

## OUR "HOLY FAMILY"

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fact, like a "God's plan of the ages" to a Russellite, to whom, the Almighty scorns the hit or miss method of purblind, finite man. "Marx said it, therefore it must be true"—even before it is a factual thing. The study of Marxism, as a science to guide us in a study of the book of life, becomes the mental degradation of a study of a book of revelations. As to what of our own intelligence and of modern science? or, as to what of unknown facts and factors, of unappreciated facts and factors, therefore of unforeseen and unforeseeable contingencies? As of yore the answer is, Pshaw, thus and this and that spake the Lord. "There is no ambiguity in that exposition," says F. C. emphatically, referring to his quotation of a prognostication of the future by Marx, "Socialism must come." "The transition from Capitalism to Socialism occurs with the inexorability of cosmic law." "Neither fortuitous circumstances nor purposeful men" have any effect whatever "to alter the course of its irresistible and timeless process." If that is not belief in magic, what unconscious fakery of word-mongery or other does it signify? The Darwinian evolutionist would be impelled to consider the possibilities of change in any direction, even retrograde ones. But no, he is ruled out of court in this evolutionary science of a self-realizing, inevitable advance to a goal. The cosmic law is right, and the Cosmos awful kind. For what the hell does F. C. mean except that there is a cherub sitting up aloft taking care of the affairs of poor proletarian Jack here below? Apparently, it is not of ourselves, but of our stars that we are to be free. Thus, a cosmology older than most of the hills. And what is the effect of that cosmology on those who yield to it? Just like regular remittances from home to the remittance man! Why, think, study, work, scheme, educate, organize, etc.? We should worry! And yet this same F. C., so soon as he makes that declaration of a faith in magic powers, uses it as a starting point to attack me for mysticism in saying that "man is the only purposeful factor in the process." But by the powers, the irony of it, unconscious that he has himself declared for a mystical interpretation of history and thinking himself a good materialist still, he sets out to fasten on me the charge of mystic by quoting MacDougall because he also uses the word "purpose," the, in fact, only similarity between us. MacDougall is talking, however, of a purpose of a super-human kind, while I referred to human purpose, whatever its limits, the only purpose that science in its work can take account of. It is F. C. himself who is self-confessed blood-brother in mysticism to Mac Dougall, only the latter perhaps is a conscious Bergsonian, while F. C. is just mainly out-of-his-depth in Hegelian phraseology—in word magic. His aim was to discredit me in materialist circles. But I have traversed the bounds too much and often to stray into the domains of mysticism unconsciously, even in the use of figurative language, as he has done.

And Lestor, who should know better, born and raised in England, the cradle of modern materialism and the scrupulous sceptic spirit. His use of analogies reeks of word magic inducing the crudest transference of ideas. Hey, Presto! a suddenly appearing new chicken, new baby, new earthquake; therefore, Hey, Presto! a suddenly appearing new society. One is tempted to ask, why not a suddenly appearing new geological strata also, if it would not spoil sport? And brevity of statement also is to him the soul of "suddenness"—a paragraph of Marx is briefly descriptive of a sequence of changes of an epochal kind, therefore, somehow, we are to believe that socialism is just around the corner, the system may go any minute. He sees "the whole of society being sprung in the air" literally. To him, speed is also the essence of that badly quoted phrase from the Communist Manifesto. Truly, words have magic properties and a life apart from things.

In the same spirit, when I challenge the Hegel-

ian elements in Marxism, my critics reply by quoting more of it and more of it and more of it, seemingly unconscious that they are thus merely begging the question I raise, and as though they thought mere repetition would work a charm. As a matter of fact, I am not sure how conscious they are of the meaning of the quotations they make and the phrases they use. This I am sure of, however, that a charge of infidelity is really what my critics are hissing at me through their articles. I feel they expect me to feel as must that impious wretch in the story of old, at whose dread act contending armies stayed bloody strife to gaze in horror upon him. It was at the flower of that naive and happy "golden age" in the youth of the world, when the sons of the gods were kings of men and 'twas at peril of the anger of heaven for anything less than a king to engage a king in combat. Accidents were liable to happen. The story reads, that "a bowman drew his bow at a venture, and the arrow, piercing a joint in his armour—killed a king." Yes that is it, I am irreligious.

I am held to be irreligious. That is the substantial core of inspiration in the arguments of my critics. I am held infidel by them because, forsooth, I attack the ideological hangovers from an archaic science and point of view to which they are predisposed by habit of mind, and challenge the Party positions to which they have become habituated. I know, "R," because, F. C., your habits were my habits, once upon a time.

Great . . . old . . . fossils!

How we Socialists slam one another, everywhere! Is it the movement criticising itself? If so, good and excellent discipline! But there are the dangers of egoism, as Lestor says. Let us help or force one another to take high ground on the merits of disputed issues.

