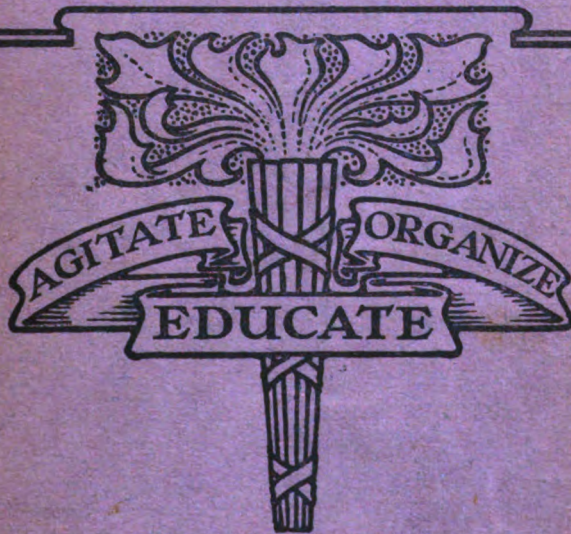


Vol. VIII, No. 1

February, 1916

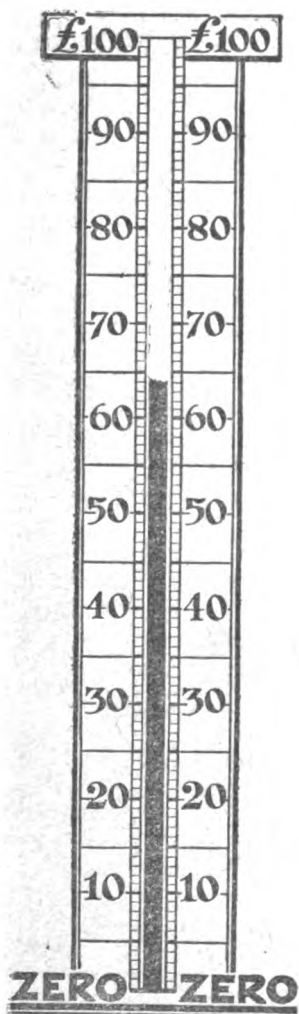
The
PLEBS
MAGAZINE



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MONTHLY

TWOPENCE



We have to
get this
down
to

SOCIAL
SCIENCES

Zero

CARRY ON!

FIRST NUMBER OF A NEW VOLUME.

THE PLEBS MAGAZINE

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

Vol. VIII

February, 1916

No. 1

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EDITORIAL

It is just six months since we gave our readers any information as to the state of affairs at the Central Labour College. The last A.G.M. under the old management had then just taken place, and all of us anticipated that the two great Unions which had undertaken the management and control of the College—the National Union of Railwaymen and the South Wales Miners' Federation—would straightway enter into possession. We have purposely postponed further reference to the subject, hoping (against hope, it almost seemed!) as month after month went by, that we should be able to announce the inauguration of the new regime. Those months have been anxious ones for the staff at Penywern Road, and it has seemed more than once as though, despite all their efforts, the College would have to close its doors before relief arrived. The situation was urgent when the Unions first decided—*more than a year and a half ago*—to come to its assistance. It was still more urgent after a year's delay. What it has been for the last six months we leave our readers to guess. An institution may—technically—

be owned by two powerful organizations; it may—theoretically—have surmounted all obstacles and won ‘recognition’ at last. But ‘recognition’ makes but unsatisfactory food, drink, and clothing; and until it becomes transformed into something a trifle less unsubstantial, it is not of great practical value in this hard matter-of-fact world. *Relief has not yet arrived*; although at the time of going to press, word has been received at the College from the two Unions that the legal and technical difficulties in the way have—at last!--been satisfactorily settled, and the path cleared for the twice-repeated mandate of the rank and file to be carried into effect. We hope that, by next month, we shall be able to ‘report progress.’

* * *

MR. SHAW’S adjuration, addressed to all users of the *Labour Year Book*, not to waste time admiring it, but to spend an hour or two complaining of what they miss in it, is such characteristically

**The Labour
Year Book
—A Complaint.**

sensible advice that we intend to follow it without delay. What we of the *Plebs* miss is an even moderately satisfactory statement of the distinctive aims and objects of the Central Labour College, and of the facts of its foundation.

We are not asking for what the compilers would doubtless promptly tell us is impossible—more space. We should be perfectly content with the 16 or 18 lines devoted to the C.L.C., if those lines included what could be put into a couple of dozen words—a statement of the point of view of the College on the subject of working-class education; and if, moreover, the said lines did not open with a stupid under-statement, or mis-statement, due either to lack of sympathy or lack of knowledge—we have no means of deciding which.

The Central Labour College (the *Year Book* states) was originally established in Oxford in 1909 as the outcome of differences arising between the Warden and students and the governing authorities of Ruskin College.

That is the sum total of the information vouchsafed as to the C.L.C.’s origin and aims. Eminently satisfactory, is it not?—to outside enquirers desirous of learning something about the institution no less than to those few who, like ourselves, are merely concerned to see that a subject in which we are particularly interested is adequately—and accurately—dealt with. Not a word as to policy, basis, etc. Not even a line of explanation of the “differences” referred to. It is a little difficult to put oneself in the place of an unprejudiced stranger, seeking information;

**“Welcome, little strangers!”—as the Secretary said to the
Postal Orders.**

but our feeling is that such a person would inevitably conclude from the *Year Book's* statement that the C.L.C. came into being "as the outcome" of a purely personal or local squabble, the less said about which the better. May we assure the compilers of the *Year Book*, if, as seems probable, their own views on the subject are something of this sort, that the "differences" were differences of considered opinion on what we—and some others—consider matters of vital principle; and that if they find themselves unable to deduce these principles from the various printed statements issued by the C.L.C. (and supplied, we believe, to them) we shall be happy to draft a paragraph in readiness for next year's edition. Those principles cannot conceivably be too revolutionary for mention in a Labour Year Book; for, as Mr. Shaw points out when contrasting the aims of such a publication with an existing work of reference like the *Statesman's Year Book*, "the *Statesman's Year Book* sees life from the social angle of an Oxford college. . . . A proper Labour Year Book ought to set all the Oxford Colleges clamoring for its prosecution on a charge of sedition. . . . It ought to give all the information that our rich men and their caterers and retainers try to hide from themselves and everybody else." It was precisely because the founders of the C.L.C. felt the urgent necessity of imparting information which our rich men, and their caterers and retainers in Oxford colleges, wished to hide from the workers, that the College came into existence. And we expect a Labour Year Book to mention the fact.*

* * *

Most *Plebs* readers will have seen the very interesting letter putting forward a scheme for a Labour College in Scotland, signed by representative Trade Unionists, and published in *Forward*, the

Railway Review, etc. The writers point out that the Glasgow Economics and Industrial History Class has been successfully conducted for some years, the membership this year being close on 450. Out of this Class a Committee has been formed, and a Conference is to be called early this year to discuss the scheme. "The Universities and other institutions for higher education," declare the writers, "have for their object the training of men and women to run Capitalist society in the interests of the wealthy. The time has come for an independent College, financed and controlled by the working-class, in which workers might be trained for the battle against the masters." We need hardly say that we, as supporters of the one independent working-

* One other minor correction. Kautsky's name (p. 360) is Karl, not Parl.

