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November, 1915

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**PLEBS**  
MAGAZINE



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**MONTHLY**

**TWOPENCE**

**WILL YOU**

**DO YOUR**

**SHARE ?**

# THE PLEBS MAGAZINE

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

Vol. VII

November, 1915

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Are you coldly scientific?

Is your favourite author *Marx*?

Or do you, along with *Orage*,

Rave of profiteering sharks?

Maybe you're a subtle Fabian,

Swearing by (not at) the *Webbs*?

Hearken—have you sent that bob yet

To the *Plebs*?

Are you very keen on *Dietzgen*?

Do you know what Logic's for?

D've like *Cole* and *Mellor*-drama?

Or prefer the plays of *Shaw*?

P'raps you favour Yankee flavour—

*Havwood*, *Walling*, *Boudin*, *Debs*?

Anyhow—just send that bob off

To the *Plebs*.

Do you, with the C.G.T., think

Politicians up the pole?

Are you "British" first and foremost—

Do you swallow *Blatchford* whole?

Are you pessimist or opti.,

As the Movement flows and ebbs?

Please yourself! . . . But send a bob *now*

To the *Plebs*. J.F.H.

## U R G E N T !

The Executive Committee of the Plebs League made last month a Special Appeal on behalf of the Magazine. In response, some fifty of our Readers have already subscribed (or promised) a total of about £7. (We hope to print full lists later). This is a beginning - but it is not enough. May we state once again that if each of our thousand and odd Readers send us a shilling, half of the debt would be wiped out at once. One shilling now, and another shilling later, would clear off the debt immediately.

**Wanted—£100. Received—£7. Balance—£93**

Do the many Friends who have not as yet let us hear from them realise the urgency of the situation? The Printer of the Magazine is our principal creditor. (The Post Office gives no credit, and all the work done for the Magazine, clerical or editorial, is voluntary). At a time of financial stress like the present, it is impossible to extend credit for such a considerable sum for a long period. The bulk of the debt **MUST BE CLEARED BY THE END OF THE YEAR!** If our Readers do not rally to our support, we must take it that they are willing to let the *Plebs* go down. We are loth to believe any such thing.

Will Provincial Classes, etc., follow the lead of the Rochdale and Birmingham Classes? (See reports on another page). Will **ALL** our Readers send us a subscription, however small. **AT ONCE?**

## Should the Workers be Organized by Industries?

**I**N his thoughtful letter in last month's *Plebs*, my friend Mackay asked two questions:—

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

I will endeavour to give him an answer.

1. A Craft Union is a Union of skilled workers. A coal-hewer is a skilled worker; a union of coal-hewers would be a Craft Union.
2. Coal mining, in its widest and completest sense, is an Industry of many grades of workmen with various degrees of skill. One organization embracing all these grades of workmen would be an Industrial Organization.

I do not understand Mackay's allusion to 'Theorists' and 'Practicalists,' so will pass it on to the initiated.

The organization of all workers in and about mines is a theory that is well on its way to practical realization—as will be seen before this article is concluded. I thank Mackay for taking up the discussion, because it is the most vital subject Labour can study and think about, and is more important to the worker than any thing else under the stars. Industrial Solidarity will make the workers the rulers of their own destiny. The principle has already done much for miners, and will ultimately obtain them the mines.

I am sure our friend Mackay is "not far from the kingdom." Take this illustration of the Coachmakers, given in his article:—

In the old days . . . . 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 specialized 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.

We accept the test conditions and say that the Coachmakers can be best catered for by the industry for which the coach is to form a part. If railway coaches are built at Swindon by the Great Western Railway Co., and at Crewe by the London and North Western Railway Co., we say that the industrial interest of these men will be better catered for by the N.U.R. than it can possibly be by any Craft Union. In proof of this let us suppose that the coach builders wanted to obtain an increase of wages, and the Company refused to pay it; and let us suppose also that these men were members of a Craft Union. It is easy to see that if they resorted to a strike, the Company could run its trains with its old coaches for an indefinite time, and the men would be defeated. On the other hand, if the coach-builders were members of the N.U.R., their case would be part of the industrial programme, and they would be supported by the whole organized workers of the railway industry; the Company would be compelled to concede the terms demanded by the workers or be confronted with a stoppage of the entire Railway service of the country. So that even on the question of better wage conditions the workers would be better "catered for" than they could possibly be by a Craft Union.

Needless to say, what applies to these apparently dissimilar occupations applies with equal force to all Industries. If the Industry is unified (however complex its ramifications) then the Union, to be able to attain its maximum efficiency, must also be unified. This is not dogma, but a practical application of common-sense to organization. It is hardly necessary to tell Mackay, or the readers of the *Plebs*, that the object and goal of Industrial

Organization is not collective bargaining for wages, but the owning and controlling of the Industry by the workers themselves. And it is this very interdependence alluded to by Mackay, which makes organization by Industries inevitable.

Probably the Miners' Federation of Great Britain will be the first organization to include all the workmen in one Industry to one Industrial Union. As I stated in my last article: "At the M.F.G.B. Annual Conference at Stockport in 1911, the following resolution was carried by an overwhelming majority:—'We consider that all workmen employed in and about collieries should belong to the same organization.'" There is no ambiguity about this resolution. It needs no defining. It includes the collier and the colliery mechanic; the craftsman who makes the tram and the craftsman who hews the coal and fills the tram; the man who works with the electric lamp and the electrician who attends to the electrical machinery. The only workmen who are not included are the colliery office clerks who are treated as the confidants of the employing class. I may say that upwards of 1,000 members of a Craft Union have seceded from their Union, and come over with three of their agents into the South Wales Miners' Federation since July. It is also worth knowing that the Miners' Federation obtained an extra shift per week for those enginemen, stokers, and surface craftsmen who are engaged on the afternoon and night shift, that this "bonus" turn was afterwards taken from these men by Mr. Runciman, the President of the Board of Trade, and that over 10,000 miners instantly struck work in defence of these craftsmen. Their case was taken up by the whole of the members of the S.W.M.F., and the "bonus" turn was recovered and restored to the craftsmen—even to those who are not members of the S.W.M.F. This is something for the Craft Union man to ponder over and reflect upon. It is yet another proof that "these subsidiary Unions are largely parasitical and live on the vitality of the larger organization."

