should be sent to A. J. Solomans, 12 Binnie Place, Monteith Row, Glasgow. We can supply single copies. If you order early you are less likely to be disappointed or to have to wait till the second edition is published.

Our two leaflets, "How to Form a Social Science Class" and "Short Study Outlines" are invaluable to class secretaries and to those who wish to rouse interest and form classes in neighbourhoods hitherto untouched by independent working class teaching. Don't write asking our advice; it is printed in the leaflets. ½d. each or 2s. 6d. per 100.

### WANTED.

In order to complete volumes of the Magazine for 1917, one copy for February and five copies for March are urgently needed. Also one copy each of February and October, 1910; September, 1911, and July 1913, also complete volumes bound or unbound for the years 1915 and 1909. Will any reader oblige by writing or sending Magazines to the Secretary, who will remit by return of post?

## The Schooling of the Future with Special Reference to the Education Bill and its Defects.

By E. SYLVIA PANKHURST. Price 1d.

Should be read by all Socialists and Educationalists. Exposes the tendency of certain clauses in the Bill towards the stereotyping and militarisation of Education.

Published by the Workers' Suffrage Federation, 400, Old Ford Road,  
London, E. 3.

## A Matter of Concern to N.U.R. Men

In 1909, when the C.L.C. was founded, Mr. Hird was asked to be Warden. He accepted, and offered to act as Warden for the first year without salary. After nearly two years, in 1911, he was granted by the Board £100 a year, but owing to the financial difficulties of the college this payment, as well as the salary of other members of the staff, fell into arrears. In June, 1916, the N.U.R. and S.W.M.F. bought and took over the College. Unfortunately at this time Mr. Hird was absent, suffering from a serious illness. Later (acting on the report of a joint sub-committee specially appointed to investigate the finances of the college) the N.U.R. paid the *outstanding debts and arrears of salary of all other members of the staff, the S.W.M.F. refunding their half-share*. But no payment was made to Mr. Dennis Hird. Subsequently the Board of Governors investigated the matter, and fixed the amount due to Mr. Hird at £565, being five years' honorarium and £65 travelling expenses. In May, 1917, the S.W.M.F. Annual Conference, without a question or an opposing vote, decided to pay Mr. Hird their half of the £565, and paid it in July, 1917. Up to the present the N.U.R. Executive have refused to pay their half-share, *i.e.*, £282 10s.

It appears from a minute of the Executive Committee of the N.U.R. (No. 76 in Report) that this refusal is based upon the impression that they are not responsible for any work performed previous to the Union accepting joint control. But—besides the fact that the Miners have no such scruple—the N.U.R. *did* pay for work performed previous to the joint control, in the case of all other members of the staff.

The only difference between Mr. Hird and the others was that, owing to his unfortunate illness, he was not performing active service. But this surely can be no reason against paying him arrears for work actually done.

Mr. Hird's work needs no emphasis in *The Plebs*, nor the part he played in the founding and early history of the C.L.C.

We feel sure that the rank and file of the N.U.R. will not wish the Miners to outdo them in repaying just dues once their attention has been called to the matter. It is hoped that a resolution on the subject will be on the Agenda for the N.U.R., A.G.M. in June. Branches and individuals are asked to approach their E.C. with resolutions so that justice may be done to an old comrade who has given freely of his services in the past.

### RAILWAY WORKERS ONE-UNION MOVEMENT

A very successful Conference of the representatives of the rank and file District Committees of the Railway Workers' One-Union Movement was held in London on Saturday and Sunday, March 9th and 10th, when the ways and means were considered whereby the interests of the movement could be furthered. A National Committee was formed, composed of three members of the A.S.L.E. & F., three members of the R.C.A., and three members of the N.U.R., with Mr. H. Ellison (Preston) as Chairman, and Mr. F. Anderson, 22, Quaker's Field, Tottington, Bury, Lancs., as Secretary. If any individual members of branches of these Societies require further information, the Secretary will be glad to supply same, on application to the address given.

