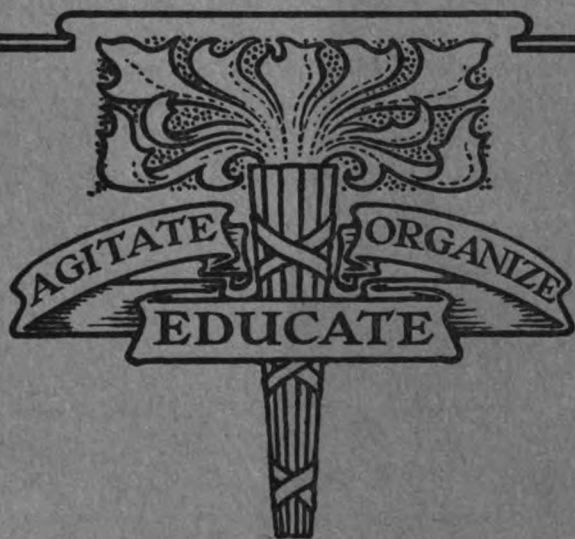


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February, 1915

The
PLEBS
MAGAZINE



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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.

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EDITORIAL

WE cannot better begin a new volume of *The Plebs Magazine* than by giving readers some idea of how things stand with the Central Labour College. Many of them, of course, will already be acquainted with the facts of the present position of affairs. Others, perhaps, may have been labouring under the delusion that when two powerful Trade Unions decided to come to the assistance of the College, all necessity for individual effort was done away with, the safety of the workers' own (and only) educational centre being at last assured. Let us make it very clear, then, at the outset, that the need for individual effort on the part of every supporter of the C.L.C. movement is as great as ever; and that it will continue to be so, even when the negotiations which are still proceeding result—as there is every prospect that they will—in the

College being freed from the burden of debt which has hitherto hampered its work, and placed on a more stable footing for the future.

* * *

MAY we briefly run over the course of events since June of last year. In that year, it will be remembered, the N.U.R., at its Annual General Meeting at Swansea, passed by a large majority a resolution

(1) to increase the number of its students at the College from two to six; (2) to augment the scholarship fees for the current year by an additional £1,150, on condition that the S. Wales Miners advanced a similar sum, it being understood that in return for this the two organizations should jointly hold the title-deeds of the College property; and (3) instructing the Finance Committee, on receipt of a favourable reply from the Miners, to give effect *at once* to this resolution. A month later the Miners announced their decision. At a special conference at Cardiff they discussed

proposals for the purchase of the buildings, and *the management and control* of the C.L.C., by the S.W.M.F. and the N.U.R.

Again by a large majority the support of the College was decided upon, and the Railwaymen's proposal accepted.

* * *

THIS all happened over six months ago. *But these resolutions have not yet been carried into effect.* In August there began a series of long-drawn-out negotiations; for the handing over of the money

voted by its owners—the rank and file of the two Unions—was by no means the simple business a plain layman might have imagined. To cut a very long story short, the S. Wales Miners insisted on the “management and control” clause; while the Railwaymen's Executive, being legally advised that it was quite impossible for them to share in the management and control of such an institution as the C.L.C. without an alteration of the rules of the Union, decided that they were bound by the strict letter of the A.G.M. resolution, which merely empowered them to grant a certain sum of money to the College. They went further, and two or three weeks ago resolved that they could not recommend any future A.G.M. to alter the rules in such a way as to enable the Union to share in the management and control of the College. Of course, the immediate result was a temporary deadlock in the negotiations. The next step was taken by the Miners; their Executive has called a special conference for the 6th of this month, to decide whether the S.W.M.F. will undertake the management and control of the C.L.C., with or without the help of the N.U.R.

* * *

ONE or two small points in this “brief but tragicall historie” call for comment. It is certainly curious, in view of the N.U.R.

Executive's qualms in the matter of "management and control," that ever since the C.L.C. Board of Management was formed (in 1911) two official representatives of the Railwaymen have been members of that body—one of them, in fact, being its Chairman. That is to say, *the N.U.R. has for more than three years shared in the management and control of the C.L.C.* Which might appear puzzling to anyone unversed in the subtleties of the laws, customs, traditions, and conventions ordained for the governance of the actions of Trades Unions. Another point is that the A.G.M. resolution very expressly laid it down that four additional N.U.R. students should take up residence at the College. Half the College year has gone—and neither the students nor their scholarship fees have as yet materialized.

* * *

Now we want here simply to ask the rank and file of the Railwaymen whether they are perfectly satisfied with their Executive's decisions. If so, well and good. If not, what are they going to do about it?

What About It?

That Executive, of course, being the governing body of a democratically controlled organization, exists to carry out the wishes of its constituents. Will the rank and file make their wishes plain—*now?* They have in the past given generous support to the College; ever since its foundation—nearly six years ago—they have been among its most enthusiastic and whole-hearted supporters. Is this past generosity of theirs to be in vain? Do they wish now to have neither part nor lot in the College? The members of the S.W.M.F. and the N.U.R. have hitherto shared the honour of supporting the one real Labour educational centre in the country. Do the Railwaymen now wish to back out? We do not believe it. And we are quite sure that they will find ways and means to give their Executive explicit instructions in the matter. *One penny per member per annum from the N.U.R. would, in addition to the financial support already given by other Unions, provide ample funds for the upkeep of the College.*

To the members of other Trade Unions we appeal also for a special effort. What is your organization doing? Is it doing all it might do if you put your shoulder to the wheel? Are you doing all you can to secure its support for the C.L.C.?

To every sympathizer with the aims and work of the College—railwayman or miner, civil servant or engineer, I.L. Peer or B.S. Peer—we appeal for financial assistance *now*. Your Branch will send something—have you asked it? And even though before you send the money, the College has been lifted out of danger by the S. Wales Miners, your cash will be used to good purpose—make no doubt about that. The C.L.C. flag has been kept flying up to now by the pluck, devotion, and enthusiasm of the garrison. Only those, perhaps, who—like the present writer—have had an occasional glimpse behind the scenes, know the extent of that devotion and that enthusiasm. What are *you* going to do about it?

J. F. H.

A Defence of Historical Materialism

THE *English Review* for December contains an article entitled "Socialism, Materialism, and the War," which is jointly contributed by the comrades Hyndman and Bax. The Editor of the *English Review* had, in the November issue, attempted to associate Marx's theory of historical development with the views of Trietschke, Bernhardt, and the rest of that cult. The authors of "Socialism, Materialism, and the War" set out to accomplish a double task: (1) to dispose of Austin Harrison's view of the connexion between Marx's Historical Materialism and the War; (2) to set forth their own view of the War in relation to Marx's theory. It is with this second performance that I am exclusively concerned in this article.

