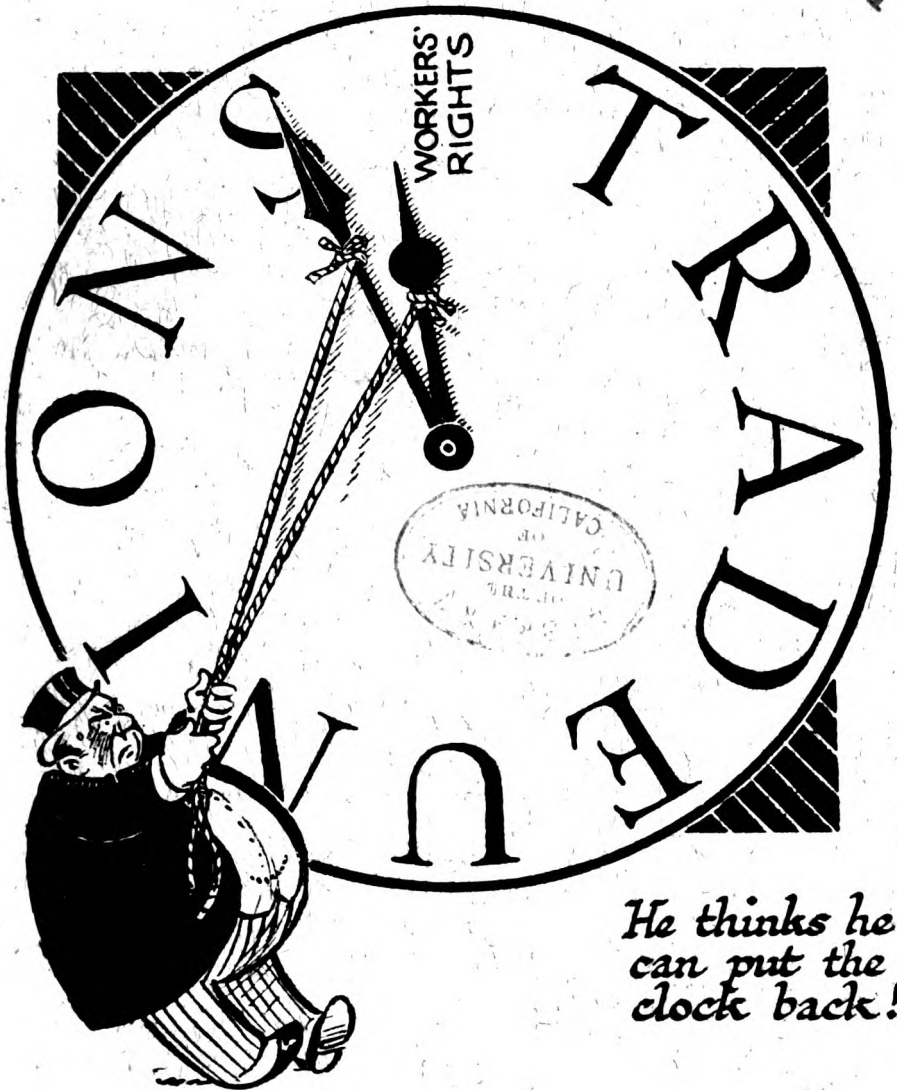


June 4^D 1927

PLEBS

GIFT
AUG 1 1927



*He thinks he
can put the
clock back!*

THE ATTACK ON THE UNIONS

If the workers are to fight effectively against the Tory Government's Bill to smash Trade Unionism, they must know something of the history of their own movement, and of the struggles by which Trade Union rights were won. That is where Independent Working Class Education comes in. And every I.W.C.Er will, at this juncture, do his bit towards spreading among his fellows the knowledge they need.

These PLEBS publications will help him—and all workers—to realise what we are fighting for:—

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE BRITISH WORKERS.

By R. W. Postgate

120 pp. 1s. 6d. (postpaid 1s. 8d.) (illustrated by J. F. Horrabin).

TRADE UNIONISM : PAST & FUTURE.

By Mark Starr

(New expanded edition)

6d. (postpaid 7d.)

and the story of last year's great struggle—

A WORKERS' HISTORY OF THE GREAT STRIKE

By R. W. Postgate, Ellen Wilkinson, M.P.,

1s. 6d. (postpaid 1s. 8d.)

and J. F. Horrabin.

PLEBS, 162a Buckingham Palace Rd., S.W.1

THE PLEBS

*The Organ of the National Council
of Labour Colleges*

VOL. XIX.

JUNE, 1927.

No. 6

CONTENTS

	Page
Plebs Point of View - - - By J.F.H.	186
"The Plebs" - - - -	188
Now Then, N.U.R. ! - - By J.P.M. Millar	190
Capital's Next Step in Coal and Iron - - - By D. J. Williams	192
The New Phase in China - - By Zed	196
The Lenin-Luxemburg Controversy - - - By Max Beer	199
Free State or Colony ? - - By A. Ellis	204
Notes by the Way - - - -	209
Letters - - - - R.E.B and J.H.	210
N.C.L.C. Notes - - - -	212
The Plebs Bookshelf - - - By J.F.H.	215

Published by
The Plebs League
162a Buckingham Palace Road
London
S. W. 1





The Pleb Point of View



“THE man who does not know *why* he is a Trade Unionist is a potential blackleg.” That was a PLEBS cover “motto” some few years back. It is truer than ever to-day—when every man who is not rallying to the defence of himself and his class is blacklegging his class. To know *why* he is a Trade Unionist a man must know something, at least, of working-class history. And, as we pointed out last month, it is the business of every I.W.C.Er in this present crisis to make himself or herself into a propagandist or a tutor, and see to it that in his locality, and among his fellows, that knowledge is broadcast. We haven’t done our job while there is a T.U. branch in the country which has not heard an N.C.L.C. speaker put the case against the T.U. Bill *in the light of the facts of the history of the last hundred years*. We regard education as a weapon. *Get busy with it now.*

* * * *

On a later page of this issue our readers will find a report which will put them in possession of the essential facts about the negotiations which have been proceeding for some months between the Executive Committees of the *The Plebs and the N.C.L.C.* N.C.L.C. and the Plebs League on the question of the taking over of all publications by the former body. Since the foundation of the N.C.L.C. in 1921 the Plebs League, as most people know, has acted as the publishing department of the I.W.C.E. movement. This arrangement had both advantages and disadvantages. It was not so much deliberately planned, as necessitated by circumstances. The N.C.L.C., in its earlier stages, could not have undertaken the financial responsibility for issuing textbooks and the magazine, and this particular part of its work was therefore left to the organisation which had carried it on previously. The advantage of this was that it permitted a certain freedom to the magazine, and that it ensured—while the N.C.L.C. was getting on to its feet, so to speak, by the organising of the classes and of Trade Union education schemes—that the literature of the movement should still have the same point of view and the same aims as it had always had.

The disadvantage was a certain lack of co-ordination between the two sides of the movement—a lack which the appointment of N.C.L.C. representatives to a Publications Committee only partly met. Unification of the whole movement was obviously desirable,

so soon as it was practicable. That time, we believe, has come. And we are glad that the Plebs E.C. is recommending the members of the League to endorse the scheme for "absorption."

The proposal at first put forward by the Plebs representatives was that the League should retain control of the magazine, while handing over all other publications to the N.C.L.C. But this, apart from any other consideration, is impossible in practice, since the magazine does not pay its own way and could not, therefore, be carried on as an independent concern without a subsidy from somewhere. And a subsidy—wherever it comes from—inevitably makes any real independence impossible.

* * * *

The question of the future of the League itself ought to be carefully considered. There is, we believe, just the same need as before for a body which includes the active individual workers for, and propagandists of, Independent Working-Class Education, and it is good to note that the officials of the N.C.L.C. themselves recognise this and have agreed cordially to the clause in the agreement which indicates that the League is to go on, and, we trust, increase both in numbers and influence. This particular question will be discussed at the Plebs Annual Meet in July.

As for the magazine itself, we need only say here that while changes for the better will, so far as possible, be made, its general character will remain the same, and the same staff and contributors will carry on as before.

* * * *

Meantime, *we badly need money*. The N.C.L.C., as we all know, is by no means rolling in wealth, and when it takes over we shall need, as heretofore, the active—and practical **PLEASE!!**—support of all our friends. We are weighed down by heavy debts. We know that it is difficult to make appeals to our fellow-workers in times like these, when unemployment and short time are common in every industrial area. But THE PLEBS has weathered storms in the past, and we believe that all those comrades who, with us, are convinced of the vital importance of real workers' education, will prove their faith in the cause by coming to our help, to their utmost ability, now.

* * * *

This month's contents include more than one item of immediate topical interest to everyone taking part in the workers' struggle.

The new turn of events, in China, is analysed by *On Other* "Zed." Albert Ellis's article on Ireland contains *Pages* material of value to every tutor of classes in Imperialism and Economic Geography. Max Beer concludes his discussion of the Lenin Luxemburg controversy; and D. J.

Williams, who has been doing invaluable tutorial work in Scotland since his term of residence at the London Labour College, in his article on "Capital's Next Step in Coal and Iron," makes a very timely plea that while we are forced to the defensive by the capitalist onslaught on Trade Unionism we yet cannot afford merely to preserve the old forms, but must adapt our organisations to the needs of the struggle of to-day—and to-morrow.

J.F.H.

“THE PLEBS”

Scheme for Unification of Publishing Activities under the N.C.L.C.

