

Vol. IX, No. 3

April, 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**

# Why Plebs ?



“The Roman peoples were divided into two Orders. One Order was the Patricians, the other the Plebeians (or Plebs.) . . . The term Plebeian meant “the multitude.” It was a term used in contradistinction to the few, the patricians. In other words, it was the antithesis of oligarchy, the patricians being the few, the plebeians the many.”—Daniel De Leon. ☒

Our appeal is to the Plebs—the many. If you are a Patrician you won't be interested in the Magazine. It might hurt your feelings.

A red X here signifies that your subscription is due.

Please remit at once, and don't spoil your reputation.



# THE PLEBS MAGAZINE

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

Vol. IX.

April, 1917

No. 3

---

---

## CONTENTS

	Page
THE WORK BEFORE THE PLEBS. By J. T. WALTON NEWBOLD	49
"AS TO POLITICS." By NOAH ABLETT	53
GUILDSMEN AND THE STATE. By W. N. EWER	55
STUDIES IN IMPERIALISM. II.—CAPE-CAIRO. (with Map)	58
THE LUDDITE MOVEMENT. (Trans. by W. H. MAINWARING)	60
THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE & POST-WAR PROBLEMS. By C. WATKINS	63
CORRESPONDENCE. From F. ARCHBOLD, H. WYNN-CUTHBERT, & C.	65
NEWS OF THE MOVEMENT	68
THE PLEBS BOOKSHELF	71

---

---

### The Work before the Plebs

AS a recent adherent to the cause of the C.L.C. and to the work of the Plebs League, I have, like many of my comrades, been pursued across the country by screeds, more or less intelligible but always increasing in insistency, ending with the cryptic symbols "J.F.H." and requiring an article from my pen. He wants, this uneasy one, to have my impressions of the future activities and possibilities of the Movement. Now I am a new recruit and have not grown old in wisdom and experience of this organization like that Alpha which stands for Ablett. On his head, therefore, be my blood if ill befalls me.

Why have I, a "university man," joined forces with the Plebs League? Perhaps,—in fact, I am inclined to give that as one of my main reasons for doing so—because I have had some experience of one of the most democratic of the New Universities. Maybe, had I been other than a stranger within the graven gates and musty walls of Oxford or Cambridge. I should not have come to such a

bad end. Maybe it was the blatantly bourgeois surroundings of the Victoria University of Manchester which prepared me for this secession from respectability and that orthodoxy, which was, in its beginning, as heterodox as that of the C.L.C. The Universities of the 19th century—red brick monstrosities like that Birmingham parody on decadent Greece, brazenly Byzantine and Chamberlainesque; blackened sepulchres like Owens, with its random architectural tributes to cotton manufacturers, industrial chemists, and purse-proud engineers; or glorified technical night-schools like Armstrong College, Newcastle, or Firth College, Sheffield—are redolent as much of the sixpence-halfpenny dividend-mongering philosophy of their patrons as of the “stinks” of their Carnegie Laboratories. “*Arduus ad solem dividendumque!*”\*

That would have been a satisfactory motto for Victoria and all its contemporaries! They are utilitarians with that vice—or virtue, in their sight—of bourgeoisdom; magnificent with the skyscraping elegance of their mill-owner culture; snobbish to the latest fad of their Sociological Societies and Fabian “Group” syllabuses. *Olent!* They stink!

The universities of G. D. H. Cole—heaven help him and me—are, or were, universities. Their odour is not so much of the profits of futurity as of the sanctity of centuries of rents and tithes. They frown with superstition and glower with authority. They exude from their mouldering stonework the traditions of the Middle Ages, filtered through the Anglicanism of the landed and mercantile capitalists, that Tory ideology of the field stealer and the slave-owning “planter.” They are as patently bulwarks of the past as the brick laboratories and marble-faced lecture-halls of the New Universities are ramparts of the present. The New has influenced the Old, and the Old the New until now they are rapidly approximating to each other. The universities, comrades, reflect the minds, the needs, the inclinations and the prejudices of their patrons, of those who founded them or those who administer their trust funds. The middle-class, in the persons of Owens of Manchester, Mason of Birmingham, Firth of Sheffield, Armstrong of Newcastle, the Whitworths, the Rylands, the Beyers, the Chamberlains, and their kind, founded their own colleges, because the Old Universities did not and would not conform to the notions of the industrial capitalists, the non-conforming profiteers and the mechanically inclined manufacturers. They wanted colleges of industry, night schools, experiments, lecturers who would give their point of view and write history and discuss theology from their angle of inclination.

The old Universities have built laboratories and founded chairs in Sociology. The new Universities have sought Dukes to be their Chancellors and have taken War Office representatives on to their

---

\* *Arduus ad Solem* is Manchester's motto.

Senates. The cross-fertilisation of landlord and capitalist interests, which has become so visible in industry and the social marriage market, has been reflected in their schools. Now, they are talking of making membership of the O.T.C. (Officers' Training Corps) an essential part of a graduate's training. Not Holy Communion and Anglicanism, but Strategy and Militarism. Moreover, they are going to succeed to a very great extent.

Yet, it is these shrines whose oracles we are to look to for working class education! Ye Gods! Some of us thought so, too—so deeply ingrained were the prejudices and influences even of that against which our student life was one long, useless revolt. Well, we have eaten of their flesh-pots, have learned their lore. We have sat at the feet of Michael Sadler and learned more than he ever would have dreamed he was teaching us. We have ransacked their libraries and cross-examined their professors. These people are very clever, very well-informed, often very well-meaning. But their ideology is not ours, and their idea of education will never aid us far in the emancipation of the working-class. When they are best-intentioned, they are—to my mind—most dangerous. The purpose which, I take it, education should serve for the working class is, in the opinion of the Plebs League, to arm it for the task of emancipation. The Plebs does not desire education for its own sake, or for the appreciation of middle-class culture, or for the better adaptation of the "hands" (or "brains") to the production of income and future reserves of capital. For the members of the Plebs League—

"The Cause alone is worthy till the good days bring the best."

I have said enough, already, to make it clear why I am in favour of the workers having their own educational system to propagate the revolutionary thought of an independent and militant working class. They want to learn to think for themselves and to see and learn and teach the story of human society from the angle of inclination of the working class. There is an amazing amount of dross which we have to unlearn when we make our transition from Marshall to Marx. It is so difficult to realise that "Pure Economics" is but the expression of a class view-point. It comes to my mind and then slips away again because of my training. They were crazed on impartiality, those teachers of mine. They should not have permitted me to study Economic History and Economic Theory. I learned Scientific Socialism from my study of original sources. Its truth hit me in the eye at every hand. Having continuously, for years, fortified my growing opinion, my increasing conviction, with the accumulations of first-hand research, and having at last read and found myself most at ease with the literature of Boudin and Engels and Unterman and Dietzgen and Morgan, and of course, that great master-piece of Labriola, *Essays in the Materialist Conception of History*, I have

had to join the Plebs League. I have been weary of and, almost, nauseated by the superficialities of most of the pacifist socialists since the War broke out. Then I found *Socialism and War*, and met W. W. Craik. The rest has followed.

