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Karl Marx



J. E. H.

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MONTHLY

TWOPENCE



Karl Marx.

Not for the thought that burns on keen and clear,
Heat that the heat has turned from red to white,
The passion of the lone remembering night
One with the patience day must see and hear—
Not for the shafts the lying foemen fear,
Shot from the soul's intense self-centring light—
But for the heart of love divine and bright,
We praise you, worker, thinker, poet, seer !
Man of the People—faithful in all parts,
The vein's last drop, the brain's last flickering γ dole,
You on whose forehead beams the aureole
That hope and " certain hope " alone imparts—
Us have you given your perfect heart and soul ;
Wherefore receive as yours our souls and heart.

Francis Adams.



A Red x here means that if we don't hear from you (with enclosure) we shall cut off your supply.



THE PLEBS MAGAZINE

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

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Vision and Re-vision

A FEW weeks ago we were talking to an Italian comrade who was in London for the Inter-allied Socialist Conference. He had been on pilgrimage to Highgate, and was inclined to deplore the British lack of ancestor-worship. Marx's tomb, he thought, might have been made more of as a

Meditations among the Tombs.

shrine. We have no personal acquaintance with the burial places of most of the saints and sages of the earth. But it is more than twenty years since a visit to the sepulchre of a great conqueror and great statesman, Tokugawa Ieyasu, the founder of the last dynasty of Shoguns in Japan, left an abiding impression

on the mind of one of the present writers. The site owes much of its incomparable beauty to nature, and when the Japanese say, "Do not use the word 'magnificent' till you have seen Nikko," they are thinking as much of the cryptomeria avenues and the maple-tree forests of that mountain valley, as of the temples raised by the hand of man. But as one climbs among these fanes, rising tier upon tier, to the lone summit where the remains of the feudal chief lie beneath a huge bronze casting, one feels that never did the peculiar and sublime (if mistaken) devotion which is the product of the system whereby he ruled, contrive a worthier tribute to the memory of one of the world's "great men."

In a sense, certainly, the visit we paid to the grave of Marx (in the endeavour to evoke the proper spirit for the writing of a centenary article) was less inspiring. The walk from the neighbourhood of the British Museum through several miles of the unrelieved ugliness of North London streets, suggested invidious comparisons. At the date of Marx's birth, probably, and in the time of Tokugawa Ieyasu unquestionably, Highgate was a charming country village. If to Cobbett London was a "wen" a century ago, what would he term it now? Highgate Hill is a respectable eminence, and would command a fine view of London City and the silver Thames—were not the prospect somewhat bedimmed by smoke. The mortuary monuments of Highgate cemetery, many of them at any rate, address their appeal rather to the jester's fancy than to the artist's soul. The courtesy of a careful custodian at the gate, a man obviously used to guiding socialist pilgrims, made it easy to discover among the myriads the undistinguished flat stone that covers the resting-place of Marx. The grave, though by no means neglected, might well seem (to a visitor from regions where the cult of the departed is more in fashion) to suggest that English socialists reckon little of the mighty dead. But to us it appeared that there was no cause for complaint. At Nikko, at the tomb of Ieyasu, that worthy's shade might be imagined saying, "If you require a monument, look around;" and, indeed, Nikko is a glorious sepulchre. But what beyond a tomb and a fading memory remains of the great Shogun? The system he inaugurated was utterly swept away after nearly three centuries of undisputed stagnation. History has marched over it. King Feudalism is dead, in Japan as elsewhere; King Capital reigns in his stead. On Highgate Hill Marx sleeps sound, just as Tokugawa Ieyasu sleeps sound at Nikko. But Marx needs no shrine and no temples, for the energy of his thought is incorporated in the minds of living men and women, and is destined to play a large part in re-shaping the world. Marx's monument is now a-building; a great corner-stone has recently been laid in Russia. When it is finished it will be a grander mausoleum than any ever wrought by the builders of megalithic monuments,

To those irreverent socialists, and in Great Britain they are many, who incline to regard Marx as a back number, these assertions may appear hyperbolic. To others, again, fervent devotees of the materialist conception of history, we may seem to err in that we attribute to Marx's "thought" instead of to "the material conditions of existence" a main part in the remoulding of the world. We like irreverence, and we like arousing difference of opinion, for both are powerful stimulants to thought. We shall be irreverent ourselves before long, and shall doubtless give rise to much more dissent before we have finished this centenary article. For the moment, let us deal with those who will tell us that Marx's doctrines are as dead as any of the bones on Highgate Hill. When we read such statements we are always reminded of the story of the first death of Mark Twain. A false report of the humorist's demise had been widely circulated, and an old friend thereupon wrote to the family to express regret and sympathy. Mark Twain had read the journalistic obituary notices with high glee, and was equally pleased with the letter of condolence. He replied to his friend by wire: "Report of my death much exaggerated." Well, the report of Karl Marx's death is likewise much exaggerated. To give but a few concrete instances, a man cannot be "as dead as all that" when his influence survives to make a Bolshevik revolution in Russia, and to animate in Britain a Plebs League and a Socialist Labour Party.



Now for a little irreverence. Comrade Newbold tells us, rightly enough, that Marx was a titan. But Newbold, despite his profound admiration for the author of *Capital*, would **Hero-Worship**, hardly have us believe that his hero was a plaster saint. (Indeed, Newbold does not like plaster saints, for they are the product of "bourgeois idealism"). A hundred years after a man's birth (unless we are dealing with the Wandering Jew or Old Parr) it is usually permissible to speak freely of his personal character—and we may admit that the character of Marx was not wholly amiable. Socialists need not write of Marx as, until a quite recent date, all "good Americans" thought it incumbent on them to write of Washington. Even since the beginning of the war men have been imprisoned in America, not merely for disrespect to "Old Glory," the American flag, but for disrespect to the memory of Washington, the founder of the U.S. bourgeois republic! Now do not let us hesitate to be disrespectful to the memory of Marx, if not simply for the healthful exercise of an excellent quality, at least because it is desirable that we should be able to be candid (if not impartial) in our judgment of a certain historic quarrel which has a very definite bearing upon our conception of Marxist socialism to-day. We refer, to the quarrel

between Marx and Bakunin, to the quarrel between the "socialists" and the "anarchists" in the old International.

Let us remark (sagely) in passing, that the persistence of the spirit of faction is often an obstacle to progress, and, what is more serious, is often an obstacle to revolution. We mean that old quarrels persist when the reasons that underlay them are as dead as the bodies of those that were the protagonists in the original dispute. The impossibility of combination between the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks to save the Russian Revolution from imminent shipwreck did not arise wholly, nor perhaps even mainly, from any profound differences of principle extant at the close of 1917; the two factions were held apart by old emotional differences due to the memories of years of hostility. The divergence lay in the sphere of feeling and will, not in that of reason, and was therefore as irremovable by reasonable considerations as are the differences which (quite apart from those arising out of bets and other economic factors) sway the crowd at a football match. The same emotional differences come to light when one talks of co-operation between the I.L.P. and the B.S.P. Subconscious memories of their predecessors' conflicts, traditions of ancient struggles, determine men's actions quite as much as clear reason and deliberate will. But reason can at least fight for supremacy. The aloofness of the Socialist Labour Party from the political Labour Party and from the socialist bodies affiliated to that party is based upon principle, and is another story. To return to the old quarrel in the International, it is interesting and instructive to read to-day Bakunin's opinion of Marx, penned in 1871, the year before the expulsion of the anarchists from the International. We introduce this contemporary personal estimate of Marx by a notable adversary because of its human interest, and because, right or wrong, it mingles warm admiration with its criticism.

Marx was at that time much more advanced than I was; and to-day, though not more advanced, he is incomparably better informed than I am. In those days I knew nothing of political economy, I had not yet cleared my mind of metaphysical abstractions, and my socialism was still purely instinctive. Marx, though younger than I, was already an atheist, an able materialist, and a thoughtful socialist. It was at this epoch that he was elaborating the foundations of his system. We met frequently. I respected him greatly for the extent of his knowledge and for his passionate devotion to the cause of the proletariat--though this devotion was always tinged with personal vanity. I loved his conversation, which was invariably instructive and brilliant, except when (as happened all too frequently) it was motivated by personal animosities. But there was never any frank intimacy between us for our respective temperaments made this impossible. He termed me a sentimental idealist, and he was right; I spoke of him as vain, untrustworthy, and surly, and I too was right.*

* James Guillaume's Memoir of Bakunin, prefixed to Vol. II of the French edition of Bakunin's writings.

How does it stand to-day with the essential conceptions of the Marxist system? What is our attitude towards the theory of surplus value, towards the doctrine of the class struggle, towards the materialist conception of history?

The Economic Foundations of Society. We must remember in the first place to be guarded in our use of the term

"Marxism," and it is well to recall that Marx, at the Erfurt Congress, after listening to some of the young lions of the "Marxist" movement, quietly remarked, with a shake of his leonine head, "If that be Marxism, then I am not a Marxist." (One wonders whether Marx may not, on occasions, have felt similar uneasiness regarding the discipleship of Engels. But we must reserve this "disrespect" until the Engels' centenary, which is not due for another two years). In certain details, again, many of us who are glad to proclaim ourselves Marxists, would like a revision of terminology. We prefer to speak of "the economic interpretation of history," rather than of "the materialist conception," for he who talks of "materialism" talks of a particular metaphysical view of the universe, a conception which was useful as a counterblast to a narrow "idealism" or "spiritualism," but whose terminology, unless we are discussing a purely philosophic problem, is better avoided. To speak (with Loria) of "the economic foundations of society" does not commit us to any ontological theory whatever. A Hegelian and a Buchnerian can join hands over the belief that history must be largely interpreted in the light of the class struggle. Similarly, we prefer to speak of "realist socialism" rather than of "scientific socialism." Marx's contrast, or, at any rate, Engel's contrast, was between Utopian Socialism and Scientific Socialism. It seems to us better to distinguish between *realist* socialism (the socialism of the S.L.P.) and *idealist* or *sentimental* socialism (the socialism of the I.L.P. leaders, and, above all, the socialism of the new bourgeois recruits to the I.L.P. and the new unattached members of the Labour Party).

Having given our distinguished approval (we *cannot* push in the disrespectful stop in this centenary article, not even when it strikes home)—having given our distinguished approval to economic determinism, let us go on to express our opinion that the error of "Marxism" (we will not say the error of Marx, for Marx could be gloriously inconsistent) is to dwell too exclusively on the economic aspect of life. The justification for a close attention to this aspect is, of course, that economic need is primary. Until man is sufficiently fed, warmed, clothed, and sheltered ("sufficiently" is an elastic term!) these economic needs tend to monopolise his attention, and he can rarely think of anything else. But (and the idea is embodied in the theory of value and the story of the 'nth pail of water or of the forty-second tart) as these economic needs are satisfied, man can turn, does turn, his attention to other things;

and other motives than the economic come to dominate his actions. During adult life, the sex need is the second of the great primary stresses. Sex-hunger (which *in part* is the need for perfect companionship), when urgent, will master even the hunger for food, and, like the hunger for food, it is an exclusive passion. But "Marxism" is apt to take little account of the urge of sex. Like Adamsmithism, it has a tendency to concentrate its attention upon a strange abstraction known as "the economic man." When food-hunger and sex-hunger are stilled, man turns his attention elsewhere, and devotes himself to the search for other intellectual, emotional, and volitional satisfactions. In part, be it agreed, these latter are "masks" for primary economic and sexual needs; but this is not the whole truth. When the primary needs are in abeyance, the secondary needs, peculiarly human, the needs which pre-eminently distinguish man from other animals, assert themselves. They are, to a large extent, independent of the economic motive, and in the socialist commonwealth will, it need hardly be said, be far more independent of the economic motive than they are to-day. Man, civilised man, wants to *think*, to *enjoy*, and to *do*. Science and philosophy are mainly the fruit of the first impulse; art in the widest sense is the sphere of the two latter. (Once more, do not let us be interpreted as denying the significance of economic determinism in science, philosophy and art; we merely show that there are alternative determinisms). The harmonious life exists for those rare and fortunate beings in whom intellectual, emotional, and volitional impulses secure adequate satisfaction, in conjunction with the perfect sex companionship, and in conjunction with an economic basis of life (here Marxism comes once more into its own) which is neither exploitative, nor exploited. We write for socialists, for proletarians. In members of the exploiting class economic stress takes a different form. The aim of the professional exploiter is to continue a mode of life in which the material means for the gratification of all his needs, both primary and secondary, are provided as far as possible by others' labour. Thus in the exploiter's life, by a strange paradox, the economic determinism of Marxist theory may be more exclusively dominant than in the life of the proletarian.



