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The
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MAGAZINE



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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

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EDITORIAL

THE special effort planned at the Annual Meeting on August 3rd to clear off the debt on *The Plebs Magazine* has proved fairly successful—especially since it had to be undertaken at a time like

The Magazine Fund

the present, when attention is almost monopolized by one subject, the war, and when it is correspondingly difficult to make one's voice heard on other matters. Full particulars of the money raised are not yet available, as all ticket-holders have not sent in their reports and cash; but the numbers of the winning tickets in the “draw,” and a brief report of the Concert and Social Evening held at the College on Nov. 7th, will be found on another page. This latter function was a notable success, and will doubtless prove to have been instrumental in winning, both for the College and the

Magazine, the interest and sympathy of many new friends. All members of the Plebs' League owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Mainwaring for his capable organization and energetic labours on behalf of this special effort to enable this Magazine to start the new year with a debt considerably reduced.



BUT it is not enough to make a special effort. Special efforts, for that matter, ought not to be needed at all. Why has not *The Plebs Magazine* a circulation amply sufficient to make it pay its way? Is

**Why is a
Special Effort
Necessary?**

it the Magazine's fault? Or is it the fault of its supporters? Can we get this question settled, once and for all? For that the *Plebs* ought to be able to pay its way, without special efforts and subsidies, there can be no question. True, we have no advertisement revenue, and have to depend on our circulation alone. But there are surely enough enthusiastic supporters of the Central Labour College up and down the country to ensure that that circulation does not fall below the figure required. Twopence per month (or a half-penny a week, if you prefer to pay it in instalments) is not an exorbitant price to ask. Why, then, is not the circulation of the *Plebs* just about double what it actually is?



Is there anything wrong with the Magazine itself? Critics have at various Annual Meets pointed out this or that feature as popular and desirable, and some other as "no earthly interest to anybody." We

**Criticism
Wanted**

hereby invite all readers to send us their candid opinions as to the Magazine and its contents. Be as personal as you please—no libel actions will ensue. Does the Magazine satisfy you as it is, and does it satisfy your friends? If it does, can't you nail a few more regular subscribers? If it does not, what's the matter with it? What do you want altering? What do the people to whom you try to sell it want altering? Is it too solemn, or not solemn enough—too varied or too monotonous? Are the articles too long or too short, and would you prefer articles of some other kind, on other subjects? Remember, of course, that the editorial staff is but human, and regrets that it is unable to promise to beat Shaw and Shakespeare and Neil Lyons and Kautsky all on their own grounds. Don't ask for 24 pages of inspired literature every month, because it can't be done at the price. But the editorial staff is prepared to mend its ways if you convict it of sin. It is absurd that the circulation should stick pathetically at one figure, as though that figure were fixed by unalterable, eternal law. Better lose a few readers than go on, year in, year out, like the occupant of a suburban pulpit, preaching the same old sermons to the same old yawning congregation.

NEXT month's *Plebs* is the last number of the present volume. If you will be so good as to pull yourself together, and send us your recommendations and suggestions, we will publish a selection of them

The New Volume in the January number, and do our best, moreover, to be guided by your advice in making our plans for the new volume. If you haven't any suggestions to make, just let us know that you're satisfied with things as they are. But do waste at least a postcard on us. You've no idea what a chilly business it is turning out a magazine month by month, to an unseen, unheard audience. It is related of Barry Sullivan, the actor, that once when he was playing before a particularly undemonstrative crowd, he stepped down to the footlights, and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, if you don't applaud I can't act." So please let us have either applause or eggs by return of post. But remember—if we try to meet your requirements, it is your business to find us new readers. The debt must be finally wiped out in the near future.



WRITE soon, and write often. Send reports of how things are moving in your districts. What is the good of running a Magazine to advocate and support a particular movement, if its workers in different parts of the country do not make use of it to

Get Busy communicate with one another, and to exchange ideas and suggestions. In the October number we printed an article entitled "One More Step," by Mr. Frank Jackson, of Rochdale; we want more of such articles, or paragraphs, if you can get your matter into a paragraph. Use the Magazine—it exists to be made use of. And if you don't agree with the views put forward by the writers of articles, write and say so. This present number, for instance, contains articles on the war from the standpoint of the workers, articles which raise numerous points of importance and interest. You have opinions of your own on these matters—let us have a discussion on them in the pages of the Magazine.



ABOVE all, get hold of new readers, and make them write. And make a note of the fact that the College is not yet out of danger, since the Unions who voted money for its support

The College have found themselves unable as yet to pay the money over. There are many fewer students in residence than there ought to be, and time is running on. But the garrison intend to hold out till relief comes, and it rests with you to do your part in seeing that relief is certain.

J. F. H.

The European Crisis

(Continued from last Month.)

TO say that the working classes of Europe did not seek this war, is simply to utter a commonplace. Much more to the point is it to understand why they were unable to effectively resist that which was not of their seeking. Once this is understood it will be less difficult to explain the subsequent attitude of the European Labour movement, an attitude, at first sight, so incomprehensible in view of the national and international proletarian declarations and protests against the plunging of Europe into a shambles.

This is not a war between two nations, but a war between an alliance of European Powers against another alliance. The more warfare attains to its present colossal dimensions, the less the possibility of its being prevented or modified by the working-class movement of any one country. Just as it has taken several countries to make the present crisis imminent, so it necessitated the international alliance of the working-class movements in those several countries, in order to offer an effective resistance to the war-kindling efforts of the European Powers. There must be no exception. Each Government must be met within its gates by an unequivocal working-class opposition to its plans. More particularly is this necessary in the case of the aggressive government. A failure, there, cannot but involve a serious dislocation of the whole international machinery, and that the more serious, the less developed is the consciousness and practical tactics of each integral movement. Indeed, such an international collapse has resulted during this crisis, a collapse which has certainly been precipitated by the action of the German Social Democracy in backing the Government which precipitated the European War.

