

Vol. VII, No. 9

October, 1915

*The*  
**PLEBS**  
MAGAZINE



*Printed by Fox, Jones & Co., at Kemp  
Hall, High St., Oxford, & published  
♦ by the Plebs League ♦  
at the same address.*

**MONTHLY**

**TWOPENCE**

**WILL YOU**

**DO YOUR**

**SHARE ?**

TO CONTRIBUTORS AND CORRESPONDENTS.—Please note that the last day for receiving copy for the *PLEBS* is the 18th of the month.

---

# THE PLEBS MAGAZINE

---

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

Vol. VII

October, 1915

No. 9

---

---

## CONTENTS

---

	Page
1.—AN APPEAL BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - -	193
2.—MYSTERIES OF WAGERY IN SOUTH WALES. By NOAH ABLETT - -	195
3.—INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM AND THE STATE. By ROBERT HOLDER - -	197
4.—GUILD SOCIALISM AND WOMEN IN INDUSTRY. By J. F. AND W. HERRIN - -	200
5.—SUPPLIES AND THE ENGINEERS. By TOM REES - -	205
6.—REPORTS ("PLEBS" ANNUAL MEET) - - - -	207
7.—CORRESPONDENCE (B. S. MACKAY, WORKER, AND G.S.) - -	210
8.—REVIEWS (A. J. HACKING AND J.F.H.) - - - -	214

---

---

## To Our Friends

As was announced in last month's issue, we have to make a special and urgent appeal to every reader of *The Plebs Magazine*. If the response is general, we believe that it is the last appeal we shall need to make.

Our readers are entitled to a brief statement of the facts of the situation. *The Magazine* is now practically paying its way. During the past twelve months the circulation has steadily increased, and there is every prospect, in view of the extension of the activities of the Central Labour College, of a still further increase in the near future. But we are faced with an outstanding

debt of £100; and that debt, or the greater part of it, must be cleared by the end of this year. So large a sum would take a much longer period than that to raise by increased circulation alone, however confident we might be that in the long run, we could pay it. **WE HAVE TO RAISE THE MONEY WITHIN THE NEXT THREE MONTHS.**

It was accordingly decided at the Annual Meet that a Special Appeal Fund be opened, to which every reader of the Magazine should be invited to contribute. We do not think that, once they are acquainted with these facts, our friends will be slow to respond. The Magazine has been run for the financial profit of no individual or group of individuals. It has existed solely to express (and discuss) certain views and ideas which its supporters agree in regarding as of vital importance. The financial debt it has incurred in so doing is, then, we feel, the joint responsibility of all its readers; and the effort to clear it off should be a joint one.

There is no need for us again to point out the increased possibilities of usefulness which lie before us now that the College itself has at last won its way to a firmer basis. We cannot do better than quote a sentence from an appeal made in these pages a year ago:—"The service rendered to the College through and by means of the Magazine has made it indispensable to its future welfare, providing as it does the means of keeping the active supporters in touch with the work of the College and the Movement generally."

A Subscription Form is enclosed with this issue. We would point out that if every reader subscribes the sum of One Shilling, half of the debt would be wiped out at once. One shilling NOW, and one shilling at a later date, would clear off the debt completely. Or can you secure a new subscriber to the Magazine and get him (or her) to send on a year's subscription, NOW? P.O.'s, &c., to be sent to J. Reynolds (Secretary-Treasurer), 13 **Penywern Road, Earls Court, London, S.W.**

We very earnestly invite our friends to make this Shilling Fund an immediate and complete success. Of course larger sums will be most gratefully accepted. Will YOU do YOUR share?

**WINIFRED HORRABIN,**  
**J. F. HORRABIN,**  
**O. KEIGHLEY,**  
**B. SKENE MACKAY** (*Chairman*),  
**J. REYNOLDS** (*Secretary*),  
**J. V. WILLS,**

} **Executive  
 Committee.**

#### FUTURE BOOKINGS, &c.

We hope to publish next month an article entitled *What of the Women?* by Alice Smith; also one on a subject of vital interest to Railwaysmen—and others—by George Brown, of Bristol; and a review of G. D. H. Cole's new book, *Labour in His Time*, by Noah Ablett.

Our readers will be interested to note that George Barker's article, *Should the Workers be Organized by Industries?* (published in the July number of the *Plebs*) and the August Editorial (*The C.L.C. and the Welsh Strike*) were re-printed in the September number of the *International Socialist Review*.

## Mysteries of Wagering in South Wales

THE Editor and other powerful persons who have their fingers on the throbbing pulse of Plebeian public opinion have induced me to think that an explanation of the title would be of interest to Plebs who don't happen to be S.W. Miners. Selah! On them be all the blame.

There are a variety of wage systems in the S. Wales coalfield. To recount all of them would be to present a pandemonium. But they all obey the principles I shall now outline in explaining the chief of them, known as the "Standard of 1879." This standard is the basis upon which all the other systems are to be based in the formation of the new 1915 Standard.

In the year 1879 the coalowners and workmen met to form a scheme for the regulation of wages in the coalfield. The price of coal at the time of the meeting varied only from 7/11½ to 8/- per ton. It was agreed that the price of coal should be the sole determining factor from which wages should be calculated. At every colliery there were certain agreed rates and prices; the rates, for all classes of men who worked by the day; the prices, for all men who worked by the piece—chiefly coal-cutters. It was further agreed that when the price of coal in the market should be 8/- per ton, all these rates and prices should be at par, or at the standard. But if the price of coal in the market rose to 9/- per ton, then those rates and prices would also rise by 8¾%. And if the price of coal in the market fell to 7/- per ton then those rates and prices would fall by 8¾%. In other words, for every 1/- per ton increase in the price of coal on the market the workmen's wages would rise by 8¾% on their standard rates and prices, and per contra for every 1/- per ton decrease in price. So that 8/- becomes the "equivalent" of par, or of the standard, and from this basis a "scale" of 8¾% on or off the standard is measured by every 1/- increase or decrease in the price of coal. That system was called the sliding scale. In the year 1898 the workmen endured (best word in this case) a six months' strike to abolish the sliding scale, and to establish what was and is called the "Conciliation Board." The only difference between the two systems is that under the new system other factors besides the price of coal—large screened coal—are used to determine the "equivalent" and the "scale," viz.,—the cost of colliery material to the coalowners, the quantity of coal sold or the volume of trade, the price of small coal, and the cost of living to the workmen. I must now digress for a moment.

The bulk of the coal worked in S. Wales is steam coal. The economic history of S.W. steam coal is that the thicker, cleaner, best quality and the more productive seams of coal lie nearer

the surface. The further down you go the seams become thinner and less productive. The Plebeian student of economics will at once see that the economic tendency in S. Wales is towards an increased cost of production and an increased price of coal. This in fact has been the case. Since 1879 the price of coal (with fluctuations) has steadily risen until in the last 15 years prices have varied from about 14/- to 40/- per ton. After that I need hardly say that given the '79 equivalent and scale, I would be an enthusiastic adherent of the old sliding scale.

