

# THE RED FLAG

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Editor ..... C. Stephenson

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## Education---A Comparison

A pamphlet has come into our possession on education in Soviet Russia. Just as we received it, the ratepayers of Vancouver turned down the appropriation asked for by the school board.

This is the situation as it stands in Vancouver. No new schools have been erected for four years; the number of school children have increased at the rate of 800 to 1000 annually. At present the children are being taught in basements and ill-ventilated and increasingly crowded class rooms. The double shift is in practice, one lot of scholars attending from 7 to 12, and another from 1 to 5. Imagine this condition. That "dread visitant," the black plague, is considered a possibility during the cold winter months, and the medical health officer is sounding his warning, "avoid crowding and colds this winter." In order to meet current expenses fees for attendance at high school are charged, hence the children of the poor are denied that class of education. Part of the sum asked for was for a technical school and its equipment towards which the government was to grant \$50,000, should the by-law pass. The industrial metropolis of the West is without a technical school. Only a modest sum was asked for in all equal to twenty-five cents on every one thousand dollars assessment or for the general householder about one dollar a year. The pleaders for the cause of the children had a good case. Probably the sum asked for was less than what was spent during the recent day's visit of a personage. Probably the pecuniarily enlightened ratepayers thought that after that, splurge retrenchment was in order when they turned the school bylaw down. These ratepayers of Vancouver are almost to a man and woman anti-Bolshevik. After reading the pamphlet containing the Soviet educational program and comparing it with their action on the school appropriation there remains no shred of doubt that they are anti-Bolshevik as they are also anti-education. The two antis evidently go together. Bolshevism in Russia is synonymous with education, intensive education. The pamphlet we have been reading contains 34 documents, decrees promulgated by the Soviet of People's Commissaires and the Commissaires of Education. They are concerned with all forms of education, artistic, scientific, vocational, and general and are an astonishing tribute to the energy and idealism of the leaders of the educational movement in proletarian Russia.

We give two clauses of Document No. 8. (1) "Every person, regardless of citizenship and sex, reaching the age of 16, can be admitted as a member of the student body to any of the higher institutions of learning (universities) without submitting a diploma or testimonial papers attesting graduation from a secondary or other school. (5) "Tuition fees in higher educational institutions of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic are henceforth abolished. Tuition fees already paid for the first half of the academic year, 1918-1919, shall be refunded accordingly."

The salaries of teachers are based on a four-

## "The Unsolved Riddle"

PROFESSOR Leacock in his fifth article strives to convey the impression that Socialism had at one time discreditable connections. As a matter of fact, it was only those ignorant of its history who have considered it to be associated with the "propaganda of the deed" or the advocating of the destruction of the family or breaking the marriage tie. Neither St. Simon, Fourier, or Robert Owen of the so-called Utopian school, or Marx, and Engels of the later scientific school ever advocated such things. They did postulate change however. They, in fact, could not escape their time, for scientific enquiry in the domain of history and sociology revealed that society and its institutions are the products of an evolutionary process and, as such, can not escape in the future the implications entailed by that process. The Materialist conception that the changing means of production are the factors which determine the form and nature of social institutions and the prevailing ideas of any particular time Professor Leacock has himself in his articles amply demonstrated, though without acknowledgement to Marx and Engel, who first formulated the theory, and to whom acknowledgement was due. The professor himself

hour day, all extra work is paid as overtime. The teaching body in Russia now holds frequent conventions and congresses, and expresses itself freely on the conduct of the schools, a condition of affairs that will arouse the envy of their colleagues in this country. The pamphlet we refer to "Education and Art in Soviet Russia," may be had for 15 cents from the Socialist Publishing Society, 15 Spruce street, New York City.

One last quotation from the preface before we close. It is a quotation taken from the Appendix of John Reed's book, "Ten Days That Shook the World," and is a paragraph from a decree of the Commissaire of Education, Lunacharsky: "One must emphasize the difference between instruction and education. Instruction is the transmission of ready knowledge by the teacher to his pupil. Education is a creative process. The personality of the individual is being 'educated' throughout life, is being formed, grows richer in content, stronger and more perfect.

