Western Clarion

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VANCOUVER, B.C., FEBRUARY 1, 1922

ACROBATIC LEADERSHIP.

LAST issue we committed ourselves to the statement that we did not propose to examine further any windy utterances or wordy phrases given forth by the new reformers in our midst, but rather that we should wait for evidences of action (since "the time for action is here"), and then see the worth of the spoken or written words. We abide by that, for there's no use in fighting phrase-mongers.

We have heard or read nothing concerning policies and tactics from the experts in manoeuvring the working class movement since last we wrote that is not of the usual stereotyped order. Indeed, when we get a printed program or release article from the U. S. A. Workers' Party publicity source at any time, we expect to see it or most of it's phrases soon committed to the columns of one or the other of the papers printed here as Workers' Party organs—official or to be official—under the guise of home production. Likewise also with the made-to-order speeches imported from across the line under the release system, and delivered by the new missionaries as their own.

We learn that the Workers' Party of Canada have hurried along with the convention program and have set the date of the next convention at Feby. 17th, to be held in Toronto. (The argument is now on as to who are to be the delegates). That convention, we are told, will have power to set its house in order and call the new reform party by whatever name it chooses. We guess not! It will do as its managers have been told to do and the "instructional" machinery already has itself in motion to see that it does. The 21 points are subject to "proper interpretation" nowadays, and we don't seem to be able to read aright at all.

The new leaders are up against some difficulties, the chief of which is that they are themselves at one and the same time (some of them) the new and also the old leaders. There need be no very great wonder as to what is to be the official program of the new reform party in Canada. The Workers' Party of the U. S. A. has issued its program, and the Canadian program will be the same as that with a few minor alterations to suit. The few minor alterations will be the special function of the convention. There will have to be definitely settled, of course, the fate of the O. B. U. The U. S. program of the Workers' Party has relegated the O. B. U., the I. W. W., the W. I. I. U., and such like organizations that are not allied with the official labor unions, to the realms of oblivion. Their members are told to dissolve their organisations and gain entrance to the bureaucratic unions—to "bore from within." This program will have to be copied in Canada, and here arises the chief trouble of the new leaders who are (some of them) also the old leaders. They have discovered that "the O. B. U. is no task of theirs,"—not now.

But before they made the big "mistake," the O. B. U. was a chief task of theirs. They helped to promote and form it. they argued its superior form of organisation, they demonstated the fallacy of boring from within as a possibility. And what now?

Well, as we all know, those who never do anything never make mistakes. Of course not. But it's a poor policy to run around looking for a chance to make mistakes and, incidentally, he is a very shallow and weak and really only an apprentice leader who can find no better excuse for his sins than that. Our new leaders therefore, as usual, will fall back upon "tactics" as the all-powerful excuse. It was good tactics they claimed (when they were the old leaders) to bring the O. B. U. into existence. It will be good tactics they will claim (as the new leaders), to put it out. Such are the "instructions."

Now, we lay no claim to proficiency in the art of leadership, nor have we ever sat up nights devouring text books on tactics or tomes on the new emancipation strategy of the smoke screen reformers, but our innocence is sorely affronted by the bare faced effrontery of these acrobats, and we feel like calling in the psychologists to prescribe.

For our part, we know that industrial movements do not spring up that way and, by the same token, they don't go out that way either. They grow and gain strength under circumstances favorable to their existence and, provided they find a field to operate in they stay, and no amount of ordering will put them out.

The new leaders have fastened themselves upon the credulity of the working class.

Watch your leaders!

SECRETARIAL NOTES.

Comrade Frank Cassidy has been, for the past two or three months touring the Maritime Provinces spreading socialist propaganda.

The Federal elections took place while he was there, and he found some considerable organisational work in progress among the members of the Independent Labor Party. That party in various places in the maritime provinces is fairly well knit together, and Frank, after some preliminary hostility had been exhibited here and there was able to find ample opportunity to state the case for socialism. Some reports of progress appear in another column. The following message is an indication of the measure of appreciation extended to comrade Cassidy:—

INDEPENDENT LABOR PARTY OF NOVA SCOTIA
Halifax Branch

Halifax, January 16th, 1922.