I have assumed in the foregoing that the scale of  $8\frac{3}{4}\%$  on the standards was always equal to 1/- per ton on the market. This was not always the case. The scale has varied from  $7\frac{1}{2}\%$  to the 1/- per ton to  $10\%$  to the 1/- per ton, but the equivalent remained the same during the lifetime of the sliding scale. In the year 1902 when the price of coal was considerably above the equivalent, being  $13\frac{6}{8}$  per ton and yielding  $48\frac{3}{4}\%$  on the standard, a new equivalent was arranged. Hitherto when the price of coal was  $11\frac{1}{3}$  the percentage was  $30\%$ . In the future the equivalent of  $30\%$  was to be  $11\frac{1}{10}$ —a loss of 7d. per ton. As a payment for this the percentage was never to go below  $30\%$ , and thus the great principle (?) of a minimum percentage was established. In the year 1910, the minimum percentage was raised to  $35\%$  opposite an equivalent price of  $12\frac{1}{5}$  per ton—another  $2\%$  lost. (In all this period with one brief exception, September, 1905—May, 1906, prices never touched the minimum). In the same year—1910—another concession was granted to the owners. When the price of coal was 14/- per ton the % was to be  $50\%$ , but also when the price was  $14\frac{1}{9}$  the % was only to be  $50\%$ , so as to compensate the owners for the increased cost of production. During the negotiations for the present agreement the workmen endeavoured to get the equivalent back to the old '79 basis by asking for a percentage of  $65\%$  opposite a selling price of  $15\frac{1}{6}$  per ton.

Now if the reader has not fallen asleep, or become too giddy to think, he will appreciate the eagerness of the miners to secure a "fair" equivalent % to the selling price. Up to the moment of writing no equivalent has been fixed. But a number of very substantial reforms in wages and in the conditions of the lower paid wagemen have been secured. Who will pay for these improvements? If the workmen secure an equivalent of  $15\frac{1}{6}$  per ton opposite their new minimum (equal to  $65\%$  on the '79 standard) then these improvements come out of the profits of the coalowners. If, on the contrary, the equivalent be higher than  $15\frac{1}{6}$  per ton, then to the extent that it is higher than  $15\frac{1}{6}$  per ton, to that extent the improvements will be paid for from what ought to have been the increased percentages of the whole of the workmen. The owners very naturally claim that every increase in the cost of production should be placed upon the equivalent so that they may continue

to enjoy all the profits of the industry of the workmen. They even go further and very solemnly claim that in their costs of production should be included the percentages they have to pay the workmen. If the workmen are granted a 10% advance due to increased price of coal the owners at the next application put that in as an increase in the cost of production. So that not only is cost of production not to be a loss but an actual gain to them, a sort of "chewing the cud."

Our strike was a great one. The gains were substantial, but the most important point—the fixing of the equivalent—is left to an "impartial" chairman, who will no doubt administer some impartial consolation to the wounded and humiliated coalowners in the shape of an increased equivalent.

Now let me point the moral (I can't adorn the tale). This elaborate system of wages was designed by the great Lord Merthyr of ever blessed memory. It was to end all strikes and labour troubles. Labour was to receive its proper 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ % share. Capital was to have the remainder. The band was to play "God save the King," and the curtain was to rise on such a fair millennium, that all other industries would soon copy, and we should have arrived. We have not arrived. Why? Because the Equivalent was not Equivalent.

NOAH ABLETT.

## Industrial Unionism and The State

**I**N the August *Plebs*, the article dealing with the State was mainly concerned in pointing out that the State was not an eternal verity, but that it only came into being under certain specific conditions; from which it was deduced that when these conditions disappeared, so also would the social institution known as the State. Having proceeded thus far, we must next go on to inquire whether the basic conditions of the State's existence are being combatted or undermined in any way, and also whether any other social institution is arising which is in conflict with the State and capable of replacing it.

We have had plenty of evidence recently that there is a conflict with the State so far as the working class and their social institutions are concerned. The cause of this conflict is not far to seek, for the State (as was pointed out in the last article) is simply the private power of the ruling minority, and the conflict is the root antagonism between Capital and Labour manifesting itself in a higher form.

The political government of society arises when the social group becomes divided into antagonistic interests; the weakest interests have no participation in the direction of the social life, e.g.,

the women and a large proportion of the adult males to-day. Each interest is reflected according to its economic power within society. The various antagonistic interests strive to win the support of the social group in order to advance their own particular views ; hence the various political parties and sects. But there is always one section—the one most powerful economically—which dominates and directs society.

It is because of the political government of society by a ruling minority that the struggle of the working class necessarily takes on a political form, but it is vital to an understanding of the State that we distinguish between the political form which the struggle of the working class takes, and the economic cause of that struggle. When we keep in mind this distinction it is plainly seen that it is impossible to have a political democracy by means of votes so long as the economic life is not also democratically controlled. It is impossible to have political government by means of a centralized State power and also at the same time democratic control of the economic life of the nation ; the two are irreconcilable. Political government only arises because of the division into owners and non-owners of the means of producing the necessities of life. With the abolition of this division the State dies out.

One reason for the illusion that the State represents the people is to be found in the fact that the working class participate in the election of representatives to Parliament ; but the working class only obtained this right to vote after the first quarter of the 19th century because the rising manufacturing class needed their assistance in the political fight against the landowning interests. So long as industrial capital was a progressive force in the social life, it could dominate and win the support of the majority in society, but, as capitalism develops, its antagonism with the interests of the working class becomes plainer ; the State begins to throw off its democratic cloak and stands forth in its true light as the despotic representative of capital. The workers now seek to use the rights and privileges which they were given in the interests of capital as means to advance their own interests.

The Capitalist class perceives correctly that all the weapons which it forged against feudalism turn their edges against itself ; that all the means of education which it brought forth rebel against its own civilization. . . . It understands that all its so-called citizen's rights and progressive organs assail and menace its class rule, both in its social foundation and political superstructure. (Marx, p. 72, *18th Brumaire*).

To-day the antagonistic interests within society are being rapidly reduced to two—Capital and Labour. The so-called middle class interests are being crushed out between these two. Although the individual capitalists are antagonistic to each other in their mutual competition on the market, yet they all have a common interest in opposing the working class, and the State



with its functionaries is their Executive Committee. The State does not represent the interests of any individual capitalist as such, but the interests of the ruling class as a whole; and though it may sometimes take action against individual members of the ruling class, this is by no means sufficient justification for the illusion that it is an impartial body representing the whole people.

We can keep ourselves quite clear regarding the State if we remember that the State as such is not the basis of the ruling minority's power, but that their power lies in the private ownership of the means of life whereby Society lives. The State is merely the *form* through which this power is expressed; hence the workers in order to free themselves from the domination of the ruling class must not only capture the *form* of their power—the State, but also the *substance* of their power—the control of the material means of life.

It is at this vital point of the control of the means of life that Industrial Unionism plays such an important part in relation to the State. This new social form of organization which the workers are gradually building up will enable them to control the means of life, a thing which craft unionism could never attain. Industrial Unionism does not deny the value and necessity of political action, but it does say that it is impossible to free the workers by means of political legislation. Universal suffrage would not achieve economic freedom in itself. The political activity of the working class must be subordinate to, and supported by, an industrial organization capable of controlling the economic activities of society. The workers must not carry on political activity with a view of capturing the State power and perpetuating political government. "The working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made State machinery and wield it for its own purposes." (Marx—*The Civil War in France*).

Political government implies the government of man by man. In order to free themselves the working class must abolish this form of government by replacing the State machinery of capitalism with the industrial machinery of their own making. This industrial machinery is seen in the germ in the growth of the industrial form of organization, a form which is capable of administering the means of life. When the workers gain democratic control of their own organizations (and this is their first task) the self government of Labour by Labour follows as a logical result.

