

## Western Clarion

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### THE ANGLO-SOVIET TREATIES.

NOW that the British and Russian delegates in conference have reached agreement on the proposed drafts of the general treaty and the commercial and navigation treaty as between Great Britain and Northern Ireland on the one hand and the Union of Soviet Republics on the other, it remains to be seen whether or not the British Parliament will provide the authorization necessary to allow the treaties to go into effect. It has been widely held, and with some apparent circumstantial justification, that in view of the unprecedented political conditions surrounding the return of the last Baldwin ministry the opportunity presented itself whereby liberal and conservative parties might encompass a definite approach toward settlement of disturbed political and commercial relationships with Russia by allowing labor to take the initiative and thus avoid, for themselves, the humiliation justly consequent upon their past actions and utterances against Russia. The appearances were there, and now that they have their bargain it remains to be seen whether they are to accept or not. Peculiarly enough, although the labor government is a minority government and is thus unable to by itself in Parliament vote ratification of the treaties it has sponsored, so also was the Baldwin government in a minority, as would also have been the liberal party had it, under the circumstances, succeeded to office. There thus arose the circumstances wherein a treaty with a foreign power cannot secure parliamentary passage without compromise among the general membership of parliament, and possibly of both opposition parties there. The press of Great Britain has been very largely denunciatory of the treaties, from which we gather that although ratification may be given they expected and hoped for a better bargain than they got.

On their part the Soviets promise satisfaction concerning the claims on their government of various categories, the amounts to be determined through further negotiations. This involves pre-war debts concerning which the old-time concept—of four or five years ago—was that they must be rightfully acknowledged and arrangement for payment made, to be done dictatorially by assembled capitalist interests. Private claims, such as confiscation of goods, are subject to arrangement under these negotiations still to be conducted, as are also claims of former property owners who have been expropriated. All this affects British nationals. On its part the British government concurs in the Soviet point of view that these claims cannot fully be liquidated; amounts and methods of payment are subject to separate negotiation. The British government takes upon itself obligation to conclude a loan to Russia. The amount of the loan will be consequent upon the amount to be determined as Russia's obligation. Although not necessarily to be of exactly the still to be agreed upon amount of these obligations the loan amount will be largely determined thereby and will in part be used for the purchase of material in Great Britain. It is not expected that the further negotiations respecting individual claims and their amounts will be speedily terminated once they are commenced nor without disagreement, but it is expected that agreement is possible. The Soviets have concluded agreements

with some other European governments, but in no such case has there been agreement concerning a guaranteed loan. Thus the position of Russia assumes a new aspect in international affairs, new that is since 1917, because with legal recognition providing the usual channels of commercial and political negotiation and with further capital investment lodged in her industrial life through the medium of one powerful outside state apparatus, by virtue of self interest on the part of that state she is afforded something of immunity from violence on the part of the latter's trading rivals and their governments. It has taken since the early part of 1919, in actual proposals, for the Soviets to reach this position with the outside world. Then, when they offered, under certain conditions, to recognize the financial obligations of the former Russian Empire, it was commonly thought by sympathisers that this offered recognition was a clever ruse on their part merely to promise and then to avoid fulfilment. But events do not encourage this convenient way of avoiding recognition of matters of fact. Trotsky, at any rate, has made it clear that all Soviet obligations are made in good faith and with the intention of observance. Propaganda by sympathisers contrariwise simply involves further protestation by the Soviet authorities to the same effect and increases their difficulties accordingly.

What lessons from these Anglo-Soviet agreements may be learned by the Socialist movement at large? Has its ideal of full emancipation from the bonds of capital helped or hindered it in its consideration of Russia's case? It is apparent that if capital is invested in Russia seeking a return Russia is conditioned to that extent by the character of capitalist exploitation. The working out of a philosophy may occasion as much argument as the philosophy itself, but it is apparent that in Russia's case each is merged in the other. A rigid ideal may be set so high that pronouncement upon it becomes a very logical formalism. Altogether, without prejudice to those who hold by the tactical values of the latter position with working class education in view it is apparent that practice imposes its claims in work-a-day affairs, big or small.

### "NO COMPROMISE," ETC.

THE policy of the party is now under examination. The dynamic factor in our propaganda has eluded us. We have been looking for it in the tactics of reform. We find ourselves in the labyrinth of compromise. This step, according to Harrington, has been taken officially. Does the party as a whole approve of the stand taken in the recent B. C. election?

