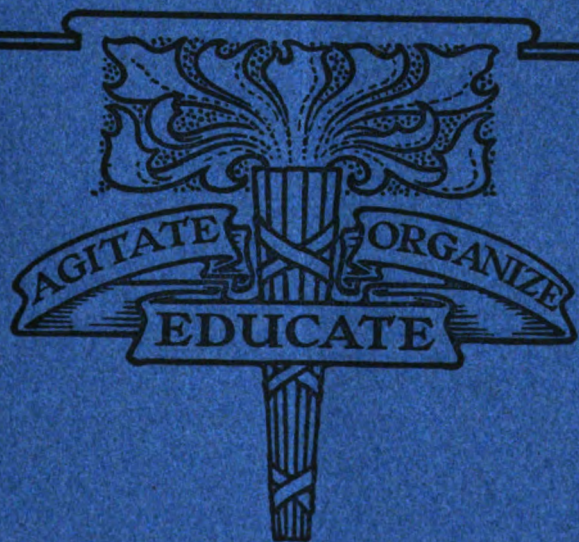


OUR HUNDREDTH NUMBER.

Vol. IX, No. 4

May, 1917.

The
PLEBS
MAGAZINE



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

MONTHLY

TWOPENCE

Karl Marx



"Marx never condescends to cast a glance of useless longing at the past: his cry to the present is, always, 'Pass by: we are waiting for the future.' Nor is the future at all mysterious, uncertain, or dreadful to him. There is not a word of hope or fear, nor appeal to chance or providence, nor vain remonstrance with Nature, nor optimism, nor enthusiasm, nor pessimism, nor cynicism, nor any other familiar sign of the giddiness which seizes men when they climb to heights which command a view of the past, present and future of human society. Marx keeps his head like a god. He has discovered the law of social development, and knows what must come. The thread of history is in his hand."

G. Bernard Shaw [1887].

A [red X] here means that you owe us some money.

THE PLEBS MAGAZINE

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

Vol. IX.

May, 1917

No. 4

CONTENTS

	Page
THE WORK <i>BEFORE</i> THE PLEBS: MESSAGES FROM FRIENDS ON OUR 100TH NUMBER - - - - -	73
ENTER DEMOCRATIC RUSSIA. By G. S. - - - - -	79
MAY, 1917. By WINIFRED HERRABIN - - - - -	81
THE STRUGGLE FOR IRON ORE. By J. T. WALTON NEWBOLD (with Map) - - - - -	82
TO OUR CRITICS. By W. P. - - - - -	87
"AS TO POLITICS." By W. W. C. - - - - -	91
MR. MACTAVISH AND THE PLEBS LEAGUE - - - - -	92
CORRESPONDENCE. From F. SILVESTER AND J. WALKER - - -	95

THE WORK *BEFORE* THE PLEBS

The PLEBS this month reaches its 100th number, the first issue having appeared in February, 1909. The following messages from various friends encourage us to go forward. The work which lies BEFORE us is the important thing—not the work already achieved, though this last may well serve as a stimulus to greater efforts in the future. The magazine, with its 100th issue, has attained a circulation double that of a little more than a year ago. The classes are "going strong." On behalf of Plebeians everywhere who have "done their bit" towards these hopeful results, we beg to thank our friends for their congratulations.

From **George Barker** (S.W.M.F.).

One hundred, Not Out! That is "some" record for *The* magazine. I've had—and read, I believe—every number. Isn't that "Top Hole." Mags. may come and Mags. may go but the *Plebs* goes on for ever. At least, them's my sentiments.

The *Plebs* tells the workers what to do to shift the incubus off their backs. Also how to do it. May its circulation increase and increase!

From **A. Bellamy** (President, Nat. Union of Railwaymen).

I desire to offer my congratulations to the *Plebs* on its 100th birthday. Its work of attempting to educate, agitate, and organize industrial workers was never more needed. Many happy returns !

From **John Bryan** (of *The Call*).

Please accept my heartiest congratulations on the attainment of its 100th number by the *Plebs*, and my best wishes for its future. At present, the *Plebs* is the only theoretical Marxist organ in this country. That it should be so small, and should appear only once a month, is a melancholy indication of the condition of Socialist thought among our working-class. It is, however, a great thing that it exists at all, and that it finds so many keen readers.

There can be no two opinions about the good work which the *Plebs* has accomplished. A modern working-class movement can only be a Socialist movement—or cease to be a movement at all ; and a Socialist movement can only be sound if it is based on conscious Marxist lines. The *Plebs*, by trying to spread a knowledge of Marx's teaching among the British working-class, is thereby helping to lay the foundation of a sound working-class movement. May it have a still greater success in the future—may it become the chief theoretical organ of Socialism in these islands ! The times we live in are among the most terrible experienced by the human race ; but a new life is certain to be born out of them, and the *Plebs* will find in it a new source of vigour and usefulness.

From **Jack Cade** (of *Labour Leader*).

I think the English working-class will be the last working-class in Europe to become revolutionary. Radicalism and the belief in "all forces working together for Progress" have got too strong grip upon them. But if the English workers ever do rebel, their revolution will be largely due to the insistence of the *Plebs* upon the *fact* of the class-struggle and the *falsity* of all the "Progress" stunts.

From **G. D. H. Cole**.

I have the greatest pleasure in greeting the *Plebs* on its centenary. It stands for very many of the things for which I stand ; and our occasional differences in no way interfere with my appreciation of it. You will pardon me if I say that I think you serve as an excellent tonic to the W.E.A. ; and, as a staunch member of that body, I appreciate your assaults upon it. You strengthen the hands of those of us who would like to see the W.E.A. more militant and working-class. At the same time, may I wish you every success in your own work.

From **W. N. Ewer** (Author of *Five Souls*)

TO THE *PLEBS*.

How you've reached your hundredth number
Is to me a mystery :
Are our masters wrapped in slumber,
Are they blind, who do not see
That the truths you teach,
And the faith you preach,
Are far more deadly than T.N.T. ?

Why don't they go about to slay you ;
Why in the world don't they D.R.A. you ;
You who are making incessant war
On the trebly sacred Things That Are,
Spreading pernicious,
Highly seditious,
Rebellious doctrines near and far ?

May their folly continue—this then I wish you—
May their folly continue and lead them to spare
You and your like till that wonderful issue—
When the Red Flag flies in Trafalgar Square,
When the people awake,
And the tyrannies break,
And you proudly proclaim—"I have done my share."

From **Alexander Gossip** (B.S.P., and Socialist Sunday Schools).

A little bird has whispered in my ear that the 100th Birthday of the *Plebs* is near at hand, and I take this opportunity of wishing you a very happy birthday indeed, as we of the Young People's Movement are deeply interested in all who are engaged keeping the Red Flag flying, and we have kindly remembrances of numerous comrades from the Central Labour College who attended the Fulham School whilst studying at Penywern Road, and greatly assisted us in our lessons.

Whatever others may have thought, there was no doubt whatever in the minds of the comrades referred to above, as to the advisability and necessity of Socialist Schools for the young, and my own long struggle, hard and fierce at times, to get rid of the effects of early training on the usual orthodox lines, which spell disaster for everything for which the *Plebs* stands, will ever remain as an incentive to go on with the work in which we are engaged. More than ever are they required in these days of false teaching in the ordinary day schools, where initiative is discouraged and the seeds of a false Patriotism and Flunkeyism are diligently sown by the far-seeing enemy.

