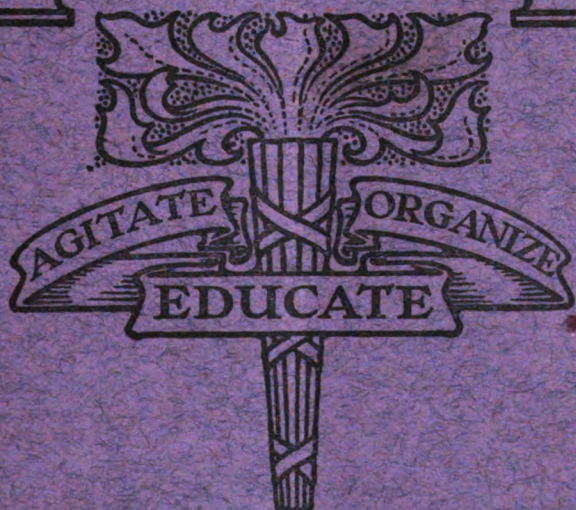


Vol. IX, No. 2

March, 1917

The
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MAGAZINE



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THE PLEBS MAGAZINE

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

Vol. IX.

March, 1917

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"As to Politics"

I VALUE my friend Ablett's criticism quite as much as I do his praise. While this is the first occasion on which he and I have entered into a public discussion on the question at issue, many have been the occasions on which we have, privately, broken a lance.

In the course of his review of my little book, he complains of the lack of any valid reason for my "must"; he wants to know *why* the working-class "must constitute a political organization." I make no pretence of having exhaustively analysed the whole ground in which the necessity for political organization is rooted. The scope and size of the volume compelled me to handle this question in a very general way.

"Must" is the appropriate word for expressing the working-class necessity for political power. Admit the latter as a necessity and the necessity for political organization follows. It is not that the

working class *ought* or *ought not* to constitute a political organization, nor that they *may* or *may not* do so, but by a force as compelling as a law of nature they "*must*" constitute a political organization; and not for a capitalist purpose but for an anti-capitalist purpose, not to preserve class-rule but in order to abolish it.

My critic says:—

Mr. Craik understands that it was Capitalism that needed and developed Political Democracy; he also understands that "the Trade Union Congress, the Trade Union, and the Trades Council, and not the national and local political assemblies, represent in embryo, the administrative framework of future social organization"; why then does he want us to do the work of the Capitalist?

The question evidently implies that there is a contradiction between the two statements made by me, and quoted by my critic. Now no one knows better than Ablett, and no one has taught me better than Ablett, the relative nature of social forms; that different forms of society and even different stages in the development of the same form have their own peculiar laws and requirements; that the tactics or rules of the game may vary with the development of the game. Is there anything inconsistent then in saying that the functions and tactics of the Labour movement differ in a society of wage-labour from those necessary in a society of economically free labour?

The organizations of the future will be purely administrative. The organizations of the present, while they will have to acquire *within* the existing State an increasing measure of administrative control in industry, can only realise this progress as fighting organizations, as organizations capable of carrying on a victorious struggle against the *existing* State, against the rule of the capitalist class. The society of the future will contain no classes, no class-rule, no political State. The present form of society, on the other hand, contains the most decisive class-cleavage, the most matured class-antagonism, the most concentrated class-rule ever known in the history of mankind. I submit that these very different circumstances "alter cases."

Only after the house has been built does the scaffolding become superfluous. Yet, the further the erection of the house progresses, the more does scaffolding become necessary. That is at least a reasonable contradiction. It is the same with the view that whilst only after class-rule has been overthrown do the political organs, the organs of class-rule, become superfluous, yet the further the working-class would progress to this end, the more it must proceed to make itself master of these political organs, the more it must seek to establish its own rule. This the modern proletariat, in contradistinction to all previous labouring classes, can do. This it "*must*" do.

I would ask my critic :—Has the modern working-class movement been strengthened or weakened in the degree that it has participated in political action and won legal recognition? Is the movement more, or less, advanced to-day than in the post-Chartist days when the "model" Trade Unions believed that political action was something so much apart from their Trade Union activities that they denied the right to introduce politics into the Union? So they might, as long as they were content with their docile "model" Unions. Just as soon, however, as they felt compelled to build up more durable, more extensive and more militant industrial organizations, they were also compelled to constitute a political movement and fight for political reforms.

"Political power," says Ablett, "is merely the result or reflection of economic power." He admits then that economic power *must* result in political power. I have, however, a greater appreciation of the efficacy of economic power than to think it only results "merely." If political power results from economic power, the result results in something. What did the repeals of the Master and Servant Act, of the Criminal Law as applied to Trade Unions, of the Taff Vale Judgment, have for their results if it was not that they provided more room, more facility for the development of economic power. Political action gives to industrial organization the light and air necessary for its growth. That in no way contradicts the fact that it is the growth of industrial organization which develops the demand for more light and air.

It may be, however, that my critic would appreciate the value of political action in the past, but takes the view that now, and from now on, political action is superfluous. If so, he is obliged to point out what different circumstances have arisen which necessitate the workers now concentrating wholly upon industrial action. Certainly, changes have taken place since the new century began. Industrial organizations are in process of revolution from the narrow and outgrown craft-form to the broader and more up-to-date industry-form. This fact appears to play a decisive part in my critic's determination against political organization and action. Says he :—"The larger the industrial organization, the less need is there for any political organization." But the very process of building up gigantic industrial combinations and setting them in motion, even for particular and immediate aims, against an increasing number and variety of capitalists, cannot take place in such a way that no political consequences ensue, in such a way that the State remains uninfluenced and inoperative. Just the contrary. The more the capitalists are threatened as a class, the more they are compelled to act as a class. This they can do and have already begun to do, by concentrating upon their only class means of defence—the State,

Since Imperialism set in, the State has come to acquire a new significance. It becomes the driving force for the expansion of national capital over the face of the earth, the protector and promoter of national capital as against the enemy national capitals, which latter also strive for expansion. The organs and operations of the State are changed and augmented to meet the needs of this Imperialist phase of capitalism and especially to meet the need for war which becomes henceforth *the* means of capitalist expansion. On the other side, or rather inside, the very forces which make for Imperialism, make also the lot of the workers, within each Imperialist nation, ever more intolerable and unendurable. For them also war—the war against Capital—becomes *the* means of relief.

The State that requires war without needs peace within. It has, therefore, to adapt itself to maintaining the latter, as well as for the conduct of the former. It must become, directly, an economic power. Less than ever, then, can the industrial organization expand and the area of its activities extend without political consequences, without State intervention. The working-class cannot attack the economic power of capitalism without attacking the political organization of that power. Unless it too, therefore, constitutes itself as an independent political movement, its industrial organization and action must remain limited in extent and achievement. The absence of any such political organization or the immature and indefinite character of its political organization—what is that but *the proof of the immaturity of its economic power*.

