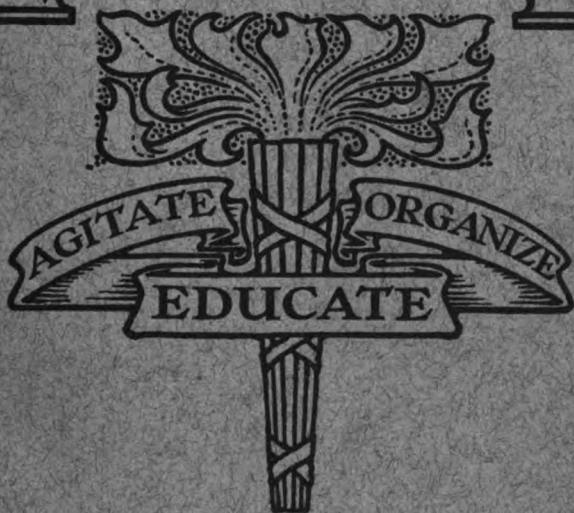


Vol. VII, No. 5

June, 1915

The
PLEBS
MAGAZINE



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

MONTHLY

TWOPENCE

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 Seventh Annual Meet will be held in London (Bank Holiday), August, 1915

G. SIMS, Secretary-Treasurer

To whom all P.O.'s should be made payable

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

THE PLEBS MAGAZINE

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

Vol. VII

June, 1915

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Stale Fish and Red Herrings

"The essay. . . is quite in keeping with the revolutionary ardour of the *Communist Manifesto* and has almost as ancient and fish-like a smell."—W. MARTIN GORMLIE.

"The C.L.C. accepts the Marxian system of economics as the latest, most up-to-date, and accurate."—NOAH ABLETT.

IN these days of World Wars and Coalition Governments, the man who derides the possibility of a social revolution is a truly astonishing spectacle. It was therefore with some amazement that I read Mr. Gormlie's letter in the last issue of the *Plebs*. He there speaks "of the absurdity of the gospel of the coming social earthquake," and commits himself to the extraordinary assertion that "Reformism is a movement following the lines of social evolution." After this, his reference to the *Communist Manifesto* quoted above should give rise to little surprise. I should not take up valuable space in the *Plebs* with a reply to such

criticism were it not that the views expressed by my Australian critic are a fair sample of the ideas of many Socialists and Labour men respecting Marx and his theories. The *Communist Manifesto*, say they, was written some seventy years ago; Marx himself died in the early eighties; what then is the good of bothering about this "ancient and fish-like" economic theory in 1915? I meet such objections with the direct counter-statement contained in Mr. Ablett's excellent article last month:—"The Marxian system of economics is the latest, most up-to-date, reliable and accurate." This statement is a bold and definite challenge to any and all opponents of Marxism. Is it true or false? If it is true, then it is of the utmost importance that the workers should understand Marxism with as little delay as possible. If it is false, then the pretensions of the Marxists should be exposed, and evidence of the unreliability of Marx's views should be forthcoming.

Like a good many more Socialists, Mr. Gormlie apparently began and ended his Marxian studies with a perusal of the *Communist Manifesto*. This is a pity; for had he read the preface to the *Critique of Political Economy*, he would have found an answer to most of his objections to the theory of social revolution. Indeed he is really not so far from the kingdom of Marx as he appears to be, for despite his contempt for "the revolutionary outlook" he confesses to a belief in "getting all industry out of the hands of private enterprise and transferred to the organized community." Well, that is the most essential part of the Social Revolution upon which he pours such scorn. Whether this change will be ushered in by bloodshed or whether it will be welcomed by the acclamations of an enlightened people is wholly irrelevant to the main contention, which is that the present phase of social evolution—capitalist society—must culminate in the taking over by the proletariat of the instruments of production from the hands of the present owners. That act, brief or lengthy, peaceable or bloody, constitutes the Social Revolution.

But it may be objected that all this is mere theory. What proof is there that this revolutionary change is going to take place? The truth of this theory can only be demonstrated in the same way as that of any other idea. Apply it in conjunction with the rest of Marx's theories to actual social conditions and see whether it proves to be the rational explanation of the facts of society. Do material conditions determine social progress? Do the workers produce more than they receive? Is the class struggle a fact? Will technical development ultimately bring about a revolution? If the answers to these questions are in the affirmative, then Marxism is as true to-day as it was fifty years ago. To say that a theory is old is no argument. The question is whether it is true. Is Darwinism "ancient and fish-like" because Darwin

was a contemporary of Marx? Is there a single biologist to-day who rejects the fundamental thesis of Charles Darwin? Darwinism is true because it agrees with the facts of biological evolution. Marxism is true because it agrees with the facts of social evolution.

Now let me assume the role of critic. Assuming that Marxism is antiquated (stale fish in short), would my critic substitute for Marxism the unsatisfying diet of the red herrings of social reform? He apparently thinks that Socialism is to be attained by means of "step by step" social reforms. Will he be good enough to name the definite steps in this reformist Jacob's ladder to the heaven of Socialism? What are the workers to do next? The best answer from the Reformist standpoint that I have met with so far, is that reformers must advocate all reforms, and by testing them one after another arrive by practical experience at a Socialist state of society. This is Utopianism gone mad. To adopt such a view is to deny that any science of society is possible. Yet this social experiment theory, absurd as it is, is the only alternative to a definite programme of social reforms that will lead direct to Socialism. And this latter is an utter impossibility. I do not oppose social reforms as such, but I am strongly opposed to the false, utopian and utterly unscientific conception that it is possible to draw up a scheme of reforms, to persuade the majority of the community to accept this scheme, and so usher in Socialism. The only way to bring about Socialism is to abolish Capitalism, and the means by which that can be done lies through working-class organization rather than through reform of the capitalist state. To suggest that reforms are in harmony with social evolution is to give the lie to history. Many reforms for which our fathers waxed wildly enthusiastic, leave us quite cold to-day. Yet these reforms have never been attained! Where to-day is the great republican agitation of the days of Bradlaugh? The road to Socialism is marked, not by social reforms which have been gained, but by the whitening bones of reforms abandoned by the wayside. Adult suffrage and railway nationalization are following republicanism to the limbo of forgotten reforms of other days.

But surely, some will object, there is need for reform? Certainly reforms are needed, and what is more we shall go on needing them for a long time to come unless we find some new and better method of enforcing our demands. Their attainment depends upon the power and efficiency of the industrial organization behind the demand. The route to real reform is through improved industrial organization. Educate the workers to see that they are robbed of the product of their labour, organize them with the object of enforcing the one demand that they shall receive the full value of what they produce—when they get that capitalism will have ceased to exist.

