

Innocents Abroad

London, January 3rd, 1921.

To the Editor of the "Western Clarion."

Dear Comrade:—

I have been in England for a considerable time, and have watched the Movement very carefully in order to be able to supply you with information of a reliable nature.

About a month ago I went to hear a lecture delivered by Sir Sidney Olliver. The lecture was entitled "A Colonial Policy for Labor." The only place he spoke of was East Africa, and he informed the audience that when the Labor Party got control they would teach the natives how to work more scientifically than they do at the present time. I asked a few questions, which he said he could not understand, because the drift of them was to the effect that we had no business interfering in either East Africa or any other country. I came away with the impression, since confirmed, that the Labor Party is becoming more and more bourgeois, and that the blooming Empire will be as safe in their hands as in the hands of the Coalition Government.

I had an interview with Jowett, of Bradford, and also with Bob Smillie. Jowett is a broad minded man, and his experience in the Movement has caused him to perceive that capitalism contains within it a contradiction that will eventually destroy it. He puts his idea of the present situation in these words: "Things are rapidly approaching a crisis, and when the breakdown comes, we shall have a fundamental change."

Bob Smillie was genial, frank and open. He looked well, and much younger than I expected. I endeavored to make him acquainted with the undercurrents of Canadian and American politics, and he took careful note of what I said. I was introduced to Frank Hodges, who happened to be in the office, and I tried to get them to realize the necessity of keeping more in touch with the Movement in the West.

The Plebs outfit, i.e., the Labor College, received me most cordially, and I admired their method of teaching so much that I made arrangements with them to have some literature sent to you. They are much on the same lines as the S. P. of C.

I had an interview with the Latvian representative, and also the Estonian ambassador, in order that I might obtain a little information about Russia. Both these men are anti-Bolsheviks, and therefore their opinions are to be viewed from that angle. They both stated that Lenin and his colleagues were sincere and honest men, and their ideas were to the effect that the force of circumstances had compelled the Bolsheviki to take the steps they did. Their opinion was that the Communists would continue to control Russia, but that they would not be able to establish Communism, but a modified form of capitalism.

I was informed by men who had just come from Moscow that Lenin and the leaders of the Russian Reds are feeling the strain, and that underfeeding and overwork is beginning to tell. Some of them they say, are almost hysterical. They are compelled to work night and day because there are so few amongst them who understand the proposition. They are badly in need of men and women who have a good grasp of the principles of scientific Socialism.

I have listened to the speeches of the Communists here, both the Pankhurst crowd and the B. S. P. bunch, and have come to the conclusion that they are simply half baked anarchists. Their organizations are like the I. W. W. outfits, and serve as fly traps for the Reds. The police are making full use of the opportunity afforded them. A bunch of leaders who see how to obtain shekels by exploiting the fanaticism of their followers and the ignorance of the slaves; this is all the Communists here amount to, with perhaps a few exceptions.

The Socialist Party of Great Britain is much the same as the S. P. of C., and the work they do, and have done, is wonderful, considering the smallness of the organization. They are a fine body of men, and have got the goods.

The Movement elsewhere seems to have gone

back. It almost looks as if it were falling to pieces. There is nothing in the communist Party, the Shop Steward Movement or any other short cut to the Co-operative Commonwealth that can stand against unemployment, and the unemployed problem is now so acute that it is dislocating all organizations that claim to be connected with the job, because the job has vanished. The organizations that are built upon understanding can, however, stand every shock, and my experience here has convinced me that the S. P. of C. is better even than I realized. It is to be hoped that during the winter the boys in the West will study diligently. If they were here and could see the misery and realize the ignorance that exists, they would work as never before to develop themselves. It is strange but true, that when I deliver the same dope I delivered at Carrall Street, in Hyde Park, the slaves understand it instantly, but it is new and strange to them. I was speaking to a bunch of dock laborers a week ago. I talked on economics the whole time and they drank in every word as if their lives depended upon it. The situation is such that they are beginning to yell "What shall we do to be saved?" They have tried everything but the abolition of the wage system, and they cannot abolish that until they understand the nature of the wage system, and until they understand capitalism.

There is a mountain of ignorance to remove here, and before that is done something is going to rip. The masters realize the situation better than the slaves and are preparing. They calculate that a premature revolt would enable them to deal the proletariat such a crushing blow that the Movement could be thrown back for a generation. Capitalism however is collapsing, and what is coming is chaos.

