

Note carefully this square. If its whiteness is unsullied, your account with us is square. If it is embellished with the sign of the cross, you owe us a subscription—in which case, go and get that Postal Order without further delay.



# THE PLEBS MAGAZINE

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

Vol. XI.

February, 1919.

No. 1

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
OURSELVES—PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE - - - -	3
CARTOON. By "OBBY AWK" - - - -	5
REVIEWS: COLE ON "PROLETARIANISM." By J. F. H. - - - -	6
CORRESPONDENCE. From W. L., & A. J. PENTY - - - -	8
PLEBS PUBLICATIONS - - - -	9
NEWS OF THE MOVEMENT - - - -	10
THE PLEBS BOOKSHELF - - - -	13

## Ourselfs—Past, Present and Future

Ten years have gone by since the little group of "malcontents" and "young men in a hurry"—how the press of to-day would rush to label them Bolsheviks!—at Ruskin College, decided to publish a monthly magazine which would voice their disrespectful ingratitude towards their *alma mater*, and explain the implications of their new slogan, "Independence in Working-Class Education." No. 1, Vol. I. of the *Plebs Magazine*, appeared in February, 1909, and with the present issue we begin our Eleventh Volume. The time is appropriate for a brief consideration of past history, present circumstances, and future possibilities.

The past need not keep us long—though many things have happened during that decade. From seeking to bring about the Redemption of Ruskin, the Plebs had soon to turn to heralding the advent and pleading the cause of the newly-established Central Labour College; and when, at long last, two powerful Trade Unions made themselves responsible for the future development of the College, the immediate function of the *Magazine* was to serve as a link between the classes which were springing up all over the country. But throughout those ten years the principles the *Plebs* has stood for have remained the same as those which were the basis of the "rebels'" action at Oxford. We do not need to enlarge on these principles here; by this time they are well enough known and nowadays are being more and more widely discussed. Nevertheless, the day has certainly not yet arrived when a "Journal of Independent Working-Class Education" is no longer necessary. To-day, when impetuous industrialists on the one hand and political opportunists on the other repeat the old, false antithesis between "Action" and

"Theory," it is more than ever important that friends of our cause everywhere should work harder than they have ever worked before. We are not, in short, thinking of going out of business just yet.

Which brings us to the consideration of present circumstances—OUR present circumstances. We have "carried on" through the four years of war, and we emerge with circulation increased, price as per *ante bellum*, but somewhat diminished in bulk. This latter is a matter of stern necessity; but we need hardly assure our readers that we shall proceed to expand at the earliest possible moment. We like the business of boiling ourselves down as little as some of them like the result. (A word, by the way, to certain of our critics: Let them remember Dietzgen and, instead of visualising an ideal educational periodical, unexceptionable both as regards quantity and quality, and comparing the poor reality with that satisfying vision, let them start by taking into account the material difficulties with which at present we have to contend—cost of paper, absence of many of our regular contributors, and so on—and then, in relation to these sordid facts, judge the finished product. We, no less than they, can give our fancy rein and compare What Is with What Might Be—indeed, we intend a little later on to indulge ourselves in this vein. But *our* Pegasus is always held in check by the thought of printers' bills.) We have no intention of resting content with 16, or even with 24, pages; any more than we shall remain satisfied with our present circulation—though we perfectly realise the difficulty our friends have to face in endeavouring to win us new subscribers at a time when we are but a shadow of our former self. Let them remember, however, that we are selling the *Magazine* just now at practically the same price we pay for its printing—in some cases, in fact, where special terms are granted, we are selling at a loss. And as we intend to go on, and shall only make their lives a burden to them later on by begging for contributions to wipe off a back debt, they had better ask themselves, "What about it?" and get busy NOW. (How many times in the course of our ten volumes have we printed that little word in capitals? And never once in vain!)

As for the future . . . well, let us tick off one or two practical certainties before we indulge in musings upon What Might Be. Sooner or later the price of paper will come down; and when that happens we shall see that Plebeians get more of it for their money. Less than twelve months ago we were able to publish a 48 pp. magazine—our Marx Centenary Number—at our usual price. *Forty-eight pages!* We are watching month by month for the opportunity of doing that again. Also, sooner or later, the "boys will come home"—from overseas or behind bars. We hope soon to number Craik and Sims, Holder and Mark Starr among our regular contributors once more. (And no one will rejoice more than the present very attenuated editorial staff when they exchange their swords or shovels for pens!) The *Plebs*, we know, like all other periodicals, never has been, and never can be, as good as it once was. That is taken for granted. But we shall do our best, nevertheless, to enable Volume Eleven to take its place without undue shamefacedness twelve months hence alongside its predecessors.

And What Might Be? . . . Well, with luck, 48 pages might be. A real monthly Labour-educational review might be—there is room enough and to spare for such an organ. We have the men; we have the "point of view"; we have the will. Then why not? Our dream is of a magazine containing not only news of our own movement; not only book-reviews and comments on current events; but big enough to contain—and with student-readers keen enough to appreciate—real educational matter which may afterwards be usefully issued in book form. And in connection therewith a busy publishing department—giving Kerr's a run for their money! Again, why not?

