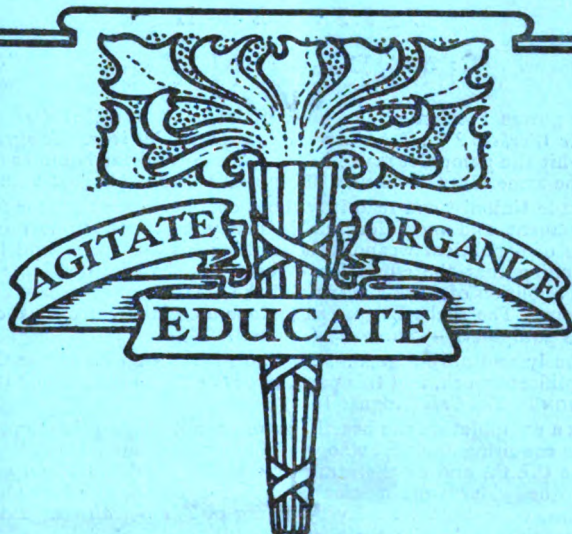


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THE PLEBS MAGAZINE

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Vol. IX.

October, 1917

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CONTENTS

	Page
WHITLEY-ING AWAY OUR STRENGTH By W. McLAINE	193
SOCIALISM AND THE HERD INSTINCT. By EDEN AND CEDAR PAUL	196
HOW TO FORM A SOCIAL SCIENCE CLASS. By MARK STARR	200
THE WAY THE WIND BLOWS. By J. H. (B.W.I.U.)	203
PLEBS PUBLICATIONS—IMPORTANT NOTICE	205
CAPITALISM DE LUXE. By J. T. WALTON NEWBOLD	206
LANARKSHIRE MINERS' REFORM MOVEMENT. By J. D. McDUGALL	208
S.W.M.F. UNOFFICIAL REFORM COMMITTEE—PROGRAMME	210
NEWS OF THE MOVEMENT (Glasgow, Abertillery, Newcastle, Edinburgh, etc.)	211
CORRESPONDENCE (R. J. S. S. E., E. COLLINS, A. P. LETTE)	214
REVIEWS AND PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED	215

Whitley-ing Away Our Strength

THE ruling class at any particular epoch, if it is to retain its power and place, must, when challenged by the uprising revolutionary forces in society, adopt one of two methods. If it is confident in its own strength it may proceed to take from the people such small measures of freedom as they possess in the hope of effectively checking the revolutionary movements. If, on the other hand, it is not so confident, it will bring forward proposals which appear to have some resemblance to the demands that are being pressed forward, but which, if accepted, will result in the attention of the revolutionary forces being diverted from the main issue into channels of futile reformism; and the enthusiasm which, if properly made use of, might have succeeded in securing full and complete freedom, is itself used to fasten more securely the chain of servitude upon the people. History is very largely a record of the success and failure of such methods as these.

At the outbreak of the European War the ruling class in England (as in other countries) having secured by means of its appeals to patriotism the necessary strength to make its own position secure, proceeded to undermine the working class position by taking away such vestiges of freedom as the Right to Strike, Freedom of Speech, Liberty of the Press, and so on. By means of the Defence of the Realm Act, the Munitions Acts, and the Military Service Acts, the workers have been browbeaten and tyrannised over to an extent unknown within living memory, and, as a result, a great deal of working class energy has been expended on attempts to secure the restoration of civil liberties and a return to pre-war conditions. It is, of course, very necessary that Government by Orders in Council should be fought against, and necessary also that action should be taken against particular instances of Government savagery, such as the imprisonment of prominent persons active in the cause of the working class; but all such fights and actions, like the demands now being made by many trade unions for a return to the *status quo ante* will, even if successful, but leave the workers in the same position they occupied hitherto. Instead of demanding a new social order and organizing for it, the people demand a return to things as they were, while the capitalist gains at every step.

But, as the appeals to patriotic effort lose their power to charm, and as the meaning of the class truce becomes more and more realized by the workers, the capitalist class, finding repression to be no longer of value, must needs make use of other and more subtle methods of curing the "discontent." Hence proposals are now being brought forward which, while having the appearance of satisfying certain working-class desires, will ultimately result in binding that class the more securely to the chariot wheels of predatory profiteering.

The unofficial Workers' Committee and Shop Stewards Movement has very largely led the revolt *against* the class truce and *for* the recognition of the motives underlying capitalist manoeuvring during the past three years. Because of this it is the most hated and the most feared section of the working class. It has alarmed the master class to such an extent that it has been forced to consider how and by what methods the movement can best be countered. Since repression has failed and capitalism is too unstable to definitely challenge the new movement, side-tracking must be the order of the day.

The new movement, though as yet not quite clear as to its ultimate objective, is at its base revolutionary. It demands the control of the workshop by those engaged in production. Many are attached to the movement who would perhaps not give full support to this demand, because they only see "unrest" as being due to certain temporary superficial disturbances and grievances; whereas

the movement itself is the outcome of the fundamental antagonism between the elements constituting modern society—those who own the means of production, and those who do not—and therefore must work for those who do.

The Report of the Whitley Committee is the expression of the desire on the part of the owners of the means of production that the workers' movement should be side-tracked and its energy wasted in efforts to reconcile the divergent interests of Capital and Labour. The Shop Stewards seek to secure the formation of Workshop Committees linked up with District Councils, the whole to be connected up in a National Workers' Committee. The Whitley Report, ostensibly in sympathy with this form of organization, seeks to assist in the formation of similar committees, with a similar method of national linking up, *but with employers and employed represented in equal numbers upon each Committee*. "We want a Workshop Committee," says the man in the shop. "Good says the employer, "we will form one for you and help you to run it, and we will do the same for your District Councils and for your National Committee." If the workers accept this form of organization, offering as it does no hope or possibility of "control," it will be but the preliminary to a regulation of industry in which, though the workers may obtain certain improvements in their working life, they will be called upon to acquiesce in their own enslavement.

Furthermore, they will be asked to acquiesce in an industrial system in which, while predatory capitalism in its more vicious activities will be curbed, there will be quartered upon the working class a faction of parasites whose position will be guaranteed by law, and who would be a permanent interest-drawing patrician class.

The object of the recommendations of the Whitley Committee is summed up completely in the Industrial Unrest Report for the North-Western Area :—

Many a sensible young man who now thinks that the only hope of betterment for himself and his class lies in the spreading of advanced doctrines would understand how far more useful he would be to himself and his fellow-men by taking a seat on the Shop Committee and doing direct work in improving the conditions of the shop. We think that what is driving many well-meaning enthusiasts into very extreme propaganda is the hopeless feeling that they have no place or voice in the management of the work they are doing, and that the only way in which they can assert their knowledge and individuality is by promoting disorder, and thereby calling the attention of the authorities to things which all reasonable men agree are wrong. It would do away with a great deal of Industrial Unrest if these Shop Committees were formed and seriously and honestly worked.

In other words, nobble the rebels by specious proposals which will fritter away their energy and enthusiasm. A word to the wise should be sufficient.

W. McLAINE.

Socialism and the Herd Instinct

(*Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War.* By W. TROTTER.

T. FISHER UNWIN. 3s. 6d. net.)

AMONG the higher animals (and despite the Great War the dispassionate biologist will continue to count man as a higher animal), there are three primitive instincts of universal force—hunger, self-preservation, and sex. The gratification of these instincts is directly pleasurable, and their satisfaction is dictated by an imperious inner urge which sometimes conflicts directly with the promptings of reason. But, broadly considered, the gratification of the primitive instincts tends always to promote individual survival or survival of the individual's direct descendants.

