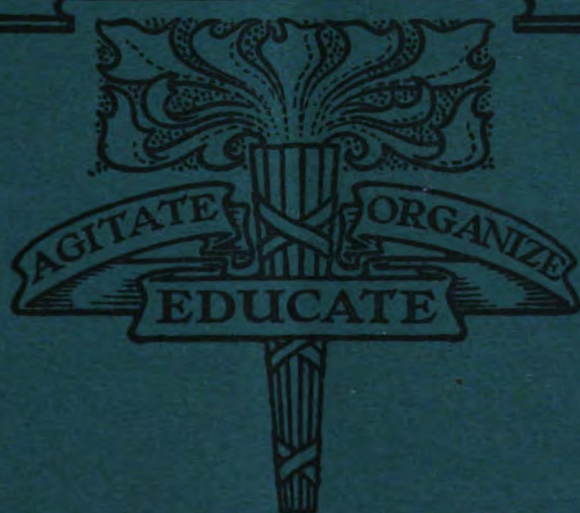
 An Appeal to YOU inside cover.

Vol. IX, No. 5

June, 1917.

The
PLEBS
MAGAZINE



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THE PLEBS MAGAZINE

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

Vol. IX.

June, 1917

No. 5

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A Letter to the I.L.P.

DEAR COMRADES,—For about a year I have been endeavouring to voice to you, in such a manner and by such a vehicle of expression as would ensure that the whole Party could hear it, my grave discontent and alarm at the message which has been given out in our name as the authoritative attitude of the largest Socialist section in this country towards War in particular and in general. My uneasiness was of earlier origin than that, but I did not wish to do or say anything which would embarrass those anxious to rally around us all the forces of opposition to Conscription and in favour of Peace. I realised that, at that time, it would not be practicable to launch out in a thorough going exposition of our Socialist fundamentals.

I hoped, and at one time almost believed, that our Press and publications would get to grips with realities and shew our new-found friends, who have been so eager to understand, what had

happened to their world, and why every cause in which they believed and every institution in which they reposed their trust were being steadily and relentlessly undermined. I expected that an attempt would be made to deal with causes as well as effects, and to analyse the origins of the War. I thought that those who speak for the Party, and who are not engrossed entirely in the specialised activities of the House of Commons, would show *why* Secret Diplomacy, Militarism, Armaments, Protection and all the measures of Reaction were being resorted to, not only in this country but in every capitalist country, belligerent or neutral. Instead of enquiring whether Britain was blameless, or how the War came, or restating the incidents of the years 1904-1914, or reviving the doctrines of *Laissez-faire* to develop a case against the New Protection, I thought that some life-long exponent of Socialism would go to the roots of the matter, and show how Capitalism, inevitably in its course of evolution, had plunged us all into the abyss. I wanted to see some expert, with years of experience and Socialist passion, some man whose name and whose reputation far transcended my own, show the Individualists and Radicals and Utopians who, one regrets to say, have set our pace, *what* lay back of all their sub-causes and *what alone* could save the world from despotism and destruction. I thought that our chosen leaders and our spokesmen would rise to the occasion and that the I.L.P. would set, and not merely keep, the pacifist pace. In that hope I was preparing, day after day, the shot and shell which was to feed the Big Guns of the Movement. But they never got the range!

Latterly, I have attempted to criticise. My letters have been clipped, mutilated, suppressed, ignored. Again and again I have tried to criticise the Bermondsey Resolution, but references to it have been deliberately excised—of course, owing to exigencies of space. I have tried to reply to Allen and Brockway, by stating the Socialist case for Alternative Service. Again, there was an excuse for not inserting it. Even my articles have been cut in such a way as to point the editorial moral. I found it useless to put the case against German Capitalism even though Liebknecht was denouncing it incessantly. It was equally vain to appeal to the editorial staff to assume a more Socialist attitude to the various topics of the hour. Now you know the reason for my apparent boycott of the Party organ.

Why I am addressing you, in this way and at this time, the letter quoted below will make evident. You will remember that in the issue of 19th April, an invitation was extended to open a discussion on I.L.P. classes. The letter over which this notice appeared referred to the W.E.A. I immediately accepted the invitation in the hope of starting that "interesting discussion." A fortnight later, May 3rd, the only reference to the matter, under the heading, "Some Belated Correspondents," was woven around a mangled

and *hopelessly contorted* quotation. My letter was despatched on April 21st, in time for the issue of April 26th, but the space was evidently needed for an article on "*War Office Censorship at Work.*" Here is my letter in full :—

TO THE EDITOR, THE *LABOUR LEADER*.

Sir, I am extremely glad to note that J. R. McPhie is calling the attention of the I.L.P. to the importance of Study Classes. It has long seemed to me that our Movement in this country has been sadly lacking in that it has not, hitherto, been able to maintain a vigorous educational system of a definitely Socialist character, worked as part of a carefully co-ordinated propaganda. I well remember with what interest, envy, and hope I looked upon the offices which the Belgian Socialist Party had opposite to the *Maison du Peuple* in Brussels; how eagerly I queried Liebknecht about the provision for education in Germany; and, latterly, how joyous I have been when I have found the publications of Charles Kerr on my comrades' bookshelves, more particularly in South Wales.

But I should have hoped that my comrade would, in speaking of I.L.P. Study Circles, have remembered that there is the nucleus of such an educational system of a definitely and avowedly Socialist character in the classes of the Central Labour College. Some of us have found new stimulus and inspiration in the magnificent work that is being done in South Wales, Northumberland, Durham and elsewhere by the little band of working men who, labouring against odds, have been developing the educational wing of our Movement.

This Central Labour College, temporarily closed owing to the operations of the Military Service Acts and the decision of the Board of Management, is supported by the N.U.R. and the S.W.M.F. Classes in conjunction with it, are being conducted up and down the country, whence, in normal times, chosen students are sent up to the College for a period of training. Thereafter, they are expected to return to their normal life and to help organize and conduct classes amongst their fellow workers. In this way, the working class is evolving its own educational plan and its own distinctive university, in the same way that, two generations ago, the middle class founded the New Universities, there to teach their own ideology.

The W.E.A. has, of course, no Socialist bias. The text-books and study courses are not Socialist. Its aim is not to make Socialists. It endeavours, quite honestly no doubt, to maintain the illusion that history and economics can be presented from an "impartial" stand point. It aims at education "for its own sake," and for the bringing of the knowledge and culture of the Universities—now rapidly becoming not only schools of Capitalist thought, but also hotbeds of Militarism and Reaction—to the working classes.

The Plebs League—which consists of members of Central Labour College classes and others who, like myself, wish "to further the interests of independent working class education as a partisan effort . . . to assist in the abolition of wage-slavery"—has an altogether different view of educational classes. We desire to build up a Socialist Educational Ladder. We wish to arm ourselves with as complete a knowledge as possible of Socialist theory and to work out, from our study of that theory and of economic, political and social development, the urgent problems of Socialist method. Only by such methods, by studying the classics of Socialism and the practice of Socialist parties, and by applying the Socialist critique to industry and politics, can the I.L.P. get clearly in its mind what it *can* get and what it *wants* to get.

I would make an appeal, therefore, to my comrades of the I.L.P. to support a Socialist effort, to form in their branch a class to study industrial history, economics, "Socialism and War," or some similar question, and to affiliate to the Central Labour College.