Messrs. Hyndman and Bax deny that the War has an economic origin. The cause of the War, they affirm, is to be found in Prussian militarism. But Marx held that the underlying economic structure "conditions the socio-political and intellectual life process generally." Messrs. Hyndman and Bax have therefore to remove themselves from the standpoint of Historical Materialism. "All wars" say they at the close of the section on materialism, "are no more of necessity economic wars than all internal national conflicts are of necessity class struggles. This is as true of modern wars as of the wars of history, and is particularly applicable to the greatest war the world has ever seen in which we as a nation are taking part to-day." Those who would reduce wars in general to economic conditions are "fanatics of materialistic monism." A number of wars are quoted by the authors which were "undoubtedly intelligible" only from the point of view of economic origin. Not so however "the wars of emancipation such as those of Italy and Hungary and the Balkan principalities. . . . the wars of Germany against Austria and France." Finally "the war between Great Britain, France, Russia, Servia, etc., against Germany and Austria-Hungary is likewise not a capitalist war in origin." I quote these passages in order that it may be plain why the conclusions expressed therein, made it necessary for Messrs. Hyndman and Bax to revise the theory of Marx, to find that Marx "overlooked" something, to "expose the shortcomings" of the theory.

The authors very meritoriously reproduce Marx's own formulation of his theory from the preface to the Critique of Political Economy. The general run of Marx-killers are not so particular, finding it easier no doubt to criticize what they put into Marx's mouth than what Marx actually did say. It is true that Messrs.

Hyndman and Bax in the course of their criticism are inclined to forget what they had previously reproduced. Still their early virtue serves to lay bare their later vice. As many of our readers are most likely not in possession of the Critique in which the outline referred to appears, I take the liberty of reproducing it below, and exactly as it is set forth in "Socialism, Materialism, and the War":

In the social production of the environment of their life, human beings enter into certain necessary relations of production which are independent of their will, and correspond to a determinate stage of development of their material and productive forces. The totality of these relations of production form the economic structure of the society, the real basis upon which a judicial and political superstructure raises itself, and to which determinate forms of social consciousness correspond. The mode of production of the material life of society conditions the socio-political and intellectual life process generally. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence but, on the contrary, their social existence that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come into contradiction with the existing relations of production, or, to speak in judicial language, with the conditions of property holding, under which they have hitherto worked. When this is the case, the forms of development proper to the productive forces become suddenly transformed into fetters for these forces. An epoch of social revolution is then entered upon. With the transformation of the economic basis, the whole immense superstructure sooner or later undergoes a complete bouleversement. In considering such revolutions as these, one must always distinguish between the material revolution in the economic conditions of production, and the judicial, political, religious, artistic or philosophical—in short, the ideological form, in which mankind becomes aware of the conflict and under which it is fought out. Just as little as one can judge an individual by what he thinks of himself can we judge such a period of revolution from its own consciousness alone. On the contrary, we must rather explain this consciousness by the contradictions obtaining in the material life of the time, in the conflict existing between the social forms of production and the social relations of production. A social formation never passes away before all the productive forces immanent within it have had time to develop themselves, and new and higher relations of production never establish themselves before the material conditions of their existence have already been formed within the womb of the old society. Hence mankind only sets itself tasks that it can accomplish, for if we consider the matter carefully we shall find that the problem to be solved never arises except where the material conditions of its solution are already present, or at least where they are already in process of realizing themselves.

In their broader outlines, oriental, classical, feudal, and modern modes of production may be designated as progressive epochs in the economic formation of society. The bourgeois relations of production are the last of the antagonistic forms of the social progress of production, antagonistic, not in the sense of individual antagonism, but of an antagonism arising out of the social conditions underlying the life of individuals. These are created by the productive forces developing themselves within the womb of bourgeois society, which forces create at the same time the material conditions for the resolution of the antagonism thus created. With the present social formation, therefore, the introductory period of the history of human society is closed.

Now Messrs. Hyndman and Bax cannot accept the foregoing "as a complete summary of human development." The doctrine leads to fatalism, history becomes simply a Punch and Judy show, or to quote their own words, "mankind in society is thereby reduced to a collection of merely sentient automata, unconsciously dominated from generation to generation by economic circumstances outside of their own cognition or control." And they add that it "assumes the attributes of a God or First Cause." We are informed that "some of Marx's followers are quite content to ascribe it to such a power." It may be so, although I have never come across this novelty. It is well known that some have been "quite content to ascribe to such a power" the mode of evolution discovered by Darwin in the domain of organic life. But there is nothing in Darwinism that leads of necessity to that conclusion. And Messrs. Hyndman and Bax have yet to prove that Marx's theory of historical development "assumes" the hair-raising nonsense which they attribute to it. It is they who "assume." But let us follow the piling up of assertions. Among some of the other "assumed" consequences of Historical Materialism is the cannibalistic rôle of the "economic factor," which "devours all other factors in the long history of man in society and proceeds onwards and upwards of its own motion and volition." Now a little further on we are told that "what Marx overlooked in the passage quoted, is that one factor of a complex synthesis cannot constitute reality." We will see later on that Marx overlooked no such thing. For the moment let it be "assumed" that the criticism is valid. If then Marx considered reality to be entirely economic, how about the devouring performance when there is nothing to "devour"? Might it be respectfully suggested to the critics that it would conduce to the relief of their difficulties if they *devoured* a little less and *digested* a little more.

But we are not finished with things "assumed." "Progress is assumed as one of the properties inherent in matter giving forth of

itself an impulse towards the modification of human environment. . . . The mental or psychological factor is thus wholly eliminated." How "thus"? Who has "eliminated"? Not Marx certainly! It is rather Messrs. Hyndman and Bax who have performed the "elimination." It never occurred to Marx to regard "progress" in the way the critics have so generously attributed to him. On the contrary it is according to Marx, "*man*" that "makes his own history," it is *men* who carry on "the social production of their environment," it is only *men* who progress and not "matter." Progress was most assuredly no entity for Marx, no property "inherent in matter, &c." Has the word "historical," really no meaning for Messrs. Hyndman and Bax? Is the matter of natural science, the material unmodified by human work, one and the same with the historical material, the material modified by the industry of man? What are we to "assume"? In any case, there is left no room for doubt as to what Marx thought upon the subject. The evolution of mankind was not in his view "the uninfluenced material evolution" the critics have fathered upon him. It would certainly be a decidedly mystic notion that conceived of an economic development in which the will and the mind of man played no part; it would indeed be a mysticism more in affinity with Bax than with Marx, for he like a juggler out of an empty hat, can produce "many historic situations" without any materials at all, peradventure, out of his "psychological spontaneity." For it would seem that Bax still cherishes this categorical treasure. He complains by the way of "the simplicity of the theory" of Historical Materialism, and thinks that those who hold it are a very simple lot who seem to take a devilish joy in crushing "active mentality." It must indeed be a very "active mentality" that actuates itself. Such an aristocratic conception is worthy of a place on high Olympus. But this simple Historical Materialism which explains not only history but also itself, is nothing in simplicity to Bax's "psychological spontaneity" which is so simple that it explains nothing, not even itself.

