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The
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MONTHLY

TWOPENCE

ARE YOU KEEN £40?

We headed our Appeal last month "Are you Keen a Bob?" Below we print a list of comrades whose answer was in the affirmative. To them we tender our sincere thanks. To the others (and what a lot of them there are!) we can only say "What about it?"

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THE PLEBS MAGAZINE

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

Vol. XI.

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Educate ! Educate ! Educate !

The Russian Revolution, and its gradual development since 1917, has made itself felt universally, undermining established theories, shattering many preconceived notions, and challenging both in policy and tactic, every progressive movement in every country in the world. Particularly sharp has this challenge been to the Socialist movement in Great Britain, with a consequence which, whatever merits it may have for immediate purposes, might prove disastrous just at that moment when mistakes would be most fatal. The consequence I have in mind lies in the fact that the Socialist response in this country to the above-mentioned challenge was to turn almost all its studious minds on to the task of policy-divining, and tactic-defining, to the neglect of what is proving the salvation of the Russian Revolution itself. I refer to Socialist and Working-class Education.

LOOK TO YOUR SOCIALIST EDUCATION ! ! !

Let us be careful lest our intense concentration on immediate possibilities should warp and narrow our vision. In revolutionary situations a comprehensive knowledge of policy and tactics certainly enables us to grasp passing opportunities wisely, and thus make revolution possible. But the *staying-power* of the revolution, its very maintenance, will be determined by the amount of real groundwork prepared, in the shape of Socialist and Working-class education. To-day in Russia it is this which is the most telling factor in upholding the Revolution. And why? Because revolutionary changes are stabilised by the actual amount of real *constructive* work done, by the *actual progress* made in *building up* the new system ! ! ! And to build *effectively* presupposes knowledge of what we are going to build.

It presupposes, first, that our constructive work will be upon the basis of economic freedom and social equality ; second, that our structure will allow

of absolutely NO possibility of a return to wage slavery. Our knowledge of the real character of the revolution must be such as will allow of no wavering in moments of trial, no relaxation just when we ought to hold on—in other words, we must realize that a revolution will not only mean a transformation in the economic structure of society, but that this very change in itself will render obsolete all our old standards of ethics, morality, legality, etc.; and we have, therefore, to prepare for the easy cultivation of new standards by extensive and thorough-going education while we have the opportunity.

Our philosophy should be made accessible to every worker, and should be presented in such a way as will allow of no dubiety when it is in process of materialisation. How often, in the history of forward movements, has their stability been endangered by opponents adroitly appealing to the adherents of these movements in terms of sentiment of the old standards? All of these things we must constantly keep before us, and their extreme importance brings out the value of Plebs and C.L.C. Classes. The antidote to dangerous possibilities is educational work such as they carry on. They must be utilised to acquaint the worker of the true character of capitalism, its economics, its social development. The Materialist Concept of History must cease to be a mere phrase for point-gaining discussionaires, and become a ready tool for forcing open the doors of the past, and revealing the true nature of social progress. Pedanticism, as manifested in ponderous and semi-obscure syllabuses, must be treated as a relic of a bygone moral-value, and a more generous attempt made to emulate Lenin and Trotsky in their devotion to the task of having difficult theories propounded in the most popular terms. This is work of lasting and permanent value, and is sufficient reason for all possible assistance to Plebs, C.L.C., and all Marxian educational institutions. In the clash of ideas which inevitably follows a social upheaval, the plausible, professionally-schooled, middle-class man, with his convenient half-truths, may appeal more successfully to an uninformed mass than the man whose "whole truth" is dressed in the repellent garb of Abstract Terms.

Education, then, and along more popular lines, is of vital importance, and must be given its place, as such, in the Socialist movement to-day. Let us look to it.

ARTHUR McMANUS.

The Prophets of Profit.

The wind is well up in the camp of the Coalowners just now. A considerable quantity of paper is being blown about in the form of small pamphlets, containing words on the infinite wisdom of private ownership, and words of warning on the disastrous ruin that will result if the policy of public ownership is instituted. The propagandist activity of the Coalowners and the Royalty Lords, on the platform and in the Press, indicates how very unsatisfactory from their point of view have been the proceedings of the now concluded Coal Commission. A very significant fact about this propaganda is that the pamphleteers have found it necessary to prepare two different sets of literature in defence of the *status quo* in the coal-mining industry. *The Case for the Coalowners* and *Black Diamonds*, for example, are intended for the intellectual invigoration of coalowners and owners in other industries. "Have you ever thought what increased cost of coal means to your business?" "Perhaps you personally are not directly interested in coal mines, and you feel inclined to stand aside and let the coal people fight out their own battle. But *your turn* will come and *your time* to take energetic steps is *now*." Those two quotations from *Black Diamonds* make it quite obvious that this pamphlet appeals only to the buyers of labour-power, to the "Business Man." It is an appeal to the capitalist class as a whole to unite on the basis of identical

interest. If another type of appeal is made to the mine-workers and the workers of other industries, there is already an implication that the workers occupy a different ground in economics, and that they have an interest in industry which is not identical with the interests of the capitalists. Different interests require different arguments. If the different interests are also antagonistic interests—as, indeed, in reality they are—then the arguments appealing to the different interests will also indicate this antagonism. Contradictory interests involve contradictory arguments.