Does the general body of the party approve of the "New Revisionism" of "C"?

Judging from the articles in the Clarion and conversations with comrades the answer is in the negative.

What is the cause of the general apathy that exists in the ranks of the reds, old-time members of the S. P. of C? Why has the old-time vim and enthusiasm vanished?

There never was such a demand for the straight dope as now. There never was a time when the proletariat were in such a receptive mood as they are today. There is something missing in the party itself. Let us try to find out what it is.

The Russian revolution stole our hearts and we lost our heads. We were in love and blind. Like the girl in the story we loved not wisely but too well. We left the straight and narrow path of historical materialism and strayed into the highways of idealism and sentimentality. Very little good socialist literature was produced during the war. Liberal papers like "The Nation," "The New Republic," and others increased their circulation, and many comrades, not too well grounded, fell under the spell of their psychology. The advanced section of the liberal school of thought takes the stand that a new form of society is coming. In their opinion it will come very slowly. They always emphasise the fact that evolution is very slow. The effect of the propaganda can be perceived in the pages of the Clarion. The class struggle is gradually eliminated from articles written by "C," and others, and as a result

the virility of the party is unconsciously sapped away. Then we imitate our masters' quilldrivers. We become victims of bourgeois culture. Like the ivy it has attached itself to our organisation and is smothering us. Some of our writers, instead of developing a proletarian manner of expression are little more than cheap imitations of the scribes of capitalism. The slave no longer understands us and in consequence we are losing his support.

What is the remedy? Within the framework of capitalist society the co-operative commonwealth cannot be built. There is no gradual step at a time policy possible. The baby is not born a foot one day and an arm the next; it comes as a whole. After it enters the world it begins to grow and develop. We cannot successfully interfere with the development of the baby in the womb; capitalism is pregnant. We are preparing for and anticipating the birth. Therefore our policy must be a revolutionary one.

The working class cannot be educated by propaganda alone. It must see and feel; it must experience. The S. P. of C. is a political party. In our conflicts with the henchmen of capitalism during election times we are able to prove to the developing mind of the slave the truth of our philosophy. His brain is quickened in the fight. If we co-operate with reform parties we sacrifice a portion of our educational opportunities in order to further a policy which is not ours. It may be said with truth that we lack political initiative. We should explain and examine in the light of Marxism the political and economic conditions that actually exist in the locality where the election is taking place. We do not always do this. When an election is not taking place, that is during the time between elections, it may be possible to do educational work upon the platform of other parties, providing the speaker upholds the revolutionary position and speaks as a member of the S. P. of C.

This, in my opinion, should be allowed and encouraged. The criticism I have indulged in is in a kindly spirit. There is no fear in my mind regarding the future of the party. We shall do more work in the future than we have ever done in the past. We have had an experience and we shall be all the better for it. As the editor says, "we can learn." The spirit of fatalism that prevails in some quarters is to be deplored, but we shall rise above it eventually.

"It is not a question of conditions alone, but man and the conditions. Conditions can be altered by man," says Marx. Sometimes we forget this and wait for the coming of what we should work to help to bring about. If there is anything wrong it is with ourselves. The revolutionary track is ours and we shall keep on it. Our policy is to steer clear of the rocks of compromise and opportunism, and continue to be guided by the chart that has heretofore saved us from being engaged by the quicksands of expediency, saved us from the fate that has destroyed so many apparently promising movements. This discussion brought about by our friend "C," "boring from within," will, I hope, prove beneficial to us all. Something was needed to galvanise the party into life, and from the plug on the skidroad to the slave in the harvest field there comes the cry, "No compromise, no political trading."  
C. LESTER

### POLITICAL REPRESENTATION.

(Continued from page 3)

times and places, but the following general principles were commonly observed. The members of the two privileged classes, the high clergy and the nobility, were summoned in person. The important convents and chapters were invited to send delegates. Occasionally the regular and secular clergy of a diocese united to elect their deputies. The nobility of the lower order usually chose their representatives, but sometimes members of this group appeared in person. In the towns the delegates were elected—often under a widely extended suffrage, including, on some occasions, women voters. These orders of society were known collectively as the clergy, the nobility, and the third estate.

(To be continued)