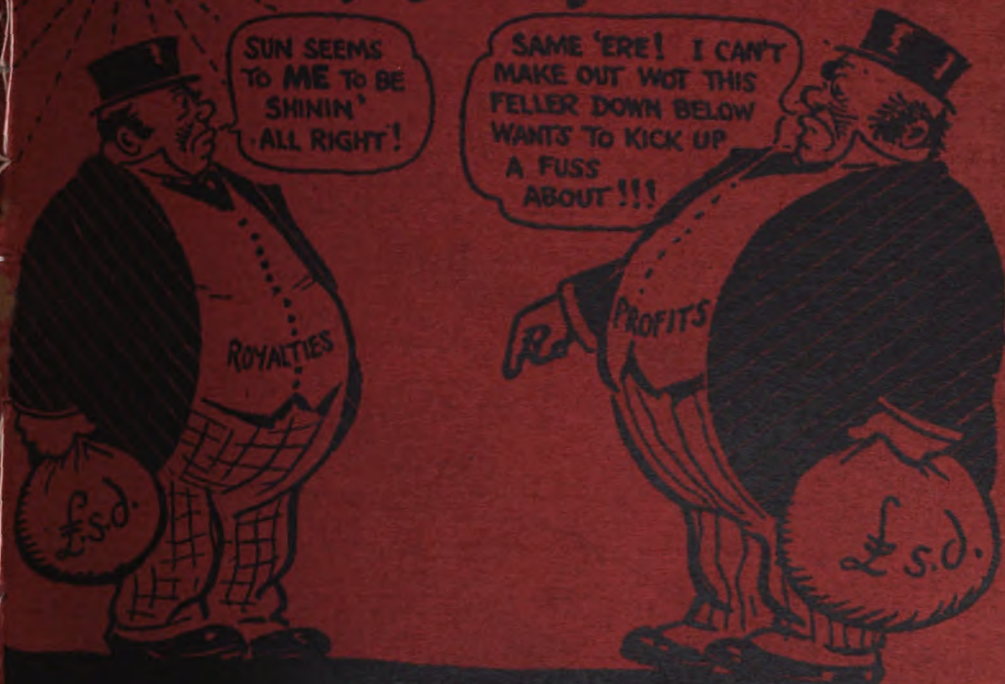


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The Organ of the National Council of Labour Colleges

THE PLEBS

I can promise to be candid but not impartial.

Vol. XVI

April, 1924.

No. 4

CONTENTS

	PAGE
OURSELVES—AND YOU	129
THE ENGINEERS' WAGE PROBLEM. By J. D. Lawrence	132
OUR GRAND OLD GOVERNING CLASS. By J. T. Walton Newbold	135
A RUSSIAN TEXTBOOK. By W. H. Ryde	139
HOUSING AND MONEY. By Arthur Woodburn	143
HOW TO BUILD HOUSES. By J. J. Clark	147
THE ECONOMICS OF CAPITALISM: A SYLLABUS FOR CLASSES	150
THE REVIVAL OF TRADES COUNCILS. By W. Brain and J. Stephenson	153
NOTES BY THE WAY FOR STUDENTS AND TUTORS	154
MARKED PASSAGES	157
OUR READERS' VIEWS	158
THE CONSTITUTION OF THE PLEBS LEAGUE	162
COBER HILL SUMMER SCHOOL: PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME	162
LABOUR COLLEGE (LONDON) STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION	163
THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LABOUR COLLEGES: NOTES AND NEWS	164
BOOK REVIEWS	167

OURSELVES—and YOU

THE March issue of The PLEBS was sold right out. We even had to break into the small reserve of copies which we keep for binding at the end of the year—and we had regretfully to turn down quite a number of "repeat" orders towards the end of the month. This is sufficiently clear evidence that the reduction to 4d. was a move in the right direction. Our circulation has gone up exactly 25% already.

We've got to get it up further. We've printed a larger edition this month—the largest edition The PLEBS has ever printed. Shall we be able to announce a record circulation next month? It rests with you—our friends in the movement.

We want a steady circulation of at least 7,000. There isn't far to go now. But we need redoubled efforts—and some careful organisation—just now, if we are to keep up to this figure during the summer months. The days should have gone by when we “slacked off” during the summer. We can't afford, believing as we do in the vital importance of Independent Working-Class Education to the workers' movement, to rest on our oars for months on end. If we have to adapt ourselves and our methods to slightly different circumstances—well, it's up to us to think out how. Revolutionists who “go easy” because of a change in the weather are scarcely of the stuff that counts in these strenuous days. Anyway, whatever else marks time, the mag. must go on—and that depends on you, and the plans you make to ensure its distribution. Even if there was no sort of urgency about the cause you and we are working for, it is bad—and wasteful—policy for all of us concerned in the running of classes to lose touch with the people we've got together during the winter, and to begin doing the spadework all over again in the autumn. See to it that the mag. is made full use of as a “means of contact” in your district; and do your bit to assist in the job of distribution.

Our comments on the W.E.A.'s appeal for assistance to the Carnegie Trustees has raised quite a stir in the clan MacTavish.

*Andrew's
Barbees*

Mr. MacTavish himself, in his letter on another page, makes no point which we have not already answered in reply to the W.E.A.ers who had previously written to us. His sarcasms about Plebs using Free Libraries leave us quite unmoved. There is all the difference in the world between taking full advantage, as individuals, of all the facilities which such “communal” institutions as Free Libraries offer, and asking, *as a* (professed) *working-class organisation*, for a donation from the loot “made” by a particularly unscrupulous capitalist. Even though, as Mr. MacTavish declares, the assistance were given unconditionally, that difference still exists. It may be a matter of “spiritual” values—considerations of dignity, independence, etc.; but it is a difference which even such “base materialists” as ourselves can recognise and appreciate. And anyhow, would the assistance be given unconditionally—from such a source—if the W.E.A. were really what it nowadays pretends to be: a genuinely working-class organisation, with working-class (and therefore anti-capitalist) aims?

The Editor of the *Highway*, Mrs. Barbara Wootton (to whom

heartly congratulations on her Royal Commissioner-ship) has some comments on PLEBS in the spring number of that journal. She fears that what the W.E.A. is suffering from at present is anæmia—that it is growing WEArY in well-doing, in fact. “*And for all their raging furiously together the Plebs suffer from this disease, too*” (italics hers). This is apparently said in order to cheer the drooping spirits of the weary ones. Mrs. Wootton neither elaborates the statement, nor produces evidence to support it. It just stands out, in stark italics, with an air of “Ha ha, I could tell you more if I thought fit.” . . . Well, the present circulation of The PLEBS doesn't look to us one little bit like a symptom of anæmia! And it's up to us all to make the diagnosis look silly—even though in doing so we have to disappoint a lady!

The *Labour Press Service's* paragraphist (13/3/24) is “tired of the eternal feud between the W.E.A. and the Plebs League . . . both bodies doing excellent work and it is regrettable that they should dissipate so much energy in squabbling with each other.” We ourselves are tired of the eternal feud between the Liberal Party and Labour Party; both are out for “progress,” and it is regrettable that they should dissipate etc., etc. Let the General Council of the T.U.C. have nothing to do with education which is not frankly and openly pro-working-class and the feud will be gone for ever.

Will all R.C.A. and U.P.W. Plebeians draw the attention of their Conference delegates to certain paragraphs in National Council of Labour Colleges Notes this month; and see that those delegates take a copy of this month's issue along with them to their respective Conferences. . . . And will every A.E.U. Pleb concentrate on the job of winning his Union's support for I.W.C.E. during the next few weeks.

We're on the eve of big things for our movement! *Shove all together!*

PLEBS TEXTBOOK No. 1

An OUTLINE of PSYCHOLOGY

4th Impression selling out rapidly

The ENGINEERS' WAGE PROBLEM

As our front cover last month suggested, the workers cannot be satisfied with political advances alone. The interest of the following article is that it urges "guerilla warfare" as best suited for the Engineers at the present moment; a plan of campaign in direct contrast to the national movement—to which we all wish complete success—now being carried through by the Miners.

SOMETHING discontent with low wages pervades the minds of the great mass of engineering wage-workers throughout the industry. Since the lock-out of 1922 wages have been beaten down by the victorious employers to an average of 57s. 6d. for a 47 hours week, and the determination to raise this wage pittance is increasing everywhere among those compelled to work for it. It can be declared with confidence that if all the skilled workers in the industry were working for the minimum district rates, the employers would be unable to maintain such a position for any prolonged period in face of the formidable agitation that would confront them.

Thus it can be seen at once that there are other factors operating which render the engineers' wage question an exceedingly complicated one.

The employers' policy of recent years has brought about a great extension of various wage systems which for convenience can be described as Payment-by-Results. In another direction they have instituted the practice of paying much higher hourly rates than the minimum to men graded as specially skilled. Those engaged under Payment-by-Results are expected to be quick and skilful enough to increase their minimum hourly rate of wages by at least a third, and generally this is the case. Compared with the men engaged upon the minimum rates, Payment-by-Results workers make anything from fifteen to twenty-five shillings more per week. Of course there are certain annoyances and dangers attached to all Payment-by-Results schemes, but the extra money gained by working under them is sufficient inducement to accept the risks.

Now take the super-skilled—or more lucky—worker. If an engineer gets a job in a newspaper plant he will receive from £5 to £6 per week. In a power house he will obtain £4 to £5; as an expert toolmaker somewhere about the same, and in many other cases the wages of these workers vary between £3 10s. and £4 10s. for a week of 47 hours. Also, many municipalities employ a great

number at much higher rates than the minimum. Another factor with an important bearing upon the situation is the steadily increasing tendency to give holidays with pay to these favoured workers.

How many engineers there are employed as described is impossible to say, but there are many thousands, and their number is increasing particularly in London and the surrounding districts. In the great provincial centres of Notts., Lancashire, Yorks., in Newcastle, Glasgow and other towns, are to be found the bulk of the minimum rate workers, though even here the spread of Payment-by-Results and differential rates makes steady progress.

Many other factors help to swell the complication of systems and rates of pay, such as old firms with obsolete methods, foreign competition, key trades within the industry, the enormous cost of raw materials, and the prolonged collapse of the shipbuilding trade. Most of these are the capitalists' concern and we need not discuss them here though they should be borne in mind in our wages consideration.

It is thus easy to understand that the relatively great differences in the wages of engineers are bound to cause equally great diversity of interest among the sections. Old-time union engineers detested piecework and prohibited their members to work it under heavy penalties of fines, exclusion from union membership, with social ostracism thrown in as a final reminder of their inveterate hostility to the unholy thing. They had a real identity of interest in maintaining the hourly pay system. Almost to the present day their denunciations of piecework are sufficiently remembered to silence any enthusiastic propagandist of Payment-by-Results. Because of their passionate hatred they fought more as one man in their numerous disputes than we do to-day under our complex conditions of a dozen different rates in a single factory.

The first essential in our problem is to understand it, and apparently engineers in the main have missed the significance of the great changes in wages that have occurred in recent years. Undoubtedly it is a powerful factor adversely operating against the chances of raising the low wage rates of the bulk of their fellows. The plain inference to be drawn by those prepared to express an unpopular opinion, and to be greatly misunderstood, is that the long cherished traditional belief in a genuine identity of interest among engineers is nothing but a myth, and the sooner the underpaid among them realise it, the quicker they will succeed in raising their wages.

Actually, there are distinct segregations of workers based upon wage disparities ; the higher-paid too absorbed in themselves to feel concerned to take active steps to help their underpaid fellow members. The custom of allotting wage increases when they used to be given in the engineering industry to all concerned merely perpetuated the

disparity between the underpaid and well-paid. To-day when nothing but refusals are accorded by the employers to every wage application, only the underpaid bare rate men are really affected, whereas if the applications were made only for these some improvement might be obtained.

