

Vol. IX, No. 8

September, 1917.

The
PLEBS
MAGAZINE



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

MONTHLY

TWOPENCE

FIRST EDITION OF 10,000 SOLD OUT
SECOND EDITION NOW PRINTING.

THE 'PLEBS' PAMPHLET

WHAT DOES

'EDUCATION'

MEAN TO THE

WORKERS?

By J. F. H. & W. H.

ONE PENNY

Orders have been received from, or on behalf of, London, Manchester, Sheffield, and S.-Eastern District Councils, N.U.R. ; Edinburgh No. 1, and numerous other N.U.R. Branches ; Barrow-in-Furness, Sheffield, and Leicester Shop Stewards' Committees ; the B.S.P. and S.L.P. ; and Plebs and C.L.C. Classes in S. Wales, Birmingham, Lancashire, Newcastle, Yorkshire, &c., &c. *And the Orders are still rolling in.* Have we got yours ?

Single copies, 1½d., postpaid. Per dozen, 10d. (postpaid). Per 100, 6/- (postpaid).

— FROM —

**SEC., PLEBS LEAGUE, 127, HAMLET GARDENS, RAVENSCOURT
PARK, LONDON, W. (6).**

A Red × here means that if we don't hear from you (with enclosure)
we shall cut off your supply.

THE PLEBS MAGAZINE

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

Vol. IX.

September, 1917

No. 8

CONTENTS

	Page
CLASS-CONSCIOUSNESS AND INDUSTRIAL UNREST. By J.F.H.	169
MARX AND THOREAU. By EDEN and CEDAR PAUL - - -	- 174
AN ECONOMIC POT-POURRI. By MARK STARR - - -	- 178
CORRESPONDENCE. From J. T. WALTON NEWBOLD - - -	- 180
THE PLEBS MEET: REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT -	- 181
NEWS OF THE MOVEMENT - - - - -	- 186
THE PLEBS BOOKSHELF - - - - -	- 189

"A Form of Class-Consciousness Increasingly Powerful & Deliberate of Purpose."

THE Report of the Industrial Unrest Commissioners for Wales and Monmouthshire* is a document of especial interest to C.L.C.ers and Plebs Leaguers. Its fifty pages contain much valuable information which may be available elsewhere, but certainly not in such concise form, nor at such slight pecuniary cost. The Commissioners—Messrs. D. Lleufer Thomas, T. Evans, and Vernon Hartshorn, with Mr. Edgar Chappell as Secretary—have brought together a mass of facts and figures which should be useful to C.L.C. classes in S. Wales—and elsewhere.

But the primary interest of the Report to *Plebs* readers lies in the fact that it discusses Independent Working Class Education—in particular, C.L.C. education—as a factor in the existing Industrial Unrest in the S. Wales coalfields. And having discussed it, and admitted its importance, the Commissioners proceed to make

* *Commission of Enquiry into Industrial Unrest, No. 7 District, Wales and Monmouthshire.* Cd. 8668. Obtainable (6d. net, postage 1½d.) from H.M. Stationery Office, Imperial House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2. Or may be ordered through any bookseller.

sundry recommendations as to the kind of education—"broad," "impartial" and "humanistic" (!)—which they urge should be provided, by the State or by local authorities, as "a *corrective* to all methods of study of a purely partisan character undertaken for propagandist objects."

Space will not permit us to quote from the earlier sections of the Report, dealing with The Chief Industries in Wales and their Distribution; Physical and Geographical Conditions, and their Influence on Social Conditions; Racial Characteristics, Population, &c., &c. We must turn straight to p. 17, (Sociological Factors, sub-section on Political Education and Trade Unionism) for this preliminary description of the miners' lodges as centres of educational activity:—

With the spread of elementary education and the slow development of the desire for a clear understanding of the conditions under which the workers live, a change has spread over the spirit of the lodges. The younger generation, led upon the writings of the Fabian Society, the Independent Labour Party, and the works of Continental and American writers, has tended more and more to formulate a theory of reform and of political action which is almost entirely opposed to that of the old. It demands that its representatives in Parliament shall be first and foremost representatives of labour, not labour as a portion of communal life, but labour as the majority in the country, as an economic and productive force of vital and, therefore, paramount importance, with a programme of social reform involving the reconstruction of the whole basis of society. The effect upon the trades councils to which they send delegates has been two-fold. In the first place, they have become centres of *educational* work from which lectures and classes on political and social subjects have been organised and, secondly, they have become centres of *social* and *political* activity more potent perhaps than any other of the social movements in the community.

There follows a description of the two movements, "the one of direct political action, the other of Industrial Unionism" ("each is profoundly affecting the other"), into which the present-day working-class movement in S. Wales is divided. The consideration of Industrial Unionism ("in no part of the country is this creed so widely held and constantly preached as amongst the miners of Glamorgan and Monmouthshire") leads the Commissioners to the question of education:—

The comparatively late development of industrialism in Wales has hindered the growth of such working-class organizations as the Co-operative movement, while University Extension lectures, or the teachings of the

YOUNGER SCHOOL OF OXFORD DEMOCRATS

have had no direct appeal to the Welsh workers. In contradistinction to the workers of Darby and Northumberland, or those of the Potteries, where University work has been carried on with great effect, the closely-packed valleys of Glamorgan have been given over to propagandist work of a political nature, at first of somewhat unorganized character. The I.L.P. has some scores of branches in the Welsh Coalfield, each branch a centre of political educational activity. Lectures are arranged and classes conducted in political and social subjects, whilst there is a large sale of propagandist literature . . .

The I.L.P. branches have, however, concerned themselves mainly with political works. But the ill success of the strike movement, the menace of combines of employers, with the consequent centralisation of capital, and what an advanced section of the workers regard as the failure of Parliamentary representation, have all brought home to the worker the imperative need for organisation. Organization is, however, impossible to a community only partially, if at all, educated. Hence the leading spirits in all trade unions have of late years been devoting themselves to an

ACTIVE IF RESTRICTED FORM OF EDUCATIONAL PROPAGANDA.

The working-man, it is held, must organize his own education, train his own teachers, and work steadily for reform within his own union. Thus to-day the South Wales Miners' Federation and the National Union of Railwaymen have jointly assumed responsibility for a working-man's college (the Central Labour College) where the workers may be taught the social sciences free from the bias and prejudice of the upper-class conception of history and economics. In March, 1917, the College conducted 41 classes, of which 19 were in S. Wales, 8 being in the Rhondda. The number of students at that time in S. Wales would not be less than 500. Since March, 1917, however, the number of the classes has largely increased, and steps have been taken to organize classes in almost every district of the S.W. Federation. The subjects taken are almost invariably confined to Economics, Industrial History, and the Modern Working-Class Movement.

These classes, then, together with the transformation of industry into the combine on the one hand, and the fool-proof machine on the other, have had their part in the revolution which has taken place in the minds of the workers. . . . Of late, the workers have both widened and narrowed their outlook. Improvement of status, rises in wages, have all proved ineffective against the more obvious pressure of capitalist economy and the patent gambling in the necessities of life. This has been taken advantage of by teachers and leaders, and out of it has developed

A FORM OF CLASS-CONSCIOUSNESS INCREASINGLY POWERFUL AND DELIBERATE OF PURPOSE.

The worker, as a class, has, they maintain, been exploited; as a class, he must seek and win his freedom; it is this which explains the general desire for tuition in economics, not the prejudiced economics of the older school, but a theory which will give some explanation of the conditions under which the workers live, and hold out some promise of immediate reform. Thus the education which he asks for and receives tends, though intensive, to be partial. Its motto is "I can promise to be candid, but not impartial." He studies along certain restricted lines, reads little outside his own particular field, and grasps too readily the shibboleth for the reality. Economics is often degraded into a gross materialistic conception of cause and effect, and

THE ESSENTIAL SPIRITUALITY OF EDUCATION.

is neglected or forgotten. . . . Whilst during the War the country in general has been somewhat slow to recognise the importance of education (except in the field of applied science), the recognition amongst the workers of S. Wales of the importance of educational reconstruction has been immediate and remarkable. . . .

