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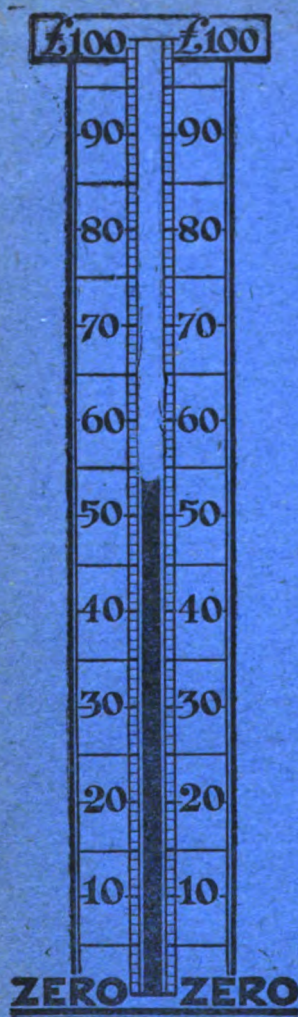
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**PLEBS**  
MAGAZINE



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This Month, **PLEASE!**

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# THE PLEBS MAGAZINE

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

Vol. VIII

April, 1916

No. 3

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## What to Read First

The recommendations and suggestions contained in Mr. Cuthbert's interesting article are, of course, the outcome of his own personal experience—and predilections. Some of our readers may disagree with him on certain points, and we hope to receive criticisms of his article from conscientious objectors to any of his rulings.

"**W**HAT books shall I read first?" This is almost invariably the first question asked by the working-class student. Time for study and money for books are alike so strictly limited, that it is of the utmost importance that the answer to this question should be carefully considered. The books that the worker should read are those which will best equip his mind for the struggle between labour and capital. How does the master-class obtain rent, interest, and profits? Why do prices rise and (some times!) fall? Why is a man paid, say 30/- a week, and not 15/- or 80/-? These are some of the problems that wage earners would do well to solve, before applying their minds to the study of poor law reform, astronomy or co-operation. It is nothing less than a tragedy to witness so many well

intentioned workers wasting their brief leisure and even scantier earnings upon efforts to acquire knowledge that cannot lead either directly or indirectly to their emancipation. In order to be free, the working class must understand society and their relation to it. Let us, then, aim first at acquiring this understanding of our social conditions. "Liberty first and culture afterwards!" should be the students' motto.

He must then lay the foundation of all his subsequent work, by trying to realize something of the meaning of the term evolution. The fact must be grasped that throughout the universe, from ether to capitalism, "nothing is, everything is becoming." The more thoroughly he lays hold of this idea, and the more frequently he proves how true it is by examples taken from the world around him, the better will he be able to understand economics and sociology. There are now, happily, a variety of cheap, illustrated books dealing with evolution in a general way, from among which the student may safely select Clodd's *Story of Creation* and McCabe's *Evolution: From Nebula to Man*.<sup>\*</sup> McCabe's *Prehistoric Man* is not only an interesting sequel to his *Evolution*, but forms an excellent introduction to the study of sociology. A careful perusal of Engels' *Origin of the Family*, makes a suitable completion to this preliminary course of reading.

Our student is now in possession of a number of important facts. He will have realized that not only is evolution a principle of universal application, but the most prominent fact of history is the division of society into a series of class struggles. He will have noticed, too, that technical development is the indicator of social progress. In view of the deplorable confusion of ideas which exists respecting Marxism and Darwinism, it is essential that the distinctions and relations of organic and social evolution should be thoroughly grasped. Anton Pannekoek's *Marxism and Darwinism* should be studied at this stage, together with *Evolution: Social and Organic* by A. M. Lewis. Dennis Hird's *Easy Outline of Evolution* is not only a delightful book to read, but contains perhaps, the simplest and most interesting account of the evolution of man that has ever been written. It should, however, be now supplemented by *Evolution* (Geddes & Thomson).

Continuing his studies, the student may now commence his work on the Marxian theories, and for this purpose he cannot do better than begin with Cohen's *Socialism for Students*. This little book is a positive *multum in parvo* of Marxism, and should be read by every Socialist. *Vital Problems in Social Evolution* (Lewis) should be read in conjunction with Cohen's book. There are two books which may almost be termed classics of Socialist literature: Boudin's

<sup>\*</sup> Prices and publishers of the books recommended are given at the end of this article.

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*Theoretical System of Karl Marx*, and Untermann's *Marxian Economics*. Boudin deals most effectively with practically every objection (and their name is truly legion!) raised against Marx's teaching. He also summarises the theories of "value" and "surplus value" in a manner unequalled elsewhere. The reader who has made a thorough study of these two books, will find that his reading of *Capital* itself has been robbed of half its terrors. The two well-known pamphlets of Marx, *Wage Labour and Capital*, and *Value, Price and Profit*, may now be studied with advantage.

It is obvious that this book list might be very much extended, and several striking omissions will at once occur to the more experienced student. Moreover, in compiling a list of this kind, no two writers, probably, would include exactly the same books. However, I think it can be safely claimed that the student who has intelligently read these works, will probably have a clearer idea of Marx's teachings than would have been the case if he had begun his studies with *Capital*, or with an attempt to assimilate the mass of philosophic generalisations contained in Engels' excellent work *Socialism: from Utopia to Science*. This latter book presupposes considerable preliminary study in philosophy and history. Similarly, Dietzgen and Labriola find no place in my list. Important and valuable as the writings of these two authors are, they are *not* books for the beginner.

When this list has been exhausted, the student will have to decide what branch of the subject he will then take up. Broadly speaking, Marxism, while forming a complete whole, may be studied under three separate aspects: Economics, Industrial History, and Philosophy. It is advisable to study that division of the subject that appeals most to one's taste, but at this stage the student would do well to take up a correspondence course with the C. L. C. in one or more of the subjects named. He will then obtain expert guidance in his reading, as well as most valuable help in the shape of criticisms of his essays—and all for the nominal charge of a shilling per month for each subject. Proletarians will find a lean purse and a slender wage no bar to knowledge.

But the purchasing of a number of books, and a mere hasty or superficial reading of them is worse than useless. A course of serious study presupposes, not a reader, but a *student*. The task of acquiring an education—in the right sense of that much-abused word—is the most serious business to which a man can address himself. It certainly will not be accomplished by desultory reading of half-understood works taken up at odd times, and opened again—six months later. The habit of systematic study should be formed. It is far better to study thoroughly a small portion of a text-book for half-an-hour each day, or even less, than to read aimlessly for two hours at a stretch once or twice a week. Draw up a timetable. At first, begin with only one book at a time. After the

first month study two alternative works every other day. Always study with a note-book, pencil, and as good a dictionary as you can procure. Do not read too fast, but revise previous readings from time to time, in order to thoroughly familiarise yourself with the subject. "Hasten slowly" is an excellent maxim. But whilst "study for study's sake," and the gratification of the personal desire for knowledge are in themselves, in many cases, sufficient inducements to make a man study, yet the proletarian student must never lose sight of the great object for which he is training himself. It is for no mere selfish wish to "improve his mind," or rise out of his class, that the worker devotes time to gaining a knowledge of sociology. His objective is the ultimate emancipation of his class from wage slavery. And the way to Liberty is through Understanding.

