

MATERIALIST CONCEPTION OF HISTORY

(Continued from page 6)

erful enough to render valuable aid to the king against the feudal lords, but it was not a strong enough alliance to weaken the nobility, for the nobles united and imposed a new constitution on the king. But the increasing wealth of the commercial classes and the progressive impoverishment of the nobles made it necessary to dispose of some of their land to capital. As one historian, Weir, says: "The introduction of money played a great part in abolishing feudalism. The commercial class compelled the nobility to admit them to parliament as early as 1295. It found itself in a helpless minority but gained power when we saw the Barons weakened by the War of the Roses, finally leading up to the 1688 Revolution. The French Revolution presents still another character. The growth of wealth and power of the French bourgeoisie was too limited and too gradual to allow them to combat the nobility with any vigor. Therefore they made no headway, although they had a little representation two centuries before the Revolution, until they sought the aid of the people. Finding themselves in the minority and recognizing they could not take decided action against the nobility alone without popular support, they withdrew from parliament, descended into the streets, and instigated the Revolution, a comparatively easy matter when the effects of the famine prevailed on account of the intolerable methods of production, which prevailed because the capitalists were excluded from the political power to organize agriculture and industrial enterprise on a rational basis. Therefore not only the people joined in but the unproductive laborers of the old regime, the priests who were now become poor and hostile to the old property system with the agitation of the unproductive workers of the new regime, the paid thinkers of the capitalist class, lawyers, doctors and men of letters; neither the peasants or the laborers led in the revolt. Historians attributed the Revolution to the actions of the Encyclopedists without reflecting that the theories of those writers can only be explained as the product of the times in which they lived."

Loria quotes an impartial writer (Buckey) who says: "The six years preceding the Revolution were peculiarly shameful of the men of letters. It is difficult to fathom the degree of infamy to which these men who made a business of writing were willing to descend. Philosophy, mathematics, drama, romance, journalism, in fact all branches of the intellect were engrossed by the encyclopedia monopoly. At the root of their ideas there was nothing but vanity and wealth." The people fought under the bourgeois banner, and rendered valuable aid, but having accomplished their ends, and the overthrow of the aristocracy, and having vanquished the court, the bourgeoisie suddenly separated themselves from the people and ceased to be a revolutionary party, and began laying the foundations of their own political power.

Just as the English capitalists were forced to place themselves under the dictatorship of Cromwell in order to offer an effective resistance to the nobility, so the French bourgeoisie likewise did the same thing under Napoleon. But just as the English bourgeoisie turned against their own creature and restored the king, so also did the French restore the monarchy because their dictators failed to reflect the new economic conditions. The weakness of the French bourgeoisie, which obliged them to call on the aid of the populace in the great Revolution of 1789 continued to be apparent in the future revolts in France. When the aristocratic government of the Restoration became wealthy and intolerable to capital, the capitalist class could only resist with the people's aid, and again for a second time the revolt of the bourgeoisie became a popular revolution. The people reaped no real benefit or advantage from the second revolution as it resulted in raising Louis Philippe to the throne, who in the first years of his reign, almost realized the ideal of a government for property. But this king, also attaining great wealth and a division in the bourgeoisie class, transformed himself into an absolute monarch. This act called forth a new resistance and another alliance with the people, which resulted in the revolution of 1848, which began in a bourgeois and ended in a socialistic revolt. To shake themselves again from the al-

liance of the people and remedy their weakness, the bourgeoisie sought resource to another Caesar, and the second empire was established after one of the most colossal insurrections of the workers in the history of European civil wars. On the side of the Parisian proletariat stood none but itself. The bourgeoisie had the aid of the aristocracy of finance, the industrial bourgeoisie, the middle class, the small trading class, the army, the slums organized as Guards Mobile, the intellectual celebrities, the parson class and rural population. Over 30,000 insurgents were massacred and 15,000 transported without trial. Again, like the former despotism, an instrument of the bourgeoisie, the new government overrode their interests until once more the bourgeoisie with the people in their alliance overthrew the empire and acquired absolute political power under the Republic form of government, under which the political supremacy of property attains the fullness of development. (The United States is an example.)

Let us summarize the revolutions and their different characteristics. In Germany the bourgeoisie could not of themselves destroy the power of the nobility and dared not accept the proffered alliance of the people, therefore the revolution was abortive and feudal politics was allowed to remain in a modified form.

In England, on the contrary, the weakness of the nobility and the strength of the bourgeoisie enabled them to possess the political power without the aid of the proletariat, and effected essentially the 1688 Revolution.

In France the relative strength of the nobility compelled the bourgeoisie to alliances with the proletariat to obtain political supremacy, and this gave a popular character to the French Revolution. This had the effect of the distribution of wealth to be more equitable in France.