The two big forces working in Society to-day are the Centralization of Capital expressing its power through the State, and the Centralization of Labour expressing its power through the Industrial Unions. The working-class movement if anything is lagging behind the economic development; the alp of craft unionism belonging to the 19th century is still weighing heavy upon it. But the agitation for the organization of science as a result of the War

and the application of this organized science to industry will still further smash the crafts, and if the working class are not sufficiently conscious at present to adapt themselves to the new conditions, the logic of events and the bitter experience following thereon will teach them. Craft unions are organized on the basis of the product produced, which product belongs to the capitalist, and craft unionism does not dispute his right of ownership, but makes pious appeals to his sense of justice for "a fair day's wage for a fair day's work." On this basis the workers can never hope to attain their freedom because the cause of their slavery, viz., the capitalist system, is left untouched.

The National Registration Act is an attempt by the State consciously to organize society, in the interests of Capital, for the immediate purpose of producing the means of destroying life; but if society can be organized to destroy life it can also be organized to preserve life, and this latter task is the mission of the modern working-class movement. The present war has shown that the workers are the most indispensable class in society to day. Appeals are made to them to cease their struggles in order to save the State. Labour must see to it that, having saved the State, it claims the right to mould it in accordance with what it knows to be best for social progress as a whole.

It is by means of their Industrial Unions that the workers will "cross the line from Political Government to Industrial Administration"; it is they who, through conscious co-operation with the laws of social evolution, will thereby initiate a new phase in human development.

ROBERT HOLDER.

## Guild Socialism and Women in Industry

**G**UILD Socialism is being a good deal talked about just now. Discussion of it—thanks to a very persevering and very ably organized campaign in the Labour Press—is no longer confined to the small but select circle of *New Age* readers. Moreover, the Word has become Flesh, and a National Guilds League is now in existence.

Before we write another word, let us make it clear that, in our opinion, the N.G.L. can and will do good propaganda work. For immediate practical purposes the ideas it advocates are the ideas of Industrial Unionism; and any institution or organization which perceives, and works for, that essential "next step" is—so far—entitled to the sympathetic interest, if not the active support, of all who are working in the same direction.

But if it is to accomplish what it has set out to do, the N.G.L. will have to rid itself of certain elements in its composition. Its origin, of course, helps to explain the diversity of opinion on certain subjects which is to be found among those who profess and call themselves Guildsmen. In part, it consists of University Socialists who saw in the "Guild Idea" an effective head-line for their theories of industrial organization; in part, of disgruntled Fabians to whom the personality or the doctrines of Mr. Sidney Webb had become disagreeable; and in part, of the motley group of "intellectuals" who write for the *New Age*. These various groups will obviously appeal with varying degrees of success to the ordinary Trade Unionist. The ex-Fabian, for instance, who had probably never heard of Industrial Unionism, will only provoke derisive smiles if he persists in congratulating seasoned Industrial Unionists on their "conversion" to Guild Socialism, and condescendingly assuring them that there is no need to quarrel about "mere phraseology." This particular group, however, though exasperating, is perhaps unimportant. The biggest obstacle to the practical success of the Guild propaganda—among Trade Unionists—is the *New Age* group; in particular, the Editor himself, whose self-appointed life-work it is to cast pearls of wisdom before ignorant and besotted wage-earners. If the N.G.L. is going to attempt to embody the whims and vagaries of Mr. Orage and certain of his satellites in its propaganda programme, then it is assuredly doomed from the very outset.

Take, for instance, the question of women in industry. Is the attitude of the League to that problem to be determined by the plain facts and conditions of the wage-system, or by an assortment of *a priori* ideas and personal prejudices? Some few weeks ago an article appeared in the *New Age* signed "National Guildsmen" (and therefore presumably an official declaration) which began by stating—"We are no less implacably hostile to women in industry than the editorial writers of this journal; and we agree that the subject is vital to Guildsmen." Sundry individual members of the League (including Mr. Rowland Kenney) have since expressed themselves to the same effect. What, then, has been the editorial attitude on this subject?

So long ago as August, 1912, the writer of the Notes of the Week in the *New Age*—evidently suffering from an acute attack of nerves brought on by the activities of the militant suffragists—gave to the world his views on the "Woman Movement." His arguments he declares (in July, 1915) have never been answered. We hereby recommend to his notice a series of editorial articles on the subject by W. W. Craik which appeared in the *Plebs* from August to November, 1913.\* These articles were a more than adequate

\* Guildsmen may obtain copies from the Secretary, Plebs League, 13 Penywern Road, S.W.

reply to the *New Age's* muddled arguments and strident assertions ; and we have no intention here of going over the ground so ably covered by Mr. Craik. He dealt fully with the question of the status of women from the theoretical point of view ; we are concerned here solely with the practical problem of women in industry—and with *New Age* pronouncements on that subject. But we may be permitted to remark that the task of “unravelling” *New Age* criticisms, on this or any other question, is made doubly difficult by their muddled and perverse conceptions of history and society. This point can be very quickly illustrated by quoting the following remarks, by “National Guildsmen” on the economic conception of history, which appeared in the *New Age* recently :—

In reply to several correspondents we may say that we accept *an* economic interpretation of history, but not *the* economic interpretation, as if there were none other. Reality being infinite in its aspects, and history being the record of reality, it follows that there are as many interpretations or readings of history as of reality ; and the attempt to reduce them all to the economic is equivalent to the old fallacy of the economists who conceived an “economic man.” Is it a fact, we ask, that the underlying and master motive of all men equally is economic ? It is obviously not, for self-interest may express itself in other ways than economic—in love of approbation, for example, or of health, or of leisure. But if the economic motive is not predominant equally in all individuals, it cannot be exclusive in history, which is the story of masses of individuals . . . . . Sentiment so-called (that is, other than economic motive) plays at least as great a part in history as economics.

The popularity of the Marxian dogma is due to the facts that, in the first place, it is an interpretation of history, just as the theory of Evolution *was* an interpretation of progressive variation in nature ; and in the second place, it appears under certain circumstances to be primary. Without *some* economic foundation obviously no history whatever is possible. Food is the first condition of life. But because food is the first condition of life, and, under certain circumstances, becomes the only condition that matters, it does not follow that food is the only *motive* of life. On the contrary, food as motive is predominant only where food is precarious ; as soon as food is comparatively secure, other motives begin to play ; and in advanced societies these other motives overlay the economic as a building stands upon its foundations. . . . The economic motive, in fact, can be found at the bottom of all other motives ; but this is not to say that all other motives are economic, or even that economics enters into them. Because at the bottom of every structure you find a foundation which is naturally the first condition of the structure itself, it does not follow that the structure is all foundation !