Just as the present European crisis has a general cause, so also is there a general cause for the breakdown of the International. The International could not be expected to possess a foresight and a power which transcended that of its constituents. Any defects in the theory and practice of the national groups was bound to express itself in the alliance of these groups. The International acts as a thermometer, indicating the maturity or immaturity of the national developments. Let us see how in the history of the International, the weaknesses which in general engendered its dissolution have manifested themselves.

The International which now lies in ruins, was founded in Paris in 1889 and was to have celebrated its double anniversary, ironically enough, at Vienna, just a month after the war was declared at Vienna. It was the heir of the first International which was set up in London in 1864 under the pioneering guidance of Marx and Engels. In the 60's of the last century England was at the head of the Capitalist world: in fact, she practically stood alone as a nation with large-scale

capitalist production and with an appropriate capitalist-controlled government. France and parts of Germany were, however, beginning to open out on more developed capitalist lines, and as a consequence the old handicraft and domestic methods of production were being pushed out of existence. This revolution, of course, was bound to profoundly affect the formerly independent craftsmen and small producers, although they were animated more by the traditions of the past than by the modern proletarian spirit of revolt. Naturally, in England, the modern working-class spirit was manifesting itself with greater force than upon the Continent. On the Continent, particularly in Germany, the middle or capitalist class had not yet achieved its conquest of the State, and, as in 1848, this class was appealing to the proletariat for its active support in the battle for political democracy. But democracy was at that time threatened by the menace of Russian Czarism, and this may be regarded as hurrying on the foundation of the International, the essential aim of which was to unite the workers of all lands, not merely for the immediate improvement of their economic conditions, but also for the future goal of Communism. The clear insight of its founders into capitalist society, gradually won over many workers hitherto dominated by the empty phrases of the middle class, and gave to the International two practical tactics for the solution of its problem—industrial organization in the struggle against capital, and political organization for the conquest of the public powers—and these, not as ends in themselves, but as means to the end, viz., Communism. There were limits to the continuance of the International, which the growth of Capitalism in Western Europe gradually made more marked. The existence of a general organization governed from London became more and more impossible in the degree that the capitalist nations of Western Europe emerged and created local battlegrounds for the struggle of the proletariat. The differences in the local political conditions called for local movements and local tactics. A general organization with a general programme was with such developments, less and less practicable. The International gradually became disrupted, and dissolved after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. It had fulfilled its task. It had left its legacy in the shape of the Communist idea, and in the theoretical and practical weapons wherewith the workers of the world must fight to win the world for Communism. The second International was founded in 1889 by representatives from twenty nations. In harmony with the principles of the Old International, the New recognized the Labour organizations as well as the Socialist parties in its representation. Unlike the Old, however, the New International was no general organization, but an organization consisting of the independent autonomous groups of the different countries. Like the Old, too, it put the conquest of political power at the head of its immediate aims as an indispensable condition for the overthrow of Capitalism. As a means to political conquest, the return of independent representatives of the working-class movement to Parliament, and the

extension of the suffrage, became recognized as important factors, while the necessity for the extension of industrial organization was also recognized as a powerful lever in the struggle.

In the quarter of a century that has elapsed since the coming into being of the Second International, capitalism has established itself in every quarter of the globe. Everywhere therefore has arisen the the inevitable proletarian Atlas and the equally inevitable conversion of Atlas into Nemesis. Within each nation in proportion to its capitalist development, the concentration of industrial and political power has proceeded apace, industry has become the monopoly of a group of magnates and the government an apparatus for the aggrandizement of these industrial lords. Within each nation there has in consequence taken place the rise of an ever increasing army of revolt among the struggling mass of workers. With the multiplication of organizations and political parties, with the increase therefore in the number of officials in the industrial and parliamentary circles, an antagonism has also arisen between conservative and radical sections. With some honourable exceptions, the functionaries of the Labour Movement cling to tactics which belong to conditions that have disappeared and which are inadequate to the new conditions. These tactics and tacticians, more particularly outside of Germany, deny the class struggle of wage-labour against capital and seek to effect by means of small reforms and frequently through alliance with some capitalist section in the national government, conditions which make capitalism more endurable. From this conservative point of view, what is in reality a *means*, becomes an *end* in itself. In order that the organization, industrial and political, be maintained, the real role of the organization as a weapon of combat is sacrificed. So long as capitalist expansion proceeds unchecked and the working class organizations are able to participate in some degree in the prosperous times, this conservative policy is not seriously questioned, and reformism as the "be all" and "end all," grows and is accepted by the masses. Different is it however when the tide turns and the economic conditions of capitalism press with increasing weight upon the masses. Then does the impulse to rebellion become felt more and more widely, then also is it discovered that the old methods and outlook promoted under past conditions, have become so many obstacles to the successful conduct of the present struggle. A growing minority arise who challenge the effectiveness of old forms and they are usually met with the response from the conservative side. to the effect that they are conspiring to destroy the organization, The organization as an end in itself is here clearly the view of those who cling to traditional methods. I do not say that the innovators are always and everywhere clear in their outlook, or practical in their tactics. By no means. The policy that has within recent years sprung up and which proposes to abandon the parliamentary method in favour of what is called "direct action," I consider to be an

illustration of the misjudgement of innovators. But the latter have this merit that they realize the old policy to be no longer effective. Not so the conservative element, who would make "every to-morrow be as to-day." While happily evolution is no conservative, still it takes time to thoroughly leaven the mass with the new spirit. The minority has been growing in this country as in the other European countries and has been contesting with increasing vigour the old traditional methods. Before however it had got beyond the initial phases of its task, there fell upon Europe the catastrophe before which all else pales into insignificance. And in the day when the hand pointed full upon the stroke of murder, all protests and passionate speeches were unavailing to stay the stroke. The lack of a practical tactic in the national labour movements left them helpless before the impending crash. What wonder then that on the very day when the International could fulfil its highest function and win for itself and its ideals the world-wide gratitude of the workers, it should be found wanting.