I ask the Editor to reprint some matter from the "Plebs" of the British Plebs League, a Marxian educational organization, which seems to indicate a similar self-criticism is going on over there. The reprint, I think, has value for its constructive defining of what socialism needs, to cope with the practicalities in present day political situations.

## INTROSPECTIVE

In this rallying of the workers on definite class issues our function, of course, is not to supply the actual-political slogans of the struggle or to make pronouncements as to the actual forms which the struggle from time to time must take. Our work is to supply a knowledge of the relevant facts of the situation—facts of the past and of the present—so as to demonstrate what the true issues are. Coupled with this is our work of providing the means of interpreting these facts, and this requires us to develop among all the active workers in the movement the capacity for clear dispassionate thinking—a subtly wrought tool of the mind which the working class needs for the problems which confront it more than any other class has needed it in times of stress before.

We are, therefore, faced with a double task, to which it is imperative that all Plebeians should bend their backs in the coming winter. First is the need to relate our teaching more closely to the actual struggle, so that we may quickly sense the changing needs of the struggle which our teaching must serve. Second, we must raise the quality and standard of our education above its present level. We shall only persuade trade unions to entrust their education to us, if we can prove, not only that our aims and intentions are better than anybody else, but that our execution is also superior in quality.

The first need means that we must probably have less of theory and abstract phrases and more attention to present day facts than has been customary in the past. At any rate, our education must have a greater elasticity, so as continually to adapt teaching to meet the ever-changing needs of the moment. We must not be content to prove that economic conditions produce class struggle, and then to imply a priori that Socialism follows as an "inevitable" "effect." We must stress the need for conscious,

active struggle—and must apply our education to an examination of the forms which that struggle takes, and to a careful dissection of the detailed problems to which that struggle gives rise.

At the same time our second task requires us to caution ourselves against a pressing danger. We must not confuse our educational work with the distinct task of the propagandist agitator, whose aim is to stimulate the emotions of his audience by the use of words, as does the musician with sounds and rhythm and the artist with colour and design. The agitator plays the important role of rousing men to take specific action. Our task is to provide the mental tools by which a wise choice of action may be made. For the agitator words perform the part that the red flag to the bull plays for the toreador. For us words must be what lines are for the draughtsman or the map-maker—shorthand symbols for complex facts. A principal part of our education, in fact, consists in disentangling words from their emotional colour and associations and in teaching their use in strict relation to actual fact. For words are the vehicles of thought, and only in the degree that we can separate them from our emotions and use them as strict representatives of things will our thinking be realistic, scientific and practical, in contrast with the emotion-tinged dreaming of the mystic and the utopian. It is probably in improvement in this direction that much of the second part of our task lies. The duty of the teacher is not to overlay the mind with a new set of prejudices or to induce transitory moods of anger and resentment against a monster labelled "capitalism." On the contrary, it is to clear the mind and to give to students that apprehension of facts and power of realistic analysis of them which has made the teacher himself a fighter in the class struggle. And let us remember that vague abstract terms are much more likely to be suffused with emotional colour, and so to be a cloak instead of an instrument of thought, than are concrete words which can be easily related to something in our experience which they represent. In this fact lies the heart of the problem of simplification!

The Plebs (London)

## PLATFORM

Socialist Party of  
Canada

We, the Socialist Party of Canada affirm our allegiance to, and support of the principles and programme of the revolutionary working class.

Labor, applied to natural resources, produces all wealth. The present economic system is based upon capitalist ownership of the means of production, consequently, all the products of labor belong to the capitalist class. The capitalist is, therefore, master; the worker a slave.

So long as the capitalist class remains in possession of the reins of government all the powers of the State will be used to protect and defend its property rights in the means of wealth production and its control of the product of labor.

The capitalist system gives to the capitalist an ever-swelling stream of profits, and to the worker, an ever increasing measure of misery and degradation.

The interest of the working class lies in setting itself free from capitalist exploitation by the abolition of the wage system, under which this exploitation, at the point of production, is cloaked. To accomplish this necessitates the transformation of capitalist property in the means of wealth production into socially controlled economic forces.

The irrepressible conflict of interest between the capitalist and the worker necessarily expresses itself as a struggle for political supremacy. This is the Class Struggle.

Therefore we call upon all workers to organize under the banner of the Socialist Party of Canada, with the object of conquering the political powers for the purpose of setting up and enforcing the economic programme of the working class, as follows:

- 1—The transformation, as rapidly as possible, of capitalist property in the means of wealth production (natural resources, factories, mills, railroads, etc.) into collective means of production.
- 2—The organization and management of industry by the working class.
- 3—The establishment, as speedily as possible, of production for use instead of production for profit.