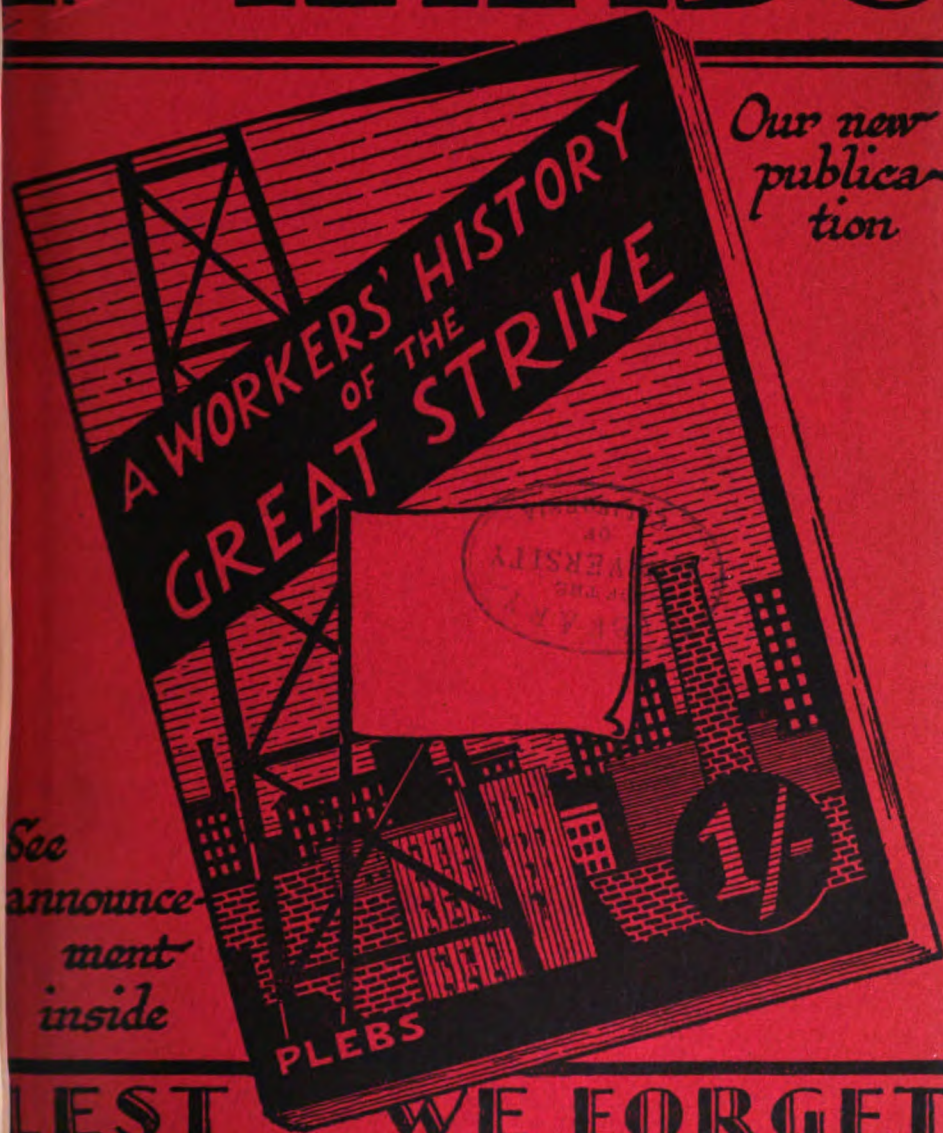


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THE PLEBS

*The Organ of the National Council
of Labour Colleges*

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(17 15 13)



The Pleb Point of View



WITH this number we begin another annual volume—the 19th—of THE PLEBS. It would perhaps be ironic, with conditions as they are at present in the coalfields and industrial centres of this country, to wish our readers a Happy New Year. Whatever happiness—in the conventional sense—we workers want, we shall, as recent events have made only too clear, have to struggle for. But there is a very real happiness that comes from comradeship in a struggle—and the greater the odds we are up against, the more real that joy of comradeship becomes. In our educational movement we are definitely taking a part in the struggle of our class to make a world in which happiness, in the fullest sense of the word, is the workers' birthright.

* * * *

May we again ask for the active assistance of all our friends (a) in getting us new readers for the magazine ; (b) in pushing our three new publications—the *Plebs Atlas* (now on sale), *Wanted—* the new expanded edition of Mark Starr's *Trade Missionaries!* *Unionism: Past and Future*, and *A Workers' History of the Great Strike*, to be published on January 10th ; (c) in helping us financially with these publications in any of the ways suggested in last month's PLEBS—*i.e.*, by loans, cash orders, or investing 5s., 10s., or £1 in our Publication Fund, to be repaid *in books* as issued. Quite a lot of friends have written us to say they noted the appeal, "and will send something along shortly." The hard fact is that we want money NOW—and that good intentions pay no bills ! So if you are one of our well-wishers, and can translate your sympathy into terms of cash—please do it now.

* * * *

With the recent onslaught by the W.E.A. official organ on our manners, our men, and our methods, J. P. M. Millar deals on another page. There is another matter of *The Movement's* really first-class importance to our movement *Need* on which we have only space to say a word or two here ; but we shall return to it again. The uncertainty as to the future of the residential Labour College, London, (now that the Easton Lodge scheme is abandoned) raises a question about which it is urgent that we should make up our

minds, clearly and definitely : that is, what precisely we want a residential College to be. The London College may, in spite of recent rumours to the contrary, carry on as hitherto. On the other hand, there may—we hope there will—be a possibility of some re-modelling of methods, curriculum, terms of residence, etc. This is a matter of vital concern to the whole I.W.C.E. movement, and we should be glad if it could be discussed fully and frankly in these pages.

Our own view, as we have said before, is that the great need of the I.W.C.E. movement is for a Tutors' Training Centre, at which intensive courses of three or six months' duration would be open to men and women who have had preliminary experience of class-work. Such an institution would in a year or two strengthen our movement enormously. Can the London College be transformed into a Training Centre of this kind? If not, is another separate institution practicable? This is the plain question confronting us at the present time ; and the pages of THE PLEBS will be open to all comrades who have anything to say on the subject which will help us to a wise decision.

J.F.H.

THE W.E.A. TAKES THE OFFENSIVE.

THE November issue of the W.E.A.'s official journal, *The Highway*, featured an "Open Letter to the Trade Unions of Great Britain concerning Secret Circular No. 83," based upon a circular sent out by the N.C.L.C. to its constituent organisations. That circular the W.E.A. abusively describes as "SECRET," although it was simply marked "private and confidential," as such circulars usually are.

Throughout the whole article further attempts are made to drag in the idea of "Communist plot" in the same way as the Conservative Party dragged in the forged letter during the last General Election. The open letter talks about the N.C.L.C.'s "right to attack Trade Union leaders" and "its right to dictate or manipulate policy inside the Labour movement." The N.C.L.C. does neither the one thing nor the other, and this calculated misstatement is made in an attempt to ingratiate the W.E.A. with Trade Union officials, who naturally object to personal attacks.

The N.C.L.C.'s sole purpose is to provide independent working-class education, and it cannot in the nature of things enter into disputes between Trade Unions or working-class political organisations. It exists to provide an educational basis for all *bona-fide*

working-class bodies. That it is doing so is indicated by the fact that it has more Trade Union educational schemes and more financial support from the Trade Unions than the W.E.A. and all other working-class educational bodies put together, and by the further fact that it has had to face the united attack of the W.E.A., the Universities, the Education Authorities, and the Board of Education.

The "Open Letter" is couched in such terms as to make even the sympathetic reader sceptical, and we should not have troubled answering it but for the fact that there are a number of misstatements, some of which we must regretfully characterise as deliberate.

In the first place, it is a deliberate misstatement to say, as the open letter does, that the conflict between the W.E.A. and the N.C.L.C. is over "teaching methods and class administration."

The N.C.L.C. is accused of a breach of the Scarborough Scheme because it has not supplied the W.E.A. with full information about what it has done or is proposing to do. Although it is about eighteen months since the Scheme was passed, the N.C.L.C. has not received a single communication from the W.E.A. saying what it was doing! In addition, it may be remarked that the Scarborough Scheme has never been put into operation and that the W.E.A. knows that.

The W.E.A.'s Journal states further that the so-called "Secret Circular" was sent out "on the eve of the Bournemouth Congress," the inference being that it was issued for the purpose of influencing the Congress vote. The W.E.A. *knows* that the circular was dated 24th September and that the very wording itself clearly indicates that it could not have been drafted, far less issued, until *after the Congress had referred back the Easton Lodge Scheme*.

The W.E.A. alleges that it has "stood since its foundation" for the principle of education for 'social and industrial emancipation' " Here again is a calculated misstatement. When the Scarborough Scheme was drafted, and these words were decided upon, it was only after a long fight, in which the N.C.L.C. representatives had to threaten completely to break off negotiations, that the W.E.A. agreed to include that phrase in its Statement of Policy. *It refused to put the phrase in its Constitution*, but smuggled it into an odd corner of a long-winded Statement of Policy.

Again, it was the N.C.L.C. representatives who insisted in the Scarborough Scheme that the tutors employed by the working-class educational bodies should be Trade Unionists. This, however, did not please the Board of Education and the Education Authorities. As a result, the W.E.A. has since *undertaken not to make membership of a Trade Union or professional organisation a*

"condition governing employment." (See *Education*, 12th February, 1926.)

The "Open Letter" suggests to the reader that the N.C.L.C. does not provide proper financial statements for those Unions who are entitled to have them, and states, regarding the question of statistics of work done, that "everything has to be taken on trust." Needless to say, an organisation controlled by 33 Trade Unions* and thousands of Trade Union branches, local Labour Parties, Trades Councils, etc., has both a properly audited balance sheet and satisfactory statistics.

According to the "Open Letter," the part played by the N.C.L.C. in the Easton Lodge proposals was to do everything to bring them to nought. It is certainly true and has never been disguised that the N.C.L.C. and the Unions controlling it disliked a proposal which was going to involve spending £50,000 on equipping Easton Lodge for a handful of residential students, while no provision was being made for the more important evening-class work.

In order to assist the General Council to make their proposals more acceptable to the Trade Union movement—admittedly much more interested in evening-class work than in residential work—and realising that the General Council itself was anxious to include class work,† the N.C.L.C. Executive actually offered to hand over subject to a ballot of its affiliated organisations and to reasonable safeguards on the question of educational principle, the whole of the N.C.L.C.'s machinery, which deals with over 30,000 class students alone every year, to the General Council. The N.C.L.C., unlike other working-class educational organisations, is self-supporting, obtains further Union schemes each year, has no debts, and thus no greater offer of assistance could have been made by any educational body. Needless to say, the W.E.A. did not make a similar offer. About £45,000 per year is required to finance its work, and over two-thirds of that money, at the very least, comes from the State, the Universities and the Education Authorities, which in fact, whatever may be the convenient theories, control it.

After Congress had decided to refer back the Easton Lodge proposal, the N.C.L.C. Executive did not withdraw its offer. It felt that, as the N.C.L.C. was self-supporting, Congress could in the N.C.L.C. have the largest piece of Trade Union educational machinery in the world. Moreover, it believed that the General Council, with the amount it was entitled to spend from its own

* Membership over two millions.

† The Chairman of the General Council's Education Committee had indicated to the N.C.L.C. Executive that it hoped to take over the N.C.L.C. when the financial position allowed.

resources plus assistance from the Unions that were willing to assist, could quite easily carry out its proposal to take over the residential Labour College, London. The Executive, therefore, so that there might be no difficulty from the N.C.L.C. side, incurred the expense of calling a special Conference* after the Bournemouth Conference in order that the special Conference might approve of the offer to hand over. The Conference approved of the step taken, for the simple reason that the N.C.L.C. (unlike the W.E.A.) is controlled by working-class organisations only, and has no other axe to grind than Labour's axe. The N.C.L.C. then went to further expense in taking a ballot of its controlling organisations, and this ballot, by the remarkable vote of 70 to 1, approved of the offer.

