

Western Clarion

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VANCOUVER, B. C. FEBRUARY 15, 1922.

NOTHING SPECTACULAR.

It seems to be expected of the Clarion these days that it shall permanently enter the lists of controversy with those among whom the spectacular is something of a cult. The spectacular, we take it, insofar as it has literary application hereabouts, consists of a circus-like tendency whereby what has come to be known facetiously as a "policy"—not an accident policy, but an editorial "policy"—turns somersault every other week.

Fortunately, such vagaries and whimsicalities, emanating from the grave-yard of the working class intellect—the putative labor press—die young and are soon forgotten. The reward of innocent authorship, as Mencken says, is something akin to the satisfaction achieved by a hen every time she lays an egg—the high aspiration, of course, is akin to the satisfaction that came to Beethoven when he wrote the Fifth Symphony.

We are somewhat inclined now and then to suppress expression of our ideas on grounds of decorum, and while we like to be civil and obliging always we are not disposed to keep up a constant literary vigil over anyone who chooses to follow a "policy" written one week with the right hand and next week with the left. There is evidence enough that those who aspire to control events find it difficult to control themselves, and if we on our part are charged with being rigid and inflexible (which is the charge we have always had levelled against us by the reform elements), we plead hopefully that it is better to be rigid than to require a straight-jacket to curb a tendency toward political lunacy.

Programs, policies (so called) and action are favorite words these days. The spectacular performance is "the thing". Its opposite is visited with disgrace. The leader, newly arisen, despises the "academy" and for good reason—there is no room for leadership there, no room for the public chatter-box. "Policy" and "tactics," considered as articles of popular faith are found, when applied, to serve as excuses for a sort of calculated foolishness that passes for leadership where leadership is more of a nuisance than a help.

The socialist student is charged nowadays with wasting his time. He should be in the parade. Tactics should take first place in consideration by the working class, for, must not an army advance and retreat in the face of the enemy? Where would an army be if it stood rigid and sought no acquaintance with tactics? These are the common illustrations used to bring out the need for tactics.

Well, we have already confessed that we are not skilled in tactics, but we know this, that no army need ever enter the field without ammunition. Without ammunition there is no army of any account as a fighting force. Without ammunition tactics can never save an army from annihilation, to say nothing of its uselessness against the enemy in such a case.

The need of the working class is a knowledge of the class nature of the capitalist order. We want to destroy capitalism; they don't. They don't know why. Just as all armies depend upon the laboratory, upon the technique of chemistry, for their weapons of offence, so the working class must seek its ammunition in understanding.

The "academy"—the school of working class education—has been scoffed at. It is not popular, but it lives and it will live and thrive so long as working class ignorance remains to be dispelled as a stumbling block in the way of working class freedom. Against this there has been set persuasive leadership which, even though it be a new expression of the old vanity has had a brief innings hereabouts as an attraction and is already a forlorn hope. "The pleasures of sudden wonder are soon exhausted," as Dr. Johnson has it, and salvation from wage-dorm through leadership, as a new creed in the west, has already fallen short.

Politics, tactics, programmes—these may be of use as time arises. They can never be set down from a book of instructions for universal swallowing. As we see it, the need of the hour is understanding. Our closest ally in developing understanding is unfolding capitalism and the problem it presents more insistently day by day to the working class. Working class education must parallel industrial development. There is nothing spectacular in prompting working class understanding. The process is slow, but it is the most valuable, lasting work that is being done today. There is no possible alternative that now presents itself. Let us keep at it.

THE "WESTERN CLARION" APPEALS TO THE READER

Buddy, there is one fact about life which is worth keeping in mind; there is no purpose or understanding back of it urging and guiding it onwards to some pre-determined goal: no purpose or understanding other than our own.

When ever you are prepared to make a careful self-analysis, Buddy, you will find abundant evidence within yourself and, if this is not enough, there are all the facts which patient investigators have gathered in every field of science from astronomy to psycho-analysis, corroborative evidence which may convince you that this is so.

Life has been a procession from one form to another, a procession marked by an infinite number of more or less painful experiences along the wayside: experiences, Buddy, which are wrought into our physical and mental frameworks, and express themselves in us as instincts, habits, and customs.

When you were a child, Buddy, why did you "fear the dark?" Was it because remote relations of yours passed through such painful experiences in the dark they instinctively dreaded it?

For what reason do we exalt and glorify leaders? Is it because the most persistent habit of mankind at all times has been to make gods?

They have made them, Buddy, in divers forms to ward off disaster or social catastrophe. But never in one solitary instance did the gods prevent such from stealthily creeping upon the community and silently destroying it.

Why do we, the sons of slave parents, vote for our masters, even though in conversation before the votes are cast we roundly condemn them? Custom!

Buddy, let us look at a question which concerns our class and not our class any less than society in general: have we got a social concept akin to the social nature of production; or, have we got one developed during feudalism, when individual ownership of the tool lent character and substance to a private-property concept?

This is a question which you must think over, Buddy, and the "Clarion" will help you to think more clearly; it supplies you with facts which will enable you to get a new view point.

And, by the way, I spoke of purpose early on in these rambling remarks. What is your purpose in life? If not, why not?

Take the "Clarion" around to your friends, ask them to read it; and when they have done so make them "come through" with a sub.

The "Clarion" must have a circulation, by the end of this year, of at least 10,000 copies, all paid for. And an assurance in the shape of yearly subs.—will help the "staff" to continue their efforts to rob the boss, gain time for the work of digging for facts,

and explaining them when found.

To induce you to take up this purpose of rustling subs. the "Clarion" offers you two books, "The Positive Outcome of Philosophy" (Dietzgen) and "The Social Revolution" (Kautsky), as a prize for the highest number of subs. between now and the end of March. The next highest will receive "the Industrial History of England" (de Gibbins).

Now, Buddy, go get 'em!

R. K.

HERE AND NOW.

Modesty is our weakness, of course, but we cheerfully lay the Clarion before your attention and confidently debit your interest with a dollar for twenty consecutive issues. Send it now.

Follows the yield to the debiting process since our last financial prayer:—

We direct the attention of our readers, Here and Now, to the importunities of Comrade Kirk in another column.

If there is an hall-marked device known to sub-hunters which lends facility to the easy flow of subscriptions we are strangers to it. Yet the subs. must come. The one and only device upon which the Clarion has relied throughout the years for subs. has been a reliance upon truth telling concerning matters of interest to the working class.

We rely upon that and will continue to rest our argument for subs on that. We have no eye for sensationalism it is true, and thus we are not popular. We never were.

Following \$1 each: E. Johnson, Dr. Williams, J. Coutts, H. Adie, B. Tamarkin, Wm. Churchill, H. A. Wiertz, F. Tippiffing, J. Mitchell, N. MacAulay, R. S. Lugin, A. R. Sinclair, R. H. Cole, J. F. Knorr, Mrs. Saunders, H. Maitland, C. W. Springford, F. W. Warder, J. Peabody, Mrs. Griffith, W. Lott.

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