I venture to say that a good deal of your work is trying to get rid of preconceived ideas of a false system of Society imbibed in childhood days, work which must be done before your special work has the slightest chance of being successful. The ground has got to be cleared of weeds and undergrowth before one can expect a fruitful crop, but no true husbandman ever dreams of neglecting precautionary measures to avoid unnecessary weeding, to say nothing whatever of deliberately assisting in the sowing of tares in the virgin soil. The children must be taught to look at things from a working-class point of view if ever we are to have more than a small minority of men and women consciously working for a new and righteous system of Society. That is why I so heartily welcome Comrade Newbold's statement in your April issue.

From **George Lansbury** (Editor, *The Herald*).

I am glad to send this line of congratulation to all the friends responsible for the *Plebs*. I am glad you have been able to keep going so as to bring out your 100th number. I hope that you will live to bring out many more, and that between us all we shall go a long way towards helping to build the society of the future. You, and all reformers and revolutionists, have a long, hard road to hoe, but it will be all the easier the more there are of us to—with wholeheartedness and singleness of purpose—put our hands to the plough. You people who run the *Plebs* are amongst these who day in and day out keep the flag of true revolution flying. May it soon be the flag of victory!

From **Tom Mann**.

Permit me to join in sending sincere and hearty congratulations on the appearance of the 100th number of the *Plebs*. It is of real solid value to the Labour Movement, and is destined, I believe, to render an increasing service to all who realize that working-class advance is limited and retarded chiefly because of the absence of clearness of outlook. For the excellent work already achieved I tender my thanks to all responsible, and I hope to see the *Plebs* rapidly obtain a circulation befitting its real value.

From **W. Mellor** (Secretary, National Guilds League).

Accept my best wishes for the continued success of the *Plebs* Magazine and the Plebs League. More than ever there is need for *independence* of outlook and *independence* of action—the Magazine provides the one, the League will help to provide the other. Is it too much to hope that the advanced section of the Labour Movement will find common ground, both in Education and in Industry, and so be able "to fight the good fight" without unnecessary internal disputes? The Capitalists are united—only the workers cannot sink their minor differences in the one great end. I look to the Magazine and the League to keep the *essential* facts to the front.

From **J. T. Walton Newbold, M.A.**

The Plebs League has before it a period of unique opportunity to serve the interests of the Socialist Movement in this country. On every hand the defenders of Capitalism, avowed and unavowed, are springing up to bemuse and mislead the workers. The present governing class will fight with all the resources of science at its disposal, and will organize from top to bottom every one of its educational services for the better safeguarding of its class interests.

It is impossible to exaggerate the formidable character of the defences now being erected by the Capitalist State, the most powerful instrument of government in the history of the world. The proletariat will henceforth have to wage the class-struggle without allies. The bourgeoisie has joined the older forces of Reaction, to preserve the existing order. We are now looking ahead across an uncertain vista of years to the Social Revolution. Our comrades in every section of the Movement are becoming increasingly conscious of this, and however vaguely they appreciate the fact, are preparing to meet the new conditions. Study circles and classes in Industrial History and Economics are being formed all over the country, but up to the present there has been little co-ordination of effort.

The Plebs League offers to the members of these classes a means of common discussion and action. It welcomes them regardless of whether they belong to the I.L.P., the B.S.P., or the S.L.P. In its magazine they can thresh out their differences and find solutions to their problems. It will help them to draw up their syllabuses, to choose the right books to read at the right stage, and to avoid many a pitfall. The Plebs League rejoices to say that it is not "impartial." It is going to build up an educational system for the Socialist Movement of this country.

Comrades, I appeal to you, whether your interests lie in the I.L.P., the B.S.P. or the S.L.P., whether you are engaged in industrial or political propaganda, and especially do I say it to you in the Socialist Sunday Schools—come along and help us to make the Plebs League the great force for Socialist Unity, for Socialist Victory, that it promises to be.

From **Maurice B. Reckitt** (Editor, *The Church Socialist*).

Congratulations to the *Plebs* on reaching three figures—but it must not rest till its *circulation* reaches twice as many. The governing class long ago made the pretence of "educating its masters," but the workers will never be its masters till they *educate themselves*. Because this is the mission of the *Plebs*, and because it is almost the only "progressive" periodical which can be read for its own sake, and not merely as a duty, a Socialist editor wishes it the best of luck.

From the **Editor** of *The Socialist*.

The *Socialist* congratulates the *Plebs* on reaching its 100th issue. We desire also to compliment it on the most valuable work it has done for Marxism during its career. The success of the *Plebs* is the best reply to the army of superficial rhetoricians in the Labour movement who prate that Marxism is dead and has no influence so far as the growth of British Socialism is concerned. Excepting our own journal, the *Plebs* is the *only paper* in the British Socialist movement that we have been able to recommend to our readers on Marxian Socialism. Our late comrade Daniel De Leon, one of the greatest of Marxian scholars, frequently republished in the *New York Weekly People*, the organ of the S.L.P., articles from the *Plebs*. We have repeatedly reprinted in the *Socialist* contributions that have appeared in the *Plebs*, in order to assist Plebeians to fight the conspiracy of silence, which until the *Plebs* forced the issue, was the official attitude of the larger and better known papers of British Socialism. As Marxism becomes more powerful in this country, the *Plebs* will be surprised to find Labour papers and organizations becoming interested in its work. When the history of the growth of scientific Socialism in this country is written, the *Plebs* will receive due recognition for the valiant fight it put up against almost insuperable obstacles, many of which were thrown in its way by certain elements within the Socialist movement.

We hope you have overcome many of the financial difficulties that impeded your work in the early days. It was then, when the fight was most difficult, when friends were few and far between, that S.L.P.ers helped Plebeians in their work. To-day, when the future is bright for the *Plebs*, we offer our congratulations, knowing that we assisted when our service was appreciated. That the *Plebs* may continue to do good work in the future is the fervent wish of the *Socialist*.

From **Geo. J. Wardle, M.P.** (Editor, *Railway Review*).

I am glad to hear that the *Plebs* has reached its 100th issue. It is a brightly written, thought-provoking, and educational journal. One does not need always to agree with it to appreciate its candour and stimulating mission.

From **Our Oldest Reader** (?)—75 years young !

When I was a girl, *Reynolds'* was considered a very revolutionary organ. My mother was a great reader of it, and, as practically everyone in Scotland in those days was his neighbour's keeper, and reported any misdemeanour to the kirk session, her wicked ways were frowned upon by the ministry. But she was one of the outspoken sort, and though ministers gave her house a wide berth, whenever she saw one she would tackle him and engage him in debate ! So, naturally— I, being her daughter—like the *Plebs*. (We have moved since the *Reynolds'* days !). Best wishes for the future—the time when " Man to man the world o'er shall brithers be for a' that."

(Edinburgh).