In referring to the recent crises in which the Miners have been involved, my critic says, that at no time during these crises "was or could any political party be of any assistance to us. The Government was compelled to meet us directly." The significant fact in these crises is the intervention of the Government. In these troubles from 1912 onwards—and this is of essential importance—the miners *recognised the right of the Government to intervene* and in the end *accepted the decisions of the Government*. It is one thing for miners to fight mine-owners, and for immediate objects. It is another and much bigger thing to fight the Government. Is it conceivable that the miners in 1912, when they brought to a standstill the whole of the mining industry, would have accepted the decision of the Government and stopped the fight if they had been conscious of the capitalist character of the Government? Would workmen who understood that much continue to support such a Government?

The great body of workers think of the State in different terms to those in which they think of their immediate employers. The State is not so concrete, not so directly sense-perceptible as for example, the Coal Owners' Association. For that reason, the

real nature of the State is more difficult to apprehend. It appears as some third party, as a neutral agency "above the battle" of economic interests. Hence the same men who fight the coal owners, "put in" the Government, and by so doing hand over powers to a class against which, or part of which, the industrial fight is directed, powers which are used to intervene and stop the fight.

Consciousness of the class character of the State—that surely more than ever is the need of the workers. That consciousness cannot be acquired except by the struggle for the possession of the State. The industrial struggles have precisely this permanent result. They serve to reveal the class-features of the State, to lay bare its economic foundations, to show that it is not something detached from class-interests but, indeed, the very buckler and shield of class-interests; and, as a consequence, to make it ever plainer that there is only one alternative to the capitalist control of government—the government of the working-class. Only then can the last obstacles to the complete institution of Industrial Democracy be removed.

My friend Ablett is fond of quoting a saying of the "Old tanner"—"If you want to put a brawler out of the temple you must first embrace him." That, I think, very well applies here. You cannot overcome a difficulty of this kind by running away from it. Indeed, in this case, you cannot run away. The "temple" *must* be entered and the "brawler" embraced before he can be flung out. Ablett is opposed to Government intervention in the industrial battles. That can only be because this intervention has a stultifying effect upon the issue of the battle. There is no way to prevent that effect other than by the political intervention of the workers, by the translation of economic power into political power.

Ablett says:—"No political party was or could be of any assistance to us." The "was" may be; but the "could" by no means follows from the "was." A political party will be of no assistance to the workers if it assists the Government representing its enemies. But then who put that political party in office? The workers themselves! That fact indicates their economic weakness. And no amount of "direct action" will make that weakness strength. "Those in the House," says my critic, "could do little because they could not understand as fully as we could our contentions." The details of the settlement were arranged outside the "House," and this shows that Parliament can exercise little influence! A Labour Party in Parliament it seems can have no influence because it is not completely composed of miners and, therefore, can have no special and thorough knowledge of the details of "our" business. If one uses an argument of this sort, then he places himself at once on the same platform as those who defend craft-unionism and who argue that the winding-engineman cannot preserve and pro-

mote his interests in an organization embracing the whole of those engaged in the coal-mining industry, because the hewer of coal "could not understand fully" the details of the winding-engine-man's occupation.

The important and most far-reaching questions to which a workers' party in Parliament can devote their energies, are not questions of craft or even of industry but of *class*. It should ever be their aim to translate every particular issue of a special branch of labour into a general issue. In that way, a political organization becomes a laboratory for the working up of class-consciousness, a classroom for the extension of the conception of "our" business. I think the Triple Alliance owes something to this influence, for its existence.

Because the capitalist class developed democratic institutions, Ablett seems to suggest that this fact is sufficient to make them useless for working-class principles. Since Imperialism set in, the capitalist class, or at least its leading representatives, are certainly and significantly striving to make them useless for the working-class. There is, indeed, much truth in Ablett's contention that the influence of Parliament is on the down grade. The decadence of Parliamentary power has grown more and more evident during the war. Bourgeois democracy has lost its youth and vigour precisely because the conditions of its existence have vanished, because of the phase which capitalism has now entered, in which great industrial capital and high finance predominate, the needs of which are no longer compatible with democratic institutions. Government tends increasingly to become independent of Parliament, to work behind its back. And the more the State becomes directly an economic power, the more this tendency, if left undisturbed by working-class action, must assert itself.

The working-class stands most of all, to lose by this decline of Parliamentary power. For it, most of all, needs the light and air of publicity, and all the more to the extent that it seeks to knit together the various branches of the industrial workers and extend the area of their united effort. A democratic Parliament is of the greatest value to the working-class, both from a propagandist and practical point of view. It serves to awaken higher forms of class-consciousness and to clear the road for the development of the organs of the class-struggle.

I pass over the question as to what the "juridical and political obstacles" are, because I think this must be one of Ablett's jokes. It is also a good joke, too, when he asks:—"Why don't they prevent?" I feel sure that it cannot be that he thinks the ever increasing number of preventives are merely for the "duration of the war," or even that the end of this war will be the end of war in general. It will not be if Imperialism is allowed to develop. This very question of war is one that most immediately, above

all, calls for the working-class conquest of the State ; for *the State is the driving power of Imperialism and War*. And as only international action on the part of the workers can end Imperialism and War, the necessity for political action by the workers within each nation becomes more imperative, in order that they may mutually bring about, in each State, those common political results which must condition the building up of a real and durable International.

I can remember when Ablett was a great enthusiast for political action and thought little of industrial organization. Since then, he has swung over to the opposite extreme, and I am bound to say that under the conditions which have prevailed, particularly since 1908, the emphasis had to be laid on the industrial side. And the importance of industrial organization must never cease to be emphasised. But it is just this new conception of the rôle and power of industrial organization which makes it all the more necessary, especially with the development of Imperialism, to emphasise the necessity for a correspondingly higher form of political organization and action. Ablett will yet find his *via media*.

W. W. CRAIK.

Is it "Towards a Miner's Guild"?

Towards a Miners' Guild. (National Guilds Pamphlets, No. 3, 1d.)*

A National Guild is an Industrial Union including all workers of every grade in the industry it covers, organizing production in conjunction with the State for the benefit of the whole community. Under this system *the State* would own the mines, but the business of coal-mining would be organized and conducted by the miners themselves. . . . The miners would organize their industry . . . for the use of the consumers. They would sell their coal, no doubt ; but the prices would be fixed by *the community*. They would receive money by selling it at the fixed prices ; but they would pay to the State as owner a tax or rent for the use of the mines, and that rent would be fixed at such a level as to prevent them from exploiting the rest of the community by securing an *unduly high reward*. Moreover, prices and the tax they would have to pay would not be fixed arbitrarily by the State, but by agreement between the State and the whole body of the Guilds, of which they would be one. The State would be secured against exploitation by the miners and the miners would be *secured against exploitation by the State*. (Italics mine.)

THE above quotation brings out the only difference between the Guildsman and the Industrial Unionist proper. Every other idea in this pamphlet was part of the ordinary propagandist equipment of the Industrial Unionist before the Guilds-

* Copies 1½d. post paid, can be obtained from the Sec. *Plebs*, 127 Hamlet Gardens, Ravenscourt Gardens, W.

men were. Therefore it is unnecessary to labour the obvious (to Plebeians, by dealing with these other parts of the pamphlet ; though next month I hope to be able to make some comments on certain other points relating to the M.F.G.B.