The "literary hod-carriers" to the Coalowners, to be sure, do not intend to reveal any hostility of interests between owners and workers. Theirs is the pleasant duty of proclaiming the harmonious identity of interests between capital and wage-labour. The pamphlet, *Nationalisation of Mines: How will it Affect the Worker?* is designed to show that the "colliery workers are forging chains for their own slavery" when they agitate for the elimination of the private ownership of mines; that it will be all up with "personal liberty" and "freedom to work"; that the workers will become "an oppressed class of drudges." "History will repeat itself. The ancient Israelites writhed under Egyptian task masters." "The miner is gliding down to his Falls of Niagara." It is a truly terrible prospect for the miner which is sketched for him in this pamphlet. How does it harmonise, however, with the gospel according to *Black Diamonds*, wherein the capitalists, outside of the coal industry, are warned, under the heading, "After Coal Mines, what next?" that the "Nationalisation of coal mines is only the first step in the Socialists' campaign. Then will follow Railways, Iron Mines, Engineering Works, Steamships, and then Food and Drink until the whole of our industries are owned and worked by the State." Both prospects, it is true, for both owners and workers, are portrayed in usually forbidding colours. For both parties, the pamphleteers describe a common "road to ruin." It is just here that the good monistic intentions of these knights of the pen of Profit are shattered by the matter of fact dualism which, although it does not escape their recognition—as witness the provision of two sets of literature—does evade their powers of reconciliation.

They prove too much in their prophecies of "paralysis" for miners and mineowners. If, and when, the mining industry is nationalised, and the disastrous consequences of which the miner is warned become a fact, the workers in the other industries will hardly carry on a campaign for the extension of this liberty destroying, life-oppressing system to the branches of production in which they are engaged. Why then should the prophet in *Black Diamonds* parade the terrors of "After Coal Mines, what next?" and startle the gentlemen who own Railways, Iron Mines, Engineering Works, etc.? "What! frightened with false fire!" May it not even be with those gentlemen as with the King of Denmark, to whom Hamlet ironically addressed those words, and who saw in the play which Hamlet had arranged, something more than a mere piece of acting, saw just what Hamlet intended he should see. "The play's the thing, wherein to catch the conscience of the king." It is from the fear that the miners will find more freedom without the mineowner, and that the workers in other industries will recognise the fact and follow the example, that the appeal to the capitalist class is prompted—"Your turn will come and your time to take energetic steps is now."

In the pamphlet intended for circulation among the workers, the bogey of Bolshevism was sure to find a place. That it is decidedly out of place, in relation to the argumentation preceding its introduction, is a matter of which the writer of the pamphlet appears to have not the slightest inkling. So eager is he to pile up a multitude of objections to "nationalisation" that he has never paused to think—if he is capable of this cerebral process—how far those objections are logically and harmoniously related to one another.

Until we get to p. 6 the argument, if it may be dignified by that word, is

directed against State ownership and Government administration. Government departments are indicted as inefficient, uneconomical and coercive. By State and Governments are, of course, meant the existing State and the existing Government. The Prussian capitalist State is cited as an awful example of the disastrous results of national ownership, being one of the causes that "lured Germany to ruin." All that, however, does not satisfy the pamphleteer for the defence of his masters and so he proceeds to expose the "actual working of nationalisation" as it is in Russia. His evidence—and this is where the devil plays his joke—is entirely extracted from a Government White Paper (Cmd. 8 of 1919), which "sets forth in a plain and unvarnished manner how Nationalisation acts in Russia." The Government which cannot be trusted with the control and administration of industry can be trusted when it comes to supplying evidence as to the untrustworthiness of such control and administration "in Russia!" The Government is so obliging as to show, from the example of Russia, what utter ruin must ensue when it takes over the mines or any other industry!

No one who has troubled to make even the most elementary investigation of the Russian situation, can fail to distinguish the Russian experiment of industrial self-government from the pure and simple nationalisation of industry by a capitalist State. Nor does anyone who has made himself familiar with the facts about the conditions in Soviet Russia feel at all perturbed by the deliberately invented fictions that Governments set down in White Papers to blacken the character of a real democratic achievement. If, according to the extracts quoted in the pamphlet from the White Paper, the economic system of the Bolsheviks had shown all the incapacity, tyranny, dissatisfaction and complete paralysis of industry attributed to it, it would have long since perished, the Soviets would have become only a memory and the present policy of the Allied Governments of furnishing arms and the men to support Koltchak, Denikin and the other aristocratic heirs of Czarist corruption would be superfluous. No doubt "output has been reduced," no doubt the "cost of living has gone up" in Russia. Is that peculiar to Russia? If this country were subjected to the same attentions that the Allied Governments have paid to Russia, those phenomena would have become quite as marked in this country as they are there to-day. All the drawbacks and deficiencies in Soviet Russia, all the anarchy and famine, are due, not to the social control and administration of industry by and in the interest of those who take part in the industry, but precisely to that predatory system of "private enterprise" which only sophistry can attempt to defend.

