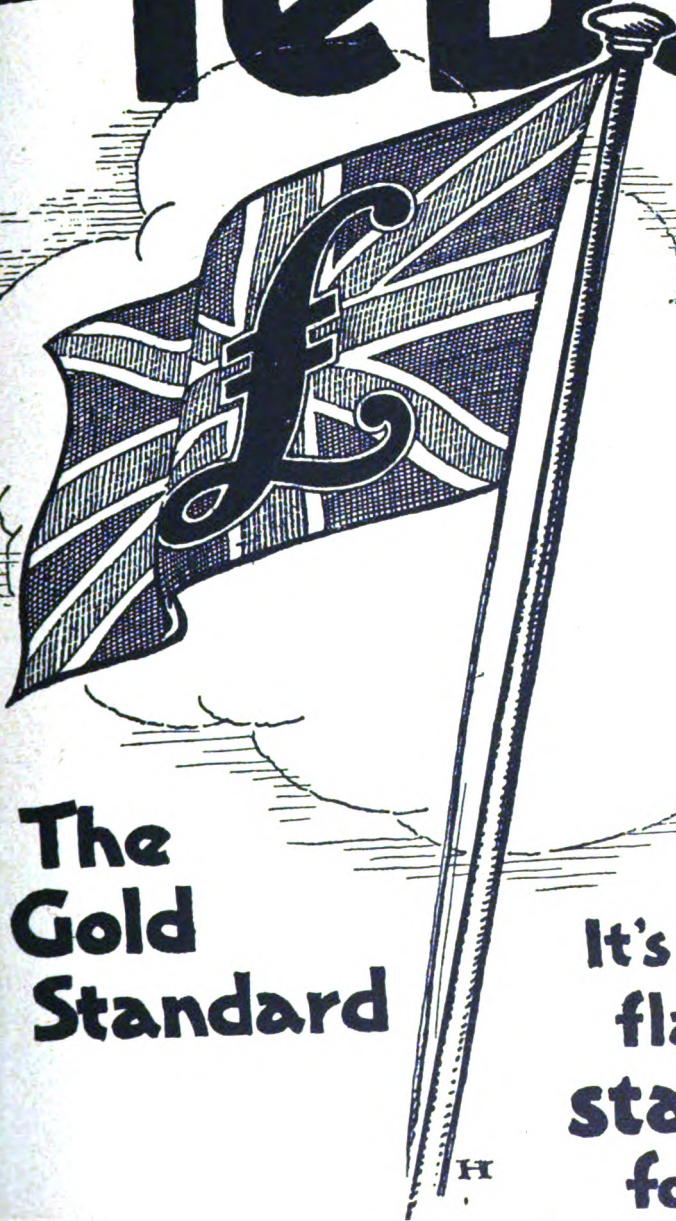


June 1925

THE
Plebs

4^d



**The
Gold
Standard**

It's your
flag —
starve
for it!

H



ENERGY is good; energy needs direction; but, much more than that, energy needs the *right* direction.

Labour is gaining power; but power is wasted, because some Workers, who oppose the Governing Class industrially and politically, make the *fundamental mistake of co-operating with them educationally*.

Before deciding that any Educational Body is to be entrusted with Trade Union education, ask whether it receives heavy subsidies from the Capitalist State.

Consistent Trade Unionists demand *Independent Working-Class Education* (which arose out of a strike of students at Ruskin College against its University type of teaching). This Independent Education is provided by

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LABOUR COLLEGES

The N.C.L.C. operates the bulk of British Trade Union Educational Schemes, and provides Evening Classes, Week-end and Summer Schools, Residential Tuition, Correspondence Courses, etc. It has more Trade Union Correspondence Students than any other Working-class Educational Organisation in the World.

Send threepence in stamps for 24-page Booklet on "The N.C.L.C. and Its Work," to J. P. M. Millar, General Secretary, N.C.L.C., 22, Elm Row, Edinburgh.

THE PLEBS

Vol. XVII

June, 1925

No. 6

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The PLEB POINT of VIEW

BY the time this number of The PLEBS is in the hands of its readers, the Annual Conference of the N.C.L.C. will have come to a decision on the T.U. Congress Educational Scheme. We hope, as we wrote last month, that the Scheme will be accepted; provided that the N.C.L.C. makes it clear to the General Council that "co-operation" with educational organisations which our movement has always—necessarily—opposed implies neither any modification of the principles we stand for, nor any slackening of propaganda on behalf of those principles.

We are quite well aware that a Scheme based on the co-operation of two bodies diametrically opposed to one another in principle is scarcely likely to provide a permanent solution of the educational problems of the Trade Union movement in this country. We have pointed out again and again that, sooner or later, Congress would

have to come to a definite decision as to what it wanted—Working-Class Education, based on a working-class point of view ; or Extension of Ruling-Class Education to workers. It is a perfectly clear issue—if the numerous red-herrings dragged across the trail by the Extensionists are ignored. And it is an issue that cannot be evaded—and which will not be any less apparent when Independents and Extensionists can both claim T.U. Congress “sanction” for their respective activities.

So far as the capitalist press has commented on the T.U. Congress Scheme it has of course rejoiced that the W.E.A. is to play a part therein, and has offered that organisation its *King Cotton loves the W.E.A.* condolences on having to share the work of the Scheme with people like ourselves. The *Manchester Guardian's* Labour Correspondent, writing on May 12th, went so far as to imply that but for the “acrimonious propaganda” and “bitter, persistent agitation” conducted by The PLEBS and the Labour Colleges, this eminently desirable aim of Education for All Trade Unionists might have been realised long ago. Anybody who knows anything of the facts—and who is really

“CHAPLAINS TO THE PIRATE SHIP”

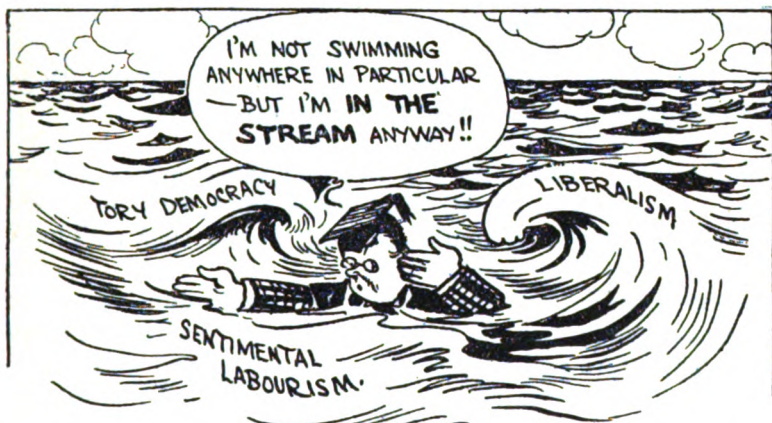
The W.E.A. has always insisted that, unlike us Plebs, it seeks neither to attack nor defend the existing social order, but simply to discover and teach the Truth. It points to the fact that we base our teaching of economics on Marx as evidence of our “dogmatism,” and commends to its own students such economists as Henry Clay, Marshall, Cannan, and H. D. Henderson—all of whom have just been included in Sir Ernest Benn's “Times” list of the best writers on economics whose object is “the defence of the existing order of things.” Some people must wish Sir Ernest wouldn't be quite so candid!

interested in truth—knows perfectly well that it is precisely this “acrimonious propaganda” and “bitter, persistent agitation” on the part of I.W.C.E.ers which has made Workers' Education a front-line issue. Also, anyone capable of recognising ideas—as apart from the repetition of the same old platitudes one wrote in copybooks at school—would be able to see that, right or wrong, the Labour Colleges did stand for a principle ; and that to label the statement of that principle “acrimonious propaganda” indicates only that you are either too stupid to know what the argument is about, or too cunning to admit it.

All the way along, according to the *Guardian* man's story, the

W.E.A. has gone on valiantly "pioneering," and the Labour Colleges as persistently queering the pitch and crabbing results. The W.E.A., he declares, "is in the main stream of democratic movements in England." And he anticipates that contact with its "broad, humane conception of education" will be the means of "rescuing" the Labour Colleges from the "isolation" which "stultifies" them and their Trade Unionist supporters!

Well. . . we intend to go on being "isolated" so far as certain things are concerned !*



The Cotton scribe reads his PLEBS, and he quotes from our last issue our statement that the Plebs League, not being tied by the agreement, will continue its advocacy of Independent Working-Class Education, and, therefore, its criticism of the W.E.A. "There is probably," he opines, "a good deal of bluff in all this bravery."

It is difficult to convince a capitalist-journalist that one really believes in what one is advocating—and intends to go on believing in it ; all the more when there's no "money" in it ! We can only assure him, and his W.E.A. friends, that there was no "bluff" whatever about our statement. After the tremendous strides made by our movement in the last two or three years, we are not likely to haul down our flag now—especially for the sake of applause from ruling-class newspapers. And even if we did, our movement wouldn't follow us. It may suit the *Manchester Guardian* to pretend that the I.W.C.E. movement is a little clique of nobodies whom it is the business of people with Statesmanlike Minds to ignore. But—

*It was the *Manchester Guardian* which, a month or two ago, published an article advocating "Workers' Week-Ends" at the Universities, and remarked that "such week-ends might be arranged without seeming to have a subtle intention."

fortunately—the facts are otherwise. And anybody—in our own camp or another—who starts monkeying about with I.W.C.E. principles at this time of day will discover that a whole lot of keen workers will “know the reason why.”

Just to make our declaration perfectly clear, let the following resolution, passed at the last E.C., be set down here :—

“The Plebs League, having as a body been excluded from direct representation at the negotiations on the T.U. Congress Scheme, formally states that it is not bound by any provisions in that document restricting the rights of propaganda.”

Here’s the sort of letter which bucks one up—apart altogether from the cheque so generously enclosed with it :—

DEAR COMRADE,

Best Thanks

The longer I live the more firmly I am convinced of the need for a more widespread system of education among young men and young women such as The PLEBS stands for.

We cannot expect to get permanent and continuous results in the right direction when Labour gets into power, locally or nationally, unless the legislators and administrators are gingered and supported in their tasks by a determined and properly educated majority in the Trade Union, Labour and Socialist movements.

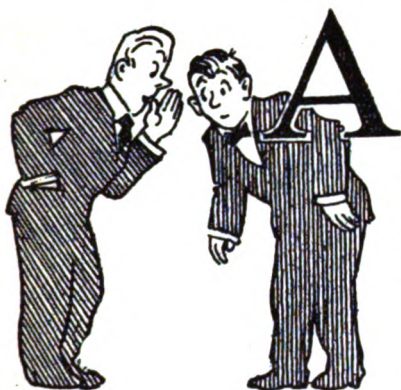
I have therefore pleasure in contributing towards your publication fund £5 in gratitude for the existence and work of your organisation.

Yours fraternally,

Readers will note that the affiliation of four more Trade Unions (including the A.S.L.E. & F.) to the N.C.L.C. *Trade Unionists,* is reported in “N.C.L.C. Notes” this month. *Please Note.* The magnificent progress of the last few months is not merely being maintained—it is actually being improved upon. We are sure our friends on the General Council will not fail to point out this to their colleagues.

This is a fitting opportunity to say—briefly—that these splendid results are due very largely to the unremitting efforts and unflagging enthusiasm of the N.C.L.C.’s General Secretary, J. P. M. Millar. True (as he himself would be the first to insist), he is reaping the harvest that the pioneers had sown. But harvests are often lost for lack of the patience which “keeps on keeping on” till the result is sure. And that patience J. P. M. M. has shown in abundance. The gratitude of our whole movement is due to him and to his wife for their wholehearted service to the cause of I.W.C.E.

HI!!—YOU!!!



WORD in your ear, brother!

We've got the circulation of The PLEBS up to 8000 this year.

Can't we keep it at that figure during these summer months?

Just the least little bit of extra effort on the part of all keen I.W.C.E.ers will do it.

What about it?

10,000 is our mark for next winter.

Why shouldn't we get a move on towards it NOW?

Yours frat.

THE EDITOR

THE SHADOW

WE smile at the taboos of the medicineman of the savage tribes, but the cute old boy has taught our modern wizards a thing or two. When anything particularly shady has to be done it is labelled "High Finance" and as such, of course, cannot be understood of the people.

The debates in the House of Commons on the gold standard showed us in what a tangle of bewildering words and phrases it is possible to wrap up a perfectly simple matter. The cobbler says there is nothing like leather. The financier says there is nothing like gold. It is the raw material by which he makes his money, but it is not the raw material by which the wealth of the country is made. It is the heavy chain by which the financier binds industry to yield him tribute.

