

June 1926

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PLEBS

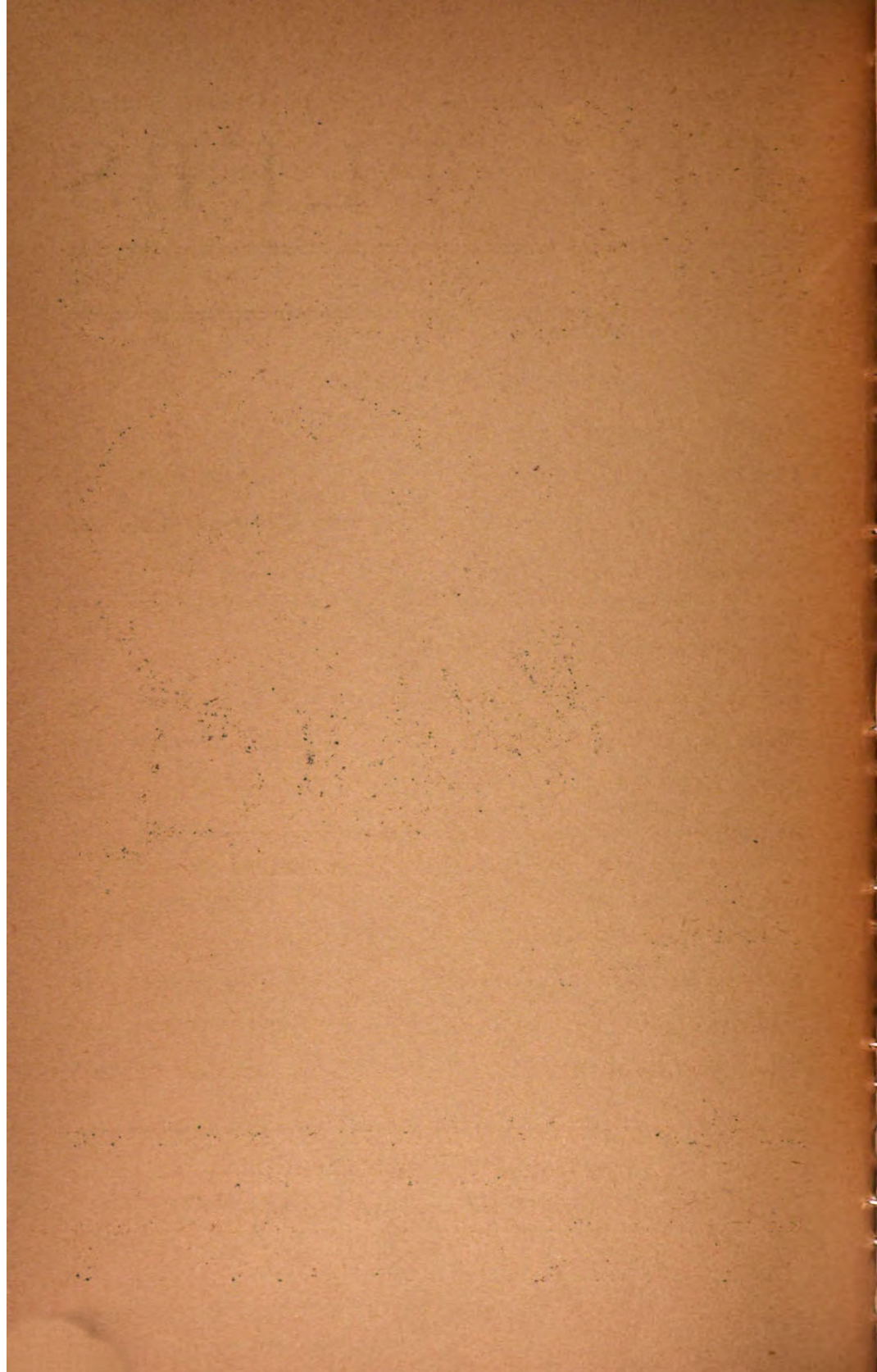


*The
Constitution*



The Elephant :- Oooh! I must be careful not
to tread on THAT!

STRIKE NUMBER



THE PLEBS

Vol. XVIII

June, 1926

No. 6

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The PLEB POINT of VIEW

HISTORY has been made during the past month; and since the facts of history are the raw material out of which we working-class educationists have to shape our teaching, we have all of us now got to do some hard thinking. Just as what happened in Russia in October, 1917, altered, not perhaps the essential point of view of Socialists, but certainly the *perspective* in which we saw things, so the events of May, 1926, in Britain will—must—affect all our theories. No longer can we discuss, “in the air” so to speak, what a General Strike might or might not accomplish. We have now to argue from the *fact* of a General Strike which has actually taken place—which has been to this extent successful, or in that respect a failure. Our advocacy of, or opposition to, centralised control of the Trade Union movement is now no longer a matter of theorising. We have seen that control actually in operation; and we have in future to take into account every consideration arising out of a series of actual happenings. As Marxists our first duty is to argue from events to generalisations; and the fact that the events have only just happened, are in fact still happening, will not excuse us for failure in that primary responsibility.

Was the Great Strike a victory or a defeat? . . . Only people with no grasp of historical development, of the forces that make history, could be in any doubt about the answer *Victory or Defeat?* to that question—or, for that matter, could pose the question in that particular way. Every struggle in which the workers engage must, until the final conflict in which they actually take and hold power, be a defeat. But since every struggle is a step towards that ultimate victory, it cannot but be, in part at least, a victory, too. We study history in order to enable ourselves to see the events of to-day in proper perspective; and once we see those events as the last links in a great chain we shall find it a little difficult either to whoop deliriously with those who feel that pæans of victory are appropriate or to howl with those others for whom the very light of the sun seems to have gone out.

Big advances have been made in this struggle, big stretches of ground won. Above all, vitally important lessons have been learned—or remain for us to learn. It is the aim of these notes and of the articles which follow in this issue to indicate some of those lessons. Any defeat can be turned into a victory if one learns from it how to prepare for next time. And those people—leaders or rank-and-filers—who talk of “No Next Time” in this connection are of all men most comic. May, 1926, was neither the first nor the last chapter

in British working-class history. It has been one of the biggest chapters yet; and if we study it aright we shall fit ourselves to help write bigger ones still in the near future.

A word on our immediate responsibilities. The miners are still locked out, and our need to think hard about the events of the last two or three weeks must not excuse us from doing everything in our power to help wage the struggle which still goes on. The Labour man or woman who is for one moment deflected from helping the miners' cause by the contemptible efforts of some T.U. leaders to escape criticism of their own conduct by "putting the blame on the miners" writes himself down as fainthearted and as mean-spirited as those leaders themselves. As propagandists, by our financial support, or in any other practicable way we have to help the miners win through; and the machinery of Independent Working-Class Education must still be devoted to "war service."

We have another duty, too. Those of our comrades now in gaol for "offences" committed during the strike against boss-made and boss-administered law have got to come out. Every day they remain imprisoned will add to our shame. By any and every means we must work for their release.

Behind the scenes, an important part in the decision to call off the strike was played by the Astbury judgment, following upon Sir John Simon's declaration that the strike was illegal. It is of the utmost importance that trade unionists should understand the nature of this judgment, which stands until it is reversed on appeal to the House of Lords (an unlikely event) or rendered nugatory by legislation.

Under the Trades Disputes Act of 1906 any union can call a strike "in furtherance of a trade dispute," *even in breach of contract* (i.e., without giving the requisite notice) and yet remain immune from civil proceedings to recover damages, except in certain specified essential services, such as hospitals and gas works.

Lord Astbury has now ruled, through the opportunity so obligingly provided for him by the National Sailors' and Firemen's Union, that the General Strike (and by implication any sympathetic strike) is not a conflict between a particular body of employers and their workers and therefore is not a trade dispute. Hence employers can recover damages from trade union leaders and trade union funds, in every case where the strike was called without due notice. Lord Astbury ruled that the General Strike is an attempt to coerce

the Government to take a certain course and is therefore a political and not industrial act.

It is said that certain leaders feared arrest, but at the worst it meant that they could only be sued for damage in a civil court. Any attempt to sequester union funds would have caused such resentment that the Government would have been compelled to pass legislation reversing the decision. As in the reaction after the Taff Vale and Osborne judgments the political side of the movement would have been immediately strengthened.

It is therefore to be regretted that the General Council did not dare the Cabinet to take action which would have been far more damaging to the Government than to Labour. As it is, little feeling may be roused about the Astbury judgment. It may be allowed to lie about, ignored now, only to be used with great effect as an excuse "next time" by leaders who don't want to fight. To expect the House of Lords to reverse this decision or the present Government to bring in legislation to render it impotent is to join the queue of political optimists who are always petitioning our capitalist leopard to change his spots. The reversal of this judgment must, however, be one of the first tasks of the next Labour Government.

A curious feature of the dispute was the complete eclipse of the Parliamentary Party. The General Strike merely pointed the obvious moral that the real power of the working class lies in its industrial strength. A general strike is more danger to the capitalist class than a Labour Government. But admitting all this, much more use might have been made of the Parliamentary Party than was the case. The most reactionary trade union official thinks he is being positively Left when he growls "Keep the politicians out of it," whereas he is merely being silly.

At the beginning of the dispute the Party was muzzled by the General Council's order, itself an indication of who was boss, that only appointed spokesmen from the Front Bench should answer the Government. The result of muzzling men like Lansbury, Maxton and Wheatley was an exhibition of crawling apologetics from the Front Bench that started the campaign on the worst possible note. The movement was relieved when the Press Strike drew a veil over the sickening sight.

As no voting strength in this Parliament counts against the Government, the Parliamentary Party should immediately have been used as speakers and contact-makers, heartening the strikers in the remoter districts, while a cadre of skilled obstructors remained to fight a rearguard action against E.P.A.

The Labour Parties in the country were equally ignored except

where they formed part of the Trades Councils. The Trades Union Congress, having refused to allow trades councils to affiliate, the very motion being ruled out of order at Scarborough, suddenly decides to rely only on this machine which they have allowed to rust. The only available list of secretaries included men who had died five years ago, and one General Councillor found himself sending a notice to himself as secretary of a trades council, an office he had resigned six years previously.

Mr. Citrine, the acting secretary of the Trades Union Congress, has been making efforts during the past two years to link up the trades councils with the General Council. It is to be hoped that as a result of the experience of the May strike his work will be rewarded

TO OUR READERS—IMPORTANT.

OWING to circumstances arising out of the Strike, we have had, at the last moment, to change our printers. This will mean rather heavy additional expense, and we ask all I.W.C.E.ers to rally to our support by making extra efforts to win us new subscribers, and by paying us what they owe as speedily as possible. We have no reserve capital to draw on in an emergency like this—we can only rely on our friends. Please help us to sell out this month.

We should like also to take this opportunity of thanking our new printers for the way in which they have helped us to get out this month's PLEBS without undue delay.

by the affiliation of the councils to Congress, and their use as the local agents of the industrial movement. In order to prevent overlapping and duplication of effort, a scheme should be worked out to co-ordinate their activities with those of the local labour parties, which are much more efficient than a casual glance at the present Parliamentary Labour Party would indicate.

The unpreparedness which handicapped Labour during the momentous Nine Days was not only a matter of actual organisation.

Pugsillanimity It was mental, too—especially in the case of the “leaders.” If they had had a glimmering of understanding of the lines of capitalist development they would have foreseen some at least of the inevitable developments of the struggle itself. And they would not have been frightened and bewildered by such booby-traps of words as “the community,” “the constitution,” “political aims,” and so forth. The *British Worker* wasted much valuable space in the effort to prove that Labour would hate above all else to hurt the constitution, and to maintain a distinction between an “industrial” and a “political” struggle.

Has any class-made constitution to be regarded as graven unalterably on tablets of stone? And who is this "community" which the *British Gazette* declared stood "cool and confident" behind the Government? Are the miners, and the millions of workers who supported them, outside this "community"? And now that the State has been so clearly revealed as the executive committee of the capitalist class, will our leaders ever again let themselves be hoodwinked by clap-trap about the "nation" and "democracy"? Words "twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools" are one of capitalism's deadliest weapons. We have got to make it futile.