In the current *Socialist* there is stated a basic truth of our propagandist needs throughout the Socialist Movement.

Open-air propaganda can only succeed when behind it there are *trained students, a scientific literature, and a Press* to back up both.

It is our work to create those. The Plebs League can do so. It is going to do so. It is going to be a great educational organization. That is the function it has to perform for the Socialist Movement in this country. Unhesitatingly I would say that nothing is so much needed here as this kind of work. Until it is done the Socialist Movement will borrow its philosophy and its economics and its views on foreign questions from those brilliant non-Socialists whose emotions are nearest akin to its own. Men and women in the I.L.P., the B.S.P., the S.L.P., and the trade union advanced wing, can find in the Plebs League a common rallying centre where they can study and can compare the results of that study. There are Marxists even in the I.L.P. There are going to be more. I believe in the I.L.P. just as sincerely and vigorously as I dislike many of the sentimental tendencies of that organization. I hope to see Marxists rally to the Plebs from all these bodies. I hope to see, and I am working and shall continue to work for, joint action between the Plebs League and those who have, as their first object, the education of our children in the Socialist Sunday Schools, Sunday Schools, Socialist "Young Citizens," Plebs League Classes for Adults and the Central Labour College—that is the ladder we have to build. It is not going to be done immediately, but the two Movements naturally connect together and will be a growing source of strength one to the other.

Now, for the provision of scientific literature. I have one serious fault to find with the literature of the S.L.P. and the text-books of the Plebs League; and I do not think that either body will disagree with me. They are too purely theoretical and too advanced for the beginners. We have before us the task of writing our own literature, preparing our own histories and our own text-books in economics. There is nothing wrong with Marx except the way in which his theory is served up by its teachers. What we need to do is to apply the Marxian method to the study of present-day problems and of developments in industry and commerce, in politics, and diplomacy since Marx's death. Craik has led the way. Much less successfully, because it was not written to meet the same demand, I have endeavoured, in *How Europe Armed for War* to present a vivid picture of the strength and complexity of one phase of Modern Capitalism. Only after I had finished it did I discover that it was Marxist.

I believe that nothing would be more effective than a series of short text-books—which could also be enjoyed by the ordinary reader—dealing with the rise of Capitalism in different parts of the country where we are establishing classes, or already have them set up. Simple studies of working conditions in the mining, railway, engineering, wood-working and other industries at different periods of technical development and the effect these had on the methods of organization by guild, society, craft union, local sectional union, either craft or otherwise, industrial unions, and on political consciousness, would be invaluable to propagandists of Industrial Unionism.

Such are some of the suggestions I would throw out. Let us have no unnecessary diversion of our energies and enthusiasm. All together, now, Comrades of the I.L.P., the B.S.P. and the S.L.P., into the Plebs League !

J. T. WALTON NEWBOLD, (M.A.)

### “As’ to Politics”\*

\* See also E. Archbold’s letter on another page.

I DON’T think readers of the *Plebs*, any more than myself, are anxious for a prolonged controversy on the merits or otherwise of Political Action. Especially, as in this case, where one party asks one question, and the other replies to a quite different question. I asked—Why *must* the workers constitute a political party? Craik gives the following answers:—(1) Because ‘must’ is the proper word. (2) Because since only with the abolition of class rule politics become superfluous, the working-class must seek until then to establish its own rule. (2a). Because the scaffolding of a house is the more necessary the nearer the house is to completion. (3) Because the working-class must attack the political organization of the Capitalists. (4) Because the workers must enter the Political Temple in order to expel the Capitalist Brawler. (5) Because Craik and De Leon erroneously call politics the light and air of the working-class movement, instead of its fog and gloom. (6) Because a democratic Parliament is of the greatest value to the working class. And (7) because Ablett once was an enthusiast for political action, has now swung to the opposite extreme, and therefore must find a *via media*.

Now all these reasons merely beg the question. Instead of being a collection of “*musts*,” they are merely a musty collection. They all can be disposed of very briefly. What will happen to compel the worker to form a political organization? Craik says that we will be attacked by the political power of the Capitalists. I agree. But what will prevent our opposing to that political

power the industrially organized power of the workers? The absence of that organization caused by apathy due to the ignorance necessary in a political government by consent (?). Well then, that apathy, as I said before, is the obstacle to working-class progress. If that can be overcome, the question of working-class (and human) emancipation is solved. Which then is the easier to accomplish, the industrial or the political organization of the workers? History and our own experience show beyond question that Industrial organization is not merely easier, but is inevitable before the political superstructure can ever be raised.

But these are agreed commonplaces. In order to get direct to the point at issue let us first enumerate the main points of agreement. Craik and I agree—(1) That before private property can be abolished the political and economic power of the capitalist class must be broken. (2) That when it is broken the machinery of the new society will be exclusively industrial, and (3) that the said machinery must be developed through industrial organization, in the lifetime of Capitalism, in such a way that the workers can take, hold, and administer the new society.

The point of divergence then is this, that Craik insists that in order to break the economic and political power of capitalism the workers *must* project a political organization, whereas I say there is no "*must*" in the business at all. I confidently assert that the industrial organizations of the workers contain in themselves all the power necessary to destroy the old capitalist society, and all the machinery necessary to construct the new communist society. Political democracy is essentially a capitalist institution forged by capitalism with the main object of enlisting the workers against feudalism. Parliamentary governments or the franchise, has never been won in any country in the world's history by any working-class movement. It has always been initiated by capitalism as a lure to the working-class to overthrow the landed interests. The process is at this moment taking place in Russia (of course I am delighted, because it is a necessary stage). Craik understands this quite well. He does not believe in Political Democracy, but on the contrary is a firm believer in Industrial Democracy, the weapon that is now being forged by the workers to destroy the political democracy of the capitalists. Industrial Democracy, *i.e.*, the control of industry, and consequently of society, by the workers, creates an ideology in which the fallacies of political democracy are easily perceivable.

