

## Western Clarion

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Editor ..... Ewen MacLeod

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VANCOUVER, B. C., NOVEMBER 1st, 1920

## EDITORIAL

### THE LABOR COLLEGE.

**S**Ocialist study classes have commenced for the winter season. In another column will be seen particulars as to the studies undertaken by Vancouver and Winnipeg. Other places show a determination to organize classes for this season, and it is likely that as the winter months advance various groups will be organized for study throughout the country. It has always been the case in past years, that no matter what effort was put forth towards co-operation of student groups in different places, as between one group here and another elsewhere, these efforts towards cohesion have failed. For instance, correspondence between secretaries of classes has been instituted, in an endeavor to outline subject studies and problems for mutual consideration; notes, minutes of class proceedings and discussion, general conclusions arrived at on debatable paragraphs in the book used for study—these have been in past years printed in the "Clarion," in order to centralize educational work and bring forth enquiry from isolated points. Past experience goes to prove that if classes are to get in touch with one another for mutual help, then other methods must be adopted.

Time and again there have come forward suggestions regarding the formation of a labor college. Our last issue contained a suggestion, well made, as to methods and the general need for such an institution. Already in Great Britain labor colleges are doing good work, and in the U. S., correspondence courses in economics, history, etc., are being conducted.

No doubt the need for a labor college is felt in Canada. A labor college, it is presumed, would have competent instructors and lecturers, and would direct courses in correspondence. The stumbling block seems, in the main, to be finance. Without the solution of the financial difficulty the Labor College is still a problem.

### CHARLIE O' BRIEN.

**C**OMRADE O'BRIEN'S name is familiar to all who are acquainted with the history and growth of the Socialist movement in Canada. A dozen or more years ago he was actively engaged in spreading sound Socialist education throughout the country from coast to coast, and he recognized no ordinary obstacles. He earned for himself a reputation as a wholehearted and indomitable worker for Socialism, whose characteristic feature was always a modest self-effacement and whose stock-in-trade was the general good and welfare of the Socialist movement. In spite of himself he was nominated and elected as Socialist candidate for a constituency in Alberta, and he was an eruptive and antagonistic nuisance to property interests represented in the legislative assembly of that province during four years. In course of time he wandered back to the eastern provinces and ultimately arrived in New York State, where for several years since he has worked as a Socialist educator, notably in Rochester. The steady growth of sound educational effort among the workers of Rochester has been apparent in the past year or two, and O'Brien has been instrumental in directing the educational work. Finding himself in a neighborhood where the main body of Socialists, so-called, devoted them-

selves to the advancement of reform policies rather than to education, to gaining numerical strength rather than to an understanding of the foundation of class strife within capitalism, he set out to work for the establishment of educational classes wherein the workers might gain a real knowledge of society's historical growth, and of the operations of present day society, through the study of economics.

Last December, the U. S. Palmer agents arrested him for this and charged him with "Criminal Anarchy." The exact details and nature of the events following upon that are unknown to us, but we know that he was released on bail in January, and that he has been twice arrested on a deportation warrant by the immigration authorities. As far as we know now he is on bail yet on two counts. He was last arrested between the 8th and 12th October, and he is on bail now, his case being slated for hearing by a Federal Judge in Buffalo early this month. An appeal has been issued by the Defence Committee of Rochester for funds to obtain a writ of habeas corpus, and the D. E. C. of the S. P. of C. decided to open a fund in these columns in order to help; Local Vancouver also pledged support and no doubt other locals of this Party from whom we have not had advices in the matter have done likewise. However, for the time being we have stayed our efforts, as we have just recently been advised that the writ required has been obtained and O'Brien is on bail, with the ultimate decision of his case pending. What that decision may be, and what may be further required as to finances, we shall announce as soon as we can. In the meantime, while maintaining a jealous eye on Rochester, we hope Charlie may be able to continue to educate whom he pleases in New York State as long as he likes.

These remarks are made, not in order to extol the virtues of one for whom we have a personal regard, but in order to satisfy many enquirers who are acquainted with his plodding spade work in Canada in past years, and who constantly ask for information concerning his case. Long ago the late D. G. McKenzie wrote: "The Socialist Party of Canada owes nothing to any man but one, and he denies it." The man was O'Brien. If the impending decision is "unfavorable," Rochester's loss will be our gain.

### B. C. ELECTIONS.

**A** GENERAL B. C. Provincial Election will be held on December 1st. In another column will be seen notice of a special business meeting of Local Vancouver to nominate candidates.