When considering the general cause of the European crisis, I characterized the part played by the several nations involved as being that of accessories before the fact. In the same way, in fixing the responsibility for the breakdown of the International, all of the autonomous parties constituting the International must stand condemned of neglecting to establish a practical policy against the ever-growing menace of war.

The old International sought to unite the workers of all lands on the basis of a general policy. This sufficed for the infancy of the European proletariat. But when, thanks to its guidance, the workers of the several countries had succeeded in building up national organizations to meet the growing power of the national capital and its State, then the particular differences of each national situation asserted themselves and the old International succumbed. The Second International has fallen to pieces primarily for the opposite reason, viz., because it has allowed the particular national policies to overshadow the general need for a practical international policy. Hence in the day of international danger, when the need for a general anti-war tactic asserted itself, the Second International had nothing better to offer, in the way of resistance, than words. Just how much those words were worth the subsequent attitude of the various Socialist and Labour representatives has made clear. The reason given in the main for the action of endorsing and supporting the conduct of the war is summed up in the now familiar phrase, "I am a Britisher first." Such a reason cuts clean across the fundamental principles of Socialism.

W. W. C.

(To be continued).

Women and War

"To the male, the giving of life is a laugh ; to the female, blood, anguish, and sometimes death."—*Olive Schreiner.*

IT was in one of the daily papers that there appeared the story of the Bishop's daughter, who on her way to play golf remarked that she "managed to forget the war"! The women of the working class are not so happy. It is not enough that their men's blood should continually grease the wheels of Capitalism, but now they are called upon to manure with their precious bodies the ground of France and Belgium. The working women cannot manage to forget the war.

We were told once that men must work and women must weep, but that time has long passed. Women no longer merely weep as their contribution to the scheme of things. To the mothers of the past, the mothers of unwanted children, the death of those children was a bitter sorrow ; but that sorrow was more instinctive than reasoned. They wept and submitted. To the women of to-day, the violent death in war of their loved ones comes as an insult ; their eyes are dry, it is with their brains that they feel. They will know *why* their lives are made desolate.

"No woman," declares Olive Schreiner, "whether she has borne children, or be merely potentially a child-bearer, can look on a battlefield covered with slain, but the thought would rise in her, 'So many mother's sons! So many bodies brought into the world to lie there. So many months of weariness and pain while bones and muscles were shaped within ; so many hours of anguish that breath might be . . . all this, that men might lie with glazed eyeballs, and with swollen bodies, and fixed, blue, unclosed mouths, and great limbs tossed ; this, that an acre of ground might be manured with human flesh, that next year's grass and poppies and karoo bushes may spring up greener and redder where they have lain' And we cry—'Without an inexorable cause, this should not be!'"

We must understand what is the inexorable cause of all this horror. Every man dying in agony in Belgium means something vital torn from the life of some woman. The brain reels at the thought. But there is something in *us* that was absent or dormant in our mothers ; we cannot submit. These men were our comrades, as well as our husbands, fathers and brothers ; we must understand what force it is that draws them away from us, never to return, or hurls them back maimed and mangled out of all likeness to

humanity. Never in all history have women needed so much to *know*. We cannot fight in the dark. Our light must be knowledge. It is for the working women to realize the necessity for a true knowledge of the forces that brought about this war, and to seek to get that knowledge for themselves.

We have learnt some things already. We have come to know that our fight is not with individuals but with forces that must be understood in order to be controlled. If we, women and workers, are silent now and inarticulate, it is not that we submit without thought, or willingly. Much of the agitation among women and among workers during the last ten years has been instinctive rather than reasoned. This war will inevitably bring many women to study the causes that lead to war, as it will recast the thoughts and plans of the workers of all countries. Capitalism crushes women in the same way that it crushes the workers. There can be, there will be, no freedom for women under Capitalism. Many women have already realized this, and many more, their husbands and sons swept from them in this torrent of blood, will realize it when, their first grief assuaged, they pause to consider. To the weeping mothers of men in Russia, in Germany, in France, in England, in India, the message will come. No man or woman can be free under Capitalism, and until Capitalism ceases, war will be inevitable.

The women of the working class have a double burden. Their sons are maimed and killed, or used up, in peace, as well as in war. The owners of the means of production are at least safe in peace; the workers die and starve and rot even in prosperous times. We can never forget that.

Shall they work for a pittance all their lives, men, women, and children? And then when the masters' coffers begin to run dry, when Ooglestein has grabbed a market that was Smith's, or Brown has taken custom from Blumenfeld, shall the lads' lives be thrown away like chaff? We women, who sit at home and knit, what can we do? One thing we *can* do, we can get *understanding*.

Modern Capitalism is like a howitzer. It is an engine of destruction, how well we have learned that. We must know what parts of it are vital to its working, and so organize that we can take away those vital parts and render it useless. The next generation, this generation too, must be taught and must learn how it comes about that there are workers and masters, and how it is that as well as doing the masters' work, the workers must needs fight when the masters quarrel.

Once the women of the working class have realized that there is only one division in all the world which separates man and man, not colour, not race, not speech, but an economic division, the masters and the workers; only one war, the class war, then all our lives will be given up to working for the emancipation of our class from wage-slavery, and we shall end war, because under a world communism, war would be no longer thinkable.

Educate — Agitate — Organize

Knowledge is ultimately the balm which will heal the wounds of the world.

WINIFRED HORRABIN.

The Workers and the War

RECENTLY a few labour people were discussing the best method to adopt in order that pressure might be brought to bear on the government of the day for the purpose of taking over the numerous relief agencies springing up as a direct result of the War.

One rather young person suggested that the organized Labour Movement ought to move in the matter. Most of the other folk applauded the suggestion as being one of extreme value, but—to the surprise of all present—a Trades Union Leader of considerable experience dismissed the suggestion with the contemptuous comment that the Labour Movement had ceased to exist!