We give below a brief account of the negotiations which have been taking place between the N.C.L.C. and the Plebs E.C. on the question of the taking over of the Magazine and other publications by the N.C.L.C. The matter is also referred to in this month's editorial.

AT the last Annual Meeting of the N.C.L.C. the Edinburgh Labour College brought forward a resolution calling on the N.C.L.C. Executive Committee to begin negotiations for taking over the PLEBS Magazine and the publications department. After a good deal of discussion the matter was referred back to the N.C.L.C. Executive for further consideration.

In the September PLEBS under the title "Do we still Need a Plebs League?" the whole subject was discussed in detail, and in subsequent issues letters from comrades were published arguing "about it and about."

The E.C. of the League, at their September meeting, decided to ask the N.C.L.C. Executive whether they would prefer to meet the whole Plebs Executive, or to have a full report and statement of the Plebs position on the matter; but before this proposition was sent to them the N.C.L.C. appointed a sub-committee consisting of J. P. M. Millar, J. Hamilton and W. Rae, and this sub-committee met the Plebs Executive on January 7th, when an exhaustive discussion took place.

No definite proposals had been drawn up by either the Plebs or the N.C.L.C., so that the discussion was more or less informal, each member stating his or her objection or agreement.

The N.C.L.C. representatives stressed the desirability of the central organisation controlling and co-ordinating all activities, of which the publication of textbooks and the Magazine was an

important one, but it was argued that even if the central organisation controlled the textbook publication there were arguments in favour of retaining the Magazine under separate control. It was pointed out, however, that the Magazine does not pay for itself and that it would not be a practical proposition to consider running it apart from the other publications. After a long discussion it was decided that the sub-committee report back to the N.C.L.C. and that the Plebs Executive reconsider the whole question.

In March, a sub-committee of the Plebs Executive was appointed consisting of J. F. Horrabin, R. W. Postgate, Will Paul and Winifred Horrabin, to meet the N.C.L.C. sub-committee and "explore the whole question" without reserve. The April Plebs E.C. especially instructed the sub-committee to "emphasise the necessity of keeping the 'open forum' character of the Magazine."

On April 8th the joint sub-committee of the two organisations after discussion drew up the following provisional agreement:—

1. The N.C.L.C. takes over full responsibility for the present staff, and takes over the whole of the PLEBS machinery as a going concern, debts and assets included.
2. As a condition of the handing over of the magazine the N.C.L.C. formally agrees that the PLEBS shall remain an absolutely free forum (within the limits allowed by law) for the expression of working class opinion, and that the Editor will be instructed to continue to secure articles and studies of a controversial and free-spoken character.
3. The N.C.L.C. will appoint a board of contributors and advisers to assist the Editors drawn from those who have in the past formed, or will in the future aid, in carrying on the magazine.
4. The N.C.L.C. will immediately give its assistance towards reconstructing the Plebs League as a Plebs League and Students' Association,* which shall have representation on the N.C.L.C. Executive Committee.

On the report of the sub-committee at the May Plebs E.C. it was decided to recommend this agreement for adoption by members of the Plebs League: M. H. Dobb abstaining from voting, and Wm. Paul voting for an amendment that the League retain the control of the Magazine for a year.

The Executive will therefore submit this provisional agreement to a ballot vote of the membership of the League during this month; and the question of the League's future activities will be discussed, in the light of the result of this ballot, at the Annual Meet at Kiplin Hall in July.

* Membership of which would, of course, be open, as hitherto, to all individual supporters of I.W.C.E.

**Perhaps you are one of those who
do not know**

WHAT TO READ *First*

SEE REMARKABLE OFFER ON PAGE 216

NOW THEN, N.U.R.!

AS was explained in an article in the February PLEBS, the N.U.R. Executive have decided to give up their half share in the Labour College, London. As the South Wales Miners themselves are unable to bear the whole of the cost, and as in any case it is highly desirable that the residential college should be brought into much closer touch with the class work, the N.C.L.C. Executive submitted proposals to the N.U.R. and S.W.M.F. with a view not only to saving the College but to putting the whole I.W.C.E. movement on a more satisfactory footing. The N.C.L.C. proposals would result in the N.U.R. and S.W.M.F. directly sharing in the control of the N.C.L.C. in the same way as do the A.E.U., A.U.B.T.W., etc. ; and the N.C.L.C. would take over the control of the residential college. The proposals also provide for the whole of the members of the N.U.R. and S.W.M.F. free access to N.C.L.C. classes throughout the country, whereas now these unions, as such, simply provide for nine to a dozen residential students at the Labour College every two years. The actual cost per union would, moreover, be reduced by about £500 per annum.

This scheme was turned down by the N.U.R. and S.W.M.F. Executives. Subsequently, the N.C.L.C. called a conference of unions interested in Independent Working-Class Education ; and the result was that it was decided that the Governors of the Labour College should call a meeting of representatives of the Executives of the N.U.R., S.W.M.F. and the N.C.L.C. with a view to considering jointly the possibility of preparing a scheme for the co-ordination of residential and class work and the joint administration of that work.

When the N.C.L.C. delegates attended the Governors' Conference they found that the N.U.R. Executive had decided not to be represented, just as they had refused to be represented at the previous conference called by the N.C.L.C., while the S.W.M.F. had, in the case of the Governors' Conference, made their attendance conditional upon the N.U.R.'s attending, and were consequently not represented as an Executive.

The discussion between the Governors and the N.C.L.C. representatives was long but not fruitful. The Governors submitted the following resolution :—

“That we are of the opinion that the N.C.L.C. proposals which they submitted to the N.U.R. and later to the S.W.M.F. are not such as will be acceptable to the two controlling Unions, and we are unable to recommend same. As an alternative we suggest that the two controlling Unions and the N.C.L.C. should endeavour to formulate, and agree on a scheme to give equal representation to the three bodies, with equal responsibilities, financial

and otherwise. Further that an endeavour should be made to co-ordinate Evening Class and Residential College work."

The N.C.L.C. subsequently agreed to accept a third share of the financial responsibility of the College and a third control, *provided the N.U.R. and S.W.M.F. shared financially on an agreed scale in class work and correspondence course work.*

It might seem from the above that the prospects of such an arrangement going through are good ; but the N.C.L.C. are not of this opinion, as the Governors' resolution, while designed to commit the N.C.L.C. to a definite expenditure on residential work, does not commit the two unions to any expenditure for evening class and correspondence course work. The N.C.L.C. Executive is still of the opinion that the most satisfactory arrangement is for the residential work and the class work to be under the one control, that there is no justification for the separation which presently exists, and that the original N.C.L.C. scheme is the best scheme.

The key to the present position is the N.U.R. A.G.M. ; and a number of branches have submitted resolutions appealing against the N.U.R. Executive's decision not to accept the N.C.L.C. scheme as originally outlined. The Musselburgh Branch has submitted a resolution which means practically the same thing. What the N.U.R. Executive's position actually involves is that the Union nationally should pay *nothing whatever for trade union educational work.* It presently is paying nothing for class work, and consequently has not obtained the fullest advantage from its residential scheme that it could have had. It is only paying about £3,000 for residential work. While that would be a large sum to a small union, it is a small sum to such a large and important organisation as the N.U.R., with its 360,000 members. Most of the unions which have N.C.L.C. educational schemes pay more per head than does the N.U.R.

Trade Union speakers are continually denouncing the Government for reducing the expenditure on education. We feel sure, therefore, that the N.U.R. Annual General Meeting will look twice at proposals which are intended to wipe out entirely the national expenditure of the union on educational work. Such a step is retrogressive in the extreme and takes the union back about ten years. It will be a severe blow to the movement for Independent Working-Class Education if the N.U.R. is responsible for shutting down the residential Labour College. The first announcement of its Executive's decision was received with unconcealed satisfaction by the capitalist Press throughout the length and breadth of the country. If the N.U.R. ceases to support the College, the N.C.L.C. will have to take steps to establish a residential College of its own.

J. P. M. MILLAR.

CAPITAL'S NEXT STAGE IN COAL AND IRON

IT is evident by this time that the defeat of the miners in 1926 has brought only temporary relief to the capitalists of the mining industry. The miners are working longer hours for lower wages, and the power of the M.F.G.B. has been severely crippled. But coal capitalism is as far from solving its basic problems as it was before the lock-out. Some districts are enjoying a temporary boom, but this boom, by its very nature, can only be of a transient character. Once the world shortage caused by the lock-out has been made up all the old difficulties will reappear in an aggravated form.

These difficulties are rooted in the capitalist organisation of the mining industry, but they have been enormously intensified during the last few years by the general crisis which has afflicted British capitalism. The British coal industry is dependent to a very large extent on the world market. During the past five years it has met with severe difficulties in this sphere. International competition has been greatly intensified as a result of the general collapse of the world market and the disorganisation of world economy. But the organisation of the British coal industry has been badly equipped to meet this intensified competition. It has been weighed down by a wide variety of crushing impositions, and the dice of foreign competition have been heavily loaded against it. The burden of royalties, watered capital, the toll of the banks, the colossal anarchy of production, the entire absence of any scientific co-ordination of the industry as a whole, and, above all, the obsolete and inefficient technique of the industry—all these have been a dead weight on the competitive power of the British coal industry. The two chief competitors of the British coal industry—Germany and the U.S.A.—suffer from none of these disabilities. In spite of all this, however, the industry has been able to hold its own in the world market, but only by constant attacks on the miners' standard of life.