Another defect of much that passes by the name of Marxism is its tendency to concentrate its attention too exclusively upon the attempt to capture the political state. Though continental socialism, being much more definitely Marxist, is largely free from the confusionism characteristic of the British socialist and labour movement, so that in France, for example, the "radical socialists" and similar sentimentalists and fabianists, are not in the Socialist Party (which definitely avows itself a revolu-

tionary organisation working on the lines of the class struggle)—in practice, alike in France and in Germany, the socialist parties like the British Labour Party, are essentially reformist, parliamentary, and opportunist. In France (before the war), on the other hand, the spirit of the trade union movement was syndicalist and anti-political, and the syndicalists were inclined to cultivate a policy of somewhat futile strikes and other forms of "direct action," but lacked the clear-cut socialist philosophy which is now shaping the left wing of the British movement. French syndicalism, in fact, is largely an expression of the less coherent aspects of anarchist thought. Tcherkessoff, in his *Doctrines and Acts of the Social Democracy* (p. 28), quoting a resolution of the German social democrats to the effect that "the struggle against class domination must be a political one, having the conquest of political power for its end," writes:—

This is totally false. The power of the ruling class is based on the wealth produced by the people, which is appropriated by the ruling class. Consequently, to free themselves from class domination, the people must refuse to yield up the fruit of their toil to their masters. It is not by a political, but by an economic struggle; not by ballot boxes, but by strikes; not by a decision of parliament, but by a triumphant and well-organised general strike, that the people can inaugurate a new era; the era of economic and social equality, of solidarity, enlightened, not by metaphysics, but by thorough and truly scientific instruction.

There is much truth here—but the "realist socialist" criticism would be that the "triumphant general strike" would be as futile as "the conquest of political power" unless, as a preliminary, *the workers had learned how to control industry.*

Now what was Marx's attitude towards this vital problem? We write subject to correction, but we do not think he can be said to have had any attitude at all. For it is a new problem, a problem which the obvious failure of the Marxism which would bring about socialism by "capturing" the class state, and the no less obvious failure of the Marxism which would win by means of the general strike, has forced upon the attention of the class-conscious workers. Hence the rise of the new Marxism, the Marxism which in this country is most effectively represented by the Socialist Labour Party and the Plebs League.

Marx cannot be said to have been a consistent "political action" man. As to the future of the political state, his view was that the proletariat cannot free itself without freeing all other oppressed classes, and that the victory of the proletariat will therefore entail the end of exploitation and of political repression altogether. Consequently the state as a repressive power will die out, and a free association will take its place. As to ways and means, there is much in his writings to which the "general strike" doctrinaires can appeal in justification; but there is more to which the "political action" party can appeal, for Bernstein is assuredly right in

contending that Marx laid the principal stress "upon the political struggle as the lever of social emancipation."



To the Marxists of the new school the question is now of mainly historical interest. They are engaged in diffusing the fundamentals of the Marxist outlook by the method of independent working class education, and they are aiming at the control of industry on industrial unionist lines, hoping that the growth of industrial unionism will dry up the springs of capitalism at the source. But the history of "political Marxism" remains one of the most instructive of lessons for use in the process of independent working class education. We can see clearly enough the causes of its failure and the causes of the failure of the British Labour Party and of the Australian Labour Party. These bodies, though not consciously Marxist, and though many of the British Labour Party leaders repudiate Marxism, are, in fact, all Marxist political movements, working-class movements for the capture of the political state. The inevitable fate of such movements would appear to be that of our self-complacent friend in the familiar Limerick :

There was an old person of Riga
Who smiled as he rode on a tiger.
He returned from the ride
In the tiger's inside,
With the smile on the face of the tiger !



To resume our centenary consideration of the three doctrines which are generally regarded as typical of Marxism, while we are very far from "revisionism," we do not think that any one of them can be accepted as true in an exclusivist sense. They are "true," that is to say, but they are not the truth. They are aspects of truth. The notion of surplus value, for instance, throws a clarifying light upon the process of capitalist production, but its corollary, the right to the whole produce of labour, requires modification. Granted that the *isolated* labourer has the "right" to the whole produce of his labour, and that the capitalist has no "right" to any part of the produce of labour, the question remains, Who has a "right" to the results of the superior productivity of *associated* labour? Has the labourer a right to his share *pro rata*? Has he a "right" to more than "subsistence" (in the Lorian sense); and has not the community of which he forms a part the right to the Lorian "income," the Marxist "surplus value," which results from associated toil? Granted it be so, is that "community" the group of workers engaged in the particular industry, or is it the community at large?

In the former case we have to face the difficulty that certain privileged industries, producing monopoly products, will tend to acquire privileged positions like those of the patriciates which were based on some of the craft guilds of the Middle Ages. In the latter case, the crux of how the surplus product is to be collected and distributed faces us once more, and we have to ask whether it is after all possible to avoid, in a highly complex modern community, some sort of centralisation which will partake of the nature of the detested "state." We do not now attempt to answer these questions; we merely moot them, to show that the theory of surplus value and the claim to the whole produce of labour, while blowing the capitalist ship clean out of the water, do not suffice to pilot the vessel of socialist theory safely into the harbour of the promised land.*



Eight years ago one of the present writers delivered his mind on the class-struggle, contending that it was not, as Marx (or, at any rate, Engels) thought, a complete explanation of the vicissitudes of history, but hailing it as "a leading

The Class Struggle ; principle for the guidance of socialist
Economic Determinism. policy."** We now go further, and consider the tactics (and the theory) of

the class struggle absolutely essential to the upbuilding of a socialist party which shall constitute an effective revolutionary instrument. As to "economic determinism," let us look at a recent crucial instance—the Russian Revolutions of 1917. For the purposes of this argument, they may be considered as a single revolution, for Marxism was the driving force in April no less than in November. The Russian Revolution is at once an exemplification of the power of Marxist thought and (paradoxically) a refutation of Marxist extremism—a refutation, let us say, of Engelism. Marxist thought is the mainspring of the Russian revolutionary movement, but Marxism

* " Ransome's message in the *Daily News* of April 5th, shows that the Bolsheviks, in spite of all their other difficulties, are developing the metal mines in Western Siberia. New lines of railway are being constructed where necessary, and it is clear that the Bolsheviks intend to prove that they can organise production efficiently. The whole of the Ural district is arranged as a single national enterprise. The workers are the paid servants of the people, all arrangements being controlled by a Soviet, in which the workers of the district have a minority. The majority of the votes belong to the representatives of the organiser appointed by the people as a whole through their central organ. This principle of giving the local workmen a minority in the representation obtains throughout the whole of the new organisation of industry. Only in this way can the nation ensure that the interests of the local workmen are not preferred to the detriment of the nation as a whole. Each industry has its local committees and its central committee, which controls the raw material, finance, and the disposal of the output, thus effectually controlling even private concerns not yet taken over by the state."—*Labour Leader*, April 11, 1918.

** Karl Marx and Modern Socialism. I.L.P. pamphlet, 1910,

in Russia can hardly be said to correspond to the stage of economic evolution in that country. Contrast the prevalence of Marxism in Russia with its backwardness in England. Is not this alone sufficient to refute the assertion that political causation is always "material" (economic), and never "ideal"? Marxism, in this narrow sense, is not a key to fit all historic locks. Yet how much fuller is one's understanding of history when one has mastered the principles of Marxist interpretation. Who but a Marxist can extract all the juice from the following passages, the first penned by one of the most notable enemies of socialism in Germany, the two latter by one who, though a socialist, is perhaps the ablest living critic of Marx.

In Posen during the thirties, emancipation (relief from feudal burdens with grant of ownership rights in the land they farmed) was restricted to peasants on the larger farms, those who owned teams, for the state had no desire to deprive the great landowners of that wage-labour which is indispensable in the eastern agricultural districts of Germany. (Treitschke, *History of Germany in the Nineteenth Century*.)

From the end of the fifteenth century onwards there came into existence in Muscovy what was known as "kabal serfdom," *kabala* being the Tatar word for indebtedness. The debtor worked in order to pay the interest, but, the capital charge remaining unredempted, the debtor was bond for life, and so were his children. (Masaryk, *The Spirit of Russia*.)

Economic need now became the most efficient and decisive cause of serfdom, the indebted peasant, voluntarily in many cases, accepting a state of bondage *vis-à-vis* the wealthy lord. (Masaryk, *Ibid.*)



The crowning value of the Marxist analysis of the structure of the class state is that it sheds so clear a light on the essential identity of economic exploitation in all its forms. It shows that, amid the share certificates of the bourgeois (respectable humanitarian!), and no less amid the Government bonds which (if much touting has had its due effect) must be found occasionally in the homes

of working-class investors, are concealed the lash of the slave-driver, and the lance and the coat of mail of the medieval baron. Of course Marx was not the first to discover this. To give but one example, Keats, in a poem composed in the very spring of 1818 which we are now commemorating, gave a most luminous analysis of capitalist exploitation. Isabella's brothers were merchant princes of Florence:—

And for them many a weary hand did swelt

In torchèd mines and noisy factories,

And many once proud-quivered loins did melt

In blood from stinging whip;—with hollow eyes

Many all day in dazzling river stood,

To take the rich-ored driftings of the flood.

For them the Ceylon diver held his breath,
 And went all naked to the hungry shark ;
 For them his ears gushed blood ; for them in death
 The seal on the cold ice with piteous bark
 Lay full of darts ; for them alone did seethe
 A thousand men in troubles wide and dark :
 Half-ignorant, they turned an easy wheel,
 That set sharp racks at work, to pinch and peel.



But that which, a hundred years ago, was plain only to the inside imagination of the poet, can to-day, in virtue of the Marxist analysis of the nature of capitalist property, be made so intelligible that he who runs may read. Even the sentimental socialists who say of Marx, " I know not the man ! " are continually lapsing into Marxist terminology.



From time to time there appears an intellectual giant who changes the entire human outlook in some important field of thought. After the publication of Newton's *Principia* and the acceptance of the principle of universal gravitation, the physical universe became a new habitation. In philosophy, the Kantian criticism, for all its defects and obscurities, marks a new era. Man's conception of the biological world, his view of his own " place in nature," can never again be what it was before the publication of the *Origin of Species*. It is too early for Freud's contemporaries to sum up the work of Freud, but it is already clear to us that the work of Freud and his school is destined to remodel psychology—including the psychology of ethics. Marx was one of these epoch-making thinkers, and his thought, refashioning our essential outlooks on sociology and politics no less than on economics and ethics, will contribute to work a revolution in spheres where the effects of revolution are more immediately conspicuous—perchance in spheres more directly related to the wellbeing of the average man, woman, and child. If " centenary celebrations " are ever warranted, they are warranted in the case of such an " earth-shaker " as Karl Marx.

EDEN AND CEDAR PAUL.

READ

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Marx as Historian

SO much has been said and written about Marx as an economist and so fierce have been the storms of controversy that have raged around his theories of value, of surplus-value, and so forth, so violent the disputations as to the accuracy of his forecasts concerning the concentration and centralisation of capital, so intense the conflicting hatred and admiration which this mighty prophet of revolution has aroused, that his commanding genius as one of the world's most illustrious historians has scarcely been realised. To-day, his method—and to speak of Marx, the historian, is to speak also of Engels—is coming into almost universal use. Everyone adopts his method, but very, very few have the courage, the honesty, or the decency to acknowledge him as their master. Many, no doubt, do not realise that they are adopting the Marxian method. For my part, I read history for years in one of the most modern universities, under liberal-minded teachers, but I do not recollect that on a single occasion I was bidden or advised to take down *Capital* from the lofty shelf where the three great volumes reposed. It would surprise me if any student of Modern History was ever referred to the *Eighteenth Brumaire*, to the *Revolution and Counter Revolution*, to the *Eastern Question*, or to the *Life of Lord Palmerston*. Yet these works are masterpieces of research and of criticism absolutely indispensable to anyone who would understand the great European changes between 1845 and 1865, which determined the present struggle and the tendencies leading up to it. One book is known, and is now being quoted more and more frequently, and that is Engels' *Condition of the English Working Class in 1844*. An interesting pastime in libraries where modern historical works abound is to scan through indexes and to find how many make allusion to Marx and Engels, and where such reference occurs to find what the author has to say about them. American writers make more frequent mention of Marx than do those of this country. Perhaps it is not to be wondered at that so little mention is made of him by British writers, for there are few of them—very few until quite recently—who knew anything worth knowing about the economic history of this or any other country.

Now it seems incredible that one could go through College and take a high degree in Economic History without ever being introduced to the Marxian theory thereof. One does sometimes get as far from orthodoxy as to discuss the economic interpretation of history, generally to be warned against it, and against Thorold Rogers as not being "sound," just as one was warned against the pitfalls of "inductive" reasoning. But, "historical materialism"! However, Marx is coming into his own, and those who are least disposed to give him his due take good care to follow religiously in his footsteps. Book after book that one picks up to-day follows

the Marxian method and tacitly, or even openly, confirms the Marxian conclusions.

None does this more conspicuously or more overwhelmingly than that by J. L. and Barbara Hammond, entitled *The Town Labourer, 1760-1832*. Page by page and chapter by chapter, drawing on the records of the Home Office, these two moderns drive home with pitiless reiteration, the irrefutable evidence of the class struggle. Nothing written since Marx laid down his pen is so merciless, nothing has ever so completely borne out his contentions.

His, however, was the distinction of discovering seventy years ago what others are assuming to-day. In his time the evidence whereon his theories could be built was just becoming obvious to the more painstaking student who could free himself from preconceived views of social and political development. The world of industry and of government had just evolved through the earlier stages of the great technical revolution, and the middle-class, newly called to share in the guardianship of property, had shewn in England the workings of its mental processes in the legislation it projected. It was coming to a consciousness of its real interest in the preservation of all institutions defending property and privilege, and already began to show incipient signs of conservatism. Marx, who looked at facts and grubbed about in the British Museum comparing and contrasting the economic theories of successive class spokesmen, examining the merciless records of official documents, and having the invaluable aid of Engels, who had lived as a capitalist in Manchester, got behind and underneath the superficialities of the orthodox historians and, having no vested interest to defend and no patron to consider, recorded exactly what he discovered and what conclusions he arrived at.

