

Western Clarion

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VANCOUVER, B. C., JULY 1, 1922.

A FRIENDLY KICK

WE promised in last issue to print Comrade Mrs. Director's letter registering a friendly kick against Comrad Kirk's representation of France as the Jew of Europe (see Clarion, May 1st), and here it is:—

Prince Rupert, B. C., May 22, 1922.

Editor of the "Clarion" Vancouver.

Dear Sir:

In the "Clarion" of the 1st inst. I find in the front page article called "The Genoa Conference" by Robt. Kirk, the following sentence, "But in this latest picture, France appears as the Jew of Europe, stoutly defending the tenets of Shylock," to which I take exception.

I always understood that socialists stood for the brotherhood of man, irrespective of color, race or creed and am disappointed to find such an instance of petty prejudice in a paper of the standing of the "Clarion".

The Jews have suffered through the ages from ignorance and prejudice, and it is too bad that the "Clarion" helps it along.

Your paper, which is as well thought of in Europe as in America, and is looked up to by radicals of all nationalities as a paper which is broad-minded and fearless enough to tell the truth at all times, will not add to its reputation by slamming a whole race.

As you well know, many ignorant people reading the article in question, and glad to hear something nasty about the Jews, will say to themselves and others, "I was always told the Jews were Shylocks; it must be so if such a radical paper says so."

Also, remember that quite a lot of radicals are of Jewish birth and these will think that here was one paper that they did not expect such prejudice from, and it will be a disappointment to them to find that the "Clarion" is the same as any bourgeois paper, ready to print something that will appeal to the sentiments of the mob.

I am one of the charter members of the S. P. of C. here, also am of Jewish birth, and as such, I cannot begin to tell you the trouble and misery such expressions as these cause the Jews.

It is because I want to be able to say to my friends truthfully, that here are, at last, people who judge human beings as people, and not as Jews, Christians, Mohammedans, etc., that I am sending this protest to you and hope that you will not allow anything like this to be printed in the "Clarion" again.

Before I close may I be permitted to say that I enjoy reading the "Clarion" very much, and would not miss an issue for anything.

Yours sincerely,
(Mrs.) H. Director.

Now, since Kirk is at the present moment out in the wilds working in "the pit" at the head end of a steam shovel and is, besides, under the unfavorable circumstances and surroundings usual to literary composition in camp life diagnosing in his customary, systematic manner the sickness of world capitalism (see "Current Topics") we may proceed to an examination of Mrs. Director's letter and make our peace, if we can.

We take it that it will be recognized by all and sundry, and the statement accepted at once, that in the family of wage workers we hold no prejudice as between Jew and Gentile whatsoever. But, if we err in citing Shylock as the most outstanding example of usurious greed and revenge that presents itself in the world of literature we err in good company. Tradition is deep rooted, and habits and customs form themselves and concepts survive today which had their origin centuries before and which, mainly, best fitted the time in which they found general acceptance. At the same time, particularly apt

illustrations that might have been applied to conditions and to relationships in industry, to family life, religious creeds, trading ethics and so forth of days gone by, are still commonly used with an everyday application. True it is that ten percent. wrung from any borrower by a Gentile is no pleasanter to think about than ten per cent. extracted by a Jew, and to a wage worker the terms of employment and the burden of his misery are lightened none by the fact that his master may be an ordinary Christian. As Shylock himself says:

I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is? If you prick us do we not bleed? If you tickle us do we not laugh? If you poison us do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his suffering be by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villainy you teach me I will execute; and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.—(The Merchant of Venice)

That passage, by the way, at the present time would have an appropriate setting applied to the negro race in the Southern States.

But, in spite of the fact that the Jew thus clearly identifies himself with his Gentile brethren, the Shylock of Shakespeare still persists in appearing where an illustration has to be drawn of acquisitiveness, commercial cunning or revenge. Trotsky, himself a Jew, in his book "Our Revolution," quotes Antonio's stricture on Shylock's cunning: "The devil can cite scripture for his purpose." And Marx, also a Jew, illustrates the unctious legality of the developing system of credits by quoting the adamant Shylock: "I stay here on my bond." ("Critique," p. 189).

An enquiry into the development of usury will reveal the reason for all this. Marx (quoting Hardcastle) says: "Jews, Lombards, usurers and blood-suckers were our first bankers, our original bank sharks, their character being such as to be called almost infamous . . . They were joined by the London goldsmiths. On the whole . . . our original bankers were a very bad crowd, they were greedy usurers, stony hearted vampires." ("Capital," vol. 3, p. 718).