Well, that's for YOU to say!



**THE LOOKERS-ON (to Labour):**—Some burden, undoubtedly, my good fellow. But for goodness' sake don't drop him until you are sure what you are going to put in his place!

## Reviews

### COLE ON "PROLETARIANISM" & OTHER MATTERS

*An Introduction to Trade Unionism.* (2/6 net.) *The Payment of Wages: A Study in Payment by Results under the Wage System.* (3/6 net.). By G. D. H. COLE. (Fabian Research Dept., 25 Tothill Street, Westminster. Special T.U. Editions, paper covers.) *Labour in the Commonwealth.* By G. D. H. COLE. (Headley Bros., 5/6 net.)

In face of such a list as that above, there can be no question of a Cole shortage. And it is all useful, well-informed, readable matter, even if never precisely "inspired."

"Inspiration," of course, is somewhat out of the question in the case of the two first-mentioned books—Nos. 4 and 5 in the Trade Union Series published by the Fabian Research Dept. Here it is rather a matter of accurate, well-arranged information; and Mr. Cole, with the resources of the Research Dept. behind him, can do this sort of thing on his head. *An Introduction to Trade Unionism* is a valuable appendix to the Webbs' *History*, being a general sketch of British Trade Unionism as it is to-day—its structure, government, problems, and ideals. Part III., on "Problems" (Amalgamation and Federation, the Shop Stewards' Movement, Women in T.U.'s, etc.) perhaps contains the most interesting, certainly the most debatable matter. Part IV., on "The Future of Trade Unionism," opens with a brief discussion of Syndicalism, Marxian Industrial Unionism, and National Guilds; and also includes a short section on Trade Unionism and Education, with some account of Ruskin College, the C.L.C., the W.E.A., and the Plebs, and the "feud" between the latter—"into the merits of which quarrel the writer, who has been for years closely associated with the W.E.A., without becoming blind to its shortcomings, has no desire to enter."

*The Payment of Wages* is a somewhat longer book, dealing in detail with one of the "problems" of T.U.ism—methods of payment. Successive chapters on Piece-work, Bonus and Efficiency Systems, Scientific Management, Price Lists, Workshop Committees and Bargaining, etc., lead up to the conclusion that—"Piece-work and other systems of payment by results, even if they result in an increase of earnings, do seem to result in a loss of status, and to those who regard status as of greater ultimate importance to the working-class than immediate earnings under the wage-system, the arguments in favour of time-work on purely social grounds appear to be convincing." Mr. Cole advocates the conversion of all systems of individual payment by results into collective systems, instancing the scheme of collective contract put forward by Messrs. Gallacher & Paton in their Memorandum published by the Paisley Trades Council. With the moral of it all—rubbed in with emphasis in the final chapter—Plebeians will unreservedly agree. The workers, says Mr. Cole,

must concentrate on getting, in their own ranks, *men with a real understanding of workshop problems.* . . . There are thousands of men in the T.U. movement who could quite easily be fitted for the work in question, *if the proper training were provided.* It is only the fact that the T.U. Movement has not hitherto, except in isolated instances, realised the need for such training, or been prepared to pay for it, that has held the Unions back. . . . To equal the development on the employers' side *the Trade Unions must either develop a science of their own, or else relinquish any claim to a real control over industrial conditions.*

The third volume, *Labour in the Commonwealth*, is a work of another kind. Mr. Cole has taken advantage of the "New Commonwealth" Series published by Messrs. Headley, to write a sort of recruiting appeal directed at those

earnest (mostly middle-class) people, who are genuinely moved by words like "the Commonwealth," and his aim is to convince them that "the claim to democratic control in industry follows logically and immediately upon the recognition of the humanity of Labour. . . . All the arguments in favour of political democracy apply with no less force in the industrial sphere." It is a book, therefore, of rather more "literary" pretensions than either of the other two, and it is written in a livelier, less arid style than Mr. Cole's subject-matter usually permits him to adopt. For example —

Hobbes and Marx were alike of the middle class; but neither of them addressed his theory primarily to his own class. Hobbes did not say that the Social Contract implied the sovereignty of the *bourgeoisie*: he gave his Leviathan the head of Charles I. Still less did Marx salute the suburbs and say, "*Bourgeois* of the world, unite; you have nothing to lose but your villas, and a world to win." He fixed his eye firmly upon Labour and bade his own class go hang.

Or, again:—

It would be absurd to look for free art or free amusement in a servile Society. The whole jammed order of things hangs together.

