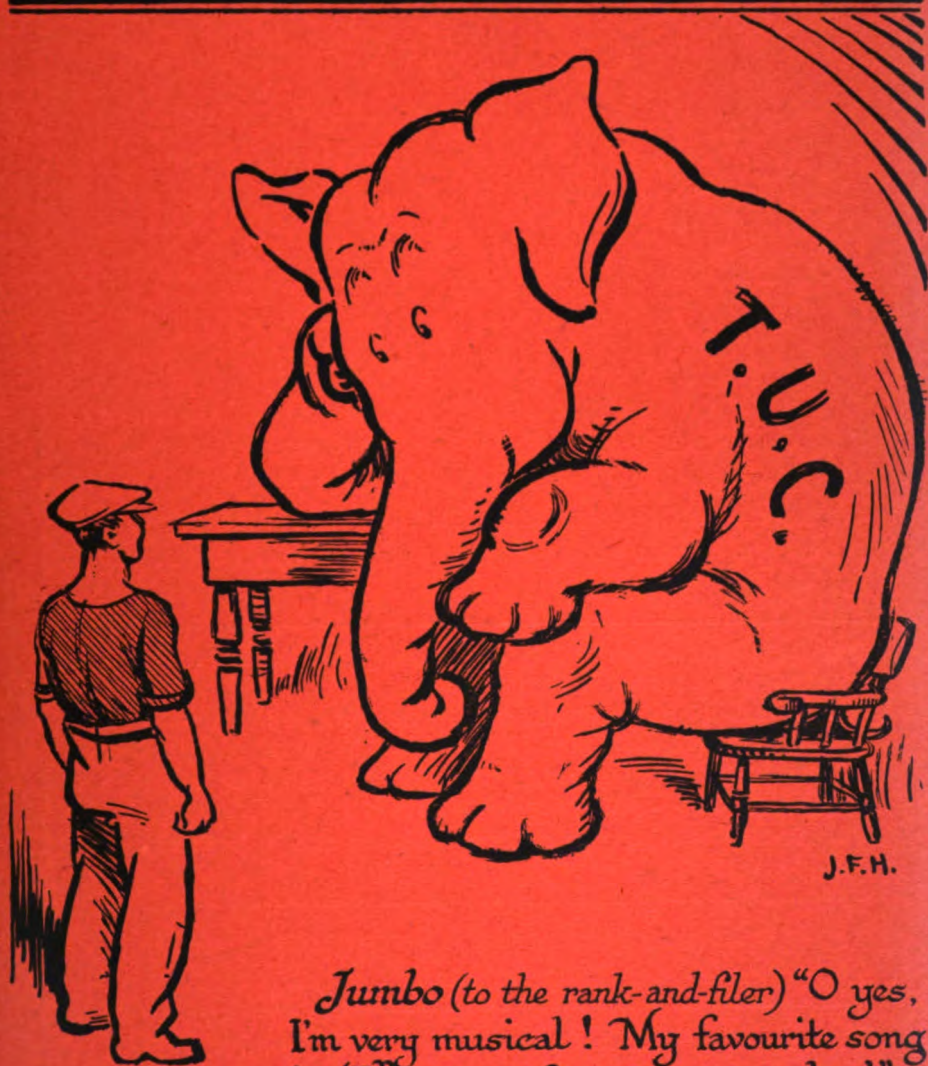


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OUR POINT OF VIEW

NO organisation more heartily wishes the T.U.C. Education Scheme to be a success than does the N.C.L.C. The N.C.L.C. has always stood for Trade Union control of Trade Union education, and one of its main objects from the beginning has been to convince the Trade Union movement of the importance of establishing its own independent educational machine. As a matter of fact, what has made a T.U.C. scheme possible at the present time is the Labour College movement.

The T.U.C. Scheme

It is with the deepest regret, therefore, that we have to note that at the time of writing the T.U.C. scheme threatens to take a very unsatisfactory form. During the past year the General Council's Education Sub-Committee has devoted its attention to the residential college question. It appears to have practically decided to take over Ruskin College (with its unsatisfactory financial position) and to take over the residential Labour College as well as Easton Lodge, where it proposes to centralise residential work eventually. We understand that it, through the General Council, will ask Congress to agree to 1d. per member levy for three years in order to raise a fund for building at Easton and providing equipment. In addition, Congress's existing educational fund has apparently been largely mortgaged to keep Ruskin from sinking.

While all these plans for generously assisting residential work have been adopted, nothing whatever has been done so far as evening-class work is concerned. Despite the funds placed by Congress at the disposal of the Education Committee for this, among other purposes, not a penny has been granted to assist the most popular and most fruitful working-class educational work. We refer, of course, to the evening classes, etc., which provide opportunities not for a few lucky residential students, but for the rank and file throughout the country.

We agree that the W.E.A.'s educational work is already so heavily subsidised by the State and the Universities that the Education Committee are justified in refraining from making grants. But, on the other hand, it is surely the duty of the Committee to give some financial assistance to the Trade Union educational body, the National Council of Labour Colleges, which has to work *against* those State subsidies.

As things stand at the moment, we fear that the present plans of the T.U.C. Committee will, through ignoring the provision of educational facilities throughout the country, make it impossible for

the Congress to receive satisfactory educational returns for the money spent. We believe it possible for Congress to have residential facilities *and* evening-class facilities at no greater cost than that which it proposes to incur for residential work alone. It may be that before Congress actually meets, substantial changes in the proposals may take place ; we sincerely hope that will be the case. Failing that, however, all those delegates who greatly desire a well-planned T.U.C. scheme will have to consider whether the present proposals which lavish finance on residential work alone are not likely to put the Congress in the undesirable position of having a too costly cart and no horse.

It is already well known that the great majority of Trade Union educational schemes have been placed with the N.C.L.C. The Amalgamated Society of Dyers have now arranged

More Union Support a N.C.L.C. scheme providing for access to classes, free correspondence courses, etc. We are pleased to note this further indication of the Trade Union movement's approval of I.W.C.E.

This month sees us all settling down to another winter's work. We want to ask all our friends to do their darnedest on behalf of the Magazine and our publications during the next

What about that 10,000 circulation? month or two. In common with every other working-class organisation, we have been "up against it" lately. When a big struggle is on we have all to make sacrifices, and it is difficult to make any appeal except for those actually in the front-line trenches. As we write, the miners are still in the thick of the struggle, and the needs of their wives and children are the first call on us all. But we cannot afford to lose ground in our own struggle for I.W.C.E., and we have accordingly taken the risk this month and gone up again, as our readers will note, to 40 pages. We have still some big back debts to clear—the legacy of the troubled times since May last. Don't let us be handicapped all through this winter's work by the effort to get those debts off our shoulders. Make a push on our behalf *now* ; get us new readers and send us subscriptions. We know you are keen ; but *keen how much* ?

A miner comrade writes from Stoke-on-Trent :—"Your HISTORY OF THE MINERS' STRUGGLE, by J. Hamilton, has been a great help to our committeemen here. When we have called a mass meeting and the officials have not arrived in time for the start (as sometimes happens), we have been called on to say a few words—and often do not know what to say or how to say it. But your pamphlet has helped us to get over that difficulty."

HOW ARE WE TO PREPARE FOR "NEXT TIME" ?

WE have had in The PLEBS several reports from various districts of activities during the Nine Days. Can we, after reading them, draw any general conclusions? Are there any common features which stand out in relief?

Do these reports leave on our minds any general picture of the situation as a whole? From the information that we have at hand, the following facts seem to stand out with particular force :—

At the T.U.C. Headquarters

(1) *Lack of preparation*, and consequent inefficiency of improvised organisation and arrangements.

(2) *Lack of centralisation* and persistence of *sectionalism*. The General Council showed itself not a real General Staff of an industrial army, but a mere co-ordinating council of officials of sectional bodies, drawing its sanction from a meeting of T.U. Executives, with each official tending to think primarily in terms of his own section. This was graphically shown in four principal ways : (a) Their own reiterated insistence on the purely industrial nature of the struggle. (b) The atrocious organisational blunder of leaving strike instructions to be despatched *separately by each union executive to its respective local branches*. The chaos resulting shows that the G.C., far from being a centralised leadership, was not even an efficient co-ordinating body. (c) The spirit inspiring the leadership, as shown in the plea of the G.C. in its own defence that the miners did not show sufficient gratitude to the other sections for what they had done—regarding it, not as a united class move in defence of *common* class interests, but merely as a "gesture" of certain *sections* on behalf of another section whose interests were quite separate and apart. (d) The immediate return to sectional negotiations immediately after May 12th, with its fatal outcome of leaving the miners to face alone not only the coalowners, but the whole might of capitalist Press and capitalist State.

(3) *Lack of class leadership*—a factor closely bound up with (2)—and persistence in the belief that the strike was a mere game, in which certain rules of decorum and "fair play" had to be observed. This was shown in the foolish belief that if printers were withdrawn from capitalist papers, they must in fairness be withdrawn from workers' papers, too (a belief which also implied a sectional, not a class, definition of "blacklegging"); or, again, that if workers were withdrawn from private firms they must be withdrawn from Co-ops..

too. It was shown in the failure to withdraw electric-power men and in the whole muddled handling of the permits question. It was shown in the whole tone of the official propaganda in *The British Worker*.

(4) *Lack of contact with the rank and file.* It was a Junta, rather than a real leadership. It allowed itself to be absorbed in the atmosphere of Eccleston Square and the West End of London, and had no real sense of what the position and spirit was in the industrial Midlands and North. The G.C. co-opted MacDonald and Henderson to represent the Parliamentary Party. Certain members had contact with the enemy by private conversations "behind the scenes." But they refused to co-opt a representative of the miners (*cf.* Cook's pamphlet); they did not even consult delegates from local branches or Trades Councils who could have told them what the actual men in the trenches were feeling and doing. They ignored the offer of a body like the Labour Research Department to place itself at their disposal, a body which had had plenty of experience of publicity work in previous strikes; but instead were careful to concentrate all publicity work, including material for *The British Worker*, in the office of the Labour Party, where electoral and Parliamentary issues necessarily held the floor. Moreover, they did their best to restrain local initiative by their instruction, dated May 5th, that local committees must "confine their statements on the situation to the material supplied by the Publicity Committee."

In the Localities

(5) The errors (1) and (2) at H.Q. were apparently reflected in numerous localities, though not in all. It was shown in the general *lateness* in getting improvised machinery going. (There were, of course, exceptions.) In most cases Strike Committees did not meet before the Tuesday. It was shown in the fact that many Joint Strike Committees failed to exercise any central directing force, let alone give an active lead; officials of separate unions "standing aloof or organising themselves around a trunk-call telephone" (F. Shaw). (*e.g.*, Leeds, Bradford, Doncaster, Barnsley, Cambridge, contrasted with Dewsbury, Huddersfield, Halifax, Edinburgh, Newcastle.) Finally there was the almost universal confusion arising from the fact that orders from H.Q. came separately to the separate T.U. branches, whereas the local Council of Action should have been "the body to which all instructions came dealing with the development of the dispute in the district" (J. S. Barr).

(6) *Predominance of sectional and passive attitude* even in localities where a Joint Strike Committee was formed and worked smoothly. This was mainly due to insufficient powers being given to the Committee, and to the "defeatist" attitude of leaders, who

played into the enemies' hands by simply "marking time." In such areas, for this reason and on account of (3), the workers' publicity and the Co-ops. suffered more than the capitalist Press and private firms; while fairly generally the failure to tackle the food question was one of the greatest "gifts" to the enemy that they could have wished for.

(7) *The masses* were everywhere shown to be *far ahead of their leaders in a crisis*; and, in a crisis of this character, to be much more class-conscious than at an average Parliamentary or local election. In localities where a central Council of Action was set up with real power, which gave a class-struggle lead, organising an adequate publicity service, mass picketing, workers' defence, food arrangements with Co-ops., the utilisation of such local government bodies as had a Labour majority, etc., the effect in rallying the masses and in "checkmating" the Government's arrangements to smash the strike (and so forcing it into the open to adopt Black and Tan methods and savage class justice) was amazing and unprecedented (*e.g.*, Doncaster and Barnsley, Blaydon and Chopwell, Newcastle, etc.)