Recurring to Mackay's reference to the Coach-builders. Does he mean that the men who build the body of the car should belong to the Carpenters' and Joiners' Union? The men who paint it to the Painters' and Decorators' Society? The men who put in the electrical fittings to the Electricians' Union? The men who make the rolling stock to some other organization? No, of course, Mackay means nothing so absurd. Yet this is the *Ultima Thule* of Craft Unionism. I suppose these specialized grades should all be members of the Coachmakers' Society. Then why not carry it one step further and let all engaged in, on, or about railways belong to one and the same organization, thus "providing the *dynamic* which will give meaning and reality to our faith that the working class shall own and control the means of life." The means for providing this dynamic is well in sight. The Organizations of the Miners, Railwaymen, and Transport Workers will

soon be blackleg-tight Industrial Unions. Anticipatory of attaining this great ideal these great unions are linking up together by means of a Joint Committee for united and simultaneous action. Had this calamitous war not occurred, this potent power of combined Labour would have manifested itself this year, 1915. The employing and territorial classes are well aware of this, and it is against the culmination of an organized Industrial Commonwealth that Conscription is directed, and not for the prosecution of the war. Our duty lies straight before us. Let us Industrialize our Organizations—federate—and prepare for the grand consummation, the inauguration of the Industrial Commonwealth.

GEORGE BARKER  
(Miners' Agent, Abertillery, Mon.)

**A little help is worth a ton of compliments.**

## What of the Women ?

**OF** the various situations that have arisen owing to the outbreak of war none is more encouraging than that concerning women.

With the rise of private property, women became a subject sex just as the property-less workers became a subject class. In both cases the subjection arose from the same cause, namely, economic dependence; of the female on the male, who alone had an opportunity to earn a livelihood; and of the propertyless worker on the property owner, who afforded him that opportunity. And it is now, when this system of private ownership of the means of production, with its inherent striving after profits, is failing most miserably to satisfy the social demands, that woman, again, is getting a chance to regain her lost economic independence by entering industry.

True, large numbers of women had already done this, and were earning their own livelihood, but now there is a general call to women to enter into any sphere of industry that they are capable of filling. In response to this call many women, from patriotic motives, will become wage-earners who would not otherwise have done so. Also, through the absence of so many men, many more will be compelled to take part in the struggle owing to lack of men to support them.

Arising out of this exodus of women from the home we may expect great progress in two directions. First, in the numbers of class-conscious women, more especially when the men return to work again and the women must compete with them for jobs. For it would be idle to suppose that the women will drop quietly into their former position directly the men appear. Oh no, just

as with a freeman who has once been a serf, the women will try to maintain their new found independence, arduous though it may be. This will mean that the men will finally be compelled to admit them into their trade organizations in order to have some control over wages and conditions. Secondly, this situation will give a great impetus to development in domestic matters. The woman in the home being still in the handicraft stage, owning her own means of production as a producer of home comforts,—her own little array of cooking and cleaning requisites,—her output is naturally scanty in proportion to the outlay of energy involved. So long as woman continues to perform these duties at home there is not much chance of her burden being lightened. The mechanical contrivances required to dispense with physical effort such as are used in laundries, bakeries, etc., are too complicated to be installed in every back kitchen, so the only hope of relief from the present drudgery of domestic work, is that these particular duties shall be performed outside the home. The only way to remove domestic drudgery is to remove the domestic drudge.

Already this has taken place to some extent, but only with the entrance of far greater numbers of women into industry will it become universal. And why should domestic work be the one stationary exception in an age of progress? Other handicrafts have left the home, the enormous increase of products resulting thereby holding out a promise of more ease and leisure under another form of society, and so with this particular kind of work. As it becomes more industrialized there will be further developments in technique all making for ease and efficiency. Personally, I long for the time when all cooking, baking and washing will be performed outside the home, and all meals taken in cafes, and the harassed housewife no longer held responsible for meal-time disappointments, often the outcome of some circumstance over which she has no control. Really, a home should be a place of rest and pleasant intercourse, not a centre of bickering and never-ending toil, as it so often is at present.

This development will be a very definite step forward in the march towards emancipation as will be evident to those who have noticed the complete absorption in home life of huge masses of women, thus placing them entirely at the mercy of those who manage public affairs. With their entry into industry the timidity and bigotry engendered by seclusion will be displaced by a spirit of self-reliance and adaptability and a new interest in social questions. Altogether the outlook is promising for an enormous increase in the number of women workers and a corresponding wave of independence and development flowing womenwards.

And, while we women are welcoming this extension of opportunity to regain economic independence we may well ask ourselves,

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**Have YOU sent your Shilling?**



what of the long interval of economic dependence on the men? Has it been absolutely barren of any good result for us, a dark period of subjection and mortification of the spirit illuminated by not even a faint ray of progress? Not so. For us the outcome of this dependence on the male has been far-reaching and beneficial, as a study of history will show.

Under primitive communism, before women were yet a subject sex, the means of production were held in common, as also were the women under the system of group marriage. But, with the rise of private property, accompanied by the desire of the male owner that his own children should inherit it, a system of monogamy arose under which one woman was married only to one man. In his efforts to gain perfect security on the question of which were his children he not only conserved the woman for himself, but, in so doing, preserved her from the other males of the group. As a result of these selfish propensities of the male there has been established an ethical and legal code giving the female the right of choice on whom she shall bestow herself and full protection against any male who would force himself upon her. A little reflection on the probabilities of group marriage will convince us of the great advantage we have gained. To be married from birth to all the male members of the group, or all the male members outside that particular group, must have been very harassing, more especially as the gentle male of that period would very probably apply for the restitution of conjugal rights with a club!

To arrive at this climax where woman generally has sole control over her favours it was necessary for her to become the property of someone who would protect her as such. And in order to gain her submission to being owned, it has necessary that she should be economically dependent on her owner. In so far as these things were necessary they were reasonable, but now that woman has advanced to the point where she can claim social protection, private ownership and the economic dependence that has accompanied it are unnecessary and therefore unreasonable.

By the dialectic method we understand that we progress through struggle, that contradiction is the true nature of everything. But this contradiction must be solved and reconciled in a higher unity. And so with the woman's question; from the state of economic freedom and sexual liberty,—in a positive sense,—there emerged the contradictory state of economic slavery and restriction of sexual liberty. This contradiction will be solved and reconciled in a higher unity by the state at present emerging, that is, the economic independence of women, and sexual liberty in a negative, as well as a positive sense; not only "I will," but also, "I will not," a very valuable addition, indeed.

Alice Smith.

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**EVERY SHILLING HELPS.**

## Labour in War Time\*

**T**HERE can be no two opinions as to the value of such a book as this at a time like the present, and Mr. Cole has rendered a very valuable service, if only for permanently recording the most salient facts relating to the attitude of Labour in this rapidly moving time. In this, and other respects—to be pointed out later—we have nothing but the most unqualified praise to offer. A minor defect is his reference (on p. 7) to the “pathetic pacifists.” This, however, is merely a triumph of literary vanity over exactitude of phraseology, and we must take our author alliteratively—not literally.