We would suggest that further facilities should therefore be granted for the spread of education and of knowledge—not knowledge in the narrow limited sense of equipment, but knowledge sought in the spirit of truth and pursued for its own ends.

"Pursued for its own ends," observe. *Not* pursued with a view to mitigating "unrest"—oh dear no! If you seek knowledge "in

the spirit of truth," all these things—docility, patience, contentment with things as they are and with S. Wales as it is—shall (inevitably) be added unto you. The moment your pursuit of knowledge leads you to imagine for one moment that there is anything wrong with the established order of society, then you may rest assured that you are getting away from "the spirit of truth." So the Commissioners urge that Continued Education (for Adolescents) should "lay stress upon civic and national responsibilities," should be "broad and humanistic;" its keynote being "the conception of the industrial system as the handmaid of society," and of work as "a form of public service." Tendentious? Not in the least.

As regards Adult Education—

It is here that the University should prove of peculiar value. . . . The University should be the centre of the life of the community, gathering to itself its aspirations and hopes, fulfilling its deepest needs and ever shaping it to nobler purposes. We may assume "that University teaching is teaching suited to adults; that it is scientific, detached, and impartial in character; that it aims not so much at filling the mind of the student with facts and theories as at calling forth his own individuality. . . ."

And so on—the Commissioners here quoting, as readers will doubtless have observed, from the Special Report of H.M.I. on W.E.A. Classes, (Board of Education, 1910). "We may assume" that the University is all these things; but it is worth remembering in this connection that ex-Professor H. Stanley Jevons (whom the Commissioners quote on an earlier page as one of their authorities for facts about the coalfield) wrote as follows in the *Daily Chronicle*, March 25th, 1912, in an article on the Minimum Wage:—

For six years I lectured on political theory as Professor of Economics and Political Science in the University College, Cardiff. Much. . . . that I now write contradicts what I taught in College. What is the reason? Simply that I came gradually into contact *with actual facts and real life*. Whisperings of miners' grievances came to me through my students. I began to enquire for myself, and was shocked beyond all bearing *when I learnt the truth*. I resigned my Chair, as I felt I *must now begin to learn, not teach*.

So that here was a University man seeking knowledge "in the spirit of truth"—and it led him *out of the University!* But the Commissioners do not quote Prof. Jevons in this connection. They merely urge—

that the University is the proper medium for the education of the adult, and that University tutorial classes should be established in every centre of industry in Wales, *in which political economy, industrial history, and such other subjects as bear upon the conditions and interests of the workers, can be studied impartially under the guidance of skilled and recognised authorities. . . . Classes in which subjects of general human interest may be studied in an impartial and systematic manner under expert guidance, whereby the relations of industry to the community, and the desirability of a broad and sympathetic outlook upon the complex factors of modern society, may be adequately realized.*

The capitalist Universities to the rescue of the capitalist State! "Skilled and recognised authorities"—recognised by whom?—

are to guide the workers, misled by "partisan propaganda," to "a broad and sympathetic outlook upon the complex factors of modern society." And all their Commissioners, including a "Labour" representative, arrive at these conclusions and recommendations "with complete unanimity," and sign the Report "without any individual reservation or qualification whatsoever!"

What the employers think about the Report is sufficiently indicated in a leading article on "The Mentality of the Welshman" in the *Colliery Guardian* (Journal of the Coal and Iron Trades) August 10th, 1917. After referring to the "assumed antagonism" between Capital and Labour preached by the "so-called 'advanced' men," this organ of the masters goes on to say—

This assumed antagonism is, of course, a fundamental fallacy attributable mainly to the false doctrines of Karl Marx, and built up on erroneous views of the place of capital in industry. . . . *The growth of the revolutionary spirit has been fostered* by the unfortunate fact that the education of the miners has been largely left in the hands of a particular school of economists who have found in the closely-packed valleys of Glamorganshire a suitable field for the development of class-consciousness. The Commissioners, therefore, very properly urge the importance of affording facilities for the spread of education upon *sounder lines*. This work should be taken in hand by the University, and there should be a wide extension of the scope of university teaching in Wales. . . . We would suggest that courses of lectures upon Marxian sociology should be given in every industrial centre. FEW PEOPLE WHO TALK AND WRITE UPON THE RELATIONS BETWEEN CAPITAL AND LABOUR ARE REALLY FAMILIAR WITH THE ABSURDITY OF THE VIEWS ADVOCATED BY KARL MARX, whose illogical arguments are too often accepted as rigid principles of economics. Nowhere has the doctrine of the antagonism of the classes, now in process of being abandoned by the more educated Socialists (!) of the world, been more persistently upheld than in . . . S. Wales. We believe the S. Wales miners to be an intellectual and knowledge-seeking race, and if an organized effort were made to illustrate the falsity of the doctrine with which they have been fed, the fundamental weakness of which no Socialist has yet been able to answer (!) they would soon learn that the improvement of their conditions is not to be achieved by the methods they have been taught to approve. The impression given by the report of the Commissioners is that S. Wales has been practically abandoned as a field of *sound* educational work among the masses. Like an untilled field, its fertile soil has been left to grow the tares of a discredited propaganda.

If anything were needed to round off the testimonial to the efficacy of the educational principles and policy of the C.L.C. given by the S. Wales Commissioners, this ingenuous and touching outburst on the part of the coal-owners supplies it. Can any Labour man, reading both, fail to be impressed with the urgent and vital need for Independent Working-Class Education? Is it necessary to dwell further upon the distinction between what the employers' universities, call "poison," and what they call "sound educational work?" We think not. And we very seriously doubt whether "organized effort" on the part of the capitalists and their hired intellectuals will convince either the miners of S. Wales or the workers in other parts of this country of the "fundamental weakness" of their (the workers') case against Capitalism. J. F. H.

Marx and Thoreau

The Politics of Capitalism. By J. T. WALTON NEWBOLD, M.A., (British Socialist Party, 1917, 1d.). *Henry David Thoreau.* By HENRY S. SALT. (Humanitarian League, 1917, 1d.).

THE centenary of Thoreau's birth has just been celebrated. By those who love centenary celebrations, the centenary of the birth of Marx will be celebrated next year. Thoreau never left New England, dying there in 1862. Marx, born at Treves, died in London in 1883. It is unlikely that Thoreau ever heard of the author of *Capital*, for though (next to Russia) America is now the most congenial home of Marxist Socialism, the echoes even of the *Communist Manifesto* were but faintly heard across the Atlantic more than half a century ago. Marx had probably heard of Thoreau, for Marx was an omnivorous reader, and outlived the American by fifteen years, but he is unlikely to have given the ideas that find their supreme expression in *Walden* more than a contemptuous thought. None the less, it is by no merely fortuitous juxtaposition that Salt's and Newbold's pamphlets are here associated, for in the opinion, by no means unique, of the writers of this notice, the Marxist outlook and the Thoreauist outlook are essential complementaries, both indispensable to the full Socialist comprehension of life, both equally necessary to the upbuilding of the Socialist future.

During the last twelve months Newbold has discovered Louis Boudin, the American Marxist. A year or two earlier he had discovered Marx. Before either of these planets swept into his ken, the young English economist was thinking on vigorous and independent lines. The vigour and independence continue, but Newbold would be the last to deny that his thought has been enormously clarified by the reading of Marx and of Boudin. Thus, brief as it is, *The Politics of Capitalism* manifests a notable advance upon *How Europe armed for War*, just as the last-named work manifested a great advance upon certain articles contributed to the *New York Call* in the first year of the war. His economics have become more unmistakably "Socialist economics," and have gained enormously in the process.