H. WYNN-CUTHBERT.

The following is a complete list of the books named above, with author, publishers, and price, inclusive of postage.

*Story of Creation.* E. Clodd. (9d. Rationalist Press Association.)

*Evolution: From Nebula to Man.* J. McCabe. (1/3 Milner & Co.)

*Prehistoric Man.* J. McCabe (1/3 Milner & Co.)

*Evolution Social and Organic.* A. M. Lewis. 1/7\*

*Easy Outline of Evolution.* Dennis Hird. 9d.\*

*Origin of the Family.* Engels. 1/7\*

*Marxism and Darwinism.* A. Pannekoek. 4d.\*

*Evolution.* Geddes and Thomson. (1/3. Home University Library, from any bookseller.)

*Socialism for Students.* J. Cohen. 1/7\*

*Vital Problems in Social Evolution.* A. M. Lewis. 1/7\*

*Theoretical System of Karl Marx.* Boudin. 2/9\*

*Marxian Economics.* E. Untermann. 2/9\*

*Wage Labour and Capital.* Marx. 13d.\*

*Value Price and Profit.* Marx. 4d.\*

*Chambers' Twentieth Century Dictionary.* (From any Bookseller, 2/8.)

(Books marked by an asterisk are obtainable from the Sec. Plebs League, 13 Penwern Road, Earls Court, S.W.)

## The Proposed Railway Conciliation Scheme

TEN years ago—in 1906-7—there was a national agitation among railwaymen for improved conditions of service. To prevent this agitation culminating in a stoppage of work, the politicians stepped in, and the setting-up of a scheme of Conciliation Boards was suggested. The scheme was adopted and covered most railways, the few exceptions including the N. E. Railway. From the men's point of view it proved unsatis-

factory, and the grievances which piled up resulted in the upheaval of August, 1911. That strike was called off largely as a result—again—of the intervention of the politicians, with their promise of an immediate Royal Commission. The Commission sat, heard evidence, and reported; and their report, with a few alterations, was adopted. By it, the 1907 Conciliation Scheme was amended, and this amended scheme has been on trial since 1911. The men have not been satisfied, and agitation against it proceeded apace until the war broke out. Now, a proposed new scheme is to be submitted to a Special General Meeting of the N. U. R. on March 30-31. This scheme has been evolved after much discussion between representatives of the Unions and the Railway General Managers' Committee. It is really the old scheme slightly amended.

The purpose of conciliation schemes in general is to dissipate the fighting energy of a Trade Union. This is accomplished in various ways, and the ways of the new scheme are pretty much those of the old one. A series of stages are laid down through which demands for improved conditions, &c., must travel. Each stage means delay, until the final stage is reached, at which an outsider is called in with power to settle. That is one process. The other is to have all demands dealt with by sectional machinery, thus making it possible for agreements to be arranged terminating at varying dates for the various sections, and thereby making it difficult for all sections to act in unison.

If the new scheme is examined, it will be seen that these processes are clearly exemplified in it. It has, moreover, the further defect that *it does not include all grades*, but leaves some outside. These latter, it may be argued, are left free to act, but, being thus sectionalized, their position is too weak to be of much avail. Quite naturally, these grades agitate to be included in the same machinery as the other grades, on the principle of all sinking or swimming together.

Questions of management and discipline are excluded from the new scheme, but will be dealt with, we are told, as part of the ordinary administration of the Company. The method of procedure under the old scheme was by way of (1) petition, (2) deputation, (3) Conciliation Board, and (4) independent chairman. Under the new scheme the first three stages remain the same; the last being altered to (4) two assessors, and (5) umpire. The Trade Union official comes in a little more, and the independent chairman appears again under the *nom de guerre* of 'umpire' ("a rose by any other name," &c., &c.). The two assessors are chosen one from either side, and the men's representative *may* be a T. U. official. Failing a settlement by the Conciliation Board, the assessors can meet and decide the point. This is giving the T. U. official power to settle without reference to the men for whom he is acting,

and appears to the writer to be a very dangerous precedent. Further, unionists and non-unionists alike have a vote and voice in the selection and election of the representatives on the Boards. One would have thought that the Unions would have stood out for the complete control of one side of the machinery in their own hands.

Apart from the tedious methods of the scheme, what will be the position of the railwaymen, if it is adopted, when they desire to put forward a national programme for shorter hours and higher wages? The companies will argue that the proper machinery for dealing with such matters is the conciliation scheme. The programme will perforce be turned over to be dealt with by that machinery, and will at once lose its national character. The men would have to negotiate in as many separate sections as there were separate conciliation boards. And so long as such methods are adopted, the strength of the Union will be to a large extent vitiated.

But, we shall be asked by those who assert that negotiative machinery is necessary, what is the alternative? *If* such machinery is necessary, then the alternative to unsatisfactory machinery is to set up machinery which follows logically from the accepted basis of the organization. Such machinery should aim above all else at eliminating all possibility of sectional settlements. Why should not this machinery be the machinery of the Union itself? Why should there not be absolute and complete recognition of the Union, from bottom to top? Why should not the Head Office be recognized by the head-quarters of every company? Why should not the branches and their officials and the district organizing secretaries be recognized by the companies? Why should not all national negotiations be conducted by the Executive Committee, and all national settlements be sanctioned only by Annual (or Special) General Meetings? Why should not a composite standing board of Union representatives be elected by the Union members on each railway to deal with all matters local and peculiar to that railway; while the branches deal with all matters local and peculiar to their respective centres—each branch and each board of representatives having the support of the whole organization? In all cases where a member is fined, suspended, reduced, or dismissed, it should be possible for the branch officials or the organizing secretary to demand an interview and investigation with the company's officials responsible.

A strong Union like the N. U. R. needs above all else to see that its strength is not frittered away by negotiative machinery which is not in keeping with the basic principle of the organization. Moreover, in the opinion of the present writer, it is quite powerful enough to establish methods consistent with its form and structure.

G. W. B.



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## The Function and Structure of the Railway Union

**I**N organizing themselves into the National Union of Railwaymen, and establishing their union upon an industrial basis, the railway workers were the first body of men in this country to give practical realization to the theory of Industrial Unionism. This realization, however, has up to the present been far from complete, and has applied more to the structural than to the functional side of the organization. The framework has been strong, but the spirit animating it has been weak. This may partly be due to the fact that at the time of its inauguration the N. U. R. had to take upon itself the Sectional Conciliation Boards and other obsolete lumber belonging to the superseded forms of sectional unionism. Moreover, it has to be recognised that so far many of the leading officials as well as the great mass of railwaymen, have failed to rise to a full conception of all that is implied in the changed form of organization.

