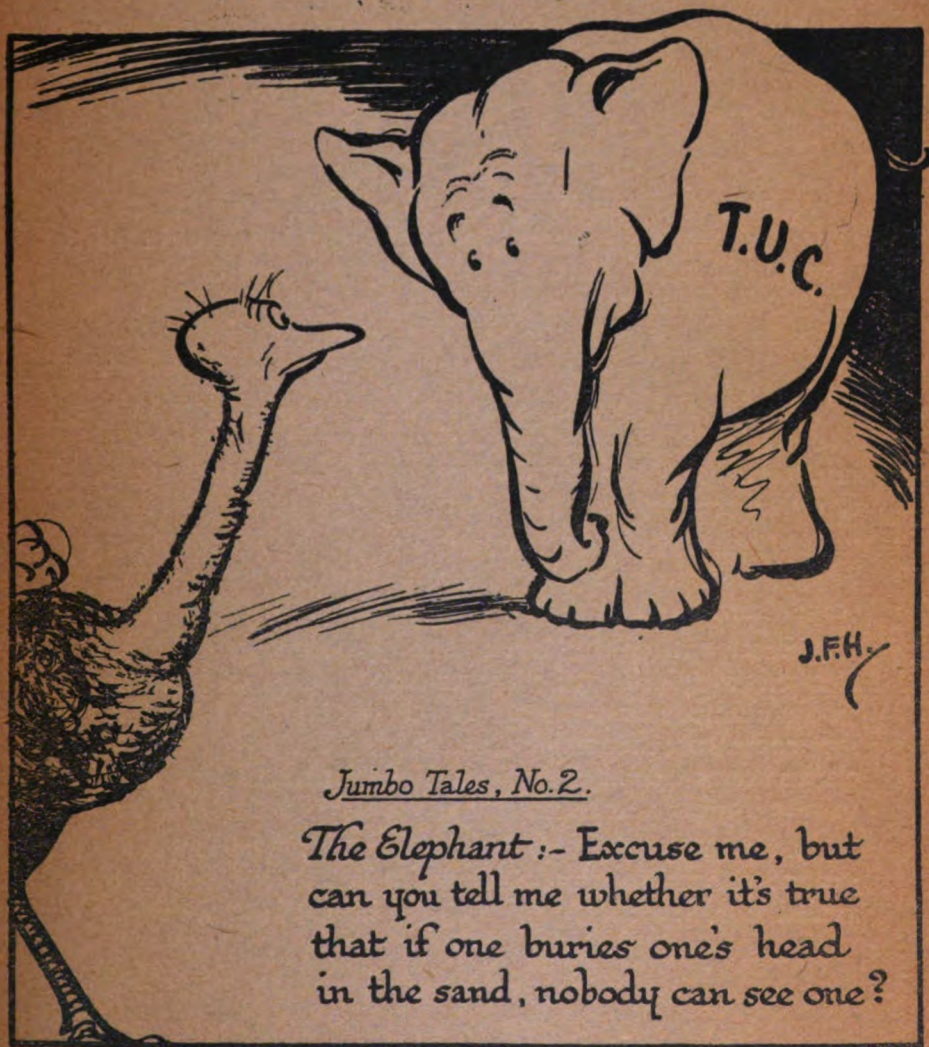


July 1926

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# PLEBS



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# THE PLEBS

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Vol. XVIII

July, 1926

No. 7

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## TO OUR READERS

**W**E have—very regretfully—to reduce the number of our pages this month. This is the result of our having had to meet heavy additional expenses, owing to our enforced change of printers; and of our receipts having slowed down as a result of the crisis.

Many of our readers are miners, and we don't expect them to be able to afford monthly magazines just now. Many others have been hard hit by the struggle. But we are quite certain that we have only to remind Plebs everywhere that we get no subsidies from anybody, and depend entirely on the support of rank-and-filers, to ensure their rallying to our support. We want to sell out this month—and we ask you to settle your account as quickly as you can.

We don't want to start next winter's work handicapped by a load of debt. A good push all together—*now*—and we'll be out of the wood.

### THE SUMMER SCHOOL

**Y**OU still have time—if you hurry—to book your place for this year's big event, the N.C.L.C. and Plebs National Summer School at Cober Hill, Scarborough. The N.C.L.C. Annual Meeting and the Plebs Annual Meet will be held during the School; there is a list of lecturers including A. A. Purcell, M.P., Ellen Wilkinson, M.P., Lady Warwick, Dr. Marion Phillips, E. F. Wise, Geo. Hicks, J. W. Brown, W. M. Citrine, A. J. Cook, A. Heron, R. Coppock, Ben Turner, and R. B. Walker (every lecture will be followed by a discussion); there will be readings of plays by Susan Glaspell, Upton Sinclair, etc., concerts and dances; as well as tennis, bowls and bathing in the intervals of the programme.

Write immediately to J. P. M. Millar (62 Hanover Street, Edinburgh) or to PLEBS Office for full particulars, enclosing booking fee of 15s. (in part payment). We know—only too well—that times are bad for workers' holidays; but we are certain that, if you can scrape the cash together for a week at the School, you won't regret it. Make up your mind *now*.

## THE MINERS' TRAGEDY

*Ebby Edwards, of the Northumberland Miners' Federation, here writes briefly of the struggle of the miners against their State-supported exploiters.*

**I** WRITE "tragedy" at the head of this article deliberately. Think of it!—a million mine-workers and their dependents are fighting against Capitalism's master-weapon—starvation. Undaunted, and as determined as ever, they stand solid in their resistance. And as a result of the coal stoppage thousands upon thousands of other workers and their families are being forced to exist on meagre State allowances.

And what is all the suffering and sacrifice for?

For the right to go on living under Capitalism, on terms which were admittedly bad before this present struggle began, and for a wage admittedly inadequate! No wonder Bernard Shaw once wondered whether this world as at present constituted were not serving as a lunatic asylum for some other planet.

The miners' stand is a brave attempt to checkmate the vicious (but inevitable) efforts of the dividend-drawing class to secure "industrial prosperity" (for themselves) by reducing the standards of working-class existence. How simple the issue! "A living wage." In round figures the miners' wages, before this conflict began, were 20 per cent. below the 1914 standard. It was plain to see that any further reductions would mean a wage on which no human beings could live decently.

That was why the General Strike call was so magnificently answered. It was the "morality of bread," not any conscious, reasoned hatred of capitalism, that welded the working-class forces. Everywhere, and in every industry, the workers realised that the fight was one for the bare necessities of existence. And by their continued support of the miners now they are still making plain their realisation of that.

The tragedy lies in the fact that the miners—and the workers who demonstrated their sympathy with them so magnificently—are struggling for mere readjustments under Capitalism. You cannot, if you aim at working "within the Constitution," win more than a compromise. You have got, consciously, to abolish the Capitalist Constitution before you can win the freedom you need. The General Strike might have been—ought to have been—a conscious struggle against Capitalist control of society. It is no use blaming "leaders" because they shirked that issue. In any case our plans and preparations, as a movement, were not ready for such a struggle.

The most important fact that has emerged from the conflict so far is that the mass of the workers has begun to realise that the whole State machine—the Government—is but the economic, military and administrative force of Capitalism, organised for any action that Capitalism needs. The habit and tradition of thinking of it as an “impartial” national tribunal have received a hard blow. But this vital truth needs to be pressed home, and its implications made clear (here is where the I.W.C.E. movement must labour unceasingly) before we can hope to rally all the workers in a struggle not merely for bread, but for freedom from serf-conditions.

The miners’ tragedy is the tragedy of the whole working-class. The miners’ struggle—a wage-struggle—might have been the signal for a *class* struggle against Capitalism itself. That struggle did not materialise. It cannot be long deferred. Meantime, the miners go on with their fight—alone. Hunger will not drive them to get coal. But, unless sufficient assistance from their fellows is forthcoming, it will drive them, for their children’s sake, to get *food*. Then Capitalist Law and Order will be administered. And we shall have another instance of the “impartial” State machine at work. Sacrifice and suffering is still the order of the day: and the object of it all is, as I have said, mere readjustments under Capitalism. Is it worth it?

One day, the miners and the millions of their fellow-workers will say, No! And on that day they will start to readjust not merely pay-sheets, but the whole social system that condemns them to starve in order that their masters may enjoy “prosperity.”

EBBY EDWARDS.

## A MONUMENT TO SACRIFICE

### AN APPEAL TO YOU

**O**VER £65,000 distributed through the relief committees in the coalfields for the feeding of miners’ wives and children, a maternity scheme that is trying to reach and help every babe born into a locked-out man’s family, special grants for abnormal cases, distribution of gifts in kind on a large scale, these represent the solid achievements of the Women’s Committee since it started in Whitsun week.

The fund itself is a monument to the sacrifice of the workers and their passionate sympathy with the miners. As such it is magnificent, but faced with the widespread need we have to say that it is not enough.

The ordinary channels of relief and help are being choked by the Minister of Health, whose new circular to the Welsh Board of

Health refuses grants for extra milk even to the mother and her new-born babe.

Has each Pleb done his or her bit to see that the sympathy of those not connected with the Labour movement has been tapped? Put on your thinking caps (complete with Plebs badge) and see if there is not yet another special effort that can be made.

The need in other industries is growing rapidly worse. The iron and steel industry, hit by reparation policy before the war, is now stagnant, and after years of suffering the people are now desperate. Meanwhile Ascot has had its most brilliant season since the war. They are so confident as they dance that there will never be a "Next Time"—but we KNOW. The cry of the starving is not only a call to charity. It must be a call to action.