THE FIRST GENERAL STRIKE

THE fortnight which began with May Day saw the greatest event in the history of British Labour since the Chartist days. Sisley Huddleston, viewing it from across the Channel, went so far as to call it in *The New Statesman* "the greatest industrial crisis in the history of the world." Historians will look back on it as one of the grand landmarks in the workers' movement of Britain and of Europe. But since it will be some time before its events are sorted into an ordered history, we must hasten to seize some lessons from it, while its impressions are still hot. These are a few ideas which crowd on to paper while the smoke clouds still linger about the battlefield.

The General Strike has afforded an example of the magnificent solidarity of the workers, fighting not for their own individual interests, but for their class. The response to the General Council's appeal and the tenacity in the struggle was more than any of us had dared to hope.

The issue showed itself as a real class issue, and as such was felt by both sides—by the workers who were striking for their class, and by the "gentlemen" who volunteered in a passionate spirit, identical with that of wartime, to "down the workers," and by university authorities who became the recruiting agencies for special constables and volunteers. The State threw off any semblance of impartiality and openly took the capitalist side to smash the workers, taking over O.M.S., Press propaganda, and using wartime appeals of "defence of King and Country" and "a fight to a finish." The capitalists had no illusions about the role of the capitalist State; by their very action they made the struggle a *political* one, as it must be always when the working class fights as a united class. The kid-glove was speedily thrown aside. Naked class oppression ceased to cloak itself in gentlemanly phrases. Baldwin stepped aside for Churchill, Jix and Birkenhead to take the front of the stage. Democracy bowed

before E.P.A. and the suppression of opinion. Legal Fascism showed itself in the actions of magistrates, in armoured cars and soldiers in steel helmets, and in brutal Black-and-Tan methods of police and "specials" in Poplar, Glasgow and elsewhere.

In spite of these two facts, the Right Wing leaders adopted a thoroughly "defeatist" attitude and tone. They had clearly always wanted to avoid a general strike at all costs, and had only been pushed into it by the aggressiveness of the other side. They were frightened of the class issue which had been aroused, and tried to hide it like flustered hens. They persistently evaded the political issue, which the Government realised and exploited to the full. They were more concerned with keeping strikers employed by entertainments, lectures, church services, etc., than with educating them in the real issue and rallying their class consciousness. In many areas Right Wing leaders refused to form Councils of Action—a refusal which went beyond a mere difference of words, and betrayed a very important difference of attitude. This attitude eschewed any *active* functions, and regarded the strike as purely a *passive*, sectional thing—a matter of sitting still and twirling thumbs until somebody else made a move. No definite lead was given from the centre beyond the actual strike orders, and injunctions to "keep calm." *The British Worker* was incredibly uninspiring and flaccid. It refused to deal with the situation in anything but "kid-glove" terms, treating it rather as a cricket match between gentlemen and players than as a fight. It refused to expose provocative acts of the Government. It suppressed most of the acts of class "justice" and police oppression (its account of the Poplar affair of the 11th was nothing like so strong as that in the *Westminster Gazette*). The whole tone of official communications was that of a soporific rather than a tonic to class struggle.

In spite of this absence of a lead from the centre, there were clear signs by Wednesday, the 12th, that the workers were winning and the Government weakening. Government propaganda was losing its effectiveness through the influential criticisms of *The British Gazette* (e.g., Lloyd George), and the foolish blunder of suppressing the Archbishop's appeal. "Stunts" about "strikers returning to work," "riots," "sabotage," etc., were being exhausted, and were progressively losing their effect. The circulation of *The British Worker*, on the other hand, was increasing rapidly and was only two days behind that of the official organ. There was no appreciable weakening in the strikers' ranks—in fact, in many centres a solidifying and embitterment owing to police action. The attempt to run volunteer services had already reached its high-water mark; and a crop of railway accidents seemed likely to start a panic among middle-class railway users. The Government seemed to have played its

last card—Lord Astbury's judgment making trade unions engaged in a sympathetic strike liable to be sued for damages in breach of contract. There remained for the Government merely the use of troops and machine-guns—or else compromise. Strong signs appeared of a split in the enemy's ranks: powerful influences grew daily against Churchill and in favour of a more moderate official policy and the opening of negotiations. The solidarity of the workers was succeeding. There seemed a strong chance that within a few days the Government would have to climb down.

It was just this moment that the Right Wing leaders chose for their great betrayal. Never having wanted a general strike from the beginning, devoted to democracy and terrified of a class issue, apprehensive of the effect on middle-class voters, and fearful of a strengthening of Communist influence if the strike proceeded, they were finally stampeded into abject surrender. How, indeed, could MacDonal and Thomas, champions of democracy, continue to lead a general strike which the courts had declared illegal? Having been presented with an unofficial proposal from Sir Herbert Samuel (apparently with the promise that Baldwin would accept it, although the Minister of Labour had already on the 8th intimated that the proposal was "entirely unauthorised") the T.U.C. went to Downing Street and capitulated, without mention even of the Samuel Memorandum or of victimisation (save for an appeal by Bevin to Baldwin's "goodwill"). Thus did a great event end in the most humiliating scene in Labour history!

Once the class issue had been abandoned in favour of democracy, the old-fashioned sectional attitude reasserted itself. No longer a united class front; but separate sectional overtures to employers. The capitalists had certainly no intention of filling the role of gentlemanly participants in a cricket match which their opponents had designed for them. They immediately claimed the T.U.C. action as an "unconditional surrender," and treated the trade unions as the vanquished party which had given up its sword. They repudiated the Samuel Memorandum. *The Times* curtly told Baldwin that, now his gentlemanly role had been played, he had better step aside in the interests of his class. ("Infinitely more valuable for what he is than for what he does.")

The employers immediately took advantage of the situation to declare war on the striking unions, which was only prevented by the spontaneous refusal of men everywhere to return to work under such conditions. The position might even then have been saved had not the leaders signed humiliating contracts of submission admitting the illegality of their acts and binding their hands for the future. Employers proceeded to adopt the "open shop" principle (some to employ only non-union labour), to deal with their men as

“ individuals ” and on day-to-day contracts, and to transfer politically active workers from one part of the country to another. The policy of arrests, particularly of Communists, proceeded, merely for the offence of appealing to workers to stay on strike in defence of the miners. Finally, the miners, now isolated from the rest of the workers, were presented with new proposals involving a reduction of wages, which they have steadily refused to accept.

It was not the rank and file that failed, nor class unity that showed itself impotent. In this the general strike gave us a magnificent inspiration, which given a clear lead would have achieved at least a partial victory. At worst, its defeat could not have been more inglorious than the actual outcome! Defeat, abject and shameful—defeat, not only for the workers of Britain, but for the workers of Europe—came because the Right Wing leaders of a pre-1914 generation which disavowed the class struggle were at the helm; and in the name of democracy they committed “ sabotage ” on the working class. And the Left Wing leaders, because in the interval since Red Friday they had not fought against the poison of the Liverpool Conference, but had accepted and temporised out of “ loyalty to leaders,” were impotent to stem the treachery, impotent even to rally the rank and file in a genuine protest.

Unless we learn the lesson of these events and burn them on our souls, there will be no “ next time ” !

M. H. D.

NEVER AGAIN?

THE quaintest error of the human mind is an assumption of finality. After the special Trades Union Congress in 1920 rejected the miners’ proposal to strike for the nationalisation of the mines, the papers came out with screaming posters: “ End of Direct Action,” “ Direct Action Killed.” And now after 1926 Mr. Concemore T. Cramp says to the forces of history: “ Never again.” While the remark of the disgruntled everywhere is: “ Well, that’s killed the General Strike in our lifetime ! ”

Nothing of the sort. The General Strike didn’t come because the workers, still less their leaders, wanted it. The struggle was forced by a capitalist system desperately trying to stabilise itself at the expense of the workers. That process will not stop. The quiet success of this strike, as a strike, was the simple reply of men who had been told that all wages must come down. “ If we are going to have a scrap, let’s have it all together.”

The same conditions will continue to operate because the process is not yet worked out. The capitalists and their State have been emboldened by their apparent victory. Our problem is not whether

another General Strike can ever happen. In one form or another the workers inevitably will resist the further attacks that are now being prepared. The question is, are we going to have another mess-up like this next time, or can anything be done?

The student trained in I.W.C.E. methods will not waste energy in futile denunciations of "treachery" and "cowardice." A year ago we were debating whether the General Council could or would ever take charge in a great dispute. May, 1926, shows what the response of the workers is to their call. Now, as worker students we have to put this event on our laboratory tables, as it were, and find out why, given the solidarity, came the surrender.

The Test Tube What are the conditions essential to a successful general strike? Surely the first necessity is that the leaders should have a clear idea of exactly what they want to achieve by it. In this strike there were two ideas: the first a desire to help the miners; the second, more general among the ranks than the leaders, to prevent the general cutting of wages believed to be imminent.

Neither of these objects can be achieved by the mere withdrawing of labour. For the long-maturing mining muddle nationalisation is the only remedy, and a general fall in the wages, or at any rate the purchasing power, of the workers cannot be prevented by this means under the present conditions of our capitalist State.

Both of these objects are "political" in the queer terminology of the present day which has made the word almost connote "revolutionary." A successful general strike can only be waged, therefore, by people who are prepared to face the constitutional consequences of their action; who are prepared to take over the machine and run it on their own lines. Churchill's attitude was the only logical one. A general strike is either a direct challenge to the whole system, or it is a mere demonstration of sympathy, handsome enough in itself, but which can achieve nothing.

The full constitutional consequences might not eventuate. Economic interests seriously threatened might give way and wait till next time. But there will be a "next time" when the issue has to be fought out, and then the General Council as at present constituted will helplessly land us into Fascism. The victory in a general strike lies with the side that is prepared to face the consequences.

The second essential is that the strike should be led by leaders who believe in it. It is nonsense to talk about choosing different negotiators from the T.U.C. The leading officials of the key unions are the only ones who can implement their threats. The individual unions must deal with

*Revolution
by Tears*

their respective leaders. Incidentally, however, one of the effects of the group system of electing the General Council is that a number of people whose word carries no influence get on automatically from some of the smaller groups.

The tragedy of this strike consists in just this fact, that it was led by men who did not believe in it, who could not want it to succeed. There was a very English scene in the House of Commons on the day the strike was declared. The great railway leader blowing his nose vigorously, and in tears exclaiming: "I love my country as well as the gentlemen opposite," and the Premier also in tears declaring that his work was in ruins. But behind the weeping Premier stood Churchill and Amery, prepared to go to any lengths; while the tearful labour leader was the strongest man on his side, and he had just declared that it would be a catastrophe if the strike he was about to lead should succeed.

The third condition is that there should be some plan of campaign. Not necessarily any elaborate strategy which needs must depend on the circumstances of the crisis, but at least, as we pointed out in *The PLEBS* of September, 1925, someone should previously give some thought to the most elementary details. It is the incredible fact that the National Joint Committee of the Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress, faced as they were with the most elaborate preparations by the Cabinet, should have solemnly passed a resolution that no preparations of any kind should be made beforehand.

This is the natural attitude of a committee the majority of whom have been reared in the idea of class collaboration. The General Council appears to have an idea that there is some mysterious entity called "public opinion" which is able to come to your rescue and see fairplay if only you throw away most of your armour before you appeal to it.

Public opinion, like the constitution, the flag, the crown and other State fitments, are part of the necessary paraphernalia of a modern capitalist State: useful bogies to be used by the governing class when it suits them, and hastily hid away, as in the incidents of the Curragh or the recent letter from the King when these gadgets become a little inconvenient.