"In the social production of the environment of their life," says Marx, "human beings enter into certain necessary relations of production which are independent of their will, and correspond to a determinate stage of development of their material and productive forces." Is it here that Messrs. Hyndman and Bax find the grounds, or part of the grounds, for their charge of automatism, fatalism, or the Providential dispensation? As they make no attempt to relate their charges to the passage in which the theory is formulated, we are compelled to do this for them. Is man a marionette because from necessity and not from free choice he must first satisfy the

immediate needs of his existence? Is it the fact that the relations of production, which men must enter at a given time for the satisfaction of their needs, are "independent of their will," which appears to "active mentality" as a reduction of mankind in society to "a collection of merely sentient automata"? Are we to have it then, that the tribes of higher barbarism convened a meeting, and decided by resolution or amendment to make away with the relations of production as they were, under primitive communism, and to install in their place the productive relations of classical antiquity? Was it that the relations of capitalist production were the result of a pre-arranged scheme hatched out of the famous "independent psychological series" of capitalist mentalities? If the relations of production into which human beings enter, are dependent on their will, why should not the guild-encircled handicrafts of the medieval city have employed the steam-hammer instead of the hand-hammer, or betaken themselves to the conquest of the world-market, while still remaining guild handicrafts?

Historical man always finds himself circumstanced by historical material. Man does not make his history out of "whole cloth" (Marx). He must lay hold on the materials he finds to hand, he must find the means of livelihood in relations which are given. *Economic development*, which is essentially the work of man, the work of his brain as well as that of his hand, takes place in given *economic conditions*. The distinction is important. Specific economic conditions, i.e. such and such occupations, distribution of tasks, division of classes, on the one hand, and such and such tools of production, on the other and corresponding hand—the results of preceding economic development—serve as the ground-work for further economic development, i.e. new inventions and discoveries, the consequent formation of new occupations, altered division of labour, change in the form and relation of classes, which in turn become the conditions of still further development, and so on. To the mind of man, the successive economic conditions set successive problems, and with the problems, the means for their solution. "Mankind only sets itself tasks that it can accomplish, for if we consider the matter carefully we shall find that the problem to be solved never arises except where the material conditions of its solution are already present, or at least where they are in process of realizing themselves" (Marx). The accomplishment of one task leads to the rise of new tasks before the mind of man, the satisfaction of a need gives rise to new needs. All these results react upon the relations of men, and after a certain sum of such results have been realized, the economic relations of society are entirely revolutionized. And not only does a thorough going

change take place in this artificial foundation of society, but changes will in consequence be necessitated in the political system, regulations of law, and general means of social adjustment, as well as in the direction and in great part the objects of intellectual activity. Thus in this continuous development which is effected by man, *man himself is effected*, effected in ways which in general were not foreseen or intended. So true is this, that almost until now, the producers of history, the historical workers of whatever social layer, directors or directed, have rarely been conscious of the significance of their own work, i.e. they were unable to penetrate to the real causes of the complicated effects of their own activity. But this is not to deny the participation of the intellect in social development. On the contrary, it is precisely Historical Materialism that gives a consistent explanation of its rôle ; certainly it denies that the mind of man stands over and above the historical development, shaping it and arranging it with innate wisdom. And so much did Marx recognize the rôle of the idea in the life of man, that he could say, "the tradition of past generations weighs like an alp on the brain of the living."

Do we not in the Labour movement realize how very true it is, that changes in the heads of men *follow*, at first slowly, changes in the conditions of their life? Ideas expressing *things as they once were*, abdicate slowly in favour of a mental outlook which perceives *things as they are*. Even some of our theoretical leaders, even the comrades Hyndman and Bax, have still a last Mohican or two of bourgeois thought that find lodgement in their brains. Most assuredly there is a history of ideas, although not of ideas that explain themselves. And what does this history show? Not that the head of man is the great restless radical, but rather the clinging conservative! The courageous few who first scented the morning air of a new day, and who proclaimed the fact to their less awakened brethren, invariably found out to their cost, how slow to move out of the old forms is human thought. So true is this that even the early champions of revolution have attempted to mask the new order which they advocated with the old veils. Yet we find despite the original resistance of the past to the pioneers of new principles and institutions, that the old forms of thought were defeated and the past left behind. History does not stand still at the command of conservative thought. What is it that rends the veil, that turns Saul into Paul, that makes generally accepted and orthodox that which was at first generally rejected and heterodox? There has been an intellectual change it is true, but this cannot be explained out of itself, otherwise it would be inexplicable why it did not change before. It is *the continuous economic development that is*

the real radical, and we have already seen that this consists in the successive discovery of improved means of labour, giving rise to successive distributions of labour, to new class formations, inequalities, frictions, to new social needs. The more the new elements develop, the more do they plainly stand out in contradiction to the old institutions, customs, and therefore to the mental outlook corresponding thereto. When we recall the fact that economic development is the work of man, and that these new needs which contradict the old relations are therefore the effects of his own work upon him, it is once more plainly to be recognized from his original opposition to the first proposals to change social relations in accordance with the new needs, or in other words from his resistance to consequences of which he is the author, that he is not conscious of his authorship. And it is precisely in this sense that I understand Marx, as well as Engels, in their formulations of Historical Materialism. So far from "the mental or psychological factor" being "eliminated," as Messrs. Hyndman and Bax claim to be "assumed," it is just Historical Materialism that gives a rational explanation of the rôle of the intellect in historical development. "It is not the consciousness of men that determine their existence, but on the contrary, their social existence that determines their consciousness." That is not to deny the "mental factor," any more than to insist that the cart goes behind the horse is to deny the useful rôle of the cart. However for Messrs. Hyndman and Bax, what appears to me to be a sober view of history, is a species of intoxication. The name of the evil brew is "materialistic monism." When we have had a taste of Messrs. Hyndman and Bax's dualism over the graves of the believers in the Second Advent and Peter the Hermit, we will be fortified in the conviction that the drunken ones are they who see double.