Political democracy merely means that a workman has a vote once every few years in a territorial constituency, which means that in certain favourable circumstances a representative of a constituency may become an M.P. who will be governed, absolutely, by a Cabinet, who in turn will be governed by departments whose inspiration derives from loyalty to a chief, tradition, and political



etiquette. Industrial Democracy means that every workman in every shop, field, factory, or mine, shall control by his vote the conditions of his daily life, subject only to the needs of the uniformly controlled community. These again are agreed commonplaces.

The position, then, is that I assert that the new society must be organized by the present trade and industrial unions gradually taking control and ownership of all social work, and so creating the new society within the lap of the old; while Craik says that this process cannot be achieved unless the workers will (or rather *must*) project a political organization on capitalist lines (as every political organization must be, because a political basis is a capitalist basis) to break down the capitalist political power. Now I think I can easily show why a political organization will weaken the power of the industrially organized workers, but for the moment I am not called upon to show this. I have not even to show that the workers must not project a political organization. What remains to be proved is Craik's *must*.

Dear Craik,—Why *must* the workers organize politically? When you have really tried to answer this I will deal with your answer.

NOAH ABLETT.

## Guildsmen and the State

### A Reply to Noah Ablett

**A**LL this pother is, it seems, over a word. Ablett, reading quietly, if critically, through *Towards a Miners' Guild*, has come suddenly upon the word "State." And in a flash he is up and off, full gallop, the bit well between his teeth—not merely bolting himself, but threatening to stampede all good Plebeians in a wild rush from National Guilds.

These Guildsmen, he cries, believe in the State! Away from them, or away *with* them! For "what is the State?" "It is the policeman's truncheon and the soldiers' bayonet." *Ergo*, Guildsmen believe in truncheonings and bayonettings. "It is the instrument whereby the ruling class coercively governs the ruled class." *Ergo*, Guildsmen believe in coercion and class-government. "Its functions are the maintenance of the existing order." *Ergo*, Guildsmen are out to preserve the existing order. "It is anti-revolutionary and anti-international." So too must the Guildsmen be.

And so on, until he has persuaded himself, no doubt, that we are staunch supporters of Capitalism, fierce Jingoese, and ardent Conservatives; who swear by Saint and King and Lloyd-George, sing Rule Britannia in place of the Internationale, and would fly the Red Ensign in place of the Red Flag. And all this because we give place in our scheme to a form of social organization which we call "the State." Never a pause for thought. Never a moment's

question as to whether the "State" we envisage may not be something quite other than the State of to-day which his soul so loathes. The mere word has put him into a wild panic.

But perhaps even now it is not too late to reassure him. Certainly, I hope, it is not too late to reassure Plebeians, and to convince them that National Guildsmen detest the truncheon and the bayonet, class-government and the State of to-day, just as wholeheartedly as Ablett himself. And I will, if I may, endeavour to do this by quoting from an article of my own in the *March Guildsman*, since this, written long before I had seen the *March Plebs*, is free from any suspicion of being an attempt to meet Ablett's criticism by capitulation.

Not only (I wrote) is capitalism in itself our enemy, but so is the State in itself—the State, that is, as it exists and has existed for the past few centuries; and this is quite apart from its present sinister intimate association with organized capitalism.

The scheme of society which is our goal does indeed postulate the existence of a State, and does assign to it functions of the highest importance . . . . But it is a State metamorphosed out of all recognition, and having little save the name and some fortuitous similarity of structure in common with the Sovereign State of to-day.

That surely is good and sufficient evidence for the rebutting of Ablett's wild series of accusations that Guildsmen are supporters and defenders of the State of to-day. And now, dropping denunciation, let us consider calmly what is the real point at issue between us.

Ablett, in his concept of Society as it will or should be, finds room for no type of structure other than the industrial organizations of *producers* in Unions or Guilds. We on the other hand feel that there is room, and need, for another type of organization existing side by side with this. We feel that there is need for a social organ to express the will and voice the needs of the *consumers*—not, be it clear, of some separate body of "consumers who do not produce," but of the whole body of citizens in their aspect as consumers.\*

We feel that, for example, the people who wear boots do require to have some voice in deciding, not internal questions of the boot and shoe industry, but questions of the quantity and quality and type of boots produced—that, in fact, the man who knows where the shoe pinches ought to have some say in the matter. That surely is a reasonable and a commonsense proposition. And if it be accepted, surely it is an equally reasonable deduction that some form of organization for the expression of these consumer's

---

\* A sentence in his reply to Craik elsewhere in this issue suggests that Ablett, too, "feels the need" for some such "social organ". Cf. his definition of Industrial Democracy (towards the end of his article) particularly the final clause—"subject only to the needs of the uniformly controlled community.—Ed. *Plebs*."

interests is desirable—some democratic organization, that is, of the body of consumers distinct from their industrial organizations as producers. For to require the Guilds or Unions to do this work is to ask them to perform two quite separate functions; and confusion of functions is a direct road to muddle and inefficiency.

It is this democratic organization of the whole body of citizens which we, for convenience sake, dub "the State"—not, by the way, implying thereby that it need be highly centralised. And it is this surely reasonable proposal which is the occasion of Ablett's passionate outburst.

Now as to economic machinery. If we agree, so far, that a democratic organization of consumers is required side by side with the democratic organization of producers, it is purely reasonable to suggest that the question of the distribution of the national income—of the total production of the society—should be a matter for joint arrangement between these two organizations; that, in other words, questions of price and taxation should be the joint affair of the Guilds Congress and the State.

Now the machinery for securing equitable apportionment of the national income between the various guilds would probably have to be two-fold. In the first place, by the fixing of prices a roughly equitable distribution would be effected. But since this would only be rough, and would be liable to disturbances due to unforeseen circumstances, it will probably be necessary to correct it from time to time by a re-adjustment partaking somewhat of the nature of taxation. There is here no question of profiteering or of collaring surplus-value for a privileged class—only of the prevention of fortuitous profiteering, and of the accidental monopolisation of surplus-value by one section of the community. Certainly there is nothing to justify Ablett's furious indignation.

One other reason there is that makes some sort of taxation probably necessary. There will be some forms of industry—for instance, road-making and sanitary services—in respect of which it will be convenient that the producers shall be paid, not by direct sale of their goods and services, but by a levy upon the community—in other words by the taxation of those guilds whose income is derived from the sale of their products. These, and a hundred others, are matters of detail, matters for careful thought and quiet argument; and if Ablett will argue them quietly with us, he and we will probably benefit alike from the discussion. But it will help neither him, nor us, nor the common purpose which we have in view if, instead of discussing, he denounces, and if, whenever some difference of opinion manifests itself, he cries "To your tents, O Israel," and accuses us of "wanting to modify the revolution," and of "degrading revolutionary ideas by trying to make them work upon the basis of the capitalistic state." For heaven's sake let us drop passion and take to reason—or at least let us think before we start cursing.