There are two extremes in this matter of the currency. German industrialists went to the one extreme and by limitless inflation paid off their mortgages, debentures, and debts of all kinds that were borrowed in gold values, in worthless paper. By the return to the gold standard the British Governmental mouthpiece of international finance, Mr.

Churchill, has rushed to the other extreme and proposes to pay paper debts in gold values.

The immediate effect of this is to increase enormously the burden of the war debts. The £, worth 7s. or 8s. in pre-war value when we borrowed it, will be paid in currency of a gold value. The mortgage on the nation's industry is doubled and more.

But even worse is the effect on employment. The return to the gold standard restricts the amount of credit available for industry, and as most industry is run on credit unemployment follows immediately. Not only that, but the price of our goods is made prohibitive to our customers. The Chancellor speaks only of America when he talks about the gold standard. The dead-weight of thirty millions that Baldwin fastened upon us by his agreement with America is serious, but it is negligible compared to the fact that while we can manufacture say iron and steel as cheap or cheaper than Germany or Belgium, when we have to sell it to our impoverished customers it takes so much more of their currency to buy the dear English pound than the cheaper mark or franc.

"But doesn't Churchill realise all this?" says the puzzled worker. Of course he does, but the war has left the financier in control. By returning to the gold standard Churchill has completed the Anglo-American Money Trust. By this deal the finishing touches have been put on a power that has already interfered so effectively in the affairs of France and Britain—a power infinitely greater than that of the elected representatives of the people. What does unemployment in Britain matter to these men who can gamble with the wealth of the whole world—no, not quite that yet—not with the immense potential wealth of Russia? But that is coming. Already we hear rumours that the financial noose is being put round Russia also, ready to be pulled tight when the Soviet Government refuses their impossible demands.

Already across a world of workers who only ask to be in peace with each other and to work out their salvation falls the shadow of the Cross—The Cross of Gold on which is sacrificed the happiness of humanity.

ELLEN C. WILKINSON, M.P.

COUE-ING TO US!

"The PLEBS gets better and better in every way every month. I wish it came out fortnightly."

Letter received last month.

BULGARIA, the BULGARIAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY, and the LABOUR and SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL

Colonel Malone was a member of the recent Labour Delegation to Sofia. In the House of Commons on April 14th, 1920, he moved the rejection of the Treaty of Neuilly. He here sketches the course of events leading up to the present White Terror in Bulgaria.

IN considering the position in Bulgaria to-day, it is necessary to remember the key position which the Balkan Peninsula holds in Capitalist and Imperialist world politics and the events which, both in the Balkans in general and in Bulgaria in particular, have led up to the present situation.

Ever since, in the nineteenth century, the Great Powers helped the Balkan States to emerge from subjection to the Ottoman Empire, they have used them as pawns in their own antagonisms. This was especially the case up to 1914. For here in the Balkans many highways converge, from East to West, from North to South. German Imperialist plans towards the East, the success of the Berlin-Bagdad railway, with its branch line to Medina, depended on the maintenance of German influence in the Balkans. And so it was with Czarist Russia, behind whom stood the bankers of France and England. The rich exports of South Russia, from the wheat-fields of the Ukraine and the oil-wells of the Caucasus, must pass through the bottle-neck of the Bosphorus. The struggle for the control of these important cross-roads has been the struggle between the Great Powers, using Turkey and the Balkan States as pawns. Side by side with this struggle ran the pressure of the Austro-Hungarian Empire for control in the Adriatic and an outlet in the Ægean at Salonika; and to counter that, on the part of the Entente Powers, the carefully nursed growth of Serbia and Greece.

During the nineteenth century the European Powers bolstered up Turkey as a bulwark against Russia—then conceived to be the great menace, especially to British Imperialism in India.

But, by the twentieth century, a new alignment had taken place.

Germany and Austria, the Central Powers, and not Russia were by that time considered our great antagonists. And about the time that Edward VII. was cementing friendship with the Czar Nicholas at Reval, the Young Turks were throwing themselves into the arms of Austria and Germany, the Central Powers. Our retort was to stir up the Balkans against the Turks ; and a little later emissaries of Great Britain, such as Mr. J. D. Bourchier, were at work in the Balkans ; and eventually succeeded in uniting the Balkan States—Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece and Montenegro—in the Balkan League, which declared war on Turkey in 1912.

At that moment the Central Powers appear to have been sleeping—confident of a Turkish victory. They woke up at the close of the first Balkan War to find Turkey severely defeated and Mr. Asquith and Sir Edward Grey making pleasant speeches about happiness and tranquillity in London, where a Treaty was being drawn up which would have given Serbia what Austria had always fought against—access to the Adriatic. It was to prevent this that Austria had, a few years earlier, annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina ; and now she repeated her bluff and created an artificial Albanian State further down the Adriatic coast ; and the Entente Powers, not wanting to fight at the moment, acquiesced, as they had done before.

But Serbia, balked of expansion on the Adriatic, demanded compensation on the other side, in Macedonia—a territory which by treaty should have gone to Bulgaria. The Entente supported Serbia, Russia wanted to arbitrate, the Central Powers backed Bulgaria, Count Tisza, the Hungarian Premier, urging Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg, the King, to fight it out. Which he did, with immense loss to Bulgaria, faced as she was by the rest of the Balkan League, to whom, as well as to Roumania, she had to yield much territory.

The Balkan wars were but the preliminary tourney to the Great War ; the smouldering fires, only temporarily checked by the Treaty, which ended the second Balkan War in 1913, were quickly fanned to flames by the murder of the Arch-Duke Francis Ferdinand at Sarajevo. Once more, trouble in the Balkans ; but this time the Great Powers—who hitherto have only been moving their little Balkan pawns about, manœuvring for position—this time they are ready, and they will fight to the end for the domination of the Near East, the great highway to the East which the financiers in each country desire to exploit.

Already before the War an effort had been made to buy over Bulgaria ; and the "Banque des Pays Bas" had offered her a loan if she would take her orders from Russia. But Radoslavov, the Prime Minister, preferred to take his money from Berlin. And

when, during the War, agents from England endeavoured to bring Bulgaria in on our side, by buying up her wheat at exorbitant prices, it was either too late or we had already promised Serbia so much that we had nothing left with which to persuade Bulgaria that our alliance was worth having.

The Treaty of Neuilly which settled the fate of Bulgaria after the War, deprived her on all sides of territory. The Dobrudja was given to Roumania, Macedonia to Serbia, and Thrace to Greece—who thus has, in addition to the big port of Salonika, two minor outlets on the Ægean, Kavalla and Dedeagatch—while Bulgaria has none.



The Treaty seemed to me a grave injustice and, on April 14th, 1920, I moved its rejection in the House of Commons; but obviously without avail.

Since the War we have pursued a steady policy of aggrandising Serbia, who is now, with our backing, the unchallenged ruler of the Balkans. Grown into Jugoslavia, the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, she has swallowed Montenegro, who expected a union on equal terms, and has lately even succeeded in besting Fascist Italy by establishing a dummy ruler under her control in Albania. She has been given that part of Macedonia, formerly largely inhabited by Bulgars, which is now called "Southern Serbia,"

where she is busily planting out a Serbian population, while the Bulgars flee from her repression. So that in addition to a long Adriatic coast-line, Jugoslavia now has her feet firmly planted on the railway to Salonika, the Ægean port—the goal in the East of those who cannot hope to control Constantinople.

This greater Jugoslavia looks entirely towards Great Britain. Even the business men in Zagreb, we are told, want direct financial and economic relations with London, the obvious trend in Serbia to-day, whereas formerly they were much in the power of the Austrian bankers.

Sporadically too, we have supported Greece; as when, for instance, Lloyd George, at the instigation of his Greek financier friends, egged on Greece to attack Turkey in Asia Minor, with what disastrous results to the unfortunate people one recalls: though possibly not to those who had the contracts to rebuild the burnt-out Smyrna, as they had had a contract to rebuild the Pyæus.

The Balkan States have since the War and the Russian Revolution a double rôle, to be a bulwark both against Turkey, and (in alliance with other States) against Soviet Russia. Hence a network of commercial and political Treaties, concluded within the last few years, extending through the Balkans and far beyond through Central Europe, which include every Balkan State except Bulgaria. The Tzankov militarist Government at Sofia are now bidding for British support. They declare that they are ready to offer the greatest advantages to British capital interested in cotton, wool, coal, minerals and the exploitation of their forests. They are prepared to offer the greatest concessions in order to get within the charmed ring of English financial support.

So much for the Imperialist and Nationalist conflicts. But class issues here, as elsewhere, have come to the fore, based in Bulgaria chiefly on the peasant movements.

In 1919 Stamboulisky, the leader of the Peasant Party, came into power and was Prime Minister until he was overthrown in June, 1923. The charge against him was that he worked exclusively for the peasants (who form 90 per cent. of the population) and antagonised other elements.

He arranged long-term credits on easy terms to provide agricultural machinery for the poorer peasants. He divided the estates of the large landowners. He created the sugar industry which gave a livelihood to thousands of families whose land could not provide them with bread. He encouraged the co-operatives. He opened new schools.

He passed a law which forbade the real estate speculators to keep the people without homes. Any vacant lot which was not to be built upon within a given period was to be confiscated by the State,

and on it houses were to be built for the homeless with State credit.

Stamboulisky also introduced a measure compelling every citizen to work for the State for a certain number of days in the year. Bankers found themselves doing manual work. This was one of the acts which made Stamboulisky so unpopular amongst the *bourgeois*.

That he was strongly supported by the peasants and workers throughout Bulgaria was shown by the return of the Elections held in the early months of 1923. The results were :

Peasant Party : (Stamboulisky) :	..	437,000
Communists :	252,000
Bourgeois Block :	219,000
Social Democrats :	40,000

The Bulgarian people under Stamboulisky, certainly enjoyed a respite and a period of unusual tranquillity. There were no political murders nor conspiracies and no illegal parties during Stamboulisky's regime.

On the 9th of June, 1923, the bourgeois block, with less than a quarter of the electorate behind it, but supported by the bankers, manufacturers, tobacco merchants and exporters, and the Military League of Reserve Officers known as the "Kubrat," assassinated Stamboulisky and seized power.

Stamboulisky was never a Communist, but he had curtailed the profits of the speculators, bankers, land-sharks and capitalists, taxing them for the benefit of the peasants, of agriculture and education. He humbled the military caste, which was as class-conscious as the Prussian Junker officers. He wanted peace and understanding with neighbouring countries, they wanted preparations for "revanche." By making peace with Serbia and Greece he annoyed the Macedonian mercenaries who had been armed, fed and clothed by all previous Bulgarian Governments, to keep Bulgaria's prestige uppermost in that "Macedoine" of nations.

Stamboulisky aspired to a federation of all the Balkan nations, which should put an end to perpetual wars which benefit only the more powerful States. In such a federation national conflict would disappear, there would be rapid economic development and the Balkan States would no longer be under the influence of rival external powers.

Since the death of Stamboulisky there has been a reign of merciless terror, in which the military clique and Wrangel troops have played the most important part. In September, 1923, the Tzankov Government, which is only the dummy put up by the military Junta which really rules Bulgaria, provoked a premature rising of the peasants and so got a pretext for completely smashing all opposition.

The Co-Operative Society "Osvobozhdenia," with 70,000 members and hundreds of millions of francs in property, was declared illegal and all its property confiscated. Cynically, the magnificent "Co-Op" building in Sofia is now used by the police as what is officially known as the "Bureau of Public Safety," but unofficially as "The Chamber of Horrors"—a title which seems to be justified by what we saw and heard during our visit to Sofia in April.

Massacres have taken place under the Tzankov Government at Lom, Palanka, Phillipopolis, Bajardjik, Samokov, and Sofia. No less than fifteen Members of Parliament, elected to represent workers' or peasants' interests, have been assassinated, some in the streets of Sofia, some actually on leaving the precincts of the Sobranje. According to the estimate of so moderate an observer as Vanderelde, the Belgian Socialist, in the last eighteen months the Tzankov Government has murdered 16,000 of its opponents. The Budget for education and social services has been reduced, schools and colleges have been closed, teachers dismissed.

Can one not be permitted to say that such a Government was asking for trouble, and that in a country living under such conditions with every vestige of public opinion suppressed and long used to the employment of bombs and guns where we in England generally use votes and newspapers, the organisers of the assassination of General Gheorgiev and the bomb outrage in the Cathedral, whether they were prompted by Serbia (as the Bulgarian Government at first suggested) or by the bourgeois Bulgarian politicians, tired of their military masters, or by whomsoever they were instigated, were bound to find fertile soil for their plots?

