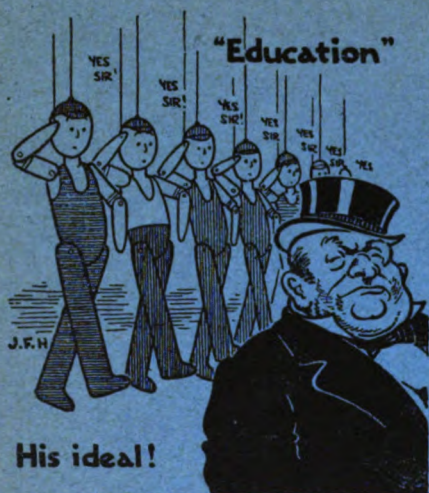


The Plebs

May
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THE PLEBS

Vol. XVII

May, 1925

No. 5

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The PLEB POINT of VIEW

THE National Council of Labour Colleges, at its annual meeting on the 30th and 31st of this month, will have to come to a decision of the utmost importance to the future of our movement. It must make up its mind for or against the Trades Union Congress Scheme (printed in full on a later page of this issue).

In an "Open Letter to Plebs," also published this month, our comrade George Hicks makes an appeal for acceptance of the scheme, giving sundry weighty reasons for such a course. We have no desire to make up the minds of I.W.C.E.ers for them on this matter. What we want to do, briefly, is to sum up one or two of the main considerations, *pro* and *con*, which ought to be borne in mind in coming to a decision.

In the first place, as Geo. Hicks points out, the N.C.L.C. cannot

afford to go out into the wilderness. Our place is in the van of the workers' educational movement ; and, just as we have always aimed at winning the support of individual Trade Unions for our work, so now, apart from other considerations, we welcome the support and backing of the T.U. Congress. But it should be remembered here that, whereas we have gained the support of several Unions for Independent Working-Class Education, as distinct from education of any other kind, we have not so won over the T.U.C. In the working of this Scheme, we have to co-operate with an organisation which stands for an educational policy in direct opposition to our own, and against which we have always fought. The N.C.L.C. is to share T.U.C. support with the W.E.A. There is—with important qualifications, of course—to be a sort of a "coalition."

Now, it may be taken for granted that none of us likes the idea of anything of the sort—not because we are unwilling to work with other people, and not because we aren't ready to admit that there are many men and women of good intentions inside the W.E.A. We dislike co-operation simply because we stand for a principle—the principle of *Independent Working-Class Education*—the very principle which is the reason for our existence as a movement ; and any sort of compromise on principles is distasteful.

The vital point to be decided, we think, is just this : Can we go into this Scheme—and, having gone into it, do our best to make it a success—without any compromise of our principles ?

We certainly cannot, if in any way the expression of our point of view as I.W.C.E.ers is to be limited or modified. True, as George Hicks points out, The PLEBS will not be tied by the Agreement ; and—let us hereby give due and full notice to all whom it may concern, either one way or the other !—The PLEBS will certainly continue to advocate *Independent Working-Class Education*, with all that that implies. But obviously it would not be a very satisfactory situation if our movement, as an organised whole, were committed to a course of action which precluded it from doing or saying certain things, while the organ of the movement, the Magazine, and the League of individual supporters of that movement, felt it their duty to take a different line.

We do, therefore, feel that it is vital that the N.C.L.C., if it decides to accept the Scheme, should press for a very definite understanding on this matter of the rights of the various educational organisations to carry on their propaganda—whether or not that propaganda is a criticism of the aims or methods of other organisations participating in the Scheme. What amounts to a compromise on principles can only be avoided by a clear understanding on this point at the very outset. Our movement has won every bit of support

it now has by the advocacy of unqualified *independence*. We undo all we have accomplished if we lower that flag a fraction of an inch!

On the other hand, remember, we do the same if we simply refuse the T.U.C.'s invitation. We want Congress support—we want to see Congress committed to an educational campaign. We believe George Hicks is right in saying that there is a possibility

THE OLD FIRM—



“STRICTLY IMPARTIAL”

of getting workers' education established on a better and wider basis than ever before by a Scheme such as that now before the movement for consideration. But we want that education to be *real working-class education*; and we want to be free to convince Trade Unionists—General Councillors and rank and filers—of what constitutes real working-class education, and of the need to avoid all specious substitutes!

So long as we are assured of such freedom, there can be no objection to the sort of “co-operation” with the W.E.A. indicated in the Scheme. The Unions who have already given their support to *Independent Working-Class Education* ought surely to be ready to back the N.C.L.C. in insisting (1) that “avoidance of conflict between the various bodies” (see par. 3 of the Scheme) should not be interpreted as in any way preventing full and free expression of

our objections to the educational aims and policy of the W.E.A. : and (2) that it be an instruction to the representatives of both organisations to make clear on all occasions the strictly limited extent of the "co-operation," and the differences in principle which make it necessary to keep the organisation of each intact and separate.

J. F. H.

An OPEN LETTER to PLEBS

COMRADES,—The question of the unity of the educational bodies operating within the working-class movement is now a very real and pressing one. We have to take full cognisance of the negotiations that have taken place under the auspices of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress, at and since the Plymouth Congress. It is evident that something in the nature of a General Educational Policy for the Trade Union movement is hardening and taking shape.

This fact has got to be realised. The National Council of Labour Colleges must be careful of becoming Ishmaelites in regard to this educational work and policy. We do not want to find ourselves left on the outside of the main stream of the working-class movement. In accepting the conditions laid down by the Education Advisory Committee of the General Council, we may have to make certain formal concessions—concessions which, I feel convinced, will, in actual practice, amount to practically nothing. I think we should accept the conditions of the T.U.C. Advisory Committee. Our rightful place—our proper field of work—is *inside* the general working-class movement. We must be in and of the movement. Indeed, what other alternatives are there?

What is the present position in regard to the London Labour College? The present attitude of its sponsors is one of seeking ways and means for no longer maintaining it as a separate unit. Forces are pulling in those two organisations to get out of their present liabilities in regard to the college. These forces are sufficiently strong, in my opinion, to be successful unless we can produce a stronger force to hold them. The only conceivable stronger force is the Trades Union Congress. I think their financial equivalent can be obtained, or retained, if the necessary adjustments are made under the control of the General Council.

You will see, according to the scheme of the Advisory Committee* that the object states: "To provide working-class education in

* See overleaf.

order to enable the workers to develop their capacities . . . *in the work of securing social and industrial emancipation.*" That, in itself, gives the N.C.L.C. plenty of latitude, and is a safeguard against the degeneration of the education work along the lines of the W.E.A. Obviously, that implies clear *class* education for the specific purpose of enabling the workers to end the capitalist system.

The adoption of the Scheme provides us with many opportunities of taking advantage of the present sentiments and currents of opinion prevalent in the Trade Union Movement and the Trades Union Congress. Particularly so in regard to unity. Indeed, we would, in my opinion, lay ourselves open to criticism if, while we were actively promoting Trade Union Unity, local, national and international, we opposed the unification of our educational work.

An Eminent W.E.A.er on the UNIVERSITIES

"He was not suggesting that the Universities were the willing tools of Capitalism, but rather that they had been pawns in a deep game that in their innocence they did not understand."

Mr. A. Greenwood, M.P., reported in *The Observer*, March 29th.

Not only so, but there would be obvious difficulties in maintaining the support of the separate Trade Unions for the N.C.L.C. outside the General Council Scheme. Many of those Unions which are now pledged to develop educational work along the lines of the A.U.B.T.W., the N.U.D.A.W., the A.E.U., etc., would, naturally, accept the jurisdiction of the General Council in preference to an entirely independent line. Nor do I think it at all desirable, in the general interests and progress of the movement, to persist in isolation when the General Council, not the W.E.A., is the leading factor.

Reviewing the whole scheme, I do not think there are any dangers which, by tact and hard work, we cannot overcome. After the adoption of the Scheme, there are still opportunities for propaganda to decide the principles of the educational work undertaken by the movement. And much can be done through Congress—if not at the Scarborough one, then in succeeding Congresses.

We will still have full right of criticism. As Paragraph Seven

says : "The above scheme is not to abolish the rights of criticism or propaganda of the separate organisations, etc." The Plebs League will be free to carry on its work as usual—it will not be bound by the Scheme because it will not be one of the contracting parties. No Scheme could possibly curtail the rights of criticism.

I certainly think we would be wise to advise the acceptance of the Scheme. The general tendency of the movement is leftwards. The class clarification of the workers' position is proceeding apace. The passing of time can but bring us additional strength, while the untenable position of the W.E.A., with its capitalist State subsidies, must necessarily be correspondingly weakened. If we go into the Scheme and link up with the general movement, we will be able to exercise an even wider influence than we are exercising now. Our propaganda will make the position clear. It is really, in my opinion, a great chance to set the entire working-class educational movement along the lines we desire it to go.

GEORGE HICKS.

The T.U.C. EDUCATIONAL SCHEME

The following is the text of the scheme as agreed to by the sub-committee consisting of representatives of the educational bodies (N.C.L.C., W.E.A., The Labour College (London) and Ruskin College) on the T.U.C. General Council Education Advisory Committee. It is to come up for ratification—or otherwise—at the Annual Conference of the N.C.L.C. at Whitsuntide.

1. *Objects*—To provide working-class education in order to enable the workers to develop their capacities, and to equip them for their Trade Union, Labour and Co-operative activities generally, in the work of securing social and industrial emancipation.

2. *Machinery*—(a) A National Committee of Educational Bodies accepting the above objects and approved by the Trades Union Congress General Council shall be formed in the same way as the present sub-committee but including a Chairman and two other members appointed by the General Council. It is a condition that such educational bodies and their work will be controlled by *bona-fide* Trade Union, Labour and Co-operative Organisations.

(b) Divisional Committees consisting of representatives from the educational

bodies carrying on class work and accepting the above objects, plus a Trade Union Chairman approved by the General Council.

3. *Duties of Committees*—(a) To avoid conflict between the various bodies in giving effect to the educational policy of Congress.

(b) To exchange full information concerning classes or other educational work in progress or in contemplation.

(c) To take joint action, where considered desirable, in holding educational conferences, week-end schools, etc.

(d) To report to the General Council through the National Committee concerning the work done in their districts.

(e) To take joint action in making known among Trade Unionists of each district the facilities offered for educational work by the various bodies ; to

undertake propaganda with a view to extending educational work in the Trade Union Movement; and also with a view to stimulating the provision of better facilities by Local Education Authorities.

4. *Special Schemes and General Schemes*—Any Union may arrange a special educational scheme either direct or through the T.U.C. National Committee with any, or all, of the educational bodies represented on the Committee; but in any general Congress scheme of educational work the governing principle shall be that of freedom for the individual trade unionist to choose between the facilities offered by the various bodies recognised by the T.U.C. and forming part of the National Education Committee.

5. *Training Centres*—The Committee recommend: That for the purpose of training (a) tutors and organisers, and (b) workers for the general activities of the trades union and labour movement, there shall be residential colleges (at present the Labour College, London, and Ruskin College) which shall be controlled by the above mentioned National Education Committee. In addition there shall be recognised any special training institutions entirely under the control of any of the educational bodies represented on the National Committee. It was further agreed that as a general rule, students to be admitted to the training centres shall be drawn from classes and shall have had experience in industry as trade unionists.

6. *Tutors and Organisers*—As far as possible provision shall be made for the training of tutors and organisers by the classes and colleges conducted under the auspices of the National Education Committee and the educational bodies comprising it, and every effort shall be made by the bodies concerned to increase the number of tutors recruited from the ranks of the students as well as to ensure that all tutors taking

classes are members of their appropriate trade union or professional organisation and properly qualified both by knowledge of the subject to be taught, and by sympathy with, and understanding of, the working-class movement.

7. *Rights of Criticism and Propaganda of the various Organisations*—The above scheme is not to abolish the rights of criticism or propaganda of the separate organisations, provided that there shall be mutual abstention from criticism of the good faith of any educational organisation recognised by the Trades Union Congress, and forming part of the Joint Committee: nor does it interfere with the rights of unions to arrange schemes direct with the educational bodies. It is assumed, of course, that the declared objects and policy of the educational bodies are in line with those mentioned above.