There are a dozen unemployed processions going on daily in different parts of London. I followed one today to get the psychology of the slaves that were taking part in the demonstration. Police to the right of them, to the left, in front and behind. Three red flags and banners led the way. Instructions were given by a bugle blown by a returned soldier. An attempt was made to recapture a library that had been seized by the unemployed and recovered by the authorities. A deputation from the unemployed went first to interview those in authority. They had barely got inside the building when police charged the crowd and I rushed into a shed to escape the horses' hoofs and the policemen's batons. I saw one slave break an iron rod from some railings and strike a blow for, as he thought, liberty. Every part of the country is the same, and everybody seems helpless and the situation hopeless. The wind is rising and it looks like the real thing to me. The Russian revolution will not occupy the centre of the stage very much longer; there is something bigger coming then even the most optimistic anticipate. Amid all the chaos and confusion that now prevails, we are buoyed up and sustained by the knowledge that our class cannot perish, and that even in reactionary Britain the future belongs to the proletariat.

C. LESTOR.

Liverpool, Eng.,

January 3, 1921.

To the Editor "Clarion."

Dear Comrade,—Thanks for your letter. I have been here a month and have sized things up pretty well. Lots of slaves (the most abject, servile lot of broken wretches in existence) out of work in this city. They are quietly starving, but now the government is giving them "doles." The liveliest (at least the most active) are the Irish Nationalists (Sinn Fein) who live things up by burning cotton warehouses every few weeks. They did a million dollars worth of damage in December.

There is no labor paper in Liverpool. The unions do no agitation or educational work, but the Communist Party and the I. L. P. are holding classes on Economics and History.

The coal miners from South Wales are lecturing—Wm. Hays (Economics), and Gibbons (History). They are products of the Labor College, and if they

are fair samples of what the College turns out, it is certainly fine work. They lecture every night somewhere, and change lectures weekly.

The Communist Party is run like a social club, which looks queer, but they are all reading. Membership is not large, and the Picton Hall is not filled for lectures. The I. L. P. has several branches here. One on Parliament Street is pretty good, but I understand the others are not so good.

The Building Workers Social Club and Institute on Byron Street is a social club for billiard and spitoon philosophers, etc., but Hays (Economics) lectures there on Fridays, and there is another weekly Saturday lecture. There is a small local in Birkenhead of the Communist Party.

I am mixing here among the middle class quite a lot, and it is most amusing to listen to the weeping and wailing, and the reviling at the slaves.

Economically, things look rotten here; politically no better. The plugs are broken. The coal miners are the best, especially South Wales. I have not been to Scotland, but judging by press reports there is a real live bunch there, on the Clyde.

Meetings by Communist Party have been stopped here along the docks, by the police. The Sinn Fein fires were the pretext. If I have any cash to spare I shall bring some good books out with me. Things don't look very hopeful here, but if starvation will help any, we shall have lots of help this winter.

T. MACE.

Book Review

COMMUNISM AND CHRISTIANISM.—By Bishop WILLIAM MONTGOMERY BROWN, D.D. Paper 25c. Published by Bradford Brown Educational Co., Gallon, Ohio. Sold by Cass. H. Kerr and Co., Chicago.

This book is dedicated to the proletariat, and begins with Marx' famous statement that "religion is the opium of the people."

The author is a member of the House of Bishops Protestant Episcopal Church, sometime Archdeacon of Ohio and special lecturer at Bexley Hall, the Theological Seminary of Kenyon College.

He has a text: "Make the world safe for democracy by banishing Gods from the skies and capitalists from the earth." It is one of the most outspoken conversations I have ever read. I advise all to read it, because its author certainly gives Marxian Socialism its proper place. In a foreword he says: "The contradiction in terms known as Christian Socialism is inevitably antagonistic to working class interests and the waging of the class struggle. His policy (that of the Christian Socialist) is the conciliation of classes, the fraternity of robber and robbed, not the end of classes. His avowed object indeed is to purge the Socialist movement of its materialism, and this means to purge it of its Socialism and to divert it from its material aims to the fruitless chasing of spiritual will o' the wisps. A Christian Socialist is, in fact, an anti-Socialist."

The book is in the form of letters to other Bishops debating the subject of Socialism. It is written from the viewpoint of Darwin and Marx. Thus, "The happiness of the world will be promoted in extent and degree in proportion as the knowledge of the truth is disseminated by a twofold revelation. (1) The truth as it is revealed by history according to the Marxian interpretation thereof, a revelation of the truth which is saving the world from the robbing impositions of the capitalistic interpretation of politics. (2) The truth as it is revealed by nature, according to the Darwinian interpretation thereof, a revelation which is saving the world from the robbing impositions of the supernaturalistic interpretations of religion. . . ."

"This is the discovery of Marx . . . according to the scientific interpretation of history, man is what he is, and his institutions are what they are, because he has fed, clothed and housed himself as he has." He goes on with the history of man from savagery, up through barbarism, to civilization as the best proof of the correctness of Marx. After giving the illustration of the capitalist being analogous to a flea on a dog and describing capitalism as the tape worm of society, he says: "The existence of the master and slave class inevitably gives rise to four struggles: (1) the struggle of the slaves with the master for better conditions; (2) a struggle between masters for advantages in mar-