There will be, no doubt, many candidates representing other parties in the field. We shall hear the usual clap-trap advanced from their platforms, and we shall not be surprised if they manage to reach the ear of the multitude this year as in past years.

There are some among us who, in their zeal for the purposes of working class solidarity would have us close one eye to the defects we have hitherto detected in our supposed next-of-kin, the F. L. P. The F. L. P. propaganda that we have listened to off and on for a year or two is not of the same order as our own. Much, indeed, of our own propaganda is devoted to eradicating the ideas they are busy in disseminating.

It is actually urged by our "tacticians" that as we "compromise" every day in the week, by working for wages and everything that goes with that, sometimes with those very people of the F. L. P., we therefore would not be illogical in allying ourselves with them as a political party.

Whether we think the alliance advisable or not, this "logic" is plain ordinary bunk and nothing more. By the same "reasoning" nothing is to hinder us from alliance with Liberal and Conservative workers also, in their parties, since we daily "compromise" in their company also. It will be said no doubt that the F. L. P. is a declaredly working class party. Indeed, it has been said already. Some excuses have been made that are connected with "Labor Party candidates already in the field who should not, for that reason, be opposed by us." We do not know what this exactly means, as at this moment of writing there are no F. L. P. candidates

nominated. So, that prop to the argument is destroyed, yet the argument still persists. Therefore the proposal does not rest upon that. It rests upon something else.

Concerning parties in the field, the S. P. of C. has been in this "field" fifteen years. Its educational work is acknowledged as far reaching. The F. L. P. came into existence here some three years ago to fill the shoes of the departed S. D. P. If its members had desired to advance the cause of the workers from a class standpoint, they might have considered the Party "already in the field," the Socialist Party of Canada. But these political infants had in their ranks a plentiful sprinkling of aspirants for office, and some of these had left the S. P. of C., in order to give their ambitious political wings room to spread. They are spreading them now. We have found it necessary in times past to clip these wings when they needed it. Any alliance with them must lead to confusion on one issue, the class struggle and its outcome. We are told that with changing conditions we must change the order of our efforts. We do not dispute that, but would point to the uselessness of changing our minds with every changing wind. Some enthusiastic folk have followed that practice before, to come back always to hammer home to the workers, not "tactics" and the way to the revolution, but education. In this election campaign, we venture the opinion, the workers, to their sorrow be it said, will be more interested in the government liquor law than in their own slave status. In these circumstances, considerations of "tactics" are considerations not justified by any immediate definite ends from a class conscious standpoint.

### SECRETARIAL NOTES.

An error in these "Notes" in our last issue. We said the History Class (Vancouver) had undertaken the study of De Gibbins' "Industrial History of England." This should have been Engels' "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific."

A letter just received from Comrade John Tyler states that his recent article in the "Clarion," "Is it the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" contains a statement that misrepresents his meaning. This is the sentence: "No, F. S. F., you cannot get Socialism by a Dictatorship of the Proletariat." He says this is not in accord with his retained notes of the article, and that it should read "By a Dictatorship of a minority." We have looked up his manuscript and find we are not in error (for once), and have returned it to him. However, this correction is inserted, as "minority" is evidently the word he meant to use.

We have several times tried to mail packages containing the "Manifesto" of the S. P. of C. to eastern points in the U. S. A. The dictators of that democratic land decline, however, to import it. We have been told that it is on the U. S. proscribed list, and last week we had a parcel returned marked "Prohibited Importation," and this seems to confirm our information. The "Manifesto" has somehow found its way in the past, however, to places where it was officially despised.

The last article of "Economic Causes of War" commences in this issue. These articles will be concluded in next issue, whereupon we shall set ourselves to their reproduction in book form. We shall soon be able to announce prices, and we expect comrades throughout the country who see the worth of these articles to inform others, so that the book may have the wide circulation it deserves.

Look at our "Here and Now" paragraph. Our mailing list is thinning out and we need renewals and new subscribers. We are nearly over the mark of our 1918 mailing-list indebtedness, but not quite. Increasing printing costs may compel us to raise the price of the paper, and that is what we don't wish to do. Numerous additions to the mailing-list will enable us to get new readers.

Comrade Frank Cassidy was in MacLeod, Alberta, last week. The comrades in Edmonton are expecting to see him there in course of time. If finances warrant Frank will reach Edmonton, and will visit other Alberta towns. It is hoped that he may be able to travel westward over the G. T. P. to Prince Rupert, stopping off at places on the way. We shall have more to say of this later, but in the meantime, comrades in Alberta should write regarding Frank's whereabouts to John F. Maguire, secretary, Alberta P. E. C., 10016-93rd Street, Edmonton, Alberta.