For the rest, the capitalists of Western Europe are moved by the same consideration and trepidation in their support of armed intervention in Russia as the capitalists of this country who respond to the warning of the coal-owners' propagandists. In the one case, it is *After Russia, what next?* In the other, *After Coal Mines, what next?* Their prophecies of failure for the proletariat are prompted by their fear of a successful proletariat. They dread nothing so much as the judgment of history.

Whatever the immediate recommendations of the Commission may be, it constitutes a mighty clarifying and unifying influence, not only for the miners but for the workers as a class. Its moral effect has been considerable. It has increased the self-respect of the workman and made him feel that he is at least of as much consequence as those before whom he formerly was content to humble himself. His exercise of the power to question, through his representatives, the gentlemen who formerly denied him anything but the duty of unquestioning obedience, and his discovery of the indefensible character of the means by which those gentlemen have so long swung the rod over him, have enlarged his consciousness of power and increased his desire and determination to exert that power for the removal of all that burdens his life and limits his liberty. The immediate task of all our propaganda is that of intensifying and extending all those enlightening and invigorating effects.

W. W. CRAIK.

Opportunism.

The collapse of the war provided a breathing space for consideration of the Socialist position. The official Socialist parties had always regarded events likely to call for international action as afar off. To-day we are confronted with the necessity for immediate action to safeguard established proletarian governments in Russia and Hungary. To-morrow there may be developments in our own country.

We cannot make up our minds, as a class, about the established systems yet. We are still wrapped in the swaddling clothes of Socialist idealism. Force is the essence of the tactic of the "dictatorship of the proletariat," and our theory has been to convince, peacefully and legally. Western European Socialism generally remains under the enervating spell of this outlook. The "old guard" jibs at the new tactic evolved from the immediate need of the movement. Past international congresses, with their revolutionary resolutions and their reactionary practice, proved inadequate at the one moment in recent history when, as an international team, we had the ball at our feet. Are we to repeat that mistake or are we to set our organizations in order as a result of this experience?

In *The Collapse of the Second International** Lenin discusses the theory and practice of Socialism as a class-conscious principle applied.

By the collapse of the International is sometimes meant the interruption of the intercourse between the Socialist parties of the warring countries, the suspension of the meetings of the International Socialist Bureau, etc. To class-conscious workers Socialism is a serious conviction, and is not a cloak to cover up conciliatory middle-class aspirations or opposition to the Government along nationalist lines. By the collapse of the International, these workers mean the scandalous betrayal by a majority of the official Social-Democratic parties of their convictions and solemn declarations . . . embodied in resolutions passed . . .

This "scandalous betrayal" by the leaders of the movement is not mitigated by their laborious attempts to prove the authority of Marx and Engels for their action, or to lay the blame for it upon one or other of their national organizations. There must be an economic basis for their action, and a theory or idea countenancing it. There is.

The economic basis of . . . opportunism in the Labour movement . . . is the union of the upper strata of the proletariat . . . with the lower middle class, both benefitting from the crumbs which fall from the privileges enjoyed by "their" national capital.

The theory of the old guard is "the transformation of the present State by the proletarian conquest of political power." That proposition from Vandevelde's book, *Socialism versus The State*, adequately puts their viewpoint. It also explains their failure. Politics is essentially based on *common* as against *class* interests.

The main idea running through opportunism is the co-operation of all classes.

Opportunism means the surrender of the *basic* interests of the masses for the *temporary* interests of a small minority of the workers.

This theory of the Second International led the workers as lambs to the slaughter when war broke out. Its capacity (if still supported by the workers' organizations) to continue this process in future is unlimited. Its congresses were, and are, capable of *good resolutions*, supported by a wealth of argument and dialectical skill, but as surely leading to *bad results* as an addled egg.

* From S.L. Press, 50 Renfrew Street, Glasgow. 1/-; Post paid, 1/2).

It leads in practice to the very bad tactic of relying on independent national development of power through the ballot box. But it leaves internationalism as a pious aspiration. Parliamentarianism has no cohesive basis and no effective fighting organization. Votes lightly won are lightly lost, as our own Ramsay Macdonald has proved. All the Leicester Socialist campaigns leave no permanent trace when once the "common interest" asserts itself as Jingoism. Green follows Macdonald, and the King makes Leicester a "city" to celebrate its upholding of the "common interest."

Parliamentarianism is basically opportunist. The power of initiative in appeal, the measures that will come before the electorate, is always in the hands of your opponent while you are in a minority. And to be in a minority is inevitable, while you are economically in subjection. Geographical constituencies are formed of elements mutually antagonistic. Nonconformist employers and workmen, for example, may unite to oppose Anglican or Roman Catholic employers, and workmen, also united, on religious questions; *but* on questions of property relations in general the cohesion of employers as employers and workmen as workmen is assured. Religious belief is less powerful as a motive force than economic reality. Such examples might be multiplied. This game of see-saw inevitably weakens principles. Politics is the means for legalising capitalist society, not the means for its overthrow. So far as Socialist politics is successful, it is only at the expense of Socialist principles, success being achieved through conciliation. Conciliation is only the expression of agreement as to divided interests of the propertied and the propertyless, not the abolition of private property in social utilities.