N.B.—A mark thus—X—on the left-hand side of the wrapper signifies that your subscription has lapsed,

class College already in existence—and the first in the field, whatever happens!—are gratified that the C.L.C. should thus receive “the sincerest form of flattery” from the Glasgow workers. But we cannot help expressing some surprise at the fact that, after so clear-cut and uncompromising a statement of principles, the writers of the letter should go on to bracket together—as though they were institutions with similar aims—“the Ruskin College at Oxford” and “the Plebs’ College (!) in London.” Either they are sadly ignorant of the comparatively short history of independent working-class education, or their ideas of “independence” still fall some way short of our own standards. We can scarcely believe that the latter is the case, and we would accordingly suggest that some study of the respective records of the two Colleges might prove both useful and instructive to advocates of *genuine* working-class education in Glasgow. We have little fear of their verdict; and though we have no authority, of course, to speak ‘officially’ for the C.L.C., we may yet express the hope that, if the Glasgow scheme materializes, some co-operation between the Scottish College and the Central Labour College will be found to be practicable.

J.F.H.

The Plebs Fund

WANTED £100. Received to Jan. 19th—£35 16s. 2d.

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* Second donations.

A Labour Year Book—At Last!

WING to the restrictions on drinking in the London area, and the consequent impossibility of buying him off, I promised the Editor of the *Plebs* the other day to review the *Labour Year Book*.* Now I regret my rashness. More than that; I am positively gloomy at the prospect before me. And if any Plebeian is tempted to cry "Buck up," I would suggest that he should get a copy of this monster of recorded iniquity and then try to imagine what he could say that would possibly interest a group of men better informed than himself, each of whom comes into daily and hourly contact with the actual grim realities here represented by tables and groups of figures. The whole idea of a 'review' of such a thing is preposterous; the best that could be demanded would be a criticism following a publisher's announcement, and the criticism should come at the end of the year, and not at the beginning. How, in heaven's name, am I to know how many of these "facts" I shall find superfluous or wrong, or badly compiled, during the year that is now beginning; and, if that has nothing to do with the case, how am I to know what facts I shall require which will not be here?—unless I read the book right through, which . . . ! However, being accustomed to Editors' decrees, here goes.

The copy I have secured is the shilling one. It is fairly well printed on tolerably good paper; the stiff paper cover is as horrible as such things have a habit of being, though, unlike many such, it is well glued and seems as if it will stand a good deal of wear and tear. Including the seven pages of advertisements, there are 704 pages of letterpress, statistical tables, &c.; the index, which is not by any means complete, taking up seven pages of small type. The book proper is divided into eight parts. (1) Labour and the War; (2) the Industrial Labour Movement; (3) the Political Labour Movement; (4) the Co-operative Movement; (5) the International Working-class Movement; (6) Imperial and National Government; (7) Local Government; (8) Social Insurance. Special articles are contributed by a number of people well known in Labour and Socialist circles, including G. B. Shaw, Arthur Henderson, M.P., G. D. H. Cole, Robert Smillie, W. A. Appleton, and Philip Snowden, M.P.

Henderson, as becomes one who has staggered up the ladder of fame from Liberal election agent to Labour M.P. and then, by the fortunes of war, tumbled through the skylight into a Government Department (Education! of all things in the world!) and been ordered out by a Labour vote, devotes a page and a

* *The Labour Year Book*, 1916. (Published at 1, Victoria Street, S.W. Cloth, 2/6; paper, 1/-. Postage 4d. extra.)

half to "Labour after the War." Knowing nothing of Labour during the war and having forgotten everything he ever knew before the war, he is, as one might expect, as unimaginative, uninformative and dull as a Labour Member is generally supposed to be. Having nothing to say, he says it by using such phrases as: "If civilisation is to be delivered from the tyranny of an oppressive brute force,"—meaning Germany. He ends up with: "The return of peace will mean the renewal of many old struggles. If labour is to face them victoriously it must be animated after the war by the spirit it has shown during the war, by unflinching loyalty to its principles, and by a firm resolution to maintain its unity unimpaired," which comes very, very smoothly and aptly from one who has helped to tie up Labour into as compact a parcel as possible, and then hand it over, without any payment or guarantee whatever, to its arch-enemies, Lloyd George, Runciman, & Co. Holding the view that Labour in war-time is synonymous with slavery, he now desires the serfs to show the same spirit after as they have shown during the war. All of which, coming from Henderson, is quite right and proper.

Some of the other special articles are fairly well done; but the level is not high. The dull embers of Shaw's old fire sometimes flame up, lighting and warning the rest, 'like sepulchral lamps among the ancients.' "A proper Labour Year Book ought to set all the Oxford Colleges clamoring for its prosecution on a charge of sedition, and to make half the purchasers of Whitaker go blue in the face with indignation." What I would like to see would be a proper Labour leader who would have that effect; but then we should have Henderson & Co. also clamoring for his prosecution—and what becomes of the Year Book then?

For the rest, the book seems almost wholly admirable. In Part I. the material of which has largely come from Mr. Cole's book, various resolutions and manifestos of the various bodies are given, ending with the resolution of the Joint Board of the Trade Union Congress, the General Federation of Trade Unions, and the Labour Party to call an Industrial Truce. "The number of new industrial disputes fall from 99 in July, 1914, to 14 in August. By December there were only 17 disputes as contrasted with 56 in December, 1913." Part II. is the most important and the most interesting; though the Publication Committee might surely have got a better opening article than the one here given by Mr. J. A. Seddon. The Trade Unions are dealt with fully, their numbers, membership, structure and finance. There is a good directory which should be useful; and then statistics and a directory of Trade Councils. The vast mass of information generally hidden away in Blue Books, which few of us ever see, referring to strikes and lock-outs, changes in rates of wages and hours of labour, cost of living, and so on, is collected and collated.

Mr. A. Bellamy and Mr. F. Bramley write on Industrial v. Craft Unions; Bramley upholding the latter. The section devoted to the cost of living is particularly worth noting. "A sovereign was worth in 1896, 20/-; in 1906, 18/-; in 1912, 16/3; in 1914, 14/7; in 1915, 11/10." It is worth less to-day, but munition workers continue to purchase pianos!

Under the heading of "Industrial Accidents" we find the usual toll of slain and maimed, without either a roll of honour, Victoria Crosses, or reports of hangings for murder. In the mining industry the fatal accidents in 1914 averaged 100 per month; whilst for industry generally the total for the year was 4,554. The total number of injured is not given, but for 1913 it was 222,061. On the railways in 1914 the killed numbered 477, and the injured 27,218. I am one of those who honestly "believe in the war," as it is phrased, but whenever I read these figures and ponder on the terrible crimes they represent, crimes perpetrated not by maddened soldiers doped with rum and drunk on blood-lust, but by soft-spoken, gentlemanly beings who are honoured and respected among us, I could positively wait for a gun—for other purposes than German potting. But my old shunter mates still go on getting killed or injured at the rate of 1 in 15 per year; and apparently they will continue at the same rate for a devil of a long time yet.