The curse of the modern reform movement is that it is totally divorced from the real and immediate needs of the workers. Their leaders are craft unionists whose knowledge of economics is in the majority of cases *nil*. Craft unionism is as helpless when it faces the Trusts as an old wooden frigate would be against a modern battle cruiser. Yet we have the very men who denounce Marxism as out-of-date, clinging with pathetic faith to this obsolete form of unionism! The political expression of the labour movement—! It must be left to the Labour colleges of Asquith and Bonar Law to define it. The "reforms" which find favour with the mouth-pieces of labour to-day are the abandonment of Trade Union safeguards, the advocacy of conscription, and the denunciation of strikes. It is for these red herrings that the workers are asked to reject—not the stale fish of an exploded and antiquated dogma—but the deadly submarine of a scientific system of thought which will ultimately torpedo capitalist society.

In conclusion let me say that I hold no brief for the I.W.W., Direct Action, or Sabotage. Whatever "gutter language" the I.W.W. may use in Australia can easily be matched by the utterances of political opponents of any party in England at election time. Any attempt to overthrow capitalism by "direct action" of a few misguided enthusiasts, however justifiable their hatred of the existing social system, leads not to Socialism but to the police station. Marx advocated working-class solidarity, not mob violence. The man who confuses the sabotage of a Syndicalist with the theory of Industrial Unionism has yet to learn the meaning of the word revolution.

H. WYNN-CUTHBERT.

The Outcome of Philosophy*

THE career of Philosophy is comparable with Polar expeditions; many vast and adventurous exploits, great sacrifices of goods and human lives, much trouble and hardship, and then apparently no, or at least, a very tiny result. Yet all these sacrifices and hardships are necessary and inevitable, and are of inestimable consequence for the science and art of life.

Understanding—that has been the object of Philosophy, the goal which many philosophical expeditions have set out to reach. But does not all science have understanding for its object? To be sure it has; yet it is necessary to distinguish the speciality of philosophy from the specialities of science. Botany aims at

* See also review (on a later page of this issue) of *German Philosophy in Relation to the War*, by Prof. Muirhead.

the understanding of plants ; astronomy, of the stars ; political economy, of the mode of production of wealth ; but the special object of philosophy is *the* understanding itself, the understanding of understanding, the knowledge of how thought in general is produced.

Philosophy first arose in ancient Greece at a time of social revolution, when the old order of relations had been dissolved and men found themselves in a new social world, with new problems for which the old traditional beliefs offered no solution. Like all new movements, that of philosophy began in a nebulous and vaguely defined fashion. Among the Greeks, it was not definitely specified whether a mathematician, a politician, a physician, or an astronomer, was a philosopher. A philosopher was a wise man, a lover of wisdom irrespective of the field on which he sought wisdom. Where the problem was hazy, where the goal was not clearly distinguished, it might be expected that the attempts to solve the problem, to reach the goal, yielded little in fruitful successes.

Modern philosophy is no longer characterized by that indefiniteness which marked the philosophy of antique civilization. Like science, it has from the time of Bacon and Descartes turned its attention to the study of a speciality. Especially Kant marked an epoch in the direction of a more definite conception of philosophy's special task. And the fruitful results of science have served to accentuate this development by demonstrating that the world cannot be digested with one bite, that one must specialize in order to achieve success. And so it is that whereas Socrates sought for universal wisdom, the modern classical philosophers have so far improved their consciousness as to realize the limits of their field, and instead of trying to know everything, they have increasingly confined their investigation to the *method* by which we know anything, the process of cognition.

Modern philosophy has therefore been able to achieve more than ancient philosophy, thanks to the higher material plane of evolution on which it has moved, in comparison with the limitations within which the latter was confined. Compared with science however, its results are meagre. This difference is rooted in a difference of method. Science, in practice, strives to win its conclusions on the basis of concrete material, whereas philosophy has never been able to rid itself of the hereditary vice of attempting to produce wisdom out of the depths of the mind, by "pure reason." Philosophy unconsciously separated its speciality—the understanding—too far from the world of sense-perceptible material. It overlooked the connexion and placed, in its systems, the premise of being, in thinking. Hence its failures, as compared with science which sticks to the experience of the senses. Hence also the difference, that while the history of the sciences consists in a pro-

gressive accumulation of knowledge, the history of philosophy consists rather of a succession of unsuccessful attempts to evolve knowledge upon the general relations of the world and life, "final truths of the last instance," independently of the outer world, by means of "pure reason." By far the most herculean attempts of this character was made by Hegel, the Napoleon I of philosophy. The defeat of the Hegelian system was the Waterloo of philosophy. Hegel's own principle, that everything finite carries within it the means of its own negation, struck home with a vengeance at the Hegelian system. Because his system was the "purest" of all the philosophical fantasmagorias, because it was raised upon the most completed contradictions, the more completely did these contradictions show themselves, and living reality take its revenge.

The metaphysical expeditions of Kant, Fichte and Hegel have all led nearer and nearer to the positive goal, the outcome of philosophy, which may be summed up in the scientific propositions, that the intellectual force can function only in communion with sense perceptible material; that the individual and his thinking faculty are, together with all other phenomena, "organic members of the cosmos," and that this natural and universal interrelation is the unitary and absolute premise of all thought, the "final fact of the last instance." The very disagreements of the system of philosophy, the fact that Kant was dissatisfied with Leibniz and Hume, that Fichte could not accept the conclusions of Kant, nor Hegel those of any of these predecessors, spurred on each successor to further exploration, with the result that finally the whole mystery was dissolved in the clear noon-day light of science. It was not so much what these philosophers positively affirmed as the true way, that led to the goal. They laid bare the kernel without consciously recognizing that it was the kernel. The more artificial their philosophical systems, the more they tried to isolate the thinking force, to separate it from the sensory manifestations, then the more strikingly did they disclose the impossibility of such a separation, the more clearly did the unreasonableness of "pure reason," the thoughtlessness of "pure" thought become manifest. It was, as previously stated, Hegel who advanced philosophy in this way to the frontier of science, although he himself lacked the appreciation of his own achievement. His immediate follower, Ludwig Feuerbach, partially realized and proclaimed the dissolution of philosophy. "My philosophy is no philosophy," said he; that is, the riddle of philosophy was at last solved; philosophy had found its North Pole.

It was, however, exclusively with religion, that the contribution of Feuerbach was concerned. Philosophy's speciality—the organ of cognition—is a general speciality; it operates in all special fields. Therefore Feuerbach left a great deal to be completed, and the partial nature of his performance manifests

itself in several relapses on his part, into the metaphysical abstractions which he set out to overcome.

Here it may be appropriate to refer to an opinion (which of late has been expressed in the *Plebs* by some correspondents) which doubts the utility of discussions or contributions on the subject matter of philosophy to the development of the thought of the proletariat. Against that view I am of the conviction that this so-called philosophical question is closely bound up with the emancipation of the proletariat. It will not surely be denied that this emancipation demands theoretical clearness, a logical and consistent use of the instrument of thinking, in order to understand the social world which is to be transformed. And is not a logical *use* of our faculty of understanding to be facilitated by the knowledge of the *nature* of this faculty? By learning the nature of the instrument, by knowing what is in it, we are the better able to handle this instrument consciously and bring out what is in it. Or is it preferable to use our brains in an instinctive way, a way that may be very "practical" but not very successful, if the history of the working-class movement may be referred to for judgment? To *know how thoughts are produced* is to place ourselves on a plane independent of the "authorities," whether they be Moses and the prophets, or Marshall and the profiteers. This knowledge, the positive outcome of philosophy, the science of thinking, gives us a unitary conception of all things in place of the dualism that divides the indivisible whole; and this is the indispensable theoretical foundation for accomplishing in practice a unitary proletariat, and the dissolution of a social order which "divides up" the co-operative result of social production between those who work the labourers, and the labourers who work to keep them.