Would any public opinion that matters have been outraged by a small expert committee sitting in a room sometime during that nine months and considering, if a strike took place, what unions should be called out, whether food supplies were to be banned, how people were to

*Monuments of
Vagueness*

be fed, whether light and power were to be withdrawn, and how communications were to be maintained with the districts? As it is, the circular calling the strike was a monument of vagueness and open to a dozen interpretations. The headquarters of the various unions acted on their individual readings of it so that the plasterers on one job were ordered to stay at work, while the bricklayers were called off it. The utmost confusion was caused by the transport orders, the result of which was that the N.U.D.A.W. was ordered to call out all co-operative transport except the services of bread and milk, while their members in the retail shops had to be ordered to serve blacklegs, O.M.S. and the like insects, if such presented themselves. A comic situation arose where the York Co-operative Society, which had handed over the whole of its available room space to the strike committees, would have had its transport stopped while all its competitors were carrying on gaily.

The stopping of printing was a great piece of strategy. The General Council have been criticised for thus stopping their own publicity. What kind of publicity would they have got in capitalist papers printing and distributing from a hundred centres throughout the country while the *Herald* would have been practically confined to London? But having made this bold gesture, publicity was damped down.

A Bold Move The printers' unions made difficulties about permits for local strike sheets, and here again was a complicated question that needed arrangement beforehand. The wireless messages were an outrage; but it was obvious that wireless must become the Government mouthpiece unless the E.T.U. took steps to prevent it—a pretty good bargaining agent for getting equal treatment at least.

Transport and communications again were matters that need time to arrange. Actually, someone had to go out and buy maps on the morning the strike started. Exhausted drivers had to rush to Glasgow or Cardiff and back in one journey, with eager motorists kicking their heels (or exhausts) in towns on the way because there was no time to arrange a relay system after the strike had commenced.

The payment of 2½ millions of men from funds mainly kept in securities is not a matter to be settled in a couple of days. The unions who were anxious to help found difficulties immediately they approached their banks. *Union Funds* The C.W.S. Bank could be an invaluable agent, but obviously its preparations would need making beforehand.

Apart from the difficulties of realising assets at such a crisis, the position will have to be faced whether strike pay can ever be paid in a general strike. There is no doubt that the fact that one key union paid out £250,000 the first week was an important factor in deciding to call off the strike. Those of us who saw the spirit of the country know that those men would have stuck it without strike pay if there had been a proper appeal to them. In another such strike, after the Astbury judgment the Government would probably put an embargo on funds straight away. The answer to that is to make the strike so complete at the beginning that its duration is short.

*Can Strikers
be Paid?*

The strike has given us a magnificent opportunity among the rank and file just to hammer in the reality of the class struggle. The value of I.W.C.E. is not in the actual amount of facts of history or economics imparted, but that, by making the class struggle the basis of all its teaching, its members can be trusted to take the right *attitude* at moments of crisis.

*God Save
Churchill*

Printers who had been persuaded to think on these lines, as Horrabin points out in the Bookshelf this month, would not have needed to have explained to them the difference between printing the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Herald*, nor would they have raised objections to the printing of strike sheets.

All the preparation in the world is but secondary to this prime need of breaking the hold that the class collaboration formulas have on the workers' minds. The Cabinet, by their unscrupulous stretching of every constitutional formula, have helped us immensely in this task. There are moments when one could pray "God save Churchill."

The nine days we have gone through have made history. The days we are living now will make more. The application of the scientific method to history has produced magnificent results from Marx to the present time.

Living in History

We want a study of 1926 equal to Marx's analysis of 1848. Important as is the origin of the Manor, and the Industrial Revolution, the alive Plebs history tutor will see that the events of May, 1926, are thoroughly discussed by his students and their lessons carried into every corner of the trade union movement.

ELLEN WILKINSON.

WE NEED NEW READERS — WILL YOU HELP?

“ENGLAND IS RISEN . . .”

HOME THOUGHTS FROM ABROAD

AMERICAN slang, ever expressive and pointed, talks of giving a place or a person “the once over,” and to spend three weeks in Moscow studying life and conditions there, is to give it only the briefest “once over.”

But Moscow responds to such a treatment. In the first week she appears fantastic, squalid, dirty, teeming with life, Eastern and romantic, a little aloof, something very different from any Western city. What is her fascination, one asks, stepping over deep puddles and gutters full of half-melted snow, fighting—really fighting, not just “shoving”—black-bearded, beady-eyed, Mongol-looking folk and placid fair-haired, flat-faced “Slavs” for a standing place on the back of a tram. Is this the co-operative commonwealth, where homeless children, heaped rags and sore bodies, lie asleep on the window-ledges of the Society for Cultural Relations with Soviet Russia? What can one think or say about it all?

But in the second week, slowly Moscow begins to “work.” From the sleeping homeless children one has looked into the keen faces of the Pioneer Youths, factories have been visited where the workers work in almost ideal conditions, schools and universities have been seen where youth, keen and questing, is being supplied with the knowledge it drinks up as the earth drinks up water after a drought. Perhaps this is not the co-operative commonwealth of one’s dreams; but to come through the dark shadow of the Iberian Gate into Red Square and against a clear inky-blue sky to see over the Kremlin wall the Red flag fluttering in the breeze, illuminated from below by a hidden red light, is to get near to the realisation of one dream at any rate.

The third week. This is not the co-operative commonwealth, perhaps it is something better—something more human. Here the greatest tyranny in the world was defeated, here a great blundering, uneducated mass have gained power. Cleverly administered and powerfully controlled, the Communist Party leads the workers to what? History will tell us. We can only guess. We can only see around us the attempts they are making to build out of this material a temple that will be worthy of the class they fight for. But someone says, “the Communist Party is the same thing as the working class.” It is not. It is the spearhead in Russia, and behind it come the workers, contented and discontented, frightened by its power, proud of its power. It may be that its ranks contain not only archangels (rare in Russia except on the walls of its thousand churches).

One thing is certain—it is “in power,” and in power it will remain just so long as it remains the spearhead of the Russian people. The masses in Russia give one that feeling. They were dumb and oppressed in the past, perhaps they are a little oppressed still. Individual freedom takes a back seat when there is work to be done in the world; but they are not dumb. They are being educated. Education is unknown in Russia, say the middle-class critics; it is all propaganda. Plebeians are not afraid of the word. We are used to it and it makes us smile. We accept it. The workers are being educated by propaganda—propaganda that tells them the truth about their own class. “Masses are powerful, masses must be free.” If the Communist Party leaders can retain power in a tyrannical sense after ten years of this “propaganda,” and if the Russian workers let themselves be so tyrannised, then those leaders deserve power, and those masses deserve rule by tyrants. It is impossible to believe this could happen. The only Workers’ Republic in the world may not be, one can be bold and write, *is not, all* that one hoped or dreamed, but to spend only three weeks in Russia and not to realise that here is the most interesting drama that has ever been staged by history, that here, slowly, dangerously, perhaps cruelly, is being forged the first Workers’ State, is to write oneself down a fool. It is not ideal, it is sometimes even ugly, it is not kind, it treads heavily, it cuts a tender heart with its sharp contrasts, it wounds a tender spirit with its ruthlessness, but it is vital and alive and moving.

Afterwards, I talked to a Russian lady of the old regime, sitting in a comfortable drawing-room in Berlin. She said: “Russia does not exist any longer. Our Russia is dead. It has gone for ever. What you say is very interesting, but it is not Russia.” She was intelligent, but she talked exactly like a person from another planet. In her world, workers kept their place, they did not control governments or ride in eight-cylinder Daimlers or run universities in *their* way, or organise factories or develop industry. In her world, workers worked and formed the stuff of the body politic, they were well in the background—indeed, they were the background, solid and substantial, docile and deserving, dumb and dependable. It is a queer world when the very foundations get up and talk!

And over in England the foundations are talking! It is a queer experience to be in a distant country and all round to feel the thrill and excitement of news—news that is vital and that means so much. It is indeed strange to enter a crowded tram and find everyone avidly reading news of the General Strike in England, and not to be able either to talk or read. This after a night spent in chasing thoughts of home and one’s comrades, this after working for eleven years in the workers’ movement, hoping all the time for solidarity, longing for action, praying that when the test came everyone would

stand shoulder to shoulder. A comrade, hearing one's broken Russian spoken in taking the ticket, says: "You hear the news? Cavalry are in all the streets in London, comrade. It has come to England, please, this revolution. What will they do, the English comrades? You know?" One's heart gives a leap. "They will fight for their class," one says, feeling rather ashamed at being dramatic. "That is good news that you hear to-day," he goes on, bent on being affable. It is unbearable. Good news to be away with a fight on! Knowing that anything may happen before the news gets through. One knows what it feels like to be dead—and damned!

Nothing to be done. Look up at the Red flag over the Kremlin. The impossible happened in Russia. It is no good worrying. All one's comrades are in it, there is nothing to do but keep steady and believe the best.

At Dvarets Truda, the palace of labour, come more questions and more news. Russian workers are all looking to England to see what is happening there. The excitement is intense. Special editions of papers sell faster than they can be issued. Theatres hold special performances, special conferences of workers have the situation explained to them, only the stranded English comrades wander like lost souls, eagerly drinking whatever drops of information percolate through in English!

What do the gilded domes against a blue sky signify? The beauty and mystery of the Kremlin's dark minarets in the moonlight only increase one's sense of desolation. The days pass in a mist of thoughts about home.

At a crowded meeting in the House of Trade Unions when the band plays "The International" one stands at attention, trying vainly to control a lump in the throat.

"Then, comrades, come rally,
The last fight let us face——"

The Russians do not sing it, only the band plays, but in one's ears English voices sound as clearly as if England was in the next room.

Is it possible to get home? There are no cross-Channel steamers, they say, only aeroplane traffic, and visitors from Russia will not be welcomed! There is nothing for it but to "stick it."

But the fascination of Moscow pales before the situation at home.

Then comes the news—it is settled. The strike is over—unconditional surrender.

It cannot be true. Surely there is a mistake somewhere. Russian news is always a little "trimmed"—one takes refuge in prejudice. A visit to Dvarets Truda confirms the news.

Out into the cold streets again. The wind that blows the Moskva river into waves is bitter cold, but no colder or more bitter than

one's thoughts. There is only one thing left to believe—that one's comrades stood true to their posts—and that something untoward and unforeseen happened. The Russian comrades' rather pitying glances hurt more than they comfort. It is fitting to have a cold wind and a wet day; one feels for once grateful for appropriate weather.

The co-operative commonwealth is not easily won. We have still to face that "last fight."

The home letters come, with news of mass meetings singing from full hearts "England is risen and the Day is here"—full of cheery messages and hope, full of fight and the will to victory.

Disappointment at defeat fills the day, but through everything the knowledge of that splendid solidarity gives one hope and belief in ultimate victory. It was not only by the will and work of our Russian comrades that the Red flag flies over the Kremlin. There was also Comrade History working ever and always on the side of the rising working class. The tide is with us. There is no need to despair.

WINIFRED HORRABIN.

NOT ALONE

THE miners are still locked out. They remain in the front trenches with their supports withdrawn, and we must keep the food supplies going. In many districts the men have been unemployed or on short time for months. Their resources are low, the Boards of Guardians bankrupt. Just to keep the men and their families in bread will cost £500,000 a week. Remember they are facing actual starvation. Under the auspices of The Miners' Federation of Great Britain a Women's Committee for the relief of miners' wives and children has been formed at offices kindly lent by the Parliamentary Labour Club at 11, Tufton Street, London, S.W.1. This committee is making arrangements for house-to-house collections, flag days, entertainments, miners' choirs and every other possible means of raising money. The Joint Secretaries are Dr. Marion Phillips and Lilian Dawson, J.P.

Offers of personal help are urgently needed. Collectors, clerical workers, any kind of talent can be used. Those who were suddenly checked in the midst of strike duties by the call-off, please offer your help. The miners want money and want it quickly. It's more use at the moment than swearing at the General Council.

ELLEN WILKINSON

*(Chairman, Women's Relief Committee
for Miners' Wives and Children, 11,
Tufton Street, S.W.1).*

THE N.C.L.C. AND THE GENERAL STRIKE

UNLIKE the Universities, the N.C.L.C. did not provide blacklegs, nor did it take up a so-called neutral attitude that would allow employing-class wrong to overcome working-class right. As an educational organisation built up, financed and controlled by trade unions, the N.C.L.C. threw its whole weight into the struggle. On the forenoon of Saturday, 1st May, it appeared that the General Strike was bound to be declared, and in anticipation, the following manifesto was hurriedly drawn up and issued:—

Education for Action

In the great crisis now affecting the Trade Union and Labour Movement, the N.C.L.C. calls upon all present and ex-students, tutors and officials to render every possible assistance.