To me, the most wonderful discovery that I have ever made, or, rather, to which I have ever been introduced, was this: "The method prevailing in any society of producing the material livelihood determines the social, political, and intellectual life of men in general." The class struggle had been a historical commonplace with me for years, something so obvious that I marvelled how anyone could conceivably be blind to it. But this conception of the tool and the machine as the essential determining factors—though I had seen it all so plainly in the development of armaments—made the whole world plain and comprehensible. Marxian Socialism, based on the realism of social development instead of the soulful aspirations of well-intentioned idealism, had drawn me irresistibly but tradition, training and a desire to prove its irrefutable truth held me back until it was impossible to hesitate another moment. With what exultation then did I proceed to work, knowing the immense treasury of evidence on which to draw, the power I had to bring to bear, like some pneumatic drill irresistibly tearing through every subterfuge and falsehood with which capitalism

concealed its hideous reality ! The joy of having learned their lore in the halls and libraries of their endowment, of ransacking their archives and revealing the substructure of their pretensions and their benefactions !

The materialist conception of history is a law to be applied, the theory of the class struggle is a standard of continuous reference. Marx and Engels worked out these laws and applied them to certain phases of the past and to the events of the hour. We must use them to revise the whole of social and political history and to explain the events of the present time. It is not enough to read and to teach what Marx and Engels wrote. It is imperative that we should apply their methods and that we should show the workers how to follow suit and to improve upon our efforts. Let us remember how Marx spurred on his companions, crying : " It is necessary to learn ! " We must know all that we can imbibe about capitalism, its institutions, laws, ideas, its every expression, and its every variation. We want an army of learners, of researchers, of workers, of teachers. Like a swarm of locusts, like an army of ants, we must sweep down upon the records of capitalism, written and unwritten, and strip everything that can be of use in exposing and scarifying the system. We want no copyright on our discoveries. We must train hundreds and thousands where to-day we have dozens and scores of writers and lecturers, and our printing presses must never cease to turn out leaflets, pamphlets, text-books and every propagandist and educational medium we can devise. Books like those of Connolly on *Labour and Irish History*, like Craik's and Starr's little digests, like Paul's *State*, like Gustavus Myers' deadly *History of Canadian Wealth*, *History of the American Fortunes*, and *History of the Supreme Court*, must be popularised and pushed, and similar works must be compiled in this country to interpret the history of the United Kingdom and the British Empire. There are dozens of themes in my mind as I write, all of which demand immediate attention by specialists, there are score of libraries, mountains of periodicals, documents, papers ; there are a thousand and one sources waiting to be tapped. There is the material. There are the methods. Let us do the supreme honour to Marx of finding the men and women to carry on !

J. T. WALTON-NEWBOLD, M.A.

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The Chartists and their Historians

(*The Chartist Movement*, by MARK HOVELL. Edited by Professor T. F. TOUT. Manchester University Press & Longman's. (7s. 6d.)

DECIDEDLY the Chartist movement has no luck with the historians! For a long time it was completely ignored by them, as if it had never occurred. Then foreigners—for the most part, Germans—began nibbling at it with no great result. Shortly before the war Max Beer dealt with it at considerable length in his history of Socialism in England, and made an indigestible mess of it. A Frenchman, E. Dolléans, followed suit with two volumes, in which he never for a moment left the surface of things. During the war Schlüter, an old German *émigré* in America, published a book on it, the merits of which are personally unknown to the present writer, but which he hears has greatly suffered from the fact that it was written without the knowledge of documents to be found only in this country. So far, the pioneer work was all done by foreigners. Now at last comes a history written by an English historian, and, candidly speaking, a very inadequate performance it is. We, indeed, gather from the introduction that it is but a "rough draft" left by the author in the hands of a friend on joining the army in 1916, that he was killed a couple of months later in action, and that his friend, from whose "general line of work," as he confesses, "the Chartists were far too remote," touched and retouched and expanded the "draft," with the help of that rising Fabian luminary, Mr. Julius West, who himself has a volume on the subject ready for print. These circumstances, of course, were not auspicious for the production of a book of commanding authority, and its defects are, indeed, writ large on every page. Nevertheless, one may venture to assert even on the strength of what we have, after making every allowance, that even if the author had lived to complete his work and to give it a more attractive literary finish, the result would still have been disappointing. The reason is that the author, like most of his predecessors in the field, lacked that sympathy with, and inner comprehension of, the subject, which a trained revolutionary Marxist attitude alone can give. The Chartist movement was the first political class-movement of the modern proletariat. It gave to the world the theory and the practice of the class-struggle which Marx and Engels afterwards developed and bequeathed to the Social Democracy of our own day. It asserted the principle of the conquest of political power by the proletariat with such force that it afterwards, through Lassalle and Wilhelm Liebknecht, became an axiom with every Socialist party. It, lastly, proclaimed to the world the Internationalism of the working class movement, which found its most signal expression in the concluding clarion

call of the Communist Manifesto, and laid the foundation of the international organisation of the proletariat, on which Marx afterwards erected the proud edifice of the First International. To analyse and to trace all these leading aspects of the Chartist movement as well as to describe its incidents—that is, its beginnings, course and ultimate failure—in relation to the material background, *i.e.*, the economic, political and social circumstances of the time—would require just what we have called a “trained revolutionary Marxist attitude,” and it is because all the writers who have hitherto dealt with the subject, including Hovell himself, lacked it, their efforts have proved such a failure.

That Hovell was in this sense no match for the subject is obvious, not only from his treatment of the leading figures of the movement, all of whom, with the characteristic exception of Lovett, appear to him as “demagogues,” and among whom, especially Feargus O’Connor, is singled out for a vast amount of gratuitous and often contradictory abuse and baseless slander, but also from his complete inability to see the fundamental factors of the movement. Take, for instance, his outline of the social consequence of the industrial revolution :

The rapid accumulation of capital and the development of credit facilities aided in the rise of a class of employers who were not the owners of the capital which they controlled. Thus(?) the social distance which separated employers and employed was widened as capital seemed to become more and more impersonal. . . . This divorce of classes in industrial society was making headway everywhere, even in those industries which were still under domestic arrangements, as the industry fell more and more into the hands of large wholesale houses. Crude ideas of class war were making their presence felt amongst the working people, while employers, who were influenced by the equally one-sided political economy of the period, tended to regard the interests of their class as paramount and essential to the development of national prosperity. The bane of the industrial system was the encouragement it gave to the rise of a brood of small capitalists but little removed in culture and education from the working people themselves, slender of resources, precarious in position, and therefore unable to abate one jot of the advantage which their position gave them over their workmen, often unscrupulous and fraudulent, and generally hated by those who came under their sway. . . . The transformation of industrial organisation from the domestic to the large-scale system of production was by no means completed in the year 1840. It is even doubtful whether the large scale system was as yet the predominant one. The weaving trade, the hosiery trade, and the hardware industry, as a whole, were carried on under systems which were either domestic or at least occupied a transitional position between the old and the new systems. . . . It was in these as yet unrevolutionised or only partially revolutionised industries that the worst abuses and the most oppressive conditions prevailed—abuses which are erroneously supposed to be the outcome of the developed “capitalist system.”

The bourgeois bias of Hovell’s mind revealed in this passage (and still more in the sentence left out in the quotation) need not arrest us in the present connection. We have yet to find a bour-

geois historian to whom the idea of class war, in whatever circumstances, would appear other than "crude." It is an epithet as inseparable in his mouth from the class struggle idea as the designation of "honourable" or "learned" or "gallant" is in the mouth of a member of Parliament referring "from the floor of the house" to his colleagues who are lawyers or officers, likewise the reference to the "one-sided political economy of the period" is characteristic of a modern bourgeois economist who, in another connection, speaking of the damaging conclusions drawn from Ricardo's theory of labour value by the Socialists, naively confesses "that modern economists have felt it incumbent upon them to modify or reject the Ricardian premises which led to such astounding and subversive conclusions." A pretty testimonial that to bourgeois science!

What is more interesting to us is the fact that in the above-quoted passage Hovell unwittingly laid bare the most important factor which governed the Chartist movement, without being able to appreciate its manifold bearings. The industrial system of England was passing through a transitional stage. The small independent producer and skilled artificer were being ruined, the factory worker found himself face to face with the soulless and merciless power of newly-invented machinery, and the small master and middleman was everywhere landing in the clutches of the larger capitalists. All these heterogeneous elements in various parts of the country (but nevertheless, in the main, geographically distributed between the north and the south), were now in revolt, and after the great deception of 1832 and the passage of the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834—that vast measure of expropriation of the poor in the interests of the flesh-hungry capitalist magnates of the north—united in the common cry for political power, embodied in the Charter. Hovell does not analyse the particular mentality of these various elements, and does not see that the ideals which inspired each of them and governed their policy and actions were bound to be different and productive of much conflict, oscillation and ultimate paralysis. If he had grasped the meaning of his own diagnosis of the situation he would have understood why petty bourgeois London could only produce a Lovett and was bound to oppose the revolutionary tendencies of the proletarian north; why the movement only succeeded, by a long series of secessions of the semi-ruined small-masterdom of Birmingham and of the semi-ruined small artizan element of London, in acquiring a purely proletarian character; why even among the proletariat of the north the abuses of the "primitive accumulation" prevented the rise of a clear conception of policy and ultimate aims; why the proletarian elements were opposed to the Anti-Corn Law agitation, which exercised such an attraction upon the small producer and middleman on the way to ruin, and why, in the end, the success of that agitation, by cheapening consumption, ranged the

petty bourgeoisie on the side of the large capitalists against the working class. In fact, it is only by taking the social nature of the different elements, which composed the bulk of the Chartist movement, as the starting point, that one can successfully unravel the seeming confusion of its course and explain its internal struggles, its successes, its apparent contradictions, its final failure, and even the character of its leaders. For that, however, one needs be a Marxist, and, as Hovell was not one, his efforts was foredoomed from the beginning.

The Chartist movement is yet awaiting its historian: may the young Marxist generation, brought up on the *Plebs* and other Socialist literature of this country, produce one at an early date! Here is a field which promises rich fruit to our movement and rich fame to its cultivator. "R."

Marx and Our Movement

IT was as no mere theorist that Marx accomplished so much in liberating the proletariat from "the mire of confusion." Indeed, the very nature of his theoretical standpoint was such that it compelled him to actively participate in the practical work of building up the Labour movement. How could one who drew his ideas from the real world of men and things remain outside as a pure observer and spectator? All that we owe to him we owe to the fact that he was at once both thinker and practical fighter. It is in this combination that he has set us an example. It is only in this way that we can both appreciate and apply what he has taught us. Especially should this lesson of his life-work have great significance for our educational movement.

Our "broad" educationalists, in whose *shallow* view we are mere "propagandists," seem to imagine that to be a practical fighter in the struggle of the working class constitutes an obstacle to scientific thinking. In order, therefore, to overcome this impediment to impartial education, the fighter must detach himself in thought from his practical activities and interests and receive the pure truth from those whose knowledge of the world has been acquired from the spectator's stand, and unmixed with any base interests in the world's disputes or disputants! In our view, on the contrary, *practical work* is not a handicap but a *help to understanding*. It was Marx's intense occupation with the class-struggle of the proletariat which enabled him to give us that clearness of view in so marked a contrast to the confused and disorderly notions of the learned professors. The greatest of all the English economists was the banker, David Ricardo.

Rousseau has said, somewhere in his *Julie*, that one perceives the actions of others only in the measure in which one himself acts. He who only observes, observes nothing. It applies to the investigation of all things, that without practical experience with these things, one cannot understand them. Astronomy could never have developed had it been limited to pure observation, had it not made use of such practical means as the telescope, the spectral analysis, and photography. Where would chemistry or any other physical science have been without practical experiment?

In the investigation of human society, it is true, one cannot apply the experimental means and methods employed in natural science. Nevertheless, the "practical" plays a no less significant rôle for social science. A thinker who is practically active in the sphere which he studies, will arrive at results unattainable to the mere observer. The science of ethnology, which illuminates the whole field of primitive cultures, is a good illustration of the value of practical experience for a clear understanding of the social relations and customs of primitive folk. Engels says somewhere that Morgan accomplished for this science what Marx accomplished for the science of modern society. The author of *Ancient Society* could never have given us that remarkable insight into the family relations of the American aborigines had he not lived for a considerable period of his life in close personal association with the tribes of the Iroquois Indians. So is it in any branch of social science. A thinker who proceeds to the study of a subject in which he is also practically active, will, with sufficient scientific training, more easily grasp it than a bookworm who has not the slightest practical acquaintance with it. Particularly will the investigator be favourably placed through his practical experience if it is concerned with the investigation of a movement of that class in which he himself works and with whose peculiarities he is most familiar.

Without doubt, practical occupation with a movement is not in itself sufficient for a sound scientific understanding of it. Without a scientific method of analysing and classifying the material of practical experience, there are dangers confronting the practical man which can disturb his impartiality as investigator. Especially is this the case in historical study. Kautsky has summed up these dangers as (1) The temptation to model the past life after the image of the present, and (2) the temptation to regard the past as if it corresponded to the requirements of the present.

We owe it to the theoretical genius of Marx that we feel ourselves secured against these dangers through the association of the materialistic conception of history with our proletarian standpoint. Without this historical method Marx could never have arrived at his great liberating conclusions, that method which runs like a "red thread" through all his works. For him, as for us, the "Labour point of view" was the consequence of "historical materialism."