8. *General*—(1) That the General Council shall be represented on the Governing Councils of the National Council of Labour Colleges, the Labour College, Ruskin College, and the Workers' Educational Association, so long as the General Council is willing to contribute to these Organisations to assist in the educational work they are doing. (Each of the Educational bodies have submitted proposals as to the extent of such representation.)

(2) That it be the function of the General Council to organise educational work in conjunction with the educational bodies represented on the Trade Union Congress National Education Committee, and in addition, to provide week-end and summer schools under the auspices of the General Council.

9. *Interpretation of Agreement*—Any question of interpretation arising out of the above agreed scheme of educational work shall be referred to the General Council of the Trades Union Congress for a ruling thereon.

March, 1925.

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LENIN and TROTSKY

A study, and understanding, of the problems of policy and of administration confronting the workers' movement in every part of the world ought surely to be a part of our work as I.W.C.E.ers. Maurice Dobb here summarises the main issues behind the controversy between Trotsky and the leaders of the Comintern; issues which we, in our turn, must inevitably face one day—when we, in our turn, seize power.

IT can hardly be disputed that Lenin made a contribution to Marxist theory, which has good claim to the title of the Marxism of the twentieth century; and this theory he forged by revolutionary practice into a concrete living reality. Yet few of the ideas and conceptions which figure in the numerous continental controversies about the subject are known to us in this country, or studied—still less understood. For this reason any book which may familiarise us with the teaching and practice of Lenin is of inestimable importance to our movement; and accordingly one greets very eagerly the new book on Lenin from the brilliant pen of Trotsky, which a bourgeois publisher has seen fit to make available in an excellent English translation.*

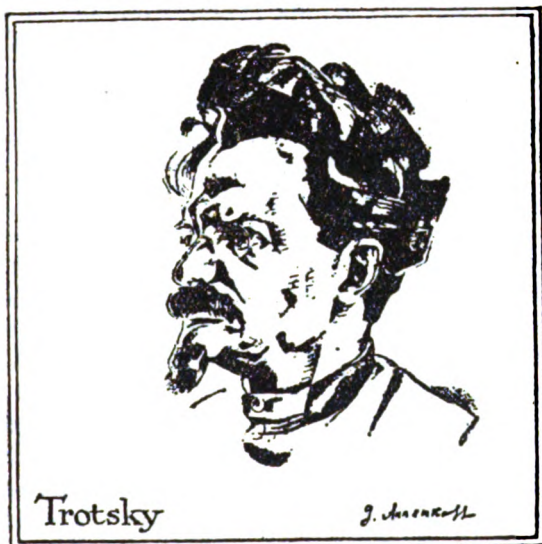
The book starts with interesting glimpses of Lenin in the days before the split in the Social Democratic Party in 1903, when he was at work in London, on the editorial committee of *Iskra*, along with Martov and Plekhanov. They were the days of the fight against the so-called "Economists"—those who were so obsessed with the economic factor and with the doctrine of "inevitableness," that they neglected the active role of a class in history, and the need to study the problems of active political organisation and agitation. In those days the fight was against those, on the one hand, who wished for a less intransigent tone towards the Liberals and even for working agreements with them against Czardom, and against the Social Revolutionaries and their individual terrorism, on the other hand. In the realm of theory the period saw the clarifying of ideas upon modern Imperialism, upon the agrarian question, and upon the "how" of the workers' struggle—questions which brought Lenin, of the new generation, into conflict with Plekhanov, his former teacher.

Through all these controversies one sees Lenin clearly and firmly pursuing a goal which received more definite formulation at each step, surely and carefully subordinating to that single aim every

* *Lenin*, by Leon Trotsky (Harrap, 7s. 6d. net).

detail on the road, so as to use persons and tactics when they serve this end and discard them when they had become an impediment. Untouched by internal conflicts and sentimentalisms which blur reality, his "keen, penetrating mind rejected all the external, the accidental, the superficial, in order to perceive the main roads and methods of action."

From the *Iskra* period we pass to interesting glimpses of the days



between April and October, 1917, of Lenin's courageous faith in the masses, his insistence that then was the time for the Party, on behalf of the masses, to seize power, and his struggle against those who desired merely the rôle of a "left wing" of democracy, and clung to legal democratic forms. To Lenin neither legality nor illegality were unswerving principles: everything was a tactic in the ruling strategy of rallying the masses *against* the bourgeois State. We see him—known in the spring of 1917, only as "a curious man who wrote little articles in a little newspaper" and was laughed at by the Kerenskyites in the Congress of Soviets—setting his teeth against "sentimental pacifism" and democratic illusions. At Brest-Litovsk, after the seizure of power, the flexibility of Lenin's realism showed itself even more clearly than before. Now it was necessary to make compromises to safeguard that power. The need was to combat those whose adherence to "principles" and love of heroic "attitudes" endangered the holding of power. Lenin insisted that the Peace, however humiliating, must be signed, in order to give a "breathing space" to the revolution and to consolidate its position. He won . . . and history has shown that he was right.

But in spite of these valuable pictures there is something a little unsatisfying and incomplete about Trotsky's book, and the story tails off into short disjointed comments about nationalism in Lenin, a reply to H. G. Wells, about Lenin's illness and then the grief at his death. There is a gap from 1903 to 1917, and this inevitably is a serious defect in the impression of Lenin conveyed. The chapters on 1917 certainly give rather to Trotsky himself the place of protagonist in the front of the stage, with Lenin assenting and commenting in the background, and with Kamenev, Kalinin, Stalin, Uritsky and Sverdlov and others occasionally appearing for a few moments from the wings. "Myself and Lenin" would hardly be an inappropriate title to the book. No doubt such a treatment is partly inevitable in personal sketches of this kind; but it necessarily causes one to look elsewhere for a complete study of Lenin and Leninism.

Nor is one likely to be satisfied if one looks to this book to find the roots of the present controversy between Trotsky and the leaders of the Comintern, and to find the differences between Lenin's view and Trotsky's and their points of agreement, on which Trotsky so emphatically insists. The publishers, with an eye to advertisement, announce it as the "book whose publication caused the exile of the author." Needless to say, the author has not been exiled—he has merely been requested to resign his post as chairman of the Military Council; nor is this the book that has given rise to the present controversy. A few shadows of the controversy are, of course, cast across its pages, such as the continual identification of Lenin's viewpoint with Trotsky's, for instance, and references to Lenin's differences from certain of the "old Bolsheviks"; but it is little use to go to this book to find the roots of the discussion. It is not here, but in the Preface to a later volume entitled "1917," that Trotsky expressed the views about which the controversy has waged.

To summarise the points at issue between Trotsky and the Comintern leaders is not easy in a short article; and it is made more difficult by the need to make certain assumptions and allusions which are largely unfamiliar to British worker-students. The start of the matter was when Trotsky, at the Conference of the Russian Communist Party in 1923, led the Workers' Opposition group against the E.C., criticising the official economic policy, and calling for a greater democratisation of the Party and the right to form opposition groups within it. These matters were fully discussed at the conference and the official standpoint was endorsed; and, in conformity with the usual policy of full and frank discussion before taking a Party decision and then complete unity in carrying the majority decision into effect, the opposition agreed to close the discussion and to abide by the conference verdict.

Then in the autumn of 1924, the third volume of Trotsky's "1917" was published, to which he contributed a controversial Preface. The overt motive of this was a plea for a study of October, 1917, and an insistence on its importance as an example to European workers when approaching a revolutionary situation; and from the experience of October Trotsky attempted to draw certain lessons. He starts by assuming that in order to give a revolutionary lead to the masses and to organise and carry through the struggle for power, a united, disciplined, and organised Party is needed, drawn from the most active elements of its class and holding the confidence of the masses.

The rôle played in the bourgeois revolutions by the economically powerful bourgeois, its organisations, its municipalities, its universities, etc., can, in the Proletarian Revolution, only fall to the lot of the Party of the proletariat. . . . A possessing class is capable of wresting power from the hands of another possessing class, and maintaining it whilst supporting itself upon its riches, its culture and its innumerable connections with the old State apparatus. With the proletariat, however, nothing can replace its Party.

In the old Social-Democracy there was much talk of tactics, and these were conceived as separate tactics applying to separate departments—parliamentary, trade union, co-operative, etc.—and each was treated in isolation. Actually, however, the Workers' Party must be capable, not only of tactics—"the art of carrying out individual operations"—but of strategy—"the art of conquering power"; and it is the rôle of the Party to co-ordinate and control the various separate tactics—trade union, co-operative, parliamentary, etc.—in line with this wider class strategy.

Now, the greatest change of strategy is required when conditions so develop as to create a revolutionary situation—a situation where the enemy are sufficiently weak and vacillating and the working masses sufficiently strong and class-conscious to make a seizure of power possible. It then remains for "the Party of the proletariat to proceed from preparation, from propaganda, from organisation and agitation to the immediate struggle for power, to the armed insurrection against the bourgeoisie." The failure of the workers to follow the Russian example successfully in the revolutionary period at the end of the war—in Germany, Hungary, Austria, Finland, Italy—was due precisely to the absence of a Party suitably united and organised to effect this change of strategy.

So far Trotsky says little with which any disciple of Lenin would quarrel. But from it he draws a more precise conclusion. It is this change of strategy, he declares, which almost inevitably produces a crisis in the Workers' Party, bringing out the opposition of all the passive and conservative elements who tend to hold back from the new strategy of seizure of power. In 1917 this was represented by the old Bolshevik leaders, such as Kamenev, Zinoviev, Rykov;

and only the persistent energy of Lenin carried through the correct policy in October. At the April Conference of the Party Lenin first brought forward his slogan of "Down with the Provisional Government." To him it was necessary to prepare the masses for a clean break with the democratic parties. But the right wing of the Bolsheviks opposed this, declaring that the rôle of the Party was to help by "pressure" to "complete the democratic revolution." Some even said that the functions of the Soviets were temporary and must pass to the democratic institutions, and some that in Russia the workers' revolution needed to wait upon a socialist revolution in the West.

Trotsky declares that this hesitant right wing, over-estimating the forces of the enemy, under-estimating the strength of the workers, always tends to appear when transition to military insurrection is necessary, and this element must be strenuously opposed and its influence in the Party removed. This is what occurred in Bulgaria and Germany in 1923, when the Party failed to take advantage of a revolutionary situation and so suffered defeat. For in those countries there were hesitant Menshevik elements among the Party leaders, but no Lenin; and, moreover, there was bad generalship from the centre (i.e., the Comintern)—though this is implied rather than explicitly stated—because the very elements who erred in 1917 hold the lead in the Communist International.

This Preface, which is a brilliant and persuasive piece of writing, the Party leaders in Russia declared to be a return by indirect means to the 1923 discussions, which it had been agreed to close. It was an indirect attack on the existing Party leaders. Their reply to Trotsky's attack takes the following line:—

First, they declare that the reference to the German and Bulgarian defeats in 1923 are misleading. In the case of Germany it was Zinoviev who first saw in August that the situation (thanks to the Ruhr occupation) was changing to a revolutionary one, and he sounded the alarm and summoned the E.C. of the German C.P. to Moscow to discuss with them the needs of the new strategy of seizing power. Trotsky all along supported the German "right" leaders of the C.P., such as Brandler, who failed to carry out preparatory military measures, gave exclusive attention to Saxony, and confined themselves to Parliamentary tactics and Governmental alliance with the Left Social Democrats. It was Trotsky, also, who opposed the inclusion of Ruth Fischer, representing the Left in the E.C. of the German Party, and who in January, 1924, signed a memorandum supporting what Brandler had done.

The mistake in Bulgaria was that, on the overthrow of the Stambolisky peasant government by the Fascist reactionaries of Tsankov, the C.P. of Bulgaria remained neutral instead of forming an alliance

with the peasantry. It was the leaders of the Comintern who immediately criticised this failure—a mistake speedily recognised by the Bulgarian leaders. The Tsankov regime involved a severe White Terror ; and rather than submit tamely to this the Bulgarian C.P. put up armed resistance, but having little preparatory contact with the peasantry was beaten. Only several months later does Trotsky come along with his criticisms of the two events.