The W.E.A.'s "Open Letter" deliberately *circulated among the Unions*, is part of its campaign in a vain endeavour to discredit the N.C.L.C. in the eyes of the Trade Union movement and to hide the fact that it is not now, as it never has been, willing to come entirely under working-class control, financially and otherwise. It also indicates that the W.E.A.'s policy is to do everything possible to prevent the General Council from accepting the N.C.L.C.'s offer. The W.E.A.'s "Open Letter" is nothing more than an attempt to sabotage the possibility of a real Congress Educational Scheme.

J. P. M. MILLAR.

WELFARE FUND.

The special attention of miners is drawn to the growing attempt which is being made to utilise the Miners' Welfare Fund to provide governing class education. Within the last year or two the combined efforts of the W.E.A. and the Universities has been successful in utilising Miners' Welfare Funds for educational work amongst the miners of Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Nottingham. In November, Lord Chelmsford announced with great satisfaction that steps were being taken to provide ten scholarships each year and valid for fully three years, which would enable miners to pass from the pit to the University, and then to "take up medicine, law, and similar professions."

This is naturally approved of by the coal owners who have half representation on the Welfare Committee; but what have the miners to say to it? Meanwhile a proposal for financing an N.C.L.C. scheme from the Miners' Welfare Fund in one locality has been quietly dropped.

* The so-called "Secret" Circular is simply a summary of the discussion at that conference.

Straws in the Wind

The New Page—The Industrial Peace Stunt—Banishing Class Struggle—The Purge of the Labour Movement—Clarification within our Ranks—New Problems before us.

JANUARY, 1927, opens a new page. Who this time last year really dared to believe that May, 1926, would see a General Strike, a thing unique in our history? Who really dared to hope in his inmost heart that a miners' struggle would continue firm and vigorous for nearly eight whole months? Who would have prophesied, and staked upon it, that the State would have shown itself so nakedly an instrument of class dictatorship, gaoling pickets, banning meetings, using the Poor Law against the workers and organising a Special Constabulary Reserve (Black and Tans) with tin helmets, or that the official leaders of the movement would have dared to have sabotaged so openly and shown themselves so clearly opponents of any real mass struggle? The new period, therefore, on which we enter has the following important new features:—(1) The class-consciousness of the British workers has reached a stage of development which had been reached in continental countries, but which here, the classic country of the "Liberal working man" and the nonconformist "Labour aristocracy," had always been lacking; (2) the possibilities of mass solidarity, which many were inclined to doubt before, have been abundantly shown; (3) the character of the State as a capitalist instrument has been abundantly proved, and a highly important lesson been learned that the struggle cannot take a "kid-glove," democratic path, but must inevitably take the road of mass struggle *against* the capitalist State; (4) the real lines of division inside the Labour movement between those who disbelieve in the class struggle and merely desire liberal reforms, and the masses whose circumstances force them to struggle along class lines, are for the first time being clearly and sharply defined—the clash between the old pre-1914 ideology of a British "Labour aristocracy" and the new post-war revolutionary ideology of the masses; between ex-Liberals, Fabian Parliamentarians and Trade Union bureaucrats on the one hand, and the rank and file in mine and workshop on the other hand.

After every big industrial struggle one finds the twin movement of propaganda for Industrial Peace coupled with attempts to "clip the wings" of the Trade Unions, so far as they dare. This time one sees this twin movement on a much more developed scale, showing that the capitalists realise how far the class struggle has reached

its crucial stage. The repeal or amendment of the Trades Disputes Act ; the appearance of "Company Unions" ; the attempt to smash the M.F.G.B. ; victimisation of militants—these are topics of universal conversation. But what is more significant is that the Industrial Peace stunt is being led at the present, not by the capitalists, who are more keen on the mailed fist at the moment than on honeyed words, but by the official leaders of Labour themselves ! And why ? Because for the first time the official leaders have faced real mass struggle and real mass initiative, and they are frightened by it in their "respectable" nonconformist liberal souls—so frightened that they can conceal their open hostility to the class struggle no longer.

Mr. Frank Rose, M.P., we know, and are not surprised to find him writing in the capitalist Press to attack Trade Unions in general. Frank Hodges we know, and Spencer M.P. and his "Yellow" Union, and MacDonald's letter to him ; and Bromley's "stab in the back" at the miners we know, and Thomas' and Snowden's open attacks on the miners' secretary, and Williams' insults at Margate, and MacDonald's equivocal attitude over the telegram to America. But some of the later moves in the game, now that the actual fight is over, may come as rather more of a surprise ; and are nothing to what is no doubt coming in the next few weeks (*e.g.*, with the forthcoming Report of the General Council to the T.U. Executives). Mr. Frank Hodges appeals for a "Five Years' Truce" in industry (at the time when the employers are seeking to bind their men by three-year agreements) ; and not only is there no disclaimer from official Labour, but J. R. Clynes writes in *The Times* (Dec. 14th) in approbation of "the rare penetration with which Mr. Hodges probed the economic forces relating to a settlement in the coal industry," in contrast to the miners' secretary with "no qualification for seeing how best his members could benefit in the making of a bargain." Moreover, Dr. Haden Guest M.P., protagonist of the new Labour-Empire policy, writes in *The Times* (Nov. 27th) claiming to represent "the views of a number of members of the Labour Party," and proposes : "(1) A guaranteed period of industrial peace between Labour and Capital based on a partnership conception of industry . . . (2) a relentless scrapping and repudiation by Labour, not only of all the revolutionary fanfaronade of class war, break-up of capitalism, etc., but of all shibboleths, Labour or Capitalist, which offer any opposition to the reconstruction [of capitalism] programme." Mr. MacDonald declares, at the Royal Society of Arts, it necessary "to preach the doctrines of anti-revolution," adding that "if any reforming movement is started on the assumption that society is a battleground of clashing interests

where victory and progress can be secured only by one of those classes overcoming the other, then they are embarked on a hopeless quest" (*Daily Herald*, Dec. 15th). When Lord Weir pleads in the House of Lords for an Industrial Truce, Lord Thomson, for the Labour Party, agrees with him and advocates Co-partnership (Dec. 14th). When a Tory M.P. writes to protest against certain trade unionists in Manchester refusing to work with non-unionists, Clynes replies (*The Times*, Dec. 1st) : "I have never approved such action, and I do not think that in the long run Trade Unions stand to gain by taking some course against a third party (the employer) to reach a second party." What further plea for the "open shop" and "yellow unionism" does one need? Further, the "Never Again" policy (*i.e.*, no more mass struggles) is being pursued relentlessly ; and attempts are being made to use the defeat of the miners, not to learn the lessons of defeat and to prepare for another day, but to sow despair in mass action and animosity against all who gave the call to struggle, and so to encourage the rank and file to resign themselves in passivity, lulled to sleep by the refrain : "The ballot-box is the better way." And hundreds of sincere rank and file fighters, who have not yet clearly grasped the real implications of the situation, are taking up the cry, "Now for the ballot-box," without realising that they are helping to beat the traitors' drum. For what those at the top who lead this cry really mean by it is : "Give up the class struggle. Resign yourselves and do nothing but prepare for the next election, when you will vote for us. Meanwhile you will allow us to bind you hand and foot by 'industrial peace' agreements, 'yellow' unions, etc. ; and then one fine day in the future we will pass a Bill through Westminster which will give you a new heaven and a new earth." Well may a writer in the December *Socialist Review* ask the question : Have we been captured by the Middle Class ?

While this open disavowal of the class struggle and this raising of the banner of "Industrial Peace," "Labour and Empire," "the ballot-box only," etc., is being carried on, a "purge" of the Labour movement of those who really believe in the class struggle is being conducted, too. There were many who said that the attack on the Communists was only the thin end of the wedge, and would be followed by an attack on all ordinary "Left-wingers," too. This is now seen to be the case. While Liberals pour into the Labour Party, saying it is not they who have changed their principles, but the Labour Party which has taken over Liberal principles and applied them, and while Frank Rose and Spencer and men of their kidney are allowed to remain, approved rank and filers who have fought and suffered for the movement are excluded. We have Mr. Jones

of Yorkshire declaring that Communists must be turned out of the unions. We have T.U. Executives forbidding their branches to affiliate to the Minority Movement. We have a wholesale disaffiliation of local Labour Parties, and the attempt to create in place of them rival "safe" Right-wing bodies. We find in a local election in West Ham prominent Labour M.P.'s openly supporting a rival candidate against the official Labour candidate, because the latter was a Left-winger (not a Communist). We have the London Labour Party organising a rival May-Day demonstration of its own, because the First-of-May Committee which has organised it for decades refuses to exclude Left-Wing bodies from the celebrations. We find Cook reviled and attacked by all Right-Wingers because he has dared to put up a real working-class fight. We are reaching in our movement the stage which the German movement reached in 1922 when the Social-democrats decided to expel from the Trade Unions all militants who directed their agitation "*against the authority of the State*" and "anyone who proved by his actions that he *accepts the watchwords* of the Communists." "There must be no half measures," their official statement said. "Whoever is not with us is against us" (*c.f.* Berthelot, *Works Councils in Germany*, p. 52). This happens in all countries when the class struggle approaches its acute stage. We shall have in England our Noske yet! Meanwhile the attack on all elements faithful to the class struggle will proceed and widen. Either the apostles of industrial peace will succeed in their "purge," or—a counter-purge will purify the Labour movement from the liberal, defeatist elements who at present control it. This separating of the sheep from the goats will be the feature of the new page which we are commencing. On the outcome will depend the further feature of that page; whether it will see a temporary lulling of the struggle, or the organisation of the struggle on a new and more advanced plane. Unity—by which is meant the breaking down of sectional barriers and sectional ideology—must be fought for above all things; but it must be a unity of the masses based on the class struggle, not a sham unity that merely throws a cloak over the designs of the enemy within our gates. And in our educational movement we need to develop our studies to grapple with some of the problems of this new, more developed stage in the class struggle—problems such as those which the articles in this issue raise. For the new page brings our movement much nearer to crucial issues than we have hitherto realised. Let it not be said that our political consciousness and education still linger chapters behind!

ZED.

THE TACTICS OF THE MINERS' STRUGGLE.

“**A**FTER seven months of struggle we have returned to work on the miserable terms that we rejected so contemptuously in April last. Why this defeat? The reason can be given in a word—SABOTAGE. The first act of treachery was, as every miner knows, the calling off of the General Strike. The next was the foolishness of the M.F.G.B. Executive in ever trusting this same General Council again during the struggle.”

The same writer touches on a supremely important point also when he adds, after referring to the notorious cases of vacillating or treacherous leadership in the Midland coalfields (he cites Varley as an instance of the first and Spencer as the outstanding example of the second)—“one of the lessons we have to learn is that such leaders exist in every County Association.”

In these few words from a plain rank-and-file fighter of the coalfields, I think we have outlined the whole gist of a correct analysis of the miners' struggle. Let us take his last point first—the question of the county and district leadership ; for this lies at the bottom of everything else, as I hope to show.

We have been too apt in the past to think of the Miners' Federation as if it were really not a Federation at all, but as if it were a flexible kind of industrial union. The fact is, and the 1926 lockout has demonstrated it up to the hilt, that the M.F.G.B. is a very loose Federation indeed ; its score of district federated miners' associations are largely autonomous, directed by officials who think of their own district first, foremost and all the time. The districts, in effect, fight their battles on their own, even though they may be all fighting together in a national dispute, and a weak district is allowed to go the devil in its own way without the other districts troubling their heads about it.