The chief interest of the book to Plebeians lies in the fact that it is written by an avowed disciple of the theory of National Guilds (p. 21), and it is of some interest to trace the influence of this theory on his work. On pp. 20-21, the writer presents a “new” theory of international socialism. He calls the Marxian Internationalists (Workers of the World, Unite!) by a new name—Cosmopolitans, hitherto associated in my mind with William Le Queux and Cunninghame Graham. “Internationalism” (of the Cole brand) does not “seek to confound all social sense in a vast, vague sentiment of the individual brotherhood of all men. It is based on nationality, and the brotherhood on which it rests is the brotherhood not of individuals but of nations.” How vast is this vagary! Let us paraphrase “Cosmopolitanism . . . . does not seek to confound all sense in a vast, vague sentiment of the brotherhood of nations. On the contrary, it is based on the clear basis of the industrial brotherhood of men as workers with one common aim.” The secret of this fuddled theory is found in the last sentence (p. 21), “The wage-system will end when National Guilds replace it,” because the Guildsman (fine old, mediaeval term) finds the “vast, vague” sentiment of a State indispensable to his mental machinery. No Guildsman has yet clearly defined the necessity or functions of the State. It only exists as a relic of the “vast, vague” tradition of middle-class snobbery.

I am persuaded that this new international theory came to Mr. Cole in the silent watches of the night, and he thought it far too precious to analyse, and so immediately recorded it after the fashion of the immortal Pickwick—fresh from the intellectual mint. In short, nationality is a “reality” to our author because the “reality” of National Guilds cannot otherwise be appreciated. And in the dilemma between Cosmopolitanism and the Guilds, the Guilds win the “toss.” The book throughout is marred by the same kind of thinking. But nowhere else is it more apparent than in his (otherwise excellent) criticism of the Munitions Act Committees.

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\**Labour in War Time.* By G. D. H. Cole (Bell and Sons, 2/6 net.)

His enthusiasm for the Guilds is so great that on p. 198 he says, "It (a Munition Committee) will go down to history as the first definite and official recognition of the right of the workers to a say in the management of their own industries. . . . The workers are being recognized, however, grudgingly as partners in industry." Partners in industry! In the very next paragraph he goes on to say that "later developments have clearly shown that Labour was being asked to make large concessions in return for the infinitesimally small share of responsibility which was being conceded to it." On the next page he further states, "On the Clyde, for instance, one of the chief tasks of the Committee has been to stimulate good time keeping." But, as consolation, this last is not caused by any powers under the law, but because of the ignorance of the workers the Committee has "employed a gigantic scheme of bluff." Glorious *principle* of partnership in Industry!

It does not dawn upon Mr. Cole that he is here showing the final futility of National Guilds. Oh, no! if only things were different they would not be the same. Or to put it in our author's more precise language—"If . . . Trade Union leaders had been persuaded to play their cards well they *might* have been able to make it impossible for the State to return to its *time-honoured practice* of ignoring Labour. They *might* have succeeded in forcing the State to abandon to some extent its old *alliance with capital*, and to join them in wringing from the employers not only better wages, but *some* share in industrial responsibility and self-government" (needless to say, the italics are mine). In return for this optimism I cannot refrain from exclaiming *a la* Marie Corelli—"Oh, the pathetic faith of the Internationalists! Oh, mustard seed of Biblical fame!! Oh, Modern Quixote!!! \* \* \* \*"

But let not these defects prevent Plebeians from reading this book, because Mr. Cole is really constructive when he gets to grips with his subject. He compiles all the War resolutions (except that of the S.W. Miners, which I have asked the Editor to publish) in an interesting chapter in which he shows a discerning eye for salient facts. As regards the chapter on "Organization," we have scarcely anything but unqualified praise for his treatment of this important matter. He makes the negotiations between the State and the Trade Unions exceedingly interesting reading. His facts are so well marshalled as to present a coherent whole. Official Labour is pictured as in a frenzy of concession. There is scarcely anything precious in the way of Trade Union rights they are not eager to give up. Abraham sacrificing his son "'gins to pale his ineffectual fire" before this orgy of sacrifice by proxy. The Government is shown deftly sounding these sacred guardians of Labour. Its cunning is wasted. Labour is only too willing. The apple falls ripe into the lap. Their only defence is the patriotic but soporific phrase, "for the duration of the war." Cole's book will in spite of defects last longer than that. NOAH ABLETT.

*Resolution* (passed by the S.W.M.F. Executive Council, August 1st, 1914)

"That this Council having, at a special meeting called for the purpose, very carefully considered the present International conditions, and the suggestion of the Board of Admiralty that the miners employed at the collieries supplying Admiralty contracts should work on Tuesday and Wednesday next, two of the three days arranged as holidays by the Conciliation Board:—

We do not consider it necessary for defensive purposes to ask the miners to work on these two days, and we decline to encourage or in any way countenance the policy of active intervention by this country in the present European conflict, and we are also strongly of the opinion that there is no necessity for Great Britain in any degree to become involved in the war between Austria and Servia, and we call upon the Government to continue its position of neutrality and to use all its power in the attempt to limit the area of the present conflict and to bring it to a speedy termination.

Further, that as the International Miners' Congress has, at its meetings, adopted a resolution condemnatory of war between the nations represented, we think the present moment opportune for the miners of Europe to make an endeavour to enforce their views upon the Governments implicated in the conflict and the pending complications, and to this end the General Secretary shall at once get into communication with the President and Secretary of the International Miners' Organization requesting that an International Conference of Miners shall be immediately convened to consider the attitude to be adopted by the affiliated miners in the present crisis.

It was further resolved that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Prime Minister, the First Lord of the Admiralty, and Sir Edward Grey,

(Signed) Thomas Richards (General Secretary)."

**The Plebs depends on its friends.**

## A Tribute to the C.L.C.

(It is with both pride and pleasure that we reprint the following from an article entitled *A Big Victory* in the October number of the *International Socialist Review*. The fact that, as regards one or two details, the writer has been imperfectly informed (e.g., the statement that the Unions are taking over the *Plebs Magazine*) does not in any way detract from the tribute paid to the pioneers of the C.L.C.)

**E**VERY year for the past decade some of the advanced trade unions have been sending one or two men to take up a course at the Central Labour College, and there they have been taught the principles of scientific socialism and have been educated in the laws of modern science.