What does this difference (between I.U. and N.G.) consist of ? The first difference is clear—the State is to own the mines. Next, the miners are to sell their coal at fixed prices, but it is in no way indicated to whom they will sell their coal, nor, further, why it should be *sold* at all. Thirdly, it is clear that the miners are to pay a tax or rent to the State for the use of the mines, and that this rent would be fixed at such a level as to prevent the miners exploiting the community by securing “unduly high rewards.” Fourthly, the price of coal received by the miners and the rent paid by them is to be fixed by agreement between the State and the whole body of the Guilds. Earlier, the Guildsmen, say—“but the prices would be fixed by the community.” This confusion of terms may be a slip or it may be dexterity. In either case it is well to note the three terms—Community, State, and the whole body of the Guilds. There is no definition of these terms, but I assume that as regards two of them there can be no dispute. The Community represents all the people, every living man, woman, and child ; while the “whole body of the Guilds” represents every producer organized in the Guilds, and this, I take it, is intended to mean every producer. I shall deal with these terms and with the State later, but first I want to examine the economic machinery of Guildism.

The miners will sell their coal. Then obviously the Agricultural Guilds will also sell their products, and the Metal Workers Guilds theirs. In short, all the Guilds, i.e., all the producers, will sell their products. Who will be left ? Consumers who do not produce. But apart from infants, the youth of the community during the educational period, and the inefficient through physical or mental causes, everyone will be a producer. If not, there will be a leisured class, and I don't know of any Guildsman who has yet publicly committed himself to that. Well, the various Guilds sell their products to one another. But what if one Guild fixes the price so high that it will get “unduly rewarded ?” “Oh,” says the Guildsman, “we'll soon remedy that by means of the State. The State will tax each Guild, first for the use of the industry, but also at such a level as to prevent exploitation.” Well, now, that is interesting. If the miners charge too high a price for the coal will you tax the excess prices and pay it to the State ? “Oh, no,” indignantly retorts Mr. Guildsman, “the miners can't charge too high, because the price is fixed by the community, that is by agreement between the whole body of Guilds and the State.” Well, then, it must be that first by agreement between the State

and the whole body of Guilds an excessive price is charged, and then to remedy the evil a tax or rent is agreed upon by the same people to prevent "unduly high rewards."

I wish to call attention to the superiority of this method to the well-known system of living by taking in each others' washing, because in this case there is (sweet thought) a surplus. And the name of this surplus is that latest invention of civilized States, called Rent or Tax according to your taste, or the custom of your Guild. Under this system there shall be no more Capitalism; it will be called Guildism. No more employer; he will be called Comrade State. No more profits; these will be sweetly described as Rent. No more wagery; Comrade State now owns the mines.

Perhaps it will be objected that this is not dealing fairly with the Guildsmen, since they want the workmen to manage industry and to control their own lives in a far greater degree than under the present system. What I say is, that these ideas are borrowed from the Industrial Unionist—as is also most even of their phraseology; but that the Guildsmen have degraded these ideas by trying to make them work upon the basis of the capitalistic State. What is the State? It is the policeman's truncheon and the soldier's bayonet. It is the instrument whereby the ruling class coercively governs—that's tautology—the ruled class. It is not primarily an industrial institution. It is a political machine, whose functions are the maintenance of the existing order, and therefore anti-revolutionary, and whose scope is national, and therefore anti-international.

In consequence, the Guildsmen, in spite of vigorous phraseology, are introducing a nationalism into what is essentially an international movement. Instead of a revolution of the existing order, they want to modify the revolution to a partnership with our old friend the State. In a properly organized industrial community there is no need for the (or a) State. Every bit of necessary work that requires performing can be performed by men and women organized into industrial unions; every requisite for the proper maintenance of the community can be calculated beforehand by a process of arithmetic; every necessary exchange of commodity or service can be effected without money or coercion. If these things cannot be done then the great majority of mankind are doomed to be hirelings to a select minority, and democracy is a fantastic vision. But they can and will be effected. But not before the State—the "partner" of the Guildsmen—is dethroned from the social economy of the world. That will be when the international workers of the world—there can be no international Guilds—acquire such power as to cause the ruling classes to surrender their power, or, by their failure to do so, compel the workers, in the interests of humanity, forcibly to overthrow them.

NOAH ABLETT.

That Pamphlet

MARK STARR'S appeal, in the January issue, for a *Plebs* pamphlet, and the further correspondence last month, were very much to the point. Never was the time more opportune for a brief, clear re-statement of our aims and our position. By dint of hard work and the exercise of not a little patience, the C.L.C. movement has reached a "strategical point" at which all our efforts may fail unless every one of the rank and file understands and fully realizes, not only the present position, but the campaign that led up to it, and the nature and extent of the ground yet to be taken before we can "consolidate our position."

It is really surprising how little is known of the C.L.C.-Plebs movement outside the few enthusiasts who work so hard for it. (I say this in order to provoke an attack from South Wales—and I might add that astonishingly little is known even of South Wales in some "Labour" quarters). True, we have been "mentioned in the *Times*"; but then how many of the proletariat read that important organ of opinion? Quite a number of keen, class-conscious workers appear to regard the C.L.C. as a small, but loud-voiced, organization, with a lot of "bees in its bonnet" and a great many grievances; of the real *point* of our aims these people understand nothing. As a sample of the sort of misunderstanding we are constantly running up against, take the statement of C.L.C. aims in the *Labour Year Book*; a hopelessly inadequate and indeed, misleading statement, which is calculated to cool the enthusiasm of any inquirer. Had a pamphlet been in existence such as we are now asking for, statements of that sort would matter less. But as it is—and as I trust it will *not* be shortly—they may do us, by their sheer misunderstanding of the main point at issue, no little harm.

We once had a pamphlet—*The Burning Question of Education*; but that has been out of print for some time considerable now, and in any case it is not quite the sort of thing needed at the present moment. The incidental details of the original fight for an independent working-class education institution, interesting as they are, are not so essential now as a brief re-statement of *principles*, and a summary of the facts of C.L.C. history. In the early days (far be it from a comparative newcomer to detract from their glory—and very glorious they must have been, since just to "have been there" seems to be considered by some of the participators as standing in lieu of further work—but hush!) in these early days personalities loomed large, and the fight had to be carried on, to a certain extent, round the figures of individuals. Now, however, *principles* are the main thing; and though admirable statements of those principles are to be found in a hundred places in back numbers of the *Plebs*, we have nothing to offer the seeker after

light which can be posted to him by return, and which he can sit down and "get the hang of" in half-an-hour.

And why should it take us more than that half-hour to tell him what we stand for? We want something "brief, bright, and brotherly"; something simple, direct, and—dare I say it?—interesting. We are much more likely to gain the inquirer's support if we refrain from giving him a headache. We have a solemn mission, but it's Capitalism's funeral we're out for, not our own; and we are *not* mourners. We don't want a detailed, documented, annotated, historical work of reference this time—though I hope we shall have it some day. We want something much less hefty—something with a kick in it.