The coercive strength of these impulses is easily explicable on the theory of the struggle for existence. One lacking a strong and unreasoning tendency to gratify hunger, to fight for what Max Stirner called *der Einzige und sein Eigentum* (The Ego and his Own), to compete with rivals in the sexual struggle, will leave no descendants, and his type will perish from the earth. But what of the man who, permeated with "altruistic" feeling, convinced that it is sweet and decorous to die for one's country, volunteers to lead the forlorn hope, and casts his life away in the breach that others may march on to victory? He too leaves no descendants, and yet his type, we gather from a summary survey of human history, tends to become more dominant as that history runs its course. How, on Darwinian lines, can we explain the origin and perpetuation of the instinct of self-sacrifice on behalf of the community, and of the instinct which Kropotkin and others speak of, when manifested in action, as "mutual aid"? The answer is simple, and yet it is only within recent years that it has been clearly formulated. In non-social animals the primitive instincts are supreme. Where gregariousness extends only to the family, parents will die in the attempt to save their offspring, but the desire for self-immolation goes no further. A tigress will die for her cubs, but she will not die for another tigress. It is only in those animal types alone which have discovered sociality that we find the instincts of self-sacrifice and mutual aid—the "altruistic" instincts. In their supreme form we find them in a perfectly organized social community such as that of the honey-bee. Here the elaboration of the social instinct is supreme; the community has become a quasi-immortal unit; and individuals are ruthlessly sacrificed, by their own initiative, or by that of other individuals, for the benefit of the hive. The worker bee is apt to perish as a reward for having used her sting in the communal defence; the drones, having fulfilled their function, are killed off by the workers. [*En passant*—we do not urge

A NEW TEXTBOOK FOR C.L.C. CLASSES:—Mark Starr's "OUTLINES OF INDUSTRIAL HISTORY." See page 205.

that the human community should devise a euthanasia for its functionless members, but at least the lesson of the bee-hive may well be borne in mind. . . . " 'Allah! Allah!' cried the stranger, 'wondrous sights the traveller sees. But the latest is the greatest—how the drones control the bees!' " We remarked in a recent number that the principal object of the Plebs League was to alarm the worker bees against those non-workers who were attempting to extract honey from the hive. The League strives also to enlighten and invigorate the efforts of the worker bees to wrest the control of the social organism from the hands of a functionless class of " owners."]

Now this superadded or " altruistic " instinct is the *herd instinct*, and it often conflicts with, and may altogether supersede, the primitive instincts. Not only is the worker bee prepared to die in defence of the hive, but she has been completely desexualised, and leaves no offspring. Among the higher mammals, including man, the gregarious types have developed a less completely integrated form of sociality. The individual organisms remain fully functional; they are subject to the instincts of hunger, self-preservation, and sex, in the fullest intensity; and yet these primitive instincts often conflict with, and are frequently superseded, by an altruistic impulse, a herd instinct. As in the case of the honey bee, so also in the case of wolves, of sheep, and of men—in the case of all the social mammals—the operation of natural selection has been largely transferred from the individual to the social unit. The herd instinct, like the primitive instincts, is the outcome of natural selection and the survival of the fittest, but the operation of natural selection is now removed to a different plane. The human social organism is not, like that of the wolf pack, constructed almost exclusively for offence; nor is it, like that of the wild sheep flock, constructed almost exclusively for defence. Man, considered as a social community, is organized both for offence and defence; and in proportion as human consciousness, human awareness, human understanding, grows, does man, the herd, deliberately endeavour to use the powers of social organization to control nature, including the very stuff and substance of the social environment for, in, and by which man exists.

For in man the problem is complicated by the growth of that self-consciousness through which alone a creature comparatively defenceless and extremely ill-equipped from the purely animal standpoint, has been enabled to emerge from primitive brutedom and to aspire to play the part of " master of things." But, being self-conscious, he is extremely prone to over-estimate the rôle of his new acquirement. Destined, doubtless (if man continue—and this is dubious, especially dubious in the year of grace 1917—to prove himself one of nature's successful experiments in species-making) to play an enormous part in the development of the civili-

sation of to-morrow, consciousness has throughout human history been largely concerned with finding satisfactory "reasons" for what man the individual or man the herd has "wanted" to do. The human understanding has, in the past, been mainly devoted, and is to-day mainly devoted, to the pseudo-rationalisation of man's impulses, to explaining, after the event, "why" we yield to the herd instinct or to one of the primitive instincts, and to endless casuistic disputations about the numerous (all too numerous) instances in which there is painful conflict between the desires of man, the Stirnerite ego, and the desires of man—or what "ought" to be his desires—as a member of the human herd.

Such, in brief, and with a few Pauline glosses, is the theory expounded in W. Trotter's remarkable book. The author has not grasped Socialism from the inside, and he lapses occasionally, but unequivocally, into the outlook of a member of the "leisure class." On the whole, however, just as many of us are "above the battle" which is still raging between the Allies and the Central Powers, so Trotter writes from the detached outlook of a sociologist who is above the class struggle. But he is above it because he ignores it, and in certain respects he would be even more illuminating than he is were he to take the class struggle into adequate account. It is in the hope that some of our younger Socialist economists will master the Trotterian sociology and make certain obvious applications of the doctrine to our aims in the Plebs League, that we draw their attention to a very remarkable book. In the applications of Trotterism to the fields of education, of ethics, and of psychology; in the discussion of how the doctrine bears upon the justification of arch-individualists like Thoreau, Stirner, and Nietzsche in their revolt against herd control; in the consideration of the herd instinct in war (a matter to which Trotter himself, who drafted his theory ten years ago, devotes the concluding chapters of his book, offering us an amusing example of herd instinct falsely judging itself to be independent thought, and demonstrating once more the futility of the old proverb, "In vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird"); in the criticism and restatement on Trotterian lines, of Marxian and of Lorian economics—in all these matters there is scope for a dozen interesting monographs. The present writers are content to point the way to others. *Arts longa, vita brevis.*

We will conclude with two quotations, which will serve, perhaps, better than our inadequate exposition, to explain why we are so emphatic in commending this little volume to the attention of our fellow Plebians. Apropos of war:—

It seems remarkable that among gregarious animals other than man direct conflict between major units such as can lead to the suppression

of the less powerful is an inconspicuous phenomenon. They are, it may be supposed, too busily engaged in maintaining themselves against external enemies to have any opportunities for fighting within the species. Man's complete conquest of the grosser enemies of his race has allowed him leisure for turning his restless pugnacity—a quality no longer fully occupied upon his non-human environment—against his own species (p. 130).

The other quotation deals with the second of the "characters of the gregarious animal displayed by man":—

He is more sensitive to the voice of the herd than to any other influence. It can inhibit or stimulate his thought and conduct. It is the source of his moral codes, of the sanctions of his ethics and his philosophy. It can endow him with energy, courage, and endurance, and can as easily take these away. It can make him acquiesce in his own punishment and embrace his own executioner, submit to poverty, bow to tyranny, and sink without complaint under starvation. Not merely can it make him accept hardship and suffering unresistingly, but it can make him accept as truth the explanation that his perfectly preventible afflictions are sublimely just and gentle. It is this acme of the power of herd suggestion that is perhaps the most absolutely incontestable proof of the profoundly gregarious nature of man. That a creature of strong appetites and luxurious desires should come to tolerate uncomplainingly his empty belly, his chattering teeth, his naked limbs, and his hard bed is miracle enough. What are we to say of a force which, when he is told by the full-fed and well-warmed that his state is the more blessed, can make him answer, "How beautiful! How true!" In the face of so effectual a negation, not merely of experience and commonsense, but also of actual hunger and privation, it is not possible to set any limits to the power of the herd over the individual (pp. 114, 115).