After the war, we are going to restore our International connexion with the Socialist Educational Unions abroad. Once more, we shall share with them our international literature and our common battle. We shall yet link the Socialist Sunday Schools in a chain of learning and fellowship to the Workers' University. We shall proclaim our revolutionary gospel and aim our ever more damning indictments and exposures at the chameleon antagonist—Capitalism!

For us and for you let the message be, in the words of Labriola,

Ethics and Idealism consist henceforth in this, to put the whole thought of Science at the service of the Proletariat!

Yours fraternally, J. T. W. N.

The editorial comment on this was almost too exquisite for words, with its jibe at "mere Socialist economics," and its reference to the "ethical as well as economic" basis of the I.L.P. When I am told that the basis of the I.L.P. is ethical, I want to know *what* is the basis of its ethics. I cannot for my life conceive how "the science of morals," ("that branch of philosophy which is concerned with human character and conduct") can be studied without first considering the material conditions of social life. An understanding, an acceptance of the historic verity, the Class Struggle, *must* precede any comprehension of Socialist ethics. To pretend that there is no Class Struggle is to strike at the very roots of Scientific Socialism.

The educational propaganda of the Central Labour College and the Plebs League has the blessing of Klara Zetkin, Karl Kautsky, and Karl Liebknecht as well as other "Minority" Socialists. It can, unlike that of the W.E.A., become a fraction of that future International Socialist Educational Union which was taking shape when war broke out. It is political as well as industrial, but its work is to express the *fundamentals* which determine Labour and Socialist practice.

Comrades, is it your desire to take your lead from an organization which has subsidies from the Capitalist Government and which warns its Socialist teachers to be "impartial," or to be affiliated to one which is in tune with the International? Will you prefer to look no deeper into the causes of War than you can by studying the works of Morel, to take your philosophy from Bertrand Russell, your economics from Pigou, and your ethics from *Common Sense*; or will you not rather go, in company with Liebknecht, Longuet, and Boudin to the masters of "mere Socialist economics?"

Yours fraternally, J. T. WALTON NEWBOLD.

PLEBS POSTCARDS :—The portrait of Marx reproduced on our cover last month is now obtainable as a postcard, price 1d. each (1½d. post paid) or 8d. per dozen, post paid. **NOW READY!** All profits to *Plebs Literature Fund*.

Ewer's "State" of Uncertainty

IN a Latin Primer much quoted by undergrads there occurs the following question—"Have you the pen, the ink, and the paper?" To which the answer is—"No, but I have the salt, the pepper, and the vinegar?" Of such sort is W. N. Ewer's mollifying reply to me in last month's *Plebs*.

I adversely criticised the proposal, quoted from *Towards a Miner's Guild*, that the State should own the mines, and should further, in partnership with the Guilds, fix the prices of coal and levy taxes on the producers. Ewer now comes along and, on behalf of the Guildsmen, attempts to explain that they didn't mean anything of the kind. He says, in effect—"Now when we use the expression "State" we do not really mean the State at all. Perish the thought! What we really mean is the people. We envisage the democratic organization of the whole body of citizens which we for convenience sake dub 'the State.' And again, when we talk of Rents and Taxes, you must not take these words in a literal sense. What we have in view, if we must be precise, is the 'prevention of fortuitous profiteering' or the 'prevention of accidental monopolisation of surplus value.' You may hear us talk of Rates. The word may grate. But really all we intend is to levy the community for sundry sanitary services. Now do be reasonable. Don't curse. We are quite harmless people, and it is really very wicked of you to get angry with us when we mean so well, &c., &c."

Now by the dexterous use of soothing phrases, after the method of Ewer, it would be easy to explain that Capitalism was really an excellent state of society, and that the alleged evils in the world are not really evils when sympathetically explained. Unfortunately for Ewer, he is not the whole "Guild" movement. Readers of the *Plebs* may remember that not very long ago the most prominent of the Guildsmen were hailing the Munitions Act as the great charter of working-class liberty, because it admitted the principle of working-class partnership with—not the whole body of citizens—but with the Sovereign State, with all its "present sinister intimate association with organized capitalism." It is only fair to add that the same people soon modified their enthusiasm, not because they didn't believe in the State, but only on the ground that the official Labour movement was not sufficiently alive to the glorious opportunity of partnership. If Ewer will read the Guilds pamphlets, and study their varied utterances, he will—even with the semi-clear ideas he at present seems to hold—soon find himself in a minority of one in the Guild movement; and I predict, judging by the quotation he gives us from the March *Guildsman* and the passionate democracy of his poems, will soon give up his amateur Guild notions and become a full-fledged Industrial Unionist.

INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM AND THE STATE.

The Industrial Unionist easily understands the lack of clarity the Guildsmen betray in their conceptions of the State. For one of the first fallacies the Industrial Unionist movement had to overthrow was the conception of a future Socialist political State. The collectivists and political Socialists imagined that once you "nationalized the means of Production, Distribution, and Exchange," (the old chestnut) the State immediately became the most beneficent institution imaginable. Very few Socialists believe that rubbish to-day, and as the propaganda of the *Plebs* extends their numbers become ever fewer. We had to show that the future society could not be political, because democracy was essentially industrial. We said the workman will never be free until he controls industry; he will therefore be compelled to educate himself, organize his enormous industrial power, and gradually seize from his employer more and more of the control of the workshop, until, either by a revolution or a show of force of an overwhelming character, he will break up the old order and establish the Industrial Commonwealth. He would have no use for the State. The State was the coercive organ of the capitalist; it was adapted to a society based on what was called political democracy; it was essentially the governing organ of a nation with geographical limitations; so he abolished the nation and the state.

While this propaganda was gradually undermining the old Collectivist notions, along came the Guildsmen, mainly middle-class people, and in the true English spirit said—"Let there be a compromise! You industrialists are too industrial; we can't see ourselves for industrialism. And you politicals are too political. Now we'll give the industrials the industrial unions they're so keen on; only we shall call them Guilds. And we'll give the Collectivists a political structure and we shall call it the State." That's why the Guildsmen cannot or will not understand the State.

THE INVENTION OF THE CONSUMER.

When is a man a producer, and when is he a consumer? When he is eating he is on the one hand consuming food and on the other producing energy. When he is making, or producing, a boot he is at the same time consuming leather—simply, of course, because producing and consuming are two poles of the same act. There is no act of production that does not involve consumption, and, *per contra*, no consumption that does not involve production.

But the Guildsmen look upon men, for the purposes of Guild propaganda, in separate categories—as producers and also as consumers; and they call for two sets of organizations. Friend Ewer put it rather plausibly. He says the man who has to wear a shoe ought to have some voice in deciding the quantity and quality of shoes, because he knows where the shoe pinches. How is it decided

to-day? By the money in his pocket and the kinds of shoes accessible to him. Well, if we arrange to have all the existing kinds of shoes available in every locality, and eliminate the money difficulty, will a man require a separate organization to prevent his shoe pinching him? Does Ewer suggest that, in order to find out how many shoes are required in a given period, it will be necessary to organize every citizen and hold a meeting for this purpose? The needs of the community, and the ability to supply those needs, merely require a statistical department which would be a branch of the Industrial Union of Public Service. But alas! poor Guildsmen, if you have no consumer, you have no State—or status!