All local activities should be carried out under the direction of the Trades Councils and local officers of Trade Unions actually participating in the dispute.

For the Executive,

A. A. PURCELL, *Hon. President.*

J. HAMILTON, *Chairman.*

J. P. M. MILLAR, *General Secretary.*

London, 1st May, 1926.

On Monday all students and tutors were requested to put aside educational work for the time being in favour of giving every support to the strike. On Monday night, the whole of the N.C.L.C. Head Office staff—the largest in the East of Scotland—had been placed at the disposal of what was on the following day to become the Edinburgh District Central Strike Committee, whose area extended from Bathgate on the West to Galashiels in the South. Eventually, during the course of the strike the whole of the Head Office staff were engaged on strike work, and had the honour of being entrusted with the organisation of the Committee's day and night clerical staffs.

In practically all the Divisions, the same enthusiasm and energy were displayed. At the time of writing, it is impossible to say how much work was actually done, but the reports that have come in so far, without exception, have indicated that organisers, tutors and students played a very prominent part in strike activities. Many

of our students and tutors engaged on picket duty have been fined or imprisoned. Organiser Barr, who acted as Assistant Secretary to the Birmingham Strike Committee, was fined £10, while Vin Williams, who had been acting as temporary full-time lecturer in Derbyshire, was sentenced to three months.

The strike itself was a demonstration of solidarity so extensive as to take utterly by surprise even the most enthusiastic of us, and undoubtedly gave the organised Trade Union Movement the finest opportunity it has so far had of realising its power. It now remains for the Trade Union Movement, by means of a great Independent Working Class Educational effort, to make workers' control an immediate issue.

In the meantime, we urge all our supporters to give every assistance to the miners in their desperate need.

J. P. M. MILLAR.

PLEBS in the TRENCHES

OUR editorial last month opened with an expression of the hope that, if the struggle which then loomed ahead actually came upon us, every I.W.C.E.er would do his best to justify our movement's aim, *Education for Action*, by playing as active a part as possible in the conflict. "We study history in order to fit ourselves to make it."

To the fact that Plebs and N.C.L.C.ers everywhere lived up to the spirit of that appeal I happen to be in an exceptionally good position to testify. When the Strike came I was given a "staff job"; and I think I can claim—along with a fellow-member of the Plebs E.C., Ellen Wilkinson, whose "O.C. Transport" I was—to have seen as much of the Strike, in various parts of England and Wales, as anybody. We were detailed to travel from place to place giving, and gathering, authentic news. We did over 2,000 miles in twelve days, and between 40 and 50 meetings. And everywhere we found Plebs on the job—in the trenches! Again and again, at the end of a meeting, two or three comrades with the "?" badge up would push through the crowd and introduce themselves. Very often they didn't need to do any introducing—they were old pals. But, young uns or old uns, they were none of 'em doing anything in the armchair-philosopher line; in fact, many of them looked as though they had never seen either an armchair or a bed since the Strike started.

I can only write, of course, of those places I actually visited; but at any rate those will provide some first-hand evidence, not only of the way in which Plebs rallied to the call, but of the way in which the Strike generally was carried on. And as the lie-factory will of course at once get busy concocting the only true and historical

account of the Great Strike of May, 1926, eye-witness's accounts ought to be put on record.

We were in the Buckrose (Yorks) Division the day the Strike started, and found a group of Scarborough Plebs busy electioneering. That evening we went on to Hull, to a crammed meeting in the City Hall—Plebs on the platform again. Thence next day to London, to find The PLEBS Office just putting up the shutters, and the staff crossing the road to Eccleston Square: K. S. to drive a car by day, and help get out the *Westminster Worker* by night, Mark doing ditto, and Jack Williams to get on to the speakers' panel for London district meetings.

From London, on Thursday the 6th, we started for Oxford, Banbury, Woodford, Coventry, Cannock, Walsall, Hednesford, Wolverhampton, Stafford, Crewe, Northwich, Wrexham, Shrewsbury, Hereford and Worcester; which kept us busy until Sunday night. At Oxford we found G. D. H. Cole (who, if not precisely a Pleb, has at any rate had long and direct relations with our movement!) addressing a big open-air meeting, assisted by one or two keen Plebs at present in residence at Ruskin. At Coventry we met Comrade Willetts, of the Staffs. miners, at Stafford our old friend Hindle, at Crewe, Wilde, at Shrewsbury, Alice Pratt—all of them working overtime on strike committees and proving in practice the usefulness

N.C.L.C.

NATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL

Cober Hill, near Scarborough

10th to 24th JULY, 1926

The vacant places are now being rapidly booked up. Accommodation is decidedly limited. To avoid disappointment the 15/- booking fee should be sent on now. To-morrow may be too late to book your place.

For Illustrated Leaflet, giving full particulars and programme of lectures, send stamped addressed envelope to J. P. M. Millar, General Secretary, National Council of Labour Colleges, 62 Hanover Street, Edinburgh.

Why not get your Union, Branch, Co-Operative Society or Trades Council to provide Scholarships?

of an I.W.C.E. training. There were many others ; but those were crowded days and I kept no diary, so comrades whose names are not mentioned here will forgive me. (At Northwich, by the way, the initials, "N.C.L.C.," were apparently *not* well known, and I was billed as "of the L.C.C.")

We left London again, heading northward, on Tuesday (11th). At Peterborough we found the secretary of the N.C.L.C. class busy in the strike committee ; at Grantham, Plebs (full of enthusiasm for Charlie Brown's work in the district) collared us and told us how well things were going there. Next day found us at Newark, Retford, Worksop and Rotherham. Then on to York, where an old C.L.C. man—Arthur Hadfield—was chairman of the strike committee. On that Thursday—the day after the strike was called off, but when, owing to the plans of victimisation trumpeted by railway managers and other bosses, the number of men out was greater and their spirit more determined than ever—we did Darlington, Stockton, West Hartlepool and Middlesbrough ; at the latter place, another Pleb, Edgar Turner, was secretary of the strike committee.

Almost everywhere we went, let me repeat, I.W.C.E.ers were well to the fore ; and of course in other places the same thing was true. Will Lawther in Durham, Stuart Barr in Birmingham, Dobb in Cambridge, J. L. Gray in Nottingham, George Williams in Mansfield—as editors of strike bulletins, officials of strike committees, despatch riders or speakers, Plebs were busy translating theory into practice. We can say without boasting that our movement's strike record is a good one. Now let's make the best use of that fact for the advancement of Independent Working-Class Education ; and carry on our propaganda, not as armchair-philosophers, but as rank-and-filers who have carried on the struggle shoulder to shoulder with our fellows, and whose concern is with the problems which now confront the whole working-class movement.

J. F. HORRABIN.

PLEASE!!

We did not expect to get much money in during May—and we were not disappointed. We need it badly now. Please help us to pull up during June. Otherwise our position will be serious.

W. H.

THE PLEBS LETTERS

EMPIRE

DEAR COMRADE, — In last month's PLEBS Mark Starr's useful sketch of the uses of history ends with a question and several answers to it: "What do we workers want from history?" answered by "Less about kings and more about peoples," etc.

In this set of "slogans" we are pulled up with a jerk by "More about the Enclosure Acts and the spread of landlordism, and less about the spread of the British Empire."

The things workers want from history are surely these: facts and theories explaining their present position and affecting their future struggle. That struggle happens, in this country, to be against an Imperialist State and its supporters.

The industrial worker would have been in much the same position to-day, and would have much the same struggles ahead (not, I admit, quite the same) if the bulk of the land was owned by peasant farmers as in France or America. Many British industrial workers would not exist, and all would have a different position and different problems if the "spread of the Empire" had not occurred.

The story is variously told, but I believe it was in Moscow that a speaker coined the phrase, "the offensive colonial peoples are vitally importunate to the revolting British proletariat." The wording is unhappy: but what he meant to say needs saying—often, apparently.

Yours fraternally,
T. H. WINTRINGHAM.

MAY—AND OCTOBER

DEAR COMRADE,—Possibly because my mind has been working along similar lines to Dobb's, his article in last month's PLEBS seemed to me both timely and courageous. I had hoped to write commenting on it more connectedly, but participation in the events of the last fortnight has left me with little time to put thoughts down on paper. These notes will I hope be pardoned their sketchiness in consequence of my having been on "active service."

It seems to me that while realising the necessity for studying not alone the Octobers, but the preparatory periods leading up to those Octobers, Dobb's analysis has not gone deeply enough nor far enough back into the preparatory periods. If we take the R.S.D.P.(B) as our subject for study, then I think we need to begin it from at least 1905, and to trace the organic development of the party and the masses from that date onward. This is especially necessary in studying the question of discipline, as well as the general questions of strategy and tactics.

I have been for some time of the opinion that the situation in Britain in 1926 has reached a phase comparable to Russia's 1905. The events of the last few days have only confirmed that opinion. Ignoring any superficial comparison of external events, 1905, on its "subjective" side, was noteworthy, apart from the emergence of the Soviet, for the detachment of the masses from their faith in constitutional methods, and for their coming to a negatively revolutionary attitude. When the events of the past fortnight come to be historically examined, I venture to think that they will be found to have had much the same effect. By a grim irony, it is such men as Thomas who have administered the blow.


But from a negative to a positive revolutionary psychology is a long step. Spontaneous mass action is not necessarily positively revolutionary, and as Dobb says, it is necessary that a party should be at hand, to lead the masses. The R.S.D.P.(B) were certainly not ready for the psychological moment in 1905, and it is doubtful whether they were ready even in 1912 or 1914. During all the intervening years the party was developing an organic discipline, depending for its value far more on the individual's voluntary subjugation to the centre, than on the centre's compulsory subjugation of the individual. That discipline was forged on the day-to-day problems and necessities of illegality and active propaganda: it was the direct outcome of iron necessity.

We get some idea of the kind of discipline it was in the discussions leading

up to October. The utmost freedom of discussion of strategy, tactic, and policy. Obviously, such discipline cannot be imitated; discipline such as Dobb desires must come out of iron necessity here as elsewhere, and slavish imitation would go far towards wrecking the movement in advance.

While warning us against Khvostism, Dobb should have touched on the converse danger—for it decidedly is a danger—of attempting to lead the masses from a point too far in advance. From his eminence "above the battle" Dobb may well be permitted to remain far ahead, but those of us who are also in the fighting line may know somewhat of the danger of the masses ignoring us at the psychological moment precisely because we have not been with and of them during the preparatory period. Here again arises a danger of slavish imitation, and a too uncritical application of tactics which thus applied may do the movement far more harm than good. This applies among other things to criticism of leaders. True, they have to be discredited: events may be trusted to do that, and then the moral can be pointed. But to carry on a petty pinprick attack in season and out of season of everyone who disagrees in the very slightest with oneself, to scream "Traitor" even at local honest-to-God Labour Party officers, etc., simply has the effect on the rank and file (who are mainly in the same boat as those officers) of setting them largely against the individual who screams. The majority of T.U. and Labour Party members are more backward than we should like them to be, but the application of the boot to their nether parts does not always have the desired effect of driving them forward. Moreover, there is developing among the rank and file a suspicion of ALL leaders, whether left, right, or centre. And is that to be regarded as altogether satisfactory at this juncture?