W. W. C.

(*To be continued.*)

A W.E.A. APOSTLE ON MARX.—Why, up to the present, had the German Empire succeeded in this paradoxical combination of industrial and commercial activities with severe military discipline? The answer lay in the intellectual theory of German Socialism. The German working-classes allowed their minds to be captured by a theory. The chief author of the theory was Karl Marx. His theory captivated the working-class in Germany. It was *a mistaken doctrine, a half-truth, founded on imperfect generalisations, contradicted by much experience, indiscriminating in its practical conclusions.*—Prof. M. E. Sadler, of Leeds University, speaking at Keighley Municipal Institute, Dec. 14th, 1914.

Socialism and the War

THE articles in the last issue of *The Plebs* replying to my article in the December number call rather for commendation than for criticism. The writers raise important issues which are thrusting themselves with increasing insistence upon the notice of the rank and file of the Labour Movement at the present time. The first is that of the absolute control which is being exercised in all phases of the Movement by the Official Leaders (I am prompted by an instinctive reverence to use capitals); the second is that of the relationship between industrial and political action. It would, of course, be impossible here to deal with these questions at length, so I must content myself with saying that no great and permanent advance will ever be possible for the Movement until these two questions have been once and for all settled.

Now for my kindly critics. I am entirely in agreement with Comrade Silvester's opening statement—that it is unnecessary to ask a Marxist whether the war will destroy Socialism. But I trust our Magazine gets into the hands of many non-Marxists (the members of the Plebs League are sadly lacking in their duty if it doesn't) and that our very confidence for the future will arouse their interest and compel them to examine the Marxist position. It was for this reason that I raised the question.

With regard to the inability of the International to prevent war, whilst recognizing that the feelings of the Movement were entirely opposed to the idea of war, yet I cannot discover that any step was taken to express those feelings in action. Moreover, the policy adopted by the International Socialist Congresses was in itself sufficient to prevent such feeling from finding expression. This policy declared that Socialists were justified in taking part in the defence of their country if attacked by an aggressive power. By the adoption of such a policy anti-war resolutions and demonstrations were swept off the board. All the big Powers who are fighting in the present war justify their actions on the ground that they are fighting in self-defence. And that is the justification put forward by the French, Belgian and German Socialists for the support they are giving to their respective Governments. But any war may turn out to be a "defensive" war. Socialists therefore must support armaments and all else that contributes to the preservation of "their" country. The logical outcome of this policy is, of course, the complete surrender of all revolutionary principles and the adoption of an ultra-reactionary attitude on all questions respecting "national welfare." Notable examples of this "mental devolution" are unhappily only too common just now.

Let me hasten to assure Comrade Silvester that I am fully aware of the wide difference that exists between Continental Revisionism and English Socialism as expounded by Messrs. Macdonald, Webb and Co. Greatly as I differ from the Revisionists in their conclusions, I at least recognize the ability of their methods, and it was perhaps scarcely complimentary to class them with English Labour Leaders, Fabian Essayists, and "Biological"

Socialists. It would perhaps have been better to have used the term "Reformist" instead of "Revisionist." Nevertheless, so far as practical politics are concerned, there is nothing to choose between English and Continental Reformists. This is borne out by the extracts from Pannekoek's article which Comrade Silvester quotes. It is clear that the collapse of the International is the direct outcome of Reformism.

It is difficult to deal shortly with the vexed questions of industrial and political action, but one or two points call for comment. To be of any use, political action by the workers must, I suggest, be based upon, and be the expression of, a powerful, organized, industrial movement. The workers cannot take an intelligent part in political action unless they have realized the meaning of the class-struggle. It is on the industrial field that this struggle most clearly expresses itself. Hence the industrial organization of the class-conscious workers must be the foundation of a powerful Labour Movement. When ready and where necessary this organization can make itself felt on the political field. But we are not yet ready to give battle to the Capitalist on these lines. The goal of all Trade Union reform must be Industrial Unionism. This can only be brought about by the action of the rank and file in the Unions. This in turn means education. It means that the influence of the C.L.C. must be extended far more widely than it is at present.

Comrade Silvester's suggestion of an Industrial Council is indeed a valuable one, and I heartily agree with his concluding paragraph. Indeed, I go further. Why should not the Plebs League ultimately become the real Socialist organization of the country? The League has a definite programme based on a sound theory. It is in touch with the best of the organized workers, and has already more than two thousand sympathisers and supporters. An article appeared in a recent issue of *The Plebs* entitled "One More Step," by Mr. Frank Jackson, of Rochdale. It was a striking reminder of the latent possibilities of the Plebs League, and was proof that my suggestion is by no means as Utopian as at first sight it may appear.

The writer of the second article is equally sympathetic. He also emphasises the danger to the Movement of the "official" element, and rightly urges the necessity for propaganda within the Unions. But he takes exception to my statement that the workers by their actions proved that they had no wish to stop the war. Let it be clearly understood that I do not blame the workers for supporting the war. Having regard to their environment it would have been miraculous if they had acted in any other way. But I recognize that the majority of them are not fighting unwillingly. That millions of men could be compelled to fight one another simply because a few autocrats will to have it so, is unthinkable. Patriotic, religious, and racial animosities and falsehoods are all playing their parts in hypnotising the workers of Europe; but out of it all emerges the fact that they *will* to do it and acquiesce in the horror of it all. And so while we recognize and account for the action of the workers in the war, yet we do not blame them, for in crucifying Humanity on the battlefield they truly know not what they do.

In another part of this issue will be found a further criticism of my article, which arrived too late for publication last month. The writer is of opinion that the Socialist Movement will be a very tame and obscure one after the war owing to "the boom in trade." Personally, I should be reluctant to assert so confidently that the war will be followed by a boom in trade. But if the boom comes, what then? A boom in trade means for the capitalist increased profits, and for the worker a higher cost of living effectively neutralising any increase in wages. But even if the boom meant prosperity for both, surely that should not affect the growth of a real Socialist movement. If that movement relies on slack times and general discontent to gain its recruits it is built up on very unstable foundations. No movement can be permanent that is based upon waves of feeling of any kind. Election campaigns prove that. A further cause for the prospective Socialist slump will be found, Mr. Rodway suggests, in "the general distrust of the people after the sorry exhibition of 'fraternity' during the war." That is my whole contention. If as a result of the war the people come to realise that fraternity, based (as it has been hitherto) on sentimental appeals and mere expressions of opinion, is futile, then the prospects of Socialism may be more rosy than my critic seems to think.

We are agreed that the Movement will be animated by more revolutionary ideas, but how will these "Ideal Ideas" express themselves? I reply, in a drastic alteration in the character of Trade Unions, changing them into instruments for fighting Capitalism; and, as the movement grows stronger and more conscious, demands of a more revolutionary character will develop.