The district independence shows itself strongly in the national organs of the M.F.G.B. The M.F.G.B. Executive has been correctly described as a conclave of ambassadors from independent, though allied, powers. It is the reverse of a central directing authority of a single national organisation. And the highest authority of the M.F.G.B., the national delegate conference, is the same thing on an enlarged scale. Both bodies, the Executive entirely, and the delegate conference largely, are composed of district and local officials.

The M.F.G.B. has no centralised organisation whatever—only a Secretary ; even its other three national officials are at the same time leading officers of district associations.

What part have the district officials played in the struggle? With certain honourable exceptions they have, taken as a whole, played no part whatever—I mean no part in the active leadership of the fight in the coalfields. Who organised, led, and fought on the picket line? Who ran the soup kitchens? Who took the masses out on the streets to demonstrate against blacklegs, or to the Guardians and workhouses to demand relief? Who were arrested, fined and imprisoned? Who, in short, *fought*, and fought to win? The rank and file miners, not the district officials. Indeed, in many cases, the district officials were an actual obstruction to the conduct of the struggle. The mass of the miners were eager and determined, the fighting spirit was roused in them as it had never been roused before, even in their long history of militancy—and yet the timorous district officials, instead of placing themselves at the head of their men and leading them into battle, used every means to damp their ardour, so inevitably discouraging and disheartening them.

Everybody who has had first-hand knowledge of the coalfields during the past seven months will be able to call to mind colliery villages which never saw a district official during the whole course of the lock-out. When the officials did put in an appearance, it was as often as not just to address a meeting ; and their favourite oratorical line seems to have been the perhaps comforting but peculiarly irrelevant reflection that nothing much could be done until we had a Labour Government. Sometimes they added that it was all the workers' fault for not returning a Labour majority in 1924.

What has been said about the district officials applies also, to a considerable extent, to the local officials. A complaint frequently voiced by rank and file miners, particularly in Yorkshire, was of the lack of lodge meetings. In a number of cases lodges did not meet for months together ; and it is significant that where this happened, notably in South Yorkshire, serious breakaways took place. Another grave mistake committed by the local officials was the granting of extra safety-men to colliery managements who applied for them. This created intense friction and bad feeling locally (sometimes leading to the lodge meeting over-riding the officials and pulling *all* safety-men out), caused serious division in the miners' ranks, and was in fact merely providing the owners with blacklegs.

In the M.F.G.B. leadership (with the outstanding exceptions of Cook, S. O. Davies, Arthur Horner, etc.) the characteristic ideology and errors of the district leadership were projected on to the national plane. Although it was perfectly obvious that the

owners and the Government were bent on a fight to a finish, yet after the betrayal of the General Strike and the consequent isolation of the miners, when it was evident that only a rigorous intensification of the struggle could bring victory, four-and-a-half months passed without the M.F.G.B. leadership really going on to a war basis or attempting to deal with the situation in a militant way.

During the summer months the only national activity of the M.F.G.B., by both the Executive and the Delegate Conference, consisted of negotiations for a settlement. It was noticeable that the first breakaway in Warwickshire became serious after the negotiations with the Bishops had opened in July. In August the delegate conference empowered the opening of negotiations with the owners (this was the "abandonment of the slogan" so loudly trumpeted in the Press at the time), which were completely abortive, as might have been expected; significantly enough there followed the grave breakaway in Notts. and Derby. Before August was out came the Churchill negotiations; and then, on September 2nd, the delegate conference decided to agree to discuss a settlement with the Government and the owners on the basis of a "reduction in labour costs"; the breakaway in the Midlands had swelled (allowing for the owners' grossly exaggerated figures) to alarming proportions, and a trickle had begun in other fields. By the end of September over 100,000 miners had returned to work.

Five months of the struggle had now passed, and a very critical phase—the most critical phase since the end of the General Strike—had been reached. Suddenly something happened. The first sign of it was the overwhelming vote of the miners against the Government's suggested terms: 737,000 votes to 42,000. It was a clear mandate from the rank and file to the leaders to have done with negotiation, to realise what they were up against, and to fight accordingly. There followed, at the delegate conference on October 7th, the passing of the famous South Wales resolution.

That resolution re-affirmed the "slogan," and required the withdrawal of all safety-men, the cessation of outcropping, a special Trades Union Congress to organise a levy, an embargo on the import of coal, an intensive propaganda campaign in the "black" areas with all the forces of the Federation, including the large phalanx of miners' M.P.'s (who so far throughout the war "did nothing in particular and did it very well"), and finally the central control of all these operations to rest in the M.F.G.B. Executive, with power to over-ride refractory district officials. Here at least was the enunciation of the only tactics which held out any prospect of success. The passing of the resolution ran like an electric shock throughout the whole British coalfield. Instinctively the miners felt that here was the means to victory. A bold lead, and the immediate

operation of the *whole* of the South Wales resolution would have changed the whole situation.

Every clause in the South Wales resolution was important ; but the acid test was the question of the safety-men. At the stage the struggle had then reached that was the one immediate concrete and practical issue. The postponement of the application of the South Wales resolution for a week (largely on the insistence of Herbert Smith) until the district vote had been taken, was fatal. True, the district vote showed a majority of nearly 180,000 in favour of the South Wales resolution ; but the moment had passed. Every district should have been wired directly the resolution had been passed—"Withdraw all safety-men." The feeling in the coalfields was such at the end of that first week in October that every safety-man would have been pulled out by hook or by crook. Once again, however, the leadership caught cold feet.

An attempt was made to carry out the propaganda campaign in the 'black' areas. Despite the banning of meetings and every form of police persecution, the campaign had some effect, showing clearly that this tactic was the right one. But still the chief burden of the campaign was borne by one man, A. J. Cook, and the district officials bungled things badly. However, the rot had gone too far to be met merely by a propaganda campaign, and the failure to operate the whole of the South Wales resolution rendered the campaign nugatory in its ultimate effects.

It may be noted here, as a striking commentary on the district and the national leadership, that the task of battling against the breakaways, first in Warwickshire, then in Cannock Chase, Notts. and Derby, and so forth, was from start to finish laid on the devoted shoulders of Cook. The other prominent district officials and members of the Executive, with very few exceptions, lay low, hugging their own districts. And, of course, the labours of one man, herculean though they were, could naturally not produce other than a passing effect.

Nothing effective was done to operate the other clauses of the South Wales resolution. The decision to meet the reactionary Safety-men's Federation, led by Mr. Shirkie, was notoriously farcical (so farcical that there was no attempt even to hold the meeting). With regard to the embargo, a meeting between the M.F.G.B. and the transport unions took place on November 2nd under the auspices of the General Council ; it was abortive, as had been every approach by the M.F.G.B. to the General Council and the transport unions on this subject, since they first asked for an embargo at their meeting with the General Council on July 15th. The levy was considered by the Conference of Executives on November 3rd—the embargo having been studiously excluded from

the purview of the Conference—which voted the penny a day voluntary levy; this was, as its proposers, the Distributive Workers, stated, “hopelessly inadequate,” and in any case it never produced even the sums (about £60,000 a week) that were estimated. I understand that it only put into the coffers of the M.F.G.B. the paltry sum of round about £20,000.

Our Northumberland comrade, whose statement we have taken as text, referred to the foolishness of the M.F.G.B. Executive in ever trusting the General Council again after May 12th. That appears very strikingly in their failure to appeal, over the heads of the unwilling leaders of the other unions, to the rank and file railwaymen, transport and other workers—both for the levy and the embargo. Yet some such appeal was absolutely essential if the isolation of the miners from the rest of the working class was to be broken down. On the international plane the same mistake was made; no organised approach to the rank and file of the Continental workers was made. The workers of the Soviet Union gave their magnificent aid without being asked.

In connection with this fatal and incomprehensible trustfulness in the General Council shown by the M.F.G.B. leadership must be cited the agreement to postpone the Conference of Executives called for June 25th, which was followed by the agreement not to raise the question of the General Strike or the miners’ lock-out at the Bournemouth T.U.C. Both these agreements were tactical errors of the first order, undertaken on the plea that nothing must be done to militate against the miners’ struggle; in fact, all they did was to shield the General Council and enable the work of sabotage to proceed unchecked.

The final collapse of the M.F.G.B. leadership in November followed naturally on all that has been said above. The delegate conference first dropped the South Wales resolution and authorised the opening of negotiations on the lines prepared by the mediation of the General Council. Then they recommended the abominable Government terms for acceptance—which the rank and file rejected by 460,000 to 313,000, thereby splendidly demonstrating their splendid determination to fight on at all costs. Finally they ignored this rank and file decision and authorised the opening of district negotiations. That was the end.

ALLEN HUTT.

THE CIVIL WAR IN FRANCE by KARL MARX

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RESEARCH WORK

The Value of Newscuttings

Research work by individual workers has to cover other and wider subjects, as well as the local investigations dealt with by R. W. Postgate and F. J. Adkins in the last two issues of "The PLEBS." Mark Starr and J. F. Horrabin here set down a few hints on the keeping of newscuttings.

WE workers have not only to dig facts from the files of old newspapers—we have to take full advantage of the fact that the newsboy calls on us daily, and that history is being made in the world we live in. This history is only slowly absorbed into books; so that a collection of newscuttings is essential if one's information is always to be up-to-date.

If you can afford to subscribe to a newscutting agency, and so have delivered to you regularly cuttings bearing on whatever subjects you are interested in, your job is, of course, simplified. But most Plebs can't afford such luxuries. And anyhow, cuttings that you have made yourself can be used with much greater relish and effectiveness. (One of us, for instance, treasures a copy of the *Daily Mail* of August 9th, 1926, which has headlines—"RUSSIAN REVOLT REPORTS: ARMY AND NAVY MUTINY . . . Petrograd (*sic*) and Kroonstadt are centres of the revolt." As he happened to be in Leningrad on that date, it is not difficult for him to work in a reference to Ananias when alluding to the *Mail's* reports where Russia is concerned.)

The very act of cutting out an item helps to fasten it on one's mind. And one reads a newspaper much more keenly and critically if one is looking for the really significant points. Every teacher of Economics will, for instance, during the past month have made one or two cuttings about the Chemical Combine, and made use of it as an illustration of the writing up of capital. The student of Imperialism will have been noting and cutting the day-by-day news from China. The lecturer on Trade Unionism who did not file the Embargo Document (*Daily Herald*, July 31st, 1925) lost a real historic document. And so on—on all sorts of subjects.

Almost any newspaper or journal contains some item of value—if one hunts for it. But we cannot here give a long list of useful journals, since both time and money prevent the worker student as a rule from subscribing to more than one or two. It hardly needs to be said—yet it is better perhaps to say it—that one need not read through every line of a newspaper in one's search for the good

things. Newspapers usually "group" their news according to a fairly regular plan. Let us assume that our "researcher" gets the *Herald* daily. He will note, if he is studying international questions, that the *Herald's* foreign news is usually on p. 3, though if the news be of outstanding importance it may appear on p. 1. He will watch, further, for the excellent column on "Men and Things Abroad" contributed by the Diplomatic Correspondent once or twice weekly. And he will glance at the leading articles to see if there is any comment there on international affairs.

Or he may be chiefly interested in industrial questions. In that case he makes a point of going carefully over p. 6 of his *Herald*, to see whether among the mass of miscellaneous Trade Union news on that page there are any items of more than passing significance.

If he is an economist, he glances down the City Column—and so on. And on any day when there is news of exceptional importance from his point of view, he can, if he will, treat himself to *The Times* or any other paper likely to contain additional material on the same subject—or he may buy any one of the capitalist papers merely to see (and to cut) the comments and the headlines with which they serve up this particular item.

We may note here that he will probably regularly buy, in addition to his daily paper, one or two weeklies which have special features bearing on his subject. The *Manchester Guardian Commercial*, for example, is well known to students; and the foreign news and special articles in the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* are a mine of useful material. The Labour weeklies themselves—*Lansbury's*, *New Leader*, *Sunday Worker*—all again print matter worth keeping; and one cannot (one's wife insists so anyway) keep a full file of every paper one subscribes to.