He did not start out, as the superficial critics would have us believe, with his mind made up in favour of the proletariat, with a bias in favour of the working class. He took his stand on the side of the working class as a result of his historical analysis. The bias in favour of the proletariat was a historical bias, *i.e.*, the bias was in historical evolution itself, just as, at an earlier stage, and under other conditions, historical development favoured the rise and progress of the capitalist class.

The traditional conception of history regards the movements of history as so many struggles after certain political arrangements—monarchy, aristocracy, democracy—which, in turn, are the consequence of certain ideas and ideals. If one halts there, and seeks not for the ground of these ideas and endeavours, then it is easy to conclude that the struggles of history only change in outward appearance, but in content, in essentials, they remain the same; that these same ideas and struggles ever recur, that the whole of history represents an uninterrupted striving after freedom and equality, against slavery and inequality, a striving fated never to be realised, although also never to be completely subdued. If at any time anywhere the fight for freedom and equality has appeared to triumph, the victory nevertheless transformed itself into the setting up of a new gain of slavery and inequality. Thus, the historical process appears as a movement in a circle which ever and again returns upon itself, an eternal repetition of the same gleanings and strivings.

Whoever shares this conception will always be inclined to portray the past after the image of the present, and the better acquainted he is with the men of the present, the more disposed will he be to model the men of antiquity after the pattern of the present-day men.

The conception of history which Marx, in association with Engels, discovered and developed, and which stands out in marked opposition to the conventional view summed up above, does not stop with the contemplation of social ideas and ideals, is not content to accept as *the* explanation, the ideas which the actors in the struggle held as to the motives of their own strivings, but seeks to discover the real ground of this ideology in the deepest foundation of society. Ever and again does the plummet strike upon the mode of production, which, in the last analysis, depends, to a large extent, on the state of technique or, in other words, on the stage reached in the development of the means of production.

As soon as we proceed to investigate the means and methods of production prior to capitalist economy, the outlook at once disappears, that upon the world's stage, the same trago-comedy repeats itself. The economy of human society shows a constant upgoing evolution, although not in an uninterrupted straight line, from lower to higher forms. When, therefore, we have investigated the econo-

mic relations of men in the different historical periods, the appearance of the everlasting recurrence of the same struggles and ideology, vanishes. We see that, in the course of centuries, the same words change their sense; that there is only an outward resemblance of ideas and institutions; that, in reality, the seemingly same forms have a quite different content since they arise from the different needs of different classes under different conditions. The German knighthood, at the beginning of the Reformation, the Third Estate at the French Revolution, and the modern proletariat, have each inscribed "freedom" upon the banners of their agitation. But, in each case, the same word has had a very different significance. As soon as one ceases to view the historical struggles as struggles merely concerning political gains or abstract ideas, but lays bare their economic foundation, then it becomes manifest that in the political and legal arrangements of society, as in the means and methods of production, a steady evolution to new ground takes place; that no social epoch completely resembles the other; that the same rallying cries and arguments signify very different things to different times.

While our practical occupation with the modern working-class movement allows us to understand those features which the movements of earlier labouring classes had *in common* with that of our own day, much more easily than is possible to the academic professor or bookworm, so, on the other hand, does the emphasis of economic relations arising out of the materialist conception, prevent us from overlooking the peculiar *differences* of past movements which arose in economic situations differing fundamentally from that of the modern proletariat.

The Marxian method, therefore, preserves us from the danger of appreciating the past by the standard of the present, or, to use the old phrase, "measuring the other man's corn by your own bushel." It sharpens our faculty for distinguishing the peculiarities of each era and of each people or class. It secures us also against the other danger of adapting the portrayal of the past to the needs of the present.

It is manifestly quite impossible to maintain impartiality in relation to the past if one who takes an interest, in one way or another, in the social struggles of his own time, sees in these struggles of the present a repetition of the struggles of the past. The more, in such a case, one cherishes his cause, the less can he remain impartial. The more important become for him the achievements of the past and the greater the inclination to raise into prominence all that appears to support his standpoint, On the other hand, he who practically occupies himself in opposition to some institution or movement, will look into the past for all that appears to condemn such an institution or movement. Anything that the dead Samuel of the past might offer in

support is suppressed. Whoever calls up the past in order to glorify or stigmatise certain historic phenomena because he stands as supporter or opponent of what appears to him as similar phenomena to-day, is not a scientific investigator, but only a badly-instructed advocate.

Certainly, Marx was an advocate—an advocate of the proletariat—as are we also who strive to extend among the proletariat a knowledge of his fertilising thought. He was, however, an *advocate of science*. It was his scientific investigation that led him to take up the cause of the working class. His advocacy followed from his science. So far from the materialist conception of history being a one-sided and unimpartial view, as superficial critics allege, it is the only conception capable of impartiality and entitled to the claim of scientific. It is an objective and impersonal method. By this method alone does it become clear that nothing in history repeats itself, that the economic relations of the past are irrecurrable, that the earlier antagonisms and struggles of social classes are essentially different from those of to-day, that in spite of all outward resemblances the modern movements, struggles and ideas have a quite other content than those of the past. One perceives that each age is to be measured with its own measure, that the movements of the present are to be explained only by the economic relations of the present, that the successes or failure of the past are no criterion for the fortunes or prospects of present day movements, and that the invocation of the past, as precedent for the justification or condemnation of the demands of the present, is unscientific and misleading. The proletariat has often enough, in the course of the last century, experienced the fruitlessness of trying to sustain itself with the ideology of the bourgeoisie, instead of developing its own ideology, based on its own independent insight into the existing class relations. "History repeats itself, the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce." This was Marx's own satirical way of summing up the fallacy under discussion. In other words, first there is the real occurrence, and later there is the artificial attempt at initiation. In that brilliant monograph* in which the sentence quoted appears, he showed the rôle which this deception played in the movements of the French bourgeoisie. Still less can the modern working class afford to sustain itself with this illusion. It has everything to lose by clothing itself with the clothes of the dead and adopting the language of past agitators for the furtherance of its own demands. It has the need to understand the past; but to "understand is to leave behind."

Whoever stands upon the firm ground of historical materialism is able to look upon the past with the fullest impartiality, even if he takes the most active part in the practical class-struggle. This practical occupation can only have the good effect of sharpening

* The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte.

his view of historical phenomena without feeling any need for glorifying or damning any part of it. He knows that whatever the strivings and fate of past movements may have been, they can affirm nothing for the prospects of the modern proletariat who fight and work in a quite different situation.

Has history then nothing of practical value for the Labour movement? Is historical study merely a matter of interest for antiquarians? No such conclusion follows. The Labour movement cannot dispense with historical knowledge. A class that needs to move, must be conscious that *movement* is the very nature of history. Have we not, time and again, seen to what fruitless ends, the efforts of our class have been directed, precisely because of the absence of the true historical spirit, because leaders attempted to navigate the vessel of Labour according to the directions of an obsolete chart? The great practical lesson which the application of Marx's method to the study of history yields to us is that the channel of history has continually changed, that in the navigable passage of yesterday reefs and shallows have since formed themselves. The navigators upon the sea of social life must, therefore, be continually taking soundings in order that they may not steer on to the rocks or stand in the shallows. In short, the historical method bequeathed to us by him whose centenary we celebrate today, make us recognise, that the success of our practical activities depends upon how far our organisations and tactics are based upon a correct appreciation of the existing reality.

Our educational movement has good reason to take a leading part in the Marxian centenary. Those of us who were fortunate in participating in the early stages of the Plebs and the College, can well recall our first association with Marx's thought and can especially appreciate its great influence upon the inauguration and elaboration of our movement. If we may speak of a founder of independent working-class education, truly that founder was Karl Marx. It is precisely his "method" that characterises the essential core of our educational outlook. It is this "materialist conception" which distinguishes our education from all bourgeois forms of education including that confusion-creating education of the W.E.A. In the true sense of the word, it is *our* method which is impartial. Impartial because it is objective and impersonal. It makes history speak for itself. Yet we are also, at the same time, independent and partisan. Independent because it is necessary to stand above all bourgeois prejudices in order to investigate social relations in the impartial scientific spirit. Partisan, because this independent investigation can only be carried out by a part of society, by a party or class that has no interest in preserving the existing system, or, therefore, in distorting the truth about that system, that in the words of Marx, "has nothing to lose but its chains," and, therefore, can the more easily bring itself into line

with the course of the historical forces. Those who rail at us for being narrow propagandists should really address their railleries to history itself. History itself is the real propagandist. At one time she propagated feudalism, at another and later time capitalism, and now she works and speaks for a new social order. This is just what our "broad" educationalists can never understand, and never will understand so long as they lack the "method" which penetrates below the dust on the surface of social affairs to the deepest foundations. They may well be broad, since it is a breadth that is due to a lack of depth.

Shortly before his death, Paul Lafargue, the illustrious son-in-law of Marx, wrote me expressing his delight at the formation and progress of our educational movement. He was sure that Marx would have rejoiced at this new development in the class-struggle. When Marx said, "Workers of the world, unite!" wrote Lafargue he realised the necessity for this unity in the field of education. At a time like this, when the workers of the world are flung against each other in battle array, the need for a unifying thought is impressed upon us with irresistible force. The greatest service we can render to the cause of our class the world over, a cause which is identical with the cause of international peace and solidarity, is to direct our efforts with redoubled activity to the extension of our educational work. And that also is the grandest monument that we can erect to the memory of the mind-emancipating Marx.

W.W.C.

Marx—The Man

MAY 5th, 1818 and March 14th, 1883—the start and the finish of the life of Karl Marx. About many human beings no more deserves to be said; no great cause ever set their minds aflame. Even millions of other noble men and women are forgotten by us who benefit by their efforts, just as, in surveying the huge chalk cliffs, we are inclined to ignore the untold millions of insects who built them. But because the name of Marx is synonymous with Socialism, and because in studying and praising his works we are advancing our cause, the name of Marx will never die; it will never be condemned to obscurity or "fade into nothingness." Despite the scant appreciation and the brief mention now given by orthodox compilers of biographical dictionaries, when the pillars of past and modern times have crumbled, when many bubble reputations have burst, when many of the now supposedly great have disappeared, "on the wrecks of thrones in the midst of the freed" the name of Marx will be honoured as being that of the man who first brought Socialism from a world of philosophic speculation and placed it in the hands of its true bearer—the wage-working class.

The worth of the works of Marx often obscures Marx the Man. Yet, no teacher should be short of lesson material while the life of this great hero is not fully known.

How many fond parents have seen their children topple over all the castles they built for their future. How many hens have watched with serious misgivings their ducklings take to strange waters. Pleasant it is when the strife between the new and the old does not cause personal ruptures though pain is almost unavoidable. Skipping Spargo's account of the home environment, the schooldays and courtship of Marx, on p. 26 of his *Life*, we are told :

"Like her husband, Mrs. Marx was pained by the radical and revolutionary tendencies which her son early displayed, but whereas the father died when Karl was about 20 years of age, and was thus spared the pain of witnessing the revolutionary activities of his stormy life, and the poverty and martyrdom which these brought upon him, she lived until 1863, all through the worst period of her son's struggle. Thus she lived to know the name of her child, her bright and happy Karl, was a terror to the Governments of Europe ; that he had kindled fires of revolt which could not be extinguished by force ; that he was hounded from land to land, an exile from his Fatherland, persecuted and feared, but often hungry to the verge of starvation. Even the knowledge that he was a great scholar, acknowledged to be one of the most powerful and original thinkers of his time, could not compensate her for the pain and suffering she was thus obliged to endure. . . . It was the irony of life that the son who kindled a mighty hope in the hearts of unnumbered thousands of his fellow human beings, a hope that is inspiring millions to-day, who speak his name with reverence and love, should be able to do that only by destroying his mother's hope and happiness in her son, that every step he took should fill her heart with a great agony."

From Marx the son and truthful student, with his mental struggles over the ultimate questions, we come to Marx the husband, father and children's friend. Wilhelm Liebknecht bears witness to "the singular beauty and purity of Marx's family life, his almost sublime devotion to his wife," his Puritanical displeasure at doubtful jests and shady stories, and his attachment to, and romps with, his own and other children. Spargo also devotes several pages (*ibid.* 186, 187, 188) to Marx's passionate fondness for children, and how his own privations were deepened because of theirs.

"He wrote almost always with the children running in and out of the room, sometimes while he wrote pretending to be their stubborn horse, receive their whippings and scoldings with the utmost good nature and patience."

To come to another phase of his activities, how many of us Plebeians would have liked to have been in the rooms in Great Windmill Street when Marx was giving lessons upon political economy. We are told by Liebknecht :

"Marx proceeded methodically. He stated a proposition—the shorter the better—and then demonstrated it in a lengthier explanation, endeavouring with utmost care to avoid all expressions incomprehensible to the labourers. Then he requested his audience to

question him. If this was not done he commenced to examine them, and he did this with such pedagogic skill that no flaw, no misunderstanding, escaped him . . . he had all the qualities of a good teacher. He also made use of the blackboard, on which he wrote the formulas among them those familiar to all of us from the beginning of *Capital*."