And now to ways and means:—

Fate has made me practical-minded, for she has placed me in a position to know exactly what the practical possibilities are. And that the *Plebs* itself should take the risks of printing and publishing this desirable pamphlet is *not* a practical possibility. All our efforts must go to meeting our current expenses. We must *sell*—not give away for propaganda, put on the shelf, or use for wrapping-up paper—but *sell* 2,000 *Plebs* per month in order to make ends meet.

I suggest, therefore, that the classes (and individual supporters) undertake to guarantee the sale of so many copies of the pamphlet. Write in *now*, and state how many copies (at 1d., say) you will make yourself responsible for. The *Plebs* would boom the pamphlet (*some* boom!) and the pamphlet would help to boom the *Plebs*. Profits would go to the old fund! Now you bloated munitioners, forego some of those grand pianos, postpone the purchase of that fur coat, and send us an I.O.U. along.

During the few months I have been engaged in dodging housework in order to attend to the daily pile of letters addressed to George Melhuish, I have had to say "No" to numerous requests for literature dealing with the general aims of the Mag. and the Movement. Look at Mr. Gerald Gould's remarks quoted elsewhere in this issue. Mr. Gould is a man of quite average intelligence, I feel sure; and he presumably reads his *Plebs*. But he admits he is not quite clear about what we are out for. We must have that pamphlet—among other things, for the pleasure of reading his review of it.

Now can *you* get us a new subscriber to the Magazine, and send us a shilling towards a Pamphlet Fund? The terms of the War Loan, kind as they are to self-sacrificing patriots, are as nothing to what the workers can get out of the *Plebs*, if they'll put their money in it. Five pounds invested therein may mean—

- (a) The Industrial Republic.
- (b) The Guild System.
- (c) The Co-operative Commonwealth.

—cross out what not required—in a few years' time. The forces of reaction are busy enough. The W.E.A. is offering its imitation article everywhere. We must advertise the real thing. Send suggestions, CASH, and promises of help; also, from the classe, guarantees; and we can have that pamphlet out within a month! I pause for replies.

WINIFRED HORBAIN.

Studies in Imperialism

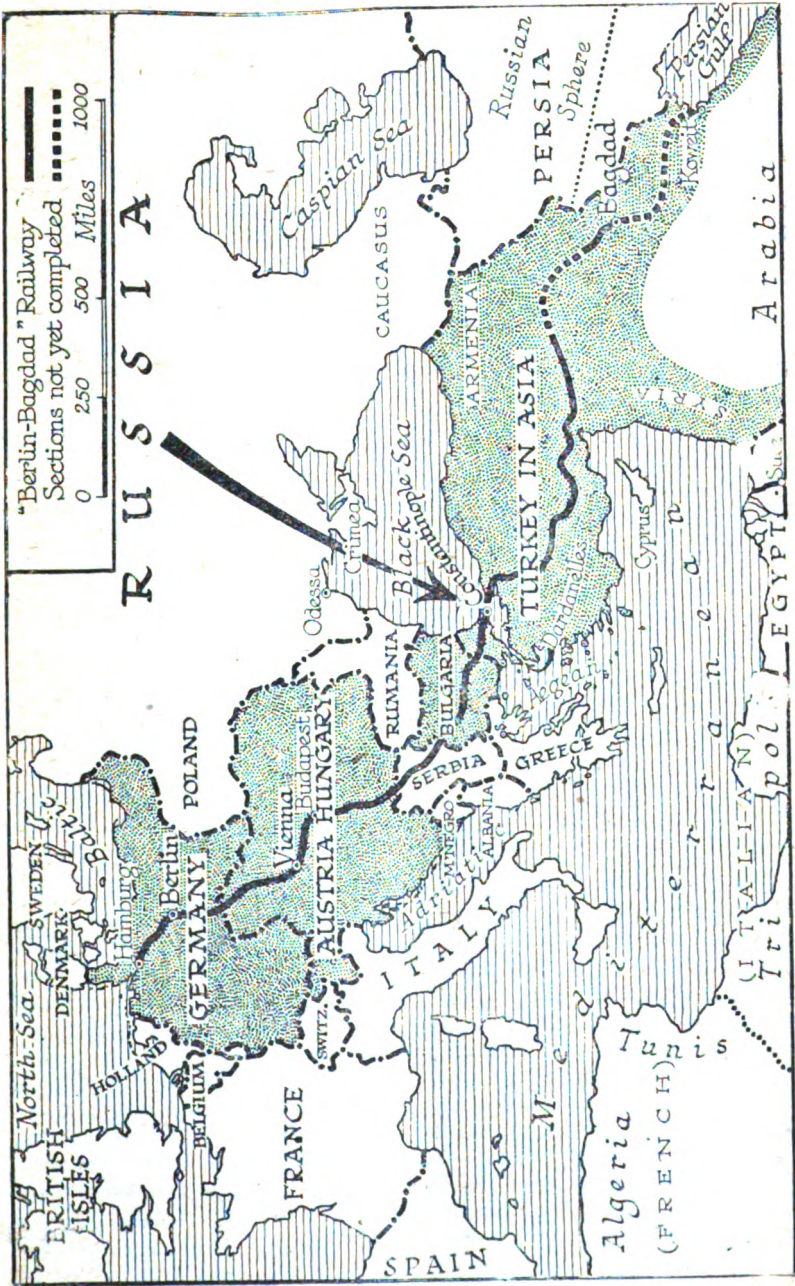
I. Berlin—Bagdad

However firmly we, as Socialists, may be convinced that only with the abolition of Capitalism can come the end of War—precisely because we *are* so convinced, in fact—it is necessary that we should endeavour to understand fully the particular aims and plans of present-day Capitalism, *alias* "Imperialism." To do this intelligently we need to follow Lord Derby's advice on a certain occasion, and "Look at the Map." The map we print this month is an attempt to make clear, in simplified form, one of the fundamental issues, perhaps *the* fundamental issue, underlying the present conflict. It shows, shaded, the territories of the Central European Alliance—Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey; and illustrates the "Pan-German" scheme (described by Lord Curzon the other day as a "sinister plot") of a solid German Empire extending from the North Sea to the Persian Gulf, and thence to the Indian Ocean and the East. The "backbone" of that scheme, so to speak, is the Berlin-Bagdad railway (see map); and this necessitates control of the Balkans, since the line crosses Serbia (at present in the occupation of the Central Powers), Bulgaria, and European Turkey. The aim is the opening-up of Asia Minor (Turkey in Asia)—a land rich in undeveloped mineral wealth, &c.

But the scheme threatens Russian interests, inasmuch as it strikes right across the path of Russia's "road to the sea"—Constantinople and the Straits. (The arrow in the map serves to emphasise this point.) It also threatens Russian and British interests in Persia; British interests in the East and in Egypt; and French and Italian interests (and ambitions) in Syria and Asia Minor generally.