ELLEN WILKINSON.

## STRIKE HISTORY

### Stories of the Nine Days from North and South

*We have asked correspondents in various areas to write for The PLEBS short accounts of their local organisations, activities, and experiences during the General Strike. Here is a first instalment. We think our readers will agree that such a "pooling" of information by comrades in the different districts will not only form invaluable material for a full history of the Strike, but provides the basis for discussion of plans for Next Time. The points here touched upon—the constitution of Strike Committees, the maintenance of contact between the districts and the centre, the recognition of Trades Councils by the T.U.C.—are all questions of real importance to the movement, and we trust that comrades in other areas will send us similar accounts, without waiting for an individual invitation.*

#### THE MERSEYSIDE AREA

THE response to the call in the Liverpool District exceeded all expectations. There was a complete stoppage of transport other than food; rail clerks 85 per cent. out and so on. Seamen, in defiance of their headquarters, refused to sign on, and the loyalty of the local officials to the T.U.C. resulted later in losing their jobs. Many other instances of loyalty could be cited. For instance, when the cheque for strike pay from the A.S.L.E. & F. was delayed one member without hesitation and guarantees loaned £300 (probably his life's savings) to his

branch. The weakest section was the tramway employees, a service being run throughout the strike, about 50 per cent. of the normal at the finish. Many University students volunteered and were encouraged for blacklegging, but it was significant that the University authorities refrained from any public pronouncement on the strike although same was considered. A cyclostyled *Bulletin* was issued by the Merseyside Council of Action and a circulation per issue was reached of 46,000 copies.

This Council of Action was composed of typical trade unionists, cautious and unimaginative, conscious that they were engaged in something bigger than they had ever tackled before, a little fearful both of the Government and the rank and file, and rather afraid that matters would get out of hand. In this state of mind problems and developments were only met as they arose. They obstinately refused to think two days ahead, so that by the beginning of the second week they were getting "nervy" and I think were genuinely relieved when the end came. There was little, if any, direct communication with the T.U.C. General Council, most of the information coming via the Transport Workers and other Unions. Within these limits undoubtedly the Council did its best. One thing clearly emerged and that was the intense hatred of all "Left Wing" organisations by several leading lights. The fault is not one-sided, as lack of tact on the part of the "Left" has in the past alienated many possible supporters. This is very regrettable as, if we are to pull full weight in a similar fight in the future, we must have complete unification of forces. Rank and file discipline was good, and considering Liverpool's past reputation picketing was carried out with the minimum of collision with the police.

Birkenhead demonstrated the complete lack of preparedness on the part of the Labour Movement to conduct a struggle of such magnitude. The N.U.R. had maintained its strike organisation since 1919, and prior to the strike was successful in forming a Joint Railwaymen's Strike Committee comprising the N.U.R., A.S.L.E.&F. and the R.C.A. Hence the railwaymen were the best organised throughout the struggle. Important centres in the Wirral, as Ellesmere Port, Hoylake, etc., would have been left to their own resources but for the railwaymen, who sent out speakers each day and kept in constant touch with the various strike committees.

A Council of Action had been formed from the E.C. of the T.C. & L.P. several weeks before, but it did not meet until the second day of the strike. The conduct of this Council was generally condemned, no proper sessions being held for a considerable period. The secretary was absent the greater part of the time, being a member also of the Merseyside Council which met in Liverpool. In fact, the Council was an informal gathering of T.U. officials who dropped



in when they could get away from their own organisations or from the Merseyside Council. Pressure eventually resulted in regular sessions being held and minutes being taken by a substitute secretary, but in no way nor at any time did the Council co-ordinate the activities of the strikers. The workers at two important oil depots were unorganised and large quantities of petrol were despatched by motor to various parts of the county. Apart from this the stoppage was complete.

The spirit and discipline of the men remained good, only two conflicts with the police being reported. On one occasion a squad of "specials" were attacked and put to rout, on another a riot was just averted. The "call off" resulted in a breakdown of morale in certain sections. Busmen, flour millers and others suffered victimisation.

Warrington had an excellent Council of Action so far as active workers were concerned. Its chairman failed, however, to understand that the circumstances called for action, not talk, a case of platform men not always proving themselves the best of organisers. Very few meetings were held in the town and its news bulletin was of little value. It was amazing that the local Labour newspaper, controlled by the Labour Party, was not utilised by the Council of Action, although local Tory and Liberal papers were published as usual. Too much was left for the individual Unions to deal with, consequently strong sections, such as the N.U.R., did good work in preserving the morale of their members. On the other hand, the N.U.G. & M.W., bearing in mind that their leading local official is Parliamentary Labour candidate for the borough, steered a middle course by not attempting to do much effective work, although the members were restive. This is the result, apparently, of being tied up with local political prospects. There was a strange spectacle on the day following the "call off." Three meetings were held at which roughly 5,000 people attended. The speakers were the President of the T.C. & L.P. (the local Parliamentary Labour candidate) and the Chairman of the Council of Action. The latter suggested that none should return to work until there was general assurance that all should be reinstated. The President of the T.C. & L.P. informed the meetings that the Council of Action had no power in the matter. The real power lay with the executives of the Unions concerned and speaking for his own organisation he advised a return to work immediately. This resulted in the breakup of organisation and a rather inglorious finish.

In Earlestown the Trades and Labour Council constituted themselves the local strike committee, a case of an industrial group with control of the local political machinery. One could not weaken because both were controlled by the same people. It was a testing

time for many; the Chairman of the T. & L. Council could not see his way to preside at strike meetings and has since resigned. The committee had the free use of the Town Hall during the period of the strike, thanks to a Labour majority on the U.D.C. All the deliberations of the strike committee were held in public, this being somewhat of an innovation.

There was a great response in St. Helens. The Town Council, having a Labour majority, voted £7,000 for free meals for children, three per day. The local committee produced a very creditable printed *Strike Bulletin* instead of the usual cyclostyled one.

Widnes has never been a Labour stronghold, therefore its activities during the strike were characteristically feeble. Strains of "God save the king" could be heard floating from the meeting room of the N.U.R. branch. Across the river at Runcorn a strong I.L.P. group, understanding the importance of industrial and political action combined, made the best possible use of the strike period. Extensive propaganda meetings were held, the local Labour Party agent, who was a member of the strike committee, using every effort to get speakers from all parts. Here, as distinct from Earlestown, we had the local political group, mainly I.L.P., functioning for the trade unions and forcing the pace.

Northwich again had an organisation mainly controlled through the political section linking the various unions together. The active union was the N.U.R.; the N.U.G. & M.W. with its large membership being ineffective, practically all remained at work. Places like Lymm, Winsford, etc., though practically isolated, demonstrated courage in face of this difficulty.

In all districts N.C.L.C. students were to be found on strike committees, acting as despatch riders and doing all manner of jobs for the effective prosecution of the strike. It would be invidious to single out individuals when all did so well.

What are the lessons that occur to us as the result of these collective observations? First and foremost we must get on with the job of forming industrial unions out of the existing ones. Obviously, for instance, there is an urgent need for the seafaring workers to link up with the transport workers. Very much closer relations and a practical understanding of common aims is needed with the Co-operative Movement. In every locality there should be a strong "forward" group; this would avoid the possibility of the official Labour Party, in cases where the group in control is merely concerned with prestige and political manœuvring, weakening the strike organisation. In several places a too respectable viewpoint decidedly damped the spirit of the strikers. Councils of Action should be given an official status and effective organisation. There should be no future overlapping with T.U. district and strike committees. A

better news service needs to be devised and more effective contact with the General Council.

Above all a wider knowledge of the implications of a General Strike must be spread among all sections, particularly among those holding official positions. This will result in a future determination to use every weapon and means of propaganda. There is no doubt that many of the guiding hands all through the strike were looking for an excuse to "honourably" call it off. As one local Labour M.P. said, before the truth was known, "No doubt the T.U.C. did not want a complete victory for the men." And a district secretary of the A.E.U. had this view, "We must do nothing that will make it difficult for us to work with employers after the strike. In all I do I am mindful of the fact that we have to work side by side when the strike is over."

Nevertheless, despite everything, the spirit of the mass was splendid. Translated into mass-consciousness and given courageous leadership the future is ours.

JOHN HAMILTON.

### YORKSHIRE

**T**HE strike call had a splendid response in Yorkshire, but the manner in which the various localities set to work to co-ordinate local strike action indicates the necessity for a more uniform policy in the event of any future general strike.

In the smaller towns, like Dewsbury, Huddersfield, Halifax, etc., where all local officials of the various Unions involved were ready and anxious for complete co-ordination, the Trades Councils acted as the central authoritative body, their chief officers taking the initiative in calling representatives of the Unions together and building up the Central Strike Committee. The methods adopted varied little in the above cases. Sheffield developed on the same lines. Delegates were appointed from the Unions as they were called out, and these formed the Central Strike Committee. From the general body was elected an executive sitting all day. Sub-committees were appointed for propaganda and publicity, picketing, finance, etc.

The really valuable feature was that although some of the Unions had instructions to form their own committees (such as the Railwaymen, Transport Workers, etc.) and were instructed to carry on the lines detailed to them from their Head Offices each day, yet they subordinated themselves to the Central Strike Committee. Unions asked for interpretation by the Committee and acted loyally by its decisions. You had complete discipline as a result. Each branch appointed a certain number of pickets who were placed at the

disposal of the Picketing Committee and who in turn responded to any calls made upon them by any section needing assistance in that direction.