All Socialist politics is the attempt to *convince* the people of "common interests" in the socialization of utilities. To convince the propertied interests you have to injure the propertyless, a fact the Labour Movement here recognized by withdrawing its statesmen from the Government. The politician is fettered to legality, he is a reformer. Socialists must be free to act, must be revolutionaries. Hostages must be given to fortune, opportunity must be harnessed. That implies might, and might implies organization. Effective organization implies cohesion. Cohesion can only be obtained by common material interests. Common material interests are class interests. Organization must, therefore, be based upon class material interests. That type of organization has in it the germs of unity for the conquest of society and the defence of an accomplished proletarian revolution. The dictatorship of the proletariat? Yes! as a tactic. If that is in opposition to the theorists, so much the worse for them. Along that path facts point unmistakably. That is the road of the Third International "The transformation of the present state through the conquest of political power" must give way to a

proletarian democracy and the possibility of the realization of freedom for the working masses; not parliamentarianism, but self-government of the masses through their elected organizations. (*Moscow International*).

The working out of this self-government in Russia approximates (under Russian conditions) to the adoption of the principles of Industrial Unionism. As Ablett says, "Bolshevism is socialism with its working clothes on." It is the working clothes Socialism as against the full dress debate Socialism. Berne stands for the *consumer* and Moscow for the *producer* concept of Socialism. "With the former the phrase surpasses the substance; with the latter the substance surpasses the phrase." To Moscow! G. SIMS.

LANC. & CHESHIRE League for Independent Working Class Education: Important Conferences, Co-Op. Assembly Rooms, Dornin St., Wigan, on Saturday, July 12th, to consider the establishment of a Labour College for Lanc. & Cheshire. Nun Nicholas and others will speak. Delegates' names and addresses to be sent to J. Hamilton, 52 Byrom Street, Liverpool, not later than July 5th.

Ireland in Revolution.

II.

Having torn the Irish people from the soil which they had owned from time immemorial, the landlord exploiters of the United Kingdom were legally at liberty—they never had any *moral* compunctions conflicting with their class interests—to make what use they liked of "their own." They could raise their rents, replace their tenantry, use or abuse their lands as seemed to them most desirable. To add insult to injury, the Protestants in Parliament passed a series of ruthless penal laws against the Catholics, thus satisfying not only their religious prejudices, but also striking a wedge of perpetual legal uncertainty underneath the potential economic power of those whom they judged to be Counter-Revolutionaries and the enemies of their Church and State and Property. It was not so much the injury that Acts of Parliament could wreak as the ill-will which their enactment showed as existing amongst the rulers of the kingdom, whom Irishmen have tended always to confuse with the mass of the British people. This unfortunate conclusion was natural, but to-day we may ask our Irish friends to realise that whilst the British governing class ruled them with the jack-boot it also provided, through its State Church and its private gift of livings to the shepherds of the Lord's flock, for the instruction of the British workers in the ideas and prejudices favourable to the continuance of its class-rule.

The jealousies and suspicions fostered and stimulated by centuries of wrongful treatment and wrongful instruction cannot be chased away in a few years even by the most logical presentation of facts. Yet we can hope, in time, if the conscious workers of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland will help to enlighten each other and each other's audiences, for the increasing solidarity so vital to the success of our common cause.

What, however, helped even more, perhaps, to sunder British from Irish than even the Irish land laws, was the deliberate pursuit of a policy aimed at destroying, by *legal enactment*, the industries of Ireland, into which the dispossessed peasantry might have made their way. For it was not till the 19th century that *natural* handicaps such as absence of coal and iron made it inevitable that Ireland's economic development should lag behind that of the sister isle. Immediately the government of England and of Scotland passed out of the control of the sovereign, to whom his whole realm was, if he was wise, an estate to be cultivated and developed to the uttermost, into the hands of the landlords and merchants, these people began to use political power to forward the interests of their estates and their trades and to pass laws to protect English and Scottish industries, commerce and shipping. The 22nd and 23rd Charles II., Ch. 26, prohibited direct importation into Ireland from the Colonies, of sugar, tobacco, cotton, wool, indigo, or other dyes. After the Revolution these restrictions were extended almost to debar trade between the Colonies and Ireland. Whilst permitting the export from Ireland to the Colonies of horses and foodstuffs, the effect of restrictions on imports, restrictions intended to collect Colonial trade in the ports of Glasgow, Bristol, Liverpool, Whitehaven, etc., was to destroy the exchange of commodities on which commerce depends. By 1698, Dublin had not a single ship. In 1783 Britain had 360,000 tons of the vessels in the Irish trade against 71,000 owned in Ireland.

Deprived of their traffic with the British Colonies or Plantations, the Irish had developed a considerable export of woollen cloths to the Continent. This export was likewise prohibited by an English Act of 1698. In the next reign Parliament forbade the import into Ireland of hops from any country but England, and even then only on unfavourable terms, so preventing the growth of a native brewing industry. By successive Acts from 12 Charles II. to 2 Ann prohibitive tariffs were placed on Irish manufactures of all kinds imported

into England (later, Britain). These restrictions remained in force until 1780, and had the intended effect of destroying all Irish industry except the linen manufacture of Ulster.