Nor does it follow, when a foundation is hidden by the superstructure, that it is any the less a foundation. The writer of that “criticism” ought to have been a W.E.A. lecturer ! Or perhaps the fact that he moves in “advanced societies,” where “food is comparatively secure,” has coloured his outlook,

It is perhaps this latter fact—using the term “advanced” in a slightly different sense—which explains a good deal of the *New Age* attitude to the problem of women in industry. The only women the *New Age* writers ever met are presumably middle-class suffragists of a peculiarly irritating kind—the ladies who (theoretically) “claim all labour for their province.” And the entry of women into industry is accordingly visualized as a crowd of rebellious females breaking loose from the arms of their loving husbands, brothers, and “protectors,” and rushing headlong into industry of their own deliberate choice, because they are Feminists. Could there be a more pathetic misconception of plain facts? As well might one assume that the problem of the “unskilled worker” was simply and solely concerned with the handful of stockbrokers and City “gentlemen” who have been going down to arsenals and dockyards to potter about on Sundays. The women who are entering industry of their own free will at the present—abnormal—time are an insignificant part of the problem. When we ask that the Engineers should admit women to their Union, it is not because Lady Ermytrude, or the Duchess of —— have become munition workers. We are thinking of the thousands of women who have been forced, for economic reasons, into industry and who will inevitably hereafter come in in increasing numbers; and we are asking how the men are going to protect themselves against a flood of *unorganized* cheap labour? Women have been *shoved* into industry; only *ladies* are privileged to “enter” it. And an attitude of “implacable hostility” will only result (as a *Herald* writer recently observed) in women still being in the industry but outside the Union.

“The facts of the situation,” defiantly declares the *New Age*, “may appear to be wholly against us. Undoubtedly Heaven and Hell are conspiring at this moment to sweep more and more women into factories, offices, and elsewhere. . . . Nevertheless we believe that the whole movement is one colossal infatuation, a piece of national dementia; and that sooner or later it must and will be stopped unless the race is to fall into ruin.” Heaven and Hell, indeed! We thought that Mr. Orage had published an “Inquiry into the Wage-System.” Either he left some of the facts out of count in his Inquiry, or he is making rather a foolish fuss when the wage-system behaves “as ‘tis its nature to.” One had fondly imagined that—to use his phraseology—Socialists had already decided that the wage-system “must and will be stopped unless the race is to fall into ruin.” Why, then, all this hullabaloo about a single aspect of the wage-system—an aspect which surely every other student of it had taken into account, viz., the inevitability of the Capitalist exploiting any and every source of labour—supply available—human, animal, or vegetable—male or female?

Or take the following :—

But men have not only made the wage-system ; they are the only people who can unmake it. *Not* the employing classes, for they naturally wish to perpetuate it, since on its profits they grow fat ; but the wage-earners themselves. Now can anything be conceived more fatal to the attempt of men wage-earners to abolish the wage-system (and so to make industry good enough for women (!) ) than to swamp their efforts by adding to their competing ranks millions of low-waged women. It is a lunatic's notion.

Well, is it or is it not a lunatic's notion to imagine that the Capitalist, quite clearly perceiving the possibility of "swamping the efforts" of the men Trade Unionists by the introduction of cheap female labour, will carefully abstain from using such labour ? Is it or is it not a lunatic's notion to insist that one is meeting the demands of the situation if one declares oneself "opposed" to woman labour ? Is it not a lunatic's question, to ask (as the writer proceeds to ask) "Are women necessary in industry ?" "Necessary" from whose point of view ? From the point of view of some ideal "Community"—which does not exist ? The only question wage-workers need trouble to ask themselves is, "Are women exploitable in industry ?" If, having answered that question in the only way it can be answered, they can hit upon some other method of working for the abolition of the wage-system for women than the one they have decided upon for men, then by all means let us hear of it. "Women are, in fact, playing the profiteers' game." Of course they are ; and so are men, unless or until they organize.

But *how* are women to be kept out of industry ? Listen :—

Sooner or later . . . . women will be forbidden, except in special cases, to enter industry. The reason is that racially (that, is, physiologically and psychologically) industry for women will be discovered to be so detrimental to health (!) that their employment will be seen to be anything but economic. The economics of industry is only a department of the economics of life ; and it is often the case that an industrial economy is a vital waste. . . . Profiteers, whose minds are ephemeral and whose souls are correspondingly transient, are naturally indifferent about a future more remote than their nose-tips. But society is *ex hypothesi* eternal, and sociologists must legislate for eternity.

The beneficent State, in fact, to the rescue ! One pictures the "impartial" legislator endeavouring to persuade the Capitalist (his paymaster) that "the economics of industry is only a part of the economics of life" ; that whereas men are notoriously in industry for the good of their health, women are finding it "detrimental," and that they must accordingly be paid a living wage to remain at home ; that, in short, one *must* take thought for eternity. One can also hear in imagination the Capitalist's reply. (What one finds it hard to imagine is, how a Labour journalist of the standing—and experience—of Mr. Rowland

Kenney can persuade himself to echo this sort of "criticism.") Mr. Orage, of course, can look with confidence to the legislator; for has he not written\*—

It took several milleniums for society to realise that chattel slavery was fundamentally contrary to the nature of man. When, however, this immorality was realised, and, above all, *felt*, the economic system dependent upon it was doomed. No arguments based on tradition, utility, theology, or science were of the smallest value against the moral conviction that chattel slavery was bad. *It might even have been demonstrated that the economic successor of chattel slavery was bound to be inferior in point of production to the system that it displaced (Italics ours).* The *heart* of society was made up, and the head was compelled to take the economic risk and to make the moral plunge.

After which there is absolutely no more to be said.

We can only end, as we began, by hoping that the National Guilds League may be preserved from some of its friends. It would be a thousand pities to risk the success of propaganda on behalf of methods of industrial organization suited to the needs of the time, for the sake of "lunatic notions" on the subject of sex.

J. F. AND WINIFRED HERRIN

---

## Supplies and the Engineers

THE operative engineer occupies a very important position in the scheme of things just now. The eyes of the world are upon him. Cabinet Ministers are invited to Labour's Parliament to expose his weaknesses, to reveal to an astonished assembly the depravity, the selfishness, and the true inwardness of the man. Amid cries of "Shame" and "Disgraceful," it is explained how the engineer, by limiting production, by objecting to the introduction of unskilled men on machines, is playing into the hands of our enemies, and how, if this attitude is persisted in, the triumph of Germany is inevitable.

The charge against the engineer of being a slacker is not peculiar to the present crisis. The employers have repeatedly assured us in the sacred times of peace that the engineer has a really easy time of it, is well paid, and affectionately cared for. We have grown quite accustomed to it. But now, unsolicited, there come to the aid of our masters the ponderous utterances of a number of Members of Parliament who sit somewhere among the Labour Benches. Whatever may be the decision of the Committee which the Parliamentary Committee of the T.U. Congress has thought advisable to set up to investigate the charges made, it would appear that the evidence is so overwhelming that the minds of these good men are already made up, and there is no hope for us. The action of the engineers is bad, very bad, and the executives are urged to take strong action with us.

And this general indictment against the engineers is based upon a few obscure cases scattered here and there over the country side. Moreover, even these obscure cases have yet to be proved. If the one case quoted at Bristol by Mr. Lloyd George (in which the present writer is remotely concerned) is to be taken as a criterion, then the charge against the engineers fails, and the Minister of Munitions might, with advantage to his campaign for increased production, apologise to that section of the industrial community which he has so frequently abused.

---

\**National Guilds: An Inquiry into the Wage-System, and the Way Out*: p. 110.

Underlying this campaign against the engineers is the Machine Question—a question that at all times occupies a considerable amount of the energy and time of the A.S.E.; one that has only too frequently called forth the whole strength and discipline of the organization to protect the Trade interests of its members. The employers were quick to see that the War gave them an opportunity of succeeding where they had hitherto failed. Over a year ago it was suggested that owing to the abnormal demand for mechanics certain trade restrictions should be removed. For the first time in the history of the engineers a greater number of mechanics was needed than could be found. For the first time in their lives the engineers found that the demand was likely to operate to their advantage. Individuals demanded higher wages, and left their employment if unsuccessful. It was the golden age for engineers, and, according to the Economists, they were in for a good time.