It will come as a pleasant surprise to many persons who talk about "economic (!) Socialists," and who picture Marx and his followers as being absurdly narrow in their reading and outlook, to know that Marx was well versed in Shakespeare, knew Dante and Homer, and liked to quote Whitman. His materialism was not mechanical; he never mistook religion for *the* enemy indeed in this realm of thought, while never concealing his own disbelief, he was never full of "the thin sour wine of a crude and absolute logic" which would provoke needless pain, but was "tolerant of the religious beliefs and opinions of others . . ."

Bearing in mind recent Russian happenings, it is interesting to find that in the '70's and '80's Marx and Engels engaged with others in discussing whether Russia would be able to avoid capitalism and leap from the *mir* to the Social Commonwealth. Spargo (p. 245) quotes their joint reply: "*The sole possible answer at this time (1882) is this: If the Russian Revolution is the signal for the labour revolution in the West, so that both complete each other, the modern Russian Communal landownership might become the basis for a Communistic development.*" Alas! the West has not replied to the wonderful appeals; "the signal" has been shown in vain.

The thinker and the fighter were combined in Marx. The writing of *Capital* and his other works, his forced visits to the pawnbroker, his command over many languages, his premature death, and a thousand and one personal details are mixed up with his public work for the International, his relations to the Chartists and to the London Trades Council, his constant guidance of the German movement, his attitude to the Crimean and American Wars, and other events involving a thorough grip of 19th Century happenings.

Especially in this Centenary year, no Socialist should remain unacquainted with this man as well as his message. One is saddened to think of this ogre of capitalism being refused a situation as a railway clerk because of the illegibility of his writing. Mention of this brings to mind our indebtedness to Mrs. Marx, who not only shared the pains of poverty and exile without a selfish murmur, but also re-wrote her husband's M.S.S. for the printer. Again, Marx cannot be thought of apart from Engels, who, by intellectual co-operation and financial aid, rendered such magnificent help. According to Aveling (Intro. to *Students' Marx*) Marx was even greater than Darwin to whom he was always proud to be compared. His boundless exertions as a social scientist in gathering "the bricks and mortar" for his works is only equalled by his strenuous unceasing activity as a polemicist and agitator. Mistakes he made

and absolute originality he never claimed. But he had that clearer perception of truth, rightly termed genius, to which a living monument is being erected—the world-wide Socialist Movement. Marx saw that the mere changing of the heads would not alter the bureaucratic nature of government or make unnecessary the really vital educational propaganda and personal study. His heart would have rejoiced to see the phenomenal success of independent working class education. And we, in this Centenary year, should strive to hasten this movement, repeating what the Marx faction said in 1850: "Let us organise to educate and agitate, and educate to agitate and organise."

MARK STARR.

Marxism and Criminology

MANY bourgeois thinkers sneer at the social theories of Marxism, because, they contend, it is unable to explain every detail in the great complex problem of human existence. Marx and Engels never made any extravagant claims for their historical and economic theories. They conscientiously realised that their contribution to Sociology was not a one-blanket affair destined to cover every phase of human life, with its myriad and many-sided problems. To them, the materialistic conception of history and of value were *guiding threads*, by means of which the tortuous paths of the past and present could be followed.

Whatever the shortcomings and limitations of Marxism may be, it is *the method* which has yielded the best results in the hands of those whose work it is to indicate the laws of social evolution. Because, after all, the great work of Marx and Engels rests, not in the number of original contributions which they made to Social Science; their true greatness lies in the fact that they worked into a synthetic proposition the great work of brilliant predecessors. Just as the modern proletariat is the heir to the fruits of the economic evolution of the past, so is it the historic trustee of the mental development of the bygone ages. And as the capitalist class is forced to hamper the logical development of the modern economic process, so its bourgeois "intellectuals" are compelled to pervert the logical culmination of the many brilliant contributions made to Social Science. Indeed, it may be stated that as the economic-historic development created the modern revolutionary working class, so, in the same measure social evolution brought with it a cultural growth which is essentially revolutionary. Marxism is the intellectual, revolutionary counterpart of the technical process which is in revolt because it is fettered by the capitalist mode of production. Here, we observe, that the economic process, ripe for revolution, converges with a mental growth which can only expand by being freed from the intellectual dogmas at present being reinforced by bourgeois professors.

Marxism is the liberating force which enables the human mind to survey the past and present. Marxism is greater than its founders, Marx and Engels, because in the hands of others it has achieved wonderful results in many branches of Social Science. Marxists have done brilliant work in their studies of Religion, Marriage, Law, Economics, Social Institutions, and Philosophy. Slowly and surely other branches of Social Science are being investigated by the rising generation of Marxists. The proof of this statement is verified by drawing the attention of our readers to the recently published work on Criminology * by our esteemed Dutch comrade—Dr. Bongers.

The orthodox and bourgeois interpretation of crime begins by seeking to trace the *cause* of criminality to certain peculiar, unborn, characteristics inherent in the criminal. Thus, when a crime is committed the individual is punished and placed in prison where, according to capitalist ethics, it is deemed he will reflect upon his conduct and strive to do better when liberated. Bongers, true to the Marxian method, *examines the criminal in relation to society*. He shows that under earlier social systems—such as Primitive Communism—there was no phenomenon comparable to modern crime. This remarkable fact was due to the tribal *mode of production*, which, being communal, developed the spirit of socialisation within the tribe. But with the use of private property, and with the growth of social systems based upon classes and exploitation, there slowly rises a condition of affairs wherein the interests of the individual do not coincide with the interests of society. Instead of noble social impulses being developed, instead of tribal kinship and fraternity, we get the growth of a new social spirit which manifests itself in individualism, competition and egoism. This leads to everyone considering only his *own* welfare, and not the welfare of *society*. We find, therefore, that crime is not a question of the *individual*; it is rather a problem which must be examined from the *social* standpoint. The truth of this generalisation is realised when we remember that it is in modern Capitalism, wherein the individual struggle for existence is fiercest, that crime ranks as a conspicuous phenomenon.

Our author has no difficulty in showing, by means of elaborate statistical tables and charts, that crime cannot be stated in the terms of individual, inborn characteristics. If crime is caused by biological variations, then why did these variations not produce criminals under Primitive Communism, and why has crime only ranked as a prominent problem since the use of private property, and especially with the advent of modern Capitalism? If biologi-

* *Criminality and Economic Conditions*. By Prof. Bongers. Price 21/- net. Published by Heineman, London. (May be ordered from the S.L. Press, 50 Renfrew Street, Glasgow.)

cal variation, which undoubtedly takes place among individuals, is the cause of crime, why do statistics demonstrate that the majority of criminals belong to the propertiless class? We cannot assume that biological variations take place only in the ranks of the working class. These variations occur in every class. The question thus rises—Why are the greatest number of criminals found among the proletariat?

The answer to this question leads Dr. Bonger to examine the economic structure of modern Capitalism. That examination—which is a brilliant exposition of the Marxian theory of value—shows that the working class is propertiless, and is sold in the Labour Market like ordinary pieces of merchandise. Being exploited and robbed of the major portion of their product, living a life of insecurity and poverty in the midst of plenty; being miserably housed, clothed, and fed; being badly educated, humiliated and degraded, it is small wonder that such conditions drive many workers to crime. So well is this aspect of the case dealt with that long statistical tables are quoted and scrutinised. These tables prove that the high price of grain in agricultural countries intensifies crime just as industrial depression makes for crime in the highly capitalised nations. In this connection our author points out that wars generally reduce the number of crimes because it means increased employment for wage-earners and a temporary modification of the fierce industrial struggle for existence. Considering that the book under review was written prior to 1914, it will be seen that Bonger's analysis of criminality is at once sound and scientific. But the modification of European crime since 1914 cannot be explained upon the basis of inborn, individual characteristics; it can, however, be understood as a result of the temporary and abnormal economic conditions created by the war. The war, thus, completely vindicates the economic interpretation of crime as outlined by Bonger, but the war as completely smashes the bourgeois criminologists who seek to find the cause of crime in the variations of individuals.

Dr. Bonger does not deny that variations take place among individuals. What he does emphatically deny is that these variations are the cause of crime. Thus, he examines the position of two persons who may have a mania to possess expensive jewellery and clothes. First of all, we must realise that tastes and social appetites are historically developed, and that, under social systems based upon class exploitation, luxury becomes one of the methods of consuming the wealth plundered from the workers; secondly, if one of the luxurious, craving individuals is wealthy, the desire for expensive articles of adornment may be satisfied without any resort to crime. On the other hand, the desire for articles of luxury may provoke the second individual to commit a crime, especially if that person is propertiless. The cause of crime is not to be found,

therefore, in the variations of individuals, since, in the case of the two individuals just examined the same craving only makes *one* of them commit a crime. The cause of the crime by the second individual is not only to be explained as a result of poverty. The cause was also provoked by *a mode of production based upon exploitation* which develops luxurious tastes, but denies to members of the proletariat, an opportunity to satisfy them. In the same way it is possible for two men to be born with weak lungs if one is a member of the propertied class, and is well fed, clothed, and lives under good healthy conditions, he may live to a ripe old age. But if the other one belongs to the working class, and is badly fed, poorly clothed, and is forced to work hard in a large, dusty mill, he will undoubtedly die from consumption. Death was not caused by the weak lungs—because the wealthy man lived—it was caused by the social class and the economic conditions under which the second man lived. So it is with crime. Individual variations, or weaknesses, may make it difficult for some people to withstand acts which may lead to crime but the fundamental fact which determines whether a criminal act is committed or not is generally due, in the last analysis, to the pressure of the environment. Our author says:—

as always, it is the environment that is the cause of the crimes taking place; it is the individual differences which explain in part *who* is the one to commit them.

Thus, we may say with Quetelet that it is society which prepares the crime, but it is the weaker moral types who commit them.

The economic explanation of criminality is clearly seen in what are called sexual crimes. Under Capitalism, with its He towns and She towns; with its degrading home and family conditions; with its enforced inferiority of woman and sexual demoralisation; and with its drunkenness and immorality—these are the conditions which provoke assaults upon sex and breed prostitution. These crimes vary with the very seasons.

When considering political crimes Dr. Bonger completely annihilates the theories of Professor Lombroso. Our author, who clearly understands what the State and its function is, says:—

The origin of the State, and the possibility of political crimes, are bound up with a certain phase of the development of the economic life, that is to say, with the origin of marked contrasts of fortune. Those who had monopolised the power in the State defended their position by laws whose infraction was threatened with severe penalties. Economic conditions, however, undergo considerable changes, and when these have reached a certain degree, the oppressed class, having become the more powerful, breaks the political power of the ruling class and seizes it for itself. If the dominant class does all that it can to maintain its position unimpaired to the last moment, it will necessarily happen that this development will lead to political crimes.

The action of the State in defining what a crime is reveals the class nature of criminal legislation. It was a Liberal statesman, and a pacifist-quaker, who declared that adulteration is a legitimate

form of competition. We know that an adulterator is more dangerous to society than a burglar, but so perverted is the morality of Capitalism that whereas the former may be put in the House of Lords the latter may be put in prison. Likewise, while a woman who sells her body becomes a criminal a man who sells his brain and honour may become a Premier—and this despite the fact that the one is forced to do it for bread, while the latter may do it to satisfy his egotistical lust. We need not doubt which is the greater criminal, because some psychologists assure us that the brain is higher and nobler than the flesh. Capitalist morality, like the economic structure of the social system, is perverted. It is dishonest to pick a pocket in a tram car, but one may purchase a knighthood from the proceeds of a successful "corner" in wheat. Capitalist commercial ethics is based upon the legend that "Honesty is the best policy." This, as Bonger points out, is not a moral honesty, but an honesty that pays—an honesty which is not of a social nature, but a precept which is maintained only so long as it is to the individuals advantage.

The only solution to the problem of criminality is to establish socialism. The Industrial Republic of Labour, while fundamentally affecting the economic structure of society, will have an equally important influence upon morality and the social impulses. Socialism will create an educated and cultured community; it will force all to realise that their own best interests are bound up in the interests of all; it will replace competition by emulation; and it will demonstrate the falsity of egoism and weakness of individualism by showing that the happiness of one does not begin with himself, but radiates from the happiness of all. Socialism will not destroy crimes committed by pathological individuals, but these "will come rather within the sphere of the physician than that of the judge."