Here we may appropriately return to the dissolution of philosophy and its mysteries in the sober science of the mental process. I have tried to point out the importance of this science to the proletariat. But it is not only a *proletarian need*. It has its origin in those material conditions of social life in which the modern proletariat itself was born and has grown up. It was a *proletarian discovery*. Karl Marx and Frederik Engels, developed the new method which was the outcome of the Hegelian philosophy—although they stripped it of its idealistic or abstract form—and applied it to society. And the method was tested and justified by the results. They did not *invent* this new method by "pure reason"; they did not drag it out of the depths of their inner consciousness. They discovered it by *means* of their thought, in the material conditions of the social life of their time. Thus they were able to open the road to a social science. The *science of society* thus takes its place alongside of the *science of nature*, and, interrelated with the development of both, there has developed also *the science of the mind*.

True it is that neither the science of mind nor of society has as yet attained to general recognition, a recognition that will only be completed with the *generalization in the concrete* of society itself. Our modern society divided into Haves and Have-Nots, affords much cover for the cunning and crazy mystery-mongers. The mental bamboozling of the masses is certainly closely associated with their exploitation. Once the proletariat ceased to believe in the "special pleadings" and romancings of the privileged, as to the nature of the present social order, the present would soon become a past and the privileged cease to bestride the people. It is not reasonable to expect that those who derive their power from the present, will think or do anything except that which is calculated to extenuate or maintain the present. They are not accessible to the necessary scientific impartiality which proceeds from the concrete facts to the mental generalizations. On the other hand it is the masses, who are oppressed by the present social order, who are best fitted for the acceptance of the scientific method. Their experience spurs them on, to look for the source of their sufferings in the material circumstances, in the facts of their daily experience. The material evolution places them upon their feet while it inclines the propertied class to stand on its head. It brings out the contrast between science and philosophy, between the objective method and the subjective, between induction and speculation.

The social condition of the proletariat is therefore favourable for the extension of that logical knowledge which banishes the ghostly and mysterious from its last refuge—the human mind. This logical knowledge, I have already said, does not proceed from the brain of some talented individual, but is rather the gradually formed result of the entire universal evolution. The brains of the philosophers and scientists must be regarded as rather the organs or levers of this development. And their contributions have been stimulated by the material stages of development on which they stood. Thales, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Bacon, Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant, Fichte, Hegel—all these have contributed toward the outcome of philosophy in the science of thought; all have helped in the search for the logical North Pole.

Feuerbach, it has already been pointed out, was the first to apply this outcome, although only with respect to the religious field. Marx and Engels extended the application to the other fields of human society. The new method, the "dialectical method," runs like a red thread throughout all their works. But the merit of first formulating or working out the origin, development, and nature of this method, belongs to another German, Joseph Dietzgen, a working-man tanner. While, in his originally scattered but now collected works, he still retains the *old name*

of philosophy, it is with the purpose of more effectively discrediting the *old thing*, a concession to prejudice which was justified by the circumstances of transition from the old philosophy to the new science. More truly could he say, than Feuerbach, "My philosophy is no philosophy."
W W.C.

The Need for Noah—and Others

TWO things were particularly noticeable about last month's *Plebs*; one was the colour of the cover—which was a stagerer, and the other was—what we have missed for so long—a trenchant article by Noah Ablett on "The Need for a Policy." We have so needed ginger in the *Plebs* that it was a treat to get it and to get it in the best possible form. As well as a need for a policy in the Plebs League, there is a need for Noah Ablett, whose article filled for many of us a long felt want.

To those men who first started the Plebs League, and who were responsible for the foundation of the C.L.C.—in those halycon days when revolution was rife (according to later accounts)—the College to-day must seem rather dead-alive. Let us be quite frank. This is not to blame anyone or to discredit the fine stand made by the men (and women) who have kept the flag flying through these troublous times. It is only this, that a small number of people, separated for the most part from the people whom they are working for, get rather weary at times, and perhaps lack that vitality which is necessary to obtain the best results. We need fellowship. We feel isolated. Besides giving us very definite ideas and showing us the way to work, the Plebs League ought to stimulate us to more action. A stated policy for the League would lead to concerted action. We can only get this stated policy by meeting and discussing and formulating a plan of action.

The Plebs Meet this year must not and cannot be allowed to fizzle out. This depends on each individual determining that they at least will be there to put their point of view and help in the reconstruction, on a fighting basis; of the League.

We must guard against one thing. We cannot afford to waste time discussing what we ought to have done. We *know* that the Plebs League has been the mainstay of the C.L.C. and that it *can*, as Mr. Ablett said, be the scaffolding of the new college building. Our building is of a peculiar kind, one which will, I think, always need the scaffolding. So I would rather liken the League to one of those new iron frames used in building construction. We shall always need it. To continue the metaphor (building

workers please note), our concrete foundation is our Marxian basis! Our only excuse for being alive at all is that we interpret things from the working class point of view. The C.L.C. stands or falls by that and by that alone. The men who founded the League had been taught by bitter experience that the policy of the College could not safely be left solely in the hands of those directly responsible for the management of the College. Once again the need for action arises. During the last few years the urgent necessity of the League has not appeared so clearly as it does now. The Plebs meet must draw up a plan that we can all work to—so that we can all feel that we are indeed part of a movement, and not merely enthusiastic but isolated individuals.

The College, or rather the ideas and beliefs that the College stands for and has set in the forefront of its curriculum, appeal directly to the working man and woman. These ideals, if I may use the word, teach the worker to be what can be called a *real* Socialist, a unit in a great army working and fighting each for all and all for each towards the emancipation of the working class. Our message is to a class, and we claim the support of the Labour movement for that very reason—the Labour movement being a class movement.

We all know the brand of Socialist who snarls—the “what-shall-I-get?” kind of person—who refuses to do anything that will not benefit him or her individually—the person who is beautifully ignorant of the great forces that are at work in society. The College makes us know our place in the movement. Its message is doubly important to women. Just as the un-class-conscious worker cannot realize that he is oppressed by something bigger than just the ill will of a few individuals, so does the average woman imagine that *wicked man* has subjugated her. *Man* appears to be the enemy. Hence the sex war and other futilities.

The economic interpretation of history gives to women the same feeling of freedom that comes to the worker when he realizes the truth about the history of his own class. The capitalist in the class war, and man the villain in the sex war, are shown to be as much *dupes* as their victims.

The Plebs League then should have a special interest for women because it is essential to them that the Marxian point of view in its widest sense should be the basis of the College curriculum.