What are we to say of it? We are to say of it (with Achille Loria) that, in the existing order, the main function of priests and moralists is "to pervert the egoism" of the workers and to make them imagine they are pursuing their own better interests when diligently and submissively producing income for the master class. And we are to say that this perversion of egoism will continue, so long as the human herd is content to accept the education and to imbibe the ethic provided for it by the master class.

EDEN AND CEDAR PAUL.

IN THE PRESS.

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(See August *Plebs*, pp. 164-5, for general outline of Contents, &c.)

How to Start a Social Science Class

(The following article, by Mark Starr, is to be issued immediately, in leaflet form, by the Plebs League. A companion leaflet will contain brief specimen "study outlines" of some of the pamphlets mentioned herein. Both are designed, of course, for the use of classes just starting operations, but we trust that more advanced classes and students will find them useful, at least for propaganda purposes. See "Plebs Publications" on another page. Orders to be sent to Secretary, Plebs League, 127, Hamlet Gardens, Ravenscourt Park, London, W. 6.)

THE greatly varying nature of local circumstances makes the giving of advice upon this subject difficult. The stage of industrial development and the character of the industry, the position and influence of Socialist and other propagandist bodies, and the strength of the Trade Unions in the neighbourhood are all factors demanding consideration. Again, some districts have an ample supply of competent class-leaders or lecturers, while others have none. Let us hope this latter difficulty is only temporary, and that in the near future we shall see working-class progress rapidly accelerated by the sending forth from our Trade Union educational institutions of an adequate supply of intelligence-purveyors into every corner of the kingdom.

THE START.

Here we must presume the existence of at least one individual who has been a residential or correspondent student of the C.L.C., or who has been, and is, an interested reader of the *Plebs* and a member of the League, or who is, at any rate, interested enough in the question of working-class education to be prepared to work for it. As the probable organizer and secretary of the class he approaches others likeminded, and they determine upon the place and time of meeting, upon methods of advertisement, and upon the inviting or electing of the necessary class-leader. In some cases the local Trade Unions or the Trades Council would be advanced enough to support this educational effort at once. In all cases they should be approached, as well as the propagandist bodies, with a view to pointing out the urgent need for, and the immense value of, working-class education in Industrial History and Economics; thus publicity, if not official financial support, would be secured.

METHODS OF CONDUCTING CLASS.

(1) **A Course of Lectures or Addresses given by an Individual Lecturer.**—This may well be adopted when the class is an official one (*i.e.*, controlled and maintained by the Trade Unions), and when a capable *bona fide* lecturer is available. The continuity of the class enables a printed Syllabus to be followed. (In some of the Miners' Districts the class teachers collaborate in the drawing up of the Syllabus.) In this method the recognised text-books are used for reference and not actually read in the class. *Question and discussion time should be ample.*

(2) **Lectures-by-Post.**—This method, suitable to an official or unofficial class when a competent lecturer is unavailable, is now, unfortunately, suspended for a while, but it will undoubtedly be revived again when the College resumes its work.

(3) **Collective Perusal of Pamphlet or Book.**—In the absence of a competent lecturer, no better method can be adopted than this. In fact, in some quarters this method is rated more highly than the first-mentioned. Under the direction of a class "leader," the paragraphs of the book or pamphlet chosen are read aloud by individual members of the class and discussed. Each member gets accustomed to the sound of his own voice and also to the pronunciation of the terms used. Progress is sure if slow. Much of the success of this method depends upon the class leader, who should always read beforehand the portion to be taken, anticipate difficulties and be prepared with explanations, give a *résumé* of past chapters, hunt up subsidiary information, supply an historical setting to pamphlets like the *Communist Manifesto*, and endeavour to bring forward *local* evidence and illustrations of economic laws and tendencies. A small study circle of this sort, wherein individual difficulties and development may be attended to, is often more productive of lasting good than a popular address given to a larger, mostly tongue-tied, audience; though there may be need of both.

A SIMPLE STUDY COURSE.

The following study course is put forward to suit a class adopting the last method; it may also contain useful hints for the individual student. Comparisons between books and pamphlets are invidious. The list is based upon the writer's confessedly limited experience, and individual preference may also have influenced it. Cheapness and easiness of procurability (in view of recent restrictions) have not been forgotten.

The first important step, preliminary to all else in the formation of a successful class, is to get a clear grip of *why* the workers must have *independent* education in the social sciences; of their true relation to general education and education in the arts and technical sciences; of why they must specialise in matters of social science; and of what the objective of all their study must be. There must be, too, a frank recognition of our aim, which is to show the Labour Movement that the provision of independent working-class education is a part of its proper function. Therefore, if the whole of the class is not thoroughly "sound" on this matter, a better commencement could not be made than by placing as the first item on the menu: *What does Education Mean to the Workers?* (Plebs League, 1d.)

A universal consensus of opinion testifies that the De Leon pamphlets (published by the S.L.P.) have been valuable stepping-stones to higher things in the literature of Scientific Socialism. Here are some of them:—*What Means this Strike?* (1d.). *The*

Burning Question of Trades Unionism (1d.). *Reform or Revolution* (1d.). *Industrial Workers of the World* (1d.). *Socialism v. Anarchism* (1d.). *Two Pages from Roman History* (2d.). *Marx on Mallock*, (1d.). The simplicity and directness of these pamphlets sharpen the appetite for more knowledge of the same sort, and naturally beget a desire to make the acquaintance of the masters of Socialist thought to whom De Leon so often refers.

At the same modest price, which allows each class member to have a copy of his own, and from the same source, can be obtained: *The Communist Manifesto*, by Marx and Engels (1d.); *Socialism: Utopia to Science*, by Engels (1d.); and *Historical Materialism*, by Engels (1d.). The first-named, as mentioned, should be studied in its historical setting; i.e., with careful attention to the particular conditions of the period at which it was written. The two other pamphlets contain mental *pabulum* of a stiffer sort, and require some explanatory comment from the class leader.

These pamphlets will serve as a general introduction, and the class might well next decide whether to devote its attention to Industrial History or Economics. For the former, W. W. Craik's *History of the Modern Working-Class Movement* provides abundant food for discussion and is an ideal lesson-book, cheap and easily obtainable (from W. T. A. Foot, 119, Harvist Road, London, N.W. 6. Price 7½d. post paid). Newbold's *Politics of Capitalism* (B.S.P., 1d.) may usefully be studied in connection with Craik's book. Another text-book specially designed for the use of classes is the present writer's *Outlines of Industrial History*, reprinted from the *Merthyr Pioneer*, and shortly to be published by the Plebs League.

If Economics be taken up, and an endeavour made to understand the anatomy of human society, Marx's *Wage-Labour and Capital* (1d.), should be first tackled, and followed up by *Value, Price and Profit* (3d.). Mary Marcy's *Shop-Talks in Economics* (Kerr's, 5d.) with its excellent catechism at the end of each section is a fine introductory pamphlet for beginners. Ablett's *Easy Outlines in Economics* (which the Plebs League hopes to publish shortly) will be an admirable text-book.