The Future

And what of the immediate tasks for the future, which these facts imply? Here are a few suggestions, as contributions to the discussions which should be initiated without delay:—

- (a) The need for a new leadership—a leadership based on the class struggle, which will give a class lead. We must deal with leaders who have failed us, as capitalist shareholders would deal with directors who had led them into bankruptcy.
- (b) But a leadership is no good which is a mere Junta, or still retains its sectional basis. It must be intimately connected with the rank and file, *e.g.*, by containing, not merely representatives of T.U. executives, but representatives of local bodies, like Trades Councils, which represent a class, and not merely a sectional, point of view.
- (c) The need to build the Trades Councils in each locality to represent *all* the working class organisations in the district (*e.g.*, including Co-op., Women's organisation, workshop committees, minority movement, etc.), and to assume powers to take command of the movement in the locality on all common class issues.
- (d) To keep in being a permanent Council of Action machinery, and in light of the experience of May, 1926, to elaborate careful plans for meeting a similar emergency in future.
- (e) To build up a real live International Trade Union Unity—not merely a formal unity, but a unity in *action*. As a step to

this the development of the Anglo-Russian Committee must be pressed for. Only by such unity of action can we avoid in future the humiliating spectacle of foreign miners and transport workers (and English, too !) helping to send black-leg coal to crush the British miners.

- (f) To show clearly in all propoganda that the workers' struggle, once widened into a class issue, must take precisely the *political* form which the General Council disclaimed, thereby raising the issue of class power.

M.H.D.

II.

ONE thing emerges clearly from the series of articles that have appeared in the two last issues of *The PLEBS*, viz., that there was no link, no contact, no machinery between the General Council and the districts where the fight was being conducted. It appears from a study of those reports from the firing line that the question of organisation had been left, perhaps because the fight might not come off.

It was in the pages of *The PLEBS* that we, with other comrades, suggested the necessity three years ago of the General Council being given full powers, or at the least extended powers to deal with any and every phase of an industrial dispute. And we consider that as the Labour Colleges and Plebs groups represent the advanced wing of the movement, or that side wherein education is used as a weapon, as an instrument to guide the workers in their struggles for emancipation, it is more than ever essential that the pages of *The PLEBS* should be used in order to attempt to build up the organisation of the future in order to avoid the mistakes of this last few months. To neglect this opportunity would be to miss the tide. After all, this is the only non-party magazine in the movement.

John Beckett talks of building a central fund. But we cannot win with money. We can only win by a realisation of the problem, and the building of an organisation to overcome it. "To understand is to overcome," provided the will and courage are there.

We do not desire to cut across or argue with any of the contributors, but to lay down a few cardinal points that will have to be discussed and acted upon if, in our humble opinion, we are to succeed when the next time comes. It is pleasing to note that "Jix" realises that those nine days of May will not be the last General Strike. We can therefore be sure that the plans that he and his colleagues in the Cabinet made and perfected from August, 1925, till May, 1926, will be further extended and improved for "next time."

As all *The PLEBS* correspondents stress the splendid loyalty and solidarity of those who were called upon, that aspect need not be

laboured. The weaknesses in the chain were not at that end of it ; they were elsewhere.

Owing to forces and circumstances over which we had no control, we cannot recall, as many comrades have done to us, that wireless message that announced the end of the Strike. It appears to have been received as the tolling of the last bells. We heard of it from one of His Majesty's representatives in one of the guest-houses controlled by "Jix," and the printer would refuse to set the type for the utterance of H.M.'s warder.

Some of the steps that will have, in our opinion, to be taken before "next time" are as follows. The first and most important on the practical side is that, as the General Council found in their "back to the unions" campaign, in 1922, the Trades Councils will have to become the nerve-centres of the machinery. They will have to be the recognised authorities in every industrial centre, and to have representation on the General Council, just as the Divisional Labour Parties have on the Labour Party executive. (It should be laid down, however, that the representatives of the Trades Councils should be active workers in their Trades Councils, not M.P.'s or full-time officials of trade unions.)

Locally, the Co-ops. should be linked up with the Trades Councils, not as a Co-op. Political Party, but as a trading concern, recognised as an integral part of the organised movement, whose function it shall be to feed the army in its struggle. This would overcome the difficulties described by your correspondents in their various local situations. Likewise, the Co-op. movement will have to be linked up nationally with the Trade Union movement.

If we got busy on these tasks, then the difficulty over which much time has been spent in recent months, *i.e.*, the question of the Communist Party, would be obviated, because the immediate tasks of building a strong and active organisation would be the dominant theme. And all trade unionists who desired to participate would do so.

Another matter to which serious attention will have to be given is the control of elected persons, both national and local.

These are only a few of the thoughts that arise from a perusal of "the despatches from the front." We hope other correspondents will enlarge and develop them, so that in the forthcoming winter session when the lessons of history have to be understood and developed, our students shall be equipped to play their part in forthcoming struggles.

We do not desire to start any new machinery. The Trades Councils are here, the Co-op. is here, the Trade Unions are here, and the vital spark to connect up lies in the Minority Movement and the Left-Wing movements.

WILL LAWTHER.

STRIKE HISTORY

More Stories of the Nine Days

We print this month a further series of reports from PLEBS correspondents in various parts of the country, describing the General Strike and the organisations by which it was carried on in their respective areas. Previous articles in this series appeared in our July and August numbers.

CARDIFF

CARDIFF workers responded to the T.U.C. call in a manner that warmed the hearts of Left-Wingers who had come to regard the premier coal port as a rather unproductive spot in the Labour field. Here, as throughout the whole country, there was an inspiring demonstration of a wonderful growth of class-consciousness amongst the workers. The enthusiasm and solidarity tapered off near those lines of demarcation (so mystifying to the average worker) which the T.U.C. had drawn between the "outs" and the "ins"; but the few exceptions to the general loyalty were boss-minded supervisors, too gentlemanly clerks, etc.

The municipal trams and omnibuses were paralysed for a day or two, then they commenced to move sparsely and feebly by the aid of some bespatted scabs, largely drawn from the local fount of W.E.A. inspiration, the University College of South Wales. Later, there developed a considerable service of inter-urban and suburban 'buses, run by yet more scabs from the bourgeois fringe; owner-drivers and a fair number of unorganised road-transport workers.

The event found the Labour forces of the city unprepared with either plans or organisation; but on the initiative of the Trades and Labour Council a Central Strike Committee was set up composed of representatives of all affected workers and of the Trades Council executive. The Labour Hall in Charles Street (popularly renamed Strike Street) was put at the disposal of the Strike Committee. A joint Railway Committee was also formed and kept continuous session in eight-hour shifts. This committee organised the efficient corps of despatch riders and messengers which served the Central Strike Committee. The Ward Labour halls were used as meeting places, picket centres and general rallying points for the suburbs!

The General Council allotted to Cardiff an administrative area stretching to Blaina in the East, Merthyr on the North, and Bridgend to the West. About twenty strike centres were served.

T.U.C. despatches were copied and distributed ; committee minutes and bulletins were exchanged.

On and after May 6th a cyclostyled *Bulletin* was issued. Editions of about 600 copies were printed, and distributed free of charge. Through this medium effective counters were made to the Baldwin bluff and the B.B.C. lie factory. Here one must pay tribute to the valuable editorial and general clerical assistance rendered to the cause by some few University students.

Copies of the *British Worker* were unobtainable until May 9th ; but on the 10th arrangements were completed for bringing out a South Wales edition, the publishing of which was continued until the *Herald* resumed publication.

On the whole the spirit shown from the Central Strike Committee to the humblest picket was admirable. Both wings served the body of Labour well. Yet, as was inevitable, the muddle of policy, leadership, and organisation at T.U.C. Headquarters had its local reflection.

It is almost superfluous to record that local I.W.C.-Ers were in the thick of the fight—on the Central Strike Committee, producing the bulletin, serving on auxiliary committees, picketing and despatch-riding.

As the struggle wore on the steadfastness of all the workers was very impressive. 20,000 enthusiasts demonstrated in Cathays Park on Sunday, May 9th. Organisation and discipline were improving hourly and we were all settling down to a stern struggle. Then the blow fell. In the heat of the battle we had almost forgotten that our General Staff didn't believe in war.

In common with the rest of the country we first heard the hateful news from the enemy camp—the B.B.C. and the scab-produced Press. To some of us that fact alone was fraught with sinister significance ; but we were hardly prepared for the ghastly truth.

The demoralisation that followed the calling off of the Strike extended to the Cardiff Central Strike Committee, and after an hour or so of vainly 'phoning the T.U.C. for information, the local Strike headquarters were closed down !

It may be urged in extenuation of the failure of the Committee at this juncture that its members were overwhelmed by the demands of their particular organisations ; but the fact remains that valuable opportunities for salvage from the disaster were lost.

There are memories of that historic May 12th which still burn. One was accosted at every step for information as to the terms of settlement ; how could one explain to those fine comrades the conviction that there were no terms? There are memories of events at the Labour Hall. Reports of incredibly degrading terms offered to those who had presented themselves for work ; insulted and

resentful deputations returning and 'phone calls from all over the district, some asking in vain for information, others expressing a determination to fight on for the miners, T.U.C. or no T.U.C.

Then came the resurgence of May 13th and the following days ; but that is another story.

ALLEN POPE.

NORWICH

WHEN the General Strike came the only people in Norwich in any way prepared were the Railway Unions who, building on their experiences of the railway strikes, immediately formed a composite Strike Committee of the various transport unions involved, and organised a system of despatch riders, whereby throughout the Strike we were kept in touch with London and the surrounding districts. As other unions came into action they were co-opted on to this Transport Strike Committee which became in this way the Central Strike Committee.

Each union, of course, had its own Strike Committee to carry on its own internal affairs, but appointed delegates to the C.S.C., which met in relays so as to be in continuous session day and night. The C.S.C. kept control of the actual conduct of the Strike, arranged the picketing, issued permits, etc.

In a time of crisis such as this, which was likely to develop into a position unparalleled in the history of the British working class, it was thought essential, however, that the whole Labour movement should be brought into contact with the Strike activities besides the unions actually on strike.

On the Monday night, therefore, a committee was called together by the Trades and Labour Council Executive consisting of the executive and delegates from all the unions affiliated to the Council. This became known as the Co-ordinating Committee and met every evening during the Strike, when it received reports both concerning the conduct of the Strike and from the unions who were becoming involved and who wished for advice. A lot of time was spent in this way deciphering the various and conflicting instructions issued by the different unions and trying to translate them into a common policy of action.

Like other districts, we found great difficulty in putting the vague, general orders of the T.U.C. into detailed action. Transport had to stop, but housing had to continue, and so on the fourth day we had the building unions asking us whether they had to handle cement which was essential to carry on the Municipal Housing Scheme, but which was being brought from Cambridge by blackleg transport labour. Similarly, the boot and shoe industry, which is the largest in the city, and which received orders to remain at work, was being supplied with leather, brought on railway lorries driven by "scabs."

In these and other cases where non-striking unions were affected, the Co-ordinating Committee, though having no executive powers, was able to advise and straighten out the tangles. This Committee also arranged meetings, concerts, sports, etc., for the strikers and endeavoured to publish a *Strike Bulletin*, which was not very successful. The need for a bulletin was not felt so keenly as in other districts, as we had a regular daily supply of the *British Worker* from London. Several attempts were made, however, to induce the printers to publish a local strike sheet by voluntary labour. This would have been easily possible, as the Typographical Association themselves own the local Caxton Printing Press, but owing to the conservative and narrow outlook of the T.A. officials, the printers would not move in the matter.

Though there was no conflict of any kind between the Central Strike Committee and the Co-ordinating Committee, yet this kind of dual control was very unsatisfactory. It was, however, inevitable in a Strike which the T.U.C. continuously stressed as non-political and in which the local Trades Councils and Labour Parties were ignored. Thus the actual control of the Strike had to be left to the Trade Unions who were actually involved. Again, as this General Strike was not general, but only partial, there were many unions who were not "on strike," but who were keenly affected by it. These were debarred from participating in the work of the C.S.C., but it was found essential to link them up with their fellow-workers by means of the Co-ordinating Committee. Had the Strike developed into a real General Strike or into a revolutionary situation requiring the united efforts of the whole Labour movement, the Co-ordinating Committee would undoubtedly have become a Council of Action, absorbing the C.S.C. and have taken full control.