The organisation of the British mining industry, even from a capitalist point of view, reveals many serious defects. It is obsolete, inefficient and hopelessly out of date. Apart from certain recent developments, it really belongs in its entirety to the nineteenth century. It was formed and fashioned in the prosperous period of British capitalism—the period of small scale production, of free competition, and of Britain's monopoly in the world market. Until almost the end of the nineteenth century the British coal industry had no competitor. It enjoyed a world monopoly. There was no

need for a well-equipped organisation at home to meet competition abroad. Nor was there any need for the application of progressive ideas in the administration of the industry. The many schemes put forward by Sir George Elliot and others to trustify the industry failed to materialise precisely because of this fact. The coal-owners refused to regard the industry as a national unit. They were imbued with a pit psychology. They refused to look beyond the pit to the wider national and international horizon. Tradition dies hard; and until quite recently the bulk of the coal-owners continued to live in that obsolete age. Even to-day their ideas in the main still reflect the anarchic age of nineteenth century capitalism. They still tenaciously cling to the methods which proved successful fifty years ago. They made their fortunes out of the pit, and refused to see the connection between the pit and the industry as a whole. These old-fashioned coal capitalists are anachronisms in the present industrial age, the Don Quixotes of modern industrialism. Like the Bourbons they learn nothing and forget nothing.

But the changed circumstances of British capitalism demand new methods of organisation. The stress of international competition, amongst other things, has increasingly compelled the abandonment of the old financial and economic unit—the pit. The tendency during the past decade has been towards the amalgamation of colliery concerns into ever bigger units. On the other hand, the great iron and steel concerns have invaded the coal industry. A large number of coal producing concerns have been linked up with iron and steel. Every iron and steel firm of any importance owns its own coal mines. Not only has the pit been abandoned as an economic unit, but the coal industry as a whole can no longer be treated as a separate, independent unit in the organisation of capitalist society. It has become a part of the much bigger unit of heavy industry. This, it is interesting to note, was one of the reasons adduced by the Samuel Commission against the reorganisation of the coal industry as a whole. The Commission agreed that amalgamations were advantageous; the Report even recommended partial amalgamations. But the Commission objected to the complete national reorganisation of the industry on the grounds that “existing combinations would be disintegrated.” (Report, p. 69.) It is easy to discern in this the voice of the heavy industry capitalists who wield a powerful influence over the affairs of the coal industry.

These changes in methods of organisation have brought into existence a new type of coal capitalist corresponding to this new form of organisation. This new type of coal-owner differs as much from his nineteenth century prototype as the structure of the coal industry to-day differs from that of fifty years ago. The interests of the modern up-to-date coal capitalist are not confined to one industry,

and his views therefore are not cramped by a pit outlook. He sees in the coal industry merely a unit in the economic organisation of capitalist society. He came into the coal industry after Britain's monopoly of the world market had passed, and his activities as a consequence are not fettered by that traditional sense of security which a monopoly of the market gave to the older type of coal capitalist. He brings into the industry new ideas and new methods which have proved successful in other industries faced with the rigours of international competition. He has as a rule extensive cosmopolitan connections, and the experience he has gained in international commerce stands him in good stead when he turns his attention to the coal industry.

A good example, though not the only one, of this new type of coal capitalist is Sir Alfred Mond. He is the modern up-to-date capitalist *par excellence*. In many respects he is the Henry Ford of British capitalism. Mond heralded his advent into the coal industry by the formation in 1923 of the Amalgamated Anthracite combine. Previous to that the anthracite district had been typical of the British coal industry—a scattered coalfield composed of a large number of small dispersed pit units. Mond early began to apply to that district the methods at which he had proved himself such an adept in other spheres of modern capitalism. His dominating policy was unification. To-day the Mond combine is well on its way to monopolise the whole of the anthracite coalfield. Through the recent merger with the United Anthracite Combine, Mond, as head of the syndicate, already controls about half the output of this district, which has practically a world monopoly of anthracite coal. It has been reported that Mond is now negotiating to acquire the anthracite pits of Guest, Keen and Nettlefold. The same tendency is at work in Yorkshire, where Lord Aberconway who, like Mond, has extensive connections outside the coal industry, has recently amalgamated six one-time separate colliery concerns.

These modern up-to-date coal capitalists have already realised, however, that internal reorganisation alone is not enough to solve the problems of the British coal industry. They realise that the most important factor in the British coal problem is the export trade, and that here above all new methods are necessary. During the last two years the possibility of forming an international, or at least a European, coal cartel has been widely discussed in British mining circles. Mond has been most active in promoting some scheme of international agreement in regard to coal selling, seeking to apply to the coal industry the methods which enabled him to form his Imperial Chemical Syndicate. Already there are signs that his scheme is receiving considerable support from many of the British coalowners. So far one of the chief obstacles to the formation of

the proposed cartel has been the absence of a centralised body to negotiate for the British industry. The Samuel Commission recommended the formation of selling agencies amongst the British owners as a means of overcoming this difficulty. The Report States :—

If the industry succeeded in creating organisations for this purpose (coal selling), it is possible that it could secure the co-operation of the existing German Kartell in an arrangement to prevent the prices of coal in neutral markets from again falling to unremunerative levels (p. 94).

The immediate obstacle to the materialising of the scheme seems to be the reluctance of the British owners to settle any kind of percentage basis until they have re-captured the markets they lost as a result of the lock-out. Already a bitter struggle is in progress between the British and the German coalowners, and the British miners have to suffer a further reduction in wages in order to increase the competitive power of the British coal capitalists.

In the iron and steel industry the same tendency towards the formation of an international cartel is observable. This industry is confronted with the same basic difficulties as the coal industry in the realm of international competition. The acute crisis of the last five years has impressed upon the capitalists of heavy industry the need for some kind of international agreement. The formation last year of the European steel cartel has further emphasised the urgency of the matter. Many of the leading iron and steel capitalists have declared in favour of an international cartel. At the last meeting of Dorman Long and Co., the chairman, Sir Arthur Dorman, stated that amalgamation was very desirable, but that to be effective it must embrace international agreements. At a recent meeting of the South Durham Steel and Iron Co. Lord Furness advocated the formation of a trust in the heavy industries. It is reported from several quarters that Britain is preparing to enter the steel cartel. Some negotiations have already taken place. The chief obstacle to agreement seems to be the allocation of the quotas to the respective countries. But the continued depression in these industries is likely to compel the British capitalists in the near future to come to some agreement with the steel cartel.

All these developments—the growth of vertical combination, the extension of amalgamation and the promotion of international cartels—are so many steps in the capitalist policy of “rationalisation.” Trustification means an increase in the power of capital over the workers, and this increased power has been used with ruthless severity to throw the burden of capitalist decline on to the shoulders of the workers. For “rationalisation” consists in attempting to stabilise capitalism at the expense of the working class. In the mining industry this process has been accompanied by a violent uprooting of all the old traditional relations of the industry. As a pre-

liminary to the application of this policy of rationalisation to the coal industry it was necessary to smash, or at least to "tame," the M.F.G.B. Hence the lock-out of 1926. This is now being followed up by the rapid introduction of machinery in the mines, the "scrapping" of large numbers of workers, the cutting of basic rates, attacks on old customs and usages, and the imposition of all sorts of indignities on the miners whilst their organisation is weak.

These latest developments in the organisation of capitalism clearly point to the need for a re-organisation of the Trade Unions. The old policy of separate Unions for separate industries has long become antiquated. Pre-war divisions between industries no longer exist. The Trade Unions will have to modernise their equipment if they are to function effectively. The organisation of the workers in the mining industry clearly demonstrates this. The M.F.G.B. came into existence when there were no powerful combines dominating the mining industry as is the case to-day. The M.F.G.B., together indeed with the whole apparatus of British Trade Unionism, belongs to the pre-trust stage of British capitalism, and it naturally shows on its structure all the imprints of that stage. The Trade Union movement is far too loosely knit to meet the highly-centralised power of the combines. The Trade Unions can only combat this power of the combines by bringing their organisations into line with the recent developments of capitalism. Our immediate objective should be an extension of the policy of Trade Union amalgamation, greater power to the General Council as the General Staff of the Trade Unions, and International Trade Union unity. In the mining industry the growth of these combines stresses above all the urgent need for One Miners' Union.

D. J. WILLIAMS.

Straws in the Wind

THE NEW PHASE IN CHINA

THE events of the last six weeks in China provide a historical lesson for Marxist students of enthralling interest and of first-rate importance. To those who saw in the Chinese nationalist movement merely a movement of ideas, as also to those "Marxists" who could see in it no more than the various bourgeois nationalist movements of the past, the sudden turn of events at the end of April—the defection of Chiang-kai-Shek and the setting up by him of a rival nationalist Government at Nanking—seemed an inexplicable surprise, or else the chance outcome of the personal factor. Actually such events

were to be expected at some stage of the Chinese struggle, if one analysed correctly the class forces at work.

