

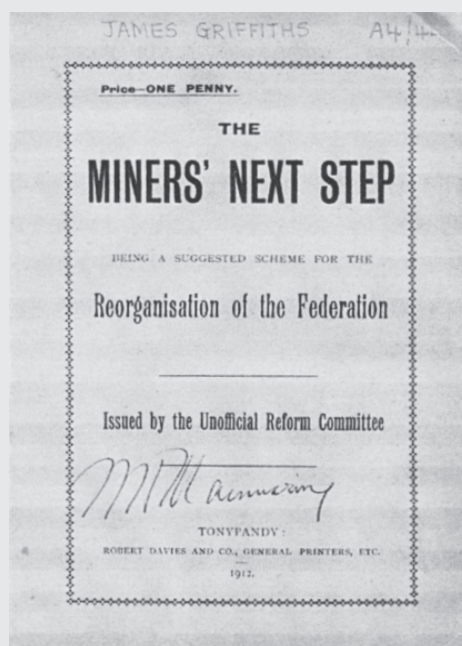
## OUR HISTORY

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## The Miners' Next Step (1912)

The Miners Next Step was a pamphlet setting out a suggested scheme for the reorganisation of the South Wales Federation of Miners Unions, published by an 'unofficial reform committee' based in Tonypanydy in South Wales. The pamphlet was drawn up by a group of miners – Noah Ablett, Will Hay, W H Mainwaring, George Dolling, Noah Rees and C L Gibbons. Mainwaring acted as committee secretary. Ablett and Hay had previously published an article on 'a minimum wage for the miners' in Tom Mann's Industrial Syndicalist. Hay was editor of the South Wales Worker. Ablett and Rees had been sponsored by the miners union to study at Ruskin College in Oxford in 1907. Rees returned to South Wales as secretary of the Cambrian lodge of the union and was active in the Cambrian Combine Committee strike of 1910-11. Ablett, elected checkweigher in the Masdy colliery, was involved in the establishment of the Plebs League in 1908 and the foundation of the Central Labour College as a marxist alternative to Ruskin. Ablett became a governor of the college and contributed an article on the case for independent working-class education to the first issue of the Plebs journal. His writings for Plebs were published in a 1919 volume Easy Outlines of Economics. Between 1921 and 1926, Ablett served on the executive committee of the Miners Federation of Great Britain. He remained a militant socialist and was arrested and fined for a speech during

the 1926 general strike. Mainwaring joined the Communist Party. Both Ablett and Mainwaring were candidates for the general secretaryship of the MFGB in 1924, a contest which was won by A J Cook.



*“Our objective begins to take shape before your eyes. Every industry thoroughly organised, in the first place, to fight, to gain control of, and then to administer, the industry. The co-ordination of all industries on a Central Production Board, who, with a statistical department to ascertain the needs of the people, will issue its demands on the different departments of industry, leaving to the men themselves to determine under what conditions and how, the work should be done. This would mean real democracy in real life, making for real manhood and womanhood. Any other form of democracy is a delusion and a snare.*

*“And with this realization, the age-long oppression of Labour will draw to an end. The weary sigh of the over driven slave, pitilessly exploited and regarded as an animated tool of burden; the mediaeval and fast bound to the soil, and life-long prisoner of the lord's domain, subject to all the caprices of his lord's lust or anger; the modern wage slave, with nothing but his labour to sell, selling that, with his manhood as a wrapper, in the world's market place for a mess of pottage: these are phases of slavery, and mankind shall at last have leisure and inclination to really live as men, and not as the beasts which perish.”*



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