The structure of the Industrial Commonwealth will no doubt largely determine itself. So far as it can be planned on telic lines, the Industrial Unionists have made a science of structure without so far discovering the slightest reason for a separate organization of *consumers*. I cannot go into details now more than to say that every Industrial Unionist contemplates certain central and local organizations made up of representatives from the industrial unions who would have to deal with all questions affecting the respective unions.

MONEY.

Have the Guildsmen contributed anything to the make-up of the future structure? Every single contribution they have made is an unnecessary complication. They have given us a State, a consumer's organization, rent, taxes, rates, and the need for money. Not one of which is required. It is a commonplace of Socialist economics that money is born in commodity production, but that with the abolition of commodities, there is no function for money. Marx taught that 60 years ago, but the Guildsmen haven't glimpsed it yet. Take away your useless money, and you can throw your rents, rates, taxes (payment for sanitary services included) into the Fabian lumber-room. Can Ewer wonder that, when we see these old spooks solemnly trotted out by a so-called advanced body, we should feel like groaning—or cursing?

NOAH ABLETT.

HERVÉ.

Sympathetic observers at the beginning of the war looked forward to a revision of the basis of the (French Socialist) Party on the lines of *the patriotic abandonment of the Class War, co-operation with Capital, and the replacement of the Collectivist ideal by one of industrial organization with a share in profits and control*. . . . But alas! the minority cling to the old dogmas and formulae, and the majority give way for fear of a rupture. It is the suicide of a party!—Hervé, in *La Victoire*, (*Cambridge Magazine*, March 24th, 1917).

Reforming Reformism

THE recent immense extension of the powers and activities of the State in the control of industry and in the drastic limitation of civil liberties renders a re-statement of the fundamental principles of Socialism an urgent necessity. The popular progapanda of the larger Socialist bodies has for many years past so closely identified Socialism with State ownership and control, that the rapid development of the rule of an irresponsible oligarchy is placing the believers in State Socialism in a very awkward position.

At the outset it must be borne in mind that all the conflicting schools of modern Socialist thought are reducible in the final analysis to two clearly defined groups ; just as (to borrow an illustration from biology) all varieties of animals can be classed either as vertebrates or as invertebrates. (The analogy is not less appropriate inasmuch as it is largely a question of "back-bone" that decides to which of the two groups any particular Socialist theoretician may safely be assigned !). The classes comprise, on the one hand, the Marxian or scientific Socialists, and on the other, the Reformist or State Socialists. These latter will be found to include all those who, however much they may appear to differ as to methods, &c., base their Socialism on the principle that the object of all Socialist endeavour should be "the well-being of the community as a whole." The logical outcome of such a theory is a species of propaganda replete with emotional appeals and ethical phraseology. The hard lot of the workers and the social evils which inevitably result from a system of competitive capitalism are cited to prove the injustice of the present régime, and to arouse sentiments of pity and indignation in the minds of the audience. The average well-intentioned person falling under the spell of an eloquent exponent of this kind of Socialism feels the need for immediate action at least to palliate the worst of the horrors thus depicted, and readily appreciates the value of reforms to be carried out by "a democratic State in the interests of the whole community."

Of the many false assumptions underlying this quite sincere and well-intentioned attempt to solve social problems, only a few can be indicated here. The first is that the final court of appeal is the subjective emotions of the auditor and not the objective facts of society. Socialism of this kind is essentially an ethical gospel and not a scientific exposition of social development. Secondly, that the remedy is to be found in asking the State—wrongly regarded as an impartial third party—to intervene on behalf of the oppressed "masses." Thirdly, that there really exists any such homogeneous body as a "community" at all. Capitalist society consists of

antagonistic groups. To harmonise their economic interests is impossible, since all further development of Capitalism will only accentuate their antagonism, and render it more obvious.

It cannot, however, be disputed that the policy of the Government has been the logical application of the theories of *State Socialism* to the problems confronting it. The welfare of "the community" is imperilled by the conditions arising out of the war. The interests of the community necessitate, therefore, the restrictive legislation of the past three years. But this "Socialism" has neither destroyed Capitalism nor emancipated the workers from wage-slavery. Rather has it enormously increased the powers of exploitation of the ruling class, forged new chains for the workers, and destroyed the liberties of the individual. Hence the State Socialists have been compelled to modify their theories. The Guild Socialists, who have vainly striven to resolve the dualism of the class struggle into a harmonious trinity of producer, State, and consumer, are becoming increasingly dubious as to the efficacy of the State as a means of preventing social discord. The serious searchings of heart which have been going on in the I.L.P.—the State Socialist party *par excellence*—have recently found expression in one of the most astonishing pronouncements in the history of the Socialist movement.

An official statement has been drawn up by "a little company of I.L.P. experts," entitled *The Socialist State*. It opens with the assertion that "Socialists believe in the State." Socialists who do *not* believe in the State, and deny that such a political form is in any way conceivable "under Socialism," are thus quietly ignored. It is then explained that "the State will consist of the masses using their political power for the good of the whole. It must be democratic or it will rule in the interests of a small class which will exploit the nation." It is unfortunate that the "experts" have omitted to provide any definition of these "masses" or any explanation of how they are to be distinguished from "the whole." One can only conclude that the "masses" together with "the small exploiting class" constitute the whole. But when shall these things be? Under a *Socialist* form of society? Presumably so, since it is a "Socialist State" that is being described. So we are left with a democratic, and therefore classless, community containing a powerful exploiting class!

Perhaps we may take it that the reference is to the present social system, which it is hoped will become "more democratic." Such an aspiration is the essence of Macdonaldism, and betrays the identity of at least one of the experts. Briefly, if this be so intended, it means reform within the existing social order,—democratic control of the State without destroying the economic basis of capitalist society—Socialism without a social revolution. Adequate comment is impossible. Let us pass on to the last point. When

it has developed to its perfection, this astonishing form of society, we are told, is to blossom forth into the purest form of communism! "The State under Socialism," the experts assure us, "is the power of the mass to retain the freedom of all individually as well as conjointly." One can only wish "the mass" joy of its job!

Such a confusion of terms and contradictory statements defies analysis or serious criticism. Let it be remembered that these same "experts" have for years been denouncing the theories of Marx as unscientific, inaccurate, and obsolete. And let us leave it at that! To the scientific or Marxian Socialist, the situation presents no difficulties whatever. In the light of the Materialist Conception of History, the war, its causes and effects, are shown to be the inevitable outcome of the development of capitalist society, and the State to be the political expression of that development. For us it is only a question of educating the workers in the facts of society so as to enable them to obtain possession of the instruments of production, thereby destroying the power of that class whose interests alone the State expresses. Each new development in society to-day is an additional proof of the truth of the Marxian theories. We have no need of revisionism or of reformism. In due time the State will die out, giving place to a form of society based on communal ownership and voluntary co-operation among the workers. The political State of to-day would be as impossible then as are now the stage coach or the bow and arrow.

The "experts" must try again.

H. WYNN-CUTHBERT.

The Luddite Movement

Translated by W. H. Mainwaring from *A History of Chartism*, by H. Schluter (New York Socialist Literature Co.)

(Continued.)

