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EDITORIAL

THE Labour Movement is summed up entirely in the struggle of the working class. Those who deny the existence of this struggle must logically conclude that the existence of the Labour Movement is without justification. **The Source of the Movement.** It is in this struggle that the movement is born; it is from this struggle that it derives its growing vitality and stature; it is the elimination of this struggle which is its purpose.



BUT what is the source of this struggle of the working class? Fundamentally it is the system of production for exchange. In that system the product stands to the producer in a relation of antagonism—the product controls the producer.

The Source of the Struggle. The product is not produced for the use of the producer, but for the use of others. The boot and shoe makers, for example, do not meet clothiers, miners, or other ware makers upon the commodity market and exchange the results of their labour. The producers exchange nothing with each other, for the very simple reason that they have nothing to exchange, because what they have produced does not belong to them. *The product of the producer is the property of the non-producer*, and is therefore only exchangeable by him. How does it come about that the non-producer possesses the product of the producer? What is the basis of this contradiction? The private ownership of the means of production by the class of non-producers. *The essential condition of this class-possession is the dispossession of the*

mass of producers. Were that condition to disappear, class-possession would disappear; its modern form of capitalism would pass out of existence, and all the social antagonisms arising in and from that system would vanish. For obviously if the producers possessed their instruments of production, the material out of which, and the workshop in which, they could make their product, then they would possess that product. And if such possession was social in its character, then the distribution of the product would be socially made. To-day the product is a social product—the process of production is social. But the means of producing the product are privately owned. Hence again the social antagonisms, the class character of social institutions. But let us reduce the matter still lower. Man can live only by labour. If some members of society are able to live without labouring, without producing, it is not because they have discovered how to live on nothing a day or through any revival of the manna shower which refreshed the wandering tribes of Israel a few thousand years ago. If the "lilies of the field toil not," it is only because they are tended and nourished by those whom God made a little lower than *lilum flora*. Those who produce must not cease production at the point where their own wants are supplied. As a matter of fact, they are not allowed to reach that point. They have to devote the greater portion of their working day to production for that section of the community who are never heard advocating "the right to work" for themselves, that class who very often are to be found enthusing about systems of organized charity for the poor. True they organize the charity, but it is in order to live upon it. It is charity for the rich that is provided in the soup kitchen of capitalism, wrung from the exploited producers. Not only do the workers give their labour to this non-producing class; they give their lives as well. If they ever rear a monument to the memory of those hundred and odd men who in the process of producing surplus value in Wellington Pit met their death, a suitable inscription might be chiselled thereon:—"Greater love hath no man than this that he lay down his life for his *friends!*" Had these miners survived another pay day they would have been privileged to draw what is called wages, advanced by the generosity of the mine-owning non-producers. But the generosity of the latter could only be possible through the previously enforced generosity of the miners. Wages are only equivalent to a part of the value created by the receiver of wages. The other part represents gratuitous or unpaid labour. The wage-earner is paid this week in part of the realized value of his unpaid labour of last week or last year as the case may be. Further than this, before he can secure part of the product of his unpaid labour of past weeks he must again furnish more unpaid labour this week. Such is the indispensable condition for the receipt of wages, and as he can only secure a livelihood by selling his labour-power for wages, it is the inevitable condition of his existence under the system of capitalism. He must, in order to

live, produce day in, day out, surplus value, and as capital is an aggregation of surplus values he must continually increase that aggregation, and so strengthen that very power whose slave he is. Here is the fertile source of the clash of classes, of the antagonism that divides society into two warring camps. The dependency of capital upon wage-labour, the dependency of wage-labour upon capital, a relation in which the owners of capital can thrive only at the expense of the owners of labour-power, and in which the latter can only advance at the expense of the former, that is the source of the never-ending struggle within the framework of capitalist society.



THE struggle of the working class is summed up entirely as a struggle of producers against non-producers for the ownership and control of the product. It does not spring out of the heads of men; it exists

The Objective Reality. in the facts objectively outside of men and quite independent of their wishes. The economic relation of dependency of wage-labour upon capital and the antagonisms arising therefrom is not an invention. Neither is the means for eliminating these antagonisms an invention. Both the problem and the solution are born out of material conditions. And the same conditions that throw up the problem, throw up within the problem the means for its solution. The development of the problem—the capitalist mode of production—involves the development of its solution. The more the problem presses for solution, the easier it is to solve it. But the latter has to be discovered, and the discovery of the solution pre-supposes the uncovering of the problem, the laying bare of the system which is the source of the struggle and the Labour Movement following therefrom.



BUT who are the solvers of the problem? Why, those for whom the system of production is a problem; those for whom it is a thing that stands between them and their free development; those for whom it is a thing that must be removed. The

The Problem and its Solvers. solvers are the producers, the class of wage-earners. For the class of people who live upon the results of the appropriated labour of the workers, for those who possess without producing, there is in the system that permits them to do so no problem. Not only for that class is there no question therefore of a solution, not only are the non-producers non-solvers, but they are anti-solvers. Indeed in this latter connexion there might be said to be a problem for those who live by "the great divide;" the problem of perpetuating the present order, of fortifying it more firmly on the throne, the problem of covering up the antagonisms that economic development is bringing to the surface. The image of the economic conflict is first found in