The Politics of Capitalism, then, is a brief exposition of the Marx-Boudin thesis that (political "ideals" and political activities being determined by class interest) the changing ideology of liberalism, the transformation scene to which (in England) Joseph Chamberlain acted as stage carpenter, the replacement, as the predominant influence in English political life, of the spirit of Quaker universal philanthropy by the spirit of capitalist imperialism, of the regime of Bright and Cobden by the regime of George and Milner,—have all been conditioned by the enormous recent expansion of the iron and steel industry, now the primary interest of the great money lords, just as textiles were their primary interest during the era of liberal

free trade. The world-struggle, as Newbold sees it, is in essence, a capitalists' war. The imperialists are "crusaders of commodities."

War came—a War for Liberty, for the Rights of small Nationalities, for Fatherland, for the freedom of the Seas, for the destruction of militarism, for all the catch phrases and illuminated signs with which these high-souled hucksters have pushed their wares. It is a War for Liberty—the liberty to exploit, unhindered by the other fellow's dastardly competition. It is a War . . . to emancipate small nations and subject peoples . . . by the aid of the money-lenders of justice and civilisation. It is a War . . . to fill the highways of the nations with the tumult and the whistling and the tooting of the freight train, the motor lorry, and the steamship; to festoon the wilderness with telegraph, telephone, and electric-power cables; to erect mine-heads and oil-shafts, mills and furnaces, hotels and grain elevators, to the Lord God of Profit, whose temple they have vowed to build of beaten gold that he may make his everlasting abiding place among his chosen people. Such is the vision that has been revealed to the Crusaders of Commodities. The Mark, the Dollar, or the Sovereign—in that sign will they conquer.

Will our Socialist economist understand us when we assure him that, seeing all these things as he sees them, we see also that Socialists will make no headway towards the goal of their desire unless, in addition, they are, like Thoreau, like Stirner, like Whitman, like Carpenter, like Salt, arch-individualists, anarchists, artists in life? If Newbold will not understand us, there are others who will, and to them we commend Salt's admirable pamphlet on Thoreau—thinker, apostle of simplicity, and humanitarian. There are many other things we can learn from "the Sage of Concord," but above all he can guide us in our quest to make living a fine art, to minimise in our personal living that use of others as means to our ends which, inevitable in a capitalist regime, can be finally abolished only through the establishment of the Socialist commonwealth. This simplicity of living is not pursued as an end in itself, nor is it merely "a state of mind," and "devoid of external characteristics."

Personal simplicity (writes Salt) is a sign, not of asceticism, as is often wrongly supposed, but of the triumph of genuine taste over traditional habit; a wise man simplifies because, on the whole, he derives more satisfaction from simplicity than from abundance. . . . But while it is important not to overburden oneself with 'comforts,' it is no less important not to overburden other persons with the labour of producing them; and it is this social and humanitarian view of the question which is so often evaded. The hard work of the world has to be done by someone.

Thoreau puts the matter in a nutshell in one of those golden sayings scattered richly through the pages of *Walden*. To quote it in conclusion may perhaps help puzzled readers to understand what we are driving at in coupling his name with that of Karl Marx:—

"If I devote myself to other pursuits and contemplations, I must see, at least, that I do not pursue them sitting upon another

man's shoulders. I must get off him first, that he may pursue his contemplations also." In the existing economic system "the blood drips from all our roof-trees"—the phrase is used by the hero of Jack London's *The Iron Heel*. We cannot, under capitalism, entirely escape riding upon men's (or women's) shoulders. A study of Thoreau, mental assimilation to his outlook, will at least enable us to realise when we are doing it, and will help us, on occasions, to dismount, and to enjoy the rare luxury of walking upon our own feet.

EDEN AND CEDAR PAUL.

An Economic Pot-Pourri

SOME [while ago] a travelling book agent in Mammon's own country, by means of working several well-known Plebeians "on the cross," succeeded in getting rid of a number of copies of a certain work.* Attracted by the contents table, the present writer handed over the monetary expression of its exchange value hoping to get a large use value at a later date. Another reason for buying was the desire to obtain a wide knowledge of economic theories, dead and alive, and also to escape that charge of narrowness and prejudice so often flung at Marxians by people who are ignorant of the books of writers like Bohm-Bawerk, Jevons, Bernstein, Macdonald, &c., which, with Fabian pamphlets and Anti-Socialist literature, find a place in *our* collection (though their margins are often scored with notes and "!" and "?" marks.) This book is like the curate's egg; and until the Plebs Publishing Department gets going—haste the day!—the same may be said of most literature of this sort, and the critical faculty must not be allowed to sleep.

Now the writer cannot boast enough reading in economics to place, estimate and criticise this work properly. So, by the grace of the Editor, only the most glaring of the mistakes and the most interesting and piquant of the remarks in the book will be quoted for the delectation and enlightenment of Plebeians. It is hoped that the extracts and the accompanying remarks will help the fortunate (or unfortunate) possessors of the work to be on the alert, show where effective antidotes to its errors can be found, as well as being of interest to the general reader.

The volume is divided into five books: The Founders, The Antagonists, Liberalism, The Dissenters (this contains a chapter on Marxism) and Recent Doctrines respectively; these again being divided and sub-divided into chapters and sections.

Even in the translator's prefatory note, we are told that, among other things helping to a better understanding of the relative

*Gide and Rist's *Economic Doctrines: From the Physiocrats to the Present Day*. Translated by R. RICHARDS, B.A. (Harrap & Co., 15/-).

positions of the earlier and modern economists, is the fact "that the Marxian doctrine is already antiquated in the opinion of certain members of that school; that the Socialism of the Fabian Society is merely a recrudescence of Ricardian economics . . ." Surely Plebeians are not among those "certain members" who have backslided, and surely the only connection between Ricardo and the Fabians would be his Differential Rent.

The authors in their preface tell us, though they think the ideas of the historical materialists—who "regard doctrines and systems as nothing better than a pale reflection of facts" (as if they could reflect anything else)—"are not altogether devoid of exaggeration," that :—

The influence exerted by the economic environment, whence even the most abstract economist gets material for reflection and the exercise of his logical acumen, is indisputable.

And to illustrate their point they say later:—

But for the advent of machinery, with the consequent increase in industrial activity, and the parallel growth of a proletarian class, followed by the recurrence of economic crises, we may be certain that neither the doctrine of Sismondi nor that of Karl Marx would ever have seen the light of day.

Coming on to the book proper, we get a picturesque definition of the science of political economy as being concerned "with the fowl in the pot" or "the material welfare" of people. The history and views of the Physiocrats, and the predominant position of the land in their eyes, which—industry being to them sterile—was thought to be the only source of a surplus, or "the net product" as they termed it, are made clear. Quesnay, influenced by Haivey's discovery, drew up an Economical Table to shew the method or way of wealth circulation in the body economic—thus mixing up biology and sociology in a manner unhappily not without modern imitation.

The following needs no comment :—

Knowing only feudal society, with its economic and political activities governed and directed by idle proprietors, they (the Physiocrats) suffered from an illusion as to the necessity of landed property similar to that which led Aristotle to defend the institution of slavery. (p. 22).

The Physiocrats frowned upon exchange as being unproductive, in opposition to the Mercantilist ideas; defended the divine institution of landed property but thought its proprietors should "bear the whole burden of taxation."

According to the verdict of M. Rist, Hutcheson, Hume and Mandeville influenced Adam Smith, who improved upon the Physiocratic ideas by showing labour of all kinds to be the source of wealth and by emphasising the importance of the division of labour. Say, Malthus and Ricardo and their ideas are dealt with at length. The problem of Economic Rents forced one to borrow a 1909 *Plebs* volume to have Ablett's lucid explanation of the matter in his 10th Outline.

Sismondi is treated as a critic of the methods and conclusions of the Classical school. Then came the attack upon private property itself; Saint Simon's name figures in connection with this. While later Robert Owen and Fourier are taken as examples of "Associative Socialists." Proudhon and his Exchange Bank Theory occupy another chapter; sections of the *Critique* and the *Poverty of Philosophy* were here useful.

But the centre of most interest to Plebeians is the chapter on Marxism (p. 449), and to this attention will now be turned. In a biographical footnote, amid other details, we are told that:—

Although Marx was one of the founders and directors of the famous association known as the "International," which was the terror of every European Government between 1863 and 1872, he was not a mere revolutionary like his rival Bakunin, nor was he a famous tribune of the people like Lassalle. He was essentially a student, an affectionate father, like Proudhon, an indefatigable traveller and a man of great intellectual culture.