But there is one chapter of especial interest to Plebeians—that entitled 'Proletarianism,' which sets out to discuss the question "How far the working class, or proletariat, ought to have a culture and an 'ideology' of its own." "In France," says Mr. Cole, "the question has been debated in the most fascinating fashion in the books of the Syndicalist intellectuals, MM. Lagardelle, Berth and Sorel. In this country, it has risen to prominence in connection with the 'extremist' working-class movements represented by the Socialist Labour Party, the Central Labour College, and the Plebs League." He instances Paul's book on *The State*, and observes of the lists of books therein quoted for reference that, though not all by members of the working class, or even of the Socialist Movement, "they do represent a quite different starting-point and a quite different culture from the accepted culture of our times." And "a similar phenomenon may be to some extent observed in the classes conducted under the auspices of the Central Labour College and in the articles published in the *Plebs Magazine*. . . . *A Worker Looks at History* is the title of a small book recently published by a Central Labour College lecturer, and the very title serves to emphasise the difference in point of view."

Now Mr. Cole admits that "for real and effective working-class education most of the text-books will have to be re-written, at least so far as history and economic science are concerned." He admits also that "the keen working-class student is apt to find in most bourgeois teachers exactly the same causes for dissatisfaction as in bourgeois books—bias, the acceptance as axioms of disputable theories, and, above all, failure to tell the student just the things he wants to know." But, while admitting these facts, he proceeds to warn us that "there is grave danger in a narrowing of culture, or a confining of it within rigid limits." The working-class, "finding half-truths in the bourgeois historians and economists," must not merely "put into their own works only that other half of the truth which these writers have left out." "It does not follow that the working-class has to make a totally new culture, or that the bridges between it and bourgeois culture ought to be broken down. It follows rather that the working class ought to make all speed with the creation of teachers and text-books to suit its needs, but that it ought to be ready to avail itself of all *really friendly assistance* in the process." And so on, at some length.

Surely a considerable part of this criticism is somewhat academic—directed at a bogey of Mr. Cole's own invention. The present writer must plead ignorance of the writings of MM. Lagardelle, Berth and Sorel on the subject. But so far as this country is concerned, it is safe to assert that no proletarian is *deliberately* aiming at a "totally new culture," or at "breaking down the

bridges " between it and bourgeois culture. A " totally new culture " is an impossibility. And while realising fully the need for re-writing the text-books, particularly of history and economics, none of us advocate putting into those books merely " the other half of the truth which the bourgeois historians and economists have left out." It is one thing to insist on a definitely proletarian point of view, particularly in history and economic science ; it would be quite another—and surely no one would be such a fool as to adopt such an attitude—to decline to make use of the work of bourgeois writers (*e.g.*, of John Richard Green's *History*, or Mr. and Mrs. Hammond's books) simply and solely because they are bourgeois. None of us wants to " narrow " culture, though we may, in an all-too-short life, with all-too-little leisure in it, prefer to concentrate on those particular branches of culture most essential for the emancipation of ourselves and our class. And there should surely be no need to remind Mr. Cole that only when our class is emancipated, when social and economic freedom is the birthright of all men and not merely of a class, can that real " freedom in education " on which he insists be realised. " Independence in Working-Class Education," in short, does not mean a refusal to take notice of the theory of Evolution until some proletarian Darwin shall have arisen and re-stated his bourgeois predecessor's views ; but it does mean that the workers should put all knowledge and all culture to " the acid test " of its value and truth to them, as workers, selecting and rejecting accordingly. And by the same test the workers must decide whether offers of assistance are " really friendly " or not. After all, as Mr. Cole himself observes elsewhere in this book, " Labour is perfectly right to mistrust any person or any movement that tells it what great things can be done for it by someone else. It should trust only those who tell it what great things it can do for itself." And, having realised the shortcomings of bourgeois society, it will certainly not accept bourgeois culture " on trust "—for " the whole damned order of things hangs together ! "

J.F.H.

---



---

## Correspondence

TO THE EDITOR OF *Plebs Magazine*.

### A HINT TO MINERS.

DEAR COMRADE,—Will C.L.C.'ers in Durham get to their lodge meetings and have the following resolution sent on for the next council meeting of the Durham Miners' Association :—

" That the Council Meeting, realizing the necessity for an educational policy on the part of the workers, in order that we, as workers, may be fitted to play our part in the working-class movement, recommends that the following resolution be forwarded to the annual meeting of the Miners' Federation, viz. :—

" That the Miners' Federation of Great Britain take the necessary steps to become part owners and controllers with the National Union of Railwaymen and the South Wales Miners' Federation of the Central Labour College, London, and establish Scholarships to enable members of the M.F.G.B. to attend that Institution."

It follows that if miners in other parts of the country can get their districts to forward the same resolution, our position will be strengthened. Could not South Wales, Yorkshire, and Scotland get their districts to send it on ? We will do our best in Durham.

Yours fraternally,

W.L.

## ON MARX.

DEAR SIR,—May I be permitted to say a few words in explanation of my articles on Marx in the *New Age*, on which J.F.H. comments so severely in the December *Plebs*.

(1) The first article was written as a reply to a letter by Mr. Walton Newbold to the *New Age*, in which he attacked middle-class Socialists and intellectuals, whom he associated together. I considered the attack unjust. Mr. Newbold has not yet replied.