These attacks were made the excuse for an immediate persecution of the progressive parties, a hunt to the death, by the Fascist Military Officers' League—the Kubrat—by the police and the military, of all the political opponents of the Tzankov Government; who, when they had been killed, are declared to have "committed suicide" or are subsequently proclaimed the authors of the Cathedral outrage. According even to *The Times* correspondent, the spokesman of the most militarist and repressive section of the Government, and on the admission of Tzankov, the Prime Minister himself, 3000 persons have already been arrested, out of a total population of $4\frac{1}{2}$ millions.

Labour in England, as elsewhere, has two tasks before it. First, to use its influence to check the reign of terror and endeavour to save life. Surely there is sufficient international solidarity and sympathy among the workers to permit us to do that. Secondly, we must throw the searchlight of publicity on the attitude of the Labour and Socialist International and the Social Democrats in Bulgaria.

From the very beginning they sided with the militarists who overthrew Stamboulisky, and some of the members of the Social Democratic Party were even concerned in the murder. One need only read the *Bulletin of the Labour and Socialist International*, Volume I., No. 2, April, 1924 :—

“The Social Democratic Party, as such, did not take part in the *coup d'état* ;” (i.e., of June 9th, 1923), but . . . “separate members of the party, it is true, were initiated, as individuals,” And “After the upheaval, the Party administration was not in a position to hold them responsible.”

The Social Democratic Party then participated in the Tzankov Government, receiving one seat out of ten in the Cabinet (the Ministry of Posts and Railways). In the subsequent report of their doings the officials of the Bulgarian Social Democratic Party say :—

“Much was done against our will, against our advice, against our vote ; but . . . We would remind you of our motion in Parliament regarding an enquiry.” (In regard to certain massacres.)

And yet they remained in the Government until February, 1924, giving it their moral support which obscured the issues before the workers and peasants, completely split the Progressive movement throughout the country and enabled the Tzankov military Junta effectively to suppress all opposition and firmly settle themselves in the saddle.

By what words can we describe those who, when workers and peasants were being murdered throughout the country, joined hands with the murderers, gave them the moral assistance of the Social Democratic Party, admitted that wrong was being done, but could only “have a motion in Parliament?”

This so-called Socialist Party, endeavouring to sit on the fence and to be moderate, has come down on the side of reaction, against the workers and peasants. As Colonel Wedgwood has said, titles no longer adequately describe political parties. The Christian Socialists in Austria would have much in common with the Duke of Northumberland ; the Social Democrats in Germany, throughout Central Europe, and in Bulgaria are only mild Liberals, and their fate is the fate of those who hold the Liberal creed—so remote from present-day realities.

Later, after the terrible suppression of the workers and peasants following the rising in September, 1923, the Social Democrats bargained with the other bourgeois parties for an allocation of seats,

and although subsequently they withdrew from participation in the Ministry, they can really only be regarded as a puppet opposition, useful in emergencies for *keeping down* the movement in the country.

Some of the leaders of the Right Wing of the Social Democrats and Agrarians, who have thrown in their lot with Tzankov and now have only a negligible following in the country, complain that their followers have been "seduced by foreign gold"—meaning Moscow. They do not seem to mind the subsidising of the Tzankov military regime by Mussolini's lire and Italian arms; nor the help that they receive from the remnants of Wrangel's troops, whose officers we saw strutting about in Sofia in their Imperial Russian uniform.

Throughout this dark period, a recognised member of the Social Democratic Party has been the official Press propagandist in London on behalf of the Tzankov terrorists. His headquarters are at the Bulgarian Legation. His duty is to whitewash the Bulgarian Government, to counteract all reports of the Fascist terror and, in particular, to use his position as a Social Democrat to keep the eyes of the British and Continental Labour movements shut, and thus to prevent any widespread movement of protest. He does this work well. As a Social Democrat he keeps moving in all Labour circles and has considerable influence with the Labour and Socialist International whose offices are in London, and also with some members of the Joint International Department of the Labour Party.

Lovers of humanity, who desire to save life, who want to put a stop to massacres, who want real democracy in the Balkans and an end to the age-long employment of these small nations as the puppets of international finance, who want, in fact, to see a Balkan Federation of Balkan workers and peasants, must fight against all those who stand with the Tzankov terrorists, even if it necessitates fundamental changes in the constitution of the Labour and Socialist International. We should demand the expulsion of the Bulgarian Social Democratic Party from the Labour and Socialist International, or, alternatively, the withdrawal of the British Labour Party, and see that the eyes of the British Labour movement are open to the dangers which confront us. The Social Democrats in our midst who act as agents for Bulgarian reaction to-day, may be the agents of British reaction to-morrow.

C. L. MALONE.

Are you coming to

COBER HILL (July 4th—11th)
or to WIMEREUX (Aug. 8th—15th) ?

(See page 252.)

THE RETURN TO GOLD

THE new Bill, restoring the Gold Standard, which Mr. Churchill has introduced, marks an important milestone in the post-war history of British capitalism, and, indeed, also of Europe. For some time there has been much controversy as to whether it were best to continue to have a "managed" paper currency, bearing no fixed value-relation to gold and controlled merely by the credit policy of the Bank of England, or for the £ to be tied down to a gold basis by a restoration of the free export of gold? Amid this wordy controversy, now shifted to slightly different ground, the main features of the position, in themselves fairly simple, tend to be obscured; and before one proceeds to the wider political aspects of the question, it is wise first to clarify the essential points.

A country is on a gold standard when its central bank guarantees to buy and sell gold at a certain fixed price in terms of its own money (in England before the war £3 17s. 9d. per ounce troy).^{*} This the new Bill establishes by compelling the Bank of England to give gold bars or ingots for notes—a provision which carries into practice Ricardo's century-old gold ingot plan—and also to give notes in exchange for gold at fixed pre-war rate. This provision effectively ties the value of money to the value of gold. For, if the purchasing-power of money falls (e.g. because of excessive credit issues by the banks raising prices), it will be profitable to change money into gold and send it abroad, since in that way more goods can be purchased. Since the war the paper pound has been *nominally* convertible into gold—you could get gold for it if you demanded it; but the prohibition of export of gold meant that there was no advantage in doing so. On the other hand, if the prohibition of export had been removed before the £ was restored to its pre-war value relatively to gold, gold would have flowed abroad and the Bank of England would have lost its gold reserves. For instance, at the end of March a £ would buy 4.77 dollars. If, however, one had changed a £ into gold and could have exported it to U.S.A., one could have got with the gold \$4.86; and if export had been free, it would have paid merchants and financiers to do

^{*} There is no need for gold to be in actual circulation. In fact, this is impossible at present, since the Bank of England and the Currency Note Department hold only £155,000,000 of gold, while there are £302,000,000 currency notes in circulation, and is prevented by the clause in the new Bill making it obligatory on the Bank to give gold bars for notes, but not necessarily gold coin.

this. Although the Gold Embargo Act does not expire till December, free export is at once restored by the grant of a licence to the Bank to issue gold for export.

To restore the Gold Standard, therefore, either the £ had to be raised in value to reach its pre-war parity with gold, or else there had to be a lowering of the value of gold to meet the depreciated £. Since the war the value of gold has depended on the value of the dollar, since the only important market for gold is the fixed dollar-price at which the American banks buy gold ; and hence, if through a freer issue of credit by the banks prices rose in U.S.A., the buying-power of the dollar fell and with it the value of gold relatively to other things, including the £. Up till March of this year the price-level in U.S.A. was rising, and the value of the dollar and of gold was falling* ; thereby causing the London—New York exchange to go in favour of the pound sterling. In addition, there have been increased investments of American capital in London, and this has had the effect of raising the foreign exchange value of the £ through the increased demand to buy £'s which the American transfer of funds to London has involved. It was on the hope of the continuance of these two movements that English financiers relied for an early restoration of the Gold Standard. And it was to continue the favourable movement of the foreign exchange that the Bank of England on March 5th raised its Rate from 4 to 5 per cent. in answer to the action of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York in raising its Rate from 3 per cent. to 3½.†

Now, this problem of monetary policy is only part of the much wider problem of the struggle of British capitalism for a return to stability and pre-war "progress." Depreciation of money-values, which is shown internally in the price-level and externally in the rates of foreign exchange, is the outward and visible sign of an undue strain placed on the credit system by certain abnormal circumstances—a war or a revolutionary situation or the payment of reparations or foreign debts—which capitalism cannot provide for in any of the ordinary ways. A re-establishment of money-values is only possible after an ending of these abnormal conditions : and if the re-establishment is to take the form of *Deflation*—laboriously reducing the price-level and raising the foreign exchange rate until the old

* Professor Irving Fisher's Index Number shows the following :—

	Prices as per cent. of pre-war.	Purchasing-power of dol- lar in pre-war cents.
1913	100	100
Average, 1924 ..	149.3	67.0
January, 1925 ..	161.9	61.8
March, 1925 (1st week)	164.1	60.9

† Cf. *Notes by the Way* in April PLEBS.

parity is reached—this can only be achieved by an opposite process of a rigorous parsimony in the use of the credit system. Whereas Inflation and monetary depreciation come through a choking of the economic system by over-issue of credit, Deflation can only occur by a *starvation* of the economic system of credit. It is this latter process which the interests of the financial community have dictated for us in the last five years, and which will need to be continued if the sterling exchange is to be kept at parity. But this starvation of credit naturally arouses opposition from the industrialists, who suffer additional losses in face of the falling prices. Accordingly, there is a keen conflict inside British capitalism between the industrialists, on the one hand, as represented by the F.B.I., who desire "easier credit" and a revival of prices, and, on the other hand, the financial interests, as voiced by City Editors and the speeches of bank chairmen, who want to restore the "prestige" of the £ by a return to gold, and so enable London as a financial centre to hold its own against the encroaching influence of Wall Street. Moreover, this conflict is likely to continue after the return to gold, since gold itself may change in value, getting either cheaper or dearer, in part influenced by the credit policy of the U.S.A. banks and hence by the value of the dollar. Whichever alternative occurs will cause fresh controversy to burst forth as to the right credit policy. If gold cheapens and flows into the Bank of England, what is to be done? Is an increased issue of money to be permitted as a result, leading to freer credit conditions and a rise of prices—in a word, Inflation? Or are the bankers to buy up gold at the mint price and merely bury it in their vaults, keeping a tight hold on credit so as to keep down the price-level and buttress up the value of gold, as U.S.A. is doing now? On the other hand, if gold were to become dearer, the English banks would either have to starve industry or credit, and thereby force down the price-level and raise the value of the £, or else see their gold reserves flow abroad where it was worth more.

The other important aspect of the matter is the relation of U.S.A. to Europe. As a condition of remaining on the gold standard the American banks have continued to purchase all gold brought to them at a fixed price in dollars. In the ordinary way an inflow of gold puts more money into circulation (either actual gold or its paper equivalent), and so tends to raise prices. Up to 1920 this actually occurred, prices rising to 247 per cent. above 1913, and the purchasing power of the dollar falling to 40 per cent. of its pre-war value. This was the so-called *gold inflation*. Since then, in New York as in London, the financiers have asserted their power as creditors of the community and have restricted credit, while continuing to buy imported gold freely; and thus by 1922 they had

restored the value of the dollar to 72 per cent. of pre-war. Since then it has again fallen to 60 per cent. The American bankers are, therefore, in a strangely anomalous position. Having invested in huge stocks of gold to the amount of half the world's gold supplies and 80 per cent. of their own deposit liabilities, the banks naturally wish to keep up the value of that investment. At the same time it is a barren investment, yielding no interest, and they can only preserve its value by reducing their income-bearing loans to American industry. What they gain in the stability of their investment they lose in sacrifice of sources of income. This, however, is merely an expression of the fact that American finance-capital, which came out richer from the war while Europe came out poorer, has a large investible surplus of capital, which it is eager to employ in more profitable ways than the absorption of gold. Since her rebuff in 1919 at Versailles America has ignored Europe as too poor, too unstable and too wilful. Now at last, when bankruptcy has put Europe in better mood to accept America's terms, U.S.A. finance has "come back to Europe," as all the Press so jubilantly acclaim. On the monetary side her return has meant the use of her influence, as in the case of Germany and Britain, to induce Europe to restore the Gold Standard and so to open a market for some of America's gold. To provide impoverished Europe with the power to do this, America has had to make extensive investments in Europe. America's condescension once again to aid Europe in her distress, therefore, means that the Federal Reserve Banks can sell some of their superfluous gold again abroad and can turn it into profitable foreign investments. From Europe's point of view it means that stability by a return to gold is being purchased at the expense of an increasing indebtedness to American finance-capital, of which the Dawes Scheme for Germany is merely a first step. The City Editor of *The Manchester Guardian* has, indeed, explained very clearly the essential condition of this new step. In accounting for the recent rise of the £ towards pre-war parity he said :—

Liquid balances normally held in New York were transferred to London, where they derived the benefit of more remunerative employment (because of higher rates on money-loans) . . . ; and there were considerable investments in British stock exchange securities, particularly of the short-term Government bond description. Side by side with this flow of American money for temporary investment in London there began that much larger flow of money destined for more permanent investment in Europe. *The American credits to European states and industries granted mostly after the signing of the London agreement reached enormous figures.* They included the \$100,000,000 reconstruction loan to Germany, the exchange stabilisation loan of similar amount to France, a \$30,000,000 loan to Belgium, loans to Greece and Hungary, to French railway companies, to the German potash industry and to Krupps, to mention only a few. The aggregate sum represented by these various credit operations it is not easy to compute even approximately, but it *must*

run into thousands of millions of dollars. . . . A large part of the proceeds of the credits must have been remitted in the first instance to London " (M.G.C. Comm., Review of 1924, Jan. 29th, 1925).