The teachers at the Central Labour College thoroughly trained the students in theoretical socialism, and every event in the world of labour was discussed and tactics planned and worked out to

help the working class in its struggle for emancipation. As the students were from the industrial working-class, the questions they propounded were naturally of an economic or industrial nature. The work of the college was never permitted to be side-tracked by politics, compromises or reforms. It was kept strictly on the class struggle basis and every form of organization studied, was considered only in the light of their value to the working-class movement.

Several men who were prominent in the Welsh miners' organization had been students of the Central Labour College before they returned to the mines. They saw at once how important was the position of the Welsh miners when the British conspiracy against labour was revealed. . . . So the 200,000 Welsh miners went out on strike defied the Government and rendered the Munitions Act a dead letter.

If this were the single accomplishment of the Central Labour College it would be enough, but this is only one of the many things—big things—it has been able to do during its years of service. In thinking over the events of the last few years, it occurs to us that we have never known the Central Labour College to fail the working class, to be led astray or to be side-tracked on futile reforms or compromise.

Neither George Sims nor Dennis Hird, for so long identified with the work of the College, ever forgot for one moment that it was a *Labour* College. They secured the interest and the co-operation of the trade unions, and its members were from the ranks of the actual industrial workers, who cooked their own meals, washed dishes, made beds and scrubbed floors in order to keep down expenses at the College. This naturally kept it a thoroughly proletarian institution.

We think there has been no other work done like that of the Central Labour College. No panic, no gaudy political victory, no reform dreams, not even the war-madness that rages over Europe to-day, were able to swerve the College and its teachers from their loyalty to the interests of the working class of the world. The shallow cries of patriotism failed to move them. They determined to fight only the battles of the working class against the exploiting class.

And this is the sort of education that enabled the Welsh miners to defy the British Government and infuse new militancy into the hearts of the entire British working-class. Practical tactics on the field of labour—not in the realm of politics, but in the field of industry—was what the students learned at Central Labour College.

Word comes to us that the Welsh miners and the new National Union of Railwaymen, of England, are now to take over the

management of the College and of the *Plebs Magazine*, the official organ of that institution. The *Plebs Magazine* says:—

It will be for the members of these two unions to see to it that the institution remains as uncompromisingly PARTISAN, specialized and 'extreme' as the men who founded it intended it to be, and as it has been hitherto. The day when two of the foremost British Trades Unions definitely undertake the responsibility of providing class-education for their members is no unimportant date in the history of Trade Unionism.

Good luck to the unions in this new work. They have a great task before them, and if they fulfil it as well as their predecessors, they may well be proud. It is with pride and joy in the work they have done, and with a choke in our throats that we see the old guard go. We hope they are to co-operate and help the unions to organize the work for a wider field.

In these grim times, it is good to think of the work of the men who have made the Central Labour College. They have fought the good fight. They have been loyal to the interests of the working class. They have never failed that class in any crisis. May the new management continue the good work. More cannot be asked of any one.

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## Hervé on the Welsh Strike

[We are indebted to a correspondent for the following translation of Gustave Hervé's article, *A Shameful Strike*, published at the time of the S. Wales strike. It is not, perhaps, a particularly important document; we in this country have our Blatchfords, Thompsons, and the rest, and are growing accustomed to the "mental squirt" which the war produces in certain types of so-called Socialists. But it is an interesting—and pathetic—manifestation of that very "hot-headedness" and "want of consideration" of which Hervé accuses the Welsh miners.

It is perhaps worth mentioning in this connection that Mr. John Hodge, M.P., who recently visited France with the object of "reassuring the French Socialist Party" as to the attitude of British workers towards the war, informed President Poincaré, in a special interview, that "all sections of the community had condemned the Welsh miners for not continuing negotiations instead of striking."]

THE delegates of the S. Wales Miners' Federation, representing 150,000 workers, decided at Cardiff last Tuesday to call a strike if a 20% advance in wages was not granted them. They justify their demands by pointing out that within ten months the price of coal has risen 50%, and claim that it is fair that they should share in the profits of their employers, more especially since the cost of living has steadily increased. That the Welsh coal-owners should have seized the opportunity afforded them by the absence of German competition to make scandalous profits is not unlikely; England is not the only country where selfish rascals find means to enrich themselves through public misfortune. It is the business of Parliament to limit their scandalous profits, and after the war it will be left to the people to call them to account.

But that the miners in their turn should wish to imitate these insatiable vultures—what a blow for those of us who had thought the workers would bring to the world a morality higher than that of the privileged classes, a higher conception of social duty! Here are workers who cannot earn less than about £4 a week, and because war has caused the price of coal to rise and the cost of living to become dearer, they, without any consideration, decide to strike.

That we, whose principal mines are held by the enemy, should be in urgent need of coal for our machines—that troubles the Welsh miners not at all. That their stoppage means the slowing down of English and French munition factories matters nothing to them, so long as they can swallow an extra glass or two of whisky every day. That their comrades at the front, already none too well supplied with ammunition, should now get even less, does not concern them. That as a result of their selfishness, nervous people—neurasthenics and pessimists—should spread abroad the monstrous calumny that the English people are indifferent to the martyrdom of Belgium and to the fate of the seven French departments in the occupation of the Germans—that is a moral consideration too lofty to touch their consciences for a moment. Indeed, the high cost of living seems to obsess them.

And what of the rest of their countrymen, and of ourselves? Do the Welsh miners imagine that in a civilized country every available man can be mobilized without anyone or anything suffering by it? And the thousands of gallant Englishmen in the trenches, freezing in winter, roasting in summer, in constant peril of death or mutilation—are they at their ease? The millions of Frenchmen who have abandoned their businesses, who have seen ruin fall on all they possessed, whose families live on 1/- a day, and who themselves have only a half-penny a day—are these men lying on a bed of roses? Moreover, while Belgians, French, and English defend French soil near Arras, Dunkirk, and Calais, are they not defending the threshold of England—and of Wales?

We have in France a working-class usually considered to be hot-headed; but it possesses too much political sense, too much patriotism, too much heart, too much intelligence, to commit the enormity which the Welsh miners are committing at this moment. If the British Government, to tame them, were to institute Compulsory Service, they would have well deserved it. And they deserve the reproach of one of their newspapers, which accuses them of being the tools of agitators who have sold themselves to Germany, and which offers a reward of £5,000 to whoever discovers the German agent who has served so well the interests of the Kaiser and his gang.

To strike at such a time as this, when we should all be fighting for the freedom and independence of Europe, is, I say, a crime of high treason—not only against England, but against France and all the Allies.