It is written somewhere that De Tocqueville lost his temper during strenuous efforts to wriggle through the entanglements of convention surrounding our sacred Constitution. During his meanderings he happened to take the wrong turning, and rather hastily concluded that the great and glorious British Constitution was a shameful fraud— . . . "*elle n'existe point!*" *

That the Labour Movement has been in a sense side-tracked there can be but little doubt, and one cannot very well appear surprised at the cynicism of the old official. Still while it is correct that in certain quarters *representative men have placed it on record* that they are citizens first and trade unionists (a long way) afterwards (as if unionism was some leprous thing incapable of attracting the best elements of life); while it is also true that thousands of unionists have become temporarily indifferent to the work of organization, it is not correct to say that the Movement has ceased to exist. All things considered, the British Movement has remained wonderfully intact. Instances can be recorded of successful battles waged to protect ground won from the Capitalist prior to the war,—battles

*It never existed.

provoked because the capitalist thought the Movement had ceased to exist! It is a fairly safe conclusion that the vast-majority of trade unionists in the country support the present war. Not perhaps because they believe British diplomacy was all white and the German brand all black; but rather for the reason that they believe they have something to lose by German success.

In times of peace working-class deputations galore affirmed, in the capitals of Europe, their hatred of armed force. However, clouds of words were of little concern to the war-mongers and the *debâcle* of Internationalism was merely the more pronounced on account of the frequent visitations of the apostles of peace. That the able speeches, approving the Brotherhood of Man, made by the International Socialist leaders at Conferences, were sincere there can be no room for question; but the fact remains that far too many speeches, lulling us into a false sense of security, were delivered, and no effort commensurate with the issues involved was made to create effective machinery for dealing with any crisis similar to that of July and August last.

In Britain definite steps were taken at the last moment by the Welsh miners with the idea of co-operating with their comrades in Germany, only to discover that communication with Germany was impossible. Granted that both bodies could have come into touch, it must not be forgotten that German autocracy had always prevented the German workers from expressing any collective opinion as to the desirability of using the strike weapon against war.

The workers of Britain cannot understand why the German worker is content to take up arms against countries which—nominally at least—enjoy greater liberties than are exercised in Germany. But rightly or wrongly the German worker believes, that Russia is determined to crush his Fatherland, and he obeys the law of self-preservation. With his eye on Russia he cannot understand why the British workers are going to the trenches in France. Would British Socialists stand idly by with Russia menacing their Homeland? If not, why has Britain declared war on Germany? France had committed herself to Russia—but Britain? Many men are in the British trenches for notions of chivalry. The cry of "Holy war" has attracted thousands to the colours, but, Belgium or no Belgium, once war was declared the majority of Britishers believed, that it was for them, too, a war of self-preservation.

Germans have for some time realized the possibilities of Russian aggression, but German Socialists fondly dreamed of a closer understanding with the Russian people for the purpose of ensuing peaceful development.

Britishers have for long realized that the Prussian military caste habitually drank "To the Day"; but British Socialists trusted that intermingling with the democracy of Germany would remove

misrepresentation and hoped for the time when the Social Democracy would destroy the Frankenstein swaggering in its midst—dreams of an idle day!

War has been declared and German workmen will fight against Russian aggression just as British workmen will fight to keep the German army out of London. Some comrades will argue that the worker has no more to lose under German rule than he has to lose under British rule; others will courageously assert their belief in the doctrine of non-resistance and blame the national labour movements of the countries affected for not advocating the principle here and now.

After the conquest of Belgium and the partial occupation of France it should be fairly obvious that we have nothing to gain by a German occupation, and the teaching of Tolstoy, has very few if any consistent advocates to-day. The workers are called upon to make enormous sacrifices. There are very few working-class homes but are affected by the war. Thousands of families are concerned either by the absence of bread-winners with the colours, or by shortage of wages through unemployment consequent upon the war.

From all quarters the workers are besought to save the country. The Government of the day, in return for full-time service, doles out to the workers' family a paltry pittance, and endeavours to cloak its meanness by commending the helpless dependents of the country's saviours to the care of charity! Ye Gods! How the classes have revelled in their congenial task! How they have entrenched themselves in their territorial districts! And what a row the workers have made!

The only effective means whereby the views of the working class could have been heard in the early days of the war was the Trade Union Congress. Never, perhaps, in the history of the movement had there been a greater necessity for the organized movement to express itself. The army of fighting men were of the working class. The condition of their dependents was of interest to the working class. The army of unemployed bread-winners was of the working class. The condition of their dependents was of importance to the working class. Only through the organized movement could their views find adequate expression and their interests proper protection. But for some inexplicable reason the Parliamentary Committee decided that the Congress should not be held!

Several private committees containing names of well-known Labour men and women have been formed. Some very excellent people have given of their best, but the best has only been a "tinkering" with the real issue.

One might be permitted to observe, in passing, that considerable resentment is growing in the provinces against the attempt that seems to be made to run the Movement by a "Junta," and if it is thought

that this opposition is confined to a few irreconcilables there will be a considerable disillusionment later on. That by the way. The Parliamentary Committee decided against a Congress, and the Government, assuming that for the moment the Movement had ceased to exist treated applications for adequate pay for soldiers and sailors, and for the adoption of proper measures for dealing with the problem of unemployment, by a reference to the Prince of Wales Fund. Which, up to date, is an outstanding monument to the stinginess of the over rich !

Slowly but surely the workers have made themselves heard, and already the miners of the country have unanimously decided upon a common policy which must work out advantageously for the whole of the workers ; conferences are to be held in the more important centres of industrial activity. This is all to the good, for by this systematic way alone can the Government be brought to recognize the claims of the workers.

Having secured proper recognition for the soldier and sailor and having compelled the State to deal drastically with the unemployed problem, the workers through their organizations have a very sacred mission to perform.

By all means break the back of Prussian militarism. By all means see to it that Belgium is compensated, so far as is humanly possible, for the great wrong inflicted on her people. But in the interest of all that the word progress implies let the workers of Britain stand for a settlement that will not involve the humiliation of the German *People*.