## Correspondence

### MARKET PRICES: SUPPLY AND DEMAND OR SUPPLY AGAINST SUPPLY.

SIR,—Many Marxists teach that the value of a commodity is labour, that the quantity of this labour is expressed relatively in a quantity of gold, and that the name of this quantity of gold is the price of the commodity; put shortly, that price is the monetary expression of value. At this point the student is perplexed by the fact that price never equals value. The Marxist replies that the law of supply and demand causes deviations from the real price, but taken over a long period these deviations cancel one another and by this means the real price which expresses value is theoretically attained. This to a Marxist is simple enough, but is not so to a student tackling the subject for the first time, especially if he has had any training in bourgeois economy, because the point left unexplained is involved in the question—what causes supply and demand to vary?

For the sake of clearness let us tabulate the points of discussion. The Marxist teacher says—

Quantity of labour determines Value.  
Value is expressed in Price. Therefore  
Labour determines Price.  
Deviations from this price are caused by supply and demand being unequal.

To the student it appears that

Supply and demand balance prices.  
The theoretical mean price expresses value. Therefore Supply and Demand determine Value.

Of course he can see that labour has something to do with it, but yet, if Labour determines value, then it can't be supply and demand, and if supply and demand determines value then it can't be labour, and he is very puzzled between the two.

Just here the writer would like to ask, is there any serious reason why Marxists should use such a term as "demand"; demand relates to use-value and as such is not a category in economics? There is no such thing as a law of supply and demand. "Supply and demand" is only a convenient phrase to use in discussion, but, since it is so often misunderstood; and from this standpoint loses a great deal of its convenience, would it not be better to use the words "supply against supply"?

To consider this: a man enters a shop and demands a pair of boots because he wishes to use them; the proprietor asks 15/-; the man says, "I have no money, but I assure you my demand is most urgent." The proprietor says, "Nothin' doin', unless you bring the money." The man's demand must therefore be backed by money, but, since he has no gold mine of his own, he must first supply some commodity to society in order to get the money. So, from this standpoint, "demand," backed by money, is only another



name for "supply." Therefore the relation between traders is, in essence, not a relation between supply and demand, as such, but between supply and supply.

When the producers of one class of commodity have supplied more of that particular use-value than the rest of society is willing to buy by means of the things it can supply, then, from the standpoint of these particular producers, *much* is supplied against *little*; consequently, the price paid for these particular commodities is lower than their value (average social labour time embodied in a commodity and expressed in gold). But from the standpoint of the rest of society, *little* is supplied against *much*, and therefore the price they receive is higher than the value. Under these conditions (other things remaining as before), the producers of the particular use-values in question go on short time to reduce output, whilst the rest of society is trying to make hay whilst the sun shines, by increasing output. The result, of course, is that the positions are reversed. So the question of market prices is only the question of ill-balanced supplies, which, of course, means ill-balanced quantities of labour having regard to society's requirements.

Market prices are, therefore, nothing but monetary expressions of supplies which, for the time being, are either below or in excess of society's requirements; they do no more than register the different quantities of labour put at different times into different classes of commodities, and if treated from the standpoint of "supply against supply" are perfectly and intelligibly in accord with the Marxian law of value as determined by social labour time, because labour does determine price, even the market price, but, if treated from the standpoint of the so-called law of supply and demand, they are most confusing to beginners.

Yours faithfully,

FRED CASEY.

We trust other teachers (or students) will tackle the controversial points raised by our correspondent; we have only to ask that they will make their replies as brief as possible.—ED. *Plebs*.

#### "FREETHOUGHT AND THE LABOUR MOVEMENT.

DEAR COMRADE.—I was surprised to find that my letter in the December *Plebs* was unchallenged. Surely the "Freethinkers" are not going to take it lying down? Let us carry it a little further.

One must admit that to judge the Freethought movement from a historical point of view is rather difficult to-day. You will agree that Christianity (as we have religion to-day) is anti-imperialist, and its tenets hamper the capitalist in sundry directions. If he were a strict Christian his machines and men would have to remain idle on Sundays, and many things necessary in capitalist production would have to be discarded. Therefore it is quite easy to understand what the future action of the capitalist is likely to be. Before he will throw away his profits he will discard his religion, and adopt that set of ideas which will suit his method of production. It is not at all impossible that Freethought will be the most favourable in the assistance of future production.