In concluding his brilliant study Dr. Bonger says:—

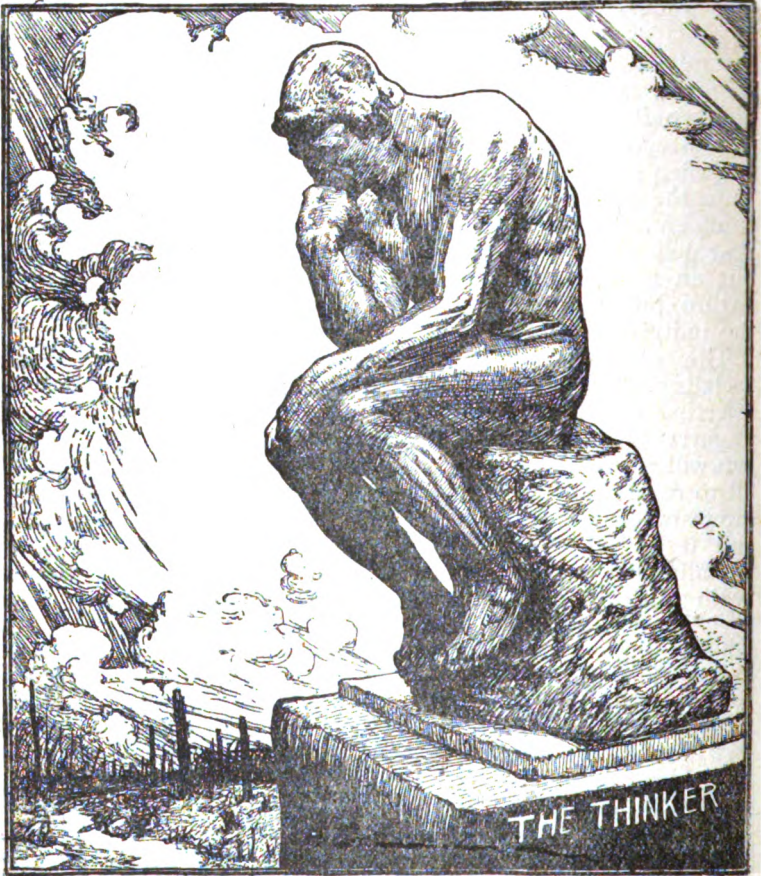
"It is society that prepares the crime," says the adage of Quetelet. For all those who have reached this conclusion, and are not insensible to the sufferings of humanity, this statement is sad, but contains a ground of hope. It is sad, because society punishes severely those who commit the crime which she herself has prepared. It contains a ground hope, since it promises to humanity the possibility of some day delivering itself from one of its most terrible scourges.

WM. PAUL.

MR. DENNIS HIRD AND THE N.U.R.

Continuing our paragraph in last month's issue, friends will be glad to learn that several branches have sent in resolutions for the Agenda of the forthcoming A.G.M., urging the payment by the N.U.R. of their half-share of the arrears of salary due to Mr. Hird for his services at the Central Labour College. It is hoped that all branches will instruct their delegates to support the motion, and thus right a grave, but, no doubt, unintentional, injustice. If any comrade thinks that his branch has not the full facts before it, a brief concise statement will be posted to him on receipt of a postcard addressed "Plebeian," 33, The Grove, Hammersmith, W. 6.

DEDICATED to the memory of three great Artists, Rodin, the Revolutionary Sculptor, Swinburne, the Revolutionary Poet, and Marx, the Revolutionary Thinker.



Are ye so strong, O kings, O strong men? Nay,
Waste all ye will and scatter all ye may,
Yet one thing is there that ye shall not slay,
Even thought, that fire nor iron can affright.

The wordless and invisible thought that goes
Free throughout time as north or south wind blows,
Free throughout space as east or west sea flows,
And all dark things before it are made bright,

A Tribute

Out here in Lombardy, with the world in flux, one wants stable things to cling to, and I never knew the darkest days or situations to be capable of suppressing the feeling of security induced by Karl Marx. One clutches elementals. One realises phases of hope, despair, and for comfort one remembers the constancy, the development of the principles of a life that weathered the revolutionary changes of the '30's, '40's and '70's unmoved, inflexible—the gathering force of the evolution of a system. Corrections there were, certainly, of details, but of principles, never. That is how Marx strikes me.

I met Marx in 1908. True, he had been dead then some twenty-three years, as we fallaciously reason. Who can be dead when his influence appeals to, lives with one, as intimately as the closest of friends? He was as alive to me then as my best friend—how dead, then? One need not be a spiritualist to love the presence of the departed. The bodily form called Marx I never met, never shall; that has passed into oblivion. The comprehending thought, the understanding nature, the compelling person of reason lives with me almost every moment of my being. In that sense, the idea is immortal, based upon the foundations of our social reality. That is the standing upon its feet of the Hegelian concept—reality expressed, the idea, real. I have tried for years to get a feeling of reality in religion, to feel that God and the Christ were of me, with me, but the reality never came. I strove earnestly, but never attained. But I remember the first reading of the Communist Manifesto, how the pamphlet appealed to something in me, some revolt against things as they are, purely due to feeling, not at all to reason, something more passionate than ever I had felt about religion. I did not understand; I felt the appeal as an answer to my yearnings. I had many sentimental gratifications from the association with the name of Marx afterwards, but the appeal never became reason till I got a grip of the philosophy in 1908. It is said Marx wrote "The Bible of the Working Class," and I have joined in a laugh at the phrase, but what else is the basis of religion than Belief and Promise? There is this difference, while we, in common with all believers, looked for an early fruition, we never altered in our belief even when the Promise seemed to fail. That is the difference between pure Belief and reasoned Belief; when one *knows* one can wait, can realise the folly of a prevision by date or time. Not that this distinguishes any school of believers—the Christian looks to the miracle of general individual conversion, and the Fatalist to the Event. We are neither Fatalists nor Believers in miracles—simply people who know the inevitableness, logically, of the end; the inevitability of social evolution, of development and progress based upon material needs as the stepping stones to our higher selves, as against the appeal of the Individual, Fate, God, or Self.

G.S.

A Would-be Catholic Critic

WHILE glancing through a recent number of that anaemic journal, the *Highway*, the writer noticed *Marxian Socialism*, by W. Paschal Larkin, O.S.F.C., M.A., with Introductory Essay by Prof. Alfred Rahilly, among the "Books Received." This apparently is No. 3 in a "University and Labour Series," edited by T. Smiddy, M.A., and A. Rahilly, M.A.; comes from Ireland, and is sold by P. S. King & Son, Ltd. (6d.). The subject of the book, the alphabetical puzzle after the author's name, and the book's source, aroused a curiosity which was indirectly satisfied by the generosity of a Catholic, anxious to bring it within the notice of persons interested in Socialist theories.

Quite unaware of its contents, the writer began the 19-page Essay by Mr. Rahilly. He commended "this brochure of a promising young writer . . . a welcome change from merely vacuous academical refutations." (!) Plebeians will be pleased to know that . . . "friend and foe alike must admit that Marx has a unique influence in social science. Hence the subject of this pamphlet has a perennial interest." To Rahilly—

The very name of Marx seems to conjure up the figure of an atheistic prophet pitilessly unmasking the organized spoliation of the worker and ominously preaching a proletarian uprising. With statistics drawn from blue books, with vivid pictures exhumed from Reports of Royal Commissions, with masterly economic analysis and unsparing irony, Marx has delineated for posterity the horrors of English capitalism.

Yet Mr. Rahilly's next few pages show a slight confusion regarding the advances made by Marx upon the findings of the classical economists. His tributes are now qualified. He states that Marx got his idea of socially necessary labour-time from the Cork man, William Thompson, but fails to notice how the Labour Theory of Value is by Marx used to explain how surplus-value is created, and the advance the latter made upon the Utopian Socialists' analysis by differentiating between labour-power and labour. Rahilly's confusion is illustrated by the fact that on p. 3 he claims that Thomson, besides improving upon Petty, Smith, and Ricardo, by taking "socially necessary" instead of "particular" labour as the measure of value, and by reducing "skilled labour" into "multiplied simple labour," also "was the first to enunciate the principle of *decreasing utility*." Now can our Professor have it both ways? Nothing written in these pages concerning Thompson's findings alters the fact that, while he was the ablest exponent of the Owenite system, he was a Utopian wishing to make labourers into capitalists in ideal communities.

The Professor then proceeds to erect an interpretation of history which excludes every factor but the economic one; and welcomes the schematizations of the Guild Socialists as indicating

the constructive failure of Marxism. Out of his conjuror's hat come straw bogies which he triumphantly destroys. And this Introduction (as well as the book itself, with its manifold foot-notes) convinces one of the wealth of Socialist literature, if not of our authors' understanding of the same.

The writer proper, Mr. Larkin, is a Catholic first and a Social Reformer afterwards. That religion is a working hypothesis he never seems to doubt. He does not admit that "revealed religion" may be as untrue as revealed astrology or alchemy. The truth of the former is the premise of all. In his Preface, Marxian Socialism is identified with State Socialism, and so he prophesies a reaction against both after the war. A reaction against State Capitalism there certainly will be. The first chapter deals with "Marx and His Predecessors"; these are the rationalists of the 18th century; William Godwin, Fourier, Owen, Thompson, Hodgskin, Sismondi, St. Simon, Smith, and Ricardo are noticed, besides the German philosophers and thinkers. Mr. Larkin is aware of the danger arising to certain interests by the fact that ". . . scarcely any modern presentation of Socialism confines itself merely to setting forth an economic or social programme, but contains, in addition, a whole view of life." In other words, the rising class is bringing with it its own philosophy and morals.

Mr. Larkin then examines Historical Materialism, and is eager to know what will be the dynamic of evolution when "the class war" is ended. If Mr. Larkin has no idea, if his "revelation" falls short in this particular, he must "Wait and See." He gives Marx credit for making history more than "past politics" or "a narrating of past events," and says "The material conditions of the people in any age now rank higher in the historian's estimate than the passing whims and ambitions of rulers." Yet he rejects the economic interpretation as an *ultimate* one. He is out for the *noumena*; wants *absolute* and *ultimate* knowledge; and applies the causality concept to the Universe. He should continue his investigations, grapple again with the relations between matter and mind, the material and the ideal, by the aid of the working-class philosopher who wrote (p. 391, *Positive Outcome of Philosophy*)—

. . . . the world in which everything has its adequate cause, is nevertheless, including consciousness and the faculty of thought, without beginning, end, and cause, that is, a thing justified in itself and by itself. The law of the adequate cause applies only to pictures made by the human mind.

Space and time are too precious to be wasted in a detailed examination of Chap. III. dealing with the Marxian Theory of Value. Mr. Larkin confesses to a difficulty in defining capital, but will not agree that it is a "command over unpaid labour." The usual chestnuts about abstinence, directive ability, non-reproducible goods, decreasing rate of profit, the supposed Great Contradiction,

and so on appear. The everyday experience of a wage-worker, and his struggle with the representative of the capitalist over surplus-value, place him in a better position for understanding economic problems than University professors who, consciously or unconsciously, kick up a dust and then complain that they cannot see. And clear ideas concerning these matters are the necessary barrage for the working-class advance.

Chapter IV. is devoted to "Neo-Marxism and Later Developments." Not a word is given concerning Bernstein's recantation when dealing with Revisionism. The statement that "Statistics of production go to show that even in the most industrially developed countries the smaller businesses are responsible for the greater part of the total output of production," awaits proof. Amalgamation is the order of the day in the coal mining industry, at any rate.

Ignorant Plebeians will vent a sigh of relief and ejaculate "Now we know!" when they read:—

Society is not divided into two warring classes with interests irreconcilably opposed. The antagonism which exists between the higher and lower orders of society is not inevitable; it is unnatural and abnormal. As Leo XIII. has wisely said, "The great mistake made in the matter now under consideration is to take up with the notion that class is naturally hostile to class and that the wealthy and working-men are intended by nature to live in mutual combat. So irrational and so false is this view, that the direct contrary is the truth. Just as the symmetry of the human frame is the resultant of the disposition of the bodily members, so in a State is it ordained by nature that these two classes should dwell in harmony and agreement, and should, as it were, groove into one another, so as to maintain the body politic. Each needs the other: Capital cannot do without Labour nor Labour without Capital. Mutual agreement results in pleasantness of life and the beauty of good order; while perpetual conflict necessarily produces confusion and savage barbarity."

Capitalist, freethinker, and the Pope, whatever else they may disagree about, agree in this, that the class-struggle does not exist,

Mr. Larkin's larking ends with the remedy of peasant proprietorship and "moral culture of the individual." If this is what the University has to offer Labour we shall still have to regard such institutions as being unreliable sources of information!

MARK STARR.

NOW READY.

International Socialist Library.

- VI. **Karl Marx: His Life and Teaching.** By Zelda Kahan-Coates.
- VII. **Wage-Labour and Capital.** By Karl Marx. With Introduction by Frederick Engels. (New Translation by Florence Baldwin).
- VIII. **Marx and Modern Capitalism.** By J. T. Walton Newbold, M.A.

Twopence each. Postage ½d. extra.

**BRITISH SOCIALIST PARTY, 21a, MAIDEN LANE, STRAND,
LONDON, W.C. 2.**

News of the Movement

The ordinary "news" is suspended till next month, but attention is called to the following Marxian Centenary celebrations, and Plebeians are asked to make a note of them.

* * * * *

EDINBURGH.—LEITH and MUSSELBURGH will take part in Marx Centenary, particulars from Bruce Whyte, 55 Albert Street.

* * * * *

LEEDS.—Plebs League will co-operate with S.L.P. to demonstrate in Victoria Square on May 5th. Speakers, Lew Davies and T. Jackson.

MANCHESTER.—Plebs Manchester District Demonstration on May 5th at 6.30. Speakers, Walton Newbold, W. Gee, W. LeMaine, and others. All are invited.

* * * * *

BIRMINGHAM.—Write F. B. Silvester, 8, Evelyn Road, Sparkhill. A Demonstration was being planned, but news has not come through about final arrangements.

* * * * *

The LONDON celebration, on Sunday, May 5th, will take the form of a procession to Highgate Cemetery, leaving the Archway Tavern at 12.45 p.m. After appropriate tributes have been placed on the grave, the procession will return to the Archway Tavern, and proceed thence, at 2.30 p.m., to Finsbury Park to take part in the great May Day—Marx Centenary Celebration at 3.30.

* * * * *

Sunday, May 5th, is the Centenary Anniversary of the birth of Karl Marx, and Social-Democrats all over the world will assemble on that day to honour the memory of the Founder of the Workers' International and the father of modern Scientific Socialism.