"The toiling masses of the people—the workmen, the peasants, the soldiers—are thirsting for elementary and advanced instruction. But they are also thirsting for education. Not the Government, nor the intellectuals, nor any other power outside themselves, can give it to them. The school, the book, the theatre, the museum, etc., may here be only aids. They have their own ideas formed by their social position, so different from the position of those ruling classes and intellectuals who have hitherto created culture. They have their own ideas, their own emotions, their own ways of approaching the problems of personality and society. The city laborer after his own fashion, the rural toiler according to his, will each build his clear world—concept permeated with the class idea of the workers. There is no more superb or beautiful phenomenon than the one of which our nearest descendents will be both witness and participants: the building by collective Labor of its own general, rich and free soul."

"The problems that face us are great, responsible and pressing," says the appeal of the Proletarian Cultural Organization, "but we believe that the forces which will come to our assistance are also great."

While the pecuniary minded ratepayers of Vancouver have saved a dollar, it is so these Bolsheviks, these educators, their country surrounded by a world in arms against it, with shortage of food, amid difficulties incalculable, shoulder the burden of the children's future generously, courageously and joyously. "The school," they cry, "is the laboratory of the man."

showed us that the machine-age has produced new conditions of life today, new human relationships, legal and otherwise, and new concepts and ideas to those that prevailed even so late as the eighteenth century. Consequently, he who is so beholden to that fruitful-method of enquiry, should be last to characterize it as a "wooden materialism." He objects to the materialist conception invading the field of philosophy and religion. But if the introduction of a new method of production has produced such changes in the material conditions and in the ideas of men which he says the machine method has, how then can he object to Socialists invading the fields of philosophy and religion in order to see to what extent those fields have been influenced in this and in other ages by this fundamental factor. Whatever Professor Leacock says, Socialism is, we assert, as Socialists, that it is first and foremost a critique of the present social order. It is this, first, because of necessity, for how can men rid society of the evils afflicting it unless first they understand their causes, and also understand the nature of those institutions which may tend to alleviate social evils or which, on the other hand, may foster, or be used to foster, the perpetuation of those evils. He, himself, has shown us that the wealth and power of one section of society today exists by virtue of the impoverishment and misery of another. He has practically said that that condition is the status quo. Can he assert with truth, that neither philosophy or religion have ever been used to preserve a status quo? We think not. For these reasons, as well as in the ever present social necessity of testing the truth of all doctrines and ideologies which affect the lives of men, no social institution or doctrine can ever be sacrosanct from our critical examination. The professor says that Socialism "has become a purely economic doctrine." This is but in part true, and like many other of his assertions shows a sad lack of acquaintance with the Socialist Philosophy or else—something else. The importance and time given to economic factors by Socialists follows as a matter of course from their materialistic conception.

In this fifth article he states that the Socialists say that the fault of the present order lays in the waste of energy due to duplication of labors and services, as for instance, in too many milkmen and bakers delivery rigs; etc., running over the same ground. Ehen! We are at a loss what to think of him. He, himself, in his former articles related to us of the elimination of the multitude of small scattered textile producers of the handicraft days by the competition of the co-operative method of labor in the factories, and that this labor-saving method has resulted in no improvement of the condition of the laboring masses. With this new method of production, he said, "we are now probably a hundred times more productive than formerly." Socialists have been pointing this condition out for fifty years at least, and also that though the machinery of production and the system of distribution were brought to perfection it would not result in any benefit to the wage-working class under the capitalist system of production for sale. On the contrary, fewer of them would be needed in the industries owned by the capitalist class in order to supply the market. In his fourth article, Professor Leacock himself pointed out that increased productivity in itself did not mean a higher return to the laborers for their labor. The increase belongs to the capitalist owners of the machinery of wealth production.

### A SOLDIER'S LETTER.

In giving vent to his feelings on his discharge, an old soldier wrote to his late colonel: "Sir,—After what I have suffered, you can tell the army to go to hell."

In due course he received the following: "Sir,—Any suggestions or inquiries as to movements of troops must be entered on Army Form 123, XYZ, a copy of which I enclose."

On Sunday evening, Oct. 5, W. A. Pritchard will speak from the Socialist Party of Canada platform at the Empress Theatre.