The course of the Strike was similar to that of other centres, and the response of the workers to the call was startling in its unexpectedness. The spirit of the rank and file was splendid and was becoming increasingly determined when the unlooked-for end came. But though the Strike was a fine example of growing class consciousness, it had by no means a revolutionary outlook, though undoubtedly this would have developed rapidly had it been allowed to go on.

D. STEPHENSON.

PRESTON

"Proud Preston, poor people,
High Church, but no steeple."

YES, Preston, in spite of its "poor people," has some historical associations of which it may well be "proud." Henry Hunt, "Orator," sat as M.P. for the town. Cobbett, in 1826, Keir Hardie in 1900, contested the seat. Industrially, the town took an active part in the Chartist movement.

This, in spite of, or perhaps because of, the fact that the Derby family, the famous Stanleys, have exercised great influence here, and almost always had one of its members to represent the borough at Westminster.

The principal industry is, of course, cotton spinning and manufacturing, but there are also big engineering works, and the town is a big railway centre.

And what happened in this old-fashioned town during those nine days? Preston's record is, indeed, a proud one.

The Trades and Labour Council is the influential body, and with it are associated the political side of the Labour Party, the Co-operative Society and the I.L.P.

In July, 1925, when the trouble was threatened with the miners, an Industrial Committee was formed by delegates of various unions, notably the A.E.U., N.U.R., A.S.L.E. & F., and N.U.G.W., to deal with strikes and strike conditions. When the Baldwin Government granted the subsidy to the mineowners, and the crisis was postponed, this Committee decided that the secretary of the Trades and Labour Council, who is also a member of the Town Council and agent of the Labour Party, should summon them when necessity arose.

On April 29th, 1926, the Committee met. It was decided that the secretary and a delegate of each union, whether or not affiliated to the Trades and Labour Council, should be summoned, thus forming a Committee of industrialists. Political bodies and the Co-operative Society were not represented.

A meeting was held on May 4th. A Central Strike Committee was set up, covering engineering and transport. The Trades and Labour Council offices were made the centre of all activity, the Co-operative rooms were loaned free of charge, and were used as the centre for picketing operations. Another Committee to control dispatch work was formed and worked most efficiently. The Co-operative Society made arrangements for allowing credit, and for food supplies to be given to strikers, financed by the distress fund. £300 was raised for strikers to help those who were non-union men. The mass picketing was very well done, and credit must be given for this to J. Johnstone of the N.U.R., who acted as head of that work. A local strike sheet was *printed* every day. The General Council objected to this and instructed the Typographical Association to inform its members in Preston to cease printing. In spite of this, the sheet came out. A Labour sympathiser—a printer—lent his premises, members of the Typographical Association who were on strike did the work, and the paper was distributed from the I.L.P. rooms. All the work was voluntary, and the proceeds from the sales were given to the strike fund. Meet-

ings and concerts, organised by the different unions were held each day at a cinema, lent by a sympathiser.

On May 5th every engineering shop was closed. The transport workers, including, of course, the railway workers, ceased work. The textile workers did not come out, nor the members of the A.U.B.T.W., engaged on domestic buildings, and much difficulty was experienced at mills and on building operations, owing to members of unions who *were* on strike having to handle "black" material, and there are men who are still victimised because of their loyalty. The "Ribble" 'buses, a private firm whose 'buses run into the town, have, up to the present, refused to reinstate some of the men.

Preston controlled the districts north to Lancaster, west to Blackpool, east to Colne, south to Leyland and Chorley. In these towns the organisation varied. At Lancaster the men came out at Lord Ashton's works—the first time for fifty years! At Chorley there was practically no organisation and no arrangements for picketing, although the town is very near the mining areas. This made it difficult to carry out instructions from headquarters.

On May 12th a call was given for all workers, except those in textile unions to cease work. The next day the strike was at an end. Preston was solid, and never in all its history has there been such unity shown, or such a well co-ordinated effort been made. A mass meeting was held on the Market Place, and when the announcement was made that the Strike was at an end there was bitter disappointment.

The principal difficulty, as in other towns, was in the granting of permits to transport drivers. Supplies of petrol were distributed from the docks, which had been taken over by the Government. Except for this, it can be truly said that the foresight of the Committee set up in July of last year had great results, and the lesson to be learnt from this is the old saying, "Eternal vigilance is the price of Liberty."

It is difficult to mention individual names, as the offices were crowded, night and day, by eager volunteers. The offices were never closed. Still, outstanding figures come to one's mind. J. Woolley, a "Right" Labour man, powerful in the Textile Unions, first Labour Mayor, this year, whose weight always came down on the side of the workers. Councillor H. Ellison (N.U.R.), whose strong position during the Strike has caused the authorities to object to his position as a magistrate. Jack Allison (A.E.U.), who worked day and night, and who is now thoroughly broken in health. As he pathetically remarked, "It was the end that did it." Councillor Rhodes, district organiser of the A.E.U., who went through the district calling on the men to come out, although they scarcely

needed that call, and H. Leeming, his secretary. And last, but not least, comrade Burgess, of the R.C.A., who gave a splendid lead to his Association which joined the mass movement for the first time. The rank and file, men and women, were magnificent. After the Strike was over, collections for the distress fund still went on in the mills, and according to the last reports over £1,190 has been sent to the miners' fund.

CONSTANCE TAYLOR.

GLOUCESTER

GLOUCESTER is not looked upon as one of the most forward areas in the Labour movement, but no industrial centre responded more loyally to the call on May 1st than did the workers in this ancient city of the West. Railwaymen in their thousands, transport workers, printers, engineers and workers in all the trades affected unhesitatingly answered the call, and solidarity was the order of the day.

The Trades Council and Labour Party had already formed a Council of Action and this was continually in session during the whole of the Strike period. Foreseeing that distress and want would be inevitable in such a crisis, a distress fund was immediately inaugurated, and the response was magnificent, hundreds of urgent cases being relieved by this means. A sub-committee controlled the publicity side and ran the Strike *Bulletin*, which appeared every day during the Strike.

The N.U.R. had their own Strike Committee, but all sections worked together loyally, and a wonderful feeling of optimism prevailed. The mass meetings were splendid, and thousands attended to hear A. A. Purcell, M.P., at the Shire Hall. A. J. Cook was also due to speak, but was prevented at the last moment. The mass meetings at the skating rink were also attended by five or six thousand workers, and the solidarity and comradeship expressed heartened everyone. Through the whole of that eventful period there was never one despondent note, and the handful of 'loyalists' slunk to work by backways. Gloucester did itself proud, and the result will, it is certain, be expressed in no uncertain way when the workers again get an opportunity of showing what they think of the blessings of modern capitalism.

Our Bishop lost no time in telling the workers what a lot of wasters the wealth producers are. He has woefully failed to understand that he does not live in the 18th century.

The announcement that the Strike was off was received with dismay and the workers refused to start for several days. It was not possible to understand what had happened, and all agreed that to call off the Strike when the workers were most determined and most

solid was a fatal error, especially when no guarantees were offered against victimisation. This, alas! has been plentiful, and in addition to the many who have lost their jobs, there were about a dozen transport workers "sent down" for 14 days. Four others were sentenced, to two months in one case and one month in the other three. These latter four, however, have had their sentences reduced to a fine, on appeal to Quarter Sessions.

The effect will be seen in the future, and there can be no doubt that the result will be such a strengthening of our forces that we shall all look back with pride to those wonderful days of May, 1926.

S. A. STODDART.

“DO WE STILL NEED A PLEBS LEAGUE?”

INSTEAD of giving a report of the Annual Meet I propose to deal with the question at the head of this article, because quite the most important discussion at the meet occurred when the E.C.'s resolution—"That in the interests of I.W.C.E. an immediate expansion of Plebs membership is vitally necessary, with the consequent formation of groups in close touch with the Executive Committee"—was put before the members.

We had then, what a few years ago would have seemed an amazing spectacle, the Editor asking us what we needed a League for, Comrades Millar and Hamilton pleading for a League consisting not of groups at all, but merely of individual members, and other comrades, all with differing ideas, putting forward their various points of view.

The discussion forces us to a reconsideration of the whole position. Shall the Plebs become converted into the publishing department of the N.C.L.C. (a resolution to this effect was referred back by the N.C.L.C. to its Executive); or shall we continue to function separately, and, if so, what is our most effective method of procedure? Is it to be an extension of *groups* or merely a roping in of individuals?

Let us take first the discussion on the publishing department. To many students in the N.C.L.C. classes and indeed to many of the Trade Union supporters of the N.C.L.C., the fact that the publications issued for use in the classes are published by the League seems a curious situation. All other activities have now been unified under one E.C. except this important one. We who have been in the I.W.C.E. movement almost from the beginning, and who know

its growth, understand the reason for this, but it is not so clear to the newcomers.

Perhaps it is just as well to remember here, and to remind others, that the Plebs League was the parent organisation of the I.W.C.E. Out of the Plebs League grew the Labour College, then the class system, which was finally co-ordinated and unified into the N.C.L.C. Now our huge network of classes spreads over all England, large trade unions support us, and at last we are in the position of being "recognised" by the T.U.C.

One main reason why the Plebs League retained its identity and kept control of the magazine and publications was that it was felt that with the coming of the large trade unions there might also come a watering down of the policy and ideals that we believed were the vital essence of I.W.C.E.

But what has happened? We have obtained this support, not by watering down our policy or in any way modifying our point of view, but in fearlessly presenting our case to the organised workers and letting them judge for themselves. The staunch support that the large trade unions give to independent working-class education has not been obtained on false pretences. We have always stressed the *class* position, we have built up our organisation on the difference between our independent class-conscious appeal and the "extensionist" appeal of the W.E.A.. Those large unions that are supporting us now are supporting not only classes for their members, but are standing four-square and solid on the groundwork of Plebs propaganda, the need of the working class for their own interpretation and teaching of the class struggle.

This being so, we have to ask ourselves, Is there a need for a Plebs League to continue?

First of all, as regards publications, is the time ripe for us to turn over this activity to a sub-committee of the N.C.L.C., on which the "experts" of our movement work with the full backing of the N.C.L.C. Executive Committee? That has to be carefully discussed.

Let us assume that the answer is "Yes." That leaves us with the magazine and the League organisation. Suppose we decide to hand over not only the publications department, but also the magazine, which would then become an official journal, would that result in a gain? Personally, I do not think it would. An official organ is muzzled in so many ways, and though it may be argued that The PLEBS has been acting as an official organ for a number of years, it must be apparent to all that the taking over of the magazine by the N.C.L.C. would completely alter the sort of magazine we have been having. It would become at once more "technical," more

concerned with the actual practice of class work, and less generally readable. Is that desirable?

Again, assuming that we have given up publications and magazine, what are we to do with the League?

It consists at present of several groups, with energetic and tireless secretaries, ever working and whipping up Plebs Leaguers who are all busy in other fields of the movement; several hundred isolated Plebeians who are sometimes foremost in their local movement, sometimes entirely out of touch except for this link of belonging to Plebs; and the London group, known as the Executive Committee. The E.C. is composed of members who reside in London and by force of circumstance have had thrust upon them the job of running and organising the publications and the magazine. They are all trusted I.W.C.E.-ers, who can be relied upon not only to understand the League's peculiar position in the N.C.L.C., but who have "graduated" for their place by years of work and support.

The E.C. has many critics. It has been referred to as a "charmed circle" and a "clique of intellectuals," but the fact remains that a London E.C. has been the only practicable one, and that as it is balloted on by the whole membership, we can assume that it represents the wishes of the majority, as far as personnel is concerned.

Now what function can this organisation have other than the propaganda of I.W.C.E.? And is the mere propaganda of I.W.C.E. a sufficient reason for formation into groups?

We have seen during the past year that formation into groups has led to controversy with the N.C.L.C. because the group has begun to emphasise the political tendencies of its members and to take the questions under discussion rather further than was good for the N.C.L.C. The N.C.L.C. must keep the support of the Trade Unions and to have groups criticising the working-class political parties, either from the Right or the Left, does make their work difficult.

