

BLACKFRIARS

THE CITIZEN FACES WAR. By Robert and Barbara Donington. (Gollancz; 7/6.)

THE FAITH CALLED PACIFISM. By Max Plowman. (Dent; 3/6.)

The nature of peace and the basic necessities for its achievement do not receive very deep study or reflection: the principles and problems involved are, apparently, preferably dealt with by a peace organization run on business lines for economic ends: this attitude is purely secularist, exterior, irresponsible and bourgeois. The authors of *The Citizen Faces War* express this attitude. They have written a useful history of the causes of the Great War, the C.O.'s dilemma, treatment and position, the pacifist organizations, and finally a study of contemporary peace societies and institutions.

Max Plowman is one of the few who understand the nature of peace and consequently the solution to its achievement. He writes imaginatively and realistically. The promise of "Never again" or "War to end war" was patently absurd and dishonest: but the pacifist attitude it expresses is fairly widespread. Max Plowman shows it to be essentially a moral attitude and incidentally a negation. To refuse to fight is passivism: being destructive and not constructive or creative, it will not ensure peace. Even so, it is the necessary first-step, for it gives us the crucial second for reflection; especially since "the restricted organized fight between contentious units, which was war, is no longer possible." War "is an act of race-suicide." Finally come two superb chapters: *The Religious Basis of Pacifism* and *The Political Immediacy of Pacifism*.

In the former Max Plowman says: "Mere conscientious objection is not enough: it is a negation. We need to go deeper and to discover a faith of which Pacifism is only one expression." Catholics have this faith: but they too often merely fulfil the legal conditions of Church-membership. Unless our religion is a living force within us we cannot hope for peace: our attitude to peace and war must be conditioned by that living reality—our faith.

The second point which Max Plowman stresses is the necessity for personal and individual integrity and responsibility. The bourgeois mind is characterized by a loathsome willingness eternally to discuss any problem. This characteristic and, secondly, the petrifying ability to spot wheat in a field of cockle are palpable excuses for inaction. The League of Nations, Peace Ballots, etc., alone are useless. The individual must look into himself and scourge himself till the will to peace is but one expression of his faith.

Knowledge of the Church's teaching, as expressed for instance in Stratmann's *Church and War*, is not sufficient. Religious ideals or dogma are useless for the man in the street unless they are based

REVIEWS

on the realities of life within and without society. Consequently, to understand the cause of war, a knowledge of the Capitalist System is essential: war within society—man with man, group with group, Capital with Labour—leading to expansion and war without. Hutt's *Conditions of the Working Class in Britain* should be well studied.

But there is another vital factor: the utter lack of respect of man for man: the lack of a dynamic "togetherness." Is it surprising that men do not respect one another as members of the Mystical Body when they treat each other like automatons in the natural order?

P. W. SINGLETON.

THE TWO NATIONS. By Christopher Hollis. (Routledge; 10/6.)

Mr. Hollis has followed up his *Breakdown of Money* with a full dress study of the history of England, from the financial angle. As such his book will be essential as a commentary and supplement to the general run of historical textbooks. Not only does it contain a great deal of information which is by no means easily at the disposal of the ordinary reader, but it should do much to lessen the gap which undoubtedly exists between the point of view of the historian of the present day and that of the general public. The latter is often scarcely beyond the stage of J. R. Green's *Short History of the English People* as yet. Despite his uncompromising views, it must be realized that Mr. Hollis is by no means a solitary faddist in his attempt to emphasize the enormous effect of the financial element on past history. To take a solitary instance, to-day it is generally recognized that one of the reasons for the decision to end the Crimean War was the fact that, though the Russian government had continued during the war to pay to the British bondholders their interest, the exhaustion of the country made it improbable that this payment would continue if the war was prolonged in order to gain more favourable political terms. It is an accepted fact which "every school-boy"—as Macaulay would have said—is expected to learn. The same is true of the rise of prices and its effect on seventeenth century England. Mr. Hollis's purpose is to supply such facts right down the line of modern English history. His chapters on the financial problem which faced the Stuart Kings and on Ireland are particularly valuable.

There are, naturally, incidental judgments from which many informed readers will dissent. It is not true to say, for instance, that the Poor Law of 1834 succeeded in its object: it was the boom in railway construction and, therefore, in the allied industries which in reality provided the solution, for the time being. Many of Mr. Hollis's readers will be inclined to think that he has fallen too completely a victim to the indisputable attraction of