A word here to all the men who are keen or interested in education, agitation, or organization. During the last few months the employing classes have, through very definite economic reasons, just discovered in women a great source of unskilled, low-paid labour, and under the high sounding title of War Service for Women, they are preparing to exploit it. This presents a greater danger than a flood of unskilled male labour for a number of

reasons; the chief of which are that women are less educated and less organized. The very nature of woman's surroundings has tended to make her individualistic in her outlook, and in this individualism lies a great danger. The only way to combat this is for the men to admit women into their unions. Men for their own sakes cannot afford to let women remain uneducated and unorganized.

The Plebs League and the Women's League can work together. In all the propaganda done by the Women's League on behalf of the College, the definite proletarian class-conscious nature of the teaching has been emphasised. And we feel that not only have women an interest in the maintenance of the College, but that they should have an interest in the Plebs League, for without its clear cut Marxian basis the College is no good to the woman worker or any other worker.

The need then is for Noah—and others—to evolve a policy, which must then be put into practice by enthusiastic *united* action. Optimism is essential, and work necessary.

WINIFRED HORRABIN.

THE WAR

Its Effects on Domestic Workers

JUDGING by the various letters which appear from time to time in the press, the outsider (*i.e.*, the person who knows nothing of the conditions) would imagine that the position of the domestic worker is so arranged that whatever happens in the outside world, the man or woman in service just goes about his or her work entirely unaffected; which goes to prove what I have often contended—that we are regarded as automatic machines.

Let us take the position of the men first (though, being a woman, I should not do so). In numbers of households they have been dismissed; (it is now considered smart to have *footwomen* in livery of coat, skirt, and tiny black apron). As many of the men are of military age, the difficulties in getting other posts have been many; result, enlistment. To those older men who have been retained is given the task of doing the work of two men for the pay of one. Being unorganized, often a married man with a family to support, he dare not face the possibility of unemployment, and so is forced to accept any reduction in wage and addition of work which his Patriotic Employer may see fit to give him.

The woman has also suffered. At the commencement of the war, staffs were reduced, and those kept on offered reduced wages. Some accepted, others were unemployed, and in some cases were at last forced to accept a post at lower wages than they were accustomed to. Many suffered by having their food reduced. This of course does not apply to every household, but in many cases where a large donation was given to the Prince of Wales' Fund, or the Queen's Work for Women fund, a domestic servant was dismissed, or economy was practised by cutting off a meal or two (only in the servants' hall or kitchen), the excuse being given that expenses must be cut down owing to the war.

Belgian refugees for some time seemed likely to undercut the English domestic. The *Board of Trade Labour Gazette* gave the number of Belgians ready to enter domestic work as 1,729, but the registration at the Labour Exchange was only 200. We have yet to learn how many Belgian refugees taken as guests are really unpaid domestics.

Unemployment amongst Domestic is now normal again, with the exception only of the elderly cook, always an acute problem, and now a tragedy; employers refuse to engage a cook who is over 40 years of age (and who can by her experience demand £50 per annum) in consequence of the number of younger women who are now coming into domestic work. I know of one case where a disabled soldier and his wife have gone into service together; the wife does all the cooking, the man is able to drive a car (owing to his disablement it is only in the country that he can do this). Their joint salary is £1 weekly, with board and lodging; as the salary of a domestic invariably includes this, the excuse for so small a wage is that they get the husband's pension. As the war goes on this sort of thing will increase, and the domestic stand more in need of an organization than ever. To those employers who argue that as there is very little entertaining being done, staffs must inevitably be cut down, let me reply at once that those who usually entertain largely are now busy giving various charity shows, such as Belgian and Red Cross Relief Fund Concerts, to say nothing of the various sewing parties, all of which mean extra work for servants. There are very few cases indeed where a reduction of staff is even excusable.

The domestic has suffered privately also. There are over two million domestic servants, and I doubt very much if you could find a hundred out of that number who have not some relation in the fighting line. In a large number of cases the war has hit the parents by loss of work or business (one need only instance the fishing villages), and a demand is at once made on the girl in service, the idea being common amongst parents as well as employers that she has few or no expenses, such items as uniform being quite overlooked.

The war registration of women has already proved that domestics realize the injustice of their conditions, numbers having registered to obtain any other work than that they are now doing. I consider the character of the average domestic (which is the outcome of her environment) makes her a particular danger to the workers already organized in other trades. As a class, domestic servants are very conservative, this and their previous lack of freedom will induce them to undercut men as no other class of women workers will be prepared to do. Their reasons will be given as :—

- (1.) Their wish to do something for *their* country.
- (2.) They will have more freedom.
- (3.) Their utter lack of knowledge of the cost of living and lodgings.

So that until they have bought their experience they will be a difficult obstacle, and the men can protect themselves only by demanding

- (1.) That the women have equal pay for equal work done, and
- (2.) By organizing the women in the same union as themselves.

I have only been speaking of private houses, but the hotel employee (also a domestic worker) has been particularly hard hit over the war ; numbers were unemployed throughout the winter, and some will certainly suffer as the result of there being a much reduced seaside season.

I do not wish to imply that the above applies to all domestic workers in all conditions. Just as there are good shops so there are good houses. But what I have said indicates briefly the way in which the war has affected a large proportion of domestic workers.

GRACE NEAL

(Gen. Sec., Domestic Workers' Union).

URGENT !

At the moment of going to press, Comrade F. B. Silvester (whose address will be found on the back page of the cover) writes asking us to appeal to *Plebs* readers on behalf of the fund to lodge an appeal against the sentence of three months' hard labour passed on William Holliday, a Birmingham trade unionist and S.L.P.-er, under the Defence of the Realm Act, on May 28th. We have no time to do more than make this brief reference to the case, and hereby ask our readers to communicate with Comrade Silvester *at their earliest convenience*, as the matter is of great importance to all Socialists.

Letters on Logic

ECONOMICS

TENTH LETTER OF THE SECOND SERIES

LEST I should forget, induced by my interest in the subject of Political Economy, that we are concerned with it here only as a means to illustrate Logic, I must ask you to bear in mind that every idea expressed in words forms a possible subject matter for Logic, and that every story teller interrupts his theme by long or short digressions, only to return to it again. by roundabout ways.

We have seen that human labour-power has less value in our free competitive society than it creates ; like a machine, it produces more than it costs. The value of a machine is not fixed by its total product ; but by the labour which went to its making.

Now our *logic* is opposed to this state of affairs. Not against the fact that a lifeless machine is made by less work than it can actually perform, but against the fact that human labour-power is considered as the equivalent of a machine, and is bought and sold as a commodity. Whether man is a means for the accumulation of value, or whether this accumulation should be a means for the service of humanity, is a question which logic must decide. And logic requires that no man be sacrificed to Baal, but that Baal must be thrown out of the temple even if half a dozen priests of Baal have to be jerked out at the same time.

