

ORGAN OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF  
LABOUR COLLEGES

# THE PEOPLE'S

Monthly, 4d.

OCTOBER, 1929

Keeping Labour under Control



*See Leading Article*

N. C. L. C., 15 SOUTH HILL PARK GARDENS, LONDON, N.W.3



Old Gent.: "Seems to me we'll 'ave to give our workers some more o' this 'ere University Education."

## Some Workers

Are sometimes in a Union and  
sometimes not.

✪ ✪ ✪

## Some Workers

Sometimes vote Labour and  
sometimes don't.

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They've been mis-educated. What they lack is a sound education  
from the working-class point of view.

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# THE PLEBS

Organ of the National Council of Labour Colleges

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## STRIKE OFF THE SHACKLES!

THIS issue of *Plebs* appears at the period when the winter classes are opening. In consequence, it will greet many new readers for the first time. We cannot do better than express the hope that their enthusiasm for the *Plebs* will even outclass that of the pioneers who introduced this magazine to a Labour world to which the idea of independent working-class education was strange and unbelievable.

The *Plebs* is the father of the whole Labour College movement in this country. It has, we believe, made a bigger contribution to the idea of independent working-class education than any journal published in the international Labour movement.

The Labour movement has advanced to the extent that it has grown in class-consciousness. No class can revolutionise society unless it has developed an independent outlook, and so long as it remains in the intellectual leading strings of the existing governing-class, whether that be feudal or capitalist, it is doomed to remain a class of hewers of wood and drawers of water.

### Minding our own Business

As in this country Keir Hardie championed independent working-class political action at a time when the average organised worker and his leaders were tied to Liberalism and political co-operation with the employers, so has the *Plebs* championed the idea of independent working-class education. After years of fighting against Keir Hardie's view,

## PLEBS BOOKS

See Outside Back Cover

the whole Trade Union movement in the end had to recognise the necessity for the workers minding their own business politically. It has not yet, despite many honourable exceptions, realised the equal importance of the workers minding their own business educationally.

One reason for that is that the active trade unionist has in the nature of things usually been so busy dealing with immediate trade union problems that he has often not had the time to see that an enormous number of his difficulties arise through the mis-education of the workers and that that mis-education is an essential part of the self-protective business of capitalism. A further, though much less important reason, is that admittedly some of the exponents of I.W.C.E. have unconsciously rendered disservice to the movement by attaching to it passing policies that have not been an essential part of it and have consequently prejudiced fair consideration at the hands of the unconverted. The average man, after all, hates to meet a new idea and seizes any excuse for dodging it.

### Education for the Old Order

The third reason is that the British governing class has never lacked representatives who appreciate how vital it is to control the education of the workers. As the demand for education grew in the working-class ranks, the governing class has not hesitated to spend large sums of money both out of its own pockets and out of taxes to inculcate in the minds of the workers the social theories necessary to ensure the continuance of the present order of society. It is true that with its growth, the working-class movement becomes more and more sceptical of the governing-class's direct methods of education. With an adaptability that does it credit, the governing class, however, has surmounted this difficulty for the time being by retiring into the background and, by means of grants and through its own trained educationists from the universities, maintained control over the education provided by bodies that have the *appearance* of being purely working-class.

### Fogging the Issue

With a class-cunning that is difficult to beat, the governing-class has not made the mistake of keeping too tight a rein on such educational bodies. So long as it was sure that 90 per cent. of the education provided was sound from the governing-class point of view, it was prepared to allow the W.E.A., for example, to employ an occasional Cole, who, perhaps, nursed the mistaken idea that he could hoodwink the governing-class into financing real working-class education on a big scale. Moreover the governing-class was and is content to permit such bodies to press upon it demands for raising the school age and for improved teaching conditions generally, things desired by the Labour movement but undesirable to the governing-class from the point of cost.

The consequence of this policy is that it is much more difficult for the workers in this country than in some others to realise that orthodox education in the social sciences, no matter who doles it out, is the biggest enemy of the working-class movement.

### The Unseen Enemy.

This brings us to the *Plebs'* own special job. That job is to make the workers realise that the citadel of capitalism is in their own minds. It is not lack of raw materials, it is not lack of technical knowledge, it is not lack of energy, it is not lack of thinking capacity that stands between the workers and the new social system for which economic conditions clamour. It is the mass of pro-capitalist, anti-working-class ideas in the heads of the workers themselves; it is the success of the governing-class educational policy as expressed through schools, universities, "working-class" educational bodies, cinemas, pulpits, theatres, books and through every other idea-channel under governing-class influence.

The influence of the *Plebs* on working-class educational policy depends on the extent of its circulation and the enthusiasm of its readers. Who will help us in our great task of striking off the intellectual shackles that bind the working-class to the wheels of Capitalism?

# AFTER TRADE UNIONISM—WHAT?

## *Is Douglasism Marxism?*

By H. NORMAN SMITH

[In the August PLEBS, H. Norman Smith (Lobby Correspondent of the DAILY HERALD) writing on "After Trade Unionism—What?" suggested that the fundamental cure for our present industrial ills was control of credit and the creation of purchasing power for the people by the Government.

In last month's issue, A. Woodburn, writing under the title of "Currency Will o' the Wisps," attacked Mr. Norman Smith's view. Below Mr. Smith counter-attacks all along the front. Mr. Woodburn will reply in next month's PLEBS.

This discussion raises some very vital questions for Trade Unionists. PLEBS readers should make it widely known. Back numbers may be had for 5d, post free.]

MR. Woodburn writes of currency schemes as "Will o' the Wisps," and he clearly underestimates the power of finance-capital. In this respect he is like most militant trade unionists, to whom "the master-class," meaning employers, is the enemy to be fought. In the same way employers, under economic pressure, strike at the workers' wages, and do not dream of demanding that the bankers should rationalise financial conceptions.

Truly employers, as such, are victims of economic deadlock, a misfortune they share with workers. Trade unionists, obsessed with the Socialist panacea of nationalisation, imagine that the ownership of industrial capital, in itself, confers economic power. Never was greater delusion. Ask British mineowners or Lancashire millowners exactly how much economic power is enjoyed by industrial capitalists who "own" mines or mills for the output of which there is no market.

We know nowadays that nearly all the industrial struggles in this country since the war have been the reaction of industry to the deflation policy of the finance-capitalists. Trade was necessarily stagnant in Britain after the bankers began in 1920

to deflate, because deflation means a falling price-level; and obviously manufacturers will not produce this month at costs of production represented by  $x$  when they must sell next month at a price level representing something below  $x$ . I insist that almost all the wage-cutting of the post-1920 period was the outcome of deflation; and the necessity for this wage-cutting was imposed on the industrial employers because the bankers (with the connivance of the political government) had decreed that the value of the currency should be raised.

### Who is the Enemy?

The unions were bound to be beaten when the fight took place on a falling market, and that is why deflation is bad for trade unionism. Yet during those struggles the trade union leaders and the "rebel" fighters of the rank-and-file acted and talked as though the wage-cutting employer, and not the deflating banker, was the enemy; and only in the past three years has the Labour Movement even begun to awaken to the fact that finance-capital is a force to be reckoned with. (See the banking supplement to *Labour and the Nation*; also Mr. Bevin's speech at the Blackpool Conference of the Labour Party, 1927).

In the light of all this, Mr. Woodburn's championship of the gold standard becomes difficult to understand; for, by common consent, the earth has not got enough gold resources to enable that standard to function in a world of increasing productivity and rising population. Why, at Genoa Conferences and in Young Plans, do bankers scheme measures for "economising" gold? Because they know that unless the gold standard be virtually abandoned (and the U.S.A. has already substantially modified it) the world will be faced with a steadily declining price level—that is to say, with the very conditions that stereotype trade depression and ensure the defeat of trade



unionism on the industrial field. Even bankers are scared lest the unions, under the spur of continual defeat, be driven to realise who is the true enemy.

### What is Douglasism ?

Mr. Woodburn, in criticising Douglas, makes the same facile but erroneous assumption that the bankers choose to make, namely, that Douglasism is inflation. The bankers, at any rate, cannot plead the excuse that they do not know better. Inflation is produced when the currency supply is increased without the goods supply being correspondingly increased ; it results directly from the ordinary working of the law of supply and demand. The Douglas scheme is a piece of financial or accounting technique for endowing *all citizens, as consumers*, with a supply of socially-created currency while, at the same time, introducing a reformed banking procedure that will stop the price level from rising, or will even depress it.

This being so, inflation is by hypothesis excluded from the argument ; and it is open to Mr. Woodburn either to abandon all his contentions so far as they rest on inflation, or else to challenge the actual Douglas technique.

Now the Douglas scheme entails largely-increased production and consumption ; and it rests on the certainty that the earth's natural resources and man's productive plant are both seriously under-employed. *The war taught us that production and consumption can be tremendously expanded even when 5,000,000 men are "on the dole" so far as industry is concerned, provided there is a ready-made market for the goods.* It is no answer to say that we are still paying for the war. In the physical and scientific sense you cannot consume in advance of production ; and in the same sense there are no real costs of production once the process of production is completed. The munitions, etc., were consumed while the war was on ; and in reality (if not in current financial sense) were paid for while the war was on.

So the Douglasite says : "Do not let employers and workers fight over the present absurdly limited product of industry ; let

them, instead, increase the product and at the same time take steps, by adopting rationalised finance, to ensure the full distribution of the product."

### The Little or the Lot ?

Such a policy is not against the human nature of anyone. Even employers would sooner see their factories at full blast than under-employed. Unhappily the bankers have managed to put across a scarcity complex, whereby workers and employers wrangle over the little that is produced, because both think more is not available.

Let the people as consumers, not as workers, be the instrument of economic change. Marx and Douglas have much in common. Both insist on the Materialist Conception of History (and who else does ?). Douglas's "A plus B" is only Marx's familiar dictum that wages approximate to the bare cost of subsistence. Marx's "surplus-value" is Douglas's "B-cost." Marx and Douglas agree about the economic causes of modern war (again, who else does ?). Douglas, in short, is Marx brought up-to-date in the light of finance-capital's usurpation of industrial capital's supremacy.

That the touchstone should be the consumer function, and not the producer function, offends the prejudices of many trade unionists, though it might delight the same men in their capacity as Co-operators. I take it as axiomatic that, as industry becomes more and more mechanised, so the chances of a successful general strike will recede ; and certainly Mr. Woodburn's claim that to-day the trade union movement "defends wage standards as well as ever it did" looks pretty sick beside the plain facts of diminished membership, broken morale, shattered wages, open shop and overt intimidation.