Nevertheless, the war, which has changed so many things, has temporarily at least, produced a welcome change in the practice of negotiations between the Union and the railway companies, and has brought it more into conformity with modern needs and conditions. Governmental control of the railways, however unreal in many respects, did, at least, perform the useful service of bringing all the various railway managements under one nominal head. When, therefore, it became necessary, in consequence of the rapid rise in prices, to negotiate a new wage-agreement, the Executive of the N. U. R., acting for the whole body of railway workers, was able to approach the railway companies as a whole.

Whatever the limitations and demerits of the war-bonus, it had at least this great advantage, that it was a uniform concession to all grades in the railway service. However inadequate to meet the special circumstances, it nevertheless represented the most comprehensive wage-settlement in the railway history of this country. Compared, too, with the tedious and protracted process of negotiations through the sectional Conciliation Boards, it marked a welcome change. It had the additional merit of being one unified agreement, covering the same period for all sections of workers. In the past the practice has been to have as many agreements as there were sectional boards, each one of which terminated at a different date, thus making a general movement perpetually impracticable. Small wonder if the companies are anxious to prevent the war-bonus precedent from becoming the established practice. Already they have submitted their proposals for new machinery for the conduct of negotiations when the war-bonus ceases.

As another writer in this month's *Plebs* is subjecting this new scheme to a critical scrutiny, I need only remark that it has all the defects of the old, and has been devised for the same purpose, i.e., to keep the workers separated as much as possible in their respective sectional units, and thus make common, united action as difficult and occasional as possible.

Before, however, this new scheme can become operative it has to receive the endorsement of the sixty delegates elected to the last A. G. M. While we cannot anticipate their decision, we may at least hope that they will prove themselves capable of judging the question from the view-point of Industrial Unionism, which is now our accepted principle of organization, rather than from the old sectional Trade Union point of view. That the majority of our Executive, including our leading officials, have failed to raise themselves to this new view-point seems unfortunately only too-well established by the fact that they appear to have accepted, tentatively at least, the draft of the new scheme. Let us hope the delegates will realize the inconsistency as well as futility of attempting to build up on the one hand a compact industrial organization by eliminating the remaining vestiges of sectionalism, while on the other hand, they accept machinery and agree to a policy whose whole purpose is an absolute violation of the very principle on which such an organization is based.

Further, in any commitments of this character we are in honour bound to consider what their effects may be upon our relations with the Miners and Transport Workers who, with the Railwaymen, are now closely associated in the Triple Alliance. It was generally understood when the final ratification of this new consolidation of forces took place, that the principal reason for hurrying the plans forward was the common emergency which would be created for all three sections immediately the war-bonus agreements expired. That being so, it surely is not the desire or intention of the railwaymen's delegates to commit their organization to a policy which in its operations is going to paralyse in advance the activities of railwaymen in fulfilling their responsibilities toward the Triple Alliance. I appeal to railwaymen to face the situation. According to existing arrangements they are to be deprived of their five-shilling-a-week war-bonus as soon as the contract between the Government and the railway companies ceases. The only provision made is the companies' promise that they will agree to the setting up of new machinery at the end of the war to negotiate a new wage-settlement, and that any concessions made shall be retrospective to the date of the expiration of the war-bonus. If it required the pressure of a compact consolidated organization to obtain the 5/- war-bonus at a time when the railwaymen's position was an exceptionally strong one, it will require an even greater exercise of organized power to obtain an equivalent under the conditions likely to prevail when the war ceases.

Instead of allowing themselves to be committed to a scheme of operations which will inevitably lead to the disintegration and diffusion of their forces, let the railwaymen consider ways and means of consolidating their forces with those of the other joint-partners in the Alliance. Let them immediately initiate a movement for a war council with their other two allies for the purpose of formulating their strategic plans, tactics and programmes for the struggle which is inevitable as soon as peace breaks out. If the three sections in the Alliance could agree to a simple and common programme, say, of a general eight-hour day for all workers in these three industries, and a minimum wage of £2 a week, it would provide a rallying-cry which would unite all sections and help to place the Alliance on a firm and permanent basis. With this programme realized, a good starting point would be reached for aspiring to the much more ambitious project of obtaining organized control by the workers of the industries which they operate.

Whatever the destructive effects of the war, one positive effect is bound to be a tremendous impetus to mechanical development and industrial consolidation. By a full appreciation of these tendencies and by a sensible adaptation of organization to meet and take full advantage of them, the workers in the Triple Alliance will be able not only to counteract the adverse effects which otherwise must accrue to themselves, but they may also hasten the day when nationally and internationally the working class will be in a position to fulfil its historic mission of making itself the sole arbiter of its own destiny and of that of mankind in general.

C. WATKINS.

## The Labour Leader of To-Morrow

We reprint the following extracts from an article which appeared under the above title in the *Nation*, Oct. 2nd, 1915; an article which, as we think our readers will agree, is of especial interest to everyone interested in genuine working-class education.

ONLY yesterday Mr. Keir Hardie seemed to great numbers of his fellow-countrymen to personify the spirit of revolution, and yet for some time before his death he was identified, in the eyes of a great many of his fellow workmen, with a phase of politics that was already antiquated. To say this is not to disparage his services to democracy; it is merely to record a change in the ideas and the outlook of democracy. It may, indeed, be questioned whether Mr. Keir Hardie was primarily a working-class leader. A working-class leader is a man who is conscious, first

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of all, of the grievances of the working classes, who makes some definite project for their benefit his principal aim. Mr. Keir Hardie probably felt more deeply on grievances of race or on grievances of sex than on grievances of class. He was a chivalrous and intrepid friend of causes that appealed to men and women of generous sympathies, whatever their class; his imagination took fire over the wrongs of women at home, or of India or Egypt, or of the subject races in the Empire, and he probably spoke more often in the House of Commons on such topics than on questions affecting immediately labour prospects or labour aspirations. The presence of such a man in the House of Commons is of the greatest value, and public life is sensibly the poorer for the loss of his courage, his integrity, his independence, and his contempt for the subtrefuges and accommodations of the Parliamentary system. But it is not so much a working-class leader as a stern uncompromising Radical critic that the nation mourns in him. The Independent Labour Party became less independent after 1906; but independence was the essence of Mr. Keir Hardie's character, and wherever the existing order inflicted injustice he remained to the last its assailant, never lacking in courage, though not always happy or wise in his methods.