I pass on to the question of reforms. Let us suppose some reform to be of great value. How is it proposed to obtain it? There are only two ways. The first is the method we have used hitherto—to pass resolutions at Congress, to send deputations to wait on Ministers, and to have matters discussed in Parliament,—in plain English, to accept those things which Capitalist Governments are pleased to give us. The other method is to educate the workers and to organize them in Industrial Unions, thus enabling them to enforce their own demands. If we want to get better conditions by any other method than by fighting for them, then logically we must support Reformist governments. Just as the adoption of a policy of national defence compels Socialists to become patriots and Imperialists, so "step-by-step" reforms force them to become mere Liberals. Moreover, the fact that the workers "go on living scantily" is proof that the reforms we have got have very little effect upon the social conditions of the workers. "A dose of Marx" (!) My critic has evidently to learn that the Marxist system is not a quack remedy. It is a scientific explanation of the way in which society develops. I suggest that this knowledge of social development is the one thing the workers need most. When they understand how the social system works, and why and how they are robbed of the proceeds of their labour, they will no longer "shout for the moon and live scantily." Marx will teach them to leave the moon to take care of itself, and to take possession of the habitable globe instead.

Lastly, anti-militarism is by no means synonymous with anti-force. An anti-militarist is one who is opposed to the theory that the workers should

kill one another in the interests of the capitalist class. If necessity compelled them to do so, the workers would be perfectly justified in taking up arms against their masters. But I do not think armed force will be necessary to accomplish a social revolution. Given education and organisation, force is unnecessary. The whole thing reduces itself to a question of education, and hence the vital necessity for our education to be of the right kind.

And all this will take time, so that there will be no question of us having "Capitalism on one day and Socialism on the next."

H. WYNN-CUTHBERT.

Bernard Shaw—Socialist

WHEN a final estimate is made of the havoc wrought by the war, several exploded theories and bankrupted theorists will have to be included in the list. Belgium may yet prove to be the grave of a good many reputations, as it has already been the grave of more brave men than one likes to think about. Trade Unionists and literary men, politicians and parsons, have said their say about it during the past few months, and it is more than likely that some of them will within the next few years find it inconvenient to be reminded of certain of their utterances.

It is hard, of course, to keep one's head and look facts in the face at a time when half Europe is delirious. Moreover, the man who tries to keep his head, and to speak or write accordingly, is likely to be greeted with yells of "Traitor"—be he British, Russian, French or German. It is now three months since Mr. Shaw published his *Common Sense about the War*, declaring that the time had come "to pluck up courage and begin to talk and write soberly" about it. He proceeded to discuss it from the commonsense point of view—*i.e.*, from the point of view of an International Socialist. Now every English paper is prepared to eulogise (and quote) Dr. Liebknecht or *Vorwärts* for their "courageous criticisms of Prussian Junkerism," their "brave stand for truth against blind prejudice," and so on and so forth. But—needless to remark—let anyone on this side of the North Sea dare even to assert that such a thing as British Junkerism exists, or that Britons could conceivably be blinded by anything but a passion for the truth, let him endeavour, as Mr. Shaw did, to show that there may be two aspects (at least) of the situation, and that the neutral nations may not necessarily

see us quite as we see ourselves ; then leader-writers, orators, street-urchins and prominent Socialists will arise in their English pride and hoot "Pro-German !"

Could Bernard Shaw the giftie gie us
To see oursel as ithers see us !

He cannot give us the giftie, but he has at least provided us—and not for the first time—with the opportunity. Naturally, we resent being told that we are "cursed with a fatal intellectual laziness, an evil inheritance from the time when our monopoly of coal and iron made it possible for us to become rich and powerful without thinking or knowing how"; that in the end we have "become fatheaded, lost all intellectual consciousness of what we were doing, and with it all power of objective self-criticism." And it is precisely because we have become fatheaded that we are angrier than ever when he reminds us that "there is an opinion abroad, even in the quarters most friendly to us, that our excellent qualities are marred by an incorrigible hypocrisy"; that "Pecksniff is not considered so exceptional an English gentleman in America as he is in England"; and that since the world in general can have no particular interest in branding us with this particular vice, we can hardly have acquired this reputation for nothing.

Now since it is their business to try to understand the point of view of other nationalities, Socialists, as well as patriots, may find something to ponder over in this part of Mr. Shaw's tract. But our object here is simply to direct attention to certain home-truths uttered by him in the tract itself and in his replies to sundry critics ; home-truths familiar enough, perhaps, but which, none the less, uttered at this particular time, should earn for him the respect and support of everyone who cares for the Labour Movement.

This war, we are commonly told, is (on the side of the Allies) a war for Democracy against Militarism and Absolutism. Mr. Shaw agrees that, "properly handled, it can be led to a victory for Democracy over its worst enemies both at home and abroad." But he insists on defining Democracy a little more clearly than will suit the book of certain Democrats. "When I say Democracy," he wrote in the *Daily Citizen*, "I do not mean Mr. Asquith's pseudo-democracy, which uses Mutiny Acts in time of peace to imprison Labour leaders and muzzle the Labour Press, but genuine working-class democracy." In his pamphlet he declares that "as far as popular liberties are concerned, history will make no distinction between Mr. Asquith and Metternich"; and further—

The governing classes are using their power secondarily, no doubt, to uphold the country in which they have so powerful and

comfortable a position ; but primarily their object is to maintain that position by the organized legal robbery of the poor ; and to that end they would join hands with the German Junkers as against the working-class in Germany and England as readily as Bismarck joined hands with Thiers to suppress the Commune of Paris.

And in a reply to Mr. H. G. Wells in the *Chronicle* he repeats the irritating truth : “ Mr. Asquith is on the side of the Kaiser as against Dr. Liebknecht, and the Kaiser on Mr. Asquith’s side as against Mr. Tom Mann.”

To the perfervid patriots, Mr. Shaw remarks—

Will you now at last believe what the Socialists have been telling you for so many years : that your Union Jacks and tricolours and Imperial Eagles are only toys to keep you amused, and that there are only two real flags in the world henceforth—the red flag of Democratic Socialism and the black flag of Capitalism? Victory to the capitalists of Europe means that they can not only impose on the enemy a huge indemnity, but lend him the money to pay it with, whilst the working-classes produce and pay both principal and interest.

Statements like these are not new—Socialists have indeed been “ telling you so ” for years past. But some measure of their truth and of their appositeness at the present moment may be gauged from the outcry they have provoked.