Which brings us to another practical matter—the best way of keeping one's cuttings. There is no one best way—there are half-a-dozen alternatives to choose from. A strong cardboard box can be turned into a good alphabetical file by means of pieces of cardboard serving as divisions. Or you may prefer a collection of large envelopes, each labelled with some sectional heading—"China," "Russia," "Kenya," or "Combines," "Workers' Control," "Strikes"—and the envelopes kept in alphabetical order on a shelf. (In either case you will need to go through your cuttings every now and then and throw out any of secondary interest—or you will soon accumulate such a pile of stuff that it becomes difficult to find the item you really want amid the mass of more or less useful material.)

You can also keep really good cuttings pasted in books on the subject to which they refer—the cutting thus forming a sort of appendix. But don't do too much *pasting*, because as already remarked it is just as necessary that you should be able to "scrap" cuttings as that you should collect them.

Another small practical point in conclusion. *Always* remember to mark the source (*i.e.*, name of journal) and date on every cutting. This is really important.

And don't try to keep cuttings on every subject under the sun.

MARK STARR.

J. F. HORRABIN.

THE COLONIAL EMPIRE.

IN the Empire Conference last November the Colonies were not represented at all, and they are not often remembered by those who speak and write about the Empire. The Colonies are essentially "the white man's burden"—territories where the white man relieves the native races from all responsibility of government and ultimately from all responsibility of owning land or even making a living out of it. The territories are vast, and the burden is heavy; but the profits are satisfactory.

Of the territories within the British Empire which still have colonial status far the largest and most important are in Africa and Asia. The West Indies are the heritage of a pre-imperialist stage, but were not important enough to form into a Dominion; and other similar colonies scattered over the world (Gibraltar, Malta, various islands in the Pacific, etc.) are either unimportant or are useful only as coaling and defence links in the chain of communications. But in Africa Britain has a series of colonies of immense area and natural resources; in Asia (apart from the semi-Dominion of India), Mesopotamia, Palestine, Malaya, and Hong Kong—the base for the colonisation of China.

The African territories (omitting the Dominion of South Africa) were all added to the British Empire during the imperialist stage. Purely trading operations have never played so important a part in British relations with the African colonies as they did, for example, with India. In the earlier phases of the African colonies they were used mainly for the provision of raw materials needed by British industry; and West Africa is still largely used for this purpose. The method of exploitation is therefore fairly simple, and is not far removed from the trading method. The natives, generally speaking, are not forced to labour directly for the white man; palm kernels and timber can still be got without any elaborate machinery by unskilled labour.

In West Africa generally, therefore, the natives have not been driven from the land and deprived of any means of existence other than working for the white man; they are encouraged to work in the forests and to bring the natural resources in to the towns for sale to the white man, but they are still their own masters. Already, of

course, a proletariat is being created. Railways run into the heart of the country; mines (including coal mines) are being worked; harbours and buildings of all kinds are being constructed; and a proletariat is gathering in the towns, especially the seaports. To a certain extent, therefore, surplus value is being extracted directly from the natives, but relatively this is unimportant. The securing of raw materials and the sale of British products are the main functions for West Africa in the capitalist scheme. Lever Bros. is still the main type of interest, although, of necessity, such items as the Takoradi Harbour Works, the construction of railways, opening up of mines, etc., interest British banks and heavy industry.

In East Africa the position is different. Here the natural resources are not so easily obtainable. The territory is useful, for the most part, only as land, which can be brought into the capitalist scheme only by means of an extensive agricultural development. With this in view, it was necessary to take the land from the natives, and then to get the natives to work on the land for the new British owners. The methods employed both for depriving the natives of land, and for the creation of a proletariat, cannot be examined here; they are well stated in the Labour Research Department's *British Imperialism in East Africa*. In so far as this policy has been successful, direct surplus value is being created by cheap native labour for British planters; the type of concern is Lord Delamere, farming or leasing over 100,000 acres; and there is also some direct exploitation in mines of various kinds. The trading element is almost negligible, compared with the direct exploitation—and the financial pickings which are so universal a feature that they must be referred to later.

Similarly, in Egypt and the Sudan the cotton growing interests are predominant; partly by direct exploitation of the natives on British-owned estates, partly indirectly by purchases from native peasants; with the financial interests in the background. The Sudan Plantations Syndicate Ltd. is the typical concern, operating on a vast scale, with a concession area of 450,000 acres, growing cotton and other produce on land artificially irrigated by associated concerns, with railways constructed by other associated concerns, all financed with the help of the Sudan Government and loans guaranteed by the British Government.

In Malaya raw materials for British (and foreign) industry are obtained by the direct exploitation of imported labour, producing surplus value for numbers of relatively small tin mining and rubber companies; while the preparation of both tin and rubber for the market, in addition to the transport and shipping involved, has led to the formation of a town proletariat, which is now rapidly developing with the beginnings of other industries.

Hong Kong, though a colony, is too closely bound up with the British penetration of China to be grouped with the simpler type of colony ; Mesopotamia and Palestine are hardly touched as yet.

From this brief survey of Britain's colonial empire the diversity of the types of exploitation can be appreciated. Lever Brothers ; Lord Delamere ; the Sudan Plantations Syndicate ; the myriad mining and rubber companies ; and here and there the beginnings of machine industry. Superficially, it seems that the colonies mean to Britain merely the aggregation of these miscellaneous interests—interests of a simple type of capitalism, colonial capitalism, imperialist in so far as the capital has been exported from Britain, but not bearing on the surface the main characteristic of imperialism—monopoly operated by finance-capital. This is the colonial empire of J. H. Thomas, of the Labour imperialists, of "humane" exploitation of the colonial races in order to swell the world's production ; of satisfactory profits which are divided up among large numbers of peace-loving and respectable British capitalists ; of gradual betterment in the moral and material welfare of the exploited races, leading to the ultimate goal of self-government and self-capitalism.

Unfortunately for the adherents of this pleasant theory, the Beast is grinning through the tropical jungle and the oily ooze. The petty capitalist interests of the East African planters and the rubber company shareholders are relics of a bygone age ; it is not for their sake that the colonial empire is maintained or colonial policy shaped by Governments. The interests of British financial capital—banking capital closely allied with industrial production, using the power of monopoly and control over Governments—have turned to the colonies, partly in despair, partly in triumph. Despair because the growth of the Dominions, the rise of nationalism in China, the adolescence of American imperialism, have set up barriers to its advance ; triumph because the colonies are so vast, so submissive, so completely under control.

The £10 million loan to be raised for East Africa with guarantee of principal and interest by the British Government, and the mortgage of "the general revenues and assets of the territory or colony concerned" in order to provide interest and sinking fund ; the similar loan of £4½ million for Palestine : these are examples of the operation of financial interests which enormously exceed in importance the aggregate of petty capitalist interests in the colonies concerned. These loans are not the first of their type ; they are of a type which appeared long ago in Turkey, China, South America, and other places outside as well as inside the British Empire. Their importance, together with that of similar government-provided or guaranteed schemes in West Africa (Takoradi Harbour Works, railways), in the Sudan (Kassala

Railway, dams), in Malaya (the Singapore base, Perak Hydro-Electric scheme, railways), lies in the fact that similar operations are not now possible in other countries where British finance-capital is not in control of the Government machinery.

In the old days, bribery or threats of force were used to induce some native potentate to take up a loan; constructional contracts were secured, and the machinery of the native State was used to collect the interest and sinking fund from the inhabitants. Now the operation is simpler and safer; arrangements in Whitehall are enough for the loan and contracts, and the British State machinery is used to collect interest and sinking fund—if possible, from the inhabitants of the colony, but failing that, from the inhabitants of Britain.

Of the East African loan, £6½ million is for railways, £2½ million for harbour construction—good contracts for heavy industry—and £1 million for roads and “purposes incidental . . . including the raising of the loans.” It does not matter to finance-capital whether the railways ever pay; it does not really matter whether they are ever built; finance capital gets its reward in the profits on the contract work and in the financial pickings at the time of issuing the loan and at every later stage.

The loans are issued, and passed on for the most part to the investing capitalists—the wider circle of capitalists not directly controlled by the banks. These investors take their place alongside the investors in rubber, tin and other colonial companies, constituting a wider parasite class living in Britain directly or indirectly (*i.e.*, through the colonial Governments acting as bailiffs) on the surplus value provided by the colonial peoples. Normal production in Britain becomes unnecessary—the profits are greater from colonial production; production in Britain becomes confined to luxury and “catering” trades, punctuated only by bursts of large-scale contracts organised by finance-capital through the Government, so long as the colonies remain under the control of the British Government, and until even large-scale production is possible in the colonies themselves.

Thus the colonies are the last hope of J. H. Thomas. Without them, there would not be the possibility of these contracts enabling surplus value still to be obtained from the British worker, and of the loans, the interest on which is provided from the surplus value taken from the colonial workers. The colonies are the last refuge of finance capital *in Britain*, the last bulwark *in Britain* against revolution. And that is why a native of East Africa was imprisoned for having in his possession copies of a Labour paper, while the British Labour Party is carefully working out plans for the Amelioration of British Rule in Colonial Countries.

EMILE BURNS.

PROBLEMS OF DICTATORSHIP.

Suggestions have at times been made in THE PLEBS that our movement needs to give attention to the political experience of other countries and the lessons it holds for us. This article should be of special interest in connection with the problem of the rural worker, the colonies and the petit-bourgeois blackleg, which recent events have raised.

THE entry on a new phase in the history of the British workers' movement involves the necessity to examine more closely the methods of struggle, not only for the immediate future, but also during the period of transition—the "dictatorship of the proletariat." But in Britain the "dictatorship of the proletariat" is still little more than a slogan, with no theoretical content and no attempt to give the phrase meaning in the light of modern British conditions. For on the one hand, there is a stubborn prejudice even among Marxians against any theoretical attempt to apply lessons drawn from "foreign revolutions" to British conditions, it being assumed that "Britain must go her own road." On the other hand, it is too facilely assumed that the "dictatorship of the proletariat" must necessarily take a closely similar form in every country, and especially that it must closely follow the path laid down in practice by the Russian Communist Party and working class from 1917 onwards. Yet even that historical path is little understood in its detail by the British revolutionary movement, and an intelligent historical analysis of the course of the dictatorship in Russia is all too rarely met with. Meantime, the need for much more intensive and objective study not only of October but of the periods leading up to and down from October is greater to-day than ever before, in view of the intensification of our own class struggle. We need to profit by other workers' experience, and especially do we need to test out our theories, and to amplify them, in the light of that experience.

The "dictatorship of the proletariat" was a bone of theoretical contention among Russian revolutionary Socialists long before the war. Reasoning on the events of 1905, the Bolsheviki, with Lenin at their head, first enlarged the phrase to "the democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants," and then further defined the second partner by prefixing the adjective "poorer." On the other hand, in 1909 Trotsky finally enunciated his theory of "permanent revolution," basing his argument on the assumption that the

peasants were at heart no less inimical to Socialism and the town workers than were the bourgeoisie and aristocracy. Lenin's theory continued to be held among the Bolsheviks down to 1917, when the time came to test out all theories of revolution, and to scrap such as had no basis in reality.

The events of 1917 seemed to confirm the accuracy of Lenin's interpretation of dictatorship. For the purpose of struggling against the Provisional Government workers and peasants acted together through the new forms of workers' democracy, the Soviets. But a closer analysis of those events reveals that the positive dynamic force came from the towns, while the peasants' contribution was dynamic only up to a certain point—the seizure of the great estates. With this achieved, the peasantry tended to become a negative factor, and the rôle of dictatorship was more and more assumed by the workers alone. The outbreak of civil war, and the advent of military communism only intensified the political dictatorship of the towns. Whatever it did or did not do in the economic field, military communism had the effect of concentrating political power in the hands of the workers, and "permanent revolution" is unquestionably the correct term to apply to the dictatorship of that period. The development of grain requisitioning put the matter beyond all doubt, and not even the poorer peasants could then be considered to have a positive part in the dictatorship, despite the class struggle taking place in the villages.