(2) Though the form of Mr. Newbold's attack associated middle-class Socialists and intellectuals, I was not concerned with defending either of these primarily as persons, but with asserting the "right to think." Mr. Newbold may criticise intellectuals and middle-class Socialists as much as he likes, and I might often agree with him; but what I object to is that a middle-class person is to be condemned because he is a member of the middle class, and that only working-class men have a right to think about social questions. To group middle-class people together indiscriminately is unscientific. Stockbrokers, artists, journalists, engineers, etc., have no common economic interests or common ideas. The only thing they have in common is their clothes. The average middle-class intellectual has, as a rule, as hard a time to-day as the average working man. His life is one long anxiety amid uncertainties. Why should he desire to preserve the existing order?

(3) Mr. Newbold accused us of neglecting the study of Marx. As I thought that perhaps I had been prejudiced against Marx by the Fabians, I followed Mr. Newbold's advice and took up the study of Marx; and I am pleased that I did, for I made the important discovery that I had wasted my time in attacking the Fabians, and that I ought to have attacked Marx from the first, for the Fabian is only Marx and water. Though I disagree with Marx about almost everything, his definiteness has cleared up my mind about many issues. He is certainly a challenge to the modern world, but it is a challenge which can certainly be answered. The revival of Marx will directly do harm; indirectly by reaction it will do good, for it will act as a purgative to modern thought, and I may agree with Marxians that it needs it.

ARTHUR J. PENTY.

## Plebs Publications

Many recent inquiries make it desirable to state the position in regard to our text-books. We have sold clean out of Mark Starr's *A Worker Looks at History* (two editions in less than a year); and already more than half of a ten thousand edition of Ablett's book is ordered. Craik's book on *The Modern Working Class Movement* we did not publish, but it, too, is unobtainable, all editions having been sold out months ago. As soon as we can we shall reprint Mark Starr, and shall urge the N.U.R. either to reprint Craik's or give us or some other publishing house permission to do this. The main obstacle in the way of all reprinting at present is the price of paper. We are not afraid to start without capital—we launched *A Worker Looks at History* without any! But paper prices are so big that just at present we cannot venture. Ablett's book is now on the press, and we hope to be able to deal with all orders before the present month is out. Orders will be taken in rotation.

**READ THE SOCIALIST Monthly 2d.**

**And Support the S.L. Press (50 Renfrew St., Glasgow)**

Our appeal to single-copy subscribers has had a good result. Our December account is now paid, but its place is taken by the January bill, so that our appeal can still stand. The decision of the E.C. last August to keep the price at 2d. leaves us, despite our largely increased circulation, with a deficit each month. And although this means some anxiety, we feel that it was the wisest course to adopt. If we can "carry on" for a few months longer at our old rate of 2d. per copy we shall soon begin to pay our way again. We tender our sincere thanks to individuals and classes who have sent along donations; and we ask for further support. *Don't forget "An Appeal to Trade Unionists" leaflet, which will be sent on application. We have also small posters to advertise the Magazine in Club Rooms and Institutes. Free on application to Sec.*

Has anyone a complete set of *Plebs Magazines*, since Vol. I., bound or unbound, for sale?

## News of the Movement

We have not yet had a full list of the names and addresses of members of the League from branch secretaries. It is not enough—just now—to send subscriptions, though we are now, as always, pleased to see money in any shape or form. But, strange as it may seem, this time it is primarily information for which we crave.

There have been more Plebs classes this winter than ever before, and it is only lack of space that forbids a large and varied series of reports on this page. Everywhere our classes have held their ground, and we have been successful in starting new classes in hitherto unheard-of places.

W. Banks (Gate Head, Gt. Clifton, Cumberland), Sec. of a new class, writes: "I should like you to give us a show in the *Plebs*, for a start has been made in backward Cumberland! We have now a class on Economics in Workington, with J. B. Allen, ex-C.L.C., student, as Lecturer. J.B.A. is the newly-appointed general secretary to the Cumberland Colliery Enginemens. Our class already numbers over thirty, and is growing. We are encountering great opposition from the powers that be—also from certain local trade union officials. We seem to have caused quite a flutter in official circles." This is entirely new ground, and we wish our comrades success. After all, a flutter is a good advertisement for a beginning.