From **Robert Williams** (Nat. Transport Workers' Federation).¹

I am glad that the *Plebs* has reached its 100th number and is doing well. There is more than enough room for all genuinely progressive literature. That great libertarian Socialist, William Morris, once said there were three things essential on the part of the working people before they could call themselves free. They required "the intelligence to conceive, the courage to will, and the power to compel" their own freedom. It seems to me that the *Plebs* is lending a vigorous hand. Good luck to you!

Enter Democratic Russia

The following notes do not, of course pretend to cover the ground of this all-important subject. Nevertheless, every Plebeian will welcome them as coming from an old friend. As the Bookshelf is unavoidably held over this month, may we take this opportunity of referring to the excellent articles on the Russian Revolution which have been appearing in the *Herald* (by H. N. Brailsford), the *Call*, and the *Socialist*.—Ed. *Plebs*.

THE Editor has demanded a few words from me for the *Plebs* 100th No., and has suggested a subject. The few words are herewith sent, but they will not be on the subject first suggested, for there is only one subject to me these days—the Russian Revolution. I do not claim for a moment any special knowledge of Russia or Russian conditions—and that is perhaps the best reason why I should write about it. These notes will necessarily be fragmentary, both on account of the very 'colossal-ness' of the upheaval now operating in Europe (one is almost parish-pumpy in thus limiting the effects of Armageddon) and also because of the contradictory aims and persons who represent the collectivity we know as Russia in Revolution.

The war has already wrought two enormous changes in the general outlook on two pre-war problems, viz., the Position of Women, and Russia. The relative importance of these changes I put in the order stated. The mass of material accumulating in the hands of our comrades on the former subject will or should be of great assistance, not only to the cause of Women, but in the larger question of general social relations for our propaganda after the war. Even the most conservative organs are not above commenting on the fixing of different scales of minimum wages for female and male in the various industries now demanding recruits as "vital trades;" and are arguing that women require, work for work, as much sustenance as men. This subject must however, be left for some more competent exponent and also one with better opportunities for the gathering and filing of data.

Russian affairs are the more spectacular at the moment, however, and—may one venture to say—the more immediately hopeful. I have no opportunity of exchanging opinions with mutual friends,

so I can only speak for myself when I say that whether the war realizes that ultimate result I had hoped for earlier, (i.e., the utter destruction of the military caste and ideals in Germany—and elsewhere) or results in an inconclusive peace, the “success” of this war is already achieved by the Russian Revolution. Why? Because already this new and overwhelming democratic factor has been evolved in Europe—nay the world. The Manifesto recently issued by the Petrograd Council of Workmen’s and Soldiers’ Deputies has a clear and unmistakable challenge to the Liberal bourgeoisie and the Socialists alike in Germany when it declared that the Liberal elements of the Central Powers may justifiably support a war against Russian Autocracy, *but can no longer do so against the triumphant Russian Democracy.*

Now I am not prepared to argue that the Revolution may not ultimately prove to be a *present* victory for the landed-manufacturing class; indeed it would be strange if it were not so, but even *that* would be well worth all the sacrifices of the war. The colossal nature of this change in mighty Russia—the only people in Europe, of real import, left, in all their primitive vigour, to carry on the fight for the social revolution, and having even nowadays the seed of old communistic association remaining—is almost beyond realization by any of us during these present days of stress, when the most persistent revolutionist among us must be distracted by immediate necessities, plus our anxiety for the safety of those actually engaged in the war. The mind is almost incapable of conceiving of the menace of Russia “to European democracies” changed to a menace “to European reactionaries.” Just now an inkling of the terror already dawning on the latter is seen by their recognition that the Petrograd Manifesto, already referred to, has specifically emphasized their determination to carry on a *defensive* war for the Fatherland and coupled that with a call to all democracies to unite *in the common interests*. The Petrograd special correspondent of the *D. Telegraph* (31-3-17) comments on this:—

The main point of view is clear. The parties that dominate the Council . . . stand for a war of defence, as opposed to a war of aggression . . . As to the concrete aims of the war, the simple repudiation of aggressive aims does not, apparently. . . mean the restoration of the *status quo* in Europe. In the same meeting in which the Council adopted its appeal to the peoples, *it unanimously adopted a message to the Polish people, expressing the hope that Poland would become an independent Democratic Republic.* But the establishment of a Polish Republic obviously involves the loss of Posen and Western Galicia by the Central Powers. . . . The denial of Imperialistic aggression does not exclude Irredentism, and as the Council expressly confirms the right of each nationality to self-determination, it cannot content itself with the present organization of Europe. *Some of its leaders, in fact, look forward to a new Europe, composed of free associations of free peoples:* in other words, a sort of United States of Europe. But evidently a great deal of hard thinking has still to be done in connection with the possibilities opened up by the Russian revolution and the further developments of the war.

One might continue quoting, but enough has been said to show that the exigencies of war have caused social ideas and principles to be generally discussed which are anathema to the leaders of the nations waging war for liberty. Have ever events contained a greater justification of Marx's dictum that the struggles of capitalism more and more tend to raise the social question as the one living question for solution in our social existence? One could only guess at the horror of a representative of one of the Free Countries waging the war against militarism and bureaucracy, were the Russian delegates to a Peace Conference to state that the one question of serious import to be decided was: "A guarantee from all the signatories for the granting of a Constitutional Government on the lines of that *already* promulgated by the Russian Provisional Government"—and that is only a little of the progress which may be hoped for (many years ahead perhaps) from the entrance of Democratic Russia into European affairs. Already the papers have generally remarked that the happenings in Russia *must* find their counterpart elsewhere—of course the moral has been pointed to the Central Empires, *but*—the "tale is told of thee, thou art the man."

Here I must conclude. It will probably be held that I am extremely optimistic and I shall be told "Nature (social or otherwise) does not make a leap." It may be so. I give thanks that the military needs of Russia has thrown the Army into the Revolutionary side of the scale, *but* I hope much from (1) the education in social subjects imparted, often at the sacrifice of life and liberty, by thousands of heroic revolutionaries, and (2) from that *social* instinct so deeply rooted in the Russian nature. Finally, Long Live the Russian Revolutionaries—and to us all "Sursum Corda;" for the Silver Lining is ahead!

(Somewhere in France, April, 1917).

G. S.

May, 1917.

There was no joy in the coming Spring—
 It seemed that Winter only had begun;
 No happy promise did the dull days bring,
 The budding trees were slow to feel the sun.
This Spring held menace and an awful dread,
 Winter was with us still, and all its pain,
 And numbing thoughts of the dear dead
 To whom no Spring would ever speak again.
 Then, in the East, a sudden light appeared.
 Russia is free! Lift up your drooping eyes!
 Never was light more dreaded or more feared—
 Lift up your hearts—nor heed *our* troubled skies.
 Winter has gone and now our doubts have ceased;
 We have a message, and a light to shed,
 A message echoing ever from the East—
 "Who die for Liberty, they are not dead!"

WINIFRED HORRABIN.

The Struggle for Iron Ore

THE development of modern industry has been such that the whole complex of peaceful production whereon civilisation depends, as well as the military and naval supply trades, demand almost unlimited reserves of minerals, more particularly of iron and coal. Since these supplies are fixed in location and can be neither cultivated nor renewed there enters into the problem an element of monopoly which necessitates their careful conservation by those whose demand upon them is indefinitely prolonged. Unhappily, the profitably workable ironstone supplies of the European nations, now in the fore-front of industry and politics, are in grave danger of becoming almost entirely depleted within the near future. Not only so, but variety of ores is not accompanied by volume of supply of different grades and qualities. This condition of affairs gravely menaces national security as well as industrial prosperity and rallies to the defence of the metallurgical interests the whole material and sentimental support of the threatened community.