To the Dominion Executive Committee of the Socialist Party of Canada:

Dear Comrades:

After a series of 13 lectures given by Comrade Frank Cassidy to meetings of workers in Halifax, N. S., a motion was passed to be sent to the Executive of the S. P. of C., informing them that Comrade Cassidy's lectures were appreciated and were of a great educational value to the workers in Halifax.

I am a former member of the S. P. of A. and S. P. of C. and have heard most of the ablest exponents of Socialism on the North American Continent (including a series of lectures by A. M. Lewis) and I consider Comrade Cassidy a very able comrade to be on the road, as a propagandist for Socialism.

Yours:

A. R. Pearson, Secretary.

P.S.—We have now formed a Marxian Club to study Economics.—A. R. P.

Comrade Cassidy will make the trek westward gradually, stopping at points here and there en route.

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Comrade Leckie's series "The Materialist Conception of History" is concluded in this issue. We have no idea just at this moment what subject Peter will spread his ink over next, but his pen will not be allowed to be idle—we'll see to that. The series just concluded has proven of value, particularly to readers in isolated agricultural areas where socialist lectures are few and far between. We have received hundreds of letters testifying to that. Leckie's efforts are not confined to writing. As a "soap-boxer," platform speaker, class room lecturer, public debater, or literature seller in public meetings or on the streets of Ottawa—at any or all of these tasks he is able and always active. During the last municipal elections in Ottawa he took a notion into his head that he could get a word to the workers by running as a candidate for office. He ran for the office of Comptroller. He always gets considerable newspaper notice in Ottawa, and the newspaper notices of "Leckie, the Bolshevist," before and after the election are quite intersting. The general comment was to the effect that he talked—not of municipal finance and indebtedness but of the reasons for unemployment, the international situation past and present, the economic causes of war and the status of wage labor. He received about 400 votes, which astonished him. He did not expect to get so much support. Incidentally, Comrade Leckie has been on the unemployed list 21 weeks out of the past 12 months. So much for an effective black-list of an active Socialist propagandist.

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The following have been expelled by Local (Vancouver) No. 1, of the S. P. of C for violation of the constitution: R. W. Hatley, J. G. Smith, J. Kavanagh, A. S. Wells.

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Bound volumes of the "Western Clarion" for the year 1921 may now be ordered. Only a limited number of copies are available for binding and orders should be in within a month, accompanied by cash—$4 per volume post paid. Some sets for the year 1920 (unbound) are still on hand. A complete set for 1920 will be mailed, post free, for $1.25.

The 1921 "Clarion" contains the full text of the discussion on the matter of affiliation with the Third International on the basis of the 21 points (which appeared first as 18 points in the translation made into English in Moscow). This discussion is worth reading now, especially in the light of the recent utterances of the new reformers, who have called themselves the Workers' Party in order to be legal and safe but who a year ago, in fact little over a month ago, advocated unconditional affiliation.

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Many enquiries have reached us from readers of the B. C. "Federationist" asking why reports of the regular Sunday evening S. P. of C. propaganda meetings in Vancouver no longer appear in that paper. The fault is not ours but lies with the management of the B. C. Federationist, Ltd. Answering the enquiries of Local No. 1, as to why our reports are not allowed to be printed, we are informed by them that they will no longer give our meetings publicity, as they have endorsed the Workers' Party. It appears, therefore, that reports of Socialist lectures by O'Connor, Pritchard, Harrington or whoever may be our speakers at any time are to be sabotaged by silence on the part of the "Federationist," while at the same time its columns have space to advertise Shoddy's clothing or Bunco's oil. This is evidently the latest move in the "tactics" necessary to fighting the capitalist class!

The "secret meeting" process which has been a feature in the larger towns throughout the country where there is an S. P. of C. local has become quite a regular feature. "Emissaries" from the Workers' Party issue invitations to the elect and the pact is made. Edmonton, Winnipeg, Calgary and Vancouver have had their day. The last is Victoria, B. C. There the emissaries went forth on the 21st in great secret (two of them) from Vancouver, with the spirit of the "mysterious stranger" as a happy memory. Somehow or other their secret departure was known all over town. We have a notion that this "secrecy" is an advertising scheme. That's how it works anyway.

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