Scotland has kept well to the fore again and classes are flourishing under Plebs League auspices in Glasgow and District. Here is the list for use of Plebeians in the district:—

**Marxian Economics and Industrial History.**—CENTRAL:—*Hist.*, J. M'Clure. *Econ.*, J. Thomson. Secretary: George Oag, 63 Rolland Street, Maryhill. COLLEGE. I.L.P. *Hist.*, W. Stewart. *Econ.*, G. G. Kerr. Secretary: W. Stewart, 310 North Woodside Road. BRIDGETON: *Econ.*, J. Brown. *Hist.*, Geo. Whitehead. Secretary: Geo. Whitehead, 125 Main Street, Bridgeton. GOVANHILL: *Hist.*, A. M'Manus. *Econ.*, H. M'Millan. Secretary: R. Townsley, 38, Rannoch Street, Cathcart. RUTHERGLEN, *Hist.*, John Dick. *Econ.*, James Macgill. Secretary: John Dick, 18 Greenhill Road, Rutherglen. CAMBUSLANG: *Hist.* and *Econ.*, Thos. Rogers. Secretary: W. Jenkins, 48 Lightburn Road, Cambuslang. CITY. I.L.P. *Hist.* and *Econ.*, John M'Clure. Secretary: Miss J. Kennedy, 97 Alexandra Parade, Dennistoun. ANARCHIST GROUP: *Hist.*, Robert Stevenson. *Econ.*, H. M'Millan. Secretary: Mrs. A. Gordon, 756 New City Road. PARKHEAD and SHETTLESTON: *Hist.*, J. Colquhoun. *Econ.*, J. Thomson. Secretary: J. T. Marshall, 392 Main Street, Shettleston. PARTICK. I.L.P. *Econ.* and *Hist.*, John Thomson.



**Esperanto.**—CENTRAL: John A. Ferguson, D.B.E.A. Secretary: Francis Rafter, 76 Stratford Street, Maryhill. BRIDGETON: Francis Rafter, F.B.E.A. Secretary: Miss Olive Whitehead, 45 Walter Street, Alexandra Park, Glasgow. PARTICK I.L.P. and Anarchist Group Classes in process of formation.

The unavoidable delay in getting out Ablett's book has unfortunately held up more than one Economic Class. Reports are to hand of several classes waiting and ready for the book. BONHILL, Dumbartonshire, has what the Sec. (A. M'Gowan, 4 Union Street) describes as a very good class, with J. Gready, M.A., of the Scottish Labour College, as tutor. They have already studied *The State* (W. Paul) and *A Worker Looks at History* (M. Starr), and now await Ablett's book. We hope to be able to satisfy them before very long.

FLEETWOOD has a small but enthusiastic class. The Sec. (F. Slater, 44 Blackiston Street) will be glad to hear from comrades in the neighbourhood. This next session's subject is to be Economics—Industrial History having occupied the first half of the winter term. Our old friend, H. Brownjohn, is class-leader.

We have to acknowledge with gratitude a splendid donation to the Plebs Fund from the members of the Pontnewynydd Class. Comrade W. G. Davies who forwarded the money writes:—"We all wish to see the *Plebs* continue and flourish. The Magazine is a sure guide to the real Labour Movement. We feel you have done wonders to keep the flag flying during the war, and hope that all supporters will make this year a memorable one. We must have a re-union some time during the summer." We can safely promise that the *Magazine* will continue, and also that August will see a gathering of the clans; as for the "memorable year," we must leave that to the supporters.

LIVERPOOL Plebs District plunges from one conference to another in a perfect orgy of success. One was held on January 18th (alas! no report to hand), at which John Maclean was to speak. The resolutions:—"To link up the whole of the classes in Lancashire and Cheshire into a Plebs League District," and "Proposed establishment of a Labour College for Lancashire" would no doubt produce good discussion. By the time this is printed another Conference will have been held on January 26th—Speakers, W. Paul (S.L.P.), G. Jones and J. Hamilton; chairman, T. McLellan (Pres. Birkenhead Trades Council).

The Sec. of the LEEDS class writes: "We have a big central class of between 40 or 50, and are deeply interested in and have fine discussions on Paul's book, *The State*. The class has decided to pay the full 2/- per dozen in order to help the *Magazine*. The class under the auspices of the Amal. Toolmakers is also progressing well, and we are trying to get round the branches to further the educational movement." Leeds Plebeians, please note Sec., J. T. Ashurst, 2 Rosebank Street, Woodsley Road, Leeds.

---

**VOTE for DISARMAMENT & 15/- A WEEK for each CHILD & its MOTHER, instead of MILITARISM.**

---

Pamphlets, cards, etc., from S. Mackenzie Kennedy, Killarney, Ireland.  
Four for 6 halfpenny stamps.

A new Railwaymen's class started early in January at BARNSELY, with Comrade L. Benson, of Penistone, as class leader. The meetings are held on Sunday evenings, full particulars from Sec., G. Wells, 3 Taylor Road, Sheffield Road, Barnsley.

\* \* \* \* \*

Our friend Titterington has been running a class in Bradford for some time, and the following letter shows that interest and support are likely to be forthcoming from another quarter :—" Herewith is a postal order, as a donation to *Plebs*. I regret I am unable to make it £5 ! If you ever read the *Gazette* of the Postmen's Federation, you will find that at our last Conference I moved ' that this Conference instructs its E.C. to discontinue our affiliation to the W.E.A. as that body does not fulfil the purpose we desire.' Unfortunately I was defeated, but I am not squashed and intend to make another fight for it. I had hoped that we in Bradford would have had a definite Branch of the Plebs League by now, but hope this will be remedied soon." Any Plebeian desirous of communicating with our comrade should write F. Ratcliffe, 27 Brassey Terrace, Bradford.