Modern economy is carried on by two kinds of labour : (1) by accumulated dead labour, which is so well rewarded that the capitalists cannot consume the product but must accumulate fortunes, and (2) by living wage-labour, which is not rewarded but paid worse than is necessary for mere subsistence. There is no absolutely fixed standard of life, it is true ; but humanity is growing out of simple animalism, and exists—like our logic—in the flux of things. Ideas and institutions which were humane in the past have now become inhumane, so that slavery is not *absolutely* inhuman but has become so through the development of human culture.

All past productive labour, apart from its beginnings in the times of the earliest communism, has been enslaved labour. Men have been divided into rulers and ruled. That labour which was not enslaved, when everybody dug his own bait and caught his own fish (if such a system ever existed), that labour was never productive. We have realised that only such labour is productive which produces more than it costs, which accumulates or collects fortunes. The single individual can never collect fortunes. And not only can he never accumulate, but he could not even secure

a bare existence entirely by his own effort—not even if he lived in a veritable paradise. Co-operation is an eternal natural necessity—the more necessary as man becomes more and more cultured. Productive labour is joint labour, and this implies organization, order and domination. Even in the most advanced republic, based on complete liberty, equality, and fraternity, there will exist to a certain extent the domination of men over men. In every society individual interests must be governed by social interests. And this relation of master and servant is so deeply rooted in our whole life that everybody is at the same time his own master and servant; everybody has in his own soul to wage the same struggle of reason against unreason, which agitates the inner structure of society and keeps life flowing.

Only when you grasp the fact that this relation (of master and servant) is in general unavoidable, will you be able to distinguish the avoidable part from the unavoidable. Ability to think means the ability to make distinctions. If you want to think logically you must not exaggerate any conception; you must not separate the conception of serfdom too much from that of masterdom. The relation between masterdom and serfdom must be understood from the historical point of view. Human society has grown out of savagery in the same manner as from serfdom. Man is by nature a serf and he needs a master. Moreover all forms of masterdom and serfdom have been necessary to culture; but each form is transitory, and the modern form of wage-slavery will not exist to all eternity.

So long as man had not accumulated the necessary knowledge and materials his poverty was inevitable, which is however quite a different matter from the unnecessary social poverty of the present time. Inevitable and unavoidable poverty is in reality no poverty (as we understand it) at all. All historical forms of enslavement, including of course capitalistic wage-labour, were originally necessary and reasonable. Humanity can only emerge from slavery by means of the development of the economic productive forces. It is only the high development of the productive forces which justify us to-day in describing the capitalist society of wage-labour as an intolerable serfdom.

Not merely for reasons of compassion and sentimentality does Socialism fight against bourgeois wage labour, but because of logic, the so-called "logic of facts"; the process of world development having now reached the point where labour power must cease to be a commodity.

When the worker has been badly paid, badly fed, clothed and lodged, such an economy has—until now—been more or less logical. It was based on the fundamental principle, which in economics is what gravitation is in physics, that man tries to satisfy his wants with the least possible effort. In order to be able to spin

with the same amount of effort a thread which is a thousand times longer than one spun on a primitive machine, it is necessary to have an instrument which contains x times more accumulated labour, x times more value. A national economy based on low wages was necessary in order to accumulate capital, which in turn was necessary as a means in the course of development. At present this development has gone so far that it is likely to suffocate in its own juice.

The 5th chapter of the First Book of *Progress and Poverty* tries to prove that low wages are not the result of lack of capital.

Not only do wages nowhere reach the limit fixed by the productiveness of industry, but wages are relatively the lowest where capital is most abundant. The tools and machinery of production are in all the most progressive countries evidently in excess of the use made of them, and any prospect of remunerative employment brings out more than the capital needed. The bucket is not only full; it is overflowing.

If the bucket of capital would overflow it would only be inconvenient for the minority—the capitalists; but it is the bucket of commodities that is overflowing, and the prices of commodities, more particularly the human commodity, labour-power, are going down not only below their value, but are becoming valueless. Society is affected. The wage-labourer wants no longer to compete, and to accumulate value; he is becoming conscious, the end of his slavery is in sight. We are able to become and we want to become masters; let us then combine into a new society, which will bring the blind, unreasoning production of wealth under the rule of logic.

In conclusion I must warn you against that widely accepted notion which, quite illogically, assumes that the new society now growing out of the old one is very widely separated from the parent bosom. There are two forms of heaven: a reasonable one, which arches over the earth and which, although very far off, remains still a worldly physical heaven; and there is on the other hand a supernatural metaphysical heaven, of which the curate is preaching and superstitious people are talking. The distance between the old and the new society, that is to say the *difference* between them, can only be relative but not absolute. Logical minds, politicians and socialists, do not *believe*; they know. A theory of two worlds is not logical.

(Translated for *The Plebs Magazine* from the German of Joseph Dietzgen by Miss Bertha Braunthal.)

“Follow your course and let the people talk.”—DANTE.

“He who knows his power seldom fails; he who is ignorant of them hardly ever succeeds.”—SWIFT.

Reports

HALIFAX C.L.C. CLASS.

We have just finished our second course on the Materialist Conception of History, which has proved exceedingly interesting and instructive. The class commenced with 22 students, but unfortunately on account of the War we have not been able to increase the number. At the close of the last lesson Comrade Brearley, on behalf of the students, presented Mr. H. Kershaw with a handsome leather bag for the able services he has rendered as tutor.

With the object of keeping the class together and inducing new members to join, we have arranged a series of six rambles during the summer months.

Comrade Thomas is conducting one of the rambles through the famous Bronte land.
M. COLLINS (Sec).

THE COLLEGE

We intended to publish this month a list of the many Trade Union branches Socialist Societies, and individual subscribers who have sent donations to the College Fund since our recent appeals in the *Plebs*. Exceptional pressure on our space compels us to hold the list over. But we hope to publish it in the near future, *and we earnestly hope that by the time it is published the list will be considerably extended.* (Please take the hint.)

Correspondence

THE WAR—WHERE DO WE STAND?

SIR,—At the risk of being classed as one of those "peculiar people," I venture to give expression to one or two "hard facts" which C. T. Cramp in his letter published in the May *Plebs* seems to "shirk," since he apparently thinks the real point at issue is "How to dodge a 10-inch shell"

It was only to be expected that those "Socialists" who denied the existence of a class war in society should have declared "they were Britons first and Socialists afterwards," but when a "healthy minded materialist" like C. T. Cramp, who admits that "the economic factor is the real cause of the war," asks "are we forgetting that we are men and women first and Socialists afterwards," one is inclined to question the "healthy mindedness" of his materialism.

Surely a "healthy-minded materialist" should know that the workers, under capitalism, are *not* men and women first, but that they are simply commodities, and it is the recognition of this "hard fact" which causes him to become a class-conscious Socialist. The shelling of Hartlepool, and also the wholesale and ruthless sacrifice of lives as a consequence of the war, is not due to the German proletariat as such, but to the unconsciousness on the part of the whole of the European workers of the economic factor underlying the war.

