

Western Clarion

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RING IN THE NEW.

THE year just gone, every day of it marked by human strife in field, factory and workshop, in national councils and in international relationships, and every day of it witnessing the pitiable conditions in which the tormented peoples have striven to live may be marked down as a year well gone. It is not that we would parade and trade upon cumulative misery and rejoice that it continues, rejoice, that is, that present increased suffering betokens the break-up. But it would seem that in viewing society and its welfare as the great consideration we are still far below Wad's "last and highest landing in the great staircase of education."

While the industrial and agricultural workers of this American continent have had their immediate every day problems, in the former case the general problem of work and wages and in the latter case the serious business of making ends meet as producers and marketers of foodstuffs of one sort or another, while their problems have been acute enough they are almost beyond comparison with the conditions that have obtained in certain parts of the European world. The once powerful national fabric of Germany has been broken and her people reduced to a state of famine. The peace seems worse than the war, and still there go along powerful military preparations ostensibly to preserve the peace.

There remains in 1924 the same causal relations existing between rich and poor that have marked these past years, yet aggravated the more by policies of conquest and oppression set afoot by national groups and powerful combinations who have still more to gain. How long these courses may be pursued is quite naturally a matter for wonderment by all. The new year carries with it the problems of the old. Surely they cannot magnify.

JOHN MACLEAN IS DEAD

SEVERAL terms of imprisonment during the war and after operated seriously against the health of John MacLean, of Glasgow, Scotland, a man well known and widely respected throughout the world of Socialist educational and propapanda circles. We learn of his death from "The Forward" (Glasgow):—

"De mortuis nil nisi bonum. John Maclean was a sore thorn in the flesh of the Labor and Socialist Movement in the West of Scotland during recent years, but none ever doubted his sincerity. His conviction that machiavellian attempts were made to poison him and that he was surrounded by cabals seeking his destruction, colored all his later years and rendered him gey ill to thole. Towards the end his organization was simply an anti-Labor Party, one trading largely upon his personal sufferings and sacrifices of its founder.

"But now that he is dead, we think of him rather as the man who in earlier days of the Socialist Movement conducted a great and thankless propapanda at the street corners. Peace to his ashes!"

In the war years the practice of "doctoring prisoners' food (C.O.'s, politicals and such like),

resulting in various ailments to mind and body was much complained of. It was in self-defence against such pressure, presumably exerted officially to break the prisoners' morale, that John MacLean adopted the hunger strike practice. His release from his first term found him, therefore, reduced physically, and mentally from that time on, by all reports, he had suffered all sort of imagings concerning various designs made for his personal hurt. His trust in human nature was wrecked, and some of his friends were not beyond his suspicions. That is what "Forward" means when it says he was hard to bear in the later years. We join with all comrades in the general sorrow of his passing. His devotion to the educational field among the working class is well shown in the "Foreword" to "First Principles of Working Class Education" (Clunie), written June 1920:—

"The growing demand by wage-earners for knowledge of history in all its branches and of economics from a worker's as well as a capitalist's point of view is a natural reflex of the war, the Russian Revolution, and the growing tension between Britain and America in the rush for world economic supremacy.

"The Government's jugglery with its Bradburys and the consequent rise of prices, the rapid amalgamation of companies into trusts and interlocked trusts, the transformations inside works along the lines of scientific management, and the perpetual repetition of the "increased production" cry are more immediate stimuli inciting the more thoughtful of the workers to plumb to the depths the principles of human and social evolution and of political economy.

"These are the main circumstances that have led to the permanent establishment of the Scottish Labour College, the start of the Connolly Memorial College in Ireland, the desire for other Labor Colleges in England besides the Labour College in London, and the movement just beginning in Canada to establish a string of Labor Colleges right across that vast territory.

"Very soon every village and hamlet in Scotland will have its classes working in conjunction with the Labor College. A tremendous thirst for knowledge will then manifest itself. Unfortunately, tutors and suitable text-books are scarce. However, these will emerge in due course once the pioneer work of getting finance and organization machinery has been accomplished."