The aim of these suggestions has been to indicate, for the benefit of classes only just starting operations, a number of inexpensive, and not too difficult, pamphlets which will serve as text-books until such time as the class is firmly established, and the students are so far well grounded in the subjects chosen as to be ready to go on to the many books available (chiefly published by Kerr & Co., Chicago); books such as—on the historical side—Engel's *Origin of the Family*, and Kautsky's *Ethics and the Materialist Conception of History*; while, in economics, Untermann's *Marxian Economics*, Hyndman's *Economics of Socialism*, and Boudin's *Theoretical System of Karl Marx* lead up to the study of Marx's *Capital* itself. The isolated student is apt to be repelled by what appears to him the "dry-as-dust" and difficult character of

such books. Let him (or her) begin his studies along the lines here suggested, discussing with others the points at first hard to grasp, and exchanging ideas with fellow-students; and he will find that he will come to the study of these books later, filled both with the desire and the capacity to master them—and to enjoy them. *Go slowly but surely at the start.* MARK STARR.

The Way the Wind Blows*

A CONSIDERABLE amount of ink is being spilled in capitalist journals, and hot air wafted from innumerable platforms, as to the relationship of Capital and Labour after the War. It is anticipated that a fierce competitive world-struggle for trade supremacy will take place. To this end it is insisted that the rate of production must be increased, and all "restrictive" Trade Union rules must never again be revived. The *Times*, and other organs, in denouncing the German peace offer of the *status quo ante*, are equally insistent in denouncing the *status quo ante* of restrictive Trade Union rules in the workshop. Above all, the wicked policy of "ca'canny" must never again be thought of, let alone practised. A writer in an engineering journal has declared "ca'canny" to be immeasurably worse than stealing. He argued that if a worker only produces one article when he could produce two, then the community is so much the worse off; whereas if a thing is stolen it only changes hands and someone still has the benefit of it. Q.E.D.!

Of course labour must have an adequate *quid pro quo* as its share of the bargain with capital, and its share in the new order of scientific industry is to be higher wages, better conditions, with shorter hours, and more careful attention to health and physical efficiency. Let us quote a few samples of what some of the advocates of the desired harmonized relations between capital and labour are saying. Lord Leverhulme (Sir William Lever) has stated quite frankly that all this bettering of working conditions and improvement in wages is to be regarded as part of scientific management and administration, and is done (or discussed) because it will pay and help the country to success in the trade war. Mr. S. Smethurst, J.P. (Oldham) in a paper read at a meeting of the North-Western Federation of Building Trade Employers on "The Relations of Employer and Employed in the Future—What They Should Be," contended that as a nation we could produce one-third more than we do without physical harm to the worker:—

To put the matter clearly, let us suppose that before the War we were paying in wages One Thousand Million Pounds (which is as nearly as I can judge about the actual figure). And suppose that, on the average, our workers could, without suffering any harm, have pro-

* This article was written before the publication of the Whitley Report. The wind is still—very obviously—blowing the same way! Our contributor's quotations and references are accordingly as *apropos* as they were two or three months ago, when first written.—Ed.

duced one-third more, that would have meant, in terms of money, goods more than we had into which 333 million pounds in value of labour had entered.

He went on to say :—

I pronounce for a social system which, if possible (and I believe it is) provides for every man willing to work a sufficiency of food, clothing, and good housing, which will enable him to live and bring his family up in reasonable comfort, properly educated for the duties of life; and if he is careful and thrifty also, to put aside something for old age, times of sickness and misfortune. *Can this be achieved without doing any harm to the Capitalist? My answer is Yes. . . .* I ask you how this can be done, and suggest to you that the only way is by increasing the wages of the worker. He is really the only person who has an additional capacity to consume, for whatever you might add to my income I should spend no more, as I have already all I want; but if you increase the wage of a labouring man with a family he immediately buys more food, clothes himself and his children better, and lives in a better house, so absorbing the extra things provided by the increased productivity of his class. And all this is done without anyone being worse off. How is it to be done? My answer is, by co-operation replacing antagonism between employers and employed, a policy of mutual understanding and trust of each other taking the place of misunderstanding and distrust. *This can be achieved by the workmen in all trades agreeing to produce to the best of their ability, and, on the other hand, the employers seeing that those who work have the right to live in comfortable and healthy conditions, and combining with the workers' representatives to get such conditions.* (Italics mine.)

The same thing is being advocated in America. Mr. Charles M. Schwab (the Steel King) in a book, *Succeeding with What You Have*, recently published, says :—

The Bethlehem profit-sharing system is based on my belief that every man should get exactly what he makes himself worth. . . . This is the only plan I know of which is equally fair to the employer and every class of employee. Some day I hope all labour troubles will be solved by such a system.

All these arguments and schemes are for the perpetuation of capitalism. What is our answer? We denounce compulsory trade-unionism, compulsory arbitration, profit-sharing and bonus systems, as but the prelude to the Servile State. We state that nothing short of the control of industry should be the aim of the working class. We must hammer away to get into the heads of our fellow-workers the necessity of being organized by industry, not by craft, with the ultimate aim of expropriating the capitalist class and controlling industries in the interests of the whole community. Without vision we perish; for lack of vision the trade union movement has sacrificed all to the gods of war and mammon. The vision we must inculcate is "to take and hold the means of production," and for this purpose Industrial Unions must take the place of the hopelessly helpless craft and sectional unions. The problem of women in industry must likewise be faced, and the obvious solution of equal pay for equal work be fought for. Men and women, organized together in Industrial Unions, must fight shoulder to shoulder. It is for the workers to decide which way the wind *shall* blow! J. H. (Building Workers' Industrial Union).

Important—To All Readers

PLEBS PUBLICATIONS.

At a time like the present, when working-class educational classes are in demand everywhere, and when teachers—for a variety of reasons—are scarce, the provision of handy text-books, outline study courses, etc., is more than ever important. The Plebs League, accordingly, can do valuable work by extending and developing its Publication Department. In order to do this successfully, it will need the support of *all* its friends.

Item No. 1 is, of course, the pamphlet, *What does Education Mean to the Workers?* a first edition (10,000) of which has been sold and a second edition (same quantity) prepared. Nearly half of this second edition has already been ordered; and if our supporters everywhere will *look ahead*, and send us guarantees, we can order a third edition before paper gets more costly. We are hoping for further orders from N.U.R. District Councils and from South Wales Districts and Lodges. Every railwayman, remember, and every South Wales miner, is now a part-proprietor of the C.L.C., and *ought* to know at least as much about the College and its history as this pamphlet will tell him.

Items No. 2 and 3, which we hope to have ready *this* month, are two 4 pp. leaflets; one containing Mark Starr's article, *How to Form a Social Science Class*, with some additional matter; the other containing short specimen *Study Courses*, based on pamphlets, etc., mentioned by him. These will cost $\frac{1}{2}$ d. each, or $4\frac{1}{2}$ d. per dozen (post paid), or 2s. 6d. per 100. They should be exceedingly useful in districts where new classes are being formed, as well as of interest to class-members everywhere. We want orders for these **AT ONCE**, so that we can proceed with printing.