But iron necessity was forcing actual political power into the hands not even of the town workers so much as of their leading ranks—the Communists. The "dictatorship of the proletariat" had by 1921 come to mean not the "democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants," but rather that of a small, highly disciplined and centralised section of the workers. While this was the iron necessity of the time, it is not to be regarded as other than a deviation from the original significance of the phrase as either Lenin or Trotsky had defined it.

With the disappearance of iron necessity there was bound to develop a tendency to divergence of opinion even among Communists on both economic and political questions. Divergences involve discussions, and increased divergences necessarily involved intensified discussions! Discussions had taken place during the military communism period, but the necessity of the moment had silenced even Lenin, although there can be little doubt that he always regarded military communism as a serious though inevitable deviation from the true path to Socialism. But from 1921 onward each new discussion took a sharper and more intense form. The necessity of providing a safety valve for such disputes was expressed by Trotsky in laying down his three points of internal party demo-

crazy in 1923. A recrudescence of the discussion in 1924 led to Zinoviev and others proposing the gradual absorption of the whole working class into the party. To some extent this suggestion was acted upon, but a further divergence of economic opinion in 1925-26 led to the most violent opposition movement that has yet occurred, in which Zinoviev, Kameniev and others who had been Trotsky's bitterest opponents in 1923-24 now joined forces with him on the political platform of democracy within the party. Around the "permanent revolution" theory raged a feverish discussion as to the future attitude of the Soviet Government to the peasantry.

Such has been the course of dictatorship in Soviet Russia. The writer is not concerned with attempting to prophesy the future course of Soviet dictatorship, beyond saying that in his opinion the broadening down of the dictatorship to include more and more of the town workers, and probably the poorer peasants also, is inevitable. But he is concerned with the possible lesson that may be drawn from Russian experience by the British movement, and especially with attempting to reduce the implications of "dictatorship of the proletariat" to concrete terms.

The theory of "permanent revolution" will hardly provide us with a satisfactory solution to the agrarian problem of Britain. In no realistic sense can we be said to have a peasantry approximating to that of Russia. Our agricultural population consists of landless proletarian labourers, and farmers, mainly of the tenant class; and although it may be claimed that the latter are our true peasantry, in education, psychology and general outlook they are petty bourgeois in a sense that the landed peasantry in Russia are not. The agrarian programme must necessarily expropriate the large landlords, but in Britain it would be a distinctively retrogressive step to allow the land to be divided among the agricultural labourers and small farmers. On the contrary, the aim must be in the direction of the greater industrialisation of agriculture, and its large-scale intensive development. Viewed from this angle, schemes which aim at the establishment of innumerable small holdings are revealed to be highly reactionary in their ultimate effect, no matter how alluring the proposals may be as vote-catching devices. The agricultural labourer must be treated as a backward section of the proletariat; both during the seizure of power, and, consequentially, during the approach to power, the policy of the revolutionary movement must necessarily aim at the development of the agricultural labourers' proletarian class-consciousness and sense of solidarity with their town brothers. Once that is achieved, we need hardly stop to consider the small tenant farmer as a separate factor, except perhaps to aim at the neutralisation of his political activities by

assuring him security of tenure. By psychology he naturally has to be considered with the mass of petty bourgeois elements.

The real "agrarian problem," the food problem, of the British movement is rather to be considered, and a solution to be sought, in conjunction with the peasant nationalist movements of the non-independent colonies. At its best, the new "Labour Imperialism" does represent an attempt to get round the fundamental problem of British Socialism, namely, the food supply, but it is definitely retrogressive and indeed flatly reactionary in its ultimate results. "Labour Imperialism" must not only be opposed whole-heartedly, but in its place a positive policy of active association and co-operation with the anti-Imperialist elements of India, Egypt and Africa must be substituted. For the nakedly Imperialist doctrine of white hegemony, indecently draped in the alluring slogans of "no trade in sweated goods" and "Imperial Labour preference," must be substituted the practical organisation of struggling native labour organisations, linking them up not with the British Empire, but with the British workers. A programme on these lines needs to be worked out much more fully, and without delay.

What is to be the attitude of the working-class movement during the dictatorship to the petty bourgeoisie? Far too little attention has been paid to this side of the problem of power, and there has been a tendency to accept without much consideration the general principle that the petty as well as the great bourgeoisie must be eliminated—annihilated. That may be an easy theoretical way of disposing of, or rather ignoring the problem, but it may be doubted whether it would be the most satisfactory or practical way of dealing with the petty bourgeoisie at the moment of seizing power. One cannot doubt the ability of the petty bourgeoisie to organise, or in the worst case allow themselves to be organised in defence of the dying order, nor must it be overlooked that a large part of the administration of government and industry is in their hands. A solution to the problem has rather to be sought for in the direction of a more conciliatory policy in regard to the petty bourgeois intellectual workers during the approach to power, and the working out of a definite programme calculated to attract them to the side of the workers, or at least to render them neutral to a large extent. It should be made a definite objective to win over, through the bourgeois Trade Unions, etc., a group of professional or technical workers in every centre of industrial, economic, and governmental administration, thus gaining a nucleus from which to act on the mass. To achieve even this calls for much closer and more detailed study of the lower middle class problem than it has yet received.

But what of the possibility of dictatorship passing from the hands of the mass of workers into those of a comparatively small leading

section? And how long may we expect the transition (the N.E.P.) stage to last, given favourable external circumstances? The problem of the lower middle class complicates the answer to the latter question, while the former is bound up not only with the possibility of civil and international conflict, but also with the question of the actual preparedness of the British workers for assumption of power. It can be granted that the British workers are more prepared to take over power in the economic field than were the Russian workers, by reason of better technical education, training and practical experience. The institution of direct workers' control in British industry should be comparatively easy, and the economic structure of workers' government, if worked out and established in skeleton form in advance, and given rather more flexibility in Trade Union machinery and procedure than obtains at present, should quickly be got into full working order. The period required for training workers to replace sabotaging technical personnel will often be comparatively short, in industry, if not in the financial sphere.

But it is also unfortunately true that the British workers are not so prepared for political power as were the Russian workers by 1917. In this regard the Labour Party training, with its emphasis on Parliament, its rejection of the industrial weapon, etc., is a poor substitute for the years of desperate economic struggle which constituted the training ground for Russian workers. Hence, although from many points of view the advocacy of a *mass* revolutionary party is to be regarded critically (through the loss of discipline when large numbers are involved, failure to act at crucial moments, unwieldiness in the struggle, as in Germany in 1923), and while it may be doubted whether it will in practice be permitted by a bourgeois government; on the other hand, the mass development and education of the workers is vitally important, since the psychology of the masses is tending to lag somewhat behind the tempo of economic developments. Thus the organisation of shop committees in every factory, mine and workshop, and even office, wherever possible, is much the most important task confronting not only the industrial but also the political workers' movement.

It is impossible to dogmatise on the future, but the foregoing analysis would seem to justify the prognosis that the transition period should be marked by a speedy broadening down of industrial democracy, accompanied with a light holding of political dictatorship by a party having as membership a large part of the working class.

The questions raised here are not perhaps so hypothetical as they seem. Events of the past few months show that once already the revolutionary movement has been caught napping through inadequate preparation. The immediate future can only bring with

it an intensification of the class struggle, and it is wiser to face that struggle erring on the side of over-theorisation, than to go on shouting slogans the content and significance of which for Britain are only dimly if at all apprehended.

“STEPAN STEPANOVITCH.”

A WORKERS' HISTORY OF THE GREAT STRIKE.

THE PLEBS *Atlas* is going strong; and on January 25th our other new publication—*A Workers' History of the Great Strike*—will be ready. We print here a synopsis of its contents which will, we feel sure, convince our readers that it will be a book to possess. Please let us have your orders as soon as possible.

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The collapse of the O.M.S.—The strangling of the Press—Policy of the relics—*British Gazette*—An edition of the *Morning Post*—Its provocations—Weakness in the ruling class—the Archbishops' terms—Use of the wireless—Lies—Police attacks on the workers: arrests, batonings—General good behaviour of the police.

Chapter IV.—The Strike Studied in Two Areas.

The veil of silence—1st, South-western District centred on Reading—2nd, Northumberland and Durham.

PART III.

THE GENERAL COUNCIL AND THE GOVERNMENT.

Chapter I.—The Legal Position.

Chapter II.—The Story of the Negotiations.

Negotiations resumed—Sunday night—The miners arrive—The Government breaks off negotiations—The House of Commons—Enter Sir Herbert Samuel—The Samuel Memorandum—The miners' decision—The call-off—The steps of Downing Street.

PART IV.

THE WORKERS FIGHT ON.

The General Council's defence—"The memorandum is binding"—Confusion caused by the *British Worker*—Local committees that accepted the tale of "victory"—Realisation of the truth—The workers fight on—The capitalists' attack—The day of May 13th—Hasty withdrawal by the employers—The sectional agreements—The railways—Attempts to carry on still later—Men victimised—Unions "burst"—Police evidence—The End—The Council's final defence—Was the strike "at maximum?"—This claim tested town by town.



Notes by the Way



ESPERANTO.

I.

Sub Reĝo de Horthy.

[The following has been received from an English comrade who has by means of the international language found employment in Hungary. We offer a Plebs Textbook for the best translation of this and the next instalment sent to us before March 15th by a N.C.L.C. student.]

Gyöngyös, urbeto kuŝanta ĉirkaŭ 45 mejlojn for de Budapeŝto en la valo de la montaro "Matra", estas konata aliloke precipe por sia vinberkulturo. Ne enkalkulante la malgrandan ĉenon montaran, de Gyöngyös ekkomenciĝas la grandega plataĵo hungara, kiu siaparte etendiĝas senfine sur la plej granda parto de la nuntempa Hungarujo. Absolute tute plata ĝi estas, kaj tie oni kulturas la vinberojn, kvankam for de Gyöngyös oni ankaŭ bredas la ĉevalojn. Gyöngyös mem havas 20,000 enloĝantojn. La inteligenta kvartalo estas tute dividita duone . . . de unu flanko estas la kristanoj tre naciemaj, faĉistoj: kaj de la alia flanko estas la hebreoj riĉaj, tre inteligentaj, edukitaj, komercemaj, gajnemaj. Ciu alia estas simpla kamparano. Vere preskaŭ ne ekzistas meza klaso, nur riĉuloj malmultaj kaj la kompatindaj analfabetaj terlaboristoj multnombraj. Cie en la Balkanoj estas same. Nur ekzistas du klasoj. La kamparanoj en Hungarujo estas treege primitivaj: ili ankoraŭ laboras tute same kiel laboras la gepatroj, la pragepatroj antaŭ milo da jaroj. La modernaj aferoj tute ne ĝenas ilin. Ili uzas

ankoraŭ la plej simplajn ilojn por kulturi la teron; la bovoviroj ankoraŭ trenas la veturilojn, la putoj aspektas tiel, kiel tiuj kiujn uzis la malnovaj egiptanoj apud la Nilo, kaj la viroj ofte sin vestas kun jupo super la pantolonoj. For de Gyöngyös estas urbo Mezökökövesd, tutmond fame pro siaj brodaĵoj, pro la dimanĉvestaĵoj de la enloĝantaro. La vestaĵoj estas nepriskribeblaj, tiel multkoloraj, vere artaĵoj multvaloraj: la homoj mem estas tre religiemaj, paprikemaj, tamen donacemaj, tre muzikemaj, dancemaj.