Before long the unions may feel impelled to adopt the policy of raising the minimum men, leaving the highly-paid to look after themselves—which they seem well able to do. But—knowing our employers!—it will be advisable to consider methods other than negotiation, which has the serious defect that the best attainable by its application is to secure only the wage that the employers are willing to give; there is no forcing wage advances by negotiation.

The plain brutal truth is that if engineers mean to secure higher wages, they must fight for them and be prepared to endure hardship and often defeat. There is no other way and if they shrink from the ordeal then they must continue to wear out their lives making profit for their employers on semi-starvation wages.

The full power of the unions cannot be consolidated to fight the battle of the minimum men, simply because of the wide disparity in wages of the members. Chiefly because of this disparity it would be more than ordinarily difficult for the A.E.U. to launch a national strike for a uniform wage advance. No! The bare rate men will have to fight for themselves and by themselves! They must dare to fight like the gallant engineers of Southampton. Let them swear they will work no longer for their disgracefully low wages—and await suitable opportunities, when the employer has sufficient work in hand to make it unprofitable to delay its delivery. Then let them present their demand for the increased wage and, if refused, strike the shop without wasting time in futile negotiations. In other words, guerilla warfare will have to be tried and risks taken; if one strike is unsuccessful another must follow. The men must learn to strike effectively, and there is quite a lot of experience required to organise a strike properly.

To many engineers this may seem a counsel born of desperation, but to the writer it seems the only thing left to do. With nearly thirty years' experience of engineering workshops up and down the country in many sorts of jobs with wages generally low, and irksome discipline only relieved by the splendid comradeship of A.E.U. men, my conclusion is that only determined battling, by means of short, fierce strikes frequently applied, will secure adequate wages to the minimum rate men.

Political trade unionists there are in plenty among the engineers, but the bulk are *wage* trade unionists whose claims must be met before they are ready to move for better things.

J. D. LAWRENCE.

OUR GRAND OLD GOVERNING CLASS

(In Two Acts)

I.

THE "GLORIOUS" REVOLUTION

IN this and another article it is my aim to turn the searchlight on to the land robbers, financiers and politicians who in two long drawn out acts, following upon the Reformation prelude, established in power the British governing class. In the second article, we shall make the acquaintance of the beneficiaries of the Reform Act of 1832 and all that thereon ensued. In this article, we shall see unfolded the real story of the conquest of political power by the Whig Oligarchy in 1689, when they brought a Dutch and German prince to reign over us, and he and his pock-marked sister-in-law having no heirs, foisted on to "this royal throne of Kings, this sceptered isle" the German Georges, God bless 'em!

The arch-reactionaries, like the Smithson-Percies and the Bathursts, are so noisy in their denunciations of the foreign associations of the revolutionaries of to-day that it is interesting to read in Sanford's classic, *The Great Governing Families of England*, that the Duke of Northumberland's ancestor, Charles Seymour, Duke of Somerset, "was amongst the first to welcome the Prince of Orange in the Revolution," and to observe that the first authentic Bathurst was one Benjamin, Governor of the East India Company in the reign of the same blessed William, Prince of Orange and Nassau, Hereditary Stadtholder of the United Provinces. But to make the dear old *Morning Post* and the *Patriot* still more ridiculous, these gentry were associated with the shadiest collection of cosmopolitan Jews that have ever landed on these shores.

The relationship between religion and the classes which modern historical development has thrown up is revealed most clearly in an inquiry into the forces which brought about the revolutions in England, France and the Rhineland between 1641 and 1851. There is no gainsaying the presence and influence of the Jews, but much less is to be heard about the Huguenots, Lutherans, Anglicans and Presbyterians, who, however, were by no means exclusively engaged in searching diligently the Holy Scriptures whilst the Israelites looked after the ducats.

The first thing to be noted is that almost all the great Whig families whose representatives plotted to bring over William the Dutchman, seated him on the throne and reserved all the legislative and financial, and as much as possible of the executive, control to themselves in

the "Cabinet" system, were raised to fortune upon the plunder of the monasteries. Needless to say, they were firm believers in the Thirty-Nine Articles, the Book of Common Prayer and the whole Church as by Law Established. Prominent amongst these defenders of the Reformed Faith and the cause of True Religion were the Cavendishes, the Russells, the Lowthers and the Pagets. The very thought of the re-establishment of the Papal authority and the return of the Catholic Orders caused these "crooks," who had, as a class, contrived to get into their possession the one-third of England that belonged formerly to the Church, to break out into a cold sweat.

The second thing to observe is that the development of the wool trade, the manufacture of cloth and the commerce in textiles which proceeded apace between the 14th and the 17th centuries had produced a bourgeoisie in the towns of England, France, the Netherlands and Germany of native origin and not of Jewish descent. These elements found themselves in antagonism of interest alike to the Church, to the landed class and to the Jews who were, generally, the favourites of the needy aristocrats and even protected by the Church. The moral and ethical codes of their antagonists required for their countering codes applicable to themselves and sanctions and authorities to confirm them. In this way, had we time and space to elaborate, grew up the schools of bourgeois religious thought. In Languedoc, the wool manufacturing region of the South of France, sprung up families of Huguenot merchants who financed Henry of Navarre, fled to Geneva after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, lent money to Louis XV. from their banking houses in that city and, returning to France at the Revolution, constituted what is now known as "la haute banque" or the Protestant bankers, the very select inner circle of conservative France. In Germany and the Netherlands, the prototype was the family of Baring, who shortly after the "Glorious" Revolution came to Exeter from Bremen but were natives of Gröningen in Holland. In England were the Hoares, the Gurneys and many another family that evolved from linen and woollen drapery to banking. In Scotland were the Hopes, who became, thanks to the "Glorious" Revolution, the greatest bankers in Holland.

In France, the influence of the Geneva bankers was to be used in the cause of conservative constitutional monarchy. In Holland, the native bourgeoisie was hostile to the House of Orange, the Stadtholdership and the landed class, and was, eventually, to become friendly to the revolutionary ideas coming in from France. In England, the London merchants veered round to Toryism after the Jacobite menace disappeared. They did this, as the Dutch bourgeoisie did the opposite, because of the third factor—the Jews, and the allies of the nobles.

Spain, under Mahommedan rule, had become the refuge of the Jews driven out of Christendom by those superstitious but not disinterested barbarian landlords and land cultivators who owed allegiance to the Papacy and who were enrolled as the Holy Catholic Church. When the Moors were driven out, the Inquisition was soon to give an engine to the hand of the Catholic landlords which they were to use for the extirpation of the enemies of Christ and the creditors of Christians. The Jews gave ground, nominally accepting Catholicism and withdrawing either to Portugal or to the Islamic East. Finally, the Spanish conquest of Portugal drove them either east to Salonica and Smyrna or north to Holland and to Hamburg and Frankfort.

They made immense fortunes in the Wars of Religion. They made themselves indispensable to the Protestant Princes, especially to the House of Orange. At the same time, the trade of the Indies was largely in their hands. "The first traders in America were Jews. . . . Already in the year 1492 Portuguese Jews settled in St. Thomas, where they were the first plantation owners on a large scale" (p. 32). "Barbados . . . was inhabited almost wholly by Jews" (p. 35). "We are told that Jews were large shareholders in the Dutch East India Company" (p. 29). "We know, for example, that the trade of Hamburg with Spain and Portugal, and also with Holland, in the 17th century was almost entirely in the hands of the Jews" (p. 24). So says Werner Sombart, in his *Jews and Modern Capitalism*.

The English Navigation Laws and the systematic campaigns of privateering and colonial warfare carried on by the English merchants and the English Government from 1650 to 1670 wrought havoc in the trade of Holland. It menaced their profits in the East and West Indies. It actually lost them New York. When France, under Colbert's guidance, also attacked their colonial empire and their trade, the Jews of Holland had every motive for arriving at an understanding with the English landed magnates—desirous of developing their estates and draining their lands with cheaper loans than they could obtain in London—to counteract the East India Company's monopoly and to secure the succession of a Protestant Prince, heavily in debt to them. They wanted a client in supreme command of the English Navy. They wanted their own corrupt place-men—it is notorious that every Whig had his price and that Walpole was a paymaster for some unseen hand—to help them to economic power in England. Nothing is more illuminating than the stocklists of the East India Company which, *after* the Revolution, came to have as many as 270 Dutch shareholders, nearly all of them Jews like the da Costas.

"Isaac Suasso, Baron Auvernes de Gras, is said to have advanced

2,000,000 florins to William of Orange for the invasion of England. . . . Marlborough's troops were supplied by Sir Solomon Medina and Joseph Corlissos" (*Jewish Encyclopædia*, Vol. II., p. 492). The same authority, speaking of war contractors, says:—"In London, which, owing to the relations of William III. with Holland, was financially dependent on Amsterdam, Mendes da Costa, Manasseh Lopez and Baron d'Aguiar held prominent positions." "By the time the South Sea Bubble burst," says Sombart, "the Jews as a body were the greatest financial power in the country. . . . They retained their fortunes unimpaired . . . when the Government issued a loan on the Land Tax, the Jews were in a position to take up one quarter of it. During this critical period the chief family was that of the Gideons, whose representative, Sampson Gideon (1699-1762) was the 'trusted adviser of the Government,' the friend of Walpole, the 'pillar of the State credit,' (*Jews and Modern Capitalism*, pp. 55-56).

No wonder it was a "Glorious" Revolution, and that all power was put in the hands of a secret "Cabinet" and a German dynasty, equally in debt in Hanover to the financial creditors and political clients of our landed aristocracy!

J. T. WALTON NEWBOLD.

"AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL"

That is an old working-class slogan. And it is as true *internationally* as it is *industrially*.

The capitalist offensive against the workers of Germany is a threat to all workers. When one section of the working-class front is broken, the defeat of the rest of the line is made easier.

There are 7½ million unemployed in Germany; and those who are working are doing 60 hours and more a week for less than the British unemployment "dole."

We have to help the German workers in their struggle—if for no other reason, then because of the plain fact that we shall be unable to keep up our own standards of living if millions of workers in Central Europe are forced down permanently to a "coolie" level.

WILL EVERY N.C.L.C. CLASS & PLEBS GROUP FORWARD A DONATION, HOWEVER SMALL, TO MRS. HELEN CRAWFURD (SEC.) WORKERS' INTERNATIONAL RELIEF, 26 BEDFORD ROW, LONDON, W.C.1

A RUSSIAN TEXTBOOK

I DO not believe that the political leaders, Lenin and his lieutenants, took much interest one way or the other in the economics of Communism. . . . The leaders in Russia, and elsewhere, were politicians, not economists." Thus wrote J. M. Keynes, in an article on Russia, in *Reconstruction in Europe* No. 4. The consulting physician of sorely troubled capitalist Britain must have been badly misinformed.

How much so, Bogdanoff's book* helps us, in part, to realise. First published in 1897, the ninth edition appeared in 1906. Years of reaction followed. With the Revolution came a revived demand—and a revised edition. Why a revised edition? Because a new phase of capitalism had completely defined itself. The moral implied here is a valuable one for us all—that if Marxism is to be a social force guiding our struggles against Capitalist Imperialism and towards Socialism, it must constantly adjust the tactics of the workers to whatever new phase of social relations appears as a consequence of the changing character of the means and methods of production.

It was the economic knowledge of the vanguard of the Russian proletariat which enabled it—under the guidance of Lenin—to introduce system and direction into the struggle of the classes. Bogdanoff's book is being used in Russia to make that knowledge more widespread. The Plebs movement here is seeking to accomplish a similar task. It was with this aim in view that the *Outline of Economics* was written and published. Hence, as co-workers, we not only welcome the enterprise which has made available to us the textbook of the Russian Marxists, but also propose to attempt a candid, if brief, comparison of it with our own *Outline of Economics*.

The aim of both books is the same : to help the workers free their minds from poisonous capitalist influences—influences which either numb them or divert their activities into fruitless channels.