The R.P.A., the bulwark of the Freethought movement, has a number of hon. associate members—the "big bugs" (to put it vulgarly) and I want to show that their connections are distinctly upper class.

Sir H. S. Leon (Bart.), Chairman, R.P.A. (Director Anglo-American Telegraph Co.; and Smithfield Market Elec. Supply Co. Chairman, Yorkshire Elec. Tramway Co.).

Rt. Hon. J. M. Robertson, M.P. (ex-Parl. Sec. to Board of Trade).

Prof. Andrew White (Attache to U.S.A. Legation, Petrograd, and afterwards at Berlin).

Sir R. Lankester (Prof. London, Edinburgh, and Exeter Universities).

Sir Ed. Brabook (Registrar of Friendly Societies, 1891-1904).

Prof. J. B. Bury (Hon. D.L.L., Oxford, Durham, and Dublin Universities).

I fail to find one worker among the honorary associates, but there are many more, with bourgeois connections. Now, my Freethought friends, is this class of men likely to prepare the minds of the workers for a philosophy that will destroy the present social system?

Yours, etc.,

TILLERY.

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## Reviews

### A NEO-WEBBIAN.

*Self Government in Industry.* By G. D. H. COLE (G. Bell & Sons. 4/6 net).

Cole's book, we are told, was originally planned as a sequel to *The World of Labour*, and subsequently laid aside owing to the war. The material was later used for articles in various journals, and the book loses somewhat by reading more like a collection of separate essays than a work planned and carried through as one coherent whole. It is chiefly interesting as affording ample evidence of the compelling character of Industrial Unionist propaganda. Here is a young Oxford don, saturated with Webbism, and yet "live" enough to realise that Sir Oracle's (his own name for Webb) voice has long been one crying in the wilderness, and that the future is with the "young men in a hurry" in the Trade Union movement. He is sure of an attentive audience, not only among his own class (at whom his book is principally addressed) but among those of ours—and they are not few—who are anxious to find the problem of Labour's needs more difficult than it really is, and who therefore looks up for "intellectual" guidance. In nothing is Cole more Webbian than in his readiness to supply this guidance—in his manifest conviction that the present professional classes are what they are by an inherent vocational instinct for "guiding," politically, intellectually, socially, the working classes to whom this instinct has been denied by Nature. One has only to study his schemes for a balance of governing power between the State and the Guilds—between the "uses" and "enjoyers" (Webb's "consumers") on the one hand and the *manual* producers on the other—to realise the hold the Webbian articles of faith have upon him and his fellow-Guildsmen.

The first two chapters discuss T.U. conditions during the war and after-war possibilities. They consist in the main of a recapitulation of points familiar by this time to most of us; and in them Cole appears rather as a Richard Yea-&-Nay who is in two minds about details. The real centre of interest is the definition of the aims of National Guildsmen. These are described as industrial organization along the lines already formulated by Industrial Unionists, with the ultimate "partnership between the State and Labour, accompanied by the abolition of the system of capitalist production." With us Industrial Unionists, Cole recognizes that the world is not to be rebuilt to specification, but will evolve out of existing material conditions. Nevertheless—and this is an important qualification—while these "ultimates" may not shape themselves according to our plans and desires, they are in essence our touchstone of final relationships under the new order, and therefore our standard of judgment on the value of the next step in our march. For this reason we must find out where Cole and the Guildsmen stand in relation to the State—the other partner in the New Jerusalem. Cole is fully alive to the importance of this point to the people for whom his book is written, *i.e.*, the more thoughtful section of the professional classes, whose eyes are searching for some means of escape from the upper millstone of Capitalism and the nether millstone of Syndicalism. The way of escape is *via* the State, the nature of which is explained in Chap. III. The State is a Parliament of "neighbours," "users," and "enjoyers." This Parliament, as a balance of power in society,

is for me at least the underlying principle of the Guilds, and any departure from it would be destructive of their essential character. . . . Every individual under the Guilds will not be a member of a Guild; but every individual, we may expect, will be a member of some form of association based on social service rendered—a productive association in the widest sense of the word.