\* \* \* \* \*

EAST LONDON Industrial History Class commenced at Water Lane Infants' Hall, Stratford, E., on Sunday, January 5th, at 3.30 p.m. Teacher, Harry Pollitt. Sec., Miss K. Read, 85 Central Park Road, East Ham. East Londoners, please note.

The movement in Liverpool and District has suffered a severe loss by the death, on December 21st, of Comrade Ernest Ilsley, at the early age of 23. He was a staunch advocate of Independent Working-Class Education, a keen Marxian, and had made a special study of Philosophy in its relation to Socialism, having a remarkable knowledge of this subject based on Dietzgen's works. Under the auspices of the Liverpool Committee for Independent Working-Class Education, he had taken charge of the courses of study in Philosophy, and made a deep impression on the students. His lectures, delivered in many centres in Lancashire, marked him out as a platform orator far above the average. Altogether he had a brilliant career in front of him. His remains were borne to their last resting-place by members of the Committee and Students, on December 28th, and Mrs. Bamber and Mr. G. Jones gave appropriate eulogies at the graveside on behalf of the large gathering who attended of class students and workers in the Socialist movement.

## AMMUNITION FOR SOCIALISTS.

BRYAN'S **ESSAYS IN SOCIALISM AND WAR.** 1½d.  
 FAIRCHILD'S **ECONOMICS OF WAR.** 1½d.  
 MCLAINE'S **TRADE UNIONISM AT THE CROSS ROADS.** 1½d.  
 NEWBOLD'S **POLITICS OF CAPITALISM.** (Revised and Enlarged Edition.)  
 KAHAN-COATE'S **KARL MARX: HIS LIFE AND TEACHING.** 2d.  
 MARX'S **WAGE-LABOUR AND CAPITAL.** 2d.  
 NEWBOLD'S **MARX AND MODERN CAPITALISM.** 2d.  
 MACLEAN'S **WAR AFTER THE WAR.** 2d.  
 MCLAINE'S **EVOLUTION OF HISTORY.** 3d.

POSTAGE HALFPENNY EXTRA.

READ "**THE CALL**" THURSDAYS. 2d.

**B.S.P., 21a Maiden Lane, Strand, London, W.C. 2.**

## The Plebs Bookshelf

I suppose there really are groups of earnest working-class students up and down the country who will take as a text-book Mr. Arnold Freeman's *Introduction to the Study of Social Problems* (W.E.A., 1/-). I feel genuinely sorry for them. Turning over its pages, one feels inclined to ask, "When is an Introduction not an Introduction?" and to reply, "When it's made by a W.E.A.er." For the great rule governing the etiquette of introductions under W.E.A. auspices is, as we all know, impartiality; which, being interpreted, means indefiniteness, formlessness, vagueness amounting almost to incoherence. So that at the end of the ceremony you can hardly be certain whom or what you have been introduced to, or whether you really have been introduced at all!

True, here and there Mr. Freeman makes a definite statement. "The production of wealth having become dependent on machinery, society was sharply divided into the two classes representing Capital and Labour." (Section II., England 100 Years Ago.) "The divorce between Capital and Labour seems scarcely less decisive than it was at the opening of last century. . . . The divorce between Labour and Capital is the main cause of social discontent in our present civilization." (Section III., England 50 Years Ago.) "Turning from the historical to what would be called the existing causes of unrest, it seems to me that the fundamental reason of it is the inequality of wealth." (Part II., England Before the War.) After which one turns almost hopefully to the section headed The Inevitable Social Policy; but here at once Mr. Freeman begins to hedge. "The word 'inevitable' is rather *too bold* a term, but I cannot find a less assertive substitute." Too bold! . . . "Let us discreetly keep to the safer ground of generalisation" (p. 44). So we get—"We want Character; we want Ability; we want Health," and "We shall never get adequate incomes until people are healthy and capable enough to deserve them." Which may mean anything or nothing. We turn to another section, headed Industrial Developments, and find this helpful passage:—

How will the Industrial Revolution end? . . . It is still a matter of conjecture with whom the ultimate victory will lie. Syndicalists, like Mr. Tom Mann, will tell you that the workers will take over the industries of the country. Socialists, like Mr. Bernard Shaw, believe the State will become the master-manufacturer and distributor. Anti-Socialists, like Mr. Mallock, believe that the trust-magnates will obtain increasing authority in politics as well as in industry. *We may all believe what we want to believe.* Perhaps the next decade will bring us to a standpoint where it will be much easier to forecast the ultimate working out of the Industrial Revolution.

---

**NOW** is the time to get  
**THE PEOPLE'S CALENDAR.**

Compiled by DORA B. MONTEFIORE.

A quotation for every day in the year from a great number of writers—  
mostly revolutionists.