Personally, I believe that it would be possible to keep our groups and to form more, and to use them as "forums" for discussion, while we realised all the time that decisions come to at group meetings about political affairs should be carried out, not as Plebs Leaguers, but as members of our political organisations.

It is a subtle distinction and rather suggests walking a tight-rope. But I believe there will have to be some tight-rope walking done by all sections if we are to maintain that unity which we all desire.

Here, then, is the whole case set out for consideration. We must view it not only from the point of view of the I.W.C.E. movement, but by regarding that movement as a vital and necessary part of the Labour movement. To sum up in a series of questions:—

Shall the N.C.L.C. become responsible for text-book, pamphlet and other publications?

Shall the League continue, and, if so, is it essential for it to keep control of the magazine?

What form is it best for the League to take : (a) a "group" organisation, or (b) an individual organisation pledged to support I.W.C.E.?

In conclusion, a personal expression of opinion : after years of hard work it is tempting to pass on the work to others, and if not to rest, at least to enter new and—because they are new—more exciting fields ; but after careful thought I find myself still believing that the Plebs League has a useful and necessary part to fulfil. I believe that the leaven of I.W.C.E. is more necessary than ever in the Labour movement, and the more I think about it the more vital it seems to me that the leaven of Plebs should still be in the N.C.L.C.

Exactly in what form we are to persist I do not know, but to disband now would be fatal. We need each other, and the movement needs us all.

WINIFRED HORRABIN.

HISTORY and the WORKERS

The fourth of the series of articles by Mark Starr discussing the place and importance of History in workers' education, and the method of its interpretation.

IV.

THE MARXIST APPROACH

IN opposition to the *idealist* explanations of history dealt with last month there are those called *materialist*. According to these, ideas are the result of environment. Racial and national habits and institutions are determined by conditions of life.

Robert Owen, it will be remembered, attracted a great deal of attention in the early 19th century by his avowal that man's character was made *for* him and not *by* him. But this determinism was mostly concerned with individuals as such and, although it greatly disturbed the clergy, made little advance toward creating a science of society. Later, Buckle emphasised the effects of climate, food, soil and the general aspect of nature as explaining the differences between various peoples. Modern geographers have advanced and extended his theories very considerably. Mrs. Semple following her master Ratzel, Fairgreive and many others have done much to make geography into a fascinating study of society (not individual man) in relation to its natural environment. The PLEBS *Outline of Economic Geography* has been widely used and greatly appreciated in our classes.

Some of the geographers tend to push their point of view too far—to formulate, in fact, a “geographical conception of history.” But, as the *PLEBS Outline* again and again insists, “Man lives not only in Nature, but in Society.” The more his tools grow the more he masters and overcomes his natural environment, and the slave of Nature is becoming its master. A natural environment which has changed but a little in historic time cannot explain later constant changes and developments, although it stamps its impression most noticeably upon the earliest forms of society.

In the following classic passage Marx states the basis of his theory of history:—

My investigation ended in the conviction that legal relations and forms of government cannot be explained either by themselves or by the so-called development of the human mind, but, on the contrary, have their roots in the conditions of men's physical existence.

In making their livelihood together men enter into certain necessary involuntary relations with each other.

These industrial relations arise out of their respective conditions and occupations and correspond to whatever stage society has reached in the development of its material productive forces.

Different stages of industry produce different relations.

The totality of these industrial relations constitutes the economic structure and basis of society.

Upon this basis the legal and political super-structure is built.

There are certain forms of social consciousness or so-called public opinion which *correspond* to this basis.

The method prevailing in any society of producing the material livelihood determines the social, political, and intellectual life of men in general.

It is not *primarily* men's consciousness which determines their mode of life; on the contrary, it is their social life which determines their consciousness.

When the material productive forces of society have advanced to a certain stage of their development they come into opposition with the old conditions of production, or, to use a legal expression, with the old property relations, under which these forces have hitherto been exerted.

Instead of serving longer as institutions for the development of the productive powers of society, these antiquated property relations now become hindrances. Then begins an epoch of social revolution.

With the change of the economic basis the whole vast super-structure undergoes, sooner or later, a revolution.

In considering such revolutions we must always distinguish clearly between the change in the industrial methods of social production on the one hand; this change takes place unconsciously, strictly according to the laws of natural science, and might properly be called an evolution.

And, on the other hand, the change in the legal, political, religious, artistical or philosophical, in short, ideological, institutions; with reference to these men fight out this conflict as a revolution conscious of their opposing interests.

This conflict takes the form of a class struggle.

A careful study of this will enable one or two misconceptions to be swept away. For example, C. E. M. Joad (*New Leader*, January 16th, 1926) speaks of Marxism as based on man's “desire to obtain money,” “pecuniary benefits” and “the desire for economic power on the part of a governing group.” Both in Mr. Joad's remark—and even in the Veblen books he was reviewing

—there is an amazing and complete forgetting of the class struggle. No wonder, when Mr. Joad burlesques Marxism into the rule that “men do what pays them,” that he falls back unsatisfied with this “too simple” explanation to pondering upon “the complexity of human motive . . . which reflects and springs from the inconsistency of the human heart.”

The name “Economic” Interpretation does not suggest, as the older title “Materialist” did, the social consciousness and the class struggle; and for this reason its use is to be deprecated. Labriola, dealing with this point, says: “Those deceive themselves who, calling it the *economic* interpretation of history, think they understand it completely. That designation is better suited, and is only suited to certain analytic attempts (Thorold Rogers’) which, taking separately and in a distinct fashion on the one side the economic forms and categories, and, on the other, for example, law, legislation, politics and customs, proceed to study the reciprocal influences of the different sides of life considered in an abstract fashion. Ours is the organic conception.”

Modern historians all consciously or otherwise unite to explain changes by economic factors. But that they do this unconsciously in many cases is proven by the meaningless phrases they resort to when the economic sequence is not clear to them. When, for example, the Hammonds, in their latest book, *The Rise of Modern Industry*, leave description and attempt to interpret, they fall back upon such question-begging phrases as “imagination of the times,” “the wide mystery of fellowship,” “impulse to make a society.”

In spite of the recognition given to “consciousness” and “ideological institutions” in the paragraphs quoted above, and also the practical participation of Marx in the working-class activities of his time, again and again the view appears that Marxism rules out “the psychologic factor”—ideas and personalities—and that the inevitable change in some way works apart and outside the minds of men. We find even such a capable writer as H. N. Brailsford (*Lansbury's Weekly*, 7/11/25) partly falling into this error when he writes: “The most embarrassing aspect of this [the Russian] Revolution is that one must seek for the explanation of its success outside the Marxian interpretation of history. It was not the inevitable expression of Russia’s economic development. It was rather the work of Lenin’s genius and the collective personality of the Communist Party.” One might well ask how Lenin’s genius acquired the idea of Communism at all apart from world capitalist development? What caused the World War which hastened the bankruptcy of Tsarism and occupied the other rival Powers long enough to give Soviet Russia a start and allow the Bolsheviki, firmly convinced of the inevitability of social change, to leap into

the saddle? Do they not approach all their difficulties guided by their Marxist knowledge of the part that capitalism has played in objectively producing the conditions for working-class emancipation? Such questions answer themselves. The serious point is to put "genius" and "collective personality" in opposition to economic development.

Nor do Marxists, as some superficial critics suggest, hold the fatalistic view that social changes come apart from the conscious activities of men. Trotsky's comparison of Calvinism and Marxism is worthy of quotation :—

"Calvinism, with its doctrine of predestination, was the mystical form in which the attempt was made to grasp the laws of historical processes. The rising bourgeoisie felt that the laws of history were in its favour; it formulated this consciousness in the doctrine of predestination. *The Calvinist revolutionary energy of the interpreters who felt themselves called upon to complete an historical act.* A parallel can, with some justification, be drawn between the part played by the doctrine of predestination in the Puritan revolution and the part played by Marxism (economic determinism) in the proletarian revolution. In both cases, the increased activity is not based on private opinions and subjective sensations but on the recognition of law, which in the one case is felt mystically and in the other case realised scientifically."

Next month we will trace the constituent elements of this view of history and apply it.

MARK STARR.

A BOOK BARGAIN

WE have purchased the publisher's stock of a book which we believe scores of I.W.C. Ers and Left-Wingers will be glad of the opportunity of acquiring at a low price—

LENIN *by* Leon Trotsky

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BOOK REVIEWS

MODERN INDIA.

Modern India. By R. Palme Dutt (Sunshine Publishing House, Bombay).

INDIA—the brightest jewel in the British crown! No wonder we are taught this in our history books. No wonder our ruling class has to rationalise the causes which have led to the present political and economic relation between Britain and India. It is, therefore, good that a historical analysis on sound Marxian lines has now been published of the British connection with India. R. P. Dutt has certainly collected a lot of valuable material in a short space and presented it in an easily-readable form. It is a pity that this book is not published in England and that apparently it is not easy to get copies in this country. I hope this difficulty will shortly be overcome, because it ought to be read by Labour College students.

Dutt shows that the occupation of India by Britain was really the penetration of a mercantile capitalist system into a continent where primitive self-sufficient communities existed under feudal conditions. The process of breaking this down was inevitable, and Dutt quotes some interesting passages in which Marx, with his wonderful foresight, foretold the coming not only of mercantile but later of industrial capitalism, and showed that utopian jeremiads about the decay of the ancient Indian civilisation were childish in view of the march of economic forces. There are some excellent chapters on the change of British policy which has led to the granting of the Montague-Chelmsford reforms and to the present regime of Dyarchy.

What has happened is this. Before the war India was a mercantile colony, an Asiatic backgarden into which Manchester was privileged to dump her cotton goods. It was the colony for Britain's consumption-capital. But today the native accumulations of capital and the rising nationalist movement, together with the difficulties of supplying India during the war, have made the development of Indian industrial capitalism inevitable. The British Raj, from being the agent of Manchesterism

in India, has become the agent of Birminghamism. Dutt shows how British exports of consumption goods to India has fallen and their place been more than taken by the export of industrial machinery and of capital invested there, whereby the cheap Indian labour is used in place of British workers at home. A lot of figures are quoted here which are highly interesting and suggestive.

Dutt is, of course, very critical of the leaders of the Swaraj movement, whom he shows to be wholly ignorant of the economic forces which stand behind these movements. He attacks all attempts of these leaders to compromise with the British rulers and to work for Dominion status for India. His view is that Dominion status merely means the continuance of economic slavery for the Indian workers and peasants under British finance and industrial capital, while native capital will be given a subordinate place and fed on the crumbs from the rich man's table. He demands nothing less than the absolute severance of British connection. This opens up a thorny topic and, as students know, many Socialists argue that the immediate separation would not guarantee political and economic power to the working masses of India, while the Dominion status might with the coming into power of Labour in England lead to rapid steps towards the socialisation of important branches of Indian economy.

On the question of the organisation of the Indian National movement Dutt is interesting. He advises a "National organisation built up on the basis of peasants' associations and unions of workers, of young national groups (including students and young workers). These, linked together in some type of federal democratic association with a strong central leading body could constitute the framework of a People's Party."

M. PHILIPS PRICE.

AN INTERESTING NOVEL.

Mills of Man. By Marcelle Vioux, trans. by Denis Crane (A. M. Philpot, Ltd., 7/6).

The "PLEBS" does not, as a rule review novels, but it has so often pleaded for the creation of a new "literature of the job" picturing, from the workers'

viewpoint, the success of everyday working life, that this translation of a French factory girl's account of her experiences in a Lyons silk mill is worthy of note.

The book is being quietly banned by the libraries in this country as "too unpleasant." The dirt, the overcrowded dormitories, the stench of crushed bugs in the overheated workrooms, the creeping out of the girls at night to supplement their miserable wages, do not make light holiday reading. Neither does the bitter sketch of an elegant lady inspector so anxious to be assured by the forewoman that the girls all came from respectable country homes and had the most irreproachable characters.

The bitter realism of this book reveals a level of labour conditions that certainly would not be tolerated in this country, and for that reason we are apt to forget that these plague spots of intolerably badly-paid and ill-treated girl labour still exist in Western Europe and ought to be the subject of international action by the great labour organisations.