The key to an understanding of the nationalist question in China depends on the fact that the Kuomintang, or Revolutionary Nationalist Party, is a *bloc* of various class forces—a *bloc* united by a common interest in waging a revolutionary struggle against Imperialism. It consisted of a section of the industrial bourgeoisie, the small bourgeois traders, the petty-bourgeois students and intelligentsia, and the workers and peasants* ; the latter constituting the broad mass basis of the movement in town and country. It was natural that the industrial bourgeoisie would be more inclined to compromise with the Imperialists and to forsake the anti-Imperialist struggle in return for a few "concessions," than would the petty-bourgeoisie or the peasants and workers. Particularly would they be likely to do this if a strong mass movement of workers and peasants developed. Therefore, at a certain stage of the struggle the crystallisation of a bourgeois Right-wing, eager to make a compromise with Imperialism and to suppress the developing workers' and peasants' movement, and finally its defection, was bound to occur. In China this had already occurred in 1925 and 1926 ; and Chiang-kai-Shek, occupying a vacillating Centre position, had in March, 1926, tried to make an alliance with the Right and to expel the Left, particularly the Communists, from the Kuomintang. But he found it impossible to do this, because most of the active political organisers belonged to the Left, and his action would have involved the dropping away of the mass basis of the movement. Accordingly, he dropped his alliance with the Right and agreed to work with the Left. Now, faced with the phenomenal growth of Trade Unions and Peasant Leagues in the last year, and the appearance of armed workers' militia in Hankow and Shanghai, he has re-formed his alliance with the Right, suppressed the workers' movement in Shanghai, executed Communists, and set up a bourgeois nationalist Government at Nanking, in defiance of the true Kuomintang Government of Hankow. It seems clear that Sir Austen Chamberlain (as was foreseen in the article in the March PLEBS) has been playing the clever game of trying to detach the bourgeois Right from the main movement, just as British Imperialism has done in India. That is what "the wise Foreign Office policy," praised by MacDonal and Co., as against the "foolish" Die-hard policy, amounts to !

Some Marxists who do not fully understand the nationalist question argue that it is useless to co-operate in the Kuomintang (or in any national movement) because it includes within it sections of the bourgeoisie. This is clearly mistaken. So long as objective

* cf. article by David Naylor in THE PLEBS for March, 1927.

circumstances give to the colonial bourgeoisie an anti-Imperialist rôle, the bourgeoisie are a progressive force ; and it is important to secure their co-operation in the struggle against Imperialism, while at the same time developing the mass basis of the movement against the time when the progressive rôle of the bourgeoisie is at an end and they become a reactionary element in the struggle. Similarly, there are many who under-estimate the importance of the Chinese nationalist movement to the British workers : they regard support of it as merely a matter of vague "sympathy" and a "generous gesture" ; whereas it is really an alliance, vital to both, between movements fighting a common foe—capitalist Imperialism.

For instance, a minority among the Communists argued that the Communists should separate themselves from the Kuomintang, and not accept posts in the Nationalist Government. But if they had done this the conditions would not have been created for the broadening of the movement among the masses by the formation of militant Trade Unions and Peasant Leagues ; and the Hankow Government, without a backing among the masses and a strong support among the army, would now be in a much weaker position. On the other hand, if too many concessions had been made to the Right in the past to pander to the bourgeois elements, the mass movement would likewise not have been developed to constitute an effective alternative to the bourgeois Right.

The British Foreign Office is wise enough to sense the true significance of the Chinese struggle as a challenge to British Imperialism. It is not by chance that the ultimatum to the Hankow Government, the Trade Union Bill to make a repetition of the General Strike illegal, and the preparations for breaking off relations with Russia come all at the same time. They are all part of a single struggle of capitalism against the rising revolutionary wave. It is important that we should not fail to understand the significance of these events, too—to see that the General Strike of last year, the Chinese struggle, the defence of workers' Russia, the struggle against the Trade Union Bill are bound intimately together. The events in China show the importance of the anti-Imperialist revolt of the colonial countries at the present stage. They show how in this movement the workers, while allying with other classes (so long as those classes travel along the anti-Imperialist road), and not preserving a foolish separatism, are bound to be the main driving force in this movement. They show that this struggle and that of the British workers is a common struggle ; and that, faced by armed force, State Fascism and Terror at home and abroad, this struggle can only be successful if it is widened to face the new stage and assumes a clear-cut revolutionary form—that is, becomes a struggle for power. To provide a proper analysis and understanding of this situation is the function of our educational work.

ZED.

THE LENIN-LUXEMBURG CONTROVERSY

Max Beer here continues and concludes the very important article which he commenced in our May issue. In his first article he dealt with three of the points in the discussion.

4. WITH regard to the relation of Social Democracy to the peasantry, the opinion of Lenin and Luxemburg diverged very considerably. Luxemburg altogether denied that there was any possibility of an alliance of Social Democracy with the peasantry, since the latter was aiming at individual ownership of the land and was, therefore, part and parcel of the *bourgeoisie*. Socialism was essentially the theory and the final goal of the working class movement, and, as far as the land is concerned, Socialism could only address itself to the agricultural labourer, and must *ipso facto* antagonise the farmers and peasants. Luxemburg, in fact, defended in this matter the general opinion of Marxists, and in her essay on the Russian Revolution, written in 1918 and published posthumously in 1922, she declares literally: "Lenin's agrarian reform has created in the country a strong mass of enemies of Socialism, whose opposition will prove more dangerous and more tenacious than that of the great landowners." (*Die Russische Revolution*, p. 87.)

Lenin, on the contrary, looked on this question from the point of view of the Russian Revolution; his attitude was that of a revolutionary leader who had an urgent and immediate problem to deal with. This may be formulated as follows:—Russia was in the throes of a revolution against absolutism and the old order. The bulk of the Russian people consisted of a peasantry that could not undertake the business of government and did not aspire to govern, and yet it had to form the political basis of all government, since it formed the overwhelming majority of the nation. However, on the one side of the peasantry there existed a relatively small group of capitalists, with their *intelligentsia*, and on the other side there was a growing class of fighting proletarians, led by Social Democrats (Mensheviks or Bolsheviks). Both these classes were aiming at the conquest of State power. From 1905 to 1917 practically the whole of Russia was gradually drawn into a revolutionary movement, the victorious course of which could only result *either* in the formation of a Government by the small group of capitalists, based on the man-force of the peasantry and using the State machinery in favour of capitalist development, with its attendant class struggles,

oppression, crises, and devastating wars, or in a proletarian Government, directed by Social Democrats (Mensheviks or Bolsheviks), using the State machinery for the purpose of furthering collective production and distribution. Since, however, the revolutionary proletariat was numerically small, it must needs enter into an alliance with, and make concessions to, the peasantry, unless a revolution of European Socialism and Labour took place, which would, of course, greatly simplify the problem, for it would free the Russian Revolution from the danger of foreign invasion, and would, by financial and technical aid, greatly facilitate the economic transformation of Russia. But failing a European Socialist revolution, the alliance with the peasantry would allow a Socialist Government in Russia to employ State power to socialise the manufacturing industry, to inspire the home administration, the educational institutions, and the armed forces with Socialist ideals, so as to bring up the young generation of peasants and lower middle classes in the spirit of Socialism, and spare the Russian nation all the calamities and catastrophes which capitalism brings in its train.

That was evidently the policy of Lenin.

Luxemburg saw things as a Marxian sociologist ; Lenin mastered things as a Socialist statesman. He was, as far as theory is concerned, the least dogmatic of all Marxists, but absolutely dogmatic in the adherence to, and execution of, adopted decisions and measures ; there was no divorce between his thought and action. In his view, Marxism was not a highway, built by a master-mind, which Socialists had but to follow in order to reach the goal. Lenin saw in Marxism a signpost only, pointing to the direction in which the industrial and political activities of the Socialists had to move, but giving ample scope for the choice of the ways and means to achieve the Socialist aim and end. Bolshevism is, indeed, the only Marxist school that raises the human factor, the will power, the moral courage of man to the height of a great and actively propelling social force. Leninism is Marxism in revolutionary action.

5. We come now to the last difference of opinion between them. It concerns the most difficult Marxist problem, that of the process of progressive accumulation of capital. Only a rough outline of it can be given here, the subject being too vast to be enlarged upon at the fag end of an article. In this discussion Luxemburg has been confronted not only by Lenin and the Leninists, but also by the moderate Marxist school.

Marx, in *Capital*, vol. II., chapters xx, xxi, attempts to give a general view of the process of simple and enlarged reproduction, that is, to show (1) how the incoherent and infinite mass of the multitudinous economic activities of Capital and Labour somehow settle themselves into a certain order ; (2) how the continual extension of

the scope of production, or the progressive accumulation of capital, is going on ; (3) to formulate the law which operates behind the chaotic movements of the economic agents. He arrived at the following conclusions :—

The main economic activities of society fall under two heads—(1) manufacture of means of production and transport ; (2) productions of means of consumption. All other activities of society are remunerated from the fund created by those two departments.

The annual production of the commodities of both departments Marx calls reproduction, which is either simple or enlarged. Simple reproduction merely replaces the same quantity of consumed commodities for further consumption. Enlarged reproduction not only replaces the consumed commodities, but creates a surplus for the purpose of extending the volume and raising the scale of production, so that the produce of one year is, as a rule, quantitatively surpassed by the produce of the succeeding year.

In simple as well as enlarged reproduction the manufacture of means of production and transport must exceed the production of means of consumption, since the former has to make tools and machines, build factories and workshops, etc., for both departments. And this is much more the case in enlarged reproduction, for here new means of production and transport are not only to replace the consumed ones, but to create additional ones for the purpose of extending the scale of production.

Simple reproduction may be likened to a closed circle, enlarged reproduction to a spiral, the outward end pointing towards a higher development.

For the purpose of simplifying his problem Marx assumes that all countries are based on capitalist production, that is on the division of society into two classes, Capital and Labour, and that the progressively growing mass of commodities find their market through the growing effective demand both of the capitalists and working people. According to this assumption, capitalism goes on absorbing its surpluses of capital, and keeps up a proper ratio or corresponding proportion between the various branches of industry, and consumption does not lag behind the increasing productivity of labour.