the heads of that class which suffers directly from it—the working class. The clearer the conflict is apprehended the more definite, coherent, and threatening does the organized activity of the working class become, and, at the same time, the more does the problem of stemming the activity press for solution upon the defenders of the *status quo*. Attempts are made first of all to check the progress of the Labour Movement in the workshop. Schemes of industrial co-operation are brought forward. The entry of the Movement into the political world brings out the same co-operative proposals. Latest of all comes the attempt to put off the economic revolution by preventing the intellectual revolution of the working class. In this, as in all other things, the bourgeois world stands upon its head. Nevertheless the advance of the Labour Movement can be hampered and hindered considerably, in the degree that these re-actionary proposals find listening ears among the workers. It is upon the field of education that the greatest damage can be inflicted. For the advance of the working class depends upon its clearness of vision, upon its ability to apprehend the real nature of the economic conditions and forces which it seeks to transform and control. To prevent that clear-seeing, to obscure the economic reality, to blur the lines of the struggle, is the most effective method for checking the progress of the Labour Movement, for putting back the day of transformation. And it is just the hope of success along these lines that animates those who are busily engaged in promoting schemes for the education of working men at the hands of the Universities. To gain the confidence of the Labour Movement they put on a cloak of sympathy and the mask of brotherhood. Like the conjuror, they begin by assuring those about to be tricked that "there is nothing up their sleeve," and in the degree that they succeed in directing the attention of their intended victims to the uncovered arm are they successful in concealing the coin in the palm of their hand. A typical piece of palming took place at a meeting held at Plymouth during the recent Congress of the Co-operative Society. The object of this meeting was to promote the policy of the Workers' Educational Association. There are one or two Labour organizations in this country that stand in a position of financing educational movements, and the Co-operative Society is one of them, a fact which Mr. Mansbridge, the secretary of the W.E.A., fully appreciates. This meeting of the Co-operative delegates was an expression of that appreciation. It provided a splendid opportunity for extending the ravages of the W.E.A. The Rev. Canon Masterman was the lecturer, and the subject was entitled "The Education of the Citizen." The rev. gentleman proved a typical conjuror. He produced out of nowhere some wonderful things, including flower boxes in the windows of the citizens. This, he assured his audience, was a highly desirable symbol of good citizenship, and showed them that this happy state of things would universally result if they supported the Workers' Educational Association. The "citizen" is the basis of

this Association's policy. The worker is to be educated as a *citizen*. The object of the education is "efficient citizenship." It is to an exposure of this trick that we hope to return in our next editorial. In the foregoing we have attempted in a general way to arrive at a criterion of the "citizen" basis from an analysis of the economic position of the worker. We are to oppose the *wage-earner unit* to the *citizen unit* to show why the advocates and promoters of this bogus educational movement start from the citizen and avoid the real wage-earning category. *The "citizen" is the hand that conceals the coin* that obscures the economic cleavage which divides society into two hostile economic classes. Whatever obscures the intellectual vision of the working class is dangerous and involves delay. Whatever makes clearer the real cause and character of the inevitable conflict is practical and evolves progress.

W. W. C.

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Sociology and the State

(Continued)

ON the several occasions I have attempted to show that the tendency of sociology has been to seek to narrow it down to some one principle supposed to be adequate to embrace the whole field, and that there are many such principles, each of which is so regarded by some one writer or some school of writers. When I made my principal contribution* to this aspect of the subject in 1902, and discussed twelve such principles, all of which belong to sociology and constitute important factors in the completed science, no one had distinctly claimed that political science was the great comprehensive discipline, and that the whole field now usually embraced by the science of sociology falls under the single conception of the state. Such a claim has recently been made, and to it a moment's attention may now be given.

There is a doctrine usually ascribed to Comte and defended by a considerable number of sociologists, which has been sometimes called "objection." Its chief form consists in declaring that society is the only reality, and that the individual is an abstraction. Comte is supposed to have said this but he only said that man is an abstraction, and that there is nothing real but humanity.† The doctrine is metaphysical enough in any form, and it is such doctrines as this that have done most to discredit sociology in the eyes of scientific men. They judge all sociologists by the few who maintain such views, and the open enemies of the science have made the most of this.

* "Contemporary Sociology," *Amer. Journ. Sociol.*, Vol. VII.

† *Philosophie positive*, 3d edition, 1869, Vol. VI, p. 590.

We now have a new form of this doctrine of objectification, differing in nothing from the old forms, except that instead of humanity or society being called the only reality it is the state that is so regarded. The distinction between society and the state, however, is not clearly drawn, as may be seen from the following passage, which embodies the theory :

Instead of the genesis of society from individuals, what has taken place is the genesis of individuals from society ; man did not make the state but the state made man it is an institution that existed before the human species was formed and was the instrument by which the human species was developed ; the state includes society just as any entity includes all its parts.*

The author of this remarkable theory claims to be an orthodox Darwinian, and calls most sociologists anti-Darwinian, including those who are biological specialists and have sought to show the non-biological sociologists what Darwin really taught. It is a pity therefore that he could not have been contemporary with the great biologist in order to have told him how "species" were formed and developed, at least the "human species." That the "state" underlies the origin of species would certainly have been new to Darwin. That this "institution" is not confined to the "human species," but is of earlier animal origin, is, however, made clear in other passages, for example :

The state [which is here called a genus !], an integration that took place in the animal stock ancestral to the human species. All existing forms of the state have been evolved from primordial forms existing anterior to the formation of the human species. The state is the unit, of which all social structure and individual human existence are the differentiation. The state is a psychic unity and it is apprehensible only as it is objectified in institutions.†

Now certain sociologists have proposed some highly metaphysical and even absurd theories, and have "objectified" humanity and society in ways that would have pleased a Scaliger, but none of them have ever approached this new doctrine as a specimen of mediaeval ontology. Yet its author is one of those who characterize sociology as a "pseudo-science" that has made a "false start." In his first attack upon it, published in a newspaper, and containing low appeals to popular prejudice, he simply repeated the old charges that have been so often made by the authors named at the beginning of this paper, and I was surprised that any answer was thought necessary. But the answer made him familiar with the face of the monster and lured him on to express his pity in a second attack, much subdued, in which at last he showed his colours, and advanced the astounding theory above stated. He has thus been good enough to tell the

* *Amer. Journ. Sociol.*, Vol. XV, September, 1909, p. 248.

† *Ibid.*, b. 255.

sociologists what they should have done and what a true "start" would have been. What might not sociology have been if it had only made this true start!

The comedy of all this lies in the fact that we now have a rational theory of the state. Morgan taught us in 1878 that political society supervened upon tribal society in Greece and Rome in the sixth century before Christ, and that it does not exist in most of the outlying races of men. Nothing that can be called a state exists in gentile society, and the state is a comparatively late factor in social evolution. Gumpłowicz and Ratzenhofer have shown us just how the state arose as a consequence of race amalgamation. The ethnological and sociological proofs, although independently arrived at, harmonize completely and furnish us with the true natural history of the state. They teach us the origin in comparatively recent times of political society, states, and nations, as the result of prolonged struggles followed by periods of social and political equilibration and assimilation.