Second, they declare that Trotsky has exaggerated the differences of opinion in 1917 in order to serve his purpose of identifying himself closely with Lenin and attacking Kamenev, Zinoviev, etc. Differences existed, as there naturally have always been at crucial points in the Party history ; but they gradually grew less until in October the Party was almost united behind the Lenin policy. Moreover, the erring comrades in question had admitted their mistakes in speech and writing, and in consequence were soon re-appointed with Lenin's approval to important posts in the Party.

Third, Trotsky places too exclusive importance on the military period of insurrection and on the purely military tasks of the Party. He neglects the less spectacular rôle of the Party during the slow (pre-revolutionary) process of building and of creating contact with the masses. Yet without this preparatory period there would have been no Party to carry through October, 1917 !

These divergencies of Trotsky's policy proceed from fundamental differences of outlook ; and these differences are epitomised in Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution, in which is included his attitude to the peasantry. This theory, which he formulated during 1905, is briefly as follows :—When a revolutionary situation arises, the proletariat finds itself to be the only class without any real allies, and it is accordingly forced to form a military organisation and seize power, taking advantage of the temporary discontent among the peasantry and petit-bourgeoisie to make a temporary alliance with them. But as soon as the workers have seized power and proceeded to inaugurate Socialism, they inevitably come into conflict with the peasantry, and can only achieve victory by alliance with the workers of the West in a world revolution and a Workers' United States of Europe.

This clearly brings out the points in which Trotsky has differed from the official position since 1917. First, he opposed the Peace of Brest-Litovsk with the Germans, because he despaired of holding power unless there were a world revolution, and he preferred in consequence the "heroic" measures of a revolutionary war of defence, by which the workers of West Europe might perchance be stirred to action. Second, in the critical period before the introduction of the N.E.P. he proposed as a solution the militarisation

of labour. The Workers' Opposition had at that time put forward the syndicalist proposal for placing control of production in the hands of the trade unions. Trotsky combined this proposal with the plan to appoint military heads to the unions and to organise them on military lines. In this he left the peasants out of account, whereas Lenin, seeing that the crux of the matter lay in the relations with the peasantry, introduced N.E.P. and free trade in corn. Third, he put forward at the 1923 Conference, in opposition to the official policy, proposals based on the "Dictatorship of Industry."* This involved (a) opposition to the lowering of industrial prices, devised to overcome the "scissors" crisis (the high price of industrial and low price of agricultural goods, involving the inability of the peasants to buy industrial products); (b) a critical attitude to the financial reform and monetary stabilisation, since this involved restricting credit to industry, whereas inflation placed a "tax" on the peasantry to the benefit of industry; (c) the proposal to place more power with the State Economic Planning Council in order to enforce a single economic plan for industry; a proposal which was opposed by the official leaders because the Planning Council gave scant representation to agriculture, and would in practice have represented industry to the neglect of, or even in opposition to, agriculture.

To this policy, evidently traceable to a distrust of the peasantry and of the growth of their influence, the Communist leaders oppose the alternative of alliance with the peasantry for the maintenance of Soviet power. Naturally the position would be aided by a Socialist revolution in the West; but the position is not hopeless without it any more than it was hopeless in 1918. The solution is for the workers to forge a closer alliance with the peasantry; and this they can do, while at the same time transforming peasant economy into socialism, by giving the help of co-operative credits and selling agencies, in place of the middleman and the usurer; by extending education in the villages and spreading technical knowledge, experimental stations for agriculture, etc. And this governs also the relations of the Soviet State with the national movements of the East.

Such are the main lines of the controversy, on which the capitalist Press have seized so eagerly as a sign of the "weakening" of Soviet

* This policy is connected with an interesting theory which Preobraschensky has propounded in a recently published book, *The Fundamental Law of Socialist Accumulation*. This theory is that in the transition period Socialist industry must "exploit" the colonial areas (i.e., all domains of small property, including the peasantry), by keeping up the prices of industrial products, and so creating accumulation for the expansion of Socialist industry. In this way small property will be gradually forced out of existence. This he calls "primary socialist accumulation."

authority and its intransigence and intolerance. Such in main outline is Trotsky's position, which, whether right or wrong, has unfortunately formed a rallying point for many bourgeois elements in Russia among the specialists and old intellectuals and "nepmen," who seize on any hope of a "revision" of Communist policy.

To many the details of such a controversy may seem alien and irrelevant. If this is so, it but goes to show to what an extent we are unfamiliar with the ideas and practice of the Marxism of which Lenin was the exponent. Only a Kautsky who still lives in the nineteenth century, or a Macdonald who disavows Marxism, will deny that the lessons of the workers' struggle in other countries have an important bearing on the problems which lie ahead of our own movement, or that the problem of the seizure of power by the workers will present important points of similarity wherever it occurs. In our educational work we have hitherto paid much attention to abstract things like theories of value and Dietzgen. We have talked much about "historical necessity" and the determining effect of economic factors. In the last few years we have paid a welcome attention to modern Imperialism. But as yet we have dealt very little with what is the essential problem of post-1914 Marxism—a study of the political issues involved in the workers' struggle for power, and a careful examination of such revolutionary experience as that in which Russia and Central Europe during and since 1917 are rich. Trotsky complains that insufficient study has been given to the lessons of 1917. For us there has been very little study of the politics of any period, save the Paris Commune and a few superficial details about the Russian Revolution. We have talked much about the State in antiquity and under feudalism, and even framed certain generalisations about the democratic State of the nineteenth century; but of the detailed changes in the Imperialist State of to-day and the relation of the workers to it we know little. Moreover, such kernels of the controversy discussed in this article, as the rôle of a Workers' Party in the preparatory period of insurrection, in the seizure of power and in the subsequent period, or of relations with the peasantry and colonial peoples, we have left almost untouched; while the lessons of Russia in 1905 and 1917, of Germany, Italy, Hungary, Bulgaria, etc., since the war we have scarcely begun to study and compare with the conditions of our own movement to-day. This gap in our teaching we should make haste to fill. And, if we are wise, we shall study such questions—not slavishly and uncritically, but carefully and realistically—with the help of what Lenin thought and taught and carried into practice in connection with all these things.

MAURICE DOBB.

CAPITALISM TO-DAY

III—The Worker and the Trusts

Previous articles in this series appeared in the February and March issues of The PLEBS (5d. each postpaid).

DOES concentration of industry mean concentration of wealth? Granted that the evidence proving the growth of the multiple shop and of concerns with millions of capital and thousands of workmen is indubitable, is it not a fact that the joint-stock principle makes it possible for a larger number of persons to share in ownership of these gigantic affairs?

Such is the second line of attack made by Marx's detractors. Undoubtedly the question is important in determining the workers' attitude to the Trusts. If Mr. Baldwin could realise that pathetic ideal of his of "making every man a capitalist" all would be well for capitalism. All observers agree that the little shareholder has no real control. Yet the controlling few are supposed altruistically to enrich the little shareholders, and capitalism is saved because John Jones can save a £1 and buy a share in "his" firm! Oddly enough this argument is used by those who suggest that "human nature" is too bad for Socialism.

If he escapes the "bucket shop" company and its artfully worded circulars, the small investor may be loaded with shares in a company whose capital has been inflated for the benefit of earlier owners. Always the directors by their blocks of shares can outvote the scattered individual holders and reorganise a concern to suit themselves. In fact, the holding of a few shares in some concern makes the worker as much a capitalist as a 6d. bet makes a man a racehorse owner and breeder. Well might Mr. Wells write: "Through the seas and shallows of investment flow great tides of depression, on which the big fortunes ride to success while the little accumulations, capsized and swamped, quiver down to the bottom."

The figures concerning the increase in the incomes of the super-rich and the savings of the workers show that concentrated control means concentrated wealth. The growth of the deposits in the Post Office Savings Bank is some indication of the rate at which the workers are becoming millionaires. These have grown from £264,000,000 (1922) to £280,000,000 (Dec., 1924). (Incidentally this should be compared with the new capital publicly subscribed in 1924 of over £200,000,000.) If these are divided up among

twelve and a half million depositors it means that they have under this heading less than £23 each between them and the workhouse—which does not yield them in a year at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. enough to pay the rent for a week. The average worker's chances of saving are small. During the War period, when unemployment was absent, amusement and luxuries curtailed, and the Press and other agencies united to make saving a patriotic virtue, the workers were able to take only 2s. 6d. to every £5 worth of War Loan issued, and receive now a proportionately small amount of interest. In 1919-20, a period of boom prices, the Inland Commissioners report that the total number of incomes exceeding £500 per annum were only 563,000. Thus any effective saving is confined to a small class. The Labour Research Department *White Paper No. 1*, shows that from 1900 the worker's position has steadily worsened in the matter of real wages, and he has less opportunity, owing to the prevalence of unemployment, to put by for a rainy day. Sir J. A. R. Marriott in the *Fortnightly Review* (Dec., 1924), estimated working-class savings in friendly, building, insurance and co-operative societies and savings banks at nearly £216,000,000, in addition to which he suggested there was £600,000,000 of small cottage property in which the workers had some share. Mr. Runciman rashly rejoiced in March last because fifteen million small capitalists had about £52 each. Even Professor Clay was quick to point out that Mr. Runciman's total of £777,834,000 was not more than 5 per cent. of the national wealth. Further he maintained that over two-thirds of the national capital is held by less than 2 per cent. of the people, and that a capital levy on all estates over £1000 would leave 95 per cent. of the people untouched.

In June last, a Parliamentary paper was issued which gave the number of people paying super-tax (i.e., have an income of £2000 a year or over) as 84,589 who have an annual total *income* of £497,741,215. These are some of the items in that total :

“ 137 persons whose income is £100,000 per annum or over.

“ 127 persons whose income is £75,000 per annum and over, but under £100,000.

“ 278 persons whose income is £50,000 per annum and over, but under £75,000.

“ 291 persons whose income is £40,000 per annum and over, but under £50,000

“ 1,081 persons whose income is £25,000 per annum and over, but under £40,000.”

Surely such a list indicates a remarkable concentration of wealth, and reveals that while the working-class is getting worse off Big

Business is building up fortunes for the few. The same tendency can be seen in the United States. "In his recently published *Dynastic America* Mr. Klein (First Deputy Commissioner of Accounts of New York), gives the wealth of 498 American families whose fortunes vary from \$20,000,000 to \$2,500,000,000. Rockefeller and Ford are at the top; the Astors, Du Pont, Guggenheim and Vanderbilt houses are rated at \$500,000,000 each, with Harkness at \$400,000,000; Mellon, Pratt and Weyerhauser \$300,000,000; Armour, Payne-Whitney, Ford, Goelet, Morgan and Wm. Rockefeller, \$200,000,000; 11 with \$150,000,000; 14 with \$100,000,000; 22 with \$75,000,000; 83 with \$50,000,000; and 353 who have to worry along on fortunes rated from \$50,000,000 down to a paltry \$20,000,000."

If only a tiny portion of such incomes and wealth remains unconsumed, it means that industry is increasingly becoming concentrated in the hands of a few oligarchs.

It is a complete fallacy to regard the savings of the workers as capital. Only a relatively few exceptional workers are able to protect themselves against sickness and old age, and those few do not save in order to use wealth for the purpose of exploitation. Giving the worker a stake in the country by making him a houseowner only means that he will buy the commodity "shelter" in a lump instead of weekly, and the capitalist will redirect his freed capital into industries giving a larger return and in which nothing like the Rent Restrictions Bill operates. Meanwhile, it is hoped that by tying the worker down to one neighbourhood he will become more docile and oppose any increase in local amenities—health and educational services—because of the bogey of higher rates.

If the savings of the workers are kept in safe investments at the negligible $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the Post Office, the thrifty ones have by no means laid low their devil of insecurity. Deeply as the worker suffered in the years of inflation, because wages lagged behind prices, he had some power as the owner of a commodity to raise its price. But those dependent upon a fixed income from Government stock, pension, annuity or friendly society payment, were in a more grievous plight. Abroad the fate of this class was worse and still remains pitiable. In France, pre-war holdings of Government Stock have lost seven-eighths of their real value; in Italy, eleven-twelfths; and in England, one-half. (A.L.T. *Socialist Standard*, Feb., 1925.)