Item No. 4 is a bigger business, and means a strong pull, all together, if we are to make of it the success it ought to be. We intend to publish Mark Starr's

OUTLINES OF INDUSTRIAL HISTORY,

which have been inquired for, in book form, ever since they first appeared in the *Merthyr Pioneer*. The book will be published in a similar style to Craik's *Modern Working-Class Movement*; but it will contain rather more pages, and it will cost 1s. *Now we cannot undertake this without guaranteed orders from classes, and from individuals, everywhere.* It is a big undertaking, but the publication of such an ideal text-book is worth a big effort. Send in your orders **NOW**; reduction in price for quantities will be announced later. This, of course, will depend entirely on the number we are able to have printed.

Item No. 5 will be Ablett's *Easy Outlines of Economics*—another long-felt want! Particulars of this we hope to announce next month. Meantime, send us your orders for the above-mentioned items,

WINIFRED HERRABIN (Sec.).

Capitalism de Luxe

Amongst the latter-day developments of capitalist activity which deserve to be watched by Plebeians, none merits more attention than the Federation of British Industries, generally known by this time as the F.B.I. According to a recent brochure issued by them—

The objects of the Federation may be summed up briefly as the Organization and Development of Industry now and after the War, in co-operation with Labour and in conjunction with the Government and Government Departments.

It intends to develop sources of supply of raw material and is watching over the problems of Demobilisation the future of temporary War Workers (women ?) and the mitigation of possible unemployment during the transition period to Peace conditions.

It appears to have much the same working philosophy as was enunciated in Benn's *Trade as a Science*, reviewed in the *Plebs* some months ago. The second object mentioned in the rules is:—

The promotion and encouragement of free and unrestricted communication and discussion between masters and workmen with a view to the establishment of amicable arrangements and relations between masters and workmen and to the avoidance and settlement of strikes and all other forms of industrial warfare between masters and workmen.

It is "the Compleat Brother" up to date. Various employer's associations and protection societies have joined up with it and its *magnum opus* so far has been the formation of the National Alliance of Employers and Employed. The founder and first president of the F.B.I. is F. Dudley Docker, Esq. At the annual meeting of the Metropolitan Carriage Wagon and Furnace Co., Ltd. of which he is chairman, he stated of the National Alliance and its demonstrations—

These meetings have had a good effect and an atmosphere of greater friendliness has been engendered. . . Infinite patience, tact and judgment will be required on both sides, but the welfare of the Empire demands that these problems shall be dealt with without delay, and the fact that our (!) very existence is at stake will, I am convinced, influence everyone to do all in their power to arrive at this desirable and necessary end.

The second achievement of the F.B.I. has been the British Trade Corporation, which is modelled somewhat on the lines of the Deutsche Bank, and which has been incorporated by Royal Charter "to assist in opening up new channels for enterprise where . . . financial aid can be afforded without undue commercial risks" and "to further co-ordination . . . of British commercial and industrial undertakings."

Thirty of the forty-eight members of the Executive Council of the F.B.I., and seven of the sixteen directors of the British Trade Corporation are directly engaged in the iron and steel industry—an interesting illustration of what we may call the Boudin theory. Amongst the executive members of the F.B.I. are:—

LORD ABERCONWAY (Palmer's Shipbuilding & Iron Co., Ltd.)

SIR V. CAILLARD (Vickers, Ltd.)

F. W. GILBERTSON (W. Gilbertson & Co., Ltd.)

HENRY HOWARD (Stewart & Lloyds, Ltd.)

H. MCGOWAN (Nobels Explosives, Co., Ltd.)

SIR G. H. MURRAY (Armstrong Whitworth & Co., Ltd.)

F. J. NETTLEFOLD.

G. SCOBY SMITH (Bolckow Vaughan & Co., Ltd)

J. ROBER WRIGHT (Baldwins, Ltd.)

Plebeians on the North-East Coast, at Dowlais, Port Talbot, Sheffield, and other centres, will be interested in these doings of their masters, who, be it remembered, are also desirous of being their brothers.

J. T. WALTON, NEWBOLD.

CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS AND INDUSTRIAL UNREST.

In sending us a report of the Monmouth Western Valleys scheme for C.L.C. Evening Classes this winter (see "News of the Movement" on another page) GEO. BARKER writes:—"It is to be hoped that every District of the S.W.M.F. will establish similar classes, and I hope the N.U.R. Branches everywhere will follow suit. The effect upon the intellectual development of the Federation will be incalculable, and will make someone squirm! Education on C.L.C. lines is the one thing needful. The ways of the 'cozener' will be hard once the boys have been through this training. Our old friend Geo. Barnes does not believe in the class war. His education has been neglected—but then there was no C.L.C. in his youthful days."

"THE TIMES" ON INDEPENDENT WORKING-CLASS PROPAGANDA.

We shall hope to refer later to the *Times* series of articles on "The Ferment of Revolution," the first of which, some three columns long, appears just as we go to press. The articles are to discuss the "revolutionary propaganda current among the working-classes of this country"—propaganda which, so the *Times* declares, "runs counter to British Trade Unionism," and the chief characteristic of which appears to be a determination on the part of the working-class "to evolve its own system of civilisation—that of Social Democracy." Article Number One concludes—with a characteristically Northcliffean mixture of shriek and threat—"Loyal and patriotic citizens can no longer afford to remain passive; they must study, think, organize, and (in the last resort) act." For our part, as working-class propagandists, we would remark that no harm will be done if "loyal and patriotic citizens" (*i.e.*, of course, readers of the *Times*) were to "study" and "think" a little—by way of a change.

SATIRE.— Striking Cartoons. Biting Humour.

The Picture Paper for YOU. Sub. 1/6 for 12 months. Specimen Copy 2d. post paid from **Satire, 127 Ossulston Street, London, N.W.1.**

Miners' Reform Movement in Lanarkshire

Readers of the *Plebs* will be interested to learn that the various movements in South Wales, Durham, and other coal fields making for Industrial Unionisms in the mining industry have at last found a parallel in Scotland. Lanarkshire—always the most progressive of the Scottish counties, and the originator of the "five days a week" policy and other advanced measures—is determined to give a lead as regards the reorganization of the Miners' Union.*

For years dissatisfaction with the methods of conducting Union affairs, which seem to be designed to afford ordinary members a merely nominal share in the control of the Association, has been felt among the rank and file. The method of electing officials—not by the direct vote of the members, but by Pit Committees, which in turn are appointed in a far from satisfactory way—is of a kind which in political affairs has been abolished for a hundred years, and that it should still survive in an important trade union is nothing short of a scandal. It is amazing to hear miners' leaders, as politicians, declaiming against the House of Lords, while they themselves, as union officials, retain office by means of an antiquated and corrupt method of election. The first business of the Lanarkshire miners is therefore to democratise their organization.

The realization that something was wrong has been steadily growing. A vast number of the late Daniel de Leon's pamphlets have been circulated in the area. The "native" literature of Tom Mann, Cole and Mellor, G. Harvey, and W. F. Watson has also had much influence in opening the eyes of the miners to the economic evolution which has taken place since the days when the Miners' Federation really corresponded to the needs of the working class. The propaganda of the B.S.P. and I.L.P. Branches has converted many miners to Socialism, and these men view with the utmost disgust the narrow, nationalist attitude of the Executive of the Scottish Mine Workers' Union, composed as it is mainly of agents and full-time officials. Their refusal to petition for the release of John Maclean will be remembered as a case in point.