IN the year 1813 the Luddite movement declined, owing to some slight betterment in conditions. Cobbett's "Letters to the Luddites," in which he showed the folly of destroying machinery, also had considerable influence. Secret meetings, however, continued, as well as the activity of spies, who led many a worker to his undoing. The unrest continued in the factory districts, although to a smaller extent than before. The government system of espionage covered the whole of industry, and in order to demonstrate the need for their activities the spies themselves frequently furthered acts of violence.

Towards the summer of 1816 unrest broke out anew in Nottingham. On June 8th, a meeting was held near the borders of Derbyshire at which very strong speeches were delivered. Under the leadership of a man named Brandreth, also known as the "Captain of Nottingham," about two dozen men marched to

Nottingham. Others joined them en route. Armed with clubs, pick-axes, and scythes, the procession as it approached the town was attacked by soldiers, the captain and 20 others being arrested. Three of them, including Brandreth himself, were condemned to death on Oct. 16th, and a few days later hanged. As Brandreth walked under the gallows he cried out—"God bless everybody, except Lord Castlereagh. All of this is Oliver's work."

Oliver was government spy, who frequented workers' meetings in order to incite unrest. In 1817 he tried to get the workers of Manchester to arm themselves and march to London. He spoke at a meeting as a delegate from London, and told the people that they would have to turn Manchester into a second Moscow if the capitalists continued to show no regard for labour and wages. (Moscow was burnt down in 1812). He was, however, unmasked, and it was as Oliver the spy that he was later known. A short time after this, he was granted a government pension.*

With the year 1817 the movement practically died out. It was not in the main a movement for the destruction of machinery, so much as a general revolt of the workers in the industrial districts against the conditions brought about by the development of machinery. In its effect it came second only to the French Revolution. Hatred of war and the nobility played a part in the speeches at the meetings. As one speaker said:—"Down with the aristocracy! They have brought about this war and live well upon it. They send us to do the fighting for all, and by doing so we are destroying the Liberalism of France, and assisting in establishing despotism over the whole of Europe." But the Luddite movement was primarily an organization of the workers against the factory owners—in one sense, the first *conscious* opposition. Here the class instinct came out, by which the workers rightly began to feel that in the bourgeoisie they had a greater enemy than in the aristocracy. We have seen to what extent the workers were responsible for the movement becoming one of force and violence.

In the main, it was social oppression and fearful want and suffering that drew them into this movement. "If the workers are mad, it is oppression that made them so." And a close observer of almost every incident of the movement said:—

Now say, you philanthropists, men of understanding, upright and honest, is it right, is it reasonable, first to drive men mad through oppression, and then hang them in groups while they are still in that condition? Is it reasonable and Christian for judge, jury, and lawyers to make great outcry against the effects of oppression without one word being uttered against the cause of it? Is it right to offer a man a rope when he asks for a loaf? Pray, gentlemen, where did you learn that hemp is a good substitute for bread? §

* Peel, *Rising of the Luddites*.

§ *Beggars Complaint*.

The memory of the Luddites was honoured in the districts affected. For some decades the workers avoided all intercourse with those persons suspected of having been informers, and long afterwards one could have heard in Yorkshire songs about the destroyed machinery, broken windows, and burning factories, hummed softly as some old Luddite rocked the cradle of his grandchildren and thought over the struggles of his youth. . . .

Hand in hand with this movement in the industrial centres went another in the agricultural districts. The counterpart of General Ludd, called " Jack Swing," was there hailed as leader in a campaign of violence. Want and misery it was that created General Ludd, and so it was with Jack Swing. . . .

The Luddite movement was the first general movement of the modern proletariat against the industrial conditions that followed in the wake of the machine—at a time when no other means could be thought of wherewith to free them from the curse that lay over them. It was revolutionary in so far as it expressed the opposition of a new class to the oppression that the continued development imposed upon them. Their opposition to the bourgeoisie drove them into the Luddite movement. The means they used, the forms the struggle took, now appear obsolete and unsuitable. But they struggled at a time when the evolution of the working-class had not developed the necessary experience or knowledge to understand that Industrial and Political Organization alone will make possible the emancipation of their class.

The Bankruptcy of the 'Hodgean' Theory

FOR the past few months it has been the custom of His Almightyness, the Minister of Labour, to order men back to work the moment they " lost their heads " (capitalist press version) and struck against intolerable conditions. Regardless of whatever grounds for complaint they had, men were told—in parrot-like fashion—that not until they complied with the Government's first condition, i.e., returned to work, would their grievance be looked into. This condition, it was held, was absolutely essential in order to ensure the successful prosecution of the war. Any disturbance of the great machine of organized industry was at all costs to be avoided.

Plain folk might deduce therefrom that, this being the Government attitude towards Labour, " what was sauce for the goose would also be sauce for the gander " ; and that Capital, in its turn, would be required to " toe the line." Certain recent happenings, however, hardly support this view. In Lancashire—at Castleton, near Rochdale, to be precise—is a big factory engaged in peace times in the production of textile machinery, by name, Tweedale and Smalley's. After the outbreak of war, this firm like many others of its kind, became busy on " work of national importance." The firm was well-known as a non-union shop, and, up to 4 or 5 years ago, a Trade Unionist could not get

employment there; nor were any Society's officials recognised. While this anti-T.U. attitude remained unabated (after 1914), Messrs. Tweedale and Smalley were quite ready to take advantage of the concessions made by the Unions in the matter of allowing women to be introduced at reduced wages; and they were very soon employing a greater number of women under the Dilution Scheme than any other firm in the district.

In 1915 the Engineers of the district were successful in obtaining an increase in wages of 3/- on day-work, with an equivalent of 7½% on piece-work. Along with other non-federated firms, T. & S. were notified of this, and requested to comply therewith. The firm declined to reply to any correspondence from a Trade Union. After further vain efforts, the Unions concerned decided to take the case to arbitration, and Messrs. T. & S., as a controlled establishment, had to agree to this. Mr. L. Macassey was accepted as arbitrator, and his decision was that the firm must grant the increase to men on munition work, but not to those on commercial work. So afraid was the firm of the Government that they did not trouble to put the award into operation; and further, when some of the men signed on as War Munition Volunteers, and in due course received transfer papers, the firm intervened, had the transfers annulled, and retained the men!

During 1916, the Engineers gained a further increase of 3/- on day-work. This time Messrs. T. & S. paid only 2 or 3 sections, and the question again went to arbitration. Again the award was in favour of the men, and the firm (in the early part of this year) complied with it. Meanwhile they had adopted the practice of transferring men from munition work to commercial work, whenever slackness in the former department gave them an excuse for so doing. On Feb. 20th of this year—regardless of arbitration awards, pledges, Government conditions and everything else—they proceeded to order certain men to instruct women in the commercial work, with a view, of course, to a little extra "dilution" for their own benefit. The men refused point blank; and all received their "release." On March 7th, 30 more men were discharged, on the ground of slack trade. The Allied Trades' Committee of the district, being convinced that this was a mere excuse and not the real reason for the firm's action, sought an interview—but were ignored. On March 22nd, the rest of the Union men—some 500—struck work, and remained on strike for 6 weeks. From Feb. 22nd onwards the Ministry of Munitions had been in possession of the facts of the case, and as late as April 23rd, were still "asking the firm for an explanation."