### The Leisure State or the Work State

It is for the consumer, and nobody else, that industry exists ; and our goal should be the Leisure State, not the Work State. Scientific discovery and engineering progress applied to the earth's resources would not only enable production and consumption to attain to the standards conceived by the

old Socialist dreamers, but also would emancipate the masses from precisely that function of work that modern trade unionism seeks to glorify.

To sum up. While trade union leaders are talking as though our aim should be to enable Britain, by rationalisation, to compete successfully with foreigners for export markets, Douglas would have us begin by

producing for our own home market, and distributing the product by means of a rationalised financial technique. Then by our example we should do more for internationalism in ten years than present methods are likely to accomplish in a century; while on the other hand the export idea implied in rationalisation would serve to accentuate international animosities.

# LABOUR IN THE UNITED STATES

By CARA COOK

(Brookwood Labour College, U.S.A.)

## I.

**F**IRST, it may be well to recall briefly the industrial background on which this problem rests, for it is a very different background from that of any other industrial country. American industry was affected from its beginning by two factors—first, the abundance of raw materials, and second, the scarcity of the labour supply. The result of this was an early introduction of machinery and its development towards mass production. That was the only way to secure a high rate of output per worker, at a reduced cost of production, and the enormous profits which have been the amazing offspring of American industry.

Mass production and standardisation in turn brought a division of labour, the growth of an unskilled class of workers, and, again, increasing mechanisation. Indeed, these items cannot easily be separated; they form a vicious circle, each augmenting the other.

During the war, production in America, as in every industrial country, received a tremendous impetus. War needs brought mass output and efficiency to the front as never before. Labour enjoyed greater power and higher wages than it had ever known. A new slogan crept in—"reduced overhead"—and, until Labour began to lose its wage gains, this reduced overhead was secured first by increasing production at a lower unit cost, and second, increased sales. The first gave birth to the so-called Taylor system of efficiency, and the second brought in the twin arts of advertising and high

pressure salesmanship—see any copy of the *Saturday Evening Post* for illustrations!

The Taylor system, as you know, was the analysis into their elemental motions of workers' operations. The immediate result was an intensification of labour, as waste motions were eliminated, and an increase in machinery; for it was easier, the nearer you came to simple motions, to discover a machine that could do them more quickly.

### Payment by Group Result

The result of this, in turn, was the conveyor, or belt system, such as we know it in the automobile factories, where, as one writer puts it, "men must keep pace with the inflexible routine of industry's master ferris wheel," and the old system of payment by individual result, under the Taylor regime, becomes a payment by group result, at the pace set by the power house.

Finally, to take care of the ever-increasing product, sales experts evolved the Greatest Little Idea on Earth, the instalment system of buying. Credit purchases were not unknown before the war, but the concerted effort to put across the idea of anything from five cents to \$500 down, and the rest "at your convenience," did not take hold until the 1921 business slump shifted the emphasis to increased sales. And so we find 1928 a record year not only for production and profits, but for retail sales.

One expert economist hired by the General Motors Company, one of the biggest in-

stalment agencies, estimates that this method of hire-purchase extends to only about 7% of the consumers, but there is no doubt that it is spreading rapidly, and, of course, in those wage-earning groups where incomes are nearest the margin.

### Speed Up

But, it seems, we have not yet reached the end of our inventiveness. There is a new magic phrase in American industry to-day, capturing the imagination of the scientific engineers and arousing an unexpected vestige of militant trade union protest, and it is known as "speed-up." What are the evidences of speed-up in American industry to-day? I shall cite just a few examples.

The New Bedford textile strike of last spring involved 27,000 workers, who struck for six months against a 10% wage reduction. They cut the reduction down to 5½%, but six weeks after the strike ended, several thousand workers had not been taken back; some mills had been shut down entirely, and there was an immediate demand in others for speed-up. Weavers were asked to operate more looms than before, and more frames were crowded on to the spinners.

Not long after the end of the strike, agents from the so-called Barnes Textile Service introduced the old system of stop-watch speed-up, under the new-fangled name of "labour extension." It was claimed for the service that it would displace 20% of the skilled weavers. The idea was to take away all except strictly weaving processes, and let the subsidiary motions be done by less skilled workers at lower pay. After establishing by a stop-watch what was called "the unit of human power measurement, or B," the base rate of pay was calculated, and then it was up to the worker to speed up in an effort to earn a small bonus on this rate. Southern mill owners have also become interested in this service, and others like it. It is an eleventh hour resort in one of the most inefficient and exploitive industries in America.

One of the newer textile industries, rayon, is beginning to suffer from speed-up. During a recent strike of women rayon workers in



From the *Locomotive Engineers' Journal*.

Ohio, posters were displayed stating "65 spindles is hell; 95 is murder." Besides more spindles to operate, the workers were threatened with a piece-rate decrease from 4d to 3d a pound. Speed-up always seems to bring rate reductions in its wake.

Rayon plants figure in the recent epidemic of bitter strikes in the Southern States. The textile industry has slowly been shifting from the Northern industrial States, with their cheap water power, to the Southern States, with their cheap labour power and lower standards of protective legislation. The answer of Southern workers—a small, organised section only—has been a series of sporadic strikes, that started in cotton and rayon mills of the Carolinas and Tennessee, and were aimed primarily against speed-up and stretch-out systems. Once started, the strike fever spread rapidly, and the State militia with their tear bombs, the companies with their machine guns, and the 100% American citizens with their kidnappings and threats to tar and feather and even lynch union leaders, gave it such publicity as to bring the matter before the National Congress. We Americans don't go in much for militant strikes, but when we do, we provide all the added attractions!



### When Two Plus Two Don't Equal Four

Another instance was the silk strike of 1924 in Paterson, N. J. That was directed against the introduction of the multiple loom system. It was lost, and those who went back to operate four looms instead of two, and turned out twice as much product, found their wages had *not* doubled, but that their piece-rate was cut instead. Now, in many shops, a gradual lengthening of hours on the plea of temporary overtime (which often becomes permanent) and progressive piece-rate decreases, have brought it about that many now earn less for operating four looms than they previously did for operating two.

Robert W. Dunn has written a book on speed-up in the automobile factories, where youth is at a premium because it can stand the pace better. He cites figures to show that in the Hudson motor plant the assembly belt moves about 13 feet a minute, 10 feet a minute faster than it moved 10 years ago. In the Ford plant in 1919, on certain conveyor lines, the unfinished motors moved at the rate of 40 an hour by a given point; by 1925 this had increased to 60 an hour. On another line the rate had increased from 120 an hour to 180. As a result, in 1925, 31,200 cars a week were being turned out with the same machinery which had turned out only 25,000 before. And this increase was due directly to speeding up the motors that moved the conveyors. This speed-up takes on many forms. Besides speeding up the conveyors, the men are made to step along with the belts, the number of workers is reduced, and the amount of output maintained with those left by group incentive systems, such as the gang bonus and other systems of wage payment.

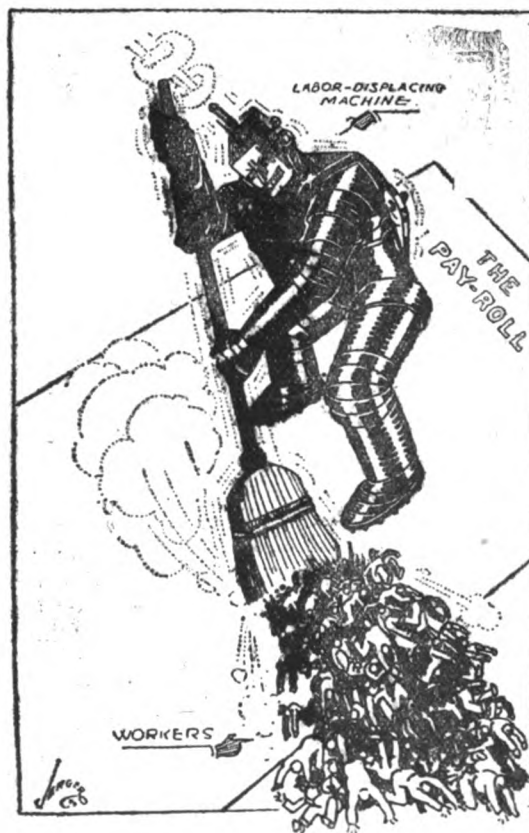
Other observers of conditions in the automobile industries put the speed-up as the primary complaint of auto-workers, and the chief issue on which to appeal to them with organisation propaganda. They comment on the atmosphere among motor shop workers, one of constant fear that they cannot keep up the pace, and will be fired. It is as much as your job is worth to mention a union, for a network of "service men" are on the job to weed out "agitators" and

"reds" and promote welfare schemes to pacify the employees.

The most fatal obstacle to organisation, however, is the comparatively high wages, although some competent observers maintain that these are a myth. If a man *can* stick the pace at 12 or 14 hours a day, and 50 hours a week, he can make his 6, 7 or 8 pounds a week—but to what end, if the belt finally wears him out as it does so many?

The failure of the 1927 coal strike, when the miner's basic wage of 31/3 a day was lost has been followed by severe unemployment in the coal industry, but in many areas *increased* production of coal is reported. Again speed-up and the introduction of mining machinery are the explanations. In eastern Ohio, an important anthracite area,

### WIPING THEM OFF THE PAY ROLL



From the American Loco. Engineers' Journal

the monthly output is now averaging 200,000 tons more than in 1927 before the strike, with 2000 fewer miners employed, and these under non-union conditions. Ohio operators are predicting that mine machinery will halve the present force again.

Perhaps this is enough to indicate that "speed-up" is the new industrial slogan in America, and it is in this field that American efficiency engineers are making their special contribution to the present world industrial tendency which we speak of as rationalisation.

### Mechanisation

Inseparable from speed-up is the problem of mechanisation, and here too, I think, American industrialists carry off the palm. Not only have they a mechanical inventiveness born of an insatiable desire for profits, but there is an experimentalism in American industry which makes the adoption of new machinery and the scrapping of old an accepted procedure. It's a national characteristic, I suppose, a sort of gambling spirit that simply doesn't exist in England. I have seen this spirit struggling to break through on the faces of people standing before the automatic food machines which are now springing up here and there over London, but the only time I ever saw one used was when a couple of American students came by and one of them put in a sixpence for an apple, saying, "Here, let's show 'em how it's done."