This is a book that should rouse such international conscience. Perhaps the ending—the suicide of the unfortunate little country girl, dismissed because she has allowed herself to become pregnant and so thrown a stain on the irreproachable character of this workshop paradise—is unnecessarily melodramatic. It is, we are told in the preface, the only detail that is not strictly autobiographical. That the facing up to an intolerable situation may be even grimmer than the most melodramatic suicide is a fact of life that so young a novelist can hardly be expected to have learned.

E. C. W.

ONE OF UPTON'S BEST.

Letters to Judd: an American Workingman. By Upton Sinclair (PLEBS Office, 6d. paper covers, 7d. post free).

No workingman will have an excuse for treating money problems as something beyond his ken while he can spare a "tanner" for these *Letters to Judd*. Sinclair can write on high finance without being hindered by a highbrow jargon. In this little book he deals with the machinery of banking and stock exchange in such a lucid style that he gets the stuff across. He says on the cover that "Thirty years' study of American

problems have gone into this book; also thirty years of learning how to write," and the result is that difficult problems are made plain, and the whole thing is a masterpiece in simple presentation.

J. M. W.

LENIN ON ORGANISATION.

Lenin on Organisation (Daily Worker, Chicago, \$1.50).

This book is a Barmecide feast. Excellent food, but it is seized and taken away before you can taste it. It is already clear that Lenin's work deserves the most attentive study of all thoughtful workers. We turn, therefore, to this book with anxious eagerness to learn more, only to find the censor is abroad. Not the censor of the capitalists—we know him—here the school-ma'am is the Communist International, whose motto is *Do what you're told and shut your jaw*.

This book consists of scraps and expurgations. Arbitrarily, paragraphs are torn out of Lenin's works and slung before the reader without their context. Sometimes, indeed, only a single sentence is offered to us! Naturally, these extracts are chosen which support the policy of the present executives of the Communist Parties—any dangerous matter is left out.

Where we are allowed to read a long passage from Lenin's works, in Chapters III. and V., the clarity and power of his mind resumes its sway at once. These two chapters feed our admiration for his ability and our indignation at the "Bolshevizers" who have the impudence to shut the book in our face and tell us "the rest is not suitable for you, dearie."

The workers are *not* babies and the sooner Labour officials of every wing realise it the better. A full *Lenin's Works*, if you please, and not a *Nursery Lenin for Good Little Girls*.

R. W. P.

AN IDEOLOGUE.

Must Britain Travel the Moscow Road?

By Normal Angell (Noel Douglas, 5/-).

Mr. Norman Angell once wrote a book proving the futility of war. 1914-1918 followed. He has now written a book proving the futility of revolution.

J. N.

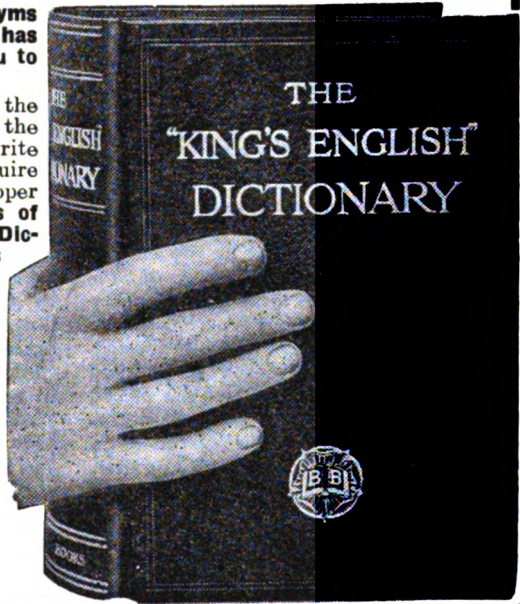
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Plebs 305

OUR THIRTY YEARS.
Thirty Years of History. By W. K. Wallace (Allen & Unwin, 10/6).

Those of us who were born in the nineties are conscious of an irritating gap between the time when most recent histories stop, and our own reading of newspapers began. There are memoirs and partial histories, but this book tries to give a world history of the thirty odd years that cover the lifetime of many of us. In turn, from the viewpoint of England, Germany, France, Italy, Russia, and Japan, the author shows the complicated moves that inevitably led to the World War.

This part is well done, but still more interesting is his attempt to explain the importance of this period as the ending of one age and the beginning of another. To him, the nineteenth century appears as the end of the period of the sovereign national state, with its foreign relations regarded as purely political affairs, and the beginning of the period of world politics, with economic interests frankly avowed as being the main consideration of the diplomatic game. The earlier chapters in which the author tries to find a psychological basis of this change, the "will-to-power" replacing the old nationalistic conception of personal liberty, are somewhat unconvincing; as are also his wide generalisations. A remark like "during the closing years of the nineteenth century men undertook an examination of conscience" makes one writhe. Moreover, a Marxian student will realise that economic considerations were generally as much behind the high-sounding periods of the old diplomacy as they are behind the brass trumpets of the new.

Mr. Wallace's summary of the Profit and Loss of the Great War is especially interesting to Labour readers. He sees the war as the bursting of the bounds of the old national sovereign states by the new power of world economic interests, the leaders of which are unhampered by the necessities of parliamentary or diplomatic technique. "Their powers are dictatorial. There is no need of a plebiscite to determine whether French capital shall secure control of the industries of Czecho-Slovakia. . . or the British gain a controlling voice in the economic life radiating from Vienna."

One is tempted to go on quoting. This book costs 10/6, but no tutor of modern industrial history can afford not to have read it.

E. C. W.

"AD UNUM OMNES."

Spiritual Values in Adult Education.

By Basil A. Yeaxlee (Oxford University Press. Two vols. Vol. 1., 10/6. Vol. 2, 15/-).

Dr. Yeaxlee's thesis, stated briefly, is that all education—workers' education, at any rate—is noble, beautiful and good. Therefore it has spiritual value. Therefore there is something to admire in every school. "Even the endeavours of the revolutionaries among the Trade Unions, if examined closely, will reveal a considerable element of idealism, however this may be obscured or misdirected by a twisted mentality or a narrow purpose." From this point of view he perceives—and welcomes—a remarkable "integration" of all schools of thought in adult education. (Indeed he perceives "integration" everywhere—"it is the prevailing note in religion, politics, and social life"!)

He is no believer in the class-struggle. "At bottom the integration of the adult education movement rests upon the unity of personality, which is reflected in the unity of society, and which has its source in the oneness of the life of God and of the universe." And as he has "heard it said by more than one member of the Plebs League that he belongs to it because he believes in the Kingdom of God," Plebs—despite their twisted notions about a class-struggle—are to be admitted into the fold, and "the Labour College and the Church Tutorial Class have much to learn from each other."

The interesting parts of these two rambling volumes are the historical sections. Dr. Yeaxlee is a genuine enthusiast for workers' education—of every sort and kind. He goes over the ground, from the Birmingham Sunday Society of 1789 to the controversies between Plebs and W.E.A. in our own day, and his own all-embracing interest in the subject compels his readers' interest. He has apparently read every scrap of literature round and about his subject (though he does not mention Miss Margaret Hodgen's excellent history published last year) and his footnotes and quotations are enormous. He discusses the

respective points of view of ourselves and the W.E.A. at some length, and, despite the observations quoted above, realises that "it would be futile to attempt a harmonisation of the two theories, for the harmony would be only superficial."

He is verbose and vague. But one can forgive a good deal to a man who can see that "this conflict (i.e., that between 'independents' and 'extensionists') is beyond question the most determinative of all the struggles at present convulsing the Labour Movement not only in this country, but throughout the world."

It is a rare treat to handle a book so satisfyingly indexed. J. F. H.

OUR NEW OFFER.

Trotsky's *Lenin*, a special cheap edition of which we are offering our readers (see p. 326) was first published in an English translation just over a year ago. Part I. deals with "Lenin and the Old *Iskra*"; Part II. with "October, 1917"; and there are concluding chapters on "Lenin the Man." This book is a vivid portrait of one great revolutionary leader by another, and is a contribution to the history of our own time which every Pleb should possess.

LETTERS from READERS

MIND AND MATTER.

DEAR Comrade,—Though your correspondent J. Jones puts his case very clearly in the July PLEBS, he does not appear to me to have thought out his position with equal clarity. He asks me how can I explain inorganic evolution, on the assumption contained in my own words that "'matter' cannot exist without 'mind' to conceive of it as being 'matter'?" In return I might ask, if matter *can* exist without mind, how can Jones know that without the aid of his mind? Or, if he will pardon my giving it a ridiculous turn, how can he form the concept of its existence without forming that concept?

He does not attempt to show *how* matter can exist without mind, but begs the question by inviting us to agree with him when he says, "But surely matter *has* existed and *can* exist without mind, otherwise we are back to the position of Berkeley." The way he puts it suggests that I am a follower of Berkeley, but that is not so.

Now if Jones cannot form a concept of matter being in existence, without forming that concept, then matter does not exist *without the concept of it also existing*. But this does not mean that matter and the concept of it are one and the same—it does not mean that matter *depends* for its existence upon its being perceived, but rather that we cannot be cognisant of its existence without the aid of mind, and therefore in all circumstances concerning its existence the mental concept does take place, so that

turned the other way round, "matter" (in inverted commas to indicate not just the thing, but the thing *with a name to it*) cannot exist without "mind" to conceive of it as being "matter," for to talk of matter that exists or that did exist without being conceived, *is itself one of man's concepts*. I submit there is no escape from the latter statement.

However, while the two are at all time one philosophic unity, and are never separate except by a mental separation and for special purposes, yet,

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the mental concept is only one part of matter, so that matter consists of something in addition to the concept. This something is demonstrated by the existence of mental errors in connection with which the other part of matter forces us to recognise it as something non-mental by forcing us to adjust our concepts to it. As instances we may cite the unity of scientific thought among scientific men who have been forced to give up false theories, also the forceful influence of modes of production in spite of idealists' dreams and the many inventions and projects which miscarry.

Up to this point Jones, I take it, is not at fault for he says "It is quite true that we cannot have a *concept* of matter without mind," and on the other hand he is clearly well aware that the existence of matter is necessary for the concept to be formed.

And now for our comrade's (if I understand him aright) "unsolvable" contradiction. If matter cannot exist without at the same time mind conceiving of it, how is it that inorganic matter existed before man was evolved and capable of forming the concept? That is what he wants to know.

At this point and for lack of space to demonstrate, I simply state that I am a follower of Dietzgen, who teaches that the special in any given set of circumstances is false while the general is true, and therefore true understanding consists in finding what is general *within any given limits*. We must accordingly define the limits *first* if we want to think clearly. This, I suspect, is what Jones has omitted to do.

Just as a kitchen fire may be hot for cooking a meal but cold for smelting iron, so in some relationships matter exist without mind, while in others it cannot. Put in a general way, a given statement may be true in some relationships and false in others. Indeed if the limits concerning a statement are not made clear, no sense can be made of it. Jones ought to have noticed that in my review I was dealing with the *philosophical* relationship between matter and mind. I think I made that quite clear.

Therefore, if our purpose be to teach inorganic evolution, then *within those limits* man and his concepts would find no place, *even though we are using such concepts all the time*. It would

accordingly be right to treat them as special, and we should be quite correct in making the mental separation between matter and mind, and in stating that before man was evolved matter existed without mind.

But in treating of epistemology, questions of inorganic evolution become the special and must be left on one side, for *within these limits* neither matter nor mind can be ignored, nor can the two be separated, for epistemology like sociology is confined *within* the relationship of man to the rest of Nature, it encompasses the whole of that relation, so that all knowledge, even concerning affairs lying outside this relationship, nevertheless proceeds from *within* the relationship, because without doubt since all ideas have a basis of sense data, it follows that the concept of matter in the past, is a generalisation based upon sense perceptions of matter in the present.

While Bukharin knows this (and I suppose Jones also) yet he knows it in only a hazy way, for after making the mental separation between matter and mind by showing that mind evolved from matter so that *within those limits* matter is primary while mind is secondary, he then, through lack of a consistent epistemology, carries that idea into his sociology and treats matter (objective reality) as the dominant or primary partner at *all times*. To this extent he is still hampered by the old mechanical materialism.