It is obviously impossible to go over the whole of the book, and such futilities as the Political Labour Movement do not interest me; but one point I should like to deal with before I close. Under the heading of railways we get, in the index "Railway Strike, 1911," and "Railway Workers' Wages." The strike comes in Part III., the Political Labour Movement!—and is chiefly a glorification of Mr. J. R. MacDonald and Mr. Arthur Henderson for the part they played in the negotiations over that piece of industrial work. How anyone can have the impudence to treat this subject in this way I cannot imagine. "Railway Workers' Wages" is properly dealt with in the industrial section. But what I fail to find is a review of the railways since war broke out. This is a serious omission. The railways, we are often told, were "practically" nationalised in August, 1914. The fact is that they were not nationalised. They were, to some extent, unified, and the Government claimed first call on them—at a price. The price paid was a regular dividend at record rates. It is safe to say that such a step saved one at least of the big lines from bankruptcy. In any case, the public is in the position of having been robbed of all kinds of services; of having to pay increased rates; and of being certain of having to pay more and more as the war goes on, and, all the time, strengthening the companies for when they start their general plunder after the war. The employees have, many of them, gone to the war; the others have received

paltry bonuses; and womens' labour has been introduced at cheaper rates and in previously undreamed-of quantities. Surely a national service like the railways, and the questionable—one might almost write corrupt—methods of dealing with it adopted by the Government, should have been fully treated here.

And now I will quit my growling. The book is infinitely better than any of us had a right to expect, probably because of the work put into it by the Fabian Research Committee. Indeed, one cannot imagine such a book coming from any but a Fabian source, although it is officially the joint production of the Parliamentary Committee of the Trade Unions Congress, the Executive Committee of the Labour Party, and the Fabian Research Department. It is, on the whole, fair in its treatment of all sections of the movement, and is an almost incredible improvement on all previous attempts such as the Reformers' Year Book, the Socialist Annual, and the I.L.P. Year Book. Personally, I think much of the matter would have been susceptible to a well-wielded blue pencil, but I should not have liked to be the unhappy wielder; and if, as we generally expect, the first issue is by far the worst, we may expect a really wonderful annual in a very few years' time. It would be much more inspiring, however, if Labour would only roll up its sleeves and give the compilers a few real, substantial victories to record. Over the facts here gathered together there is too much of the horrible atmosphere of constant, complete or partial, defeat.

ROWLAND KENNEY.

Stop the Rot!

SOME twelve months ago I wrote an article for the *Plebs* entitled "Will Socialism Survive the War?" And now I am tempted to initiate a discussion on the moot point as to whether the Labour Movement itself is going to survive the war. Certainly that movement has never been in a more critical condition than at the present time. By means of the machinery set up by the Munitions Act, and the recent attempts to "dilute" labour, it is not too much to say that Trade Unionism is being deliberately destroyed. It is suggested that the present state of affairs will end with the war, and we shall then resume our wonted industrial activities and conditions. The history of Trade Unionism shows the fallacy of such an argument. Every advantage the Unions have gained is the result of years of agitation and effort. That in the period of industrial turmoil which must follow the war, the capitalists will agree to the re-establishment of full Trade Union rights and privileges is unthinkable. And Trade Union officials have agreed to the terms of the Munitions Act! From the standpoint of Labour it was treachery, from that of Patriotism it was

folly. Even Messrs. Hodge & Co. must have realised that such an Act would create trouble with the workers. Had the attitude of defiance taken up by the South Wales Miners been adopted generally, the Act must soon have become a dead letter, and much of subsequent legislation would never have been introduced. Unhappily, "the Munitions Act," as the *Nation* pointed out a few weeks ago "is working—and from the standpoint of the employer it is working uncommonly well."

The present plight of Trade Unionism is largely due to the failure of the Labour "Leaders" to realise the possibilities of the state of affairs created by the sudden outbreak of war. Even if the simple fact that "labour is the source of all value" was beyond the minds of the Labour M.P.'s, they should have at least realised that Labour was essential to the national existence, as well as to the successful prosecution of the war. If Labour refused to "do its bit" the country would starve and the war would come to an abrupt and inglorious conclusion. This fact is so obvious that it ought not to require any demonstration—even to anyone with no more brains than a "Labour" Cabinet Minister. In view, therefore, of the supreme importance of the whole-hearted co-operation of all the workers with the Government "in this, the greatest crisis of our national life," as Asquith would phrase it, the Labour Leaders had it in their power to obtain from the Government large and substantial advantages for the workers in return for this all-important co-operation. It was the supreme opportunity for Labour. The necessities of the moment made it absolutely impossible for the Cabinet to refuse to concede any claims that the workers put forward.

The success of the South Wales Miners' strike proves the truth of this statement. The result of obtaining such concessions would have been an enormous increase in the prestige and power of organized Labour; would in a moment have transformed the political expression of our movement from a farce into a reality; would have increased its importance in the eyes of the whole world, and would have enabled it to play a prominent part in forcing the Government to state the terms upon which it would make an early and an enduring peace. Unhappily for the Movement the "statesmen" of Labour adopted no such strong line of action. They made no terms with the Government beyond a series of concessions which have reduced Trade Unionists to serfs at the beck and call of Lloyd George. In the words of Sir John Simon they have "sold their birthright for a mess of pottage which will not provide them with a square meal." They have lost not only a golden opportunity, but the confidence of the rank and file as well. But they have had their reward. The *Daily Mail* is ringing with their praises, and their patriotism is warmly acclaimed in the *Times*. They are among those whom the King has delighted

to honour as his Privy Councillors, and Asquith, of Featherstone fame, includes them among his Cabinet Ministers. They turn their eyes upon their leader and exemplar, Lloyd George, with looks of respectful admiration, as they follow him upon his career of intimidation, abuse, and insult of the workers from one scene of "labour unrest" to another. They apologise for strikes, support the Munitions Act, and openly advocate Conscription. The weekly tirades of a Blatchford or a Bottomley pale beside the robust "true blue" utterances of a Stanton or a Hodge. For this, then, they have been elected and paid by the workers from whose ranks they have risen, and from whose confidence and real leadership they have cut themselves off. . . .

Let us leave these "right honourable gentlemen" amid the golden glamour of their new and exalted positions, and return to the grim work-a-day world of the class struggle, the Munitions Tribunal, and the suppressed Socialist newspaper. The problem that confronts us is two-fold. First, to maintain what is left of Trade Unionism. Second, to resist any further disruption of the Movement. It is becoming clearer every day that the responsibility for these duties devolves upon the rank and file. Recent happenings on the Clyde show plainly that official leadership no longer represents working-class opinions. The task of conserving and strengthening the Movement must be taken up by every individual Trade Unionist. If any neglect this work *now*, they will pay even more dearly for it than they have done already for the action of their "leaders." Much time is being given to profitless discussions as to what will have to be done "after the war." This is sheer waste of time. Sufficient for the day is the task thereof. Our task is with immediate questions and present day problems.