W. N. EWER.

## Studies in Imperialism

### II.—The Opening-up of Africa

After Berlin-Bagdad, Cape to Cairo. Our map this month illustrates the way in which the White Man is taking up his Burden in Africa. As the question of the German Colonies will be an important item in the discussions preceding the Peace settlement, some study of the map of Africa is, for Socialists, eminently desirable.

The whole of Africa, with the exception of Abyssinia, Liberia, and Morocco, has now been partitioned among seven European States—Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain, and Belgium. Of these three exceptions, Abyssinia, it will be noted, is cut off from the sea by Italian, French, and British Territory; while in Morocco a French Protectorate has been set up—“Morocco has therefore become for France what Egypt has become for Great Britain.” (C. G. Robertson, *Introd. to Historical Atlas of Modern Europe.*) It is impossible in these brief notes even to summarise the international bargains, arrangements, and conventions of the last quarter of a century (we may be able to do this later).

Our map shows the Cape-Cairo railway, and some of the principal east-and-west connections. The Cape-Cairo route was the dream of Cecil Rhodes, and as originally planned it would have run up through Rhodesia to Lake Tanganyika, and thence through Uganda to the Sudan. It will be seen that German East Africa blocks the way of an “all-British” route—a fact of some significance.\* German opposition (cf. British opposition to the extension of the Bagdad railway to the Persian Gulf) compelled the turning of the line north-westwards through the Belgian Congo, the railway to Bukama (2,618 miles from Capetown) being completed in 1914. Whether the “All Red” route will be resumed as a result of a re-distribution of territory after the war remains to be seen. Of the four German colonies, Togoland, the Cameroons, and German South-West Africa are entirely in the hands of the Allies; and the whole of German East Africa with the exception of a small area in the south is also conquered.

With regard to the British possessions, the following point is worth noting:—

Of the four great African rivers, the Nile, the Niger, the Zambesi, and the Congo, British territory controls or shares in the control of the three first. Mastery of the arterial rivers of a great continent, as the history of the American continent proves, is a brief expression of the great truth that political power follows and rests on the trunk waterways. (C. G. Robertson, as above).

See also Sir H. H. Johnston's *Opening-Up of Africa* (Home University Library, 1/3) for much useful historical information.

---

\*Note what was said as to the supreme importance of *routes* in the course of last month's comments on the Berlin-Bagdad scheme.



## The Luddite Movement

(This translation of one of three chapters forming a section of a *History of Chartism*, by H. Schluter (New York Socialist Literature Co.) is of particular interest at the present time. The events described occurred, it will be remembered, towards the close of the great European War of 100 years ago—that war which, in the words of Mrs. J. R. Green's Epilogue to the *Short History of the English People*, "enriched the landowner, the farmer, the merchant, the manufacturer; but it impoverished the poor.")

**H**ARDLY had the law been passed making the destruction of machinery and the taking or administering of illegal oaths capital offences, when a violent outbreak took place in and around Nottingham, Halifax, and other places.—proving the correctness of Lord Byron's words—"He who fears not transportation, fears no gallows." In the Nottingham district, it was the Croppers who were especially concerned in the outbreak. The conditions of these people had been comparatively good under the handicraft system, so that they resented the more strongly the displacement of their labour by machinery, and the suffering involved through unemployment and consequent poverty. They met in secret conferences and gave vent to their hatred in bitter speeches and songs. It was at one such meeting at Liversedge, early in 1812, that the "Croppers' Song" was first sung. It was very popular to demand at these meetings the abolition of "the tyrants"—with "Axe, pike and musket," or with "Great Enoch," the big hammer, used in smashing the machines, and honoured in song:—"Stop him who dare! Stop him who can!"

In the speeches delivered it was openly admitted that they were engaged in a desperate venture. But as one of them said:—

Are we not driven to it, . . . Oppression drives men mad, and we refuse to die like dogs, without striking one blow for our wives and children who are starving before our eyes. Our masters offer us neither sympathy nor charity, neither kind word nor crust of bread. Apparently we are in their way. But we insist upon the right to live in the land of our birth, and we deny them the right to drive us out. Curse the machines, cursed be the men that made them! It is not right that we should suffer as we do. It cannot be right that men, able and willing to work, should be turned away with scorn and mockery to starve, or that their little ones should languish and waste away before our eyes.\*

Most of the bitterness aroused in this campaign was directed towards certain factory-owners who, by their harsh and domineering attitude, had drawn it upon themselves. Among these was one William Cartwright, one of the first to introduce machinery for weaving. He owned a factory at Liversedge, in the West Riding,

\*F. Peel. *Rising of the Luddites*

known as Rawfolds. Knowing well the state of mind of the workers, he took steps to fortify his factory, so that when during the night of April 11th, 1812, the workers made an attack, they were met with the unexpected armed resistance of soldiers and others. The attack failed; two of the men were killed outright several others being wounded, two of whom were captured. One of these died shortly afterwards, and before his death was visited by a priest, who at his bedside inquired closely about his fellow-culprits in the attack. The wounded man, in a dying whisper, asked, "Can you keep a secret entrusted to you?" "Yes," eagerly replied the holy man, overjoyed that he was about to obtain the desired information. "So can I!" replied the poor devil, and turned over quietly to die. The attack upon the factory was followed soon after by an attempt upon the life of the owner himself, who had received a present of £3,000 from his admiring fellow-owners in the North of England, as a mark of their appreciation of his successful "defence."\* On April 16th, another factory-owner named Horsfal, of Huddersfield was shot.

The Luddite movement from this time onwards became more general in character. Not only the workers in one industry took part, but whole districts. Especially did the small owners, themselves in danger of losing their independency by the development of the machine, take a prominent part in the unrest. Near Stockport attempts were made to fire several factories, and a rumour spread, and was generally credited, that the whole of the workers would come out on the 1st of May. The employers organized a strong opposition, and the Government strengthened the troops situated in the affected areas. In Middleton, five alleged Luddites were shot together by the military. The barracks at Sheffield was broken into by the people, and the arms partly destroyed and partly taken away. In short the unrest became more and more general.