There are other points one would like to discuss (e.g., the Parliamentary issue) but the fundamental question for us all (and it is here that Dobb has taken his courage in both hands) is that of the future party. We need have little fear that the rank-and-file will not develop a positive revolutionary psychology, if the present phase continues for long. But the future union of a



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party with the masses necessitates the closest study of similar situations elsewhere, as Dobb says, and also their close comparison with that obtaining in this country at any given moment, together with a frank thrashing out of tactical and strategical questions in a fashion that has not obtained hitherto. Dobb has not in his article attempted to argue in the light of the present situation in this country, nor has he done much towards mapping out a positive policy for the future which could be discussed. At times, his article reads more like an apologia for present tactics rather than a preliminary survey for the future. But the issues he raises are far too big to be confined to apologies. He raises the whole vital issue of correct strategy and tactic, which necessarily involves the discussion of such strategy, etc., as may already be in vogue. Unless the discussion can be kept off the narrow, party plane a number of readers who might contribute will be forced to keep out of it.

I regret that for the present I have to adopt a nom-de-plume, and sign myself,
Yours fraternally, PLEB No. 1079.

THE PLEBS

REVIEWS

THE MARXISM OF MARX

Historical Materialism. By Nikolai Bukharin. (Allen and Unwin. 12s. 6d.) [*Publishers' Note*—Nikolai Bukharin, one of the foremost theoreticians of Marxian socialism, is Editor-in-chief of the Moscow *Pravda*, and lecturer on Economics and Sociology at the University of Moscow.]

IT is doubtful if the content, the meaning and the purpose of any man's work has raised such discussion as has that of Marx. Apart from opponents, honest and dishonest, there are numbers of "Marxists" each giving a different interpretation. Some insist that Marxism is not a system but a method. It is also vigorously asserted and equally vigorously denied that Marx offered a mere mechanical interpretation of historical progress that reduces men to the level of being simply the cursed puppets of the cosmos, which itself is blind and without purpose.

As a contribution to this discussion we are now offered *Historical Materialism*. This is a book that all students of sociology should read, while teachers of any phase of Marxism, to do themselves justice, not only should but must read it and, if possible, should possess it, for the average teacher will need to read it more than once.

This is not so much because it contains the author's concept of Marxism and also his application of this concept to post-Marxian events, important though these contributions are, but because it is the greatest compilation and detailed treatment of Marxian materialism to be found in any one volume. It is the boiled-down essence of a great number of books. To our mind, though with one important exception to be mentioned below, it is the most complete and masterful exposition of the Marxian concept outside Marx's own works.

British Marxists, in the main, hold that the Marxian theory of historical materialism is not a system with its set of rules or laws, but is rather a method by which, or a point of view from which, historical events may be

interpreted. Such readers, however, may possibly get a shock to see on p. xv. that

"the theory of historical materialism . . . is not political economy, nor is it history; it is the general theory of society and the laws of its evolution, i.e., sociology." (And further) "the fact that the theory of historical materialism is a method of history, by no means destroys its significance as a sociological theory."

In other words, Marxism is both a method or a tool for interpreting history and is also a system of sociology which should be taught just as systematically as are the laws of any other science. To accomplish this is the sole object of the work.

In opening the discussion Bukharin takes the trouble to clear from his path all teleological (ultimately religious) explanations of causes. He is a thorough-going determinist. Accidents appear as such only to those who are ignorant of the causes involved, for just as there is no possible "chance" of there being two days without any night between, neither is it possible to have capitalist production without a working class which grows and which develops a socialist movement.

Since all these things happen not by accident but in strict accordance with necessity, there is evidently some law underlying the forming of groups in society, which also determines the way they think. So there is law in social development just as there is in the rest of nature. What is this law? That is the question.

To live man must produce the means of life. He must employ certain productive forces (tools or methods). If these forces are so poor that it takes all his time to get the bare means of life, he has no time for anything else. With a decrease in productive forces fewer people can be kept, so population will decrease. Improved methods of production will of course operate in the reverse direction. Laws of population, then, are at bottom laws of production.

Given society in total, it is then a question of its inner divisions and the relations between them. In this

matter the growth of different kinds of productive forces (tools) leads to the formation of different groups each doing its own kind of work according to the peculiar nature of the tools used. So each group establishes relations ("productive relations") between its members, corresponding to the productive forces employed by it. In consequence it develops its own peculiar modes of thought. Within the generalised limits of productive relations, several groups may form a greater group with a greater generalising of ideas resulting in an ideology representing ultimately the general interests of the group.

Only when the productive forces enable workers to produce more than their keep is it possible for them to keep others. The existence of groups, who do no productive work implies therefore a fairly advanced state of technology. These so-called higher groups such as the nobility, priests, administrators, etc., and their various grades of satellites, also develop their own ideologies, while the whole of this superstructure during any given historical period is reflected in the forms of religion,

philosophy, science, social customs, etc., current in those times.

The ideology of each group constitutes something more than the individual ideas of the members of the group. It overrides individual interests and becomes a directive force for the group in its conflict with other groups.

The whole of this movement is continually going on, so that with every change in its productive forces (social technology) society changes its superstructure. It is continually upsetting its old equilibrium and establishing a new one. Consequently from the productive forces as a base, the author traces the growth of productive relations, the forming of social groups, the rise of corresponding ideas and concomitant ideologies. He also traces the different forms of ideological expression separately in science, philosophy, religion, art, language, thought, social psychology and politics, and in the last chapter gives us a penetrating analysis of classes and class groups, of their interests both special and general, with numerous examples of

1842—

and 1926

In both years a General Strike took place in Britain; and both are described in the new PLEBS textbook—

A SHORT HISTORY of the BRITISH WORKERS

by R. W. Postgate

The book opens with the "Wilkes and Liberty" movement and the Corresponding Societies of the late 18th century; and comes down to the events of May, 1926. Its size and style will be similar to the last edition of *A Worker Looks at History*.

READY THIS MONTH SEND YOUR ORDERS NOW

their possible interaction and alignments resulting in various forms of class struggle.

The whole treatment is wonderfully well worked out, except in the region of philosophy from which we could quote dozens of examples to illustrate what appears to us as its weakest point. Of course we have space for only a few.

The fault lies in over-stressing material objectivity at the expense of "immaterial" subjectivity, when as a matter of fact the two are equally material parts of a material universe, the latter being neither objective alone nor subjective alone but is at all times both. It is subjective-objective or objective-subjective.

As instances of this faulty separation we may read on p. 55, "*matter may very well exist without mind*," and on p. 61, "matter is the mother of mind and not mind the mother of matter"—the fact being that "matter" cannot exist without "mind" to conceive of it as being "matter." They exist simultaneously, the two being one philosophic unity viewed from the standpoint of them existing, just as the "past" is really one part of the present because it is a concept of some living human brain, so that past, present and future all exist at one and the same time.

Again, p. 225, "man's thinking is influenced by his being." We would ask, is it not part of it? And does his thinking not influence his being? On p. 226, in answering a similar objection we get, "The theory of historical materialism does not deny the importance of the superstructure in general and of the ideologies in particular, but explains them." So it does. It is attempted in this book but it is not done clearly, hence our complaint. For instance, p. 227, "Philosophy arises from the sciences . . . (it is) 'secondary' . . . yet philosophy controls the sciences to a certain degree." We would like to point out that when philosophy controls the sciences, then in that connection it should be classed as primary, so whether it is primary or secondary will depend upon the purpose in view. Bukharin realises this, for on the same page he says, "The true difference (between material production and the superstructure) is in the different character of their functions." He

therefore recognises "*mutual relations*" (italics by F. C.) between them but for all that pins his strongest faith to the first, namely the objective material, just as though the superstructure could not be equally objective according to its own manner of functioning, or again, just as though the productive forces (objective materiality) could exist without men. Men and productive forces are two parts of one whole. Take away either and the other ceases to exist. He is continually hovering about the apex of the theory but just misses it.

He goes as far as the works of Marx and Engels could take him but does not mention Dietzgen, who completed the Marxian concept on its epistemological side, for nowhere in Marx or Engels can such a complete science of thinking be found as that supplied by Dietzgen, and without this completion there still remains a loophole for "idealism." The argument, so to speak, never gets cleaned up and this is why it drags on. We therefore think it a pity that through this lack such a work as this should just miss the level of a masterpiece.

While offering this criticism with full respect and sincerity, we would like to take the opportunity of suggesting that "Marxism" to be rendered fully, should be Marx-Engels-Dietzgenism. No doubt the shorter word is more convenient, but the longer one should not be forgotten.

Can we beg of the publishers that they consider issuing a cheap edition?

FRED CASEY.

OCTOBER, 1917

Ten Days that Shook the World. By John Reed. (C.P.G.B. Paper, 2s. 6d.; cloth, 4s. 6d.)

This is history written as it is made—both made and written with the highest intensity. The author, as all the world now knows, lived in Petrograd during the Bolshevik revolution, and has reported the events of those great days in a narrative which Lenin, in his introduction, describes as a "most vivid exposition."

The first two chapters explain the background and causes—the passive and active factors of the revolution. In the saddle is Kerensky. His "moderate" followers exhibit feverish

"There has probably been no greater revolution of ideas than in the new educational system as practised in Soviet Russia."
—Report of the British Trade Union Delegation, 1925.

EDUCATION IN SOVIET RUSSIA

BY

SCOTT NEARING

(author of *"The American Empire," "Dollar Diplomacy,"* &c.)

This is the first detailed account to appear in English of the educational work and experiments carried on by the Soviet Government. It is, therefore, a book of special interest to all I.W.C.E.ers. As the list of chapter-headings shows, it covers the whole Russian educational system, and it is the result of a first-hand study of that system—Scott Nearing having only recently returned from a tour in Russia in the course of which he visited the various educational institutions here described.

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hurry to leave behind the destruction of the Tsarist regime, and proceed to the construction of the new one. An idea of the mentality of the new ruler will be gained from the story of Senator Sokolot who, in the full tide of the Kerensky Revolution, was refused admission into the Senate "because he did not wear the prescribed livery of the Tsar's service."

While the Provisional Government strove to paint the Russian map pink, its "Mene Tekel" was being written. On the one hand reactionary militarism grew bolder; on the other the will of the workers was being licked into shape. Between the threatened resurrection of the former, and the threatened insurrection of the latter, Kerensky was helpless. "The Government, torn between the democratic and reactionary functions, could do nothing; when forced to act it always supported the interests of the propertied classes." This might almost serve as a standing description of similar governments in all countries.

With our own coal crisis still unsettled, it is not without interest to find recorded that on the eve of the revolution a miners' organisation 30,000 strong was dispersed by the Cossacks. Some of the miners were locked out by the owners, and the rest declared a general strike. "This was followed by the dispersal of the Soviet at Kaluga," which "sent a wave of panic rage throughout Russia."

The next eight chapters describe the historic ten days, proceeding stage by stage, from the fall of the Provisional Government to the conquest of power by the Soviets. Not the least interesting feature to I.W.C.E.ers will be the story of the suppression of the bourgeois Press. Trotsky declares "the attitude of socialists on the question of freedom of the Press should be the same as their attitude on the freedom of business."

The book concludes with the Peasant Congress of 23rd November, when Lenin, in his address, said: "If socialism can only be realised when the intellectual development of all the people permits it, then we shall not see socialism for at least five hundred years." This congress wedded the sickle to the hammer.

There are also included some useful

notes and explanations on various political parties and other organisations in Russia. When one remembers the confusion created by a Press which frequently describes MacDonald as a Marxian and Purcell as a Pacifist, one feels that something similar might be done for the British Labour Movement.

J. M. W.

SEARCHLIGHT STILL NEEDED

Bench and Bar: A Searchlight. By William Durran. (Allen and Unwin, Ltd. 6s.)

It is to be hoped that at some time in the future someone will write a book which will demonstrate beyond question that "rich men rule the law." It could be shown quite beyond doubt that wherever there is any "class" question at issue the pure fount of justice becomes at least a little muddy. The history of the last hundred years, with its "illegal" conspiracies of workmen, its Taff Vale and Osborne cases, and lately with the Poplar cases, demonstrates quite clearly that the impartiality of British justice is not quite so obvious as we are led to believe. The "fair trial" of the twelve Communists was by no means so "fair" as most people seem to have accepted. It compares curiously with the "fair trial" of the Fascists in the Pollitt kidnapping case.

The book required would also expose the real nature of the vested interests of the legal profession and the impossibility of the poor person getting justice in spite of all sorts of cheap-jack "poor persons" procedure.