The state is the most important of all human institutions, and it is doubtless a recognition of this truth that has led to the innumerable attempts to explain its origin and nature. Some of the theories put forth may contain germs of truth, but the greater part of them are utterly worthless, as embodying no principle capable of explaining anything. Every writer imagined himself competent to formulate a theory of the state. I made bold to enter the lists in my initial work,* which appeared in 1883. I was culpably ignorant of Morgan's great work published five years earlier, and Gumpłowicz's *Rassenkampf* appeared the same year as my own book. Of course I knew nothing of his pamphlet, *Race und Staat*, 1875, which contains a clear statement of the principle. My guess was perhaps as good as the average, but was wide of the mark, and in the light of the great Austrian theory and of the ethnological proofs I do not hesitate to repudiate it and remand it to the same limbo as all the rest.

I would not have mentioned this had not this new interpreter of the state singled it out (instead of quoting *Pure Sociology*, chap. X, published twenty years later) and held it up as my theory of the state. This procedure may be compared with that of the Spanish court-martial in condemning Ferrer at fifty for what he said at twenty. It would of course be useless to argue with one who resorts to such methods, and I wished only to show that of all the worthless theories of the state that have been set afloat the theory proposed by him is the most absurd. To it Tully's famous saying perfectly applies: *Nescio quomodo, nihil tam absurde dici potest, quod non dicatur ab aliquo philosophorum.* (I know not in what way, nothing so absurd is able to be said, which may not be said by some one of the philosophers.)

LESTER WARD.

* *Dynamic Sociology*, Vol. I, pp. 464-67; Vol. II, pp. 212 ff.

"WAGES"

To Mr. Marxian, Scientist.

Dear Sir,—I have received permission from the Editor of the "Plebs" Magazine (permit enclosed) to interview you on the subject of "Wages." As it is well known that the only man you are in mortal terror of is the said Editor, I do not anticipate a refusal, and shall therefore call on you at 7 p.m. this evening. The interview will be published in the "Plebs" Magazine.—Yours, &c.,

(PROF.) HUMANE GOLDBRICK,
Lecturer in Economics to *Rus-Cow University*.

MARXIAN SCIENTIST.—Dash it! Another old fogey, I suppose. Still I dare not refuse. When I have time I must read Nietzsche and see if I cannot cultivate enough will-power to give the editorial Czar a cold bath with a ton weight around his neck. Hello, what's that? Why it's seven o'clock. Come in! Ah, here the bounder comes, and a fine specimen he looks. Good evening—what can I do for you?

PROF. HUMANE GOLDBRICK enters, bows, and smiles: Ah, hem; I am Professor Humane Goldbrick, of Rus-Cow. I presume you have heard of me? Did you get my letter?

M.S.—Oh yes, though how you got that editorial permission is beyond me. Still, please sit down, and let us get it over as quickly as possible. No preliminaries, please, I am a busy man.

H.G. (sitting).—I also am a busy man, and it is only the importance of the subject, and the lack of information at Rus-Cow, where your magazine has a large circulation, that has induced me to come. I will therefore get to business at once. Ah, hem (consulting some notes). Oh yes. I understand the Marxian theory of wages is called the "Iron law of wages!" Why is this?

M.S.—Oh dear! This is a good start. I trust that all your questions are not of this calibre. Attention please! (Speaking slowly and with great emphasis.) The "Iron law of wages" is a phrase used by Ferdinand Lassalle, who erroneously conceived, as did Ricardo, that the law of wages was the application of supply and demand to Malthusianism. If workers received wages in excess of the subsistence level, the working-class population would increase still faster and so by competition reduce wages down to subsistence level. If wages went below this level population would decrease. The supply of labourers decreasing, wages would rise, &c. That theory has nothing in common with the Marxian law of wages.

H.G.—Dear me? This is very interesting, and only shows the importance of first hand information. An eye-opener for a start. I can assure you that this will please Rus-Cow and no —

M.S. (frowning terribly).—Be so good as to proceed with your questions.

H.G. (timidly).—P—p—please tell me then what is the Marxian theory.

M.S.—Wage labour arises together with capital from the ruins of feudalism. The feudal serfs become free labourers. They become free because they become owners of property. They own one commodity—labour-power or capacity to labour. The strange thing about this, however, is that whoever owns this commodity is debarred from owning other commodities. This is a strict rule, and failure to observe it is attended with the terrible punishment of banishment from the ranks of the wage workers. If this rule was generally broken present society would collapse. Another condition still more strict is that whoever owns this commodity must sell it or die. Thus, although the worker has freedom, he has not free-will. But—mark well—his freedom consists in this—that he enters the market and sells his commodity on terms of equality with the owners of other commodities, at its value. This great freedom was denied him in all previous stages of society. Do you comprehend?

H.G.—Oh yes, perfectly.

M.S.—Good. Those then are the conditions. The question now arises—What determines this value? Marx says: "The value of labour-power is determined like that of every other commodity by the labour socially necessary to produce it."

H.G.—Please explain that a little more. It sounds curious and I must say not very humane.

M.S. (smiling).—On the capitalist market it is not humanity but value that determines the exchange of commodities. The expenditure of labour-power uses up a certain quantity of nervous and physical force which has to be replaced every day. It is the cost of this replacement, *i.e.*, food, house-room, &c., which makes up the value of labour-power.

H.G. (with excitement).—Do you mean, in all seriousness, that wages are determined by that most sordid form of calculation? Why this is worse than the "Iron law." Not only am I disgusted, but I do not believe it is true!

M.S.—Keep calm, we are only commencing yet. I was about to add—It is necessary, on account of the mortality of the wage-worker, that when he dies another may be ready to take his place. Therefore he must marry and rear a family to keep the labour market well supplied. At first then his wage includes this portion of the cost producing labour-power. So that, as with other commodities, wages equal the cost of production and reproduction of labour-power.

H.G.—What a monstrous idea! The home—that beautiful and sacred institution—represented to be a factory for the production of labour-power!

M.S. (unmoved).—Your discernment is admirable, and your criticism of capitalism most precise. But wait a moment. I said "at first." The time comes when by improved machinery it is possible for women and children to leave "that beautiful and sacred institution" and take their place in the factory. When this takes place the wage is reduced from a family to an individual basis.

