

Western Clarion

A Journal of History, Economics, Philosophy,
and Current Events.
Published twice a month by the Socialist Party of
Canada, P. O. Box 710, Vancouver, B. C.
Entered at G. P. O. as a newspaper.

Editor _____ Ewen MacLeod

SUBSCRIPTION:

Canada, 20 issues _____ \$1.00
Foreign, 16 issues _____ \$1.00

925

If this number is on your address label your
subscription expires with next issue.
Renew promptly.

VANCOUVER, B. C., OCTOBER 1, 1924.

A CONSTANT MENACE.

A week or two ago here in Vancouver the arrest of Sam Scarlett, member of the I.W.W. and speaker for that organisation, on a deportation warrant issued at Ottawa, directed the attention particularly of all working class bodies to the processes of legal procedure whereby a man now resident in Canada who has been born elsewhere may be arrested, taken before a Board of enquiry made up of Immigration Department officials and deported or allowed to remain, as the case may be, judgment being determined by the Ottawa Department on the basis of the Board's findings and recommendations. It is true that the law in respect of these matters varies as the subject may be a naturalized Canadian citizen, a British born individual of Canadian citizenship of less than five years' standing, or a British born individual of Canadian citizenship of five years' standing or more. The Immigration Act has apparently been amended to include the intention and as far as possible the substance of the notorious Order-in-Council passed at Ottawa during the general strike period of 1919. These amendments as they have come before Parliament have been protested by the labor members there from time to time and have been passed by the House in spite of that. In the case of the threatened Scarlett deportation whereby the law as it stands has been again brought to attention in its practical workings these protests have been taken up and emphasized by all working class bodies in these parts, with the result that Scarlett has been released by the Immigration officials on instructions from Ottawa and his bondsman freed of obligations. Yet as the law stands the same procedure may be effected tomorrow or at any time and may affect anyone who, as in Scarlett's case, is British born and is of less than five years' consecutive Canadian citizenship, in which case he has no legal claim upon open court procedure but must suffer the judgment merely of Immigration Department officials. Even the daily press of Vancouver have launched their protests against this method of procedure although they consistently voice the usual and characteristic press opinion that no great harm would ensue if this law were exclusively applied to the I.W.W. and others who are said to promote a great many activities that they don't promote. However this department of law may eventually work itself out the case we have just had before us provides one more lesson to the workers who are organized in the various industrial and political bodies, a lesson which points to the ever recurring fact that labor at large when in trouble of such a kind has no organizational machinery ready to hand to provide for such contingencies but must depend upon the known broad sympathies of all workers which exist despite organizational and party differences of complexion. That is to say these sympathies are proven subject to organization but the organization comes after the fact and not before it. There is evident no foresight, no prevision and indeed little understanding of the legal menace hanging over all workers who may be considered at any time a nuisance by prejudiced officials, through directing attention to social sores. Meanwhile, the Scarlett case is at an end but the legal machinery through which it was brought out still exists and will continue to exist with a quiescent

working class opinion offering no opposition to it. Of these matters all labor bodies should take note, taking into account also consideration of ways and means to provide for future cases.

Reform or Revolution

BY J. A. McDONALD.

COMRADE "C" promised a reply to my attack on the new political policy of the S. P. of C. But after eating up almost four columns of space he admits that he did not reply. We are both in agreement on this point. But this is about as far as we can travel together.

The progress of our discussion has at least revealed one thing clearly—that "C" and myself are the exponents of two fundamentally opposite schools of thought. I contend on behalf of a position which the Socialist Party of Canada has held for upwards of twenty years, a position which I am prepared to defend at all times as being sufficient so long as that social-economic system known as Capitalism exists.

"C" on the other hand advocates a complete change in Party methods involving an alignment with labor parties, and the cessation of hostilities in respect to social reforms. This, I think is a fair premise from which to start. My first endeavor will be to present the reasons for espousing the former position and program of the Party.

Capitalist society is in every sense of the word a class system. To look at it in the light of community where society is composed of interlocking social interests that supersede all divisions, is to see it not as it is but as we might like to view it. Some consideration can be given to writers such as Belloc and Chesterton who clamor for a return to medieval times when social interests in some cases might appear paramount to those of class.

The present social organization has eliminated such a condition almost entirely, and has thrown into bold relief an incessant struggle of class against class. A numerically small section of society has control of the means of producing wealth while the overwhelming majority in order to exist, must accept the dictation of those who own and control.