Owing to these various causes the Union Reform Conference held in Hamilton on August 25th was a great success. About a hundred members attended, the bulk of them being there as individuals, and a few being delegates representing branches. It was unanimously resolved that the Conference should constitute itself the Lanarkshire Miners' Reform Committee, and the meeting then proceeded to consider a programme. After much discussion the following points were approved:—

(1) The object of the Union to be the direct control of the mines by the miners. Nationalisation was expressly repudiated on the grounds that it would probably lead to the increased exploitation and subjection of the miners.

* The movement has also spread to Fifeshire, where also a Reform Committee has now been formed.

(2) The methods of the Union to be based on the principle of the class struggle. The Conference declared for the abolition of the Conciliation Boards and against any compromise except such as was forced upon us by economic necessity.

(3) Agents, Officials and E.C. to be elected annually by individual ballot vote of the members. Election day to be observed as a general holiday, and polling booths kept open all days. Agents and Officials to attend the E.C. meetings in a consultative capacity, but to have no vote.

(4) Power of negotiating a dispute to rest with the local Pit Committee for three days; the Pit Committee's duty at the inception of the trouble being to send detailed information to the E.C., and thereafter daily reports. In the event of the local Committee having failed to settle the dispute at the end of the stipulated period, control to be assumed by the E.C.

(5) On the general question of miners' organization, the Conference resolved in favour of one union for the mining industry in Britain; all men and women working in or about mines, including winding enginemens and clerks, (provision being made for sectional representation on the E.C.) to be members of the Miners' Union. All funds to be centralised except the portion retained by the local branches for fighting local disputes. District Committees, subordinate to the Central E.C., to be set up in each coal field, as required by the needs of the organization.

(6) The Union to acquire premises or to use any other methods alone or in co-operation with others, *for the purpose of educating trade unionists in Social Science*.* The First Day of May to be recognised as an official holiday.

(7) Members victimised to receive the full rate of wages for their particular occupations.

A draft statement embodying the programme will be duly issued as a manifesto, 50,000 copies to be printed. A series of public meetings in the county are to be held, culminating in a big demonstration, to be addressed by some of our comrades of the advanced movement from South Wales and Durham. The Secretary is Mr. James Russell, Donaldson Street, Burnbank, and the Treasurer, Mr. George Russell, 20, Clark Street, Blantyre.

LATEST NEWS.

A very successful series of meetings has been held in various centres and the audiences were in every case larger than the usual attendance at public meetings in the villages. The proposals of the Committee were received with enthusiasm. The branches in these districts may be expected to affiliate to the Reform Committee as soon as they have had an opportunity of considering the matter. The Fifeshire Committee is getting to work, and efforts are being made to establish one in Stirlingshire. A National Conference of Scottish Miners' Reform Committees in Glasgow at an early date seems well within the bounds of possibility.

J. D. McDougall.

* See "News of the Movement" for further reference to this point.

READ

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S.W.M.F. Unofficial Reform Programme

The following "programme of demands and basis for propaganda," drafted by the above body, will be of interest to miners—in Lanarkshire and elsewhere—as well as to Trade Unionists generally. Noah Tromans is chairman, and W. H. Mainwaring secretary of the Committee:—

IMMEDIATE.

(1) An increase in wages commensurate with increase in cost of living. (2) Abolition of Income Tax on wages. (3) Amendment of Compensation Pay to increase same to level of wages. This to be continued during any period of so-called light employment. To obtain security of employment after injuries. To secure the payment of a fixed pension to the dependants of any member meeting with a fatal accident. (4) Eight hours' working day for all surface craftsmen. (5) Men called from own working places to perform some other work must be guaranteed the wages of their own grade or the one taken into, whichever may be the greater. (6) The Federation to seek power to prosecute colliery companies for any breach of the Mines Act, or of any regulations governing safe working of mines. (7) To remove the restrictive clause in Mines Act limiting examination of mines to once a month, thus enabling the workers or their representatives to examine mines whenever they think fit. (8) Where workmen are rendered idle as a result of unsafe condition of mines, such workmen to be found work in other parts of the mine; failing which, the recognised minimum rates of wages to be paid them for all loss of time involved.

EDUCATIONAL.

To press for the formation of a full programme of educational activities with regard to local and district class work, as well as the Central Labour College.

AMENDMENT OF MINIMUM WAGE ACT.

(1) That the age of maturity shall be reduced from 21 to 18. (2) That the payment of the additional sum of 9d. to boys now optional should be made compulsory. (3) An all round increase in minimum rates. (4) Abolition of all restrictive qualifications regarding claims for wages.

ULTIMATE DEMANDS.

(1) Six hours' working day. (2) Five days a week.

To meet the situation arising out of demobilisation. (3) A guaranteed full week's wages. (4) Abolition of sub-contracting. (5) Abolition of piece rates.

Suggestions also to be formulated with a view to Control of Our Own Organization, and, further, the Control of Industry.

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News of the Movement

We would point out to the many correspondents who have written to us for information and advice concerning the formation of classes or branches, that they will probably find in these paragraphs various useful hints and suggestions which, probably with some modification or adaptation, may be suited to their local requirements.

Our good friend **J. GEO. BARKER** writes from Abertillery, Mon. :—" This district has always been staunch in its support of the C.L.C.—and is proud of it! We shall be more than pleased when the Only Labour College in these isles once more opens its doors to the many aspirants after a real, working-class education. In the meantime, the district (Monmouth Western Valleys) is making the best of present opportunities by linking up with the C.L.C. Evening Classes. On August 27th the following scheme was adopted by the District representatives :—

" C.L.C. Evening Classes, to be held at Abertillery, Llanhilleth, and Newbridge, from October 1st to March 31st. Subjects: Social Science, Economics, Industrial History. Classes: (1) Each class to consist of not less than ten students. (2) If average attendance be less than seven, class to be discontinued. (3) A register of attendance to be kept, and classes to appoint their own Secretary. (4) The District to appoint an Organizing Secretary, who shall report to the District Meeting every two months, if necessary. (5) Class Secretary shall work through the Organizing Secretary. (6) Travelling expenses of teachers and Organizing Secretary to be paid by District. (7) Remuneration for teachers' services to be considered at end of session. (8) Fees, one subject, 2s.; two subjects, 3s. 6d. (9) The District to receive the fees. (10) The District to pay for suitable rooms, and requisites for classes. Mr. W. J. Hewlett was appointed Organizing Secretary, and Messrs. G. Dagger and W. J. Sadler (ex-students C.L.C.) will be on the teaching staff."

This is the right sort of reply to the recommendations of the Industrial Unrest Commissioners. The remaining portion of Geo. Barker's letter is given on another page of this issue.

* * * * *

The Conference convened by the S.L.P. in conjunction with Plebs Leaguers, held in GLASGOW on Sunday, September 16th, was exceedingly successful. We have received the following report :—" Comrade T. Mitchell was in the chair, and represented at the Conference were 50 T.U. Branches, 4 Trades Councils, 34 Branches of the S.L.P., I.L.P., B.S.P., N.-C.F., Herald League, &c.; 2 District Councils, B.S.P. and S.L.P., and 15 Industrial Workers' groups and Workshop Committees. Messages were read from supporters of Independent Working-Class Education in various parts of the country. The purpose of the Conference will be sufficiently apparent from the resolutions :—

" 1.—That this Conference, realising the need for adequate independent working-class education in the subjects of Economics, History, and Philosophy, and noting the capitalistic taint in all these subjects as taught by the orthodox schools, resolves that it is necessary, in order to achieve the emancipation of the working class, to formulate and support education that will be definitely and frankly education in the foregoing subjects from the working-class point of view. That, therefore, we endorse such education as outlined in the statement laid before the Conference by Organization Committee.