It might seem, at first sight, that these measures would have redounded to the advantage of English woollen workers by reason of diminished competition, but, on the contrary, they merely released hundreds of thousands of Irish who made their way not from the land to the looms of Irish towns, but from the land and looms of Ireland to the land and looms of England and Scotland. They came into Bristol, Liverpool and Glasgow from the squalid misery of their degraded village and homestead life, the life of cabins, famished and blighted with the diseases of hunger, to snatch at any work, at any conditions of pay and treatment, to live in any hutches with which Lowthers, Hamiltons, and Londonderrys might provide them.

To walk through Port Glasgow and Greenock, to explore the rows of Lanarkshire, to peer into the courts of Whitehaven and to promenade Scotland Road, Liverpool, and the squalid streets of Bootle, is to see and to know the immeasurable curse which British rack-renters have brought, not merely on the distressed and dispossessed people of Ireland, but also upon the English and Scottish workers amongst whom they have flung this unassimilated and unwelcome by-product of their iniquity. To see these things is to fathom the depths of Irish resentment and to appreciate the curses hurled at the Saxon from across St. George's Channel. But it was not the Irishman's funeral alone. It was ours too. And one's shame turns to wrath when, studying the history of strikes and lockouts, of the ruin of that fine Mine Workers' Union which flourished in Lanarkshire a century ago, and of the black deeds of Powell of the Duffryn in the valleys of Monmouthshire and Aberdare, one discovers the smug capitalists sending into Ireland to persuade the labourers to come over to work in the mines of Scotland and South Wales, counting as they did so on the almost weekly affrays which would absorb the fighting energies and pugnacious qualities of both sections of their hapless wage-slaves.

Merthyr and Ebbw Vale, Coatbridge and Motherwell, present one long story, ever since the Potato Blight, of wrangling and murderous assault between natives and immigrants. One long agony has been the lot of the Irishman, robbed of his own soil and struggling to establish himself afresh, without experience, training or savings, in a hostile land and an industrial economy utterly at variance with the inherited traditions of sept and clan life. Reparation has certainly been done to him in part, but his lands have only been returned to him when the mischief has been done and when peasant proprietorship no longer offers hope of continued and progressive prosperity.

The Irishman knows that he has been robbed. What he needs to learn is that the Englishman and the Scotchman and the Welshman were robbed at the same time; the trouble being that their memories have been shorter, and that they have been led to believe that he is an aggravation of their problems. Gradually with the activities of W. Martin Murphy and others like him, with the rise of capitalist conditions in certain parts of Ireland and with the unity of front displayed by the ruling class in Glasgow Belfast and Limerick, we may expect a fuller understanding of their positions and an infinitely closer co-operation between the workers of Great Britain and of Ireland.

J. T. WALTON NEWBOLD.

THE WORKERS' DREADNOUGHT.

THE MOST ADVANCED LABOUR WEEKLY

Foreign News, especially Russian, a Special Feature.

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That Blessed Word "Democracy"

We ought to thank our comrades E. & C. Paul for the introduction into the Plebs' vocabulary of a fresh-sounding word—"ergatocracy" (workers' rule).

"Democracy," dear old "democracy," beloved of the high-falutin' orator, has become a hackneyed insincerity. But the glib pretence of the puppet statesmen of Capital and the splutterings of its harassed coupon-holders concern us less than do the plaintive wails of our tame Socialists and parliamentarians. The nice-sounding phrases of the former are defeated by their actions—we can study "democracy" at work, at home and abroad—Conscription, Aliens' Acts, the working of D.O.R.A., British administration in Ireland, Egypt, India, etc.; but with the latter we have to wrestle with specious argumentation based apparently upon Socialist fundamentals.

As "democrats" Messrs. J. H. Thomas, A. Henderson, J. R. Clynes, and others are extremely anxious concerning the trend of working-class policy. J.H.T. denounces the political strike; "the workers," says he, "can get all they want by voting the *right* men into Parliament." The Rt. Hon. Arthur had much to say at the Congress of the French Socialist Party (April 20th) about "sound democratic principles . . . broad based upon the peoples' will" . . . "Socialists who believe in Parliamentary methods have no sympathy with dictatorships, whatever political or economic theories they may profess to represent." As for Russia, "the duty of the western democracies was to help that country to establish political unity and the central order of the State on sound democratic principles." Mr. Clynes, also recently uttered words of warning against "unconstitutional methods." Apropos of the latter's speech the *Yorkshire Post* (21/4/19) says:—

On this subject (the political strike) we had some really *statesmanlike* talk from Mr. Clynes at Leamington. Workers have the vote and they can get all they want by means of the vote once they clearly see what they do want. *Naturally Mr. Clynes does not regard a Labour Government as involving any danger to the State.* He knows well that it *might* be a danger, for he told his audience that "a working-class autocracy would be as fatal to working-class interests as a wealthy class autocracy."

All of which recalls those far-off days before the flood—when Mr. Ramsay Macdonald (at the 1911 Leicester Conference of the Labour Party) opposed any suggestions for more direct and popular government, defending what he called "the dignity and authority of Parliament," and insisting upon "the reverence and deference" which people ought to feel toward it.

