

Western Clarion

A Journal of History, Economics, Philosophy,
and Current Events.

Published twice a month by the Socialist Party of
Canada, 401 Pender Street East, Vancouver, B. C.
Phone Highland 2583.

Editor Ewen MacLeod

Subscription, 20 issues \$1.00

815

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

VANCOUVER, B. C., MARCH 1, 1920

EDITORIAL

HELPING RUSSIA.

WE read daily of "peace" with Soviet Russia, and, if we would have it, this peace is to be instituted "in view of the sore need of the Russian people."

The League of Nations, which represents 31 out of 32 Powers associated in the war, resembles a giant association of the lame, the halt, and the blind. With all its troubles, not the least of which is the threadbare economic condition of Central Europe, Russia is its greatest worry.

A month ago we read that free entry of goods into Russia was to be permitted, and that limited trading through the Russian Co-operatives was to be "encouraged." Since recognition by the Supreme Council, of the Soviet Government, was withheld, much worry was caused as to how the details were to be worked out, and, as one paper had it, "the best plan is to leave it to the Soviets."

Although British trading with these co-operatives has already commenced through the Scottish Wholesale Co-operative Society, the "details" have been well attended to by the Soviets, and we see their work in the recent Murmansk coast and southern Russian victories for the Red armies. All of which causes a further reconsideration of the question, and demonstrates that poor Russia really needs help.

As we well know, M. Lenin has long since tendered peace proposals. And now comes the latest, in what definite terms we do not know, but in terms more rigid, we expect, than those sent through Mr. Bullitt on the 14th March, 1919. A peace proposal on behalf of Soviet Russia has been received by Captain (or is it Colonel?) James O'Grady from Maxim Litvinoff, the Bolshevik emissary. Whereas former peace proposals made on behalf of Russia to the Allies were hidden from public knowledge, we are actually informed of this in advance by the press.

Truly, Russia is pulling us all her way.

And now that the military anti-Soviet program of the Allied Governments has been destroyed, not by their good-will but by the Red armies, we have discovered that "as no anti-Bolshevik organization exists any longer, Soviet Russia is now Russia." But our cautious diplomats have decided to send a delegation to Russia, commissioned to "enquire" into conditions. No peace, they say, can be formulated, nor official recognition of the Soviet Government be maintained until they are assured that the Bolshevik "horrors" have ceased.

We know, and of course they know, that in this they are trying further to gauge the strength of the Soviets. But here it is interesting to note that in the past few years capitalism in her dying agonies has exterminated some fifteen million able bodied men in bloody battle. And in Russia itself, the executions and atrocities committed by Czechoslovaks and Russian counter-revolutionaries assisted and maintained by the Allies, are pointed examples of Allied holiness of purpose.

British interest in Russia's welfare is quite sound, however. We cannot do better in dealing with the present proposals to "help the Russian people" than quote Sir Francis H. Barker, chairman of the executive committee of the Russo-British Chamber of Commerce, who, presiding at the eighth monthly dinner of the British Russia Club, said:

"We wish success to Admiral Kolchak and General Denikin, and I think I cannot do better than raise my glass and ask you all to drink to the health of Admiral Kolchak, General Denikin and General Yudenich. . . . Russia is a great country. You all know, because you are intimately connected with it in your business, what the potentialities of Russia are, whether it be from the point of view of manufacture or the point of view of mineral wealth, or any other thing, because Russia has everything. . . . Now this is a country we ought to help."

The references to Kolchak, Denikin and Yudenitch are happily a little out of date, but the eye of Sir Francis sees profit in Russia, and the cessation of its production there is the chief horror of which the Soviets can be guilty.

SECRETARIAL NOTES.

The many letters of congratulation we have received on the reappearance of the "Western Clarion," are taken as a tribute to the sound educational policy the paper has pursued in past years. We hope to be able to continue the policy and will try to merit, in our turn, the kind words. Many suggestions are offered, good and otherwise, as to the best method of presenting the case for the worker, to him. It is our intention to make the paper bright, readable and instructive, and after all this, understandable. It should have in it something educational that will strike the understanding of the worker in every branch of industry, including our farmer friends, who have a point of view of their own on their own problems.

We conclude in this issue Comrade Harrington's able and instructive book review commenced in last issue, and while it is altogether unorthodox to have book reviews continued from one issue to another, lack of space prevented its presentation in full in 813.

A section of the Appendix to the second edition of "Red Europe," written by Comrade Bennett on "Militarism" (as effecting Soviet Russia), is presented in this issue. Other sections to the appendix are: "Anti-Bolshevik Lie Factories," "Education," "The Children," and "Industry."

"Sabotage," by Prof. Veblen, will be completed next issue. The pamphlet will be sold at five cents per copy, or twenty-five copies for one dollar, post paid.