That is precisely what makes the future allocation of the Moselle Valley such a vital issue alike to France and Germany, an issue which has come, increasingly, to dominate their several policies of expansion. It is nothing short of a tragedy that France should have come to rely more and more for her native ore supplies on the district lying on her eastern frontier, and that, at the same time, German metallurgical capitalism should have, of necessity, pressed forward towards the Lorraine border.

Whilst the region of the Rhineland and the Siegen is the historic home of the steel manufacture of Germany and of her mineral and metallurgical industries, the producers of Essen, Dusseldorf, Elberfeld and neighbouring centres have, during the last generation, come to rely, for the satisfaction of their enormous demands, upon the collieries of the Saar and the ore fields of the Moselle and of Luxemburg. Similarly, the iron and steel works of Central France have found the restricted supplies of the region around St. Etienne, Firminy, Commentry, and Le Creusôt inadequate to meet their more extended requirements and have, in consequence, developed the virgin resources of Longwy and Briey. As generally happens in economic evolution, those districts which, formerly, were devoted to the treatment of the raw material have, to-day, become specialised in the working of the metal into mechanical and chemical manufactures. The iron-founding and steel-working industries of France and Germany which first developed upon the long operated coal and iron lands of the Haute-Loire and Rhenish-Westphalia have since given place to engineering works and finished manu-



Studies in Imperialism

III.—LORRAINE

Our map, which illustrates Comrade Newbold's article, shows the iron and coal fields of Lorraine—that Debateable Land which the development of modern Capitalism has once more made a vital issue between France and Germany. The coal fields of the Saar are shown; the iron fields of Longwy and Briey, situated just where the frontiers of Belgium, Luxembourg, France and Germany meet; and the iron fields of Meurthe-et-Moselle, lying but a few miles within the French border. Only a few of the principal works and mines are indicated, anything like a complete map being, of course, impossible on this small scale.

J.F.H.

factures, and betaken themselves to the locations where new sources of ore supply are to be found—in Luxemburg and on either side of the frontier in Lorraine.

For fully half a century the enormous mineral wealth of these areas has been known to mineralogists, and contemporary technical authorities recognised the potential gravity of the transfer of Lorraine from France to Germany in 1871.

The Journal of the Iron and Steel Institute then remarked —

The consequences of the cession of Alsace and Lorraine to the German Empire will be to diminish the iron-producing capacities of France about one-third of what they have hitherto been, since of the entire eastern iron district the Longwy basin alone is all that has remained to France About three-fourths of the iron production of the old French department of the Moselle will now be diverted to the Zollverein. . . . the new boundary line places in the latter country, with the exception of the Longwy group of iron-mines, all the rich deposits of oolitic iron-stone in the Moselle and the Meurthe (1871. Vol. II. p. 110.)

Indeed, one of the German boundary commissioners was a mining engineer who had made a special study and survey of this area a few years before.

In 1873, Schneider-Creusôt purchased great ore-mines in Algeria, whilst Henckel von Donnersmarck, the Silesian Iron-King, bought Dupont and Dreyfus' Lorraine Forges for 15,000,000 francs. The exhaustion of Germany's haematite ores and the inadequacy of her other native sources of supply drove her iron masters to develop Lorraine and the Duchy of Luxemburg, which was an integral part of the Zollverein,* although politically independent.

About 1878, the Thomas process of dephosphorising iron, and the Siemens method of treating steel, made available the heavily phosphorescent iron-stone of these regions for steel production and liberated the German industry from its dependence on British pig-iron and Spanish and Algerian ores. Between 1878 and 1882, the output of Luxenburg ores rose 75% and, in the next decade, the German production of pig-iron increased 46% and of steel, 83%. Between 1884 and 1898, the output of German pig-iron rose more than 105%. For almost the whole of its native ore, Germany relied on Lorraine and Luxemburg. Between 1895 and 1905, an enormous volume of capital flowed from the Rhineland into this region, opening up extensive ore mines and erecting blast furnaces and steel producing plants.

Driven westwards by the imperative need of obtaining new ore supplies as well as by the attractive prospect of high profits from the easily operated mines of Briey, the German steel syndicates pressed towards the frontier and, in certain cases, over-stepped it. By 1904, they were importing extensively from France as well

* The German customs union.

as from Sweden and Spain. To maintain their colossal production of steel they turned, now in this direction and now in that, in search of future sources and reserves. The formation of the *Stahlwerks Verband* about this time increased the power of the German producers and systematised their exploitations. The Swedish supplies, on which the Silesian interests have needed to rely in more recent times and on which the Moravian and Bohemian works of Austria-Hungary have drawn so heavily, have latterly been threatened by the developments of submarine warfare and the re-construction of the Russian Baltic Fleet. Spanish supplies were unreliable so soon as war with Britain became one of the probabilities of foreign relationships.

During the last ten or fifteen years one great steel producer after another purchased mines or mining concessions in Lorraine and the *Meurthe-et-Moselle*, acquired shares in blast furnaces and works on both sides of the frontier, and threatened France and French interests with financial expropriation and the possibility of political pressure to achieve economic ambitions.

Meanwhile the French engineering and armament firms had discovered the riches of Briey and the neighbourhood, and were hastening to supplement their worked-out native mines and their Algerian supplies by these, apparently, inexhaustible reserves. *Schneider-Creusôt*, apart from their over-sea mines, latterly obtained the whole of their ores from Lorraine. The *Chatillon-Commentry Co.* had erected mighty steel works at *Neuves-Maisons*, near Nancy in 1900, and acquired mines at *Maron-Val-de-Fer*. The *St. Chamond Steel Co.* (*La Société de la Marine et de Chemins de Fer*) owned the great *Homécourt Mines*, on the frontier to the south-east of Briey, producing 1,841,000 tons of ore per annum.

The exhaustion of other workings elsewhere in France and the exposed situation of their chief native supplies practically determined the attitude of the three largest armament corporations of the Republic towards the Moroccan policy of the Government. Neither France nor her firms could regard with equanimity a state of affairs so menacing to national security and economic prosperity. They could not remain content to draw their reserves from Spanish or Italian territory, either at *Bilbao* or in *Sardinia* or *Elba*. If *Algeria* could not assure adequate supplies of ore, then they must stake out a more or less exclusive claim to the rich lodes of *South Morocco*. It is a remarkable fact that the French effort to secure *Morocco* was so largely bound up with the question of Moroccan mining rights, and that the armament firms of France and Germany played so conspicuous a part in the long struggle. Also, that the more German metallurgical capital poured into Lorraine the more the French imperialists laboured to keep alive the idea of the *Revenge* and to fasten their hold upon *Morocco*.