Attacks upon factory-owners and officials led to many arrests. The Government had little cause for satisfaction with the prosecutions that followed. Only in one, perhaps, of a hundred cases would the evidence make a conviction possible. Partly through fear, and partly from sympathy with the culprits, the witnesses remained silent upon a good many points they knew all about. In May, 1812, the Government set up special courts to deal with the arrested Luddites, and they employed that time-honoured method of all oppressors: espionage. Spies were sent into the secret organization of the workers. In Halifax, on July 8th, five members were sentenced to seven years transportation because they had administered an oath to a spy. Amongst the convicted was an old man of 66, an old democrat named John Baines, who had spent his life for the people's cause. The judge before whom he was

\*Gaskell's *Charlotte Brontë*.

tried said Baines stood for "anarchy and the abolition of all order amongst the lower classes in society;" as well as for the abuse of religion and blasphemy against God, inasmuch as he had taken an oath for an alleged criminal purpose.

On January 8th, 1813, three Luddites were hanged at York, and a week later at the same place a mass hanging took place, no less than fourteen persons being hanged on the same day. This was on account of the attack upon Cartwright's factory. In many other places also the executioner found work for *him* to do!

We have already mentioned that spies were active, and where they are, there also is the *agent provocateur*. A good deal of the excitement and unrest was the work of these spies. In some places the owners themselves were not sorry to see the "destroyer" come. Insurance against damages played no little part in the matter. In certain instances they even expressed themselves in writing in order to excite the workers to attack their property. The anonymous author of the brochure, *The Beggars' Complaint*, points out that many of the offences were put down to Luddites when really they had nothing whatever to do with them. He tells us that he had no part in the movement himself, and neither was he an enemy of the machine, which he regarded as a blessing to mankind. Nevertheless he faced the question with intelligence and stated his views clearly:—

The Luddite Movement (he declared) does not exist everywhere it is credited to be. Every thief and robber now takes the name of "General Ludd" in his mouth when committing any offence. The newspapers show this to be true. Most of them are concerned more with increasing their circulation than with the distinction between truth and falsehood. They publish only what is startling and likely to tickle the palate of their readers. Hence it is that the old familiar names of "thief" and "robber" have disappeared, and in their place comes a new name and a new character wherewith to label the violence and vice of the day. 'Ned Ludd' it is who now figures in any strange or fabulous tale of any kind.

The author goes on to say that of the fourteen unhappy men hanged at York in January, not half were members of the Luddite movement. Five or six were guilty of having forcibly entered houses and demanded arms, and of having destroyed machinery. The others were only guilty of having been acquainted with Luddites and of having demanded gold in the name of "General Ludd."

Translated by W. H. MAINWARING.)

(To be continued).

---

**Next month's will be our 100th number. We want a record circulation. Send your order in good time.**



---

## The Triple Alliance and Post-War Problems

The *Plebs* is read by a considerable number of railwaymen and miners throughout the United Kingdom. How widely it circulates among members of the Transport Workers Federation I do not know, but doubtless there are many of these who are regular readers of the one periodical which combines so well the theory and practice of working-class action. That is my reason for submitting the following proposals and suggestions to *Plebs* readers, with the view of securing their co-operation in making more effective use of the vast potentialities and possibilities of the Triple Alliance in dealing with the problems created by the war.

Acting upon my initiative, the February meeting of the Sheffield and Chesterfield District Council of the N.U.R. passed unanimously a resolution calling upon the N. U.R. Executive to arrange for a joint meeting of the three forces in the Triple Alliance for the purpose of coming to an understanding on a common program and policy to meet the situation arising at the end of the war. As a basis for a common agreement the resolution further suggested that the joint demands should include :—

An Eight Hour Day for all workers in the industries covered by the Triple Alliance ; a Minimum Wage of £2 a week ; the conversion of the War Bonus into an equivalent increase on wages ; and similar rates of pay and conditions for women as are conceded to men.

In the course of discussion it was pointed out that this program would not only secure unity of action of the forces included in the Triple Alliance, and tend towards the further consolidation of the remaining sectional unions, but that, if realised, it would go a long way towards the immediate settlement of some of the more acute problems which will arise at the end of the war.

A general eight-hour day would help to absorb many of the women and men workers who otherwise would be displaced by the return of men from the fighting forces, and would thus obviate antagonism between the sexes, or between other sections of the working-class. A minimum wage of £2 a week would mean a substantial advance in the wage-standard of many workers, and, by wiping out some of the unjust distinctions in remuneration, would establish a sounder basis for working-class unity than lies in any sentimental appeal. The conversion of the War Bonus into a wage equivalent would solve the difficult problem created by this anomalous expedient of meeting advancing prices ; and would mean a good deal to those higher paid workers not reached by the £2 a week minimum. Equal rates of pay for both sexes would prove the most effective antidote to that sex prejudice still latent in the minds of many of the men.

---

**IN PREPARATION—that Pamphlet. Have we got your order ?**

This program may be incomplete, and may need revision in one or two of its important items; but it would at least provide a basis for discussion between the executives of the Triple Alliance, and thus pave the way to more united action than is possible so long as each has its own separate program and policy. The potentialities embodied in this gigantic Triple Alliance will provide it with a unique opportunity of meeting and solving post-war problems, and of determining the future standard not only of its own members, but of the working class in general.

Readers of the *Plebs*, who have a proper comprehension of our materialistic philosophy, will realise the importance of applying principles in action that will provide the material basis for those higher aspirations of working-class unity which we all recognise as necessary to carry the workers forward to their goal. Consequently they will sympathise, if they do not altogether agree, with this attempt to apply these principles. It is in the hope that these proposals and suggestions will be pushed forward in their respective organizations by other members of the Triple Alliance that they are here submitted for consideration.

The Miners, Railwaymen and Transport Workers took a great step forward when they decided to establish an organization which would enable them to "dwell in unity". A still greater step will have been taken when they have succeeded in devising a common program and policy which will ensure that they shall henceforward *act* in unity.

C. WATKINS.

---

**PLEBEIANS in LONDON are very cordially invited to attend the Women's League Social at the College (13, Penywern Road, Earl's Court) on Saturday, April 21st, at 7.30 p.m. Tickets 7d. (including tax) from 127, Hamlet Gardens, London. W. 6. Bring your friends.**

---

**All Plebeians should read**  
**Essays in Socialism and War**  
 By **JOHN BRYAN**

Specially recommended by J.F.H. in last month's *Plebs*.

ONE PENNY; post free, three half-pence.  
 Usual terms to Branches and Classes.

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

## Correspondence

AS TO POLITICS AND ABLETT.