Thus the *Outline* (page 11) : "As the wealth producers the workers should understand with their brains the wealth they produce with their hands." The workers must be fallacy proof—and more : capitalism is breaking down, a new order must be created. "Only a knowledge of economics will help us do that." Bogdanoff writes (page 4-5) :

At a certain stage of the development of society a situation is created when men come under the power of the social-labor relations. There begins

*A Short Course of Economic Science. By A. Bogdanoff (Communist Party) Paper 3s., cloth 5s.

to dominate over man, over his labor and his welfare, a market, competition, fluctuations of prices, and a number of other economic phenomena . . . naturally this must give birth to a striving to understand all these phenomena—to an understanding which would create the possibility of foreseeing these phenomena and influencing them.

Thus political economy, like all science, arises from, and helps to solve, the practical problems of human existence. The history of Economics shows us clearly the connection between man's practical needs and his theories. Especially is this the case to-day. The whole capitalist world, which in pre-war days appeared so solid and enduring, cannot overcome the prevailing world-crisis. The pressing needs of post-war world capitalism—to reduce unemployment, to revive trade, to restore exchanges, to balance budgets, to get rid of unhealthy currencies, and so on,—are focussing attention on economic problems and giving birth to much theorising, wise and otherwise. Some would concentrate on foreign exchanges, others insist the banking monopoly is strangling industry, inflation and deflation have their champions, and in the medley of pedlars the organ of the Government Socialists is preaching Stabilisation (of what?—Capitalism?).

This is the basic contradiction. Viewed in the abstract, science in general is for the control of life as well as for its enlightenment. But in the concrete world of capitalism this end is thwarted. Class dominion involves the perversion of science: what should bring wealth, brings want. The growing power over Nature is negated by an absence of control over human social relations. Marx long ago solved the contradiction theoretically; our task is to solve it practically through the class struggle.

The *Outline* and the *Short Course* are means to this end. But if they agree in aim, they differ widely in the ground covered, and in the manner of presentation.

To take the latter first. The *Outline* quite correctly states on p. 9 that

In dealing with economic relations, the determining factors behind men's ideas and behind all social institutions are revealed. History is a meaningless jumble until economics explains the rise and fall of social systems—the root of differing political parties—the dynamic of society.

But apart from scattered instances through the book—excluding the Historical Appendix—the connection between man, his work, his social constitution, and his ideas, is nowhere consistently treated.

Hence there is a danger that new recruits using it may be led to view history not as a "piece," but as composed of independent "pieces." This is the root of the major portion of the nonsense about Marxian fatalism. It is of the first importance to guard ourselves, and our educational movement, against such possible confusion. It is in this connection that Bogdanoff's book is likely

to be of great practical value. As he writes :—" ideology is an instrument for organising economic life, and is consequently an important condition in economic development " (page viii.).

That custom, law, and so on, help or hinder the unfolding of the productive forces of society is easily demonstrable. The development of Joint Stock Company law is an interesting example of ideology first hindering, then helping, modern economic development. The student using Bogdanoff's book, is therefore warned that " The chapters on ideology in this course by no means serve as supplements to the main subject." Accordingly, from beginning to end the aim is to show the connection between Economics and Ideology, and how each has influenced the other. And this is all to the advantage of those who thirst for a Marxist understanding in order to become better fighters for their own class.

Turning now to compare the " ground " covered by our own and the Russian textbook, a wide divergency is apparent. One is limited to a single phase of history—capitalist society—the other outlines the whole course of human development.

Bogdanoff's method of exposition is stated thus :—

(1) *Primitive Natural Self-sufficing Society* :—Its distinguishing features are : the weakness of the social man in the struggle against nature, the narrowness of separate social organisations, the simplicity of social relations, the absence or the insignificance development of exchange, and the extreme slowness of change in social forms. Under (1) Primitive Communism, Authoritarian Tribal Communes, and Feudal Society are dealt with.

(2) *Commercial Society* : The extent of social production and the variety of its elements grow. Society represents a complex whole composed of separate enterprises which only in a comparatively insignificant degree satisfy their requirements by their own products, but mostly by the products of other enterprises, that is by means of exchange. Development proceeds through the struggle of interests and social contradiction ; the rapidity of development increases. Under (2) Slavery, Handicraft System, Merchant Capitalism, Industrial Capitalism, Finance Capitalism.

(3) *Socially Organised Society*—A stage of development not yet attained. The extent and complexity of production continues unceasingly to grow, but the variety of its elements is transformed to the tools and methods of labor, while the members of society develop in the direction of uniformity. Production and distribution is systematically organised by society itself in a single purposeful system which bears no trace of separateness, contradiction, or anarchy. The process of development proceeds more and more rapidly.

In a word, Bogdanoff seeks to show the continuity in diversity from Primitive Communism, with its tribal limitations and group consciousness, to a World Communist Society purged of all limitations, with man no longer the slave either of Nature or of the social forces he has created. Bogdanoff's method is akin to that of Bang in his *Crises in European History* : it is not so much the history of a particular country which is drawn upon : the material used is the whole history of human development.

Will Bogdanoff's book help our class work as a textbook ?

Above all, will a careful study of it amply repay a worker who wants to reinforce his hatred of capitalism with an effective opposition to it? To both questions we answer: Yes.

A knowledge of the broad outlines of history, of the appearance and disappearance of different social systems, why they arose and why they changed, is a first necessity. "The traditions of all past generations weigh like an alp upon the brain of the living."

But to this understanding of the general laws of human society and its movement there needs to be added a knowledge of the particular laws of capitalist production and distribution. Now whilst it is true that man makes his own history it is equally true that man is not free to choose the material out of which it is made. The material out of which the Labour Colleges is seeking to make history includes workers of all political parties, and of no party: the general mass of organised and unorganised workers. To many of these Marxism is as yet only another name for mystery. A textbook, therefore, along the lines of the *Outline of Economics*, to meet their elementary needs, is still a necessity—although I would urge the desirability of a careful scrutiny of its contents and arrangement. I am not seeking to belittle the *Outline's* usefulness—far from it! What I am suggesting is that our textbooks should be frankly based on the principle that the better is the enemy of the good. In the work of improvement the co-operation of the class-students should be enlisted.*

Marxist education, with its corollary, determined class struggle, offers us alike the means of combatting and destroying democratic illusions and of forging the weapons of ultimate victory.

W. H. RYDE.

* Now is the time for this as the first edition is newly exhausted, and the question of reprinting is therefore urgent. Will all tutors or students with any suggestions to offer send them in without delay—making them as brief and concise as possible—so that the Editorial Committee may have the benefit of as many opinions as possible.—[ED.]

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HOUSING :

Where is the MONEY to come from ?

THE Labour Party's programme of providing houses by the hundred thousand and making work for the unemployed calls for such expenditure that raising the necessary amount by additional taxation is out of the question, and as more and more social reforms will be required the payment of interest on the total will also soon be a difficulty. It is, then, worth while examining the whole question and endeavouring to solve this problem of money.

What is required for Houses

We have, of course, to remember that houses are not built of money, but of bricks, stone, iron and wood—by *men*. There is no dearth of men ; and, once their energy is applied to mother earth, there need not long be a scarcity of the materials. It may be objected that we must have money to pay the men. Well, suppose the Government pays a few pounds to its printer and obtains in return several million pieces of paper stamped £1 similar to those in circulation, and these are handed to the men each week, the men would be paid in the usual way. The printer, then, can so easily solve the difficulty of money that the question immediately presents itself—Why is this not done ? It is obvious that there is more than paper to be considered, but if we follow the paper it will take us to the secret.

Suppose, for instance, a housing scheme is in operation, and, as suggested, the men are each paid with three pieces of paper stamped "£1," we should find that the men almost immediately parted with their paper pounds to shopkeepers in exchange for food, clothing, shelter, and amusement. The shopkeepers would deposit these in the local bank, entitling them to replenish their stocks. The bank would hand the notes out to the employer the next pay day, who would again pay them to the men. The men would pass them to the shopkeepers, who would deposit them in the bank and there they would lie until the next pay day once more sent them on their journey. The men, then, do not work in order to obtain pieces of paper, but food, clothing, shelter, etc., and the pieces of paper only serve as tickets permitting them to obtain these things. The housing problem is to be solved, then, by obtaining a sufficient supply of these necessaries to supply to the men who wrest the materials from mother earth and combine them as houses. The food and

other necessities are in existence at any given moment, stored in shops and warehouses, and the owners will only part with them in exchange for these £1 tickets in the various forms of pence, shillings, pounds, cheques and bills. To obtain the foodstuffs for our housing schemes, we must either (1) obtain possession of some of the £1 tickets in existence or (2) obtain new ones. The first could be done by taxation, and as we have decided against that method, we must find what authority issues the tickets, under what conditions they are issued, and to whom.

Who keeps the Money?

The great accumulation of food, clothing, houses, factories, machines, etc., which exist at any time is the wealth of the community, and the owners may interchange their titles to shares of it without adding to or reducing the total. Some may hoard it, but it is in continual process of change. Everything produced adds to it, everything consumed reduces it, and in theory, he who adds to it is entitled to take from it an equal value. If, for example, a building contractor adds a house valued £500, he receives £500 in tickets, which he can exchange for other goods, or which he might keep for future use. In the latter event, he has "saved" £500, and the community's store remains augmented till it is "spent." Formerly, when these tickets were made of gold and "saved" to any extent, a safe place in which to keep them became necessary, and banks arose in this way as the depository of all tickets or money not in use. Other people, however, not owning any tickets, but desiring to produce for profit, borrowed these tickets to obtain food and other wealth from the existing store, with which they made workers create new wealth. Out of the tickets (money) obtained when this wealth was sold, the borrowers were able to pay back the loan, give some tickets (money)—called interest—to the lender for the loan, and keep some—called profit—for themselves. In the course of commercial development, however, transactions grew to such magnitude that gold tickets could not be produced to meet the need, and it was discovered that substitutes could act as tickets equally well or better. To-day these substitutes regulate practically every transfer of wealth in the form of notes, bills and cheques, with cheap metals for petty dealings. Bills and cheques are tickets which can effect the transfer of wealth to any amount on one piece of paper. To build houses, then, all we require is one of these magic pieces of paper bearing the necessary amount. We would find, however, that the cheque system of exchanging wealth is controlled by the former gold-custodians, *viz.*, *the banks.*

How to make Money

In days of gold, when banks guarded money, they could obviously

only lend the use of the gold deposited. If they lent that at 10% and gave 5% to the owners both parties did very well. They could lend some without the consent of the owners more profitably, but in this case, they risked the chance that all the owners might claim their gold tickets at the same time. The danger and inconvenience of using heavy parcels of gold led to paper substitutes which could transfer ownership of the gold without its requiring to leave the bank safe. Experience taught the bankers that only a proportion of the gold tickets ever left their custody, and that seldom for long. This led them to the great discovery that *they could lend more than they had* by lending paper substitutes to a greater amount than the gold they possessed. If, for example, £1,000 in gold were deposited with the banks, and they lent it at 10% (£100), the bankers could give the owner 5% (£50) and have 5% (£50) for their trouble. The great discovery however that 2,000 paper pounds could be lent, with little chance of its being demanded in gold, made it possible for the banks to pay the owners of the real £1,000 their 5% (£50) as before, have the other 5% (£50) on the real £1,000 for themselves, and in addition, obtain the 10% (£100) on the paper £1,000—making £150 "profit" for the bank. It is obvious that in this transaction, if the banks gain something for nothing, someone else is losing it. It is also clear that the goods in existence do not double in quantity when the banks double their tickets. Every real £1 means that its owner has added that value to the community's store, and has not yet exercised the right to consume or withdraw its equivalent in goods. The total owners of these real £1 tickets can claim the total amount of goods not withdrawn from exchange, and each owner's title to these goods is limited to the proportion of the total tickets he holds. The banks are the custodians of nearly everyone's tickets and if, as in the illustration above, they double the quantity of tickets, they, of course, halve the value of every real ticket. In the same way when a forger makes imitation tickets, and withdraws goods, he lessens the goods available for the real ticket-holders, and if caught is severely punished.

Are the banks forgers ?