Parliament—that is the rock upon which much I.U. propaganda splits. What is to be our attitude, as workers, to the political machine? Are we to regard it as in any sense permanent, or merely as the outworn framework of capitalist society? Surely the latter is the right view; though it may yet be true that during the transition period political action has its value—perhaps more negative than positive—to our movement. Parliament is essentially bureaucratic—government "from the top down." Industrial Unionism is as necessarily democratic, "from the bottom up"—and never the twain shall meet; . . . Cole, "*On the Nature of the State*," is inconclusive and unconvincing.

This book is scarcely worth four shillings and sixpence of a proletarian's money. The Appendix on "Syndicalism" is a useful piece of work. If Cole could only rid himself of his paternal attitude towards Labour, and his occasionally apologetic tone when appealing on its behalf; if, that is, he could shake off the Webbian point of view as he has already shaken off many of the Webbian formulae, his work would be more "worth while."

G.S.

## A CHART FOR MINERS.

In one of his cartoons "Cynicus" depicts that model proletarian, Job, surrounded by the medicine men of his day, and the following couplet is appended:—

"Advice in trouble is the aid which friendship freely lends;  
Job's greatest patience was displayed in listening to his friends."

These are days when Labour is called upon to display a good deal of this particular sort of patience. Its friends are many and varied, and their advice plentiful. The publication, therefore, of a book \* on a vital Labour problem, written by a worker, and not by an "outside" adviser, is exceedingly welcome. A perusal of it will do no harm to the medicine men of Labour to-day, in giving them some idea of what a worker thinks the future of the miners' organization ought to be. Despite the many suggestions for the unity of Capital and Labour "when peace comes," there are many who accept this truism—

Is it not a fact that even a so-called "Ideal Board" would only provide for the robbery of Labour, and robbery for all time, since the Constitution of Conciliation does not provide for the abolition of the wages system? (p. 91).

That the book will arouse rank-and-filers by its exposure of a futile and worn-out policy, based on conciliation, goes without saying. It will also, perhaps, cause certain "leaders" of the M.F.G.B. to think (and that is a consummation devoutly to be wished!)

The author has divided his subject into five parts, tracing in the first, "The Failure of Trade Unionism," criticising very strongly the M.F.G.B.'s failure to cope with the new industrial situation. This section gives miners (and others) a fairly faithful history of their organization. He clearly shows where it has failed, and how, and lays stress on the pitiful waste of opportunities in the National Strike of 1912. In a number of quotations showing how "leaders" viewed the victory (!), the palm must be awarded to C. B. Stanton, who said (*Daily Herald*, 18. 5. 12):—"It (the act) was a precedent by law which meant the beginning of the end of Capitalism."

To prove that the member for Merthyr was somewhere near the mark, in Part II. ("The Wrong Basis, Structure, Object, and Policy of the Unions and Federation") a list is given of nearly every company in the British coalfield with their profits and share capital. Judging by the figures here quoted someone is near "the beginning of the end," but it is hardly the Rhonddas, Joiceys, Peases, Furnesses, Aberconways, or others of that kidney.

The mineworkers are up against not only powerfully entrenched mineowners, but . . . against the entire International Capitalist Class, with its Press, its Politicians, and its Physical Force. Class distinctions were never so great as they are to-day, government laws never so ruthlessly administered in the interests of a class as our modern governments are administered, class opposition was never so clearly defined as it is now. The fact is, **Miners' Trade Unionism is Out-Organised**" (p. 89).

This part concludes with an exposition of the educational point of view of the C.L.C. and Plebs League:—

Working Class progress depends on a Class education, an education in Social Science, on a grasp of first principles, and for neglecting to teach these there is no excuse (p. 100).

We trust that Harvey's (and our) co-workers in Durham will soon see this fact more clearly than they do to-day.