Sir.—In his review of the first C.L.C. text book, W. W. Craik's *Modern Working-Class Movement*, Ablett takes exception to the suggestion that the working-class must constitute a political organization before the reconstruction of society takes place. His contention is that the economic organization of the working-class constitutes their real power; that even the details of working-class action must be worked out by the industrial organizations, and ultimately enforced by their economic power. As illustrative of this general proposition he cites two instances, from which he draws not simply particular lessons, but the general one that political organization, and thus political action, merely involves a "frittering" of working-class energy. These illustrations are:—

(1) The crisis through which the South Wales Miners have passed during recent years; which brings forth the claim that *no* political party could have helped the Miners in face of the intervention of the Government.

(2) The industrial policy of the Triple Alliance; which evokes the suggestion that no political party could help that alliance in the event of a strike being decided upon.

No Marxist denies that the basic power of the workers is economic, or that working-class participation in politics can be other than subsidiary to the development of their economic power. That is merely another expression of the social law which says that the political must reflect the economic interest. But Ablett's contention that the larger the economic organization, the less the need for politics, has only a *relative* application. It has not a general application in that it can only apply to certain immediate demands, and not to the transition stage from capitalism to the new society. Herein lies the weakness in Ablett's armour. His criticism does everything save what it set out to do, *i.e.*, to expose the fallaciousness of the claim that capitalist society cannot be dissolved without the workers constituting themselves a political organization.

Now the question of anti-political propaganda is one of importance to those who, like myself, believe both in political action and in independent working-class education. To leave the political field to capitalism in face of the distinctly non-revolutionary spirit of the workers in the mass would be merely opening the door to the counter-revolution. Ablett would probably argue that economic evolution would produce a greater degree of receptiveness amongst all classes of workers before the situation became critical. Yet the only justification for the existence of the C.L.C. and the Plebs League is that they seek to *interpret* and *assist* economic progress. The metal-workers, from the point of view of capitalism, are the most important workers in the social economy, in that they are the producers of the staple products of the

modern capitalist era. Yet from the point of view of working-class psychology and organization they are as yet still in the conservative stage—if not actually the reactionary. If Political Democracy has been, as Ablett seems to urge, a necessity for modern capitalism, it can only be because the evolution of Governmental forms has naturally corresponded to the evolution of industry and to social psychology. That being so, it would seem that public psychology has something to do with the problem, although to judge by Ablett's somewhat irrelevant illustrations it certainly has not. It may be granted that Political Democracy has only meant the extensive application of "dope," yet the fact still remains that its very appearance implies the correlative nature of economic conditions, politics, and popular psychology. As De Leon said—"The people have grown into Government."

Ablett asserts that there is already sufficient economic power to deal with the judicial obstacles without the creation of a political organization. That the juridical obstacles can be overcome without political effort is to me unthinkable in these days of compulsory militarisation. In the last analysis, it is the naked bludgeon of militarism that opposes the workers economic power in the struggle for mastery. "Can it be seriously argued" that the economic power of the workers is adequate to resist the effects of a law making industrial arbitration compulsory, or the imposition of taxation in order to nullify every wage advantage gained? Is it further contended that the interests that constitute the political and juridical mechanism of the State are going to *forget* that they can use the technical power of the State, as they have used the weapon of Political Democracy? The law is bludgeon combined with tradition, and in the minds of the mass of the people is still the "holy of holies." To argue that Capitalism will not *dare* is merely to appeal to that force of Political Democracy which Ablett so derides, and is quite without justification, since capitalist action during a relatively normal period is no standard whereby to judge the activity of capitalism in its death struggle.

Further, I would ask, is it necessary to assume even "some great political organization yet to be created?" Why not an organization fulfilling the dual function? In short, why should it be outside the range of the Industrial Union to fulfil the political function any more than the educational one? Ablett would admit that the classes are a legitimate Union activity and necessary to the development of the workers' economic power; then why not politics as a means of economic education?

I have had some ten years' experience on the working-class platform, four of which years I spent as C.L.C. class lecturer; and as a result I am compelled to look to political activity to play the same part with the mass of the workers as the C.L.C. classes are playing in South Wales. Capitalist intensification does not *necessarily* develop a working-class consciousness; it often produces something approximating to its opposite, through sheer mental and physical fatigue. My contention is that political activity is the only effective means of mass education, as no means have yet been devised of cajoling any but a minute fraction even of the organized workers to attend Trade Union

or C.L.C. meetings. Every political question is fundamentally an economic question and a means of economic education. This does not mean that every industrial question has to be referred to political "representatives," but every question involving political discussion could be dealt with by the political department of the Industrial Union in conjunction with those responsible for the working of the industrial side of its activities.

There *must*, of necessity, be room for the political wing until the Labour Movement not only solves the problem of mass education, but evolves some other means of meeting the political questions of working-class taxation and inefficient local administration, and the all important juridical questions that must inevitably arise so soon as the working-class challenge to capitalist mastery assumes dangerous dimensions. My "must" may annoy Ablett, but at least I have tried to justify it.

(Pte.) E. ARCHBOLD.

#### THE PAMPHLET.

Sir,—When I was but a tiny child, I used to sing :—

Tidings (1) sent to every creature  
Millions (2) yet have never heard.  
Can they hear without a preacher (3) ?  
Lord Almighty (4), give the *word* (5).

(1) Of the C.L.C. and all it stands for. (2) Yes—millions ! (3) And preachers are scarce. (4) In this case the Plebs Leaguic. (5) i.e.—that pamphlet.

Yours fraternally, H. WYNN-CUTHBERT.

(We'll suggest two alternative last lines to H. W.-C.'s highly appropriate verse :—

Can we print without " the needful ?"  
Come, Plebeians, send the *cash*.

They don't rhyme, but the sense is excellent.—Ed., *Plebs*).

#### FROM FRANCE.

Sir,—*Re* Winifred Horrabin's article on the pamphlet—why the L don't you get it out ? Please send a copy on as soon as it's off the press.

Yours &c., PLEBITE.

P.S.—*Nom de plume* suggested by " chats " at present at work !

## Cuttings

### AND WHAT DO THE WEAVERS WANT ?

Mr. Chamberlain inquired what was the proportion of the weavers' wages to the value of the finished cloth.

Mr. J. A. Ormerod (Cotton Spinners' and Manufacturers' Association representative) replied that it would be *about one-eighth*, . . . Only last week he received information that one firm (in Bombay) had made £55,000

on a capital of £120,000, and another £54,000 on a capital of £100,000. They in Lancashire would like to have a taste of such prosperity. (Cheers). *What they wanted was equality.* (!!!)

(From the report of the deputation to the India Office seeking the withdrawal of the proposed tax on cotton exported to India.

*Manchester Guardian*, March 13th, 1917.