The banks when they lend more money than they have do not themselves take goods, but they lend a forged right to take goods to someone who is likely to replace them before discovery, and pay the banks a commission. Thus, if the Government orders houses from a building contractor who has not sufficient money or tickets to obtain the materials necessary, a bank will forge a claim for him ("open a credit" it is called) and the builder will with this be able to obtain the use of men and materials and "build" houses. Payment for the houses will enable him to hand back sufficient to enable

the bank to wipe out the forged claims, and leave the profit to be divided between the banker and the builder.

If the Government, however, is unable to confiscate through taxation sufficient real claims, it also will have to ask the bank to lend it a forged claim, with which it pays the builder, and the rents of the new houses go as interest to the banks until such time as real money can be obtained to pay off the loan. In this way, we see that *the Banks*, as cashiers of the National Wealth,—

- (1) lend the use of it at the expense of the owners.
- (2) draw interest on these loans until real money can be found to pay them back.
- (3) cannot extend this lending to a point where the suspicions of the owners of real wealth would be raised, and cause a panic.
- (4) guard against panic by not lending sufficient to raise prices unduly.
- (5) appropriate practically the whole benefits of the continually increasing productivity of the human race which would otherwise be always reducing prices.

To quote actual figures, one of "the Big Five" banks in its recent balance sheet had about £50,000,000 in money (much of which was not real but bank notes) and practically no interest would be payable to the owners—most of it being current account. On the strength of this £50,000,000, they had lent nearly £300,000,000, on which they will draw interest. The Bank of England, to help the war, offered its customers loans of this fake money at 3% which they lent to the Government at 4%—(F. Temple in *War, Finance and the Worker*)—which the taxpayer has to pay every year, to be divided between the bank and its customer for their kindness in permitting the community to use the material it itself was producing to fight the Germans. No one else is allowed to manufacture "money" in this way. Why have the banks this privilege?

Labour and Housing

To pay for 200,000 houses per year at £500 would require £100,000,000 and tickets to that extent must be confiscated or borrowed from the existing holders, or manufactured. Borrowing the money or having it manufactured means that the Labour Government will have to apply directly or indirectly to the banks to lend it faked titles to the goods; the community will supply the goods but will have to pay the banks interest for lending it its own material. How can we obtain houses and escape the tentacles of this octopus?

The Problem Solved

We have seen that this "credit system" is so delicate that caution is necessary to avoid panics. Long experience has shown that a certain amount of cash is necessary for each £100 fake money, and

if the Government demanded a big uncovered loan it might endanger the whole superstructure.

The Government can of course print £1 notes to any extent but that would enable the banks with this new cash to lend about five times its value, and for a little money the Government would give more interest to the banks and cause an unnecessary rise in prices.

To avoid complications and giving unnecessary gifts to the banks, the writer suggests that the Government issue 20,000,000 £1 notes and demand an interest-free loan of £80,000,000. In this way it would obtain the £100,000,000 to pay for the first 200,000 houses, the rents for which would pay back the cost in 20 to 25 years. The banks would still have a margin to lend at interest which would pay for the extra pen work of the clerks, and they would be well advised to acquiesce lest their game be exposed and stopped. At the same time, it would be *necessary to control food prices*, in case profiteers became busy as during the war.

Housing, however, is a temporary crisis which might be helped by an expedient such as suggested, but the whole problem of wresting from the banks this enormous power of controlling the economic power of the nation must be solved decisively at an early date.

ARTHUR WOODBURN.

HOW to BUILD HOUSES

Comrade George Hicks has promised to reply in our next number to this article by Prof. Clark, of Liverpool, author of well-known books on Local Government, &c.

THE suggestions made by Mr. George Hicks in the January PLEBS must be cordially welcomed. He does not, however, go far enough, for with his knowledge and experience of the Building Industry, Mr. Hicks can give the nation a very definite lead.

1. *The Demand for Houses.*—The Housing Survey, by Local Authorities, under the Housing, Town Planning, etc., Act, 1919, showed an estimated requirement as follows:—

England and Wales	..	..	796,246
Scotland	..	..	115,565
			911,811

Before the year 1910, about 75,000 houses per annum were built to compensate for wear and tear and to meet the normal growth of population.

Requirements for 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, therefore	300,000
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Total number of houses required	1,211,811
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Mr. Hicks suggests a minimum of 200,000 houses per annum for twenty-five years. With this I quite agree.

2. *Unemployment*.—According to the last published return, the number of persons, on Jan. 14th, 1924, on the registers of the Employment Exchanges in Great Britain was 1,220,400. The total was made up as follows :—

Men	..	..	..	..	..	906,700
Boys	..	..	..	..	..	40,600
Women	..	..	..	..	..	254,000
Girls	..	..	..	..	..	38,200

In addition, the number working systematic short time and drawing benefit for intervals of unemployment was 52,500.

The percentage of unemployed among the craftsmen in the building industry in October, 1923, varied as follows :—Bricklayers 1.7, Masons 3.0, Carpenters 3.7, Plasterers 3.8, Slaters 3.8, which included aged and infirm workers. When these were deducted the unemployed were nominal, representing only the normal process of transfer from one job to another. On the other hand, the percentage of unemployed labourers was exceptionally high, including Bricklayers' labourers 14.8, and Plasterers' labourers 12.9. Most of these men are semi-skilled and it might be suggested that they be admitted into the craft instead of waiting for the increase of apprentices. This dilution should extend also to ex-service trainees.

3. *A National Conference*.—Representation should be made to the Government urging them to call a national conference of representatives of the Employers Associations and the Trade Unions in the Building Industry ; the conference to agree to a relaxation of the present Trade Union restrictions on output ; the Employers' Associations to remove the limits to free sale of materials required for building, to arrange for standardisation of parts, and for mass production.

4. *Government Assistance*.—(a) The Government to provide that the control of output of materials shall be withdrawn and all combines dealt with drastically. (b) Safeguards provided against unemployment for a period of years to all members of the Trade Unions in the building industry. The proposal for a two-thirds guarantee during the war might be renewed. (c) Special provision for transport of building materials should be provided by arrangement with the Railway Clearing House. (d) The bill for the formation of Municipal Banks should become law.

5. *Shortage of Man Power*.—(a) Even with the dilution of semi-skilled labourers and trainees there would still be a shortage of labour to meet the suggested construction of 200,000 houses per

annum. (b) Selection should, therefore, be made by approved representatives of employers and workmen from suitable men on the live registers of the Ministry of Labour. These men should undergo a course of intensive training as additional dilutees. (c) The shortage should be further supplemented by a compulsory course of training for all youths leaving school who have no employment and who show themselves capable of benefiting from such instruction. This training need not at the outset be specifically directed to the building industry but for the purpose of developing the "workman's touch" and the "craftsman's skill." As they show adaptability, the youths should then be admitted for further training in the building industry itself.

6. *Local Authorities.*—(a) The local authorities should proceed to the formation of Public Utility Societies under the powers provided by the Housing, Town Planning, etc., Act, 1919, Section 18, and the Housing, etc., Act, 1923, Section 5. This would encourage the building of many houses and develop the spirit of corporate responsibility. (b) The Small Dwellings Acquisition Act to become operative throughout the country and the local authorities should be required to give publicity to its provisions. This would open up a further market for house purchase. (c) With the passing of the Bill for the formation of Municipal Banks, the provisions possessed under Section 7 of the Birmingham Corporation Act, 1919, should become general. This gives the local authority power to encourage and facilitate the erection of houses by the formation or extension of housing societies.

J. J. CLARK.

“REMINISCENCES of the RUSSIAN REVOLUTION”

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The ECONOMICS of CAPITALISM

A Syllabus for Classes

(Lessons 1, 2 & 3 were published in last month's PLEBS ;
Lessons 7, 8 & 9 will appear next month.)

LESSON 4.—MONEY AND CREDIT UNDER CAPITALISM.

What is the use of money ?

To enable people to buy things they need, and to measure the value of things, *i.e.*, as *means of exchange* and *measure of value*.

Money arose and developed with growth of trade. There have been all kinds of money—slaves, beads, cattle. In capitalist countries gold and silver used. First bankers were goldsmiths.

With development of modern capitalism two further needs arose :—
(a) For possibilities of borrowing money for short periods (*i.e.*, for credit); (b) For elastic supply of money.

Hence modern Banking System which created *Credit-money* (cheques, etc.) Banks create Credit-money by giving Bank Loans or *Credit advances*, to capitalists.

There are therefore, two kinds of money :—(a) Credit-money (cheques, etc.) ; (b) Legal-Tender money (Gold and Treasury notes).

During a time of good trade, banks create credit-money by expanding credit advances. This is known as *inflation*. It gives capitalists more power of buying raw materials, etc. Therefore *prices rise*. This makes money circulate more quickly, because capitalists buy goods with it quickly. This causes a further rise of price, because money is "doing more work." The rise of price creates a demand for more legal-tender money from banks to buy things at higher prices ; some of the cheques come to be "cashed." Prices rise and purchasing power of money falls.

In pre-war days, when the banks felt this drain on their gold reserves, they stopped inflation by raising the *bank-rate* (price charged and fixed by Bank of England for bank loans). During the war they printed *paper money* instead. Hence, during war *no limit to inflation*.

Inflation also causes fall in Foreign Exchange. Capitalists having more credit-money, spend it on buying raw materials from abroad. This increase of imports makes foreign bills (with which to pay for imports) scarce, and so raises their price. This turns rate of exchange against inflating country. This in turn checks imports. The fall in foreign exchange is, therefore, a sign that the country is living beyond its income—buying more than it can pay for.

The German mark "slumped" because of: (a) Inflation of paper marks; (b) Impoverishment of Germany; she could not export enough to pay for imports; (c) Reparations which increased (a) and (b); (d) Speculations, buying and selling marks for profit.

As a result of the war and the post-war chaos of Europe there has been violent inflation and "slumping" of the exchanges. This has wrecked money and credit as (a) Means of exchange; (b) Measure of value; (c) Method of giving loans to capitalists. Hence trade is hampered, and capitalism is mortally injured.

LESSON 5.—THE CONCENTRATION OF CAPITAL.

Capitalism brought factories. To expand size of factories a widening of the market was necessary. For this, development of transport was essential. Economies of large factory:—(a) More division of labour; (b) Machinery more constantly employed.

Economies of large capitalist firm:—(a) Buys raw material in large quantities; (b) Can specialise particular parts of firm on particular work; (c) Can raise capital and money more easily (e.g., from banks); (d) Can arrange special terms with railways for transport; (e) Can use its own by-products and do its own repairs. Some of these economies got by localisation (e.g., cotton in Lancashire, iron in South Wales and Clyde). In iron and steel economies most important, because several processes can be done with one heating. Also special economies of raw material and transport. (Give examples.)

Combines unite several firms under one control. Economies are:—(a) They can specialise firms on particular jobs; (b) Control their own raw material supplies; (c) Have more "staying power" in bad times or in a competitive struggle; (d) Can market their goods at less cost; (e) Can control the market more easily; (f) Can exert greatest political influence.

Examples: Vickers, Imperial Tobacco Co., Lever Bros., etc.

Therefore Capitalism develops large-scale social production, which is organised on most modern and efficient lines.

But so long as combines are in rivalry with one another anarchy of production is unchecked. As a result of this, when industry expands, some industries expand production much too fast. They cannot exchange their goods against the products of other industries. There is over-production. They "close down," and men are thrown out of work. These men cannot buy products of other industries. Prices start to fall and other capitalists take fright. Over-production and closing down become general.

Therefore, because of anarchy of production, there are recurring trade booms and trade depressions—the industrial crises.

N.B.—Modern form of industrial crisis is *political*. The combines of various countries use their respective States in competition with one another. This is Imperialism. The competition becomes one of diplomats, and then armies—war, which wrecks the industrial system. (Give examples : Bagdad Railway, Occupation of Ruhr, etc.)

LESSON 6.—CAPITALISM IN DECLINE (A).

(Summarise features of Final Stage as given in Lesson 3.)