It was with the hope that this book was going to be a real searchlight that one looked forward to reading it; but what a disappointment! What the author does show is bad enough, but it is only a small part of the case and it is not the worst part; further, the book is written and arranged in a very haphazard fashion and shows no conception of causes. The author hopelessly mixes his metaphors and then mixes his imperialism with his criticism, which is not helpful. It is as well that the present reviewer is not reviewing the book from the literary point of view; if so, he might wonder what the author meant by a sentence like this: "Overt acts, such as the

trembling and abject demand for peace at any price—even at the price of submission—arise out of fixed habits." The book is full of the most extraordinary rhetoric, and the author is certainly not a stylist.

The present reviewer in his childhood days was told of a solicitor in his native town who had in his office a picture of one farmer pulling at the horns of a cow and another at the tail, while the lawyer was milking it. Detailed experience has proved how true the picture is.

The man in the street jokes about the honesty of the lawyer. It is to be hoped that some day a writer will show that the joke is much more serious than most people suppose.

CHANCERY.

A MARXIST ON CHINA

Karl August Wittfogel's *Das Erwachende China* (Awakening China) ought to be available for every English Marxian. Plebs able to read German, and interested in the tremendous struggles of the Chinese nationalist revolutionary movement against the imperialist powers, will find the cheap edition (2.50 M.) of this work, published by the Agis Verlag of Vienna, very useful.

Wittfogel commences in an ironical vein with "A little Shooting Affair," as he describes the Shanghai slaughter of 30th, May 1925, when the police inspector, Evenson, ordered "Shoot to kill." The author discusses this as a landmark in the development of the anti-imperialist movement, and its significance for China's awakening.

Several popular errors are disposed of: perhaps most of them artificially fostered. "The outcry over the 'Chinese Wall' in the mouth of the European bourgeoisie is merely an expression of their anger at China's resistance to their robber's handiwork." Laughter at the pigtail is effectively stilled by a gentle reminder to fellow Germans that Goethe and Schiller wore this particular hair adornment.

One of the most interesting portions of the book deals with the class compositions of old China; the old Bureaucracy that arose with the control of the irrigation schemes on the great rivers, the coming and passing of Feudalism, the period of small-peasant farming,

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and the rise of the new State power. Behind all these social changes secret political organisations form and dissolve, smouldering discontent frequently bursts into open insurrection. Little wonder that China has been termed the classical land of revolutions.

With the capitalist development of Europe comes the day when eyes are turned to China. "The first messengers of European capitalism came as perfect cavaliers." As soon, however, as they found themselves strong enough the mask was dropped. In the first half of the sixteenth century European Christianity was demonstrated in Canton, Ningpo, Fuchow, and Amoy, by a liberal distribution of cannon balls.

The shrinking of the European market forced the capitalists more and more to seek for other fields of exploitation. As an English writer, oft quoted by Marx, puts it: "Suitable Profit makes Capital courageous: 10 per cent. certain and it can adapt itself to anything, 20 per cent. and it becomes lively, 50 per cent. positively rash, for a 100 per cent. it will trample all man-made laws underfoot, and for 300 per cent. there is no

crime that it will not risk." The Opium and Boxer wars with their attendant atrocities were an ample demonstration of this truth.

The rise of the great revolutionary leader, Sun Yat Sen, and his struggles with both the imperialists and the reformists in his own camp is vividly portrayed. The industrialisation of China by England, Japan, and America with their fomenting and subsidising of civil war, the terrible oppression and ghastly working conditions are treated as elements in the compounding of a very "explosive mixture." The revolutionary nature of the mixture was strengthened during the last few years by the struggle for trade union recognition, and innumerable strikes, with not a little shooting of strikers at intervals.

The blood bath of Shanghai finally awakens China to the presentation of a national revolutionary front, under the leadership of the Communist Party, to the imperialist exploiters.

The international socialist movement and the U.S.S.R. is considered from its possibilities of assistance to China, and the conclusions point to the Third International as the only body likely to be of much future value to the Chinese workers.

The book concludes with a survey of literature on China and a list of useful works is appended.

H. R. W.

"THE IMMORTAL MEMORY"

Robert Burns and the Common People.
By William Stewart. (I.L.P.
2s. 6d. cloth.)

It is well that Robbie Burns' plebeian origins and affiliations should be asserted, that he should be rescued from his conservative and conventionally-minded admirers, that his fame as a national poet should not be allowed to obscure his international sympathies. Mr. Stewart has performed this task with enthusiasm.

He is the first great poet of the common people; meaning thereby, not merely that he is the first great poet to emerge from the common people, but the first who has found in them his continual theme and the source of his inspiration. Therein rests the assurance of his permanent place among the world's immortal

singers; for the future belongs to the common people.

This passage sums up the book, and the rest of the 107 pages is composed of repetition and elaboration. One feels that a pamphlet would have sufficed, but that Mr. Stewart, having determined to write a *book* on Burns, heroically kept on till he had covered the requisite number of sheets. There is scope for a socialist study of Burns which would examine his work in relation to his heredity, upbringing, and social environments, and show the influence of contemporary conditions and developments. Beyond an odd hint here and there, Mr. Stewart has not attempted this, but perhaps he has paved the way. E. J.

TAINTED TEXTBOOKS

The Menace of Nationalism in Education. By J. F. Scott. (Allen and Unwin. 6s. 6d.)

This book is not a complete exposure of the propaganda of "hate" in school textbooks, because it does not include the well-known persecutions of free opinion in the United States and the Hearst campaigns against pro-British textbooks there; nor does it deal with the Prussianism of the Japanese school system so well described in the January issue of *Sennacieca Revuo*. But Mr. Scott, by examining French, German and English schoolbooks, has done well in part a job which greatly needed attention.

In the Soviet schools the T.U.C. delegation found that "History in all cases is almost entirely confined to social and political aspects of the nations of the world, the growth of civilisation and its effect on the workers of various countries. Social reformers, their lives and creeds, have entirely taken the place of the history of kings and dynasties. The wrongs and oppressions to which the people have been subjected by the ruling classes are strongly emphasised." Unfortunately the author ignores this development and is only out to expose *nationalist* bias and perversion which he attacks as an obstacle to the League of Nations. His only positive remedies are the use of Esperanto, and the submission of all history books to a committee of the League of Nations in order to

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delete all incorrect and biased statements. He fears that our French teacher comrades of *L'Ecole Emancipée* will associate their internationalism with the class struggle and thus lose support for their attack upon "drum and trumpet" history.

Most space is devoted to France where, after 1871, a centralised school system was consciously devoted to inculcating patriotism and loyalty to the Republic and against clerical and monarchist influences. In June, 1922, M. Leon Berard, then Minister of Public Instruction, forbade the teaching of Esperanto in the public schools because he thought it would separate "language and fatherland" and was "an instrument of a systematic internationalism, enemy of the national languages." Some of the infants' readers widely used still repeat stories of German atrocities and describe France as "the land of liberty and justice."

The story of the German textbooks is more tragic. After the Revolution, Hoffman and Haenisch made bold attempts to clear away the poison of nationalist hate and revenge from the schools. But in the bargaining of the Social Democrats, the Ministry of Education was handed back to a reactionary and, with few exceptions, the new textbooks preach the usual patriotism of hatred against other countries. Kaiserism still persists in the schools.

In Britain there was no struggle to take the schools from clericalism and the State cult is not so blatant, but Mr. Scott gives us some choice examples of that boundless Curzonian conceit in the essential rightness of the British Empire; of omissions concerning the breaking of international law at Copenhagen in 1804, and the refusal to evacuate Malta in 1802 despite a treaty pledge to do so; and also examples of widely used textbooks which still repeat the myth of the sole war guilt of Germany in 1914.

A reading of this book shocks one by revealing the gulf between the teaching of the schools and the necessary world outlook. The Teachers' Labour League will find it of assistance in their campaign against imperialist textbooks. If our teachers and investigators approach the facts of history in the spirit of science,

they will not only try to remove nationalist bias, as Mr. Scott has tried to do, but they will clear away the menace of capitalist class bias also.

M. S.

PEACE—PERHAPS !!

Information on the Reduction of Armaments. By J. W. Wheeler-Bennett, Junior. (Allen and Unwin. 10s.)

This book, in presenting "the essential facts of the history of the disarmament discussions from the Peace Conference of Paris to the present day," naturally pays most attention to the wordy pronouncements at the meetings of the League of (capitalist) Nations.

Great stress is laid throughout on the fact that "aggressive war is an international crime," and in the event of a war breaking out it is suggested that the Council of the League should meet and within four days decide who is the "aggressor" so that the other members of the League may know which side they are to support. No definite definition of "aggression" has, however, yet been arrived at.

While the Secret Service estimates in all capitalist countries continue to rise each year, it is amusing to be reminded that in the original "Covenant of the League of Nations" it is stated that "The Members of the League undertake to interchange full and frank information as to the scale of their armaments, their military, naval and air programmes and the condition of such of their industries as are adaptable to war-like purposes."

Austen Chamberlain, in his speech against the "Protocol" (March, 1925), said, "It is unnecessary to lay stress upon the sympathy felt throughout the British Empire with any effort to improve the international machinery for maintaining the peace of the world." All the other capitalist representatives speak in similar terms, but the record of negotiations in this book shows clearly that nothing definite in the reduction, much less the abolition, of armaments will come while capitalism reigns over five-sixths of the world. Armaments are a vital necessity to modern capitalist States for use in the periodical wars resulting from their struggles for markets, sources of raw

material and colonial areas, and will never be abolished until the world's workers unite to destroy capitalism itself which merely uses militarism and armaments to maintain its power. This great change will be accomplished not through, but in spite of, the League of Nations.

J. E. M.

ECONOMIC DETERMINISM

Social Aspects of the Business Cycle.
By Dorothy Swaine Thomas, Ph.D.
(Routledge. 10s. 6d. net.)

This book gives the results of research in Britain and U.S.A. into the connection between fluctuations in trade and social phenomena, such as marriages, illegitimate births, divorces, alcoholism, crime, deaths from tuberculosis and suicides. Some preliminary results of the investigation were given by the author in an article in The PLEBS of September, 1923. Here the fuller results are set out in detail, together with a survey of other discussions of the problem, and a description of the method of investigation adopted. The whole is a very admirable example of the statistical approach to economic problems—building up laws by "induction" from observed sequences and correlations—in which considerable headway is being made in America; and as a study in method alone the book is of interest.

But the conclusions themselves are of considerable importance; and quite often they are the opposite of what one would expect. Marriage-rates and birth-rates are found to vary directly with conditions of trade and employment, and more closely in U.S.A. than in England; and this is also the case with divorces in U.S.A., but not in England. Illegitimate births and suicides, on the other hand, increase

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during periods of unemployment. In U.S.A. crimes both against property and person show a slight correlation with unemployment; but in England this only applies to crimes against property. Contrary to what one would expect, however, deaths from childbirth and tuberculosis and infant mortality increase during trade prosperity and decrease during depression, the possible explanation being "the greater employment of women in times of prosperity, the greater substitution of artificial for breast feeding at such times, and the tendency for certain infant deaths to occur because of the drunkenness of the parents." Combined with this there is possibly the effect of the increased exploitation through "speeding up" by employers during a trade boom. At any rate, the worker seems to get the worst of both worlds!

M. H. D.

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A GERMAN LABOUR COLLEGE

FIFTY members of German Trade Unions are in residence at Schloss-Tinz Labour College, near Gera, in Thuringia, Germany. They came to the school in August, and will leave for their homes at the end of December, after completing the five months' course.

Schloss-Tinz is controlled by a Governing Board, in which the Social Democratic Party and the Trade Unions are represented. Twice each year these groups send fifty students, twenty-five from the Party and twenty-five from the Trade Unions. For each student a fee of 125 marks per term is required. This covers board, lodging and instruction. In addition to paying this fee for its students the Social Democratic Party provides a monthly allowance of 10 marks for pocket money, and a total of 50 marks for books. Two consecutive five-months terms for men (August to December and January to June) are followed by a single term for women.

