

## Western Clarion

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

Published twice a month by the Socialist Party of  
Canada, P. O. Box 710, Vancouver, B. C.  
Entered at G. P. O. as a newspaper.

Editor.....Ewen MacLeod

### SUBSCRIPTION:

Canada, 20 issues ..... \$1.00  
Foreign, 16 issues ..... \$1.00

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

VANCOUVER, B. C., OCTOBER 16, 1922.

### EDUCATION.

**T**HIS is rather an alarming title. It sounds virulently academic, and it may rouse the ire (though I hope not) of those who are more enamoured of "direct" than of cerebral activity. However, we may be able to steer a perilous course between the Scylla of "old-fashioned Clarionism" and the Charybdis of "revolutionary action," albeit close hauled to port.

Education is a thing of fine flavor and subtle interaction—as vague and sundry as its definition. What is education? The acquirement of wisdom. In all ages wisdom has made its appeal to man. In all ages it has not only left its impress on passing time; it has projected its image on the changing concepts of posterity. In different ages it has been acquired by different processes. But always it has won respect and esteem, and in the light of it's understanding—has magnificently triumphed. It has had setbacks and disasters. That but proves its kinship with cosmical processes and is itself part of the means of education. But it accumulates continually and shall do so till society itself, in the aeons of futurity, shall be vanquished in the decline of a perishing planet.

The society which discovered fire not only discovered a new force to progress, but added a new means to immediate existence, and with it new social transformations. The fisher folk who invented the net and the boat increased the gathering store of knowledge, and by river and sea spread it to new habitations. The hunters of the grim ice ages who acquired cunning in the ways of the wild showed their necessary allegiance to wisdom as truly as the modern exponents of "free education." The wandering herdsmen ultimately enshrined their gathered lore in the mystical books of the ancients; and even the destruction of marauders added its rude quota to the store. The ancient empires rejoiced in the wisdom of god-king—hierarchies—interlinked abstractions of the baseless but fearful realities of medicine men and witch doctors. Greece achieved the art and science of Ionia and declined in a welter of militarism. Rome expressed the practical philosophy of Pagan pragmatism—crudely and sternly as becomes a martial rule. The middle ages swathed themselves in the eclectic and extraneous wisdom of the unknowable trinity,—whose reflex appears in our not distant forefathers who desired to see their hopefuls "waggin' their heads in the pit." Today the concept of wisdom is the classical idealism of school and college—barren, inept, uninviting,—founded in imitation of a culture, whose life and imagery, vanished with the conditions from which it sprung.

Underneath the idealism of school and age, is the realism of natural life. And naturally their concepts and interpretations of existence differ. The social view point is the base line from which man measured attainment, and with every alteration in the gravity of position there is a corresponding difference in the angle of fact. The culture of the time may be dominated by a particular force or influence, but it is intermingled with every impulse of life, and interfused with every interest of time. Society is not explained by one force, or one factor, or one school. It is the amalgamation of all influ-

ences; of now and of yesterday; the balancing, or interruptions, or perturbations of conflicting forms, antagonistic forces and ever changing interests. Classical history shows us the decline of empires, and ultimately attributes their fall to the decline of wisdom—hidden vicariously in lack of prevision, political ineptitude, social corruption, public disprobity, etc. And that answer is quite true. But it evades the primal issue: why did wisdom decline? Why? Because progress had undermined the foundation on which it was built; had engrafted on ancient acquirements the impulse of vitalistic immediacy; had confronted society with new needs, clothed it with new necessities, and sent it spinning on a new plane of rotation.

Since the days when tribes became the nation, society has been politically controlled, i.e., by necessity has been enslaved to the "will" of a priest-king warrior. The exploits of monarch and noble have been recorded and magnified, but the slaves who alone made the exploits possible are not mentioned—or only in contempt. Sargon founded Babylon—on the labor of slaves. Tiglath raised temples and monuments—on the labor of slaves. Assurbanipal built walls and public works—on the labor of slaves. Hammurabi "turned the desert into fruitful gardens"—on slavery. Slaves built walls and dykes, made the roads and kept them in repair; tended and watered the gardens; constructed the bridges and aqueducts, and suffered as only hapless slaves can suffer. The pyramids of Egypt; the irrigation canals of the old Empire, the temples of Tuxor; the splendor of the "city of the good god;" the conquests of Rameses; were the symbols of a ferocious slavery. Spartan simplicity rested on Helot subjection. The glory of Athens was based—bloodily—on the slavery of silver Taurum and the greatness of Rome on the unremitting and unrewarded toil of the Tatifundia. Slavery, slavery, slavery, unspeakable in its ferocity, pitiable in its helplessness, fragmentarily recorded, and veiled by the flickering moonshine of egotistical individualism and an Osher idealism.