H.G.—Oh, but after all, these are only bare statements. I shall not accept them without proof.

M.S.—That is only reasonable. What are your objections?

H.G. (consulting his notes and suddenly smiling with satisfaction.)—Yes, that's it. Ah, hem. If what you say is true, how do you account for the fact that wages are not uniform, or, to use your phraseology, that the value of labour-power is not the same for all labourers? In agricultural districts wages are lower than in industrial centres; more than that, they are not uniform among different groups, as engineers, miners, weavers, &c.; further, that they are not uniform even in the same factory, mine, or workshop. Now, come, you have been sailing too smoothly.

M.S.—Oh! then you have already deserted the battle-ground of theory and now want an explanation of the facts. Very well, please pay close attention while I make some observations. *Firstly*: It is of less importance to the worker as to the money wage he receives than to the amount of subsistence those money wages will buy. In some agricultural districts £1 will purchase as much means of subsistence (especially house-room) as 30s. will in London. In the last ten years there has been a gradual rise in prices. If the worker received even a little more money wages now than ten years ago, he might yet be able to purchase less of the still higher-priced goods. But I suppose even in Rus-Cow you know that much. *Secondly*: The level subsistence means a different thing in one country than in another, also in one part of a country than in other parts. A Hindu coolie requires less clothing than a Russian labourer. During the trouble consequent on the Eight Hours' Act in Mines, a group of Midland colliers went out on strike because certain beer allowances were threatened. The value of labour-power then has an historical element, and is influenced by climatic differences and customs. *Thirdly*: The differences in skill of an engineer, and say a navvy, means that it costs more to educate the engineer than the navvy, and therefore increase the value of the labour-power of the former. Again in the same industry under different degrees of intensity of labour, the wear and tear of physical and nervous forces is greater, and requires therefore a greater compensation (though whether this will be obtained or not depends on the organization of labour-power). In the same workshop the different grades of workers require different standards of subsistence for the efficient performance of their different tasks. *Fourthly*:

Labour-power no more than any other commodity is exempt from the disturbances of supply and demand, monopoly, and exceptional circumstances which cause differences in price. Yet in spite of all these differences, some of which vanish with the development of capitalism, we can still say that two-thirds of the peoples of the civilized or capitalist world are propertyless; that they have no *prospect* of any accumulation of wealth sufficient to enable them to leave the ranks of the wage workers.

H.G.—But this modifies your formerly rigid theory into a generalization.

M.S.—Yes, just as the perturbations in the world of physics modify the law of gravitation. If you are looking in any social science for a law that will explain individual peculiarities in one formula, then you are in for as fruitless a search as the old alchemists were when searching for the philosophers' stone.

H.G. (consulting his notes).—If what you say is true then it seems to me that it is useless for the wage worker to think of improving his position, for do what he will, according to you, he will not obtain more than the level of subsistence which his particular conditions and industrial grouping will allow. Is not that a very hopeless state of things?

M.S. (smiling).—If it were hopeless would you recommend as a remedy a different theory?

H.G. (with warmth).—I should at least strive for a little more humanity in my theories. You condemn a deserving class to eternal poverty?

M.S.—I? I have nothing to do with the matter except point out that the Marxian analysis shows that capitalism demands poverty on the part of this "deserving class." But capitalism is not eternal, any more than wagedom. To revert to the question. It is quite true that under the existing system wage workers will not in general be anything but propertyless, and that, do what they will, they will obtain no more than the level of subsistence as a class: but the level of subsistence may rise considerably higher than at present. If the workers by organized effort secure more wages, and spend these in definite directions on their subsistence, they can increase the standard of living, and so long as their organization is strong enough they can maintain the new standard.

H.G.—Organization? What, another modification? Your theory is being gradually modified to mean almost anything. Please go on modifying.

M.S. (with a pitying look).—Well, I should certainly think that the fact that sellers of a commodity should organize that sale would occasion no surprise to a lecturer in economics! It may surprise

you still more to know that as far as improvements in the standard of living is concerned, in other words as far as the question of a rise in wages is concerned, the most powerful factor is the organization of the workers.

H.G.—That remark leads me to one of my questions, viz. : Can the working class obtain a rise in wages if the Marxian theory is correct? As far as I understand this peculiar theory, any improvement in their condition from one source, say a lowering of house rent, only means that they can work for less wages and still receive the same standard of living: that therefore wages will go down to that level by competition. Again, when a rise in wages takes place prices increase accordingly. It has been stated to me in favour of this opinion that the tremendously inflated prices in the means of subsistence in America has nullified all the improvements that the workers have been enabled to gain. (Here a knock at the door is heard and refreshments are brought in.)

M.S.—The question you raise is of immense importance. We will therefore adjourn the discussion until we have seen how a humane professor can eat.

NOAH ABLETT.

(Continued next month.)

The Method of Science.

IN the treatment of all natural phenomena, modern scientific thought excludes the conception of supernatural interference, or what is popularly known as the "design theory" operating in the universe. It proceeds upon the premise that knowledge of any character can only be known through the ordinary channels of sense perception, thus ruling out of consideration all the prejudice and superstition that is born of ignorance and the panic-stricken ideas of despair.

The scientific mind has never reached "the peace that passeth all understanding." Rather, such a mind, revelling in the conflict of ideas, challenging all that remains veiled in mystery, yet withal, impelled through passionate and irresistible desire, pursues the secret that will yield an explanation. With the advent of the scientific mind there followed a recognition of the complexity of all external phenomena. It was from such a recognition that science evolved the guiding principle—methodized classification—it utilizes in the elucidation of all the material with which it is perpetually confronted.

The method of science then is essentially analytical, proceeding from the complex to the detailed. But the work of scientific investigation does not end here. The cycle is not yet complete. In such a stage in all phases of scientific work is discovered the

constructive principle which is the basis for further operations. It is precisely at this stage that, for example, in the science of political economy, Marx discovered the "commodity" as the unit of investigation, and upon this foundation proceeded to examine the anatomy of capitalist society, revealed the precise and characteristic social relations, developed his revolutionary system of economics and outlined the historical development of the working class, of which more anon.