The Independent Labour Party represented a reaction against the earlier phase of the labour movement. A number of causes, arising partly from religious associations, had combined to make the few working men who contrived to reach the House of Commons members of the Liberal party. That party, as a party represented in Parliament by great capitalists and manufacturers, stood for interests on which, in one sense, the advanced leaders of the working classes declared war. On the other hand it represented in local life, in contrast with the opposite party, the religious and social atmosphere of great numbers of working men. The Radical working man, like other people, got drawn further and further into the party system, and the Independent Labour Party was the manifestation of the discontent which this process excited. It did not stand for any revolutionary conception of the State: it accepted the general theory of collectivism, denounced the evils and injustices apparent in society, and found the remedy in a Labour Party, independent of both existing parties, and enforcing its own will on the House of Commons. So far as it preached the repudiation of the old individualist tradition, which had had in its day no less vigorous a life in the minds of working-class thinkers than elsewhere, it preached a new doctrine; but that doctrine had already begun to permeate politics, and it was in the air before the Independent Labour Party reached the House of Commons. For the rest, the I.L.P. looked more like a new Radical Party

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**Did YOU send us anything last Month ?**

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than anything else ; the speeches of its members were largely the exposition of ideas that all Radicals preached when their party was not in power, and they denounced abuses and extravagance in the spirit of the independent Radicals of the past. . . .

But the eclipse of the I.L.P. was not merely to be attributed to this process. The explanation is to be found, too, in discontent with its ideals. The working-class thinkers had expected a great deal from Parliament, and they had many disappointments. Those disappointments were reflected in the strikes and agitations of 1911 and 1912 ; the resort by great bodies of workpeople to the sympathetic strike, the attack on the imagination, the attempt to make employers, over whom a Radical Government, supported by a Labour Party, seemed to exercise little influence, treat their men with consideration from fear of a general revolt. The Labour Party mistrusted this spirit, thinking that it meant exchanging the tactics of an army for the tactics of a mob, that it accustomed men to trust to bursts of violence, and to successes which look brilliant at the moment, but demoralize and exhaust the working-class forces in the long run. There was justice in this criticism but it missed one essential truth about the new movement. The Syndicalists made a mistake in thinking they could do without Parliament ; men like Mr. Ramsay Macdonald and Mr. Snowden made a mistake in thinking that everything could be done through Parliament. For this spirit of discontent, and this impatience of Parliament, arose largely from the desire of working men for something more than the Independent Labour Party has ever offered them. They do not want merely the bureaucratic State ; they want a new status ; a place in the sun. And the true means to their end is to be found in the successful reconstruction of trade unionism as an element in the life and government of society.

In this sense, the Labour Leader of to-morrow is the man who will go outside Parliament, who will not merely manipulate votes, or lead a party in the House of Commons, but will find some way of revitalizing the whole labour movement ; concentrating and deploying its scattered forces, seizing its different and several aspects and energies. The problem before labour statesmanship is analogous to the problem that was solved by Applegarth, Odger, and the other members of the Cabinet of the trade union movement, as Mr. and Mrs. Webb called them half a century ago. By their skill and energy they saved the principle of trade unionism. What is wanted to-day is another such Cabinet.

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**It not, SEND NOW.**

## The Point of View of the Railway Clerk

WE hear a good deal as to why the A. S. L. E. & F. should amalgamate with the N. U. R., but the position of the other railway craft-union, the Railway Clerks' Association, is less often discussed.

What is the history of this clerical union which confines itself to the limits of a single industry? In the early nineties the A.S.R.S. made a special effort to get clerks to join their union, but were not very successful. The R. C. A. was started in 1897, because the A. S. R. S. in that year, when contesting the matter with Sir George Gibb (N. E. Rly.) gave up its claim to represent the clerical staff; Mr. Bell accepted Sir Geo. Gibb's dictum that whilst the companies would not tolerate their clerks being in the same union with the operative grades, there would be no objection to the clerical staff having a separate union of their own. The R. C. A. membership is confined to station masters and clerks. In December, 1915, it numbered 259 branches, with 42,650 members out of 85,001 eligibles. Its motto is "Defence, not Defiance," and it endeavours to gain its ends by "indisputable argument, moral persuasion, and parliamentary action."

After sixteen years of craft organization, according to the last Board of Trade returns, the average wage of station-masters and station-clerks on British railways for 1913 was 34/-, or 4d. increase over 1912. No one can say that their conditions of service are Utopian, yet Mr. Walkden, the R. C. A. General Secretary, recently stated in London that the railways were hardening in their attitude towards the R. C. A., and that it was now almost impossible to wring concessions from them. It was necessary, he said, to increase the subscription from 1/- per month to 6d. per week, to enable the Association to take up a more advanced policy. At present the funds only averaged 5/- per member.

Apparently the powers that be have a lurking suspicion that all is not well with the craft basis of the R. C. A., for frequently the members are urged to consider federation with other clerical unions, although the fact must be plain to the most superficial thinker that the interests of the railway clerks are identical with those of the outdoor staff, and not with Civil Service, Post Office, and commercial clerks. Accordingly many clerks advocate fusion with the N. U. R.

Now the N. U. R. has been a good friend to the R. C. A., which depends on the N. U. R.'s Parliamentary representatives to ventilate grievances in the House. Messrs. Wardle, Thomas, and Hudson came to the rescue over the N. E. clerks' victimization case, the G. E. directors' refusal to see deputations from the clerical staff, and the recent treatment of G. C. girl clerks, as well as in several cases of less importance. In fact, if the companies are

obdurate on any question the R. C. A. has to turn to the N. U. R.

But when amalgamation is put forward one hears weird and wonderful objections. The companies, it is urged, will not negotiate with the N. U. R. in respect to clerks, nor pay any regard to representations made to them by that union affecting the salaried staff; the N. U. R., we are told, does not claim to represent clerks, and the companies prefer the clerks in a separate organization. Now anyone can see why the companies do not negotiate with the N. U. R. over clerks—the clerks not being in that society, but in the R. C. A., and excluded from the Conciliation Boards as well. For the same reason the N. U. R. does not claim to represent clerks at present. As for the companies' objection to fusion, if we are to allow them to decide what union a man should join, and how that organization shall shape its policy, they will very soon prohibit a man joining any union at all.

Then we are told that there is nothing in common between the operative and clerical grades. This is pure snobbishness; both are wage-slaves selling their labour power. Sub-division of labour has brought about the various grades of shunters, guards, and clerks; all alike are exploited by one group of capitalists. There is a difference, certainly; the out-door men get extra pay for overtime and Sundays, whilst the salaried staff are extremely lucky if they get their ordinary rate paid them for extra hours. We have all heard the wail of the station-master who works all day Sunday for nothing, whilst his signalmen get 7/6.

Lastly, we get that old objection, that the clerks would be outnumbered, out-voted, and lost in the N. U. R.; the lower-paid men would ignore the clerks' programme, and it would be side-tracked. These objections have been discussed so often as between the N. U. R. and A. S. L. E. & F., that it is unnecessary to go over the ground again. The pros. and cons. are familiar to every industrial unionist. It is probably a waste of time, also, to point out to the craft unionists of the R. C. A. that their work is fast becoming unskilled, by reason of simplified working of accounts, scale boards, and books of charges, &c.; work which was previously intricate and done by experienced men now being done by girls at 14/- per week, or by Belgian refugees. If the R. C. A. find it difficult to get any concessions from the railways, how do they expect to realize their Programme of £150 per annum at thirty-seven years of age, and a forty-two hours' week?