\* *Industrial Unionism and the Mining Industry*. By Geo. Harvey (1/- post paid, 1/2. From Author, Miners' Hall, Wardley Colliery, Pelaw-on-Tyne, Co. Durham).

In Part III., dealing with "Recent Revolts against Capitalism and Trade-Union Constitutionalism," the South Wales Miners occupy the greater space, and there is a "Roll of Honour" of British coalowners showing their profits for 1914-15-16. The remainder of the book deals with "re-construction"—that blessed word! But it is re-construction from the partial or working-class point of view rather than the so-called "impartial," "unbiased," &c., &c. The defenders of "impartiality" can never understand, they inform us, the bias the worker has against schemes of increased output, welfare work, and other strange devices to smooth over the antagonisms between employer and employed. But the worker is not so unfortunate in his grasp of the reason why. He feels, consequently he inquires, and his understanding follows.

Inside the miner's organizations there have been many attempts (notably the "Miners' Next Step" campaign of 1912) to bind the various unofficial reformers (?) together. What has been lacking hitherto has not been enthusiasm, but a clear idea of the immediate steps. Harvey puts forward a plan (if you care to call it so) to apply theory to practice. He suggests, as a beginning, that we achieve unity by having only one union in the particular country or district covered now by the Minimum Wage Boards.

The Districts dovetail into each other, the whole area covered is so limited in mileage, and the conditions of labour vary so little, that the twenty-two Districts could be reduced by one-third, say to fourteen, for purposes of organization. We thus get fourteen Unions. By a process of elimination we could reach this stage in a short time, and each step we took would perfect the Union machinery on an Industrial basis, train the members to think industrially, and be a step towards the organization of each large "District" in such a way that, with little difficulty, they could become simply District parts of the ONE large National Industrial Union (p. 159).

This quotation shows that the author understands that the essential thing is to get the *first step* taken. Some may argue that the adoption of such a policy would be merely tinkering, or "wobbling." But in the meantime, are we doing anything towards that clarity of vision needed ere the ONE big union arrives. The book does more than merely give a history of the Industrial Union Movement in "our" isles. There are chapters dealing with America, &c., &c., which provide the reader with an outlook on "foreign affairs," so often lacking in the English Labour Movement. The differences, too, between Industrial Unionism, Syndicalism, and Guild Socialism are fully dealt with. The old conflict is renewed as to the utility or futility of political action.

To the Industrial Unionist the failure of the Labour Party is no argument for Anti-Politics. The Class Struggle must express itself in all fields of action—Industrially, Politically, Educationally. That is an axiom the Industrial Unionist builds upon. He desires no social change behind the back of society, has no quick romantic route to emancipation (p. 191).

More could be quoted from this section, but we have indicated sufficiently the bedrock the author builds upon. Nowhere is there any hesitation to give "knock-out" blows when necessary. The marshalling of the facts, the problems set forth, the solutions offered, make this book a notable contribution to our armoury. It will interest others than miners, and the stress laid on the necessity for effective educational work on partizan lines should help the further extension of C.I.C.-Plebs work.

We hope that it will not be merely bought and laid down (or the author's portrait in his pit-clothes cut out and pinned up as a memento), but that efforts will be made to eliminate as speedily as possible the 79 District Unions and 13 Federations which make the M.F.G.B. so impotent for effective work.

WILL LAWTHOR.

*The Evolution of Industry.* By W. McLAINÉ. B.S.P., 21a, Maiden Lane, Strand, W.C. 2. 2½d. post free.

Before the War, one felt at a loss when asked to recommend some simple book or pamphlet for a beginner; now the difficulty is to choose one from the mass of good material on hand. The S.L.P., the B.S.P., and the Plebs League have all contributed to this store of ammunition for the better waging of the class war, and this pamphlet, by Comrade W. McLainé, is a valuable addition. Full of interest, simply and lucidly written, it will be a great help to beginners.