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AUTHOR'S CORRECTION.—In the article on *Industrial Unionism and the State*, by Robt. Holder, in last month's issue, p. 200, line 5, please read:—  
"Craft unions are organized on the basis of a detailed part of the product produced."

## Letters on Logic

### ECONOMICS

#### THIRTEENTH LETTER OF THE SECOND SERIES

THE Russian language has different words to describe a peasant taking his food and a landlord doing the same thing; and certain other functions are differently described according as a nobleman or a moujik is performing them. In the same way, we must distinguish between animal instinct and human reason. Moreover, not only men and animals have a "reasonable" instinct. It is "reasonable," for instance, that water should run in brooks and rivers down the valley and into the sea, and not climb up hills. This universal instinct towards reason it is which has made our planet what it is to-day, a reasonable place for men. Why not, then, call this reasonable instinct the world spirit? But I must again urge the importance of not separating the *spirit* of things from their *material*.

The "reasonable" or rational condition of our modern society (which is reasonable despite the fact that the human mind has done little towards it) leads us to the consideration of the world spirit. It is the immortal merit of Marx's *Capital* that it proved the instinctive reason of economic matters. Previous economists had never conceived that, although there were many quite eminent minds among them. They considered the commodity form of the product, the money form of the commodity, the capital form of money, the *wage* of Capitalism, as unchangeable facts of nature. We, on the other hand, are able to show that there is in economic history a moving spirit, which only becomes real spirit when human brain is applied to it and changes the "natural" planet into an ordered, systematic whole.

Socialism aims at applying system to national economy, which at present is carried on unsystematically. In our modern economy there is an unconscious spirit; when we become *conscious* of that spirit we understand that modern instinctive economy is in the same relation to a systematic one as the feeding of animals to the eating of men. Animals and men both take food; but the two acts are not the same. In order to understand this we need the "language of the spirit," which our dialectic provides. Then it becomes clear that not only men, but the world also, has a mind, that human mind is only a part of the world mind, and the material only slightly differs from the spiritual—like animal food from human food.

My logic deals with the "theory of the spirit." To be able to use this spirit, to think logically, I think it best to generalize

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**What about that Silver Bullet for the Plebs?**



it into the infinite. You are thus able to conceive the spirit, which exists in our minds as something relative, as a part of the absolute. As it is a popular habit to idealize our thought-capacity, let me say that it is related to all other forces and all other forces are related to it—just as the Russian peasants and their lords, however far removed from each other, are still all members of one body politic.

To classify the oak and the butter-cup under the one conception of *flora* is a pretty big exercise of the thought-capacity, but it is less important than that which summarizes the universe monistically under the conception of labour, or movement, or spirit. It is necessary for right thinking to understand that all conceptions are subject to a universal absolute conception. Only by such logical understanding of the "being of all beings" can we learn how and to what extent each essential piece is merely form. To regard the commodity form of the product, the money form of the commodity, or the capital form of money as having rigid, separate existences, and not to understand them as mutable, changing *appearances* of the world process, is the cardinal error of previous economists.

I think I have made it sufficiently plain that the exchange value of the product, the commodity form and the money form, are all based on the fact of human brotherhood (which a comparatively blind natural instinct had realized as a fact); a brotherhood, however, which has a nasty hole in it in actual fact, inasmuch as the capitalist brother treats the wage labourer as a *thing*, which can be produced at cost price, i.e., as cheap as possible. His "value" is not measured by what his labour power performs, but by what the man actually costs to reproduce. You may study the exact details of this process in Marx's scientific expositions, I am stating the particular instance in order to demonstrate in a proper manner how political economy is connected with the spirit which is working in the universe, not in any ghostly fashion but as much materially as spiritually. Logic will teach you not to think this or that, but to think *on the whole*, on the world in general—to think in and with the universe. And remember that it is not sufficient to conceive of the universe as uniform, but that it must also be conceived of and studied in its details—organic living beings. The eternal, unchanged absolute can only be conceived by its manifold and varied appearances, and economics only as a moving part of the absolute world movement.

(Translated for the *Plebs Magazine* from the German of Josef Dietzgen by MISS BERTA BRAUNTHAL.)

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*The Thirteenth Letter to be concluded next month.*

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**Doesn't our success or failure concern YOU ?**

# Political Economy

## OUTLINES OF A LECTURE COURSE

We propose to print month by month in the *Plebs* the Outlines of the Lecture Courses on Political Economy now being taken in various C.L.C. Provincial Classes. This, besides being of much value to the actual students of those classes, should also prove of great interest to the many isolated working-class students who subscribe to the Magazine, as well as to many who have taken the same or similar Courses in the past.

## LECTURE I.

### Introduction to the Study of Political Economy

*THE TERMS.*—"ECONOMY"—The mode of making and obtaining wealth. It implies association. What are the limits of this association? The primitive commune, the patriarchal family, the ancient or medieval city, the nation or the international? Modern political economy arose as national economy. In practice, the economic processes tend to become international. World-economy dominates increasingly the economy of nations. Each nation, however, asserts its jurisdiction over the economic arrangements within the national boundaries. That is partly the signification of "political" in modern society. But political signifies still more; it signifies that the economic system is of such a character that in order to maintain equilibrium, in order to suppress the consequences of the antagonisms immanent in the wealth-making and obtaining processes, some power must preside within the nation, exercising general command, sanctioning certain practices and condemning others. This power is "political" power—the power of the State.

*THE PURPOSE OF OUR STUDY.*—Economy as it is carried on to-day, not only produces much wealth, but much poverty. We want to know why poverty is so widespread in a world so rich, why where so much is produced, so little is consumed by the actual producers? Is this inevitable? Is this a permanent or transitory, an absolute or relative necessity? The problem is not solved by introducing the question of the justice or injustice of the system. The problem is objective, concrete, a matter of specific relations or relations of specific materials.

*METHOD OF STUDY.*—These relations must serve as the premise of our investigations. Salvation from poverty does not consist in importing subjective speculations or schemes into these relations, but in critically assorting these materials, by grouping them in logical system. If salvation is to become clothed with flesh, then, it will only be because it grows as a product out of the actual material development. The solution can only be discovered within the conditions of the problem.

More specifically, we must employ the Dialectic method of analysis and reduction, of interlinking and construction. This method is the historical method. Applied to political economy it views economy as a process as

fluid in contradiction to the static way of looking at the world. Our method distinguishes into groups the varied economic manifestations, and, at the same time, recognizes the connexions. It specializes the general and generalizes the specialities. It neither confounds differences nor separates the differences too far.

