

Hokum

"ARE we a revolutionary party?" asks Com. C. K.* Well, what is revolution? In this case it is "the" revolution. That is to say in socialist concepts, it signifies the complete abolition of the capitalist form of society, with its concomitants of private property (capitalist) and wage labor commodity production. And the substitution of a society having social possession of the common means of life and co-operative production for social advantage. That is, that revolution is an entire change in social relations; not a mere class flurry of temporary reform, or the political abrogation of party license. In this sense, and from the revolutionary viewpoint, it makes no difference whether "the" revolution is now on or is only approaching. The particular stage of revolutionary development does not affect its final objective—the utter abolition of capital. Nor does it affect the methods of accomplishment until society is far gone in the decline of disintegration. For the obvious reason that the dominant standards of organized agencies of capitalist society are quite opposed to the unrealized standards of a socialist society. It is because man thinks before he moves that society is conservative to its accustomed standards. And it is only in the later phases of capitalist development, with its consequent negations of social attributes and amenities, that social reality can be made clear. Neither man nor society can be made to think by force. The reason of being can only be presented to the being of reason. And that being is not molded to the fashion of the ideal, but to the fashion of time-growth.

That is what socialism implies by "education." Not an ineffective appeal to reason—ineffective because not in accord with prevalent social conceptions. Not a barren philosophical argument, which, in its day and generation flies over the heads of its audience. Not a logical deduction, based on a premise vague in the minds of its hearers. It implies, indeed, those things, but connective with and involved throughout the steady development of the social economic. That economic works with the precision of law. It is law. And because it is law it moves in the dim ways of its own determinism, awaiting the shock of discovery and its consequent yoke to the modified direction of social intelligence.

The economic of capital, based as it is on profit production, inevitably contracts on social conveniences and natural desires. By its necessary development it drives social intelligence into the narrow grooves of class interest—and individual prostitution. By its waste of the social forces of production, it increasingly restricts social necessity. And by the developed manipulation of those forces—for the purposes of narrow ambitions—it imposes quite impossible inhibitions on a social necessity of progress that can be staged now, only to the darker expense of the future. And whether that progress be fast or slow, whether it be retarded or accelerated, and however moribund society may be in the practice of its ancient customs, the mechanical logic of time will force home on the social mind the perception of its meaningless customs. "Who does not venture beyond the fact?" says Huxley, somewhere, "seldom gets as far as the fact." And although the logic of development will force conviction ultimately, it is only the intelligent logic of reason—by looking beyond the fact—that can forewarn of the possible disaster; that can mitigate the probable chaos and obviate the certain misery and as certain degradation of fortuitous development.

But, in fact, there is no accounting of development fortuitously. The power of the mind is a principle factor in social development—and is destined to be the greatest agency in human progress. Economic development furthers mental development. It is continually supplied with an increasing abundance

of sense material, augmenting its capacities, stimulating perception, fostering its dormant virility of reason. These powers and capacities exist in society. They are creations of its growth. Like the reservoirs of natural resource they are ready to be drawn upon in due time and season. And it is because of those capacities—those logical and deductive capacities—that the appeal to reason is made. The propaganda of social education is justified in the forward imagination that foresees, with the enlarged experience of social progress, a more or less corresponding ratio of enhanced social intelligence. Force may effect change. But the same agencies that flourish force will be called upon to think of their resultants afterwards. The essence of socialism is to think of them forehanded, to the end that the philosophic logic of deduction may synchronise with and temper, the lusty—but it may be chaotic-logic of developing fact. The materialist conception is not political, merely, or economic. It is the whole complexus of reality that molds and influences society. It is this division of material forces that hinders the cohesion and harmony of society, similarly as the division of economic forces prevents the solidarity of labor. The past is a pointer to the future only as it affords a clue to its determination. The causes of that determinism are concrete in yesterday and today. But the synthesized incidence of the unfolding potentialities of tomorrow are to be interpreted not only by the torch light of history, but by the sparkling achievements of progress. It is for this, among other lesser reasons, that the house of socialism is divided against itself. Because it refuses to account the cumulous of development and its consequences. And it is for this, among other reasons, that Com. C. K.'s arbitrary separation of "material" and "mental" is peculiarly misleading. In reality no such separation is possible.