But they had reckoned without the employers. Federated firms have an arrangement among themselves that they will not pay above a certain starting wage; neither will they give employment to a man who has left another firm who are members of the Association. Not content with this local arrangement the policy was now extended throughout the whole country where the Employers' Federation exercised any control. An engineer could not leave a federated shop in London to return to his home in Manchester, where he originally came from, and where his old associations still remained. It was endeavoured to make it impossible for an engineer to leave a low paid district for another where wages were more commensurate with his skill. There were, however, a sufficient number of firms who were not parties to the arrangement to still cause inconvenience to the large Armament Firms. The engineers were asked to abrogate their rules; and this at a time when the vast majority of the engineering firms were not engaged, or at that time even expecting to be engaged, on Government work, and while the employers were utilising all the means at their disposal to prevent the free mobility of Labour.

Then follows their successful appeal to the Government, and the passing of the Munitions of War Act. In the case of no section of the community does this Act interfere with the liberty of the subject as much as the Engineers. We are repeatedly assured by Mr. Lloyd George that employers are not entitled to do certain things which we apprehended. But these things are actually taking place at the present time, and the decisions of the Munitions Tribunals up to date by no means lead us to look for sympathetic or impartial hearing there. Behind the whole campaign can be seen quite clearly the hand of the powerful Ring of Armament Makers; to whom, in the last analysis, much of the deficiency in supplying munitions of war can be traced. Government supplies have been months overdue because of the insatiable greed of the Ring in accepting orders beyond their capacities, rather than that other firms should share with them in the orders placed.

The problem of supplies is a difficult one, and the Minister of Munitions does not make his own task any easier by casting reflections on a section of the community on the sole evidence of the employers. He has done much to break down the monopoly of this Ring by placing orders direct with firms outside its control. He might go further, and reveal to what extent the employers themselves have been responsible for the shortage of supplies. When he has done this, *and not before*, he will have justified his statement at Bristol, that he was in the habit of stating "facts without fear or favour, affection or ill-will."

T. REES  
(London District Secretary, A.S.E.)

---



## “Plebs” League Annual Meeting

THE Seventh Annual “Meet” of the “Plebs” League was held at the College on Sunday afternoon, August 1st, Councillor B. S. MacKay in the chair.

### SECRETARY'S REPORT

Mr. J. Reynolds, Acting-Secretary, in presenting the report for the past year, stated that in accordance with the decision of the last Annual “Meet” to try and reduce the debt on the Magazine, a special effort was made, which resulted in the sum of £35/0/8, after paying all expenses, being realised. Considering the unfavourable conditions prevailing, the amount obtained was very creditable, and the very best thanks of the League were due to Mr. W. H. Mainwaring for the secretarial work in connexion with the special effort, and also to those members of the League who so ably assisted in the selling of tickets, some of them being responsible for the sale of £2 and £3 worth of tickets.

During the year they had lost the valuable services of Mr. Geo. Sims, owing to his having responded to the call of “King and Country,” consequently a new Editor had to be appointed. Mr. J. F. Horrabin had kindly consented to take over the Editorship until the “Meet,” and he (Mr. Reynolds) thought they could congratulate both themselves and Mr. Horrabin on the very able manner in which the Magazine had been edited, and he hoped the members present would endorse the appointment of Mr. Horrabin and elect him as Editor.

The circulation of the Magazine had slightly increased during the year, and there were indications of further improvement in that direction, although the present circulation and financial position was far from what it ought to be. This could easily be remedied if the present subscribers would only exert themselves in pushing the sale of the Magazine among their friends and fellow-workers. Also the secretarial work and financial position could be rendered much easier if some of the subscribers and agents were more prompt and up-to-date with their payments.

With an increased circulation it would probably be possible to increase the size of the Magazine and reduce the price, but before they could think of doing that the existing debt must be paid. In the *Plebs* they had a medium, second to none, for expressing theories on the tactics and policy which should be adopted by the Labour and Socialist Movement, such as was impossible, or at least difficult, to find in any paper or magazine published in Great Britain. Therefore no effort should be spared by the members to free the Magazine of its existing debt, which, in the main, was

contracted in the early years of the League's existence, and thus make it possible to have a magazine with a circulation worthy of the League and the object for which it existed.

On the question of election of officers, Mr. W. G. E. Pratley had intimated his desire to resign from the E. C. owing to living too far away from London, though he intended taking as great an interest as ever in the League and Magazine. He (Mr. Reynolds) wished to be relieved of the secretarial work as he was unable to devote the necessary time required, consequently a new secretary would have to be appointed.

It was moved and seconded that the Secretary's report be adopted. Carried unanimously.

### **FINANCIAL STATEMENT AND BALANCE SHEET.**

A lengthy discussion took place on the financial position, and various methods were suggested to wipe off the debt. Eventually it was agreed to instruct the new Executive Committee to issue a leaflet asking all subscribers to forward at least 1/- each, and by this means it was hoped to considerably reduce the debt by the end of the year.

*It was moved by Mr. W. G. Davies, Barry, and seconded by Mr G. Griffiths, London, that all those who had not paid their Magazine subscriptions for the year, should have their names struck off the subscribers' list if they failed to pay up within two months' time. Also that all renewal of subscriptions for the next year must be paid on or before February 1st, 1916. Carried unanimously.*

### **POLICY OF LEAGUE AND MAGAZINE.**

The policy of the Magazine was unanimously endorsed, and a hearty vote of thanks was accorded to Mr. J. F. Horrabin for his excellent services as Editor. After an interesting discussion it was ultimately agreed that, owing to the business of taking over the management and control of the College by the N.U.R. and S.W.M.F. not having been completed, it was inadvisable to decide definitely upon the future policy of the League, but that it should be left to the Executive Committee with instructions to them to report and take a ballot of the members if any important change became necessary.

### **ELECTION OF OFFICERS.**

The following Officers were elected:—*Executive Members*, Mrs. W. Horrabin, Mr. O. Keighley, Mr. B. S. MacKay, Mr. J. V. Wills; and Mr. J. F. Horrabin, *Editor*. Mr. J. Reynolds was elected *Secretary*, on the understanding that the London members of the League would relieve him of some of the secretarial work.

The meeting concluded at 6 p.m., the members adjourning to partake of tea provided by the London members.