The raising of the English Bank Rate in March to 5 per cent., as a step in the policy of a return to gold, is a graphic expression of the new phase in world capitalism which Mr. Ramsay Macdonald and his London agreement has introduced. High interest rates in Europe are the only way in which the funds can be attracted from America for investment in restoring Europe to stability. By virtue of thus attracting American capital and by restricting bank-credits, England is able at present to combine a favourable movement of the exchange with a growing excess of imports of goods over exports. Sooner or later, however, funds will have to flow back to U.S.A. as interest payment on the investments; and this will reverse the present tendency, and make imports dear and exchange rates unfavourable. It has been estimated, in fact, that the present level of the exchange, which has moved towards the parity of £1 — \$4.86 since Mr. Churchill's announcement, shows an over-valuation of the £—i.e., an excess over its *internal purchasing power*—of 5 to 6 per cent. Therefore, to maintain the exchange at this level, when the temporary influences of investment-buying and speculative buying of sterling have ceased, the *internal purchasing-power* of the £ will have to be *raised* this 5 or 6 per cent. by a further process of deflation. To this end the Bank Rate will have to be raised and kept high and industry starved of credit still further, until industry has been forced to adjust itself to production at a lower price-level by a reduction of wages. "Stabilisation," therefore, is only purchased by a lowering of the European standard of life; and the ability of the financial houses of London to compete with Wall Street is only purchased at the cost of making it harder for the industrial capitalists to compete in the world's markets, and by prolonging trade depression and unemployment.

This partial restoration of equilibrium does not, it is clear, mark a return of European capitalism to "normal" pre-war conditions of capitalist progress and expansion. What is gained by temporary stability is lost in standards of life, loss of investing power, and foreign markets. European capitalism will no longer be able to appease her wage-slaves by concessions of "reforms" or to talk with anything but shifting uneasiness of an "era of glorious progress." To stave off revolution, capitalism will have to employ naked dictatorship or else make use of the social-democrats and reformists to beguile the workers. Already we see Europe having to yield ground in order to retain the "good pleasure" of America. France for the first time had to bend her wishes before the adamant desires of J. P. Morgan's at the London Conference (hailed by

Mr. Snowden, etc., as a victory for "reason" 1). Now we see Britain yielding her majority share in the oil resources of Mesopotamia in favour of Standard Oil.

But politically the new stage is by no means marked by a sinking of conflicts. There are various levels of indebtedness, involving complications pregnant with disagreements. France is creditor of Germany while being debtor to America. British capitalism regards itself as being as much a creditor of Europe as U.S.A., and would rebut the suggestion that she was a part of bankrupt and debtor Europe in bonds to America. Many, indeed, seem to claim for her partnership with America in the exploitation of the rest of the world. Whether Britain and France will severally court the alliance of U.S.A. against the other, or whether in the end both will combine to bargain collectively with the common creditor, it is hard at present to say. Britain, at any rate, restored to the safety of a Conservative cabinet, is unlikely to yield place further without a struggle to maintain its position by intensive Imperial development. Albania and the Balkans—Turkey, Syria and Iraq—Morocco and Tunis—China—even still the Ruhr and the Saar—these all summon before our mind danger spots as sensitive as any between 1900 and 1914. While, therefore, the "return to gold" is the outward symbol of the ending of the immediate chaos after the war, it does not mark a return to the upward path of capitalist development. It marks a return to 1914 only in the sense of a continuance of the "skin game" of imperialist conflicts.

MAURICE DOBB.

A LION AT BAY

We published last month a fairly full—and scrupulously fair—"summing-up," by Maurice Dobb, of the questions at issue between Trotsky and other leaders of the Russian Communist Party. In the following article Philips Price quite frankly takes the Trotsky side in the dispute.

AMONG the Bolshevik Old Guard there is one who has for some months past been carrying on an unequal fight against a group of persons at the present time controlling the destinies of the Communist International and of Russia. Only garbled versions of the truth have come to the West. His enemies at home have seen to that, and the enemies of the Russian Revolution have seen to it outside Russia. The man's name is Leon Trotsky, the founder of the Red Army, a lion of the Russian

Revolution but a wounded one, fighting at bay with his back to the wall against former comrades in arms. That is the tragic setting of this drama of inner Russian revolutionary history. And we are indebted to Max Eastman* for lifting some of the veil of mystery that has covered this particular phase of contemporary Russian history.

The author is a keen sympathiser with the lion and in this book is striking effective blows at those who are baiting him. He makes no pretence at giving the point of view of the baiters and is only concerned with saving the lion's skin. And he certainly presents a very strong case; all the more so because he does not allow the conflict of political personalities to dominate his story entirely. Although this certainly does take up the major portion of his book, he apologetically refers in one of his last chapters to the probable impatience of his Marxian reader, who will want to know what are the class dynamics and economic forces which lie behind this conflict within the revolutionary ranks. And the three chapters at the end of the book are certainly the most interesting, for they make some attempt to analyse the deeper policies of the leaders of the Soviet Union of which the personal animosities are only the outer cover.

One is loath to comment on what is after all an internal affair of the Russian Communist Party, but the fact remains that the Russian Revolution and the safety of the Soviet Union is of such vast importance to Socialism throughout the world and to the human race in general that we cannot help being interested when the Titans of that Revolution start abusing and fighting each other. Although we have, most of us, learnt to discount fully 90 per cent. of the Russian revolutionary jargon, one cannot fail to see grave dangers to the Soviet Union if this quarrel is not healed, and for that reason the workers in Western Europe have the very greatest interest in seeing that it is healed, and in assisting the process by at least sympathetic understanding.

Max Eastman's story begins at Lenin's deathbed. This incomparable intellectual giant evidently had a foreboding of dangers that might threaten after his death, which he knew was coming soon. The author brings, as it seems, pretty strong evidence to support the view that Lenin saw in Trotsky the only man who could succeed him. When stricken with his last illness he had designated him to oppose on his behalf the policies of the other members of the government who were toying with the idea of compromising over State monopoly of foreign trade and who were not sufficiently conciliatory to the

* *Since Lenin Died*, by Max Eastman (Labour Publishing Company, 2s. 6d. and 4s.).

nationalist tendencies of the Caucasian Soviet republics. Moreover Chapter III. gives a summary of the much-discussed "Testament of Lenin." No one has apparently seen this letter, which was written by Lenin on his deathbed to the Congress of the Communist Party in April, 1923, except Lenin's wife and the Triumvirate who through the Politburo control the destinies of the Party and through it of Russia. The Triumvirate (Stalin, Zinovieff and Kameneff) felt themselves strong enough to defy Lenin's and his wife's wish that this letter should be read out to the Congress. So it was suppressed, and when one reads the summary in Chapter III. one can understand the motive for its suppression. For Lenin was nothing if not direct, and his views about Stalin, Zinovieff, Kameneff and Bucharin are not complimentary. About Trotsky he says that "in spite of his too great self-confidence he is a devoted revolutionist and *the outstanding member of the Central Committee of the Party.*" (Italics mine.)

Lenin saw the danger of a huge Party machine, like that of an American election boss, controlling all departments of government. The individuals running this machine would be sure to acquire an interest in their position. Max Eastman puts it well when he says: "As Marxists we are accustomed to explain the nobility attributed to families with an heroic past as an ideology. The real basis of their nobility, we explain, is economic. Within the Russian Communist Party the situation is reversed. There is no economic basis or nobility. *The ideology is all there is*, and the present value of the heroic past is accordingly defended with exaggerated violence." One might also say that there is a danger that a party machine even in a Socialistic State could get out of touch with the masses. It has certainly been the case with the Social-Democratic Party machine of Germany. Party officials are apt to acquire a corporate mentality which is not entirely unconnected with economic interest, however unconscious it may be. The Bolshevik Old Guard, being merely human, is in this respect no exception to the rule. Stagnation in the body of a bureaucracy and the absence of fresh blood coming in from below is, on the Marxian assumption, liable to create stagnation in ideas. It was the basis of Lenin's teaching of Marx that a Socialist and revolutionary party must be flexible and ever ready in its methods and tactics to meet any given situation in world politics that may confront it. And here, as Eastman puts it, the Bolshevik Old Guard were in danger of "inculcating, in place of the flexible and concrete realistic thinking of Lenin, a bigoted religious devotion to a supposed abstract canon of Leninism."

Trotsky's offence is that, being of the Old Guard, he has nevertheless kept himself free from that mental conservatism, which, one may say with some truth, becomes in time part of the "insolence of

office." As Trotsky said in his book, *The New Course*, which was suppressed by the Triumvirate :—

Where tradition is conservative, there discipline is passive and is violated at the first shock. Where, as in our party, tradition consists of the highest revolutionary activity, there discipline attains the highest intensity, for its deciding significance is continually verified in practice. Hence the indissoluble union between revolutionary initiative and iron discipline in action. Only through the highest activity can the young man receive that tradition of discipline from the old.

This was a clear hint to the Old Guard that they must allow more freedom of discussion in the ranks of the Party on all topics of general interest—Russian and international. It was a hint to them to realise that "packed" congresses were out of place and that a certain healthy democracy, not bourgeois, but proletarian democracy, was essential for the well-being of any party. And this has been Trotsky's capital crime. He made a tactical mistake, as Eastman admits, when he sent that letter to his party branch in Moscow, expatiating on the agreement which he had made with the Central Committee on "workers' democracy in the Party," at a time when silence would have been better advised. But he said nothing in that letter which was not contained in the agreement. He said nothing in his subsequent books and pamphlets which did more than "remind 18,000 revolutionary officials, in many of whom the habits of a superior caste were beginning to rigidify, that a revolutionary aristocracy is not hereditary."

There can be little doubt—and Eastman's book goes a long way to confirm one in this conviction—that many of the unfortunate false steps of the Communist International, which Western Socialists have had experience of in recent years in the realm of international politics, is in no small measure due to the crustification of a revolutionary aristocratic caste in Moscow, which shows itself entirely out of touch not only with its own rank and file at home but with the peculiar problems of the class struggle in Western Europe and America. It is against this danger that Trotsky has dared to speak and in consequence has let lose a whirlwind. "Instead of welcoming such a direct and honest confrontation of realities of the situation, the defenders of 'Leninism' preferred to wrap themselves up in a new and perfected series of ideological distortions of reality, lies and rationalisations, so extreme that it is almost impossible for a man in his right mind to read them." This has taken the form of the grossest misrepresentation of Trotsky. Some of the things that Eastman tells are almost unbelievable, but his presence in Russia during this period and his intimate knowledge of the subject at least compel attention. The whole apparatus of the Party has been set at work to suppress his works, distort his meanings and rake up old

disputes. It is true, of course, that in exile after the abortive Revolution of 1906 Lenin had strong differences of opinion with Trotsky about the possibilities of working with some of the more progressive elements of the Mensheviks. It is true that Trotsky was in these days the protagonist of the idea of the "permanent revolution," by which he meant that the peasants would desert the revolution in the early stages and that the urban workers would have to bear the sole burden of the dictatorship. Nevertheless Trotsky's attitude towards the peasants is seen in a different light in Eastman's book. I had always understood him to have been against Lenin's concessions to the peasantry in principle, but Eastman assures us that "Trotsky regards the recent concessions made to the peasants as an expedient, the necessity of which is to be regretted. He is ready to take such steps and still further ones, if it becomes necessary to save the revolution, but only after every effort has been made to meet the demands of the peasants by developing and organising and speeding up the industries which produce the goods they need." If this is so, I think there can be little doubt that Trotsky has modified his attitude towards the peasants in recent years.