Contrast between Pre-War and Post-War Capital.

Pre-War.

Post-War.

Social production developing.
Wealth-production increasing.
Capital Accumulation.

Production wrecked.
Money and credit system wrecked.
Tendency to declining wealth and capital dis-accumulation.

Democracy.
Social Reform.
Imperialism developing.

Fascism and dictatorship.
Increasing misery of workers.
Growth of 4 big Imperialist Groups trying to dominate the world.

N.B.—These features of *post-war capitalism* are most in evidence on the continent of Europe. It is less in Britain, and scarcely at all in U.S.A.

Effects of Imperialist War and Treaty of Versailles :—(1) Destruction of material wealth ; (2) The world “lived on capital” ; it devoted to war purposes wealth usually devoted to railways, roads, houses, electrification, etc. ; (3) Wrecked the international division of Labour—Central Europe impoverished and cannot buy British goods. Political barriers erected across economic units and break up of economic unity. Over-expansion of parts of capitalism, *e.g.*, shipbuilding. As a result there has been a decline of wealth, and this is cumulative ; it makes production more difficult in future.

There are other factors in the post-war situation hindering the automatic “recovery” which in normal times might have been expected :—(a) The money system is wrecked (see Lesson 4). This further hampers trade, and makes capitalists unwilling to adopt bold enterprises ; (b) The victorious countries (France, Britain, U.S.A.), have grown more imperialist. Each seeks to consolidate its own Empire and exploit the vanquished. Result : Political rivalry and “crises” ; (c) Impoverishment of de-imperialist (vanquished) countries (*e.g.*, Germany). These become colonial areas for imperialist powers, who wish to keep them weak ; (d) The workers raise obstructions to capitalist schemes of reconstruction, because these involve a reduction of the standard of life of the workers (*e.g.*, Austria).

The decline of capitalism, therefore, tends to get progressively worse. The greater the decline of productivity, the lower the power to accumulate capital and start production on normal basis

and so on in a downward spiral. The more the decline, the more the imperialist countries quarrel to secure a profit from the exploitation of the colonial areas, and this leads to political crises which further wreck production.

The capitalists, in trying to stabilise, have to resort to the following expedients :—(a) To obtain state assistance in diminishing the anarchy of production or in disputing claims with capitalists of other countries. Hence an extension of state activity and an extension of capitalist control over the state ; (b) To combat the workers' opposition. To restore the pre-war level of profits and pre-war rate of capital accumulation, the standard of life of the workers has to be depressed ; and all attempts of the workers at " control " must be crushed ; (c) It uses popular slogans specially designed to appeal to workers and the petit-bourgeoisie ; (d) It gains recruits from the workers, when they begin to lose faith in their reformist leaders.

The growth of Fascism shows need of capitalism in its declining phase to increase exploitation of workers. It will arise in every country when the workers start seriously to lessen that exploitation (e.g., by reformist measures such as minimum wages.)

The REVIVAL of TRADES COUNCILS

DEAR COMRADE,—I hope that the discussion on the future of Trades Councils will continue until we get down to some practical agreement as to the best form and function for the Councils. We don't want a mere deluge of " Ideal Structures " or " Immaculate Conceptions " in the World of Working-class Organisation, but a discussion that will help forward the workers' struggle now.

I agree largely with Mark Starr's views, although he might have dealt with the question more thoroughly. Drinkwater's contribution indicates that his mental horizon is dominated by Parliamentarism ; he thinks of the worker primarily as a voter, and therefore wants to concentrate upon erecting and maintaining Trades Councils, or Labour Parties, or both combined, only in so far as such bodies directly facilitate the job of getting votes.

Now we have got to regard the workers as Producers, as Voters, and (under capitalism) as limited Consumers of their own product. We must not artificially separate our organisations along the line of these needs. We require a type of Trades Council which will work with close regard to

the relationship of these different aspects of what is *one* in reality—a working class fighting to be free, industrially, electorally and educationally.

The National Conference of Trades Councils had something like this in mind when it adopted the following resolution sent in by Woolwich T.C. :—

" The value of the Trades Councils to the workers is determined by the manner in which these bodies take care of, and defend working-class interests. Trades Councils which are merely debating societies are of very little value indeed.

" Therefore, this Conference resolves that it is most urgently necessary for all Trades Councils to become active and energetic agitational bodies, taking up all those questions and problems affecting the workers—such as unemployment, housing, wage cuts, rents, and so on. The Trades Council should become the leading propagandist bodies in the country. They should become the true guardians of all working-class interests.

" Further, believing that the Trades Councils are the natural concentration centres of working-class move-

ment in the localities, and that the present conditions demand that a United Working-class Front is necessary in the localities to oppose the maximum amount of resistance to the capitalist offensive, this Conference calls upon all Trades Councils to widen their constitutions so as to admit the affiliation of all bonafide political, industrial, co-operative and social working-class organisations, in this way simplifying and reorganising the local movement. Workers are at one and the same time industrial workers—therefore Trade Unionists; Voters—therefore interested in the political questions; Consumers—therefore potential members of the Co-op. organisations; and the aim of the Trades Councils should be to cater for every phase of working-class activity and to express every phase of the workers' life."

Let us have a good discussion right throughout the Labour Movement upon how we can speedily secure T.C.s that answer to the foregoing description. Political and industrial issues are becoming more and more inseparable. Therefore all specific working-class political parties should form a section of the Trades and Labour Council, with power on the E.C. proportionate

to the membership of the particular parties.

Lastly, but not least, the unemployed workers' committees must be included in any T. and L.C. that aims to organise and lead all workers.

Yours frat., WM. BRAIN
(Vice-Pres., Nat. Federation of
Trades Councils).

DEAR COMRADE,—The discussion in your pages on "The Revival of the Trades Councils" has been of great value in making some of us face the question of local organisation, both political and industrial.

The local Labour parties do not and cannot give the attention to purely industrial matters that is needed at this time. Each union locally seems to be unaware of the problems of the others. They are, of course, not likely to allow branches of the I.L.P., women's sections, etc., etc., who make up the local Labour parties, to decide upon purely industrial matters.

How much longer are we going to be taken each in turn and beaten? Surely we ought to be learning our lesson.

Fraternally,
JIM STEPHENSON,
(Pres., Chopwell, Spen and District
L.R.C.).

NOTES BY THE WAY for Students and Tutors

*Propagandist Education—even in
Arithmetic!*

THE following is from the *Baltimore Evening Sun* (Washington, U.S.A.) of Feb. 11th:—
"Governor Louis F. Hart declares that as soon as he gets through governing in a few months he is going to re-write the State's school textbooks (in order to boost the State of Washington).

"Some new scenes and better questions are to be incorporated in textbooks in a few months, and everyone a booster reminder. *California and Michigan schoolbooks are full of State propaganda, and even arithmetic*

problems are in terms of booster statistics.

"Here are a few samples of Governor Hart's ideas:—

"If Washington produces a ten million-box crop of apples in a year and sells it for \$1.25 a box, while Oregon grows 1,250,000 boxes at \$1.08, how much more profit does the Washington orchardist make than one in Oregon?

"What State produces the greatest cut of lumber and the most shingles?

"What city has the nation's lowest death rate, fewest doctors and nurses per thousand, and most babies per couple?

"When Governor Hart gets through

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editing pages and adding pictures he believes 'we will have a description any boy or girl can readily recognise as his home State.'

Engels

A. Millar asks whether there is another *Landmarks of Scientific Socialism* (Engels) than Kerr's? Not, we believe, in that form. But *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific* (Allen and Unwin) is a translation of the same work, Engels' *Anti-Duhring*, without the American verbiages, intrusions, and excisions. But whether they are exactly the same we cannot say. Perhaps some comrade acquainted with the German text will give us the exact bibliography.

Bogdanoff on "What is Matter?"

The following is a quotation from a special article which Bogdanoff—see W. H. Ryde's review of his book in this issue—wrote for the February Literary-Scientific Supplement of *Senaciaca Revuo*: "La scienco siaspece rilatas al la materio, ne abstrakte konstruas ĝian koncepton, sed reale esploris ĝin; kaj sur tiu vojo la koncepton de materio ĝuste en la nuna epoko travivas plej profundan revolucion. La fundamenta karakterizo de la materio—"maso"—restas grandaĵo elektrodinamika, reduktiĝis al energio, Kiom malproksiman koncepton pri materio, ekz., havas Einstein, identiganta ĝin kun "elektro-magneta kampo" de la ankoraŭ neantaŭlonga pure mekanika kompreno de ĝi! Tie-ĉi, en la scienco, la materio prezentas sin ne kiel "objekto en si mem," per kiu finiĝas la vojo de konceptado, sed kiel reala komplekto de aktivado-rezistado, kiel viva sperto, kiel problemo postulanta solvon."

"Listening in" to the World

Upton Sinclair (*N. Y. American*, 10/2/24), points out that "the radio is giving immediate impulse to a

movement for a common auxiliary tongue." He gives three decades for Esperanto to come into world use for this purpose. Marxian students will realise the significance of the radio as the most recent development in the technical basis for internationalism and its practical complement—an international. *Esperanto and Labour* (2½d. postpaid) expands the argument that just as paper was not used until printing was invented, and aviation had to wait for the petrol engine, so an international tongue has no chance of success until improved transport and communication have broken down barriers of distance.

Who wrote "The Miners' Next Step?"

This question needs clearing up. In *Labour Who's Who* Noah Ablett is listed as part author and A. J. Cook gives it as one of his publications. "Iconoclast" in *Fit to Govern* refers to it as Vernon Hartshorn's "famous pamphlet." Obviously "Iconoclast" has never seen the pamphlet, or she would know that it was issued by a Committee, the secretary of which was W. H. Mainwaring. The same group was responsible for the taking over by the S.W.M.F. of the Labour College. By the way a few copies of the pamphlet are still obtainable from PLEBS (6d. postpaid).

"The Martyrdom of Man"

A good many Plebs will be interested in the announcement that Messrs. Watts are about to issue a cheap edition, in cloth at half-a-crown, of Winwood Reade's *Martyrdom of Man*. In its new and handy form it covers, with the lengthy biographical sketch of the author, over five hundred pages. Reade's book, though by no means "authoritative," deserved a mention in the bibliographical section of the new L.R.D. Syllabus on *World History*—if only for its readableness!

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Words, Words

"SELF-DETERMINATION," one of them insisted. "Arbitration!" cried another.

"Co-operation?" suggested the mildest of the party.

"Confiscation!" answered an uncompromising female.

I, too, became slightly intoxicated by the sound of these vocables. And were they not the cure for all our ills?

"Inoculation!" I chimed in. "Transubstantiation, Alliteration, Inundation, Flagellation and Afforestation!"

(From *More Trivia*, by Logan Pearsall Smith.)

The "Grand Scheme of Subordination"

This year was distinguished by his being introduced into the family of Mr. Thrale, one of the most eminent brewers in England and Member of Parliament for the Borough of Southwark. Foreigners are not a little amazed when they hear of brewers, distillers, and men in similar departments of trade held forth as persons of considerable consequence. In this great commercial country it is natural that a situation which produces much wealth should be considered as very

"Dope Economic"

The following verses adorned a Christmas card which was distributed—with his lordship's "sincere regards"—to all Viscount Leverhulme's employees last December. We commend them to the notice of our friend "Gad-fly" of the *D.H.*:—

Now maybe I'm moss backed and rusty,
But here's how things line up to me:
When some modern statistical expert,
Charts "Capital" "Labour" and he,
With zig-zag graph lines and figures,
Marks "Labour" as if it were coal,
And "Capital" as if it were hard cash,
And neither had body nor soul.

Plague take all this dope economic,
That marks human lives on its chart,
Why "Capital" is our friend and neighbour,
And "Labour" has body and heart.

respectable; and, no doubt, honest industry is entitled to esteem. But, perhaps, the too rapid advances of men of low extraction tends to lessen the value of that distinction by birth and gentility, which has ever been found beneficial to the grand scheme of subordination.

(From Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, Chap. XV.)

