

The Labour Unrest and the Control of Industry.

**Syllabus of a Course of Six Lectures
to be given by Mr. and Mrs. Sidney
Webb at the King's Hall, King Street,
Covent Garden, W.C., on Tuesday
Evenings, beginning October 29th,
1912, at 8.30. p.m.**

The Chair will be taken on 29th October by Mr. Philip Snowden, M.P.; 5th November by the Rt. Hon. F. E. Smith, K.C., M.P.; on 12th November by Mr. Norman Angell; on 19th November by the Rt. Hon. Winston S. Churchill, M.P.; on 26th November, by the Marquis of Tullibardine, M.P.; and on 3rd December by the Lord Bishop of Winchester.

I.

Tuesday, October 29th, 1912, at 8.30 p.m.

Chairman : Mr. PHILIP SNOWDEN, M.P.

Lecturer : MR. SIDNEY WEBB.

The Industrial Warfare of To-day.

In this introductory lecture an attempt will be made to describe the thoughts and feelings which have caused the present "unrest" of so many of the wage-earning class—the dissatisfaction of the workman with "life on a pound a week"—his advance in economic knowledge; his resentment at lifelong subjection to orders; his hatred of "charity"; the recent rise of prices; the failure of the governing classes even to try to prevent Unemployment.

What is the present situation of the wage-earner in British industry?—The substitution of impersonal for personal relations between "master and man"—The increasing concentration of capitalist enterprise—The development of joint stock companies, of "multiple shops," of trusts and "cartels," of industries of national and even of international extent.

The steady but slow growth of Trade Unionism—Its best development in the Cotton Industry (selection of Trade Union officials by competitive examination; settlement of wages and workshop disputes by the professional agents of the associated employers and employed)—Its absence or weakness over most of the field (refusal of some employers even to recognise its existence)—The Right to Strike (Taff Vale case)—The Right to seek Legal Enactment (Osborne Judgment).

II.

Tuesday, November 5th, 1912, at 8.30 p.m.

Chairman: THE RT. HON. F. E. SMITH, K.C., M.P.

Lecturer: MRS. SIDNEY WEBB.

The Legal Minimum Wage.

The intervention of the law in the wage-contract—The century-long elaboration of our Factory legislation (covering now all classes and grades of manual workers in the Great Industry; dealing with sanitation, safety, hours, and other conditions)—The continuance of "Sweating" wherever the Factory Acts do not apply—The Colonial remedy of a Legal Minimum Wage—Its rapid spread in Victoria to nearly all industries—Our adoption of it in the Trade Boards Act (1909) and Coal Mines Act (1912)—The present demand in Great Britain for a Legal Minimum Wage in agriculture and all industries.

On what principle a Legal Minimum Wage is determined (married men versus bachelors; men versus women; "equal pay for equal work")—How the Legal Minimum Wage is, in practice, obtained, and enforced (Courts of Arbitration, Wages Boards, registration of Collective Agreements, or simply a clause in a Factory Act).

How far a Legal Minimum Wage, in practice, (a) prevents Strikes, (b) causes the ruin of the industry, and (c) is affected by the competition of other countries.

The nightmare of "the Servile State."

III.

Tuesday, November 12th, 1912, at 8.30 p.m.

Chairman: MR. NORMAN ANGELL.

Lecturer: MR. SIDNEY WEBB.

Can we do without the Wage System?

Production and distribution by individual proprietors of land and capital—The extent to which this prevails—The peasant proprietor—The village handicraftsman—The pedlar and the little shopkeeper—The apotheosis of "la petite industrie"—A vision of rural Japan—The inability of the "Proprietary State" to provide for enterprises of national scope (railways, universities, etc.)—Its failure to stand up against the Great Industry—"Loading the dice" against the peasant agriculturist, the handicraftsman, the little master—The hopelessness of expecting any supersession of existing British industry by individual producers.

The peaceful "Abolition of the Wage System" in the "self-governing workshops" of the early Co-operators, of Louis Blanc and Buchez in 1848, and of the Christian Socialists—The long persistence of this ideal among the British Co-operators, and its eventual abandonment—The practical compromise of "Industrial Co-partnership"—Schemes of profit-sharing—The failure of these proposals to satisfy the "Labour Unrest"—The Trade Union objection.

IV.

Tuesday, November 19th, 1912, at 8.30 p.m.

Chairman : RT. HON. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P.

Lecturer : MRS. SIDNEY WEBB.

Syndicalism and the General Strike.