MacLean in his early years had himself witnessed some evictions of the Scotch Highland crofters by landlords' agents and, as he himself expressed it in "Condemned from the Dock," his class bitterness had its root there and became an obsession. Perhaps that accounts in some measure for the fact that in these past few years he ran out of step with most groups in the West of Scotland, working class and otherwise. Anyway, another sincere and able working class educator has passed from among us.

HERE AND NOW.

WE suppose that Socialists being akin to the wise men, never make resolutions. In spite of all temptations they meander along solaced, if not comforted, with the thought that all things come under change—and that includes resolutions

Now in case any should fall from the straight and narrow path of the dialectics, and should be enticed into the camp of the resolutionists—they abound in plenty among the heathen—in such a case we would be amiss in neglecting an opportunity

Resolved, then, say we Here and Now, that in 1924 the Clarion subscription list will be extended!

As we write, the moon is on its last quarter—and so are we. Come, all ye faithful:—

Following, \$1 each: John James, C. C. Kennedy, C. W. Blair, J. G. Randall, J. C. Budge, J. Carson, E. Erwin, J. H. Moon, T. De Mott, E. S. Robinson, C. Woolings, F. Wood, C. F. Orchard, M. J. Knudsen, J. Caxon.

Lee Wilson, \$5; J. A. McDonald, \$4; W. Cunneham, \$2; C. Lester, \$2; G. R. Donald, \$3.

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Dave Watt, \$5; P. A. Askew, \$2; Alex, and Peter Shepherd, \$5.40.

Above, C. M. F. receipts, from 15th to 28th December, inclusive—total, \$22.40.

TO E. RHODES.

This notice is inserted here on the offchance that Com. Rhodes may learn that several letters await him in Vancouver and also a parcel. It might be (in view of the season) that the parcel contains—say—a plum pudding, and it would be a pity to have to hold a post mortem on it. Hurry! Let's know where you are.

TOOLS, THOUGHT AND LANGUAGE.

Sociability, with its consequences, the moral feelings, is a peculiarity which distinguishes man from some, but not from all, animals. There are, however, some peculiarities which belong to man only, and which separate him from the entire animal world. These, in the first instance, are language, then reason. Man is also the only animal that makes use of self-made tools. For all these things, animals have but the slightest propensity, but among men, these have developed essentially new characteristics. Many animals have some kind of voice, and by means of sounds they can come to some understanding, but only man has such sounds as serve as a medium for naming things and actions. Animals also have brains with which they think, but the human mind shows, as we shall see later, an entirely new departure, which we designate as reasonable or abstract thinking. Animals, too, make use of inanimate things which they use for certain purposes; for instance, the building of nests. Monkeys sometimes use sticks or stones, but only man uses tools which he himself deliberately makes for particular purposes. These primitive tendencies among animals show us that the peculiarities possessed by man came to him, not by means of some wonderful creation, but by continuous development.

Animals living isolated can not arrive at such a stage of development. It is only as a social being that man can reach this stage. Outside the pale of society, language is just as useless as an eye in darkness, and is bound to die. Language is possible only in society, and only there is it needed as a means by which members may understand one another. All social animals possess some means of understanding each other, otherwise they would not be able to execute certain plans conjointly. The sounds that were necessary as a means of communication for the primitive man while at his tasks must have developed into names of activities, and later into names of things.

The use of tools also presupposes a society, for it is only through society that attainments can be preserved. In a state of isolated life every one has to make discoveries for himself; with the death of the discoverer the discovery also becomes extinct, and each has to start anew from the very beginning. It is only through society that the experience and knowledge of former generations can be preserved, perpetuated, and developed. In a group or body a few may die, but the group, as such, does not. It remains. Knowledge in the use of tools is not born with man, but is acquired later. Mental tradition, such as is possible only in society, is therefore necessary.

While these special characteristics of man are inseparable from his social life, they also stand in strong relation to each other. These characteristics have not been developed singly, but all have

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