The "Here and Now" paragraph in this issue shows an increase over last. This does not include individuals who have sent their own subs., but is meant for the guidance of those whose efforts are devoted to increasing the "Clarion" circulation. Comrade Bennett again heads the list, and in consequence wins the premium book-prize offered by Local (Vancouver) No. 1. What is it this time, Bill?

The circulation is inclined to drop a little, owing to our being unable to locate many of the subscribers on the old list. The C. M. Fund looks rather unhealthy this time. Please note.

There is no reason why the "Clarion" should not meet such a ready acceptance as would enable us to issue weekly. There is no other paper of its kind on this continent, free from advertising matter, that so consistently maintains a sound educational policy.

Local (Vancouver) No. 1 will hold their ninth anniversary celebration of the Paris Commune of 1871, in the Lester Court, Vancouver, on the 18th March, 1919, at 9 p.m. Supper and dance, tickets \$2 each.

The Final Question

IN these eventful times, when the old order is giving place to the new, there are many voices crying to make the path straight, many devices to maintain the dying regime.

The aftermath of war has brought capitalist society face to face with the contradiction of social production and individual ownership, overwhelmed it with the unsolvable riddle of harmonizing social necessity with class privilege. Everywhere we see the master class frantic with helplessness, frenzied with impotence, mouthing the shibboleths of tradition, to avert the invincible march of the world pro-

cess,—ludicrous as priestcraft exorcising the devils of disease. Everywhere we see the crumbling of ancient structures, Europe devastated, crushed with atrocity and broken on the wheel of the world mart; Asia a whirlpool of revolt; America a crimson centre of reaction. Production is everywhere limp and halting; nowhere can profit be found. Peoples perish in the midst of plenty while Imperialism battles for gain. Famine credits are doled out to maintain the spark of bare life, till a reconstruction of exploitation is accomplished. And lost production and increased credits intensify the fight for existence, sharpen the class-struggle, drive society nearer the verge of primal necessity. Aptly, the Sun of Capital sets in lurid war.

When world production reopens, at no distant date, it must be for the needs of the people. There can be no increased production for gain, because no market can be found to absorb the product, and without a vastly increased production—even as measured by pre-war standards—the capitalist world cannot endure.

Further credits must be advanced to "save" Europe. More credit can but decrease still further European exchange; still further depreciate currency; intensify an already desperate struggle for existence; hamper an already restricted commerce; heighten, widen, deepen, the irrevocable anomalies and contradictions of capitalist production.

And America, "the democratic," is the sole source of credit. If America refuses credit, the various European nations, economically ruined; stricken with abject misery, unsupported by the intricate mechanism of international capitalism, by various methods and devious ways, will be driven rapidly into their one remaining salvation—anarchic production for immediate necessities. And America must follow. For in capitalist production, no country can stand or fall alone.

On the other hand, if American credit is extended to Europe, and even if financial wizardry can temporarily stabilize exchange, production will still be stifled under the thick blanket of credit; distress will become more acute, misery more widespread, living conditions more desperately intolerable, prices will continually rise till the whole system, in a panic of high finance, collapses in ruin.

But the inevitable cannot be leashed to the wheels of capital. The ever expanding social forces motivated by the capitalist economic, cannot be stayed by capitalist restrictions. The capitalist form and method of political society, has passed its zenith of expansion. No longer can it serve the purposes of society; no more can it be the arbiter of destiny.

Capital is not as the eternal hills. It reflects but the interest of a moment. It is but a phase in the evolution of society; an episode in the march of man, from the accidental unvisioned combinations of primitive society, to the reasoned adaptations and complex organization of the social commune. The power of class; the weapon of privilege; the law of property; these cannot be reformed or reconstrued away. Functioning as the expediences of class-rule, designed to the exigencies of class necessity, its dissolution can only be the concomitant of the utter negation of its law of property.

Reforms are but the index of social decay. They bear eloquent witness of changes in production, they point the inevitable conflict between the social forces and the mode of production, and foreshadow the coming supremacy of a new social order.

Amongst the confusions of change, the orgies of conflicting interests, the idealisms of visionaries, there is but one issue of moment—the issue between capital and labor. It is not "lo here or lo there," this reform or that, fiscal policies, political parties, industrial cooperation. These are but effects, the mere quivering of the leaves of the Upas tree of capital. The question is infinitely simpler, the answer day clear, the import more tremendously vital to that overwhelming majority who bow so pathetically to the joke of tradition, who toil and enjoy not, who create and have nothing.

It is the question of social destiny. Is labor to be the beneficiary of its toil, or continue the thrall of property? Is capital to perpetuate its exploitation, or society control its means of life? Is it to be wage-slavery or economic freedom? Capitalism or Socialism? All other questions are illusions, mist-like, trembling in ever changing hue and form over the reality of social movement.

R.