In 1912, the Krupp and Gelsenkirchen Iron and Coke Co. as well as the Guttehoffnungshütte and Thyssen were erecting new works and acquiring new sites in the neighbourhood of the frontier. At the time, "nothing was known as to their intended use" in the case of those of Krupp and the Guttehoffnungshütte, whilst the Gelsenkirchen Co. stated of their Adolf-Emil Steel Works at Esch (four miles from the frontier) that they were intended "to obviate the inconveniences arising from the distance hitherto separating the blast furnaces from the steel works." This new works was in the Duchy of Luxemburg and was built on a 500 acre site "which affords ample space for extension." This company had another works only a mile away from the frontier whilst the Deutsche-Luxemburg had an enormous plant within three miles, and Thyssen spent £4,000,000 on a steel plant twelve miles from the frontier, close to Metz.

When war broke out the Germans hurriedly seized Luxemburg, occupied Longwy and Briey, and turned the whole capacity of this enormously productive area on to the manufacture of munitions. The fact that the Gelsenkirchen Co. had a production of steel three times that of Schneider, and that Briey could supply 30,000,000 tons of ore a year gives some idea of the munition strength of Germany in war-time, when she holds in her possession the coal fields of Belgium and Northern France, and the engineering works of Liège, Antwerp, Charleroi, Maubeuge and Lille.

Since the war broke out the German annexationists, who include the Central Union of German Manufacturers, and the Union of the Middle Classes of the Empire, have issued a confidential memorandum, published in *l'Humanité* and re-produced in the *Manchester Guardian* demanding:—

the annexation of the mining area of the Meurthe-et-Moselle, as well as the French coal areas in the departments of the Nord and the Pas-de-Calais.

The memorandum went on to state:—

The monthly output of pig-iron in Germany has risen since August 1914, to a million tons—i.e., it has almost doubled. The monthly output of steel is more than a million tons. And yet there is no superfluity of iron or steel, rather a deficit. . . . For shells of grey metal alone, the superior substitutes for rifled shells and shells of cast steel, at least 4,000 tons per day of pig-iron have been used. . . . If the production of cast iron since last August (1914) it would have been impossible to continue the war. Oolitic iron-ore, the primary element for the manufacture of iron and steel, is assuming increasing importance for only this mineral is being found in Germany in increasing quantity. The production of the other home areas is extremely limited, and importation from overseas, even from Sweden, is rendered so difficult that in many districts, even apart from Luxemburg and Lorraine, oolitic iron represents 60 per cent. or so of the production of pig-iron and steel. . . the security of the German Empire in a future war demands the possession of all the deposits of oolitic iron ore, including the fortresses of Longwy and Verdun, without which these deposits could not be defended.

The future security of the German Empire, and of an industrial community whose prosperity reposes on iron and steel, explains the furious intensity of the German onslaught upon Verdun, and the vigorous offensive at the beginning of the war. At the same time the possession of these oolitic ore fields, and the gigantic productive capacity of the steel works which they supply, makes evident the source of German munitions strength.

To understand this war and many of its immediate and contributory causes it is necessary to know something of the struggle for minerals which has set the German metallurgical syndicates, and the War Machine which relies thereon, marching West and East.

J. T. WALTON NEWBOLD.

To Our Critics

IN many respects Humanity progresses because of its past errors and blunders. This may seem a paradox. But a paradox is a truth standing on its head and waving its legs, and thereby creating attention. If the errors of the Past are carefully studied, if they are used in the Present as a means to safeguard the Future, then from past defeat victory may be torn. The errors of the Past cry to the very skies lest they be repeated. And we moderns are wise in the measure that we study the cause of past failures and determine they shall not be repeated. Only so can Humanity progress through error, only in this way may failure ensure success. Thus, under certain conditions, it may be said that nothing succeeds like failure. Hence Marx and Engels modified certain important points in the *Communist Manifesto* after the Paris Commune had made them wiser in 1871 than they had been in 1848. To admit error is to announce that one has grown wiser. And it also demonstrates honesty. The modern working-class movement must be highly self-critical; it must discard ideas, theories, and tactics which new conditions prove to be inadequate, or dangerous. By doing this, Labour will reveal its inner strength, for it requires the heroic fibre to admit error. Far better that *we* find it and become stronger, than that the *enemy* discovers it and because of it overwhelms and defeats us. After two years of war, after the events in Russia, we can see things much more clearly than we could before. We have passed through a time of great intensity. And, Time, says Marx, is the womb of social development.

Many of the sentimentalists were amazed at how little Socialists accomplished when the war broke out. And even now many of them are unable to perceive the grave defects that led to the failure

of Internationalism, when the European workers proceeded to blow each other "into bundles of bloody rags," as Mr. Brimstone Churchill put it. We have listened to men in the movement who were too superior to need the aid of Marx; men, who, like Mr. P. Snowden, have declared that a study of Marx left them *cold*. And we have seen some of them spin new theories as weirdly fantastic as they were ignorantly dangerous. What if a study of Marx did leave them *cold*? That is exactly the state of mind that a scientific study should produce—and it might prevent them landing the workers into hot water. Historical evidence proves that the "hot" heads have been dangerous in the measure that they have been able to set aside the counsels of the wiser and *cooler* headed. Marxians have listened patiently to critics like Boehm Bawerk, and have scuttled them; but they at least brought a little logic (ever so little, let it be said), to justify their criticism. It would seem, however, that in the Labour Movement certain "experts," in the absence of logic, intend to use a thermometer to test the Marxian theory! Can it be that their critical faculty is at zero?

We have heard other critics, unable to read the lessons that the war has taught, and disregarding the theories of Marx, contend that in future all effort must be concentrated on "changing the heart." Now no-one will deny that a knowledge of physiology is useful, even if not the *best* science for interpreting the social problem. . . . But what do they *mean* by "changing the heart?" It is here we come to the crux of the whole question. The high-browed anti-Marxians, who so disdainfully reject Marxism, cannot elaborate a theory without developing a melancholy chain of meaningless abstractions surpassing all human understanding. They scoff at the need for definitions which Marxians insist upon for the study of social phenomena. It is not only Marxism that insists upon the need for carefully defined terms; every scientific method insists upon it. And Marxism urges that terms be explicitly stated because it is a scientific method of analysing the evolution of society. Students of the British Labour Movement may remember how Mr. R. MacDonald tearfully confessed that his party had mistaken State Socialism for the real article. But, to his credit let it be stated, he put his finger on the principal source of the tragic error by admitting "we have not always been careful to avoid *confusion in the words we have used*" (*Labour Leader*, August 7th, 1916). There can be no finer sight in the eyes of the gods than a slave in revolt, or the detection and destruction of error. But what is the use of realising a mistake if immediate steps are not taken to prevent its repetition? Psychology teaches that conscious and deliberate inconsistency is a form of mental immorality and censure must be forthcoming in face of the fact that, since the above confession was made, Mr. MacDonald has not mended the error of his ways, nor has his Party coherently defined what it means by

the State, the Class-Struggle, etc. It is true that some "experts" have drawn up a manifesto on the State, but even I.L.Pers look upon it as a standing joke against the Party. Unless fallacy is uprooted mental confusion and sheer helplessness must prevail.

And then there was the sad case of a well-known cultivator of roses who gloried in the fact that he was ignorant of economic theory. Mr. Blatchford set out to discuss a complex economic system, i.e., Capitalism, but refused to analyse its fundamental laws, or the economic forces by which alone it could be understood or explained. It was as futile to appeal to him as it was to exhort the Czar of Russia to study social science. And now both the Czar and Blatchford have become interested in gardens and flowers. A most interesting and delightful study for reactionaries retired from business! From the bottom of our generous hearts we wish them success and happiness—so long as they stay there!