### Unemployment

We have now come to the heart of our problem, and it's just the same as Great Britain's—unemployment. For the moment it is an intermittent unemployment, born of prosperity rather than depression, but there is every indication that it will persist and even increase, and to the man out of work it doesn't matter much whether his neighbour is well or badly off.

Yes, it does matter to a certain extent; he can live in a sort of reflected glory for a time, borrowing from friends or relatives, picking up odd jobs now and then, using up the savings in the family stocking, but that can't go on indefinitely, and while the employed may be earning more than ever

before, their numbers grow fewer and fewer, while the unemployed army is increasing.

It is big enough to be called an army in the U.S. now. Since the beginning of 1926, factory employment has, with a few exceptions, steadily decreased, a decrease varying from 10% to 22% in those States keeping employment statistics.

In the winter of 1927-28 estimates of total unemployed workers ranged from 2 to 6 millions, with probably 4,000,000 somewhere near the correct figure—a percentage not far from that of England's unemployed. The picture would be even blacker if it were not for sensational increases in some industries, such as automobiles, building trades, hotel workers, life insurance, radio and personal services.

Railroad employment contributes one of the largest shrinkages, about 300,000 workers being laid off in the last six years. Coal-mining has remained fairly stationary until the recent strike, but the actual output of mines between 1920 and 1927 *increased* by 20 per cent. Agriculture presents the most alarming figures. Between 1920 and 1928, about 3,800,000 persons left the farms, and something like a million and a quarter of these were actually agricultural employees.

But—and this is an interesting point, which I am taking from Professor Sumner Slichter of Cornell University—it is not yet proven that these decreases are due chiefly to mechanisation. Three-fourths of the shrinkage in factory employment, Prof. Slichter points out, is in industries affected not by technical changes but by contracting markets. This is certainly true of the coal industry. Agricultural depression and not farm machinery is the evil spirit operating in agriculture. That is, people are not demanding as much from these industries as formerly, and it is this contraction of demand, together with the increased productivity per worker, that is causing unemployment in these industries.

Prof. Slichter goes on to point out that, if the public is spending more than ever before, but on different things, it means a *shift* of workers, and temporary, rather than permanent, unemployment. Such a shift, moreover, involves reductions in regular staff as well as the lay-off of wage-earners,

and this often means hardships to the older, less efficient staff men, who expected to stick it until they died or were pensioned off.

Whatever the ultimate result of this shift will be, the present adjustment remains a problem, so important as to occupy the attention of a Senate Committee on Education and Labour. It recently reached the remarkable conclusion that maintaining steady work for our citizens is a "very live issue and will continue to be so until it has been solved"!

I would like to point out here that everything I have said so far deals entirely with the production side of industry—output, and I realise that is only one phase of rationalisation. But I have conceived it as my job to emphasise those aspects in which America exceeds or differs from other industrial countries, and, as I said before, rationalisation in America has not yet to any great extent gone beyond the production side. Such problems as specialisation by certain factories in products particularly suited to them, the closing down of inefficient plants, improved marketing processes, regularisation of prices and limitation of output, have hardly touched American industry in the way they have German.

### **"To Merge or Not to Merge?"**

When it comes to the linking up of industries into larger economic units, we *have* had considerable experience, and the question of mergers is a moot one to-day. As one writer has put it, "to merge or not to merge, that is the question. Whether 'tis better to suffer the torments of competition and the dangers of individual strength, or lose one's individuality in the benefits to be derived from union with others."

Such combination, however, has been directed almost entirely towards financial control, rather than economic reorganisation, and has been carried on in league with the bankers rather than the industrial engineers. Statistics continue to tell appalling stories about the concentration of control in iron,

### A WORD TO PEDANTS

*"The acquisition of knowledge for its own sake was no more laudable than the accumulation of wealth for its own sake. The intellectual snob was as unlovely a specimen of humanity as the grasping miser."—Mr. A. E. Evans in his Presidential Address at the Annual Conference of the Association of Teachers in Technical Institutions.*

steel, automobiles and electrical industry, and give figures like these:—six companies control one-third of the water power in the U.S.; eight companies control one-third of the anthracite coal; two companies half the iron ore deposits and two companies half the copper deposits.

Such combinations have developed either by openly defying or avoiding by underground methods the anti-trust legislation of the late 19th century, passed under the prevailing philosophy that "competition is the life of trade." Much of this still persists; indeed the American manufacturer is still at heart individualistic. He dreams of discovering some new gadget on which he will have a monopoly and make enormous profits. The poor immigrant boy's rise to be soap king or tin plate magnate still occurs often enough to keep such hopes fresh, and this "get rich quick" attitude is essentially individualistic; you don't want to get rich in company with others, for then you *may* not get quite as rich as you would by yourself.

The size of the U.S. must be taken into account here too. Individualism, among management or workers, dies out more slowly in a country 3000 miles across than in a compact State. Likewise, the character of our national federation, with its 48 separate States, each having its own legislative powers, is an enormous barrier to the German type of rationalised industry.

Next month I shall deal with the American Labour Movement.

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## **THE GENERAL ELECTION SHOWED THAT THERE WERE**

**8,000,000 wish-bones in the Labour Movement.**

**See that everyone is fitted with a back bone.**

# MARX—THE COMPASS OF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

By Dr. OSKAR LANGE

[*Dr. Oskar Lange is a Polish Socialist. He is on a visit to this, the oldest capitalist country. Those who were at the summer school will recall that he chaired for Maurice Dobb. We hope to arrange for him to give a series of lectures to PLEBS readers in London.*]

**D**URING his lifetime Marx was regarded merely as a revolutionary agitator, the great importance of his scientific work being scarcely realised. His chief work, *Capital*, for example, was quite ignored when it appeared. But circumstances have changed thoroughly. In Russia Marxism has become something like an official State philosophy; in Germany and in Austria it is much discussed, as scarcely any other scientific theory ever has been; in Italy, in France and in Poland it has made the deepest impression on men of science. Marxist theories may be regarded as the greatest achievement in social science, or as completely erroneous and misleading, but they cannot be ignored. As in philosophy one cannot make the slightest step without a knowledge of the tremendous work of Kant and without having taken a definite position towards his work, similarly in social science one cannot get on without a thorough knowledge of Marx. Whether you are an admirer or an opponent of Marx, you must know his work. Marx is more and more overshadowing our whole thinking on social matters.

## Marx's Discovery

And what is the secret source of this increasing importance of Marx for our social theories and for our social practice? It is simply the fact that Marx discovered that the social activity of man may be founded, like modern industry, on scientific knowledge. Marx did for the social relations of men what

Francis Bacon did for the relation of man to Nature. As Bacon showed how man may achieve by practical application of scientific principles a control and mastery over Nature, so Marx showed that, not only does natural science have its practical application, its technique, but that social science has its technique too, this technique of social science being Socialism. He showed that just as man has gained a marvellous mastery over Nature by the application of natural science, he may in a similar way gain a full control and mastery over the forces of society by organising them upon a scientific basis. Of course there was another one who had the same idea. It was the great French philosopher, Auguste Comte. He, too, recognised that, in the same way as man has by science achieved control over Nature, he may get with the aid of social science control over society. But Marx not only developed this idea, he also, by his scientific investigations, has shown the way to realise it, and that to realise it is the special task of the great social movement of the working class. Thus he has established the close intricate interconnection between social science and the Labour Movement, which is the outstanding feature of Marxian Socialism.

At present the contradiction in the Capitalist system is more obvious than ever. This system founds industry (the relation between man and nature) upon the most marvellous achievements of natural science, but does not organise social relations (relations between men) upon a scientific basis. It is the basic contradiction of the present social order that, while rationalising the technique of production to the utmost, it does not rationalise society itself in a scientific way. As this contradiction becomes more and more evident, the interest in Marx and Marxism increases.



## The Wine of Life

As the interest in Marxism grows, it is quite natural that the interest in the man, whose thoughts are becoming now more and more important, should be increasing too. As a result of this increasing interest we have already three excellent biographies of Marx, two of which appeared last year. The oldest (published in 1918) is up till now, in many respects, the best of them and was written by the famous German Socialist thinker and historian, Franz Mehring. It is really an admirable book, not only because of the huge amount of historical and philosophical learning it contains, but also because it was written by a congenial spirit. Like Marx, Mehring was trained thoroughly in German philosophy; like Marx he is a scholar of great learning, and, most important of all, like Marx, a keen and hearty revolutionary fighter, a man for whom the participation in the class struggle was the very delight of life.

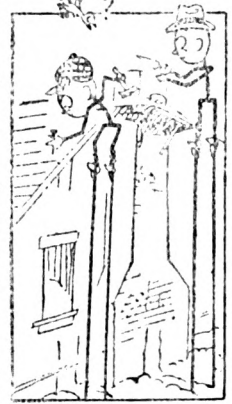
One of the two more recent biographies was written by the well-known German philosopher, Karl Vorlaender. A typical book from a learned scholar, very reliable, full of historical detail, all accessible sources fully exhausted, just a book of a German professor. Quite a different character, however, has the third book, published about a year ago in Germany and now translated into English—*Karl Marx, His Life and Work* (by Otto Ruehle; Allen & Unwin, 15/-).

## Marx for the Plain Man

The translators, Eden and Cedar Paul, have made a good choice in choosing for translation the book of Ruehle. Though its scientific value cannot be compared with that of the books of Mehring and Vorlaender, yet it has one considerable advantage, it is very popular. It is accessible to any reader, though he may have not the slightest notion about Marx and Marxism. Another advantage of the book is that it is not only a description of the life of Marx, but also a very simple, and yet very interesting, exposition of the Marxian theories. I should not hesitate for a moment in recommending this book as an introduction to the study of

## THE RISE OF LABOUR

A CONTRACTOR on a Toronto job, according to the "Locomotive Engineers' Journal" (U.S.A.) recently ordered his carpenters to wear six-foot stilts so that he would not have to erect scaffolding. The contractor may have thought he was giving Labour a rise. The men apparently thought he was taking a rise out of Labour for they refused to don the stilts and left the job. Whether this ends the matter remains to be seen. Perhaps in a few years time we shall see members of the A.U.B.T.W. and A.S.W. working as shown in the sketch. The new method might have good results for trade union organisation, as an organiser on the job might "accidentally" knock against the stilts of the "nons."