That attempts will be made by the Chauvinists to extract more than the pound of flesh there can be little doubt. The success of such a policy, however, would make reconciliation an impossibility for many generations, and it behoves the workers to be ever vigilant during the days that are before us. If we only keep our organizations intact, and exercise our undoubted power in a restrained but none the less determined manner, then the temporary difficulty of military and civil distress can be adjusted. If we continue our labours and face all new positions with the dignity befitting the class which has the power to make or mar the country's future, the day will arrive when the organized Labour Movement of Britain can take a dominant part in the discussion of issues the deciding of which will mean so much to the workers of the world.

On the other hand, if we are determined simply to let things slide,—if we are going to stifle all organized discussion and prefer to depend upon the good will of the Government—then we are playing the game of the Governing class, we are deserting the dependents of our fellows in the trenches, and neglecting our opportunity to testify to the German democracy that we have been fighting Bernhardt the warrior, rather than Goethe the poet who calls for "the pledge and proof of a new covenant."
E. G.

Letters on Logic

Economics

SEVENTH LETTER OF THE SECOND SERIES

IN the course of my letters I have tried broadly to explain that logic, or the art of thinking, is nothing else but the art of grouping the appearances of the world genealogically. The course is like this: Abraham begat Isaac, Isaac begat Jacob, &c. So far it is simple; but when, as in the case of the patriarch Jacob, twelve sons have to be taken into account, things become more complicated. In this case, as in the world at large, the thing we have specially in view becomes more difficult to trace.

In political economy, all things must be arranged in groups, which can be easily surveyed for the purpose of perception. Whether the word capital comprises every means of production since the time of Moses, or only that of to-day; whether to-day all the workrooms, tools and materials used for production, or only those of the big men, should be considered as capital; these are questions which can be solved by reflection only, and the good thinker has to decide how properly to group things. He wants to make clear their connexions, and for this purpose he has to specialize the generalities into species; he must arrange and classify. Where an experienced master has proceeded in this way, his disciples are likely to follow, to praise his clearness and to build up the "science," which is stable, it is true, and which not everybody can shake, but which nevertheless is no frozen icicle but remains open to further development.

It is the same case in Economics as in Philology; every language has its fixed rules, but they are not immutable. It is necessary to observe them, but nevertheless every orator and author may and must be free to a certain extent, or there is no progress, no life possible. Popular ideas are confused, and contradictory, while science, according to Kant, achieves uniformity. It is uniform, but not stiff; life pulses in it—it is a piece of truth and life.

The concept of capital is also a live and not a dead thing. It is the chief concept of modern Economics. Capital, so I have heard from the Latin scholars, is derived from *caput*, the head. Consequently, man and animal have capital set upon their trunks, and even the stony columns have capitals.

Adam Smith, Ricardo, and Henry George are to a certain extent right in considering the food of the servants as capital, while everything that is consumed by the principals they exclude from Political Economy. But it is not unreasonable for me to contradict that, and to assert that not only the meagre breakfast in the worker's basket, and the thin coat on his body, are capital, but the whole worker, skin and hair and all belongs to capital.

If you have so far advanced in logic as to recognize that in all reflections and judgments the contradictions are separated and at the same time solved, then you will also understand the real sense of

the discussions which deal with the great question, whether the capitalist is subjected to the worker or *vice versa*—which of them is "rewarding" the other. Which of the two, capitalist or worker, should stand first, is as idle a question as whether Goethe or Schiller is the greater poet.

The bourgeois economists pretend that the capitalist is the principal, and after him comes the worker. Henry George, the semi-socialist, would like to give the worker first place. We full-fledged socialists know by means of logic what this first place means; we realize that for the present the capitalist comes first, but that in the future he must hand the reins of power to someone else.

This question as to who is master and who is subject and appendage, the capitalist or the worker, is not to be discussed "in the air," in the absolute generality, but in the particular, in history. From the viewpoint of eternity, capital and labour are equal facts. At a given time there was capital and the accumulation of capital. At another (our own) time capital has great difficulty in maintaining its predominant position, and soon the time will come when it will again "be numbered with the dust."

Without the concept of the absolute and eternal connexions of the universe, nobody can conceive the origin and development of particular things—of capital, for example. Without this concept historical moments and things appear as separate icicles—the very antithesis of flowing moving truth.

If our ideas are to give a true picture of the world they must conceive eternity in time and time in eternity; time and eternity must be connected dialectically, so that they are not too much differentiated but united in separation. All things are predicates, appendages, parts of an absolute subject; we can only formally separate particular subjects, as concepts, from their general connexions. Not in one-sided individualism, but in the dialectical communism which contains the individual, is there truth and life.

The modern cock of the walk, capital, has his historical justification, his allotted time to appear on the world stage. But if he gets pompous and refuses to make his exit, the world stage-manager will give him to understand that he is no eternal hero but only a passing little one.

The task which logic has to perform in all sciences it has also to undertake in Economics; here production, and especially capitalist production, has to be clearly divided into groups. The capital fund has to be separated from the fund of consumption, the accumulated labour of the past from the present living labour-power, the means of production of the great capitalist from the poor tools of production of the little chaps like the small peasants, the handicraftsmen, and the shopkeepers.

The world, the universe, or the absolute thing, is no dead sandpit, no mere accumulation of things, but a living process which develops indefinitely, in the little things as well as in the great ones, which

grows from boundless chaos more and more to unlimited order, truth, beauty, goodness. Everything that our art of thinking forms into groups and orders, 'is only a formal action, a formal logic applied to the material indefinite logic of facts.

Translated for the *Plebs Magazine* from the German of Joseph Dietzgen by MISS BERTHA BRAUNTHAL.*

* *Plebs* readers will be interested to know that Miss Braunthal, as an "alien enemy," has been compelled by circumstances to leave London and—for the present—to take up her residence in Rotterdam. She is nevertheless very kindly continuing to send us her translations of Dietzgen, which arrive "Opened (and presumably passed) by Censor." Miss Braunthal and her friend, Miss Germsheimer (now also in Rotterdam) were both enthusiastic members of the Women's League of the C.L.C.