On May 3rd, the engineers of the district, assisted by those of the Manchester district, came out on strike—as the only means in their power of convincing the authorities of the necessity for a settlement of the dispute. This resulted in a settlement on May 8th, the Unions concerned *gaining all their demands for the duration of the war*. Yet for 10 weeks, the men immediately concerned had had starvation staring them in the face—having had to "support" their families on sums ranging from 10/- to 16/- per week; for 10 weeks the Minister of Capital remained—practically—inactive; and for 10 weeks, of course the firm continued on its patriotic course of piling up excess profits.

On May 7th- the firm was fined £56 by the Tribunal ! A K.C. sat as chairman (impartial) along with two assessors from outside the district. The men *might* have received something like justice for the suffering they had undergone if a Labour representative had been selected to hear the case. *Then* perhaps the firm might have been fined a sum amounting to something more than a feeble pin-prick ; and the Ministry of Munitions might have been recommended to deport the directorate to Russia, where the working-class would know how to deal with them !

And meanwhile a " Labour " man still presides at the Ministry of Labour.

FRANK JACKSON.

A Vision of the Future

" I think we are all agreed that it (the war) presents an opportunity for the reconstruction of the industrial and economic conditions of this country such as has never been presented probably in the life of the world. . . . I believe the settlement after the war will succeed in proportion to its audacity. The reader we are to cut away from the past, the better are we likely to succeed. . . . If I could presume to be the adviser of the working classes, I should say : ' Audacity is the thing for you. Think out new ways—new methods. Think out even new ways of dealing with old problems. Don't always be thinking of getting back to where you were before the war. Get a really new world.'—Mr. Lloyd George, to a Labour Party deputation.

The soldiers speak :—

We who went out to save our country's name
Are glad our lives have not been thrown away ;
Are glad to hear that nought will be the same—
That " things will be considered " on the day
When we return, and that the bolder we,
The better ! Good. You, then, will stay your hand
When, having set the other nations free,
We come to claim our due from our own land ?
And, having fought, *we take it—see ?*

Chorus of business men :—

Oh, do be careful now, L.-G.!

The workers join in :—

We who are slaving for our country's need
In sweater's den or shop or mill or mine
Were hoping that we really might be freed.
" A golden opportunity," you say—that's fine !—
To rid yourselves of slavery. A lead
We may expect, then ? You will take your stand,
And, as a son of Liberty, fall into line
When, having worked to save our Motherland,
And having fought, *we take it—see ?*

Chorus of business men :—

Oh, do be careful now, L.-G.!

WINIFRED HORRABIN.

Our May issue was completely sold out. We should be glad if any reader who has any spare copies would let us have them.

News of the Movement

On May Day—appropriately enough—the rank and file of the S. Wales Miners once again emphatically recorded their desire to provide their share of the necessary funds required for the maintenance of the C.L.C., and the extension of its work. The E.C. had put on the Annual Conference Agenda the following resolution:—

The operations of the Military Acts having made it impossible to obtain students, the College recommend that the College be closed and the building sold.

That resolution was lost—not more than a dozen delegates, out of a total of 315 supporting it. There was no debate; the resolution was formally moved by the General Secretary, and Ablett put the case against it—in fine style, we hear. As nobody felt inclined to reply to him, no other C.L.C. supporter could speak—with the exception of Mark Starr, who reported on the good work the classes were doing, and urged, as against any idea of closing the College, the vital necessity of re-opening it and extending its activities, in order to meet the growing demand for lecturers.

* * * * *

This fine result was, in part at least, due to the wholehearted enthusiasm with which the S. Wales Division of the C.L.C. League threw itself into the work of putting the rank and file in the coal-field in possession of all the facts concerning the College and its present financial condition. A circular was prepared, and widely distributed, and this no doubt helped considerably in ensuring a fine victory for the C.L.C. At a Conference of the League held at Cardiff, April 21st, plans were discussed for a propaganda campaign this summer. (Will secretaries and friends please note that the Organizing Secretary's address is now:—W. J. Hewlett, 27, Alma Street, Abertillery, Mon.).

* * * * *

At the Annual Conference of the S.L.P. held at Derby at Easter the following resolution was adopted unanimously:—

“That this Conference offers its congratulations to the Central Labour College in recognition of the valuable educational work it has accomplished.”

On behalf of Plebeians we return thanks; and, in our turn, very heartily wish the S.L.P. every success in its increased activities in connection with the S.L. Press.

* * * * *

We trust class-secretaries and members everywhere are thinking over the question of resolutions, &c., for the August Meet—as suggested in the announcement in last month's *Plebs*. We want the C.L.C. Leaguers in S. Wales and on the Tyne, and Plebs Leaguers everywhere, to frame a joint policy and get to work on a concerted scheme of action. Send in suggestions *in good time this month* (before the 16th inst.) so that we may have some discussion of the whole subject in the July Magazine.

* * * * *

Our friend J. B. Askew sends (from an internment camp in the London district) May Day greetings to all Plebeians. “Salute the brethren,” his letter runs, “though not necessarily in the prescribed manner! To-day is lovely; the sun shines quite brightly—even on barbed wire! . . . Long live the C.L.C. and its classes. May they go on and prosper.” We hope that our comrade's spell of enforced inactivity is affording him opportunity for further study—of which we, in common with other Marxian students will reap the benefit later.

From our comrade E. R. R. (Birmingham) we still continue to receive every few days the name of some new subscriber (or two) bagged for the *Plebs*. If every one of our friends did the work he's done lately we should have a circulation running into five figures in next to no time. In reply to thanks, he writes—"If it's too much to ask Marxian Socialists to order half-a-dozen *Plebs* and sell them even below market-price until the buyer has got a grip of it—then their historic mission don't mean much to them!" Incidentally, also, he pays a fine tribute to the work done by W. Paul in connection with the Birmingham Social Science Class. . . . Another indefatigable seller is Harry Eyles, of Dowlais, who "asks for more" every month. To both these friends, and to all those active workers who have helped us to more than double our circulation within the past year or so, we offer our best thanks. *Keep it up!*

Mark Starr reports from S. Wales (ABERDARE District) that the three class centres, having finished their 'official' winter programme, have formed themselves into study groups, meeting weekly. "At our classes and meetings to date" (says he, writing some weeks ago) over £20 worth of intellectual dynamite has been hurled at strongly entrenched ignorance. Good business! Meantime the Industrial History classes established by the DOWLAIS District, at Dowlais and Bedlinog, (with Mark Starr as tutor) are going ahead—and anxiously awaiting supplies of W. W. C.'s book (delay in production of which is, we understand, due to the restriction of paper supplies); though our friend W. T. A. Foot, informs us that this difficulty has now been surmounted, and he hopes to have further edition out immediately.

A good many S. Wales I.L.P. ers who are also staunch C.L.C.'ers are, by the way, indignant at the *Labour Leader's* comments on the C.L.C. (see Newbold's article elsewhere in this issue). Some of them have written to the *Leader* protesting against the editorial attitude: whether their letters will appear, or be marked "Belated," remains (at the time of writing) to be seen.* In this connection we may be permitted to mention that, a month or two ago, at the time when Boudin's *Socialism and War* was being referred to by many correspondents of the *L.L.*, we wrote suggesting that in view of the difficulty in obtaining copies of the book, some I.L.P.'ers might care to know that the two issues of the *Plebs* containing W. W. C.'s full summary of Boudin's main arguments were still obtainable. We received a note in reply stating that the *Labour Leader* "did not publish free advertisements." As the *Plebs* has several times within the last year or two *paid* for adverts. in the *Leader*, but *without ever receiving a line of notice*—though other publications are frequently the subject of comment—we could only conclude that the *Leader* editorial board does not wish to give the *Plebs* any mention, if it can avoid it.

