

# Reality

COM. "C's" central thesis is, "That the social revolution must be carried out . . . by a body of full blooded workers gradually gaining strength from improved conditions of life. That the revolution is worked out, not through misery, but through improvements in working class conditions."

Well, our worthy Comrade may be right; and although we flatly disavow the theory, it is worth looking at anyway. For assuredly "Wisdom shall not die with us."

In social evolution "the means govern and determine the end," not in relation to concepts of progress, but with reference to the clashing forces of social organizations. Theory may define, but circumstances govern. Proportionately, as identity of interest is sharply conceived, so also is the "end" sharply defined. But this identity of interest moves in the plane of the fourth dimension—time-thought-equivalence—and if it is not coincident with the conceived "end," the determining means are likely to be at fault. If the end is vague, the means are vague; since the governing cause is shadowy. But if the end is clear, the means too are clear; for then the governing cause is linked relatedly to its substance.

So the revolution, the desired end of social change is socialism: the social ownership of the common means of life. And since the end in view is linked connectedly with its preventive cause—capitalist property right—the means of its achievement are patently the complete abrogation of capital. For so long as capital exists, it must control. And so long as it controls, the social "end" must be completely denied; no matter howsoever adaptation may color its spectacular orientation. To "modernize" the thought of the revolution is, therefore, to aberrate the facts of progress with the psychology of secondary changes. It is to ask the revolution to exchange its collated concepts, for the wavering images of expediency; and to deny its ideation of conditioned time, in the expectation of unconditional revolution. For all advancements in living conditions have been the effects of improvements in social technique; and those advancements have, at the same time, tempered the steel of revolution and strengthened the rule of authority. The conditions of the revolution are the conditions that abrogate the social life of the people; the conditions that break their respect for habit and custom and authority; the conditions that void their every attempt for happiness and satisfaction; the conditions that chisel their whole life with the deepening phalanxes of necessity; the conditions that tear their being asunder with the abasements of omnipotent love and hunger, and force them in equal reaction against the abrogating cause. All history shows that. And all history shows that energy expended in attempts at alleviating organized conditions, dominant, is as fruitless as chasing the holy grail. Per contra, therefore, history implies that energy must be centred outward against the radiating cause of our social abortions;—capitalist ownership of the means of life—; that economic freedom is attainable, not proportionately with the restriction of that cause, but only in its absolute abolition; and that the only possible means of overthrowing its entrenched power is the elimination of the social misconceptions which maintain its supremacy. Consequently, if "every improvement in working class conditions is to be counted a gain for the revolutionary forces"; it is so, only in the same sense that every improvement in the brain of the fish was a gain to modern man. It is true as a cosmic ratio. But it is false as a social corollary. One might as well expect those structural modifications to transform a fish into a man, as expect structural reforms of capital to convert slavery into freedom.

Thus theory and fact posit the position of socialism. It is the consideration of those facts which holds the party to its "impossibilist" views and drives it to its political extremism. The party is not anti-reform because it is anti-labor; it is not anti-labor because it is anti-reform. It is anti-reform because it is anti-capital, and anti-capital because of its recognition of the class struggle. Conversely, its apperception of the class struggle leads it inevitably to that same field of "maturist expression"—politics—and logically to strike, not at the appearance, the effect, the shadow, but at the very heart of capitalist supremacy; its legal right of property in the social means of life. And the same unswerving logic, formulated in the daily struggle, carries it to the fact that the capture of political power is possible, not in detail and by stages, but only by resolution, governed and determined by social recognition of political organisation. That is why socialism is anti-reform.

Hence it is not a function of socialism "to oppose and destroy the political organisations of the workers." Because it cannot. Nor is it a question of "permitting the workers to enter the political field." The workers are forced there and act there as they are told, because they know no other. The conflicts of the class struggle force the working masses willy nilly, to the times of their necessities, a matter with which socialism has nothing to do. But it is a function of socialism to point out that the moves the masses make, the positions they take up and the disunity that makes them ready to the hand of their masters, are forced upon them by one thing only; their complete ignorance of capitalist society: the one remedy, its abolition. Thus the opposition of socialism to labor is not directed against labor, but against affiliation with a reformism that cannot see the utility of bettering the conditions of slavery, within the frame work of a society explicitly organized for exploitation. If the ruling class is dominant the betterment of conditions will be forced through the exigencies of the economic. If the rule is weak, and the masses blind, the slave conditions may be modified by a change of servitude. And history sponsors the lurid terrors that accompany the attempt of a slave class to better their conditions against the interests of their masters. Class consciousness of our slavery, is our supremest need. It would not advance labor one pace if all the socialism in the world discarded reality and fought for the "big loaf." For in the long run the perception of that reality is still the supremest necessity. It is not the fault of socialism if the masses cannot listen to reason and cannot face the facts. That inability may prolong and embitter the struggle. But the abdication of reason can never shorten it, nor the mirage of reform hasten it on. All wealth producing capacities of society; all its leisure and munificence; all the amenities of higher civilisation; all its magnificent potentialities await but the class conscious guidance of an understanding people, to make it a going concern just as it stands, "and garland the earth with the roses of heaven." It needs no other preparation. Think of it comrade.