As the war proceeds, the *real* issues involved tend to stand out less and less idealistically disguised in pretty phrases. Thus, as an American journal (non-Socialist) recently observed, with regard to the Allies' professed desire for the "liberation" of the subject-peoples of Austria-Hungary,—

This particular war-aim would probably not have appeared if it had not been for the sudden realization that the whole project of a central empire depended upon the control by Germans, Magyars, Bulgars, and Turks, of the subject races which constituted the great majority of the population between North Sea and Persian Gulf.



"Liberate" these races, therefore, and a gap would be made in the block of German territory. So with the Allies' enthusiasm for the cause of Serbia; and the German horror at the Allies' proposal to partition Turkey. "Economic preponderance in the world" (see the Allied Note to America) is now admitted by both sides to be the real aim—of the other. (Read Chap. IV of Boudin's *Socialism and War*—"The Immediate Causes of the War, and the Stakes Involved.")

This Berlin-Bagdad line would also—what is perhaps even more important open up a new *overland route* to the East, which would be a very serious rival to the sea route via the Mediterranean, Suez Canal, and Red Sea. And modern warfare, as the American *New Republic* recently remarked, "being an essentially economic struggle, is not concerned so much with the possession of places as with the control of routes." (See the *Cambridge Magazine*, Foreign Press Supplement, February 24th, for some interesting quotations on this subject.)

Correspondence

INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM AND THE A.S.E.

Sir,—I must face the task of replying to some of the remarks made by fellow Plebeians in reference to my article, "Is the A.S.E. the Meat?"

I must deal first with our friend J. T. Murphy. I fail to see where he has negatized any statement that I made. My object was to eradicate from the minds of many engaged in the Engineering industry the fallacious idea that the A.S.E. had the characteristics of an Industrial Union; and I still think that I produced sufficient evidence to attain my object. I think we would have been better served if J. T. M. had first accepted my statement; and then proceeded to point out a way whereby our weakness in organization could be strengthened.

"Romanno" complains that my definition of Industrial Unionism is not complete enough, and wishes to know if I agree with the Preamble of the Industrial Workers of Great Britain, emphasising Clause 2 as being of especial importance. In answer to this, I only desire to point out that the definition I gave was quite sufficient to substantiate my remarks in reference to the particular matter I was dealing with. Should he desire a pitched battle on Clause 2 of the aforementioned Preamble, I think he will find his opportunity if he turns to the remarks made by Noah Ablett in his review of W.W. Craik's book last month. As to his query regarding the N.U.R., I can only say that I do not possess one of that society's rule-books, and therefore am not in a position to convict myself. Nevertheless, if he will push the query, I feel assured that some other Plebeian will come forward and do the needful, as I am certain that there are some who are members of the N.U.R. who are quite capable.

H. Brownjohn metaphorically admits that my statements are true, but appeals for leniency for the sake of those inside the A.S.E. who are strenuously fighting to perfect their organization. I have no desire to be cruel to such heroes, since I appreciate and respect their colossal task; but when he assumes that the *Plebs* only reaches the hands of Plebeians I can assure him that he is wrong. H. B. also asks me why I do not tilt at lesser Unions within the industry. My answer to that is—because I am unaware of any of these particular Unions masquerading as Industrial Unions, and therefore cannot attack them on that ground. With regard to another query—"Are you, friend Jackson, going to work on in the old divided way until we of the A.S.E. perfect our organization?"—I should consider it a favour if our friend H.B. would produce some further explanation. I am convinced that if I left my present Union to become a member of the A.S.E.; I should still be one of the divided—just as H.B. is himself; and I consider that I am doing as useful work, as an Industrialist, in my own society, as H.B. is himself. He might as well have asked—why do you remain an Individualist when you can have Co-Partnership?

I trust that any further correspondence in relation to my article will deal with the points raised in the same. Then we can make some progress, as it is evident that there is plenty of room for discussion with regard to the organized condition of the workers within the Engineering Industry.

Yours frat., FRANK JACKSON.

THE LEAGUE: "REVISIONISM" NEEDED?

Sir,—The discussion at the C.L.C. League's Newport conference of Feb. 4th (see report elsewhere in this issue) raised the question of revising the functions and structure of the Plebs League. I should like to hear the opinions of other Plebeians as to the desirability, or otherwise, of some measure of decentralisation as regards the management and activities of the League.

The work of getting the College "recognised," and of running the Magazine, necessitated a strong central body, directing activities. Those functions were successfully performed, though some of us, I fear, have but little idea of the immense amount of work they entailed upon the central few responsible for "carrying on." Soon—if it is not here already—the time will come when the work of the League and the Magazine will be too heavy to be performed by the enthusiastic few who have so ungrudgingly devoted their energy and leisure to it.

Besides this enlargement of function, conditions have altered also. At the present time, the work is actually being de-centralised. This is a result expected, and indeed aimed at, by the pioneers of our movement, who saw in the College simply the first step in a wide educational scheme, developing until every union, lodge and workshop provided educational facilities for its members. The "children," in short, were expected to grow up; and having grown up, they must of necessity be prepared to look after themselves.

Do we need a change in the structure of the Plebs League to meet this changed situation? Is there not a need for branch organization? Would

not the League be advanced if branches, with local secretaries, aggregated into districts, and again into divisions? These districts and divisions could look after propaganda in new districts, arrange for the formation of classes and the engagements of special lecturers, and work to get the classes taken over by unions or trades councils; they could do all this much more effectively than could a centrally-controlled League—with a list of "organizers" on the back cover of the magazine. A good many members who find it quite impossible to attend the Annual Meet in London could, and would, attend a local conference or meet. (Of course, in the absence of local branches, individual membership could exist as heretofore.)

There is nothing really new in these suggestions. In the stated "Methods" of the League the "formation of local branches" is mentioned. But the awakening interest in many quarters in education of the right kind makes imperative the development and perfection of our local machinery.

Yours &c., MARK STARR.

(We hope Plebeians will respond to M. S.'s invitation to discuss this matter. As a matter of fact, the development of our movement has already brought about, in practice, much of what he suggests should be embodied in the constitution of the League. The Executive Committee does not—and could not—control the activities of the various districts; and there is no reason (so far as we can see) why these districts, or divisions, and their officials, should not be formally recognised as part of the League. This would appear to be an improvement on the existing scheme of local organization—which consists (formally, at least) of a list of organizers in miscellaneous districts, some of whom, be it whispered, seem to have forgotten all about organizing; while others have their time and energies too fully occupied with other work to devote the attention they would otherwise give to the specific business of the Plebs League.—Ed., *Plebs*.)

THE PAMPHLET.

Sir,—I have not been a reader of the *Plebs* very long, but I have had ample time to make up my mind that it is IT. With regard to the many suggestions put forward for a pamphlet giving briefly the case for the C.L.C. *versus* the W.E.A., may I express my belief that this would prove a most thorough and business-like piece of propaganda. It would almost certainly be the means of getting quite a number of young men interested in the question of working-class education and the class-struggle. Hoping Plebeians will press this matter, and make it the success it ought to be—and can be,

Yours &c., SANS NOM.