Mr. Shaw does not stop here—in what after all would be a purely negative position. Germany must be beaten, he asserts, “ because she has made herself the exponent and champion in the modern world of the doctrine that military force is the basis and foundation of national greatness, and military conquest is the method by which the nation of the highest culture can impose that culture on its neighbours.” But to beat Germany is not enough. “ We must use the war to give the *coup de grâce* to mediæval diplomacy, mediæval autocracy, and anarchic export of capital.” That is to say, in short, that we—as Socialists—are to take up a common-sense position, look the fact of the war in the face, and make what use we can of it to further our own (Socialist) ends.

We have no space to quote Mr. Shaw on Russia, the Church, Disarmament, the methods of Diplomacy, and sundry other subjects. The above quotations must suffice to indicate the general character of what Mr. Blatchford described as “ Bernard Shaw’s Latest Impertinence,” the product of “ insensate malice ” against this Merrie England of ours. But it is perhaps better just now to preserve a decent silence so far as Mr. Blatchford and the *Clarion* are concerned.

J. F. HORRABIN.

Reports

N.U.R. Edinburgh District Industrial History and Economic Class

Under the auspices of the above Class a very successful Lantern Lecture on the French Revolution was delivered by our Instructor (Mr. J. S. Clarke) in a local picture house on Dec. 20th. The audience was large and appreciative. After the lecture, and when questions were exhausted, a lady in the body of the hall got up, and, mentioning that she was from London, referred to the part the C.L.C. was playing in working-class education; and as times were bad, she suggested that someone took the hat round. Bro. J. Crawford at once obliged, and despite the fact that two-thirds of the audience had left, succeeded in collecting the sum of 7/6, a P.O. for which has been forwarded to the College. The lady in question, I understand, was Mrs. Cheshire, organizer of the Printers' Warehousemen and Cutters Union. I may state that we have enlisted the co-operation of Edinburgh No. 2 Branch, N.U.R., and intend to run a series of Lantern Lectures in that particular part of the city.

JAS. M. NIXON, Secretary.

Padiham Class Report : Third Year's 'Course.

We have just completed the first section of our syllabus of lectures. Previous to the course, we obtained grants amounting to £10 1s. od. from local Trade Unions and Co-Operative Education Departments, which enabled us to allow members of these organizations to attend the whole series of 24 lectures for 6d.

We have had 12 lectures on Philosophic Logic, and have now entered on the second section, Class Struggles in History. The teaching is exceptionally good: Comrade Archbold is looked upon more as a class leader than a teacher, and is undoubtedly a credit to the C.L.C.

J. W. HUDSON.

Oldham C.L.C. Class.

This Class in conjunction with the Rochdale District has just finished a course on Philosophic Logic. The outlines were prepared by Mr. Craik and supplied through the C.L.C. It has been the most successful class we have yet held in Oldham, the percentage of attendances being the highest yet attained, and the results of the teaching being most marked. Miss Smith, who has lately returned from the Central Labour College, has had charge of the Class, and the students all feel much indebted to her for the work she has done. We are contemplating taking a course on Conceptions of History in the near future, and are looking forward to a further increase of students. Mr. Craik paid us a visit on the 15th January, and gave a review of the Logical Method, and an introduction to the History Course. All who took the opportunity to come and listen to him highly appreciated the Lecture.

GEORGE MEARNS, Secretary.

Women's League Campaign in South Wales.

Miss Mary Howarth, of the Women's League of the C.L.C., has been engaged in a very successful lecture tour in S. Wales, and will go thence to Bristol and district, where meetings have been arranged for her. The tour was organized by Mrs. Davies (Barry) for the National Union of Railway Women's Guilds, with the object of bringing the work and teaching of the C.L.C. before the notice of the Railway Women, and of assisting the development of the women's side of the College. Miss Howarth has addressed meetings at Cardiff, Quaker's Yard, Penarth, Barry, Aberdare, Llandaff and Bassaleg, speaking at N.U.R. branches as well as at the Women's Guilds.

"We most heartily congratulate the Women's League on sending out so able a speaker," writes Mrs. Davies. "Miss Howarth's addresses have been *really good*, and we are sure she will feel amply repaid for her strenuous and painstaking efforts by the results which we know will follow. We hope that similar efforts will be made in other parts of the country." The Women's League, on its side, owes its heartiest thanks to Mrs. Davies and to Mrs. Geo. Brown, of Bristol, for their admirable organization of the campaign.

Plebs Magazine Fund Concert, etc. BALANCE SHEET.

RECEIPTS.			EXPENDITURE.		
	£	s. d.		£	s. d.
By Sale of Tickets ...	55	19 9	To Cost of Printing ...	13	10 0
„ Donations received	3	12 0	„ Carriage, Postage and Stationery ...	5	5 0
„ Collection at Annual Meet ...	1	9 6	„ Refreshments ...		12 2
Refreshments ...		14 7	„ Artistes ...		10 6
			„ Gifts ...		6 17 6
					26 15 2
			„ Balance ...		35 0 8
Total ...	£61	15 10	Total ...	£61	15 10

Gifts distributed to the following:—No. 1 gift to Mr. J. Lawson, Blackpool; No. 3 to Mr. G. Barker, Stratford; No. 6 to Mr. H. E. Kitchin, Shipley; No. 8 to Mr. F. Kamerick, Brondesbury; No. 10 to Mr. W. Lewis, Sheffield; No. 11 to W. Trussler, Chesterfield; No. 12 (claimed) by Mr. J. Owen, Hull.

Audited and found correct, Jan. 21st, 1915.

W. T. A. FOOT.
J. H. PRATT.

In addition to the donations already promised and received we have to acknowledge the receipt of ten shillings each from our friends Clatworthy

and Savage, from Plumstead. There are a few promises still to be redeemed, but this would not justify any further delay in producing the balance sheet as herewith.

The sum which we are enabled to hand over to the Secretary is not perhaps as much as we expected it to be, but taking everything into consideration the result is not altogether discouraging. Seeing that so many of our friends have been prevented by circumstances from assisting in the effort, the more thanks are due to all those who have done so. Apart from the activities displayed in selling the tickets, there is perhaps nothing that calls for special commendation, with the exception of those who assisted at the concert. The Editor has already extended our thanks to them. Personally I think the venture could very well be repeated some time in the future, when perhaps all can join in an effort to clean the slate.

W. H. MAINWARING.

Correspondence

Will Correspondents please note that THE PLEBS consists of only 24 small pages; and that as we are anxious to give as much for the money as possible, short letters, coming straight to the point, are more welcome than epistles the length of St. Paul's.

TO THE EDITOR, *The Plebs Magazine.*

WHERE DO WE STAND?

SIR,

The question *re* the attitude Socialists should adopt towards the war bristles with difficulties. The opinions of Socialists themselves are about as many and as various as the numbers of the various Socialist bodies, and it is high time this chaos in ideas gave way to a little order.