The war has proved that eloquent phrases cannot take the place of a well educated and organized working class. The largest section of the British Labour Movement ignored Marxism because it was the "Continental" form of Socialism. And even now many of them fail to distinguish between Mr. Morel's U.D.C. commercial pacificism and the anti-militarism of Marxian Socialism. The confusion existing among them regarding Capitalism is responsible for an ignorance that seems almost encyclopaedic. The anti-Marxians fail to recognise that anti-militarism is not so much a weapon *against war* as a power against the *Capitalist system*. Hence in another direction, their efforts are not directed against *Capitalism per se*, but they have elaborated some wonderful method for destroying poverty. They are unable to grasp the law of causation.

The war has shewn that the failure of the International was in reality a failure to understand all that *Capitalism* means and stands for. Instead of a working-class organization on the industrial field, inspired by an international working-class conception, we had a motley number of units filled with suspicion regarding workers in other parts of the labour process. Instead of elections having been used to propagate Socialism, they were used to get ambitious gentlemen into Parliament, who have to be apologised for on the grounds that they do not represent Socialism but the "general mass of the electorate." Instead of a Socialism drilled for action, we see the largest representative body wallowing contentedly in emotional rhetoric.

What then, from the Plebeian standpoint, is the first step towards setting Socialism in this country upon its feet? It must be organized education! In every village and town and city classes must be formed to *study Capitalism*, and grasp what we are really up against. Let reading circles be formed, even if only to read penny pamphlets like Marx's *Wage-Labour and Capital*, or the more elementary *What means this Strike?* by De Leon. The pamphlets of De Leon

are as elementary as our friend Newbold could desire. These to be followed by Craik's *Modern Working-class Movement*. Our winter classes have just finished. Let it be part of the summer work to seek ways and means of extending the influence of the classes for next winter. We are neither mere theorists nor armchair philosophers; we are the most energetic band of educators in this country. In the movement generally there has been plenty of activity, but it has been mainly misapplied energy. *Action is nothing unless intelligently applied. And clear thinking must precede intelligent action.* There is a story told of a strong man vainly struggling with a heavy case in a doorway. An even stronger chap came along and offered to assist. After ten minutes of su, er-haman pushing and shoving the stranger angrily exclaimed that he couldn't get the case in the doorway. "In"? shouted the other, "Why, good Gawd, you've been shoving the wrong way; I want the blessed thing out!" We can best push when we all know that we are pushing in the same direction. Education, Marxian education, supplies the mental energy which, applied to details of organization, will give the workers the requisite driving force against Capitalism.

These are a few of the things the war has taught us. Thus out of error and mistakes we find the means to see the way clear before us; and out of blunders we can train and discipline ourselves to hew our way to freedom. Organize that we may educate. Educate that we may organize! There is no other way.

W. P.

IMPORTANT.

TO C.L.C. CLASS SECRETARIES AND PLEBS LEAGUE ORGANIZERS.

The Executive is anxious that this year's Meet should "get to business." We want, if possible, a really representative gathering, and a full agenda. The question of the reorganization of the League needs detailed discussion, and our plans for the future must be well and truly laid. Will Class Secretaries, Organizers, &c., bring the matter of forwarding resolutions (and delegates) to the Meet, before their supporters, *now*. Will individual Plebeians send in suggestions to the Executive? Between now and August we shall then be able to draw up an agenda, &c., which will ensure this year's Meet being one of especial importance to all Plebeians.

REGRETS.—Owing to the pressure on our space this month, we are compelled to hold over the second instalment of W. H. Mainwaring's translation, "The Luddite Movement"; as well as "News of the Movement" (including reports from Edinburgh, Dowlais, the Tyne, and Birmingham) and the *Plebs* Bookshelf. Ablett's reply to W. N. Ewer, on "Guildsmen and the State," will also appear next month.

PLEBS POSTCARDS.—The drawing of Marx on p. 2 of our cover this month is obtainable as a postcard—we hope to add other portraits to the series later. Price 1d. each, or 8d. for 12. All "profits" to the *Plebs* Literature Fund.

“As to Politics”

ABLETT does not favour a prolonged controversy on this subject, and thinks that *Plebs* readers share this view. There I think he is mistaken. A fairly wide personal contact with Plebeians has convinced me that there is a growing demand for discussion of the political question. However, I can very easily accommodate Ablett's desire for brevity in the first place, because my present position makes literary work difficult, and, secondly, because the Ablettian critical method is well adapted to cut controversy short.

In order to make some show for his claim that I have begged the question Ablett reels off seven reasons which he alleges constitute my case in favour of political action. I see no reason why he should have stopped at seven, unless he has lately come under the influence of the occult. He might as well have doubled the number, and then the case against me would have been still more irresistible. For Ablett knows perfectly well that my arguments are not contained in the seven sentences which he sets out as statement of my reasons. He knows, for example, that the reference to the scaffolding of a house was not put forward as a reason for political organization, but as an illustration of my argument that there was no such contradiction as he affirmed between the necessity for political action on the part of the workers in capitalist society, and the disappearance of that necessity with the disappearance of capitalist society. He is quite well aware that his (3) and (4) are not adequate statements of my reasons. As for (5) that is obviously Ablett's opinion, and the "because" has, therefore, no business to be where it is; while he must again be quite conscious that the paragraph referred to under his (7) was never intended as a proof of the necessity for political action, but was just an epitome of his history in relation to the question, together with an anticipation of his future attitude. I am right in my history; I may be wrong in my prophecy. But it was founded on good materialist grounds.

Of course, Ablett's method of "stating" his opponent's case is a good deal easier than replying to it. The poverty of my case is finally signalled by a pun which, let us charitably assume, was evolved at the close of a busy day. The believers in "direct action" may well be brief. Brevity of the Ablett sort is an inherent necessity in the advocacy of an impossible theory.

It is evident that Ablett thinks of the industrial and the political as if they existed, so far as workers are concerned, independently of one another. As a result, he concludes that it is possible for the working-class to develop industrial organization as if the political super structure did not exist. When industrial organization has reached the degree of power capable of establishing the new society, it will proceed to overturn the political superstructure. This necromancy is worked by first supposing that what really exists does not exist, and then supposing the existence of something that in reality does not exist. Finally, what was supposed to be non-existent is put out of existence by that which was supposed into existence. The age of miracles is not dead! Direct action is simply the modern form of the ancient wonder-working. Water can still be turned into wine!

