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STERN CLARION

Official Organ of THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF CANADA

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TWENEY FIRST YEAR.

VANCOUVER, B.C., JULY-AUGUST, 1925.

FIVE CENTS

The Doldrums

By J. HARRINGTON

O FAR as chronology goes it's about twenty years since I first met the "Western Clarion," but at many other angles it might well be a century. From the prophetic preaching of capital's collapse and exhorting to the revolution, we have passed through and beyond back to a period, void and empty of any revolutionary outlook.

From a calculating survey of capital precariously tottering to its timely end, we would turn to the rising tide of proletarian anger, and envision the end of man's enslavement by man. The metaphor might be varied, but always there appeared a more or less emphatic notion that the revolution was at hand. Not a few attempts were made to figure out just what year we might expect it to arrive. And in which country. And the material upon which the computations were made was discussed seriously, though, as with the Christian end of the world, immediate preparation was hardly required, certainly not expected.

We were an optimistic crowd those days. We predicted stirring times for the future, but we never in our wildest mements predicted the amazing development which the future revealed.

Times were good too. That is, jobs were plentiful. The West was being "developed"; towns grew up evernight, as it were, and you could refuse polite request to go to work almost every day. Not a very fruitful field for the growth of a gospel of discontent, according to some, but it did prove mighty fruitful. The "Western Clarion" was launched just as this development started, and it cut deep into a swelter of moral sentiment regarding justice, rights, brotherhood of man and fatherhood of God; it ridiculed our moral pretentions and revealed the nature of our moralizing. It introduced to us a new literature, which was read and studied by many more. You could not enter a bunkhouse without seeing someone reading, reading a book dealing with some phase of Marxian philosophy, nor attend a union meeting without hearing it discussed; but if it made firm friends it the revelation, refurbished our prayer wheels, and Unheard it speaketh louder than the storm."

also made bitter enemies, and these meetings, once in a while, ended in a free-for-all.

The drastic departure from orthodox thinking, the zeal of its protagonists being matched only by that of its opponents, made this unavoidable, but the Marxists were united and so invariably victor-

However, the apple of discord was soon thrown. The I. W. W. appeared, and shortly we were engaged in civil war. The relative merits of political and industrial actions engaged our activities, at first as to which was more important, later as to which was entirely useless and utter folly. . The battle was indecisive, and under various names industrial action held the field in many places and in many was held up to scorn and ridicule by the workers militant.

If this struggle did nothing else it exercised the wits of the workers, induced them to dig up an old pencil stub and set down their thoughts. They soon discovered this could not be done effectively without some study. The well of wisdom required spriming. And so from casual pamphlet reading many were led to the standard and authoritative works, the general demand for which enabled Kerr & Co. to publish them at a profit. This demand increased up to and slightly beyond that epochal event which shook the contemptuous bourgeois world out of their complacency.

The Bolshevik revolution announced to all and sundry, sneering plug and leering plute, that the proletarian revolution was not just so much hot air. That it was not only set down in the works of Marx but was incontestably worked out by the conditions of life. Well, there we were like fish out of water, gasping for normalcy. The advent of Christ in an Adventist convention would astonish

At first we refused to believe the glad tidings, "unless I can ram my first into his side." But after some sullen moons had passed we accepted

tuned in on our loud speaker. Some to the "right" some to the "left," some to the "centre," each shouting his battle cry. When the meaning of Russia had been grasped, every little flare spelled World Revolution. And, accordingly, the owners of the earth commenced to look to their fences. The outcome of this survey brought restrictions to many forms of freedom, sacred and inviolable heretofore. It was treason to quote the word of God, sing the "Marsellaise," or recite the Declaration of Independence. There also came a gradual loss of appetite for the prophets of the Revolution, And we turned eagerly to the actors in the Revolu-

After some hectic years the great reaction set in. The day of the philosopher, the thinker, had passed indeed, the day for action had come, but, alas for the rarity of good luck and good guidance in matters favorable to our class, action was fitful and futile mostly and, finally, we called it a day and rested.

But "there we were," where were we! From every corner of the earth came the same sad tidings, reaction rampant. Well, we had not exhibited the proper zeal, nor manifested the true spirit. of the Revolution, and we had suffered accordingly! Support fell away, and we became a sort of suspended animation in working class life, good old has-beens, having served a good purpose in the past, but no longer "en rapport," as it were. But the fate which overtook us, alas, fast overhauled the more sanguine, and today we all flap our empty sails side by side in the doldrums.

So the "Western Clarion" has to go. No paper can exist without advertising, much less a working class paper, very much less one such as the "Clarion." Still, the work of the past twenty years or so can hardly be accounted lost. We have had a large and earnest audience, never noted for modesty or silence, and it may be said of the "Western Clarion," though it never appear again:

"Unseen it lifteth us with helpful hands;

Stupidus and Sapiens

By D. G. McKENZIE

Reprinted from the Clarion, April 29th, 1911

HE VIETA opened out by the patient research of the archaeologist, the ethnologist and the biologist in the attempt to unravel the unwritten history of man is one in which the most expherent fancy can revel endlessly. Gradually there has been unfolded to us picture after picture until we see, far in the past, beyond even the earliest tradition, man first emerging from the forest gloom of primeral days. Low of brow, long of arm, short legged, huge muscled, grim of aspest the direct forbear of the human race, yet lacking all vestige of aught we are accustomed to associate with humanity.

Dwelling as the beasts of the forest, wandering through the day in search of food, grabbing for iots, climbing for fruits or nuts, crouching at night

in a cave or on the limb of a tree; mating as the beast. A beast in all things, naked and unashamed. Where do we find in him any of that human nature we speak of so glibly? Where any conception of good or evil, of decency, of morality, or faith, hope and charity? Where the soul which has been the source of so much anxiety to his posterity? Where the habits and customs, where the laws, human and formless amoeba. "'divine"!

As says our Haji:

"What reck'd he, say, of Good or Ill, Who in the hill hole made his lair; The blood-fed ravining beast of prey, Wilder than wildest wolf or bear? "How long in man's pre-Adamite days · To feed and swill, to sleep and breed Were the Brute-hiped's only life, A perfect life sans Code or Creed."

Yet, this is a man, blood of our blood, and bone of our bone. Our relationship to him is undeniable, and its closeness a mere matter of a few hundred thousand years. A long time? Not it! A mere turn of the glass compared to the ages between that ancestor of ours and his faraway forbear, the slimy,

That man, urged enward by the same mute irresistible forces that have brought him to the threshold of manhood, passes over that threshold, and, generation by generation, approaches us of today, just as we are pressed onward to the morrow we know not. At the stern mandate of necessity he adapts himself to new conditions, devices new means of gaining his livelihood, creates tools and weapons, and ever improves upon them.