Though he partly sees, he fails to see *with sufficient completeness* that once Nature begot man as one of her parts, a different combination of circumstances came to be, for thenceforth man's mind plays a part in combination with other parts, neither being primary or secondary unless taken in more limited relationships, because both are simultaneously complementary. Consequently he does not give a proper account of the mental superstructure and the part it plays in society. It is that lack of clarity of which I complained, and I still think I was right in doing so.

Yours,

FRED CASEY.

A RANK-AND-FILE RETORTS.

DEAR SIR,—I have the August PLEBS before me and after reading the usual instalment of the tussle between the N.C.L.C. and W.E.A. for the use of

Trade Union funds to "educate" the rank and file according to the colouring of the University dons and the dons who are not of the University but who nevertheless have their bump of superiority largely discernible in their efforts to convince us there is some difference between those who do *not* love us but live upon us, and those who *do* love us but live upon us just the same, I turn to the pages reserved for correspondence to find the immaculate Postgate again using your pages to bleat about the Communists.

Mr. Postgate seems to have got awfully ruffled because the Communist Party, of which I am a rank-and-filer, has not only refused to become defunct since he and the Newbolds and Philip Prices have seceded from its ranks, but has persisted in gaining influence and strength amongst the rank-and-file of the trade unions.

Let Mr. Postgate be not deceived. We rank-and-filers do not complain about the criticism of *Pravda*, *Lansbury's Weekly*, or even the Blue Book of "Jix"—our tactics in the trade union branches and the Trades Councils are winning through because of the inexorable trend of events in working-class life.

W. HAMPTON.

NEWBOLD CALLS A TRUCE.

DEAR COMRADE,—It seems unfortunate at a time when we are all studying the lessons of the General Strike and the Coal Stoppage that, in reviewing so masterly a study as Bukharin's *Historical Materialism*, more attention should be devoted to the relationships of mind and matter than to the practical application of the theory that "any investigation of society, of the conditions of its growth (and decay), its forms, its content, etc., must begin with an analysis of the productive forces, or of the technical bases, of society." Evident as it is that not only did a great many leaders blunder and, apart from the railway and transport unions, was there little preparation for class war in practice as distinct from theory and advocacy, it is also apparent that certain "technical bases," such as the motor road-services, the wireless telephone and other material factors were exerting an influence as deterrent of solidarity as any mental frailties of the much-

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maligned membership of the T.U.C.

In the many studies of Chartism and of the Owenite Unions there is in all N.C.L.C. treatment a singular lack of emphasis of the material factors which, infinitely more than the attitude and influence of the different schools of thought and groups of leaders, determined the inevitable collapse of a Movement that never was in reality anything more than the organised but impotent protest and revolt of those handicraftsmen whom the machine economy was making socially unnecessary.

Learning from the failure of this heroic futility, rather than wrapping it around in a glory of romance, cannot you look beneath the present clash of personalities and conflict of parties to observe those rapid changes in the "technical bases" which are rendering just as idle the magnificent gallantry of hundreds of thousands of workers now blindly struggling against the inevitable. The steam-coal miners, the boilermakers, the engineers, the building workers and all too many of the iron, steel and railwaymen have no more a place in the fighting line of the near future than had the handloom weavers of the middle of last century. To feed them into the class-war is to give them over to massacre without the

faintest justification that somehow they may snatch a victory or even seriously defer an unavoidable retreat.

The class-war will inevitably break out again and again, but what is the use of sending others into the misery of destitution to glut your hatred of a system rather than, conquering your emotions, to get them off the battlefield and yourselves settling down to the recruitment and training of new forces is a mystery to me. Once again, as in 1839, the decisive battle has gone against us and there is nothing to be gained in fighting at this juncture other than a rearguard action.

Technical change, wiping out our forces to-day as mercilessly as machine-guns swept away riflemen, will not give our enemies the final victory. The steam-engine and the machine-tool have proletarianised the manual workers and made them class-conscious. The new electro-chemical inventions, that rush onward with an ever-accelerating speed, will proletarianise the technicians and the scientific workers.

In ten or twenty years at the latest the decisive moment will come. Till then, till the moment that we must be ready to calculate and, at any juncture, instantly to seize our opportunity, we must put aside the mentality of the struggle and get ready instead the armouries of a new campaign, unlike in

almost every way anything of which we have had experience. We are not called upon to die in the last ditch or even to bind up the wounded, but to steel ourselves eventually to conquer capitalism.

Yours very truly,

J. T. WALTON NEWBOLD.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

X.Y.Z.—We had to change our printers suddenly in May because the firm which had printed the magazine for four years would not, after the Strike, give us the necessary guarantee as to T.U. conditions, and left us with no option but to find a "fair house" elsewhere. For the past three months (June, July and August) the magazine has been printed in London—which has added considerably to its cost. With this number we start with the Blackfriars Press, Leicester, and revert, as you will note, to 40 pages. Cash has been coming in very slowly lately, and we need the active support of all I.W.C.Ers to tide us over a very difficult time. If you owe us any money please settle as promptly as you can. You'll help to save us a good deal of anxiety.

WANTED

To Purchase—A copy of *Revolution from 1789 to 1906*, by R. W. Postgate. Please communicate with Office Secretary.

NOTES BY THE WAY for Students and Tutors

The Colonial Proletariat.

ONE of the important results of Imperialism is to create in the colonial countries not only a native bourgeoisie, but also a native proletariat, which sooner or later tends to revolt against the Imperialist explorers. In India, as in China, with the introduction of a colonial capitalism we see in the abysmal degradation of the proletariat an almost exact replica of the conditions of our own Industrial Revolution as portrayed by the Hammonds.

A book on *Labour and Housing in Bombay*, by A. Burnett-Hurst, M.Sc., F.S.S. (King & Son), recently published,

in an exhaustive survey of labour conditions in that city, gives some appalling facts about the exploitation of the native masses.

There are in Bombay 85 cotton mills with 146,000 workers and 6 railway shops with 18,000 employees, also docks, etc. The number of cotton operatives between 1914 and 1921 increased by 40 per cent. A majority of these are persons lately migrated from the villages. Some are hand-loom weavers from the United Provinces crushed out by the competition of the power-loom. A frequent custom is for recruitment of labour to be done by a foreman who visits the villages for this

purpose. He paints a rosy picture and promises many things. When the villager arrives he finds that he can only get work at first as a substitute or part-timer. Even when he has got work, he has to wait six weeks before he can obtain a full month's wage. In the meantime he has to resort to a money-lender, and "many a man commences his mill life by getting into the clutches of money-lenders, jobbers (foremen) and the like, who keep him in permanent bondage." In the case of women the forewomen often use their power to force the employees into prostitution.

According to the Labour Office Report for May, 1921, *average wages per day for full-timers were just over one rupee* (i.e., between 1/6 and 2/-) or 34 rupees a month; while 16 per cent. of the wage-earners were half-timers and so earned less than this. The author considers that this was probably a high month and so gives an over-favourable picture. Moreover, fines of various kinds usually amount to deductions of 8-10 per cent. from the monthly wage. *Women earn 17 rupees per month.* Thus it will be seen that, although the relative efficiency of the Lancashire and the Bombay operative is estimated at 5½:3, Indian labour-power is distinctly "cheap" as compared with English. The author reckons that if the worker comes from the village alone, the wage just suffices to keep him from starvation. If he brings his family, it does not, and he then usually falls into debt.

The Act of 1911 restricted hours to 12 a day, and it took the mill strike of 1920 to reduce them to 10. 19 per cent. of the female population work in factories. An Act of 1920 forbids employment of children under 12; but this is often evaded, and children work anything between 7 and 10 hours.

As to housing: *94 per cent. of the workers live in overcrowded conditions* (according to Dr. Bowley's criterion of overcrowding). In eight sections of the city the *density of population per acre is over 500*; and 60 per cent. of the population of the city live in one-fifth of its area. As a result "outbreaks of plague, cholera, smallpox, etc., claim their victims very largely among the workers"; and *infant mortality between 1918-22 was 572 per 1,000, and in 1921, 667 per 1,000!* It took an outbreak of plague in 1896 to stimulate any action at all

by the municipality to deal with the perfectly appalling housing conditions, of which nauseating descriptions (with photographs) are given in the book.

Indian Protectionism.

The position of the Indian bourgeoisie and the way in which its most powerful section has patched up a compromise with British Imperialism by securing a tariff policy for the native steel and textile industries, is analysed in an interesting article on "The New Economic Policy of British Imperialism," by M. N. Roy, in No. 21 of *The Communist International*. In the same issue an examination of "The Social Basis of Fascism," by Eresli reveals some original points, as for instance the difference between rural Fascism and urban Fascism in its early days, and the importance of this difference in explaining its contradictory ideology. This should serve as a useful appendix to THE PLEBS pamphlet on *Fascism*. No. 22 of this journal contains a theoretical examination of Connolly and Easter Week, in which Connolly is hailed as a precursor of Leninist tactics, in knowing how to combine the national with the proletarian struggle. Easter Week, on the contrary to being a *putsch*, is hailed as an important revolutionary landmark; and a translation of *Labour in Irish History* into German and Russian, where it is practically unknown, is called for. The struggle of the Irish workers, it is prophesied, will soon play an important part again in the assault on British Imperialism, this time, be it hoped, in less isolation from the English and the Continental movement.

A European Steel Trust.

THE PLEBS was one of the first in the field in showing the real nature of the Ruhr Occupation in 1924, and this column has continually foreshadowed the formation of a Franco-Belge-German Steel Trust, about the consummation of which there has been much talk in the Press in the last few weeks. The Paris correspondent of *The Observer* (August 15), wise after the event, says that "when M. Poincaré was last Prime Minister in 1924. . . it was taken for granted by most people. . . that he considered French interests and the interests of the French ironmasters to be synonymous. The occupation of the

Ruhr was to obtain by force the German coke which the French ironmasters needed."

The passive resistance of the Germans made the Ruhr Occupation a failure so far as getting coke was concerned, although its use for the French remained as a bargaining weapon. "Conquest of German coal has been replaced by a policy of alliance with it." Two years ago an attempt at agreement broke down because the German capitalists felt the bargain too unfavourable, and "behind these German manufacturers was said to be British and American capital." Now the *Comité des Forges* is negotiating a new agreement, which is almost near completion, and seems to amount to "a continental iron and steel cartel, to control the production, the distribution and the price of steel in Europe." "No secret is made of its being directed against American competition." Meanwhile, British capitalism is "hesitating and standing aside," partly because she "wishes to retain the exclusive control of the markets of her own Dominions."

The History of Iron.

A book which should be added to the book list in our European History textbook is T. S. Ashton's *Iron and Steel in the Industrial Revolution* (Manchester University Press), especially Chaps. 7 to the end. This is the first complete survey of these industries during that period.

The book discloses many interesting and original things. It shows that selling and price agreements were common in the iron trade in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. "In common with similar groups of capitalists formed in other industries, the organised ironmasters took a by no means insignificant part in the shaping of public policy during the last two decades of the eighteenth century." They opposed Pitt's Excise Scheme in 1774, successfully opposed a tax on coal, and raised an agitation in 1778 against a proposal to place Ireland on the same footing as England in colonial trade, on the ground that this would give to Ireland an advantage in the production of iron. From 1790 onwards Birmingham ironmasters met weekly for dinner at the Union Tavern, Birmingham, and from 1803 a Welsh Association meeting at Newport fixed prices for foundry and forge pigs and

bar iron each quarter. This continued with a gap of one year till 1824—the period, mark you, when the Combination Acts were in force! Similarly a Yorkshire and Derby Association from 1799 onward drew up agreed lists of prices and circulated them to their members.

The author of the book remarks that these early ironmasters of the eighteenth century were mostly Nonconformists, many of them Quakers. "Quaker industry brought wealth into being; Quaker austerity and opposition to luxury led to the accumulation of that wealth; and Quaker aloofness and other-worldliness led to the constant reinvestment of that wealth in iron production."

It is also interesting to learn that two out of the "Big Five" banking groups have their roots in firms of ironmasters—namely, Barclays, connected with the Attwoods, of Birmingham, who turned bankers, and Lloyds which originated with the firm of Lloyd, ironmasters, of Birmingham. Quite early the ironmasters, having to give credit to their customers as well as to the primary producers, printed their own notes and bills for this purpose.