Marxism. Ruehle expounds the theories of Marx, together with the dramatic life of their author. Thus these theories get a breath of freshness and seem full of life. A further advantage of the book is that it contains ample extracts of Marx's writings, thus giving to the reader a direct acquaintance with the chief parts of the work of Marx.

Mehring's book was a homage done to the great thinker, and especially to the great fighter Marx. His book was an excellent appraisal of the great man and of the great revolutionary. But in his sympathetic appreciation Mehring has the tendency to make Marx a hero, a hero almost of the kind that historians make of Caesar, of Luther, or of Napoleon—or of Charles Peace. In reading the book of Mehring you sometimes may think that it has been written by the hero-worshipper Carlyle, and not by a follower of the materialist interpretation of



history. Ruehle, on the contrary, pitilessly destroys any legend, any myth. He shows Marx as he really was, not a hero, but a man, with all the weakness and faults of human nature. Ruehle's only aim is the naked, historical truth. He endeavours to make us understand Marx as a man, to understand his character and his mentality. To this purpose he approaches with the psychoanalytical method of the Viennese psychologist, Alfred Adler. He suggests that Marx was a man bodily sick and mentally affected with a neurosis which produced a constant feeling of inferiority. From this standpoint he tries to understand the personality of Marx. I think the reader will find this application of psychoanalysis rather rough and crude, and the statement regarding Marx as a neurotic at least exaggerated. Yet it must be admitted that the mentality of Marx presents a psychological problem; to realise this it is sufficient to recall how Marx used to treat his adversaries and how quarrelsome he was, or to read any of his polemics.

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The exposition of the Marxian theories in Ruehle's fine book is excellent, especially when he restates the real meaning of the materialist interpretation of history, which so often has been thoroughly misrepresented even by Marxists. It was of these that Marx once said angrily, "For my part, I am no Marxist." What Ruehle presents is not one of the many vulgarisations of Marxism which have completely misunderstood the theories of the master. On the materialist conception of history he writes: "Those who advocated the materialist interpretation of history never denied the influence of the mind, never ignored the power of ideas, never underestimated the importance of the mental or spiritual factor in the course of history. On the contrary, when recognising that history is made by human beings, they recognised in these human beings the importance of all human attributes, including, therefore, mind, intelligence, consciousness, and ideas. What they were up in arms against was the notion that the phenomena of a purely mental world, as set apart by German ideologists in the form of an "absolute idea," a "moral ego," or something of the kind, should be regarded primarily and abstractly as the essential factor of historical evolution."

### **To-Day's Great Fetish**

The reader who has no acquaintance at all with the economic theories of Marx will perhaps find it a little difficult to follow the chapter on *Capital*. But, in reading it carefully, he will be rewarded for his fatigue by the fine treatment of the theory of the "fetishistic character of commodities" given by Ruehle. This theory, which is the groundstone of the whole Marxian system, is explained by Marx in *Capital* in a very obscure manner, and therefore it is often misunderstood. Ruehle's exposition is admirably clear and lucid. "The commodity," he writes, "enters the market labelled with a price. . . . Once it has left the hand of the producer and has forfeited

its peculiarity as a real object, it has ceased to be a product and to be controlled by man. It has acquired a 'ghostly objectivity,' and leads a life peculiar to itself. . . . Cut adrift from the will of man, it ranges itself in mysterious ranks, acquires or renounces capacity for exchange, acts in accordance with laws of its own as a player upon a phantom stage. In the market reports, cotton 'rises,' copper 'falls,' maize is 'lively,' coal is 'slack,' wheat is 'jumpy,' and mineral oil shows 'tendencies.' The things have acquired an independent life, and exhibit human gestures. Human beings, meanwhile, subordinate themselves to the things, allow the things to dictate human actions, become servants of the world of commodities. The commodity, though made by human hands, has become an idol, a fetish, which holds sway over its human makers."

In these words there is the very essence of Marxism. Man creates forces which prove to be stronger than their human maker. In Capitalist society, things created by man acquire an independent life of their own, man is mastered and controlled by things he has made himself. As Engels says: "the product controls the producer." Like the savage who makes himself an idol, a fetish, which he worships afterwards as his ruler, so in Capitalist society man subordinates himself to the things he has made instead of subordinating these things to man. Marx has discovered that these things controlling human beings, these forces mastering human society, are a product of man himself. He has exposed these idols of Capitalist society. He has shown that man is the maker of these apparently strange forces which control human society. And this discovery was revolutionary, for it led him to the view that if these forces and things controlling human society are a product of man, then man, instead of subordinating himself to things, may submit them to his control, may make things servants of his will instead of being the servant of the things

he has made. Marx also has shown that this can be done by organising society on scientific principles and that such a scientifically organised society means Socialism. But he has recognised also that this task can be fulfilled only by those who suffer most from the absurdity of the present social order, *i.e.*, by the working-class. This is the great work of Karl Marx. By this discovery he has given to the Labour Movement a great goal, a goal that like a compass directs every struggle of the working class towards this revolutionary end and which dignifies the every-day struggle of the working-class by making it the starting point of a new social order.

### Ideas as a Social Force

When he was still a young man, Marx wrote the prophetic words: "Theory, too, becomes a force as soon as it takes possession of the masses." These words may be well applied to his theories, for the more they take possession of the working-class masses the more the Labour Movement will prove a force destined to conquer the stronghold of Capitalism. His theory is a force already; moreover it is a force that is growing more and more irresistible. But Marx was not only a bold thinker; he was, too, a keen fighter. He not only wanted to explain the world; he wanted to change it. In his book on *Feuerbach*\* he wrote these most admirable words: "Philosophers have done nothing more than interpret the world in various ways; our business is to change it." This breath of a bold, fearless revolutionary will be found in almost every line he has written, in almost every work he has done. And, therefore, by knowing something of the life and work of this man, the working-class not only derive knowledge for their class struggle but also strengthen their will to the Social Revolution. Oh that Ruehle's book were read by one worker in ten!

\* 2/9 post free from the N.C.L.C.

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## "Haunted by Marxism" Describes the Position

of many of the intellectual defenders of capitalism. Are you interested? If so, get one of the books advertised on the cover.

# WHAT IS RATIONALISATION?

[The man in the workshop cannot escape the fact of rationalisation. The social student cannot escape the word. Below are two short articles, one by T. Ashcroft and the other by A. Woodburn. Mr. Woodburn's article is not, of course, a reply to Norman Smith's counter-attack in the current issue. That reply will appear next month.]

## (1) THE ECONOMICS OF RATIONALISATION.

"RATIONALISATION is a new name for an old phenomenon." This assertion is certainly true in connection with individual plants and with productive organisations that come under a single control. Long ago, Engels contrasted vividly the high degree of organisation in the individual workshop with the anarchy prevailing in the productive life of society as a whole.

How is this effort towards perfection of technique and method on the part of the individual capitalist or company to be explained? The consciously-realised driving force is competition. Unfortunately the very processes by which success in competition is achieved bring into existence, when they become general, a new situation from the standpoint of the creation and realisation of profit—a fall in the average rate of profit—which intensifies competition anew and enforces yet further developments in the self-same process of technical and general productive efficiency on the part of each competitor.

The tendency towards a fall in the rate of profit constitutes one of the outstanding problems of capitalist economy, and finds its reflection in some interesting, if not always enlightening, attempts at explanation on the part of the economists. Among those of special interest are the explanations offered by Ricardo and Marshall. The latter, indeed, recognised that the cause of this unpleasant tendency resides in the modification in the methods of production

and particularly in the substitution of fixed capital for living labour (power).

Marx's explanation may be illustrated by the following table, based upon an example afforded by L. B. Boudin :—

Year.	Total Capital.	Machinery, etc.	Labour Power.	Surplus.	Rate of Surplus.	Rate of Profit.
I. 1850	500	400	100	100	100%	20%
II. 1900	20,000	19,000	1,000	3,000	300%	15%

These figures show the fall in the *rate* of profit despite the fact that the *sum* of profit has greatly increased—from 100 to 3000. (The division of the surplus into Rent, Interest and Profit is here ignored; surplus and profit are regarded as synonymous). And this fall, from 20% to 15% profit occurs despite the greatly increased Rate of Surplus Value\* (the ratio between the surplus and the wages bill), due to the speeding up of the labour process which the later method of production permits. It is evident that, had the rate of surplus value remained as in I., viz., 100%, so that the sum of surplus value would have been not 3000 but 1000, the rate of profit would have fallen much more steeply still—not from 20% to 15% but from 20% to 5%.

The reason that this fall takes place lies in the fact that while the labour-power constitutes the only *creative* factor in the production process and this factor forms a constantly diminishing fraction of the total capital (e.g., in the above Table, from one-fifth of the total capital in I., to one-twentieth in II.), the Rate of Profit is calculated on the total capital, and forms the proportion between the surplus value and the whole capital.

Faced with this tendency towards a falling rate of profit, the capitalist has evolved various methods by which to overcome it—(1) by yet further intensification of the labour process; (2) by driving wages below the existing value of labour-power, thus

\* New readers interested in this subject should get *A Worker Looks at Economics* by Mark Starr (1/1 post free from the N.C.L.C.). Other useful little books are *Shop Talks on Economics* (6d post free), *Value, Price and Profit* by K. Marx (1/2 post free).

leaving a larger part of the total product as surplus ; (3) by cheapening the elements of constant capital (machinery and raw materials) ; (4) by the expansion of foreign trade and the investment of capital abroad—to lands where these profit-lowering forces are not yet operative, or not operative to the same extent ; (5) by combination—carried out at the expense of the workers employed, of other still-competing capitalists, or of both.

All these methods, not one of which is new, enters into the process of Rationalisation. The essential difference between Rationalisation and the earlier efficiency methods lies in (a) the range of its scope and proposals, which, however, necessarily follows from the growing range of capitalist combination during the last decade or two ; (b) the more deliberate efforts and the large success in making Labour itself, within the different countries, a partner in the process ; and (c) the greater consciousness of the political policies which are the logical and necessary concomitants of economic Rationalisation.

T. ASHCROFT.

## (2) REAL RATIONALISATION IS SOCIALISM!

**L**IKE spirited horses, many of us Socialists are apt to stampede at shadows, and to-day we are inclined to take the bit between our teeth and fly from "rationalisation," whereas reflection would convince us that it is not we who need fear rationalisation, but the Capitalist.

Rationalisation is, curiously enough, the application of the teaching of Karl Marx to practical affairs, in so far as it would subject the activity of every worker in society to the test of whether it was socially necessary. The workers of the world need not fear such a test, but the passengers on the industrial ship must quake before the examination.