Facts like these ought to be made more widely known; and definite comparisons made between the big dividends being made on watered capital and the small rates yielded by savings. Such calculations as those made by Marriott and Runciman will be repeated. Anyone who has tried to do any canvassing, knows how

successfully the bogey of "Poplarism" and "supporting the undeserving poor" is used amongst the thrifty souls who in mean and squalid streets have a jealously guarded nest egg. The Trusts will not only develop Welfare Work—"taking more interest in you to take more interest out of you"—but will try increasingly by various schemes to encourage their workers to become shareholders.

One great effect of the concentration of industry is to save labour. This means not only unemployment, but the transference of workers from the productive to the luxury trades. The Joint Committee of the Labour Party and the T.U.C. recently did good service in revealing the *Waste of Capitalism* in production itself. A far more effective exposure of waste would be given by an inquiry into the wasteful consumption and unnecessary labour exerted outside the productive industries. It is true the Trust lessens the number of rival travellers, and that machinery and better methods shorten the time of production, but the fruits of such economies are wasted in riotous prodigality. The hideous electric sky signs; the rows of cars with drivers standing until the small hours of the morning outside the night clubs; the over-eating, over-drinking, over-dressing alternated by displays of costly under-dressing; the prostitution of body, mind and talent to tickle jaded appetites; the growing army of solicitor watch-dogs for property; the vast organisation of the Stunt Press, feeding on the "salacious garbage" of Society cases; these few items, taken from a long list, can never be expressed in statistics, but every Census shows a smaller percentage of the population engaged in production proper. The domestic service class, which does not include outdoor servants or housewives, is 12 per cent. of the swollen total of 17,000,000 in the 1921 Census. Between 1861 and 1911 this class grew from 1,208,648 to 1,895,347. This only partially illustrates the growth of the lackey class, because a greater number of servants do not "live in" and are indirectly controlled by their rich employers. From the official analysis a third of the total workers in 1921 were engaged in commercial, financial, clerical, professional and domestic work.

Luxury workers are generally difficult to organise, and their increasing numbers, in addition to other favoured sections of the workers with vested interests and jobs in the running of Empire, constitute a problem for the Labour Movement in the highly developed countries. Probably the struggle will be fought in the productive industries, in which capitalism is trying to stabilise itself at the expense of the workers. The need for closer unity at home and abroad will become more imperatively urgent between the unions in those groups. Educational work to save the thrifty workers from being the dupes of Big Business and to awaken the

luxury workers to the prostitution of their energies must be a vital part of our campaign. A clear recognition of the class struggle, not only in theory but in practice, has to be inculcated.

To what extent can the Co-operative Movement help the worker to grapple with the Trust? When the facts and figures given in *The Co-operative Movement* (PLEBS, 6d.), are taken into account they reveal a very small David with little chance of success against a giant Goliath unless he can be linked more closely with the Trade Unions than at present.*

In these three articles we have examined the growth of the Trusts, and the apparent exceptions to that Marxian forecast of concentration, and also noticed the accumulation of greater wealth in the hands of fewer people. Concerning the Trusts themselves we would echo the appeal of *The Iron Heel*:—"Let us not destroy those wonderful machines that produce efficiently and cheaply. Let us control them. Let us profit by their efficiency and cheapness. Let us run them for ourselves. Let us oust the present owners of the wonderful machines, and own the wonderful machines ourselves."

MARK STARR.

A PAGEANT of PROPAGANDISTS

Mr. Huntly Carter, author of a notable book on "The Theatre and Kinema of Soviet Russia," here reviews Upton Sinclair's latest book, "Mammonart."

TO future historians a feature of the post-war period will probably be the great propaganda warfare. This warfare represents the struggle between nations, and between class and class. A feature of this warfare is the feverish activity on both sides to discover and prepare effective propaganda weapons in cultural institutions like the School and Theatre, cultural activities like art expression, the drama, literature and music.

In view of this great importance of propaganda, which, by the way, is as old as man himself, it becomes necessary to ask what precisely propaganda is. At a speech delivered at the Coliseum,

* Already the Co-operative Movement has materially assisted Labour in its struggles, notably the miners and railwaymen. It has, as largest single buyer of wheat and tea, kept prices down which, if the trade unions keep up nominal wages, benefits the workers.

Leeds, September 26th, 1917, at a meeting organised by the National War Aims Committee, Mr. Asquith (now interned in the House of Lords) said, "The object of propaganda is conversion, whether by appeals to reason and the emotions, or by the more drastic methods which have found favour in the past with strategists and warriors of the Church Militant. Propaganda assumes, in the minds of those to whom it is directed, either a hostile faith which has to be displaced, or at any rate a blank tablet upon which no convictions, certainly no creed, have yet been inscribed."

Here propaganda is made to aim at conversion, and a propagandist is a person who converts. Which forms of cultural expression convert? Does art expression? Is the artist a propagandist conscious of the class-war?

These questions find an answer in Upton Sinclair's new and stimulating book, *Mammonart*. "Mammon—art!" someone will exclaim. "What a contradiction in terms." Of course it means to suggest that the artist is moulded by mammonised society, that his activities are, in fact, determined by the society whose paid servant he is. He speaks or converts on behalf of this society, and so comes the thesis of Upton Sinclair's book. It is put in these terms, "All Art is propaganda." This is a very bad way of stating the thesis, which is that all works of art are instruments of propaganda, and is likely to cause a great deal of confusion. I think the author is aware of this, for he stops repeatedly to tell us what he means by Art and by propaganda, and whether he is correct in muck-raking in this or that artist as a class-ridden propagandist. And it may be that the object of the book, "the economic interpretation of literature," although not altogether new, is sufficiently novel to call at intervals for explanation and defence.

In any case, here is an example. Says Mrs. Ogi, "Here is Halde-man-Julius, discussing the thesis of your book. He says: 'You may say that because Balzac drew his characters largely from the bourgeoisie he was conducting a subtle propaganda in behalf of a class; or, in general, that he was a bourgeois author.' But such a view would be a travesty of literary criticism." Says Ogi: "That is what a great many people are going to call this book. But let us see what we can make of Balzac." Thereupon he proceeds to square Balzac with his contention that "a man who is born into a money-ravenous world, and who absorbs its poisoned atmosphere, and sets himself to the task of portraying it, not merely as real and inevitable, but as glorious, magnificent, fascinating, sublime—such a man is a propagandist." This sort of raking-in goes on all through, and will probably set Upton Sinclair with his back to the wall fighting his critics for many a month to come. This and his literary judgments.

To prove his thesis the author takes a hundred and more figures, arranges them in the order of a historical pageant, and places at their head the parent of the lot, the primitive cave-man Ogi, who acts as interpreter. He then sets them in motion for the purpose of revealing the class influences on literary, dramatic, musical, and other forms of production, for the purpose, that is, of showing that great works of art are not the spontaneous expression of inner necessity, and that the artist is not a divinely inspired being living in a creative world of his own, as most of us imagine him to be, but a social being performing and capable of performing a social function. The procession is accompanied by a substantial body of documentary evidence which can be, and no doubt will be, vigorously examined. If his theory is proved by the evidence artists may consider themselves open to the immediate attention of rival propagandist press gangs.

But it is not possible to prove the thesis "All Art is propaganda." The term Art is far too vague and indefinite. Such a vague term defeats its own object, namely that of calling the widest attention to the value of the production of works of art as a means of propaganda. The term work of art yields a definite interpretation to everyone; the term Art does not. It would be more definite and more convincing to say all art-forms are instruments of propaganda, and all artists are propagandists. I think this is what Upton Sinclair really means, and if so we may say he proves his thesis. Says Mrs. Ogi, p. 150, "Why do you call this a work of art when you are dealing entirely with literature?" Says her husband, "All the arts are one. They are expressions of the human spirit, and the material they use is comparatively unimportant. We realise this when we see an artist like Michelangelo using blocks of marble and molecules of paint and printed words, and giving us with each medium the record of the same personality. There have been others who used the acted drama and the lyric, like Shakespeare; or words and music——" Knowingly or not, the author gives a mystical definition to Art, and suggests its oneness after the fashion of the great Indian mystics and philosophers. Actually he distinguishes between the thing called Art, which is probably an uncontrolled and uncontrollable and indivisible spiritual movement, and its activities—Drama, Music, Painting, Poetry, etc., which are commonly and inaccurately called "the arts," meaning art-forms. If Art itself is a spiritual movement, of course it has nothing to do with propaganda. Propaganda begins the moment the movement has passed through the emotions and mind of the artist and has taken definite shape according to the demand of plutocrat or pleb. It is necessary to be quite clear about the meaning of Art if it is going to be recommended to the working class as a weapon of liberation. I fancy that

Upton Sinclair is thinking of art-form, for on page 208 he quoted Flaubert as saying, "The form is parent of the idea." Again on page 211 he makes Ogi the interpreter say, "no one else, so far as I know, has analysed art works from the point of view of revolutionary economics." Here he admits he is examining works of art, not Art.

Leaving "Art" out of the question and turning to the artists in the procession we discover them interpreting themselves economically in two ways. (1) Supporting the power of kings, popes, prime ministers and other devils, and upholding their cultural point of view for money. They have in fact sold themselves, Faust-like, to Mammon, and the higher the price the more intensely they worship and glorify the high priests of Mammon. (2) Supporting the power of the common people and upholding their point of view, and exercising an influence for good in national and international affairs regardless of money. Each appears fashioned by the political and economic conditions of his times.

It is exciting to watch the author pass his muck-rake over the processionists, exceedingly heavy over some, lightly over others. And as he scratches the artist and the propagandist appears so you feel your old values and judgments drop off you one by one. You pass in turn from Greece to Rome, to Italy, to Spain, to England, to France, to Germany, to Russia, and as each familiar figure appears altered by the widely informed hand of Upton Sinclair you gasp, "What! Alcibiades a propagandist? and Homer? and Aristophanes? and Shakespeare? and Milton? and Keats?"

There are, of course, omissions. Buddha is not in *Mammonart*, but the Bible which he partly inspired is. Neither is Pheidias or Giotto. And one would like to see Ogi passing the rake over Aristotle and Darwin. "Darwin as an artist?" someone will say, "My, but that's a novel notion." But Darwin had great imagination, and he did admirable work in his generation by reminding the capitalist of his origin. Of course it would be impossible to crowd in all the significant artists. But the prominent feature of the procession is a large number of literary figures with whom most of us are familiar, and of whom we shall say: "These propagandists? Good Lord! We must have another look at them."

An essential point is left undecided by the book. Does the artist conscientiously resort to propaganda method for economic or humanitarian purpose? Can he be depended on to perform a social function? What is his precise value to society at the present crisis? Maxim Gorky confessed not long ago, that he believes he is of more service to humanity as an artist than as a politician. Ernst Toller believes that he has more influence as an artist than as a revolutionary poet. Upton Sinclair exhibits Gautier as saying that he

is concerned with nothing but art. Yet he is a propagandist of the vilest "sensuality and materialism." The point is discussed at length on page 188. "When an artist composes a song on the theme, 'Let us eat, drink, and be merry,' is he not setting forth a doctrine of life? . . . When Keats writes, 'A thing of beauty is a joy for ever,' it is perfectly plain that he is making propaganda—and false propaganda, since standards of beauty are matters of fashion.'"

Mammonart is a masterpiece in its way. It will annoy people and make them think, and I fancy this is the best praise that can be bestowed on any work by a rebel. It is written in a 'make you interested' short story style. It is a continuation of the author's re-interpretations of forms of culture and probably is a forerunner of a series of re-interpretations of cultural works and cultural institutions showing conclusively that culture is mainly a class expression, that it has been used hitherto to express the point of view of the ruling-class, and the time has arrived when it must be used to express the point of view of the working-class.

HUNTLY CARTER.

Mammonart is obtainable from *The Plebs*, price 3s. 9d. postpaid. Upton Sinclair's studies of American Schools and universities, *The Gooss Step* and *The Goslings* (reviewed in "The Plebs Bookshelf" last month) can also be supplied, price 3s. 6d. each (postpaid 3s. 9d.).