No more than water can be directly (or even "briefly") turned into wine, can the working-class turn economic weakness into full economic power, without acquiring control of that political machinery which, in the hands of the capitalist class, is directed to prevent them from acquiring economic power. One may logically distinguish the political character of society from its industrial character. But they must not be torn out of their inseparable connection. Society to-day is simultaneously industrial and political. The

political is the *general* organization which is dictated by the common need of all the private owners of industry—the need to protect the private appropriation of the products of industry. It is impossible for the workers as a class to develop industrially the power to overthrow private ownership of industry, to overthrow it *generally*, without at the same time making themselves masters of the general organization which functions for the maintenance of private ownership. Various bodies of industrial workers may secure particular concessions from time to time, a rise in wages here, some change in the form of paying wages there, without political action. But the task of eliminating the *form* of wage-labour in general, can not be carried through in that way. The industrial power to raise wages is not identical with the power to raze the wage-system to the ground. When Ablett speaks of “our own experience” in favour of purely industrial action, he is thinking of what are after all local agitations with particular and immediate aims. “Our experience” does show that the political backwardness and failures, which unfortunately the anti-political school look at too “briefly,” are but the proofs of economic weakness.

Apathy and indifference are the obstacles to a well organized working-class, says Ablett. I agree. He, however, hopes to get rid of this apathy (indeed it is “easier,” according to him) by postulating for the workers a line of action which certainly does not contribute to the development of class consciousness. Political action is more difficult than industrial action carried on by the Unions for improvements in conditions. It requires more intelligence, because it covers the whole complex field of class-relations. The workers will never be masters of their life until they acquire that intelligence; and they cannot acquire it without practical participation in that field. An economically powerful class that is not at the same time politically powerful deserves to be classified with fires that do not burn and lights that do not shine.

I tried to show in my first reply to Ablett’s criticism that the development of Industrial Unionism made the conquest of political power more imperative. It at the same time provides for a higher and more effective form of political action. The industrial unification which must result in every territorial constituency will, for the nebulous and indefinite “body of citizens,” substitute the industrially organized workers. The industrial basis will assert itself ever the territorial basis in every constituency, and the real connection between politics and economics become ever more evident.

Dear Ablett—When *you* have really tried to deal with my answer it will not be necessary for you to continue asking the same question.

W.W.C.

Mr. Mactavish and the Plebs League

(We are anxious—as, we are certain, are all our readers—that discussion of the differences between the W.E.A. and the Plebs League should be concerned with principles, not personalities. Our note last month on the Newcastle W.E.A. Conference necessarily—and deliberately—touched on the latter. We have received the following letter from Mr. Mactavish, and have asked our comrade Ebby Edwards to reply to it. We leave the matter there, without further comment—only remarking that we look forward to the publication of Mr. Mactavish’s pamphlet, replying to Ebby Edwards’ speech, with very real interest.—Ed., *Plebs*).

Sir,—In your last issue it is reported that, at the W.E.A. Conference held at Newcastle on Feb. 24th, I stated that “Mr. Edwards was here representing

the Plebs League," and that Mr. Straker (Northumberland Miners) corrected me, &c. Will you kindly permit me a little space to place the facts before your readers ?

At a W.E.A. Conference on Educational Reconstruction held at Newcastle, October 14th, 1916, it was agreed, on the motion of Mr. Edwards, to adjourn the discussion of a resolution dealing with the work of the W.E.A. to a future Conference, to permit of more time being given to its discussion. As members in our North Eastern District expressed the wish that the differences between the educational principles and methods of the Plebs League and the W.E.A. should be frankly discussed at the adjourned Conference, I agreed to be present, on the understanding that Mr. Edwards should be given sufficient time to state his case for the Plebs, and that I should be granted the same time to reply.

Previous to the Conference Mr. Edwards was informed that, while other delegates were to be limited to speeches of a few minutes, he would be allowed to speak for 15 minutes as representing the Plebs. But although Mr. Edwards availed himself of the special privilege granted him by making a fifteen minutes' speech in which he not only criticised the W.E.A. but requested delegates present to invite their Branches to join the body he was associated with, he carefully refrained from using the word "Plebs." It was because of this diffidence that it became necessary for me to emphasise the fact that he represented the Plebs' League. As a result of his reticence delegates, who ought to have left the Conference well-informed as to what the differences between the Plebs' League and W.E.A. are, left it befogged ; some of them, no doubt, believing that I had taken an unfair advantage of Mr. Edwards.

I am pleased to know that his speech has been issued in leaflet form. If he will forward me a copy I will undertake to embody it in a small pamphlet containing my reply. No member of the Plebs' League is more desirous than I that the organized Labour Movement should clearly understand our differences.

Yours fraternally, J. M. MACTAVISH,

(April 10th, 1917.)

(General Secretary, W.E.A.).

EBBY EDWARDS' REPLY.

Sir,—Without contradicting the statements which he quotes as being reported in your last issue, Mr. Mactavish writes to justify his attitude at the recent W.E.A. Conference at Newcastle. Kindly allow me, in the interests of fair play, to examine his letter.

His letter contains three points :—

- (1) That I moved the adjournment of a previous Conference, to secure a full discussion of *W.E.A. principles*.
- (2) That W.E.A. members in the N.E. District were anxious that the principles and methods of their organization *and the Plebs League* should be discussed at the adjourned Conference.
- (3) That previous to the Conference I was informed that while other delegates were to be limited to speeches of a few minutes, I would be allowed 15 minutes.

Point (1) This is perfectly true; but it is also true that Mr. Mactavish opposed the adjournment, declaring that the resolution should be put without discussion. He failed to carry the Conference.

Point (2) As this was purely an "inner circle" idea of the W.E.A. Executive, I had no knowledge of their good intentions.

Point (3) This is untrue. After I was in the Conference, the District Secretary (Mrs. Trevena) came to me and said, "If you are going to speak, Mr. Mactavish wants you to mention that you are speaking for the Plebs League." I enquired the reason and was met simply by the statement that it was the request of Mr. Mactavish. As I was representing the Miners' Executive, and as the resolution had nothing to do with the Plebs League, I declined to accede to the request.

On my rising to oppose the resolution, the Chairman intimated that if there was to be opposition, he would ask the Conference to extend the time limit. This was granted, and I proceeded.

Mr. Mactavish, instead of answering my arguments, immediately set out in his reply to misrepresent and ridicule the Plebs League. On a point of order, I objected to this, and informed the Conference that if there was a desire on Mr. Mactavish's part for a discussion on the work of the Plebs, I had no doubt such could be arranged. As he again proceeded to discuss the Plebs League, Mr. Straker rose and objected. Mr. Mactavish again continued in the same strain, and then Councillor W. Locke (who assured the Conference he had no sympathy with the Plebs League) objected. So ended the Mactavish argument.

Your readers are informed that on account of *my reticence* delegates left the conference befogged! The recent affiliations to the North of England Branch of the C.L.C. are sufficient answer to that amusing statement. The very fact that Mr. Mactavish now asks for a leaflet containing a statement of our case suggests that he has awakened to his duty as the guardian of W.E.A. interests. I wish him well in his task.

Yours fraternally, EBBY EDWARDS.

(April 14th, 1917).

Ebby Edwards' 4pp. leaflet, "A Plea for Real Working-Class Education," is obtainable (price 4/- per 100, post paid) from Sec., C.L.C. Branch, Socialist Society Rooms, Royal Arcade, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne. Class-Secretaries, please note.

MARXISM and the WAR.

Read THE CALL

The International Socialist Weekly.

THURSDAYS - ONE PENNY.

ALSO Essays in Socialism and War

By John Bryan.

Price One Penny. Post free, Three Half-Pence.

British Socialist Party, 21a Maiden Lane, Strand, London, W.C. 2

Correspondence

THE WORK BEFORE THE PLEBS.