*FINANCIAL STATEMENT, August 3rd, 1914, to July 31st, 1915.*

RECEIPTS.		EXPENDITURE.	
£	s. d.	£	s. d.
To Cash in hand August 3rd, 1914	88 12 4	By Printing—balance due Aug. 3rd, 1914	69 13 10
" Magazine Subscriptions	2 16 0	" " " " " " " "	26 11 9
" League Membership Subscriptions	1 17 0	" Postages on Magazines and Receipts	96 5 7
" Deficit Fund	1 19 6	" Parcels (Railway Charges)	16 9 1
" Collection and I.O.U (1914 Meet)	35 0 8	" Sundries	1 5 2
" Tickets : Magazine Fund and Concert		" Loan to C.L.C.	16 0 0
		" Cash in hand, July 31st, 1915	11 0
	<u>130 14 6</u>		<u>£130 14 6</u>

*BALANCE SHEET, July 31st, 1915.*

LIABILITIES.		ASSETS.	
£	s. d.	£	s. d.
To Messrs. Fox, Jones and Co.	90 2 5	By Outstanding A/c's (estimated)	15 0 0
" Treasurer	49 9 1	" Loans to C.L.C.	16 0 0
	<u>139 11 6</u>	" Cash in hand	11 0
			<u>31 11 0</u>
LIABILITIES	139 11 6		
ASSETS	31 11 0		
DEFICIT	£108 0 6		

*Audited and found correct, July 31st, 1915, J. H. PRATT.*

## Reports

### BARRY C. L. C. CLASS: AUTUMN SESSION

The above class will reassemble as soon as the necessary arrangements are completed. Economics are to be the first course of study, under the able tuition of our esteemed lecturer of previous sessions, Mr. A. J. Cook, of Porth. It is hoped that all old members will make a special effort to attend, to welcome new members and to give an impetus to the Cause. Never was the need for a true Labour education more essential than it is at the present crisis.

Members to be advised time and place of meeting.  
31, Broad Street, Barry.

THE SECRETARY.

### N.U.R. EDINBURGH DISTRICT HISTORY AND ECONOMICS CLASS

The above class held an open meeting on September 19th, when Mr. Robt. Holder, N.U.R. Student from the Central Labour College, delivered an address on "The Need for Working-Class Education." There was a fair attendance, and all present were amply compensated by the able way in which our comrade handled his subject. The fact of a railway-man being able to deliver such a message to his comrades, more than justifies the workers looking after their own education, and forms a fine testimony to the work of the C.L.C. We feel sure that as a result of Comrade Holder's visit we shall soon have our class going again for the winter months. Mr. J. S. Clarke is unfortunately prevented from taking the class on Sundays during this next session; however, another teacher is willing to assist and in the course of a week or two we hope to be in full swing. Mr. Clarke has promised to give us a few lantern lectures during the winter, these having proved of great assistance in creating enthusiasm during the last two years. Mr. Holder gave a fine address at the Branch meeting of Edinburgh No. 1, and no doubt the seed he has sown during his visit will bear fruit in the shape of a larger attendance at the class meetings.

J. M. NIXON.

---

## Correspondence

### THE WAR—WHERE DO WE STAND?

SIR,—Much may be left "to the reader's intelligence" in this discussion, but how much? "*Mens Sana*" appears to leave it *all*, and there is no profit in discussion under those circumstances. To say that "IF all the other sections had been prepared to act as the S.W.M.F. Executive did," is not dealing with the conditions that confront us. We're concerned with the situation as it exists, and not as we would like it to be. That was the whole argument of my letter.

The South Wales Miners are in the ascendant just now, and it will appear almost sacrilegious even to hint at any weakness of theirs; but needs must. If I mentioned recruiting among the S.W.M. (I am in no position to quote statistics unfortunately) I might also have quoted the Federation's action; for the grandiose Resolution to which I referred as not representing the opinion of the rank and file was shown up clearly enough when the "leaders" (the Executive) had to climb down from the lofty altitudes where they were "raising the scarlet standard high," and submit to recommending a continuance of work during the usual period of holiday. And did they, or did they not, consent to do that because they knew that the mass of the workers were pro-War?

Could "IF's" make a movement, we should be alright; but Reality consists of hard facts, and some of these latter were against the Scarlet Standard carriers. Don't misunderstand me—I'm as much ("Mens Sana" may say as little) a Socialist as ever I was. But scientific Socialism aims at seeing things in their true perspective. And I affirm that, if we had not gone to war, our problem would not have been merely the maintenance of our position as organized workers, but the maintenance of our whole standard of national social life. This, says "Mens Sana," I "seem to think" is superior to that of Germany; does he care to affirm that it is not? As for my "suggestion" that he and others imply that "war cannot possibly result in progress for the workers," I don't merely "suggest," I affirm that that is the argument; what else can possibly be deduced from the statement that "this is a Capitalists' War?" Has there ever been anything else but "Capitalists' Wars" since Capitalism came into being? I merely used the illustration of the American Civil War to show that Marx did not hold any such concept as that the workers had no interests to serve in War. I don't know and don't much care what Marx would have thought about this "Imperialistic War of the 20th century," but I should certainly put Marx down as a consummate ass if he were to come to life and declare that we—the workers—had no interests involved in fighting this War, and interests even greater than the Capitalists themselves.

True, I may be fighting with the Gurkhas, but—and "Mens Sana" seems to overlook this—I am also fighting with the mass of French, Belgian, Russian and Italian Socialists. That may at once afford evidence to him that I am fighting on the wrong side, for are not the great majority always wrong? Still, if he looks up "The Working Day" in *Capital*, he will find that even Marx could descend to such statements as "the instincts of the workers" leading them to fight on the right side. IF we had been compelled to wait for an "intelligent understanding" on the part of the mass of the workers of the reason for any given action, we should never have won even the recent South Wales victory.

Finally, I would dearly like to hear from "Mens Sana" what he and the rest of the "intelligent" workers would have done in face of an actual German invasion of Britain—when not only Union rules but Unionists' lives would have been in jeopardy. Would they have surrendered all—life included—without a fight? Or would they have set about teaching the soldiers the Theory of Value? Of course, he and other pacifists may argue that Germany would never have attacked Britain, but such an argument—in view of Germany's actions towards the shipping of neutral powers—I am content to "leave to the reader's intelligence." There are other monsters in Europe besides those of German origin—true; but that question is not at issue. What we are discussing, I think, is:—Are Socialists justified in standing aside and letting this particular monster dictate to Europe and the world—which latter includes Labour. Somewhere in France.

Yours, &c., G.S.

#### SHOULD THE WORKERS BE ORGANIZED BY INDUSTRIES?

At the recent Plebs Meet the Theorists had many complaints to level at the 'Practicalists' for their lack of energy in contributing to the common stock of Plebeian knowledge, and I propose therefore, in all humility, to do penance for my sins of omission.

What, I think, the Theorists desire from us is something in the nature of an explanation, or rather description, of the problems we have to face in the course of a day's march. But for the moment, I want to offer a few observations on Barker's suggestive and stimulating article in the July *Plebs*. First of all, I want to destroy the suggestion contained in the editorial foreword to the article, that the craft unions poach upon the preserves of the N.U.R. Such an assertion is not only misleading, but is historically incorrect. Of whatever crimes the craft unions are guilty they certainly cannot be accused of entering upon the stage after the N.U.R. The craft unions were before our time, and, therefore, before the N.U.R.—or even the constituent parts of that coalition—were dreamt of. But, it may be argued, from the point of view of Industrial Unionism, the craft unions *now* poach upon the preserves of the N.U.R. This, too, I deny point blank. Lest I be accused of backsliding, let me hasten to assure my friends of the opposition that I subscribe unreservedly, am now seconding, and will vote for the acceptance of the resolution moved by my friend Barker, "That the time has arrived when all workers in an Industry should be members of the Organization pertaining to that Industry."