*THE SYSTEM OF MARX.*—His place in the history of economic theory. The proletarian character of Marxian Economics. His critical attitude toward the groupings of categories of bourgeois economy. His mode of treating the subject in *Capital*. Distinction between simple circulation of commodities and capitalist production of commodities. The analysis of commodities. The concept or category of value. Labour substance and measure of value.

*LABOUR.*—Labour in general and particular forms. Living labour and accumulated labour. The rôle of the latter. Accumulated labour as capital.

*STUDY OUTLINE, No. 1.*—*The two-fold character of a commodity and of labour, &c.*—The attainment of scientific results in the field of political economy requires that we begin by investigating the facts in the simplest setting. We must proceed from the simple to the complex. Only thus can the more complicated issues be clearly understood. Certain manifestations of economic activity when viewed individually, at a given moment, appear as accidental, as disturbances which cannot be brought under a definite rule or law. When, however, these are considered in the general context instead of being torn out of the context, when the phenomenon is observed over a longer or shorter period of time, in the totality of its ups and downs, then the accidental appearance vanishes and the momentary vicissitudes are seen as the fulfilment of laws. It should be remembered, therefore, that throughout the first volume of *Capital*, Marx makes abstraction from all disturbing influences, but only that later on, these disturbances may be understood.

*COMMODITIES.*—The general form of wealth in capitalist society is that of commodities. Commodities were in existence before capitalist society. Only after the circulation of commodities had attained a certain degree of extension in society, could capitalist production begin to develop.

What is a commodity? Is a suit of clothes a commodity? It is not in itself a commodity but only a material product which meets a certain want. It is a useful thing or utility. A commodity must be more than this. A product becomes a commodity when destined for exchange. The representative of its production aims not at securing the product for his own use but at realizing its value in exchange. Commodities are use-values in the economic form of exchange-values. A product may be a use-value without being an exchange-value, but there can be no exchange value that is not at the same time expressed in the bodily form of a use-value.

*USE-VALUE.*—The destination of a use-value is consumption—individual or productive consumption. The utility of a thing can only be realized in the use of a thing. It may have a number of uses. That will depend on the material properties of the thing. But use-value is indifferent

to the economic form of wealth. The palpable substance, coal, is in no way changed nor is its useful properties altered, by its being sold, by the fact that it is a commodity. The commodity form of wealth is thus distinguished from the bodily substance. Nature does not create commodities, as such.

*EXCHANGE-VALUE.*—This implies a relation; (1) a quantitative relation, e.g., 1 ton of coal for 12 lbs. of tea. Use-values are exchanged in definite proportions. This exchange implies equality. This equality is evidently not to be explained from the nature of the bodily substances, coal or tea. As use-values they are unlike. But they are alike as exchange-values. Beneath the quantitative relation there is a qualitative relation. The equation expresses a common quality. This quality is human labour. All commodities are alike in this respect.

*LABOUR AND USE-VALUE.*—Labour participates in the creation of use-values. Use-values differ and this difference implies different kinds of labour or work. This fact is independent of whether the use-values assume the form of commodities or not.

*LABOUR AND EXCHANGE-VALUE.*—Exchange-value is *one*, and, therefore, the source of this oneness cannot be found in either the diverse use-values or in the diverse kinds of labour which help to produce them. The labour creating exchange-value is *one*, homogeneous, of uniform quality. Labour in general, regardless of its special forms of expenditure, is the substance of exchange-value.

*THE MEASURE OF EXCHANGE-VALUE.*—The quantitative relation expresses the fact that equal quantities of labour are embodied in the 1 ton of coal and in the 12 lbs. of tea. The quantity of labour is measured by the time of its expenditure. The duration of this value creating labour is the intrinsic measure of exchange-value. By the very nature of exchange-value and of the labour which is its substance,—labour in general—the measure of exchange-value cannot be the labour-time of any particular individual but must be the labour-time which is in general required for the production of a given commodity. The labour-time of the individual counts as exchange-value only in so far as it is the labour-time necessary for society.

This abstract social labour, says Marx, vitually exists in the average labour which the average individual of a given society can perform— a certain productive expenditure of human muscles, nerves, brain, etc. It is unskilled labour to which the average individual can be put. Labour which rises above the average, the so-called skilled labour, counts as a multiple of the average labour. This is an objective equalisation which takes place every day on the market.

*STUDY OUTLINE, No. 2—The Genesis and Development of the Form of Value—Money.*—Value is a relative category. It belongs or is related to a society in which production is carried on privately, and, at the same time, for society.

Value is an attribute of all commodities. Yet it is not perceptible in any single commodity. The commodity has a bodily form, e.g., a suit of clothes, but if the clothes were worn away to the finest threads, no trace of value

could be discovered. Value appears only in the exchange relation of commodities. It can be perceived only in the form of exchange-value.

Exchange does not create value any more than the scales create weight and there is the further analogy, that, just as the weight-form of an object is distinguished from the bodily-form of an object so the value-form is distinguished from the bodily form of a commodity. While weight is a physical quality of bodies, value in not a physical but a social quality.

Why, seeing that all commodities in so far as they possess value are created of a common substance, viz., general human labour, do they not all directly exchange for one another? Why must they each and all be first converted into the form of one exclusive commodity, into the form of money?

Recall the fact that commodity production is private production, that while men work for one another they work also for themselves. Each seeks his greatest gain with the least effort in the attainment of one and the same object. But where all are in general engaged in seeking each his individual or private gain through producing for others, for society, the law of the general effort asserts itself in determining how much each will gain for himself. This is the kernel of the law of the determination of value by the socially or generally required labour-time. Here we discern why commodities cannot be immediately exchanged for each other. It is not this individual's labour-time that counts as value except in so far as it coincides with the labour-time of the other individuals, except in so far as it is the labour-time necessary for society. The labour time of the individual must prove itself to be the labour-time generally required, must demonstrate that it is universal. It is in this universal form that the social character of value creating labour is manifested.

All commodities are each expressions of individual labour times. How can each serve as universal equivalents to the others? Particular labour time has to first prove itself to be labour-time in general before it can serve as an incarnation of general or universal labour time.

The problem is solved by the exclusion of one particular commodity to serve as a materialization of universal labour time. This particular commodity serves as the universal and direct equivalent of all others *only because all others have conferred upon it the character of universality*. In this way, commodities make money. It is not money that has begotten commodities. As commodities grow in variety and number, so grows up of necessity the money commodity. The more general becomes the extension of the value category in society, the more does the need make itself felt for a general value-form, i.e., a form that will express the value of commodities in general. When one exclusive commodity, e.g., gold, functions as the universal expression of value, it becomes money.