1/- net. POST FREE, 1/1½. BRANCH RATES:—6 for 4/10; 13 for 9/6;  
26 for 18/9. (Carriage Paid.)

All Profits to **THE CALL & THE PLEBS.**

**From Literature Department, British Socialist Party,  
21a Maiden Lane, Strand, London, W.C. 2.**

After which it is really comforting to turn back to the title-page and read that "The W.E.A. neither endorses nor repudiates the views expressed in this publication. Its policy is not to propagate any particular opinion, but to offer information and stimulate thought." We may all believe what we want to believe! Is this the sort of "education" desiderated by Mr. Cole—see review on another page—when he declares that the workers will be wrong "if they seek to impose upon their tutors and their text-books some rigid test of orthodoxy or belief in a theory, however much they may believe their 'doxy' to be right and their theory to be true"? Must one really wade through all the "thinkers too eminent to be regarded as mere 'rebels'" (p. 71) quoted by Mr. Freeman—the C.F.G. Mastermans, the W. L. Hichenses, the Zimmerns, the Rowntrees, the Mallocks—in order to avoid "narrowness" of culture?

But I must not do Mr. Freeman any injustice—he does, in his final section on Reconstruction, get down to something definite. We are all to join the Y.M.C.A. and "work for such a Reconstruction of our own country and of the world as will effect the establishment on earth of the Kingdom of God . . . planning and proclaiming the coming of a social order based upon the purest ethical principles known to man. And it is essential that all those who desire thus to revolutionise things should link themselves together." (Why do idealists always "link themselves together"?) We can then proceed to develop the cinema—"Why should not the President of the Board of Education insist that films officially registered as 'educational' should form at least one half of every moving picture performance?"—and entertain hopes of State public-houses, "with University men and women as publicans." (Help!) And our school-children, in addition to celebrating Shakespeare Day and Empire Day, must take part in "further celebrations for such things as Freedom, Science, Equality, Agriculture, Art, Labour, Democracy, Motherhood, Co-operation. . . ." I hope there'll be a Festival of Impartiality, too!

\* \* \* \* \*

At the risk of boring Plebeians to tears I must briefly refer to the Preface contributed to Mr. Freeman's book by Mr. H. A. L. Fisher. "What can a University do for the working classes?" Mr. Fisher begins. "We might as well ask what the moon can do for the working classes. (A double-edged saying, that!) The moon is prepared to do for workers what it is equally prepared to do for dukes, earls and viscounts. It will light them on a dark night. Its brilliance is impartial and transcends all distinctions of class and wealth. . . . A University has nothing to do with distinctions founded on money or opinion." One is impelled to ask Mr. Fisher, "Which University?" The last-quoted sentence moved the *Cambridge Magazine* to protest, and the *C.M.* presumably knows something about one University. A little later, discussing the desirability of establishing the University "in the good graces of thinking members of the industrial democracy," Mr. Fisher asks, "Has the democracy no interest in the education of the middle and upper classes?" So that apparently, though the brilliance of the University, like the brilliance of the moon, "is impartial and transcends all distinctions of class and wealth," some classes are better able to bask in its beams than others.

\* \* \* \* \*

Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch has been delivering a series of lectures at Cambridge on "The English Renaissance," of which the *Cambridge Magazine* has published some interesting reports. It is surely significant that the second lecture, on the End of the Middle Ages (*C.M.*, Dec. 7th, 1918) dealt exclusively with social and industrial conditions during the 15th Century—with the development of manufactures, trading, shipping, etc., and the resultant "economic interplay" with its effects on the life of the people. There was a time when Professors of Poetry would have looked askance at such matters. One or two of Sir Arthur's "illustrations" were new to me, and may be of interest to some of our class-leaders. For example:—

The Church, as we know, strictly forbade usury ; but, as a learned Italian professor, Benvenuto de Imola, had remarked in the preceding century, in a commentary on Dante, " He who practiseth usury goeth to hell, and he who practiseth it not tendeth to destitution."

The following is interesting as a sidelight upon the condition of the working classes :—

Sir John Fortescue, Lord Chief Justice, noted the prevalent lawlessness in a truly patriotic spirit : " There be therefore," wrote he, " more Men hanged in England, in a year, for Robbery and Manslaughter, than there be hanged in France for such cause of Crime in seven years. But the Englishman is of another courage. For if he be poor and see another man having riches, which may be taken from him by might, he will not spare to do so," which, for a Lord Chief Justice, you may call " a point of view."

A writer in the *Sheffield Independent* (Jan. 20th. 1919) has also, like Sir A. Quiller-Couch, been meditating upon the connection between prose and poetry :—

If there is poetry in post-war ideals there is prose too. The latter is hardly less interesting than the former, and much more likely to continue. Let us illustrate : *Engineering* states this week that " on the eve of the war France was making 5,000,000 tons a year of pig-iron, with steel in proportion, against our 9,500,000 tons, and Germany's 19,000,000 tons. It is now estimated by some authorities that France will soon be making 13,000,000 tons a year of pig-iron, with steel and engineering products in proportion. This would substitute France for Germany as our leading Continental competitor in the iron and steel trades. . . ." Thirteen million tons of pig-iron will soon flatten the idealism of many who have made party use of sentiment towards France. . . . We calculate that much less than two years will be needed to make some who are now lachrymose over the sufferings of France grow hot over her competition.