NOTES BY THE WAY for Students and Tutors

Capitalism and Stability

In recent numbers of *Inprecorr*, Comrade Prof. E. Varga, gives a comprehensive survey of World Capitalism in the fourth quarter of 1924. His conclusion is that there has been a slight revival of trade and production in the last year, especially in U.S.A. In the case of Europe the introduction of the Dawes Scheme has tempted the investment of American capital in Central Europe, thereby restoring a little the lost economic equilibrium between the "rich" and the "poor" countries. Rates of exchange have been stabilised for the most part and the credit system revived; and the famous "scissors"—the divergence between prices of agricultural goods and of manufactures—has been partly liquidated by a rise in goods prices. ("The level of prices for agrarian products, compared with pre-

war levels, has reached approximately the same level as that for industrial products.")

On the other hand, there has been no abatement, and if anything a sharpening, of political conflicts (e.g., the question of Debts, and of Cologne). The economic improvement has been accompanied by a worsening of working-class conditions, e.g., wage-reductions in U.S.A. and England, longer hours in Germany, etc. The general signs are that the recovery is no more than temporary, no more than a brief period of respite in the downward trend of capitalist world economy. The general basic features of the period of decline of capitalism are still in evidence. These features are:—(a) The "superdevelopment of the productive apparatus of the U.S.A. at a time when the distribution of income at home and the

relative poverty of other countries afford no markets for this super-production." (b) The crisis in the industrial countries of Western Europe, due to "the industrialisation of former agrarian countries" and "the impoverishment of Central and Eastern Europe," depriving Western Europe of markets. The policy of tariffs and imperial "self-sufficiency" is tending to accentuate this and "to do away with the international division of labour."

(c) The general over-development of heavy industry, relatively to the rest of industry, with the result that plant and labour in these industries are standing idle. In addition, it leads to organised limitation of production by cartels and steel trusts, and to "increasingly acute struggles for markets" and "imperialist collisions."

All this Com. Varga illustrates carefully with detailed statistics and facts, which should be invaluable to all tutors and students of the subjects. He concludes:—"International capitalism has re-established its position with not inconsiderable success since the end of the war; but up to now there is not the slightest evidence of an end to the period of decline, or the beginning of a renewed peaceful revival." Com. Varga believes that the instability and lowered productivity which he describes as "the period of decline" provides the *objective possibility* for the overthrow of bourgeois rule. Actual revolution, however, he considers needs certain *subjective conditions* as well; namely a well-organised Communist Party to lead and organise and co-ordinate the discontent of the workers and to win the peasantry and suppressed lower-middle-class to the side of the workers, and at the same time "a crisis in the ruling class itself."

The Roots of U.S. Imperialism

At the beginning of 1925 the U.S. Department of Commerce estimated that foreign investments exclusive of war loans, had amounted to \$8,000,000,000, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ out of these 8 billions represent the investments of 1924 alone. Europe, Canada, Latin America and Japan were the receivers in that order of importance. Although the above total is not yet so great as the British pre-war total of £4,000 millions, it will soon outstrip it, and

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remembering the internal development also proceeding in the U.S., it becomes clear how fast the U.S. is striding along the Imperialist trail. Meanwhile (according to Browder, *Workers' Monthly*, March, 1925) during 1924, while production of manufactures decreased 2.7 per cent., factory employment went down 12 per cent. The workers are being speeded up to that extent.

Lesson Aids

The Edinboro' Labour College keeps well abreast of the times not only in gaining affiliations but in assisting its students. Having experienced the difficulties of note-taking and essay writing by students, it has provided on foolscap sheets a duplicated summary of the twenty-four lectures on Social Development. The tutor, C. Gibbons, has drawn up these charts, and old students of his in S. Wales and Lancashire—remembering his encyclopædic knowledge of this particular subject—will be glad to know that they are generally available at 2s. 6d. the set, post free, from 13, Abercromby Place, Edinburgh. Of course, like all charts, they separate forces that are in mutual interplay, but it would be an interesting experiment in the Dalton Plan to let each chart with its reading references be an assignment to the student for working up an essay instead of listening to a lecture in the usual way.

The Oiligarchy

In recent issues of *Lansbury's Labour Weekly* will be found an interim answer to the question *Asia Minor, Whose?* asked in *PLEBS*, June, 1923. Students will watch with interest whether this Anglo-American agreement over Iraq will be extended over other countries. Incidentally the Sinclair group has lost its concessions in Sakhalin.

Several correspondents call attention to the huge profits made by the Ford company—£135,500,000 in the last year—as an example of the Economy of High Wages, and the results of scientific management and welfare work. Having exported flivvers and agricultural tractors to all parts of the earth, Ford's are now going to turn out aeroplanes by mass production.

The Electric Age

Few of our readers will be able to pay the £12 price for the four volumes of *The Transactions of The First World Power Conference*. The electric age whose beginning and future it describes has not yet been of general benefit. But power, too, teaches the necessity of a World Group. "The world as a single power unit, using its resources and developing them steadily year by year—creating the instrument of legisla-

tion and administration capable of dealing with them—comes directly into vision . . ." No wonder Mr. Garvin is alarmed as he surveys the following: "The United States, with forty-three per cent. of world coal, sixty-four per cent. of oil and fifty-two per cent. of timber, have become the greatest power region in the world through scientific development of their resources." The national earnings of U.S. have increased between 1890-1920 from twelve to sixty milliard dollars. One writer has estimated that the use of power has meant a thousandfold increase of world wealth since 1781.

A Relic

Poor Mr. Garvin. After having severely chastised the Labour people for sticking to stock phrases, he ends a long-winded lament over British trade with an unconscious quotation of the famous "Gate to More" poster of 1919. One of these posters, by the way, is still exhibited in a glass case at the Westminster Gas Light and Coke Co., Horseferry Road. Clynes, Thomas, Brace, Hodge and Brownlie still appeal to the workers to Work More, Earn More, Get More! Economics classes are not only necessary for the rank and file. Can't we have this poster made into a lantern slide?

REVIEWS

THE KRONE AND THE ROUBLE

The Austrian Crown, by J. van Waldre de Bordes (King & Son, 14s. net).

Russian Currency and Banking, 1914-1924. By S. S. Katyenellenbaum (King & Son, 9s. net).

BOTH these books are objective accounts, supported by detailed facts and figures, of the progress of currency depreciation and collapse, and then of ensuing stabilisation and the introduction of a new currency. The first is written by an official of the League of Nations; the second by a Professor of Economics at the State University of Moscow, who has written several books on currency questions before and since the Revolution and now serves as one of the Directors of the Russian State Bank.

The simplest theory of monetary depreciation is that which describes it as due to increased issues of paper money, in excess of any increase in the supply of goods and in the uses for money. To this is usually added the factor of "speed of circulation," an increase in which has the same effect as an increase in paper issue. The process is usually started by an expansion of credit by the banks, especially to the Government. This creates more buying-power without any corresponding increase of goods and hence raises prices; and as a condition of this borrowing the Government has to allow an increase of paper money to meet the needs which a higher price-level entail. The connection between this and the foreign exchanges is usually explained by the theory of Purchasing Power Parity,

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which says that the external or foreign exchange value of a currency will fall in the degree that its internal purchasing power (as measured by changes in the price-level) has fallen.

M. Bordes accepts this theory in the main. Professor Katyenellenbaum accepts the first part only with modification, and the latter part he improves upon. He rejects the "mechanical" theory that money depreciates in mathematical proportion to the increase in its issue, pointing out that sometimes it depreciates more and sometimes less than in proportion. Strangely enough, however, he rejects psychological factors as an explanation of this, since "confidence cannot be greater or less," and "money circulates as long as confidence exists." But, surely, money can circulate quickly or slowly, and this is clearly affected by people's desire to get rid of or to hold money, which depends on their belief as to its future worth or worthlessness? With regard to the foreign exchanges, he points out that there is a *reciprocal* influence between internal depreciation and external, sometimes the former causing the latter and sometimes vice versa; and here his theory seems a definite improvement on Professor Cassel's.

This view certainly seems to be supported by the actual facts of both cases. In Austria the foreign exchange fell much more rapidly than internal prices rose; and the loss of faith in Austria's future caused "the flight from the krone"—the rush to dispose of kronen balances and invest in Swiss francs and dollars. This caused a "slump" in the foreign exchange rates, which itself reacted on the internal price-level by increasing the "speed of circulation" of money, causing shopkeepers (who took their cue from the exchange rates) to raise prices, in response to which wages and salaries were equivalently raised according to a "sliding scale." Then in 1922, when a League of Nations loan was granted, there was an immediate reaction, everybody rushing to reinvest in kronen; and to keep the exchanges stable the Austrian National Bank had to buy all Swiss francs, etc., which were brought to it, at a fixed price in terms of kronen; and to provide the kronen for this purpose it had to

continue its inflationary issues of paper money. Therefore, the exchange was stabilised first, *before inflation was stopped*—the reverse of what one would expect from the ordinary theory. The continued inflation, however, did not raise prices, because the restoration of confidence in the krone, when the exchange had been stabilised, caused the "speed of circulation" of money to decline.

Russia is the only country so far to stabilise its currency *without resort to a foreign loan*. The decision to do so was taken at the end of 1921, and it was done by the introduction of a new currency—the chervonetz,—limited in quantity, and issued only in large denominations equal to ten pre-war gold roubles. But until 1924 the Government had to continue to raise revenue by currency inflation, and so inflation of the old paper roubles (which people had to use for ordinary payments and for small change) continued side by side with the issue of chervontsi. The chervonetz remained stable, while the paper rouble continued to depreciate, and the exchange-rate between the two varied from day to day. The loss of faith in depreciated paper caused, not a "flight" into foreign currencies as in Austria, but a "flight" into chervontsi, depreciating the former but raising the esteem of the latter; and gradually state departments began to perform their calculations in terms of the stable chervontsi. By February, 1924, "the falling Soviet rouble was replaced by treasury notes expressed in gold roubles and by silver coin, and a fixed rate was established between the chervonetz and the treasury note."

The writer further describes the present position of the State Bank in providing capital to nationalised enterprises. Whereas formerly connections with banks favoured the predominance and growth of big capitalist trusts, now the banking system lends special aid to nationalised industry and puts the "Nepman" at a disadvantage.

Both books should be read by all tutors who wish to be up-to-date in a grasp of the *facts* of monetary depreciation and currency systems, and (with a little judicious picking of their way through statistical tables,

etc.) should not be missed by any advanced student of the subject.

M. H. D.

THE LATER KAUTSKY

The Labour Revolution. By Karl Kautsky (Allen & Unwin, 7s. 6d.).

The relation of Kautsky to the Labour College movement is a long-standing one. His pamphlets *The Class Struggle, The Road to Power*, and others, and his books *Ethics and the M.C.H.*, and *The High Cost of Living*, were valued by us when the I.L.P. was pushing in its official Library Bernstein's *Evolutionary Socialism* and when the Fabian influence overshadowed Marxism in the political and theoretical councils of British Labour. Then, after a painful silence during the War, Kautsky challenged the Bolshevik application of Marxism, and since has found sympathetic translators and praise from Macdonald, Snowden, and other prominent British Socialists. Those who left his *Thomas More und sein Utopie*—of particular interest to English readers—his *Okonomische Lehren*—an exceedingly valuable summary of the Marxian theories—and his illuminating *Origin of Christianity* untranslated, hastened to put his *Dictatorship of The Proletariat* into the same series with Bernstein.

Judging from sundry references in this latest book, the Communist cry of "Look to Moscow" is to be met by "Look to London" for guidance concerning the coming of the Labour Revolution. For Kautsky, bound up more than he knows with Parliamentarism and Social Democracy, the advances of the Labour Party in 1924 had an exaggerated significance. Although in several passages he refers to himself as a determined revolutionary and regards our Labour Party as a *class* party, in others he unconsciously falls into the erroneous metaphor of

society as an organism. In his jaundiced view of the Soviets as but a "middle-class revolution," in his stressing of the "may" of Marx and Engels concerning a peaceful revolution in England and elsewhere, and in his complete silence concerning Mussolini, there triumphs Kautsky the embittered controversialist and not the Kautsky who has deepened the theoretical clarity of the workers.