As it stands, the Munitions Act forms a powerful foundation for industrial conscription. By the time these words are read by *Plebs* readers, some form of military conscription will probably have been passed into law. It is impossible to escape the conclusion that these measures will lead direct to industrial compulsion. In this connection Lloyd George's Glasgow visit is fraught with the highest significance. As far back as last June the *Nation* (a Liberal weekly) defined Industrial Conscription as follows: "Forced Labour is the power to transfer men from one factory to another. To put the Munitions Factories under martial law would mean the virtual suspension of Trade Unionism, both as an instrument for collective bargaining, and an indirect protection to the workers' life and limb." Putting this definition side by side with the terms of the Munitions Act, it is easy to see that "Forced Labour" is only the logical completion of that piece of legislation. With military compulsion in operation, how long would it be before the "logical completion" became an accom-

plished fact? It remains to be seen whether the rank and file of the Unions will meekly acquiesce in such developments. The call is to immediate action. There is not one minute to be lost. "The political power in this country is in the hands of the working man. He holds every Government in the hollow of his big hand." So said the leader writer of the *Daily Mail* in a recent lucid interval. The capitalist class can impose no chains upon the workers unless the workers hold out their "big hands" to be fettered. "Workers of the world, unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains, you have a world to win!" Never did Karl Marx's mighty slogan ring truer or more appropriately than at this hour. Unity of the workers would mean international solidarity and peace, and the snapping of every fetter that binds the giant of Labour.

In thus urging the workers to protect their dearly won rights, I have expressed no opinions upon the war. Indeed it would be easy to show that were Trade Unionists to be treated fairly, it would expedite and not hinder the production of munitions. The fact must be emphasised that munition and war work generally is being hindered by the friction between the workers and the masters which is being produced by the Munitions Act itself. But the whole problem of the war is an entirely separate issue. Another consideration is more pertinent. It is argued that the workers are getting far higher wages now than they were before the war, and that they should therefore have no grievances. It is true that wages have increased in some industries. It is also true that hours of labour have increased enormously and conditions of labour are far harder than before. It is also to be remembered that cost of living has increased by leaps and bounds—notably house rent. The workers are not the only people who profit by high wages! No rise in wages can compensate for the destruction of Trade Union organization and the introduction of industrial compulsion. These are the dangers that threaten "now immediate" as the Americans say. It is for the rank and file to make their voices heard in their Unions, and to see that their officials carry out their behests. "Any form of military service could be killed in an hour by the Trade Unions of this country"—so Mr. J. H. Thomas in the House of Commons. Killed in an hour! How much longer will the workers be content to hold out their "big hands" for—more chains?

H. WYNN-CUTHBERT.

MARKISM UP-TO-DATE :—Mr. Gordon Harvey (Rochdale, Lib.): "To take a cotton weaver from his mill meant taking a man of a productive power equal to £700 a year."—*The Times*, 22nd Dec., 1915 (Parliamentary Report). According to this statement, a weaver receiving on an average £3 a week in wages (which is a fairly high average) is exploited at a rate of nearly 400%; or, in other words, for every £1 paid in wages the employer receives nearly £4. Truly the reward of the "shirker" is GREAT!

Thoughts on the Present Discontent

Compiled from recent speeches by the Rt. Hon. D. Lloyd George,
Minister of Munitions.

(We should hate to offer our readers any "one-sided" or "garbled" comments (Mr. Lloyd George's own adjectives) on the subject of the existing industrial crisis. We have therefore thought it quite the best thing to make a little anthology of the Munitions Minister's own eloquent utterances. Surely, neither he nor the Press Censor can possibly have any objections to this.)

"In countries where there is complete military conscription no Munitions Ministry is necessary, and if my hon. friend (Mr. Pringle) wants to get rid of Clause 7 (the certificate clause) and every other clause in the Munitions Act, the best way would be to have universal conscription."

(*Times*, Parliamentary Report, January 5th, 1916.)

"I cannot see any other way of dealing with this unrest, unless you put everybody under the same sort of military discipline." (Ditto.)

"Not merely labour, but also employers come under the Munitions Act. The whole of their works are under control, and their prices and profits also. Therefore it is not a one-sided restriction."* (Ditto.)

"The revolt (on the Clyde) is far more against the official leaders of trade unionism than it is against the Government." (Ditto.)

"The minority (on the Clyde) is a powerful minority, a well-organized minority, and in some respects a very ably-led minority." (Ditto.)

"I HAVE BEEN THERE, and I say it does not represent the majority of labour sentiment in the Clyde Valley as I saw it—not in the least. That is the opinion which my right hon. friend the Minister of Education (Mr. Henderson) and I came to from what we saw there in front of us." (Ditto.)

"Of course, there are grievances." (Ditto.)

"What is this slavery that is imposed upon the men? . . . The workman who works under organized labour has agreed, under certain conditions which protect him in regard to wages and otherwise, to certain restrictions. . . . Why should he call that slavery?" (Ditto.)

"It is an essential part of the organization of the forces of the nation for victory—victory which is more vital to the working-class of this country than to any other class. **The well-to-do can always look after themselves under any conditions, whatever happens. . . . If they are able to do it now, they will be able to do it in time of peace.**" (Ditto.)

"I agree with my hon. friend that there are workmen who are slaving. . . . I have seen them." (Ditto.)

* Q.E.D.

Doesn't our success or failure concern YOU?

“ . . . the task of turning out munitions. *Everything* depends upon it. The length of the war depends upon it. . . . Not upon the soldiers—they have done their part heroically. Not upon the Government. It depends entirely upon the workmen of this country. . . . If they do it, *they, and they alone, will have achieved a victory* for the Empire and for the destinies of the human race which will reflect indelible credit upon the Labour movement.” (Ditto.)

“ The visit (to the Clyde) had proved very useful to him as Minister of Munitions, and in paying it he had spent a very merry Christmas.” (Ditto.)

“ There was not the faintest doubt that the trade union leaders were fighting for their lives.” (Ditto.)

“ A time would come when the Munitions Act and the Defence of the Realm Act would be regarded as landmarks in a great industrial revolution. The power to take control over workshops and to direct what work should be done, the power to organize our industrial system, the power to limit profit, to declare a minimum wage in the controlled establishments, and to prevent sweating—all these were processes which it would have taken many years to establish under ordinary conditions. Before very long the man who would say that he was opposed to the Munitions Act would be hard to find.” (*1) (Ditto.)

“ He agreed that nothing but the most overwhelming reasons could possibly justify the action taken by the Government (in suppressing *Forward*). Nothing but the supreme interest of the State could justify it.” (*2) (*Daily News* Parliamentary report, January 11th, 1916.)

“ This paper (*Forward*) was fighting dilution of labour to the death.” (Ditto.)

“ The paper has discouraged recruiting by representing this war as a capitalists' and financiers' war, and that, too, *in an area peculiarly sensitive to appeals of that kind.*” (*3) (*Daily Telegraph* report, January 11th, 1916.)

“ Great works have been set up there (the Clyde) to turn out the big guns and projectiles on which we are so dependent . . . Unless we get these, the coming campaign will not accomplish its object. It is hard that, in order to defend our action, I should be forced to say that in the House of Commons. If my hon. friends (*4) *cannot read a little bit beyond that, I do not say much for their intelligence.*” (Ditto.)