The attractiveness of "Syndicalism" as promising the "Abolition of the Wage System"—Its invention by Robert Owen—The Grand National Consolidated Trades Union or "General Union of the Productive Classes," and the proposed "universal Strike" of 1834—The revival of the idea of abolishing the Wage system in the teachings of the Marxian Socialists—Its rebirth in the "Syndicalism" of the French Trade Unionists since 1892—"La Confederation Generale du Travail," its objects and methods—The workers in each trade to control all the instruments of production and themselves to be the managers of their own industry—The "Irritation Strike" and "Sabotage"—The "General Strike" as the "Social Revolution"—as the "catastrophic" emergence of a new social order—The Syndicalists' vision of the industrial community of the future—The "mine for the miners," the "railways for the railway workers"—The manual workers' reliance on impulse, and their contempt for the meticulous foresight of the "bourgeoisie"; the attempted justification from Bergson—How far French Syndicalism has captured the imagination of the British workman.

V.

Tuesday, November 26th, 1912, at 8.30 p.m.

Chairman : THE MARQUIS OF TULLIBARDINE, M.P.

Lecturer : MRS. SIDNEY WEBB.

The Co-operative Movement, the Municipality, and the State.

The prevalence in the eighteenth century of voluntary associations of local inhabitants for all sorts of purposes (e.g., police, lighting, drainage, road repair, water supply, etc.)—The analogous associations of consumers for self-supply (corn-mills, stores, etc.)—The evolution of the latter into the Co-operative Movement, with its $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions of members, its fifty million pounds of capital, its successful "production" to the extent of twenty million pounds a year, and its annual "distribution" to the extent of more than a hundred millions.

The evolution of the eighteenth century voluntary associations into the modern Municipality as the agent of the citizen consumer—in contrast with the old Town Council based on the Associations of Producers (Craft Guilds, etc.)—The theory and practice of Municipal Trading.

The slow growth of Services of national scope under the Central Government—Confusion of idea between "the King's Government" as the maintainer of the "King's Peace," and the Government Department administering an industry in the interests of the Citizen-Consumer (e.g., Post Office, Insurance, etc.).

But this not the "Abolition of the Wage System"—Position of the 120,000 employees of the Co-operative Movement; of the 200,000 Post Office officials—What are the "rights" of a "Government Servant"?

VI.

Tuesday, December 3rd, 1912, at 8.30 p.m.

Chairman : THE LORD BISHOP OF WINCHESTER.

Lecturer : MR. SIDNEY WEBB.

The Approaching Compromise.

The "Instability of the Present"—the twentieth century is likely to see as much change in the Control of Industry as the nineteenth — "To each century, its own revolution" (and the revolution it deserves!)—Forces making for change.

The "Control of Industry" includes three distinct assertions of will: the decision as to what shall be produced, and in what quantity, and when; the decision as to the materials to be used and the processes to be employed; and the decision as to the conditions of work — Difficulties in admitting the claim of any party to make all three kinds of decision — The several parties are perhaps "right in what they affirm, and wrong in what they deny" — Vision of a community in which the State, the Municipality, the Co-operative Society, the Self-Governing Workshop, the individual producer, and the Trade Union all have their appropriate spheres of action.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

At the close of each lecture, answers will be given by the lecturer to any questions on the subject put from the audience, either handed up in writing or asked orally.

AIDS TO STUDY.

To every person attending the course, there will be supplied, if desired, free of charge, a carefully drawn up "Course of Reading" relating to the subject matter of each lecture, so as to facilitate further study of the problems; and also a full list of Books and Official Reports dealing with the subject, including all schools of thought.

ADMISSION.

Admission will be by ticket, for the course or for each lecture separately, to be obtained of Miss M. E. Bulkley, National Committee for the Prevention of Destitution, 37, Norfolk Street, Strand, London. As the accommodation is limited, preference will be given to applicants for tickets for the whole course. Applications for single tickets will therefore be reserved until October 22nd, when the remaining seats will be allotted according to priority of application.

PRICE OF TICKETS.

Numbered and reserved stalls, one guinea for the course of six, or five shillings for a single lecture. Back and gallery seats (numbered), half a guinea for the course of six, or two shillings and sixpence for a single lecture. There will be a few unnumbered seats, price five shillings for the course, or one shilling for any one lecture.

The whole of the receipts, after paying for the hall, printing and postage, will be devoted to the educational work of the National Committee for the Prevention of Destitution, particulars of which may be obtained from the Secretary, 37, Norfolk Street, Strand, London, W.C.