" 2.—That this Conference, realising the need for a definite working-class educational platform wherein all sections of the Labour movement can unite and work together for the spread of correct economic knowledge, endorses the aims and methods of the Plebs League,* and establishes the Glasgow Branch of that organization.

* Objects and Methods of which were printed on Agenda Paper.

"3.—That this Conference set up machinery for the carrying out of the decisions of this Conference, and herewith elect a Committee to undertake the immediate task of organising Educational Classes.

"Comrade J. McCLURE, who has been associated with Marxian education for a large number of years, moved the first resolution, which was seconded in a very able speech by a delegate on the floor of the hall, and adopted unanimously.

"Comrade J. T. WALTON NEWBOLD, in moving Resolution 2, made a strong appeal for Marxian unity, and gave an outline of the work of the Plebs League, urging the need for a local branch of the 'Plebs' which would serve the double purpose of unifying all sections of the Marxian movement and providing that platform of independent working-class education so badly needed to-day. This resolution was seconded, but an amendment was moved to the effect 'that the Conference delay the step of forming a branch of the Plebs League meantime.' This amendment gave rise to strong discussion. The supporters of the amendment appeared to be against the motion for varied reasons. Chief of these was that many of the delegates had no mandate to pledge their respective organizations, and hence they wished to report back and then have a further Conference convened. Others, among whom was Comrade John MacLean (B.S.P.) objected that the Conference was not taking into account the existing Committee of the Scottish Labour College, and—apparently through misunderstanding—he feared a clash between the two organizations. It was urged by supporters of the motion that the resolution was not moved in any spirit of antagonism to the Scottish Labour College, but rather with the single view of providing that common platform whereon all existing bodies could come together and work for the object in view. On the resolution being put to the vote it was carried by 49 votes to 41.

"The third resolution, moved by Comrade A. McManus, was carried without opposition, and the Conference elected an organization committee of 14 members to carry out the decisions of the Conference. This committee is getting to work, and hopes, at an early date, to meet in conference the Committee of the Scottish Labour College, and find that common ground essential to the furtherance of the objects which both organizations share."

It is hardly necessary to add that the Plebs Executive—and Plebs Leaguers everywhere—wish the new Branch of the League every success, and earnestly hope that all workers for Independent Working Class Education in the Clyde area will find themselves able to co-operate in the campaign ahead.

EDINBURGH N.U.R.-C.L.C. Class, after hearing the report of Comrade Kilpatrick, delegate to Plebs Meet, decided to form itself into a branch of the Plebs League, and called a meeting (September 2nd) of all those interested in Independent Working-Class Education. After unanimously agreeing that a branch be formed, the meeting decided that each member, in addition to his annual subscription of 1s. to the central body, should pay 6d. per quarter for local Branch purposes. Weekly meetings (Sundays, 1 p.m., Buchanan's Hotel, High Street), were agreed upon, and a committee, with Comrade Kelly as chairman, and a "panel" of teachers elected. Jim Nixon is Secretary (see address on back page of cover) and he writes that 31 members have "paid their bobs" already. Comrade Mackenzie "conducted" the first weekly meeting, Chapter II. of *Wage-Labour and Capital* being read and discussed. It is hoped that an Economic Class will be started in Musselburgh shortly. "Our idea," says J.N., "is not the setting up of one large class, but rather the establishment of classes throughout the district, with a district committee in charge of arrangements for propaganda meetings." He invites all readers of the *Plebs* in the district to communicate with him. "The *Plebs* is going to be heard of in Labour affairs in Edinburgh" is his cheery conclusion.

A NEW TEXTBOOK FOR C.L.C. CLASSES:—Mark Starr's "OUTLINES OF INDUSTRIAL HISTORY." See page 205.

SHEFFIELD has got a class going, and Fred Shaw (of Huddersfield) is going to lecture, on Saturday evenings, on "Fundamentals of Social Evolution." "Once we get started," writes Chas. Watkins, "the movement will quickly expand and gain impetus." Good! And we hope that, since they are "sharing" their tutor, Sheffield and Huddersfield—and other towns in the vicinity—will be able to work out some scheme of district organization, which will help each class to economise in time, labour, and cash. . . . R. Peart writes that the LEEDS S.L.P. Branch are about to form a Plebs Class there, and mentions that they have already been instrumental in getting the relative merits of C.L.C. and W.E.A. discussed in the local Shop Stewards' & Workers' Committee. Comrade T. A. Jackson, a keen Marxian student, has promised his assistance, and there is every reason to be optimistic about the prospects of a good class getting going this winter.

Comrade E. Jones (59, Gainsborough Road, Wavertree) wants any LIVERPOOL readers interested in the formation of a Plebs Branch to communicate with him. Already there is the nucleus of a class, and though no teacher is at present available, we trust that work on the lines described in Mark Starr's article this month will shortly be begun.

The first annual meeting of the North of England C.L.C. League, held at NEWCASTLE, September 1st, reported "some" progress. We are not a bit aggrieved by the fact that the E.C. decided for the present, at any rate—not to change the name of the League; the principal difficulty in the way of such a change being the large number of affiliations secured from T.U. Branches, &c., and the E.C.'s feeling that a change of title would be impolitic at the moment. We know that the North of England C.L.C. League is with us and of us—absolutely—whatever its name! And while we still hope that they may see their way, at some future date, to adopt the "label" the rest of us wear, we shan't worry unduly so long as the "goods" they supply remain what they have always been. The following are the officers for the ensuing year:—*President*, Will Lawther; *Treasurer*, J. Basey (Heaton N.U.R.); *Secretary*, T. Ethell (A.S.E.). *Executive*: E. Edwards (Ashington Miners), W. Lewcock (Wallbottle I.L.P.), W. Bolton (Chopwell Miners), J. Parker (Prudhoe C.L.C.), W. Pearson (Marsden Miners), J. Stewart (Wallsend S.L.P.), J. W. Miller (Newcastle N.U.R.), and E. H. MacEwan (Wallsend A.S.E.). All good men and true!

LANARKSHIRE Miners are getting a move on—see J. D. McDougall's article elsewhere in this issue. The clause in the draft programme relating to the Union undertaking educational work will be duly noted—especially in South Wales, where, in the new draft Rules (printed in August *Plebs*), they set a fine example in this particular respect. According to *Forward*, Comrade McDougall will this winter conduct economics classes for miners in Lanarkshire every evening of the week, under the auspices of the Scottish Labour College Committee. *Forward*, by the way, recently quoted from our September issue Prof. Stanley Jevons' "frank and honest admission" in 1912, adding the pungent comment: "Other able and learned professors, teaching Boss Philosophy, Boss Economics, and Landlord and Aristocrat History, please note!"

Things are moving surely, if slowly, in LONDON. Frank Jackson has already got going Erith way, having addressed a meeting of prospective students in the A.S.E. Institute recently, and spoken (with encouraging results) at various T.U. Branches. Then, also, the Plebs Committee is in touch with the London District Council N.U.R., and it is hoped that definite arrangements for a series of classes will speedily be made. In other districts—Islington and East Ham, for example—B.S.P. comrades are well ahead with their plans, supported by I.L.P.'ers and Herald Leaguers. So that in "our benighted imperial capital," as John MacLean recently described it in the *Call*, the good work goes forward.