The Propaganda Committee was widened out to include delegates from the various Labour organisations and schemes of propaganda in the outlying districts were arranged. Strike bulletins were issued daily in many cases, and the strike pars were remarkable for clarity and getting home—e.g., “Signalman at — had a conscientious objection to the strike, he is now nursing it in bed.” Another feature was the arrangement of permits with the various Co-operative Societies.

Leeds and Bradford afford very different examples. At Leeds we had the spectacle of four Strike Committees at work. When the Trades Council attempted to form a Central Committee, a full-time Union official stated that such a project was unnecessary, as they had at their office a telephone on the trunk line with the T.U.C. A few of the divisional organisers then formed a Strike Committee of their own, known as the George Street Strike Committee. They invited delegates to attend from all bodies affected after they had formed themselves into the executive, and then they had the impudence to send out circulars of instructions to the other West Riding strike committees. (These circulars usually found their way into the waste-paper basket.) The Railwaymen also had a Committee, so had the Transport Workers, and, not to be outdone, the miscellaneous smaller bodies formed one, the final situation only needing setting to music to make a first-class comedy.

At Bradford are the head offices of the various Textile Unions, so you get another example of what the working-class are capable of when put to it. The Dyers, taking in all workers in the area in the dyeing section of the cloth trade, found themselves involved by the call to all transport (except food) to cease. This put the problem direct up to them, as none of their members could work whilst their own motor drivers were out. The other Textile Unions were not immediately affected, and under the stress of the various anomalies that arose a joint memo. was worked out and sent out to their branches to the effect that they were prepared to co-operate with any Trades Council or Council of Action, provided that such Council was composed of the responsible officials of the Unions involved—in other words an elaboration of the George Street Committee at Leeds. Considering that the Textile Unions were not directly affected this was really an attempt to get co-ordination in solving their own anomalies (blackleg transport, etc.) and not for the purpose of assisting the Strike.

Owing to a complete difference of circumstances the Strike Committees at Doncaster and Barnsley had a happier time. Here there

was complete unified discipline under the Trades Councils. All the highways leading into the towns passed through mining villages, and any orders *re* transport and picketing were conveyed to the miners' lodges. Immediately massed pickets held up the roads, and thus all transport and bus services were stopped at once. This explains the large numbers arrested in this area. (At one of these clashes betwixt the police and the miners over 120 were arrested.)

One must give all credit to the building trade labourers, who with no funds, and an average wage of less than £2 per week the year round, came out with enthusiasm. The N.U.R. had a splendid news service of reports from all their stations, their motor runners covering the country in a complete network, and they assisted the various Strike Committees in many directions. The Railway Clerks did well with over 85 per cent. out. (Most of the supervisory staff have not yet got back.)

The "lesson" is obviously this:—The local Trades Councils have shown their capabilities, and are quite equal to handling any situation of this character, but if each Union is to follow its own instructions then you are asking for local indecision, and out of this you get the permanent official standing aloof or, as at Leeds, the full-time people organising themselves around a trunk-call telephone. What weakness did exist was not in the local official or the rank and file—and most certainly the members of those Unions whose full-time officials stood apart should insist in future that such officials should throw in with the local Trades Council. The local centre in future will have to be the Trades Council, and there should be no delay in full recognition of the Trades Council by the T.U.C. As expected, all the colleges closed down their classes, and the active N.C.L.C. members and Plebs Leaguers gave valuable assistance to their local Strike Committee, especially in publicity and propaganda.

FRED SHAW.

#### LONDON: ST. PANCRAS

**I**N common with the majority of Trades Councils, St. Pancras had never seriously got down to the task of preparing the necessary machinery for dealing with such a problem as that which faced us on 3rd May, 1926. But as soon as the call came, steps were taken to ensure that the task allotted to us by the T.U.C. was performed efficiently.

The first thing was to establish a direct line of communication between the various local Strike Committees and the Council, in order that direct contact could be established and maintained throughout the area. This was accomplished by a corps of cyclists who carried and fetched reports at various times in the day.

Secondly, we realised that something had to be done to counteract

the "dope" that we knew would be broadcast. Therefore, on 3rd May, a Press Committee was formed with the object of producing a typewritten sheet daily. In this respect I think we can claim the credit of being the first in the field. The first issue of the *St. Pancras Bulletin* was on sale in the streets at 4 p.m. on Tuesday, 4th May, and thereafter each day during the strike. The average sale over the nine days was about 3,100 copies daily.

The next thing was to call a delegate meeting of all Women's Organisations, who undertook the task of organising concerts, etc., and looking after the interests of women generally. Afterwards, as the strike went on, the relief of any distress, which did not come within the purview of the Guardians, was entrusted to them. This Committee is still functioning as the local Committee for receiving funds for the miners.

Probably the most important task we took up was the maintenance of order among our own folk, realising that efforts would be made to create trouble and cause dissension in our ranks. Our plan was to form a Workers' Police Corps, and a circular was sent to each Strike Committee asking them to place a number of reliable men at the disposal of the Council for this purpose. These we enrolled into what is now known as the Workers' Vigilance Corps. The work of these comrades, with their red armlets, will never be fully realised—keeping order at meetings (of which there were dozens), patrolling the streets, dispelling crowds and generally acting as preservers of good order.

Another matter that deserves attention is the question of Poor Law Relief. We realised, of course, that among the poorly paid workers the pinch would soon be felt. Therefore with a vigorous, though small minority on the Guardians, a motion was carried leaving the granting of relief to the discretion of Relieving Officers. This proved to be a very wise move, as will be seen when I say that not one complaint was made. The following figures well show this:—

*No. of persons relieved.*

Week ending— 1st May, 4,720 at a cost of £458.

                  "      15th May, 14,532       "      "      £2,058.

This does not include the amount of relief granted in cash, which was, for the week ending 15th May, £864.

Arrangements were made for two of our Guardians to sit at the Trades Council offices each day, giving advice. By this and other means (e.g., through Strike Committees) we were able to reach all families that needed help.

The machinery outlined above, once we had got it going, worked effectively and smoothly. The Council has within its ranks all sections of the Movement—all differences were dropped, all worked as one.

STANLEY E. SHARPE.

## BIRMINGHAM

**I**N Birmingham, our local organisation was in a good state of preparedness. Before the actual call for action came from the General Council of the T.U.C. the Birmingham Trades Council had its Emergency Committee formed and its plan of campaign well in hand. The Emergency Committee was of a thoroughly representative character and was assisted in its work by eight advisory sub-committees.

During the strike the Committee was practically in continuous session and had to deal with a multiplicity of problems arising in the various trades and industries. These problems were largely due to the instructions issued by the General Council being such as to create misunderstanding and friction among and within the different trades. For instance, in certain factories some workers were called out while some engaged on the same work had to remain at work. Let it be said, however, that the trouble came not from those who had been called out, but from the workers who had been left in. Those who had not received the call were clamouring to enter the fight, and right up to the strike being called off deputation after deputation waited upon the Emergency Committee, urging that all the workers should be brought into the struggle. There is not the slightest doubt that had the General Council taken the bold line, the strike would have been "general" so far as "Brum" and district was concerned.

Here let me make a comment, with regard to the relationship between the Emergency Committees and the General Council. From the point of view of efficiency it would have been a great improvement had the Emergency Committee been the body to which all instructions came dealing with the development of the dispute in the districts, instead of having each Trade Union receiving separate instructions for their own members. The Emergency Committee was the natural local representative of the T.U.C. and as such ought to have been in control of the position locally. On the other hand, if that power could not have been granted, at least a copy of the instructions sent to the local Trade Union officials should have been forwarded to the Committee.

Birmingham was the centre of a despatch service, including Walsall, West Bromwich, Smethwick, Halesowen, Stourbridge, Kidderminster, Worcester, Bromsgrove, Reddich, Lichfield, Tamworth and Stratford-on-Avon. In addition to these places arranged by the General Council, contact was kept with a number of other districts. (This part of our machinery was almost perfect and was in the hands, by the way, of a good I.W.C.E.er.)

My impression of the strike, gained from very close contact with

the machinery in this district, is that the weakness lay at the centre and not in the districts. This opinion is endorsed by most of my colleagues and there is abroad general criticism among the rank and file of the half-hearted and apologetic attitude adopted by the General Council during the dispute. Whatever might have been said in favour of leaders compromising in past disputes on the ground that the workers were not ready, certainly cannot be said on this occasion. Birmingham, long regarded as the most formidable stronghold of reaction, was solid as a rock; and it is fairly safe to assume that when Birmingham was ready, the country as a whole was ready.

A strong, courageous, fighting lead was the one thing that mattered above all others and that was the one thing lacking. A lot has been said in the past of the need for the workers having faith in their leaders; I would humbly suggest that if the strike taught us nothing else, it certainly taught us that it is just as important for the leaders to have faith in the workers.

J. STUART BARR.

### EDINBURGH

**I**N Edinburgh, a Central Strike Committee was immediately set up, composed of delegates from the striking Unions plus the Industrial Committee of the Trades and Labour Council. This body co-opted the full-time officials in the District.

Work stopped as commanded, and in those industries where orders were to "carry on," the men either stopped of their own accord or were persuaded to obey the instructions with great difficulty. One large works with about 5,000 rubber workers was only kept at work with difficulty, and this is remarkable since this particular place was full of ex-soldiers of pre-war days, most of whom were strongly anti-labour. Foundries told to continue work by their Union came out after the first day or two. Tramwaymen, of whom only about two-thirds were in a Union, struck work to a man, and in a few days the bakers who were being asked to bake bread for the tramway student-blacklegs refused and came out. The only black spot in the Edinburgh situation was the action of the University students (with a few exceptions). They manned the tramcars and buses, and though no great service was possible they supplied an irritation which raised feelings very high. Trade Unionists who still feel honoured by coming into contact with products of these institutions, should have themselves carefully disinfected afterwards.