Since then we have had five years of inter-capitalist strife; five years in which has been compressed the normal economic evolution of twenty-five years. But it has taught these people nothing. Listen to Mr. Snowden at Huddersfield in this year of enlightenment 1919, and applaud the same old noble sentiments:—

The I.L.P. is no partisan of violence. *An intelligent and self-conscious democracy in a country like ours need not resort to methods of violence to attain its end.*

Indeed the I.L.P. Conference appeared as a tree whose branches rustled in the winds of the European Revolution, but whose roots were still deep in the soil of Lib.-Lab. conservatism. "Dictatorship," "violence," "western or British democratic principles," "broad based upon the people's will," "democracy, democracy, democracy!" The old, old parrot cries!

What is this "democracy" of ours, anyway? Mr. J. A. Hobson, in his *Crisis of Liberalism*, says the "false pretence that democracy exists in Great Britain has proved the *subtlest defence of privilege.*" And our phrase-mongers defend that pretence!

It is, moreover, doubtful if these gentlemen really do believe in the "democracy" they prate about. The Labour Party's persistent rejection of

the referendum and initiative nullifies their protestations. Mr. Macdonald opposes it as a "crude 18th Century idea of democracy, a form of village community government." The Fabians, who after all provide the theoretical basis of the Socialism known as *British*, do not always even mouth the "presence of democracy." In his *Fabianism and the Empire*, G.B.S. says that "democracy in the popular sense of government by the masses is clearly contrary to commonsense." He would substitute government FOR the masses instead of government BY the masses. Walling in *Socialism as It Is*, quotes Shaw as saying:—

Despotism fails only for want of a capable benevolent despot, and what we want nowadays is not a new or modern form of democracy but only capable benevolent representatives.

H. G. Wells pillories this "Socialism" in *First and Last Things*. He remarks that the movement

has developed into something like a mania for achieving Socialism *without the overt change of any existing ruling body*. . . . Socialism was to arrive insidiously. . . . Socialism ceased to be an open revolution. Functions were to be shifted quietly, unostentatiously, from the representative to the official appointed; a bureaucracy was to slip into power through the mechanical difficulties of an administration by debating representatives . . . a pretty distinctly undemocratic Socialism.

Belloc once derided the Fabian and I.L.P. brand of Socialism by predicting that when it did come "it would simply be another of the infinite and perpetually renewed dodges of the English aristocracy"; truly observing that you cannot make revolutions without revolutionaries. And G. K. Chesterton has professed a belief which he says "is almost unknown among the Socialists of England—a belief in the common people." Observe that this is said of the "democratic" Socialists; the "ergatocrats," the believers in workers' rule (and its approach) in the dictatorship of the proletariat, do believe in the *common people*. We want the workers to see to it that the men it elects are its delegates and not its leaders.

The "democracy" of political opportunism we reject. We reject it because, to quote Wells again, it can only mean that power will be put into the hands of rich newspaper proprietors, advertising producers, and the energetic wealthy generally, as the source flooding the collective mind freely with suggestions on which it acts. (*First and Last Things*).

As ergatocrats we are out to make the world safe for the workers, nor for a camouflaged "democracy" that ill conceals the "fat man" and his hirelings, the politician and the military dictator. Again I thank our comrades Paul for the new word. I am pleased to subscribe myself an ERGATOCRAT.

A. E. COOK.

ORDER NOW FROM B.S.P. LITERATURE DEPARTMENT.

RANSOME: *Six Weeks in Russia in 1919*. 2/6. Post free, 2/8.

TROTSKY: *History of the Russian Revolution*. 2/- Post free, 2/3.

LITVINOFF: *The Bolshevik Revolution*. 7d. Post free, 8d.

PRICE: *Capitalist Europe and Socialist Russia*. 4d. Post free 5d.

THE BIG FOUR COMPLETE. 5/6 Post free.

All Plebs should make a point of reading—and taking part in—the discussion opened by John Bryan on Parliamentarism, Trade Unionism, and the Soviet System, now being published in

THE CALL

THURSDAYS - - - - - ONE PENNY.

British Socialist Party, 21a Maiden Lane, Strand, W.C. 2.

The Plebs Meet

The E.C. have decided to postpone the Annual Meet until after the re-opening of the College—probably during September. Whether any formal opening ceremony is to be held we do not know, but if so, it would perhaps be possible to hold the Meet at the same time. In any case, our friends everywhere will we are sure, be anxious to view, if possible, the College in its new glory, and also to meet the Staff and students; and for that reason it would be a pity to hold the Meet, according to custom, on August Bank Holiday, before the re-opening takes place. Particulars as to date, etc., will be announced.

Nominations for Executive Committee

The following have been nominated for the Plebs League E.C. :—

H. G. BALLARD.	J. T. WALTON NEWBOLD.*
LANCELOT HOGGEN.	C. T. PENDREY.*
ROBT. HOLDER.	T. QUELCH.*
GEO. MASON.*	MARK STARR.
B. SKENE MACKAY.*	C. TERRY.*

(* denotes member of present E.C.)

The E.C. consists of 7 members, so that ballot-papers will be posted to all League members during the month.