Perhaps the worst misrepresentation of Trotsky's outlook is over the prospects of the world revolution. He sees plainly that world capitalism has succeeded in gaining for itself a breathing space in Western and Central Europe and is on the up-grade in America. "America," he says, "has put Europe on short rations." "Trotsky demands that the party shall aggressively attack the work of the Communist construction in Russia while waiting and preparing for the real development of revolutions elsewhere. The Triumvirate are content to hold the power in Russia, while satisfying their revolutionary dispositions and professional habits with abstract agitatorial gesticulations in the International." That, no doubt, largely explains the barrage of "advice" which the Western Socialist parties get periodically on how to tackle the class problems in their countries from people who, in Trotsky's view, ought to be concentrating on their task of Socialist reconstruction in Russia, which is still far from completion.

All this will teach us to see our Russian comrades in a human light, and not with halos round their heads issuing Bulls and Pronunciamentos on the Gospel according to St. Lenin. It is well that we should see them in this light and we must not think any the worse of them for it. And after all there is hope that this crisis will be successfully overcome. Trotsky is not alone. He has thousands of supporters in Russia. Indeed there are men in high positions in Soviet Russia who agree with him and others who, while not agreeing, see his point of view. It may seem strange to say so, but I have reason to believe that one of the members of the

Triumvirate is in the latter category. A bitter anti-Trotskyite is known to have been rebuked recently at a meeting of Party functionaries in Moscow, for having cast doubts on Trotsky's good faith, by none other than Stalin himself. That able Georgian revolutionary is by common consent one of the big minds in Russia to-day and head and shoulders above his two colleagues on the Triumvirate, with one of whom particularly he is not on very good terms. I have reason to know, moreover, that he is not in agreement with the policy of heresy-hunting which has been going on at high pressure in the German Communist Party against all who do not admit that the Revolution in Germany in October, 1923, was an immediately practical proposition.

It is the duty of Western Socialists to show our Russian comrades that our problems and their problems are not the same, and that ours are not made lighter because they pretend that they are like the walls of Jericho and can be made to fall down by a blast of violently worded theses from Moscow. As far as they are concerned, the consolidation of a Workers' and Peasants' State over one-sixth of the earth's surface, with land and principal industries nationalised, is the greatest work for the world revolution that they can possibly achieve.

M. PHILIPS PRICE.

“DAISY, DAISY”

BY the time this is read Empire Day oratory will have exhausted itself. No doubt the same stock phrases about “a Commonwealth of Nations, a great fraternity of peoples and a world-wide peace-loving partnership” will have been used to cloak up the reality. During the year the Egyptians in particular have appreciated “the spirit of free and tolerant co-operation” mentioned in the King's first Wembley speech, and realised afresh how, in the words of Mr. S. M. Bruce, the Australian politician, “the British race nurtured in Liberty governs by consent.” Indians no doubt still pay “the glad allegiance” preached about by the Archbishop of Canterbury on May 24th, and enforced by memories of Amritsar. The colossal contrast between the Empire in theory and in practice still remains.

Meantime, British Imperialists are undertaking propaganda on a wider scale than hitherto. One branch of their activities is the Empire Day Movement. Its motto is *One King, One Flag, One Fleet, One Empire*; and its flower, the daisy. Its advice is “See that every British child over whom you have influence, learns the ‘Empire Catechism’ the National Anthem, the ‘Flag of Britain’ (Leaflet No. 1) and the Empire Songs by heart, *as part of the History*

and Geography lessons. Agitate until every school possesses a full sized Flagstaff and 'Union Jack,' a Portrait of the King, observes 'Empire Day' annually . . . See that in schools the 'Union Jack' be ceremoniously hoisted and saluted by both boys and girls, the 'Empire Catechism' recited, and the National Anthem and 'Empire Songs' sung on the King's Birthday, on 'Empire Day' and on such other notable dates as may be considered desirable."

As this happy little body according to its balance sheet has well over £2000 to spare (despite the fact that the Earl of Meath the vice-chairman has not paid his sub. for 1924), Labour members on Education Committees are warned in advance against the goose step educationists. 125,000 copies of the *Weekly Bulletin of Empire Study* were used in the schools last year and over one and a half millions of children between eleven and sixteen years are estimated to have received "these lessons of Empire."

Among "the blatant evils" which detract from the honour and glory of Empire are listed: "Ignorance of the history and condition of the peoples of the Empire . . . class hatred . . ." We find examples of the former combined with a lack of humour in the official statement—"the British Empire is the true League of Nations and is the greatest power for civilisation and moral good in the world next to the Christian Church. It is the most beneficent Empire the world has ever seen."

These are the dangerous lies whose harvest will be the shattered flesh and blood of British workers. We may as yet only be Davids, but let our stones be sharp and our aim sure!

M. S.

New "Plebs" Pamphlet
Ready June 12th

THE BANKS & THE WORKERS

*By Arthur Woodburn (Edinburgh
District, Scottish Lab. Coll.)*

24 pp. Pictorial cover. Price 4d.

Per 12, postpaid 3s. 3d.

This pamphlet is an expansion of the articles contributed by Com. Woodburn to The PLEBS last year under the title "Banks and Tanks." It explains the mechanism of Banks and Banking in simple terms and from the working-class point of view. It will form an admirable introductory 'textbook-in-little' for Economics Classes.

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

NOTES BY THE WAY

for Students and Tutors.

Gold Supplies

THE OBSERVER recently gave some interesting figures of the existing world stocks of gold. The following table gives the figures (in millions of dollars) for the principal countries now and in 1913.

	Dec. 1913.	Mar. 1925.
France	806	1070
Italy	234	173
Belgium	59	65
Germany	344	239
Netherlands	64	201
Sweden	28	62
Bank of England ..	150	743
Federal Reserve Banks of U.S.A.	399	2885

TOTAL EUROPEAN

HOLDINGS (other than England) .. 2122 2430.5

The great increase in the stocks of gold, together with the diminished demand for gold for monetary purposes, explains why gold has fallen in value by about 60 per cent. compared with commodities in general. The figures explain, too, America's desire to sell some of her barren investment to Europe.

Douglas Again

Mr. Oswald Mosley is the latest to be bitten with the Douglas germ—or by something very much akin. And he is shortly going to launch upon the Labour movement in Birmingham a new scheme for solving all our difficulties by Inflation. The scheme seems to be this (and it is no parody we are giving!):—The State is to make up the difference between existing wages and a decent living wage by a certain amount, which for our present purpose we will call x . To obtain the money the Government borrows by a Ways and Means Advance from the Bank of England—in other words it produces Inflation to the extent of x . This Inflation raises prices by x , and this stimulates trade and increases employers' profits by x . The Government then proceeds to place an 85 per cent. tax

on profits, so as to avoid the need for further Inflation, i.e., it raises tax-revenue to the amount of 85 per cent. x . The net result of this wonderful scheme seems to be that the workers are in precisely the same position as before, because, although money wages have risen by x , prices have risen by x . On the other hand, the Government appears to be worse off by 15 per cent. x , and the employers better off by 15 per cent.!

But what is all this talk about Inflation, anyhow? someone will ask. It does certainly seem to be true that trade and employment is brisk at times of free credit and inflation; and perhaps there is something in it as a remedy! The small grain of truth behind all this "Credit-reform" talk is no more than this. What makes capitalists happy and causes them to be brisk and busy is the chance of making a fair profit. Profit is the surplus or difference between their selling-price and their cost. Inflation, by raising prices faster than wages and other costs can catch up, enlarges profits and so gives a stimulus to trade and production; and so, at a time when selling-prices are rather low relatively to costs, a little inflation may restore profits again and bring a trade revival without the need for the rather difficult and bothering job of lowering money-wages and other costs. But the Inflation cannot go on for ever. It must stop some time. Then over-production and the usual features of an industrial crisis are discovered; and the ensuing trade depression is all the more severe because the previous "boom" and resulting over-production has been so large. Moreover, rising prices mean falling real wages! Capitalists are saved the trouble of a frontal attack on money wages; they reduce real wages by a more subtle and "backstair" means—inflation and rising prices! All these Inflationist and Credit schemes are merely ways of exploiting the popular ignorance about credit and the sense of mystery surrounding it. They are

serious dangers to the Labour movement because they lead it away from reality—from the struggle for power—and lead it rambling after will-o'-the-wisps. It is essentially the petit-bourgeois mind, full of superstition and longing for a simple and effortless key to the millennium, which runs after these things; as the love of the Birmingham shopkeepers for Attwood's fantasies during the Chartist period illustrates so well. Will Birmingham Labour let history repeat itself?

The German Worker under Dawes

The Manchester Guardian of February 21st gave some interesting figures of taxation at present in Germany. The following table, which is in percentages, and covers 85 per cent. of the whole, shows the distribution of the tax burden:—

	Per cent.
Turnover tax on sales ..	26
Customs and taxes on consumption	21.5
10 per cent. tax on wages ..	18.5
Tax on pre-paid incomes ..	11.7
Taxes on fortunes (including death duties) ..	7.5

The first two of these will fall in the main on wage-earners and the lower middle class as consumers. The exact scope of the fourth is rather hard to discover, but it seems to fall chiefly on salary-earners. Taxes on the rich compose the ridiculous figure of 7.5, which is no more than two-fifths of the direct tax levied on wage-earners! In all, probably more than 60 per cent. and perhaps as much as 70 per cent. of the taxes fall on the workers and lower middle class! Nor is this the whole of the picture. For, out of this money the Government has recently been paying £35,500,000 in "compensation" to Ruhr industrialists, and this in addition to special loans and relief from taxation and other privileges during the Ruhr occupation!

Marx killed Again!

Dr. A. Shadwell is still pursuing his task of exposing the revolutionary movement in Great Britain, which he began anonymously in *The Times* during the War. If the publishers of his latest effort *The Socialist Movement* will forward a review copy we promise to deal with it faithfully.

This little extract will give some idea of how he has proved Marx wrong:—

"There has been a levelling up at one end and a levelling down at the other. It stares one in the face in visible matters of the first importance—houses, clothes and locomotion. Perhaps the first affords the most striking object lesson. No one to-day dreams of building a Blenheim, a Chatsworth or a Castle Howard; and no one builds such cottages for labourers as represented the other end of the scale when the palaces were reared. As for clothes, it is no longer possible, as it used to be, to distinguish classes by clothes, masculine or feminine. And locomotion. In the happy days before the arrival of modern capitalism only the rich could travel at all; everyone else was limited to walking. Now all use the same conveyances; the only appreciable difference between first and third class on the railways is the relative amount of space, and if capitalists dash about by road in their own cars, the proletariat do the same in char-à-bancs."

If this bat-eyed professor can spare an afternoon we can take him to a disused military prison whose cells with their tiny high windows are used by families. And this within a stone's throw of Buckingham Palace itself! We can show mews in which workers have been forced to live. It is true the squire does not now build a baronial hall, but the great financial corporations rear huge edifices even when building labour is supposed to be too scarce to build houses.

Evidently in the matter of clothes, Dr. Shadwell does not read his own kept press by which we are told of an Ascot Week in which two and three millions are spent in as many days, partly in costly undress.

"The relative amount of space" is a delightful phrase. Its author can never have stood in any of the great stations during the rush hours—twenty stuffed into a carriage in order to be at the office in time to pile up profits for those who will eagerly believe his nonsense. For a crowded hour (of a short holiday without pay) workers are packed like sardines into an excursion train or a "sharry" and lo! class distinction has disappeared in travel!

We pick at random from the advts. of the very paper from which our quotation is made: a gentleman's house for £2500, a cheap new car for £765, a bargain lady's coat for the races at 13½ guineas. The farm labourer receiving 25s. to 30s., the miner and the engineer on 50s. a week and the million odd unemployed will rush to buy and prove how correctly this specimen of the University vintage has examined facts.

Practical Internationalism

An Esperanto class of postal workers run by Division I., N.C.L.C., after a six months course is now in constant communication with a group of colleagues in Samara. Photographs and details of working conditions have been exchanged. Let this practice but develop, and the Postal International will achieve a reality which could never be attained by contact between leaders *via* interpreters at occasional conferences. The weekly lessons in *The Post*, *Railway Review*, and the *Assurance Agents Chronicle*, in addition to the official use of Esperanto by the International Transport Federation and the proposal of the Postal International to support *La Interligilo* financially, are encouraging signs that Labour is not going to limit the development of the necessary international viewpoint to Mayday festivals. Our readers have probably noted the Manifesto issued by B.L.E.S. and signed by many prominent Trade Union leaders. Regularly details concerning the N.C.L.C. are broadcasted in the world workers' weekly *Sennaciulo*.