Now, quite obviously, it will not do to accuse Marx of race prejudice, and Kirk's reference to France clothed in the garb of Shylock is clearly applicable, the more so, indeed, since revenge was of as much importance in the case of Shylock (follow-Shakespeare's story) as his precious ducats. And to show Marx's impartiality we may quote him again, ("Capital," vol. 1, p. 113): "I know nothing of a man by knowing that his name is Jacob."

If there are any observable differences in racial characteristics they are readily subordinated and regulated in their expression under the general stress of working conditions in modern industry. The alarm clock and steam whistle play the same tune in the ears of all wage workers from whatever source they derive and, so far as we have observed, with equal effect.

So now, just to be cheery and holding the tenets of tradition in disdain, the editor confesses (in confidence) that he is himself a Scotchman.

And so to press!

HERE AND NOW

COURTESY month has almost flown, and its impression on the "Clarion" cash columns, as will be seen by these totals, has been but slight. Now we are celebrating Dominion Day for, as all good and well governed Canadians know, July 1 first came to be an important day in the year 1867, when the fathers of Confederation held their political prayer meeting and bequeathed to a liberty loving people the British North America Act.

Such kindness having been enacted so long ago it

must surely be that large sections of the populace have now prospered to the extent of one loose dollar, by the reckless expenditure of which they may learn something of the real and actual political boundary affecting their status wherever they may hang their working cap.

Which means to say that the importance of Sir John A. MacDonald is as nothing compared with that of a "Clarion" subscriber.

Following, \$1 each—J. G. Meldrum, Geo. Paton, S. Arrowsmith, And. Larsen, W. Grayson, J. Ramsay, J. Parnell (per W. A. P.), Wm. Braes, T. B. Miles, G. Wrecker, W. B. Durham, A. Tarshis, C. F. Orchard, W. Miller, A. Jankoff, W. Mitchell, E. Simpson, W. A. Alexander, F. Smiriffitt (per J. Marshall), John MacIntosh.

R. Sinclair, 50 cents; R. C. Mutch, \$1.25; C. MacDonald, \$2; J. W. Rossiter, \$5; H. G. Mingo, \$2.

Above, Clarion subscriptions received from 16th to 28th June, inclusive—total, \$30.75.

CLARION MAINTENANCE FUND

J. Parnell (per W. A. P.), \$1; Wm. Braes, \$1; from 16th to 28th June, inclusive—total, \$2.

STREET MEETINGS

Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays, at 8 p.m., at the corner of Carrall and Cordova Streets, Vancouver. These meetings will be carried on throughout the summer months by Local No. 1. Literature sellers need help, so come along. New and old speakers will adorn the soap box.

FRANK UTTERANCE.

"You can bet your life we'll use gas" . . . said Rear-Admiral Sims. . . "Gas, the Rear-Admiral declared, is not the inhuman method of warfare that it generally is believed to be. The general impression that the use of gas was so inhuman, he said, was caused by Allied propaganda when the Germans were using it."—Associated Press Dispatch.

APPRECIATION.

We thank the Admiral for his frankness. It is cheering, if a bit startling, to know that the Germans were not really inhuman after all—neither more nor less Hunnish than we are or shall be. Only it distresses us a little to have the doughty Admiral asperse the uprightness and truthfulness of our brave Allies—and ourselves. Because knockers and pacifists might interpret his words to mean that mendacity was practiced in so holy and righteous a cause. It almost leads one to wonder whether the un-American critics who said that the Admiral's tongue wagged too freely had not something on their side. It would be embarrassing to have him tell us next that Edith Cavell really was technically guilty under the so-called laws of war or that the Germans had a case when they sank the Lusitania, or that submarine warfare was legitimate, or that the invasion of Belgium—but here we draw the line; not even Admiral Sims would go that far.

—"Nation" (New York)

Manitoba Provincial Election, 1922

Local (Winnipeg) No. 109, S. P. of C. has nominated Comrades George Armstrong and Sidney J. Rose as candidates. Contributions are needed to meet deposit (Provincial Govt.) fees. These may be sent to the secretary of Winnipeg Local:—

PETER L. DAVIDSON,
P. O. BOX 2354,
WINNIPEG, MAN.