[N.B. It is not without interest to note that Boswell's *Johnson* was first published in 1791—a year when the "grand scheme of subordination" was receiving some rude shocks on the other side of the Channel.]

Anatole France on Poverty

In my opinion the pity of the rich for the poor is an insult and a denial of human brotherhood. If you wish me to address the rich I shall say: "Spare the poor your pity: they have no use for it. Why pity and not justice? You have an account with them. Settle it. This is no question of sentiment. It is a matter of economics...."

The condition of the poor does not need to be improved, but to be suppressed.

(From *Crainquebille and other Tales*, by Anatole France.)

THE PLEBS

Both are fathers and brothers and husbands,
 With mothers and sweethearts and wives,
 Both love and can hate, both dream and both wait,*
 Both are live folk living their lives.

*And one has been waiting a long time!—[ED.].

OUR READERS' VIEWS

THE W.E.A. AND THE CARNEGIE TRUST FUND.

SIR,—In response to your request that readers of *The Plebs* should make known the facts regarding the Carnegie Trust Fund and the W.E.A., I submit the following as a true statement of the case:—

The W.E.A. made an application to the Carnegie Trustees for financial assistance to carry on its work, such assistance, of course, to be granted without any conditions attached, this being in accordance with the policy of our Association. The Trustees could not promise any financial assistance, but suggested that they might be able to help in supplying books to classes. There was no suggestion that the Carnegie Trustees "should finance the publication of W.E.A. text books" such as you insinuate in your statement. All that was suggested was that the Trustees should give further help in the provision of books which are normally used in both W.E.A. and National Council of Labour College classes, and of which there are not sufficient copies to be obtained from Public Libraries, W.E.A. Libraries and the Central Library for Students. No restrictions were imposed regarding the type of book to be supplied, and it will be as easy to get "Marx" as "Marshall."

The W.E.A. is endeavouring to obtain for its students what a large number of public libraries have obtained for the general public, and so far as we are aware, no Plebeian feels contaminated by turning over the pages of a book on Socialism which may have been bought for a Public Library through the medium of the Carnegie Trustees.

I think it is quite certain that, when these books are supplied, as I hope they will be, none of the readers of

PLEBS who are students in our classes will refuse to read them merely because they have been provided by the Carnegie Trustees.

It will assist in the dissemination of the facts if you give to this letter equal publicity to that given to the statements in your issue of February.

Yours truly,

J. M. MACTAVISH
 (General Secretary).

[We trust that the "dissemination of the facts" will do the W.E.A. a lot of good. Here is a further fact which Plebs can "disseminate" at the same time:—The U.S. Industrial Relations Commission, in 1915, reported that the Carnegie and Rockefeller Foundations were having a harmful effect on education in America; certain colleges and universities (it was stated) having already modified their charter clauses to suit the wishes of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. And this, mind, was not a Workers' Commission, nor were the colleges referred to workers' colleges.]

If in view of facts such as this the W.E.A. is still proud of accepting assistance from the Carnegie Trust Fund, then it is evident that those in authority in its councils have not the remotest conception of what *real* working-class education means and implies.
 —ED., PLEBS.]

PROLETARIAN ACADEMICISM

DEAR COMRADE,—Comrade Dobb charges me with dealing with his case as if it "were both anti-Dietzgen and anti-Marx." I explained in my first letter the reason for thus connecting Marx and Dietzgen, but the editor had unfortunately to leave out owing to pressure on his space.

What Dobb said in his first letter was: "The outlook of the modern scientific philosophers... is much the

same as that of Dietzgen, except that they have developed it and brought it in line with modern scientific discoveries....I think, therefore, that modern scientific philosophy should be welcomed by us as the basis of teaching." By making such a statement Dobb proves himself to be "anti-Dietzgen" and incidentally "anti-Marx." The mere fact that he uses such a term as "scientific philosophers" shows he has not understood Dietzgen. Further, to apply this title to those professors who have written on philosophy since Dietzgen is to commit the same error as to call those professors scientific who have written on history and economics since Marx.

Let us be quite clear; we do not argue that these people have contributed nothing whatsoever of any value, but that they are not scientific.

That if one is "anti-Dietzgen" one is also bound to be "anti-Marx," follows on this statement of Engels (in *Feuerbach*): "This materialistic dialectic which since that time has been our best tool and our sharpest weapon was discovered, not by us alone, but by a German workman, Joseph Dietzgen, in a remarkable manner and utterly independent of us."

Whether Dietzgen did this in the best possible manner is a point that admits of argument.* I fully agree with Dobb that "Dietzgen is very hard to read and grasp." No Marxian tutor would think of giving "the average worker....this to read as the necessary preliminary to knowledge"; but at the same time he knows that "the average worker" must have a thorough grasp of the principles embodied in Dietzgen, before he can attain to a scientific understanding of both the world of nature and human society.

Dobb seems to forget that various attempts both abroad and at home are being made to restate Dietzgen's views in simple language, e.g., Casey has shown fairly "briefly and in clear language what good it is to us"; but in his anxiety to avoid "using a battleship to open an oyster" and embody "the essentials of scientific

method in about three lessons," Dobb tends to go to the other extreme and demands "the strength of a cow in an Oxo cube."

Before the tutor can expound and apply the "materialistic dialectic" of Marx and Dietzgen in a popular and clear manner to a class of average workmen, he must possess a wide and detailed knowledge of history in all its various aspects. In the collection of his material the works of many of the orthodox economists, historians and philosophers will be of great value, in spite of the fact that they have not been written, either in the interests of, nor from the *scientific viewpoint* of, our movement—any more than the capitalists have developed technique in the interests of Socialism. But we can only make practical use of this material by applying to it the "materialistic dialectic." Apart from this application, the works of present-day professors, even Bertrand Russell, explain nothing fundamental to the working class in their everyday struggle. "The philosophic doctrines and ideas predominating to-day in bourgeois countries and enjoying the recognition of bourgeois scientists and journalists have been truly characterised from the viewpoint of Marxism in a single concise and pithy saying by Dietzgen to the effect that most of the professors of philosophy in modern society are in reality little else than 'licensed lackeys of clericalism'" (Lenin, *The Meaning of Militant Materialism*).

Now in order to reach some definite and clear conclusion, and to avoid mere wrangling, will Dobb please tell PLEBS readers:—

(1) With regard to his desire to teach "the essentials of the scientific method in about three lessons"—is there any difference between teaching the "common facts of science" and teaching science systematically as knowledge?

(2) What is the "good in Dietzgen"?

(3) What is the "good in scientific philosophers who have written since Dietzgen," and how and where have they improved on and developed the good of the latter?

(4) What does Engels, in *Socialism Utopian and Scientific*, mean by the

* And this, it seems to us, is the point which, primarily, Dobb wants to discuss.—ED.

statement that "what still survive of all previous philosophy are the principles of thought and their laws—pure logic and dialectics. Everything else goes up in the positive science of nature and history."

The answers to these four questions do not require "a battleship," but can be done quite easily on the lines of the "Oxo cube."

Yours, ROBERT HOLDER.

[We beg correspondents—on this and other subjects—to take the Oxo cube rather than the battleship as a model for their letters.—ED.]

THE "BLOC DES GAUCHES"

DEAR COMRADE,—Why is our Labour Press, of all shades, allowing the idea to grow up that the fall of Poincaré or that a majority for the Radical "Left Bloc" at the forthcoming French General Election will mean the evacuation of the Ruhr? The Radicals and Social-Radicals that constitute the "Left Bloc" publish an important daily, founded about a year ago, called *Le Quotidien*, in which contributions frequently appear from members of the Socialist Party—*i.e.* the party of Renaudel, Blum and Longuet—adhering to the "Sozialistische Arbeiter Internationale," the re-christened Second International. In the issue of 11/1/24 there appeared a leading article by Varenne, a very prominent leader of the Socialist Party. This article opens as follows:—

"Replying the other day to a question (in the Chamber) as to whether in the event of his coming into power he would evacuate the Ruhr, M. Edouard Herriot replied positively that *he would not evacuate the Ruhr without conditions*. I myself emphasised this reply by calling out: 'Neither would we!'"

The policy therefore of the Socialist Party and of the Radicals is just the Poincaré policy: evacuation *only on conditions*; that is, in other words, no evacuation even if Poincaré falls as a result of internal disagreements. Herriot is Mayor of Lyons and a leader of the Left Bloc.

At the top of every issue of this bourgeois and Radical capitalist journal, *Le Quotidien*, are printed the names of the *Political Committee* of the paper, and one of these three names

is Pierre Renaudel, the most forceful leader of the Socialist Party. At the Marseilles Congress (held end of January) of this alleged Socialist group an electoral pact was arranged with the bourgeois Left Bloc of anti-Labour reactionaries and capitalists, and M. Bertrand, the Editor of *Le Quotidien*, who took the trouble of attending the Congress, wrote enthusiastic articles about it. Renaudel and others boldly put forward the idea of direct ministerial collaboration with the Radicals in the event of a majority at the next elections, but though this scheme was not formally adopted by the Congress anyone who realises the manœuvring capacity of the Renaudel-Blum combination knows what to expect.

The President of the French Senate is Doumergue, a member of the Radical Party. This is the man who went to Russia on behalf of the French Government in February, 1917 (a month before the Revolution) and made a pact with the Tsardom under which both Governments were permitted complete freedom to adjust their frontiers towards Germany as they wished!! Moreover, as I predicted last autumn, Briand—the renegade Socialist and one of the most bitter opponents of Labour—has now definitely associated himself with the Left Bloc and will undoubtedly be one of its "atlest" leaders. These are the people with whom the French Socialist Party—and through them British Labour—are joining hands. Think of it! Briand, against whom Jaurés during the last four years of his life was thundering on every possible occasion, as a *friend* of our millions of internationally ignorant trade-unionists! Can you beat it?

Another feature of the Marseilles Congress of the Socialist Party to which no reference has appeared in our Labour press was a speech by Jean Longuet in which (1) he mentioned his anxiety at the British hegemony in the Second Internationale with its headquarters in London and (2) he suggested the amalgamation of *Le Populaire* (the daily organ of the Socialist Party) with *Le Peuple* (the official daily of the Right-Wing Trade Union Confederation) each of which has a small circulation—I doubt if

both together their circulation is three times the monthly issue of *The Plebs*. Another point made clear at the Congress is that the publication of *Le Populaire* is only made possible by subsidies from the Second Internationale just as the continuance of its Paris contemporary *Le Peuple* is only maintained by subsidies from the Amsterdam Trade Union Internationale. These subsidies are of special interest because of the fact that both journals are very decidedly anti-Russian.

In view of the facts set out here it behoves the rank-and-file of the British Labour movement to insist that these matters should be more fully discussed in their press and in their Party conferences—at the Queen's Hall Conference last June discussion of International Labour questions was largely closed by the platform except in so far as they entered into the slight debate about the affiliation of the Communist Party, and in that debate I heard from W. J. Brown (Civil Service Clerical Association) one of the most ignorant pronouncements about the continental workers' movement that I have ever listened to. The I.L.P. also at their forthcoming Easter Conference might very well discuss the position and see if they are satisfied with being the declared associates of militarist reactionaries like Briand and of anti-Labour millionaires like Hennessey, the French brandy magnate.

Yours, etc.,

A. P. L.

A GOOD SUGGESTION

DEAR COMRADE,—May I mention a plan I adopted with *What to Read* which other students might put into operation. I presented a copy to the librarian of the local Public Library and asked him if it were possible to get some of the books listed. He suggested that I should mark those I wanted, and I am glad to report that quite a number of these have since been placed on the shelves.

I take care they don't stay there long. I get the "boys" to make a rush for them, and when Mr. Librarian sees I rush, he gets a few more books in! 'Nuff sed!

Yours fraternally,
J. W.

ANATOLE FRANCE

DEAR COMRADE EDITOR,—Now that there are some twelve or fifteen volumes available in the excellent 2s. 6d. edition of Anatole France's works published by John Lane, I should be grateful if you would indicate what you consider the best half-dozen to get?