It is also at this stage of accumulated and classified phenomena that the creative imagination comes into operation, and formulates the laws which govern particular fields of phenomena. The creative imagination is therefore the product of the synthesis arising out of the interdependent relations between thought and external surroundings. Here, then, in the synthetic process—the discovery of which heralded a fresh base of operations—is to be found the secret of all cosmic and universal progress and the process of historical development.

All through the ages the human mind had sought for an explanation of the growth, development, and ceaseless movement of living things. It is true, when Greece was in the hey-day of her philosophic splendour, Heraclitus recognised the "flow" of things, but the conditions were not yet ripe that could enable even that brilliant thinker to formulate the law of development. For many centuries philosophy lay dormant, unable to comprehend the cause of the changes taking place in society. But, with the shifting of the centres of economic power, the changing character of nations, and the renaissance in European thought and learning, the age-worn conception of the static nature of things gradually broke down.

Coming nearer to modern times. At the beginning of the Nineteenth century it became possible for Hegel, while he wrought in the domain of history, to discover the synthetic principle operating in historical development. Here was a revolution indeed, and Hegel successfully applied the principle to his analysis of past history. He demonstrated that one historic period (the thesis) developed its own antagonism (the antithesis), and that through the conflict of the two opposite stages, there resulted a new period in history (the synthesis). But Hegel, growing alarmed at the triumph of his own researches, vainly imagined that the process had reached its zenith in his own age, and, therefore, there could be no justification for the idea of further changes in the social structure.

However, contemporary minds more virile and courageous in their outlook thought otherwise. In every domain of science the principle was applied, and the process discovered to be in perpetual operation. It is the method of all nature. On this principle alone the operations of the universe become intelligible.

In the field of Biology the organism and the environment come into definite relationship, which involve "the elimination of the

wayward," and evolve the organism fitted to survive in the ever changing conditions. In the breeding of animals the same principle is consciously adopted. The best racehorse, for example, will be the product or synthesis of a combination functioning as the thesis and the antithesis, and representing the respective qualities of speed and staying power. The racehorse, while being fundamentally the product of a combination of two separate entities, is in all essentials a new creation, and, as an individual, it is fundamentally a separate entity—*une creation unique*.

Again, for example—in a strictly limited sense—a simple illustration of the synthetic process is to be found in association with the picturesque and delightful industry of coachmaking—what a gorgeous picture of romance the dear old-fashioned word recalls, in these days of motor-car construction. Take for example the building of a brougham. The clever artisan—the working-class artist—his eyes beaming with pride and his mind thrilled with constructive genius, when in the workshop, or rather the studio, comes into definite relationship with simple, though hard unshapely logs of timber. In scientific formula the builder is the thesis and the timber represents the antithesis. He does not indiscriminately saw and plane, or mortice and tenon. No! he, through past training and experience, has realised the necessity of a plan to work from. He does not build the comfortable inside seats so that they will rest on the fore-carriage and be exposed to the elements. Not at all, he is a student of good manners and knows his place in society, and incidentally that of the driver, whose seat he builds on the fore-carriage, presumably for the health of that long-suffering individual. Yet a little while, and, as a result of the interaction between the thought of the builder and the yielding nature of certain timbers, there arises the synthesis in the form of the brougham.

With this new concept of change which involves growth, development, and progress, and the operations of which can be demonstrated not only in the inorganic and organic world, but also as a vital force in society, there is revealed the source of that "hope" which "springs eternal in the human breast." Although Hegel turned conservative, and wandered down to the valley of philosophic reaction, his epoch-making discovery in the philosophy of history marked a great advance in the evolution of human thought.

The new principle demonstrated the ceaseless realization of new planes of existence, and the perpetual striving after a fresh basis of operations. It is upon the operation of this principle and its active inevitable process that the scientific mind conceives of the historical development of society. Past history reveals the fact that social development has taken place through a series of class struggles, conditioned upon the prevailing historic mode of production. This does not mean, was never intended to mean, that the mode of production is the only factor operating in society. It recognizes that

there are other forces at work, but while careful to point out their respective relations, it is maintained that the decisive factor in the growth of society is the economic. The mode of production, since at any rate the origin of exchange in use-values and the subsequent development of surplus products, has implied the particular prevailing form of the ownership of the means of production. The class who "own" are obviously the ruling class, and, as history shows, the owners of the new tools of production—the antithesis—everywhere used their economic power towards gaining social and political supremacy.

The particular form of society to-day, viz., Capitalism, is no exception to the rule, rather the antagonisms have become more clearly defined. Ranged on opposite sides are the owners of the land, and the tools of production, functioning as the thesis, and the landless, tool-less working class functioning as the antithesis, the working class who, by the very nature of things, must work out their own destiny. This can only be successful in so far as the workers are consciously organized and united towards a common end—ultimate ownership, which involves the socialization of the means of production, distribution, and exchange. When the working class is organized on this basis in every field of its own activities, then, and not till then, will the conditions be ripe for the change which will produce the synthesis in the form of a new society. Then will appear a new plane of existence, where social classes will have disappeared, and co-operation will have been established as the first principle of the human race, striving towards the fullest perfection of the individual in physical, intellectual, and moral beauty.

BEN MACKAY.

The Material of Art

IT is well known that certain periods of the highest development of art stand in no direct connexion with the general development of society, nor with the material basis and the skeleton structure of its organization. Witness the example of the Greeks as compared with the modern nations or even Shakespeare. As regards certain forms of art, as *e.g.*, the epos, it is admitted that they can never be produced in the world-epoch making form as soon as art as such comes into existence; in other words, that in the domain of art certain important forms of it are possible only at a low stage of its development. If that be true of the mutual relations of different forms of art within the domain of art itself, it is far less surprising that the same is true of the relation of art as a whole to the general development of society. The difficulty lies only in the general formulation of these contradictions. No sooner are they specified than they are explained. Let us take for instance the relation of

Greek art and of that of Shakespeare's time to our own. It is a well known fact that Greek mythology was not only the arsenal of Greek art, but also the very ground from which it had sprung. Is the view of nature and of social relations which shaped Greek imagination and Greek art possible in the age of automatic machinery, and railways, and locomotives, and electric telegraphs? Where does Vulcan come in as against Roberts & Co.; Jupiter, as against the lightning rod; and Hermes, as against the Credit Mobilier? All mythology masters and dominates, and shapes the forces of nature in and through the imagination; hence it disappears as soon as man gains mastery over the forces of nature. What becomes of the goddess Fame side by side with *The Times*? Greek art presupposes the existence of Greek mythology, *i.e.* that nature and even the form of society are wrought up in popular fancy in an unconsciously artistic fashion. That is its material. Not, however, any mythology taken at random, nor any accidental unconsciously artistic elaboration of nature (including under the latter all objects, hence also society). Egyptian mythology could never be the soil or womb which would give birth to Greek art. But in any event there had to be a mythology. In no event could Greek art originate in a society which excludes any mythological explanation of nature, any mythological attitude towards it, and which requires from the artist an imagination free from mythology.