The really important question before the Labour Movement is to settle who is to apply the test. If the introduction of rationalisation is to be left to the Capitalists alone, they will naturally concentrate on

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the elimination of waste in the ranks of the workers. They will eliminate managers, clerks, foremen, and others by substituting automatic checks on waste, and where, as in the case of the travelling belt method of production, the machine can determine the rate of production, supervision can be eliminated almost entirely. Where factories are only working part-time, there will be economies in machinery and upkeep by closing some factories and concentrating on maintaining others at full time. Such changes cannot very well be prevented, as they are a necessary accompaniment of efficiency.

There are also, however, many unjustifiable economies which are possible if the Capitalists have unrestricted power in applying this kind of rationalisation, for much depends upon the interpretation of what is "waste." Some Capitalists, for instance, have considered as waste

- (1) the provision of guards for machinery and safety appliances ;
- (2) the replacement of ropes on pit cages and cranes till long after they have passed danger point ;
- (3) the provision of healthy workplaces for employees ;
- (4) the provision of factory and mine inspectors.

Such economies are effected at the expense of the workers' health, and in many cases their lives. Rationalisation of this kind cannot be permitted, and therefore it is important that the whole pressure of the organised Labour Movement—political and industrial—be used to prevent rationalisation taking this direction.

A mere negative attitude takes us nowhere, and our movement must at the same time press forward with its interpretation of waste, and suggestions for rationalisation, an interpretation which will increase the wellbeing of the workers. We should indicate what we consider waste, and the activities in production which are socially unnecessary.

The business of society is to produce and distribute wealth in the most efficient and equitable way it can devise. There is only one way of creating wealth, which is *the*

*alteration of virgin materials into forms in which they are necessary or desirable to man.* The cost of doing this is the amount of human energy necessary to achieve the desired result, and any activities applied beyond what are required is waste.

We might therefore suggest that in the rationalisation of industry we can start by relieving it of

- (1) Ornamental directors (whose functions were defined by Mr. Baldwin as purely parasitic) ;
- (2) Bankers' exorbitant tribute ;
- (3) The profiteering of unnecessary middlemen and distributive monopolies ;
- (4) The wasteful activities of aristocratic or plutocratic idlers.

Complete rationalisation, however, means a rationally organised society, where services and rewards would be arranged on a generally acceptable basis, with proper provision for developing the highest culture of its members, and that is what we call Socialism.

We cannot adopt the mentality of the hermit, and withdraw from contact with the world ; it is our duty and privilege to remould it.

ARTHUR WOODBURN.

## DIRECT LABOUR

By J. HAMILTON

[J. Hamilton, N.C.L.C. Organiser for Division 8, is a member of the Liverpool City Housing Committee, and has years of practical knowledge of the art and craft of building.]

THE Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers, in conjunction with the L.R.D., are to be congratulated on issuing, most opportunely, a booklet on *Direct Building*.\* The question of direct labour has stirred the ranks of private enterprise, particularly in the building trade. When houses were outrageously costly to build, as in the Addison period, many local authorities had willy-nilly to experiment in direct building.

John Wheatley rightly says in his preface :—

"In every town and district there is a clamant demand for houses. Millions of people are dwelling in slums, and most local councils are deeply concerned with the problems of slum clearance. The need for building work is everywhere apparent. And this book was written with the consciousness of this in mind.

\* 3/- cloth, 1/- paper, post 1½d, from the N.C.L.C.



... We have drawn upon the practical experience of men engaged, for years, in carrying through Direct Labour Schemes. This little book is not the work of one man, it is a compilation made by the L.R.D., largely from the statements of Borough Architects and Surveyors, Works Managers, Foremen and Workmen who have devoted much thought, time and labour to Direct Building. This book shows how Direct Building can be done by those who have actually done it."

The book, therefore, is in the main a practical treatise, giving in detail the administration and costing of a scheme; its supervision and the whole problem of labour conditions and other matters arising during the progress of the work. This is very well done, but, unfortunately, in the historical survey in Chapter 2 a number of errors have crept in. On page 17, the year 1891 is given as the date of the abolition of the School Boards, instead of 1902. Further, it is not correct to infer that *all* Town Councils took over the work of the School Boards; in the smaller Boroughs the transfer was made to County Councils, of whose areas the Borough formed part.

#### Who were the Pioneers?

On page 16 it is suggested that Manchester pioneered Municipal Waterworks. This could rightly be contested by other municipalities; as a matter of fact an Act authorising the water supply of Plymouth was passed in the year 1585 through the instrumentality of Sir Francis Drake, the great navigator, and who, it may be said in passing, made a considerable fortune as contractor for part of the work. In sooth, gold was also to be found much nearer home than the Spanish Main. The City of London, about the same time, owned large granaries from which the population was supplied with corn, and it also controlled the water supply, which was afterwards transferred to private companies, to be later restored to public control but at an expenditure approaching 40 million pounds.

#### Baths and Revolution!

But the principal point is the strange statement that it was not until the nineties that other towns "followed this example (Manchester) at all extensively." The current *Municipal Year Book* informs us that well over 100 Municipal Waterworks were "acquired or inaugurated" long before the nineties. Coventry constructed its waterworks in 1844, Liverpool in 1847, Halifax in 1848, and so on. Rather wild is the statement that "municipal baths were associated with revolution." The first Baths and Wash-houses Act was passed in 1846, and even if the remarks are meant to apply only to London, it is sufficient to point out that Croydon baths date back to 1868, and similarly with others. Elsewhere earlier dates can be cited, Liverpool having purchased public baths in 1794 for £4000 and in 1842 established the public wash-houses.

It is a mistake to assume that municipal trading is an innovation of recent years. The last generation, it is true, saw a great development in public ownership and enterprise, but the fundamental principles of the system were embodied in the general law many centuries ago.

#### The New Situation

In the statement of direct building successes it would be more useful to give very recent comparisons of costs, as we are now very often met with the argument that prices being down and competition keener no such comparisons can be made now as could be made four or five years ago. The Liverpool Corpora-

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*Het Volk* (Amsterdam): "It is not everyone who will find it possible to turn over the pages of this book to the very end, for the very sight of some of these pictures stirs us so powerfully that we cry out, 'This is terrible: this must never happen again!'"

*Arbetet* (Malmo, Sweden): "These pictures are terrible, and many will not want to look at them, but they must be shown. The book has a mission to perform in Sweden, as well as elsewhere, for our political parties still teach that war is glorious."

*Informaciones* (Madrid): "It is an album of horror. All who see it shrink back in horror, whether from the book or from war, we cannot say. There is an instinctive feeling against this document which shows us what war has left behind it. But that is of little consequence, for fundamentally the mind reacts against the *cause* of such devastations. . . ."

*The Plebs* (London): "Show it to your friends who have been brought up on the 'Glories of War.' Give them a seat first—they'll need it. It's the most convincing Anti-Militarist Book in the world."

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tion, for instance, have recently accepted a tender for 152 houses, "A, 620" type, nonparlour, brick with tiled roofs, at £298 per house.

For some years direct building has been tentatively experimented with by the Liverpool Housing Committee, but comparisons are difficult, as a considerable amount of the work, such as plastering and roof-tiling, was sub-let. We are informed that the cost of these houses works out at about £10 per house dearer than contract houses of a similar type. It was recently agreed, through Labour pressure, to build 500 houses entirely by direct labour, of similar type to contract houses, so that definite comparisons could be made. Here again difficulties presented themselves, as a very bad site was selected for some of the houses, necessitating extra work in the foundations. Irritating delays occurred in the delivery of materials, largely due to a rigid application of the Council's Standing Orders insisted upon by the Tories. Further, electrical installation was let out to contract. We have obtained itemised completed figures for 121 houses. Thirty of the "A 710" non-parlour type, brick with tiled roofs, cost on the average £382 7/- per house to build. This cost includes a proportion of the general overhead charges, such as Clerk of Works' salaries. Similar houses built by contract cost £356. Sixty-two similar houses on another estate cost on the average £372 11s 4d per house. In this has to be accounted an extra cost for painting, which had to be gone over twice, due to frost; extra costs for filling in ditch, etc., on site. Twenty-one "B 950" parlour type, brick with tiled roofs, cost on the average £507 17s 11d per house. There are no comparable contract prices with these owing to structural variations.

#### Private Enterprise on the Warpath

Naturally a great deal of opposition has to be overcome from the upholders of private enterprise. In Clitheroe recently, where over 100 houses have been satisfactorily built by direct labour, the Council has, by the casting vote of the Mayor, decided to accept a tender for two blocks of six houses at £5600, this being £200 more than the Borough Surveyor's estimate. This meant the abandonment of the Direct Labour Scheme, although sanction had previously been given to erect a further 22 houses.

In general it cannot be over-emphasised that under capitalism, even with Labour majorities on the Councils, the scales are weighted very heavily against any possible success from a public propaganda point of view. The officials are usually prejudiced and easily influenced to act as awkwardly as possible. You can demonstrate that Direct Labour houses are better built, constructed of better materials; that the workers employed have enjoyed better conditions; all this usually counts for nothing with the average public if only it can be shown that the costs are a little higher than contract prices. Nevertheless, in view of the formation of a Labour Government, we can anticipate

more encouragement and must push ahead with the building of houses by Direct Labour.

The book has the virtue of an excellent index and should be invaluable to all Labour Councillors and workers interested in the housing problem.

## A LABOUR COLLEGE DRAMATIST

**P**LAYS of the People, by T. M. Watson (Allison Ltd., Glasgow; paper 1/6, cloth 2/6) is of particular interest to all *Plebs* readers, as the author.

T. M. Watson, is an old Labour College student. The book contains three plays: *A Question of Duty*, *Jinin' the Kirk*, and *Diplomacy and the Draughtsman*. This last play was broadcasted from 5S.C. by the Glasgow Labour College Players with great success a few months ago.

The critics have been unanimous in their praise of the plays and regard the author as the most promising young dramatist that Glasgow has produced for some years. The secret of his success, if it can be called a secret, lies in the fact that Mr. Watson never attempts to portray on the stage any other life than that which he knows. He devotes himself exclusively to working-class themes and has no unhealthy ambitions to portray thrilling love romances of the high-brow variety or drawing-room comedy so beloved by the upper ten.