Barker dealt with the Miners. I will deal with another historical group, the Coachmakers. I contend and maintain that, speaking relatively, the great Vehicle-Building Industry is as much self-contained as the Miners, or the Railwaymen. There are something like 200,000 workers in the Industry, and I am out to make all workers in or about the Vehicle Building Industry, members of one National Union. The framework to build up such an organization is already supplied by my own Union, the United Kingdom Society of Coachmakers. At this stage I want to ask the Theorists two questions :

- (1). What is a Craft Union ?
- (2). What is to be the *Basis* or *Unit* of Industrial Organization ?

I have my own answer to those questions and I give them for what they are worth ; only please remember that I, as much as the Theorist, want a sound foundation. Firstly then, "what is a craft union ?" Quite frankly I think there is a great deal of cant about this bogey. , Barker makes a strong attack on what he calls craft unions ; but if, as I think, all forms of work involve some degree of skill and therefore craftsmanship, it follows that there is a slight discrepancy in his phraseology. Organization by Industry does not dispose of the essential elements of work ! To "get" coal, to "inspect" tickets, or to "create" a motor-car, pre-supposes craftsmanship. Of one thing I am quite certain and that is, that Barker is wrong when he leaves us to infer that the smaller unions only give "friendly" benefits, and that on a low contribution.

Now we come to the burning question, (2) the answer to which will supply the real test to our theory. It is important that we must get an absolutely sound reply, and so far as I know, the point has not yet received any attention. I am not satisfied with the answer, "Oh! the Industry." Again, I have heard it suggested that because certain sections of the workers are *paid* by, say a railway company, or as it is now, the Railway Executive, that that ought to be the basis of organization. This in my opinion is not Organization by Industry, it is a sheer begging of the question. What then

is the answer? I think it is to be found in an examination of the Economics of Industry. This, as all Plebeians will admit, is an alluring subject, so fascinating indeed that one has to do more than merely superficial thinking to escape its glamour.

The Marxian accepts the "commodity" as the unit of Capitalist production, and in like fashion, I think the bed-rock principle of Industria Organization must be based on the unit of production, i.e., the product or commodity which any section of the workers is engaged in creating or producing. Take for example the group of workers to which I have the honour to belong. We create vehicles, from the dust-cart to the luxurious motor-car, from the railway-coach to the tramcar of democracy, and from the motor-bus to the latest creation in aircraft. Here is variety indeed, but it is only variety in form of the same product; they each and all possess one common quality—passenger-carrying capacity—and our members may be engaged on a motor-car one day and on an aeroplane the next. In the old days, and even in isolated cases now, the vehicle was built and finished by one man, but under the present system of division of labour, the creation of any vehicle is carried through several specialised grades such as body-making, painting, trimming, etc. All are interdependent and one is as necessary as the other, which consideration naturally leads to the conclusion that a Union to meet our needs must be capable of catering for all grades.

Whether I have answered the second question correctly or not remains to be seen by further contributions to the discussion. The Theorists must realize however that we want no ambiguity about this matter, and the sooner we get a clear and scientific statement of the *basis*, the better it will be for everyone concerned. Meantime the work that lies before us—the next step—is to consolidate the existing Unions in each Industry. In that way we shall very materially reduce the number into clearly defined and workable groups, and the federation of those combinations will provide the *dynamic* which will give meaning and reality to our faith, that the Working Class shall own and control the means of life.

B. SKENE MACKAY.

#### AN INDUSTRIAL PROBLEM

SIR,—It has been constantly pointed out in the pages of the *Plebs* that our *theories* of working-class organization must be tested by practice; but that we must nevertheless guard against "scrapping" an entire theory if we have only tested some part of it and found it wanting.

For the past few years an agitation for a better form of industrial organization has been proceeding; and at the present time the N.U.R. approaches nearer than any other, perhaps, to the form of organization some of us desire to see in existence throughout the whole working-class movement. But the very nature of the N.U.R. brings it into conflict, of course, with certain other trade societies, whose boundaries are marked by trade, not industry, and these trade lines project into many distinct industries.

Now the opponents of organization by industry are naturally only too ready to make the most of any criticism they can bring against an industrial union, and by the time these lines are in print they will doubtless have had

a good deal to say on the subject at the T.U. Congress. Certain labour leaders, having found what they regard as a good bone to pick with the N.U.R. will doubtless try to prove that it is an argument against the *principle* of Industrial Unionism. It is, of course, nothing of the sort. That men employed in certain "railway shops" (men who are members of the N.U.R.) are being paid at a lower rate than that fixed by the *trade* union catering for this particular trade, is regrettable and obviously wrong. But it is up to us to solve this particular problem without injuring the *industrial* form of organization upon which the N.U.R. is built. And with this object in view, it should be arranged that representatives of the N.U.R. men engaged on this class of work should sit in conference with representatives of the *trade* union, with a view to putting all these workers on one level. The level we desire is *not*, I need hardly say, that recently achieved in a certain district of the Midlands where a number of workers learned that some Belgians employed on similar work were receiving one penny per hour more than themselves. These suffering Britishers at length threatened to cease work unless the wage of the Belgians was not *instantly reduced to their own level*. (Needless to say the strike was soon over, and the "concession" granted).

WORKER.

Rochdale.

---



---

## Reviews

### DIALECTS

*Lowland Scotch.* By SIR JAMES WILSON. (Oxford University Press, 5/- net).

This is a book which amply justifies its appearance. It treats of a fascinating branch of grammar—the comparison between the "civilized" language of Southern Britain and the "heathen" speech of a region of the North which possesses homely and witty thought, untempered by that conventionality which "cribs, cabins, and confines." The author's purpose is, in particular, to show differences of orthography and pronunciation as exemplified in the dialect chosen, and as distinguished from Scotch and English. The book is useful, too, as illustrative of etymology. North-countrymen, Lancastrians or North Yorkshiremen, will be interested in noting many words in use in their own dialects, while many archaic words still common in various parts of England are also instanced. Space forbids us quoting more than a few examples here, resemblances to Teutonic words being particularly noted. The following have been taken haphazard:—

"Kist" (chest), Latin *cista*. "Kirk" (church), German *kirche*. "Loupin," German *laufen*, to run. "Doakhtar" recalls the German *tochter*. "Yard" (garden) shows the y substituted for g hard—e.g., "yestern" (O. English *yestreen*, German *gestern*). "Haansal Monday" is the Yorkshire word *hansel* (money token)—compare the German Hanse towns and the Hanseatic League.

"Plunk" is not peculiarly Scotch, being found, e.g., in Australian patois—it was probably transplanted. "Guidmaan" is, of course, the "goodman" of Biblical English (Matt. XX, 11), while "coalup" is "collop" ("He maketh collops of fat upon his flanks."—Job XV, 27). "Foomurt" appears in the Lancashire expression, "To stink like a foomart," while "gumshum" is



the "gumption" of Lancashire and Yorkshire. Lancashire, again, gives us "Stash your gab" for the Scotch "Steek your gab," and the North Country knows all about "muin-likht fluttin." I may add that I differ from the author when I regard the aspirate "hw"—as seen in "hwat" (what) "hwen" (when)—as being as essential as the "h" aspirate in the speech of educated men generally.

These few quotations from the countless examples collected by the author may stimulate the student of comparative dialects to burrow more deeply into the treasure-house afforded by this book. Dialects might provide a welcome relief from dialectics!

A. J. HACKING.

#### SAVE US FROM OUR DISCIPLES

*Edward Carpenter: An Exposition and an Appreciation.* By EDWARD LEWIS. (Methuen, 5/- net.)