Belega urbo Budapeŝto estas. Mi jam vizitis Parizon, Bruselon, Bern, Vienon, kaj Pragon, sed mi plej ŝatas Budapeŝton. Ĝi estas treege granda, enhavanta nur iom pli ol miliono da enloĝantoj, sed ĝia situacio estas tiel ĉarma, la popoloj tiel facilanimaj, la vetero tiel bona: ĉio dirite, en malmultaj vortoj ĝi estas vizitinda, enloĝinda. La urbo divididiĝas en du partoj nome Buda kaj Peŝt. Buda estas la kvartalo aristokrata, riĉa, malnova, plenplena da kasteloj: ĝi situas sur montoj riĉaj en arbaroj, ĉarmaspektaj, kaj de tie tiel supre oni malsupren rigardadas sur Peŝton, la moderna duono de la ĉefurbo, sur la riveregon Danubo kun ĝiaj bluj akvoj transiritaj per pontoj grandaj kaj belaj. En Peŝto troviĝas la komerckvartalo, la teatroj, la Operadomo, la belaj parkoj kaj muzeoj, la vivo mem de la urbo, la grandaj bulevardoj, kaj oni povus pensi, ke oni troviĝas en malgranda Parizo. La regadistaro nuntempe estas forte naciema, blanka sub la gvidado de Admiralo Horthy,

kium neniu ŝatas, sed tiu ĉi regadistaro povas tuj fali, ĉar nun estas kontraŭa movado pro granda mizero en Hungarujo. La laboristoj estas la plej lastaj hundacoj en Hungarujo. Mi scias ĉar mi ofte parolas kun ili, kaj neniu estas kontenta. Ekzemple . . . tramkonduktoro devas labori proksimume 12 aŭ 14 horojn potage kaj ricevas posemajne proksimume tridek anglajn ŝilingojn. Kaj la vivo en Budapeŝto estas tiel kara, kiel en Londono. Instruisto en ŝtata altiernejo ricevas ĉirkaŭ 30/- posemajne, kaj li jam havas multajn diplomojn. Bankoficisto eĉ tiom ne ricevas, kaj devas labori dimanĉe ankaŭ. Kaj tiuj en la pli mulaltaj postenoj ne povas vivi. La alian tagon mi kunparolis kun elektristo, kaj li diris al mi ke li ricevas pohore oficiale 6d., sed se li private laboras li ricevas nur 2d. pohore. Kaj post tio oni ne povas miri kial estas tiom da memmortigoj en Budapeŝto: oni kalkulas, ke en Budapeŝto ĉiutage sin mortigas 5 homoj, kvankam tiu nombro nuntempe eĉ plialtiĝas, kvankam oni ne legas en la gazetoj, ĉar la regadistaro timas doni la ciferojn.

THE NEW PLEBS SIXPENNY.

TRADE UNIONISM: *Past and Future*, by Mark Starr (Plebs Sixpenny Series No. I.) has just been re-issued in what is so revised a new edition as virtually to make it a new pamphlet altogether. In particular, the final ten pages have been completely re-written and brought right up to date to the Bournemouth Congress, 1926, summarising the formation of the Industrial Alliance, the historic July 31st 1925, the Samuel Commission, May 1926, and the Great Betrayal (though the pamphlet doesn't use any such rude names), and the miners' twenty-nine weeks' struggle. The pamphlet ends on the note of "Next Time": the problem of amalgamation, union with the co-operatives, the "Fordism" stunt, the Trades Councils, the growth of the Minority Movement. Finally, there is a Book List and a completely new list of dates, from 1710 to 1926, arranged in Chart form—an immense improvement. With a new blue cover it really is a new pamphlet—so you can't afford not to get it, even if you've got the first edition. The new Chart of dates alone, as a reference, makes it worth the "tanner."

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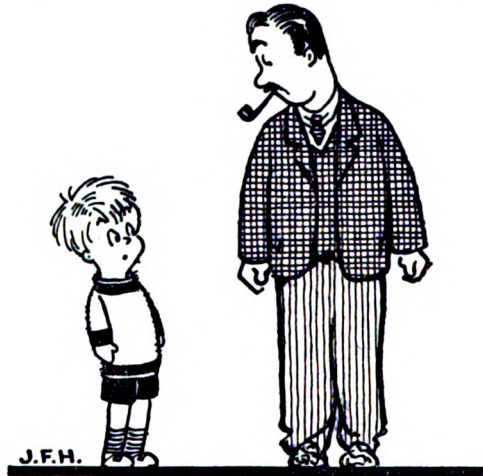
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WHAT DID YOU DO IN THE GREAT STRIKE, DADDY?



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Reviews of Books

HISTORY.

A Short History of the British Working Class Movement. Vol. II. (G. D. H. Cole, Labour Publishing Coy. 6/-).

MR. COLE'S "Short History" is in its second volume, and is not finished yet. If three volumes is his brevity, what would his longwindedness be like?

The faults of this book are obvious. It is too dear—18/- all told is twelve times the price of the *PLEBS* History, and I may be excused the statement that it is not quite twelve times as good, and certainly not twelve times as long. It is filled out to its apparent size by thick paper and many blank pages thrust in at every opportunity.

It is not so dull as Mr. Cole's first volume, and it contains more original matter, but it is still rather unnecessarily greily written. Must workers' history *always* be an Improving Task, and not an inspiring story? Also it contains inaccuracies in fact—as for example in the history of the International (p. 85). Marx did not "at once" assume the leadership of the International—not for several years, during the secretaryship of J.G. (not "G.J.") Eccarius. The International was never at variance with the followers of Proudhon," who were its strongest supporters even in '71

(p. 87). There was no Russian section of the International. The direction of the International was for some time in the hands of British trade union leaders, and the membership of over forty bodies is not justly described as "only a few unions" (p. 88). It was a high percentage of the unions there were.

Nevertheless, when all this has been said, Mr. Cole's book is most certainly one which should be studied by every student, and, as soon as price permits, possessed by him. Great areas of history previously scarcely charted are reduced to order by him. He has a curious sympathy with the "aspidistra period" of trade union leadership that is helpful in understanding. The whole trend of the period is presented admirably clearly, and also correctly. The picture falls easily into place in the student's mind at once. He need no longer buy Webb and Beer and dovetail them together laboriously himself.

The book is a Marxist book—strictly Marxist—and will be of especial value to Plebs. Definitely—read it.

R. W. P.

MARX.

The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte. (By Karl Marx, trans. by E. & C. Paul (Allen & Unwin, 4/6 cloth, 2/6 paper).

Those who are interested in studying that important incident in European history, the *coup d'état* of Louis Bonaparte on December 2nd, 1851, must read Marx's famous essay entitled *The Eighteenth Brumaire*.

This is necessary for two reasons. Firstly, because Marx gives the most penetrating analysis of the event ever written and shows very clearly the operation and clash of class relationships culminating in the *coup d'état*; and because it is a classic illustration of the Marxist method applied to an extremely complicated historical problem.

Secondly, because in *The Eighteenth Brumaire* Marx gives a complete and final reply to those contradictory and

shallow high-brows who haughtily dismiss Marxism as a method which views the historical process as mechanical and fatalistic; and who, in the same breath, object to the Marxists (especially the Communists) because they seek to bend history to their will!

In his study Marx exposes the cunning and cowardice of the middle-class when forced by events to play their part on the stage of history. In page after page he explains their treachery and unreliability.

But *The Eighteenth Brumaire* is more than a piece of brilliant historical writing. It is a most able guide to the revolutionary movement when confronted with any difficult historical situation.

In vivid language we are shewn the contrast of the proletarian revolutionary struggle with that of the parliamentary trickery of the middle-class, who may even aspire to lead the workers. We also see the great difficulties that confront revolutionaries in trying to break away from traditional methods and policies because "the legacy of the dead generations weighs like an Alp upon the brains of the living." We are taught that the workers' revolution cannot deck itself out in the trappings of the past, but must draw its code of legality and its inspiration from the present needs of the masses and the future basis of the society they intend to build. The workers' "revolution must let the dead bury their dead, for thus only can it discover its own true meaning." It "cannot draw its figurative embellishments from the past; it must create them anew

out of the future. It cannot begin its work until it has rid itself of all ancient superstitions."

He also warns us against the type, who swarm and even seek to dominate the Labour Party, who, as the class struggle grows more intense, seek to divert the movement away from its real aim by getting it to pursue will-o'-the-wisp banking experiments and by hoping "to attain emancipation behind the back of society." These policies are put forward, Marx warns us, against those types because these leaders are afraid to lead in the real struggle and renounce the final aims.

This new edition of *The Eighteenth Brumaire* has been ably translated by E. & C. Paul, who have written an explanatory introduction, a chronological table of events and a glossary.

W. P.

IMPERIALISM.

British Imperialism in East Africa. *British Imperialism in the Malaya.* (Colonial Series, Nos. 1 & 2. Lab. Res. Dept. Each, boards, 1/-; paper, 6d.). *Kenya.* By Norman Leys (Hogarth Press. Cheap edition, 4/6).

The new "Colonial Series" now being issued by the Labour Research Dept. promise to be invaluable to the student of Imperialism. They are not too big to be read, and digested, quickly and easily. They are big enough to provide a fairly full and detailed picture of Imperialism *in being* in a particular area—as distinct from generalisations about the working of Imperialism in general.

Each of the two volumes so far published covers not only the history of the area dealt with—the manner of its acquisition and the precise way in which capitalism proceeded to "develop" it; but it studies the effects of this "development" on the native inhabitants—what this has meant in terms of flesh and blood. Further, not only is the economic importance of each area in relation to British trade carefully described; but the particular capitalist interests involved,

and the consequent relation of Malaya or East Africa to the class-struggle in Britain, are also discussed. What Leonard Woolf did in his *Empire and Commerce in Africa*, or Norman Leys in his *Kenya*, is being done—with additional matter, too—for various parts of the Empire in these excellent little books. Moreover, the history is brought right down to date; and there is a good map as a frontispiece to each. Every Labour speaker on Singapore should master the contents of the *Malaya* book especially.

Dr. Leys' book on *Kenya* was highly recommended in "The Plebs Bookshelf" two or three months ago. Here at last is the cheap edition proletarians have been waiting for. True, four-and-six is none too easily spared these days. But this is emphatically one of the books worth saving up for. J. F. H.

PAMPHLETS

- (1) *The Socialist Labour Party and the Third International* (S.L.P., New York City); (2) *The Menace of Opportunism*, by Max Bedacht (15 cents); (3) *Poems for Workers*, edited by Manuel Gomez (10 cents) (Daily Worker, Chicago); (4) *Oration over the Dead Body of a Miner*, by Socrates (2d.); (5) *Coal: the*

Plebs Executive Committee for 1927 (given in order of votes received):—Mark Starr, Cedar Paul, R. W. Postgate, M. H. Dobb, Wm. Paul, Ellen C. Wilkinson, John Jagger.

Next Round, by Arthur Horner (2d.); (6) *Is it Peace?* by A. J. Cook (1d.) (Workers' Publications, Ltd.); (7) *Twenty-Five Years of International Trade Unionism*, by J. Sassenbach (Labour Joint Publications Dept., 1/6).

These seven booklets divide neatly into three pairs and an odd one:—two Polemics, two Poetics, two Pamphlets, and a Puff.

No. 1 is an attack on the Workers' (Communist) Party of America by the S.L.P. It retells the familiar Industrial Unionist story in a bright cocksure manner, but it contains nothing new and much that is untrue. It is interesting to read that the British Communist Party is the only one that has escaped the blight of Moscow control, and that the U.S.A. is destined to lead the world revolution.