These are blemishes, however, which should not blind us to the conscientious endeavour to grapple with the flood of new problems breaking over Labour in sight of power. Kautsky says all that can be said in favour of a gradual conquest of the political machine and for entering into a Coalition when parties balance, and he makes a very pointed criticism of the dangers of Guild Socialism in creating a *vocational* instead of a *class* interest. Railway transport, coal, bread, and house production will be socialised probably in that sequence. Compensation will be paid to capitalists but not to landowners. The State will not take over the banks at once, but appoint a proportion of the directors. The organisers and specially skilled technicians will still receive high salaries to retain their loyalty, and higher wages will recompense the more unpleasant services. Socialised industries will be run by a joint body representing workers, management, consumers, and State, as in the recent Labour Party Nationalisation of The Mines Bill. Money will be retained but its opportunities of becoming capital will be finally eliminated.

These are some of the proposals here stated. Those students fresh from Kautsky's early pamphlets, with their marshalling of the workers to a dramatic struggle for power, will feel that here is anticlimax. We only need to make the King hereditary President of the British Republic, and make

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M. S.

MR. BELLOC'S ECONOMICS
Economics for Helen. By Hilaire Belloc (Arrowsmith, 5s. net).

This book sets out to give in simple language an outline of economics. Presumably Mr. Belloc thinks it is a scientific examination of the mechanism of society, but as a whole the book is, in reality, a plea for the "Distributive State." In order to make out his case "that the Distributive State is the natural state of mankind," Mr. Belloc has to dispose of socialism as a possible rival. This he does in a short chapter where an "Aunt Sally" which he calls socialism is set up and cleverly knocked down again. Incidentally, he has discovered that Marx came from a family called Mordecai, though what this has to do with socialism or economics is not clear. Mr. Belloc may some day discover that Buddha's real name was Gautama.

If we except those parts which bear on Mr. Belloc's *a priori* idea of the "Distributive State" there are some aspects of economics stated in very lucid language, e.g., the chapters on Free Trade and Banking. The lucidity of language, however, loses all its value because Mr. Belloc has not made sure of either his fundamentals or facts. He starts out by repeating the old fairy tale that "Capital is always the result of saving" and that "the only way in which people can get Capital is by doing without some immediate enjoyment of goods." The Capitalist if he does not obtain "the worth while of Capital" will stop saving. Presumably he will eat all his surplus railway engines and make bonfires of his surplus coal! Illustrations of his points indicate powers of imagination suitable to a novelist, but unreliable guides in science. For example, his idea of an English coal-owner selling coal at Cadiz for £1 per ton when its cost is £2, simply because he can obtain wine

in exchange, would hardly go down with Sir Arthur Markham. After explaining currency he states that inflation decreases velocity and deflation increases velocity of currency, whereas, as he might have learnt from recent German experience, the exact reverse is the case. Far from "efficiency in circulation" acting as a "governor" and counteracting these phenomena, it nearly always exaggerates their tendencies. The reason that iron ore comes to the coal area to be smelted "because being heavier it can be carried in smaller bulk" shows he has not read our Economic Geography Textbook. He also confuses his illustration about balancing imports and exports.

Fundamental error and careless mistakes in illustration, combined with the misfortune of Mr. Belloc's prejudice, make it impossible to recommend this book to any novice. Nevertheless, much originality of expression and clearness of explanation make it worth reading for any Pleb who is able to borrow it.

A. W.

USEFUL BUT UNRELIABLE

The Main Currents of Social and Industrial Change 1870-1924. By T. G. Williams (Pitman, 5s.).

This book is useful in so far as it summarises much material from various more expensive volumes. But the author's desire to avoid "the shifting sands of controversy" has kept him to tame description and away from any interpretation or forecast; though, after noting the intellectual break from *laissez-faire* (go-as-you-please) and the coming of Imperialism, he still thinks that palliatives will patch up the capitalist system.

It is hard to know what Mr. Williams means when he writes that in Marxian theory "all value is a function of labour" and that capital is "congealed labour." His reference to profit sharing as "the plaything of philanthropic employers" is happier. In dealing with the struggle in the First International, Proudhon has been mistaken for Bakunin, and "the British Socialist Party and the Socialist Party in Great Britain" are given as the present British sections of the Third International! This is about equal in correctness to the author's estimate

of Marginal Utility as "the greatest contribution to the science from the economists of modern times."

The N.C.L.C. does not exist for Mr. Williams, who rejoices that in 1903

"the organised forces of labour . . . knocked at the door of the universities and asked for light and guidance from those who were competent to give it."

M. S.

LETTERS

CRITICISM OF "THE THIRD"

DEAR COMRADE,—My review of Zinovieff's pamphlet has started a shrill chorus of guinea-pig squeals from the Orthodox. I knew it would. And a certain amount of filth-throwing, which I also expected. I will answer as briefly as I can.

On one point you will allow me to offer an explanation. The review was written and in your hands in January. It was held over till March by you. By that time the situation was quite different. The *immediate* obstacle to trade union unity was no longer the folly of the Communist officials, but the criminal opposition of the Amsterdam leaders to the British motion. Thus it may be that the publication of the review was not *at that time* opportune. I was not consulted: I don't know what I should have decided had I been.

Inopportune or not, however, every word was *true*. Dobb says I "align myself" with "silly social-Democratic accusations" about Communists splitting unions. He must know this is false; I never said these R.I.L.U. muddlers *intended* to split unions—I said the *effect* of their foolishness was to split them, to leave the worst reactionaries in control and not to build any effective International. He cannot deny it; he just flings abuse at me. This is now a fixed official Communist tactic.

Lucy tries to score a point by saying that some of the splits occurred "before the formation of the R.I.L.U." Bright lad! As though the fact that before the conference he is thinking of, it called itself the "International Council of Unions" proved anything—except that some people think that they can catch you out very easily!

Mr. Kraft spreads a lot of filth which I am not going to answer beyond this—as I can't have the pleasure of

meeting him personally—and that is to tell him in print he lies in calling me a "turncoat."

The whole of my political life is, and has been, devoted to the cause of the workers' revolution. It is the question of what instrument is likely to achieve that which is before my eyes. I know, now, it cannot be the British Communist Party. Those who disagree with me I can at least urge to remember that without the freest criticism the revolution can never be advanced. And it will not have escaped any Pleb that while they were pretty free with personal insinuations not one of my critics (bar Lucy) attempted to answer the facts in my criticism.

Yours fraternally,

R. W. POSTGATE.

FASCISM

DEAR COMRADE,—On the question of Fascism you could not afford me room to dispute with L. W. concerning obscure facts. But let me say this:

(1) The enormous gulf between the Reformists and the Maximalists is shown by their present bitter controversy over the new programme of the former. If L. W. would only read this in the original he could not doubt.

(2) I can find no trace whatever of any agreement by the Maximalists to enter a "*cartel des gauches*" (which doesn't enter into possible Italian politics just now). I can only think L. W. is misreading the Maximalist decision that the Party could damage Fascism more at the moment by staying in than leaving the Aventine block. Neither he nor I is competent to say whether this is an error or not.

(3) L. W. says we must hope for unity "on the basis of *practice* of the class struggle." Hear, hear! Practice, not talk, or idle gestures such as the institution of "workers and peasants

Councils," which collapsed instantly under Fascism and never had an earthly chance of life.

(4) L. W. misrepresents me in saying that I hope for the Crown to succeed Fascism, one despotism for another. Nonsense! What I said was that I hoped the Crown would give the signal for the Army's attack on the Militia, and in the resultant frantic struggle the workers will have their first chance.

May I add this, meaning no offence? It is very easy for L. W. or me to accuse Maximalists or others of lack of revolutionary daring, tell them to "make a firm stand" and so on. We are comfortably seated in English chairs: we have no conception of what is possible under a Fascist terror. We should be very careful whom we condemn. Secondly, a label is not the same thing as the contents, as the man said when he found a frog in the pickles. A party labelled Communist may have nothing Communist about it.

Yours fraternally,
R. W. P.

THE NEW NEWBOLD

DEAR COMRADE,—I should be glad to know if Walton Newbold's recent articles and speeches represent the point of view of The PLEBS. Some of them are a bit difficult to distinguish from the ponderosities of the *Morning Post*, while the hysteria of others is strongly suggestive of the Stunt Press at its noisiest.

Newbold has been for so long associated with the I.W.C.E. movement that I really think we ought to know whether his latest "views" represent the newest thing in Independent Working-Class Education.

Yours fraternally,
TEN-YEARS-A-PLEB.

[We are glad that our correspondent gives us the opportunity of saying as explicitly as possible, that Newbold most emphatically does not speak for The PLEBS, the Plebs League, or—so far as we know—any single section of the I.W.C.E. movement, in his recent attacks on a "Left" policy in British Labour politics. Newbold ceased to have any official connection with The PLEBS last December, when he resigned from the E.C. of the League. We recognise the good work

To Speakers, Tutors, and Students

Comrades! How often have you been held up for want of just that one little fact which would clinch your argument?

You Know that capitalist concerns are paying large dividends on watered capital.

You Know that the workers' standard of life is steadily going down.

You Know that international capitalism controls international politics. But when that tiresome fellow at the back of the hall shouts out "Can the speaker give us a single instance?" well, you just can't lay your hands on one.

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Every I.W.C.E.er ought to be in the closest possible touch with the L.R.D., for Research is the essential handmaid of Education.

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put in by him for our movement in the past; but that only makes it the more necessary for us to state now that we have no sympathy with his present attitude—so far as we can make out what that is.—Ed., PLEBS.]

I.W.C.E. AND LITERATURE

DEAR COMRADE,—At a recent meeting of the I.W.C.E.ers in our locality the view was strongly expressed by some of the "old guard" that there was a dangerous tendency in our movement at present in the direction of "broadening" the aims and policy of Independent Working-Class Education.

For instance (it was urged) space in The PLEBS had often been devoted of late to such subjects as poetry and literature—surely things of no concern to us in our work. The PLEBS in the old days confined itself to the things that mattered.

I think you ought to be made aware of this criticism.

Yours fraternally,

W. E. W.

[We have been turning over some early volumes of The PLEBS. In Vol. 1 (1909) we find articles on "Scotland's Poet," various poems reprinted, and a serial novel. In Vol. 2 (1910) articles on "Ibsen the Iconoclast," "The Material of Art," etc. In Vol. 3 two short stories, more poetry, and a series of articles on "Geoffrey Chaucer." In Vol. 4, articles on "Paganini" (the violinist), "Capitalism and Art," "Stephen Phillips' *Marpessa*," "John Clare's *Journal*" (Clare was a poet), and more poems and short stories. In Vol. 5, articles on "Ibsen's *The Pretenders*," "Mark Rutherford," . . . But why go on? Are the "old guard" answered? Or aren't they really such old Plebs as they're trying to make out?—Ed., PLEBS.]

THE LONDON LABOUR COLLEGE

DEAR COMRADE,—May I be permitted to correct one or two inaccurate statements contained in the article, "Some Reflections on Plebs History," in the April number?

The statement that "the new College, remember, was backed by no Unions," is not exactly in harmony with the facts. At the very inception of the College the Monmouth

Western Valleys Miners decided to transfer their student from Ruskin College to the Central Labour College; and unanimously decided to levy their members one penny per head in order to assist in the establishment of the College. Further, it is worthy to note that the M.W.V.D. have maintained a resident student at the College each year the College has been open, right up to the present time. In this respect, at least, credit should be given to whom credit is due.

With regard to one other statement—"the Central Labour College . . . in 1914, was taken over by the National Union of Railwaymen and the South Wales Miners' Federation," it is true, that in the summer of 1914, at the Annual Conferences of both Unions, *resolutions* to that effect were passed. But there is a material difference between the passing of resolutions and the putting of them into actual operation. It was not until the summer of 1916, that these resolutions were carried out, and the College *actually taken over* by the N.U.R. and the S.W.M.F. These two years, 1914-1916, were among the most "precarious" years of the College. One day during the spring of 1916, the bailiffs arrived at the College with the intention of taking up residence, but they were persuaded to give a little more "consideration" before embarking on such a course. This was available when the management and control of the College was "taken over" by the above-mentioned two Unions in June, 1916.

Yours truly,

J. REYNOLDS.

The Labour College, London.

N.C.L.C. TUTORS AND THE W.E.A.