F. B. Silvester reports that the BIRMINGHAM Social Science Class—despite the heavy blow it has sustained in the loss of its tutor, W. Paul, through the operation of the Military Service Acts—is keeping the flag flying. Tom Smith, a student of the class, stepped into the breach, and piloted the members through W. W. C.'s *Modern Working-Class Movement*. Walton Newbold delivered three lectures to the class in February and March. "As regards 'that pamphlet'," says F. B. S., "our members, few as they are at present, can be depended upon to dispose of at least 6 dozen. . . . We are looking forward to our next session with mingled anxiety and hope. If, as we trust, the war is over soon, we shall probably find 1917-18 session the best we have ever had."

*The above was in type before the publication of the *Leader* for May 17th. In that issue some of these letters appear, and also a brief editorial paragraph admitting that C.L.C. classes have done "much excellent work."

EDINBURGH District C.L.C. Class has also suffered a serious loss through the removal of comrade J. S. Clarke to Derbyshire. However, the class is still forging ahead. "The sale of *Plebs* is going up by leaps and bounds," Jim Nixon reports: and he will have to give us leave to add that, with an agent as untiringly enthusiastic as himself to push it, we are not surprised. Edinburgh takes the biggest parcel of *Plebs* now—other districts please note! Moreover, Jim—making full use of his opportunities as a railwayman—has tapped various places outside Edinburgh—Dundee, Montrose, and other towns. "The boys in Auld Reekie are extending their front," says he. He'd have to extend the size of his hat if he heard all the nice things the secretarial department said about him!

The result of the Conference of North-Eastern C.L.C.'ers held at NEW CASTLE, March 31st, was the formation of a North of England branch of the C.L.C. Already, several T.U. branches have affiliated, and N.U.R., A.S.E., and Miners' branches are to be circularised, and invited to "join up." Will Lawther is President, and Ebby Edwards, Treasurer. . . . Walton Newbold visited the Chopwell and Newcastle classes a few weeks ago, delivering lectures which were very highly appreciated. . . . Will class-secretaries note that the price of Ebby Edwards leaflet, *A Plea for Real Working-Class Education*, has now been reduced to 2/6 per 100. It can be obtained—as can also any information about the C.L.C. branch—from Sec., C.L.C. Branch, Socialist Society Rooms, Royal Arcade, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne. . . . The Ashington branch of the Northumberland Miners has sent in the following resolution to the Annual Council Meeting:—"That the Executive Committee of the M.F.G.B. investigate the principles of the C.L.C. as an educational institution in the interest of the Labour movement, and if satisfied make recommendations as to a share in the control and work of the College with the N.U.R."

From the Tyne district, too, comes *The Young Rebel*, a paper for the boys and girls of the Socialist Sunday Schools, which we can very heartily recommend to all Plebeians. Copies, 1½d. post paid, from J. Stewart, 15 Woodbine Avenue, Wallsend-on-Tyne. A young rebel—aged 13—writing in the first number, shows that he for one has already got a grip of the principles for which the C.L.C. stands, and is evidently looking forward to the time when, as a C.L.C. student, he can discover for himself a bit more about the "How" and the "Why" of things. Don't forget to send for a copy.

ROCHDALE C.L.C. class has just completed a successful session. A total of 35 lectures have been given—on Industrial History, Materialist Conception of History, the Evolution of Species, and Working-Class Philosophy. The Industrial History tutor, H. Kershaw, had unfortunately to leave (Military Service Acts again) before the course was finished. A total of 31 students have had their names on the books for the various classes, and "all lectures," as the Sec., F. Horsfield, proudly reports, "have been delivered by local students who have given their services. 12 Labour organizations are affiliated to the branch."

Will Plebeians in GLASGOW interested in the formation of a branch of the Plebs League in that city communicate with D. A. Kennedy, 131, Hillhouse Street, Springburn, Glasgow.

We are exceedingly glad to hear that certain B.S.P. comrades are anxious to arrange for B.S.P.-C.L.C. classes in their respective districts. Will any such communicate with us, so that we may discuss possible arrangements regarding lecturers, &c.?

If the necessary permission from the Governors can be obtained, we should be glad to make arrangements for an Industrial History Class to be held at the College. Will London Plebeians interested in the idea write us, mentioning the days and hours most convenient to them?

Correspondence

THOSE S.L.P. PAMPHLETS.

Sir,—I must still, in spite of W. P. and Fred Silvester, adhere to my contention that the many excellent pamphlets of the S.L.P. are not more excellent than it would be possible for them to be. They are splendid, and, I frankly admit, the best in the British Movement. When I discovered them it was an experience akin to finding dry—but not too dry—and solid ground in an almost unvarying morass of oozy sentimentalism. Of course, not all so-called Socialist publications are sentimental, but most of them are either that or else quite indistinguishable from “progressive” non-socialist matter. Without Kerr & Co. and the S.L.P., I am afraid we should almost all have to remain, of necessity, in the illiteracy with which the more influential sections of the Movement appear to be content. (That is to say, unless we could read German, which I cannot). In despair, we should have to rush either to Morel, Angell, Roden Buxton, Bertrand Russell and all those amiable, delightful, critical Liberals and Individualists who, to-day, set the “Socialist” pace for so many comrades, or else bury ourselves in the *New Statesman* and the monumental monographs of the Webbs on Local Government.

Having said so much, however, I must now elaborate not only my appreciation but also my criticism. Like Lord Raglan, I am told that I have blundered my charge. Yet I still maintain that the S.L.P. pamphlets are too theoretical and deal too much with the conclusions which were the ultimate result of the researches of the great Marxians. They do not hitch on easily enough to the every-day interests of the working man. They *punch*—I love Socialist literature that punches—at generalisations, at capitalists in the abstract, at the capitalism which is obvious to the Socialist rather than to the non-Socialist reader. They are masterpieces of historical learning and criticism. They are written as if by history students and economic students for students of economics and history. But I fear they will never get a wide circle of readers, who, having digested the pamphlets, will wish to go on to the tougher meat.

I believe in the old I.L.P. method of hanging a sermon on the reader's text, or of discussing matters with which he is familiar. What I do not believe in is the kind of sermon usually preached, or the exhortation which is delivered. Neither do I appreciate the more “advanced” literature to which the student is referred (by the I.L.P.) nor the extraordinary historical economic and philosophical data with which the preachers commence operations. A lament and a dirge are alright when rendered on the pipes, but the I.L.P. aim is, too often, not at the head but at the heart; and not infrequently is more calculated to impinge on the tear glands. There is a line of song—“A rope for a robber, a carbine for a spy”—which I like to see rendered in Socialist literature as “A rope for a capitalist, a carbine for a Liberal;” and I like to sit and listen to the rattle in the former's throat and to see the latter double up as the shot gets him in his Food Control. The parson and the spiritual message are best kept for the funeral. Liberalism

can best be reformed by the worms, and Capitalism exorcised by a vigorous application of class-conscious activity.