The life of these students is simple and severe, almost Spartan-like in character. Serious minded, eager to learn, keenly interested in political and economic questions, they devote most of their time to class-work and study. From five to seven hours each day are spent in the class-room. Lectures are given by three resident instructors in Economics, its theory and problems, History, from the sociological and economic point of view, Literature and Art (the latter usually illustrated). From time to time visiting teachers give courses in the German Constitution, Government, Child Education, Labour Protection and Labour Laws, and Trade Union Organisation. During the term for women, special stress is laid on problems particularly pertaining to women. Seminar or literary readings are held frequently in the evenings.

The students must rise for a 7.15 breakfast, as lectures begin at 7.45 a.m. The meals—breakfast, dinner, afternoon coffee and supper—would

be considered by the average American or English student as exceedingly meagre.

Breakfast: Coffee prepared from grain, with milk but without sugar; bread and butter.

Dinner: One simple dish consisting of a combination of potatoes and meat, or potatoes and cabbage, or potatoes, cheese and apple sauce.

Coffee: Coffee as above with dry bread; marmalade.

Supper: Soup; coffee or cocoa; bread and margarine (or lard).

The students do not assist in the cooking or the dish-washing, but must spend six hours each week in preparing vegetables, in garden work, wood cutting, carpentering and any necessary repair work.

The time not spent in the class-room, dining-hall, or in practical work is used for the most part in study. Even the so-called "spielzimmer" (social hall) is habitually quiet.

At ten o'clock the outside doors are locked, and all lights must be out. Special permission to remain out later, and the necessary bunch of keys, can be had for the asking. Any light needed after ten o'clock must be provided by the students themselves in the form of candles.

Disciplinary measures of any kind seem quite unnecessary. There are but few rules, and the students accept them without question. Drinking is forbidden, and smoking is confined to a single room. Only ten members of the present student body are smokers.

The students sing at the beginning of each morning session. They sing with equal vigour as they peel potatoes after dinner. One senses no suppression of life or of feeling. As Mr. Braunthal, the Director, puts it:

"Our life is characterised by deep feeling, a high co-operative culture. There is co-operation in spirit, in

striving, in will, in feeling. We have no punishment, and no forcible discipline. In its place we have simple democratic school organisation."

Applicants to the school must meet only two requirements: First, they must not have attended any school higher than a grammar school. Second, they must be between eighteen and thirty years of age. All students are of course members of trade unions, and all but one are members of the Socialist Party. During the present term the Metal Trades Union has the largest representation.

Until 1923 Schloss-Tinz was supported from the Von Reuss Estate, which the Workers and Soldiers' Council had captured from a deposed Thuringian prince. In 1923, however, most of the foundation passed into the hands of the Thuringian State, which still

supports the school in part, but not so generously as before.

The aim of the school, as expressed by the Director, is to develop a Socialist viewpoint and a Socialist character through self-discipline and discussion. The Marxian interpretation is stressed in the class-room presentation of economics and of social questions. Far from wishing to be either a strictly party or vocational school, however, the school aims to express the desires and fulfil the needs of the working-class of Germany. "It responds to the sprouting culture in the Socialist soil, and step by step strives to work out the aim of Socialist culture."

NELLIE SEEDS NEARING.
SCOTT NEARING.

Heimvolkshochschule,
Schloss-Tinz, Gera, R. Germany.

HOPE

I LOOKED out on my garden
One wintry morn,
Wind-swept, storm-tossed,
And all forlorn,

When from the pall of soot-swept snow
A primrose peeped,
Pale-faced, sad-eyed,
But my heart leaped!

I look upon the workers, sore oppressed
By vile class greed,
Mind-starved, and driven
By hunger's need.

But faintly from the slave-ridden ranks
A murmur swells,
Discordant, harsh,
But hope it spells!

LEONORA THOMAS.

The NATIONAL COUNCIL of LABOUR COLLEGES

HEAD OFFICE—62 HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH

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

A U.B.T.W. and No More War movement.—In reply to an appeal for funds from the "No More War Movement" the Executive of the A.U.B.T.W. stated that it could not see its way to make a grant as it believed that war was inseparable from the capitalist system and that the most effective method of removing the cause of war was to abolish the system. The Union considers it is already doing effective work towards this end by organising and financing I.W.C.E. for its members.

Surrey Labour Federation.—At the Quarterly Conference of the Federation of Trades Councils and Labour Parties, it was decided that one important feature at the next Conference of the rally should be a Conference on "Workers' Education in Rural Areas" to be held in co-operation with the National Council of Labour Colleges.

N.U.R.—The question of an N.C.L.C. Educational Scheme is being raised at the A.G.M. All our supporters are asked to ensure that the N.U.R. steps into line with other progressive organisations.

Winter Classes.—Steps should now be taken to arrange the classes for next

winter so that it will be possible for each Division to have a list of its classes by the end of August.

Engineering and Shipbuilding Draughtsmen.—Free Scholarships are available for the N.C.L.C. Summer School. Applications should be sent to the Union and also to the N.C.L.C. Office.

National Summer School.—The A.U.B.T.W., the Irish Transport Workers' Union and the Transport and General Workers' Union, are amongst those which have arranged scholarships to the N.C.L.C. Summer School at Scarborough. What is your Union or Trades Council doing?

Correspondence Course Department.—Special attention is drawn to the new course of nine lessons on Orthodox and Marxian Economics, which is intended for advanced students. This course will be of great value to many of our Economics tutors because few if any of the readily available books on Marxian Economics deal with the most recent theories of Orthodox Economy. The cost of the course is 16s. A further new course now available is on Geography and Imperial Power. This takes the place of the old course on

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Annual Sub.—One Bob.

Economic Geography and is drafted on the new model courses. The course is one of twelve lessons and costs one guinea.

We are continually receiving appreciative letters from our Correspondence Course students. The following has just come in from a local Class Secretary who also represents his Union on one of our Divisional Councils:—

"This English Course is the best ever; those comrades who condemn it do not know the value of it to backward people like me. I can recommend it to the most ignorant individual that might be in our Movement. Thanks to your English Course, I opened the greatest open-air demonstration ever held in this town last Sunday afternoon (a mass of people—5,000 or more in number). I have received congratulations from everywhere. It was my first attempt, and words came easily. The meeting was a huge success. I'll urge every comrade in our movement down here to take N.C.L.C. English."

New Affiliations received during April.

—London Division, 5; Andover, 1; Birmingham, 1; Leicester, 1; Liverpool, 1; Peterborough, 1; South East Lancs Area, 1; Stirlingshire, 1. What is your College doing?

What the Divisions are doing

Div. 1.—About six classes still running. Will comrades get busy and try to arrange for some short course classes in districts which had no classes during the past winter? All our ordinary activities, of course, ceased during the strike and the organiser, together with the resident Labour College Students, spent the whole period addressing meetings in various parts of London and in helping in the running of local bulletins. Tutors and students throughout London assisted in addressing meetings and acted on Councils of Action.

Div. 2.—Salisbury Class just commenced a new course of lectures on "Local Government" with a former class member as tutor. A week-end school is also to be held on 20th June—speaker: M. H. Dobb. Day and week-end schools are being arranged at Eastleigh, Bournemouth, Guildford, Oxford, Farnborough and Littlehampton. There will be a big N.C.L.C. Rally at Southwoods on 13th June.

Lectures and Addresses will be given by Wynn Cuthbert, George Waddell (President A.U.B.T.W.); J. E. Mathews (N.C.L.C. Lecturer for Sussex); J. Knight of Guildford and the Organiser. All N.C.L.C.ers in Sussex cordially invited. Will comrades at Brighton, Portsmouth and Guildford make their own arrangements to come along? Details of the day's programme will be supplied by the Littlehampton Class Secretary. Eastleigh Class is displaying a fine spirit of determination to extend N.C.L.C. work in their immediate neighbourhood. Some of the members are doing good work at Southampton, Romsey and Winchester. Union Branches at Winchester are discontinuing affiliation to the W.E.A. and transferring their support to the N.C.L.C.

Div. 3.—The One-Day schools held on 2nd May at Southend and Slough went well. "The Hairy Ape" read by T. Ashcroft and "Masses and Man" read by K. and M. Starr again proved worth while in creating interest. For the Divisional Conference, which the strike postponed to 3rd and 4th July, some interesting reports have arrived. St. Albans Class under Comrade Parsons (L.R.D.) claims to have studied the Coal Commission report on the day of its issue; analysed the Electricity Bill while it was being discussed in Parliament; and investigated the high relative prosperity of luxury trades and hotel capitalism as a sign of capitalist decay—all this in a course on "Modern Problems." "Yes, we have no (academic) bananas!" On 6th June two new classes are starting at Peterborough where for the morning Esperanto Class the direct method is being used by *Petro*, a textbook proletarian both in price and contents. Bedford is using T. Ashcroft's visit (6th June) to start off its postponed class on Trade Unionism. Brentwood Class wound up with a presentation to its teacher, Miss Thompson. We are proud to state that all our secretaries and teachers were active in the Nine Days which, according to report, shook the dust off the Constitution.

Div. 4.—Penarth School was postponed as a result of the Strike. Eighty-five competitors desire to sit in the exams. for the Divisional Scholarship to Penarth. The Division is offering a Scholarship to the National Summer

School. Like other organisers the South Wales organiser addressed many strike meetings.

Div. 5.—This Division did its part in April to prepare the minds of members of affiliated organisations for the struggle. Sixteen popular lectures were given at branches of affiliated Unions during April, the "Economics of the Coal Crisis" being the chief subject. The Strike is past and it can be truly said that our Lectures on the Coal Crisis and the big quantity of literature disposed of had their influence on the rank and file in responding to the call of the T.U.C. During the next few months affiliated branches are asked to invite a speaker to attend to address the members on "The Lessons of the Strike." At Westbury (Wilts) the A.S.L.E. and F. arranged a meeting in conjunction with the N.U.R. It was a huge success and many thanks to D. Carter of Bristol for addressing this and two other meetings in the Division. Cheltenham and Lydney Branches of the A.S.L.E. and F. invited the wives of the members to the lectures. Others please copy. A class for tutors and propagandists is beginning on Wednesday, 26th May, at the Kingsley Hall, Bristol.

Div. 6.—An intensive campaign is in progress among the Trade Union Branches in this Division and considerable interest is being manifested in the work of the College Movement. A very successful Conference and Week-end School was held at Walsall on the 17th and 18th April, 90 students attending. The Walsall Class has formed itself into a rambling club and a programme covering the summer months has been arranged. During the industrial struggle Organiser Barr acted as Assistant Secretary to the Birmingham Trade Union Emergency Committee and along with the other members of that Committee, he was arrested under the E.P.A. and fined £10.

Div. 7.—Leeds Labour College held a very successful Annual Conference at which 150 delegates were present to hear the report on a satisfactory year's work. The Conference Speaker was Comrade Saklatvala, M.P. Congratulations to the Secretary, Comrade Wormald, and all who assisted. N.C.L.C. Conferences were held at Sheffield and Doncaster. The latter

easily eclipsed Sheffield from the point of view of results achieved, and was followed by a demonstration at which 2,000 were present. Organiser Shaw acted as Chairman of the Huddersfield Strike Committee.

Div. 8.—Students and tutors were fully occupied with strike activities. The Divisional Organiser reports that they did justice to our Movement. Arrangements are being made for Day and week-end schools. Is your Organisation financially supporting our work? The Division is making arrangements to be represented at the National Training Centre.

Div. 9.—Durham Conference has been postponed as a result of the Strike.

Div. 10 — Scotland. — Edinburgh Labour College's Annual Conference had a record attendance of delegates and was addressed by John Wheatley, M.P. The number of classes held in Edinburgh District during the year was 55, while the students totalled 1,384. The affiliation fees from local organisations amounted to £248. The Secretary, A. Woodburn, the Staff-Tutor, C. L. Gibbons, along with the voluntary tutors and the Committee are entitled to hearty congratulations. Glasgow L.C. has arranged a debate on Economics in response to a challenge from a W.E.A. tutor. Dumfries College is holding a propaganda conference. Throughout Scotland College tutors and students have played their part during the strike and quite a number have been fined or imprisoned. Fyfe, Perth and Dundee Areas last year ran 29 Classes with 632 students, an increase of 12 and 263 respectively over the previous year. That takes some beating.