Will Socialism Survive the War?

IN responding to the courteous invitation of the Editor of the *Plebs Magazine* to contribute an article to its columns, I have no difficulty in finding a subject for my pen. There is but one topic—the War. What, again? Yes, again! And in dealing with it I do not feel constrained to offer the now familiar apology of the conventional journalist, who assures his readers that "it is impossible to ignore the war, even for a day." There is no reason why we should ignore the war. Indeed, there is no subject of greater interest to the workers than that of the world-wide struggle that is taking place to-day.

How will the war affect the working-class movement? That is the problem for which we must find a definite solution. All other merely national questions are of quite secondary interest and importance in comparison with the one great issue—what will be the condition of the International Socialist Movement when the last "cease fire" rings out over the blood-soaked trenches of the Eastern Hemisphere? To sit still with folded hands until the war is over is simply inviting disaster. We must act, and that at once. But before doing so it would be well to survey the situation briefly.

In a recent issue of one of the "religious" papers, a correspondent was endeavouring to raise the feelings of his apparently despondent co-religionists by pointing out to them "the consolations of the war." After reminding them that the controversies relating to Home Rule and the Welsh Church had been "providentially hushed"—(by "the cannon's opening roar"!)—he concluded in a strain of almost triumphant optimism, with the assurance that "after the war we shall hear very little more of class hatred, and in the grave of German despotism will also be buried the even greater evil of Socialism."

In writing thus the worthy cleric was but voicing the as yet unexpressed feelings of all phases of Capitalist thought. In view of the strenuous activities of the leaders of the Labour Party, and of certain prominent "Socialists," to stimulate recruiting, it would, of course, be as impolitic as it is unnecessary to denounce Socialism in public at the present time. Nevertheless, there are not wanting clear indications that many people are already quite convinced that the present war will mean the end of Socialism. As an example of this tendency I may mention that at a meeting which I recently addressed, the following question was handed to me: "In view of the patriotic fervour and militarist enthusiasm displayed by prominent Socialists in the different belligerent countries, does the speaker think it will ever be possible for the Socialists to again pose as the great Party of International Brotherhood and Peace?"—(the prayers of all good Plebeians are earnestly requested on behalf of the poor "speaker"). I then answered the question briefly but sincerely. I propose now to deal with it more in detail. I am quite aware of the fact that the views I am about to propound will not meet with unanimous approval. If my conclusions are false, it is for those who are better informed than myself to correct them. Criticism from any quarter will be welcomed.* To the point then. Will the War destroy Socialism? It entirely depends on how the term Socialism is defined. If by Socialism is meant much of what has masqueraded as Socialism during recent years, I think "Socialism" as such *will* be destroyed by the war. And the workers have nothing to lose but much to gain from such destruction. For consider for a moment the difference—nay, the striking contrast—between a Socialist in the early days of the Movement, and, if we eliminate certain notable exceptions, a modern Socialist. To be a Socialist then was to be an outcast, a pariah, to live in poverty and to die in exile. To-day Socialism is the hall-mark of respectability. Socialists are no longer dangerous members of Society. Lawyers, doctors, priests, millionaires, cabinet ministers, nobles and peers of the realm—all are "Socialists." The most popular authors and novelists of the day are Socialists—at least, they say they are.

The same contrast appears between the literature of the early days and modern expositions of revised Socialism. At one time Socialist literature had the honourable distinction of being regarded by orthodox and conventional members of Society as pernicious in the extreme. To-day portions of it are favourably reviewed in *The Times*, whose readers are gravely assured that the writings of one

*We trust that *Plebs* readers will avail themselves of Mr. Cuthbert's invitation to them to discuss his arguments.—ED.

distinguished Socialist at any rate "are admirably adapted for the purpose of exposition"—as indeed they are from the standpoint of *The Times*, for has not this same writer openly boasted of the fact that he has "killed" Revolutionary Socialism in this country.

But the contrast is perhaps most striking, and the difference of mental outlook most apparent, when we compare the "old-fashioned, antiquated, dogmatic" Marxist policy with that of the cultured present-day Reformist Socialist. The former was quite simple, namely, to organize the workers of the world consciously and deliberately to revolutionize Society; the State was to die out, and the class struggle was to be fought out to a triumphant, even if bloody and bitter, conclusion. These crude and blunt theories, so utterly at variance with our democratic institutions and modern conceptions of Society, are placed entirely on one side by our Reformist leaders of to-day. The class struggle is discarded or explained away as an obsolete theory; "Socialism," we are told, "includes all that is good in all classes." Far from dying out, the State is to be given a new lease of life—under democratic control. The main planks of the programme of this Economic Modernism are State intervention on behalf of the workers, and nationalization of all industrial concerns. But the State is the fetish to which all must bow, and the State official is the priest of the new cult.

It is this State Socialism, this respectable, modern, evolutionary, revisionist Socialism which—doubtless with the best of intentions—has damped the revolutionary ardour of the workers of Europe, and in the present great crisis is leading them forth, flag in hand, to the trenches and the cannon's mouth in defence of "their" country. Internationalism it would appear is synonymous with the most ardent patriotism, and anti-militarism is to be defined as a demand for a democratized army together with the "right" of national defence!

I have no wish to write harshly of the leaders of modern Reformist Socialism. I recognize fully that the majority of them are sincere unselfish men, earnestly desiring to benefit the workers. They have adopted what they considered to be the only practical politics. But I am convinced they have chosen wrongly. They have led the workers entirely astray. The proof of the futility and falsity of their theories and programmes is imprinted upon the battlefields of Europe to-day.