Looking at it from another side: Is Achilles possible side by side with powder and lead? Or is the Iliad at all compatible with the printing press and steam press? Does not singing and reciting and the muses necessarily go out of existence with the appearance of the printer's bar, and do not, therefore, disappear the pre-requisites of epic poetry?

But the difficulty is not in grasping the idea that Greek art and epos are bound up with certain forms of social development. It rather lies in understanding why they still constitute with us a source of æsthetic enjoyment, and in certain respects prevail as the standard and model beyond attainment.

A man can not become a child again unless he becomes childish. But does he not enjoy the artless ways of the child, and must he not strive to reproduce its truth on a higher plane? Is not the character of every epoch revived perfectly true to nature in child nature? Why should the social childhood of mankind, where it had obtained its most beautiful development, not exert an eternal charm as an age that will never return? There are ill-bred children and precocious children. Many of the ancient nations belong to the latter class. The Greeks were normal children. The charm their art has for us does not conflict with the primitive character of the social order from which it had sprung. It is rather the product of the latter, and is rather due to the fact that the unripe social conditions under which the art arose, and under which it could alone appear can never return.

KARL MARX

(*Critique of Political Economy*).

For the People

We are the hewers and delvers who toil for another's gain,—
 The common clods and the rabble, stunted of brow and brain.
 What do we want, the gleaners, of the harvest we have reaped?
 What do we want, the neuters, of the honey we have heaped?
 We want the drones to be driven away from our golden hoard;
 We want to share in the harvest; we want to sit at the board;
 We want what sword or suffrage has never yet won for man,—
 The fruit of his toil God promised when the curse of toil began.
 We have tried the Sword and the Sceptre, the Cross and the
 Sacred Word,
 In all the years, and the kingdom is not yet here of the Lord.
 Is it useless all our waiting? Are they fruitless, all our prayers?
 Has the wheat, while men were sleeping, been over-sown with tares?
 What gain is it to the People that a God laid down his life,
 If, twenty centuries after, His world be a world of strife?
 If the serried ranks be facing each other with ruthless eyes,
 And, steel in their hands, what profits a Saviour's sacrifice?
 Ye have tried and failed to rule us; in vain to direct have tried.
 Not wholly the fault of the ruler; not utterly blind the guide;
 Mayhap there needs not a ruler, mayhap we can find the way,
 At least ye have ruled to ruin, at least ye have led astray.
 What matter if king or consul or president holds the rein,
 If crime and poverty ever be links in the bondman's chain?
 What careth the burden-bearer that Liberty packed his load,
 If Hunger presseth behind him with a sharp and ready goad?
 There's a serf whose chains are paper; there's a king with a
 parchment crown;
 There are robber knights and brigands in factory, field, and town.
 But the vassal pays his tribute to a lord of wage and rent;
 And the baron's toll is Shylock's, with a flesh-and-blood per cent.
 The seamstress bends to her labour all night in a narrow room;
 The child, defrauded of childhood, tiptoes all day at the loom.
 The soul must starve, for the body can barely on husks be fed;
 And the loaded dice of a gambler settles the price of bread.
 Ye have shorn and bound the Samson, and robbed him of learning's light;
 But his sluggish brain is moving, his sinews have all their might.
 Look well to your gates of Gaza, your privilege, pride, and caste!
 The Giant is blind and thinking, and his locks are growing fast.

JAMES JEFFREY ROCHE.

Central Labour College Conference

AND

August Meet of Plebs League



The above meetings will take place on August Bank Holiday.

Central Labour College Conference at 11 a.m.

"Plebs" Meet at 2.20 p.m.

Evening Meeting at 7 p.m.

Members of League desirous of attending same please notify the Editor, before July 25th, who will forward an agenda, and supply any other information *re* same that may be desired.

League members will be expected to produce their cards of Membership for meetings.

Arrangements are being made for a Brake Drive on the Saturday preceeding the Conference. Tickets, including Tea, 2/6 each. Visitors wishing to join the party are requested to notify the Editor before July 25th.

Reports

An important meeting of the Rhondda Branch of "Plebs" League was held on Saturday, June 25th last. The matters under consideration being the Appeal for Funds for Central Labour College, and the circulation of the Magazine. After discussing the best means of assisting the College it was decided to (1) bring the matter before the various Trade Union Lodges and urging them to vote money grants (2) to personally guarantee sums. Towards the latter the following members and friends subscribed: Mrs. M. T. Thomas, £1 Is., Messrs. G. Dolling, W. F. Hay, D. Mills Jones, Arthur Cook, W. H. Mainwaring, Noah Ablett, Noah Rees, T. Gibbon, and T. Evans, £1 each. Other members also promised to contribute in the near future.

A discussion then took place re the circulation of the Magazine, when the following resolution was passed:—"That the Rhondda Branch of the South Wales "Plebs" ask the Executive of the "Plebs" League to reduce the price of the magazine to 1d. In the event of this being done they pledge themselves to double the circulation in the Rhondda Valley."

How many Members of the League will be prepared to follow the lead of our Rhondda members in the matter of financial assistance to the C.L.C.?—*Editor*].