After giving a fairly clear exposition of the creation of surplus value, by showing the mysterious capacity of the commodity labour-power, which produces more value than it itself contains, Gide unexpectedly revives "The Great Contradiction" bogey. Boudin (chap. 6. *Theoretical System*) and Ablett (Outline 11. 1909 Vol. *Plebs*) have placed within our reach adequate refutations of this supposed contradiction, even if the third Vol. of *Capital* has not yet been read. Certainly University professors have not a monopoly of wit. Listen:—

While admiring the ingenuity of the dialectics we must not blind ourselves to the simple fact which Marx was so anxious to hide, but which is nevertheless implicit in all this, namely that the rate of profit, which means also the value of the goods (!) is regulated by competition—that is by demand and supply—but bears no relation to the quantity of labour employed. We must also remember that the *entrepreneur*, far from seeing his profits diminish as he employs less human labour, finds them increasing. This contradiction is just one of those flaws that finally cause the downfall of the majestic edifice so laboriously raised by Marx. (page 458).

This is not the only misstatement which is obvious to a novice.

The Marxian theory of the concentration of capital and the supporting evidence is briefly detailed before Gide passes on "to fix the general character" of the Marxian school. He tells us:—

Their (Marxians') one ambition is to gauge the significance of the unconscious evolution through which society has progressed and to point the goal towards which this cosmic process seems to be tending.

Speaking of the nearness of the Marxian to the Ricardian School and methods we are told:—

The impenitent Marxian who still wishes to defend some of the more untenable theories of Marx, such as his doctrine of labour-value, generally finds himself forced to admit that Marx had supposed (the use of suppositions is an unfailing proof of Ricardian influence)

the existence of society wherein labour would be always uniform in quality (p. 466).

Where this conclusion is deduced from is a mystery. There is more truth in :—

The Marxian school also differs from every previous Socialist school in the comparative ease with which it has eschewed every consideration of justice and fraternity, which always played such an important role in French socialism. *It is interested not in the ideal, but in the actual, not in what ought to be, but what is likely to be.*

Under the heading "Neo-Marxian Reformists," Bernstein's conclusions are given prominence without a word as to his recantation. (See *Plebs* Vol. VI. p. 31). The supposed contradiction between the I and III Vol. is taken as proved. What will Plebeian economists think of this ?

The fundamental theory of Marxism, that of labour-value, appears to be abandoned by the majority of modern Marxians, who are gradually veering round and adopting either the 'final utility' or the 'economic equilibrium' theory . . . It is difficult to see what definite contribution Marx has made to the question, and the old problem as to whether workers are really exploited or not and whether the revenues obtained by the so-called idle classes correspond to any real additional value contributed by themselves remains unsettled. . . . Passing on to the law of concentration—the vertebral column of the Marxian doctrine—we shall find upon examination that it is equally in a piteous condition, &c., &c.

The class division in society is said to be disappearing, and the materialist conception is misinterpreted into an "economic fatalism" and dismissed. According to Gide "languishing doctrinaire Marxism" was revived by the Syndicalists.

While it is not without interest to "see ourselves as others see us," the chief impressions received from books of this sort are the untrustworthiness of literature written by University professors, their danger to the worker groping in the dark, and the great urgent need of the workers providing and reading their own literature in order, to understand their own case clearly and avoid being befogged by strange mixings of truth and error. The Revisionist movement, in the light of modern events, when *revolution* is in the air, when State Socialism stands uncovered for what it is, and when class antagonisms are clearly revealed and increasingly seek expression in new forms of organization—this movement itself needs a full revising and an explanation of its rise and boasted importance, from which might be secured a true estimate of its worth. But that is only an aside thought provoked by the cool assumptions of this volume. An S.L.P. or Kerr pamphlet bought for a few coppers gives us workers a better insight into the source of profits and the method of exploitation than this 15/- work and accordingly we should fight shy of such costly productions.

Perhaps, however, some of its unnoticed portions deserve correction on another occasion.

MARK STARR.

Correspondence

THOSE S.L.P. PAMPHLETS.

DEAR COMRADE,—The pertinacity of Fred Silvester is as flattering to my criticisms as his response is meant to be overwhelming. I was not at all aware that I was on thin ice or that I was conveying the impression of manoeuvring cautiously. Nor yet was I shivering with an embarrassment which I fain would hide. Rather was I endeavouring to be scrupulously just both to the literary genius of the I.L.P. and of the S.L.P.

Being held in duress by an attack of scarlet fever—consequent, perhaps, on having too eagerly embraced the Marxian faith and too vehemently (but how pleasurable!) belaboured Revisionism—I have convalesced on the back numbers of *Plebs*—including a poetic spasm by F.S.—and on the De Leon pamphlets. Needless to say I have enjoyed the “treatment,” but it has not cured me of my previous view of S.L.P. literature. I do not consider them as being ideal *pabulum* for British readers. In their case, it is not so much their theory that is at fault but the necessary application thereof to conditions which are not patently recognisable as akin to our own.

British capitalism and British labour movements have not developed on lines precisely parallel to those of their U.S. counterpart, and I think it is unfortunate to introduce De Leon's theories to British readers in an application which is foreign to our conditions. It does not do him justice, and it does not give the S.L.P. ideas the popular appeal which I believe they would have if they were systematically presented to the British worker in explanation of his own economic and political difficulties.

Marxian literature in this country must not only be modernised, but it must be made of such a character that it hits home every time. There must be no excuse for its rejection as not presenting a true picture of our own problems, and, above all, we must not lend colour to the opinion that we cannot think and write for ourselves, but must always borrow from Americans or Germans or Russians in the same way that our Revisionist comrades seem compelled to borrow every idea that they have from the Morais, Angells, Bertrand Russells, and other bourgeois thinkers.

Let me, therefore, in advance, recommend such works as those of Geo. Harvey, Wm. Paul, &c.

There is a stupendous mass of material for us to get busy upon and enable us to remove the bitter reproach of intellectual sterility that has, not without just cause, been affixed to the socialist movement of this country.

Yours fraternally,

J. T. WALTON NEWBOLD.

Ready NOW.

Militarism & Anti-Militarism

By DR. KARL LIEBKNECHT.

A Book by the most courageous man in Europe!

Published by the S.L. Press, 50 Renfrew Street, Glasgow. Paper covers, 1/- (postage 3d) Cloth, 2/- (postage 4d) There is a big run on this book. Order your copy NOW. Special terms to booksellers and organizations.

Also in preparation:—“THE STATE: ITS ORIGIN AND FUNCTION.” By W. PAUL. (To be published at 1/6).

The Annual Meet

THE NINTH ANNUAL MEET of the Plebs League, held at the Labour College (by kind permission of the Governors) on Sunday, August 5th, was one of the most successful and best-attended gatherings the League has yet held. Delegates and friends were present from Glasgow, Edinburgh, Warrington, Rochdale, Birmingham, Woolwich, Aberdare, the Rhondda, and other S. Wales centres, Bristol, Doncaster, Worthing, Notts., Shrewsbury, Oxford and London.

BEN MACKAY was in the chair, and he, in the course of some highly optimistic remarks on the work and growth of the League, greeted the delegates and welcomed the many friends present from other organizations.