The Central Strike Committee quickly got to work. Edinburgh, being the centre of a large scattered mining area, had problems of communication and co-ordination to meet. These were solved immediately in the City when the Unions agreed to act on the



instructions of the Central Strike Committee. This Committee was very efficient, and acted throughout in a businesslike manner, with neither romantic illusions on the one hand, nor any shrinking from its duty on the other. When it is compared with other committees which have acted in the Labour Movement, this Committee will take a high place in local annals.

Communications were established by the introduction of a mobile section. It was fortunate that some workers had bought motor cycles and push bikes, for a corps of over 100 performed tremendous service throughout the strike. They carried communications amongst the various Executives, and immediately an instruction was received from the T.U.C. it was carried into execution within a few minutes through the agency of this mobile section.

The Intelligence section, not specially organised, worked very well. Every Trade Unionist in the city, I fancy, acted as eyes and ears for the Central Strike Committee, for messages were continually arriving that some firm was using its men for a different purpose than that permitted, or that some firm was sending unauthorised goods through to other towns. Immediately, the mobile section advised the outside pickets that this was being done, and these pickets interviewed the drivers and peacefully persuaded them to go back, which they almost invariably did. Great credit is due to the persuasive eloquence of these miner-pickets, for their arguments were nearly always convincing. The police seemed to suspect that some of the pickets were exceeding their instructions for some of them were arrested and vicious sentences meted out. Whatever may be the truth of the police allegations, there is no question about the efficiency of the miner-pickets, and everything should be done to obtain the release of the men. The workers practically throughout Scotland for seven days decided to an unbelievable extent what should or should not be carried by transport, and even heads of firms came to ask that their drivers should be permitted to carry this or that. Needless to say no permission was granted to use the men in any other way than that for which the T.U.C. left them at work.

The Publicity Department reached a similarly high standard of efficiency, and during the strike issued more than 100,000 bulletins. Editing was done in the afternoon of a first page, two stencils cut off it in the evening—two typists working to one dictation—and they were fixed on the duplicators ready for the morning. In the morning the duplicating started, and meantime the second side was being edited from the latest news, and made ready to start when the first side was run off. A staff of duplicators was recruited from the Railway Clerks, Printers, and others, and work was continued by means of shifts. An immense quantity of ink and paper was required,

and this was so well looked after that when the strike finished, stocks were sufficient to last for some days, while the opposition if they had desired to do any circularising would have had to cut the paper themselves. The bulletins were ready by 2 p.m. and within a few minutes were speeding around the countryside to their various destinations in the custody of the mobile section.

The Central Strike Committee interviewed the Magistrates and asked them to close the public houses, and the Magistrates agreed to do so after 3 o'clock. The Central Strike Committee also ordered that no processions, no meetings, and no demonstrations should take place without their sanction, and this was almost completely obeyed.

Edinburgh, in spite of its reactionary atmosphere, can at least be proud of its part in this great Strike. It gained a height of efficiency in organisation for which it is only right to commend this Committee, and especially its chairman, Mr. Tom Drummond of N.U.D.A.W., who throughout guided the decisions with great acumen. He, like a great number of the Committee, has been associated with the Labour College here, and such was the assistance rendered to the Committee and the Workers generally by those associated with the College that the Strike Committee made a special minute thanking the N.C.L.C. for its assistance and sending a record of this to the T.U.C. Our general Secretary, J. P. M. Millar, was placed in charge of the work of putting into operation the decisions of the Committee in regard to Permits, and the whole work of printing the Bulletin, besides being attached to the Committee in a consultative capacity.

A. W.

*(To be continued next month)*

## SOME OPINIONS ON OUR “STRIKE NUMBER”

**A** LIVERPOOL City Councillor writes:—“Please find enclosed my sub. for PLEBS. The June number is splendid, and M.H.D.’s article is just all the truth.”  
A Council of Action secretary writes:—“The best of all the Strike Numbers.”

A T.U. leader (not a member of the G.C.) writes:—“Your June cover cartoon was the best comment on the calling-off of the Strike I have seen.”

We have still a few copies of our June number to dispose of (postpaid 5d.). Order at once if you failed to get your copy.

# A NEW PLEBS TEXTBOOK

R. W. Postgate's "*Short History of the British Workers*" will be published on 14th July. We appeal to every PLEBS reader, not merely to order a copy without delay, but to push its sale among his fellow-workers—at Labour meetings, in T.U. branches, and on every possible occasion.

**H**ERE, at last, is the book our classes everywhere have been waiting for—a history of our own British working-class movement from the later years of the 18th century down to the General Strike of 1926. And it is a book which not merely N.C.L.C. students, but Labour men and women everywhere, should read and read again. As A. J. Cook well says in his Foreword to John Hamilton's pamphlet, "The more we know of our own history, the more resolute and the better able we shall be to *make history* to-day."

This book is written for folks with work in hand—men and women who have not overmuch time or energy to devote to detailed study. It has been written by a man who knows his subject from A to Z; knows how to pick out essential facts, and how to write them down so that they form a book to read, and not merely to refer to. I can foresee stern I.W.C.E.ers shaking their heads over it and regretting its often conversational tone, its frequent wit, and the lack of due solemnity displayed in the choice of "mottoes" for chapter-headings. And I can also foresee hundreds of ordinary workers, this book in their hands, thanking God for a man who can write a history book that is neither dull, dry-as-dust, nor devoid of human feelings. Obviously, Postgate enjoyed himself writing this book; and I take leave to doubt whether a really worth-while book can be produced under any other conditions.

But I don't want to give the impression that the book isn't a solid piece of work—something for the students of our classes to get their teeth into. I know something of the preparatory reading and note-taking which went to the making of this easy-reading sketch of a century and a half of history. Its chapter-headings and sub-headings give an idea of the ground it covers, and I cannot do better than quote them in full:—

- CHAP. I.—FROM ABOUT 1760 TO 1798—  
 Conditions in the 18th Century—The Wilkite Agitation—  
 The French Revolution—The Corresponding Societies.
- „ II.—FROM 1798 TO 1832—  
 The Enclosures—The Industrial Revolution—The Reform  
 Movement—The Repeal of the Combination Acts—The  
 Reform Act.
- „ III.—FROM 1833 TO 1835—  
 Robert Owen—The Operative Builders—The Grand  
 National Consolidated Trades Union.

- CHAP. IV.—FROM 1835 TO 1840—  
Conditions in the Early Victorian Age—Drafting of the Charter and its Launching—The Convention and First Petition—The Newport Insurrection.
- „ V.—FROM 1840 TO 1852—  
The Power of O'Connor—The Second Petition and the General Strike—The Fiasco of 1848—Disappearance of Chartism.
- „ VI.—FROM 1852 TO 1872—  
The New Principles—Co-operation—Amalgamated Unionism and Class Peace—Conflict with the Old Unionism—Defeat of Potter by the Junta.
- „ VII.—FROM 1872 TO 1885—  
Exaggeration of New Policy by the Junta's Successors—Liberal Politics—Conditions in the Later Victorian Age.
- „ VIII.—FROM 1885 TO 1891—  
The Collapse of Liberalism—Altered Conditions—Unskilled Unionism—Revolutionary Socialism—Defeat of the "Old Gang"—Limits of Socialist Victory.
- „ IX.—FROM 1891 TO 1910—  
The Fabian Society—The I.L.P.—The Labour Party—Alliance with the Liberals.
- „ X.—FROM 1910 TO 1914—  
Revolution *v.* Reform—Industrial Unionism—Attacks on the Labour Party.
- „ XI.—FROM 1914 TO 1918—  
Paralysis of War—Pacifist Opposition—The Russian Revolution—Revolutionary Revival.
- „ XII.—FROM 1918 TO 1926—  
Peace—Black Friday—Check of the Revolutionary Movement—The Labour Government—Conditions after the War—A Recovery in 1925—The General Strike.

Not a bad field to cover in a little over a hundred pages. And it doesn't, you will note, shirk the extraordinarily difficult part of a job of this kind by stopping at 1911, or 1914, and so avoiding comment on all sorts of points which are still the subject of hot discussion amongst us, or on events which have not yet got themselves sorted out into neat historical perspective. I wonder how many readers will turn first to the last two or three chapters! Well, they will find a Pleb at work—not pretending to be "impartial" or "unbiased," but honestly trying to state the facts *as he sees them*. And whether they agree with every line or not, they will, I think, back my own verdict that this summary of the history of the last few years—history which most of us have lived through—is amazingly well done.

I fancy there will be other serious-minded ones who will object that too much attention is paid in this book to individuals—"great men" of the workers' movement. Some people distrust history unless all the human beings are left out of it. I think that Postgate has held the balance very skilfully between "forces" and "leaders." The men he selects as typical of successive stages in British working-class development are not presented as "star performers," but are

shown in relation to the social background of their day and generation; and they help one to realise more vividly what that background actually was. To get clear in one's mind the difference between, say, Robert Owen and Robert Applegarth, is to have arrived at a pretty good working grasp of what had happened to the Labour movement between the days of Chartism and those of the Junta.

"Whether the class war is to become fiercer in Britain," Postgate writes in his final paragraph, "whether there is to be a passing lull, or whether the battle to be taken up by Mongol or negro workers, we cannot yet say. All we can say is: *There is no peace.*" We of the Plebs movement exist to provide weapons for the conflict. This book is such a weapon. Let us see that we make the fullest possible use of it.