“ We have appealed to the workers to do what the workers in France have done—that is, to suspend frankly their trade union regulations during

(*1) What will have happened to him ?

(*2) What is the “ supreme interest ” of the State ?

(*3) Which almost makes it appear as if the “ minority ” (see above) were not such a minority after all !

(*4) And others—not his friends.

the war. . . . What has been the attitude of this paper (*Forward*) ? Opposition. It spread distrust and suspicion of the proposal. It suggested that this is a capitalist dodge, in order to trick Trade Unionists out of their rights and put more profit into the pockets of the capitalist. . . . Yet we are asked to allow this paper with impunity to go on distilling this poison into the minds of the workers." (Ditto.)

"These men are *an absolutely new brand* of Syndicalists, who have taken root in the Clyde Valley, and who wish to see each workshop managed by the workers for the benefit of the workers." (*5) (Ditto.)

"I do not know what an Act of Parliament is for if a paper of this kind is allowed to go on." (Ditto.)

"I appeal to the workmen to help us ; help us quickly ; help us thoroughly. They may depend upon it that it will strengthen their claim *at the end of the war* upon the people of this country for a redress of any grievances they may suffer to-day. The patriotism of the French workman has given him a deep and abiding claim on the consideration and gratitude of his fellow-countrymen,(*6) and his demands when put forward *in the future* will be heard with the respectful attention which is the reward of his sacrifices during the war." ('Authorized' report of Glasgow speech supplied to daily press, December 27th, 1915.)

"I wonder how many people realize the magnitude of the war, and the tremendous issues that depend upon it. . . . If you will carefully watch what is going on in the belligerent lands, you will find that this war is bringing unheard-of changes in the social and industrial fabric. It is a cyclone which is tearing up by the roots the ornamental plants of modern society, and wrecking some of the flimsy trestle-bridges of modern civilization. It is an earthquake which is upheaving the very rocks of European life." (Ditto.)

"I beg the skilled workmen of this country, *in whose keeping are the destinies of labour*, to lift up their eyes above the mists of distrust and suspicion, and ascend to the height of the greatest opportunity that ever opened before their class." (Ditto.)

Mr. Lloyd George—on the Munitions Act ?—"Labour difficulties of all kinds are a constant source of anxiety to those who are engaged in increasing and improving the equipment of our armies, and *anything which tends to increase these difficulties* must have a damaging effect upon the fortunes of our country at this critical hour." (Letter to the press, December 15th, 1915.)

(*5) Which of his "Labour advisers" informed the Rt. Hon. gentleman that this constituted "an absolutely new brand of Syndicalism" ?

(*6) "A court-martial has sentenced a man to four years' hard labour for desertion in circumstances which are interesting to Great Britain at the present moment. The accused had been sent back from his regiment to work in a private factory carrying out war contracts. He absented himself from the factory for 10 days without permission, was arrested, succeeded in escaping, and was then rearrested."—*Times* Paris correspondent, Jan. 12, 1916.

Outlines of Political Economy

(Continued.)

LECTURE OUTLINE, No. 5.—SURPLUS-VALUE.—LABOUR THE SOURCE OF SURPLUS-VALUE :—If the magnitude of value is not determined by the variations of the Market—Supply and demand—then Surplus-Value, which is a part of value, can neither be determined or explained on that basis. If, furthermore, labour is the substance of value, then, labour must also be the substantial reality of surplus-value. For example, if nature creates no value, nature can create no surplus-value. Rent is a part of surplus-value and cannot—contrary to the school of Ricardo—have its source in the soil.

THE APPEARANCE OF CAPITAL AS THE SOURCE OF SURPLUS-VALUE :—It is living labour which creates value and, therefore, surplus-value. A machine, a workshop, raw material, represent quantities of materialized labour : materialized labour creates neither value nor surplus-value. The fact that this materialized labour is private property—is capital—does not alter the case. Capital enables its owner to *appropriate* surplus-value. To take is not to make. The owners of capital no more produce surplus-value than the jockey creates the energy of the race-horse. The whip in the hands of the jockey enables him to get speed out of the horse. The whip of capital enables the capitalist to get surplus-value out of the labourer. Because the use-value of labour-power—a use value which consists precisely in the function of creating value and surplus-value—belongs to capital, it *appears*, on the surface, to be a useful attribute of capital. Hence the pleasant illusion of official political economy that profit arises from the productive power of capital. The fact is, however, that capital commands profit, interest and rent, because it commands labour, that it is productive, only because it has annexed the productive power of labour.

THE RELATION OF THE FORMS OF REVENUE TO THE VALUE PRODUCED :—Wages, profit and interest, and ground rent, are parts into which value is *divided*. They are categories of revenue, but not constituents of value. They do not determine value. The magnitude of value determines the limits for the total revenue. This magnitude remaining the same, no change in the partition of the revenue into wages, profit, etc., can change the magnitude, any more than the division of a given straight line can have any effect upon the length of the line. The capitalist may calculate the price of his commodity on the basis of so much for wages, so much for profit, so much for rent. But the price *realized* will be governed by quite other circumstances that are independent of his calculations or prejudices. An increase of wages by no means carries with it, as a necessary consequence,

The Lord loveth a cheerful giver. We don't mind whether you're cheerful or not, so long as you GIVE.

an increase of prices. If the latter should result, it follows from circumstances that extend beyond the variations of wages. So much so, that wages may rise and prices fall, or wages fall and prices rise. The employment of women, at lower wages than those formerly paid to men, has not resulted in a fall in the prices of the commodities produced.

UNPAID LABOUR THE SUBSTANCE OF SURPLUS-VALUE:—Surplus-value is substantially unpaid labour—the result of the prolongation of the labourers function beyond the point where he has produced a value equivalent to the wages received by him, from the capitalist, for the use of his power.* So that as Marx expresses it, the working-day is divided into necessary labour-time, or time during which the labourer creates a value equal to that which he is paid, and surplus labour-time, or time for which he is unpaid. But to say, as W. B. Robertson says, in his *Foundations of Political Economy*, that, “if the part of the day that Marx calls surplus labour-time were devoted to play, there would, it follows, be no surplus labour performed and therefore no surplus-value would appear,” is to manifest either a lack of penetration or a lack of honesty. He continues: “When men are on half-time, the view Marx holds up would lead to the conclusion that they got full wages and the employer no profits or surplus-value at all.” As if Marx was ignorant of all this! To appreciate the depth of enquiry required for this piece of Marx-killing, see Chapter 20, of *Capital*, Volume I., which deals with Time Wages. Where the length of the working day is reduced to a period of hours that suffices only for the production of a value equal to the value of labour power, then the wages paid fall below the value of labour-power, and surplus-value, in this case, is only maintained on the basis of this abnormal depression of wages. But whether full time or short time, the working-day is still divided into its paid and unpaid parts.