Of a far more serious quality is No. 2, in which the Workers' Party castigates its native Menshevik sect, the followers of Ludwig Lore. Loreism is by no means confined to the U.S.A., but is a phenomenon that always appears when the proletariat is retreating. Many socialists, who during the "revolutionary holiday" showed more enthusiasm than judgment, succumb during the "counter-revolutionary week-days" to "revolutionary pessimism," which shows itself in the formulation of new theories and of new interpretations of old theories, differing profoundly in different countries and circumstances, but all leading with wonderful unanimity to the one conclusion, "It is useless to do anything." This closely reasoned booklet attacks Loreism in detail.

No. 3 is an American anthology of revolutionary poems, and No. 4 is an English attempt to bring Shakespeare up-to-date, which is very clever but does not quite "get there." The anthology contains some very fine stuff, which could be used with great effect by workers' dramatic groups. At the

A LOVE STORY.

Fraternity and Evolution By Tom Swan (I.L.P., 1/-).

The matter contained in this booklet could be delivered without offence at a P.S.A. gathering. It is offered as a study in social dynamics, and deals with the development of "social-consciousness" from animals up to modern civilisation. The greater portion of it rehashes Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid*. The author tilts his pen against the biologists

present stage of the class struggle in Britain and America the only thing Workers' Art can do well is satire; it must mercilessly pillory the ruling class, its vices and its greed; and, still more important, it must expose the weak and reactionary elements in our own ranks, the scab, the toady, the spy, the careerist. In concentrating on this task and shunning heroics and utopian idealism, the writers in both these booklets have shown a true proletarian instinct.

Nos. 5 and 6 are excellent propagandist pamphlets. Arthur Horner's pamphlet makes heart-breaking reading now. It was written before the miners had been driven back to slavery, and was a plea for help in their struggle for the rest of the workers. It puts the position of the mining industry in a very clear way, with the main facts and figures simply presented, and should be of considerable use in helping the militants to get the new leadership and spirit that the movement needs. Cook's pamphlet is a masterpiece. It is written in language the most backward worker can understand, it appeals to his daily experiences and emotions, and it manages to convey in cold print some of the inspiring atmosphere of a mass demonstration. All profits go to the miners' wives and children.

No. 7 is an official history of the I.F.T.U. It is remarkable for the skill with which it glosses over awkward questions, such as the negotiations with the Russian Unions (the Anglo-Russian Unity Committee is not mentioned, but the "dignity of the I.F.T.U." is), and for the dulness with which it is written. But it is a handy compilation of facts, and deserves a place on the student's book-shelf. B. W.

who have regarded Individualism as a natural law. Undoubtedly he has sucked his mental pap from the biological sociology of MacDonald. The following quotations will indicate the effect:—

"The lusts of the flesh, and the lust of possession—sex mania and the mania of owning things—these and the acts of aggression—invasion of territory and of personal rights—prompted by them, have been ever since the dawn of civilisation the most fruitful causes of individual and

tribal strife." (p. 47). "The welfare of each is identical with, and dependent upon, the welfare of all." (p. 42). "The first chapter of the story of evolution may be headed the struggle for life; but take the book as a whole and it is not a table of battle. It is a love story."

A word of praise, however, must be given for the way in which the author smashes the claims of Individualism. Were the rest of the book on a par with this section we would gladly recommend it.

N. E.

The long-awaited companion volume to Burns' account of "Trades Councils in Action" (*The General Strike: Its Origin and History*, by R. Page Arnot, Labour Research Dept., cloth 3/6, paper 2/-) is certainly worth waiting for. It is particularly valuable as it puts the Strike against the background of the general condition and tendencies of post-

war capitalism, analysing its significance as a stage in the developing class struggle. The preparations of the Government (E.P.A., O.M.S., etc.), are carefully described in detail, and also the lack of preparedness of the General Council. The details of the negotiations and events of the week-end of May 2nd are set out in full. The events of each of the Nine Days are set out in *staccato* fashion as in a series of telegraphic reports, achieving thereby the kind of vividness of a moving process that is given by the rapid impressionism of a good film. Finally, the events of May 12th, and the final spontaneous rally of the localities on the succeeding days. Appended to each chapter are the relevant documents set out in full. In short it is a highly-important piece of current working-class history—and *analytical* history too—which should be on every student's shelf. And, needless to say, Arnot knows how to write!

Z.

Letters

CASEY HAS THE LAST WORD.

DEAR COMRADE,—In the interests of right thinking, Jones should either refute my argument or openly admit his inability to do so.

By taking a sentence from my last letter while ignoring the important qualifications in both my replies, he pretends I have conceded a point, just as though I had previously denied it. That point, however, was never denied by me; rather did I offer an explanation of it which I believe to be quite consistent with my criticism of Bukharin's work. The keynote of the explanation is that matter may be primary and yet not so at one and the same time, though in different connections, *while all the time mind and matter are never completely separate.*

Yours sincerely,

Nov. 12th.

FRED CASEY.

MAX EASTMAN.

DEAR COMRADE,—May I have space in your columns to tell my political friends in England that the money paid by *The*

New York Times, *The Westminster Gazette*, and other newspapers for my article quoting Lenin's "Testament" was not appropriated by me. It was expended by well-known Communists in the interest of the revolution.

For three years an honest Marxian opposition to the bureaucratic course prevailing in the International—an opposition numbering hundreds of thousands and comprising some of the best scientific minds in the movement—has had no opportunity to express its view in *Pravda*, *Die Rote Fahne*, *L'Humanité*, *The Workers' Weekly*, *The Daily Worker*, or any other Communist paper. All these papers have meanwhile denounced this opposition without restraint and without scruple of honesty.

When that condition is corrected, we will not have to resort in an emergency to the capitalist news-columns in order to put elementary facts before those who have a right to know them, the workers.

With Communist greetings,

MAX EASTMAN.

Nov. 16th, 1926.

The N.C.L.C. at Work



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

UNIONS WITH N.C.L.C. SCHEMES: Circulars should now have been issued to all the Branches of Unions with N.C.L.C. Schemes giving particulars of the classes that are free to the members and drawing attention to the free Correspondence Courses.

NEW LOCAL AFFILIATIONS: The following is a list of the new affiliations obtained in November by Local Colleges:— London, 6; Edinburgh, 5; Ayrshire, 2; March, 2; Londonderry, 2; Dumbartonshire, 2; Birmingham, 1; Leeds, 1; Chesterfield, 1; Liverpool, 1; South-East Lancs., 1; Swansea, 1; N. Lancs., 5. As a number of the London affiliations are on considerably less than the approved 2d. per member basis, the value of its affiliation is not as great as those of the other Colleges. **IS THE NAME OF YOUR COLLEGE HERE? IF NOT, WHY NOT?**

A CORRESPONDENT WANTED: An N.C.L.C. English Correspondence Student, Frank Stark, wishes to correspond in English with an N.C.L.C.er who has a really good knowledge of the English Language. His address is: Frank Stark, Vacuume Oil Company, cimén, Postafiók, GYOR., Hungary. As Hungary is a white terror country, correspondents should censor their letters.

REGINA, CANADA: Thanks to the efforts of M. J. Coldwell, a Labour College Class has been begun under the auspices of the Trades and Labour Council and it has been decided to link up with the N.C.L.C. We hope that the Labour College work which exists in one or two other spots will spread throughout Canada. We shall be glad to hear from any Canadian comrades.

EDUCATION FOR CAPITALISM: According to the *Manchester Evening Chronicle* of the 13th November a special

Sub-Committee of the Lancashire Education Committee is to be appointed to consider the desirability of employing one or more organising tutors to take classes and give short courses and pioneer lectures to stimulate interest in adult education. As our movement progresses, we may take it as certain that the State Educational machine will make additional efforts to maintain governing-class control of working-class thought. Readers of the PLEBS are already aware that additional amounts have been promised by the Board of Education towards W.E.A. work provided more classes are run. That is all the more reason, therefore, why we should be constantly stating our case to the workers.

THE W.E.A.: It is worth nothing, by the way, that quite a number of the classes claimed by the W.E.A. in their Annual Reports are classes over which the Universities and Education Authorities have as much control as the W.E.A. Sometimes so-called W.E.A. classes are really Education Authority classes except for the fact that the Authority finds it useful to use the W.E.A. as a means of attracting workers. This point should be clearly borne in mind in connection with W.E.A. figures.

GENERAL AND MUNICIPAL WORKERS: Under this Union's Scheme a number of free N.C.L.C. Correspondence Courses are available and scholarships will be offered to N.C.L.C. Day, Week-end and Summer Schools. Application for Correspondence Courses should be addressed to the Branch Secretary of the Union and a copy should be sent to the N.C.L.C. Office.

TEACHERS: So far as we know, the first branch of a professional teachers' organisation to affiliate to a local College, excluding, of course, the Teachers' Labour League, is the 'Derry Branch of the National Association of Teachers which has affiliated to the Londonderry College. One up for Ireland.

LANTERN SLIDES DEPARTMENT: Jack Hamilton has prepared for the

N.C.L.C.'s use an entirely new set of slides on "THE HISTORY OF THE MODERN BRITISH WORKERS." The slides number 72 and could be utilised for one or two lectures. The price of the set is £5 8s., but individual slides may be purchased. The set, like the others, is also available for hire. Will readers who have copies of photographs of events during the General Strike kindly send these in as many of them may be of value for adding to the number of slides.

CLASSES FOR WOMEN: While as a general rule it is desirable that women should attend the same classes as men, in quite a number of instances better results will be had by arranging special classes for women in connection with such bodies as Co-operative Guilds, Women's Labour Parties, etc. The afternoon is often a very suitable time as that allows married women to be home in time for tea. This point should be noted where tutors are available for that period of the day.

WHAT THE DIVISIONS ARE DOING.

Division 2: The Aldershot group are arranging a series of Sunday evening lectures. Mark Starr is assisting them in January, and later they hope to be able to arrange to run some lantern lectures with our slides. This activity we hope will result in Farnborough waking up. Efforts are being made to open out at Romsey, Newbury and Basingstoke. The offer of tutorial assistance from an old supporter at Reading makes it possible to interest the last two places. Wynn-Cuthbert gives a most encouraging report of the class recently started at Reading. The attendance is still increasing and twelve essays have been written for examination. We all regret very much that our comrade is not able to continue as tutor for the second session, but the class is delighted that Tom Ashcroft, Acting Principal of the Labour College, is going to give twelve lectures on Imperialism. Littlehampton has already set a date in June for a big open-air N.C.L.C. rally. Sales of literature have been quite good for this month. "The Class-Struggle in the Mining Industry" has sold particularly well. New readers for PLEBS have been secured.

Division 3: The Neots and Hitchin branches of the A.U.B.T.W. received special lectures in December. Halstead

is likewise fixing up and Brentwood, jointly with the Labour Party, is running a special evening on January 20th. The fog postponed a special lecture on "The Soviet Union." The local N.U.R. has affiliated. Woking has so appreciated J. M. Williams that he has been asked to take "Modern Finance." Peterborough has finished its Esperanto Course and reports a good class of 35 students for M. H. Dobb's visits. One-day Schools are arranged for Southend on January 16th ("Modern Capitalism" and a reading of R.U.R.) and for Guildford, January 30th ("General Strike and its Lessons," with R. W. Postgate as lecturer). Help at Dorking from trade union branch members would assist us to follow up the initial meeting there and new ground is being opened up at Coggeshall. The decision of the East Anglian District N.U.R. to affiliate to the Division will help us in other areas. Comrade Salsky reports from St. Albans "*La klass bone progresas*" and that it is already in direct correspondence with other countries. Will all colleges having matters to raise send them before February 5th (not 6th as stated in error) when the Divisional E.C. meets at "The Builders"?