By a series of diagrams Marx illustrates (*Capital*, vol. II., chap. xxi) the mathematical proportions which are maintained between the process of production and mutual exchange of commodities of both departments, showing how by this means the progressive extension and technical improvement of capitalist production is being effected.

The whole chapter xxi. is one of the greatest achievements in economic science ; it surpasses by far François Quesnay's (1694-1774) *Tableau économique*, just as French economic life in the

middle of the 18th century is surpassed by the English industrial life in the third quarter of the 19th century. But, unfortunately, the chapter xxi. is a torso, for it was written in the last years of the life of Marx, when his health was already shattered by overwork.

This chapter gave rise to several questions : (1) Did Marx mean that the process of capitalist production was directed, or could be directed, by a fixed plan, which laid down the proper ratio or corresponding proportions between the various branches of production ? (2) Was it possible for consumption in capitalist society to go hand in hand with production, or was there no under-consumption ? Could capitalism, then, satisfy the customary needs of the masses and thus obviate industrial crises ? (3) If capitalist society could thus go on progressively accumulating capital and marketing it within capitalism itself, how was this to be reconciled with Marx's doctrine of the revolutionary outcome of capitalist development, which is the corner-stone of his sociology ?

These questions pre-occupied the mind of several Russian scholars. Professor Tugan-Baranowsky thought that the diagrams of Marx proved that capitalism could be made stable enough to last for any length of time. Lenin argued that the diagrams of Marx were correct, but that Tugan-Baranowsky drew wrong conclusions from them. Luxemburg dealt with this matter in her book *Akkumulation des Kapitals* (1913), a large volume of about 500 closely-printed pages, distinguished by great erudition, keen logic and vigorous style. She adversely criticised Marx's diagrams of enlarged production, trying to prove that they were faulty and incomplete. She further argued that his assumption of an all-round capitalist world corresponded neither with reality nor was it good economic logic. For, capitalism could not thrive by itself, but depended on having at its disposal a large annex of non-capitalist or backward countries, where surplus capital could be profitably invested. This economic fact found its political expression in Imperialism, which, on the one hand, rendered the class struggle and the international contests more acute, and led to devastating wars and economic catastrophies, and, on the other hand, promoted the industrialisation of the hitherto non-capitalist countries and thus deprived Western capitalism of its outlets. Capitalism, from its inherent contradictions, found its barrier and its end in its very success. Thus the capitalist development must result, even before it reached its final term, in the upheaval of the working class and in the collapse of capitalist society.

Lenin regarded the arguments of Luxemburg against Marx as essentially wrong. And his disciple Bucharin* showed at length that Marx's diagrams were quite correct. According to Marx, anarchy

* *Imperialismus und Akkumulation des Kapitals*, Vienna, 1926.

reigned in capitalist production, so that the proper ratio between the various branches of capitalist industry was only arrived at through a series of fluctuations and crises, when both departments of production finally attain to a certain equilibrium, working and exchanging in corresponding proportions—of course, only for a limited number of years. And it was the ratio, arrived at in that way, with which Marx operated in his diagrams. Cyclical crises were the result of the *disproportionality* between the various branches of production. For instance, if there was no corresponding proportion between the production of coal, pig iron, machinery, textiles, etc., a crisis was inevitable. This was the primary cause of industrial crises, and not under-consumption, as Luxemburg maintained. According to Marx, under-consumption was only setting in at the approach of a crisis; for, as a matter of fact, prior to a crisis, that is, in the period of brisk trade, wages and salaries and profits were good, the percentage of unemployed was low, and the effective demand was high. It was only when the disproportionality between the various industrial branches grew more and more pronounced that depression set in; then wages and profits declined, resulting in under-consumption, which, in its turn, aggravated and prolonged the crisis. Bucharin further showed that Marx's assumption of a fully developed capitalist world did by no means contradict his revolutionary doctrines. Neither the brutality of Imperialism nor the existence of a fully industrialised capitalist world would result in the collapse of capitalism. There was no need for the working class to wait for the full development of Imperialism or of universal capitalism to abolish itself and make room for Socialism. As soon as the contradictions inherent in capitalist production made themselves felt through the decline of the productive forces, which induced Capital to press down the standard of life of the labouring masses, to attack the rights and liberties of the organised working class, to exploit and dispossess the lower middle class, to heap up burdens on the peasantry, and to tighten the yoke of the colonial populations—all the elements for the social revolution were given, and it was high time for the proletariat, in alliance with all oppressed classes and nationalities, that is, with the peasantry, the lower middle classes, and the colonial peoples, to have recourse to revolutionary action and to overthrow capitalism. It was human action, directed, on the one hand, by Marxist insight into the dialectical development of capitalist society, and, on the other hand, by Lenin's revolutionary statemanship, which led to the emancipation of mankind. Luxemburg, looking mainly at the industrial evolution and at the proletariat, failed to grasp—in spite of her undoubted intellectual greatness—the meaning of the nationalist problem, of the agrarian question, and the rebellions of the colonial masses.

M. BEER.

A FREE STATE OR A MODERN COLONY ?

IRELAND'S position is such that she is not near enough to England to be a part of it nor far enough away to be left alone. She is in fact the outstanding example of the colonial policy, and her treatment reflects very accurately the passage of the Motherland from mercantilism through industrialism to finance capitalism.

During the 17th century Ireland was regarded as a colony whose duty it was to import the manufactured goods of England and to export to the Motherland such raw materials as she required. She was a victim of the mercantilist policy which aimed at obtaining a favourable balance of trade by encouraging exports and restricting imports. With the Restoration and the success of the merchants and capitalists in England, Irish goods were kept out of the British market by means of heavy duties imposed on all manufactured goods imported into England. Later the cattle trade was undermined by the Cattle Acts, which prohibited the importation of live stock into England. The Navigation Acts prevented Ireland developing a colonial trade. After 1698 the export of woollens from Ireland was prohibited, and the English Privy Council could refuse assent to any measure which the Dublin Parliament might attempt to introduce in retaliation.

Previous to the year 1800 British manufacturers believed Irish goods could undersell British goods on the British markets owing to the low wages paid in Ireland. About this time, however, British manufacturers were confident that they could, by means of their superior methods of production, not only compete with Irish manufactured goods, but undersell them and thus capture the Irish market. Free Trade was all that was required now to establish British industrial supremacy, and this economic requirement found political expression in the Act of Union of 1800, which united the Parliaments of Great Britain and Ireland. Under the circumstances this Union proved disastrous to Irish agriculture and industry.

The Irish Parliament in 1784 had passed a Corn Law which raised the price of Irish-grown corn. This encouraged tillage at the expense of pasture, a tendency which received further support by the removal of the restrictions in 1806 against the imports of Irish corn into England. Ireland was to be the granary of the workshop of the world. The high prices obtained for corn enabled the land to be subdivided and worked in small lots, and thus provided a good harvest of rent for the landlords, landjobbers and rack-renters, who

feasted upon the misery and exploitation of the land workers, since increased prices for the product meant increased rents to the landowners. Little improvement of the soil was possible owing to the poverty of the worker, in the first place, and, secondly, there was no inducement to improve it since there was no security of tenure. All benefits found their way to the landowner who let the land to the highest bidder, and this practice provided a fertile source of agrarian revolts. The surplus wealth obtained from the land, going into the pockets of absentee landlords, was not available for transformation into industrial capital, and industry, therefore, as well as agriculture was held back. In the struggle of the tenant to pay the rent, manuring, drainage and the rotations of crops received little consideration, with the result that good soil was exhausted.

But with the falling prices of wheat in England, Irish agriculture was unable to maintain the English market. Eventually, with the Repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, backward Irish agriculture lost that protection which alone enabled her to exist in the English market. The failures of the Irish potato crops brought the Great Famine in Ireland in 1847, although food was exported from Ireland during this period of starvation. These events accelerated the process of transforming the smallholder and cottier into a free labourer. The land passed from tillage to pasture, from small to large holdings via evictions. This period marks the highest point reached in the population of Ireland, and the beginning of the decrease which still continues. The population of Ireland in 1841 was eight millions, in 1881 it was five millions, in 1911 it was 4,390,000, and in 1926, 4,229,124. Industry in Ireland was not in a position to absorb the free labourers created; in fact, industry had suffered also.

The Act of Union had immediately reduced Protection, and introduced complete Free Trade between England and Ireland in 1824. The comparatively undeveloped industries of Ireland were, therefore, exposed to the full force of competition with British manufacturers who were in a much more progressive condition. At this time Free Trade meant monopoly to British industries, and the Act of Union enabled British manufacturers to flood the Irish markets with all kinds of goods except linen, driving the native competitor out of business. "The Union destroyed the feeble manufactures of the South." Thus the destruction of the agricultural and industrial prospects of Ireland provided the economic foundation for that apparent identity of interests between landlords, capitalists and labourers in the Nationalist and Republican movements down to the present day.