Capital, Volume I., Chapters 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

STUDY OUTLINE, No. 13.—CO-OPERATION —PRODUCTIVENESS OF LABOUR AND RELATIVE SURPLUS-VALUE:—Co-operation is here considered in its bearing upon the productiveness of labour, and productiveness of labour as a *condition* for the creation of value and, therefore, surplus-value. The capitalist strives to increase his surplus-value. When he increases it by a prolongation of the working-day, it is called, *absolute* surplus-value. When the working day is fixed, he can only increase the surplus-labour part of the day by decreasing the necessary part; this is *relative* surplus-value. This latter is increased by means of an increase of the productive power of labour. Increased productiveness reduces the value of the commodity, and in so far as the commodities so cheapened enter into the means of the labourer's subsistence, they cheapen the labourer himself and, therefore, lessen that part of the working-day necessary to create a value equal to the value of his labour-power; although the increase in the productiveness of labour cheapens commodities, in general, the particular point, that must be noted here, is the part played by it in augmenting relative surplus-value.

* See Quotation from Mr. Gordon Harvey's speech, on page 11.

SIMPLE CO-OPERATION :—The first form of co-operation, which serves for the development of relative surplus-value, is purely *quantitative* and consists in the assembling of a number of workers in a capitalist workshop. One workshop employing twenty men is more productive than five workshops each employing four men. The means of production being more concentrated, in the first case, than in the second, permits of their being used more economically. The result of this increased productiveness manifests itself in the cheapening of commodities, in the fall of the value of labour-power and, therefore, in an increase of relative surplus-value. This purely quantitative co-operation, by which alone *at the outset* capitalist production is distinguished from the medieval handicrafts, is called simple co-operation. The increased productiveness, which results from the collective labour-process, costs the capitalist nothing because he pays only for the individual labourers.

CO-OPERATION IN MANUFACTURE ON THE BASIS OF DIVISION OF LABOUR IN THE WORKSHOP :—Experience shows, in time, the advantage of introducing a division of labour in the workshops. The increase in quantity enables this *qualitative* differentiation to take place. Instead of each man performing all the processes necessary for the production of a commodity, each man now performs only one process. As a result of the increased productiveness, following from the specialization of men and means, relative surplus-value is still further augmented. The specialization of the craftsman to one process reduces the value of his labour-power. In addition, there arises a specialization of the lack of skill—the so-called unskilled labourers, whose labour-power is still lower in value. This form of co-operation, characteristic of capitalist manufacture based on handicraft, is called co-operation on the basis of division of labour in the workshop.

CO-OPERATION IN MACHINUFACTURE OR MODERN INDUSTRY :—A still higher stage of co-operation is reached with the introduction of machinery, and with its development. Co-operation is now based on machinery. In place of the gradations of specialized workmen, there are specialized machines, directly connected with one another in the production of a commodity. Such a form of co-operation of workmen is, again, simple, and, in the main, purely quantitative, in that while the machines are specialized, it requires very little special training to attend to those machines. Machinery tends, as it develops, to level all the former specialized orders of workmen to one common operative plane. From this co-operation there arises a remarkable increase in the productiveness of labour, which puts all previous progress in this respect in the shade, and gives a great impetus to the augmentation of surplus-value.

STUDY OUTLINE, No. 14.—MACHINERY.—ITS INTRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT :—First practical machines, introduced in the textile industry, in the last half of the 18th century, were *made possible* by

THE THERMOMETER'S GOING DOWN. (see cover)

the specialized tools of the manufacturing period and *made necessary* by the extension of the market.

The *machine*, operating *many tools*, and set in motion by *steam*, takes the place of the *handcraftsman* using only *one tool*. The locale of mechanical operations, is called, a factory. At first, machinery was made by manufacture but, finally, the machine became the product of manufacture.

THE VALUE OF THE MACHINE.—A machine may wear away by use or by non-use. In the first case, it is consumed productively, and its value is preserved by being transferred to the product it helps to form. In the second case, its use-value is destroyed and its value is lost.

The machine contributes to the formation of the product, and according to the velocity of the machine so will be the amount of the product. This is not to say, however, that it creates the *value* of the product. It is labour that *preserves* the old value and *adds* the new value, which both appear in the price of the finished commodity. According to the velocity of the machine so more or less labour is required to turn out a given article with more or less value.

The standard of measuring the productiveness of a machine is the amount of labour-power that it replaces. But it is important not to confound the *amount of labour-power*, expressed in wages, with the *amount of labour* expended by labour-power, which latter is expressed not only by wages but also by the surplus-value. The capitalist, who has his eye on the cost price of the means and men necessary to produce the commodity, makes his decision as to the purchase of a new machine, on the basis of the difference between the *cost of the machine* and the *cost of the labour-power it would replace*.

EFFECTS ON WORKMAN:—(1) Introduction of the labour-power of women and children; (2) prolongation of working-day; (3) intensification of labour. The working-day is prolonged in order to avoid the danger of depreciation of machinery through the introduction of improved machines before the already existing ones have paid for themselves; by lengthening the working-day, the time for the replacement of their value is shortened: (b) the ability to prolong the working-day without any extra outlay of capital on buildings, machinery, etc.; (c) the fact, that the owners of machinery possessed a productive power above the average social productiveness, and could, thus, gain an extra profit during the transition period; (d) growth of the surplus labour army, leading to increased competition and decreased wages. Intensification of labour, on the other hand, can only be advanced in the degree that the duration of the working-time is reduced. After the legal shortening of the working-day, this speeding up becomes a powerful lever for the increase of relative surplus-value. Improved machinery is the objective means for this intensification.

EFFECTS ON OLDER METHODS OF PRODUCTION.—(1) Defeat and disappearance of co-operation based on handicraft, and of manufacture based on division of labour in the workshop; (2) conversion of the old-fashioned domestic industry into modern domestic industry and of the old

manufacture into modern manufacture; (3) conversion of the modern domestic industry and modern manufacture into modern mechanical industry.

CRISES.—With the general establishment of modern industry the only limits to the elasticity of production, are (1) supplies of raw material; (2) disposal of finished commodities. But the more capitalist production develops, the more does it collide with those limits. More is produced than the market can absorb and a period of stagnation results. The whole history of modern industry presents a series of cycles in which the ever-recurring moments are prosperity, over-production, stagnation. Crises are the "memento mori" of capitalist production.

W. W. C.

Correspondence

THE TASK BEFORE US.

(The following letter was sent to the *Labour Leader* in reply to Mrs. Webb's article under the above heading in the Christmas Number of that journal. As the *Labour Leader* has not published it, we have pleasure in printing it in the *Plebs*.)

SIR.—Mrs. Sidney Webb's plea for unity opens up the important question of working-class education. The disunity she deplors arises from tactics, and tactics are determined by the degree of insight which the workers have as regards the Social problem awaiting solution. The workers who have the clearest insight into this problem are those who have been educated in Social Science from the working-class standpoint, i.e., Marxian economics and sociology. Unfortunately, owing to the more influential Socialist parties in this country neglecting to educate their followers in the principles of Marxism, there is at present only a minority of the workers who really understand the Social problem and who can clearly see the way it should be solved. So long as this state of things exists, the factitious unity for which Mrs. Webb pleads is neither desirable nor expedient. I cannot agree with her that the differences which split the movement are a source of weakness. On the contrary, they are symptoms of virility. Who will deny that the spirit of revolt on the Clyde is not having a salutary effect on the Labour movement? Yet this rebel movement is due (in the first place) to but a minority of the workers there, who have been educated in the Marxian classes held in Glasgow for many years past.