The Labour Monthly

SEPTEMBER

NOTES OF THE MONTH

THE COMING BOURNEMOUTH CONGRESS. *By J. R. Campbell.*

ANOTHER STAGE in the MINERS' STRUGGLE. *By Arthur Horner.*

FASCIST IMPERIALISM IN INDIA. *By Ralph Fox.*

BRITISH LABOUR AND INDIA. *by C. P. Dutt.*

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THE N.C.L.C. TRAINING CENTRE.

JULY 31st—AUGUST 14th.

IT has been my happy experience to attend the first definite residential Training Course for students in the history of the N.C.L.C.—held in the Labour College, London, July 31st to August 14th. Previous experiments, with the exception of local non-residential Tutors' Courses, had been more on the lines of the usual Summer School work with a sprinkling of teaching methods. This centre was organised primarily to train students to give courses of lectures on the subjects chosen.

Two courses were undertaken:—

- (1) The elementary course consisting of Teaching Methods and the "History of the British Working Classes," and
- (2) Teaching Methods and "Modern European History."

We were fortunate in having in charge of the Centre, F. J. Adkins, who gave five practical demonstrations of teaching technique, summed up the criticisms in all the students' lecture and teaching efforts, gave individual tuition and generally supervised the whole of the work. His enthusiasm in his work gave a great stimulus to the students, with the result that considerably more work was done outside the time-table than was anticipated. "Modern European History" was dealt with by M. H. Dobb and the "History of the British Working Class" by J. Hamilton.

The time-table worked to was as follows:—

9.15 a.m. to 10.30 a.m.—Teaching Methods and Lecture Practice.

10.45 a.m. to 12.45 p.m.—Group Work.

5.15 p.m. to 6.30 p.m.—Lecture Practice.

After supper lectures, etc., were occasionally given.

The courses undertaken followed the text books chosen (*An Outline of European History* and *A Short History of the British Workers*) in broad outline,

but not slavishly or in detail. The endeavour was to cover similar ground in rather a different way, filling out with fresh details, introducing new matter and expanding certain periods only slightly touched on, or omitted, in the text books. A useful reference library was provided, comprising many of the authoritative books on the subjects. Encouragement was given to introduce local matter, and personal germane experiences, to give colour to the lectures. A certain amount of specialist study was undertaken, such as on the "Industrial Revolution in France"; these studies were presented to the groups for criticism. A very considerable number of essays were written and examined.

Five students gave reviews of recently-published books, all dealing with aspects or periods of the subjects. Ness Edwards and F. J. Adkins had the rather unique experience of hearing their own books dealt with in this way. Opportunity was taken to see the much-discussed play by Sean O'Casey, *The Plough and the Stars*. A short historical sketch was afterwards given to get the background of the play, and then general criticism was expressed by each student.

It was interesting to note the great improvement shown by the students when giving their second lecture; the black-board was usually very effectively used. Experiment was also made of other methods, such as the medium of question and answer. Altogether the students worked on a co-operative plan, the staff leaving the initiative to them.

From the experience gained the collective opinion was that such work must become an essential feature of the N.C.L.C. and be extended in the future. Though we shall have to await the practical results of this training course as demonstrated by the students in their district work, nevertheless we are optimistic enough to believe these results will be soon forthcoming.

J. HAMILTON.

THE PLEBS LEAGUE

Financial Statement & Balance Sheet, Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 1925

TRADING ACCOUNT for the year ended 31st DECEMBER, 1925.

Printing and Publishing:—

(after allowing for difference between stocks at beginning and end of year.)

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
The "Plebs" Magazine ...	828	17	6			
Large Text Books ...	240	4	8			
Small Text Books ...	135	7	2			
Pamphlets ...	36	11	1			
				1,241	0	5
Rental of standing type ...				4	0	0
Purchase of Books, etc., for re-sale, after allowing for difference in stocks	266	7	6			

Balance, Gross Profit, carried to Profit and Loss Account 1,258 8 1

£2,769 16 0

Sales (Returns deducted):—

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
The "Plebs" Magazine (including advertisement space sold)	1,248	14	4			
Large Text Books ...	905	2	10½			
Small Text Books ...	89	14	8			
Pamphlets ...	55	8	7			
Miscellaneous	15	8	4			
Other Books	299	3	10½			
				2,613	12	8
Royalties ...				156	3	4

£2,769 16 0

PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT for the year ended 31st DECEMBER, 1925.

	£	s.	d.
Office Rent, Lighting, Heating, Cleaning, Telephone and Insurance	78	2	9
Stationery, Printing, etc., including leaflets	76	14	6½
Salaries	451	18	6
General Expenses	20	11	3½
Postages, Carriage, etc.	166	2	5½
Advertisements	89	16	7
Badges	6	6	10
Audit and Accountancy Fees (estimated)	20	0	0
Bad Debts	89	11	5
National Health and Unemployment Insurance	1	3	4
Purcell Lecture Rally—(Expenses, £29 6s. 1d.; Less: Receipts, £20 2s.)	9	4	1
Depreciation—(Office Furniture, £2 15s.; Typewriter, £5)	7	15	0

1,017 6 9

Net Profit carried to Balance Sheet 334 11 0

£1,351 17 9

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Gross Profit, brought down				1,258	8	1
League Subscriptions				36	0	0
Donations				33	15	0
Summer School Fees, etc.	279	18	0			
Less: Expenditure	269	6	6			
				10	11	6
Miscellaneous				0	3	2
Sale of Badges				13	0	0

£1,351 17 9

PLEBS LEAGUE FINANCIAL STATEMENT & BALANCE SHEET.—*contd.*

BALANCE SHEET as at 31st DECEMBER, 1925.

<i>Liabilities.</i>		<i>Assets.</i>	
£	s. d.	£	s. d.
<i>Loan—</i>		Cash in hand ...	4 13 9
The Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers ...	30 15 6	Cash at bank ...	230 15 9
			<u>235 9 6</u>
<i>Creditors and Reserve for outstanding charges</i>	92 9 9½	<i>Debtors—</i>	
<i>Marx Grave Fund</i> ...	7 14 11	Trade, less credit balances	631 15 11½
<i>Less—</i>		Sundry ...	20 5 0
Grave Maintenance Fee ...	0 15 0		<u>652 0 11½</u>
		<i>Less—</i>	
	6 19 11	Reserve for doubtful debts	50 0 0
£1 Loan Fund Account ...	30 15 2½		<u>602 0 11½</u>
<i>Profit and Loss Account.</i>		<i>Stock—</i>	
Balance as at 1st Jan., 1925 ...	672 3 0½	Large Text Books ...	84 2 0
<i>Deduct—</i>		Small Text Books ...	101 16 8
Adjustment of Loans ...	60 15 6	Pamphlets ...	1 11 7
	<u>611 7 6½</u>	Other Books ...	43 11 9
<i>Add—</i>			<u>231 2 0</u>
Adjustment of Debtors' balances as at 1st Jan., 1925	11 1 0	Office Furniture, etc., as at 1st Jan., 1925 ...	20 0 0
	<u>622 8 6½</u>	<i>Add—</i>	
<i>Add—</i>		Safe purchased	7 10 0
Profit for the year ...	334 11 0		<u>27 10 0</u>
	<u>956 19 6½</u>	<i>Less—</i>	
Suspense Account	0 12 0	Depreciation at 10 per cent.	2 15 0
			<u>24 15 0</u>
		Typewriter, etc., as at 1st Jan., 1925 ...	25 0 0
		<i>Less—</i>	
		Depreciation at 20 per cent.	5 0 0
			<u>20 0 0</u>
		Unexpired proportion of payments in advance	5 4 6
			<u>£1,118 11 11½</u>

I have audited the accounts for the year ended 31st December, 1925, and certify that, in my opinion, the above Balance Sheet is properly drawn up so as to exhibit the position of affairs on that date.

T. WATSON COLLIN,
Chartered Accountant.

10, Gray's Inn Square,
London, W.C.1.
8th July, 1926.

£1,118 11 11½

The NATIONAL COUNCIL of LABOUR COLLEGES

HEAD OFFICE—62 HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH

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

NATIONAL Union of Railway-men.—A resolution in favour of an N.C.L.C. Educational Scheme was defeated by only 35 votes to 33. The T.U.C. scheme argument was used once again to hamper the development of Trade Union educational work. We congratulate the branches on the excellent vote recorded, and hope that next year there may be a large majority in favour of a scheme.

Winter Classes.—The list of winter classes should be sent out to all local working-class bodies at least six weeks before the classes are due to begin. Special circulars should be sent to branches of Unions with National schemes, indicating that correspondence courses and access to classes are free.

New Local Affiliations received during July.—Liverpool and District, 4.

What the Divisions are doing.

Div. 1.—The London Division continues to supply a large number of speakers for indoor and outdoor meetings in aid of the Miners' Relief Fund. Classes are now being arranged in all parts of London for the coming winter. They will commence during the last week in September or the first week in October. Applications for particulars should be made to the London Organiser, Geo. Phippen, 11a Penywern Road, Earl's Court, S.W.5. N.C.L.C.'ers in South London should note that as a result of an arrangement between the London N.C.L.C. and the Education Committee of the Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society, all members of the Society attending our classes can have their fees refunded provided an attendance of 75 per cent. is made. This information should be widely spread throughout S. London. A new tutors' class on Industrial History, conducted by the Organiser, has commenced at Bethnal Green. The Woolwich Labour College is holding a week-end Summer School on September 11th and 12th at Shooters

Hill. Further particulars from the London Organiser or the Woolwich Secretary: G. Sheircliffe, 5 Anglesea Avenue, Woolwich.

Div. 2.—Will all College and Class Secretaries take notice that owing to the temporary reorganisation of Division 2 the Organiser will make Southampton his headquarters instead of Clapham Common? All Surrey N.C.L.C.'ers will be looked after by Mark Starr (Division 3 Organiser) whilst Sussex will remain in Division 2. Secretaries are getting ready now with their preparations for the winter's work. Preliminary conferences are to be held throughout the Division with a view to increasing local affiliation fees.

Comrades Eric Godfrey, of Guildford, Tom Johnson and Norman Brine, of Eastleigh, attended the Training Centre, where they added very considerably to their experience in N.C.L.C. work.

Div. 3.—Slough Branch A.S.L.E. and F. forwarded a resolution of appreciation of the Educational Scheme, with a hope for its maintenance after receiving a special lecture from J. M. Williams. Southend and Slough appreciated Comrade Ashcroft at the schools on July 11th and 18th, and a special lecture on the Miners' Case was given at Windsor on July 28th. Five Summer Classes were continued despite absence of Organiser at Leningrad in attendance at Sat Kongreso. Peterborough Class hopes to secure M. H. Dobb for its Winter Class. At Colchester the Organiser starts Social History and Esperanto Classes in conjunction with Co-operative Education Committee on October 5th after a publicity meeting on September 28th; both courses are planned for 24 weeks. Comrade Stevens is leading a short course on Local Government at Brentwood, from October 20th onwards. Miss Thompson has volunteered to take "Social Changes in Literature" at Chelmsford. It is hoped to get Brain-tree going on European History, under

Abel Cohen, and P. Winch is guiding Bedford in a study of Social History. J. Sulsky, it is hoped, will take charge of an Esperanto Class at St. Albans. Southend starts a series of "Studies in Modern Capitalism," under J. Parsons (L.R.D.), on October 3rd. Arrangements are being made to open up Cambridge again. E. Williams (T.L.L.) has promised to visit Norwich to relieve the local stalwarts for work elsewhere in East Anglia, where a tour is being fixed up to centre round Norwich's Day School on September 26th.

The Shop Assistant (24/7/26) was good enough to list our individual lectures, which our class secretaries are reminded are still available with the lantern slides. Will any classes who have not accepted the plans submitted please write at once to complete the Divisional list of classes?