In the North, however, tenant right had given greater security of tenure to the land worker and provided a little surplus wealth

ing about £650,000 for interest on the money during construction and to meet deficiencies in revenue during the first two years. In 1925 the income tax was reduced 1/- in the £; the reduction of old age pension, unemployment benefits, and the establishment of a 32/- wage for a fifty-hour week on the Shannon scheme assured the capitalists of the world that all was safe for capital in the Free State. Republican capitalism once it had become a partner with European capitalism sets about to share the exploitation of the Irish workers. Their reactionary measures have strengthened the hands of the reactionaries in the North, providing additional material for the division of the workers as Loyalists, Republicans, Nationalists, Catholic and Protestant, to the confusion of the real issue of Capital *versus* Labour. As necessary "cover," the Free State has, of course, altered the colour of the pillar boxes and the design of postage stamps and even made the speaking of Gaelic compulsory here and there, but this will not delude all the workers all the time. The condition of the workers remains deplorable, and "almost 40 per cent. of Free State children are practically unschooled and semi-illiterate", and are therefore turned out on to the labour markets of the world as cheap labourers schooled in destitution. Emigration, or the export of labour-power, remains the most prosperous business in the Free State; 19,000 emigrated in 1924, 30,180 in 1925, and 30,041 in 1926. In 1925, with a total trade of £103 millions, the Free State had an adverse balance of £18.4 millions and with a total trade of £99.8 millions in 1926 an adverse balance of £17.9 millions.

Free State ministers are now discovering that Ireland is a part of the British Isles, geographically, economically and financially, and that she is tied up to her biggest customer. More than 95 per cent. of the export trade of the Free State is with British territory, and during one month of the General Strike and Miners' Lock-out the trade of the Free State was reduced to the extent of £2 millions. The workers also are taking lessons from such factors. In Ulster, depending, as she does, on British supremacy in the world's markets, which has slumped badly, unemployment is 24 per cent. of the insurable population as compared with 12 per cent. in England. But North and South the workers are slowly but surely tackling the job of establishing independent working-class organisations, thought and action. The workers of Ireland have been affected in the past by Imperialism in the North and Nationalism in the South, as the workers of England have been affected by Liberalism. Their economic and social requirements must, however, confront them with the task of establishing a Workers' United States of Europe.

A. ELLIS

(Org. No. 11 Div. N.C.L.C.)



Notes by the Way



Periodicals.

The Communist International in its new form as a fortnightly is a considerable improvement on the old, if only as an example of good printing. Students will find material of considerable value in the special Chinese number of Dec. 30th, especially in a detailed article by Miff which gives material about the peasants and the peasant movement that is quite new to this country. The Trade Union Number (Jan. 30th) contains useful material on continental trade unions and discussion of union problems from the Communist point of view. *Inprecorr* for Feb. 24 is devoted to Varga's usual quarterly survey of world economic conditions and is full of useful facts and figures which are nowhere else summarised so completely and conveniently. He has some interesting things to say concerning the effects of stabilisation in the various countries, the growth of the monopolies, etc. It is rather late in the day to mention the *M. G. Commercial Annual Review* which came out on Jan. 27th. But those tutors, at any rate, who have missed it should try to get hold of it, as it includes some useful material; e.g. an estimate of the volume of production for 1926 by J. W. F. Rowe, who estimates that the coal stoppage resulted in a total fall of 10 per cent. in industrial output.

Notes by the Way.

We are glad to see that the *Assurance Agents' Chronicle* is running a series of articles on Economics by Fred Casey whose *Thinking* we notice is now in Kerr's list.

N.C.L.C. Esperantists will find in *Karl Marx: Lia Vivo kaj Lia Verko* (S.A.T. 9d.) several valuable articles unavailable in English. These include a biographical sketch by Lenin of Marx and also an analysis of the three sources and constituents of Marxism from the same pen. Rosa Luxembourg's résumé of the three volumes of *Capital* and Prof. Semkovski's essay on the relation of Marxism to natural science are included with a valuable bibliography.

Fiction.

The interesting articles by H. C. Stevens on Soviet Fiction remind us that

Rugo kaj Blanko (S.A.T. 1/3) originally written by I. Ivn in Esperanto also gives an interesting sidelight upon Soviet happenings. In a convalescent home the patients tell about the hair-breadth escapes and adventures of the secret underground period. One story treats of the pilfering nuisance. Another vividly presents that notable feature of present-day Russia — the precocious Young Pioneer. Kim and Roza undertake the bringing back of father and mother to the Communist fold. For them Lenin still lives and they send a letter to the Mausoleum in the Red Square airing their difficulties and asking for assistance. *Viktimoj* by J. Baghy is another work in Esperanto which deals with the civil war in Siberia as seen by the band of Czecho-Slovaks which fought and wandered there.

Many works of fiction from British pens sympathetic to Labour have already appeared in the Soviet Union. Stevens makes us hope that the exchange will not be so one-sided. What about a fiction feature in THE PLEBS?

Not "Above the Battle."

The Cantonese do not neglect the place of the school in their present struggle. In Canton in the private and public schools courses are compulsory in the three foundation principles of the Kuomintang (People's National Party) and a weekly memorial service to Sun Yat-sen must be held. Further (*Canton Gazette*, December 30th, 1926) a course in the revolutionary history of China is stipulated and the books used in the schools have to pass a special censor. The teachers and students are liable "to be called to participate in people's movements at any time in order to give them a more adequate idea of the work and aims of the revolution."

In Shanghai, according to Malone, the Unions maintain educational facilities which seem of a general type. The Tokio Labour College, like the N.C.L.C., includes the international language in its curriculum.

University Propaganda.

The following interesting paragraph appeared in *The Railway Review* for December 17th. It serves as a very timely illustration of the importance of I.W.C.E. :—

During an examination at the University of London last week the following was one of the questions put to students :—

Question No. 7.

The figures for the financial working of the N.U.R. for a certain year are published as follows :—

(i.) Contributions from members	£641,723
(ii.) Working expenses ...	£230,810
(iii.) Salaries and allowances	£101,973
(iv.) Benefits to members	£201,289

Find (a) by how much the total out-goings (ii.), (iii.), and (iv.) differed from income (i.); (b) to two significant figures, the percentage of income that went in benefit to members; (c) what the corresponding figures for (ii.), (iii.), and (iv.) would have proportionally been if those of (i.) had been (as was the case for the A.E.U.) £1,264,290.

Give the last three answers each to the nearest thousand pounds.

Of course it may be that the figures given are merely a sum where any figures are given in order to test the quality of the student, but we are under the strong impression that, in addition to a test of the student, some influence against Trade Unionism and its finance was intended in view of the Press propaganda in recent months concerning

Trade Union finance. The figures given are misleading, as all the figures in such propaganda are misleading. If the truth were given there would be no case, as we have shown in this journal when replying to the critics. The figures given by the examiners have reference to the year 1925, and the contributions from members did not total £641,723; the total contributions amounted to £470,702, which is different. While the total working expenses of the union, including Head Office and branches, cost the sum of £230,810, as shown, those expenses include the sum of £101,973 shown above the salaries and allowances to officers, etc., who include the whole of the union staff and all branch officers. So that out of four sets of figures given one set is wrong to the extent of £171,021, and two sets are unbalanced. We are not concerned about the accuracy of the answers of the students; readers can pay their money and get it in differing forms from any of the newspapers, but we hope no student failed to pass the test if he worked upon the correct figures.

Literature Secretaries should not miss *Anti-Soviet Forgeries* (Workers' Publications, Ltd., 1/-; with Preface by George Lansbury). At the present crisis it is important to secure for it as wide a circulation as possible. Parts of it, moreover, read like a Sexton Blake "thriller," as for instance the mysterious Mr. S—, who called at the Russian Embassy, offering to expose a whole army of forgers, and then disappeared completely.

L e t t e r s

OXFORD "SNAGS."

SIR.—A naive question, perhaps, at this time of day, but why all this antipathy to Oxford—for trade unionists?

Two years there would enable an intelligent worker to enjoy a mental exercise no amount of industrial routine would do. Maybe, he would imbibe some "blooming lies"; he does that anyway whatever walk he takes in life. Much connected with work, a lot associated with religion, not less that wrapped up as politics, and a good deal parading as trade unionism wobbles at the truth.

My whole point is that it seems a slur on any decent trade unionist's intelligence to suggest that the atmosphere of Oxford is so intoxicating as to blind a thoughtful man who has tasted of life's drudgery from discriminating between the true and the false. Any academic outcome of such tuition may divert his body from the routine he previously endured, but it may also enable him to become better qualified to induce those who will still remain his comrades in spirit to fight to alter conditions. It is certainly no more necessary for a man to be hugging a piece of coal or a rusty office pen all his life, to give him the

particular outlook of such callings, than it is for you to have to be a piece of me to enable you to transmit your point of view on China to me. It is all dependent upon an ability to communicate ideas and feelings even though it be of what has passed. For instance, I have heard ex-colliers (now at College) give most graphic, almost morbid, descriptions of their former occupation—the one still followed by their comrades.

I write this as a trade unionist who would more than welcome two years anywhere where I could study as God knows I cannot do now.

Yours fraternally,
R. E. B.

PROBLEMS OF DICTATORSHIP.

DEAR COMRADE,—Comrade D. J. Williams states in his article "Problems of Dictatorship" in the March issue of THE PLEBS, that all political parties went out of existence as organisations during the nine days General Strike. I want to refute that statement as a member of Newcastle-on-Tyne Local C.P., because

we got definite instructions daily from our E.C. member in that district and I believe that has been true in all districts.

In regard to his statement that we have had no experience in this country where political parties have stepped in and taken control of the Trade Union Movement in times of crisis, I would like to remind him that in the miners' rejection of the Bishops' proposals the miners were accepting the Communist Party leadership.

Where Comrade Williams goes wrong is in the answer to the passage in the classic Communist Manifesto, where Marx says: "In what relations do the Communists stand to the proletariat as a whole? That is the crux of the matter."—Fraternally yours,

J. H.
(N.U.W.C.M.,
Gateshead).

NOTE.