When one reviews the British Labour Movement from the Marxian viewpoint, it is obvious that the majority do not possess a clear insight into the problem to be solved. There are sections who believe that it can be solved by the application of Christian ethics. Others who believe it will be solved by meliorism. Others again, who believe that the Capitalist State can be made the instrument of the workers' salvation. Naturally, futile tactics are adopted as a result of the erroneous conceptions held by these various sections. Consequently, Marxists who perceive the inutility of these tactics decline to support them. They would betray their principles and their cause if they did. Hence, there is a clash of opinions, and a revolt against

Labour Leaders who adopt compromising tactics. Hence, also, the urgent necessity to discuss the cause of the war, the breakdown of the International, and the steps to be taken to rebuild it on surer foundations.

Much, however, of the confusion now so rife in the Labour movement will be done away with by the spread of Marxian Education. From this will follow a change in tactics. Socialists who, in order to gain political preferment, have hitherto ignored the principles on which the movement is built, would then perforce embrace those principles on which depends that line of action which alone can win for the proletariat of all countries the Socialist Industrial Commonwealth, based not on individual ownership of the means of production, but on social ownership; not on a Governmental State, but on an administration of things democratically controlled by the industrial communes.

Yours &c.,

FRED SILVESTER.

(Hon. Sec., Birmingham Social Science Class).

INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATION ON THE RAILWAYS.

SIR,—Unlike Comrade G. W. Brown, I think L. B.'s letter in December issue a useful contribution to a discussion on the above problem.

The principal point put forward for consideration was "a feeling among low-paid grades that there was no reason why engine-drivers should be more highly paid." With an amazing assurance, Brown asserts that this feeling is "more imaginary than real." Now my experience of loco-men in particular and the movement in general is both longer and wider than his, and I say unhesitatingly that this short-sighted envy is not only very much alive, but that it operates against the realization of solidarity. It accounts for the absence from the Triple Alliance of 35,000 loco-men and 30,000 clerks, organized separately on the railways. But this feeling is not confined to railwaymen; it is a fundamental fact of human society and pervades all classes; it is simply the ambition to rise, and, if in this instance it is expressed in ignorant envy and discontent, all the more reason for its recognition and intelligent direction. This divine discontent it is which provides work for Brown and other organizers, and without it the race would die out. Their business is to see that the desire is to rise high enough, else it certainly tends to depress wages and perpetuate material inequality.

Brown's defence of another variety of sectionalism, with an army of negotiators in lieu of a fighting union of the working class, utterly fails and is unworthy of him. He also evades the question why the eight hours was dropped by this precious Conciliation Board, and nine hours and some paltry wage advances accepted. He asks for an instance where *amalgamation has been detrimental*. This is scarcely a fair question, but he himself supplies conclusive evidence that it hasn't been a huge success when he cites this solitary reduction of hours, and adds that on most other railways "the general working-day is *ten hours*;" and as wages are proportionately low, no wonder their claim to teach new methods of organization is discounted, when not met with amused contempt.

Then, speaking of the North Eastern Railway, how does he explain the springing up of sectional branches there on any other ground than suspicion of this new and doubtful propaganda? Has he read Mackay's reply to Barker, and the unanswerable case there made out for joint action in order that we may evolve that revolutionary force essential to working Class Emancipation?

(Doncaster.)

Yours, etc.,

G. W. CHAPPELL.

GEO. BROWN, in reply to the above, writes:—G. W. Chappell's effusion does not support the claim put forward by L. B. That claim was that there is a feeling existing among the lower-paid grades that loco.-men should not be more highly paid than the men in other departments. L. B. appeared to realize that it would be waste of time to discuss this feeling unless it could be shown that in an amalgamation of grades, where the vote of other grades would be counted in along with those of loco.-men, this feeling had the effect of depressing the conditions of loco.-men. Now I showed in the January *Plebs* that the point quoted as evidence from a leading sectionalist speaker did not have the effect of depressing conditions, but that—in that particular case—the conditions of loco.-men were improved. Even friend Chappell admits this, because he cannot deny the reduction from ten to nine hours per day, together with what he calls some "paltry wage advances." (Paltry or otherwise, it certainly does not show any lowering of wages, which was the contention put forward by L. B.).

I can quite see that, as regards the alleged feeling amongst other grades, we could keep the pages of the *Plebs* occupied with an acrimonious discussion, in which one side would claim that this feeling is very general and does exist—"we know it to be so because our experience is longer and wider than yours, etc., etc."—the other side retorting that it is "more imaginary than real." Such a discussion would not be helpful to anyone. What L. B. or G. W. C. have to prove is that this feeling exists and is so general that it has the effect, where loco.-men are amalgamated with other grades, of depressing their conditions. So far neither of them has shown this. And in so far as G. W. Chappell (in spite of his long and wide experience) puts forward no evidence in support of L. B.'s contention, his letter is wide of the mark. If I were to follow him in his ramblings, I should require more space than it is reasonable to take up in a magazine such as the *Plebs*.

In conclusion, let me say that I was not concerned with the defence of any conciliation board as such, but that I merely desired to show that L. B.'s evidence, when examined, did not support his contention.

Review

(We need offer no apology to our readers for reprinting the following interesting review from the *Times Literary Supplement* of January 13th.)

GERMAN SOCIALIST WAR BOOKS.

Die Sozialdemokratie im Weltkrieg. By E. David. *Die Deutschen Sozialdemokraten und der Weltkrieg.* By Lensch. *Kultur und Nation.* By Wolfgang Heine. *Die Sozialistischen Errungenschaften der Kriegszeit.* By H. Heine-

mann. *Krieg und Sozialdemokratie*. By Hanisch. *Die Sozialdemokratie am Scheideweg*. By Kolb. *Nationalstaat, Imperialischer Staat und Staatenbund*. By Karl Kautsky. *Imperialismus und Demokratie*. By Laufenberg und Wolffheim.

Three main questions are discussed in the German Socialist war books—What brought about the war; what its effect is likely to be on the working classes; and, finally, what is to be the relation of the proletariat to the Government.

On the first issue there is a consensus of opinion. Capitalist Imperialism is held responsible for the war. What precisely is meant by capitalist Imperialism is variously explained by different writers. But the general sense is clear. The industrial capitalist States are greedy for new territories; they seek not so much new markets as new possibilities for investment, new grooves for the creation of more surplus values. In a word, capitalist economic expansion brought about the war. But there is a cleavage of opinion as to which particular variety of the species was the aggressor. Some blame the Allies; others are silent—because the German censor will not allow them to express their view. There has, nevertheless, been no lack of criticism of German policy, but one must look for it in the neutral Press. Some Swiss papers, in particular, contain admirable samples (for instance *Berner Tagwacht*).