Ye Academic Way

Extract from a Chronicle of an Ancient Monastery:—

"In the year of our Lord 1432, there arose a grievous quarrel among the brethren over the number of teeth in the mouth of a horse. For fourteen days the disputation raged without ceasing. All the ancient books and chronicles were fetched out, and wonderful and ponderous erudition, such as was never before heard of in this region, was made manifest. At the beginning of the fourteenth day a youthful friar of goodly bearing asked his learned superiors for permission to add a word, and straightway, to the wonderment of the disputants, whose deep wisdom he sore vexed, he beseeched them to unbend in a manner coarse and unheard of, and to look in the open mouth of a horse to find answer to their questionings. At this, their dignity being grievously hurt, they waxed exceeding wrath; and, joining in a mighty uproar, they flew upon him and smote him hip and thigh, and cast him out forthwith. For, saith they, Satan hath tempted this bold neophyte to declare unholy and unheard of ways of finding truth contrary to all the teachings of the Fathers. After many more days of grievous strife the dove of peace sat upon the assembly, and they spake as one man, declaring the problem to be an everlasting mystery because of the grievous dearth of historical and theological evidence thereof, and so ordered the same to be written down."

General Economic and Social Development of Rome

II. From the Roman Republic to the Rome Empire

"The free plebeians were first turned into debtors by means of heavy interest on money loans, then robbed of their land and transformed into slaves."—*Untermann*.

THE period preceeding that which we have now to consider may be regarded as one of transition from Gentile Society to Political Society, or, speaking in terms still more fundamental, from Ancient Communism to Private Property. For the official historian the institution of the Republic at Rome marks the end of the monarchy. We have already pointed out how incompatible monarchy is with Gentile organization, how the Roman reges can in no way be identified with kingship. The Roman Republic takes its departure from the new constitution of Servius Tullius and as we have already seen this constitution marks the exit of the ancient Gentile institutions because of their failure to meet the new economic conditions. The struggle between the patricians and the plebs which had developed under the expiring Gentile system continues within the new constitution. The patricians for a time after the beginning of the Republic still retain the exclusive privilege of filling the most important offices, and thus exist as a kind of aristocratic caste within an alleged democratic system. Those plebs who were economically the equals, and in some case the superiors, of the patricians, revolted from time to time against this state of things, using the great mass of their poorer brethren as a means to force from the patricians concessions. Ultimately this old Gentile nobility was compelled to surrender its exclusive privileges.

THE ECONOMIC GROUNDWORK

It must be borne in mind that the distinction between patricians and plebs was not an economic one. Rather was it one of rank, of birth. Many of the plebs were quite as wealthy and owned as much property as the noble-blooded ones. Strictly speaking there were in Rome three economic classes:—

1. The large property holders, which included patricians and plebs.
2. The small property holders or middle class.
3. The propertiless or working class.

Economic development in Rome from 500 B.C. took on a form in many respects similar to what is going on to-day in modern capitalist society. The capitalist on a large scale menaces the existence of the capitalist on a small scale. It was just so in Rome. The man who held large farms could produce with so much more economy than the small

farmer that the latter's position grew more and more precarious with the increase of large farming, until finally he could no longer hold his own. This made the lot of the great mass at the bottom of the scale—the propertiless—ever harder to bear.

Rome was continually engaged in war. As a rule she won. The immediate result of these victories was the enlargement not only of the Roman territory but of the estate of the large property holders. All territory annexed was divided among the conquerors. Theoretically this partition was to be equal. But actually those at the top by virtue of their economic status got the lion's share. The larger the estates grew the more desperate became the lot of the small farmer.

A portion of the Roman territory was according to theory supposed to be left undivided for the common good, to allow of the whole population grazing their cattle upon it. In practice, however, this was also appropriated by the patrician and wealthy plebs under the guise of usufruct.

Further, merchants' capital had become an important factor in developing commerce in Rome. Money was therefore a prime need. It led the way to the lending of money. Wherever the merchant stalks the money-lender follows. These two forms of capital are twin-brothers, and in the ancient world they wrought destruction to those societies wherein they developed. While they could make slaves of freemen they could not make freemen of slaves. The existence of Rome depending upon a large army, the small holders had to fight his country's battles. But he could not both fight and farm. The longer he had to serve as a soldier the less he produced from the soil. The large estates could be farmed by slaves. But slaves cost money, and the small land-holder could not afford that means of cultivation in any large measure. When he returned from the war his land lay untilled or his crops in ruin, and thus his livelihood was rendered precarious. The money lender was at hand to perform the final act of expropriation. To become debtor was to become damned. The small farm were soon added to the large estate and if that was not sufficient to pay the creditor the farmer was himself sold into slavery.

Finally, chattel slavery, the blackest page of whose history is to be found in Rome, fed by merchants' and usurers' capital, took on ever greater dimensions. The enlargement of Roman territory was accompanied by the enslavement of the former owners of that territory. In this line the large landowners were the investors. As slavery increased, the free-labourers were thrown out upon the street and highways.

Such is the economic ground work upon which and along which Roman history moves, a history which, as an American writer has truly said, fills our minds, our eyes, and our ears; the history of a Rome insatiable of plunder and regardless of human life; a Rome that, driven like a Fury from her own seething cauldron, becomes a scourge to the world and ends by consuming herself.

THE POLITICAL SUPERSTRUCTURE.

The four principle institutions in the Roman Republic were :

- | | | |
|---------------------------|----------|---------------|
| 1. The Consuls | | (Executive) |
| 2. The Senate | } | (Legislative) |
| 3. The Centuries | | |
| 4. The College of Priests | | (Judicial) |

The first three are developed forms of (1) The Tribal Chief; (2) The Council of Chiefs of the Gentes; and (3) The General Assembly of the Gentile People.

1. *The Consuls* were two in number, who were elected together every year by the Centuries in the Forum. They shared supreme power in everything with the exception of religious affairs. During a crisis a dictator could be appointed. This appointment was made frequently, and arose out of the political struggle that was going on in Rome. Should the multitude show signs of revolt, the patricians would instal a dictator, to whom was given supreme power for the purpose of putting down the rebellion.

2. *The Senate* consisted of three hundred members who held office for life. The vacancies were filled by the consuls. This body sanctioned or refused to sanction measures passed in the Forum. At the first only the patricians could function as senators, but ultimately, after a considerable struggle, this office was thrown open to the plebs. Only the wealthy members of the latter however succeeded in entering the senate.