Yours fraternally,

A. C.

[*Penguin Island*, *Crainquebille*, *Mother of Pearl*, *The Revolt of the Angels*, *Sylvestre Bonnard*, and *At the Sign of the Reine Pedauque* may not be the "best" but are certainly as good a half-dozen as any other.—ED.]

PERSONAL

DEAR COMRADE,—“A. G. E.” is in error in stating (in his London L. C. Students' "Notes") that I am standing for an Organising Secretaryship (N.U.R.). I am standing for the Parliamentary candidates' list, and have got thirty-two branch nominations—twelve over the number necessary.

Yours fraternally,

ROBT. HOLDER.

DEAR COMRADE,—Being an ex-student of the Labour College and a successful candidate at the recent exam. for Organising Sec., I am surprised to find that my name was left out of the list of ex-students given in London L.C. Students' "Notes" this month.....

Yours, etc.,

[We do not print our correspondent's name, as his communication was private. But we quote from his letter in order to urge all our friends, if they look to *The Plebs* to record their activities, to keep us informed of them. We are only too glad to print information about I.W.C.E.ers and their activities when we can get hold of it. But possessing neither second sight nor an army of news-correspondents up and down the country, we have to depend on our friends dropping us a p.c. when they have information to impart.—ED.]

The CONSTITUTION of the PLEBS LEAGUE

AT a full meeting of the Plebs League Executive Committee, on Friday, March 7th, it was decided to submit the following newly drafted Constitution (i) for discussion by members of the League in the magazine; (ii) for discussion at the Annual Meet, to be held on Whit-Monday, June 9th (during the Summer School at Cober Hill, Scarborough; (iii) to a postal ballot of the members to be taken after the Meet:—

* *

THE general aim of the Plebs League is:—To develop and increase the class-consciousness of the workers, by propaganda and education, in order to aid them to destroy wage-slavery and to win power.

The means it uses for this end are:—

(1) The support of the National Council of Labour Colleges and the classes run under its auspices.

(2) The maintenance of the class-conscious character of the teaching in the present organs and institutions of Independent Working-Class Education.

(3) The publication of a Magazine and, in concert with the N.C.L.C., of textbooks, syllabuses and other publications.

(4) The holding of summer schools, teachers' conferences, etc.

(5) Propaganda among workers' organisations for the adoption of new schemes of I.W.C.E. or the extension of existing schemes.

The League, although not until otherwise decided, running candidates for public or trade union offices, is intended to link together members of the labour movement for the discussion and advancement of a revolutionary industrial and political movement suited to British conditions.

* *

Will League branches and members discuss the above, and forward amendments or criticisms?

W. H. (Hon. Sec.).

COBER HILL SUMMER SCHOOL

Cober Hill, Cloughton, Scarbro'
June 7th—June 14th.

WILL all comrades who have sent in their names for the above *please send their 10s. deposit fee if they have not already done so.* Accommodation is being rapidly booked up and in order to ensure places being reserved in the Guest House the booking fees should be sent at once.

The programme for the week, while not finally settled, will be somewhat as follows:—

Sunday, June 8th.—Morning lecture.

Evening lecture, "Music and Revolution," W. Paul, with musical illustrations.

Monday, June 9th (Whit-Monday).—

The Plebs Meet. It is hoped that comrades who cannot get for the week will be able to take advantage of the excursion facilities to Scarbro' to be present at any rate for this day. Evening performance of two or three one-act plays.

Tues., Wed., Thurs. and Friday.—Two morning courses of four lectures each: (i) "The History of the Modern Working Class—from the Decay of Feudalism and the Beginnings of Capitalism to the Present Day." (This course will cover in broad outline the subject-matter of the next PLEBS Textbook—on Modern History—which we hope to publish before the end of the year). (ii) "Modern Tendencies of Capitalism: (a) The Banks, (b) Trusts and Monopolies, (c) Growth of the Great International Groups, (d) Workshop Methods, Intensification of Labour, Employment of Women, etc." It is hoped that the lecturers for these

two courses (which will be run simultaneously—students being free to attend which they like) will include Walton Newbold, M. Starr, R. W. Postgate, Ellen Wilkinson, M. H. Dobb and Arthur Woodburn.

In the evenings of these days there will be special lectures, including "The Meaning of Scientific Method," by Prof. Jas. Johnstone, and one by W. Paling, M.P., on "Some Aspects of the Work of the Labour Government."

The afternoons of the whole week will be free for walks, tennis, bathing, etc.

The terms, as before announced, are £3 3s. od. inclusive for the week. Only a few places are now left open.

Particulars of the Summer School at Bispham, Blackpool, Aug. 9-16th, will be announced later.

Meantime, note the date, and the fee—56s. per week, or 45s. 6d. for accommodation in tents in the grounds.

Labour College (London) Students' Association

WITH the approach of the Easter vacation students are beginning to consider the vexing possibility of being "odd lots" on the labour market.

The S.W.M. Federation is attempting to pioneer a new agreement in the mining industry. Whatever agreement is drawn up and accepted, it will be regarded by the left wing movement merely as a step towards the next agreement. The need for right thinking inside the labour movement and in particular within the miners' movement has been demonstrated over and over again during the last few years. Propagandists are needed. Organisers are needed to prepare the movement for a still further advance aiming at complete control of the industry. This does not mean merely that there are new jobs to be opened up, but that there are new and difficult tasks to be performed.

Nobody should be better fitted for this kind of work than the men on whose education the movement spends

a great deal of money every year. Unfortunately the work of the ex-student is often hindered by paid officials who imagine that the man is just grinding his own axe. This should not be.

If the student returning to his district is to be of real value to the movement, he must have economic security. To obtain this the Federation machinery should be used to get the student back to work. This might be borne in mind by the S.W.M.F. Executive when negotiating the new agreement, and some understanding arrived at. There are sufficient numbers of old Labour College students on the Executive to bear this point in mind.

In the meantime, are we to understand that the S.W.M.F. Executive has definitely shelved the inquiry which last year's conference instructed it to arrange? Here again it appears a next step is needed—and that quickly.

A. G. E. (Sec.).

The NATIONAL COUNCIL of LABOUR COLLEGES

HEAD OFFICE—22 ELM ROW, EDINBURGH
Gen. Sec., J. P. M. Millar (to whom all reports should be sent)

WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL TRADE UNION COMMITTEE (W. E. T. U. C.).—This W.E.A. organisation still continues to mislead Trade Unions into the belief that it can supply educational facilities through the Labour Colleges. All our Secretaries are aware that by the decision of our last Annual Meeting Local Colleges are not to take part in the W.E.T.U.C.'s return-of-fees scheme. In one or two instances this rule has been overlooked, possibly as the result of a change of Secretaries, and the W.E.T.U.C. is using these stray instances to try to justify its misleading claims. If, at any time, local Colleges are in doubt as to what they should do in connection with any request for a certificate of attendance or other information required in connection with the W.E.T.U.C.'s return-of-fees scheme, will they write Head Office before doing anything? The W.E.T.U.C. is being requested to cease publishing leaflets which misrepresent the facts so far as the Labour Colleges are concerned.

A.E.U.—The National Committee of this Union meets shortly and will decide on the question of educational facilities. It appears that the W.E.T.U.C. has offered a scheme, and it is up to all A.E.U. Plebs to see that their delegates to the National Committee turn down such a scheme if on no other ground than that the W.E.T.U.C. cannot supply Independent Working-class Education as laid down in the A.E.U. rules.

National Union of Life Assurance Workers and Tailors' and Garment Workers' Union.—Several branches have resolutions on the agendas of the Annual Conferences of these Unions, asking for N.C.L.C. Educational Schemes. All Labour College members

of these Unions are asked to take note and to act accordingly.

Union of Post Office Workers and Railway Clerks' Association.—These organisations hold their Annual Conferences shortly, and from the agendas it seems that some exception is being taken to the W.E.T.U.C.'s scheme on which these Unions have embarked. This is as it should be, as originally the Conferences of both Unions decided for Labour College Education. It is difficult to see what reason has been available for fobbing the members off with W.E.A. schemes through the W.E.T.U.C.

Trade Union Journals.—Will all Labour College students and secretaries please make a special point of sending to Head Office copies of any Trade Union or other journals or Trade Union agendas having any reference to the Labour College movement in particular, or to educational schemes in general. Assistance of this sort will greatly add to the effectiveness of our organisation.

Notepaper.—Colleges not using printed notepaper or whose printed notepaper is out of date are urged to get a supply of the standard notepaper now obtainable from Head Office.

Annual Meeting.—Colleges are reminded that this takes place in Leeds on the 3rd and 4th of May. Railway fares will be pooled as usual. The overwhelming pressure of work at Head Office has prevented any agenda being issued up to the time of writing. You are asked to excuse this—and to accept it as a sign of the rapid development of our work.

N.C.L.C. DIRECTORY—ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS.

Div. 2. **Weymouth Labour College.**
Sec.: Mr. Francombe, The Pines, Bingleaves, Weymouth, Dorset.

Banbury Labour College, Sec. :
Mr. Stanford, 70, Queen
Street, Banbury.

Guildford Labour College, Sec.:
Mr. S. Baker, 6, Upperton
Road, Guildford, Surrey.

Div. 4. *Blaina and District Labour
College, Sec. :* Mr. E. H.
Coles, No. 7, Upper Ten
Houses, Cwm Celyn, Blaina,
Mon.

Div. 7. *Brighouse Labour College, Sec.:*
Mr. J. Sykes, 7, Clog Sole
Road, Brighouse, Yorks.

Div. 9. *Workington Labour College,*
Sec. : Mr. Mullen, 28, Sid-
dick, Workington, Cumber-
land.

Div. 10. *Scottish Labour College.*
Stirlingshire Local Com-
mittee, Sec. : Mr. T. Bain,
34, Garthall Place, High
Pleasance, Falkirk.
Dundee Local Committee,
Sec. : Mr. R. Low, 17, North
Wellington Street, Dundee.
Renfrew and Dumbartonshire
Local Committee, Sec. : Mr.
D. Dick, 1, Henderson Street,
Paisley.

WHAT THE DIVISIONS ARE DOING.

Division 1.—Now includes Kent,
East Surrey and East Sussex. Three
new classes formed and twenty-nine
now running. New applications still
coming in.

Division 2.—A number of Secretaries
in this Division have been very active
getting resolutions sent to Trade Union
Headquarters. The Organiser is ar-
ranging a series of popular lectures for
the summer months.

Division 3.—New class at Welwyn
Garden City. A number of new affilia-
tions reported, particularly in Brentwood
and Braintree. Cambridge preparing
to open three new classes next session.
Day schools being arranged for Lowes-
toft and Yarmonth, and a conference
to be held in Peterboro'.

Division 4.—300 Annual Reports
sold and PLEBS sale increased by
100 per cent. Day schools arranged
for Cardiff, Aberavon, Swansea and
Llanelly. A number of N.U.D.A.W.
correspondence students enrolled. Four

new classes formed. Five more
A.U.B.T.W. branches participating in
the Educational Scheme.

Division 5.—A series of nine Lectures
on popular subjects being arranged
for the summer months, particularly
for the A.U.B.T.W. and N.U.D.A.W
branches.

Division 6.—Steps taken to take
advantage of the Birmingham Trades
Council's support. Will all PLEBS
readers not yet actively connected
with Labour College work, and willing
to assist, write Divisional Organiser,
T. D. Smith, 12, Old Meeting Street,
West Bromwich, Birmingham.

Division 7.—In connection with the
Annual N.C.L.C. Conference an Evening
Demonstration will be held in Leeds
on Sunday, 4th May, with H. C.
Charleton, M.P., in the chair, speakers
including R. Coppock (General Secretary
N.F.B.T.O.) and others. The Warp
Twisters' Society has decided to arrange
an Educational Scheme with the
N.C.L.C. locally. Conference to be held
in Doncaster for the purpose of stimu-
lating educational work in that area.

