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Where Are We At?

ALBERTA NOTES

BY F. CUSACK.

A demonstration of the "new leadership" in action was recently staged in Calgary, the unemployed being used as "political fodder" in the tactical operation known as the "united front of Labor," which front (swamp is a more appropriate term), locally at least, advances the interests of that confusionist agglomeration known as the Labor Party, the representatives of petty shopkeepers and workmen who aspire to become rich via the real estate route.

A short time previous to the municipal elections, the Labor aldermen in the city council (with one exception) supported a resolution refusing relief work to single unemployed, or married men without families, whether residents of the city or not. Three of the labor aldermen who supported the resolution came before the workers for re-election to the city council. Here was an opportunity for the party which continually objugates us to consider the unemployed as being entitled to the right to live, work, full maintenance (at trade union rates) and various other "rights" too numerous to mention, to put in operation its avowed policy of "a synthesis of theoretical Marxism with revolutionary practise," a high ideal, we concede, not to mention the obligation imposed by the famous 21 points, to "expose yellow labor leaders."

In no field of human endeavour is comparison between glorious promise and pitiable performance so odious as in the barren one of labor reformism. Did the "party of the masses" rush resolutely to denounce the betrayers of the unemployed, the labor aldermen seeking re-election? No! Nothing so rash. Would you suggest that the united front be imperilled by such "impossibilist tactics?"

On the contrary, the victims of the resolution were organized, disciplined and "instructed" to distribute election dodgers exhorting all and sundry to "vote the entire Labor slate." The labor aldermen were re-elected. Now the unemployed affected by the action of the labor statesmen whom they helped to re-elect are petitioning those individuals to "do something" for them. The labor statesmen reply that the "people" approved of their policy by the fact of their re-election. Leadership evidently moves in mysterious ways, its wonders to perform.

The Rev. Wm. Irvine, M.P., delivered a lecture at the Forum on "The Race Between Knowledge and Disaster." We were told that we were now in the "midst of the Social Revolution." In Mr. Irvine's book, "The Farmer in Politics," published some two years ago, the author wrote that "Canada was on the verge of a bloody revolution." If the revolution we are now in the midst of is the bloody one we were on the verge of two years ago it is the most remarkable revolution ever; even the purveyors of "all the news that's fit to print" have not even discovered a "bum" explosion. All is not over with the bourgeoisie. There is still hope. There is still corn in Egypt. The revolution we are "now in the midst of" can be stayed in its fell course by the adoption of a "new credit system": Major Douglas's for instance. (Bankers please note).

Amidst this welter of confusion we are forced to

state our position as follows, so that those who read may understand if in the mood to do so.

This manifesto is issued by Local No. 86, S. P. of C., Calgary, Alta.

WHERE ARE WE AT?

ARE you one of the few that are satisfied with present conditions?

If you are tear this up: but if not, do you understand them?

Do you find it hard to make both ends meet?

Again: do you know why it is so hard to make a living

Is security and comfort the lot of working men like yourself?

If not, do you think workers are entitled to them?

Are you getting any benefit from improvements made since you were a boy, by science and invention?

Are you unemployed, or likely to be?

Did you go to the war? If you did, are you better off than the fellow who did not?

Were your affairs considered at the Peace Conference?

What is the Labor Movement? and has it been successful?

In a word—are there any problems worth while thinking about, and, can they be solved?

Past Effort and Achievement

Discontent and uncertainty are found in all parts of the world. Working men in every capitalist country are in the same degraded, poverty-stricken condition. Liberal, Conservative and Farmer parties alternately gain majorities in Parliament.

In civic administration, mayors come and go. Strike follows strike. Wage agreements follow wage agreements. Peace follows war, and war follows peace. Bad times follow good times, with disheartening repetition. Unions struggle with alternate success and failure for higher wages and better conditions, but: Where are we at?

What real achievements have we got to show for our endeavour to make living conditions better?

The efforts of the workers at organization have been tremendous: the achievement Nil,—except bitter experience.

Working men are in essentially the same position today that they were in 100 years ago.

Working men have followed this, that or the other political leader, have put their faith in this, that or the other promise; always with the same result: betrayal.

Shall we benefit by that experience? If so, what does that experience teach us?

Does it not teach us this:—

That every effort to gain "something now" by the "safe, sane and practical methods of reformers, or the antiquated tactics adopted by trade unions, with their narrow craft outlook, or through the lavish promises of political job-seekers, have proved a miserable failure.

England, the classical land of reform, a land wherein trade union organization has reached its

apex, affords a most striking illustration of our contention.

There unemployment has reached an unparalleled degree; real wages are lower than they were before 1914; the cost of living has almost doubled; degradation and misery is the lot of the workers.

What is the reason for this ever-increasing misery?

The answer is to be sought in the Capitalist mode of production, whereby a small class owns the land, machinery, mines and all the natural resources—the property-owning class.

On the other hand stands the mass of workers, propertyless, their only means of gaining a livelihood being the sale of their labor power for wages.

All the products of labor belong to the Capitalist class, with the exception of the pitiful pittance doled out to the workers in the form of wages.

Through the introduction of machinery and the consequent competition for jobs amongst the propertyless workers, wages remain at the lowest possible subsistence level.

This is a point of view rarely considered by reformers, trade union leaders, et al., who hold that the conditions of the workers can be bettered under Capitalism.

With all the reform measures striven for and accomplished: The Old Age Pension Act, the Workmen's Compensation Act, the Minimum Wage Law, the various Factory Acts, Wage Agreements between masters and workers, Prohibition, to say nothing of the Uplift—the great problem of getting the essentials of life with certainty and security remains unsolved. As a matter of fact, workers are fleeing from countries which have "Reform legislation" on a large scale, to countries like the U. S. A. which has but few such reforms.

The future is blacker than ever, despite the assurance of our forward-lookers, right-thinkers, sunshine-brokers, professional boosters and prophets of the "Prosperity Around the Corner" type.

Now, can the great problem be solved?

There are many parties and organizations attempting that solution. But there is only one party in this country that recognizes the worthlessness of reform—the Socialist Party of Canada.

The Socialist Party of Canada holds that:—

Success to working class efforts can only be attained by correct action.

Correct action can be taken only if the problems affecting the working class are recognized and solved.

Working class problems can only be solved if the nature of modern civilization is understood.

The solution of working class problems is the task of the working class,—no lawyers, parsons, generals or journalists can do this for them.

The working class needs more than enthusiasm and courage, or leaders,—it needs knowledge. Ignorant it is helpless.

In everyday life, commonsense recognizes knowledge to be necessary to practical success. When we need a tooth examined we go to a dentist, who knows about teeth,—not to a blacksmith. But if we

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