DEAR SIR,—In his monthly report in your April issue, the General Secretary of the N.C.L.C. states that an N.C.L.C. lecturer was approached by a W.E.A. official to take a W.E.A. class, but "of course" declined. He adds the comment that "N.C.L.C. lecturers do not lecture for the W.E.A."

I do not know to what particular case Mr. Millar refers, but I do know that such a case occurred in Glasgow last year. The lecturer in question, in the course of a violent attack on the W.E.A. at a meeting of the Glasgow Trades and Labour Council, asserted

that the W.E.A. would not have as tutors persons of certain political views whatever their educational qualifications, and challenged it by offering to take a W.E.A. class if invited. He was taken at his word, because the branch considered him competent in his subject. He refused.

Mr. Millar's sweeping generalisation by way of comment indicates that there is something wrong with his Intelligence Department. There were during the session just ended one or two instances in the West of Scotland of S.L.C. tutors conducting W.E.A. classes, and others have indicated their willingness to do so when asked. The W.E.A. is not concerned about the outside activities of its tutors, it only requires satisfaction as to the qualifications to teach a class of adult working-men and women. The S.L.C. has, on occasion at least, shown the same wisdom.

One tutor who was conducting a W.E.A. class this session, was invited to take an S.L.C. class. He explained that he did not accept the Marxian principles, but although the class was in Economics, the invitation held good. The late John MacLean, when carrying on his well-known Glasgow Class, which was the progenitor of the S.L.C., had, for a number of years, the help of a teacher in Industrial History who not only did not accept Marx, but was a keen Liberal at that time! As it happened he was also an excellent teacher and knew the subject thoroughly.

Yours sincerely,

HERBERT E. R. HIGHTON.

[This letter was received too late for us to send it on to J. P. M. Millar for a reply in time for this issue. He will doubtless answer it next month.—Ed., PLEBS.]

The NATIONAL COUNCIL of LABOUR COLLEGES

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Gen. Sec., J. P. M. Millar (to whom all reports should be sent)

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STILL THEY COME :—Another Union to appreciate the value of I.W.C.E. is the National Union of Agricultural Workers, which has now affiliated. When is the Scottish Union going to follow suit?

Shop Assistants' Union.—Hearty thanks are due to Comrade J. Wade, of Manchester, and to our good comrade from Norwich and to many others at the Shop Assistants' Conference for their assistance in pushing I.W.C.E. Although the Conference on the Executive's recommendation agreed by a majority to await the T.U.C.'s report, there should be little doubt that next year's Conference will decide for an N.C.L.C. Scheme.

International Report—"World Workers' Education."—This report on the second International Conference on Workers' Education should be read by every active I.W.C.E.er. It contains a lot of valuable information, and

although the Conference was not a World Conference (the Russians, for example, were not invited), it will stimulate us to greater efforts to see that comrades from every country are invited next time, and that I.W.C.E. is triumphant internationally as well as nationally. Copies may be had from the PLEBS Office at 1s. 8d. post free.

W.E.A. and the Co-operative Union.—The W.E.A. is endeavouring to strengthen its hold on the Co-operative Union, and it is therefore up to all I.W.C.E.ers to see that their point of view is fully appreciated by Co-operators.

Lantern Slides Department.—Will those interested please note that while the N.C.L.C. has sets of slides for sale, the slides cannot be lent?

Rothesay N.C.L.C. Summer School (May 30th to June 6th).—Students are coming from England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales. The Irish Transport and General Workers' Union are sending twelve, made up of E.C. members, officials and rank and filers. Have you sent in your booking fee? It is hoped that as many as possible of the delegates to the N.C.L.C. Annual Meeting on 30th and 31st May will remain for the School.

N.C.L.C. Training Centre and London Summer School.—Some Divisions and some Colleges are sending students. The others are asked to consider similar action. Bookings can be for one to three weeks (1st to 22nd August). Facilities exist for both elementary and advanced students. Book *now*. Ireland is again to the fore—the Irish Distributive Workers' Union has decided to send one of the officials for the final two weeks of the School.

WHAT THE DIVISIONS ARE DOING

Div. 1.—It is hoped that a number of students from this Division will attend the August Mining Centre.

Div. 2.—Divisional Organiser Thomas is arranging to hold a number of Day and Week-end Schools during the summer.

Div. 3.—Two Week-end Schools have been arranged at Norwich. Speakers, Miss E. Wilkinson, M.P., D. Stephenson, George Hicks and M. R. Lay.

Div. 4.—This Division has decided to offer a scholarship to the N.C.L.C.

National Summer School, which is to be held at Rothesay, Isle of Bute, Scotland. Arrangements are also being made to hold a Summer School in this Division.

Div. 5.—It is hoped to have a number of week-end schools in this Division during the summer.

Div. 6.—A very successful Week-end School was held at the Clarion Club House, Sheldon, Birmingham, from Saturday to Monday, 11th to 13th April (Eastertide). J. Hamilton (President) and J. P. M. Millar (Gen. Sec.) attended the Divisional Council when plans for more extensive work were adopted.

Div. 7.—This Division is arranging to hold a Tutors' Training Class during the summer for prospective tutors. A new class is to be opened at the Miners' Institute, Edlington, with Frank Ayres as tutor. A number of rambles, and week-end schools, are to be held during the summer.

Div. 8.—Liverpool Labour College has arranged to hold a Tutors' Training Class during the summer. A Week-end School has been arranged for Saturday and Sunday, 2nd and 3rd May, at Hey's Farm, Adult School Guest House, West Bradford, nr. Clitheroe, Lancs, with J. Hamilton as Lecturer. A profit of over £6 was realised on the Liverpool Purcell lecture.

Div. 9.—A Week-end School was held on Easter Week-end, with Ebby Edwards, Charles Crawford and Will Coxon as Lecturers. The School had

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good press reports and gave general satisfaction.

Div. 10.—The energetic Fife Sec., Comrade Mitchell, reports a highly successful series of meetings, with A. J. Cook as speaker, which realised a profit of £23. For the benefit of the Scottish Division, the N.C.L.C. is, at the request of Glasgow Labour College, holding a Week-end School at Rothesay, immediately after the Week's Summer School. Excellent meetings have been addressed by Comrade Purcell in Ayrshire, Lanarkshire, Fife and Dumfries. D. Browett has been busy organising and educating in Dundee. A. J. Cook speaks at Edinburgh's Annual Conference.

Div. 11.—During the past two months the Organiser has addressed twelve meetings of Trade Union branches and other working-class organisations. Many of the branch meetings, including those of the A.U.B.T.W., Furnishing Trades Association, National Painters and several A.E.U. branches, have been specially summoned. The audiences have been delighted to hear of the N.C.L.C. and its work, and the classes have won many a new recruit as a result.

A good branch of the Plebs League is now meeting fortnightly and will serve as a link between the students during the summer months.

Arrangements are being made *vs* a Summer School to be held during the second week in July in the north of Ireland. Full particulars will be issued later.

Div. 12.—A One-day School was held on Good Friday, April 10th, with Bob Holder as Lecturer. Week-end Schools are being arranged to take place in June and July at Nottingham and Northampton.

N.C.L.C. DIRECTORY

Corrections and Additions.

- Div. 4.*—Gowerton Class Group, Sec. : Mr. E. P. Davies, 3, Church Road, Gowerton, Swansea, Glam.
- Div. 10.*—Scotland.—Glasgow Labour College, Sec. : Mr. J. Evans, 94, Mill Street, Rutherglen, Glasgow.
- Div. 5.*—Organiser, F. Phippen (new address), 8, The Chase, Hillfield Park, Fishponds, Bristol.

THE LATE J. W. THOMAS MEMORIAL FUND.

SECOND LIST.

The following sums have been received by Head Office :—

Brought forward, £45 11s. 7d. ; H. Burbey, Leeds Labour College, £1 2s. ; PLEBS Office, £2 1s. ; Barry Labour College, 9s. ; G. H. Melhuish, London Division, £4 7s. 10d. ; H. W. Prickett, Oxford Labour College, 14s. ; A. Waight of Halifax, £6 7s. ; E. Coles, Blaina Labour College, 5s. ; Mark Starr, Division 3, £1 1s. ; F. Shaw, Farsley Labour College, 4s. 6d. ; J. Robertson, of Musselburgh, 18s. 6d. ; J. G. Higginson, Swansea Labour College, £1 3s. 6d. ; F. Phippen, Division 5, 2s. 6d. ; W. Shaw, Huddersfield Labour College, £1 ; W. A. Strawbridge, A.U.B.T.W. Executive, £2 12s. ; J. Mitchell, Fife Local Committee, 10s. ; G. H. Melhuish, London Division, 5s. ; H. Samuel, Aberavon Labour College, 12s. ; E. A. Peacock, Leicester Labour College, 2s. ; J. Backhouse, Bradford Labour College, £3 5s. ; T. E. Bryan, Hull Labour College, 10s. ; W. J. Owen, Division 4, 7s. ; Scottish Labour College, Edinburgh, £4 4s. 9d. ; Mrs. Aitken, Lanarkshire Labour College, 6s. ; R. O. Scrivens, Cheltenham Labour College, 14s. ; E. Redfern, South East Lancs. Area Council, £1 7s. 8d. ; A. A. Segon, Norwich Labour College, 8s. 9d. ; J. Sykes, Brighouse Labour College, 7s. ; Mark Starr, Division 3, 5s. ; Bank interest, November, 1924, 5s. 9d. ; W. Coxon, North Eastern Labour College, £2 14s. ; J. A. Holdsworth, Fleetwood Class Group, 2s. 6d. ; Bank interest to 31st March, 1925, 11s. 4d. ; Total, £84 17s. 2d.

Despite repeated requests all the subscription forms in connection with this fund have not yet come in. If you do not see your collector's name in the above list, please jog his memory.

A form has been received without a remittance and without any indication of the sender. On the form are the following entries :—J. W. Tooth, 6d. ; A. E. Simpson, 1s. ; C. Cooper, 6d.

Can anyone help the N.C.L.C. to identify the source from which the form came? Write J. P. M. Millar, 22, Elm Row, Edinburgh.

The PLEBS Page

EVERYONE who wears a Plebs Badge and has not (a) linked up with his or her local group, and (b) not sent his or her "bob" to headquarters is deserving of strict censure—and a lot of ruder things too bad to print. That shilling per annum can't hurt anyone, for, after all, a penny per month should not be a great strain. It only amounts to an entrance fee each year. Let us have your subscription without delay.

N.B.—*To those who have paid their subs.*—If you see a pal wearing a question-mark badge, ask him to show you his blue card. Blue is the colour for 1925 (it has no significance except that it was cheaper at the printers!) Pink cards are out of date, so if he shows you a pink card, hold him firmly and get a shilling out of him!

We want all Leaguers to join up again. The T.U.C. negotiations, whatever they result in, will emphasise the need for an organisation of individual supporters of I.W.C.E. Several local groups have just re-organised and we are hoping that the Labour Colleges—and also the circulation of the Magazine—will benefit before very long. Groups are asked to let us know of their activities and to keep in close touch with us.

We understand that there has been some discussion about the usefulness of organising Plebs Groups, and it has been suggested that the local Labour College is enough and caters for anything that may arise. Without going into very great detail I would just like to say that a perusal of the April magazine ought to convince anyone of the need for the League. To be really useful the League should have a group (however small) in each district where there are classes; and local Labour College folk—lecturers, students and sympathisers—ought to be members. In this way individuals who cannot belong to the N.C.L.C. as individuals can have some voice in the control of their organisation. The group can assist in very many ways in working up support for the local College—the

more recruiting agencies we have, the better. Critics are hereby invited to send up their criticisms and then we can thrash out what can be done. Don't try to kill local organisation or damp down budding enthusiasm—even if it does blossom out in a way that may seem useless to you. Let us use every means of spreading I.W.C.E.

We have encountered lately rather a curious criticism when applied to Plebs and one which we have never had before, namely that we are too "broad." . . . Not being exactly clear as to the meaning, I hope this will reach the eye of anyone who is thinking of us in that way, and that they will let us have the details. We've got so used to being called narrow that we hardly know what to say. May I suggest that if this conclusion is the considered criticism of a group of Plebs Leaguers it would be fairer if they sent their criticism up to the Executive Committee before they condemned us. After all an elected person is not necessarily a worm, and may be quite glad to discuss seriously for the good of the organisation. Let us know what you are thinking directly, and we will try to be broad enough to take criticism into account.