Money is an attribute of value, not vice-versa. As value grows, it brings forth money. Already the germ of the money form is present in the most *elementary* exchange relation of two commodities. The germ *expands* and gathers flesh with the expansion of exchange relations until it finally asserts its *dazzling individuality—money*.

Unless the evolution of the expression of value is comprehended, then the whole problem of value must remain enveloped in mystery. Marx—

and he occupies a unique position in this respect—has worked out the genesis and development of the money form, in section 3 of Chapter I, *Capital*, volume I. This section should be thoroughly mastered by the student.

*STUDY OUTLINE, No. 3—Value,—a Social Relation, &c.*—For ages men produced and consumed the product of labour without exchange, without, in other words, the product assuming the commodity form. There is nothing, for example, in cloth as cloth, or leather as leather, which makes it necessary that they should first be exchanged before they can be available for consumption. The warmth afforded by a suit of clothes, on the other hand, is not increased or decreased by the fact that it is exchanged. Value is, as before stated not a physical or chemical property, not an attribute of simple nature, but a *historical* social attribute. *It is the expression of a specific relation of persons, through material things.* Cloth as cloth, has no value. It has this quality *only as a commodity*, i.e., only in the exchange relation of the cloth to leather, coal, and all other goods, *as commodities*. The relations of exchange are the relations of private producers who work for themselves *only* through working for one another. It is necessary, for the clear understanding of political economy, that this relation should be recognised in its dialectic character—this selfish fraternity, this fraternal selfishness. Only in the exchange of commodities is the labour expended upon them realised for the producers, or, as it is to-day, for the capitalist representatives of the producers.

Gold is the money form of commodities. Therein, the value, which is immanent in commodities but invisible in every single commodity, assumes a tangible, bodily expression. Gold is no more in itself, money, than leather is in itself, value. It is not gold as money that makes commodities valuable, but commodities that express their value in gold by conferring upon it the rôle of money. Only outwardly, on the surface, does it appear that money is exchanged. In reality, *money is only the form under which commodities are exchanged*. If A, a producer of leather, requires a piece of cloth from B, the leather and the cloth cannot enter directly into exchange. A must proceed in a round-about way by converting his leather, through sale, into so much money, and thereafter, the money, into so much cloth, through purchase. Thereby is proved that both the leather and the cloth, although private products, are yet also social products, the joint products of associated men.

That this association has so far only realised itself in the round-about and clumsy way *via* value and money, &c., that it is only *indirectly* an association,—where men worked directly for each other there would be need neither for value or money—points to a fact that the student must master, viz., that this commodity form of association has not been constructed by means of a “social contract.” It is not a consciously evolved process, an arrangement before the fact. Had it been otherwise, the present higgledy-piggledy state of economic theory would be unintelligible. It is true that this unsystematic society is a consequence of individual actions; but it is not the result of individuals mutually acting together with collective consciousness. Hence, as Marx teaches, the laws of political economy, e.g., the law of value,

descends upon men as if with the force of a natural law, assert themselves "behind the backs of the producers," under conditions of mutual rivalry and conflict.

A commodity is *particular*, the product of the labour of particular individuals. It must prove itself to be *general*, to be social, that is as has been seen, to be identical with the other particulars, before it can *realise* itself as a commodity. But every other commodity is also particular and must fulfil the same condition. "Who then shall be saved?" The problem is solved, as ascertained in the previous section, through the incarnation of value, the embodiment of the general in the form of a particular commodity. This particular commodity, for example, gold, is only money, is only a representative of what is general to the world of commodities, *by reason of the fact*, that all commodities *generally express their value in it*. The plethora of illusions existing to-day with regard to the nature of money, is in itself indicative of the fact that the evolution of the money relation has been more akin to the evolution of vertebrates from invertebrates than a process conducted with conscious purpose,—was a development "behind the backs of the producers."

Text Book : *Capital* ; Chapter I—Section 4.

Text Book : *Capital* ; Chapter 2.

*STUDY OUTLINE, No. 4—The Function of Money in the Circulation of Commodities.*—We should now have recognised that the money commodity, while it must be distinguished from other commodities, exists, nevertheless, only in community with them. Gold is *directly* money, but other commodities have to *become* money. In other words *gold as money* is value personified, value incarnate, the god of value, while other commodities have to prove themselves god-like children. But it is of the greatest importance to know, as we now should have known, how one special commodity like gold rose to the throne of the godhead. Just as the gods of men, contrary to the beliefs of men, were created by men and endowed with the attributes of the human species, so the god money did not create commodities and give them values, but the commodities, by their mutual nature and intercourse created the money-god. Henceforward, no commodity could come to its value-salvation except through the consecration or golden baptism of money.

*MEASURE OF VALUE.*—This is the first function of money. There must be a universal measure of value. Why if social labour time is the measure of value, should there be another measure? This apparent contradiction has already been solved. Because in our society, commodities are not directly products of social labour but of externally independent producers. *They must become social* and they can express themselves as such, only by changing themselves in the course of exchange. They require "conversion." They must each throw off their limited individualities and assert the common and general nature of their species. Hence the individualization of the species in money. Money becomes the special expression of a general quality, the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. As the measure of value is not the labour-time of the individual but the labour-time necessary in general, and as this general

labour-time cannot, in a society so constituted as ours, express itself directly and absolutely, it becomes individualized in the special commodity which serves as the universal equivalent. There are, therefore, not *two measures of value* but one measure which is actually social labour-time incarnate in the special money commodity. In this outward form it is decided whether the labour of the individual is socially necessary. Through the estimation of the value of commodities in a single commodity, exchange value is transformed into *price*. Price is the money name of the labour materialized in a commodity. This understood, it will be clear that money can have no price, although we sometimes hear such irrational expressions as "cheap" money and "dear" money. Price is not a bodily, but a mental form.

*STANDARD OF PRICE*.—This function while, related to, must clearly be distinguished from, the foregoing function. It has to do with weight not value. Note the comparisons given by Marx on p. 70 of *Capital*. Note also the consequences of changes in the value of gold. Discrepances arise between the current money names of the various weights of the metal serving as money, from (1) entrance of foreign money with foreign names into a backward country, (2) the exit of the less valuable metal because of the entrance of the more valuable metal, and (3) debasement of the coinage.

*MONEY OF ACCOUNT*.—When prices are expressed in the names of coins, in the aliquot parts of the legally sub-divided gold standard, e.g., one ton of coals is priced at £1/14/6, money serves as money of account. The error must be avoided of regarding £3, 17/10½ as the value of one ounce of gold. The value of gold cannot, any more than any other commodity, be estimated in its own material.

Vol. I., Chapter 3, Section 1, *Capital*.