Resolutions for the Plebs Meet should be sent in to the Plebs Office *before June 29.*

N.C.L.C. SUMMER SCHOOL

(including N.C.L.C. and PLEBS Annual Meetings)

KIPLIN HALL, SCORTON, YORKSHIRE

JULY 2nd to 16th, 1927.



COME TO OUR SUMMER SCHOOL—JULY 2nd to 16th

B Full board, £3 3s. per week (College Tutors, Secretaries, etc., and **O** Couples, £3). Send your name and address with 10/- deposit to **O** N.C.L.C., 62 Hanover Street, Edinburgh. Lectures, Discussions, **K** Sports, Play-readings — the finest of stimulating holidays. Lecturers include G. Hicks, Col. L'Estrange Malone, W. M. Citrine, J. P. Hilton, E. C. Wilkinson, M.P., J. F. Horrabin, J. S. Clarke, H. S. Redgrove, W. Paul, J. W. Ogden, A. J. Cook, W. McMullen, M.P., W. H. Thompson. A stamped addressed envelope will bring an illustrated leaflet. **N**
O
W

The N.C.L.C. at Work



(Reports for this page should be sent to J. P. M. Millar, General Secretary, National Council of Labour Colleges, 62 Hanover Street, Edinburgh.)

NEW LOCAL AFFILIATIONS: The following is a list of the new affiliations obtained in March by the local Colleges: London, 2; Sowerby Division, 1; York, 1. **IS THE NAME OF YOUR COLLEGE HERE? IF NOT, WHY NOT?**

GERMANY: A meeting of German teachers at schools for working men and women will be held in Jaahre, Germany, from 17th to 19th June. N.C.L.C. teachers are invited.

MR. A. H. TELLING: Mr. Telling, General Secretary of the Plasterers' Union, who is a member of the N.C.L.C. Executive, has just written a book on "THE A.B.C. OF PLASTERING." The cost of the book is 8/- and the publishers are the Oxford University Press.

SHOP ASSISTANTS' UNION: We are indebted to the Annual Conference of the Shop Assistants' Union, which, for the second time, has emphatically declared for an N.C.L.C. Scheme. Our sincere thanks are due to the many members of that Union who appreciate the importance of Trade Union Education.

LABOUR COLLEGE, LONDON, SCHOLARSHIPS: Three free residential scholarships are being offered by the T.U.C. Trade Unionists who desire to be considered should apply immediately through their Unions.

NATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL: Some of the Divisions are offering free scholarships to the National Summer School. Those Divisions who can afford to do so should consider the idea, but should limit expenditure to the cost of School itself.

W. H. THOMPSON, the famous Labour solicitor, has agreed to lecture at the Summer School on the "Anti-Trade Union Bill."

ANNUAL MEETING: A circular has been sent out intimating particulars of the Annual Meeting which will be held in conjunction with Nat. Summer School.

SALE OF LITERATURE: At the present time many lectures are being given to

Trade Union Branches. It seems that in a number of cases speakers attend without having any pamphlets and consequently magnificent opportunities are being lost. Speakers should have with them the N.C.L.C.'s booklet and George Hicks' pamphlet *After the Storm*. If the lecture deals with the Anti-Trade Union Bill, Mark Starr's sixpenny *Trade Unionism* should be taken. Literature should be on sale at all Day Schools, whether held in the open or not.

ASSOCIATION OF ENGINEERING AND SHIPBUILDING DRAUGHTSMEN. NATIONAL SOCIETY OF OPERATIVE PRINTERS AND ASSISTANTS: Members of the above Unions should apply to their Unions for free scholarships to the N.C.L.C. National Summer School. These Unions may also provide free correspondence courses if application is made.

NATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE: This Centre will be held at the Labour College, London, during the fortnight beginning 30th July. F. J. Adkins will be in charge of the school and will deal with *Teaching Methods*. J. Hamilton will tutor on *Economic Geography and Imperialism* and D. J. Williams on *Modern Capitalism*. The cost per student will be £2 10s. per week, including booking fee 10/-. It is advisable for students to attend the whole fortnight and to book now. The A.U.B.T.W. and each N.C.L.C. Div. is offering at least one free scholarship.

WHAT THE DIVISIONS ARE DOING.

Division 1: Mr. R. Coppock, N.F.B.T.O., will lecture at Battersea's Day School on "Trade Unionism — the Lessons of 1926 and Its Future." The Sheerness and Chatham classes are making arrangements for a One Day School at Sheerness. Two Tutors' Classes on Industrial History have now been established, one at Stepney and the other at Stratford. It is hoped to start another at Chiswick. The Clapham E.T.U. Branch is having a series of fortnightly lectures on Industrial History from the Organiser. Camberwell Class has resumed with a course on Public Speaking and Fulham

with Economic Geography. Many E.T.U. and A.E.U. Branches are having lectures on the Trade Union Bill. It is hoped to arrange a One Day School on this subject at Tottenham. The Women's Committee is running a special Tutors' Class on Independent Working Class Education, for the purpose of training women to address meetings, conduct classes, etc.

Division 2: Littlehampton Secretary supplies the following details re the Annual Open Air Rally on Sunday, 12th June. Depart Littlehampton by motor boat 10.30 a.m. for South Woods, where the school will be held at 2.30 with Tom Ashcroft, Joe Mathews and the Organiser as tutors. Tea will be provided at Amberley. Charge for the day will be 2/-. Will all N.C.L.C.ers from Brighton, Worthing, Bognor and Portsmouth kindly notify the Secretary whether they are coming? Students from Guildford can come by char-a-banc. The Dorchester Class will meet at Maiden Castle on June 26th. Students from Weymouth, Wyke, Portland, Bridport and some villages from Dorset are expected. The Organiser of the Agricultural Workers is arranging this event so we are assured of a successful time. Aldershot, Salisbury, Oxford, Reading and Bournemouth are considering having a meet. Details later. The next Divisional Council will be held on June 24th.

Division 3: No report.

Division 4: Day Schools have been held by Abertillery, Garw, Blaina, Swansea Valley, Pontypool and Pontypridd Colleges. A successful Women's Conference has been held at Newport. The Organiser addressed a special delegate conference of Trade Union officials at Newport, the subject being "The Anti-Trade Union Bill." Rhondda is running a Tutors' Training Class. A special A.U.B.T.W. Class with the co-operation of Brother Fishpool is being held at Merthyr.

Division 5: Four classes concluded last month, and attention is now being concentrated upon summer activities. Day Schools are arranged for Lydney and Cheltenham—lecturers W. J. Owen and A. L. Williams. It is hoped to arrange schools at Bath and Gloucester. Comrade Evans is engaged in arranging rambles for the Bristol Classes. The Acting Organiser is busy visiting branches of unions with schemes.

Division 6: Organiser Barr has been

visiting various Trades Councils in the Division, on the Trades Union Bill, and our tutors are all busy in the propaganda campaign against the attack on Trades Unionism. Rugby has been visited and a group of enthusiasts are preparing the work for a class next winter session. Nuneaton class is still going strong and new students are being enrolled. Jack Wood, secretary of Birmingham College, has undergone an operation and we wish him a speedy and complete recovery. An outing has been arranged to Sutton Park on 25th June, in which Birmingham College is co-operating with the Walsall College.

Division 7: Tutorial Training Classes are now in session at Bradford and Todmorden, on Mondays at 7.15 p.m., Trades Hall and Weavers' Institute respectively. Tuesdays, Transport Workers' Office, Hull, at 7 p.m. Thursday, A.E.U. Institute, Sheffield, at 7.30 p.m. Sundays, Bentley Park, Doncaster, at 2.30 p.m. The Divisional Organiser has charge of the classes. Literature Secretaries who have copies of Bogdanoff's *Short Course of Economic Science*, please communicate with F. Shaw, 1 Fernleigh, Longwood, Huddersfield. Leeds is running a tutorial training class (with A. Haigh as tutor) at 2 Exeter Street, Leeds, on Tuesdays at 7.30 p.m. The Divisional Council is running an essay competition and has offered a scholarship of one week at the Kiplin Hall Summer School. Leeds College has lost two of its hardest workers—Reginald Berriff, the late President, and Olive Parsons. In four years they have rendered yeoman service in raising the Leeds College to its present position. Comrade Berriff is now the Labour Agent for Middlesbrough and will no doubt continue his activities in the College Movement.

Division 8: The public meeting addressed in Liverpool by George Hicks was a big success and aroused much interest amongst A.U.B.T.W. members in particular. A full report was published in *Liverpool's Labour Voice*. For a first venture the Day School held by the Chorley Branch N.C.L.C. was encouraging. The Organiser and Comrade Crook were the lecturers. The Annual Meetings of the Manchester College and N. Lancs. Area N.C.L.C. were well attended. In particular the N. Lancs. meeting was brimful of in-

terest, the majority of delegates being of the younger generation. Credit is due to Comrade Hudson in effectively carrying on the work in the unavoidable absence of A. L. Williams. The class in connection with the Nelson Weavers' Scheme has been an outstanding success. Summer Courses on Public Speaking and Local Government are being arranged in conjunction with the Liverpool T.C. and L.P. Already a number of meetings have been addressed by E. Redfern and the Organisers in the campaign against the Trade Union Bill.

Division 9: A Tutors' Class has started at Durham and others are being formed. The Durham District College has advised all its classes to organise Day Schools for the purpose of discussing the Trade Union Bill. The North-Eastern Labour College is doing likewise.