We should go far to solve the problem if we decided whether we were, like Blatchford, Britons first and Socialists afterwards; or Socialists first and Britons afterwards. If the former, then Blatchford's position is obviously the right position to take up. Of course, one could argue that the defeat of Britain would be a blow for Socialism, and so try to satisfy both sides. But were the British Socialist to adopt that excuse, he could hardly object if the German said, "Our defeat by Russia would also be a blow for Socialism." Were we attacked by a nation of savages, we might say without fear of contradiction that we were fighting to save Socialism; but when it comes to a people as civilized as ourselves that plea crumbles to nothing.

Taking things as they are, if we Socialists see the economic factor as the basic cause of the war; if we believe that the war at bottom is a struggle between two groups of Capitalists for a market that threatens to become too small for both, how can we take part in the bloodshed?

It has been argued, on the other hand, that if we Socialists do not identify ourselves with the working-classes in this war we can hardly hope

to win their confidence. But surely we can let them see we are working hard for their benefit, even although we do not fight. When they are supplied with rotten khaki or bad food we do our best to make the facts known. We agitate for better pay for the men and bigger pensions for their dependants. We hold the Government up to scorn when it proposes to use the police to spy on the soldier's wives. That can hardly be called standing aloof and allowing the workers "to stew in their own juice."

And when the war is over, after trying in vain to discover wherein their lot is better than it was before, the working-classes will recall the Socialists who preached international working-class solidarity, who told them unbelieving that they would get nothing but kicks for their pains, and who, while helping them in countless ways, did not allow themselves to be swept into the war party like leaves before the wind. And to that party they will be inclined to listen. To those Socialists who shared in their folly they will turn a deaf ear.

Musselburgh,
Scotland.

Yours etc.,
JAMES P. M. MILLAR.

LIGHT TO LIGHTEN THE DARKNESS WANTED.

SIR,

I should like to suggest that you have in the *Plebs* an occasional article on what should be the policy of the Labour Movement. I think it would help to keep us from being *side-tracked* as often in the future as unfortunately we have been in the past. Let us beware of the "enemy within our gates." The workers' only aim should be the overthrow of the present system of exploitation.

May I also urge every reader to consider it his or her *duty* to increase the sale of the *Plebs* so that we may soon have a much larger Magazine.

Yours in the Cause, W. G. DAVIES.

Barry, South Wales.

WILL SOCIALISM SURVIVE THE WAR?

SIR,

After reading Mr. Cuthbert's article, one feels bound to agree with him that Socialism will survive because the conditions for its existence survive. He asks what will be the condition of the Socialist Movement at the end of the War. In my opinion it will be a very tame and obscure movement for quite a few years, mainly owing to the boom in trade and to the general distrust of the people after the sorry exhibition of "fraternity" during the war. I agree that when it does get on to its feet, so to speak, it will be animated by more revolutionary ideas.

I would like to ask Mr. Cuthbert a question about these Ideal Ideas. How will they express themselves? Will the workers keep on shouting for the moon, and go on living scantily as at present? No reform, no State aid, says Mr. Cuthbert; simply give the workers a dose of Marx, form a great international brotherhood (the same old sentiments) and all will be well!

I gather from his article that he would not ask for a rise in wages, shorter hours, or increased Union supervision in the workshop. Oh, no! Such paltry reforms are of no use.

Again, if Mr. Cuthbert is purely anti-militarist (which, I take it, means anti-force) how does he intend to get his demands? For he must not forget the Capitalists have force.

In conclusion, I don't think, as he appears to do, that we shall have Capitalism one day and Socialism the next.

Hayfield, Derbyshire.

Yours &c.,

E. RODWAY.

THE MAGAZINE.

SIR,

I was exceedingly interested in the few samples of readers' criticisms which you were able to give us in last month's Editorial. The question as to the kind of articles to be published, and the particular subjects to be dealt with, seems to me to be of first-rate importance, especially if we are aiming at increasing the circulation of the Magazine.

I take it that the *primary* aim of the *Plebs* is to further the interests of the Central Labour College. Obviously, then, the first point to be decided is whether it can best do this as a semi-technical magazine designed for the use of the students of the C.L.C. classes, or as a journal with a more general appeal, aiming first of all at winning new sympathizers and supporters. These two aims are quite distinct; although it will probably be found best in the future—as it appears to have been in the past—to make some sort of compromise.

On the whole, in my opinion, the *Plebs* has tended rather too much to appeal to the student only; and I would point out that if it is decided that it is to be a more or less technical magazine for students of economics, logic, &c., &c., then you can only increase its circulation by increasing the number of students and classes. If the *Plebs* is to assist in the latter work, then it is of no use for it to appeal exclusively to those who have already had some education in the subjects the College teaches. The circulation of the *Lancet*, for instance, is practically limited by the number of doctors; and unless the doctors increase and multiply, the *Lancet* can scarcely hope for a wider circle of subscribers.

I would point out further that even students are not exclusively interested in the subjects already mentioned, and in those alone. Speaking for myself, I would welcome articles on any and every subject, written from the *Plebs* point of view.

Some sort of compromise seems essential. But I would strongly urge that the frame of mind and mental equipment of the possible new reader should not be altogether lost sight of.

Wishing all success to the new volume,

Yours &c., A REGULAR READER.

SIR,

The *Plebs* would please me better if more *vital*. I agree that there is too much Marx and Engels. Why not give reins to the discussion of modern problems, and let us have modern and up-to-date interpretations?

I'm not too greatly enamoured of "Scientific" Socialism nor Historical Materialism. They have their place in, but are not *the* sun, in my opinion. You can kick me out if you like! . . . There is no alchemy in this, that, or the other theory of Socialism. No witchcraft of words will avail to bring about the Revolution. There must be a *demand*. And what will create the demand? That, I contend, is a question of psychology more than of anything else. It is better, I believe to be in line with the vision and aspiration of Socialism than to observe, however scientifically, the *structures* of past societies. It is better to live with the living than to be philosophic about the dead.

D. J. WILLIAMS.

Pontardulais, Glam.

A VOICE FROM DOWN UNDER.

Comrade W. Gormlie, of W. Adelaide, S. Australia, sends us cuttings of a newspaper controversy between himself and a local Marx critic, with the remark that "it will perhaps prove as good copy for the *Plebs*, and be quite as educational as some of the far-fetched and academic articles which often find a place in its pages." Now we like criticism, but unfortunately Com. Gormlie doesn't point out *which* articles he's "getting at." And while we hesitate even to hint that his own contribution is just the least bit academic, we are bound to point out that it would fill some pages of the *Plebs*. None the less, we are glad to see he's been keeping the flag flying.