Ni Legu!

The above cannot be too highly recommended to N.C.L.C. classes needing reading material. Amongst its contents are exceedingly good translations of Heine's impressive poem *The Red Weavers*, the *International*—with whose full text in English our comrades are not yet sufficiently familiar—and Dostoevski's *The Search of the Devil*, in which the latter compels a fat priest to acknowledge that the workers are *now* in hell. The wit and wisdom of many ages and many lands have been collected and combined with original Esperanto writings to make an ideal first reading book for those who believe not only in Esperanto but in

the revolutionary mission of the working class. Send 2s. to B.L.E.S., 13, Dewsbury Road, N.W. 10. Barbusse's *Eklumo en Abismo* (1s. 9d.) and *La Komunista Manifesto* (6d.) are also worth attention.

Who Controls?

Apparently Mr. Runciman is still determined to prove that there are an increasing number of capitalists. According to him, 275,413 shareholders hold the £60,500,000 of paid-up capital of the Big Five banks and have a nominal average holding of £219 for each. He no doubt will next prove that a flea is a weighty animal by averaging out its weight with an elephant. However, amusement should not blind us to the strong appeals now being made to the small investor and the attempt to encourage employes to take up shares in "their" business. We note that the National City Bank and the United Steel Corporation of the U.S. boast of 8000 and 150,000 shareholders respectively. Naturally they do not explain that if the controlling few have no more than 30 per cent. of the shares of a concern they can do as they like in the running of it.

WHAT A TEACHER THINKS

of *The PLEBS* "*Outline of Economic Geography*" :—

"It is my unfortunate lot to be a college-trained certificated teacher. A friend, knowing my interest in geography and history, showed me your *Outline of Economic Geography*, and I was delighted with the *plan* of it and the *aim* with which it was written. In my world one is allowed to take scholars up the hillside, but as soon as one gets them near the peak—where the view opens out—the 'blinkers' are put on, and they must be left to stumble along as best they can.

"I congratulate you on the production of such a cheap and much-needed book. People like me have had to pay heavily for geography books containing mountains of costly nonsense from the workers' point of view."

LETTERS

Our post-bag is unusually full this month. But in view of the interest and importance of the questions discussed by our correspondents we need make no apology for devoting more space than usual to their letters.

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

DEAR COMRADE,—It appears that for Mr. Highton's benefit I have to repeat that N.C.L.C. tutors do not lecture for the W.E.A., and if his second paragraph means anything it supplies an additional proof of the fact. It may be that in a few odd cases N.C.L.C. tutors have taken a W.E.A. class, but I do not know of any instance, and would be glad to have particulars in order to endeavour to put matters right.

What the late John MacLean may or may not have done a number of years ago does not affect my statement.

Yours fraternally,

J. P. M. MILLAR,
General Secretary.

DEAR COMRADE,—In your May issue, Mr. H. Highton, of the W.E.A., makes a statement about me and an invitation given me by the Glasgow W.E.A. to act as a tutor. He asserts that I refused, though previously at a meeting of the Glasgow Trades and Labour Council I had challenged the W.E.A. to invite a class-conscious Socialist to conduct one of their classes.

This is untrue, and Mr. Highton must know it is untrue, if he or the Glasgow W.E.A. Secretary, Mr. McPhun, has any memory or keeps a correspondence file. I did not refuse, as the enclosed letters show. I am still waiting for a reply to my last letter dated 1st August, 1924.

The terms of that letter and their not replying to it prove completely the character of the W.E.A., and the sort of education they want to give to the workers.

Yours, out and out for the Plebs position,

J. HARRISON MAXWELL
(Tutor in English and Public Speaking, Glasgow Labour College).

The letter to which Com. Maxwell refers above was written on August 1st last, in reply to an invitation from Mr.

T. R. McPhun (hon. sec. Glasgow W.E.A.), to act as tutor of a W.E.A. Literature class. The following is a copy:—

DEAR COMRADE,—Your letter came as a great surprise to me. I had imagined that you and most of your E.C. would have been aware of my activities as a propagandist for, and tutor in, the Scottish Labour College, and of my consequent opposition to the W.E.A. I know that your organising secretary, Herbert Highton, is in no doubt as to them.

Believing as a Marxian that there can be no "middle way" between the workers' point of view and the capitalists', in education as in politics, I cannot consistently accept a post as tutor in the W.E.A.

If, knowing this, your members are still prepared to invite me to conduct a class in English Literature, I would ask you to make application to the E.C. of the Scottish Labour College for their consideration of such an arrangement, and I shall abide by their decision.

I have only made this last reservation on account of a challenge I made some months ago at a meeting of Glasgow Trades and Labour Council, at which Mr. Highton was presiding.

Yours sincerely,

J. HARRISON MAXWELL.

AN "OLD PLEB" EXPLAINS THE "NEW NEWBOLD"

DEAR COMRADE,—Had your attack on myself not been directed against one who, until his resignation from the Executive on grounds that have, as you are well aware, nothing to do with Plebs policy, but personal commitments of no public concern, was regarded as an "old Pleb," I should have been at a loss to understand the reason for "this gas attack."

Whilst desiring to see established in this country a vigorous but *absolutely independent* Labour movement,

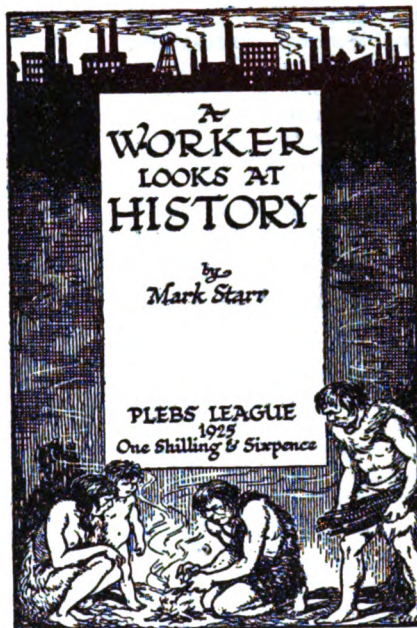
wedded neither to camouflaged Communism nor open-mouthed MacDonaldism, and always anxious that the Plebs League should encourage the formation of a *bona fide* "Left," I have viewed with the same growing dissatisfaction as many others, who believe that Working-Class Education should be both Independent and Marxist, the tendency to weaken on fundamentals and to become insistent upon non-essentials.

I prefer, subject to certain modifications in method of presentation, the old curriculum of the Labour College to the superficialities of its higher and University trained critics. I view with profound uneasiness the relaxation of vigilance on Marxist and Dietzgenist theory that accompanies the watchful insistence on accepting a specific application of that theory (greatly diluted) in practice.

It is an unmitigated innuendo—not far removed in fact from a frigid and calculated lie—to write as if my "recent attacks on a 'Left' policy in British Labour politics" were an attack on Leftism as such. I am hostile to the Communist Party intrigue that I know to be the real explanation of the temporary and sweet seeming reasonableness of Mr. Tomskey. I was present at innumerable discussions concerning the tactics necessary to inveigle the Hicks and Maxton types of industrial and political leaders into movements that would in the eyes of the masses commit them to Moscow, and would enable the disciplined members of the Communist Party to use them as recruiting sergeants.

Gradually, the scales fell from my glamour-smitten eyes and I saw how this system of Unity Movements, Relief Committees, Class War Defence Organisations, National Minority and National Unemployed Committees all shuts, like a telescope, around the co-optive central executive of the Communist International. I saw the twin frauds of "democratic" centralism and the "united" front, not from their stucco fronts and as far off as so many of you do, but behind the scenes where the wires laced and the levers were pulled.

The "Left" is a marionette theatre wherein Wilkinson, Horrabin, Hicks, Hutchinson and Cook are manipulated



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by those who have observed their predilections, antipathies, sentimentalities and simplicities, as well as their brilliances.

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I have said it before and I say it again that the Communist International welcomes and encourages the confusion in the minds of Plebs which keeps you immobilised as an independent force. You but serve their ends for the moment. Before very long the string will go taut and you (who honestly left the Communist Party) will look a lonely lot of loonies!

Yours fraternally,

J. T. WALTON NEWBOLD.

[The PLEBS is perverted. The "Left" is loony. The Communists are crooks. The MacDonalldites are mutts. In fact, it seems clearly to be a case of "All the regiment's out of step except our Walton"—Ed., PLEBS.]



An anonymous correspondent sends us this pictorial comment, inspired by certain of J. T. W. N.'s recent utterances. We print it not only

for its own intrinsic interest, but also because we feel that our correspondence columns would be much brightened if our readers took to expressing themselves in this way.

THE T.U.C. SCHEME

DEAR COMRADE,—On behalf of the London Labour College Students, I should like to express an opinion on the proposed T.U.C. Educational Scheme, which resolves itself into a "coalition" between the Workers' Educational Association and the National Council of Labour Colleges.

The principles of *Independent Working-Class Education* have been maintained as a result of a series of hard-won battles. Now, in order to get the support of the T.U.C., it is proposed to enter into a "coalition" with the W.E.A.

The Editorial Notes of the May number of *The PLEBS*, while making some qualifications, seem to face both ways. If certain "ifs" were agreed upon, the editor is prepared to recommend the Scheme. He does not take the Scheme as it is and pronounce judgment, for the simple reason that *The PLEBS* would be forced (if it intends being consistent) to condemn it.

The arguments of Comrade George Hicks in the same number are far from being convincing. No one denies that it is necessary for the N.C.L.C. to get the support of the T.U.C., but this necessity has always existed. Our comrade declares that "we must be careful of becoming Ishmaelites in regard to this educational work and policy," but we should like to suggest to Comrade Hicks that rejection of this Scheme does not necessarily mean that we shall become "Ishmaelites." Although the N.C.L.C. has not been "officially recognised" by the T.U.C., it has been in closer contact with the rank and file than even the members of the T.U.C. General Council. While the N.C.L.C. maintains this contact there is no fear of becoming Ishmaelites. The increasing influence of the Labour Colleges among the rank and file clearly shows that we have hitherto pursued a correct policy. To abandon that policy and compromise our principles in order to get the support of the T.U.C. would be a disastrous step.

The argument that we should strive

for unity because of the movement towards unity in the Trade Union movement stands on a very shaky foundation. After all, there is a difference between abstract unity and real, concrete unity. The miners, engineers, railwaymen and transport workers are striving for unity upon a fighting basis; but Comrade Hicks is asking for an ideal unity with no basis. The movement towards International Trade Union Unity is going forward on the basis of the class struggle in practice, but the class struggle is not even theoretically accepted in this Scheme.

We find it very hard to agree with Comrade Hicks when he says "we shall have full right of criticism," for Clause 3 (a) of the Agreement, which states that one of the duties of the Joint Committee will be to "avoid conflict between the various bodies in giving effect to the educational policy of Congress" will be taken full advantage of by the numerous opponents of the Labour College Movement. We shall be in a ridiculous position when we find ourselves co-operating with those whom we formerly accused of teaching orthodox theories and thus, consciously or unconsciously, becoming the hirelings of capitalist rulers by confusing the minds of the workers.

At least, the students at present in residence at the London Labour College have no intention of compromising themselves. For that reason, we have frankly outlined our position in the matter after considering all that can be said in favour of the Scheme.

On behalf of the Students,

IDRIS COX,

Students' Secretary.

[We are glad to print this letter, because we feel that every possible point of view in relation to the T.U.C. Scheme should have full expression. We agree with a good deal of what the writer says; and if we thought that the limited amount of "co-operation" envisaged by the Scheme meant any-

thing like "coalition" with the W.E.A., we should wholeheartedly oppose it.

But, so long as the N.C.L.C. keeps its organisation intact, and so long as the rights of full and free criticism and of propaganda are safeguarded, we do not think that any "compromise of principles" is involved. It will be up to all I.W.C.E.ers, by patient and persistent propaganda, and by careful explanation of just what the Scheme really involves, to see that the minds of the workers are *not* confused. Let us leave W.E.A.ers to talk of "coalition"; our task is to point out that the Scheme means nothing of the sort. —Ed., PLEBS.]