W. W. CRAIK.

## Reports

### FORMATION OF SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH OF PLEBS LEAGUE

It is with much pleasure that I report the formation of a Southampton Branch of the Plebs League. It is all due to the personal magnetism of "one of those young men from the C.L.C." The fact that Comrade Cuthbert was operating on some of the youthful minds of this town, only leaked out gradually, and in common with other victims I made his acquaintance. Now, of course, none of us will ever know what it is to have a contented mind again.

Thanks to the good offices of Comrade Warden, who has lent us the use of his "den" (and what a den it is, Marx, Engels, Brailsford, Ruskin, Shaw, —all those blighters who have done such grievous wrong to the cause of (capitalist) humanity), we held our first meeting, at 62 London Road, on September 27th, and the comrades present did me the honour to make me secretary. At the present time we are not many in number, but we are determined that we are not going to suffer alone. Cuthbert having "done it on us," we are looking out for fresh victims. To be quite serious, we do mean to put forward all our energies to spread the light, and to lift the veil of ignorance that hides the truth from the eyes of our class. No longer has one to strain the ear to catch the murmuring of Labour against his own impotence. On every hand, incoherent though it may be, the murmur is



heard ; the half-articulate appeal for a way out. And our task must be to quicken this new spirit, to foster self-respect, and bring home to our own class their true position in the general scheme of things to-day. We shall do our best to emulate the self-sacrifice and devotion to duty which have characterised the pioneers of the C.L.C. and the Plebs. L. BRIGHTON (Sec.)

#### BIRMINGHAM SOCIAL SCIENCE CLASS

The class is commencing its 1915-16 session with a series of lectures on "The History of Militarism and its Relation to Labour," by Mr. William Paul. Meetings take place on Monday evenings at Bristol Street Council Schools, and a special appeal is to be made to members on behalf of the *Plebs* fund. (Other classes please note!) F. B. SILVESTER, (Hon. Sec.)

#### ROCHDALE C. L. C. CLASS REPORT

The above class commenced a course on Economics on October 10th, the lecturer being Mr. W. Horsfield, local student and member of the Pattern Makers' Union. Our executive decided to appeal to trade unions to become affiliated, and we got about 10 societies to receive deputations. Messrs. W. Horsfield and W. Oddy undertook this work, and Mr. F. Jackson assisted in getting students from the Metal trades. We have about 24 students attending class.

The students have adopted the following method of increasing the circulation of the *Plebs Magazine*. Each student acts as 'agent,' and distributes in his particular district. The branch decided to send copies of *Plebs* to the committee of all affiliated societies who send over 5/- in affiliation fees. We are appealing to members of trade unions who cannot attend class to buy the Magazine. We sold at United Machine Workers Branch, Castleton, 13 copies—at a meeting of only about 24 members. The students have also decided to hold a social and dance at an early date, to assist in clearing off the debt on the Magazine. LEWIS TAYLOR (Hon. Secretary).

P.S.—Please send 4 doz. *Plebs* November issue.

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**Do your bit towards getting that Debt down.**

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## Review

G. B. S.

*Selected Passages from the Works of Bernard Shaw.* (Fifield, 2/6 net).

Some time ago—in those far-off days before the war—a writer in the *Plebs* gave a list of the books which ought to be on every Plebeian's book-shelf. Included in that list were the Plays of G. Bernard Shaw—though this recommendation was somewhat discounted by the further statement that Shaw's books, to judge from their published prices, were intended for millionaires only. To some extent this inaccessibility has since been overcome by the issue of "popular" editions; though even this fact has again to be qualified by the consideration that the books are many, while the shelf, in the average Plebeian's home, is small.

In recommending the study of Shaw one has also to contend against a prejudice carefully cultivated by interested people (Press, Pulpit, and Pub.), which insists that no-one can understand Shaw because—Shaw does not

himself know what he is driving at. I suppose few *Plebs* readers agree with this prejudiced insult to the greatest British publicist of our time. It is true that Shaw's writings are not always so simple that he who runs may read; nevertheless, once his general outlook is grasped, his novels and plays are a never-ending joy—even when (and the occasions are many) one cannot agree with him.

This volume of *Selected Passages* makes it possible, with a little time and thought, to master the main theses of his various writings; and as the selections are really representative, and the cost of the book by no means prohibitive, no Plebeian can in future assert that he (or she) can afford neither the time nor the money necessary to gain some knowledge of the Shavian philosophy. The average Socialist has much need of the helpful wit and wisdom embodied in the writings of a real Man of the World—and that term is used in its widest and deepest sense. There is a surface appearance of the "irresponsible trifler" about Shaw's sayings and doings, an appearance which the motley crew of half-educated 'publicists' who dish up the stew known as "news" has done its best to persuade the public is the real Shaw. Not without reason! For the bantering tone and biting wit of this "journalist" (as Shaw loves to designate himself) is a rapier sharp and deadly in the "innards" of Capitalist society, and its pretentious conventionalities. Of a truth, the "buffoon Shaw" (as that insufferable prig, James Douglas, calls him), has laughed out of court, with the wittiest wisdom and the deadliest humour, the spurious morality of the sacredness of Marriage, Parenthood, Patriotism, the Home, and the hundred and one other devices which—in their present form—go to make up the sham which we call Civilization.

That Shaw has not spared *us* (the workers) in his heroic attempt to stir up a Revolt against the whole rottenness of our social order, a reference to the files of our own Press—let alone the enemy's—will readily show. Many of us disagree with certain of Shaw's conclusions—the present writer particularly with G.B.S.'s constant reiteration of the idea of a new 'Political' order—a rudimentary survival in Shaw due largely, one suspects, to his close association with the Webbs. But no such differences can blind us to the immense services he has rendered to the working class in general, at many a crisis in the struggle to establish a Socialist outlook among the organized members of that class.

Any attempt to select special quotations from this volume is a hopeless task. Shaw is Shaw, and a Quintessence of Shaw (such as this book is) is the beginning of wisdom. Next to Marx and Engels, a study of Shaw is the best equipment one can have for the work the C.L.C. stands for—and the two first-named writers will be sufficient corrective for those remnants of bourgeois idealism which still adhere to G.B.S. As he wrote of Ibsen, so we may say of himself:—

• He never presents his works to you as a romance for your entertainment: he says, in effect, "Here is yourself and myself, our society, our civilization. The evil and good, the horror and the hope of it, are woven out of your life and mine."

And if you want to know still more of what Shaw presents to us, read this book and see! (Somewhere in France.)—G. S.

# The "Plebs" League

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## 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.)

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### SECRETARY-TREASURER

J. REYNOLDS

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