Our Com. is not blind to all this. For, he bases his argument for labor recognition, "not on its reformist tendencies, but because of its political independence." It is the stirring of the sub-conscious, conscious of its illogicality. Reformist tendencies are here glossed over. Yet why, since reforms are regarded as stepping stones to the revolution? In his endeavor to escape the scylla of capitalist reform, our Com. is like to run into the charybdis of its laborist counterpart. To avoid that he postulates political independence. Here again our Com. may be right. But we don't see it that way. The working class came into politics; not by their own volitions, but mainly as a counter blast to the jealousies of rival rulers. They were given the franchise, because the development of the industrial revolution necessitated changes in Government control, and

for the smoother working of exploitation. And because the immediate interests of the workers were modified by the cheapening of production, by factory acts, and means of labor, they regarded—and still regard—the vote in the terms of the "consent of the governed". The great illusion of wage slavery. They were drawn into politics as pawns and traders, on the same basis as their masters. But not on the same equality. A difference which is not yet recognised. And they retain their legacy to this day. They are still pawns and traders. They tag along on the skirts of any party who speaks them fair. Their territorial organisation gives them practically a bourgeois leadership. And their foremost parties today—the A. F. L.; the I. L. P.; the continental S. D. and Soc. Unions are but adjuncts to their respective ruling classes. Ruling classes which are themselves little more than vestigial relics. It requires an imagination as elaborate as the Ver. Treaty, to regard labor as an "independent movement in politics." When labor sees its interests as distinct from its masters and its representation as functional, it will then really enter the path of independence. But it will then also constitute the proof of the socialist conception. For it will then be marching straight on the citadel of property right in the social means of life.

The theory of the full blooded worker is an example of what Robertson calls "the mythopoic faculty." The worker is blooded or not in proportion to vision and opportunity. Both are complementary factors in the proposition. In the theocratic empire of antiquity, interest was visual enough, but opportunity was crushingly absent. The great slave revolts of Eunice and Spartacus were sadly handicapped by divided vision. The peasant rebellion in Germany was broken by wavering conditions: in England it was marred by wavering perception. Not at all for any reasons of anaemicity, but for the substantial reasons of circumstantial conditioning. Today the worker is "grouchy" if "success" passes him by; rebellious, if out of a job. In one, he renews his grip on "opportunity." Steady work is the lodestar of his haunted existence. For a personal advantage he will betray his comrade on the job. He will lick the spittle of humility for a prospect of "promotion." He sells his soul for a "chance." He undercuts wages; undercuts contracts; undermines conditions; undersells terms; spies; insinuates and betrays. And in the blindness of his contemptible littleness he mocks at the driven "bums" who have gone down in the crimson tragedies of slavery. Red blood is a product of red thought; and red thought is a concomitant of time conditions. and according as those conditions are correlated on the pulsing tides of change they make man sordid, abject, despicable; or they gird him in the shining armor of the sublime.

For purposes of revolution "the worker" is not merely the despised faction of society. Not the petty interest of caste. Not the artisan with his obtuse contempt for the "laborer." Not the smug complacency of borrowed propriety. Not the quill driver and petty shopman with their starched gods of respectability. Nor the braided autoerats of brief authority. Nor the "fixities" of salary. It is all of these together, welded by common conditions of oppression and growing insecurity of life and place and purpose, into common perception of purpose, and interest. It is society itself, involved in an ever keener struggle of intolerable competitions; stripped of its illusions by the insufferable meanness of its existence; shorn of its traditions by the impossibility of their fulfilment; fenceless in the accumulating exigencies of a titular property, whose necessity strains, declines, shatters, denies, the developed standards of life and need; of hope and ambition; of satisfaction and happiness. In brief, a society reduced by capitalist exploitation to proletarian circumstances, and at bay for its life. That is the only

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