His characters are real living individuals, working men and women who behave and talk naturally, and while no attempt is made to force the audience to listen to a crude recital of political opinions, the author never fails to express a definite working-class viewpoint of society and its foibles.

As one critic put it: "Mr. Watson possesses the rare gift of being able to make an audience laugh at itself." His method of attack is subtle. He never attempts to demolish orthodoxy with speeches but with something much more devastating, namely, a biting cynical wit. And there are many things which can be laughed out of existence more readily than they can be argued out of it.

The three plays are totally unlike and can be enjoyed equally as much by being read as by seeing them played. The only difficulty the reader is likely to encounter is that of trying to decide which play he prefers. He probably will end by agreeing with D.S., the dramatic critic of the *Daily Express*, who said: "It is a little difficult to assess these plays in their order of merit, but *Jinin' the Kirk*, *Diplomacy and the Draughtsman*, and *A Question of Duty* are beyond question."

The attention of Workers' Dramatic Groups is specially directed to these. Very little expense is incurred in their production and a very enjoyable time is assured the audience.

A. L. R.

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# AMONG THE BOOKS

By  
"PLEBS" REVIEWERS

**T**HIS ingenious book (*A Theory of the Labour Movement*, by Selig Perlman, Ph.D., Professor of Economics, University of Wisconsin. The Macmillan Co., New York, 1928) is an attempt to show that the Labour Movement develops not, as Marxists maintain, from "pure and simple" unionism to class-conscious socialism, but in the opposite direction. This contention the author supports with an extensive historical survey, citing, for instance, the evolution of the non-socialist American Federation of Labour from the revolutionary Marxian groups among the German immigrants in the seventies and eighties. In a similar manner he traces the emancipation of the German trade unions from subordination to the Social Democratic Party, with its concentration on politics; to-day the trade unions are primarily concerned with economic agreements with the employers, and politics and socialism are relegated to the background.

This process Professor Perlman attributes to the fact that in its infancy the Labour Movement is dominated by radical intellectuals, who give it its revolutionary character; after a period of development, leaders arise from the workers themselves, and "Labour's home-grown ideology" ousts the revolutionary dogmas which the intellectuals wish to foist upon the Labour Movement. The Russian trade unions were revolutionary because Czarism had denied them a period of peaceful development in which to throw off the influence of the revolutionary intelligentsia.

"It is the author's contention that manual groups . . . have had their economic attitudes basically determined by a consciousness of scarcity of opportunity. Labour's own 'home-grown' ideology is disclosed only through a study of the 'working rules' of Labour's own institutions" (page 6). From such a study Prof. Perlman deduces that Labour's real yearnings are not towards the elimination of the wages-system, and the formation of a co-operative commonwealth, but towards a position of 'parity of classes,' equality with the capitalist, attained through trade agreements between employer and union.

The ideal to be aimed at is the "job control" enforced by the American International Typographical Union, which has succeeded, in the "closed shops," in taking the business of hiring and firing men, and arranging the "working rules," out of the hands of the employer, into the control of a union tribunal.

Although this book is a blatant apology for capitalism, it merits serious study, for, by its errors, it teaches much.

The author professes that he himself was a Marxist twenty years ago, and quotes Lenin (page 8-9)—in *What is to be done?*—to support his theory that "if it had not been for the 'bourgeois intellectuals,' Marx and Engels, labour would never have got beyond mere 'trifling'—going after an increase in wage here and a labour hour there." J. F.

In *Margaret Ethel Macdonald* (Allen & Unwin, 5/-) we have the life-story (written by her husband, J. Ramsay Macdonald) of one of the most beautiful

characters this country, so far as its women are concerned, has ever known.

Born amidst plenty, in an atmosphere of culture, somewhat puritanical, she began her splendid life. Her story is so well written that as one reads of her thoughts, her moods, and her actions, one feels one knows her intimately.

Her intense religious convictions serve always as the pivot upon which her actions turn. In an age when religion was the hall-mark of respectability, and "eternal damnation" was preached by the so-called Christians, she dared to take the broad view of religion, as toleration, sympathy, and service to humanity as a common brotherhood. In Socialism she saw her Christianity.

Brought into contact with the unemployed in their demonstrations and demand for the right of free speech we see her at first true to her class, accepting the view they held that the unemployed were wrong, attempting to create disturbances and mob-rule. Later, with her wider knowledge and experience of the wretched conditions of the workers as the tools of private enterprise, her outlook is completely changed. She then gives her life to Socialism.

Utopian, idealistic, she was yet practical, sifting to the very bottom matters in which she was interested. To this quality, and her wonderful personality along with her powers of organisation, the success of her work was due.

Her early efforts to organise the women workers as trade unionists, and later her work of raising the status of women by their intellectual development, make her a pioneer of women's emancipation. Her idea was not that of mere sex equality as a form of competition on the industrial field, but a responsible womanhood, enjoying the pleasures of initiative with her co-partner, man.

In our Women's Sections, the women's franchise, women's right to sit in Parliament, and in their access to responsible positions in the government of the country, we see some of the fruits of the work of Margaret Ethel Macdonald.

The book should be read by all young people in the Labour Movement, and certainly by every woman, no matter what her political views may be. It is an inspiration to those who are eager to give service in the cause of Labour. FLORENCE WHITTAM.

What a gain it would be to our movement if every one of our class-tutors could draw! And lots of them could, at any rate quite well enough for the purpose of brightening up their lectures, and driving home essential facts—if only they would forget what they've been told about drawing being some sort of "gift." *Everyday Art at School and Home*, by D. D. Sawyer (Batsford, 12/6), described as "a book for children, parents, teachers and students," might help them to tackle the business. It is a book of talk 'about it and about,' with many jolly illustrations, rather than a manual of precise instructions; but its very tone may serve as a good antidote to that lack of confidence which prevents so many folk from drawing a diagram or riding a bicycle. Get it on to the shelves of your local library, and then get it off them and look it over.

By the way, it quotes on one page a remark made by a Medical Advisor to the Board of Education which contains a germ of consolation for I.W.C.Ers:—"Fortunately, children have the power of inattention and forgetfulness, which saves them from the bad effects that many of their lessons would have upon them." J.F.H.

## EDWARD CARPENTER AND I.W.C.E.

## LETTERS

### RATIONALISATION

**D**EAR Comrade,—The passing of Carpenter and the appreciation of his work by T. Ashcroft in last month's *Plebs* recalls very vividly to my mind an afternoon which J. Godfrey (A.S.L.E. & F.) of Guildford and I spent with him in February of 1928. Comrade Godfrey was a frequent and welcome visitor at Carpenter's and on every occasion on which he ran as a Labour candidate for the Borough, Carpenter signed the nomination form.

Comrade Godfrey arranged for me to go along with him on one of his visits and I was introduced as the official representative of the N.C.L.C. for Division 2. I found Carpenter very interested in a description of the N.C.L.C.; its colleges and classes, tutors, correspondence courses and text-books. We discussed at considerable length our point of view on working-class education and when it was made clear we were "minding our own business" in education as in politics, trades-unionism, co-operation and the press; and that our subjects and curriculum were free from the capitalist bias of the universities, he was delighted to hear such good news. We talked about the *Plebs*, Labour College, our text-books, Horrabin's maps and atlas as the means of providing a socialist education and of the support some unions were giving our educational schemes. He enquired who was financing all this essential work and when we again reminded him of trade-union schemes, he dramatically asked, "*And has the trade-union movement actually realised at last that social science as taught by the universities is not good enough for their members?*" We reassured him again on this point by quoting the number of schemes we had with unions and the income from this source. He told us how very pleased he was to hear all this and hoped we should soon have the whole of the Trade Union and Labour movement solidly behind us. He was also particularly happy to hear that our classes were so successful, especially in the "sleepy South," where the socialist movement is so much behind the industrial areas. As we were leaving, the veteran socialist rebel again assured us that he was very pleased to hear of our valuable work and wished us all possible success for the future.

D. W. THOMAS.

## P's and Q's

**I**F a "talkie" entitled "Cocoanuts" comes to your town, go and see it. It is largely song-and-dance inanity, but it is redeemed by the fooling of those marvellous American clowns, the Marx Bros. And I.W.C.Ers will get a special kick out of hearing a man with that surname, posing as a hotel-keeper, say to his staff—"Vages? Vot d'you vant vith vages? You don't want to be vage-slaves, do you? Vell, vot makes vage-slaves?—Vages!"

\* \* \*

As the word pyjamas begins with a "p," I hope it is in order to announce in this column that one of the N.C.L.C. (not Scotland Yard) Summer School students left a pair of pyjamas. Honesty being the best policy, the "P's" await their owner.

**D**EAR Comrade,—From the monastic seclusion of numberless revolutionaries' studies we are periodically deluged in a bath of fiery criticism, and of late the most bitter attacks have been levelled against the rationalising of British industry, and the support that certain sections of the Labour movement are lending to it. I would respectfully submit that much of the criticism is unreal and is scientifically unsound.

The first point we must observe is that "the movement," so called, is not an organic whole. It is not a body consciously pledged to socialism; indeed, only a minor fraction, so far, holds any conscious brief for our socialist doctrines, and of those, the number who have mastered Marxism is small, hence the pressing need for speeding up our class work.

The adhesion of millions of workers to the Labour Party is only through the Trade Union Movement, which is itself a historical product of capitalist economy, and was built up for the primary object of maintaining and improving the living conditions of the workers. Consequently, if a set of circumstances present themselves in which the living conditions of the workers within any industry are threatened, it is the duty of the union leaders to take what steps they may to counteract these evil tendencies, hence the support for Rationalisation which is given by the T.U.C.

Since the commencement of the protracted trade crisis in Britain which followed the war boom, the organic superiority of the more up-to-date American and German industry has slowly revealed itself to our conservative-minded industrialists; conservative in outlook because they had dominated the world market unchallenged for nearly a century. But at long-last the futility of their stay-in-the-manger policy has been brought home to them, and they are now speedily setting about rationalising or modernising their undertakings.

The social revolution cannot be arranged to suit the whims or convenience of any idealist or abstract theoretician; it can only fructify when the conditions are historically ripe, and that is when the workers can no longer maintain, let alone improve their living conditions.

This shows that we have a definite process to go through—a process of disillusionment. There is no short cut to our emancipation. The existence of a Labour Government will certainly mitigate many of the anomalies of the present system, but the Great Contradiction still remains. Unemployment administration may become less severe, the dread of old age may be no longer a nightmare, social legislation will certainly be speeded up, but only to a point. Political pressure may even be brought to bear on the Government to rejuvenate some declining industry; for instance, to nationalise the mines. But a State subsidy to mining may mean a further burden on productive industry; this, again, intensifies the contradiction.