Empires fallen into decay for lack of learning? Nay! But because the economic of slavery countermined the foundations on which they stood. Because the incessant looting of States, the plunder of peoples, the wastage of life, the sacking of cities, the pillage of plain and field, the ravishing of enterprise, the swooping destruction of labor, the "dashing of the little ones against the stones," the slave raids, the wanton massacres, the blindings, the torturings, the impalements, the crucifixions, ruined all human intercourse, turned nations into festering haunts of glittering vice, shattered the process of exchange, palsied the hands of industry, violated the necessities of production, mortgaged farm and home and man, diverted the routes of trade, made endeavor fruitless, filled the cities with famine and the empty country with brigands, and laid the ancient Empires open to fresh attacks of plundering hordes, with a similar culture, but with a new virile coherence of civilised savagery. Through the 10,000 years of political society down to the fall of Rome, that is the history of the world. Sowing and reaping the whirlwind; crushing man and freedom; annihilating love and life. The invading Goths introduced an antique feudalism into Europe which, modified by the crumbling relics of mouldering Rome—and subsequently colored with a politically aborted religion—produced the new monstrosity, the feudalism of the Middle Ages. The re-birth of commerce, the advent of new concepts, the discovery of new worlds, the new hope of political franchise, the invention of new technical processes of production forwarded society into the relatively higher vantage of political democracy. And now, the society of today—the society of capital—slips on the same slippery steep down which the scarlet mistresses of the mystical East vanished into oblivion.

To ask how this came about sounds like tautology—since the nature of the answer is already indicated. But it was neither by the telic idealism of accumulating "good," nor by the wardship of gifted individuals. There is no reason why this "good,"

e.g., should not have endowed ancient Egypt with the culture of tomorrow's instead of yesterday's 10,000 years; nor why the "masterly man" should not have lifted Egyptian society out of its morass of lethal slavery. Modern research has vindicated their claim to a high state of civilisation, and an intelligence no whit less than the vaunted type of today. And of "great men" there has never been any lack.

But mighty as Bel and Isis were, like Dagon of the Philistines they could not endure the face of the great Mammon of Capital. Ancient Egypt lived in the Bronze Age. The "life of giving revelation" of technical production was not vouchsafed to them, and if—as is sometimes said—the Egyptians knew the force of steam, they certainly knew not how to harness it. And it is primarily the application of power to production that has carried men, in our day, to the pinnacle of renown. It has abolished hand labor and exchanged brawn and muscle for brain and skill. It has converted the militarist adventurer into the Imperialist syndicate, and transformed the political slavery of the chattel into the political slavery of wages. It has unlocked new powers and forces which progress has placed in the hands of a temporary master class. It has formulated a new scheme of subjection, more subtle and sure, since it is the bondage of social consent. It has transformed and remodelled class and caste. It has banished the gods of the sleeping night for the gods of the sleeping day. For the autocracy of the land, it has substituted the autocracy of the machine; and for the tyranny of the "great king" it has involved us in the tyranny of world finance. And in its completer stages of development it is shaking society loose from its convictions, matured in the sun of yesterday; from its ancient preconceptions of law and order, or right and justice, of equity and truth. It is breaking down the stultifying apathy of custom engendered by centuries of discipline, and in the gathering comprehension of a necessitous present, unveiling the ominous origin of the time-honored sanctities of privilege and power.

This is what we imply by education. Not political theorising or classical transcendentalism, but time experience. It is not a fugitive author, or a polemical hero, or inspiring orator which make the fulcrum on which knowledge forces the gates of the mind. They are but side influences. It is social apperception that counts; social understanding of the nature of its life and living. And it is the changing technique of production, with its changing and diminishing gravity of interests, the more feverish and antagonistic cycle of progress and the continual flux and growth in and of the social forces, stemmed, harassed, necessitous, which widen the vision of the driven and conventionalised mass. It is this unveiling of original issues; this dissolution of class interest in the acid of class antagonism; this pressure of development on the modified circumstance of time; this alignment of social interest against private privilege which opens the curtained eyes of tradition to the sparkling world of fact. It is not books, or theory, or men, but common, daily, yoked experience, pulsing hot from the throbbing fountains of life. It is not poverty alone, nor misery, nor degradation, nor party nor politics which effect the recognition and need of change. It is those things

(Continued on page 5)

### Socialist Party of Canada

### PROPAGANDA MEETINGS

STAR THEATRE, 300 Block, Main Street

SUNDAY OCTOBER 15.

Speaker: J. HARRINGTON.

MEETINGS EVERY SUNDAY.

All meetings at 8 p.m.

Questions.

Discussion.