The SECRETARY announced that messages had been received from Geo. Sims, Ebby Edwards, C. W. Watkins, Dr. Dessin, J. Leach, Geo. Melhuish, Dennis Hird, Will Lawtber, Jim Nixon, J. T. Walton Newbold, (prevented by illness from being present), Geo. and Mary Griffiths, J. P. M. Millar, Robt. Holder, F. Rogers and others. Standing orders having been agreed to, the SECRETARY presented the

REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT.*

After explaining that, since Geo. Melhuish left London early this year, she had acted as Treasurer as well as Secretary, she announced that the debt (to printer) which had been a burden on the League since the first year of its existence, had been wiped out; this being due only in part to the Special Appeal Fund—the bulk of that portion of it carried over to this financial year having been paid off out of ordinary sales and subscriptions, which (at last) exceeded working expenses. Despite the considerable increase in these latter (cost of paper, &c.) the Magazine now paid its way month by month; though, since costs were still rising, there must be no slackening of effort—particularly since a margin was urgently needed to provide for the publication of pamphlets, leaflets, &c. The circulation of the *Plebs* had increased by well over 50% since last year's Meet, and had been more than doubled during the last two years. If every Plebeian would work with the enthusiasm and energy displayed by certain individual supporters, a circulation reaching five figures could be reached in the near future.

A start had been made in the Publishing Department with the issue of the pamphlet, *What does 'Education' Mean to the Workers?*, 10,000 of which were printed, and 8,000 already sold.** It was hoped that friends and supporters everywhere would assist in making the distribution of the pamphlet a first step towards a

*see p.182.

**The first edition has since been sold out, and a second edition ordered.

Financial Statement, August 5th, 1916 to July 31st, 1917.**Receipts.**

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
To Cash in hand Aug. 5, 1916.	0	4	4			
Magazine Subscriptions	242	12	1			
Membership Fees ...	3	16	0			
Special Appeal Fund ...	8	9	9			
				<u>£255</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>

Expenditure.

By Printing—balance due						
Aug. 5th, 1916 ...	65	2	9			
Printing ...	108	11	8½			
				<u>173</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>5½</u>
Despatch of Magazines						
and Postage ...				49	2	1
Office Materials ...				6	6	11
Advertisements ...				4	2	1½
Expenses for Meet ...				2	9	3
Repaid to late Treasurer				2	0	0
Delegates Fees to Leeds ...				0	5	0
Cash in hand July 31, 1917				17	2	4
				<u>£255</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>

Balance Sheet, July 31st, 1917.**Liabilities.**

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
To late Treasurer (Loans						
1913-14) ...	47	9	1			
				<u>£47</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>1</u>

Assets.

Outstanding A/c.'s (estimated)	5	0	0			
Cash in hand ...	17	2	4			
				<u>£22</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>
Liabilities ...				£	s.	d.
				47	9	1
Assets ...				22	2	4
				<u>£25</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>9</u>

Deficit £25 6 9Audited and found correct,
July 31st, 1917.FRANK JACKSON,
GEO. KIRKHAM

systematic propaganda campaign in every industrial district in the country. Other publications were to be proceeded with as early as possible; the dearth of teachers and class-leaders, due to the operation of the Military Service Acts, &c., having made the provision of text-books, outline study-courses &c., more than ever necessary. Reference ought to be made in this connection to the publication of W. W. Craik's *Outlines of the History of the Modern Working-Class Movement* by the London District Council, N.U.R., to which body every working-class student owed a debt of gratitude.

With regard to the most important part of the League's work—the classes themselves—it was unnecessary to go into detail, as reports had appeared in the Magazine month by month throughout the year. The number of the classes and the total number of students had increased considerably. In South Wales; in Northumberland and Durham; in Lancashire—where the classes carried on last winter in Manchester by Robt. Holder, under the auspices of the N.U.R. District Council, had resulted in new classes being formed in two or three towns; in Yorkshire, Edinburgh, and other towns and districts, the work had extended and developed. In London a District Committee had just been formed. Shop Stewards' Committees in Sheffield, Manchester, Barrow, Leeds and Leicester were planning educational work, and had more or less formally approached the League with a view to co-operation. Everywhere, it was to be hoped, the active workers would enrol themselves in the Plebs League; since, while our aim was that the classes should be maintained and controlled by Labour organizations, there was much to be gained by the existence—and growth—of a central association, having as its sole object revolutionary working-class education, in which every worker for that cause might be linked together, whatever his or her party, section, or organization.

The Executive wished to express their deep regret at the death of Oliver Keighley, killed in France in March last; in him the League lost a keen worker and a good comrade. They regretted also the loss to the movement—only temporarily, it was hoped—of many of its best workers; some in France, or on the way thither, others in Wormwood Scrubbs, Princetown, and other places.

There was every reason to look forward to the coming year with enthusiasm and hope; and in saying this it was necessary to remember that our present success was due to the unfailing courage and hard work of those who had had to face the difficulties of the earlier years.

The resolution accepting the Report and Financial Statement was moved by S. Bradley (Woolwich) seconded by Tom Rees, and unanimously agreed to.

THE NAME OF THE LEAGUE.

The resolution put forward by the E.C. of the C.L.C. League (S. Wales Division)—

That the name of the Plebs League should be changed to the Central Labour College, as being a link with the unofficial life of the College, and conveying to the outsider more information than the present title—

was moved by Mark Starr, and seconded by A. J. Cook. The debate on this question was some what lengthy, Geo. Brown, W. H. Mainwaring, W. W. Craik, J. Reynolds, Geo. Mason, J. F. Horrabin, the Secretary, and others taking part. The movers of the resolution made it clear that there was no question of any "split" on the subject, since they were prepared, if the meeting declared against the suggestion, to recommend to the S. Wales C.L.C. League that the name and objects of the Plebs League be adopted. The feeling of the meeting was undoubtedly against the change of name, primarily because of the vital need for the League to be perfectly free to act independently; and the resolution was defeated.

"METHODS" AND "MANAGEMENT"

The Executive's resolution, moved by Frank Jackson, altering the paragraphs headed "Methods," "Membership," and "Management" (see p. 133, July *Plebs*) in the Constitution of the League, was also discussed at some length; especially the clause recommending the appointment of a Central Executive Committee "consisting of one representative from each District." The principle of district representation was admitted to be eminently desirable, as compared with the existing practice of electing a committee from members residing in one particular area. It was doubted by some speakers, however, whether the League could yet (financially) afford an Executive meeting from various parts of the country; in reply to which objection, the Secretary pointed out that actual meetings would seldom be necessary, the Executive being consultative rather than administrative. It was further urged that, admitting the desirability of an Executive appointed in this way, it would be better to postpone the matter for another year, in order to allow of District (or Divisional) organization being further proceeded with in the meantime; and this consideration decided the meeting (by a small majority) to carry on, for the coming year, with an Executive appointed as heretofore. (The revised Constitution, as eventually agreed to, will be seen on p. 3 of cover).

FUTURE ACTIVITIES.

The remaining resolutions—inviting the C.L.C. Leagues in S. Wales and North-Eastern Districts to amalgamate with the Plebs League; and outlining various schemes for future work, on the suggestion of the Birmingham Social Science Class and the League Executive—were unanimously agreed upon.

ELECTION OF EXECUTIVE AND OFFICIALS.

Mrs. Winifred Horrabin was re-elected Secretary-Treasurer ; J. F. Horrabin, Editor of the Magazine ; and the following were appointed to the Executive Committee:—Frank S. Jackson, B. S. Mackay, Geo. Mason, J. T. Walton Newbold, C. T. Pendrey, Tom Quelch, and C. Terry.

The Secretary moved a very hearty vote of thanks to Messrs. Fox, Jones & Co., (printers of the Magazine) for their loyal assistance in the work of distribution &c., and Mr. and Mrs. Fox briefly responded. A vote of thanks to the Governors of the College for permitting the Meet to be held there was also unanimously carried.

The meeting then adjourned for tea, and thanks are due to those Plebs Leaguers and members of the Women's League who were responsible for the arrangements. In the evening, delegates and friends reassembled, under Ben Mackay's chairmanship, to hear brief but inspiring addresses by John Maclean, Eden and Cedar Paul, and the Editor of the *Socialist*.

The 1917 Meet augurs well for the future of the Plebs League!

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

Militarism and Anti-Militarism. By Dr. Karl Liebknecht. (S.I. Press, Paper, 1/-, Cloth, 2/- Postage 3d.)

The Economics of War. By E. C. Fairchild. (B.S.P., 1d.)