J. F. HORRABIN.

## GET INTO TRAINING !

**T**HE rapid development of the National Council of Labour Colleges and the rise in educational standards makes it essential that we should lose no opportunity of training more tutors and of improving the knowledge and teaching technique of those who are already tutoring.

Many colleges are this summer doing excellent work in running Tutorial training classes. Of all our activities none is more important than this, because in the meantime our Movement stands or falls by the amount of voluntary service it can enlist. Other educational organisations have their work subsidised from State sources and consequently their position is substantially different.

As most of our educational work is done by voluntary tutors—the value of whose services cannot be over-estimated—every class tutor should make a point of noting those in his class who by temperament and capacity show promise of being successful tutors and should encourage them to give themselves the necessary equipment. The N.C.L.C. Executive would be failing in its duty were it not to run a National Training Centre, and consequently the Labour College, London, has been taken over for that purpose for the fortnight beginning 31st July.

Experience last year indicated that it was advisable to run a Training

Centre pure and simple, and not to attempt to combine it with some of the features common to Summer Schools. It has therefore been decided to limit the work this year to—

(a) providing a training in "Teaching Technique";

(b) equipping elementary students to give a Course of lectures on "Working-class History";

(c) equipping advanced students to give a Course of lectures on "Modern European History."

"Teaching Methods" will be dealt with by F. J. Adkins, "Working-class History" by J. Hamilton and "Modern European History" by M. H. Dobb. Those desiring to attend the school should make up their minds as quickly as possible. Once the enrolment fee is received, a plan of the work to be done by each student will be forwarded to him or her. As a general rule the student will be limited to one of the following Courses:—

(a) "Teaching Methods" and "Working-class History" or

(b) "Teaching Methods" and "Modern European History."

Prior to going to the Centre, each student will be expected to have done a certain amount of the reading which will be indicated beforehand. Any average student taking one or other of the two courses ought to be

able to deliver a course of lectures on the completion of his training, if he or she has already attended local classes or taken a Correspondence Course.

The Executive have asked every Division to send at least one student. Such a student may have his fare or the cost of the Centre (£2 10s. per week) paid by the Division; or the Division may pay the fares of several students but not the cost of their board and tuition. It is hoped that the Colleges will also send students and that quite a number of workers will come independently as individual students. The booking fee of 15s. (in part payment) should be forwarded immediately along

with a letter giving particulars of the student, including his educational experience.

It is not advisable for students to stay outside the College, as a considerable part of the value of the experience lies in being in constant touch with one's fellow-students and thus having the advantage of countless opportunities for discussing various problems.

No College or Division should go to any expense in sending a student to the Centre unless that student undertakes to give assistance with class work, and also, as far as he can, to assist the training of tutors in his own locality.

J. P. M. MILLAR.

## NOTES BY THE WAY for Students and Tutors

### Articles to Read

**N**O. 20 of *The Communist International* contains some very important and informative articles. One by the former Menshevik Martynov, a very talented and lucid writer, discusses the new agrarian program of the Austrian Social-Democrats. Another gives an answer to the question: How has Stabilisation Reflected on the Situation of the Working Class? In addition, there is an informative letter from the Russian C.P., explaining the points at issue in the discussion last year in which Zinoviev and Kamenev were defeated. The Double Number, 18 and 19, has a very important description of the structure and problems of Socialist Industry in the U.S.S.R.—an article which should be read in conjunction with the Russian C.P.'s letter. An article by E. Varga discusses the economic situation in Europe as a result of Dawes; and one by Prof. Pokrovsky provides some useful new historical material, culled from Tsarist

archives, on the connection between 1905 events in Russia and the activities of Tsarist diplomatists on the Paris Bourse. Other articles survey the position in Germany, Czecho-Slovakia, Hungary, and China and Japan.

### *The Peasant Problem*

The above-mentioned article by Martynov quotes the following important passage from an article by the Austrian Marxist, Dr. Otto Bauer, in which the question of large v. small-scale production in agriculture is summarised: "Large-scale agriculture as a general rule surpasses petty agriculture in respect to *labour productivity*, and, on the other hand, small-scale agriculture as a general rule surpasses large-scale in respect to *intensity* of land utilisation. Petty agriculture yields more products on the same area of land, but this is obtained at the cost of a proportionately larger application of human labour and bigger expenses on cattle. (An investigation by Klaasen shows) the average income per hectare

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was 113 marks on large farms and 191 marks on small farms. But the large income of the small farm is obtained by applying three times more labour per hectare and two-and-a-half times more cattle. Thus in the small farms *the gross income is 70 per cent. greater, but the application of labour power is 200 per cent. greater, and of cattle 150 per cent.*"

Hence large-scale farming is more productive than small farming, and yields a larger surplus for the market. But this does not mean the elimination of the peasant by the large farmer in capitalist society; because the peasant is willing to struggle on, contenting himself with a smaller rate of profit through his "fear of wage-slavery," which is his only alternative. But it does mean *the increasing indebtedness of the peasant and his enslavement to mortgage-capital*; and this provides the *objective possibility* of a union of the peasantry with the proletariat. To this end, in the epoch preceding the workers' seizure of power and immediately after, the proletariat must make definite concessions to the peasantry favouring the survival of small farming. This is the essence of the Leninist policy in the matter. But *after* the workers' seizure of power, the peasant will no longer be indebted to mortgage-capital, and he will no longer have the fear of wage-slavery. Instead, he will gradually be "socialised" by being drawn into the net of co-operative credit, co-operative supply of machinery and co-operative marketing.

*Stabilisation and the Workers*

The article on the effect of stabilisation on the workers contains some very useful statistical material. It claims that the temporary relief given to capitalism by the ending of inflation and settlement of the exchanges has been followed in 1925-6 by a new stabilisation crisis. This is shown in the fact that the number of blast furnaces working decreased in the course of 1925 between 40 and 60 per cent. in Britain, France, Belgium and U.S.A., and a great increase of unemployment in Germany. Figures are given showing the general tendency of unemployment in most countries to increase in the course of 1925, and others showing a general tendency for

real wages to decline in the chief countries between 1924 and 1925. Here is the table:—

(London, July, 1924=100)

	July, 1924.	July, 1925.
London	... 100	99
Philadelphia	... 214	180
Amsterdam	... 89	83
Berlin	... 55	63
Brussels	... 59	54
Paris	... 73	65 (April)
Prague	... 56	48
Stockholm	... 81	74
Vienna	... 47	42

The figures are of *real* wages, and are taken from the statistics of the International Labour Office. They also enable a comparison between the standards of life of various countries. Austria, it will be seen, is lowest. Berlin is the only exception to the general tendency to decline—explainable probably by the imports made possible by the foreign credits under the Dawes Scheme. (These credits have now stopped and have to be replaced by their opposite—reparations.)

Varga comments on this situation as follows: "Not the *absolute level* (of wages) but its trend of change is decisive. A working class with extremely low but *steadfast or ascending* living standard is, *ceteris paribus*, much less *revolutionary than a working class with an absolutely higher but falling standard of living!* The same holds true for single strata of the working class. Not the worst-paid proletarian strata form the advance guard of the revolution; far sooner the skilled workers. . . . The existence of a well-paid Labour aristocracy is no guarantee against the revolution when the bourgeoisie is no longer able to assure them an *ascending standard.*"

*The Franc*

France is unable to balance her Budget, owing to the opposition of her capitalist class to increases of direct taxation; and hence the Government is driven to raise money by *inflation*. This causes a continuous rise in prices and fall in the purchasing power of the franc, which is reflected in a corresponding fall in its *foreign exchange value*. In fact, the latter actually "slumps" *faster* than inflation and the rise of internal prices, as witness the

recent "slump" to over 170. This is presumably due to the action of *speculators*, who *anticipate* further inflation and a further fall, and so sell out at once, to "cut their losses." The occasion of the recent "slump" seems to have been the failure of M. Poret's mission to London, by which he hoped to secure a loan in the London Money Market. New York refuses to lend to France, until she settles her existing debt on terms suitable to Wall Street. London apparently refuses to lend until France stops inflation and "stabilises" the franc. The French Government seems at present to be artificially supporting the franc exchange by using what funds it has from the Morgan credits of two years ago to buy francs in the foreign exchange market. A com-

mittee is also reported to be sitting in Paris, composed of representatives of the financial and commercial interests, to discuss plans for stabilisation. Some say it is working out a sort of Dawes Plan for France. At any rate, the plan will involve the cessation of inflation and stabilisation as the price of a loan from New York. France will have to "come to heel" and accept U.S.A. terms for debt repayment. U.S.A. capital will "penetrate" France as it has done Germany. The stabilisation will involve heavier taxation, cutting down of State expenditure on social reform, a high Bank Rate and deflation, implying a starving of credit to industry, and so a deflation and unemployment crisis in France, similar to what Germany is suffering at present.

## REVIEWS

### PROLETARIAN POETRY

*May Days—An Anthology of Verse.*  
 Edited by Genevieve Taggard.  
 (Boni & Liveright, New York.  
 \$3.00.)

FROM America, the land of "class collaboration" and prosperity, comes the most modern anthology of revolutionary verse yet published in English. *May Days* is a collection of poems published in the *Masses* and *Liberator* between 1912 and 1924. The book represents a decade of working-class history, and portrays the emotions and passions of the most sensitive minds who have felt, and still feel, the injustices and oppressions, the aspirations and hopes, the scorn and idealism, that have surged through the proletariat during the war and since.