Marx showed us that the historical tendencies of capitalist development were for the smaller concerns to be eaten up by the greater. The creation of cartels, trusts, and combines has been the means whereby this has been brought about. The unit of production

has been enlarged a hundred-fold. Mechanical power is speedily displacing the human element, and men are thrown on the industrial scrap heap with an increasing velocity.

Our duty as socialists is to "exploit" these difficulties to our own advantage. Rationalisation is inevitable; while recognising this, we must be in a position of exposing its evil consequences to the workers under capitalism. All historical tendencies are on our side; let us point them out to the workers and educate them to our point of view.

JAMES YOUNIE.

#### "AFTER TRADE UNIONISM—WHAT?"

A Further Reply to H. NORMAN SMITH

DEAR COMRADE,

An examination of the futilities of "Douglasism" and other currency schemes made in the *Plebs* of some years ago has apparently not convinced the writer of "After Trade Unionism—What?" which appeared in the August number.

"Privately-owned industry conducted for profit along the usual competitive lines" can never even "subserve the function of satisfying the needs of consumers" because to do so would be to resolve inherent contradiction. This can only be done by abolishing privately-owned industry, not by tinkering with it.

As Marxists we have little to fear in rationalisation. It is surely only a continuation of the process of increasing the proportion of constant capital\* to that of variable capital.† It involves a greater capital outlay to set a given amount of labour power in operation.

Rationalisation does not as a whole abolish the need for labourers (workers) but increases the area of division or co-operation of labour, that is, increases the size of the "collective labourer." It is at this point that rationalised industry is weaker than the form that went before it. While it can more and more do without the individual worker it is more and more dependent on the "collective labourer" or group of workers; in other words, it is more susceptible to mass attack. Hence the approach of Lord Melchett to the trade unions for the purpose of "industrial peace" or an agreed method of exploitation. It involves more loss to the modern industrialist if his productive process is interrupted than it did to the old small scale industrialist. Organisation in a form that makes it possible to paralyse whole masses of industry, not sections of it, is one of the things "After Trade Unionism."

H. Norman Smith says "the advantage snatched (by rationalisation) from foreign competitors is snatched back again when they, in turn, have been driven to rationalise." This is wrong. Rationalisation in Britain is an attempt of capitalists to obtain the same benefits for themselves (not for British industry) that foreign, particularly German, magnates have already obtained. It is a snatching back again, not a snatching that is being attempted. The very name had to be imported from Germany as well as the methods, except of course that the industrialists here have not had the chance of taking advantage of a monetary and financial chaos that the Germans had. Finance-capital is stronger here than it was in Germany.

It is true that "no political government can substantially improve the condition of the workers" not

#### "PATRIOTIC" SCIENCE

**B**ENJAMIN FRANKLIN, besides being a politician, was, as all the world knows, a scientist of considerable eminence. King George III. desired to be known as a patron of science. But there were limits:—

"The King long detested the very name of anything American; and his personal hatred of Franklin, who had certainly been one of the least conciliatory and least candid of the 'patriots' on the other side of the water, was exhibited even in the peculiar colour given to his patronage of science and literature. It is said that Sir John Pringle was driven to resign his place as President of the Royal Society by the King's urgent request that the Society should publish, with the authority of its name, a contradiction to a scientific opinion of the rebellious Franklin; the President replied that it was not in his power to reverse the order of nature, and resigned, and Sir Joseph Banks who, like a true courtier, advocated the opinion patronised by the King, succeeded him in the chair."

Wright, "England under the House of Hanover."

"because the gold standard undoubtedly works to prevent it" but because the worker is exploited and sells his labour power for less than the value it produces. Political devices, changes in the price level, gold standards, financial jugglery, high or low bank rate and the thousand other things that we hear of do not affect the fact of this exploitation, and while the fluctuation that they reflect may involve this or that group of workers being unemployed or working overtime we can afford to consider them as very secondary things if we are concerned with socialism and not with the reorganisation of capitalism.

After trade unionism we need more trade unionism and also probably a development of the co-operative movement, but the main need is for a realisation by the workers that they alone can resolve the contradictions of capitalism and co-ordinate social production with social ownership of the means of production and rationalised consumption.

H. MILES.

\*Constant capital is the amount spent on machinery, raw materials, etc., called constant because it does not produce additional value.

†Variable capital is amount spent on Labour power. It gives an increased value and is therefore spoken of as variable. See "Theoretical System of Karl Marx" (N.C.L.C., 6/6, post free).



# WHAT THE N.C.L.C. IS DOING

15 SOUTH HILL PARK GARDENS  
LONDON, N.W. 3

**A**CCORDING to a number of the divisional reports, some of the divisions expect to make a first-class show this winter. That's the spirit which we hope is general throughout the country. Already some Colleges have made arrangements for prize-draws, bazaars, etc., in order to help to finance their educational work. Such activity should be general throughout the country. Where a College is too small to act on its own it should co-operate with the surrounding Colleges. Let's all put our backs into pushing I.W.C.E. this winter. The scope for our work is enormous. Unless we get a move on we won't have Socialism in our grandsons' time, far less our own.

**NEW APPOINTMENTS.**—J. T. Dorricott, lately a lecturer at the Residential College, has been appointed a temporary divisional organiser and has taken up duty in Belfast. A. Ellis has been, at his own request, transferred from Belfast to Division 6, in place of J. Stuart Barr, who has resigned. A. Knight, an ex-student of the Residential Labour College, has been appointed South East Lancs. Area Organiser, in place of E. Redfern, who succeeds C. Brown, M.P., as Organiser of Division 12. J. Crispin, another ex-residential Labour College student, has taken up duty as North Lancs. Area Organiser. The best wishes of the movement go to these comrades in their new spheres.

**TUTORS.**—N.C.L.C. tutors can render great service to the organisation by seeing that the classes are properly organised, that the official register is marked each session, that class fees are paid promptly, that receipts are given. They can also greatly assist by encouraging students to get for the N.C.L.C. grants and affiliations from local organisations and by getting students to buy books, to read the *Plebs* and to take bundles for sale among their friends. Such are the activities that together make up an effective movement. Will you help?

**NEW (NOT RENEWAL) LOCAL AFFILIATIONS**  
—Leeds, 5; Division 1, 4; Division 4, 4; Liverpool, 1.

## WHAT THE DIVISIONS ARE DOING

### DIVISION 1.

Our Newdigate Week-end School went off well. Charlie Brown, M.P., dealt with Labour and Rationalisation and provoked a great deal of good-humoured discussion. About forty odd classes have now been arranged, while many more are in the course of formation. The Clapham E.T.U. is going to run a weekly course on Economics at its branch meetings, with W. Nichols as tutor. The Hounslow Women's Co-operative Guild is having an Economics Class, with W. T. Colyer in charge. Howell Morgan will continue the Willesden class on the History of Socialism. The West Ham Trades Council has a class—tutor, W.

Archer—on the Development of Capitalism. We can still manage further classes and we shall be glad to receive applications for tutors from areas which consider they haven't sufficient classes. A winter programme for the Plebs and N.C.L.C. Students' Association is now being arranged. The programme will consist of a series of socials and of visits to places of interest.

### DIVISION 2.

The summer session has been the best in the history of the Division for day and week-end schools. Very successful meets have been held at Littlehampton, Oxford, Portsmouth, Guildford and Bournemouth. Good classes also were run on Rationalisation and the Problems of a Labour Government at Bournemouth, Salisbury, Guildford, Salisbury and Southampton. Many visits were made to A.U.B.T.W. and A.E.U. branches. Sales of literature above the normal. Many conferences are to be held this month at such centres as Bournemouth, Portsmouth, Bishopstoke, Guildford and Oxford. The Organiser attended a good meeting at Farnham where Mr. and Mrs. Fry—students at Welwyn summer school—are pushing the N.C.L.C. Some Guildford comrades are pushing the N.C.L.C. at Godalming. The Weymouth Labour Party are considering arranging for a series of lectures. Dorchester may do likewise. In the Woking area, class work is to re-commence. The Totton class group are endeavouring to get the New Forest D.L.P. to arrange classes to fit the members for election work. Percy Collick, Labour candidate for Dorking, is out to get the N.C.L.C. going in his constituency. The subjects for next winter's classes will cover Rationalisation, Finance, Economic History, Economics, Current Economic and Political Problems and Imperialism. Miss Whitehead will take the Moordown class and hopes to start a Women's section class, in addition to developing class work in the Poole and Parkstone district. There is every indication that we shall break records this year.

### DIVISION 3.

An excellent rally of students, under ideal conditions (thanks to the generosity of Com. Plomper) was held at Billericay. Lectures were delivered on the Problem of India and followed by keen discussion. Brentwood and Peterboro' also had Day Schools. The Annual Meeting, held at the Labour College, was well attended and the reports of class delegates suggested a successful winter session. New classes will probably be opened up at Slough, Welwyn, Hornchurch and Chelmsford. An attempt has been made to enrol the support of young A.U.B.T.W. members. Comrade Pursler (A.U.B.T.W. organiser) convened two meetings at Cambridge and Horwich.

### DIVISION 4.

Cardiff L.C. is organising a Day School at Ely, with co-operation of our local class secretary, W. Stephens, and proposes holding the College Annual Meet at the same time. It is anticipated that two or more classes will be run. Penarth comrades are preparing the way for next winter's class work, and with the co-operation of Joe Ward a successful tutorial class is running. West Wales is already moving. Classes are being arranged at Swansea, Bembrey, Ammanford and Ystradgynlais, and Clydach, Ystalyfera and Gorseinon will soon be in swing. Our problem in this area is essentially tutorial. Merthyr L.C. is holding its inaugural meeting and Day School, with the co-operation of E. F. Wise, M.P., and R. C. Wallhead, M.P. Further Day Schools are proposed for Treharris and Hengoed. Abertillery L.C. is opening the session

with two classes and an area Day School, in co-operation with the Newport and Cardiff L.C. Len Roberts will conduct the school and deal with the Mining Problem, after which the students will be conducted down a mine to obtain first-hand information. Barry L.C. is running a Lantern Lecture to open its session, in conjunction with the local Trades Council, and the assistance of Divisional President Gerry.