Div. 11 — Ireland.—The Tutor's Training Class suspended the usual curriculum in order to devote as much time as possible to the Coal Crisis. The A.E.U. Branches are up-to-date, leading the way in the number of bookings for the special lectures offered to affiliated organisations, "The Problem of Unemployment" being in great demand.

Div. 12.—Tutors and students have been very active in the strike. Vin Williams has been arrested and sentenced to three months imprisonment. George Williams of Mansfield has also been under arrest. A con-

siderable number of week-end schools have now been arranged.

List of Day and Week-end Schools

Clayton-le-Dale, 5th and 6th June, 1926. (G. Holt, 116, Rectory Road, Burnley, Lancs.)

Birkenhead, 5th and 6th June, 1926. (J. Hamilton, 11, Channell Road, Fairfield, Liverpool.)

Bedford, 6th June, 1926. (Mark Starr, 25, New Street, London, S.W.1.)

Altrincham, 11th and 13th June, 1926. (E. Redfern, 1, Langdale Avenue, Reddish, Stockport.)

Southwoods, Littlehampton, 13th June, 1926. (D. W. Thomas, 35, Crescent Grove, South Side, Clapham Common, S.W.4.)

Tottington, near Bury, 12th and 13th June, 1926. (E. Redfern, 1, Langdale Avenue, Reddish, Stockport.)

Directory.—Additions and Corrections

Div. 4.—Maesteg L.C., Sec. : Maldwyn Thomas, 33, Victoria Street, Caerau, Maesteg, South Wales.

Div. 5.—Bath L.C., Sec. : W. P. Reed, 4, Cross Lane, Monmouth Street, Bath.

„ Newton Abbot C.G., Sec. : W. Gameson, 32, Salisbury Road, Newton Abbot, Devon.

Div. 5.—Plymouth L.C., Sec. : A. Pitt, 16, Sydney Street, Plymouth.

„ Swindon L.C., Sec. : C. W. Sprittles, 69, Redcliffe Street, Swindon, Wilts.

Div. 6.—Divisional Organiser : J. Stuart Barr, 44, Park Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham.

Div. 7.—Leeds L.C., Sec. : R. Mack, 2, Exeter Street, Woodhouse Lane, Leeds.

Div. 8.—Accrington L.C., Sec. : W. Mason, 162, Higher Antley, Accrington.

„ Darwen L.C., Sec. : J. Baron, 66, Vernon Street, Darwen, Lancs.

„ Barnoldswick L.C., Sec. : H. Whittaker, 8, Ether Street, Barnoldswick, via Colne.

Div. 9.—Carlisle L.C., Sec. : G. Sarginson, 103, Bower Street, Newtown, Carlisle.

Div. 10.—Dundee D.C., Sec. : H. Shaw, 2, Carmichael Street, Dundee.

„ Perth L.C., Sec. : W. Gibson, Whitefriar Street, Perth.

Div. 11.—Londonderry L.C., Sec. : R. Molloy, c/o Mrs. J. Usher, 12, Grove Place, Londonderry.

THE PLEBS BOOKSHELF

“THE workers must emancipate themselves”; and one of the best things about the closing down of the Press during the Strike was the incentive thus provided for strike committees to get down to the job of writing and publishing their own bulletins, news sheets and manifestoes. I picked up specimens of quite a few of these in various parts of England during the Nine Days, and I intend to keep them. [If this meets the eye of any comrade with odd copies to spare of any local bulletin I should be only too glad, before binding them together, to add further items to my collection.]

Some of the bulletins confined themselves strictly to news—brought through from other centres by despatch riders, or condensed from the *British Worker*. Others indulged in comments; and of

these last those issued by the York Central Strike Committee are among the best and brightest I've seen. On the last day of the Strike, under the grimly appropriate heading, “A Sense of Humour is a Sense of Proportion,” York's opening paragraph was:—

We are told that a judge has said this strike is illegal, and that someone else says we ought all to have given a month's notice to enable the other side to get ready. If there's anything else they'd like us to do, perhaps they'll let us know. Meantime the British miner's answer is Cook—who? Cook—who?

The same issue has a local news par. which arouses one's curiosity:—

A.S.L.E. & F. members would like to know if the Loco. Dept. Inspector

at Dringhouses was merely keeping his plus-fours dry, or was discussing the advisability of joining us.

I should like to know the full story about the plus-fours.

An earlier number of the York bulletin had as headline, "Our Fight is for Freedom and Right against Greedom and Fright." Lower down the sheet was this delightful item :—

A large lorry passed through York this morning bearing the following advertisement—

MASTERS

SUPPLY COAL, COKE, AND BREEZE

We are not getting any of them up !

My copies of the Merseyside, Northwich, Westminster and Darlington bulletins and of the Birmingham *Worker* and Black Country *Worker*, though all of them interesting and valuable as news sheets, contain nothing quotable ; but here is a nice par. from a Worksop bulletin (12.5.26) :—" Local passenger train being run from here to Doncaster with traction-engine driver as driver and local fishmonger as fireman. Their last hope !" The Newark News Sheet (11.5.26) had this cheery item among its local reports :—" SOUTHWELL—Not seen a train for a week. Heard of a few on the wireless !" I have a feeling that if Eccleston Square had taken no more notice of the wireless than Southwell evidently did, things might have been different. At Stafford, too, they took the measure of the wireless " news " and included this notice in the bulletin (6.5.26)—" The public are warned to take the Wireless News, especially that appearing in the *Advertiser* Office windows, with a grain of salt."

All the bulletins from which I have quoted—and most of those issued in all parts of the country—were of course typewritten and duplicated sheets. The Spen and District (Durham) Trades Council, however, had a 4 pp. printed newspaper out on the very first day of the Strike. That was good work. If it be true, as I am told, that further issues, and similar printed sheets elsewhere, were held up or delayed because the printing trades' unions couldn't see the difference between working on strike bulletins published by workers' councils and working for capitalist newspapers, then it's high time we

LET
US HAVE
YOUR ORDER
FOR OUR NEW
TEXTBOOK
NOW

I.W.C.E.ers tackled the job of educating those unions—or their officials—in a few elementary principles of class-consciousness and commonsense. If the clerks and typists who worked duplicating machines had been equally obtuse a vitally important weapon would have been lost to our side.

I did not read the *British Gazette* regularly. But I'm treasuring one copy (11.5.26) which "featured" the following verse of Kipling's :—

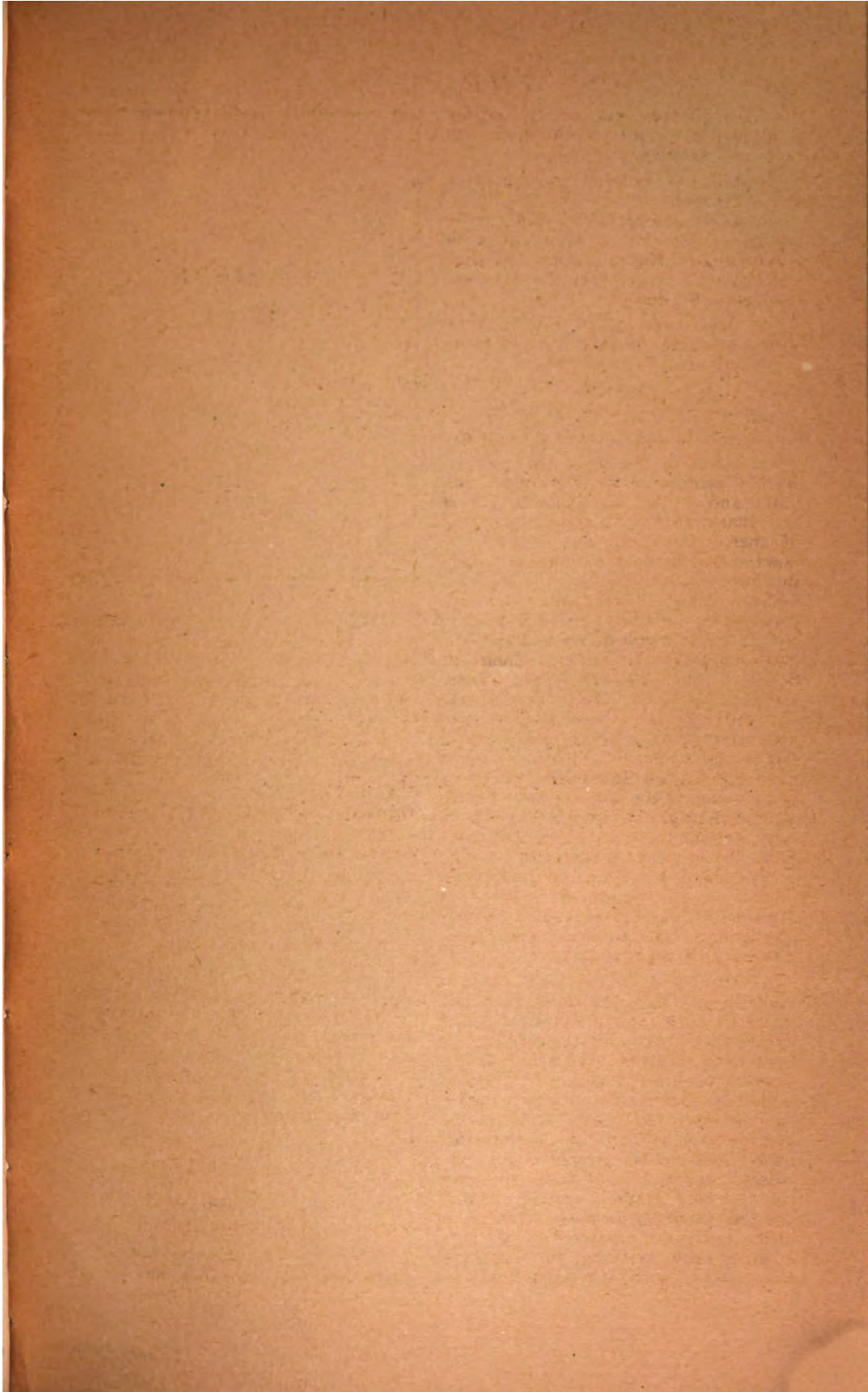
" From panic, pride, and terror,
Revenge that knows no rein,
Light haste and lawless error,
Protect us yet again."

" From panic, pride, and terror . . ."
My God ! When one thinks of the crowd of half-drunk members of the peerage and beerge (of both sexes) who crowded the *Morning Post* offices nightly and "helped" to get the *Gazette* out, one realises that they had some need to pray that prayer !

J. F. H.

ANSWERS TO
CORRESPONDENTS

Zoologist.—Yes, the elephant on our cover this month is a pink one.



THE WORKERS' BATTLE FRONTS

The Trade Union Movement wages the workers' war in the field of industry.

The Workers' Political Movement carries on the struggle in politics.

The National Council of Labour Colleges gives battle in the sphere of education.

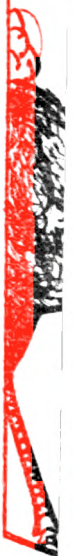
Every Trade Union should have an N.C.L.C. educational scheme providing free access to classes, free correspondence courses, and free access to non-residential day and week-end schools. Such Unions as the A.E.U., A.U.B.T.W., N.U.D.A.W., Plasterers, Sheet Metal Workers, Bury Textile Warehousemen, National Union of Textile Workers, Derbyshire Miners, Shale Miners, A.S.L.E. & F., Managers & Overlookers, N.A.F.T.A., Tailors & Garment Workers, etc., have N.C.L.C. educational schemes.

Has YOURS?

Send 3d. stamps to J. P. M. Millar, *Gen. Sec.*, N.C.L.C., 62 Hanover St., Edinburgh, for "Education for Emancipation" and full particulars of N.C.L.C. Correspondence Courses.

Jul

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