Division 10 (Scotland): Fife and Dundee Colleges had a most successful series of meetings with A. J. Cook as the speaker. Edinburgh College had a Day School at Roslin. Speakers, J. S. Clarke and C. L. Gibbons. Attendance about 180. Edinburgh Annual Meeting was addressed by George Hicks, who also spoke at a big demonstration organised by the Glasgow College and the Trades Council. Lanarkshire College has arranged several week-end schools—C. L. Gibbons and A. Woodburn being amongst the speakers.

Division 11 (Ireland): Branches of affiliated Trade Unions are responding very well to the circular sent out offering branch lectures. Many branches are keenly interested in the unemployment in the Engineering and Shipbuilding industries, and information in connection with "The Legal Attack on the Trade Unions" is in great demand.

Division 12: Through the N.U.R. Midland District Council, 14 branches have agreed to pay 2d. per member per annum in order to provide themselves with N.C.L.C. educational facilities. E. Redfern's visit to Nottingham at Easter was greatly appreciated. Our first attempt with a school at Ilkeston had a good response. Another school was run at Northampton and as usual Comrade Weston had put in some hard work to ensure success. Lincoln's first Day School has now been arranged, and if it is as successful as the classes are, there will be no cause for

complaint. Comrade Jarvis does things thoroughly. The Training Class at Nottingham is going very well indeed; a welcome sign is that the students are writing essays.

DAY AND WEEK-END SCHOOLS.

Blackburn, 18th and 19th June (J. W. Hudson, 21 Primrose Street, Nelson).

Douglas Water, 19th June (J. Wilson, 27 Waverley Terrace, Parkhead Street, Motherwell).

Bristol, 18th and 19th June (A. L. Williams, 8 The Chase, Hillfields Park, Fishponds, Bristol).

Battersea, 19th June (G. Phippen, 11A Penywern Road, S.W.5).

Porthcawl, 7th June (W. J. Owen, 13 Waengron St., Blaina, S.W.)

Aberdeen, 3rd July (W. Morrison, 323 Holborn St., Aberdeen).

Nottingham, 16th and 17th July (C. Brown, Garden Lane, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Notts.).

Altrincham, 23rd and 24th July (E. Redfern, 1 Langdale Avenue, Reddish, Stockport).

Apply to the above for particulars.

The LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of International Labour

JUNE.

SIXPENCE

Notes of the Month.

The British Government and International Fascism.

S. SAKLATVALA
India and Britain.

W. N. EWER
New Ententes for Old.

NICOLAI LENIN
Democracy.

Harry Pollitt, Rykov, Thomas Page, etc.

162 Buckingham Palace Rd. S.W. 1



The PLEBS Bookshelf



I 'VE read one novel and seen one play that stand out of the ordinary this month. The novel was Sinclair Lewis's *Elmer Gantry*, as bitingly true a picture of commercialised religion as any student of capitalism could wish for. The play was Elmer Rice's *The Adding Machine*. The first half of this is a savage attack on the brutality of twentieth century capitalism; the second half tails off into an individualist-ethical effort to show that slaves are slaves under any conditions, whereas real he-men will use their environment in order to improve the quality of their souls in readiness for their next incarnation on earth. The first four scenes would make

a fine reading for any group on the lookout for a good propaganda play. The last three could easily be cut.

* * *

I've also had a first glance at H. J. Laski's *Communism*, the latest addition to the Home University Library (2s.). It seems to me—but no; it will be reviewed later in these pages, and perhaps I'd better not ask for trouble by anticipating the reviewer's verdict.

* * *

Scott Nearing has just sent me his new book, *Where is Civilisation Going?* (Vanguard Press, New York, 50 cents.) At a first glance it seems to be just the book to provide a basis for an introductory series of lectures on general history from the Marxian standpoint. I hope to return to it later.

* * *

Pictorial Education, now being published monthly at 1s. (you can get it at most bookstalls), should be really useful to tutors of Geography and Modern Imperialism classes. It contains large photogravure reproductions of pictures and photographs of places and industrial activities which would add considerably to the interest of a lesson. Pictures like "Lumber transport in Canada," "Primitive irrigation in Egypt," "Giant grain elevators," "Tapping rubber trees in Malaysia," are decidedly worth while from this point of view.

* * *

Is this Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's way of observing the United Front? It is from an article by him in the *New York Forward* (April 24th, 1927):—

"One of our most troublesome districts has been the Rhondda Valley in South Wales. It has been a hotbed of Communism led by some of the half-baked students who have come from the Central Labour College in London. By their pushfulness and loquacity they have paralysed the Labour Movement there. No one would stand up to them, although, elsewhere, where they have been faced they have crumpled up."



FIRST CO-OPERATIVE INVESTMENT TRUST, LTD.

BROAD STREET HOUSE, LONDON, E.C.2.

(Chairman: Alderman A. Emil Davies, L.C.C.)

PROVIDES

High return on money invested—dividends of 7 per cent. per annum regularly paid from foundation.

Dividends paid half-yearly without deduction of tax.

Safety of capital (which exceeds £1,000,000) through diversification of investments.

Investments selected and supervised by Board of experienced Directors.

Shares in the small denomination of two shillings — minimum holding 10 shares, maximum 2,000.

Repurchase of shares.

Accounts Audited by Auditor appointed by H.M. Commissioners of Treasury.

To

FIRST CO-OPERATIVE INVESTMENT TRUST
Broad Street House, London, E.C.2. Ltd.

Please send me a copy of the booklet "What an Investment Trust is," the Latest Report and List of Investments.

Name.....

Address.....

Pl

Special Bargain Offer!

We have decided to clear
our remaining copies of

What to Read

A

GUIDE TO BOOKS FOR
WORKER-STUDENTS

AT **3d.** EACH.

(4d. *postpaid*)

What to Read was published at 7d. It is a book of 64 pages, and contains book-lists and advice on reading for students of Economics, History, Geography, Modern Problems (Imperialism, Trade Unionism, etc.), Psychology, Biology, Philosophy, etc.

SEND FOR A COPY
NOW, WHILE THE
STOCK LASTS.

PLEBS, 162a Buckingham
Palace Rd. London, S.W.1

Comrade H. C. Stevens, author of the recent articles in THE PLEBS on "Soviet Fiction," writes pointing out that the English edition of Trotsky's *Lenin* (offered to Plebs at 2s. recently) is disfigured by numerous errors—and stupidities—in translation. He quotes the following instances:—

P. 33:—"theoretical justification of the proletariat through the intelligence." This should read "the theoretical justification of the exploitation of the proletariat by the intelligentsia."

P. 35:—Trotsky "went about" with Chaikovsky should be "fought with" Chaikovsky.

P. 113:—"when it was a question of the suspension of exchange during the uprising. . . ." This is a mistranslation of "when it was a question of definitely fixing the course for revolution."

On p. 127, Lenin is stated to have "made the sign of the cross before his face." This has been evolved somehow or other from "made a rotatory movement of his hand around his head."

On p. 240, the word "neutral" is applied—surprisingly—to the Red Army. The word should be "non-party."

We agree with comrade Stevens that these are bad blemishes, and we hope readers who possess the book will note these corrections. But we can't agree with him when he goes on to imply that it would have been better to have gone without the book altogether than to have had it in this faulty form.

* * *

The new issue of the *Labour Who's Who*, just published, contains a good many items of interest. It must annoy the *Morning Post* and the *Patriot* quite a lot to find that A. J. Cook was "brought up in Army Barracks," his father being a soldier. Imagine! the arch-apostle of Bolshevism—born and bred in the atmosphere of the British Army! . . . I like Huntly Carter's phrase for his principal preoccupation—"in search of a satisfying social synthesis." . . . Also, I confess to a small fondness for discovering what my friends' "recreations" and second names are. (Though some of them are shy in this latter respect; J.P.M.M., for instance, still preserves the mystery of those middle two initials.) J. F. H.

SIX SOUND REASONS

for buying all your Books and Periodicals at
LABOUR'S BEST BOOKSELLERS

1. The Communist Bookshop is the largest literature agency in the Labour movement.
2. Its staff is therefore widely experienced and highly trained, and can give expert and intelligent advice on the choice of books.
3. Its premises are centrally situated in London if you want to call.
4. It has an unrivalled reputation for handling mail orders quickly and efficiently.
5. It deals in literature on *all* topics—Labour, educational, scientific, and even fiction!
6. Its Catalogue (post free on application) is arranged on a subject basis and is a valuable guide for worker-students.

THE COMMUNIST BOOKSHOP

16 KING STREET, COVENT GARDEN, W.C.2



THE TRAINED MIND—

Trained for what?

That is the question. Orthodox education exists to help the present system, just as Feudal education assisted Feudalism. The class that fights against the workers must think against them. Education is as much a weapon in the class struggle as politics. That is why every Trade Union should have an

N.C.L.C. Educational Scheme.

Has yours? If not, why not?
As fewer classes are available during the summer, why not try an

N.C.L.C. Correspondence Course?

By post the N.C.L.C. teaches Economics, History, Economic Geography, English Grammar and Article Writing, Esperanto, Public Speaking and other subjects. Write to-day for full particulars to the N.C.L.C., 62 Hanover Street, Edinburgh. Sevenpence in stamps will bring you "Education for Emancipation," "The Trained Mind—Trained for What?" and "After the Storm."



***DON'T FORGET TO
BOOK FOR THE SUMMER SCHOOL!***