The danger of 10-inch shells is only one form of the many dangers which our class have to risk in their daily life under Capitalism. The particular danger of 10-inch shells is not removed by marching forth in khaki with

a rifle in our hands. The duty of a class-conscious Socialist is not to identify himself with the workers in their folly of murdering each other for the Imperialism of modern Capitalism, but to devote all his energies towards removing the cause of this folly. In doing this there is no need to adopt the attitude of "airing superior wisdom."

It is quite true that all of us are in danger of being the victims of a Zeppelin bomb so long as the war continues, but unfortunately, as individuals, we cannot avoid this danger, along with many others, while the mass of the workers, owing to their lack of understanding of the "hard facts," retain the present obsolete methods of combating Capitalism.

The best service we can render to our fellow workers is constantly and consistently to point out that they themselves are responsible for the many dangers resulting in "wrecked homes and broken bodies" through subletting their thinking and trusting to the action of others. Nor must our policy and actions in this direction be dictated to us through fear of the "scorn and decision" of those who may disagree with us at present.

The effects of the war and the logic of events will in the near future bring home to the workers their folly in listening to and following the false prophets, both within and without the Gate, who have led them to believe that in the present war they are fighting for the freedom of humanity. To go willingly, rifle in hand, to the trenches, is to fight for the interest of the Capitalist. Those who take their stand at home and expose the profiteering schemes of the employing class and their dangerous effects upon the workers are fighting for their class in the truest sense of the word.

Yours, &c., MENS SANA.

Porth, Rhondda.

"THE W.E.A. WAY."

Sir,—May I have a little space to state the opposite case to that put forward by Mr. F. J. Adkins, under the above heading, in the April *Plebs*?

I was reared in a slum. Wife-beaters, drunkards, criminals, "peaky-blinders," and bookmakers were notorious in the district; and prostitutes, too. (They also serve in our National House of Life to safeguard the inheritance of property and the purity of drawing-room maidens).

As a youth I pondered the problem of poverty and sought its solution. Bourgeois politics, bourgeois religion propounded the riddles, but did not attempt to answer it. I gave up the question in despair and let myself drift. It was not until I was 30 that a Socialist pamphlet gave me the long-looked for clue. I put aside my Shakespeare, my Carlyle, my Dickens and gave my nights to Socialist literature. Gradually I shed the bourgeois point of view which I had acquired from various bourgeois sources—the press, the platform and the pulpit. Slowly I acquired a proletarian outlook.

I took neither a "kitchen" nor a "drawing-room" view of life. I took the view that the working-class should take a hold in the House of Life in order to make it an abode where *all* members of the human race should be free and equal. There would be no masters or servants in that house. The means of life would be socialized. They would be owned and controlled by *all* the people. Out of the means of life the House of Life would be erected and provisioned for the use and enjoyment of all whose social labour contributed to the result. To-day the means of life are owned and controlled by the capitalists. They live in the drawing-rooms and dining rooms and best bedrooms of the House of Life, and grudgingly permit the workers to live in the kitchens and worst bedrooms—those unpleasantly near the drains.

Now the social ownership of the House of Life, bringing in its trail the elimination of classes by means of the abolition of wage-slavery is aimed at by all Marxists. It is, of course, an economic problem with an economic

solution. The reason "that such aspects of life as are represented by the terms art and emotion" are remote from the workers is due to their economic status, to their being relegated to the kitchens of the House of Life. Change their status from that of economic dependence to economic equality, and their self-expression in art and emotion may yet out-Wagner Wagner, out-shine Shakespeare, and eclipse Michael Angelo. No artists have been so great heretofore as to preclude the possibility of greater hereafter. But this depends on the relative freedom of the whole human race and the consequent expansion of the Joy of Life amongst its members. Its attainment can only be secured through economic equality.

Mr. Adkins, however, will not march with us, with the class-conscious proletarian army in its fight for the abolition of the wages-system. He prefers the W.E.A. way. What is the W.E.A. way? According to Mr. Adkins it is to induce the workers to think more of "art and emotion" than to devise means whereby they may break the chains which bind them to Capitalism. This is as futile as it would be to lecture on Liberty to prisoners without giving them the least help to effect their deliverance. It is as absurd as it would be to lecture on Health to patients in hospital wards without prescribing remedies for their ailments; or as sensible as it would be to lecture on Sanity to the insane. This is, however, the W.E.A. way. Its supporters think that they can cure "the diseased economic condition of the body politic" with such nostrums as "art" powders and "emotional" pills.

I, for one, am not having any? No, on behalf of the working-class which is diseased, poor, and ignorant, in order that the governing class may be healthy wealthy and wise, I confidently point out to the workers the C.L.C. way, which is "to further the interests of Independent Working-class Education as a partisan effort to improve the position of Labour in the present, and ultimately to assist in the abolition of wage-slavery."

FRED SILVESTER.

Birmingham.

Reviews

THE WAR OF IDEAS

German Philosophy in Relation to the War. By J. H. MUIRHEAD, LL.D.
(John Murray, 2/6 net).

This book consists of four lectures delivered recently by the author in the University of Birmingham. It is inspired by the attempts that have been made in certain quarters to identify German militarism and its present outburst as the heir of German classical philosophy. Professor Muirhead sets out to rebut this claim by means of a broad survey of German philosophy from Kant to Hegel, and he thereafter describes the reaction which followed after Hegel, as exemplified in the speculations of Feuerbach, Stirner, Nietzsche, and finally, Treitschke. It is in this *departure* from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century German philosophy, rather than from anything in the latter, that the author finds the groundwork on which has been raised the German war-culture. He concludes also that the possibility of a peaceful future for Germany depends upon its return, with a contrite heart, to the old metaphysical ideas. If not "back to Kant," at least "back to Hegel."

The author recognizes the advance made by Hegel over Kant; but he has not appreciated the development beyond Hegel in the Historical Materialist direction, i.e., along the road opened up by Marx, Engels and Dietzgen. Otherwise he would have realized that philosophy had, with Hegel, come to

the end of its tether ; that the question of the nature of knowledge is now a subject for science. Professor Muirhead has a great deal to say of " Materialism " : it is however of that *mechanical* materialism which is just as one-sided as philosophical idealism that he speaks. True enough the physical scientists, although at home within their own special fields, wander about aimlessly in the *general* relation of their specialities. They have neglected the critique of reason, the understanding of the understanding. But the professor's philosophy cannot help them to this knowledge ; that can only be inductively won from concrete facts and is not to be metaphysically drawn from the depths of the brain.

The *narrowness* of physical science is characteristic of bourgeois society. And this narrowness is only to be overcome by the proletariat whose mission it is to transform bourgeois society into a communal society. And the positive outcome of philosophy has been won precisely from the side of the proletariat. The first Hegelian philosophers, like the post-Ricardian economists, remain hopelessly impotent to advance the science of cognition, just as economic science is a closed book to the latter.