"THE THIRD" AND FASCISM

DEAR COMRADE EDITOR,—I was not aware that I flung abuse at R. W. P., for whom I have much personal respect; my intention in fact being to protest against his abuse of the R.I.L.U. being passed off as legitimate criticism. He complains that I did not reply to his criticism. Personally I cannot see precisely what there is positive in his review in question, to which reply can be made, apart from the general implication that the Muscovites are knaves and fools. The chief "criticism" seems merely to be:— (a) That the R.I.L.U. did not "unite ginger groups, etc., in a common policy"; (b) That it attacked the right-wing leaders and the Amsterdam policy; (c) That it was not successful in "securing the lead" from the Right leaders; (d) That it "weakened Amsterdam's membership and its hold on the loyalty of the rank and file"; and (e) as a result frightened the Right into expelling numerous Communists and splitting the unions. One may reply: Is not (a) precisely what the Minority Movement is trying to do? Does R. W. P. mean to infer that (b) and (d) are undesirable? If so, let him say so frankly, and then we shall know

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that his criticism is that the R.I.L.U. did not capitulate to the Right. That (c) and (e) are regrettable is undeniable; that they are essentially connected with Moscow's way of doing its business is simply "Not Proven" by Postgate's *post hoc ergo propter hoc* argument; and it is a new principle in our movement that the lack of success of a Left movement is sufficient reason to attack it and clamour for its decease. If Postgate has some Odyssean "wile" to steal the lead from Amsterdam by the rear, while covering them with flatteries in front, let him "out" with it, and then we can judge how much his criticism is worth.

May I, further, "butt in" on the R. W. P.—L. W. controversy with some facts culled in a recent visit to Italy? R. W. P. desires and considers possible a union of the Italian Maximalists and Communists, and criticises the latter for preventing this by their attacks on the former. May I submit the following considerations? (1) Any attempts at fusion that there have already been, have been overtures between the Maximalists and the Reformists. These were only broken off because the Maximalists secured a surprising number of votes at the elections (mainly due to the *Avanti* tradition), and because the Right Reformists have temporarily gained the ascendancy, have issued a *completely* Liberal programme, and have openly endorsed the need for Noske tactics. Hence the return of the Maximalists to rigorous criticism of Turati, etc. But the "gulf" is not so great as from a superficial glance R. W. P. suggests it to be. (2) In the Unions it is with the Reformists that the Maximalists usually unite *against the Communists*, e.g., in the Textile Union recently the Reformists were in a minority, the Maximalists refused to unite with the Communists, and made an agreement to keep the Reformists in office. (3) A proposal was made in *Avanti* for April 10th by Clerici, a Left Maximalist, for a revolutionary united front in the unions to give a lead to the masses. An editorial note disclaimed this policy since it would mean alliance with the Communists.

The Maximalists are, in fact, playing

a typically 2½ rôle, making capital out of "support" of Soviet Russia, but at the same time never losing an opportunity of attacking the Comintern; giving vent to criticism of both wings, but producing no constructive policy to rally the masses; and inevitably drifting towards alliance with the Right and acquiescence in its counter-revolutionary rôle.

Yours fraternally,

M. H. D.

[R. W. P. writes: Dobb himself says he doesn't understand what I was getting at, so I needn't rub that in. What I *did* say, however, and repeat, was that the foundation of the R.I.L.U. and its policy failed even to begin to permeate the unions, embodied the crazy tactics that led to the "new union" policy, permitted and gave an excuse for Right-wing expulsions, and ABOVE ALL created an utterly powerless organisation.

What effective union action *can* the R.I.L.U. take? I wish M. H. D. would tell me why in Moscow the winding up of the R.I.L.U. has been seriously discussed. Imbecile treachery, I suppose. Or is it recognition of a blunder—a blunder which no one outside the Sacred Circle may point out?

As regards Italy. I have not the advantage of Dobb's no doubt extensive researches into industrial Italy. I can only rely on my reading of the three Socialist and one Fascist dailies. In my ignorance I had noticed *two* proposals recently for a Communist-Maximalist alliance, one of which was wrecked by the Serrati folly which I described in detail. The proposals for Maximalist-Reformist union had escaped my reptilian vision, no doubt because I was bemused by the columns of abuse of the Reformists (justified abuse) which have filled *Avanti* the last two months. So I still feel that M. H. D.'s last paragraph is all gas and gaiters. The fact is that the Italian C. P. is too Left—infantilely Left—and the Maximalists too Right. Only by an alliance can the class conscious workers be reunited. It's not that Moscow has put its money on the wrong horse. It has cut the horse in two. And not in Italy only.]

DEAR COMRADE EDITOR,—I certainly agree with both you and Postgate that there must be the fullest and most candid criticism, before any real progress can be made in the working-class movement, only let us be sure it is correct. I have no desire to engage in any personalities or to "catch anyone out," but I must say I consider the statements made by Postgate in his review of Zinovieff's pamphlet to be untrue.

Does he really want us to believe that the R.I.L.U. "muddlers" or the International Council of Trade and Industrial Unions, which I am quite aware was in existence for a year before the first conference of the R.I.L.U., was the cause of the splits in the various unions?

Regarding Zinovieff's advice to the militants, that they should remain in the unions and resist expulsion, can Postgate tell us when the R.I.L.U. advocated anything otherwise?

Did not the I.W.W.—certainly in favour of dual-unionism and much more to be compared with our Building Workers' Industrial Union than the R.I.L.U.—refuse to affiliate for the simple reason that they had to return to the American Federation of Labour and stop forming new unions, whereas the Trade Union Educational Committee led by W. Z. Foster, and opposed to any dual unions, affiliated?

Postgate should know as well as anyone that the Red International was not the cause of the splits, but the struggle between the reactionary officials and the militant rank and file. Further, if the R.I.L.U. never had the strength to call a strike in a doss-house, is it likely it had strength to split a union?

Yours fraternally,

A. LUCY.

SAMUEL SMILES' "KRUSCHEN FEELING"

DEAR EDITOR,—In the "Plebs Bookshelf" this month you make very depreciatory comments on Smiles' *Self Help*. Whilst agreeing that *Self Help* is certainly not a book on Economics, I venture the opinion that it is a book which could do a deal of good to most young men in the Labour Movement.

It is a number of years since I read it, but I believe my memory is correct when I recall that its contents are such

as will infuse one with the spirit to "dare and do" something.

"To get on" to Samuel Smiles may have meant "to get onto" other people's backs; but it does not follow that the reader must utilise this "dare to do" spirit to that same end.

Self Help infuses the spirit, the energy, the force that will shift mountains. Cannot this spirit, this energy, and this force be utilised for good purposes?

Despite what J. F. H. says, I say to young men in the movement, read *Self Help*, for in it is contained the same spirit as is contained in Emerson's *Self Reliance*, Haufman's *Efficient Age*, Whitman's *Democracy*, and other inspiring books.

Such books put a little of the "Kruschen Feeling" into one!

Sincerely yours,

DAI HENRY JONES.

THE ENEMY'S AMMUNITION

DEAR COMRADE,—In last month's PLEBS you state "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 Benn's list." Included in such I noticed Gide's *First Principles of Political Economy*.

Actuated by curiosity I glanced cursorily through a copy of *Political Economy*, by Charles Gide, Professor of Social Economics in the Faculty of Law in the University of Paris. The following is one gem I noticed amongst others:—"Save, then, for the issues of notes, . . . concentration does not seem to be leading towards monopoly in the case of the banks

Do you read

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any more than in that of the large stores, nor even towards a trust or union of large banks. There appears, on the contrary, a distinct renewal of activity on the part of the local banks. *Here also Marx's famous Law of Concentration is at fault*" (page 416, chapter 10).

Verily we Plebs may rest in peace!
Fraternally yours,

F. G. WILSON.

CAPITALISATION AND RAILWAYS

DEAR COMRADE,—With reference to Com. Plews' difficulty, may I explain that my contribution to the March PLEBS was rather hurried, and by the time it actually arrived at your office most of the other material had gone to the printers, therefore mine of necessity had to be cut rather drastically.

In my original draft, after the 7th line from the bottom on p. 114, I wrote—"One of the features or results of the amalgamations was to reduce watered capital, so that in 1923 there was £350 mill. and this on a 4 per cent. basis would require £14 mill. out of total earnings." This, you see, alters the position considerably.

With regard to my authority for my figures, I relied mostly on *Capital and Labour on the Railways*, issued by the L.R.D. (1s.). Com. Plews will find further details on p. 37.

A pamphlet issued by the I.L.P., *Socialism and Railways*, is much more optimistic upon this point. On p. 13 the author states that after putting together land, preliminary expenses, etc., "one arrives at a grand total of some £400 mill." watered capital. Again, on p. 27, he says "Though the total amount of capital has been reduced by the amalgamations, there remains over £400 mill. of water."

This is, perhaps, a little exaggerated. Personally, I would rather accept

the L.R.D. figures and say fairly confidently that £350 mill. still remains.

Yours fraternally,

A. G. HILL.

BIRTH CONTROL FOR WORKERS

DEAR SIR,—I would like through your columns to announce that premises have been found, and arrangements are rapidly going forward for the opening of a People's Birth Control and Social Welfare Clinic in the poorest and most densely populated part of Fulham, at the end of this month.

From here we shall cover the Hammersmith area as well. This will be the first clinic of its kind to be run on lines of association by people with Labour sympathies in the interests of their labouring fellows, free of all patronage.

Our aim will be to help the poor without putting them under any obligation. I am very confident of its success as an institution for social and moral well-being.

By combining a maximum of efficiency with a minimum of expense, we even hope to make the clinic self-supporting in time.

But meanwhile I invite all who have the cause of Birth Control, and the interests of the workers at heart, to give the clinic their support.

I shall be glad to hear from those who can contribute financial assistance and all who wish us well. Women members of the Fulham and Hammersmith Labour Party and C.P. able to give a little time to this work are especially requested to get in touch with us.

Yours fraternally,

ROSE WITCOP.

31, Sinclair Gardens,
Kensington,
London, W. 14.

OUR SUMMER SCHOOLS

SOME of us will read this number of the mag. at the N.C.L.C. Summer School at Rothesay.

Those who don't still have two further opportunities of a Plebs' Holiday this summer:—

COBER HILL (nr. Scarborough), July 4th—11th.

WIMEREUX (nr. Boulogne), Aug. 8th—15th.

Bookings are coming in nicely for both; but there's still time—if you look alive—to reserve a place.

No one who's been to Cober Hill before will need telling that it's an ideal place for a July holiday. Bathing, tennis, tramps on the moors, dances, sing-songs, all figure on the bill of fare. And we're going to get some interesting discussions. General subject—"Left-Wing Policy and Possibilities." There'll be several comrades there, we hope, not directly associated with I.W.C.E. work; and it will be a good opportunity of discussing with them new ways and means of making our work both more effective and more widely known.

The *venue* of the "Northern France week" has been fixed—at Wimereux, a pretty little seaside place three or four miles north of Boulogne. This will mean that those who prefer quiet (including bathing, walks, etc.), can get it; while anybody who wants to get into a town will be able to do so quite easily.

TERMS

The fee for the week at Cober Hill is £3 3s.—"all in" board and lodging. Everybody pays his or her own railway fare. Book to CLAUGHTON (near Scarborough); or if there are cheap bookings available, to Scarborough—and book on to Cloughton from there.

The cost of the Wimereux Week will be £6 5s.—including rail and boat return from London.

Just note this carefully, because one or two pals have made snifty remarks about "a pound a day" not being a proletarian holiday price. The cost isn't a pound a day—at least, it's only that *when you count in, as aforesaid, your railway and boat fare from London to Boulogne and back.* (You pay your own fare to London—we arrange all the booking from London onwards.) And you get your own passport.

Send 10s. deposit when you're booking for either week—and do it now!

The NATIONAL COUNCIL of LABOUR COLLEGES

HEAD OFFICE—22 ELM ROW, EDINBURGH

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

NATIONAL Union of Textile Workers.—This Union's Annual Meeting carried the following resolution unanimously:

"That this Council Meeting instruct our E.C. to enter into immediate and conclusive negotiations with the N.C.L.C. to provide educational facilities for our members in the Districts, through the medium of Classes, Study Circles, Lectures, etc."

Heartiest thanks are due to the mover of the resolution, Com. Gardiner, and to all who assisted. Bravo, Textile Workers!

A.S.L.E. and F.—As we go to press comes the news that the Annual Conference of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen has decided on an N.C.L.C. Educational Scheme. This is another big stride forward. Best thanks to all our supporters in the Society.

National Union of Agricultural Workers.—Another recruit is the National Union of Agricultural Workers which has affiliated and is arranging for an Educational Scheme, taking the form of Week-end Schools in the main.