Division 8.—New class started at
Bacup with F. Casey as tutor and sixty-
eight students. N.E. Lancs Area Council
considering advisability of having
full-time lecturer-organiser, and E.
Redfern has been appointed provision-
ally to carry on in that capacity. N.E.
Lancs reports about one hundred
N.U.D.A.W. students. Liverpool
College arranging a tutors' class and
hoping to establish educational facilities
at Wrexham shortly. New and addi-
tional classes started in Blackford,
Padiham, Hapton, Great Harwood,
Haslingden, Preston, Bury, Reddish,
Liverpool and Birkenhead. S.E. Lancs
A.S.W. Management Committee are
continuing their Educational Scheme.

Division 9.—Highly successful con-
ference held at Workington for the
purpose of forming a Cumberland
Labour College, and already local
officials have done good work. It is
proposed to link Workington, White-
haven, Maryport, Carlisle and Cleter-
more together, Bob Holder giving
valuable assistance with the propaganda
work.

Division 10 (Scottish Labour College).
—The new Dundee Local Committee
has gone off with a bang. Already

classes started and Trades Council affiliated...The Fife Secretary, Com. Mitchell, reports that Fife Miners' Reform Union has agreed to affiliate and thus provide its members with free educational facilities...Paisley and Greenock Local Committees have formed a District Committee, with D. Dick as Secretary. It is hoped to open a new class in Helensburgh...Edinburgh reports a number of affiliations and a visit from J. F. Horrabin, who lectured

on "Geography and the Class Struggle." ...Glasgow has started new classes at Nitshill and Kirkintilloch, and has now twenty-one classes. Whist drive and dance being held on Friday, April 4th, in Fellowship Halls, Portland Street, to mark the end of the session. A raid is being prepared on all un-affiliated organisations...Lanarkshire has opened new classes at Annathill, Carluke and Douglas Water...Ayrshire, too, still keeps its end up.

IN MEMORIAM

IT is with very deep regret that we announce the death of our Comrade Brammer, of Sheffield. He was killed by an accident on the railway on February the 15th, ten minutes after signing on. He leaves a widow and six children; he was 37 years old but like many workers he had crowded years of activity in the movement into his short life. His comrades write of him that "he was one of the best workers and sold more PLEBS than any single individual in the Sheffield district."

He came into our movement through the W.E.A. and when he had fully grasped our position he not only joined classes but helped to run them for his comrades. He was President of the A.S.L.E. & F. No. 1 branch for five years, first president of the Men's Co-op. Guild, twenty years a trade unionist, twelve years a co-operator. The movement in Sheffield will miss him and we join our Sheffield comrades in mourning his loss. He died on duty in a double sense. His devotion to the cause is a lesson to us all.

JOHN MACLEAN MEMORIAL FUND

AN appeal is being made on behalf of the above to all workers' educational organisations. The Executive of the Plebs League has forwarded a donation, and we hope that all Labour Colleges and Classes will make collections and send on to Mr. W. Shaw (Treasurer), 95 Bath Street, Glasgow.

The money raised will, we understand, be devoted to the support of our dead comrade's dependents. Remember—John MacLean, while living, made big sacrifices for our cause. It is up to us to see that those near and dear to him do not suffer unduly thereby.

A PAMPHLET ON THE LEVY
Light on the Levy (6d. R. Neft,
Stepney Street, Llanelly).

Our first recollections of R. Neft go back to his association with the sympathetic strike of the railwaymen at Llanelly some ten years ago. His mind often works too fast for even his friends to follow him, and he makes rings around his opponents, leaving them dazed and suspicious.

However, the scintillations of this booklet will be useful in the further discussions of this matter, and his parables will convince when statistics fail. We favour Neft's idea of increased social services without agreeing with him that the removal of the food taxes would automatically lower wages; industrial organisation could prevent that.

K.

THE PLEBS REVIEWS

167

ALL WORLD WISDOM

An Introduction to World History. By M. I. Cole (L.R.D. syllabuses, No. 12, 6d.).

THE writing of short histories of the world, rather out of fashion since the death of Sir Walter Raleigh, seems to be reviving. First Wells, then Barton, and now Mrs. Cole. Maybe we shall also see revived the office of "Professor of All World Wisdom," which existed at the same time: Mrs. Cole perhaps might have the job.

Any world history—especially one like this in 44 pages—must fall into one of two errors. Either it deals with generalities, and so tends to become windy and contain too little fact, or else it is packed with facts so that it sags, and is as heavy as Dan'l Webster the frog was full of lead. The first is Barton, the second is Mrs. Cole. Her facts do not—on the whole—appear to be held together by any general or underlying idea, such as that of the class struggle, or the geographical factor as it is used in *The PLEBS Outline*. Too often we find entries such as "in the 11th century a Mongol tribe of Ural Altaic type, the Seijuks, migrated from Turkestan into Asia Minor." There is not room enough to put such statements into a general plan: they remain mere pieces of information. On the other hand, the booklet will be found of very great value to all but elementary students because of the enormous care and labour which has obviously gone to the making of it. It contains no absurdities, like Wells' book. It is admirably clear on the whole, even if packed tightly. It appears—so far as I can test it—accurate. Its statements on such questions as the origin of the State, where it pauses for breath for a minute, are true and intelligible. Again and again, people who want the briefest, sanest and most helpful account of any particular period will find themselves turning back to it. The bibliographies are admirable. Allowing for the fault I have mentioned (a fault probably inevitable) I still think it the best of the syllabus series.

R. W. P.

IRISH POLITICAL HISTORY

The History of Ireland. Stephen Gwynn. (Macmillan, 12s. 6d.).

There is a vast amount of detail—well indexed and with two maps—in this recently issued survey of Ireland's political past. The author has an amazingly complicated story to tell.

In the thirteenth century trade with Bristol led to the intervention in Irish affairs of Henry II.—an act sanctioned by Pope Adrian. But the conquest was never completed.

Later, we are told how Henry VIII., out for power and plunder, used the separate "reformed" Church in Ireland to spread English rule. Thus, afterwards, the Papacy used Ireland, and Ireland the Papacy, until nationalism and the Catholic religion became "blended and confused."

Rebellion, treacherous massacre, attempted extirpation of the Irish, seizure of their land by plantations, the sacrifice of Irish trade and industry for English industries—of these every historian must speak. The latter provoked the Protestant colonists—the garrison—to demand legislative independence. Out of that struggle Wolfe Tone and others raised the larger issue of an Irish Republic. The Union (1800) was largely born of the fright of the confiscators at the "old inhabitants of the island," who before and after it, as Whiteboys, Steelboys, Young Irelanders, Fenians and Land Leaguers, voiced the right of the Irish people to the soil. This agrarian discontent was the motive force behind the political agitations for Home Rule.

Mr. Gwynn writes from a somewhat detached point of view. He is very polite to both English and Irish politicians. He favours the 1921 Treaty as a great forward step, beyond which he has nothing to say. One gathers he has written books about Ireland instead of being actively engaged as a partisan on either side.

However, the worker-student wishing to supplement Connolly's books, and to fill in the "Outlines" which have appeared in *The PLEBS*, will find this book useful.

M. S.

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AN ANNIVERSARY MANUAL
January Fifteenth (Manuals for
 Proletarian Anniversaries, No. 1.
 Y.C.L., 38, Gt. Ormond Street,
 W.C.1. 1s.).

On January 15th, 1919, Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were murdered in Berlin. This handbook is designed to provide "suitable material" for the celebration of that anniversary.

It contains much interesting and useful matter. But it also contains a good deal of not very inspired rhetoric which might well have been omitted. By all means let us have handbooks of this kind, giving us the salient facts which will refresh our memories and re-ignite our enthusiasm. But leave us to prepare our own perorations; for those which one might learn off by rote from certain portions of this book would be at any rate lacking in spontaneity.

For that matter, we doubt whether too much insistence on the emotional appeal of such a subject as this is either desirable or likely to give the best results. It so easily degenerates into a sort of Salvation-Army-hysteria—and that is not the best mood for fighters in the workers' struggle. Was it not indeed something very much akin to this which Liebknecht and Luxemburg had to contend against among their own supporters during those tragic days in Germany five years ago?

Q.

TOLSTOY'S PLAYS

The Dramatic Works of Lyof N. Tolstoi.
 Translated by Nathan Haskell
 Dole (George G. Harrap & Co., Ltd.
 10s. 6d.).

This well produced volume contains all Tolstoy's work in dramatic form, including uncompleted plays, and 21 "dialogs" entitled *The Wisdom of Children*, which are almost purely propagandist.

The translator appears to have done his work with painstaking thoroughness, but we fail to find anything in the plays themselves to justify his assertion that, if Tolstoy had been able to devote all his powers to this art, "he would have been the greatest dramatist not merely of Russia but of the modern world." Synge said that "on the stage, we must have reality

and we must have joy." Tolstoy gives us neither. *The Power of Darkness* is gruesome enough, with its slow alternation of adultery and murder, but the horror is laid on so thick that it fails to carry conviction. For example, in the infanticide scene:—

(*Matriona enters the entry and meets Anisya. Anisya comes out with the baby wrapped in rags.*)

Matriona: Well, did you christen it?

Anisya: Certainly I did. I took it away by main force; she did not want to give it up. (*Approaches Nikita and hands him the baby.*)

Nikita (refuses to take it): Carry it down yourself.

Anisya: Take it, I say. (*Flings the child at him.*)

Nikita (catches it): It's alive. Oh, mother, my own mother! It moves! It's alive! What shall I do with it?

Anisya (snatches the baby out of his hands and flings it into the cellar): Choke it quick, and it won't be alive. (*Pushes Nikita down cellar.*) It's your affair; finish it!

That is about as "real" as the homicidal exploits of Mr. Punch—and provokes similar emotions!

Tolstoy's 4-act comedy, *Fruits of Enlightenment*, is a tedious satire of "spiritualism" as practised in Petersburg society. It has no less than 32 characters! In *The Light that Shines in Darkness*, an uncompleted 5-act drama, we have Tolstoy's "own soul tragedy," exemplified by the hero's struggle against the overwhelming powers of Church and State. *The Live Corpse* is a study of weak-willed idealism overpowered by debauchery. Most readable of all is the very brief 2-act comedy, *The Root of All Evil*, which is directed against the drunken habits of the peasantry.

We shall not dispute the translator's claim that "all these plays have a moral purport."

E. J.

We regret that extra pressure on our space this month compels us to hold over several reviews, etc.

THE N.C.L.C.

The N.C.L.C. is the National Council of Labour Colleges, the central organisation of the Labour College Movement. It is composed of the Labour College, London, the Scottish Labour College, 51 non-residential local Labour Colleges, the Plebs League, the Amal. Union of Building Trade Workers, the Distributive Workers, and the Nat. Fed. of Building Trade Operatives.

OBJECT:—The education of the workers from the *working-class* point of view. The Colleges have been built up by working-class organisations, the members of which have realised that only *educated* Trade Unionism is *effective* Trade Unionism. These members have recognised, moreover, that just as it would be ridiculous to join a Trade Union financed by employers, so, for education on social, economic or Trade Union questions, it is equally foolish to support Colleges or classes assisted by employers, or under the influence of educationists with *employing-class* ideas.

CONTROL:—The control of the Council and of its affiliated Colleges is wholly in the hands of working-class organisations. In consequence of the working-class character of the education provided, these Colleges, like the Trade Unions, get no financial support from State departments, which is a testimonial to the good work they are doing for the Labour Movement.

METHODS:—The principal methods take the form of Evening Classes, Residential Tuition, Postal Tuition, Weekend Schools, Publication of a Magazine, "The *PLEBS*," and Textbooks, and the conducting of Educational Schemes such as those of the Building Trade Workers and the Distributive Workers.

WORK DONE:—During 1922-23 the N.C.L.C. ran 529 classes with 11,998 students and this year these figures will be materially exceeded. The N.C.L.C. has more classes *dealing with subjects of direct importance to the working-class movement* than any other educational body.

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