Although the author now and then feels that he must leave the closed field of the consciousness and look for explanation in objective development, he, it is evident, *remains an idealist*. The roots of the present crisis can only be discovered by means of the mind of man *in the material conditions and development of bourgeois society*. Then alone can real criticism find its premises. But that would lead to a criticism of the existing social order. Our professor prefers to criticise the apostate philosophers. For him, it is not the social relations that are faulty, it is the ideas of the Junker ideologists that are unreasonable. And is not this the popular official view—that the present war is not a war of the bourgeoisie among themselves, but of bourgeois society against feudalism.

The student will find in these five lectures an excellent demonstration of the bankruptcy of metaphysics, although the author did not intend it to be so. But we do not always achieve what we intend to achieve.

W.W.C.

THE PROBLEM OF RUSSIA.

The Mainsprings of Russia. By MAURICE BARING. (Nelson, 2/- net).

The Russian Problem. By Prof. PAUL VINOGRADOFF. (Constable, 1/- net).

Russia's Gift to the World. By J. W. MACKAIL. (Hodder & Stoughton, 2d.)

"At no time in the history of Russia have there been more books, articles, and pamphlets published in this country exclusively devoted to Russia than to-day." So remarked a writer in one of the literary weeklies some twelve months ago—three months before the outbreak of the war. And the war has by no means dammed the flowing tide ; on the contrary it has, quite naturally, resulted not only in more books and pamphlets about Russia, but in new editions of the old ones.

For a long time the popular conception of Russia in this country—and there are members of the I.L.P. who seem scarcely to have rid themselves of that conception even now—was of a land entirely inhabited by wicked nobles, spies of diabolical cunning, heroic Nihilists, and sundry other figures of melodrama. Such a conception, of course, was bound to have some basis in actual fact ; but it could hardly be described as an intelligent version of the facts. Then came the discovery by Western Europe of the great Russian novelists and dramatists, and however imperfectly or perversely those writers were understood their appearance made at least for more " sweetness and light " and some modification of crude ideas. Finally, there came the economic " opening-up " of Russia, culminating in the Anglo-Russian *entente* ; and that has resulted not merely in the flood of literature above referred to, but in a picturesque diversity of views on the Russian problem.

There is the Hon. Maurice Baring, for example (friend and ally of Messrs. Belloc and Chesterton), who has done a good deal of really useful work in making Russia better known and understood in England. Mr. Baring has certainly succeeded in "deflating a stock generalization by satirising the idea that the progressives were all saints and the Conservatives all despots"; but his Bellocian affinities have of course led him to champion the cause even of Russian bureaucracy against the advancing tide of bourgeois Liberalism. There is Mr. Stephen Graham, who writes rhapsodically about the Russian peasant and about Jesus, and who is accordingly able, by dwelling on the simplicity and beauty of the *moujik's* character, to convince the readers of the *Times* and the *Christian Commonwealth* alike (for diverse reasons) of the desirability of the Anglo-Russian alliance. And then there are the more straightforward books in which (we quote from the publishers' advertisement of one which appeared recently):—

Chapters are devoted to the wonderful opportunities awaiting the British capitalist, the British manufacturer, and the British trader, if they will but wake up to the fact that Northern Russia and Siberia are no longer synonymous with perpetual snow and lonely inhospitable solitudes, but rather with potential Canadas which have already shown their capabilities for profitable exploitation.

And the *Times* publishes Russian supplements with leading articles beginning: "In no direction will the present war have more marked and far-reaching effects than in all that relates to Russian foreign trade." Exactly. That is why yet another commentator can quite truthfully remark that "the hinge of international politics for probably the next half-century will be the relations existing between England and Russia."

The three books named at the head of this review are each, in their several ways, useful to the student. Mr. Baring's *Mainsprings of Russia* (one can, of course, allow due discount for the Bellocian tendencies aforementioned) is perhaps as concise and complete a handbook—at a price within reach of the ordinary reader—as could be desired. He deals with the Russian Peasant, The Nobility, The Government Machine, The Average Russian, The Liberal Professions—all with the convincingness that comes of first-hand knowledge. His chapter on Causes of Discontent is a really valuable statement and discussion of recent political happenings in Russia; and the book is well worth possessing if only for that chapter alone.

Mr. Mackail's pamphlet, *Russia's Gift to the World*, is "a very brief summary of what Russia has contributed in letters, art, and science to the progress of the world and to the enrichment of life." As such, it is interesting and useful; even though one may be profoundly conscious all the time (Mr. Mackail gives no hint of being so) that "this sphere of things of the mind" is rather far removed from the world of political alliances and foreign policies. If a summary of Russian intellectual achievements is an argument in favour of the Anglo-Russian alliance, then a similar pamphlet on *Germany's Gift to the World* (which would be at least as imposing a list as Russia's) would be an argument against it. Some people seem to want to feel that they are allied with the Russia of Tolstoy and Gorky, though at the same time they are eager to protest that they are *not* fighting the Germany of Goethe and Beethoven.

Prof. Vinogradoff's *The Russian Problem* is a reprint of a single lecture and a letter to the *Times*. It is primarily of interest because it is a statement of the case by a Russian, a scholar and a reformer. In his pages one gets nearer to realizing that Russia is a country of fact and not of fiction, that Russians are men like unto ourselves, and that the Russian problem is a problem which, in its essentials, other countries have also had to face, than one does sometimes in books on Russia written by outsiders, however sympathetic or intelligent. Here, for instance, is some commonsense on the Russian problem:—

It is one thing to state observations as to the politics and culture of present-day Russia, and another to judge of Russian political and cultural evolution in the light of the history of Europe, and especially of Eastern Europe. When we look at absolutism, bureaucracy, or the domineering habits of military aristocracy in Russia from this second point of view, we perceive at once that what we have to deal with is not the peculiar product of Byzantine servilism or Muscovite brutality, but one of the features of Eastern European development, the expression of forces which have been at work and are still at work in Prussia and Austria as well.

And here is an observation which will be of particular interest to those who know their *Eighteenth Brumaire* :

The analogy between Russia in 1906 and Germany in 1848 is striking even as regards details; when one reads the speeches in the first Duma, one cannot help recalling to mind the debates of the Frankfort parliament.

Prof. Vinogradoff, indeed, provides an effective antidote both to the rhapsodies of Mr. Stephen Graham and the equally unbalanced anathematisings of certain sentimental Socialists.

J.F.H.

EDWARD CARPENTER ON THE WAR.

The Healing of Nations, by Edward Carpenter (Allen and Unwin, 2/- net).

Common Sense About the War would have been a more fitting title for Edward Carpenter's book than it was for Bernard Shaw's pamphlet. That is not to imply that the fundamental basis of the pamphlet—as of anything else Shaw has written—was not downright common sense. But Shaw's favourite method of expression is the controversial method; and the pamphlet was very largely concerned with the uncommon nonsense talked or written about the war by sundry other people. The very title was obviously part of the "cut and thrust" business.