(Co. Durham.)

Sir,—I should welcome the publication of a pamphlet on the C.L.C. *v.* the W.E.A., with an outline of the history of the former. I would do my best to sell it amongst members of the B.W.I.U., or distribute any leaflets advertising the magazine or outlining your propaganda. With best wishes—and may you always keep the *Plebs* "virile, vigorous, and *vitriolic*,"

Yours &c., JACK HAMILTON.

News of the Movement

A good many interesting points were raised at the Conference convened by the SOUTH WALES Division of the C.L.C. League, at Newport, on February 4th (see Mark Starr's letter on another page). W. H. Mainwaring presided. To begin with, the action of the E.C. of the S.W.M.F., in deciding to recommend to the next Conference of the Federation the disposal of the C.L.C. premises and effects, was discussed; and it was decided that a leaflet be drawn up and printed, for distribution throughout the coal-field, giving the facts and figures relating to the College. Next, a resolution was passed calling upon the S.W.M.F. and N.U.R. to re-open the College, and to secure the exemption of Staff and students necessary for the resumption of full activities—a copy of this resolution to be forwarded to the headquarters of the two Unions. The Barry class delegates then moved that "the time has arrived when the C.L.C. Classes (in S. Wales) should be centralised and controlled by the Industrial Unions of S. Wales and Monmouthshire; and that we respectfully urge upon the Governors and Staff of the College the urgency of providing suitable text-books and syllabuses." The Conference finally appointed a divisional Executive Committee, consisting of Chairman (Syd Jones, Blackwood), Treasurer (T. Langley, Pontypool) and Organizing Secretary (W. J. Hewlett, Abertillery), with one representative from each district; this committee to be responsible for the business of the League, and the provision of facilities for propaganda. So practical a discussion of "ways and means" makes it evident that S. Wales is getting to business.

A new class (subject, Industrial History) commenced at Pontypool on Sunday, February 11th. The secretary is W. G. Davies, (Myrtle House, Pontrepiod, nr. Pontypool, Mon.) Cardiff also has a strong class running (subject, Industrial History) with E. J. Williams as teacher, and Ben Evans (73, Upper Kinecraig Street, Cardiff) as secretary.

W. W. Craik has been fulfilling several engagements in S. Wales recently, and Mark Starr writes us enthusiastically of his address to the Aberdare classes on January 31st. "The questions asked," says Mark, "re the C.L.C. and politics, the provision of C.L.C. education for women, the College syllabus, the relation of the movement to the professional elementary school teachers; &c., &c., revealed a healthy desire for information which did not go empty away." Mark also mentions that back numbers of the Merthyr *Pioneer* containing his Industrial History Outlines are still obtainable (from the *Pioneer* Office, Glebeland Street, Merthyr Tydvil). These should prove useful to other classes.

NEWCASTLE and DURHAM are evidently determined to run S. Wales close in the big-pushing contest. With the object of forming a North-Eastern Division of the C.L.C. League, on the lines of the S. Wales organization, a Conference is to be held in the Newcastle Socialist Society Rooms (Royal Arcade, Pilgrim Street) on Saturday, March 31st, at 3 p.m. Will Lawther will preside, and W. Lewcock and Ebby Edwards will speak on "Organization of Local Classes," and "Working-Class Education." Tea will be provided at 5 p.m.; concert by Clarion Dramatic Club and Newcastle Socialist School at 6.30; concluding with a Social and Dance at 8 o'clock. ALL northern Plebeians are hereby earnestly requested to make an effort to get to Newcastle on March 31st. The W.E.A. is busy in this area, and has again obtained a grant of £50 from the Durham Miners—it is evidently "indefinite" enough in its policy to please the more timid souls. John Bell (Chopwell Lodge) put the case for Independence in fine style before the delegates, and the C.L.C.ers are confident that their propaganda is slowly but surely gaining ground. Two new classes have commenced operations—Pegswood (Industrial History) and Newcastle I.L.P. (Social Science), Ebby Edwards being the teacher in both cases.

F. G. Temple (Dukinfield) writes suggesting that all our "boys" who may be delegates to District or Trades Councils, I.R.C., &c., get a parcel of *Plebs* down and try to sell them there. He has found this a good scheme, and recommends it to others. "I can sell odd copies," he says, "where I know I couldn't collect a 2/6 sub." Think it over.

From our old friend C. Watkins comes an encouraging account of an educational movement in SHEFFIELD, set going by the Engineers. J. T. Murphy is the secretary (we don't know whether he's too modest or too busy to send us a report). Well-attended meetings are held every Sunday evening; and recently a series of five lantern lectures by J. S. Clark, of Edinburgh, was given. Watkins is particularly enthusiastic about these, and hopes that in the near future we may be able to equip all our lecturers with lanterns and slides—or even cinema films. Wait and see!

The mention of EDINBURGH reminds us that J. M. Nixon is slowly but surely pushing our circulation along in that aristocratic suburb of Gasgow. We could wish for no better "drummer!"

Herbt. Stoneley (fra' Lancashire) has recently been working like a Trojan to get a C.L.C. movement going in COVENTRY. He started the year (*this* year) with an order for 2 dozen *Plebs*, and has already increased this to 4 dozen. How many T.U. branches he has spoken at we don't know, but he certainly never seems to weary in well-doing. He enjoyed himself at a meeting of a U.M.W.A. branch when, after letting himself go for 10 minutes, he had the privilege of hearing one of the officials—a Ruskin man—calmly condemn Marxian economics as a "thing of the past." Nevertheless, says Stoneley, "when I left I had four for the Mag., and three for the class!" A class is to be held at the I.L.P. rooms, Broadgate, Coventry, on Sunday mornings, and it is hoped that this will be in full swing during March. A second class will be held in St. Chad's School-room, Stratford Street, Stoke, on Saturday evenings. All interested should communicate with H. Stoneley, c/o Mrs. Wild, 32, Goring Road, Coventry. Stoneley, by the way, is very keen on the suggested *Plebs* pamphlet, and points out that he could not only have done good business with it, but that it would have saved his voice considerably.

Another "pusher" is Frank Rogers, who has been getting busy in the CHESTERFIELD district. He is making a thorough job of canvassing local T.U. branches, and has already sent us a nice little list of new subscribers. "It may interest Mr. Craik," he writes, "to learn that the sale locally of 40 copies of his book has brought a yield of six annual subs. to the magazine." Plebeians will offer Rogers their sincere sympathy in a recent heavy domestic trouble, and wish more power to his elbow in his efforts on our behalf.

We did not discover until too late for comment last month that Albert Taylor, Socialist candidate in the recent Rossendale election, was *our* Albert Taylor—an old C.L.C.er, and a keen worker for independent working-class education. Hearty congrats. to him and his friends on the plucky fight they put up, and a happy (and speedy) issue out of all his afflictions.

Frank Jackson (of Rochdale)—one of the old Guard—has recently been transferred to London, and is now devoting what little spare time war-work permits to assisting the "headquarters staff." (The headquarters staff is naturally of opinion that it's an ill wind that blows nobody any good!) The Executive has co-opted him, in the place of Oliver Keighley, now somewhere in France—to whom good wishes and a safe return.