Bury and District Textile Warehousemen.—This Union has also affiliated. May we respectfully suggest that the rapidity with which Unions are supporting the N.C.L.C. is worth noting by the General Council.

The National Painters' Society.—It is a pleasure to record that this Union's ballot resulted in the approval of Independent Working-Class Education. The ballot, however, did not provide for an increase in the Union contribution and this may hold up somewhat arrangements for a Scheme.

Training Centre.—Colleges are again reminded of the Training Centre which is to be held in the Labour College, London, in the first three weeks of

August with Principal W. T. Goode, M.A., in charge. The cost for the three weeks for students coming with scholarships from Unions is £2 16s. per week; students who pay their own expenses and are training as tutors and who undertake to tutor at least one class during next winter pay £2 10s. for one week, or £2 5s. per week for two or three weeks. The School is, of course, not merely open to those who wish to train as tutors but to all interested. As the future of our movement to a considerable degree depends on the training of additional tutors and the raising of the tutorial standard, will all Colleges and Divisional Councils please give serious consideration to the possibility of sending students to the Training Centre?

National Union of Printing, Book-binding, Machine Ruling and Paper Workers.—A resolution in favour of I.W.C.E. is coming up at this Union's Conference. Will readers please see that every support is given to it?

New N.C.L.C. Executive Members.—W. H. Hutchison representing A.E.U.; D. Frankel representing the Tailors and Garment Workers; J. H. Smith representing the Managers and Overlookers; A. Gossip representing National Amalgamated Furnishing Trades Association; and A. H. Telling representing the National Association of Plasterers, Granolithic and Cement Workers.

N.U.D.A.W. Conference.—Manchester Central Branch is moving the following resolution at the A.D.M.:—

That this Annual Delegate Meeting requests the Executive Council to place the following resolution on the agenda of the forthcoming Trades Union Congress:—"This Congress declares that a rank and file educated in the principles of trade-unionism and possessing at least an elementary knowledge of economic and industrial history, would more easily solve the problems with which we as trade-unionists are confronted than a rank and file not so educated, and therefore calls upon the General Council to enter into negotiations with the National Council of Labour Colleges with a view to putting into operation a national scheme of classes for all trade unions. This scheme to replace any existing educational schemes, payments, subscriptions, or affiliations to educational

bodies not owned and controlled by the trade union and labour movements."

WHAT THE DIVISIONS ARE DOING

Div. 1.—During April the following branches have had lectures: A.S.L.E. and F. Plaistow Women's Sec.; N. Islington Labour Party; Barking W. Co-op. Guild; Camden Town A.E.U.; Kensal Rise W. Co-op. Guild; N.U.R. No. 7 and Norbury Men's Co-op. Guild. Arrangements are being made to keep in touch with the students during the summer, by means of fortnightly or monthly topical lectures or rambles on Sundays with short topical addresses.

Div. 2.—Cowes' (Isle of Wight) first venture in holding a week-end school (lecturer, Wynn Cuthbert), was so successful that they want to hold more. Com. Purcell has also visited the Division and lectured on Russia at Eastleigh, Southampton, Swanage and Salisbury. Everyone delighted with the educational value of his lecture. The A.U.B.T.W. Scholarship for Rothesay Summer School has been awarded to a valuable PLEBS supporter—George Peters, Easton, Portland, who has been the Secretary of the Portland Labour College Class since its formation.

Div. 3.—The E.C. met on May 16th and received the report for the year. Every branch of affiliated Unions and every Council has received list of special lectures and play-readings available. Special schools for Agricultural Workers' Union are being arranged for Kings Lynn and Norwich. Comrade Purcell's lecture at Luton was well attended and five Transport and General Workers Union Scholarships were awarded. Peterboro', Hitchin and Braintree are carrying on their weekly class. J. Jones will visit Norwich and Lowestoft on June 7th and 8th. Divisional Conference of all bodies affiliated to be arranged to receive Rothesay report.

Div. 4.—This Division's Annual Meeting showed a substantial increase in work done, as well as an increase in Trade Union support.

Div. 5.—A successful meeting at Plymouth addressed by Comrade Purcell is likely to lead to an increase in local support. The Bristol Labour College is building up a library of books of special value to students.

Div. 6.—The Easter Week-end School held at the Clarion Club was attended

by sixteen residential students but a considerable number of other students attended the lectures. The lecturers were: S. Robinson, H. Leonard and T. D. Smith. It is hoped to have another school in August and those interested are asked to write the Divisional Organiser—T. D. Smith, 12, Old Meeting Street, West Bromwich, Staffs.—immediately.

Div. 7.—Halifax reports a very successful year's work. Com. Taylor was one of the first secretaries to send in his balance-sheet to Headquarters. Divisional Organiser Shaw has arranged Tutors' Training Classes for Halifax, Bradford, Brighouse and Dewsbury. These should have good results in providing additional tutors for next winter's work. Leeds College Annual Meeting was a great success, nearly two hundred delegates and visitors being present. Miss E. C. Wilkinson, M.P., and F. Shaw were the speakers.

Div. 8.—Barrow Labour College had a splendid address on "Revolutions in Civilisation" by Dr. J. Johnston. A successful Week-end School was held on 2nd and 3rd May at Hey's Farm, Adult School Guest House, West Bradford, near Clitheroe, Lancs., with J. Hamilton as lecturer. The annual conference of the Liverpool L.C. was very successful, and approved of the T.U.C. Scheme.

Div. 9.—Workington Secretary, D. Thompson, reports a highly successful class consisting of fourteen students. Workington is also holding a Week-end School in June, Tom Cape, M.P., and Ebby Edwards being among the lecturers.

Div. 10 (Scotland).—The Annual Meeting of this Division was held on May 16th. Reports showed that there were now thirteen local Labour Colleges in Scotland and one Class Group. The following table gives some idea of the progress made during the past three years:

1922-23 : 84 Classes with 2800 students.

1923-24 : 152 Classes with 3982 students.

1924-25 : 224 Classes with 5976 students (estimated).

The situation in Scotland generally is better than it ever has been and the report submitted by the General Council of the Scottish Trades Union Congress

showed that the great bulk of Working-class Education work conducted in Scotland is done by the S.L.C. Edinburgh leads the way in Summer Work with six classes.

Div. 11 (Ireland).—A Summer School will be held in Ballycarry, July 11th—18th, amidst beautiful scenery and in the shelter of the famous "Gobbins Cliffs." This ideal spot is a short train journey from Belfast and a 4d. bus ride from Larne. The cost of board and residence, etc., is about 5s. per day, hut accommodation. You can tumble out of bed into the sea—if you want to! The lecture programme includes a series of lectures on International Questions and their Relation to Home Affairs by A. Ellis, from whom all particulars can be obtained—33, Delaware Street, Ravenhill Road, Belfast. . . The Boilermakers No. 4 Branch and the No. 11 Area Committee of the Transport Workers have affiliated to the Belfast Labour College on a basis of 2d. per member per annum. The Coleraine Trades Council has affiliated to the N.C.L.C.'s No. 11 Divisional Council. In Belfast a Tutors' Training Class is being held weekly.

Div. 12.—At Sutton on Good Friday a highly successful Day School was held, the attendance being about 140. R. Holder was the lecturer. Divisional Organiser Brown reported a very substantial increase in class students during the past winter.

Directory.—Additions and Corrections.

Div. 2.—Littlehampton Class Group, Sec.: Miss Edith C.C. Ayling, Gladstone House, North Ham Road, Littlehampton, Sussex.

Div. 5.—Divisional Organiser: Frank Phippen, 8, The Chase, Hillsfields Park, Fishponds, Bristol.

„ Bristol Labour College, Sec.: Mr. M. Evans, 8, The Chase, Hillsfields Park, Fishponds, Bristol.

Div. 7.—Halifax Labour College, Sec.: Mr. A. Smith, 44, Blackwood Grove, Battinson Road, Halifax.

Div. 9.—Divisional Organiser: Mr. Stanley Rees, c/o W. Coxon, 5, Byron Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

REVIEWS

Agriculture and the Unemployed. By W. Wright, M.P. and A. G. Penty (Labour Publishing Co., 1s.).

THIS is a tiresome and disappointing little book. On the cover it is announced that "the authors demonstrate the possibility of this country feeding its own population and solving the problem of unemployment by one and the same policy." And so one reads on and on, hoping that in time the writers will set to work, first to prove this assertion, and then to show how the problem is to be tackled. The end is reached without the hope being fulfilled and one has to conclude that the evidence and the way out must be sought in the list of books appended!

The first chapter is devoted to the enunciation of a belief in the imminence of a return to "Mediaevalism"; the basis of this being found in the "extraordinary success which has attended Gandhi's attempts to revive the manufacture of kadder," "the rise of the Green International in Eastern Europe," and the change which has taken place in German Universities, viz., "the reversion to the ideal of culture on a basis of Mediaevalism and Christianity." "It is reasonable to suppose that the time is not far distant when these two forces (peasants and intellectual Germany) joining hands, will become powerful enough to roll back the wave of industrialism."

In the second chapter a few of the well-known arguments and facts are trotted out. The C₃ population of the towns v. the A₁ countryside population (*vide* reports of Recruiting Officers); the decline of Carthage and Athens, Venice and Genoa; the fact that we produce only 40 per cent. of the food we consume; that many more acres used to be under the plough; that other countries produce more per acre than we do—and so on.

But the authors never *establish* as a fact, but only assert, that "Britain could feed her 44 millions of people, pay an adequate wage, solve the unemployed problem and remove the danger and risk due to a thickly popu-

lated nation being dependent upon imported food supplies during war." Probably the statement is true—i.e., it is a physical possibility; but the important task is to make a start with the improvement of the level of agriculture in this country, at the same time raising the worker's wage and improving the conditions of his employment.

Here again we get little help. ". . . It is not to an extension of small holdings that we look forward. It is much more probable that development will proceed along the lines of co-operative groups or Producing Guilds as in Italy and elsewhere."

At the moment there is not the slightest sign of any such developments; nor is there any ground for believing that in the near future the problem of ensuring the more thorough cultivation of the soil of this country will be seriously attacked. The obstacle of *ownership* bars the way, and only catastrophic events will remove it.

L.

VALUE FOR TWOPENCE

The Class Struggle. By R. Neft. (2d.)
Taxation and the Worker. By R.

Neft. (2d.) (Obtainable from author, Stepney St., Llanely, or from I.L.P. Headquarters, 14, St. George Street, S.W. 1.)

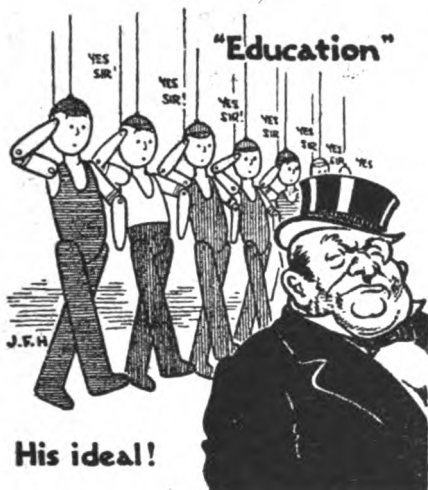
Comrade Neft is an energetic pamphleteer. The back cover of one of these pamphlets not only gives a list of previous publications but of others due "to appear shortly."

By what powers of persuasion he has managed to get I.L.P. Headquarters to distribute *The Class Struggle* we do not know. Perhaps H.Q. hasn't read it. But there'll surely be trouble someday when Somebody discovers this little collection of sermons on texts from the *Critique of Political Economy* on the Party shelves!

Taxation and the Worker would form an admirable and highly topical theme for summer discussion circles.

Both pamphlets should be on sale at all our literature stalls.

J. F. H.



His ideal!

— This gentleman is very much opposed to the circulation of such books as

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by Mark Starr

the new and revised edition of which is now on sale, price 1s. 6d. (postpaid 1s. 8d.) This book, since its original publication in 1917, has been widely used as an elementary textbook of English Industrial History in N.C.L.C. classes. The new edition has been carefully revised and partly re-written.

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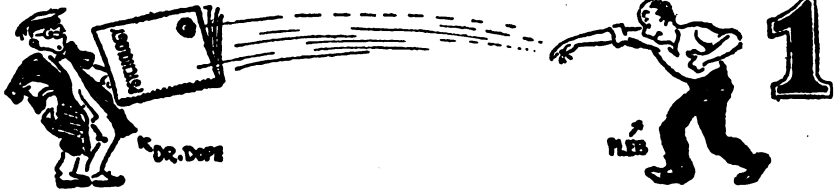
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