As a member of the R. C. A., I believe amalgamation with the N. U. R. is inevitable, unless we are to be content with humbly asking the companies to extend any concession the N. U. R. may gain for the uniform men to include us as well—as was the case with the War Bonus.

E. M. NEWHOUSE.

## “Dilution” and Craft Unionism

The following letter appeared in the *New Statesman* of Feb. 5th. We reprint it as it emphasizes a point of particular interest to all *Plebs* readers, and hereby invite further correspondence on the subject.

Sir,—Is it not time that more general attention was paid to some of the issues involved in the far-reaching dilution of skilled labour which is now taking place in the engineering trade throughout the country? For months past the old demarcation rules have in one shop after the other been set aside on munitions work, and now a galaxy of Commissioners have been sent to speed up the process on the Clyde and Tyne.

One interesting issue of this revolution is its effect on the battle which since 1911 has been joined between the old craft unionism of 19th-century England and the new unionism of the 20th century. The latter form of combination in its fear of giving itself a bad name never got itself labelled satisfactorily, but I will ignore the protests of the precisians and call it industrial unionism. It has proved to be an uphill struggle for the new ideas, but in the years before the war the followers of the activist school seemed to be making steady progress against the bearded and mutually insured unionists. Whether in trade disputes or in internal politics the dignity and official strategy of the craft unionists suffered many rude shocks and their courageous efforts to conceal their alarm have never been very convincing.

The whirligig of war has swept into this field, and now a strange thing called “dilution” (coined surely by some Government official with a Balfour mind) has been dropped bomblike among the combatants. Which side will it injure most? At first both sections joined issue against it. So typical an employers' move was not to be tolerated. Nevertheless, the scheme made progress under a mixture of Ministerial coaxing, coercion, and a genuine appreciation of the shortage of skilled labour for munitions manufacture. Safeguards were, of course, demanded, and Schedule 2 of the Munitions Act, with its attendant circulars, were spelled over with darkest suspicion by the executive councils of the craft unions. Dilution was clearly an evil which the A. S. E. intended to keep well in hand.

What of the other party? Until Xmas most of us thought that the industrial unionists, especially on Clydebank, would die in the last trench rather than agree to this Govt.-cum-employer plot. But there were some surprising sentiments to be found among the Clyde Workers' Committee during the lurid visit of the Minister of Munitions to Glasgow. It was not his petition for dilution which wrecked Mr. Lloyd George's Xmas meeting, it was Section 9 of the Munitions Act and all the rest of his coercive programme. Thanks to *Forward*, we know that the Clyde workers refused to condemn the introduction of low-skilled workers on to operations previously reserved as the sacred right of the A. S. E. man. They declared that they welcomed this progressive evolution of industry. It is true that they did not exactly fawn on the Minister at the time. They took a heaven-sent opportunity of showing him what they thought of the Munitions of War Act, of himself, and of the capitalist system in general. They revealed a hostility to things as they



are which may, I think, at any moment involve the whole Clyde area in a state of violence. Yet they were careful not to oppose dilution as such. They welcomed it. Not even free trips to the trenches could extort such a confession from the A. S. E., which depends so much on craft privilege. . . . Now I am not in the confidence of the ardent young theorists who lead the Clyde workers, but is it not a fact that, strike or no strike, a full and overflowing measure of dilution may be for them a step in the right direction—an accident of war which is much to the taste of men who have found themselves growing day by day more hostile to the ideals and strategy of the craft unions? In their view demarcation squabbles never have and never will cut any ice, and the low-skilled men and the women now being introduced are likely to prove at least as good material for their propaganda as the men they have displaced.

I know, and they know, the risks they run when peace breaks out, especially the risk of a collapse of the war boom: though it is at least possible that after the war the engineering industry will be as busy as ever. In any event we may yet see the restoration of pre-war restrictions, as provided by law, violently opposed by the new blood with which the industry will have been flooded. How happy the Government would be to be relieved of this formidable pledge to which they committed themselves in the Munitions Act!

Yours, etc., "JANUS."

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## A Prophecy by Engels

The following passage from Engel's *Einleitung zu Borkheims Mordspatrioten* (1887) is translated by the *New York Call* from the *Neue Zeit*.

"And finally no other war will be possible for Prussia (Germany) but a world war, a war so extensive and frightful as has hitherto been unthought of. Eight to ten million soldiers will murder one another, and incidentally devour Europe like a swarm of locusts. The devastations of the Thirty Years' War pressed together into three or four years, and spread over the entire Continent. Famine, epidemics, a partial return to savagery on the part of the armies and the masses of the people, brought about by acute suffering: demoralisation of trade, industry, and credit, ending in general bankruptcy. An absolute impossibility to predict how it will all end, and who will be the victor. One thing is absolutely certain,—general exhaustion and the bringing about of the conditions which will be necessary for the final victory of the working class. This is what must be looked for when the system of competitive armament will have borne its inevitable fruit. To this pass, princes and statesmen, you have brought Europe, and if nothing else is left to you but to start the last great war-dance, we may as well be satisfied with it. The war may perhaps force us (i.e., the Socialists) into the background for the moment, may even take from us many a position we had conquered, but if you loose the forces which you are afterwards unable to control, things may as well go as they will."

## Outlines of Political Economy

*STUDY OUTLINE No. 19.—TIME AND PIECE-WAGES. &c.—TIME-WAGES* :—What the labourer sells is his labour-power. What he receives as a result of the sale, viz. wages, represent the value of his labour-power. The capitalist buys this labour-power for a definite time, e.g., a day or a week of so many hours. For that given length of time he realizes the use-value of labour-power. This use-value consists in the function of labour-power—labour—through which function value is both preserved and created.

Hence it is that, what is in reality, the value or price of labour-power assumes a *form* in which it *appears* as the value or price of so many hours labour. Wages are presented under the form of Time-wages—a payment for the labour expended over a given time.

Viewed in this *apparent form*, the price paid for the labour of the hour is ascertained by dividing the daily value of labour-power by the number of hours contained in the working-day. If the daily value of labour-power be 3s. and the length of the working-day 12 hours, the price of the hour's labour is 3d. The latter thus serves as the unit measure of time-wages.

The following laws can now be formulated :—

Given the length of the working-day, the daily wages depend on the price of labour. Given the price of labour, the daily wages depend on the length of the working-day. Hence, wages may remain the same while the price of labour rises or falls, as when the duration of the working-day is shortened or lengthened. On the other hand, wages may rise while the price of labour remains the same, or even falls, as when the duration of the working-day is lengthened. Extension of the working day, however, involves increased wear and tear of labour-power : if the rise in wages does not suffice to adequately compensate for this increased wear and tear, labour-power will still be paid below its value, the rise in wages notwithstanding.