Edward Carpenter is not a controversialist; he is, indeed, a good deal more of a hermit. For Shaw, the more complications the merrier; for Carpenter, simplification at all costs. So that while *Common Sense About the War* was like a firework display (and you never knew when you might get a rocket in the eye), *The Healing of Nations* rather suggests a sober searchlight kept steadily on a few essential facts. With Shaw, it is not seldom a little difficult to see the wood for the trees. Carpenter, on the other hand (except for one or two pet trees of his which are permitted to loom up rather large in the foreground) aims at seeing the wood steadily and seeing it whole. And in the main he succeeds in that aim. Side issues are for the most part tucked away either into short chapters at the end of the book or into appendices; the four principal chapters—on the Roots of the Great War, The Case Against Germany, The Case for Germany, and the Healing of Nations—together make up the best (because simplest and clearest) statement of the Socialist point of view that we have seen. Not the least refreshing thing about Edward Carpenter's writing is its freedom from stock phrases—from all those well-worn tags which are as dear to the half-baked Socialist as are sundry odd sentences from Holy Writ to the religious revivalist. There is nothing strikingly new in his book; it is, in fact, a re-statement of the Socialist point of view, which itself is not new. But it nevertheless grips one by its freshness and directness; it is a re-statement, and not a mere repetition of a creed learned off by heart.

In his Introductory Chapter, he premises that his book

does not pretend to any sort of completeness in its embrace of the subject, or finality in its presentation. . . . The truth is that affairs of this kind—like all the great issues of human life . . . do not, at their best, admit of final dispatch in definite views and phrases. They are too vast and complex for that.

He is nevertheless sufficiently definite on the subject of the root causes of the conflict.

It is evident enough that rampant and unmeasured commercial greed, concentrating itself in a special class, is the main cause, the tap-root, of the whole business. . . .

It is this class-disease which in the main drags the nations into the horrors and follies of war. . . . It is here and in this direction (which searches deeper than the mere weighing and balancing of Foreign Policies and Diplomacies) that we must look for the "explanation" of the wars of to-day. . . . Vanity and greed are met together, patriotism and profits have kissed each other.

Here is a sufficient answer to the critics of Foreign Policies and the "people who take great pleasure in analysing White and Grey and Orange and Yellow Books without end":—

It is no good scolding at Sir Edward Grey for making friends with the Russian Government; for his only alternative would have been to join the "International"—which he certainly could not do, being essentially a creature of the commercial regime. The "Balance of Power" and the *ententes* and alliances of Figure-head Governments *had* to go on, till the day—which we hope is at hand—when Figure-heads will be no more needed.

The chapters on the case For and Against Germany deal with the more immediate causes leading up to the war; and it is eminently characteristic of Edward Carpenter that his statement of the case *for* Germany would make almost as good a case for the Allies, while his analysis of the case *against* her makes one feel that there is after all a good deal to be said on her side.

He comes to the conclusion that

allowing the utmost for the *general causes* in Europe which have been for years leading up towards war, I still feel it is impossible not to throw on her the immediate blame for the present catastrophe. . . .

It would seem that (short of great internal changes and reconstructions in Germany herself) there is no alternative for the Allies but to continue the war until her Militarism can be put out of court, and that for long years to come. There is no alternative, because she has revealed her hand too clearly as a menace—if she should prevail—of barbarous force to the whole world.

Shorter chapters deal as effectively with Patriotism and Internationalism, Conscription, Colonies and Seaports, The Over-Population Scare, &c. As a clear and out-spoken statement of the Socialist attitude towards the "tap-roots" of the whole ghastly business of the present war we very heartily recommend this book to all *Plebs* readers. J.F.H.

PAST AND PRESENT.

Trade Unionism, by C. M. Lloyd (A. and C. Black's
Social Workers' Series, 2/6 net).

As Capitalism develops, the need becomes ever greater for the Labour Movement to have a clear understanding of the industrial struggles of the past two centuries, and thus avoid making the mistakes our forefathers made. In this book the reader not only has an outline of the history, structure, function, methods, etc. of British Trade Unionism, but also a brief sketch of continental types. The concluding chapters deal with the problems and the future of the Trade Unions.

Whatever may be said of the information given us by the author on the history of Trade Unionism, he displays a somewhat superficial knowledge of present tendencies. In dealing with Syndicalism and Industrial Unionism the views advanced are certainly not clear; e.g., "Owen offered them (the

workers in 1834) a magnificent scheme by which they might emancipate themselves. It was in effect, a sort of Syndicalism"; and a little later on we get a reference to the workers "who had not long before marched so confidently under the 'Syndicalist' banner." Syndicalism is a term which has recently been applied to those who believe in the policy of "direct action" and "anti-parliamentarism." The conditions of life to-day allow the workers to make use of both industrial and political action, whereas it was more than thirty years after Robert Owen's time ere the workers (in the boroughs) obtained the franchise. The author cannot therefore accurately refer to Owen's efforts as either "a sort of Syndicalism" or to the workers "who had marched under the Syndicalist banner." The writers of *The History of Trade Unionism* realised this when they wrote "To Robert Owen, whose path was blocked on the political line by the disfranchisement of five out of six of the adult male population, open voting under intimidation, corrupt close corporations in the town and a Whig oligarchy at the centre, the idea of relying on the constitutional instrument of the polling-booth must have appeared no less chimerical than his own programme appears to-day."

Mr. Lloyd evidently realises the Syndicalist position to be anti-parliamentarian, for he says: "In this philosophy, then, 'political action' is effectually ruled out." And in his last chapter he points out: "We have already criticized its anti-parliamentarism as mistaken tactics." Yet we find him referring to *The Miners' Next Step* as a Syndicalist publication and the proposals contained therein as "Syndicalist proposals." In Chapter III. of *The Miners' Next Step* the following appears:—"That this organization shall engage in political action, both local and national, with an avowed policy of wresting whatever advantage it can for the working class." The concluding paragraph of the same chapter says, "Political action must go on side by side with industrial action." That various measures etc. "demand the presence in Parliament of men who directly represent, and are, amenable to, the wishes and instructions of the workmen." And in the proposed "Constitution," items XI. XII. XIII. XIV. XV. all refer to political action. It appears, therefore, that Mr. Lloyd is unable to distinguish the difference between Syndicalism and Industrial Unionism.

Dealing with the future of Trade Unions we are informed that "The real difficulty centres in the relations of the producers and consumers." In thus dividing the future society into two distinct sections, producers on the one hand, and consumers on the other, we are led to infer that there will be an organized body of consumers who are not producers, and an organized body of producers who are not consumers. One is left wondering wherein lies the difference between the present form of society and the one forecasted by the author.

The book has a number of interesting features, as well as diagrams, tables, etc., and a historical text-book, brought right up-to-date, should be useful.

But the author's opinions on present day problems and on the future of Trade Unions are decidedly open to criticism.

J. H. PRATT.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Peace and War in Europe. By Gilbert Slater. (Constable, 2/6 net).

The Submerged Nationalities of the German Empire. By Ernest Barker. (Oxford University Press, 8d. net.)

In France. By George Lansbury. *To Destroy Militarism.* By John Scurr. *The Way to Peace.* By Gerald Gould. *Uncommon Sense about the War.* By Robert Williams. (*Herald Pamphlets*, 1d. each.)

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