Reviews

Britannica Books: (1) *Germany*, (2) *France*, (3) *Russia and the Balkan States*, (4) *Austria and Poland*, (5) *Belgium, Italy and Switzerland* (6) *Wars of the 19th Century*. [The Encyclopedia Britannica Co., 2/6 each, or 12/6 the set.]

The present European War, and the readiness with which the Labour Movements in the various countries accepted the explanations of their respective Governments, has made plain the necessity for an understanding of the development of each nation involved. An International Labour Movement must be based on a real knowledge of international conditions, and not merely on the sentimental phrases of justice, solidarity, and anti-militarism.

These six books, reproduced from the 11th Edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, provide interesting information with regard to the Continental nations involved in the present struggle.

The volume on *Russia and the Balkan States* is perhaps the most important, as it is about these States and Russia that the least is generally known. Their early history is briefly dealt with, and there are chapters on physical features, the growth of industries, &c., leading up to the events of the present day. Those *Plebs* readers who are acquainted with the letters of Karl Marx dealing with the period prior to and during the Crimean

War, now embodied in the book entitled *The Eastern Question*, would read with interest the account of Russian policy since the time of Peter the Great. The story of the diplomatic intrigues with the rest of the European Powers will help to dispel many of the illusions prevalent to-day, when we have so many advocates declaring that the war is being waged in the interests of the weaker nations and humanity generally. The chapters dealing with the struggles of the Balkan States for independence, and the mutual jealousies of the European Powers, are very illuminating, more particularly the two appendices dealing with the events of 1909-12 in the Balkans.

In Appendix 2 we read how the success of the "Balkan League" against Turkey in the war of 1912 upset all the diplomatic formulas of the Powers. Quoting from the 3rd paragraph of this appendix: "It was clear the old maps of Eastern Europe might be rolled up. . . . The Eastern Question had entered on an entirely new phase. . . . The problem now was how the old ambitions and rival sympathies of Austria and Russia in that part of the world should be reconciled with the new situation." We are now seeing the result. The Powers are busy reconciling these "old ambitions" and "rival sympathies" on the Continent to-day under the disguise of fighting for the liberties and rights of small nations.

We are also shown by these books that the tearing-up of Treaties as being mere "scraps of paper" is by no means confined to Germany, but that practically all of the Powers have acquired this typical expression of capitalist "culture." The "deep hereditary feeling for the Balkan populations" on the part of Russia (see the English White Paper, *Great Britain and the European Crisis*) is seen to be simply a diplomatic cloak concealing the real motives of Russia.

Finally, these books, although written by orthodox historians, prove if interpreted from the view point of Labour how far the International has been removed from a knowledge of the real development in Europe. They make it clear that it is because the Labour movement has not received the education which will enable it to put Government White Papers, &c., side by side with the historical works of their spokesmen, and so disclose the real causes of conflict, that the International now lies in the dust.

ROBERT HOLDER.

The War of Steel and Gold, by H. N. BRAILSFORD
(Bell and Sons, 5/- net).

NO apology is needed for introducing this valuable study in International Politics to the notice of *Plebs* readers. The "intellectuals" of the proletariat are notoriously poor, but they possess the best library in the world with *Das Kapital* as its coping-stone, and this book of Mr. Brailsford's may serve as a sort of additional "flying buttress" amid the blasts of the present European conflict.

It is good to get hold of a book like this, and so escape from the rampagings of false patriots and the terror-stricken cries of political recruiting agents. It is the work of a fearless and independent thinker who has devoted some years to European travel, and to studying the questions raised at first hand. Moreover, Mr. Brailsford understands the Working-Class Movement, and has no doubts as to the part that it will play in the future of International affairs.

The War of Steel and Gold is in two parts—Descriptive and Constructive—and so that *Plebs* readers may have an idea of the scope of the book I quote the list of contents:—

Part I.—*Descriptive*:—(I.) The Balance of Power. (II.) "Real Politics." (a) Diplomacy and Finance. (b) The Export of Capital. (c) The Trade in War. (III.) The Egyptian Model. (IV.) Class Diplomacy.

Part II.—*Constructive*:—(V.) On Pacifism. (VI.) Socialism and Anti-Militarism. (VII.) The Control of Policy. (VIII.) The Control of Finance. (IX.) On Armaments. (X.) The Concert of Europe.

The book was finished in March, 1914, and, naturally, in the light of recent happenings, the author might have expressed himself rather differently on one or two points; but these are singularly few, and his main thesis remains unimpaired. The present writer has always held that one of the main causes of the international disturbances of recent years—and certainly an active factor in the present dispute—was one very material circumstance, viz., the Bagdad Railway—the German financial interests in it from end to end, and the Russian desire to cut through it. Mr. Brailsford particularly emphasises this economic aspect of the question.

The Balance of Power is described as "a metaphor of venerable hypocrisy," but we get nevertheless a very interesting historical development of the theory, in the course of which the changing forms of wealth are dealt with. This latter calls for passing criticism, but it is vitally interesting to students of Capitalist development. Mr. Brailsford refers to the wars for the acquisition and expansion of territory, and then makes a clean jump to the present, when fighting goes on in the interest of profitable investment; thus ignoring the intermediate stage, when the Capitalists made war for the capture of the world market.

The chapter dealing with the Export of Capital is perhaps the most illuminating, and in it we get down to the roots of Imperialism. "On the one hand, capital accumulates in a civilised country so fast that the standard of living of the working classes, and their demands as consumers, do not keep pace with it. On the other hand it seeks abroad for labour which can be even more easily and ruthlessly exploited than that of Western lands." *Plebs* readers will agree with this analysis of the economic roots of the "place in the sun" theory!

The procedure of diplomacy is described as "a highly intelligent folly"—with economic motives; and in this connection there is a vigorous criticism of our conduct in Egypt. We went there in the interests of Lord Rothschild and his satellites; in 1882 the Liberal Government talked of evacuation, but a few weeks ago they bagged the lot. There is a grim humour in the thing we call history.

Part II. is a stimulating examination of panaceas. The sentimental pacifists, with no understanding of economic or sociological forces, are very quickly got rid of. In "Socialism and Anti-Militarism" we get a resumé of the events leading up to the Stuttgart (1907) Conference, when the German Socialists were attacked by the school of Hervé—the mighty who have now fallen. The chapter on "The Control of Finance" emphasises the power of International Finance when it lays its grip on National Governments, and in it we get the author's most challenging ideas as regards the building up of an alternative policy.

This is a book which must be opened again—a book which educates, agitates and organises one's point of view.

B. SKENE MACKAY.

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