Where employment is irregular, i.e., when the labourer is not employed for the normal working-day but only for a fraction of same, then the basis for the calculation of the time-wage becomes meaningless ; the capitalist can continue to exploit the labourer without paying him sufficient to normally reproduce himself. This case must not be confounded with a general reduction of the working-day where, if the daily wage remained the same as before the reduction, the price of labour would rise.

Where the working-day is extended beyond the normal duration, the extra hours are denominated "over-time" and the price per extra hour is advanced. The extra hours, however, yield unpaid labour just as do the ordinary hours. *A low price of labour stimulate the extension of the duration of the working-day.* The extension of the working-day, on the other hand, reacts back upon the price of labour and causes it to fall, through the increased competition due to one man doing the work of two. The fall in the price of labour again leads to prolongation of working-day.

In consequence of the growth in the amount of unpaid labour to be disposed of, competition increases among the capitalists, who strive to under-

sell one another. The fall of prices, brought about in this way, leads to a squeezing down of the wages of the workers engaged in these industries.

**PIECE-WAGES** :—Just as time-wages express the value of labour-power in the form of the price of a certain duration of labour, so *piece-wages* is the form under which the price of a certain duration of labour *appears as the price of a given piece of work*. These forms, under which the value of labour-power appears modified, in no way subtract from the real nature of wages.

The form of piece-wages, even more than that of time-wages, gives to wages the illusory semblance of being a payment for work done. The wages rise with the number of pieces turned out. The division between paid and unpaid labour is concealed. In reality, however, each piece is only partly paid for.

“In time wages, the labour is measured directly by its duration, in piece-wages, it is measured by the quantity of products in which it embodies itself in a given time.”

The following special features characterise the piece-form of wages, and show it in a light most favourable to capitalism :—

(1).—The labour must be of average quality in order to qualify for the fixed piece-price, and the quality of the labour is measured by the quality of the product. Hence result all the pretexts for deductions from the labourer's wages, on the alleged ground that the products, turned out by him, are short of the average perfection. This, therefore, is for the capitalist a source of extra-profit.

(2).—Piece-wages serve to measure the intensity of labour and to raise the standard of intensification.

(3).—The stimulus to produce as much as possible and of the required quality, which follows from the form of piece wages, tends to do away with the function of superintending the labourer. This fact favours also the sweating system, and the profits, therefore, of those parasites who come between the capitalist and the domestic worker, and pocket the difference between what they receive from the capitalist buyer, for the products, and what they pay to the sweated workers. Furthermore, the piece-wage form favours the contracting system whereby one labourer contracts with the capitalist to execute a certain work at a certain rate, and pays the group of labourers, whom he has hired, as low as he possibly can, pocketing the difference between what he is paid, and what he pays to the labourers he employs.

(4).—Under piece-wages it is to the labourer's immediate interest to produce the maximum amount in a minimum of time. In this way he raises the intensity of labour. (Through organization the labourer learns in time the folly of this policy, and becomes better able to counteract this tendency.)

(5).—Differences in skill and endurance express themselves in differences in receipts. On the whole, however, these individual differences cancel each other, and throughout the workshop find an average level. Further, the relation between paid and unpaid labour is not altered, since, for the individual, the paid labour is proportionate to the unpaid labour.

(6).—The tendency is for individual piece-wages to rise, and, on the other hand, for the general level to fall.

(7).—Piece-wages lends itself to irregular employment, i.e., to working part of the ordinary working day or week.

**OTHER FORMS** :—Other forms of wages, e.g., the bonus system, and the so-called co-partnership system, are all reducible to the primary forms of time and piece-wages. Their superiority, in the interests of the workers in general, are illusory, and were, for example, profit-sharing to become general, the illusion would be obvious. These forms serve the interests of those with large capital at their disposal :—(1) in raising the intensity of labour, (2) in a saving in the expenses of superintendence, (3) in counter-acting the development of militant organization and strikes among the employees.

**NATIONAL DIFFERENCES** :—Comparisons under this head must take into consideration ;—

- (1) The range of the general needs of the working-class in the different countries ;
- (2) The cost of living ;
- (3) The cost of training ;
- (4) Average size of family ;
- (5) Extent of female and child labour ;
- (6) And finally, the three factors already considered : (a) duration of working day, (b) productiveness of labour, (c) intensity of labour.

This known, the piece-wages in each country, for given trades, must be reduced to time-wages, after which the comparisons of the rates of wages in the different countries can be made.

In every country there is an average intensity according to which is the quantity of what is socially necessary labour, given. The law of value asserts itself in those cases where the labour is below the average intensity and, therefore, above the socially necessary. On the other hand, the law is modified where the labour is more intense than the national average.

On the world market, however, the socially necessary labour takes on a universal character. The various national average intensities find their unit of measurement in an average international intensity. The less intense national labour, as contrasted with the more intense national labour, creates in the same duration less value, and is expressed in less money.

Another consequence for the law of value, in its operation on the world market, is that the more productive national labour, as contrasted with the less productive national labour, counts as more intense labour, i.e., produces a greater quantity of value, and is expressed in more money. This, however, holds good *only* if the more productive country is not compelled to lower the price of its commodities to the level of actual value. In that case, the more productive labour no longer counts as more intense. The exceptional advantage disappears.

Furthermore, if the national labour of one country has a greater productiveness and intensity than the international average productiveness and intensity, (and such a nation will be the most highly developed in capitalist production), money, relatively speaking, will be worth less than in the other countries. In other words, money will not go so far as in other countries. Hence also, in such a country, nominal wages, i.e., the actual sum of money paid to the labourer, will be higher than in the less advanced countries. By no means, however, does it follow from this that real wages are correspondingly higher, i.e., that wages will purchase so much more means of subsistence. Neither does it mean that, relatively, the capitalist in the most advanced country is so much the worse off as compared with the capitalists of the more backward countries. Compare America with England, or England with Belgium. As a general rule, it is quite the contrary. The nominally dear labour is relatively cheap labour, and the nominally cheap labour is relatively dear labour. By relative price of labour is to be understood the wages compared to the value of the product, or to the surplus value which it contains.

*Capital*, Vol. 1, Chaps. 20, 21, 22.

W. W. C.

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## Review

AN OUTLINE OF INDUSTRIAL HISTORY. By EDWARD CRESSY.  
(Macmillan & Co. 3/6.)

From the standpoint of our historical materialism, technical progress forms the foundation of the development of human society. Man is the only animal that utilizes self-made organs, i.e. tools. The most primitive tools and the ability to use them once acquired, every succeeding technical advance removes man further and further from the simple field of nature in which the rest of the animals struggle for existence. The discovery of new means of production leads to the rise of a new and appropriate method of production, on the basis of which the relations of men, their customs, institutions and conceptions are revolutionized. *As man acts upon the outside world and changes it*, wrote Marx, *he at the same time changes his own nature*. That sentence contains the core of historical science—the connection between man and his work. This scientific understanding is itself a historical product. It finds the conditions of its birth and growth in the highly developed method and means of modern production.