Consequently, if "the S. P. merely 'educates' and leaves its listeners to act as they list," it leaves them, perforce, to the circumstantial discovery of facts, which now they will not accept. And not accepting, utterly prevents that unanimity of action which alone can precipitate a social society. It is not that socialism is indifferent to that action. Willy nilly it is involved in society's activities. But its perception of the time-facts of social development make it patent. The necessity of meting all-comers in a society hostile alike to its endeavors and philosophy engendered its (miscalled) dilletantism of discussion (a discussion that is the first fruits—and the proof—of the effectiveness of its propaganda). It recognises the fruitlessness of forcing society against its own convictions; or, of attempting to mold it, by human endeavor simply, to the pattern of reasoned philosophy. Not yet is that the process of development. And knowing that, knowing that social freedom is the offspring of social freedom, it musters its energies in the only fertile field of enterprise—the stimulation of social understanding, awakening under the rude shocks of economic progression. Nor has it ever been either "blate or sear" to stand firm on its principles when to stand was exceedingly unpleasant. It has done so because of its fundamental understanding of social phenomena—and it augurs well for the future.

We agree with C. K., that man is a sentimental being—(not an animal). Society is not a thinking sentience. It moves on moonshine. That is to say, it reacts to the misapplied functions and misinterpreted relations of the fundamental expressions of human nature. But to say that is not to say that society does not think. Back of impulse is thought, the direct incentive of immediate necessity. The same material conditions which compel social movement expresses to all the same principle. And as principle is social, and interprets and manifests itself in social interaction, so through social inter-

action it must be influenced and explained.

But an explanation to be effective must grapple with the essence of its subject. And in proportion as it reaches down to this essence it influences the tenor of development. Because it is in unison with the facts of development. An explanation that is false may influence the tenor of events. But to its undoing. The unfolding cycle of change, by its increasing dissonance with the fact and its symbol, will ultimately demonstrate its falsity. But the percept that separates the essence from the incidental separates, at the same time—or distinguishes between—the fact and its expressed emotion. Emotion in its riper aspects is the mental reaction to the misunderstood environments of yesterday. And in the process of adaption to ever changing environment—whose changing brings out more clearly the antagonism between the real and its reflex—this emotion seeks to veil the deep, the unpleasant, and it may be, repulsive reality. And it is no easy task, as all know who have tried, to rend this clinging veil of sentiment from the underlying temple of the truth. But it is the unveiling of reality we desire. For we are persuaded that only in the acceptance of reality can life be made secure and society be organized harmoniously. Fact is not to be conferred, gift like, either on man or mass. That assumption is the prerogative of progress. And it is delicate to handle. Nor can it be coated with the sugar of ancient emotion, i.e., garlanded with the thought forms of yesterday, and rendered palatable and a cogent force for the social revolution. For the emotion of social society, like the emotion of all other societies, is conceived in the fundamentally different terms of a fundamentally different ideal, and can flourish only in the fruitful soil of its own aspirations.

Those two assumptions of the "compelling truth" and the "materialism of man" are surely no assumptions. There is something compelling in the truth. Not because of itself as a logical proposition; but because of its power as the expression of developing necessity. When that truth may be accepted is a matter of time-perception. That it is not accepted now is but the special pleading of desire. That it will be accepted is certain. The implication contained in the "assumption" that man is not materialist is because he has not accepted the "holy truth" of socialist education. But, as pointed out, that is not the real meaning of social education. It is not the spoken word only. It is the spoken word plus the social concept of social relations. It is not the truth of reason that is the crimson centre of activity, but the compelling truth of progress. The social conceptions of social relations are visaged through no legerdemain of "tactics," but on the contrary, mainly through the wayward movements of social development. And the tactics of its presentation are determined by the progress of events, not by any delusive panic of sentiment.

When we are about it we may go further. It is not truth that is "one man's meat and another's poison," but only man's concept of the truth. The wily Pilate's question is just a metaphysical abstraction implying finality and assuming the absolute. But neither final nor absolute are facts in time experience. If it be argued that it is only by man's concepts of truth that anything of truth is known, then the answer is that only in evolving man's grasping ignorance of the cosmic process can any abstraction obtain at all—and influence us through reflex emotion. And after all, what is truth but law? And what is law but the conquest of ignorance by understanding? The world was declared to be a plane until the thinkers of the middle ages showed otherwise. Ptolemaic astronomy was acclaimed until Copernican observations proved differently. Mass "fell" by its own "weight" till gravity demonstrated the error. "God" created man, till time proved

(Continued on page 8)

* See Western Clarion, July 3, 1923.