The result of the Revolutions was: A semi-feudal constitution in Germany; a capitalist state in England; a popular regime in France.

But capitalism is now established in all of these countries, with their imperialisms.

Next lesson will deal with the results of the Napoleonic Wars.

PETER T. LECKIE.

SECRETARIAL NOTES.

The Alberta elections will be held in July 18th. Comrade Frank Williams is the S. P. of C. candidate in Calgary, and Comrade Mrs. Mellard is the S. P. of C. candidate in Edmonton. There are five seats in each of these towns, but the deposit necessary precludes the possibility at this time of a full Socialist ticket. Comrade Williams is an old time member of Calgary local of the S. P. of C. He was four years in Ottawa, and with Peter T. Leckie was a member of the Trades and Labor Council there. Comrade Mrs. Mellard has been a member of Edmonton local for a number of years. Last spring, returning to Canada from a visit to England she and her husband were denied entry as "undesirable Socialists." Her entry to the Alberta parliament lies now with the slaves of Edmonton.

If these comrades are elected to that house they will be admitted to the opportunities eagerly grasped and taken advantage of by Charles O'Brien when he found himself there. Comrade Harrington states our position on parliaments nicely when he says (in this issue) that we have never been so much concerned with what our members have done in parliament as with what they have done out of it. That is to say—they are government paid Socialist educators, with travelling facilities provided, enabling them to move from one end of the province to the other. Our judgment of their conduct as Socialist members of parliament has been prompted largely by the efforts they have made to work as propagandists under these favorable conditions. O'Brien will serve as a pattern. The law-makers of his time developed a hostile regard for his "co-operation" and the consideration he gave to the law as they saw it. His "Proletarian in Politics" (now out of print) was a speech delivered in the Alberta Legislative Assembly, explaining to the slaves of Alberta his mission in life. Perhaps the Alberta elections will give Comrades Williams and Mel-

lard these opportunities to educate their fellows as to the class nature of politics and the meaning of the law applied to property right and slave control. To win these seats means a wider field and opportunity to do that, to fail means more propaganda and educational effort day in and day out wherever the opportunity offers.

Comrades Frank Cassidy and Geo. Armstrong (M. L. A., Manitoba, and late jail tenant) are in Calgary. Some effort has been made to corral Com. Pritchard for Alberta election propaganda purposes, but he is loose somewhere on Vancouver Island, recuperating, and can't be located.

* * *

In this issue "Geordie" presents to "Clarion" readers some matter he has had "on his conscience" (to be precise) a long time. In this issue Comrade Stephenson makes happy and timely reference to the contributions of "Geordie" in "The Red Flag" and "The Indicator" days, and "Geordie's" article herein also refers back to his writings then. Comrade Stephenson's persuasive eloquence in the "Clarion" (October, 1918) committed "Geordie" to a series of articles on economics to commence in the "Clarion" of November, 1918. Mr. Important Censor put a stop to that however, but only for a time, for the "Red Flag" and "The Indicator" later carried the series over a number of issues.

Now the substance of these remarks is that by these references now made the articles are required to be consulted, and while "The Red Flag" and "The Indicator" are not forgotten they are unavailable. "How then?" reasons Chris—"why, let's have a book." Now, more than likely this will incur "Geordie's" wrath, but Chris. must be encouraged in his exhortations. He'll succeed too. He always does.

* * *

We have received a cutting from the Rochester, N. Y., "Abendost," printed in the German language, concerning Comrade Leckie's "Economic Causes of War." We suppose a translation will uncover the usual eulogium. Comrade Mengel will translate for us in next issue.

* * *

There are but three members left in Ottawa local, yet the energetic Leckie has been for six weeks or more conducting open-air meetings there, acting as his own chairman. Literature sales are good. Peter dispenses wisdom and energy about as cheerfully as anybody we ever heard of.

* * *

The Prince Rupert comrades are on the streets too. Comrade Ellis reports good meetings and some literature spread around among the heathen minds. Comrades J. H. Burrough and Jack Stevenson are attaining soap-box fame. Here's the very best way to develop speakers—open-air soap-boxing. More Socialist propagandists have been developed in that manner than in all the speaker's classes even conducted. (The statistics are not on hand—this is an observant "hunch.")

* * *

Vancouver, true to form in the summer time, has its out-door meetings also. Comrades O'Connor, Farp and others may be found on Columbia or Carrall corners almost any night in the week. The co-operation of comrades will help to extend the field of activities. Comrades willing to act as chairmen, literature sellers, etc., are needed.

* * *

If the number on your address label is 848 your subscription expires with next issue. If it is less than 848 your subscription has already expired and we shall be counting the days till your dollar arrives. We just simply hate waiting.

—————:o:—————