Miss Taggard has also contributed a remarkably shrewd preface, in which she briefly reviews the chequered career of the *Masses* magazine, and some of its moving spirits. She sees sequence and development in the poetry of the period, and her story of the activities of John Reed, Max Eastman, Floyd Dell, and a host of others up to the time of the suppression of the magazine, is

fascinating. The *Masses* was, as she says, "hot stuff"—in fact, it became too hot for the war-time authorities. In 1917 a frontispiece representing the Liberty Bell with a huge and glaring crack, and a young man being measured by a skeleton, resulted in its being closed down.

These poets denounce drab convention, they have no patience with humiliating submissiveness, they cry out against the automatism of industrial machinery, against the artificiality and glare of city life, they revolt against hollow religions and old-man Gods, against the callous insanity of war, and the lynching murderers of the South.

Thus Alice Miller passionately retorts to a man who glibly asserted that "women are often tempters to sexual sin and delight in it":—

It may be so, good sir, it may be so,  
 Not all who sin are tempted—that we  
 know:

It may be darker things than this are  
 true,

And yet, upon my soul, if I were you—  
 A man, no longer young, at peace,  
 secured

From all that tempting women have  
 endured

---

*The third of the series of articles by Mark Starr on "History and the Workers" is unavoidably held over until next month.*



Of poverty and ignorance and fear  
 And joy that make youth terrible and  
 dear,  
 If I were you, before I took my pen  
 And wrote those words to hearten other  
 men,  
 And give them greater sense of moral  
 ease  
 In the long score of common sins like  
 these,  
 If I were you, I would have held my  
 hand  
 In fire.  
 Ah, well; you would not understand.

Or take the flaming challenge of  
 James Rorty in *The Census Taker* :—  
 There is not one of your laws that I  
 have not rejected ;  
 There is not one of your Gods whose idol  
 I have not mud-bespattered in  
 broad daylight ;  
 There is not one of your goodnesses that  
 has not broken my heart ;  
 There is not one of your sins that I have  
 not tried and found wanting ;  
 There is not one of your sanctities that  
 has not sent me forth baying under  
 the moon.  
 If you want to know who I am, I shall  
 tell you :  
 I am the yellow dog, yapping on the  
 roadside of the world.

And here is the beginning of a poem  
 to Tom Mooney, sentenced during the  
 war for fighting the battles of the  
 workers. It is one of the most moving  
 pieces in the anthology, written by  
 Williams E. Leonard in 1920, and  
 Mooney is still in jail :—

Tom Mooney sits behind a grating,  
 Beside a corridor. (He's waiting.)  
 Long since he picked or peeled or bit  
 away  
 The last white callous from his palms,  
 they say  
 The crick is gone from out his back ;  
 And all the grease and grime  
 Gone from each finger-nail and every  
 knuckle-crack.  
 (And that took time.)

In some of the poems humour and  
 satire are used in a most effective  
 manner. Why does not the Labour  
 Movement use some of the same rich  
 material in England? Labour seems  
 to forget that the working-class youth  
 is as poetic as college or middle-class  
 youth, and it is to the youth we must

look to create the new world of the  
 future. Can Britain not produce such  
 an anthology? Until recently, Labour  
 has shown a decidedly anti-literary  
 bias, but surely such splendid satirists  
 as these who are included here have  
 their place in the struggles of Labour.  
 What agitator could prod so deeply as  
 Will Herford with his delicately laughing  
 scepticism on welfare?

Sing a song of "Welfare,"  
 A pocket full of tricks  
 To soothe the weary worker  
 When he groans and kicks.  
 If he asks for shorter hours  
 Or for better pay,  
 Little stunts of "Welfare"  
 Turn his thoughts away.

There is also a parody in the same  
 meter on the folly and senselessness of  
 war in our so-called civilised society, by  
 General I. R. Sherwood :—

Sing a song of Europe,  
 Highly civilised.  
 Four and twenty nations  
 Wholly hypnotised.

When the battles open  
 The bullets start to sing ;  
 Isn't that a silly way  
 To act for any king ?

The kings are in the background  
 Issuing commands ;  
 The queens are in the parlour,  
 Per etiquette's demands.

The bankers in the counting house  
 Are busy multiplying ;  
 The common people at the front,  
 Are doing all the dying.

This anthology is full of good stuff—  
 300 pages of it. And all royalties from  
 the volume go to the International  
 Workers' Defence Fund. A. A.

#### THE ROAD TO HELL

*If I were a Labour Leader.* By E. J. P.  
 Benn. (E. Benn. 3s. 6d. net.)

Thank God! Mr. Benn isn't a Labour  
 leader, but only a cheerful muddled  
 capitalist. Life has few compensations ;  
 but this is one of them. He is wealthy  
 and so can afford to be cheerful, but the  
 question is whether any capitalist can  
 afford to be muddled.

The publisher's note on the wrapper  
 says that "this is the book for which

employers, trade unionists, and the public have been waiting since the cessation of the General Strike." Ernest ("as his more intimate Labour friends call him") being a publisher could hardly let all those folk wait long for a book—so he wrote one. Very nice of him!

He belongs to the school of bosses who think that if only they are hearty enough, if only they can appear reasonable enough, if only they grin broadly enough, then their bedazzled wage slaves will forget the way they get their profits, and that masters and men will join hands and with flower-decked bowlers dance round the workshops and all will be well. He is going to found a new Union, he says—a Union of Good Intentions; and of course he is going to put himself at the head of it.

The muddleheadedness of the following passage is characteristic of the whole book:—"The industrial dispute between the grasping employer and his underpaid workers is one proposition. A battle in which the whole of organised labour is ranged against the Government of the nation is quite another." What one is to do when one sees "the Government of a nation" ranging itself on the side of a group of grasping employers against their underpaid workers, and using the armed forces of the crown to impose the will of those employers, he does not mention.

Ernest believes in reorganising and improving the capitalist system, in camouflaging its naked exploitation, softening its crude outlines. He thinks he could get the dispossessed to help him—he, the possessor, is going to induce wage-slaves to make this system based on their own exploitation work efficiently! It may be so. And yet again it may not!

"A Union of Good Intentions" is no new thing, Ernest. It tackled the job of paving the road to Hell a long time since. The path the workers will take lies in another direction. W. H.

#### A CLASSIC.

*Imperialism: the last stage of Capitalism.*  
By N. Lenin. (C.P.G.B. 1s. 6d.)

At last a complete translation of Lenin's study of Imperialism is available for English readers. In German and French it has long been available;

and through these and, still more, through Pavlovitch's exposition, the fundamental features of the work have permeated working-class thought on the subject in this country also. But it is a great advantage to have this altogether excellently produced edition in English.

Lenin pays high and deserved tribute to two of his predecessors in the study of Imperialism—Hobson and Hilferding. Of these, the former regarded Imperialism as the outcome of the lack of consuming power among the masses. Apparently he thought that this could be remedied under capitalism—as when he says, for example, that "it is not industrial progress that demands the opening-up of new markets and areas of investment, but maldistribution of consuming power which prevents the absorption of commodities and capital within the country." Hilferding on the contrary approached the subject as a Marxist; his conclusion was that the most recent development of capitalism, culminating in Finance-Capital—"banker's capital turned into industrial capital: capital which the banks control and dispose of, and which industrialists employ"—brings in its train new requirements and a new policy, viz., Imperialism.

Lenin utilises the contributions and, as far as possible, the conclusions of the two writers, but himself emphasises rather the growth of monopoly as the outstanding economic fact of the most recent development of capitalism: the concentration of production and of capital proceeds to such an extent that it leads to monopoly conditions. Monopoly in any given sphere of the productive process calls forth a corresponding tendency in other branches; e.g., the manufacturer who would establish or maintain a monopoly must needs control the supply of raw materials, thus at once enormously widening its own powers and accentuating the antagonisms both between itself and its actual or potential competitors, and also between itself and the consumers of its products.

In all this, the banks have played a dominant rôle. Their interests in relation to the different capitalists engaged in each branch of production or commerce are all in the direction of the elimination of competition; and as banking itself is concentrated, its power

in economic life and in society at large is correspondingly increased.

But, again, the advent of the period of economic monopoly synchronised with the completion of the territorial partition of the world among the half-dozen Great Powers: new expansion on the part of any Power could therefore be achieved only at the expense of one or more of the others. On the other hand, the demand for supplies of materials, for control over routes, for spheres of influence, etc., became ever more urgent as the disparity between productivity and consuming power increased. Thus the struggle for world-power assumed a new and ever more embittered character, crisis following crisis until they culminated in "the first World War"—which, however, served not to mitigate the severity of the struggle, but only to modify its immediate direction.

Considerable space is devoted to the parasitism of Imperialism. Lenin approvingly quotes Hobson at some length on this subject, as a prelude to a crushing onslaught on the "Labour and Socialist" apologists for the Imperialist policy of their masters. Kautsky especially comes in for merciless treatment, but Lenin notes also that "the bond between Imperialism and opportunism revealed itself first and most clearly in England, thanks to

the fact that certain characteristics of Imperialist development have been observable much sooner than in other countries."

The present is, financially speaking, not an entirely auspicious moment for the appearance of new books for the workers; but this classic is one of the indispensable books that should be spread and studied throughout the length and breadth of the working-class movement.

T. A.

#### HOME RULE FOR INDIA

*The Problem of India.* By B. Shiva Rao and D. Graham Pole. (Labour Publishing Company. 1s.)

The present Government of India is like the maid—

"Whom there was none to praise,

And very few to love."

The Diarchy is a compromise which pleases nobody—even official pronouncements describe it with much wealth of alliteration, as a "cumbrous, complex, confused system." The pretence of Parliamentary Government is so obvious a sham that it impresses their subject position upon the Indian people even more clearly than did the unashamed Bureaucracy.