Upton Sinclair has sent us a copy of his latest volume, *The Profits of Religion: An Essay in Economic Interpretation* (published by the Author, Pasadena, California. 50 cents post paid ; 3 copies 1.20c.) He describes it as " a study of Supernaturalism from a new point of view—as a Source of Income and a Shield to Privilege ; " and he announces further volumes, " which will do for Education, Journalism and Literature what has here been done for the Church, the four volumes making a work of revolutionary criticism, an Economic Interpretation of Culture. . . ." I shall hope to review this book at greater length, and I look forward (naturally) with lively interest to the publication of the volume dealing with Education. I hope also that Sinclair will issue in book form the serial story at present appearing in his *Magazine*, which describes the reactions of the War on the various sections of the Labour and Socialist movement in America.

The London Workers' Committee (7 Featherstone Buildings, Holborn, W.C. 1) has published a new version of " The International," by Eden and Cedar Paul, with music, price 6½d., post paid. " We have made no attempt," E. & C.P. remark in a brief Foreword, " to transform Eugene Pottier's war-song into a hymn of peace. The workers can sing hymns of peace when the social revolution has been universally successful."

Two newspaper correspondents stand out from the crowd of commentators on the Russian Revolution—Arthur Ransome, of the *Daily News*, and John

Reed, of the *Liberator* (now Consul in New York State for the Russian People's Government.) Reed was an eye-witness of the events of the November Revolution, and some of his vivid descriptive articles in the *Liberator* have been issued as a pamphlet by the Workers' Socialist Federation (400 Old Ford Road, Bow, London, E. 3. 6½d. post paid). It is a pity that the proofs were not read a little more carefully; the pamphlet breaks off in somewhat curious fashion—halfway through a sentence.

I was naturally interested in the *Labour Leader's* announcement of I.L.P. Study Circles, and in Mr. Milton R. Powell's article on "Aims, Methods, and a Suggested Scheme." (October 17th.) In the course of an otherwise admirable plea for Socialist education, Mr. Powell delivered himself as follows:—"Subjects should be practical, and, as far as possible, topical. The day of the old dry-as-dust 'Economic classes,' with their futile discussions about the niceties of theories of surplus value, is over. Democracy has a host of tremendous practical problems to study, and no time must be lost in theoretical speculations. Study must be focussed on the pressing problems of TO-DAY, leaving the bookworm student to read up for himself the tomes on economic theories and philosophic interpretations of history." I leave it to the scores of I.L.P. students of those "dry-as-dust Economics classes" to let Mr. Powell know whether they consider discussions about the niceties of surplus-value "futile." But I can—as they can—assure him of one thing, and that is, that the day of those Economics classes is by no means over! O the contrary, they were never so numerous or so flourishing.... Congratulations, by the way, [to the *Labour Leader* on its Ernest Jones centenary number (Jan. 23rd.)

From a Walsall correspondent, an old Socialist Leaguer, I have received an interesting letter referring to my recommendation of Clutton Brock's book on William Morris, and my query about F. W. Hayes. He praises very highly James Leatham's *William Morris: Master of Many Crafts* (1/1½ post paid, from the Deveron Press, Turriff, Aberdeenshire); and he sends me two of Leatham's little pamphlet-reprints of Morris's sketches—*Under an Elm-Tree* and *A King's Lesson* (1d. each). He also encloses Morris's *How I Became a Socialist* (20th Century Press, 37a Clerkenwell Green, E.C. 1d.) with the apt comment that the title of the article therein reprinted from *Justice*, May-day, 1895—"Change of Position—Not Change of Condition"—is, in brief, an adequate summary of Socialist criticisms of the Whitley Report. My correspondent has not read F. W. Hayes' "Socialist Romance," but he sends along one of Hayes' pamphlets (*The Future of Wealth*) from which it appears that the correct title of the book is *The Great Revolution of 1905*, or *The Story of the Phalanx: With an Introductory Account of Civilization in Great Britain at the Close of the 19th Century*. He recommends James Leatham's *D'ye Mind Lang Syne?: A Tale of the Early Days of the Socialist Movement*, and also Ignatius Donnelly's "bluggy novel on the Social question," *Caesar's Column*, which originally appeared as a serial in the *People's Press* (a paper run by several Trade Unions) about 1890.

J.F.H.

Have **YOU** read EDEN AND CEDAR PAUL's pamphlet—

## Independent Working-Class Education?

Price 6d. Usual Terms to Branches. From The Workers' Socialist Federation, 400 Old Ford Road, Bow, E. (3).