But the second question is, after all, the most important of the three, and in regard to it the Revisionists (or Nationalists), who stand for a revised and modernized theory of Socialism and reject Marx as antiquated, part company from the Radicals, who pride themselves on being true, orthodox Marxians. For the latter (the last two books in the above list are typical instances) the war is just a piece of business from which the capitalist class alone will derive benefits. For the working classes the mighty conflagration in Europe will bring nothing but bitterness, and deepen the revolutionary spirit within them. When peace comes class consciousness will be an even stronger force than before, and it will be supremely necessary to build up the International anew. But the Revisionist writers (the first six books in our list are representative of these) are more moderate. In their opinion the war will bring economic blessings for the proletariat. The working man is, therefore, as interested in the success of the war as his employer. The working man's programme must in consequence eschew the decrying of militarism and the belittling of victories; rather should he set about obtaining as great a share of the spoils as he is able.

As little as we desired war (says one of the Revisionist writers), so much are we concerned, now that it is raging, that Germany shall be victorious. The attempt by English capitalism to destroy German commerce and industry must be shattered. It is our cause that is being fought for by the Yser Canal and the trenches in front of Rheims.

From this it follows that (as another writer is at pains to show) "the interests of the German capitalist which demand more markets coincide with the interests of the working man."

What of the third question? How should the Social Democratic Party behave towards the State? The *status quo* is apparently desired by each wing of the party. Before the war Revisionists were ready to vote for a "bourgeois" Budget and utilize for their own ends the Parliamentary machine. Their conduct was of course bitterly criticized by the rest of the party. Who does not recall the dramatic exit of the Revisionists from the Madgeburg Conference in 1910, after a vote of censure was passed upon them? To-day they appear to be at the top of the wave. The war is regarded as an opportunity for obtaining favours, "We had no idea we were so influential," wrote a Social Democratic Deputy as recently as last month. For casting their influence on the side of the powers that be they expect to be rewarded. Already they accept Iron Crosses with gratitude, and are glad to receive commissions at the hands of the Kaiser. But the men who count are those who, like Bernstein, support "a world-view policy" as opposed to a "policy of interests." They continue revolutionaries still; they want to save Social Democracy from disgrace. Their cry continues to be "Proletarians of all lands, unite!" They oppose the State and despise the Legislature. But at present they are greatly handicapped by the censorship.

It would seem that after the war the Social Democratic Party as it was will suffer shipwreck. Some may welcome such a result, for then the sheep will be divided from the goats, the real Socialists from those who, never of the party, were in it because that was the only way of expressing their dissatisfaction with the reactionary regime. The rift in the party is already widening, and German Social Democratic war literature bears abundant testimony to the dangers ahead.

Society Notes and News

It is understood that Mr. D. A. Thomas proposes, on his elevation to the Peerage, to take the title of Baron Rhondda of Llanwern, in the county of Monmouth.

(*Daily News*, January 7th, 1916.)

* * *

Mr. A. Henderson, winding up the debate for the Government in the House last night, made an important statement. . . . When he sat down he was patted on the back by the Prime Minister.

(*Daily News*, January 13th, 1916.)

* * *

Two boys of 14 applied to the Metropolitan Munitions Tribunal to-day for certificates of release. They were expected, they said, to work from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., and from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., alternately. They earned 2½d. per hour. The certificates were granted. (*Star*, December 21st, 1915).

The Plebs' Bookshelf

We have received a copy of the prospectus of *The Ploughshare*—a "Quaker Organ of Social Reconstruction"—which for the past three years has been published quarterly, but from now onwards is to appear as a monthly.

Most of us, whatever our differences from them in certain respects, will honour and respect a good many members of the Society of Friends for the courage and sanity of their attitude towards the War—its actions and reactions. And certain sentences from this 'statement of policy' tend to increase not only that respect, but our grounds of agreement.

The Society of Friends (we read) is perhaps the only body historically known in the West that has claimed to live without war, and on this claim we base an appeal to it to extend its testimony in favour of sound economics; *for the present system is not merely itself a kind of war, but one that leads to military war as its ultimate outcome.* . . . We have striven to lay bare the roots of war in civil life; in the economic classes into which all modern Society is divided, each struggles for its own welfare, and in the nature of things must do so. . . . The same is true of nations. Those who have mutual *interests* will not fight; those who have rival *interests* will not always arbitrate. The cure for all this must be the radical cure—that is, the abolition of rival interests. . . . We shall work for the abolition of economic classes now *necessarily opposed to each other.* . . . We shall have to study current political events and shall comment on them as usefully as we can, *pointing to their dependence on economic conditions.*

If the *Ploughshare* is going to live up to its prospectus, we wish it luck, and a long life.

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Comrade J. V. Wills sends us *The Case for the Building Workers' Industrial Union*, which deserves a place in the pamphlet-corner of every Plebeian's bookshelf. No price is quoted on it, but we fancy a stamp or two sent to J. V. W., (see address on our back-cover) would bring a copy by return.

* * * * *

Those *Plebs* readers who do not see the *Railway Review* regularly will be interested to know that W. W. Craik's course of lectures on "The Modern Working-Class Movement" is appearing week by week in that journal. *Don't miss these.* They may or may not appear in pamphlet form, but get them now and make sure of them. (If you haven't acquired the habit of keeping news-cuttings, for heaven's sake make a start; no student—least of all a student of existing social conditions—can afford to dispense with that habit.) The series commenced in the *Review* for December 24th. Back numbers can doubtless be obtained from the office, 312, Gray's Inn Road, W.C.

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We notice that Messrs. Methuen are publishing *Three Pretty Men*, by Mr. Gilbert Cannan—"the first of a series of novels which the author hopes to complete in three or four volumes to form a history of industrialism in England." This sounds interesting. Mr. Cannan's achievements as novelist, dramatist, and dramatic critic are well known to us, of course; and the War has turned him into an occasional contributor to the *Labour Leader*. But we had never suspected him of any passion for the study of the history of industrialism. We shall watch and pray for a cheap re-print! J. F. H.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Everyman's Student System. By Victor Russell. (J. M. Dent, 1/6 net.).
An Outline of Industrial History. By E. Cressy. (Macmillan, 3/6).

The "Plebs" League

Object

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

Methods

The holding of an Annual Meet: the issuing of a monthly Magazine, mainly devoted to the discussion of the various questions of Labour, theoretical and practical: the formation of local branches and classes for the study of social science, in connexion with the Central Labour College, and in every way to assist in the development of the latter institution, and its maintenance of a definite educational policy.

Membership

Open to all who endorse the object of the League.


Each Member shall pay 1/- a year to the Central Fund towards meeting the expenses in connexion with the Annual Meet, &c.

Management

An Executive of five members elected annually, and the Editor of Magazine, who shall be responsible as to publication and meets, &c.

The Magazine shall be 2d. per copy, 2½d. post free.

Subscriptions payable in advance: Quarterly 7½d., Half Yearly 1/3, Yearly 2/6.

 **The Eighth Annual Meet will be held in London, (Bank Holiday) August, 1916.**

P.O's to be forwarded to

J. REYNOLDS, Secretary-Treasurer,

13 Penywern Road, Earls Court,
London, S.W.

The "Plebs" League

(Organ : "PLEBS" MAGAZINE, Published Monthly,
Price 2d.)

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SECRETARY-TREASURER

J. REYNOLDS

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