In addition to the meetings and demonstrations which will take place on May 5th in all parts of the country, a central committee has been formed in London, consisting of delegates of the B.S.P., S.L.P., Plebs League and Communist Club (of which Marx was one of the founders), with the assistance of the London First of May Celebration Committee.

The objects for which the Marx Centenary Celebration Committee has been formed are to organise the celebration in London, where the remains of Marx repose in Highgate Cemetery, and to establish a Fund to enable the Centenary to be commemorated in some permanent and appropriate manner.

A special appeal for funds is therefore now made to carry out the objects of the Marx Centenary Celebration Committee. Branches of Socialist bodies and labour and working-class organisations generally, are asked to make grants from their funds and to take collections at propaganda and other meetings. The bodies organising Marx Centenary demonstrations in the provinces on May 5th are urged to devote a part of the proceeds of collections at such demonstrations in aid of this Special Fund. Personal donations from individual Socialists are asked for to the most generous possible extent. The Committee calls for a response to the appeal that will be worthy of British Socialism.

All contributions should be sent to The Secretary, Marx Centenary Celebration Committee, 21a Maiden Lane, Strand, London, W.C. 2.

Plebs Publications—And an Appeal

We offer our sincere apologies for the delay in publishing Mark Starr's Second Edition. We have had innumerable difficulties in getting the book out, paper shortage, scarcity of labour, and delays in printing, and so claim the indulgence of those who are anxiously waiting, or trying to still the clamour

of those who paid for their copy weeks ago. We assure our agents that their troubles are as nothing compared to ours. We have actually had to send two people their money back, and everyone knows that a crisis has arisen before that happens! We hope the parcels will all be out within the next three weeks. Hope springs eternal in the human breast.

We want to make a special appeal to our women comrades. The new Man-Power Bill is beginning to make inroads amongst our agents, and wherever possible we want the women to take up the parcel of *Plebs* and sell—sell—sell! Now more than ever we must keep our organisation intact and this will depend upon the spirit, and not only upon the spirit, but upon the courage and hard work of the women. Household duties are particularly worrying just now, and they take up more time than ever, we know that; then with the men away and a living to be earned we hesitate to ask anything of the hard pressed women of the movement.

The garrison that is keeping the flag flying at Headquarters is very small, smaller than it has ever been before; the will to fight and win is as strong as ever, but this will to win through is wasted without the backing of the hard work of individual supporters and branches. That backing has never yet failed, and we feel it will not fail now.

If your man has been taken away to jail or drawn into the military machine, take his parcel of *Plebs*—if he sold them in his branch, get permission to go and sell them while he is away.

The Education Movement is essentially a woman's movement, and we want our women to rally to this appeal.

We must have an efficient and flourishing magazine and movement ready for the time when "the boys come home." They are expecting it. A comrade wrote the other day from the trenches:—

"The only thing that keeps me going with a good heart is the knowledge that our movement goes on and grows."

Let us keep it growing. Let us be women who not only watch and wait, but women who work.

"O why and for what are we waiting? while our brothers droop and die,

And on every wind of the heavens a wasted life goes by.

They are gone; there is none can undo it, nor save our souls from the curse;

But many a million cometh, and shall they be better or worse?

Come, then, since all things call us, the living and the dead,
And o'er the weltering tangle a glimmering light is shed.

Come, then, let us cast off fooling and put by ease and rest,
For the CAUSE alone is worthy till the good days bring the best.

Come, join in the only battle wherein no man can fail,
Where whose fadeth and dieth, yet his deed shall still prevail.

Ah! come, cast off all fooling for this, at least, we know:
That the Dawn and the Day is coming, and forth the banners go."

The *Plebs* banner has been kept mast-high during these last stormy years. Shall it be lowered just because the men are taken away.

Sure of the answer, we issue this appeal.

WINIFRED HORRABIN.

IMPORTANT.

This number speaks for itself. If you think it good, send us something to defray the double expense. We could not charge extra because of our annual subscriptions, but we knew no one would mind sending a donation once they had seen this number !

Marx Dead, Indeed !

WHAT position does Marx occupy in the social struggle to-day ? We think his system all important for guidance in our proposed next steps, *i.e.*, on point of principles involved. What capitalism and its apologists think is evident from the continuous return to the "slaying" of him, all the outcry against pacifists, C.O.'s, pro-Germans, syndicalists, &c. All these attacks return with unfailing regularity to the hated name of Marx. The *Times'* articles of recent date called upon all the supporters of Law and Order to sink their differences and turn to the "settling" of the Labour Unrest, the most potent cause of which was Marxism. The *Times* makes particular reference to our classes in South Wales, greatly alarmed at this recrudescence of the Dead—and this after being officially informed of the internment *so many times* by the spokesmen of bourgeoisie economics.

There was Bohm-Bowerk's *The Close of the Marxian System*. How modest ! One would not object if the performance was but equal to the title. The preface modestly informed us that Bohm-Bowerk had even more effectively "done up" Marx in a larger work, but both books are out of print these many years. What a commentary on "value" ! So that Bohm-Bowerk killed Marx twice—one bird with two stones ! There are other hired slayers too, ranging down or up to Mallock. Probably every Oxford professor feels a personal bias against Marx since the reference to Senior was completed in Chap. IX. of *Capital* ! Senior's complaint was extensive ; Mallock's is intensive ; it relates to The Few. This Few he (Mallock) first made famous in his book on Socialism. It is not my intention to deal with that effort, D. de Leon's *Marx on Mallock* has effectively disposed of its main points, *viz.* : That Marx ignores "directive ability," basing his whole concept of the creation of value upon *manual* labour. Mallock, whatever his futility, sees that so far as Labour Unrest represents principles, those are Marxian, and recognising himself as official executioner of that criminal he ruthlessly returns to the dead body to still further dissect it. Hence his latest book, *The Limits of Pure Democracy*—the limits of Mr. Mallock would have been a truer title. Its thesis is still The Few, its aim, to prove that the social order can have no stability whose directorate does not represent the Few ! The reviews of this book in the Capitalist press afford

striking evidence of the progress made by our movement since the earlier work appeared. They plainly show that they are impatient with his pedantic treatment of the subject, and they criticise the critic. The necessity for and the merits of the Few have been proved, they say, but cut the panegyrics and tell us how we are to meet recent and growing developments among the many. Increments to Capital arise from Directive Ability! We know *that*, but what is to replace argument, to counteract the rising tide of Labour Unrest? Capitalist apologists realise, in short, that the matter has left the sphere of mere argument and reached the stage of action. They are puzzled.

Our movement has about completed a cycle. With the change from handicraft to manufacture and mechanical devices of the simplest type, a change more radical than any effected during this war, the workers answered with Force, riots and smashing of plant. The tide of social progress inevitably and swiftly swept that illogical protest aside. The next stage was a sentimental outburst against the results and methods of the new order, expressed in abortive organisations of workers to reform or revolutionise it, such as Owenism, Chartism, Christian Socialism and the like. The next, is that of argument, discussion, education and organisation, the political side of which as a separate movement is already discredited among the workers. Now a stage has been reached that frankly leaves the bourgeoisie nonplussed. In all the long years during which the class-struggle was conducted theoretically, in which Discussion, Conference, Resolution, was the outward manifestation of Labour agitation, the game was with our opponents leading with all four trumps—Parliament, Law, Press, and Pulpit. They might be beaten theoretically, but the presentation of the case was in their hands—to fake. The game has taken a new turn, our cycle has revolved to its point of departure—Force—but Force with a history, accumulated experience of attempted solutions, gains, &c. plus general social evolution, during which time incidentally the true disciples of Marx have been freed to an ever deeper study and clearer perception of his principles; likewise they have learned to drop the application of them in terms of 1840 to 1883, and to apply them fearlessly to the second decade of the 20th Century. Hence we get Force at the point of effectiveness.

Thus we can appreciate our opponents' hatred of Marxism. They had won the battle with Labour theoretically, by false representation; only to find its fruits elude them.

Thus the *Times* reviewer of Mallock wants to know what they are to answer to the voice from South Wales, *The Miner's Next Step* (surely the most-talked-about pamphlet ever written by one of ourselves) to the Shop Stewards' Movement, and the like. The far-seeing capitalist apologists see that the game has left the political and reached the industrial stage—from Talk to Action, What-

ever sham fights may have been won before cannot be repeated now. Why? Because they know that the real foundation of class society inevitably turns upon the innate, natural superiority of the Few—and the contempt they themselves have brought upon politics and Parliament, the growth of free thought in religion; the recognition of propertied interests in Law, leaves the workers to expose in Industrialism the hollowness of the claims of the Few. They have, too, a lively premonition of the result of this coming power of Industrial Unionism. "A spectre (truly) is haunting Europe," the spectre of Marxism (theories disguised in the working clothes of Industrial Unionism) the public power will lose its political character. . . . "in place of old bourgeois society . . . we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all."

GEO. SIMS.

MORE MARX IN HIGH PLACES.

"We note . . . that the Japanese press is rapidly discovering other outrages, real or imaginary, much further inland (in Siberia), and it may be that these will occur wherever deposits of steam-coal, iron ore, or gold are to be found. History shows that certain minerals have a deplorable influence in certain climates upon racial feeling."—*The Nation*, April 13th, 1913, p. 31.

The Plebs Bookshelf

That this corner of the Magazine is popular we have ample evidence, so that although "J.F.H." is now "Somewhere in France" we feel reluctant to drop Bookshelf altogether. The difficulty would be overcome if Plebeians, whenever they came across suitable paragraphs, or read interesting matter from our point of view, would send a few lines suitable for printing on this page. Many people look for Bookshelf each month, and it would be a pity to drop a popular feature of the Magazine. Remember! a good paragraph is pithy—or, as the Methodists say, "brief, bright and brotherly," and the greatest of these, from the editorial point of view, is brevity.

An interesting little controversy has been proceeding in the *Times Literary Supplement* between the author of a recent book on Russia and its reviewer. The latter, in criticising the book, complained that the author disregarded "the very important part played by Russian literature" in preparing the way for the recent upheaval. The author replied that the literary origins of the revolution were "rather German than Russian, Karl Marx rather than Leo Tolstoy." The reviewer admits the influence of Marx, whose doctrine of a "surplus value" produced by the worker and stolen from him by the

capitalist is "unquestionably a formidable and fertile idea." But he doubts whether the main literary factor in preparing the minds of the masses for the change can have been "an obscurely-worded economic treatise written in German and prohibited in Russia." Well, it is not for an outsider to express opinions on such a question. The particular point in the reviewer's letter, which I would like to quote is his record of the fact that a single publishing house, before the revolution, sold millions of copies of Tolstoy's propagandist stories (*Ivan the Fool* and the others) at prices from a farthing upwards—to the "illiterate peasants." It is interesting, to say the least, to know that the "illiterate" Russian peasant has been buying and reading propagandist literature for years past. Marx in the towns, perhaps, and Tolstoy in the country.

* * * * *

The following quotation will provoke a smile even though it contains an element of truth:—

Karl Marx is much more talked about than read; but his influence on the Social Democrats is fully admitted. To suppose, however, that it was his direct literary influence that dissolved the traditional allegiance of the Russian people to their "Tsar, Faith and Fatherland" is quite unreasonable. He supplied the creed of "Scientific Socialism" to a political party, but that party did not obtain a popular hearing till writers who were more readable had shown the people how deeply they were wronged. This was done most notably by Tolstoy, who himself disapproved of Marx.

Even in England, members of the old Social Democratic Federation were always talking about Marx, but they generally knew him only from Hyndman's popularization, and many of them had first become Socialists under the influence of the non-Marxian Henry George, Blatchford, or perhaps more remotely from Tom Hood's "Song of the Shirt."

How well we know those people who are "always talking about Marx."

* * * * *

The tactics of a governing class fighting with its back to the wall are always well worth studying. And the reviewer gives here a glimpse of these tactics which does not improve one's opinion of organised religion:—

Tolstoy's Tales were frequently subject to confiscation by the Censor and to opposition from the priests and the police. Under such circumstances one of his booklets, eagerly read and rapidly and surreptitiously passed from hand to hand, might have more influence than a hundred of the stale and hackneyed booklets the hawkers still dealt in. . . . The Holy Synod even went to the length of denouncing him in booklets (I have a specimen) which, to secure the widest possible circulation, were got up to pass as new works by Tolstoy! After his play, "Fruits of Culture," had proved a success, the Synod issued the "Fruits of Teaching," by Leo Tolstoy, to defame him!

There is a lesson also. Always read your *Plebs*, or you may find that it is really *Industrial Peace* that has been sent to you in a *Plebs* cover!

* * * * *

I have never spent half-a-crown on *The Round Table*, that brainy quarterly which supplies ideas to "advanced" politicians (and the Knights of which, as W.N. Ewer remarked in the *Herald* some time ago, would also much like

to supply education to the people—a reference, one supposes, to the influence exercised by one or two of them in the higher councils of the W.E.A.) From a review of the current issue, I gather—as from previous reviews—that the doctrines of *The Round Table* are quite characteristically W.E.A.-ish. There is an article, for instance, on "The Three Doctrines in Conflict," which are declared to be the three principles of Prussianism, Revolution, and the Commonwealth. Fear is the principle of Prussianism; and with fear is linked knowledge, *Kultur*, "State-organized and State-edited, employed to found or perpetuate a State tradition or to forward a State purpose." Revolution—Bolshevism—"in its emotional appeal is as old as slavery, in its speculations and projects as old as industrialism." It is Marx and not Mazzini whom the Bolsheviks remember; they would rid the world of knowledge (!), and avowedly base their positions, just as the Prussian does, upon tyrannical force. The "Commonwealth," on the other hand, basing itself upon justice and liberty, must reconstitute its own social customs and institutions, ordering them in the spirit of mutual service. All very pretty, isn't it? And about as satisfying an analysis of the "doctrines in conflict" in modern society as one would gather from an average Anglican sermon or P.S.A. address. In fact, one can only admire the ingenuity with which the *real* principles at issue, as distinct from the "dud" ones, are avoided!