THE WAGE-SLAVE'S DECALOGUE.

1. I am the Lord thy God, Mammon, which have brought thee out of the land of liberty, out of the house of freedom.

2. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any guild image, or any likeness of any state that is in the future, or that was in the past, or that ever could be upon earth : thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor strive for them : for I the Lord Mammon am a jealous God, visiting the hopes of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me ; and showing charity unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

3. Thou shalt not take the name of Mammon in vain ; for the Lord will not hold him unambitious that taketh his sanctity in vain.

4. Remember the eight-hour day to keep it holy. Seven days shalt thou labour and do all thy work. Though the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord Mammon : in it thou shalt do all kinds of work, thou, and thy son, his manservant, and thy daughter, his maidservant, and thy cattle and the stranger that is within thy gates : for all seven days the Lord taketh Rent, Interest and Profits, and all that in them is, and resteth not : wherefore the Lord blessed the eight-hour day, and hallowed it.

5. Honour thy landlord and thy employer : that thy days may be long in the Hell which the Lord Mammon giveth thee.

6. Thou shalt not strike.

7. Thou shalt not commit Trade Unions.

8. Thou shalt not own.

9. Thou shalt not forbear to undersell thy neighbour.

10. Thou shalt not covet thy master's wealth, thou shalt not covet thy master's luxury, nor his ease, nor his rents, nor his interests, nor his profits, nor any good thing that is his.

C.S.D., in *New Age*, .

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Review

STATE SOCIALISM IN BEING

The "Socialism" of New Zealand. By ROBERT H. HUTCHINSON. (*New Review Pub. Assoc., New York.*)

This book proves conclusively that Government control of our industrial life does not in any way solve the problem of Capital and Labour. In his preface Mr. Hutchinson remarks:—

State Socialism is a condition of society which seems at present to be the goal toward which Capitalist society is progressing. . . . Neither is this growing State Socialism an isolated thing, peculiar to any one country. . . .

A few years ago, Henry Demarest Lloyd wrote of New Zealand as *A Country Without Strikes*; but just as we here had our great strike period from 1910 up to the outbreak of war, so New Zealand was faced with a serious outbreak in Nov-Dec. 1913. According to Mr. Hutchinson, "the era of her so-called 'Socialistic' legislation is past, and the true results of those measures are becoming apparent."

The first chapter deals with the historical evolution of the country from 1870. Prior to this time the settlers were fully occupied in obtaining the bare necessities of life. In the early 80's excess of immigration caused an unemployed problem, the markets were glutted with agricultural products, the depression reaching its lowest in 1884, but in that year the *refrigeration* process was invented, thus providing a means for exporting the surplus products. Butter, cheese and meat poured into the London markets, and New Zealand entered into a new era of prosperity.

This industrial revolution was followed by a political one. The lion's share of the prosperity went to the large landed proprietor, and this fact united the small farmers and the city wage-workers in opposition to the big landlord. In 1890 their opposition succeeded, (the same year in which Henry George made a lecture tour of Australia with his theories of land-tax and values). Their political success was followed by a decade of progressive legislation.

Land was resumed and large estates broken up, progressive taxation of land values and of incomes followed, industrial arbitration was instituted, employers' liabilities, pensions and factory acts were passed, among many others, to protect the workers. The two-fold obstacle of landed aristocracy and ruthless employers was removed. . . . It was this cycle of welfare which brought forth those numerous eulogies which have unfortunately done so much to obscure the real truth about New Zealand.

Chapters II and III deal with the Railways, Posts and Telegraphs, and other State Business, Public Debt, and the Land Administration. Attention is directed to the fact that foreign capitalists draw a good deal of money in the shape of interest on money loaned to the Government; hence—

in the administration of her public works she is always conscious of the watchful eye of her creditors. . . . The effect of the large debt, together with the extensive governmental business is to make New Zealand no more nor less than a large business corporation in which the Directors are colonial politicians, and the investors the British Banks.

Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration are examined in Chapter IV, and it is doubly interesting, in view of the various proposals being made by our own employers, and many Labour leaders, with the object of obtaining "harmony" in our industrial life after the war. Mr. Hutchinson shows that the experience of New Zealand proves the utter impossibility of obtaining an impartial arbitrator where the antagonistic interests of Labour and Capital are concerned. Without compulsion the awards of arbitration are worthless. Our author also discusses the problem from the ethical side:—

'Law and order' to the capitalist means the maintenance of things as they now are. . . . The working class have a quite distinct system of ethics. . . . Thus to set up a system of arbitration for the purpose of settling disputes which are a result of our economic structure, upon a system of ethics and law which is also a result of the economic structure, and the tendency of which is to maintain that structure, is fallacious and can be no true solution of the problem.

During the eleven years 1894-1905 there were no strikes, but commencing with 1906 there were strikes every year, until in 1913 there were no less than 23. Of these, 21 were settled in favour of the employers, one in favour of the employees, and one was a compromise.

The attitude of the workers has of recent years radically changed. . . . The belief is growing that the basic principle of arbitration is at fault. . . . Whatever may be the good intentions of the judges . . . it is impossible for them to act impartially. . . . To-day, the worker feels he has been fooled and cheated and the court seems a very grim joke indeed. . . . The arbitration system has reached its limit . . . it can do no more now than grant petty concessions and awards . . . The real battle between capital and labour, meanwhile, takes place outside the walls of the courtroom.

In Chapter V. we are informed that New Zealand was the first country in the world to grant women the national suffrage. Further, all the prophecies about domestic discord and the unsexing of women, &c., as a result of entering political life have been proved false; "the relationship between the sexes is increasingly found to be upon a better footing." However, Mr. Hutchinson is careful to warn the suffragists in other lands that gaining the vote is only step.

Twenty years of the political franchise for women still leaves them, in New Zealand with the great sex and economic problems of womanhood far from being solved. . . . Back of the sex problem is the economic one . . . About 81% of the female population are economically dependent.

Chapter VI. sketches the social legislation and labour conditions. It is shewn that labour legislation really strengthens Capitalism by helping to make the worker content with the existing scheme of things. New Zealand workers have had their John Hodge since 1891, the Labour Department, with a Minister at the head who is also a member of the Cabinet, being formed in that year. All these endeavours of the State are seen to be nothing more than a benevolent form of Capitalism.

Chapter VII. is devoted to the great strike of 1913, which was engineered by the employers for the purpose of crippling the growing Labour movement exemplified in the United Federation of Labour. Farmers, mounted and armed with revolvers and batons, acted as special constables, The workers

were badly beaten, but the educational effects have been good. Says Mr. Hutchinson :—

That labour is organized upon a sound and efficient basis is the most hopeful element in the workers horizon. Its tactics are ideal for in its double nature of industrial unionism and political party it combines the two elements necessary to ensure its progress. The exclusive use of industrial action as long as the capitalist class control the law and the forces of the army and navy must prove ineffective. On the other hand the Socialist Party with no well defined economic foundation is equally open to the corrupting influences of politics. . . . Its leaders become hungry for office and keen for votes. The British Labour Party is an example of this danger. . . . The political party must be something more than a loose aggregation of voters with diverse and conflicting interests. Its agents in Parliament must be the forces of organized economic interest.