Sir,—Comrade Newbold's exhilarating article was a tonic. In this dreary winter of our discontent, with frosts at night and snow squalls in the day ; with grim-visaged War glowering all the time with ogrimish eyes on all the sons of Liberty ; with dwindling classes and tutors in the grip of the military machine ; Plebeians who are in the Valley of Humiliation, or climbing the Hill Difficulty, or in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, need a refreshing draught of enthusiasm and hope. Newbold generously holds out to them his brimming cup of zeal. I for one am grateful for his welcome stimulant. The smoke of battle clears, and I see away in the distance the Delectable Mountains. My dreams of humanity under Socialism revive, and I am ready again to "jog on, jog on the footpath way."

It is in such a mood that I desire to add a few suggestions of my own to those of Newbold's on the work before the *Plebs*. I heartily agree with him as to the necessity of having short text-books on particular developments of economic history in which the Marxian method will be applied as Craik has so skilfully handled it in his *Modern Working-Class Movement*. I share his hope that we shall soon see Socialist Sunday Schools, Socialist "Young Citizens," and Plebs League Classes springing up in all our great industrial centres.

But I desire more than this. I want Sunday evening Marxian lectures, Marxian clubs, Marxian book-stores and lending libraries, and a Marxian daily press. The Plebs League, by uniting on the educational plane Marxists who may differ somewhat on political and industrial grounds, would, I venture to think, be able eventually to carry out these beneficial educational and social activities. Comrades whose faith in Socialism has been strengthened and deepened by their Marxist studies will, I am sure, agree with me that we should seek to spread Marxist literature far and wide. It is thus that we can best confound the enemy and drive out of our ranks the traitor, the fakir, the reformer, and the intellectual bletherer, (the H. G. Wells). I pin all my faith to our literature because I believe it is the soul of our movement as the class struggle is its body.

I therefore cannot agree with Newbold's opinion that "the literature of the S.L.P. and the text-books of the Plebs League are too purely theoretical and advanced for beginners." As regards the former surely Newbold cannot have read much of it or he would not have made such a blunder as to regard the lucid and comprehensive expositions of Socialist theory and practice set forth in the De Leon pamphlets "as being too purely theoretical and advanced for beginners." Any proletarian with average intelligence could understand them. It is these masterly, witty propagandist pamphlets which have spread the idea of Industrial Unionism throughout the English speaking countries. Then the S.L.P. Kautsky pamphlets *The Working-Class*, *The Capitalist Class*,¹ *The Class Struggle*, and *The Socialist Republic* are as invaluable from an educational point of view as they're easy to grasp. I have found, too,

that the scientific works of Marx and Engels, and other Marxian scholars which the S.L.P. and the Central Labour College supply, are eagerly bought, or borrowed from the lending library, by students attending our Social Science Class. These students are of course, proletarians, who have "enjoyed" but the ordinary Council School education. They follow a variety of occupations—from clerks to navvies! No doubt the tuition given them by our tutor, comrade W. Paul of the S.L.P., has helped them to better understand the works they have bought or borrowed. But the point is that they *did* read them, and with profit to themselves. In my opinion we cannot have too much Marxian literature, and I hope the day is not far distant when we shall be able to obtain from an English publisher the books which we are now obliged to obtain either from the S.L.P. Press of New York or from Kerr & Co., of Chicago. May I suggest that this is another enterprise which the Plebs League might well take in hand?

Birmingham.

Yours FRED SILVESTER.

THE "LUDDITES."

Sir,—I was very interested in Mainwaring's translation of *The Luddite Movement* in your last issue. I may say I have on my bookshelf—and should not like to part with—*The Risings of the Luddites*, by Frank Peel. This was published by John Hartley, Brighouse, in 1895. I don't know the price, as my copy is a second-hand one purchased from a Bradford bookseller for 3/-. The story as written by Peel is, however, now appearing serially in the *Yorkshire Factory Times*. There are a few copies still to be picked up from second-hand bookshops, as I have come across one here and there.

Two other books, in fiction form, have been written round the same incidents depicted in Peel's book, and make very interesting reading and give a realistic insight into the conditions of things working-class in Yorkshire Luddite districts at that time. One is entitled *Ben O' Bill's, The Luddite*, by D. E. F. Sykes (Worker Press, Huddersfield, 1/-). It may be out of print now, but that good *Plebs* reader, Jess Townend, of 1, Market Walk, Huddersfield, would no doubt be able to pick it up from one or other of the booksellers in the town if desired to do so. The other one is hardly as sympathetically written, but still well worth perusing, because it confirms the existence of the bad economic conditions which were responsible for the risings. It is entitled *In the Trail of the Luddites*, by Alfred Colbeck, (Religious Tract Society, 1/-). It is a bit "goody" and "namby pamby"—as one might guess, coming from the source it does; but the local colour is good.

These three books and Gammage's *Chartism* give us an idea what our forefathers had to go through in the early years of the 19th century in textile districts.

Charlotte Bronte's *Shirley* and Mrs. Gaskell's *Mary Barton* also fill the bill—delineate the past, and make us renew our pledges to fight oppression and injustice more keenly than before.

Yours truly, JOE WALKER.

We have sold right out of March and April (1917) issues. If any reader has surplus copies we should be very glad if he would let us have them.

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).

Subscriptions (payable in advance): six months 1/3, Yearly 2/6.

P.O.'s TO BE FORWARDED TO

GEO. MELHUISE, Treasurer,

127 Hamlet Gardens,

Ravenscourt Park, London, W. 6

The "Plebs" League

(Organ: "PLEBS" MAGAZINE, Published Monthly,
Price 2d.)

Executive and Officers of "Plebs" League:

SECRETARY

MRS. W. HORRABIN

TREASURER

GEO. MELHUISE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MRS. W. HORRABIN, 127 Hamlet Gardens, Ravenscourt Park,
London, W. 6

J. F. HORRABIN, " " " " "

F. JACKSON, 25 Black Lion Lane, Hammersmith, London, W.

B. S. MACKAY, 28 Oxford Gardens, Notting Hill, London, W.

G. MELHUISE, 10, Mount Pleasant, Norwich.

J. V. WILLS, 10 Layard Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.

ORGANIZERS

NOAH ABLETT, 44 Glanville Street, Mardy, Glam.

G. W. BROWN, 112 Bishop Road, Bishopston, Bristol

FRED BURGESS, 47 Clonbrock Road, Stoke Newington, London, N

W. E. CRAWFORD, 60 Abott Street, Doncaster

EBBY EDWARDS, 3 Duke Street, Ashington, Northumberland

W. T. A. FOOT, 119 Harvist Road, West Kilburn, London, N.W.

T. P. KEATING, 80 Clarendon Road, Luton, Beds.

J. LEACH, 15 Church Street, Bolton

R. MELL, 54 Carlton Street, Hull

F. B. SILVESTER, 8 Evelyn Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham

W. STEWART, 5 Portallo Street, Belfast

CHARLES WATKINS, 47 Laverack Street, Richmond Road,
Handsworth, Sheffield

W. M. WATSON, Weston Cottages, Cowdenbeath, Fife

H. WYNN-CUTHBERT, "The Ferns," Pavilion Road, Worthing