* * * * *

According to his publisher's announcement, Mr. J. M. Robertson, in his latest volume, *The Economics of Progress* (Fisher Unwin), regards the economic science as "a light to the path of social progress." He "defends its claim to follow its own method for its own sake, and vindicate the analysis of Ricardo as against the objections of the "Historical" School, whose own work he welcomes, but does not admit to have reached any new economic truth." I hope it will be possible for one of our own economists to deal at length with the book later. By the way, how many volumes has Mr. Robertson to his credit? They must make a pretty considerable list—and on varied subjects; Free Trade, Free Thought, Biblical Criticism, Shakespearean Criticism, Political Controversy and Political History.

* * * * *

I see that Fisher Unwin announces, among forthcoming publications, a "popular" edition of Mr. Somerset Maugham's slum novel, *Lisa of Lambeth*—the book with which its author first won fame, and the subject-matter of which is in curious contrast to the society drawing-room dramas with which one usually associates his name nowadays. . . . I have recommended Leonard Merrick's short stories (*A Call from the Past*, Nelson Series) in these pages before. Why Merrick is not more widely known and read is, as sundry critics have remarked, somewhat strange. I should like to get hold of a volume or two of the new uniform edition of his works announced by Hodder and Stoughton, each book with an introduction by a well-known writer—G. K. Chesterton, H. G. Wells, Maurice Hewlett, Neil Lyons, and Granville Barker being included in the list. Unfortunately, the new edition is *not* published at a plebeian price. But there are two or three Merricks in the Nelson Series—and he is nearly always worth reading. . . . The best novels

I have struck lately are *The Gadfly*, by E. L. Voynich (Heinemann's 1/- Series) and Arnold Bennett's *Loot of Cities* (Nelson, 1/3). This latter, with its amusing account of the ways in which a millionaire of brains relieved some of his fellow-sufferers of some of their superfluous loot, is distinctly good light reading.

Our own delay over publishing the second edition of Mark Starr's book has been a source of much misgiving, so that we were considerably cheered to read the following in Grant Richard's advertisement in the *Times Literary Supplement* :—

I expressed hopes a fortnight ago that Robert Tressall's "The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists" (2/6 net) would be in the book-shops before the end of this month. I am being reluctantly forced to believe that my hopes will not be realised. *Binders cannot even bring themselves to give promises in these days!* I cannot help wishing that Robert Tressall were here and able to read the many clamorous demands for his work that reach me day by day. Specially in the North is this book eagerly awaited, and it would certainly have been a satisfaction to its author to know that his work was to be available to those thousands of his fellow-workmen whom he was so ardently anxious to stir. At 6/- the book was out of the reach of many; at 2/6 in these days it should be accessible to most.

We recommend those Plebeians who have written asking us for this book to write Grant Richards, Ltd., 8 St. Martin's Street, W.C. 2.

BOOKS AND LEAFLETS RECEIVED.

- The Schooling of the Future.* Reprinted from *Worker's Dreadnought*. 1d.
An interesting leaflet. Socialists should buy extra copies and distribute to friends.
- How to Settle the Irish Question.* By G. B. SHAW. Constable & Co., London. 6d. net.
- The Choice before the Nation.* Amendments to the Education Bill. W.E.A., 16 Harper Street, London, W.C. 1. 2d.
- New Towns after the War: An Argument for Garden Cities*
J. Dent. London, W.C. 2. 1/-.
- Masters and Men: The New Co-Partnership.* By T. FOSTER.
Headley Bros. London. 3d. net.

THE THEORY OF MARX.

"It is true that this theory has not been generally accepted—a thing that would be impossible from the social consequences of such acceptance—but I claim that of all the economic theories, that of Marx is the only one that daily wins more adherents and more and more interpenetrates all social science, even in the case of authors who are the bitterest opponents of this theory. To require that a book like mine should once more set forth and defend the theory of Marx "in extenso" is as impossible as to require that a modern biologist, who proceeds upon the basis of the Darwinian theory, should prove over again that his basis is sound. That there may be more or less error in detail in the theory of Marx, as in that of Darwin, is possible, but in general they have resisted, like a wall of bronze, all attacks in the most pitiless of contests, that of opinion.—Prof. W. Adrian Bonger in *Criminality and Economic Conditions*.

“Pacifism”

IF a periodical came into your hands labelled “Printed for private circulation only,” would you read it? Or would you put it on the fire, saying, “No! it cannot be in the public interest for me to read private matters. In time of war we are all comrades; we share alike; our sacrifices are equal; why, then, should I read matter intended only for the delectation of a few? Then it might be treason, one must be careful, for D.O.R.A. is a fickle jade.”

Such a periodical was sent to us by a kind friend who knows a man who has a cousin who is a capitalist, and we read it. Its name is *Industrial Peace*, and we thought that sounded safe enough! It is a charming little brochure, published monthly like the *Plebs*, but differing in that it is printed on excellent paper. If only its authors knew as much about industry and the working class as they know about printing and the “get-up” of a paper, their efforts would be worth while. We congratulate them on the technical side of their production; obviously, unless you had lots of money you could not do anything like it, still less for “private circulation only.” Our dull lives have been considerably brightened by its appearance, and it is because the March issue “goes for” the *Plebs* that the privacy of its select circulating sphere is broken in upon in this rude manner. We make no apology for quoting at considerable length from the article, for it will help to cheer drooping spirits, and that is a patriotic duty at the present time. The article deserves wider distribution, and having got the author’s assurance that our literature “*permeates every industrial town in the United Kingdom*,” we feel we must spread the glad tidings.

Our friends of the W.E.A. will be glad to know that they have the entire approval of the Industrial Pacifists. The article begins with the usual note, emphasising the sweet reasonableness of the W.E.A., which “for many years past” has carried on educational work. . . . “upon the principle of bringing the Universities to the homes of the people.” We had a kind of idea it was the other way about, that the W.E.A. brought working men, carefully cleaned and disinfected, to the Universities. Still, it probably works both ways, and as the rude boys say, “What abart it?”

“*The prevailing note of the W.E.A. and summer schools*,” we are told, has been “*an impartial desire to give access to knowledge to those whose circumstances make such access difficult*,” and the development of these classes, “*at one time rapid, has lately received a sharp check from the Plebs League and the ‘C.L.C.’ two bodies which, for practical purposes, may be considered as one.*” We thank our friends

for this admission. We can say then that, since the C.L.C. is now owned and controlled by the N.U.R. and the S.W.M.F., the Plebs League has the backing of a large and influential section of the British working class. Good! We read on:

The opposition (to the W.E.A.) is based upon the principle of the class war, and working men who attend the classes are denounced as traitors to the cause. The provincial Universities, it is argued, were founded by the gifts of wealthy men; they are therefore capitalist institutions, and all their professors and lecturers are capitalist agents. Further, the teaching given claims to be, and usually is, impartial—that is, it is an attempt to dissuade working men from taking an active part in the class war.

That is a good definition of impartiality, isn't it? Let us, just for a moment, imagine what would happen if anyone carrying on anti-war propaganda were to say: "I only want to persuade the men from taking an active part in the war—I am impartial." There is no need to stress the point. The Industrial Pacifists have brains, though rather muddled ones, we put it to them and leave it. "*These arguments, particularly in Sheffield and S. Wales, have been largely successful in bringing the work of the W.E.A. to a standstill,*" we are told; and further, that "*such a social event is a rude blow to those who take a cheerful view of the present relations of the classes.*" You will see the point, the cheerful view is the pacifist view. Have our friends ever met any Irish? Surely there are numbers in our own ranks who love a fight better than peace, industrial or otherwise, people who are depressed by W.E.A. classes, and to whom Industrial Peace makes no appeal. After all, we can afford to laugh, for it is Capitalism that is going to be buried. The fighting view is scarcely ever the doleful one. Remember, in the comic press the pacifist is always shown with a long face. After commenting on the general atmosphere of Socialistic humanitarianism which pervades the W.E.A., the writer goes on to lament the fact that though this is considered too swift for some people (!), by others, and in "*more powerful quarters* the classes are denounced as retrograde, and are not to be suffered to develop further." He appeals for a consideration of the aim, method, and power of the Plebs League. Our principles

are, in the first instance, negative. Collectivist and Socialist theories of social reconstruction are repudiated as empty fancies; the idea of compromise and reconciliation,

so dear to the heart of the War-Party!

with the capitalist classes is rejected as treason. Under every one of its varying titles, Plebs League, Central Labour College, Rank and File Movement, Shop Stewards' Agitation, this comparatively new propaganda cries out for war; not war to attain any clearly conceived purpose, but for the destruction of hated opponents, ideals and aims, it is argued, produce division. Action alone unites.

Consider very carefully this curious paradox. These people are

of the War Party in the fight against Germany—these are the identical people who deny the right of Socialists to argue—Stockholm was so much wind to them, they said then in their publicly circulated press exactly what they accuse us of saying: "Ideals and aims produce division." Less *talk*; get on with the war. "Action alone unites." Our war, they say, is not for any "clearly-concerned purpose," mark that! but for destruction of hated opponents the bond that unites all Plebeians "is a desire to destroy, not to build up." May we be allowed to ask how it is possible to build up without destroying? Even virgin soil (and what we attack is anything but that) needs rocks and trees blasting out of it.

When Sindbad the sailor began to shake off the Old-Man-of-the-Sea, he did not pause to ask himself first what he would put in the old man's place! The vampire that is sucking the life-blood of the workers must be destroyed before the workers' plans can be carried out. Surely even Fabians and W.E.A. class-tutors are out to remove exploitation by "permeation" and "impartiality"? They, too, in their mild way, might be classed among the wreckers! But make no mistake, O industrial Pacifists, the workers have their plans. You have brains, study *Industrial Unionism* and find out what we want to build up. It is all in print—and is *publicly circulated*. You need not be afraid. If the battlefield seems like waste ground to you, that is only because there is a fight on; there will be no waste places on the earth when our fight is finished. "Building up" is proceeding apace, but as you have told us in your *public* press, "all schemes and ideals are folly till the enemy is beaten." We throw this back again for you to think over quietly.

Quite a lot of the article is worth serious thought, but the following is merely amusing:—

It seems clear that this movement is the child of the successful strike, and that its dominant motive is of a sporting or destructive character.

That sounds dashing, doesn't it, evidently we too, take a cheerful view of the relations of the classes.

"Formerly it was high fun to chase and torment a blackleg; now there is bigger game to be aimed at in humiliating a Cabinet Minister (*sic*) or driving a millionaire into the workhouse."

Name, please! After saying that the term "classes" is somewhat inappropriate to our meetings, and that study in the accepted sense of the word does not exist, since "the works of Karl Marx are accepted as a gospel from which no departure is permitted," the following encouraging passage occurs:—

The meetings . . . are in reality recruiting meetings, at which new soldiers are enrolled, and at which they are instructed in their mission and receive their marching orders.

We recommend that to class secretaries ; it is quite inspiring in its way.

An inadequate survey of the towns our propaganda covers, a pat on the back for having the courage of our opinions, and the article closes with an appeal to the nation or the Government or the State or the propertied classes—it is not quite clear which, perhaps all—to rise up and get busy. "Human nature is active not passive ; it follows the strong man, not the tolerant cause," they say. And so say we !

Our propaganda, it seems, can

only to be met by a definite counter-propaganda for maintaining the existence of a United Kingdom based upon civic principles which can make a present and effective appeal. There is no such counter-propaganda of sufficient authority and influence. The official political parties—Unionist, Liberal, and Labour—maintain silence or open ineffectual parleys with an enemy whose first principle is "no reconciliation." The national existence is at present perishing by default. . . . It seems that the Plebs propagandists have not on their side either clear-thinking or lofty ideals ; but it is not yet clear that the defenders of society possess either unity or resolution.

That is the end, a note almost of pathos !

We have "no clear thinking"—then we must try to get it by educating ourselves still further ; as to our ideals, if a full life for every man, woman, and child of every nation, with opportunity to develop the best that is in them, be not "lofty" enough, we shall have to revise our programme and put in a few extras ! Our sympathy goes out to the Industrial Pacifists in their endeavour to stir up people who want to be let alone, but their class-inspired appeal will not fall entirely on deaf ears. As for ourselves, we are quite ready to meet the "defenders of society" even when they *do* possess unity and resolution, for when we do meet they will need both !

WINIFRED HORRABIN.



The Plebs League

OBJECT.

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

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.

MEMBERSHIP.

Open to all who endorse the object of the League.

Each Member shall pay 1/- a year to the Central Fund towards general expenses, publications, &c.

All expenses incurred by District organizations shall be met by an additional payment from members within that area.

MANAGEMENT.

An Executive, together with a Secretary-Treasurer and Magazine Editor, elected at the Annual Meet.

THE "PLEBS" MAGAZINE.

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