It is divided into two parts, the first, an historical sketch of the evolution of industry from the handicraft stage to the present day; the second, a review of war conditions in industry. We are glad that McLainé does not give a too detailed prehistoric preamble, nor overemphasise early historic periods. Clear understanding of these periods of history is very necessary, but the handicraft stage of industry represents something real to the ordinary student, whereas the growth and origin of the gens, for instance, is so much Greek. McLainé has done well to begin within the ordinary worker-student's grasp of history, and he carries us through the succeeding stages feeling that we know where we are going and what we intend to do when we get there.

The second part deals with war conditions, giving an outline of the way in which capitalism is busy entrenching itself against the coming offensive on the part of the workers. The increase in the power of capital, industrially and politically, the rapid decline of the middle class, the intensification of the class struggle, are all commented upon and the pamphlet closes with a reasoned appeal to the workers to claim their own. No working-class student can afford to be without the pamphlet to supplement Craik's book and  
*A Worker Looks at History.* W.H.

Like all reactionary bodies the B.W.N. League has looked for help to the University. Its new political philosophy has been supplied by W. Cunningham, D.D., F.B.A., Fellow of Trinity College, Archdeacon of Ely, and one-time Lecturer of Economic History in Harvard University. His six lectures are now obtainable in *The Common Weal* (2s. 6d., University Press), and we wish the book's contents were as good as its format. While the Professor is tracing the birth of the nation and other movements, little topical runaways concerning the wicked Russian extremists, the immoral Germans, and the welcomed change from Parliamentary to Press sovereignty, give us glimpses into his mental outlook, provoking merriment, if not enlightenment. Our Archdeacon is a pro-German in the true sense of the word. Individual liberty, religion and education must serve one thing only—the Common Weal, i.e., the State. His attacks upon the Manchester school and his return to mysticism are frank expressions of the new ideal needs of Imperialism. He has "raised the *physical* necessities" of Imperialism "into *moral* ones," but, thanks to the mind-clearing effects of working-class education, the fallacy of his high-sounding language can be easily detected. However, if *Common Weal* be read as *Class Weal*, patriotism as class-consciousness, the State as Organised Labour, and nation and community as the working class, the book will be found suggestive. We can learn from the tactics of the enemy.  
M.S.

## The Plebs' Bookshelf

"Is Hammond's *Town Labourer*," pathetically asked my 'Bookworm' correspondent last month, "ever coming within proletarian reach?" Well I've been lucky. I've managed to secure a second-hand copy for 6/6 (the book is published at 9/6). And there's no doubt it's a great book! It's worth saving up for—or clubbing together for. It's *alive*. I rather expected something on Webbian lines—patient investigation, mountains of facts and figures, a work of reference in short. But *The Town Labourer* is much more than that. As W. G. Cove happily remarked in his admirable review in the *Merthyr Pioneer*—"It deals with the machine, but it is not a machine-like book."

Such a book is, of course, choke-full of points it would be both pleasant and profitable to dwell on. We may have time and space for some of them later. At present, I can only mention one or two. The authors of *The Town Labourer* are not Socialists. I presume, therefore, that they would declare themselves unable to accept the Materialist Conception of History—at any rate, without sundry qualifications. And yet, on the whole, what a magnificent illustration of the truth of the Marxian theory this book is. Take these odd sentences from the opening chapter:—

The Industrial Revolution was a social revolution, creating a new civilization with problems and a character of its own. . . .

. . . . The world that had been shaken into life in the violent birth of modern England . . . .

The Industrial Revolution separated England from her past as completely as the political Revolution separated France from her past. For we understand by the characteristics of a society, its governing facts and conditions: the classes, institutions, and atmosphere in which its life expresses and arranges itself. These features are quite definite and manifest in the civilization that had its origin in the changes that came over England between the accession of George III. and the passing of the Reform Bill. The new classes and the new institutions were not new in the sense in which the spinning-jenny was new or the power-loom was new. The atmosphere of a capitalist society had already crept over certain industries, but it makes all the difference whether this or that feature is an accidental or an essential mark of an age, whether this or that grouping or relationship finds itself here and there in a society, or whether it is the most obvious and significant fact about that society. The view that the English people were the same in 1830 as in 1760 would be rejected as no less contrary to reason than the view that manufactures were the same, or that they still travelled along the same roads, to the same markets, to reach the same customers.