The I.L.P. shell needs tempering and hardening, the S.L.P. projectile needs a contact-fuse and a little more T.N.T. *Then* we'll get the Home Hun on the Run and keep him trotting !

Yours fraternally, J. T. WALTON NEWBOLD.

Review

The State : Its Origin and Function. By W. Paul. (In preparation 1/6 net).

This book, by the Editor of the *Socialist*, is shortly to be published by the S.L. Press, Glasgow. Like many others circulating in the movement, it is the offspring of controversy. I need hardly remind readers of the *Plebs* that our revisionist friends in the I.L.P. and Fabian Society have an idea that the Capitalist State can be transformed into a Socialist State by a series of what they call "steps in the right direction ;" e.g., State Railways, State Mines, State Post Office (with its prying into rebels' letters), Municipal Banks, Municipal Pawnshop, &c. Scientific Socialists do not share this illusion. They declare that the object of Socialism is to abolish the State. The triumph of the proletariat will not only bring to an end the age-long exploitation of one section of the community by another, but will terminate the reign of that instrument of oppression, of offence and defence—the State. The Social Revolution will not be a beautiful transformation scene, wherein the wicked wizard State will be turned into a good fairy State. The State will die out. The government of men by an exploiting class will be succeeded by an administration of things organized and controlled by an industrial democracy.

The S.L.P., as a Marxist organization, has always upheld this conception of Engels. During the war Paul, as Editor of the *Socialist*, has on several occasions had to point out to the I.L.P. how fallacious is its conception of the State. One of the results of his attacks was a statement by I.L.P. "experts" of the party's position as regards the State. Paul's rejoinder met with no response. As he is a Scot he has not let the matter rest there. He thinks the question too important to be dropped—especially in view of D.O.R.A. and other State blessings. In his forthcoming book he undertakes to prove that the State from the time of its origin down to the present day has always functioned in the interests of the ruling class which by virtue of its economic power has made itself dominant in society. •

The book is based on a series of lectures on the State given by the writer to the members of Social Science Classes held under the joint auspices of the S.L.P. and C.L.C. The first chapter gives an account of the structure of society under primitive communism, and traces the origin of the State in the rise of private property within the tribal organization. Chapters 2 and 3 are devoted to an exposure of the State despotisms based on slave-labour which coincided with the "glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome." A description of the class antagonisms and the function of the

State under feudalism and capitalism is set forth in the later chapters. The work is written in a plain, unvarnished style, by a proletarian for proletarians. Paul is not a phrasemonger, and, like the Editor of the *Plebs*, he does not believe in prose fripperies. With the object of proving his case he marshals facts, illustrations and authorities. As Newbold's book, *How Europe Armed for War*, is an arsenal of facts against the militarism of Imperialism, so *The State: Its Origin and Function*, is an armoury replete with weapons for the use of rebels who desire to attack the superstitious worship of the State, and the hateful despotism of which it is the powerful fortress.

The book will be published at 1/6 each, and will be bound in stiff boards. Owing to the high cost of paper only a limited number will be printed. Therefore Plebeians who desire to get copies are recommended to send orders immediately, with cash, to the Business Manager, S.L. Press, 50 Renfrew Street, Glasgow.

F. B. SILVESTER,

(Secretary, Birmingham Social Science Class).

The *Plebs* Bookshelf

James Connolly's *Labour on Irish History* will already be on a good many Plebeians' bookshelves. That edition is now, however, out of print; as a matter of fact (according to a recent paragraph in the *Railway Review*) the whole of the publishers' stock was destroyed by fire during the Irish Rebellion of a year ago. Now, Messrs. Maunsel have re-issued the book, together with Connolly's later work, *The Re-Conquest of Ireland*, and with an Introduction by Robert Lynd, in a handsome volume which is a worthy tribute to the memory of "Ireland's first Socialist martyr." (*Labour in Ireland*, by J. Connolly: Maunsel, 4/- net). *Labour on Irish History* was reviewed at length in the *Plebs* of April, 1914; I need not therefore say any more about it here. *The Re-Conquest of Ireland* might almost, one feels, have been written as Connolly's legacy to the Irish Labour Movement, so clear and comprehensive a statement is it of the aims which, in his view, that Movement must set before itself. Its final aim must be the Re-Conquest of Ireland and—

that re-conquest involves taking possession of the entire country, all its powers of wealth-production and all its natural resources, and organizing these on a co-operative basis for the good of all. . . in order that the present population, descendants alike of the plebeian Conquerors and the Conquered plebeians, may enjoy in common fraternity and good-will that economic security and liberty for which their ancestors fought, or thought they fought.

He goes on in the course of the book to develop his thesis that—

the labour movement alone has an ideal involving the complete reversal of the social and political consequences of the Conquest . . . that it is only in the working-class we may expect to find the true principles of action, which, developed into a theory, would furnish a real philosophy of Irish freedom (Chap. I.) . . . The Conquest was in Irish politics the victory of the capitalist conception of law and the functions of law—the Re-conquest will be the victory of the working-class conception (Chap. III.) . . . The objective aimed at is to establish in the minds of the men and women of Ireland the necessity of giving effective

expression, politically and socially, to the right of the community (all) to control for the good of all the industrial activities of each, and to endow such activities with the necessary means. (Chap. IX.)

It is a tremendously interesting book—more interesting to me, I confess, than *Labour in Irish History*. The chapters dealing with existing conditions in Dublin and Belfast, with the Woman's Movement and the Co-operative Movement, touch on every phase of the problems confronting Irish Labour to-day. "AE's" magnificent Open Letter "To the Masters of Dublin" (printed in the *Plebs*, December, 1913) is given as an Appendix.

If you had between you collectively a portion of human soul as large as a threepenny bit. . .
—but I mustn't begin quoting from *that* ! Nor have I left myself much space to quote from Robert Lynd's fine tribute to Connolly in the Introduction. Mr. Lynd quotes a poem of Francis Adams's, which, so he tells us, T. M. Kettle declared formed the best "explanation" of Connolly's mood and purpose in the Rebellion :—

" But when I hear them declaiming
Of 'liberty,' 'order,' & 'law.'
The husk-hearted Gentleman
And the mud-hearted Bourgeois,

" . . . a sombre hateful desire
Burns up slow in my breast
To wreck the great guilty Temple
And give us rest ! "

(Which you will remember is more or less the keynote, also, of Ewer's sonnet, "To the Sinn Fein Dead"—

" When hope is gone, what left but seek release
In one mad grapple with the thing you hate. . .)

Labour in Ireland is a book to possess. I shall quote one other wise sentence of Connolly's in conclusion—"The thing that matters most is not so much the EXTENT of our march, but rather the DIRECTION in which we are marching."

* * * * *

I trust that ere now every Plebeian has bought and read W. N. Ewer's *Five Souls, and other War-Time Verses* (Herald Office, 1/- net, postage 1d.). Somewhere in South Wales they were discussing recently whether Poetry was of value to the Labour Movement ; I hope somebody took along a parcel of Ewer's little volume, and did good business with it at that meeting ! I hope all Dowlais men know by heart "Gratitude"—which, despite G. G. in the *Herald*, is, I think, one of the finest things in the book. I wish they'd sing the "New National Anthem" at all Labour meetings—and repeat, with a pause between each verse for meditation, "Grace After Dividends." . . Yes, poetry of this sort is, or should be, of very real value to the Labour Movement.