\* \* \* \* \*

### THE SONG OF THE PROFITEER.

The much-abused "Profiteer" speaks: "War may seem bad, and yet, to those who're wise, it must appear a blessing in disguise, with compensation plainly shown to fit both those who do and those who make their bit. Without it our young men could ne'er have shown their deep devotion to the land and Throne; they would have had no chances to display the courage which we read of every day. And Providence, which gave them chances thus decreed a certain recompense to us; for armies must be clothed, housed, armed, and fed, and contracts made for guns, huts, boots, and bread; and if, as patriots, we can see these through, surely our profits we're entitled to! Commissions in the Army may be won—why, then, should we who stay at home have none? If prices rise and profits grow still more, that is what's meant by fortunes of the war. How justly, too, the distribution's made when those who fight and we who don't are paid. They with D.S.O., D.C.M., V.C., and we, more modestly, with L.S.D. E'en those who fall shall have enduring fame; we'll raise great monuments that bear their name—our only share a profit on the same. And then when Peace is 'stablished once again, and we have hailed our safe-returned men, *they* will have medalled-glory for their shares, and *we* can buy a title for our heirs. God bless the King and prosper long the nation that knows so well the law of compensation"—*Daily News*.

---

## News of the Movement

On February 24th there was a great W.E.A. Conference at Newcastle on "Labour and Adult Education." Prof. Sir H. Jones, M.A., LL.D., D.Litt., (of Glasgow University) moved the first resolution:—

That, since the character of British Democracy ultimately depends on the collective wisdom of its adult members, no system of education can be complete that does not promote serious thought and discussion on the fundamental interests and problems of society.

The second resolution—

That opportunities for such thought and discussion, inseparable from a liberal education, are adequately provided through the medium and methods of the Tutorial and Preparatory Classes of the W.E.A.—was moved by Mr. J. M. Mactavish (Gen. Sec., W.E.A.). It was opposed by our friend Ebby Edwards, who was present as a representative of the North-

umberland Miners' Executive, with leave to put his own point of view. Mr. Mactavish began his reply to the discussion by stating that "Mr. Edwards is here representing the Plebs League"—a point on which he dwelt so long and insistently that Mr. Straker (Northumberland Miners) had at last to rise and correct him. The Plebs League, Mr. Mactavish announced, was an organization which, ever since its foundation, had tried to undermine the work of the W.E.A. The W.E.A. had never retaliated. He had come specially from London, knowing that Mr. Edwards would be present, to defend the W.E.A. position. He went on to discuss the Plebs League's idea of education—one-sided—Marx the Plebeian's bible, &c., &c., Our friend Ebby rose, on a point of order, to ask whether the Conference had been called to discuss the W.E.A. or the Plebs League. But Mr. Mactavish stormed some more.

Our comment must be brief. What does Mr. Mactavish mean by "trying to undermine?" If he means that the Plebs League has always *attacked* the W.E.A., does he imply that this is a wicked thing to do? It is not yet an offence under the Defence of the Realm Acts to criticise the W.E.A., is it? And *why* has not the W.E.A. "retaliated"? Can it be that it is afraid of meeting adverse criticism? We *want* retaliation—and invite it. We invited Mr. Mactavish to retaliate in these pages, when Ablett and Craik criticised his *What Labour Wants from Education* pamphlet. He did not avail himself of the opportunity. Why then did he rush off to Newcastle to do his retaliating? Has "the worm turned" at last? . . . Anyhow, we are going on with the "undermining" process. Some day soon perhaps we shall manage to blow "impartiality," "unsectarianism," and the rest of the stage-properties of the great W.E.A. bluff, sky-high.

Ebby Edwards' speech on this occasion has been reprinted as a leaflet by the North-Eastern C.L.C.'ers. It is real good propaganda, and we strongly advise all class-secretaries to send for copies. Write to Sec., C.L.C. Branch, N.S.S. Rooms, Royal Arcade, Pilgrim St., Newcastle-on-Tyne. The price is 4/- per 100, post paid.

Throughout the winter the C.L.C. WOMEN'S LEAGUE has been holding monthly meetings at the College. As it was quite impossible for a group of active and intelligent women to meet at the College without feeling distressed at the condition of the place (it is, of course, practically unoccupied) they decided to ask the Governors to receive a deputation. This was arranged and as a result the Governors have granted permission to the League to see to the proper storing of blankets, linen, household effects, &c., and to use the rooms at the College in order to keep the place aired and warmed. The members of the League have undertaken to help in any way possible, and the thanks of all C.L.C. supporters will be due to those who are striving to lay up, if not treasure, at least a few things worth preserving from moth and rust. A Social is to be held at the College on Saturday, April 21st, at 7.30 p.m., tickets, 7d. (including tax) from 127 Hamlet Gardens, London, W.6 All London Plebeians are urged to make an effort to be present. We want a rally of old friends.

Guarantees and cash for the pamphlet are coming in well. We hope to get on to it at once, and to have it out at an early date. *Don't forget to send in your orders, NOW.*

The class recently started at PONTYPOOL reports "good business"—average attendance, 27. *Plebs* circulation is going up, and a further supply of Craik's book is being anxiously awaited. Eight T.U. lodges have made grants to the class. W. J. Hewlett (Abertillery) is proving a very able teacher.

We advise the "stand-backs" of the RHYMNEY VALLEY to consider Pontypool's example. Geo. Walters (Bargoed) writes that the effort to establish classes in the Valley was "defeated by a short head"—after the usual rubbish being talked at the District Meeting about the C.L.C. turning out "infidels," &c. We should like to know whether the scheme Geo. Walters submitted to the lodges was *in every instance* put before the rank and file. We *have* heard of *Plebs* readers in certain lodges who *never* so much as heard of the matter. . . . But Rhymney will get tired of lagging behind!

\* \* \* \* \*

The classes held under the auspices of the MANCHESTER District Council N.U.R., with Robert Holder as tutor, have now concluded their "term." At the Council meeting last month the following resolution was passed:—

Having heard the report of the Tutorial Classes held during the last six months, we are convinced of the importance of *this kind of* education, and the necessity for its extension among our members, in order that the new form of Industrial organization may be understood, and therefore made capable of meeting the problems which will confront Labour in the near future. We regret that the abnormal conditions arising out of the war have to some extent militated against the attendance at the classes, but we are sure that they will be entirely successful in future if the Council area is thoroughly organized; and we recommend that the classes shall be resumed at the first favourable opportunity.

The Committee and students of the classes placed on record their appreciation of "the splendid manner in which Bro. Holder has performed his duties," and requested the Council, when engaging a lecturer on the resumption of classes, to make a special effort to obtain his services. Bravo, Manchester!