. . . . The real conflict of the time is the struggle of these various classes, some working in factories, some in their homes, to maintain a standard of life. This struggle is not so much against machinery as against the power behind the machinery, the power of capital.

Good enough, isn't it? . . . . One or two other smaller points. I was reminded of the ancient adage that "history repeats itself" when I came across Mr. and Mrs. Hammond's description, in Chap. II., of the little volume, "addressed to the working men of the United Kingdom," called *The Results of Machinery*, published in 1831 by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful

Knowledge. This book gave "a glowing picture of the glories of invention, of the permanent blessings of machinery," &c., &c., and the writer, as he "skirmished with the workman's prejudices," developed his argument "with great animation and vigour . . ." We know those "skirmishes with the workman's prejudices." Them we have always with us! To-day they publish "little volumes" about Output and Increased Productivity and Efficiency. And the workmen still have "prejudices . . ." When the C.L.C. is housed as we all hope that one day it will be housed—in a building that will bear comparison (and more) with the universities of the "upper" classes—there ought to be somewhere in it a portrait or a stained-glass window or some sort of memorial to John Doherty, the Lancashire working-class leader, and editor of *The Voice of the People*. Doherty was in advance of his time in his ideas on the subject of working class education. Mr. and Mrs. Hammond tell us that—

he wanted the working-classes to organise their own education, in opposition to upper- and middle-class movements like the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.

I'm not sure whether the S.D.U.K. still exists—but other familiar initials will occur to all!

\* \* \* \* \*

In his review of *The Town Labourer* already referred to (*M. Pioneer*, Feb. 9, 1918) W. G. Cove made a criticism which deserves consideration. Mr. and Mrs. Hammond's book, he declared,

is not history boiled down to the mere bones of an outline. . . . Our elementary schools, as the writer has cause to know, are infested with history books which are mere summaries, and the educational wing of the Labour Movement seems to be in danger of the same epidemic.

That, I repeat, is a criticism which needs taking into account. Of course we need the "summaries" first—and books like Craik's, Paul's, and Mark Starr's, though they may be outlines, are certainly not "mere (dry) bones." But I hope we (of the educated wing of the Labour Movement) shall go on to books which, like *The Town Labourer*, are really satisfying studies of particular periods; books which, in Cove's words, will "lose none of their scientific precision because the facts are presented by a penetrative imagination." As for instance—*The Eighteenth Brumaire or Revolution and Counter-Revolution*; or Meilly's *Puritanism*; or Gustav Bang's *Crises in European History*. Such books can only come after the summaries—but I hope they will come, and soon. Few of us have time or opportunity for much original research work; but that need not prevent us from making a special study of one particular subject, period, or movement, and then re-shaping the already known and available material from our point of view.

\* \* \* \* \*

W. H. Dawson's *Industrial Germany*, which Mark Starr was recommending to Plebeians a month or two ago, is, I see, included in those volumes of the Nation's Library which the Reformer's Bookstall (126, Bothwell Street, Glasgow) are offering at 6d. each (postage 3d.). The same house is offering a limited number of copies of *The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists* at 2/6 (postage 5d.). . . . I see that *Anna Karenina* is shortly to be added to the



Tolstoy volumes in the World's Classics. (The thin paper "pocket" edition of this series, as I have observed before in these pages, is, on the whole, the nicest of the various editions obtainable at "proletarian prices"). . . . Has anybody, by the way—any Pleb, I mean—read *Gil Blas*? It has just been published (by Greening's) in a single volume, at 2/-. From a reference to it in a letter I received recently from Eden Paul I gather that he likes *Gil Blas*. Perhaps he'll "review" the new edition for the benefit of Plebeians:

\* \* \* \* \*

The article that most interested me in the January *Socialist Review* was L. T. Hogben's "The Poetry of Revolution," dealing particularly with Swinburne and Morris. Apropos of an article on another page of this number (written some months before Hogben's was published) it is interesting to quote his concluding paragraph:—

Who shall say that it is merely an historical accident that those two great bursts of song that have filled England with gladness, one from the great Elizabethans, the other following the French Revolution, coincided with the rise of the merchant class to economic power and the conquest of political power by the capitalist? And if such songs were born of the triumph of man over the tyranny of feudalism and monarchy, who shall foretell the music which shall vibrate when the Earth God Freedom

. . . rise and remain and take station  
With the stars of the world that rejoice;  
Till the voice of its heart's exultation  
Be as theirs an invariable voice;  
By no discord of evil estranged,  
By no pause, by no breach in it changed,  
By no clash in the chord of its choice?