Fabian Research Department, Monthly Circular. (25 Tothill St cet, Westminster, S.W.1. 3/6 per annum, post paid.)

Issued middle of each month. Contains Diary of the Month, Government Department Reports, new Bills, Trade Union and Trade Council Notes, Legal Notes, Labour Abroad, Bibliography, &c. &c. A very useful publication. The current issue contains one curious mis-statement ; in a brief summary of the findings of the Industrial Unrest Commissioners, it is stated that " It is, however, a pity that on the subject of education in S. Wales, while paying a well-deserved tribute to the work of the W.E.A., they all but omitted to mention the Central Labour College, which has been particularly active in S. Wales."

Observations on the Whitley Report. (National Guilds League, 15 Acacia Road, London, N.W.8. 1d.)

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

The Sword or the Cross? How to end the War. By E. C. Beman. (Universal Publishing Co., Chorley, Lancs. 7d., post paid.)

An attempt to arouse the " social conscience " by re-stating " the implications of the Christian religion."

**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.**

News of the Movement

The sales of "that pamphlet" have exceeded our (naturally) sanguine expectations. The first edition of 10,000 has been cleared right out, and nearly 2,000 of the second edition—which we hope will be ready by the time these lines are in print—are already ordered. This has been achieved without any systematic canvassing. If Plebeians everywhere will assist us in such a canvass, we can at once double or treble our present orders. We want the pamphlet putting before T.U. branches, Trades Councils, and Socialist societies everywhere, and this can best be done by local comrades, who will be able to see that the matter comes in for due consideration. Free specimen copies will be gladly supplied for this purpose. Labour men everywhere ought to be interested in this brief account of, and plea for, Labour education. In particular, every S. Wales miner and every Railwayman should know at least as much about the C.L.C.—their own property—as the pamphlet would tell them. (It is unnecessary to point out that we should have to run off a good many editions of 10,000 if every individual proprietor of the College purchased a copy.) The price of paper is still rising; the moral is obvious. There are a good many more than 20,000 intelligent, class-conscious workers in this realm. We want to get at them all. Will readers volunteer for the task of canvassing the movement in their own districts?

* * * * *

Arising out of the discussion at the Annual Meet, we want to proceed with the business of organizing Plebs branches and of linking these up into Districts. Write in to "head office" and get to know who else is moving in your locality. Get in touch with other workers—we shall be twice as strong when we are organized. Please note the amended Constitution (p. 3 of cover) and remember that the annual sub. to the League is 1/-. Those shillings will help us to do things—to make a start with the publishing business, and to push our work in a dozen different ways. But above all start that Branch; get in touch with neighbouring Branches; and lay your plans for an active autumn and winter campaign.

* * * * *

The C.L.C. North of England District are holding their first annual meeting at NEWCASTLE on September 1st. They announce classes for the coming winter on "The History of the State" (six lectures) Independent History (24), Modern Working-class Movement (30) and Economics (33). The Hon. Sec. is T. Ethell, 76 James Street, Newcastle. On September 30th, an Educational Conference, convened by C.L.C.'ers is to take place at Central Hall, Westgate Road, Newcastle, at 2.30 p.m. Speakers, C. T. Cramp (Presdt. N.U.R.) and Sydney Jones, C.C. (Blackwood, Mon.). Will Lawther in the chair.

* * * * *

On August 22nd, Ebby Edwards journeyed down to HUDDERSFIELD, to address the Trades Council on "Working-Class Education." Ebby was in good form, and "a long and interesting debate" (according to the *Huddersfield Worker*) "took place, which rose to a high level of excellence, and was sustained with exceptional ability by several of the younger speakers" The Huddersfield class is going to be a success, and Ebby's visit will serve as a fine send-off. Fred Shaw (B.S.P.) is giving his support and active assistance to the class, and Jesse Townend (1 Market Walk, Huddersfield) is highly—and justifiably—optimistic.

* * * * *

All readers in BOLTON and district interested in the formation of a branch of the Plebs League and the establishment of C.L.C. classes are hereby re-

quested to communicate with J. Leach, 98 Davenport Street, Bolton. We are glad to hear that the N.U.R. in this district is arranging for a C.L.C. class this autumn.

* * * * *

The ROCHDALE class is booming. F. Horsfield (Sec.) writes that not only will their numbers be larger this year than ever before but that they can supply one or two capable lecturers for other classes in the district, if required. IF!! We have already put two or three localities in touch with Rochdale, and hope for good results. A class which—despite the Military Service Acts having removed some of its most active workers—can announce in this way that it has a reserve of trained (and willing) teachers for use where needed, is a success indeed!

* * * * *

A. E. Seabury writes from WARRINGTON that—though they will miss Robt. Holder badly—they intend to maintain and extend the classes in the district this winter. A conference is being called, at which comrades from Widnes, Wigan, St. Helen's, and Earlestown will, it is hoped, be present. All those interested are invited to write to A.E.S., 3 Frederick Street, Latchford, Warrington. We hear from Alex. Evans, that Wigan intends to "line up." Go it, Lancashire.

* * * * *

J. T. Murphy writes that the SHEFFIELD Workers Committee are considering the question of establishing classes. This seems to us to be a right and proper task for the Workers' Committees, as defined in Murphy's excellent pamphlet, to undertake; and we need hardly say that Plebs Leaguers everywhere—and Sheffield Plebeians in particular—will do all in their power to assist. We want to see Chas. Watkins busy in the work for which personality and training have fitted him. . . . The Shop Stewards Committees in MANCHESTER and LEICESTER also have the question of classes under consideration, and, here again, whatever the Plebs League can do, it will do.

* * * * *

GLASGOW C.L.C.—S.L.P.'s Classes' Committee have issued a circular (with the root of the matter in it) and sent it, along with a copy of the Plebs pamphlet, *What Does Education Mean to the Workers?* to T.U., B.S.P. & I.L.P. branches in the West of Scotland. The circular announces a Conference, to be held at the Central Halls, Bath St., at 3 p.m., Sunday, Sept. 16th, with a view to "securing the organization of the West of Scotland by a chain of active classes." J. I. Walton Newbold will speak on behalf of the Plebs, and it is hoped that the attendance of other prominent exponents of working-class education will be secured. We trust that the outcome will be a unifica-

NOW READY.

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST LIBRARY.—III.

THE ECONOMICS OF WAR,

BY E. C. FAIRCHILD.

I.—Essays in Socialism and War By JOHN BRYAN.

II. The Politics of Capitalism. By J. T. WALTON NEWBOLD, M.A.

One Penny Each. Post free, Three halfpence.

Also Read THE CALL

THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST WEEKLY.

Thursdays, One Penny.

3 months, 1/8 post free.

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

tion of the various educational forces in Glasgow. At the Plebs Meet, John Maclean, whom we were proud to have with us, told us something of the work that had already been accomplished on the Clyde. If a joint movement, under the auspices of all the various industrial and political organizations, results from the forthcoming Conference, that work will be increased and multiplied tenfold in the near future. One item on the preliminary agenda is the suggested formation of "an organization calling itself the C.L.C. League." We hope that, if such an organization is formed, it will adopt the name of the Plebs League (Glasgow & West of Scotland). The League Executive has invited the existing C.L.C. Leagues in S. Wales and on the Tyne to change their title in the same way, and the S. Wales delegates at the Annual Meet went back prepared to recommend their organization to do this. Edinburgh C.L.C. Class has already decided to form itself into a branch of the Plebs League. *Labels don't matter vastly—compared with the goods; but, when we are all out to supply the same goods, it would simplify things, and strengthen all our hands, if we all adopted the same label.*

* * * * *

Will comrades in the West & South of Scotland note that Walton Newbold will be available for a fortnight, from September 16th, for addresses to *indoor* meetings on the aims and work of the Plebs League. Write Sec., Plebs League, *re* dates, &c.

* * * * *

A good many Plebeians would be interested to read Robt. Holder's "statement" to the military authorities, which has been printed and circulated by members of Carlisle, No. 3 Branch, N.U.R. Send a stamped addressed envelope to M. Hetherington, 22, Crummock St., Carlisle.