As they stand at the present time, the workers in Europe could not have stopped this war. They had not the necessary national and international machinery with which to achieve so vast a purpose. Worse than that—their actions clearly prove that they had no wish

to stop the war. And why did they not wish to stop the war? Because real systematic anti-militarist propaganda has never been carried out among the workers by the Socialist Parties of Europe. They have limited their activities in this direction to demonstrations which have been without any permanent result, and to vague resolutions at Conferences in which "Militarism" was condemned in general terms. Because the necessity for defending "their" country in case of invasion has been insisted upon repeatedly by Socialist leaders—notably in France and Germany. Above all because the ideal of real Internationalism—anti-patriot, anti-militarist internationalism of the world's workers—has not been substituted for the present patriotic militarist ideal of the Capitalist class with which the workers of Europe have been chloroformed. There is, it is true, an anti-war campaign now being conducted by the I.L.P. The organizers of this movement are sincere if mistaken men. This movement is based upon a purely sentimental appeal against the barbarities of war, and as such, I fear, it is not likely to succeed. Nevertheless, I wish it well. No mere sentimentalism will avail as a basis against that which the workers must now face. There will be more bloodshed before war is abolished. To abolish war means to abolish Capitalism—the root cause of modern warfare. Now it will require something stronger than sentiment to abolish Capitalism. An extended franchise and nationalized industries will not abolish Capitalism. Indeed, it will be surprising if future historians do not perceive in the present Reformist Socialism the strongest support of the Capitalist system. But we see to it that Reformism, if it is not destroyed in the war, is "scotched" very soon after by the organized Proletariat. We must make it perfectly clear that the workers of the world have no more to do with the "State" than they have with the transmigration of souls. The fetish of the State must go the way of the fetish of Royalty. The State to-day is the organization of the Capitalist Class—enthroned and dominant. On the morrow of the Social Revolution there will be no State. As Engels has said so truly "The first act wherein the State appears as the real representative of the whole body social—the seizure of the means of production in the name of Society—is also its last independent act as a State. The State is not abolished, it dies out!" Our duty is as clear as our objective is plain—to educate and organize the Proletariat, nationally and internationally, to accomplish the overthrow of the Capitalist system of Society. To put the plain simple truths of Scientific Socialism before the workers, so that they may clearly understand the development of the present social system, and to organize them on an industrial basis for mass action against the Capitalist Class the world over. The

problem of political action is not one that calls for immediate consideration. Educate the workers scientifically, organize them in big industrial unions, and such political action as is necessary for their emancipation they may be safely relied upon to take. This is our task, comrades !

It is a vast undertaking—in comparison with which the present war sinks into utter insignificance. Were we mere Utopian reformers we might well be appalled by the magnitude of the work that lies ahead of us. But, backed by Marx's teaching we know we have the most powerful factors in social evolution co-operating with us—the development of the material productive forces of society.

This, then, is my answer to the question, "Will the War destroy Socialism?" No, it will not. Socialism will survive the war, but the movement will be far more definitely revolutionary in character. Its leaders may possibly have as extensive a knowledge of the prisons of Europe as some of its present leaders have of crowned heads and Government portfolios. Above all, as the direct result of the present carnage the term Socialist will and must be synonymous with International Anti-militarist. If Reformism survives in any shape or form it must be clearly recognized as a danger to the working-class movement as the W.E.A. educational policy is recognized by the supporters of the Central Labour College movement to-day.

When the students of Ruskin College inaugurated their historic strike, they afforded to the Socialist movement a valuable object lesson in the necessity of keeping clear of capitalist patronage and middle class influence. If the Reformists survive the war, and attempt to form a "Socialist" party, it will be the duty of the workers to "strike" and form a new International. The immediate duty for each one of us is to do our utmost for working-class education—*on right lines*. Let us substitute Marx for war news, the Central Labour College for the Recruiting Office, and let any spare cash we have be sent on to support our own working-class educational movement—it will be better applied, and is even more needed than is the Prince of Wales's Fund.

The call to action in the movement to-day is to each individual worker. It is up to us, comrades, to see that Socialism does survive the war, and the character of the movement that will come forth from this fiery trial depends very largely upon our present activity.

H. WYNN-CUTHBERT.

"Plebs" Magazine Fund

The following are the winning numbers in distribution of gifts, as announced at the Concert, held on Saturday, November 7th:

14408—42136—12197—16691—22808—22862—30856—17124

16039—10416—39290—7680

Will all successful ticket holders please send in their claims before December 14th, so that a complete list of same can be published in our next issue.

We also appeal to those friends who have some money in hand, to forward some at their earliest convenience, so as to enable us to prepare and publish a Balance Sheet.

In addition to donations already promised and acknowledged towards the Fund, the following have since been received:

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Amount previously ack'dged	3	4	0	C. Franklyn, Grimsby	...	2	0
Ted Gill, Abertillery	1	0	0	F. Hagger ... ..	...	1	0
Idris Davies, Merthyr	5	0		W. Jameson, Burnley ... ..	...	1	6
T. P. Keating, Luton	5	0		W. E. Walker, Leeds ... ..	...	1	0
R. F. Poole, Derby	2	6		J. P. Riding, Stockport ... ..	...	1	0
A. G. Paddon, Harringay, N.	2	0					
J. Smythe, Heburn-on-Tyne	2	0					
				Total ...	£5	7	0

W. H. MAINWARING
(Hon. Concert Secretary).

Reports

Women's League Report

The war has had its effect even on us. Two of our committee members have turned out to be "alien enemies," much to their own surprise, and ours, too; that they were Germans, we knew, but then so were Marx and Engels! Miss Braunthal, who does the translations for the *Plebs*, and Miss Gernsheimer—both ardent workers for our Cause—have had to leave the shores of "perfidious Albion," and are now interned in neutral Holland. The comradeship, however, does not cease with their departure, for Miss Braunthal still sends her translations, and has promised to send on also any articles suitable for the *Plebs*, from the continental Socialist journals. At present her letters—and enclosures—are opened and read by the Censor, so that if we hear of the conversion

to Marxian Socialism of some official engaged in the Censor's department, we shall know how it has happened. Our thoughts are with our comrade enemies.