When the Labour Government was in office, it appointed a "Reforms Inquiry Committee" to consider what altera-

JULY

## LABOUR MONTHLY

### *Principal Contents:*

THE MINERS' FIGHT

By A. J. Cook

THE AFTERMATH OF THE GENERAL STRIKE

By Jack Tanner

PEACE UTOPIAS

By Rosa Luxemburg

CAN BRITISH CAPITALISM STABILISE ITSELF?

By Emile Burns

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

tions might be necessary in the Montagu-Chelmsford Constitution. The author of this book agrees with the minority report of that Commission that a transitional system like the present cannot work satisfactorily, and that the Constitution should be put on a permanent basis. One basis which they view with a very favourable eye is that outlined in the "Commonwealth of India Bill," which was adopted by the National Conference of India in 1923. This would give India dominion status within the Empire, and a Constitution of the usual 19th century type with a slightly limited franchise.

It must always be borne in mind that India is now passing through a stage which most of Europe had finished with before the war: it is still believed that National Independence and Parliamentary Government are all that are necessary to bring about the New Jerusalem, the City of God on earth. We after a struggle have acquired these blessings, and have only found in too many cases they are Dead Sea fruit, beautiful to look at from a distance, but dust and ashes in our mouths. In India at present, as in Italy during the Risorgimento, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie are united by common grievances, but it is possible that when a Liberal Constitution is achieved it may not seem a great deal better to the peasants and the proletariat than the bureaucracy of the Indian Civil Service. The

problem of India will not be solved till capitalism is destroyed.

Though the economic problems of India may not be given enough prominence in this book, it is well worth reading. It gives a readable and concise account of the political situation of India, and a brief but useful summary of the present condition of the country, and of the history of its civilisation. There is a foreword by Lord Olivier.

N. H. F.

#### BOOKS RECEIVED

*The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte.* By Karl Marx. Translated, with biographical and historical notes and glossary, by Eden and Cedar Paul. 192 pp. (Allen and Unwin. Paper, 2s. 6d.; cloth, 4s. 6d.)

*British Imperialism in East Africa.* Colonial Series No. 1. (Labour Research Dept. 1s.)

*The Handbook and Directory of Adult Education, 1926-27.* (Deane and Sons. Paper 2s. 6d.; cloth, 3s. 6d.)

*Red Cartoons.* By Robt. Minor, Gropper, Art Young, and others. (*Daily Worker*, Chicago.)\*

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\* We are sending for a supply of this first-class collection of class-conscious cartoons, and hope to be able to supply at 1s. 6d. each post paid. Order now from PLEBS Office.

## LETTERS

#### EMPIRE

DEAR EDITOR,—I think Wintringham will understand my slogan about Empire study if the words "as usually taught in State schools" were added. The notion behind such teaching is that the British Empire spread over the world as a wholly beneficent influence, whereas while this process was supposedly going on even the peasants were being expelled at home. In the matter of Enclosures it seems to me that the point of view of Marx was right rather than that of Cobbett and I hope our comrade's letter has stressed the necessity of workers studying

the growth of the Empire from their own point of view.

Yours,  
M. S.

#### MIND AND MATTER

DEAR COMRADE,—It is difficult to see how the statements concerning "Mind and Matter" appearing on pp. 55 and 61 of Bukharin's *Historical Materialism*, reviewed by Casey in the June PLEBS, warrants Casey's criticisms.

We know the *concepts* of matter and mind, as well as the "matter" indispensable to the existence of such concepts, possess in common the feature of existence; but this does not disprove

FEARGUS  
O'CONNOR



*One of the illustrations to "A Short History of the British Workers."*

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the fact that the "matter" which forms the basis of all thought "may very well" exist without involving the existence of mind, which is all that Bukharin on the pages referred to wishes to convey. Furthermore Bukharin on p. 54 makes his position quite clear in the following:—

"In the third place 'Mind' does not appear until we already *have matter organised in a certain manner*. A Zero cannot think; nor can a doughnut or the hole in it; nor can 'Mind' think without matter. Man's brain, a part of man's organism, thinks. And man's organism is matter organised in a highly intricatated form. In the fourth place; it is quite clear from the above why matter may exist without mind while 'Mind' may not exist without matter."

Casey apparently confuses the *concept* of matter with the *existence* of matter. The *existence* of matter must not be interchanged with the *conception* of its existence, for the matter of conception is not identical with the conception of matter. It is quite true that we cannot have a *concept* of matter without mind, and Bukharin does not deny this. But surely matter *has* existed and *can* exist without mind, otherwise we are back to the position of Berkeley, namely, "Matter exists only in perception," and this is subjective idealism.

In the light of Casey's criticism, to mention only one thing, may we ask, how is inorganic evolution to be explained?

Yours fraternally,  
J. JONES.

## KION LEGI ?

*We offer a prize of any two PLEBS textbooks (to be chosen by the winner) for the best translation of the following short article in Esperanto received by 18th July. Address envelopes to PLEBS Office, and mark them "Esperanto."*

**P**OST diskuto kamarado ofte diris: "Sed Esperanto havas nek historion nek literaturon. Eble ĝi utilos kiel telegrafa kodo sed ne plu." Multe eraras tia opinio. Ĉiutage kreskas la literaturo Esperanta. Pli ol 4000 altrangaj verkoj jam tradukiĝis kaj eldoniĝis. Originala verkado ankaŭ daŭre pliriĉiĝis la lingvon.

Unue ni rigardu la jurnalaron. Dufoje ĉiusemajne vi povas legi "Heroldo'n de Esperanto," kiuenhavas notojn el kaj pri ĉiu lando. Aperas ĉiusemajne "Sennaciulo" kies devizo estas. "Esperanto je la servo de la proletaro" kaj ĝi raportas pri sperto laborista en ĉiu parto de la mondo. Ĉiumonate oni povas legi en "Sennacieca Revuo" la priskribon de grava eksperimento en edukado kaj scienco kaj erojn el la mondliteraturo laborista. Ankaŭ ĉiumonate estas la bone verkata neŭtrala "Esperanto" kaj la "Literatura Mondo" Pliimultiĝas la fakjurnaloj; nun regule la poŝtisto, la progresema instruisto, la liberpensulo, la katoliko, sportisto, k.t.p. aperigas sian specialan presorganon.

Inter aliaj verkoj haveblaj estas "La Mizerulo" (Hugo), la unua parto de la mondfama rakonto pri Jean Valjean; "La Faraono" (ĉefverko de la polo Prus) en kiu la egipta monarĥio batalas kontraŭ la elekzion por gajni mastrecon kaj "Pro Iŝtar" (originale verkita de Luyken) kiu fikcie pritraktas la kreskon de mono-teismo en la epoko de Job. La mondfama atakon de Baronino de Suttner kontraŭ milito. "For La Batalilojn" tradukis germana kamarado.

Vivplene kaj interesige verkis Privat en "Historio de Esperanto" kaj "Vivo de Zamenhof" Broŝurojn de Marx, Lassalle, Liebknecht, Cachin, Kropotkin, Barbusse kaj aliaj oni povas aĉeti. Ĵus aperis "La Kemio de La Universo" de la rusa profesoro Fersman kaj "El La Mondbildo de La Nova Fiziko" de Doktoro Reiche. La unua grava lernolibro pritraktas la konstruon de la mondo; la dua, la modernan misteron de elektroenergio. Tre helpas Esperanto la rusan scienciston kiu antaŭe devis longe atendi la tradukiston. Senpere el la ĉeka lingvo ĵus

venis al la Esperantistaro la fama verko de, ĉapek. "R.U.R." Latvole oni povas legi Esperante la Biblion aŭ la verkojn de Shakespeare kaj Dickens. La kantemulo povas kanti himnojn aŭ "La Internacio'n" la "Marŝo'n de la Ruĝarĝo" kaj aliajn proletajn militkantojn. Laŭplaĉe

oni povas solvi problemojn en ŝako kaj damoj. aŭ per helpo de Esperanto solvi internaciajn problemojn politikajn kaj plej grave antaŭenpuŝi la internacian vidpunkton—tre necesa nun.

Pli mankas la tempo ol la legindaj Esperanto ĵurnal kaj verko.

## The NATIONAL COUNCIL of LABOUR COLLEGES

HEAD OFFICE—62 HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH

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

**A** *NUAL Meeting.*—The Annual Meeting, National Summer School and Plebs Annual Meet take place at Cober Hill Guest House, Cloughton, near Scarborough, 10th to 24th July. If you have not already sent your 15s. booking fee please do so immediately, otherwise accommodation cannot be guaranteed. Cober Hill will be the biggest summer school the movement has yet run.

*National Training Centre.*—This will be held in the fortnight beginning 31st July. It will be conducted on entirely new lines, and bookings should be made at once in order that the students may be sent the preliminary papers.

*National Union of Corporation Workers.*—On the motion of the Edinburgh Branch, this Union decided at its Annual Conference to affiliate to the N.C.L.C.

*Co-operative Wholesale Society.*—The Directors are recommending that £52 10s. be granted to the W.E.A. The C.W.S. makes no grant to the N.C.L.C. Our co-operative supporters are asked to take the matter up immediately.

*Tutors' List.*—The Executive ask Colleges to note that T. D. Smith is no longer on the N.C.L.C. Tutors' List.

*Winter Classes.*—Colleges are again reminded of the necessity of having their winter classes arranged by the beginning of September.