* * * * *

Geo. Brown has been elected Bristol District representative on the national Workers' and Soldiers' Council.

* * * * *

The joint meeting of LONDON Plebs League and friends from other organizations interested in working-class education, held at the College on August 1st, gave every promise of some real work being accomplished this winter. A provisional committee (for the Plebs) was appointed, and this committee has already got into touch with B.S.P., N.U.R., and other representatives, with a view to joint action. A meeting of London Plebs Leaguers is to be held (please book the date) on Sept. 10th, when a good muster is earnestly hoped for. All those desirous of becoming members, or of attending classes, are urged to communicate with the Secretary (*pro tem.*) London District Plebs League—Mrs. Chaytor, North Road House, North Road, Clapham Park, London, S.W. Wake up, London! The meeting will be held at the C.L. College, 13 Penywern Road, Earls Court, at 8 p.m. All those who attend, it will be assumed, are desirous of becoming members of the Plebs League.

GREAT THOUGHTS FROM BARNES.

This war has nothing to do with capitalism.—Rt. Hon. G. N. Barnes, M.P., at Labour Party Conference, August 10th.

He did not agree with the talk about "class-consciousness." He never endorsed the phrase . . . There was something infinitely superior and that was social consciousness.—Rt Hon. G. N. Barnes, M.P., speaking at Ritz Hotel, August 22nd.

The Plebs' Bookshelf

Our friend J. T. Murphy's pamphlet, *The Workers' Committee: An Outline of its Principles and Structure* (Sheffield Workers' Committee, 2d.) was dropped through my letter-box just as I was getting near the final pages of a bulky volume by Robert Michels, Professor of Political Economy at Basle, entitled *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy* (Jarrold, 12/6 net). The fundamental thesis of Michels' book, says a publishers' note,

is that an iron law leads to the formation of an oligarchy in all political parties. . . . He finds in party life a threefold root of oligarchy; in the psychology of the individual; in the psychology of the crowd; and in the social necessity of party organization. His detailed study of the working of the oligarchical tendencies thus originated goes far to explain that failure of democracy . . . which has puzzled and grieved all ardent advocates of social progress

Murphy uses simpler English, but right at the start he gets on to the same problem that worries Michels. His pamphlet begins—

One of the most noticeable features in recent trade union history is the conflict between the rank and file of the trade unions and their officials, and it is a feature which, if not remedied, will lead us all into muddle and ultimately disaster.

Says Michels, in his first chapter—

In theory, the principal aim of socialist and democratic parties is the struggle against oligarchy in all its forms. The question therefore arises how we are to explain the development in such parties of the very tendencies against which they have declared war. To furnish an unprejudiced analytical answer to this question constitutes an important part of the task the author has undertaken.

Says Murphy, in his first paragraph:—

We have not time to spend in abuse; our whole attention must be given to an attempt to understand *why* our organizations produce men (i.e., "leaders") who think in the terms they do, and *why* the rank and file in the workshops think differently.

Murphy quotes Whitman (on "the never-ending audacity of elected persons") and Ibsen at the front of his pamphlet. Michels, strange to say, though the number of his references and quotations is legion, does not mention the author of *An Enemy of the People*. but (p. 54) he quotes Dumas *filis* as a student of "serious social questions" Michels, in 420 pages, discusses the

The Burning Question for all Workers

NOW OUT.

INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM

(What it is, and what it isn't).

Price 2d. Published by the Building Workers' Industrial Union.

Single copies 2½d., post free; or 3/6 per quire of 26 copies. From C. W. TRURAN, B.W.I.U., 440, Harrow Road, Paddington, W.(9); or from J. HAMILTON, 10, Mill Lane, Islington, Liverpool.

Technical and Administrative Causes of Leadership (need for organization, mechanical and technical impossibility of direct government by the masses) ; Psychological Causes of Leadership (establishment of customary right to the office of delegate, the cult of veneration among the masses, need for leadership felt by the mass, &c., &c.) ; Autocratic Tendencies of Leaders (in seven chapters) ; the Exercise of Power and its Psychological Reaction upon the Leaders (Bonapartist ideology, "*Le parti, c'est moi*," ; Social Analysis of Leadership (bourgeois elements in Socialist leadership, social changes resulting from organization, Intellectuals, and the need for them in working-class parties) ; Attempts to Restrict Influence of Leaders (referendum, Syndicalism as prophylactic, Anarchism as prophylactic) ; concluding with Synthesis : The Oligarchical Tendencies of Organization, and a grand 'tabular statement,' or diagram, wherein a number of lines, starting from three points, Individual Psychology, Technical Necessity of Organization, and Psychology of the Masses, all converge—by various subsidiary stages—on to one point, Oligarchy. (The three subsidiary headings of Individual Psychology are worth quoting ; they are (1) Consciousness of Own Worth ; (2) Faculty of Keeping in the Limelight ; (3) Eloquence, good looks, intelligence. One thinks of some of our leaders . . .).

Now you may have observed, from the sentences and chapter-headings above quoted, that Prof. Michels is an adept at the art of stating a fairly obvious fact in very big words and long, involved sentences. Here is a further example (he wants to say that the actual conditions of a wage-earner's life make it difficult for him to devote much time to study) :—

If . . . we commonly find in the international working-class parties it is to the bourgeois refugees that is usually assigned the task of dealing with theoretical problems and in many cases the supreme guidance in matters of practical politics . . . this phenomenon, far from being a *testimonium paupertatis intellectus* on the part of the fighting proletariat, finds a perfectly natural explanation in the economic organization of contemporary production.

A man who writes like that ought to be condemned to a year or two's hard labour at finding, and *expressing*, 'perfectly natural explanations' of obvious social phenomena. And he ought to be denied all self-indulgence in footnotes—Michels makes it almost impossible to see the "fundamental thesis" for the footnotes.* At the end of such a period of training he would probably be able, like Murphy, to say what he has to say in 16 pages (instead of 400) ; and he might also have room, as Murphy has, for some suggested solution of the

* An appropriate place to treat myself to a footnote. On p. 77, Prof. Michels writes :—"Those who aspire to leadership in the labour organizations fully recognise the importance of the oratorical art. In March, 1909, the socialist students of Ruskin College, Oxford, expressed discontent with their professors because these gave to sociology and pure logic a more important place in the curriculum than to oratorical exercises. Embryo politicians the students fully recognised the profit they would derive from oratory in their chosen career. Resolving to back up their complaint by energetic action, they went on strike until they got their own way." Prof. Michels' book is a mine of miscellaneous information, one might almost say gossip, about the international socialist movement ; but if it is all as accurate as this particular passage (as authority for which he quotes the *Westminster Gazette* !) the fewer generalisations based on such "facts" the better

problems he outlines. As it is, he states those problems (O how fully !) and leaves one wondering ' what's the good of anything ' And it is very difficult to grasp his point of view in thus criticising democracy to decide whether he is an Anarchist or a Tory, or both combined, or simply an Intellectual, making a book. The weak point in his argument is his treatment of the " Psychology of the Masses," which he regards throughout as static—fixed and eternal ! He discusses Syndicalism and Anarchism as prophylactics ; but he has no chapter on The Prophylactic of Education. The " oligarchical tendencies of organization " are obvious enough ; but *given an educated rank and file*, are they insuperable ? And may not the very process of checking the oligarchical tendencies of officials, by means of giving more responsibility to the rank and file, itself be an educational process ? Here is Murphy on this same subject —

Real democratic practice demands that every member of an organization shall *participate actively* in the conduct of the business of the society. . . . We desire the mass of men and women to think for themselves, and *until they do this* no real progress is made and democracy becomes a farce. . . .

That is the counterblast to Michel's tale of woe. And because they make this ' active participation ' of the rank and file in the management of their own affairs more possible, the Workers' Committees described by Murphy are one of the most hopeful features of the present-day working-class movement. Don't fail to get his pamphlet.