3. *The Centuries* were military divisions of the Roman people. They met in the Forum to discuss and vote upon measures. The laws which they might succeed in passing through this assembly were all subject to the sanction of the senate.

4. *The College of Priests* was an institution which, at least in the early days of the Republic, only admitted, like the Senate, the patrician classes. If, owing to pressure from the plebs, a measure passed through the Forum and could not be thrown out by the Senate, however distasteful it may have been to the patrician palate, the College of Priests would conveniently discover some defect or flaw in the measure which displeased the gods or violated the Divine ordinances. They would therefore declare it null and void.

THE EQUALISATION OF ORDERS.

Within this constitution then the wealthy plebs, with the aid of the propertiless masses, struggled against the privileged nobility. In the course of a hundred years the nobility lost their position; the large property-owning plebs stood upon an equal footing with the "gentry," and proceeded to use their official power for the purpose of oppressing the dispossessed multitude whose power they had used to place them in the high places. The great mass of the plebs sank lower and lower, a condition which was nourished by the ever growing number of slaves who worked the large estates—a method of production with which, as we have already indicated, the small freeholders could not compete. The landless and propertiless class was therefore continually augmented. This crushing out went on till the fall of the Roman empire.

The history of society is a history of struggles against subjection, and these struggles on the mental side pass through three well-marked stages. These reflect the rise, development and decay of the powers of oppression. In the first stage the oppressed turn their minds to the past and attempt to rehabilitate it. In the second stage they tend to more and more lose sight of the past and to regard the existing order as eternal and therefore unalterable. In the third stage the subject class sets its face towards the future and bends to the conquest of the existing social structure.

In the Roman Republic, the propertiless freeman as well as the slave mass were limited in their understanding of historical development by the past. *The past stood between them and the future.* There is in much of their doings and sayings a passionate harking back to the past, addressing their ideals to the status of their fathers, to the golden age, the Paradise that lay behind them. That these revolts of the dispossessed failed was therefore inevitable, the more so in the degree that economic development left the ancient order further and further behind. The more private ownership of the land developed, the greater the appropriation of the common utilities by the few, the more impossible it became for the expropriated revolters to secure the redistribution of the land. The result of these failures was a sinking of the assertive spirit among the great mass of the Roman working people. Especially in Rome did the proletarian element become more and more debilitated in character and incapable of uprising. This fact is clearly borne out in the tragic failures of the popular movements that arise in the city in the interests of the lowly, the most prominent of which were those led by Spurius Cassius, 486 B.C., Marcus Manlius, 384, B.C., Tiberius Gracchus, 133-121 B.C., and Sempronius Gracchus, 123 B.C., and latter that led by Cataline in 63 B.C. In each case the movement was defeated, and in almost every case the disaster was due to the servility of the multitude, who not only opposed many of the reforms undertaken in their defence, but also betrayed the leaders who championed their cause.

The conduct of the working people of Rome is to some extent illumined by the nature of the Roman suffrage. Rome was a city-state which evolved into a city-empire. All those who were enfranchised, could exercise their political right by appearing in the Forum and registering their vote. There was no difficulty in carrying out this condition so long as Rome occupied a small area, or even when the conquered territory was contiguous to the city. The further afield, however, the conquests of the Roman arms, the greater the expansion of the Roman world, the more difficult it became to participate in the government for those who occupied the distant territory. When the whole of Italy became a Roman possession, the citizen colonists found it impossible to appear at the Forum in Rome. Although, then, these Italian colonists were legally political units, each of whom had a right to a say in the government, in point of fact they were disenfranchised

Economically, the population of the Roman world was divided between the land-owning plutocrats and the ever diminishing small land-owning and propertiless classes. Through this anomalous political situation another line of cleavage was drawn between the plutocrats and propertiless *in Rome* and the same economically opposed classes *outside Rome*. The proletarian element in the city through their insignificant political rights regarded themselves as the superiors of their beggared brethren outside, and joined the plutocratic forces in Rome to oppose any reform in the franchise to the free peoples scattered throughout the Italian peninsula. Again, the increasing number of slaves in the Republic did not in any way lead to a favourable regard for "the dignity of labour." Rather was manual labour looked upon as a badge of shame, especially by the Roman proletarian citizens, who eked out a livelihood by doing the dirty work, political and otherwise, of the plutocratic class. It tickled the silly vanity of the beggared Roman freeman to be regarded as a limb of the ruling plutocratic power, and the latter fed this vanity from their rapidly overflowing coffers. Such a proletarian class are ever dangerous to the revolting proletariat. They may bark loudly enough for the revolution, but when a crisis comes, their bite is one of betrayal. Under these conditions the movements of the lowly in Rome failed. But even if they had not been betrayed they could not possibly have brought freedom to the exploited working people, and for the reason already given: *the movements aimed to roll the wheels of evolution back, they worked against the direction in which social development was heading.* No society based upon slave-labour can develop within it the new life able to emancipate it. The larger the Roman world grew, the more nations there were brought under the Roman yoke, the higher was piled up the slave mass, the more widespread became misery and degradation, and therefore the possibility of overthrowing the forces of oppression grew less and less. Relief had to come from outside. The elements for a new mode of production were brought in to the collapsing Roman Empire by the hardy and vigorous, although economically inferior, German barbarians.

We do not propose to detail the external struggles in which Rome was almost continuously engaged. The earliest of these struggles took place on land, in the surrounding country. Soon, however, she was compelled to enter into a conflict for supremacy with the two ancient world-powers, Greece and Carthage. Both of these nations dominated the Mediterranean shores. In the early wars, Rome was unsuccessful. Her fleet was unequal to the superior and powerful fleets of Carthage and Greece. Once Rome possessed the same means of death in quality and in quantity, she triumphed, and both the Carthaginians and the Greeks released their hold of the world sceptre. Everywhere on land or sea, Rome was invincible, and by the beginning of our era, the territory extending from Spain to Babylon and from North Africa to the Danube lay under her dominion.

W. W. CRAIK.

Next Month:—General Economic and Social Development of Rome, (contd.) III, The Decline of the Roman Empire.