We much regret that Frank Jackson has withdrawn his name from the list of nominations as a result of his having to leave the London district for the north—we hope only temporarily.

Please note change of address for all communications to League or Magazine: 127, Hamlet Gardens, Ravenscourt Park, London, W. (8).

The Herald: Daily.

Editor—GEORGE LANSBURY.

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PUBLIC SPEAKING.

The League is issuing a HOME STUDY COURSE in Public Speaking, consisting of twelve 4 pp. printed lessons, exercises and instructions. Included in the course are—Memory Aids and Helps: Suggestions for Literary Composition: Word Substitution and Selections; Speech Preparation, Outlines, etc. The charge for the full course, posted weekly, is 3s. 6d. (paid in advance) to the League Sec., (address above).

NEXT MONTH:—First of a short series of articles by Eden and Cedar Paul, entitled "Ergatocracy and the Shop Stewards' Movement."

The Plebs Bookshelf.

The May number of the *Socialist Standard*, the organ of that truculent band of last-ditchers, the S.P.G.B., contained an article entitled "Economics at the Central Labour College," which was full to overflowing of instructive and edifying information. It was signed "F.F." Whether those initials stood for Fearful Fool or Funny Fellow we are unable, except on the evidence of the article itself, to conjecture. Give ear :—

The mistaken notions of the S.W. miners and the Liberal politics of the Labour Party form the basis of the College instruction, which is carried back to the T.U. and I.L.P. branches as independent and scientific knowledge of the working-class position.

Comment on which would only spoil its touching simplicity. We quote it to show how much the man who wrote it is in touch with the world outside his hermitage.

"F.F." has also something to say about W. W. Craik's article in the April *Plebs*, the unsoundness and anti-Marxian character of the economic views expressed in which are duly exposed. As thus :—

Mr. W. W. Craik, dealing with the Coal Commission, asks a simple question in economics—"What is Capital?" But although economics is an important subject at the College, and a correct definition of capital is very essential to that subject, the writer seems quite unable to give one. "What is Capital?" he asks. "Wealth used to produce more wealth," he replies.

And then follows a criticism of this alleged "reply" ! . . . This is a new method of controversy indeed ! I quote some ridiculous remark made by an opponent, and instantly a high-browed S.P.G.B.'er leaps up and accuses *me* of having uttered the very nonsense which I am doing my best to ridicule ! "F.F." should really read articles before he reviews them. He might then save himself some time which he could devote to the study of Marx. That he stands in some need of such a course of study is fairly evident from his assertion that capital is a *thing*, and that the source of capitalist power is the *political* machinery.

Mr. Arnold Freeman's latest publication is very appropriately and very characteristically entitled *How to Avoid a Revolution* (Allen & Unwin., 6d. net). It is issued under the auspices of the Fellowship of Reconstruction, the organisation of Y.M.C.A.'ers (referred to in our review of Mr. Freeman's *Introduction to the Study of Social Problems* last February) which is pledged "to work for such a Reconstruction of our own country and of the world as will effect the establishment upon earth of the Kingdom of God." Apparently you can achieve that aim without a revolution ! Mr. Freeman is an optimist. The main contention of this booklet (according to the *Times* review) is that "too much emphasis is laid on equality of scope in material things ; that the ultimate sources of life and progress lie in spiritual things, and the trouble with the poor (and the rich) is spiritual poverty ; and the remedy is education." So always pause to recall, when you feel more than usually bitter, that you and the boss both suffer from the same complaint ; and go away and pray for the (peaceable) coming of the Kingdom of God.

Co-operators are beginning to realise the desirability of a Co-operative College, and the matter has been a good deal discussed recently in the columns of the *Co-operative News*. Mr. Albert Mansbridge, late of the W.E.A., and now Chairman, World Association for Adult Education, contributed to the discussion in the issue of May 3rd, and in the course of his letter wrote this decidedly interesting sentence :—

There is a great deal of teaching which is immediately incidental to the development of the co-operative movement which must be carried out, *and can only be carried out, by convinced and experienced co-operators working for a definite end.*

Exactly what C.L.C.'ers have been saying for years, in fact, regarding a Labour College. But in this latter case Mr. Mansbridge talked about "partial" and "prejudiced" teaching, and about "education which was propaganda not being education at all." Listen, Mr. Mansbridge:—"There is a great deal of teaching which is immediately incidental (and ultimately essential) to the development of the Workers' movement which must be carried out, *and can only be carried out, by convinced and experienced Labour men working for a definite end.*

* * * * *

And that end is not "How to Avoid a Revolution."