#### DIVISION 5.

In conjunction with the local Labour Party, the Chippenham College ran a very successful Week-end School. The organiser was the lecturer, and a strong desire was expressed that more use should be made of the educational facilities of the N.C.L.C. Gloucester College has been trying against great odds to get a more successful movement established this winter. For the efforts to be successful, it will be necessary for all believers in I.W.C.E. to play their part. Com. Sallis, the secretary, is certainly doing his bit. Bath, Swindon and Cheltenham have arranged meetings to start the winter session, and Newton Abbot will hold a further conference for members of trade unions and labour parties. The Day School in that town provided some interesting discussions.

#### DIVISION 6.

The new Organiser, A. Ellis, previously organiser of Division 11, will have taken up his duties by the time this appears. Those anxious to help I.W.C.E. in Birmingham and the surrounding district are asked to write A. Ellis, c/o Stuart Barr, 3 Derwent Road, Strichley, Birmingham. Organiser Barr has resigned to take up another appointment and the Division's good wishes go with him.

#### DIVISION 7.

Hull College expects at least 130 delegates to attend Conference on Sept. 15th, with Miss Ellen Wilkinson, M.P., the speaker. For the Mass Meeting at night the tickets are going well. The Alexandra Theatre will hold 2000, and despite the police prohibiting the sale of tickets outside the hall the College expects to pack the place. Arrangements are in hand for four classes. The inter-meet with S.E. Lancs. at Greenfield was only moderately attended, due to it falling upon the Oldham and district holidays. However, Comrades Waight and Blagborough aroused plenty of discussion with their lectures. The Divisional Week-end School at Heathmount Hall will be a huge success this year. There are forty-four bookings to date. The proprietors say that they can only accommodate 35. We intend, however, to show our mathematical bias by indicating how it can be done. J. F. Horrabin cannot be with us as intended, and the Organiser and Will Owen of Div. 4 will take the lectures. The Leeds College had a very successful Day School at the Otley Chevin Camp, with Comrade Jessop upon "Local Government" and Comrade Haigh upon "Witchcraft, a Study in Historical Materialism," over 90 delegates attending, and a large number of visitors. The number of witches present is not known. The Halifax College organised a Delegate Conference, with J. Brett as speaker. This conference is to be followed up with a lecture before the delegates of the Trades Council. Thirty-four classes have so far been arranged and at the moment another six classes are in negotiation. The Division intends to improve upon last year's results.

#### DIVISION 8.

LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT—Day Schools at Penketh and Birkenhead, addressed by C. Brown, M.P., were fairly well attended, despite local counter-attractions.

## LABOUR MAGAZINE

The current issue contains authoritative articles on

THE HAGUE CONFERENCE and  
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His lectures provoked keen criticism and discussion. The Day School at Walton Labour Club was addressed by Tom Lowe (President, Warrington Co-operative Society). A goodly number of co-operators attended and were stimulated by the analytical and constructive lecture given on the movement. The usual class facilities are being arranged; the Birkenhead Co-op. Society (Educational Committee) has again agreed to pay fees for co-operators attending our classes if 50 per cent. attendances are registered. A new feature is a Course of Lantern Lectures on Biology, to be given in conjunction with the Liverpool Trades Council; another Class will be held in conjunction with a Branch of the L.P. League of Youth. Congratulations to one of our Wigan students, Miss L. Hodson (Tailors' and Garment Workers), in obtaining the T.U.C. gold medal for the largest number of women recruits.

N. LANCs. AREA—The delay in the appointment of an Organiser-Tutor may handicap the first half of the winter session, but all are looking forward to the guidance and help of J. Crispin (Derby), the newly-appointed Organiser. His address is 17 Burlington Street, Blackburn.

S.E. LANCs. AREA—This area will suffer a decided loss in the transference of the Organiser, E. Redfern, to Division 12. The new Organiser, A. Knight, of Lydney (address, 1 Langdale Avenue, N. Reddish, Stockport) will, however, find the class preparations well advanced and an experienced and enthusiastic band of voluntary workers to help him. We congratulate our Hon. President, A. A. Purcell, of Manchester, on his new appointment as Secretary to the Manchester and Salford Trades Council. Under his direction we are assured that the educational side of the movement will not be overlooked. Conferences in Manchester, Hyde, Ashton-under-Lyne, Bury and

Bolton have preceded the classes. The following newsagent is now stocking *Plebs* literature—O. Counsell, 24 Kay Street, Rawtenstall.

#### DIVISION 9.

Day Schools have been held at Willington and Blyth. Will Lawther, M.P., took the Willington School and W. Pearson was lecturer at the Blyth School. A Day School was held at Shildon, with W. Coxon as lecturer. The Darlington College has arranged five lantern lectures for the last week in September as a send-off for the classes. The Divisional Organiser will give the lectures. Comrade Umpleby, who was taking classes in the Staithes area, has been moved to Middlesbrough and has immediately taken up class work there. The Durham College classes are ready to start the winter session. The North-Eastern College held its Annual Meeting at Unity Hall, Newcastle-on-Tyne on Saturday, September 14th. W. Lawther, M.P., was in the chair and has been re-elected chairman of the College. Ebby Edwards, M.P. (the founder of the North Eastern) gave a short address. Coxon, of course, was also present. These three were at the formation of the North-Eastern Labour College and are still with it. Will Pearson, another of the old brigade, was re-elected treasurer. Mark Hewitson, of the N.U.G. & M.W., was elected corresponding secretary, and G. G. Hudson, organising secretary. The new Executive appears to be the right type and under its guidance the North-Eastern College should make progress. Coxon will again represent the Division on the National Executive of the N.C.L.C.

#### DIVISION 10.

ABERDEEN is busy making arrangements for the winter session. Those who can help should write the Secretary, W. Elliott, 584 George Street, Aberdeen.

EDINBURGH DISTRICT—Twenty-five classes have been arranged for the first half of the winter session. The Case for Socialism in all its aspects is to be the main feature. But all the other subjects are represented in the programme of classes. A Bazaar and Fun Fair takes place on the 21st. Donations more than sufficient to cover the costs of organising the bazaar have already been received. The new lantern, costing £16, has paid for itself in less than a year in hires, supplemented by special collections at classes where the lantern is used.

GLASGOW DISTRICT—The Annual Organising Conference was held in the S.C.W.S. Hall. Hall and tea for the conference was provided by the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society free. This is the best answer to those who regard the Co-operative movement as a mere dividend association. The relations between the Co-op. and the College here are of the happiest, and joint classes are being encouraged by the Educational Committees of the Co-op. and the College. Mr. J. S. Clarke, M.P., F.S.A., addressed the delegates on Marxism and History. The lecture was, as expected, a masterly survey of ancient and modern history from a Marxian viewpoint. J. S. Clarke added fresh laurels to his reputation and as was evident from the questions as to classes, literature, etc., the delegates were made hungry for more information. A. L. Ritchie, the organiser, spoke on the College of the future. Tom Clark, member of E.C. of A.E.U., also spoke. Over 20 classes are arranged for Glasgow Area and a successful session is promised. A Study Circle has been formed in Springburn District. First four studies will deal with Local Government. Second four with National Problems. Third four with International Affairs. Each discussion will be opened with a statement by a recognised authority on the subject.

**A**LF. Hodgetts of the N. C. L. C. Executive, has published, under the title of "Delegates' Doings," a very chatty account of his visit to Russia as a delegate of his Union, the N.U.D.A.W. Commenting on his experience in addressing a conference, he writes:—"Judging from the applause I received a very good reception and I had also a very good show in the Moscow papers. Only one person complimented me, however, and that was Markeovitch, who said, 'Comrad Hotgees, you the one good speaker very.'"

STIRLINGSHIRE DISTRICT.—This area is now being opened up with those classes, thanks to the efforts of C. L. Gibbins.

LANARKSHIRE DISTRICT. — Under Secretary John Wilson, Lanarkshire means to make headway. Many classes have been arranged.

FIFE DISTRICT is holding a conference in the Labour Hall, Kirkcaldy, on 12th October, at 3 p.m. A. Woodburn will be the speaker.

#### DIVISION 11.

IRELAND—During the month an attempt was made to get Co-operative support for I.W.C.E. J. Davidson, R. A. Boyd and A. Ellis formed the deputation appointed by the Belfast College to meet the Co-operative Educational Committee. A strong case was presented for Co-operative support, but apparently we had not sufficient support on the committee to secure a grant—our supporters in Belfast will try again. The N.C.L.C. Demonstration, organised for the opening of the Trade Union Congress week in Belfast, was a huge success. St. Mary's Hall had a crowded and enthusiastic audience. D. R. Campbell, B.L., presided in his usual excellent manner. John Jagger and A. J. Cook were in good form and received a real workers' welcome, if not a "royal" one. Geo. Hicks, who had been engaged on T.U.C. business, arrived in time to wind up the meeting. The Demonstration realised a handsome surplus which will give the winter's work a good send off. Our best thanks are due to the speakers for their assistance. Owing to the transfer of A. Ellis to Div. 6 and the appointment of J. T. Dorricott to take over Div. 11, the Winter Class arrangements will be taken over by the new organiser. Arrangements have been made for classes in Belfast and Newtonards. W. H. M'Elgunn will assist with Esperanto Classes and Councillor Mrs. M'Coubrey with a class on Modern Co-operation. A number of Public Lectures have been arranged. The return of C. M'Crystal to Belfast should be a gain to the Belfast College. A successful winter session is expected. Branch lectures have been very successful throughout the summer session.

#### DIVISION 12.

To fill the vacancy arising through Organiser Brown's election to Parliament, E. Redfern, formerly S.E. Lancs. Area Organiser, has been appointed Divisional Organiser. Meantime letters will reach him if addressed to c/o C. Brown, M.P., Garden Lane, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Notts.

# Has your Union an N.C.L.C. Educational Scheme?

If it has, please pass this on to a fellow Trade Unionist less favourably situated. If it has not, will you please do all you can to get your Union to arrange a scheme without delay?

Most Unions hold their Annual Conferences during the first half of the year. Now is the time to get your Branch to forward a Resolution for the coming Conference instructing the Executive to arrange an Educational Scheme with the National Council of Labour Colleges, providing free Classes and free Correspondence Courses.

Realising the importance of maintaining control over working-class thinking the Board of Education has followed the policy of giving increased subsidies to those working-class educational bodies that provide governing-class education. The workers' answer to that policy must be more N.C.L.C. Schemes.

## WILL YOU DO YOUR BIT?

The following points may be useful:—

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