Summer Schools.—Comrades who wish to book places for the Cober Hill Summer School at Cober Hill (July 4th to 11th) had better hurry to send in their names. We have an attractive list of lecturers and hope to make the holiday a Conference of Left Wingers. Among those who have already promised to come are Geo. Lansbury, Wm. Paul, R. Page Arnot, J. F. Horrabin, Mark Starr, J. A. E. Malone, and others. The programme includes tennis, bathing, walks on the Yorkshire moors, dramatic readings, etc., and everyone will be assured of a splendid holiday in congenial company. Terms £3 3s. inclusive for the week. Let us hear from you.

The following groups have recently re-organised and the secretaries would be glad to hear from Plebeians in the districts desirous of keeping in touch

with I.W.C.E. This applies specially to students of classes which are drawing to a close and incidentally to the tutors of same. (A census of teachers and tutors in the N.C.L.C., who do not belong to the League would be illuminating!) :—

BRADFORD.—Sec., T. Jennings, 10, Ramsey St.

MANCHESTER.—Sec., Robert Moss, 134, Alexandra Rd., Moss Side.

LEEDS.—Particulars of group from H. Burbey, 30, Mason St., Byron St.

LONDON.—A group comprising Bow, Bethnal Green and Stepney has been reorganised by P. Weiner, 72, Davis Mansions, Aldgate, E., who will be glad to hear from comrades locally.

Note.—It is hoped to hold a Rally of Plebs Leaguers in LONDON on May 23rd. There will be dancing and, in the interval, speeches. All League

members will be notified in due course and sent full particulars, but they are asked to book the date now. More later.
W. H.

ALL those who met him at our Bispham (Blackpool) Summer School last August will be saddened by the news that our comrade Otto Eichler, of Vienna, died on April 2nd—only three weeks after the death of his wife.

Comrade Eichler was keenly interested in the work of the Labour College movement in Britain, and his lovable and generous nature endeared him to everyone who came into contact with him.

Our sincere sympathy goes out to his mother, Frau Elise Eichler (XVI, Friedmannsgasse 60, Vienna).

The PLEBS Bookshelf

SOME of the reviews of Trotsky's *Lenin* have made amusing reading—not least among them the one by "W. N. E." in the April *Labour Monthly*. That the book consists only of fragmentary sketches does not matter, writes "W. N. E." "What does matter is the quality of the sketches. And their quality is such that one becomes embarrassed and uncomfortable." "Vain, garrulous tattler . . . trivial episodes, without form, without strength . . . pathetically feeble gossip . . . as pathetic a book as was ever unwisely given to the world . . ." You would hardly have thought from all this, would you, that the only one of these sketches published in England before the book itself was issued—the one on H. G. Wells—appeared in the *Labour Monthly*; and was, indeed, "featured" as the star contribution of that particular number? But that was before the Party ukase against Trotsky had gone forth; so that, presumably, its poor quality was not apparent to faithful Communists at that time.

One cannot help thinking that some folks—on certain subjects—do their thinking to order.

But surely there ought to be limits. "W. N. E." also reviewed the book for the *Herald*; and here he went so far as to suggest, very subtly, a parallel between Trotsky and Napoleon. This, to use the mildest possible language, was ungenerous. For what comparison can be drawn, by any fair-minded person, between the tried and proved revolutionist, with years of service to the workers as his record, who took over the Army command in Russia and played a magnificent part in saving the Revolution; and the professional soldier who used the events of the French Revolution solely as stepping-stones in his own personal career?

But, of course, fluent journalists can make such comparisons; and apparently there are fluent journalists in all camps. . . .

Maurice Dobb's article, on another page of this issue, is matter of a very different quality.

Sir Ernest Benn has been providing readers of the *Times* with a list of the best books on economics. Strange to relate, he did not set out on an unbiassed and impartial quest for Truth; but confined himself to works

"explaining and defending the existing order of things, as an antidote to the numerous publications of a similar character devoted to attacking it." But, of course, as the *Times* assured us in a leading article, the books recommended by Sir Ernest all appeal to reason, whereas the literature of Socialism appeals only "to emotion and appetite, which wield a far more powerful influence over most people."

It is up to us, as I.W.C.E.ers, to make ourselves familiar with the quality of the enemy's ammunition; so here are a few items from Sir Ernest's list:—Hartley Withers' *Case for Capitalism* (Nash, 2s. 6d.), Mallock's *Democracy* (Chapman & Hall, 6s.), F. J. C. Hearnshaw's *Democracy and Labour* (Macmillan, 10s. 6d.), Harold Cox's *Economic Liberty* (Longman, 7s. 6d.), Ashley's *Economic Organisation of England* (Longman, 5s.), Cannan's *Economic Outlook* (King, 5s.), M. C. Buer, *Economics for Beginners* (Routledge, 4s. 6d.), J. A. R. Marriott's *Economics and Ethics* (Methuen, 10s. 6d.), Clay's *Economics for the General Reader* (Macmillan, 4s. 6d.), Kirkaldy, *Economics and Syndicalism* (Cambridge University Press, 2s. 6d.), Gide's *First Principles of Political Economy* (Harrap, 1s. 6d.), Mrs. H. A. L. Fisher's *Getting and Spending* (Collins, 2s. 6d.), J. H. Bunting, *Is Trade Unionism Sound?* (Benn, 2s. 6d.), Macassey's *Labour Policy, False and True* (Butterworth, 7s. 6d.), John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (Dent, 2s.), Herbert Spencer, *Man versus the State* (Watts, 6d.), W. W. Paine's *Menace of Socialism* (Jarrolds, 1s.), Henry Ford's *My Life and Work* (Heinemann, 6s.), Vaughan Wilkins' *Sidelights on Industrial Evolution* (Jarrolds, 1s.), Shadwell's *Socialist Movement* (Allan, 2 vols., 3s. 6d. each), H. D. Henderson's *Supply and Demand* (Nisbet, 5s.), W. A. Appleton's *Trade Unions* (Allan, 3s. 6d.), Henry Arthur

Jones' *What is Capital?* (Nash, 2s. 6d.).

The most surprising item in the whole list—to me—was Samuel Smiles' *Self Help* (Murray, 2s. 6d.). One expected Mill and Spencer. After all, they were men of quality. But the unctuous Samuel. . . . Surely not the most credulous of shareholders believes that Samuel's philosophy any longer has any application to the world of capitalism. And it is a little quaint to find *Self Help* described as a work on economics. I always thought of



it—confused recollections of boyhood experiences, I suppose—as coming under the head of religious publications. Anyhow, neither Sir Ernest Benn's recommendation nor a sense of duty will persuade me to read it again.

Talking of Samuel Smiles, by the way, it is interesting to recall that John Francis Bray, one of the "pre-Marxian pioneers," author of *Labour's Wrongs and Labour's Remedy*, was a printer in the office of the *Leeds Times* while Smiles was editor of that paper. The old order and the new. . . !

From America, during the past month, two publications have come

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to hand which are of special interest to anyone who has seen something of the workers' education movement over there. The first is a portly volume—*The Women's Garment Workers*, Louis Levine's history of the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union (Huebsch, \$5), which, like Postgate's *The Builders' History*, is much more than the history of a single union. The clothing workers in America have pioneered workers' education, and the I.L.G.W.U. began ten or twelve years ago by entering into an arrangement with the Rand School of Social Science for the organisation of courses of lectures for New York members on Trade Unionism, Methods of Labour Organisation, and English. Later, a committee which included Dr. Chas. Beard prepared an educational plan with two main aims: first, the education of the rank and file of the membership in "general Labour questions" and "the functions, aims and possibilities of trade organisation," and second, the training of selected men and women as Union officials. The work of the Union's Educational Department, of which Miss Fannia Cohn is executive secretary, and A. Fichandler, director, is now carried out by means of evening classes held in public school buildings in New York City, Philadelphia and Boston. For the classes in English and physical training teachers are assigned free of charge by the New York City Board of Education (this part of the work, of course, finding favour with the orthodox champions of "Americanisation"). Courses on literature, economics, psychology, American history, Trade Unionism, music, etc., are conducted by various University-trained men and women of radical sympathies.

The I.L.G.W.U. played a foremost part in the foundation of the Workers' Education Bureau, and its educational work forms by far the largest part of the Trade Union activities in this sphere carried on under the auspices of the Bureau. The Union also supported Brookwood Labour College after it was organised.

The second publication received from America is a pamphlet-report of a Conference of Teachers in Workers' Education held at Brookwood last

year. The men and women taking part included most of those who are doing the actual work of the movement in the eastern States: A. J. Muste, A. W. Calhoun, Dave Sapos and Josephine Colby, of Brookwood; Alex. Fichandler (New York), Algeron Lee and Mrs. Nearing (Rand School), Theresa Wolfson, Harry Dana (Boston), Spencer Miller (W.E.B.), Mary Dent (Washington)—good comrades all, but not at their best in conference; for then, like all American intelligentsia, they use a high-falutin diction which frightens a plain Englishman, and take a terrible time and an awful number of big words to say things which said Englishman feels would be more effective if more simply expressed. (If any of them read these words I'm sure they'll forgive me; for they are all as large-hearted as they are long-winded.)

I am sorry that, owing to an oversight of my own, Com. A. A. Purcell's pamphlet, *Anglo-Russian Trade* (with preface by Fred Bramley, Anglo-Russian Parliamentary Committee, 3, Adam Street, Adelphi, W.C. 2,—price 2d.) was not referred to in these pages last month. It is a powerfully argued plea for the development of full trading relations between this country and Russia, for the sake of our own unemployed quite as much as with the aim of helping the Workers' Soviet Republic; and it ought to be on all our literature stalls—particularly those in districts which have had the pleasure of hearing Com. Purcell lecture recently. Tutors and speakers will find it exceedingly useful as a handy summary of up-to-date facts and figures.

The best of good wishes to our comrades George Hicks, Purcell and Fimmen in their new venture *Trade Union Unity* (monthly, 2d.). The Left Wing Press is going ahead. Let's hope this portends militant Left Wing activity in the near future!

Congratulations to A. L. Gwilliam, who has been putting up a doughty fight for I.W.C.E. in the correspondence columns of *New Dawn* recently. His letters have been first-class pieces of lively propaganda.

J. F. H.

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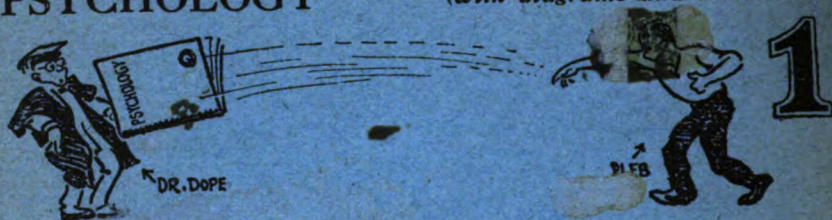
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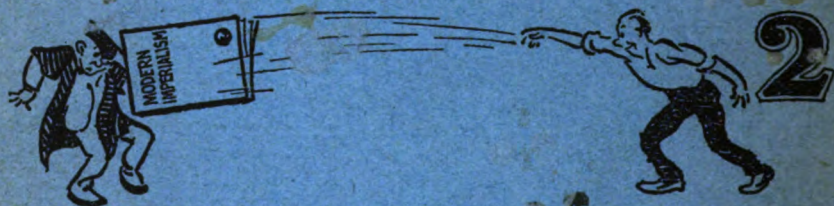
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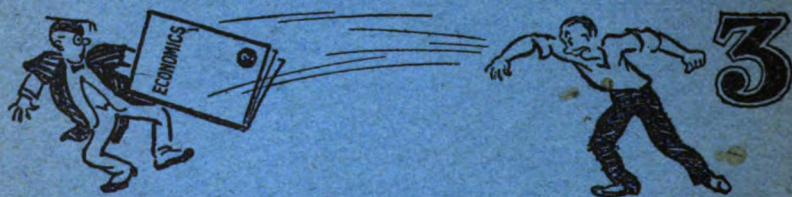


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