Div. 4.—A week-end camp school was held at Barry over the August holidays, under the auspices of the N.C.L.C. and the Barry and District Young Socialist League. Commencing on Saturday afternoon, a lecture was given by Comrade Finch on I.W.C.E. On Saturday afternoon, a lecture was given by Comrade Gerry on the "Origin of Socialism." On Sunday morning Comrade Owen gave a lecture on "The Class Struggle in the Mining Industry," and on Sunday evening we received a lecture (the first of two) on the "History and Lessons of the General Strike," the other lecture being given on Monday morning. The last lecture was given by Comrade Finch in the evening on tactics to be adopted in the Labour Movement. The average attendance at the lectures was 25.

Div. 5.—Under the temporary re-arrangement of the work of Division 5, W. J. Owen, 13 Waengron Street, Cwm Celyn, Blaina, Mon., South Wales, is to act as Secretary-Organiser for No. 5 Divisional Council, and will be responsible for the educational work in Gloucester and Bath. The remainder of the

Divisional educational work will be directly looked after by Organiser D. W. Thomas, Waterloo House, Harlech, North Wales.

Div. 8—N.E. Lancs.—A. L. Williams, staff tutor-organiser, has commenced work in N.E. Lancs. His address is: c/o D. Lawley, 221 Branch Road, Ewood, Blackburn. All N.C.L.C. supporters are asked to give him as much assistance as possible.

Div. 9.—A new College has been formed in the No. 9 Division—the Durham and District Labour College. The Secretary is:—Mr. Mostyn Williams, Cemetery Cottages, Wheatbottom, Crook, Co. Durham.

The North-Eastern Labour College has lost a very energetic worker by Miss Davison, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, leaving this country for Australia. Miss Davison has been very active as assistant secretary to the Division and the North-Eastern Labour College. A conference is being held at Gateshead on Saturday, August 28th. Cleveland is having a conference on September 4th. Carlisle College is running a week-end school on September 4th and 5th. Comrades Holder, J. Kelsall (the Labour agent for Carlisle) and S. Rees are to be the lecturers. A new Labour College has been formed for Durham and district. Comrade Mostyn Williams, who has just returned from the Labour College, London, is the secretary.

Div. 10.—The Countess of Warwick has agreed to speak, along with Page Arnot, at the Annual Conference of the Glasgow L.C. on Saturday, September 4th.

Div. 11 (Ireland).—The Organiser attended the Northern Ireland A.E.U. Divisional Conference, explained the A.E.U. Educational Scheme and reported on the work done. It is to be hoped that many branch lectures will be booked, and the opening up of classes in new districts made easier as a result. A conference and public meeting have been arranged for Newry, to be held in the

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Town Hall on September 9th, and a conference in Londonderry on September 25th. The Organiser will address the public meeting on "The Problem of Unemployment" and the conference on the N.C.L.C., its work and organisation. J. F. Horrabin is to visit Belfast to address a public meeting on October 1st, his subject being "World Problems of To-Day." He will also address a Bel-

fast conference on October 2nd.

N.C.L.C. Directory—Additions and Correction.

Div. 7.—Divisional Organiser F. Shaw's address on and after September 1st, 1926:—1 "Fernleigh," Longwood, Huddersfield.

Div. 2.—Littlehampton L.C.—New Secretary:—Miss T. Pedley, 11 Talbot Road, Littlehampton.

THE PLEBS PAGE

ELSEWHERE the whole question of the continued existence and function of the League is discussed, but I want to make an appeal here to groups to take the matter up seriously and to get the considered opinion of as many members as they can. We should like also to hear from individuals. We have many old friends who always seem to think that PLEBS goes along of its own momentum, and who never write us and rarely turn up at the Meet. We want to hear from everybody about this. It is not a summer-time stunt, but really a vital matter. The N.C.L.C. Executive is bringing the matter up for discussion at its next meeting, and we must put forward reasonable arguments if we are to continue our independent existence. These arguments should be based on the good of the whole movement rather than on the existence of a part. So let us have your opinions!

A great deal of "propaganda" for the N.C.L.C. can be done by the League groups and members. The support of unions not affiliated to the N.C.L.C. can often be obtained by starting a class and endeavouring to interest the workers in some special industry or trade in it. To give an instance—a class has been started at Highbury (particulars from J. Hollingsworth, 112 Rosebery Avenue, Tottenham), and it is hoped that French Polishers will be specially interested as the class was formed at one of their branches. It is hoped that ultimately the union will join up with the N.C.L.C. on a national scale. This work has been organised by a member of the League and a group of sympathisers, so that here is a sample of what might be done elsewhere.

MANCHESTER group held a very successful week-end school at Whaley Bridge on August 14th and 15th. Many of us who attended last year's meet in that very lovely place thought with envy of the comrades who were able to attend. The industrial situation and the fact that cash is short reduced the numbers, but close on 50 students were able to attend. Comrades Will Paul and Will Lawther lectured on "The Lessons of the General Strike" and "Labour's Next Step" respectively, and very good discussions took place.

Manchester, which sent its delegates to the meet and so had a direct report, promises to discuss the League's existence in great detail. The secretary writes, "There is no need to say that the discussion will wage very fiercely, and will prove useful to those who think they can let the League die out in a lingering, long drawn-out period of futility. Whatever decision is come to, it must be taken courageously." We are glad to hear that the question is under consideration and hope all the groups will take the matter up with as much seriousness.

THORNABY Plebs rolled up in fine style for the meet. Five comrades came long and took part in the discussions and reported back to their group, not only on the business side of the meet, but writes Comrade Gilmour, the secretary, upon "the beauty of Cober Hill, the gardens of the Guest House; and last but not least the spirit of comradeship prevailing." It is to be hoped that whatever groups are in existence next meet, will try to do what Thornaby did this time, send a delegation of comrades, not only to enjoy themselves, but to realise that spirit of comradeship.

W. H

THE PLEBS BOOKSHELF

DR. Norman Leys' book on *Kenya* was first published two years ago (Hogarth Press, 15/-). I hear that it is shortly to be issued in cheaper form, which is good news. For it is a book which should be read by every student of history and social development as well as by those who want detailed facts about the working of Capitalist Imperialism. Dr. Leys does for Kenya what Mr. Leonard Woolf did for other parts of the Dark Continent in his *Empire and Commerce in Africa*. He shows just what capitalist control of "backward races" has actually meant in terms of blood and tears. He has written a *book*, in fact—and not merely a thesis or a statistical record.

His first two chapters—"Historical and General," and "East African Life of Yesterday"—are not only absorbingly interesting, but they helped me, at any rate, to realise certain essential facts about primitive societies and about human mentality far more vividly than treatises on Sociology or the Development of the Human Mind have ever done. Dr. Leys is no believer in "racial differences":—

We know enough to be sure that racial origins are the cause of none of the important differences between human societies. History and circumstances, not race, explain them. . . . Judged by language, art, folk-lore, and every other branch of anthropology, there is nothing specifically African about Africans' minds. The more one knows them, the more obviously they are "just people," and the more obviously any special racial "psychology" is an assumption based only on superficial dissimilarities and on the fact that various human societies have had unequal opportunities of social development.

The slave trade, carried on in Africa by Europeans and Asiatics, is shown to have had far-reaching effects both on African mentality and African social organisation.

The smaller and less war-like tribes were either enslaved wholesale or dispersed into forests and mountains. The larger were compelled to subor-

porate everything to defence. . . The West Africa that at a later time the first explorers of the interior made known to Europe was a region inhabited by the survivors of two-and-a-half centuries of massacre and anarchy, relieved only by inevitable tyranny. The pictures of society we get from Mungo Park, Denham and others, the stockades surmounted by human skulls, the holocausts to demon gods, are of a savagery compounded of primitive ignorance and fear with cruelties and terrors created, however unwittingly, by Europeans. . . Livingstone notes the wholesale demoralisation of society, the abandonment of cultivation in open valleys and plains and of such arts as spinning and weaving, the frequent treachery, the universal brutality and loss of natural feeling. . .

Watch for the cheap edition of this book, and beg, borrow or buy it.

* * *

Max Eastman's *Leon Trotsky: The Portrait of a Youth* (Faber & Gwyer, 6/-) is a vivid study, not only of an amazingly interesting man, but of the "atmosphere" of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Russia. It tells the story of Trotsky's career only as far as his meeting with Lenin and the *Iskra* group in London and Paris in 1902, and has nothing to say, therefore, either of 1905 or 1917. Eastman has the gift of

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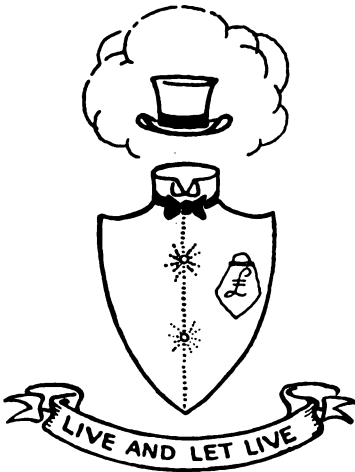
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writing about human beings as human beings, and not as incarnations of some particular idea or social tendency. One closes this book feeling that one has met a real man—and his friends, men and women; for the portraits of these latter, including Lenin, are as lifelike as that of Trotsky himself.

And, through these human beings, one gets a fuller realisation of the ideas they preached, and the way in which those ideas grew up—just as in Dr. Leys' book one realised certain general historical facts the more vividly for seeing them in terms of a particular human group. Eastman's skilful sketch of Trotsky's development from emotional idealism to clear-thinking Marxism is worth a cart-load of theses. Let us hope that the publishers of this book will have courage, and issue it soon at a price within the reach of the great majority of those who will be really interested in it.

We have to thank numerous comrades in all parts of the country who have responded to our appeal for copies of Strike Bulletins. Those we have received will be made good use of. I wish there had been space to quote some of the brighter passages from some of the bulletins here, but I must rest content with two samples from the issue of the *Northern Light* (Blaydon & Chopwell Council of Action) for Wednesday, May 5th. First, this pleasing little design, under which appeared the words—"This is the Good Cause you are fighting against":—



HIT ON THE HEAD WITH A BRICK

That was what happened to a Hull comrade who was selling our "History of the Miners' Struggle." It was a compliment to the pamphlet—the other side can put forward no other arguments against the facts it contains.

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Second, a little dialogue, printed under the heading "Quo Vadis?":—

Manager: "Where does this heading lead to?"

Miner: "To the b—y workhouse."

We haven't had room for any "Marked Passages" in the magazine lately, but the following story—cut from a daily paper recently—is too good to miss:—

The great philosopher came down the steps of his club a little unsteadily.

"Which of those two taxis shall I take?" he asked the hall porter in a husky voice.

"I should take the one on the right, sir," said the tactful porter. "The one on the left is a purely subjective phenomenon."

Tutors of philosophy classes will, we are sure, make good use of it.

The day before our latest textbook, Postgate's *Short History of the British Workers*, appeared, the *Daily Herald* reviewed two or three recently-published historical works. The review concluded with the words—

But who will set us down without fear or favour the true story of the English people—not thrones and crowns, but men?

And immediately following came our advertisement, very promptly answering the reviewer's question:—

Out To-morrow.

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE BRITISH WORKERS.

It may have been a mere accident. But it was a happy one, anyway.

J. F. H.

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of the Universities, the Local Education Authorities, the Board of Education, and other well-known organisations, the

NATIONAL COUNCIL *of* LABOUR COLLEGES

has become the largest Trade Union Educational body in the country, if not in the world. It conducts educational schemes for over 30 Unions, with a combined membership of 1,750,000.

The N.C.L.C. provides Independent Working-class Education, as distinct from Governing-class Education.

The N.C.L.C. did not stand aside during the General Strike, but officially threw its whole organisation into the fight.

The N.C.L.C. makes Trade Union membership a condition of employment, so far as its tutors are concerned: its State-supported competitor has undertaken *not* to do so.

In spite of demands for "economy," the Board of Education has promised the N.C.L.C.'s principal educational rival increased State financial assistance, if more work is to be done. The N.C.L.C. therefore urges Trade Unionists to see that their organisations support Independent Working-class Education and arrange Educational Schemes with the N.C.L.C.



J For Booklet, giving full particulars of the N.C.L.C.'s work, including Correspondence Courses, send 3d. in stamps to J. P. M. Millar, General Secretary, N.C.L.C., 62 Hanover Street, Edinburgh.