The result of our appeal to the Railway Women's Guilds has been very satisfactory, the address on the College and its aims having been forwarded to the following branches—Barry, Bridgwater, Water Orton, Aberdare, Small Heath, Brentford, Burton-on-Trent, Bristol No. 1, Bristol No. 3, Battersea, Saltley, Gloucester, Hereford, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Liverpool No. 1, Edgehill, Taunton, Highfields, Nuneaton, Leicester, Penarth, Tyldesley, and Scarborough. The five first-mentioned of these have also affiliated. This is a good beginning, and much useful work ought to be accomplished between us in the future. The League might assist in organizing meetings of N.U.R. men's wives to hear about the College, and in this way help in augmenting the numbers of Guild members.

Two lectures arranged by the League have taken place at the College, one by Mrs. Montefiore on "The Socialist Movement in Australia," and the second by Mr. Keighley Snowden on "The World Order of Socialism." While the attendance at both might have been larger, the lectures were enjoyed exceedingly by all those present. If possible a programme of Sunday lectures will be drawn up after Christmas, and it is hoped in this way to make the College a social centre on Sunday evenings, when a good many Londoners find it hard to pass the time. All our activities must be redoubled while the war lasts; we need the knowledge of our unity in thought to make it possible for us to be united in action.

W. H.

The Plebs' Social

The Concert and Social Evening which took place on Nov. 7th, in connexion with *The Plebs' Magazine* Fund, was one of the most successful and enjoyable functions held at the College for some time. Over a hundred friends and sympathizers were present, including many London N.U.R. members, and other Trade Unionists. Among the artistes who contributed to the success of the evening were Miss Jeannette Tillett, Miss Rose Randall, Miss Dorothy Horrabin, and Mr. Threadgold (songs), Miss Bunn and Miss Cudden (recitations), and Miss Eva Cobbett (pianoforte). An enjoyable programme of dances occupied the remainder of the evening, Mr. W. W. Craik acting as M.C.; and the thanks of the committee are also due to Mrs. Horrabin and Miss Mary Howarth for their capable management of the refreshments' department. During the evening the draw for the prizes offered in connexion with the Magazine Fund took place, and the winning numbers were announced by Mr. W. H. Mainwaring.

Principles of Communism

by FREDERICK ENGELS

(Continued)

Question 20.—What will be the consequences of the abolition of private property?

Answer.—First, that as society will have taken out of the hands of the capitalists the entire forces of production and means of transport, administering them according to the actual needs of the whole community, all the evils which are at present inseparably bound up with the great industries will be done away with. Crises will end; an increased production, which under the existing order would mean *over*-production—a very fruitful source of misery—will then not even be adequate, and would need to be increased yet more, since production over and above the immediate necessities of society would assure the satisfaction of the needs of all, and also beget new necessities and the means of satisfying them. It will be the condition and occasion of further stages of progress, and it will bring about their accomplishment without, as hitherto, society having to go through a period of disorder and disorganization at every new stage. The great industry, freed from the shackles of private ownership, will develop to an extent compared to which its present development will appear as feeble as does the stage of manufacture compared to the great industry of to-day. Agriculture, too, which is hampered by private ownership and the accompanying parcelling-out of land, will be improved and developed by the scientific methods already discovered.

Society will be able to regulate production so that the needs of all its members will be satisfied. The division of society into classes with antagonistic interests ceases automatically. The existence of classes has resulted from the division of labour, and the division of labour to which we are accustomed to-day will come to an end. For in order to raise industrial and agricultural production to the standards already suggested, mechanical and chemical forces will not of themselves be sufficient. The capacities of the men setting those forces in motion will have to be developed in corresponding measure. Just as the peasants and artisans of the past century altered their whole mode of life, and became quite other men, when they were forced into the great industry, so will the common pursuit of production throughout the whole of society, and the new developments of production following thereon, necessitate—and produce—a new type of man. To-day men are confined to a single branch of production; they are forced to develop one talent at the expense of all the rest, and know only one process, or even one part of a process. But an industrial commonwealth presupposes men whose talents have been developed on all sides, men who will have an intelligent knowledge of

the whole business of production. That division of labour which now makes one man a peasant, another a shoemaker, a third a mechanic, and a fourth a speculator on "Change," will entirely vanish. Education will aim at enabling young people to go through the whole system of production, so that they can be transferred from one branch to another according as the necessities of the community demand. A communist society will in this way give far more scope for individual development than does the capitalist society of to-day.

And along with antagonistic classes, the opposition between town and country will disappear. The pursuit of agriculture and industry by the same men, instead of by two different classes, is already a necessary condition of communistic association. The dispersion of the agricultural population, side by side with the growth of the industrial population in the great towns, is the result of an incompletely developed stage both of agriculture and industry, and is, moreover, an obstacle in the way of further development.

The association of all the members of society in a regulated system of production; the increase of production to an extent at which the needs of all will be satisfied; the cessation of a state of things in which the needs of one are satisfied at the cost of another; the abolition of classes; and the full development of the abilities of all the members of society by the abolition of the present division of labour, by industrial education, and by the blending together of town and country—these will be the results of the abolition of private property.

Question 21.—How will Communism affect the family?

Answer.—It will make the relation of the two sexes a purely private relation, which concerns the interested parties and them alone. It can do this because it puts an end to private property and cares for all children alike, thereby doing away with two fundamental characteristics of present-day marriage—the dependence of the wife on the husband, and of the children on their parents. This is the answer to the shrieks of those highly-moral philistines who rave about "community of wives." Community of wives is a relation pertaining to bourgeois society, and exists to-day, in prostitution. Prostitution, however, is based on private property, and falls with it. Communism, therefore, so far from introducing community of wives, abolishes it.

(To be continued)

Translated for the *Plebs Magazine* by A. J. HACKING, M.A.

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