* * * * *

The *Times* of May 29th published a report of a conference held the day previous at Harrod's Stores, at which it was resolved to establish an "Association for the Advancement of Education in Industry and Commerce." (We are indebted to the Labour News Service for the interesting information that the original name was the "British Employers Association for the Advancement of Education," but that it was later decided to omit the words "British Employers.") The objects of the Association were defined as (1) the encouragement of definite educational work in industrial undertakings (*i.e.*, of works schools); (2) the general advancement of education by the printing and circulation of papers, investigation and research, co-operation with other educational bodies, etc., etc. Lord Leverhulme was elected president, Sir W. Burbidge vice-president, and Mr. R. W. Ferguson (of Cadbury Bros.) secretary—by Bournville & Port Sunlight, a pretty combination! Employers are invited to become members at the dirt-cheap price of 5 guineas per annum. "It was hoped that the Association will be affiliated to the W.E.A." Lord Leverhulme, in the course of a few presidential observations, said that the most important part of education which should be dealt with by such an organisation as theirs was to enlighten the workers as to the *true facts* (as distinct from the false facts?) which made for higher wages and shorter hours—to teach better methods of industrialism, to dispel the false doctrine of ca' canny (loud cheers) and to inculcate the economic facts which were at the base of production. That's the stuff to give 'em! The President of the Board of Education, the enlightened Mr. Fisher, urged the assembled bosses to go ahead and set up as many works schools as possible, "in view of the useful functions they might play in solving the difficulties between Capital and Labour." (Labour News Service, June 7th). In the words of one Mr. Cecil Ashley, "The interests of Capital and Labour are identical and inseparable. The only difficulty at present is to bring this knowledge clearly home to the workers." The bosses know it already, you see.

It will be interesting to see whether the W.E.A. accepts the affiliation of the new Association. If it refuses, it will surely—at last!—be taking up a distinctly *partisan* position on the question of the education of the workers. While if it accepts. . . . But that *would* give the game away!

CYCLISTS.—Since the inauguration of the SOCIALIST CYCLING CLUB in 1917, Sections have been formed in Sheffield, Kinning Park, Bridgeton, Partick and Whiteinch. What about Dumbarton, Dunston-on-Tyne, Edinburgh, Kilmarnock and Liverpool? Who'll take the initiative to form a Section there or elsewhere? Every assistance, full particulars, rule and run books, leaflets stating our reasons for dissociating ourselves from the *Clarion*. If you believe in the International join the Socialist Cycling Club. Write the Secy., A. Grant, 3 Greenhill Road, Rutherglen.

From R. L. Outhwaite's very vigorous little weekly, *The Commonwealth* :—
 Big Business here is adopting American tactics. A case in point is the fact that the Oil Companies have contributed £210,000 to Cambridge University to endow the School of Chemistry. So also has Rockefeller endowed American Universities, and other boodlers have done the same. Consequently, the Professor who does not teach the right brand of economics gets his walking ticket, as Bertrand Russell got his from Cambridge. The gift of the Oil Companies may be an expression of approval. The London School of Economics had Lord Rothschild as its patron. . . . Th Public Schools and Universities are tied institutions.

Please read very seriously our appeal on p. 2 of cover, and think over what you can do. It is more than time we were going ahead, but our hands are tied until this back debt is wiped out. We ought to be able to do it this month—easily. There are heaps of our old friends whom we haven't heard from yet, and we don't believe they're turning us down. We have to raise £40 before the end of July. *This is serious.* Please send your p.o., without further delay, to Sec. (127 Hamlet Gdns., Ravenscourt Park, London, W. (6)).

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

- The Spirit of Russia.* Studies in History, Literature, and Philosophy. By T. G. MASARYK. Trans. by Eden and Cedar Paul. 2 vols. (Allen and Unwin. 32s. net).
- A New School in Belgium.* By A. F. de VASCONCELLOS. Trans. by Eden and Cedar Paul. (G. G. Harrap & Co. 5s. net).
- The Soviets at Work.* By Lenin. (6d.). *Data.* A monthly journal. (2d.) From the Socialist Information and Research Bureau, 196 St. Vincent Street, Glasgow).
- Capitalist Europe and Socialist Russia.* By M. PHILLIPS PRICE. (Post paid 5d., from B.S.P., 21a Maiden Lane, W.C. 2.)
- Capitalism in the S. Wales Coalfield.* By GEO. HARVEY. (Post paid, 5d., from S.L. Press 50 Renfrew Street, Glasgow.)
- Vingt Lettres de Léon Trotzky.* (Post paid, 50 centimes, from *La Vie Ouvrière*, 96, Quai de Jemmapes, Paris.)
- Constitution of the Russian Soviet Republic.* (3d., or 16s. per 100, post paid, from People's Russian Information Bureau, 152 Fleet Street, E.C. 4.)
- Facts from the Coal Commission.* Compiled by R. P. ARNOT. Foreword by ROBT SMILLIE and FRANK HODGES. (Labour Research Dept., 25 Tothill Street, S.W. 1. 6d., post paid, 7d.)
- The Re-organization of Local Government.* By C. M. LLOYD. Preface by SIDNEY WEBB. (From Labour Research Dept., 25 Tothill Street, S.W. 1. 1s., post paid 1s. 1½d.)
- Memoranda on International Labour Legislation.* (The Labour Party, 33 Eccleston Square, S.W. 1. 1s., post paid 1s. 1½d.)
- The Gang Behind the Government; or Capitalism's Case for Industrial Unionism.* By J. T. WALTON NEWBOLD. (Reformer's Bookstall, 224 Buchanan Street, Glasgow. 2d. Post paid, 2½d.)
- The Earth is the Lord's.* ROBERT SMILLIE's Text. (Reformers' Bookstall, Address above. 1d.)

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