The history of human technique and of the science which promotes and is promoted by it, is of fundamental importance to the student of social evolution. We can, therefore, recommend *An Outline of Industrial History*, in so far as its chapters on the history of technical progress are concerned, as a helpful contribution. Particularly Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 supply, in a simple and compact form, a sketch of the scientific and technical attainments realized within the last two centuries. Therein is afforded information not found in most of the books written on industrial history. These chapters narrate the sequence of scientific and technical improvements accomplished in Agriculture, in the Textile, Iron, Steel and Coal-mining industries, and

in other branches of production, as well as in Transport and Communication. This historical account will evidently yield much more fertile results when taken in hand by the Marxian method of analysis and reconstruction, than it appears to have yielded for the author of the work. Mr. Cressy is perfectly orthodox in his view-point. Even in the chapters referred to above, there peep out, now and then, the fag-ends of the "great man" theory.

But the author's lack of "historical method" is most flagrantly illustrated when he applies himself to the "human as distinct from the technical side." In this sphere he never leaves the surface and, as a consequence, misses the objective connections of the problems which call for solution. He can only hope that some legislative machinery may be invented which will cause "many of the sharp issues" to "disappear," and the "bitter antagonism of capital and labour be dissolved." His impartiality, however, demands that this dissolution of "bitter antagonism" be accomplished without dissolving the polar relation—capital and wage-labour—which is the ground of antagonism.

The chapter on the Evolution of Economic Thought furnishes many instances of the lack of critical "economic thought." While there is something to be said for the operation of the labour-cost theory of value, the author requires "a more comprehensive theory," one which comprehends such every-day factory products! as "Koh-i-noors," "old pictures," or "fifty things"—which presumably include the priceless imagination of an orthodox economist.

The "more comprehensive theory of value," which the mountain of economic thought has laboured to bring forth, is none other than the mouse of "marginal utility." It is evidently one of the "three blind mice," judging by the following from Mr. Cressy. "Make the labourer physically stronger and more intelligent, put him to work with better appliances, he will be more productive, therefore more esteemed, the margin of his utility rises and his price, i.e., his wages, will rise too. This is the theoretical justification of material hope for mankind."

If that is the best that economic thought can evolve from the facts of economic practice then, indeed, there is little ground for "material hope" for the workers of the world. But could anything be more contrary to the facts which are much more substantial than *words* of hope? The labourer has, without question, become more productive since the beginning of the 20th century. On the other hand, *wages have fallen*. Evidently, this "economic thought" of Mr. Cressy's has nothing to do with *things as they are*. Certainly economic science cannot concern itself with the *ought to be*. And it can help the working class forward *only* in so far as it correctly formulates the problems which arise from existing relations. In this way, the grounds of hope become recognized as material grounds.

Finally, like all good marginal utilitarians, Mr. Cressy puts the cart before the horse. Like Proudhon, he makes his people walk out in order to secure fine weather, instead of saying that when the weather is fine many people are to be seen out walking. "Make the labourer physically stronger and more intelligent," says he, and *then* "his wages will rise too." But how in the first place did he acquire this increased strength and greater

intelligence? It evidently could only be the result of increased wages. So the *greater esteem* resolves itself into the *greater quantity of social labour* necessary for the production and reproduction of the labourer. The theory of "marginal utility" has thereby ceased to have even a "marginal utility."

These defects notwithstanding, we have pleasure in drawing the attention of our readers to this work on account of the valuable and concisely compiled facts which it contains upon the subject of scientific and technical progress.

W. W. C.

## Correspondence

### INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATION ON THE RAILWAYS.

Sir,—L. B., whilst expressing dissatisfaction with my reply to the position taken up by him in his first letter, has yet found it necessary to shift his ground. His first position was that if loco-men amalgamated with other grades, the other grades would have a voice; and on account of a feeling existing amongst them that loco-men should not be paid more highly than they, there would be a lowering of loco-men's wages. Neither he, nor his supporter, G. W. Chappell, have brought forward any evidence to prove their contention that combining with other grades and working along composite methods has resulted in a worsening of the conditions of loco-men. The proof of the pudding is in the eating, and the proof of a theory in the practice. The practice has shown that, on the North Eastern, the men working along composite lines have achieved a general nine-hour day for loco-men and some other grades. Sectional methods on the other railways have up to now failed to achieve that position.

L. B. thinks the comparison between the North Eastern and the other railways unfair. I cannot agree; the sectional conciliation boards have been in operation as long as, and longer than, the composite board on the North Eastern. I am inclined to think that he considers it unfair because it knocks the bottom out of his own case. The N. E. men working along the composite method have achieved something which the sectionalists have failed to achieve. That is a hard, stubborn fact. And it is facts, and not references to the "swelled head" of one's opponents, which alone are of any value in an argument. I am concerned simply to try and reason from the facts of the workers' position, and to endeavour to persuade them to organize on a wider basis; following that up by doing my best to persuade them to adopt methods of action and of negotiation more consistent with the new modes of organization.

In conclusion, let me repeat again that I am not defending the principle of conciliation as such. I am of opinion that conciliation boards, whether composite or sectional, have the effect of impeding the forward march of the workers; the sectional boards being less desirable because by them it is possible to tie up the various sections by period agreements terminating at different dates, thus placing difficulties in the way of united action when such may become necessary.

Yours etc., G. W. BROWN.

## The Plebs' Bookshelf

A Walsall friend sends a further list of novels touching on social questions, for the benefit of the Swansea correspondent in reply to whose inquiry I mentioned a few titles last month. He recommends:—*Shear My Sheep*, by Dennis Hird (Fifield, 1/- net); *David Dexter, Socialist*, by H. Baxter (1/-) and *The Red Flag*, by Allen Clarke (6d.) (Twentieth Century Press, Ltd.); *Zola's Money and Germinal*, paper covers, 6d. each (Chatto and Windus); *Caesar's Column*, by E. Boisgilbert (Sampson, Low, Marston & Co., 1/-); *The Island*, by Richard Whiteing (Nelson, 1/-); and *Cashel Byron's Profession*, Shaw (Constable, 1/-). Of course, such a list could be continued almost indefinitely. Practically every modern novel that counts deals to a greater or less extent with some aspect of some social question. I shall be glad to quote in the 'Bookshelf', for the benefit of Plebeians generally, the names of any novels which readers have good reason to recommend.