We shall hope to deal more fully later with Liebknecht's *Militarism and Anti-Militarism*, translated by A. Sirnís, and just published by the S.L. Press. It is hardly necessary to recommend Plebeians to get it at once. The S.L. Press have made a really well-done little volume of it, and are to be cordially congratulated on this, their first (isn't it ?) venture in book, as distinct from pamphlet, publishing. I lent my copy as soon as I received it to a C.O. who was just enjoying the comparative freedom of a few days in the guard-room—between sentences. I should have liked to quote his verdict, but the verdict of the court-martial intervened—and I don't know whether I shall see my Liebknecht again. Perhaps the sergeant of the guard has added it to the barracks library

How these Fabians do love the proletariat. Here is ' Solomon Eagle,' who writes a weekly literary page in the *New Statesman*, remarking (August 11th) in the course of a paragraph on journalism in revolutionised Russia :— " The largest circulation of the post-revolutionary papers is attributed to

READ

THE SOCIALIST

Official Organ of the S.L.P.

for the latest and most accurate views on

SOCIALISM, POLITICS, INDUSTRY.

Monthly, 1d. Yearly, 1/6, post free. From Socialist Labour Press,
50, Renfrew Street, GLASGOW.

Lenin's *now happily defunct* "Pravda," which sold 250,000 copies daily." Perhaps it was pity for a nation so backward as to circulate a quarter-of-a-million copies daily of a Marxist journal which impelled the Fabian Society to send to the rescue Mr. Julius West, whom (in the company of A. M. Thompson) Capt. Tupper graciously allowed to proceed to Petrograd a few weeks ago. Mr. West recently contributed to the *New Statesman* some delightfully detached and impartial impressions of men and things in the Petrograd of to-day. The Bolsheviks he described as "not cordial towards England; they denounce Macdonald and swear by Maclean, *the Clyde deportee*, whom Lenin has been widely advertising." To a gifted young intellectual, perhaps, these troublesome Clyde proletarians are all 'deportees' but such a remark lets down the much-vaunted Fabian reputation for accuracy rather badly.

E. C. Fairchild's *Economics of War*, the new B.S.P. pamphlet, is good propaganda. It goes over much of the same ground as those by Bryan and Newbold, which preceded it; but that same ground can hardly be gone over too often! Fairchild deals with sundry popular "explanations" of the war, turns them inside out, and then goes "over the top" at the heavily fortified positions of Modern Capitalism. I hope a copy has been sent to G. N. Barnes.

W. T. A. Foot (119 Harvist Road, West Kilburn, N.W.6) informs us that all orders for W. W. Craik's *Modern Working-Class Movement* are now being dealt with as rapidly as received. We can supply single copies (from the *Plebs*); orders for quantities should be sent to Foot at above address. Negotiations are now in progress, he tells us, for sending out 3,000 to the order of the Victorian railway men, "down under."

Recent events in Russia—particularly at the Moscow Conference—have justified, in a remarkable way, John Bryan's article in last month's *Plebs* on "The Struggle of Classes in Russia." Compare, for instance, the following words from the *Daily News* Special Correspondent (August 30th):—"Unity has not been attained. It has not been attained because of a conflict which is quite independent of the resistance to Germany, quite independent of the re-establishment of the army's fighting-power. *This conflict is purely one of class interests.*" (A few copies of August *Plebs*, containing Bryan's article, still remain for sale.)

We want, for binding purposes, a few copies of the *Plebs* for Feb., March, April, 1916. Can any reader supply us with a copy or copies? We should be exceedingly grateful, as we are sadly short of those issues—which means, of course, that the surplus copies of the other numbers for that year are practically useless.

J. F. H.

At last! A Pamphlet explanatory of the SHOP STEWARDS,
MOVEMENT

The Workers' Committee

An Outline of its Principles and Structure,

By J. T. MURPHY.

Published by Sheffield Workers' Committee. Single Copies, 2d. (2½d; post paid), 13/4 per 100. Orders and Cash to E. LISMER, 56 Rushdale Road, Meersbrook, Sheffield.

The Plebs League

OBJECT.

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

METHODS

The formation of local branches and classes for the study of social science, in connection with the Central Labour College (now the Labour College), such classes to be maintained and controlled, wherever possible, by Trades Unions, Trades Councils, or other working-class organizations; and the linking-up of these branches into Districts (or Divisions) with a District (or Divisional) Committee appointed by the branches.

The issuing of a monthly magazine, mainly devoted to the discussion of Labour questions, theoretical and practical.

The assistance in every way of the development of the Central Labour College (now the Labour College), or of any other working-class educational institution, and their maintenance of a definitely working-class 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 general expenses, publications, &c.

All expenses incurred by District organizations shall be met by an additional payment from members within that area.

MANAGEMENT.

An Executive, together with a Secretary-Treasurer and Magazine Editor, elected at the Annual Meet.

The Plebs Magazine.

The Magazine is published monthly, price 2d. (2½d. post paid).

Subscriptions (payable in advance): six months 1/3,
Yearly 2/6.

P.O.'s TO BE FORWARDED TO

(Mrs.) **WINIFRED HORRABIN,**

127 Hamlet Gardens,

(Sec.-Treasurer).

Ravenscourt Park, London, W. 6

The Plebs League

(See Constitution on previous page).

Secretary-Treasurer :

Mrs. W. HERRABIN.

Magazine Editor :

J. F. HERRABIN.

Executive Committee :

FRANK S. JACKSON

B. S. MACKAY

GEO. MASON

J. T. WALTON NEWBOLD

C. T. PENDRY

TOM QUELCH

C. TERRY

The Plebs Magazine

is obtainable from :—

LONDON. MR. HENDERSON, 66 Charing Cross Road, W.C.2.

B.S.P. Office, 21a Maiden Lane, Strand, W.C.2

GLASGOW. S.L. Press, 50 Renfrew Street.

Herald League, 94 George Street.

Reformers' Bookstall, 126 Bothwell Street.

EDINBURGH. J. NIXON, 16 Waverley Park, Abbeyhill.

NORTHUMBERLAND. SEC. C.L.C. CLASSES, Socialist Society Rooms,
and DURHAM. Royal Arcade, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

EBBY EDWARDS 3, Duke Street, Ashington,
Northumberland.

W. LAWTHOR, 6 Wear Street, Chopwell, Co.
Durham.

BURY. J. AINSWORTH, 70 Shepherd Street,

BRISTOL. G. W. BROWN, 112 Bishop Road, Bishopston.

DONCASTER. W. E. CRAWFORD, 33 Mutual Street

WIGAN. A. EVANS, 62 Clayton Street.

ROCHDALE. F. HORSFIELD, 145a Yorkshire Street.

BOLTON. J. LEACH, 98 Davenport Street.

MANCHESTER. W. LANDER, 13 Dettingen Street, Duchy Road, Pendleton.

HULL. R. MELL, 54 Carlton Street.

SHEFFIELD. C. WATKINS, Handsworth.

WOOLWICH. C. T. PENDREY, 75 Arsenal Road, Well Hall, S.E.9.

SHREWSBURY. W. H. PRATT, 12 Havelock Road.

CHESTERFIELD. F. ROGERS, 41 St. Mary's Gate.

WARRINGTON. A. E. SEABURY, 3 Frederick Street, Latchford.

BIRMINGHAM. F. B. SILVESTER, 8 Evelyn Road, Sparkhill.

HUDDERSFIELD. J. TOWNEND, 4 Royd's View, Lowerhouses Road,
Quarumby.

HALIFAX. J. W. THOMAS, 154 Hansom Lane.

S. WALES. J. GERRY, 31 Salisbury Road, Barry, Glam.

T. E. HUGHES, 9 Dyfodwig Street, Treorchy, Rhondda.

W. H. MAINWARING, 60 Brynhyfryd, Blaenclydach, Tony-
pandy, Rhondda.

W. H. OWENS, 16 St. Anne's Road, Gilfach, Bargoed, Glam.

And numerous other agents

Or from SEC., PLEBS LEAGUE, 127, HAMLET GARDENS, RAVENS-
COURT PARK, LONDON, W. (6).