It is told of a certain small boy that when his Sunday-school teacher, having related an interesting story, proceeded to draw the moral, he observed "Blow the moral! tell us another story." What that small boy would have said to Mr. Edward Lewis one can only guess. For Mr. Lewis's book is all moral; not until the very last of his fourteen chapters does one realise that his subject is not an "ism" but a living—and particularly interesting—personality. In his final chapter ("A Personal Appreciation") he actually remarks:

I do not think it is possible to understand and appreciate Carpenter's teaching without placing it in some such personal setting as this. He embodies his own philosophy. . . .

Why then does Mr. Lewis avoid all "personal setting" throughout nine-tenths of his book? Why, since on his very first page he quotes Carpenter's declared aim in writing *Towards Democracy*—

—to write some sort of a book which should address itself *very personally and closely* to any one who cared to read it—establish, so to speak, *an intimate personal relation* between myself and the reader—does he deliberately rob his book on Carpenter of all human interest whatsoever, concentrating his attention (but not his reader's) on "higher unities," and "creative race-Egos," "spiritual plasm," "cosmic consciousness," "cosmic emotionalism," and so forth? True, Carpenter himself has written about all these more or less incomprehensible things; but a book which expounds these things and these things alone somehow misses the real Carpenter altogether—the Carpenter, at least, who has succeeded in "establishing an intimate relation" between himself and many "ordinary" men and women.

Edward Carpenter is a poet, not a philosopher. I am not going to try here to define either the one or the other. But at least I may hazard the suggestion that a poet may make "inspired guesses" at Truth which would hardly be permitted to a philosopher; and he may utter platitudes, so long as he expresses them in what Tolstoy (I think) called an "infectious" way—platitudes which seem *very* platitudinous when expressed in plain (Lewisian) prose. Every now and again, among the sandy wastes of Mr. Lewis's expositions, one comes across a refreshing little pool of quotation from Carpenter himself, and one feels better—and less puzzled. Take this, for instance:—

O People crucified in every land,  
 Mothers in all the earth weeping your sons !  
 Sisters and lovers kissing the feet of love,  
 Poor way-worn feet, gross toil-figured hands,  
 So loved, so loved !  
 Once more the dead Christ lies, borne down the ages.

Is the beauty or the meaning of this illuminated—for anybody—by Mr. Lewis's commentary :—

The pain which Jesus bore and brought in the world was indicative of a disunity which was rotting society like a disease. It fostered psychic growth, both in the world. . . and in himself ; it mediated the last potential in him, which (let it always be remembered) was a race-potential as well as an individual potential. . . . To his (Carpenter's) vision, all the world's sufferers are seen compacted together and forming the central organ of the race-body. . . &c., &c.

Out of his own mouth, indeed, we can convict Mr. Lewis ; for he goes on :  
 To Religion, they (the poor and suffering) are ears for the gospel of another world ; to Biology, they are the weaker going to the wall in the struggle for existence ; to Pathology, they are pathological cases ; to the Reformer, a stubborn economic problem ; to Carpenter, they are " the tender heart of our Humanity, the bleeding sacred heart, with tears of ages."

Exactly. And when one proceeds to take the heart and the blood and the tears perfectly literally, and construct a cosmic body and a cosmic soul to contain them—when, in short, one takes a metaphor or a symbol and works it to death, then one, to say the least, is neither helpful nor illuminating. " Even factual history is symbolic," declares Mr. Lewis. It may be—to the poet. But his prose commentator (who, moreover, insists on regarding his subject as a philosopher preaching a complete, four-square scheme of life) may over-do the symbolic business.

One thing more. Mr. Lewis very truly observes that " Carpenter has the sense of humour in a very high degree," and that " laughter is as characteristic of Carpenter as it is of Nietzsche—but of how different a quality." Mr. Lewis, on the other hand, has—so far as one can see—no sense of humour whatever. His book is as uniformly solemn and as uniformly dull as a vegetarian pamphlet or a volume of 18th century sermons.

Marx disavowed all responsibility for the Marxians ; Ibsen wrote a play bitterly satirising the Ibsenites ; Shaw has said cutting things about Shavians. It remains for Carpenter to say something gently humorous about his own too rapturous disciples.

J. F. HORRABIN.

" . . . Those men of business in whose hearts the Prime Minister's burning words will always find an echo : no price, as the contractor said, can be too high when Honour and Freedom are at stake."—P. GUEDALLA, in the *New Statesman*.

#### BOOKS RECEIVED

*Labour in War-Time* By G. D. H. COLE (G. Bell and Sons, 2/6 net.)  
*Selected Passages from the Works of Bernard Shaw* (Fifield, 2/6 net.)

# The "Mebbs" League

---

## Object

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

## Methods

The holding of an Annual Meet: the issuing of a monthly Magazine, mainly devoted to the discussion of the various questions of Labour, theoretical and practical: the formation of local branches and classes for the study of social science, in connexion with the Central Labour College, and in every way to assist in the development of the latter institution, and its maintenance of a definite educational policy.

## Membership

Open to all who endorse the object of the League.


Each Member shall pay 1/- a year to the Central Fund towards meeting the expenses in connexion with the Annual Meet, &c.

## Management

An Executive of five members elected annually, and the Editor of Magazine, who shall be responsible as to publication and meets, &c.

The Magazine shall be 2d. per copy, 2½d. post free.

Subscriptions payable in advance: Quarterly 7½d., Half Yearly 1/3, Yearly 2/6.

 The Eighth Annual Meet will be held in London, (Bank Holiday) August, 1916.

P.O.'s to be forwarded to

**J. REYNOLDS, Secretary-Treasurer,**

13 Penywern Road, Earls Court,  
London, S.W.

# The "Plebs" League

(Organ : "PLEBS" MAGAZINE, Published Monthly,  
Price 2d.)



## Executive and Officers of "Plebs" League:

### SECRETARY-TREASURER

J. REYNOLDS

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- MRS. W. HORRABIN, 127 Hamlet Gardens, Ravenscourt Park,  
London, W.  
J. F. HORRABIN, " " " " "  
O. KEIGHLEY, 25 Black Lion Lane, Hammersmith, London, W.  
B. S. MACKAY, 28 Oxford Gardens, Notting Hill, London, W.  
J. REYNOLDS, 13 Penywern Road, Earls Court, London, S.W.  
J. V. WILLS, 10 Layard Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.

### ORGANIZERS

- NOAH ABLETT, 44 Glanville Street, Mardy, Glam.  
G. W. BROWN, 112 Bishop Road, Bishopston, Bristol  
FRED BURGESS, 47 Clonbrock Road, Stoke Newington, London, N.  
W. E. CRAWFORD, 60, Abott Street, Doncaster  
EBBY EDWARDS, 3 Duke Street, Ashington, Northumberland  
W. T. A. FOOT, 119, Harvist Road, West Kilburn, London, N.W.  
T. P. KEATING, 80 Clarendon Road, Luton, Beds.  
J. LEACH, 15 Church Street, Bolton  
R. MELL, 54 Carlton Street, Hull  
F. B. SILVESTER, 8 Evelyn Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham  
W. STEWART, 5 Portallo Street, Belfast  
CHARLES WATKINS, 3 Laverack Street, Richmond Road,  
Handsworth, Sheffield  
W. M. WATSON, Weston Cottages, Cowdenbeath, Fife  
H. WYNN-CUTHBERT, "The Ferns," Pavilion Road, Worthing.