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The novels of Henry James, who died last month, will most likely *not* be found on many Plebeians' bookshelves. He did not write on social questions; his characters were mostly people with incomes—"though these also", as Solomon Eagle observes in the *New Statesman*, "are God's creatures." There were no labouring men in his world. And one needs a greater faculty for detachment than most labouring men have leisure to cultivate, in order to feel quite at home in that world. Here is a "nutshell" criticism of Henry James from one of Shaw's dramatic criticisms:—

There is no reason why life as we find it in Mr. James' novels—life, that is, in which passion is subordinate to intellect and to fastidious artistic taste—should not be represented on the stage. . . . As it happens, I am not myself in Mr. James' camp; in all the life that has energy enough to be interesting to me, subjective volition, passion, will, make intellect the merest tool. But there is in the centre of that cyclone a certain calm spot where cultivated ladies and gentlemen live on independent incomes or by pleasant artistic occupations. It is there that Mr. James' art touches life, selecting whatever is graceful, exquisite, or dignified in its serenity.

Perhaps some Henry James enthusiast will write in and insist that this is a one-sided and incomplete criticism, and that a taste for Henry James is better evidence of a brain in good working order than, say, a passion for Jack London. I hope someone will.

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I referred last month to an article in the *Atlantic Monthly* by John D. Rockefeller, Junr., touchingly entitled "Labour and Capital—Partners." (You will note that John D., being nothing if not polite, puts Labour first.) The article is a description of the "Industrial Constitution" adopted by the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company and its employees, with a view to the avoidance in future of those industrial disturbances whose "many distressing features gave me (John D.) the deepest concern."

I frankly confess that I felt there was something fundamentally wrong in a condition of affairs which made possible the loss of hu-



man lives, engendered hatred and bitterness, and brought suffering and privation upon hundreds of human beings. I determined, therefore, that I would seek some means of avoiding the possibility of similar conflicts in the future.

So the Rockefeller Foundation, whose purpose, as stated in its charter, is "to promote the well-being of mankind throughout the world," (!) secured the services of an expert, "to conduct an investigation with a special view to the discovery of some mutual relationship between Labour and Capital which would afford to Labour the protection it needs against oppression and exploitation, *while at the same time promoting its efficiency as an instrument of economic production.*" The purpose of this inquiry was "not to justify any particular point of view"—they ought to have secured the services of a Ruskin College economist!—but solely to be "constructively helpful." There follows an account of the Industrial Constitution aforementioned, which is based on a theory of social relations thus outlined by John D.:

Every corporation is composed of four parties; the stockholders, who supply the money with which to build the plant, pay the wages, and operate the business; the directors, whose duty it is . . . . . to plan the larger and more important policies, and generally see to it that the company is prudently administered; the officers, who conduct current operations; and the employees, who contribute their skill and their work. The interest of these four parties is a common interest, though perhaps not an equal one. An effort on the part of any one to advance its own interest without regard to the rights of others, means, eventually, loss to all. The problem which confronts every company is so to inter-relate its different elements that the best interests of all may be conserved.

The Constitution—"some have spoken of it," John D. modestly remarks, "as establishing a Republic of Labour"—appears to guarantee to the Colorado workers their elementary right to be regarded as human beings, and precious little else. To regard it, as J. D. evidently does, as a quite revolutionary piece of magnanimity on the part of himself and his fellow stock-holders, is a pretty commentary on the state of affairs which preceded it. It would gladden the heart of a Lloyd G. The Constitution "is not hostile to labour organizations . . . . Neither membership in a union nor independence of a union will bring a man either preference or reproach, so far as the attitude of the Co. is concerned." &c., &c. ("Sing them over again to me," as Mr. Sankey puts it; "Beautiful words of life!")

I must quote just one or two of J. D.'s aphorisms before bidding him goodbye—and wishing him a happy issue out of all his afflictions:—

Reduced to their simplest terms Labour and Capital are men with muscle and men with money—human beings imbued with the same weaknesses and virtues, the same cravings and aspirations.

There are men who hold that Labour is the producer of all wealth, hence is entitled to the entire product, and that whatever is taken by Capital is stolen from Labour. If this theory is sound, it might (!) be maintained that the relation between L. and C. is fundamentally one of antagonism. . . . . But all such counsel loses sight of the fact that . . . . if these great forces co-operate, the products of industry are steadily increased; whereas, if they fight, the production of wealth is certain to be either retarded or stopped altogether, and the wellsprings of material progress choked.

The world puts its richest prizes at the feet of great organizing ability, enterprise, and foresight, because such qualities are rare and yet indispensable to the development of the vast natural resources which otherwise would lie useless on the earth's surface, or in its hidden depths.

It is unlikely that any final solution of the problem of the fair distribution of wealth will ever be reached. . . . The ultimate test of the rightness of any particular method of division must be the extent to which it stimulates initiative, encourages the further production of wealth, and promotes the spiritual development of men.

\* \* \* \* \*

The economic interpretation<sup>7</sup> of history is becoming a quite fashionable doctrine these days. Professor Beard, of Columbia University, has recently published a volume with the interesting title—*Economic Origins of Jeffersonian Democracy*. Jefferson, you will remember, was one of the Fathers of the Republic. He was largely responsible for that earth-shaking document, the Declaration of Independence. But Prof. Beard, remarks a *New Statesman* reviewer, has found Jefferson out. He never was really a Democrat.

Jeffersonian Democracy simply meant the possession of the Federal Government by the agrarian masses, led by an aristocracy of slave-owning planters, and the theoretical repudiation of the right to use the Government for the benefit of any capitalist groups—fiscal, banking, or manufacturing.

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The Fabian Research Department has just published W. Stephen Sanders' little book on *Trade Unionism in Germany*, price 7d. net. This was originally issued as a *New Statesman* Special Supplement, but has been revised and brought up to date, and contains additional matter. It, as well as the same author's pamphlet, *The Socialist Movement in Germany*, (Fabian Tract No. 169, 2d.) should of course be on every Socialist's bookshelf. One item of particular interest to *Plebs* readers is the Lecture Plan of the Trade Union School at Berlin, quoted by Mr. Sanders' on which we hope to make some comments later. Here, there is only space to quote his description of the school as "a kind of German Ruskin College, supported, however, entirely by trade union funds and managed by trade unionists." (Italics ours.)

\* \* \* \* \*

We have received from the Council for the Study of International Relations (1, Central Buildings, Westminster, S.W.) three pamphlets:—*Aids to Study*: No. 1: "Notes on the Countries at War." (1d.) No. 2: "Outline Syllabuses on Some Problems of the War" (2d.) No. 3: "British Foreign Policy: A Scheme of Study." These pamphlets should be exceedingly useful, either to individual students or to classes. They contain good lists of books; and their method is to put questions rather than to offer ready-made solutions—thereby affording the intelligent student an opportunity of testing both his knowledge of the subject, and the adequacy of his historical theories.

J. F. H.

#### BOOKS RECEIVED'

*Socialism and War*. By L. B. Boudin. The New Review Publishing Co., New York. Price 4/2 net, Postage 5d. extra.

# 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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## Executive and Officers of "Plebs" League:

### SECRETARY-TREASURER

J. REYNOLDS

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### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- MRS. W. HERRABIN, 127 Hamlet Gardens, Ravenscourt Park,  
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