Correspondence

MARK STARR'S "ECONOMIC POT-POURRI."

SIR,—The impression conveyed by Mark Starr's article in September *Plebs* was that it was a strange confusion of confession, confidence, and criticism. Knowledge tinctured with humility is always a desirable quality in the student, while confidence is an asset to the critic; but when either or both of these are carried to an extreme, the result is either humorous or tragic. And this seems to be the case with Mr. Starr. He shows both great humility in admitting his incapability of criticising Gide and Rist's work properly, and confidence in expressing his opinion. He says he is unable to estimate and criticise the work properly. In our opinion, unless a task can be performed as it should be, it is best left alone. He goes on to say that "only the most piquant remarks and the most glaring mistakes" will be quoted. So he has already estimated and criticised! And if he has not done it properly, then how has he done it?

We may state that Gide and Rist's volume was purchased by the present writers on the recommendation of two well-known Plebeians, one of whom devotes himself chiefly to the study of Economics, and who thought the work worthy of a written recommendation; of which the salesman, justifiably, took full advantage. (Was the salesman right in saying that Mr. Starr himself had given the names of several probable buyers?) Mr. Starr may rest assured that if his remarks fail to render the help intended, they, when contrasted with the above recommendations, will certainly encourage the smile sardonic.

The conclusion at which he arrives as to the untrustworthiness of the literature of University Professors may be left to the works of Professors Labriola, Ferri, L. Ward, Dennis Hird, for refutation. We should also like to know what would have been the position of Marx, Engels, and others if they had not received a university training? The university has evidently left its stamp upon their literature. We think it would be hardly seriously contended by the most devout Marxist that the founder of their school of thought—the originator of their ideas and vocabulary—was a member of the working class. Mr. Starr's attitude shows more than the *Pleb's* partiality—does it not show prejudice? And his economics, it seems, are prescribed in the works of Marx, Boudin, Ablett, and previous issues of *Plebs*. However, we suppose that to be tricked into purchasing this 15s. volume would give him some insight into the "source of profits and the method of exploitation."

We hope that Mr. Starr's article, as well as our letter, will be taken "*cum grano salis*."

R.J.S.S.E.

[We will leave Mark Starr to reply to the criticisms which concern himself later; only remarking here—for the sake of such claims as the writers of this letter may make to possessing ordinary intelligence—that we hope the very "child-like and bland" remarks concerning Universities, University professors, Marx and Engels, are intended to be taken with a very big *grano salis*—ED.]

FORTHCOMING PLEBS PUBLICATIONS. See page 205.

AN I.L.P.'ER ON POLITICAL ACTION.

E. COLLINS, Hon. Sec., Hanwell, I.L.P., writes vigorously arguing *against* Political Action. "The House of Commons," he declares, "has 670 members, 38 of whom were Labour or Socialist. On the outbreak of War, 32 went straight over to their former enemies, and have since worked energetically for brute force and capitalism." Of the handful who remained true, he writes:—"Even these have attended Secret Sessions convened by Capitalism to continue the War—and yet all have written and spoken against secret diplomacy! . . . After 25 years of unselfish toil and the raising of many thousands of pounds to build up a Political Labour Party, what has it done for the workers?"

"FAKIR" OR "FAKER."

A. P. LEITE (Chelsea, S.W.) asks: "When we already have the word 'faker,' which means 'one who fakes,' why use the word 'fakir'—which I observe appears to be coming into favour in Labour circles? 'Fakir' (or 'fakeer') is derived from the Arabic word 'fakr' (poverty), and is a term applied in the East to a mendicant, although in western minds it is generally associated with an admixture of religious enthusiasm. . . ."

(To be candid, we confess we don't know why "fakir" rather than "faker" is used. The term hails from America. De Leon (*Reform or Revolution*) speaks of "Fake Movements" and "Fakirs"; here, of course, "faker" would seem to be more correct. On the other hand, he and others use the term "Labour Fakir" as more or less synonymous with "charlatan": and that is a shade of meaning often associated—in western minds—with the fakirs of the East.—E.D.)

Reviews

A NEW "RANK AND FILE" PAMPHLET

The Workers' Committee: An Outline of its Principles and Structure. By J. T. MURPHY. Price 2d. (2½d. post paid). (Orders to E. Lismer, 56, Rushdale Road, Meersbrook, Sheffield.)

This pamphlet, written by a member of the rank and file in the Engineering Industry (and therefore in the position best qualified for such a task) should be read by all those interested in the new form of organization which is gradually coming into its own—Industrial Unionism. It deals with one of the essential phases of this higher developed form of Unionism—Workers' Committees.

The author commences by breaking up the ground and preparing it for the seed which he has to sow. He refuses to play to the gallery when dealing with the question of Officialdom and the Constitution of the outworn form of Unionism lingering in our midst to-day. Instead of attacking personalities he gets to the rock-bottom of the trouble by analysing the organism; and having discovered the disease from which we are suffering, he prescribes the remedy under the following headings:—The Workshop Committee, Local Industrial Committees, Works' or Plant Committees, Local Workers' Committees, National Industrial Committees, and National Workers' Committee. Each of these he deals with in detail, explaining its particular func-

tion and the necessary interlinking ; and he takes great pains to avoid overlapping, so that no one interferes with any of the rest in its operations. As an initial pamphlet on this important subject this can be strongly recommended. One of its best features is that it is written in a style such as one worker would use in conversation with another in the shop.

In conclusion, I would point out the danger of accepting Workers' Committees as ends in themselves. While the work of forming and establishing them is proceeding, we must at the same time continue to press within our branches for the abolition of our decrepit and burdensome forms of organization. We must persist in propagating the theory of Amalgamation both in the branch and the workshop, and refuse to cease until our object is attained. Industrial Unionism is the only form of Unionism that will offer to the workers, as a class, the means whereby their future will be secure, and every channel and every opportunity must be taken advantage of to achieve that end. At the same time we must safeguard ourselves against the snares and traps placed in our way by employers and Government officials ; labels are cheap and can be made attractive, but there are many shoddy goods tied to a nice-looking label. This pamphlet, at any rate, is the " real goods." Don't miss it.

FRANK JACKSON.

Publications Received

Fabian Research Department Trade Union Survey. Souvenir presented to Delegates at T.U. Congress, 1917. (25, Tothill Street, Westminster, S.W. 1) Price 1s.)

Contains interesting diagrams, charts, etc., including a coloured one in which all the statistical facts concerning T.U. organization in the Mining Industry are condensed into a (somewhat complicated) sort of Catharine wheel. A bit dear at 1s., perhaps, but presumably only a limited number are available.

The Royal Road to Emancipation. By E. L. Pratt. *The Revolutionary I.W.W.* By G. H. Perry. *Constructive Programme of the I.W.W.* By B. H. Williams. (Industrial Workers of the World, 29, Theobald's Road, W.C. 1. 1d. each.)

The latest Guilds League publication, *Observations on the Interim Report of the Reconstruction Committee on Joint Standing Industrial Councils i.e., the Whitley Report* is a novelty in pamphlets. It is an elaborate "parody" —in size, type, arrangement, and every other detail, down to the number in the bottom left-hand corner of the front page—of a Government Report ; with Dyson's little drawing of Labour looking up for inspiration (to the N.G.L. ?) in place of the royal arms on the cover. The criticisms of the Whitley proposals are sound and outspoken. (From N.G.L., 17, Acacia Road, London, N.W. 8. 1d.)

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