\* \* \* \* \*

Our best thanks to Comrade E. R. Robinson, of King's Norton, Birmingham, who has sent us the names and addresses (and subscriptions) of *ten* (10) *new subscribers this month*—and more to follow, he says! He took the admonition on the cover of the March number seriously, you see. Go all ye, and do likewise!

\* \* \* \* \*

The author of *The Modern Working-Class Movement* is now Rifleman W. W. C., of the Queen's Westminsters. As his address is likely to be changeable, any friend who wishes to drop him a line may address letters to *Plebs*, and they will be forwarded.

\* \* \* \* \*

Only last month we wished OLIVER KEIGHLEY—Somewhere in France—a safe return. And now we have, with very deep regret, to announce his death. He was killed on March 11th. The sympathy of every Plebeian, especially of those who had worked with him, will go out to his widow in her great trouble. The Plebs League has lost a keen worker and a good comrade. We shall not forget him!



## The *Plebs* Bookshelf

For three years a copy of *Erewhon* (Fifield, 2/6 net) has reposed upon my bookshelves; and until this month I had never read it. I knew all about Samuel Butler being a great man—"in his own department," according to Shaw, "the greatest English writer of the latter half of the 19th century." But I had been content, as one too often is, to read *about* the man, instead of reading the man himself. I earnestly entreat you, Plebeian reader, *not* to be content with reading this paragraph, but to get hold of *Erewhon* and revel in it yourself. You won't regret either time or money. So much of its biting satire on current 'morality,' politics, and education is launched from *our* point of view that I doubt whether anybody could enjoy it more than Plebeians will. *Erewhon* is a country discovered by the author (if you spell its name backwards you will get an idea of its whereabouts) the manners and customs of which would appear to have been expressly designed to reduce to (screaming) absurdity the manners and customs of 19th century Western Europe. One soon understands G.B.S.'s enthusiasm; and realises that as Shaw himself declares in the Preface to *Major Barbara*, "Butler's extraordinarily fresh, free, and future-piercing suggestions have an obvious share" in the Shavian point of view. In *Erewhon* they imprison a man for measles or typhoid; whereas he goes under the doctor if he is suffering, say, from an irresistible tendency to embezzle other people's money. When Samuel Butler has done talking about it, and pretending, as an orthodox Anglican, to be horrified at such perversity, you realize that the Erewhonian method is neither more nor less sensible than the contrary European one. The Erewhonians have a religion—profess one, at least; but their really heart-felt devotion is to the goddess Ydgrun (rearrange the letters and you will recognise this divinity.) Among the other institutions of the country are the Musical Banks and the Colleges of Unreason. The former are beautiful buildings which the Erewhonians visit regularly (prominently but not too ostentatiously displaying their cheque-books on the way thither.) The banks issue a special currency which everybody pretends is *the* real currency of the country, but which nobody really uses—if you "tip" a Bank-attendant (or verger) in Bank coin, he is frankly disgusted. And so on. The Colleges of Unreason—well, the apostles of the W.E.A. must have been trained there! The main feature in their educational system is the study of "hypothetics."

They argue that to teach a boy merely the nature of the things which exist in the world around him, and about which he will have to be conversant during his whole life, would be giving him but a narrow and shallow conception of the universe, which it is urged might contain all manner of things not now to be found therein. . . . To imagine a set of utterly strange and impossible contingencies, and require youths to give intelligent answers to the questions that arise therefrom, is reckoned the fittest conceivable way of preparing them for the actual conduct of their affairs in after-life. . . .

Heaven forbid that I should be flippant, but it appeared to me a wanton waste of good human energy that men should spend years and years in the perfection of so barren an exercise, when their own civilisation presented problems by the hundred which cried aloud for solution.

Perhaps if Butler had been conversant with the literature of the W.E.A., he would have remembered that magic phrase, "Life before Livelihood," and have regarded the Colleges of Unreason more sympathetically. He would certainly have rejoiced over the Professorships of Inconsistency and Evasion, "in both of which studies the youths are examined before being allowed to proceed to their degree in hypothetics." "The art of sitting gracefully on a fence," he observes, "has never, I should think, been brought to greater perfection than at the Erewhonian Colleges of Unreason." But then he had probably never heard of the W.E.A.!

\* \* \* \* \*

I have been reading George Lansbury's book, *Your Part in Poverty* (Herald Office, 1/- net, postage 2d.). Its appeal is scarcely to "the converted;" and yet it has a great interest for every Socialist in that it so vividly reveals a fine personality. Geo. Lansbury's arguments may be neither new nor, from the point of view of Historical Materialism, very striking. But Geo. Lansbury's personality is an inspiration. I can best express my feelings about the book by saying that had I met him in the street after I had read it, I should have felt like taking off my hat to him. Which would doubtless have tickled him greatly!

\* \* \* \* \*

Another book from the *Herald* Office which every Plebeian should note is W. N. Ewer's volume, *Five Souls, and Other War-Time Verses* (1/- net, postage 1d.). This is poetry; more about it later. Here let me congratulate the publishers on the really satisfying "get up" of these books. They are a delight to the eye—and the more you know about the art (as distinct from the commerce) of printing, the more you appreciate them.

\* \* \* \* \*

John Bryan's article in the *Call*, March 8th, discussing Boudin's "pacifist-Cotton and bellicose-Iron-and-Steel" theory, should be read by every student of *Socialism and War*. I wish we had had space this month to reprint it. It is impossible (and anyway I should be nervous about attempting it) to do justice to Bryan's arguments in a short summary, so I merely recommend everyone to get that particular number of the *Call*. I hope that later we shall have some discussion of the gospel according to Boudin, and the Higher Criticism according to Bryan, in the *Plebs*.

\* \* \* \* \*

Events lent a special topical interest to our Berlin-Bagdad map last month. A *Pall Mall Gazette* cartoon on the fall of Bagdad summed up the situation neatly. Across a vast expanse of plain ran a railway, astride which crouched an enormous lion, the lines disappearing into his wide-open jaws. From a train labelled "Berlin-Bagdad" the Kaiser was depicted staring aghast at the lion and exclaiming, "Is this the terminus?"

\* \* \* \* \*

You can celebrate the Russian Revolution by treating yourself to either, or both, of two volumes just added to that most excellent series, the *World's Classics* (Thin Paper ed., 1/3 net.)—Tolstoy's *Resurrection* and *The Cossacks*. (Everybody, of course, already owns his *Twenty-Three Tales* in the same series).

J. F. H.

# 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. MELHUISH

---

### 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. MELHUISH, 80 Clessold Road, Stoke Newington, London, N  
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