\* \* \* \* \*

Hogben, by the way, has just published a little volume of poems, *Exiles of the Snow, and Other Poems* (Fifield, 2/- net). The poems, like his article above referred to, reveal him as an admirer of Swinburne. I think I like best the "Lines on a Lump of Coal," which should have a special appeal for many Plebeians in S. Wales, Durham, Scotland, and elsewhere. I quote a few lines:—

"Here is a poem wondrous and delicate, full of strange ventures and wisdom most old,  
Mysteries hidden no poet has chaunted, stories fantastical lips have not told:  
Forests of fern trees superb and majestic waving their filmy fronds to the warm skies,  
Long e'er the sough of the wind-swaying coppice mingled in spring with the wild birds' cries:  
Pendulous garlands profuse and mangificent, hung in the mists of the young steaming sod,  
Where creatures un hunted, immense and gigantic, bathed in a ghostlier moonlight, trod . . . ."

\* \* \* \* \*

Mr. Mallock's latest, *The Limits of Pure Democracy*, was reviewed at length in the *Times Literary Supplement*, Feb. 7th, 1918. The "riddle of the Few and the Many" is what Mr. Mallock sets out to solve; and he moves with the times, for—

it is to industrial and social democracy rather than political that the bulk of Mr. Mallock's book is devoted.

He also, one is not surprised to learn,

turns his destructive criticism against Marx's economics, which have been freely shattered already, even by Socialists themselves. One is grateful to him for rescuing a confession from the *Vorwärts* that Marx's doctrine as to manual labour being the only source of wealth (!) is as superannuated as the belief of Thales that the universe is formed of water.

How Mr. Mallock's heart must have beat as he "rescued" that cutting . . . ! Another interesting quotation from the review:—

We might with advantage have heard less about Marx and more about such modern instances as that voice from S. Wales of a few years ago, *The Miners' Next Step*; or again about shop stewards as representatives of the workers.

But the trouble is that Marx, like King Charles' head, might still have persisted in "cropping up."

\* \* \* \* \*

The reference to Beard's INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION in last month's Bookshelf called forth the following from Mr. Stanley Unwin, of George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.:—"All being well, a reprint of the work should be available in a few weeks' time, but printing and binding move slowly nowadays. In the days when book production was a comparatively simple process books of this character were in comparatively little demand, and little support was given to their publication. Now that the costs of production are almost prohibitive and the difficulties very considerable, the workers seem to have woken up to their existence." We hasten to assure Mr. Unwin that this is not pure cussedness, as he seems to think, but part of a new revival of learning and we might add, the effect of *Plebs* propaganda, perchance.

J.F.H.

#### BOOKS RECEIVED.

- Exiles of the Snow, and Other Poems.* By LAUNCELOT HOGGEN. A. C. Fifield, 13 Clifford's Inn. (2s. net.)  
*The Evolution of Industry.* By W. MCLAINE. B.S.P., 21a Maiden Lane, W.C. 2. (2½d. post free.)

SEE REVIEW IN THIS ISSUE OF "PLEBS."

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## METHODS.

The formation of local branches and classes for the study of social science, in connection with the Central Labour College (now the Labour College), such classes to be maintained and controlled, wherever possible, by Trades Unions, Trades Councils, or other working-class organizations; and the linking-up of these branches into Districts (or Divisions) with a District (or Divisional) Committee appointed by the branches.

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

The assistance in every way of the development of the Central Labour College (now the Labour College), or of any other working-class educational institution, and their maintenance of a definitely working-class educational policy.

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