*Day and Week-end Schools.*—Some

divisions are doing well in arranging Day and Week-end Schools which, if they are non-residential, are little trouble to organise and are very successful. While last winter the Scottish Division carried off the blue ribbon for running the largest number of classes it has done very little so far as summer work is concerned and is thus behind the English Divisions. This point is mentioned to put Scotland on its mettle.

*Local Affiliations.*—Unless local affiliations are carefully looked after, there is always the tendency for a number of them to drop off. Each month, therefore, some responsible official of each college should see whether any local affiliations are outstanding and take the necessary steps, including personal calls on secretaries, to see that the affiliations are renewed. A number of colleges lose many affiliations yearly simply because they do not make this business-like effort.

*N.C.L.C. National Library—Jean Dott Gift.*—Tutors are again reminded that they may have a loan of three books at once out of the above library by paying postage. Catalogue, containing conditions of lending, will be forwarded for 3d.

*Duplicating.*—Head Office is now in a position to undertake the duplicating of circulars and notices for local colleges.

*List of New Local Affiliations received during May.*—London Division, 2; South East Lancs Area, 1; Dewsbury, 1. Is the name of your College here? If not, why not?

*What the Divisions are doing*

*Div. 1.*—Southall Labour Club has arranged for a six-lecture course on "Lessons of the General Strike." Ramsgate and Bethnal Green Classes are still running. The Divisional Organiser will be glad to receive applications for six-lecture summer courses or for one-day schools. A garden Party will be held in the Labour College Grounds, 334, Kew Road, Kew on Sunday, 4th July, at 2.30 p.m. All N.C.L.C.ers heartily invited.

*Divs. 2 & 3.*—No reports this month.

*Div. 4.*—The Division is offering a scholarship to the N.C.L.C. Summer School. The Annual Meeting and Summer School which was to have taken place at Penarth, has been postponed. The School will be held the first week of August. Griffithstown class sends a lengthy account of its strike activities, a feature of which has been the public educational propaganda work of C. H. Piper, class tutor. Aberdare students now locked-out are meeting several times a week and have formed a drama society for the performing of plays with a view to carrying on propaganda and to entertain their fellow-strikers. Will all sympathisers and supporters lend a hand for a summer campaign in S. Wales? Please write Organiser Owen, 13, Waengron Street, Cwm-Celyn, Blaina, Mon., South Wales.

*Div. 5.*—June saw the closing of most of the summer classes in the Division. Short courses of lectures are being arranged in a few places. The Organiser is concentrating on attending affiliated branches, to which end all have been circularised asking them to invite speakers to address the members on "Lessons of the Great Strike" and "Is Striking Unconstitutional?" Already a number of branches have responded. Swindon held a successful week-end school on Saturday and Sunday, 12th and 13th June, with Organiser Phippen as lecturer, the subject being "International Finance."

*Div. 6.*—No report to hand.

*Div. 7.*—Under the auspices of the Doncaster College a large meeting was addressed by A. J. Cook and Organiser Shaw. A successful day school was conducted by the Organiser at Dewsbury—thirty-five students attending. Lectures on "Lessons of the General

Strike" and "The Coal Crisis." A residential week-end school is to be held at Heathmount Hall, Ilkley, on Saturday and Sunday, 4th and 5th September. Fuller particulars later. A Day School to be held at Hardcastle Craggs, Halifax, on Sunday, 4th July. Sheffield College is organising a week-end school, Saturday and Sunday, 21st and 22nd August, at the Clarion Camp, Dore Moor, with the Organiser as Lecturer. A week-end school is under consideration for all divisional tutors. A splendid tutorial training class, with thirty-two students, is active at Doncaster. Leeds College is to hold a Conference on "Independent Working Class Education" on Saturday, 28th August, in the Co-operative Minor Hall, Albion Street, Morley.

*Div. 8.*—The winter session was the most successful ever held. S.E. Lancs Area ran 63 classes with 1,602 students. Liverpool District enrolled 1,454 students. A record income of £125 was obtained by the Blackburn College. The Annual Meeting and Week-end School of the Liverpool and District College held in Birkenhead on 5th and 6th June was an unqualified success. J. F. Horrabin's lectures being greatly appreciated. A collection of £1 10s. was taken on behalf of the Miners' Relief Fund. The School on the same week-end in the Ribbles Valley, run by the N. Lancs Area Council, was equally successful. A Day School at Penketh on 12th June, run jointly by the Liverpool College and the local Labour Party, attracted a record attendance. J. Hamilton was the lecturer. The Liverpool Co-operative Society, Educational Committee, has made a grant to the Liverpool L.C. and has also decided to supply each member with a copy of *THE PLEBS* for the next year.

*Div. 9.*—The Division has decided to send a student to the Training Centre and a student to the Summer School. The North Eastern Labour College has a good report for the January to March period—69 classes, with 1,925 students. The Conference which was to have been held in Durham had to be postponed owing to the General Strike. Unfortunately it was impossible to let the delegates know. It was expected that few would be able to make the journey, but some delegates walked surprising distances thinking the Conference would be held. Two delegates walked from



a place twenty-five miles away. Such enthusiasm speaks well for our movement! The students and tutors of the Division were very active during the General Strike. About 40 students, so far as we know, are now in prison. Will Lawther, Chairman of the North Eastern Labour College, and Harry Bolton, an E.C. member, were the first to be taken. Steve Lawther and another brother are now keeping Will company. Successful week-end schools have been held at Chopwell and South Shields; Ebby Edwards was the Lecturer at Chopwell and J. Derricot at South Shields. A pleasing feature of the South Shields School was the presence of three Russian comrades, members of the crew of a Russian boat in the South Shields Dock.

*Div. 10.—Scotland.*—The Annual Report of Lanarkshire Labour College indicates that very extensive educational work was accomplished throughout the county. An old stalwart in our Movement, John Wilson, has been elected Secretary in place of Mrs. Aitken, who has had to give up her excellent work in consequence of going abroad. Staff-tutor Gibbons reports that Edinburgh College has been very active in connection with the miners' lock-out as well as being active during the General Strike. In connection with the former a Central Training Centre was run in Edinburgh to equip tutors for meetings. In connection with the Miners' Relief Fund all students have been urged to enrol as collectors in their local Wards. The Fife tutor is also giving assistance to the miners. The summer educational work done

this year has been so little that the Dunkirk Council (National Committee, S.L.C.) have drawn the attention of the Colleges to the matter.

*Div. 11—Ireland.*—A Students' Association has been formed in Belfast. The income from Belfast affiliations for the year 1925-26 has passed the £50 mark. The Organiser is now secretary to the Belfast L.C. with C. McCrystal as Assistant Secretary.

*Div. 12.—C. B. Jarvis*, Lincoln secretary, has been busy collecting funds for the miners. He has also arranged a summer class which the Organiser is taking. Mrs. Skellington, the Nottingham secretary, reports that the tutorial class is a great success. The college is arranging a campaign amongst the Unions. Successful week-end schools have been held at Arnold, Notts, and also in Nottingham. All N.C.L.C.ers in Nottingham Area were delighted that G. Williams of Mansfield was discharged when the case against him under the E.P.A. was heard. A large part of No. 12 Division is composed of mining areas and many of our active workers are still on strike duty, e.g., work at soup-kitchens and addressing mass-meetings. Mark Starr was the lecturer at a Day School at Wellingborough on 12th June. His visit was much appreciated. It is Northampton's turn for a Day School on 4th July with the Organiser as Lecturer. The Divisional Council is granting a scholarship to the Training Centre. Nottingham College held a successful week-end school on Saturday and Sunday, 26th and 27th June, with Comrade Redfern, S.E. Lancs Organiser as Lecturer.

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with Foreword by A. J. Cook

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# PLEBS LEAGUE NOTES AND NEWS

**T**HIS year the Annual Plebs Meet is to be held during the Summer School at Cober Hill. We shall reserve Sunday afternoon and evening, 18th July, for business and discussion. The General Strike has stopped many Plebeians who hoped to be present from attending, but we hope to have a good muster of League members.

The agenda will be as follows: The Chairman's Address, Secretary's Report and Balance Sheet, and discussion of resolutions submitted by the E.C. or groups. We hope to have a very interesting "Meet," for even though it will not be possible to get a representative of each Plebs group present, our friends of the N.C.L.C. will be in force and it will be a gathering representative of the I.W.C.E. movement as a whole.

Will groups send in any resolutions to Plebs Office up to 8th July (after that date to Winifred Horrabin, at Cober Hill Guest House, Cloughton, Yorkshire)? If a group has no definite resolution we should be glad to receive a message of goodwill or even of censure!

*Please note.*—You are not a member of the Plebs League, however "sound" you may be in principle, unless you have sent in one shilling for the year 1926 to Plebs Office. This rule applies not only to the rank and file but to Executive members, N.C.L.C. organisers and others!

It is a bad time to issue appeals, but this one must go in. It is going to be brief and pointed. We need every member of the League as never before; send your subscription and let us feel that we can face the hard times of the next few months with all our friends behind us. We are in low water financially and every shilling counts.

The Manchester Group are holding a week-end school at the "Woodlands,"

Whaley Bridge, Derbyshire, at the end of August. This is not exclusively for the Manchester comrades, but is rather an endeavour to draw together, under ideal conditions, comrades from other centres who find this spot easy to reach.

Will those desirous of attending communicate with Robt. Moores, 134, Alexandra Road, Moss Side, Manchester. Exact date, together with names of Lecturers and further particulars, will appear next month. W. H.

"LET MY PEOPLE GO"



An impression by a Pleb of a well-known member of the Plebs E.C. and singer of negro spirituals.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

*Zoologist Again.*—Yes, it is quite true that the elephant on our cover has no tusks.

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