So, too, by the way, are not a few verses in *Yorkshire Dialect Poems* (Sidgwick and Jackson, 1/- net). "I Niver Can Call Her My Wife," by Ben Preston, the Bradford Poet, is a poem to stir the blood of every worker. Perhaps Joe Walker or Jesse Townend or some other Yorkshire Plebeian will write us something someday about this poet of the proletariat,

Which brings me to Joe Walker's recommendation last month of *Ben O' Bill's, The Luddite*, a novel dealing with incidents of the Luddite rising. Jesse Townend (1, Market Walk, Huddersfield) writes that he has unearthed a number of new copies of the book, and can supply them for 1/3 post paid. I've got my copy already, and it looks exceedingly interesting. . . . By a coincidence, one of the publisher's advert. lists a week or two ago contained the announcement of a new novel—*A Hundred Years Ago, A Tale of the Riots of 1812*—described by the *Times* as "a well-knit tale of the Luddite riots;" while in the *Times* Literary Supplement of May 10th, there appeared the following paragraph:—

Mr. & Mrs. J. L. Hammond, whose study of *The Village Labourer: 1760-1832*, was issued by Messrs. Longman in 1911, are supplementing it with a companion work under the title of *The Town Labourer: 1760-1832*, describing the general features of the industrial revolution. It will be completed by another volume giving in detail the history of the workpeople in various industries, with a full account of the Luddite rising and of the disturbances connected with the adventures of the agent provocateur Oliver.

For references to this latter individual see Mainwaring's translation of "The Luddite Movement" on another page. . . . Mark Starr recommends to students of the 1800-1830 period the Fabian pamphlets on Francis Place and Robert Owen (2d. each) as being distinctly useful.

* * * * *

Walton Newbold's pamphlet, *The Politics of Capitalism*, is worthy of its place in the series begun by John Bryan's *Essays in Socialism and War* (B.S.P. Office, 21a Maiden Lane, Strand, W.C. 2.; 1½d. post paid). It forms a valuable little appendix to Boudin, as a study of the gradual development of Capitalist political theory and practice. Its headlines—"In the Beginning—Liberalism," "His Holiness, Free Trade," "From Cotton to Coal and Iron," "Missionaries of Empire," "Steel and Strife," "The Crusaders of Commodities," "The Climax of the Class-Struggle"—are sufficient indication of the nature of its contents. It is a good example of the *kind* of pamphlet Newbold is appealing for in his reply to W.P. and Silvester elsewhere in this issue. It brings out the essential, primary facts, and illustrates them with numerous "modern instances." Modern enough!—as for example:—

To-day, Capitalism is supreme in the councils of state. Never was there a Government so patently capitalist in composition, in ideas, and in methods, as the Imperial War Cabinet and its subsidiary bureaucracy. . . .

The only difference that the proposals of the Paris Conference will make, if adopted, will be to bring the services of the capitalist states to the assistance of their respective private capitalists. What do the capitalists maintain the State for, if not to make use of it when they require it?

* * * * *

There is a passage of peculiar interest to Plebeians in H. Wilson Harris's book on *President Wilson: His Problems and His Policy*, recently published by Headley Bros. The chapter dealing with Mr. Wilson's record as President of Princeton University describes how he set himself to reform the teaching

and the residential systems of the university with a view to breaking down certain barriers raised by the old aristocracy of wealth and seniority. He converted 24 of the 27 trustees to his views. And then—

a few weeks later the scheme, thus endorsed, was made public in the university, to be greeted with opposition immediate and intense. Alumni of every generation—now substantial financial supporters of the university—rallied to the support of menaced privilege. Warnings of the withdrawal of subscriptions rained in on the Board. The trustees quailed, then yielded, before the storm. They called on the President to withdraw his proposals. Dr. Wilson bowed to *force majeure*. He had run his first tilt against the power of the dollar—and the dollar had won.

A pretty little illustration of the Great Truth that he who pays the piper will call the tune—in Education as in other things. It is scarcely necessary to elaborate the moral further!

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If you come across a little booklet entitled *Welfare Study: What It Is*, by Cecil Walton, spend sixpence on it. I can't make out by whom it is published; it is *printed* by a Glasgow firm. It includes reproductions of photographs taken inside what look like munition works, so whether the Ministry of Munitions has anything to do with it, I don't know. The last words in the book (they occur many times in it) are—

. . . and—*it pays*.

The italics are the author's very own!

* * * * *

Two novels recommended by correspondents:—Gissing's *Born in Exile* (Nelson's, 9d.) and *The Healers*, by Maarten Maartens (Constable's 1/- series). The S.L.P. comrade who recommends the first-named declares that, better than any work of fiction known to him, it "excellently portrays the intellectual maelstrom into which intensified social and economic conditions have plunged us to-day." . . . Plebeians should also note that Arnold Bennett's finest novel, *The Old Wives' Tale*, is now obtainable in a shilling edition.

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I have been reading H. N. Brailsford's *A League of Nations* (Headley Bros., 5/- net). I have no space here to review it adequately; but I strongly recommend every Plebeian who can beg or borrow it (I know 5/- is a long price) to read it. It is packed full of valuable information. The chapter on "Problems of Nationality," dealing with the non-Russian races of Russia, with the question of Albania and Italy's claims in the Adriatic, with Austria-Hungary and the "geographical and economic" reasons for the union of its many races in one political unit, with the Balkan nationalities, and the Polish and Alsace-Lorraine questions, is full of suggestive material. It is followed by a chapter on "The Roads of the East," with sub-sections, The Highway of the Straits, and The Road to Bagdad.

It is significant (says Mr. Brailsford) that as each month passes the *Eastern purposes*, alike of the Entente and of the Central Empires, assume an overwhelming relative importance among the many issues of the war.

That was written months ago, and it is truer than ever to-day. (Cf. the same author's article in the *Herald*, May 19th)

It is "the Eastern Question" which distracted the lives of our fathers and grandfathers, with Russia still in her old rôle, and Germany filling the traditional part of Great Britain.

Other chapters, of especial interest to Marxian students, deal with "Empire, Sea-Power, and Trade," and "The Economics of Peace." *A League of Nations* is a very notable book.

J. F. H.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

Via Pacis: How Terms of Peace can be Automatically Prepared while the War is still going on. By An American (H. F. McCormick.) (Allen and Unwin, 1/- net).

Mr. McCormick's phraseology, if not his plan, ought to appeal to our rulers and governors, since his suggestions, he says, "place the outcome of the war upon a net 'Cash Value' basis of liquidation for any given date, as against that of a 'negotiable note' with a long future maturity."

The True Cause of the Commercial Difficulties of Great Britain. By C. B. Phipson. (Allen and Unwin, 2/6 net).

Showing that all Great Britain needs, in order to return to the Golden Age—or should one say Paper Age?—prior to 1874, "when her commercial prosperity was phenomenal," is the further development of the cheque system, the demonetization of gold, and the issuing of Treasury notes as sole legal tender.

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST LIBRARY.

The Politics of Capitalism

By J. T. WALTON NEWBOLD, M.A.

Essays in Socialism and War

By JOHN BRYAN.

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The International Socialist Weekly. Thursdays, One Penny.

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

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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.

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