We contend that under such conditions the misery of the working class cannot be alleviated, let alone removed. Our interests are bound up in the overthrow of the system by revolutionary means. Marx has pointed out in more than one instance that until a complete change is registered working class conditions must proceed from bad to worse. A knowledge of the mechanism of capitalism, taking into account the concentration of capital, and the disposal of surplus values, suffices to prove the validity of the statement.

Then, if this premise be correct, what steps can be taken by the workers to ensure the abolition of the system through the safest and surest channels? Our method proclaims that the primary requisite is to provide the working class with the knowledge that will enable them to emancipate themselves.

We understand that capitalism has developed to that stage where the conditions are ripe for the introduction of social ownership and control of the means of production. A lack of social knowledge is the great stumbling block that obscures the goal. Without knowing the nature of society little good will result from artificial injections advocated by opportunist and reformer.

Our policy is not to divert the attention of our class from the main object and present them with some petty nostrum in its place. We see, from the lessons of history, that the granting of social reforms have in no way mitigated the horrors and calamities that a class system has inflicted upon us.

"C" frequently refers to the effect of social reforms on the British workers. In what way have they benefitted? Since the time of Elizabeth or, what means the same thing, since the centralisation of the state and the taking over of those privileges previously possessed in some measure by the feudal church, England presents a vivid picture of reform agitation and introduction.

Factory acts without number have followed each

other in rapid succession through the passing years. If legal enactments placed on the statute books of a nation could prove conducive to the workers' well being, then, in England we would see the desired results. So nicely have the legislators renovated the charity dispensing apparatus that today a man can almost starve to death without feeling hungry. Yet in spite of this lavish display of paternalistic sentiment the economic conditions surrounding the workers of England were never so terrible as at present. Capitalist statisticians can be quoted to this effect.

But says "C" we must have strong, healthy workers instead of an anemic, emaciated class to bring about the revolution. A sublime desire no doubt. But if the granting of reforms ensured strong, healthy, contented workers why the necessity of a revolution at all? We could adopt an easier method and save ourselves all the trouble. The history of England, Germany, and other countries amply illustrates the fact that reforms do not operate in the manner that "C" contends they do. Regardless of all the palliatives applied the foundation of society is not disturbed.

To acquire the necessary reforms we are told that we must become a left wing of the Labor Party. This is the only advantage that can possibly accrue. Outside this factor we are reminded that the Labor Party should be given credit for sincerity. Who ever denied it? But what is accomplished when we grant the claim? The inmates of every lunatic asylum in the land are sincere. The factor of sincerity is of little use unless those who possess it are also equipped with social knowledge. This, the Labor Party of England or Canada is not blest with.

My contention is that if the Labor Party does not stand for a complete change in social affairs that we have no reason for seeking affiliation. There is nothing to gain by becoming an "impossible group" in a larger impossible party. The actions of the British Labor Government, as well as the British Labor Party, during the period of their existence proves beyond question that capitalist society is quite safe in their helping.

In some respects the Labor Government functions better than its predecessors on behalf of the ruling class of Britain. Even the most drastic proposal emanating from the Party while in opposition—The Capital Levy—might well be considered a good policy for the rulers of Britain. There is at least one member of the present Labor Government who resigned from the Liberal Party because of its opposition to the Capital Levy. Members of all shades of political opinion can be found in support of some such measure in the present chaos.

"C" after distorting the former position of the S. P. of C. and, then, using up much space in knocking down the straw man he erected ends with describing himself as a "neo-Darwinian Marxist." I would suggest by way of amendment that he strike out all the words after neo. His treatment of the issue has no connection with Darwinism or Marxism. A Bergsonian-Veblenite would be a more fitting appellation.

The great mistake appearing through all of "C's" effusions is found in his misconception of the class struggle. He fails to see the direct antagonism of interests consequent to a system of class society. He does not realize the drastic pressure that must be brought to bear by the workers before economic freedom is assured. This attitude has been induced largely, no doubt, by the nature of the material he has been reading in recent times, coupled with the lack of ability to discriminate between the useful and the useless.

Much has been contributed to modern science by the writers of the twentieth century. To continue my lengthy series of lectures in these parts I have found it necessary to consult the leading authorities of the day in practically all departments of science and thought. I have discovered that while much has been given of a beneficial nature in the past few years that there is always more chaff than wheat. This necessitates powers of discrimination that are not enhanced by camp conditions. "C" has suffered in this respect.