In other words, the political Labour Party must be subordinate to, and serve, the industrial organization outside Parliament. The excuse of representing the constituency is an impossibility, because the territorial division comprises both capitalists and wage-workers, and no M.P. can serve both these sections.

In Chapter VIII. Mr. Hutchinson gives his observations and conclusions. He emphasizes the fact that—

the very fundamental elements of Socialism are not to be found in New Zealand. . . . Wealth is concentrating and poverty increasing. . . . State ownership and social legislation—these have turned out to mean capitalist ownership, sops to the discontented to keep them quiet, and crutches to the lame. . . . This humanitarian attitude toward the worker has another side to it. . . . The employer has learned that it pays as much to treat the labourer well as it does to treat a horse or an ox well.

The last chapter is entitled "State Socialism and the War," and we can agree with our author that State Socialism has been hastened in the belligerent countries.

The crisis of the war has caused the ruling classes to take into their control the most important of all businesses. . . . They must belong to the Capitalist Class ; they must be commonly owned and controlled by that class. It is this change which is the earmark of the evolution of Capitalism to State Socialism. . . . There is no rise to power of individual captains of industry, but a general ascendancy of the owning and employing class over the employed class.

The great lesson contained in this book for the British Labour movement is the futility of State Control of industry so far as the economic problems of the working-class are concerned. The chapter on Conciliation and Arbitration suggests the importance and necessity of the workers making their Industrial Unions the mediating body with the employers. . . . Instead of setting up separate Conciliation machinery they should demand full and complete recognition of the Union, from Head Office down to the unit, the branch ; and then make direct use of the organization both locally and nationally. In this way the workers would learn to control their industrial conditions by means of their Industrial Unions, and so prepare themselves for the time when their organization is strong enough to defeat and replace the control of the State.

ROBERT HOLDER,

The Plebs' Bookshelf

"Hold your hand a bit," a correspondent besought me in last month's *Plebs*. "There is a limit to a wage-slave's war-bonus!" If this implies that he has been buying—or intends to buy—all the books I have from time to time recommended, I am made acutely conscious of my responsibilities. This month, therefore, I am going to be brief and merciful. I am going to recommend a book (as a matter of fact it is only a pamphlet, but it has more *weight* than 99 out of every 100 full-blown books) the price of which will *not* make a big hole in the war-bonus; will not, in fact, make a big hole even if, as I hope, every Plebeian will buy half-a-dozen copies, and "place" them judiciously. This pamphlet is *Essays in Socialism and War*, by John Bryan, (reprinted from the *Call*) just published by the B.S.P., 21a, Maiden Lane, Strand, London, W.C., price 1d., postpaid 1½d. Only those who have wearily waded through the yards and yards of rambling remarks about the War—in Socialist journals, as well as in the organs of our owners and masters—can have fully appreciated John Bryan's articles in the *Call*. Five of them—all good, though short—are reprinted in this pamphlet. You will accordingly obtain copies, my friends, read one, re-read it, put it alongside Boudin's *Socialism and War* (which, by the way, the *Labour Leader* has just discovered!) and see that your surplus copies fall into good hands. The map on another page of this magazine will serve, to some extent, as an illustration to John Bryan's brilliant essay on "Nationalities and Peace;" and I hope that in ensuing numbers we shall be able to publish further maps which may prove helpful to the student of modern Imperialism—to the reader of Boudin and Bryan, that is. The great Wells has just published yet another book about the War, price 6/- net, in the course of which he fulminates against the "intensely stupid or dishonest Labour press, which in the interests of the common enemy misrepresents Socialism." Ah, well! If the prices of Well's book and Bryan's booklet were reversed, I know which would still be the better value for money!

* * * * *

I am always grateful when the monthly *Plebs Magazine* reaches me. It is always full of hard but good-humoured hitting. I notice in the February number a suggestion from a correspondent, made not for the first time in *Plebs* columns, that a pamphlet should be published explaining the origin and development of the C.L.C. I should like to endorse the suggestion, and to add that such a pamphlet might, it seems to me, do well to include also a brief propagandist outline of what its "definite educational policy" is. The educational value of the statement to those (and there are many of them, I believe, even *after* a certain article in the *Times* Literary Supplement!) who are ill-informed about the C.L.C. would be considerable.

PLEASE send your orders for W. W. Craik's *Outlines of the History of the Modern Working-class Movement* to W. T. A. Foot, 119, Harvist Road, West Kilburn, N.W.

Thus "G. G.", in the *Herald* of February 17th. We hope to lighten his darkness shortly.

* * * * *

In *Common Sense* (February 17th) there appeared a special interview with Mr. E. T. John, M.P., on "The Spirit of Wales," in the course of which the Member for E. Denbigh delivered himself as follows:—

There is a very pronounced extreme left in the Labour politics of S. Wales—Socialist, pacifist, and, if its enemies may be believed, largely Syndicalist. . . . This extreme left is in some measure the product of Keir Hardie's long connection with Merthyr Tydvil, but *more largely of certain intellectual forces connected with Ruskin College, at Oxford.*

(I haven't, at the time of writing, seen the next number of *Common Sense*, but I trust that it contains a dignified protest from Mr. H. Sanderson Furniss, the Ruskin principal, against so libellous a statement.) The interviewer proceeded—

At this point I deeply regretted that it was impossible (!) for Matthew Arnold to be a third party to the conversation. No-one else could have offered an adequate comment on the new *role* thus played by the home of lost causes and impossible loyalties.

No-one, not even Matthew himself, could "offer adequate comment" on the all-round pricelessness of that remark!

* * * * *

Ruskin College, by the way, is re-opening on May 1st, and among other things is going to run special courses for disabled soldiers in order to give them (*vide* a letter from H. S. Furniss in the *Nation*) some "insight into the industrial system in which they are going to play their part." Wouldn't April 1st be a more appropriate date for the resumption of its activities?

* * * * *

To the organs of *modern* trade unionism referred to last month, I must add the *Guildsman*, published by the Glasgow Group of the N.G.L. (1½d. monthly, post-paid, from J. Paton, 22, Glenview Terrace, Paisley.) The January number had a very refreshing article by G.D.H. Cole on "Women in Industry."

* * * * *

I had hoped to print this month, but space forbids, a leading article from the *S. Wales Daily News* booming the W.E.A. I will quote only the title—which is significant enough:—"Preventing Unrest and Disorder." Does this enlighten you any, "G. G."?

J. F. H.

Has any reader a spare copy (or copies) of *Plebs* for March, 1916? We should be glad to re-purchase same if he would forward it to the Secretary,

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 NINTH Annual Meet will be held in London, August 5th, 1917.

The Plebs Magazine.

The Magazine is published monthly, price 2d. (2½d. post paid).

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