Division 4: Class reports from Llanharron and Swansea show the record enrolments of 95 and 94. Can you beat this? Comrades Davies and Evans have succeeded in getting the Joint Trades and Labour Councils to appoint a committee for the purpose of extending activities of the N.C.L.C. throughout the Swansea Valley. Classes at Ogmour Vale are going well. Two successful Day Schools have been held with Jack Roberts as lecturer. N.F.B.T.O. meeting at Neath recommends all affiliated organisations to work for N.C.L.C. educational schemes. Merthyr is making great progress. Comrades Williams and Davies are conducting excellent classes at Cefn, Dowlais and Treharris. Even Porthcawl can record a successful class group. Throughout the Division 70 classes are now running. Will Class and College secretaries send in particulars of Second Winter Session's class so that we can get to print?

Division 5: Bath Psychology class, with Dr. Datta as tutor, is making splendid progress. Comrade Reid, the College secretary, is conducting a series

of lectures for the Young Labour League. The class and study circle under Cheltenham Labour College are going strong. A special circular has been sent to all local Trade Unions. Gloucester is awake, and with the enthusiasm of Comrade Wagner we shall soon see the old movement re-created. Already arrangements are made for the commencement of two classes, for a public propaganda meeting and for the circularising of all local organisations. Newton Abbot reports progress. Comrades Kershaw and Millar ably defended our point of view in reply to the attack of Dr. Wells in the *Mid-Devon Advertiser*. The West's awake!

Division 6: All the classes in the Divisions have maintained a high average attendance during the session and the scope of our work is steadily extending. The Shrewsbury and Worcester Colleges, whose work has been suspended for a time, recommence operations with the new session. Classes in the Coventry-Nuneaton district are now being arranged and a conference has been held at Nuneaton when the Organiser dealt with the question of organisation. The Birmingham College has arranged an increased number of classes. The College has entered upon a campaign for new affiliations. Dudley, Walsall, Walsall Wood and Brownhills classes are doing splendidly and a new class is being arranged at Pelsall. W. E. Wade and T. O'Loughlan, both members of the teaching profession, are now on the tutors' list.

Division 7: The Leeds College has opened out a new class at Hawa, near the head waters of Wensleydale. Comrade R. Mack is the tutor and the subject is "Modern Imperialism." Forty-two students are attending the class. The Barnsley class is forging ahead. W. Burden, of Batley, is the tutor. G. Fretwell has resigned as secretary and Harry Marsh, of 14 Bradbury Street, is now acting. The Organiser commences two new classes with the new term—Bradford, Tuesdays; Keighley, Wednesdays. The Brighouse class will change over from Tuesdays to Thursdays. Edwin Nelson commences a new series of lectures at Huddersfield. A new speakers' class has been formed at Huddersfield. On alternate Tuesdays the Labour Agent, A. Gardiner, conducts a class for the women's section

with an average attendance of seventy students. An Area Conference to cover the Hebden Bridge Valley is being convened to work out details of organisation to make the valley N.C.L.C. The Organiser attended a delegate conference, organised by the Dyers at Hebden Bridge, and a class is under consideration.

Division 8: Taking advantage of a visit North of F. J. Adkins (author of "Europe's New Map" and "English for Home Students") the Liverpool Labour College arranged for two lantern lectures to be given by him on "The Map of Europe," in Earlestown Labour Club, and at "Beechcroft" Settlement, Birkenhead. Tom Lowe, Warrington, has been re-elected to the Management Committee of the local Co-operative Society. Six students are attending a Tutors' Training Class on "The Science of Understanding" in Manchester, under the tuition of F. Casey. Congratulations to P. L. Taylor upon his election to the Preston Town Council. Comrade Taylor is giving lantern lectures upon the "Cotton Industry" on behalf of the North Lancs. Area. Further particulars of these lectures can be obtained from Mrs. Taylor, 17 Rose Terrace, Ashton. Valuable additions to the tutors' list have been made this year in A. W. Field, of Preston, and R. Crook, of Chorley. A delegate conference is to be held at Burnley on January 8th.

Division 10: (Scotland): Fife, Perth and Dundee District has seventeen classes and the attendance is larger than ever before. Fife L.C. has also held two lantern lectures. Stirlingshire has four classes. Edinburgh has had a very successful series of lectures with John S. Clarke as lecturer. England and Scotland are strongly recommended to utilise his services. His address is 3, Sharrock Street, Cessnock, Glasgow. Edinburgh L.C. has arranged a special class for the blind and students are attending from various parts of the area. Glasgow has opened four additional classes and held a meeting in memory of the late John Maclean. Ayr is doing well with eleven classes and Dumbarton is now very active. Lanarkshire has thirty-nine classes and Renfrewshire is doing well also. R. W. Buchan has been appointed full-time tutor for Aberdeen College for the winter session. Best wishes to him. A

Dundee L.C. student who on joining the classes a short time ago had no connection with the Labour Movement, is now a Dundee City Councillor—Labour, of course.

Division II (Ireland): A discussion class has been started in Belfast and a class on "Modern Problems" in East Belfast. The attendance at all classes this year has been approximately the attendance at last year's classes. Councillor Harry Midgley's class on "The Co-operative Movement" continues to extend its roll, and his public lecture on "Municipal Government and the Workers" was well attended. During the October-December term three lantern lectures were given in Belfast by the Organiser, and arrangements are being made for a number to be given during January-March term, when the N.C.L.C.'s slides will be used. This winter's work should assist greatly in providing volunteer tutors.

Division 12: Nottingham College is glad Mrs. Skellington is now able to resume her duties after her severe illness. Classes in the Nottingham District have been distinctly good. Arrangements are in hand for holding a Conference in Nottingham on January 8th with George Hicks (N.U.B.T.W. and T.U.C.) as speaker. Chesterfield College held a public meeting on Sunday evening, with W. Paul as speaker. The Lincoln class is arranging a debate with the W.E.A. Now that the disturbed conditions in a great part of the area covered by Division 12 are temporarily passing away, we are hoping for a considerable expansion of class work in the New Year. Many of our comrades find themselves victimised, and if they are to obtain work will have to look farther afield. Our loss will be somebody else's gain, though it will not be easy to find others to take their places.

A STAKE IN THE COUNTRY.

Federal Trade Commission figures, published in *National Wealth and Income*, show that the great foundations, the religious institutions and the higher educational institutions of the United States hold billions of dollars worth of income bearing securities, and are thus in a position to derive a regular income from the product of capitalist industry.

Foundations, community trusts, and similar institutions held \$463 million in bonds, \$302 million in stocks, and \$210 in real estate and mortgages, making a total, with unclassified investments, of \$1,207 million.

Investments held by religious institutions included: Bonds, \$147 million; stocks, \$40 million; and mortgages, \$145 million. The total of investments held by the religious institutions was \$387 million.

Endowments of higher educational institutions totalled \$1,036 million. In

addition, these institutions reported land worth \$520 million and buildings and equipment worth \$1,019 million.

Separate figures are given for five of the leading universities. The endowments of these institutions were:—

Harvard	\$64 million
Columbia	\$56 "
Yale	\$40 "
Chicago	\$32 "
Stanford	\$27 "
Total	\$219 "

When representatives of such institutions are asked to take a public stand on any matter vitally affecting property relations, or when they oppose movements looking toward a new social order, their conduct is hardly to be wondered at. They are held to the established system by the tenacious bonds of vested income. They all have a stake, and a big one, in capitalist America.

SCOTT NEARING.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

The Mind of a Diehard. By Ambrose Hoskins (Labour Pub. Co., 3/6).

Practical Socialism, Vols. I. and II. By Rt. Hon. Christopher Addison (Labour Pub. Co., 2/6 and 1/-).

Passaic. By Albert Weishord (Daily Worker, Chicago).

Art and Culture in Relation to Socialism. By Arthur Burchier (I.L.P., 3d.).

More Rebel Songs for Sixpence (Lansbury's Labour Weekly).

The Social Revolution in Austria. By McCartney (Cambridge Univ. Press, 8/6).

Artifex: or The Future of Craftsmanship, by J. Gloag (Kegan Paul, 2/6).



The PLEBS Bookshelf



A WORD about one of our own books first—the *History of the Great Strike*. It is perhaps a little improper for one who has had some share in its production to refer to it at all. But grateful admiration for the real good work put into it by everyone concerned—from those comrades who answered questionnaires and drafted local reports down to those responsible for the last finishing touches to the book as it stands—is my justification. The mass of material we had to work on was enormous, and the sifting of it was no light task. The heavy end of this fell on R. W. Postgate, and I think Plebs will agree when they see the book that he has done his work well. For the chapters telling the story of the negotiations before and during the Strike we were fortunate in being able to make use of various “first-hand” sources—personal, as well as documentary. Here, as throughout the book, our aim has been to write *historically*; not, that is, merely to prove a thesis, but honestly to let the facts tell their own tale. It was no part of our task to attempt a final verdict—there must and will be full and frank discussion before anything of the sort is possible. But in the meantime it is worth while getting the facts “assembled.” And a book produced while the memory of the events it records is still fresh in the minds of authors and readers has an interest which not the most judicial history written twenty years after can possibly possess.

* * *

The “Home University” at 2/-.

It is good news that the price of the Home University Library has now been dropped to 2/-. Few series of books for the serious student have contained as many worth-while items as this. Of the new volumes just added I have read one—*Drama*, by Ashley Dukes, and I heartily recommend it to all Plebs interested in the theatre. I say “the theatre,” because Mr. Dukes does not write of the drama merely as a literary form, but as part of that co-operative activity in which producer and scenic

artist, actor and musician work along with the dramatist to produce the final “whole.” He insists on this *co-operation* again and again as distinguishing the art of the theatre from the more individual arts; and his stress on this is the more interesting when one remembers that in Russia it is precisely this art of the theatre which is flourishing amazingly.

* * *

The “New Masses.”

A month or two ago I made some comments on the *New Masses*, the American illustrated monthly. I have since had a letter from Mike Gold, one of its editors, from which I’m very glad to quote:—

“I think you were correct, though a bit rough on us when you say there is a lot of Greenwich-Village Chelsea-playboying in our magazines. It is hard to reform some people! But when you say that the tone of the magazine is a little hysterical, you are missing something vital in American life. This country is simply not British. It hasn’t got the sobriety, the good manners, the reticence, etc., of English life. Maybe this is good, maybe bad; but it happens to be so. I know most British dislike Americans, but after all the *New Masses* is an American magazine, and it has to live in its own country.”

I admit there’s very likely a lot in what Mike says. But what an adroit controversialist he is! When you’ve been labelled “sober,” “good-mannered” and “reticent” you really have to be polite in return. Especially when you pause and reflect that he might—as an American—have used some much less pretty words to describe those particular qualities of ours!

* * *

Psychology—and Politics.

In *Lenin, Marx, and the Science of Revolution* Max Eastman shows that Marx anticipated Freud by fifty years. Cutting through the Romantic Tradition of “noble causes and enlightened self-interest,” Marx found



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in "hunger and fighting egoism" the real motives of human actions. His materialist conception has done for history what Freud's psycho-analytic methods are doing for psychology.

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Eastman has written a challenging and interesting book—none the less so because this question of motive will keep cropping up.

* * *

C.E.M. Joad, who for some time contributed a weekly article on books and writers to the *New Leader*, has just published a selection of these in a volume—*The Bookmark* (Labour Publishing Co., 2/6). They cover such varied subjects as Edward Carpenter, Jonathan Swift, "the universal Mr. Wells," "Elections in Literature," "Economic Determinism: Veblen and Marx," "Nietzsche and the War," W. H. Hudson, "How to Write Well" and "How to Write Badly." The essay on Economic Determinism has been commented on in *THE PLEBS* before. As economist and philosopher, Mr. Joad is not exactly of our way of thinking. The literary essays are brightly written, often witty, and always readable. But one does *not* feel, after going through them, that one has got much forrader. There is no very definite point of view. Mr. Joad isn't crusading about anything. . . . I'm probably prejudiced. I hate the conversational essay, with its mild, amiable meanderings "about it and about," and its terrible dread of appearing to be serious about anything. But if you like that sort of thing, you'll like Mr. Joad, who does it quite well.

J. F. H.

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