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The Will of the People

SHORTLY, we shall be called upon to decide the political policies to be adopted in these trying times by "our" country. The issues and slogans are now being prepared, and, we have no doubt, many wonderful things will be promised, many agreeable changes predicted, with the advent of a new government, "safely and sanely" elected by the democratic will of constitutional usage. Of course! We are a free and a great people, having things done in this, "our" country, just as we, "the enlightened people," desire them. Not at all like those unfortunate "Bolsheviks," under the dictation of a fanatic clique of extremists, drunk with power, who have twice ruined Russia—being the occasion of a blockade which denied the means of production to those sweet people; and the direct cause of this present famine. O, "Bolshies," how shall we give you an accounting?

Some of us proud British born possess the prerogative of suffrage. But the possession of a privilege carries with it the advantages of its powers and benefits. If we use the former at all, the profit of the latter must surely accrue to us. In these circumstances therefore, the present social condition of society must be the "will" of society. Is that so? If so, why is society restless and discontented, riotous and unruly? Why does it manifest such aversion to its own "order?" Why this continual need for the appearance of change? Why so many laws enacted contrary to majority interests? If the "people" are responsible, why are they ignorant of their own enactments? And their fateful consequences to themselves? It will not do to say it is "original sin." That is the antithesis of the premise—the intelligent majority. And it does not explain how the derivable advantage is invariably on the upper side. Nor is the "will of God" any better. That is but another "Bolshevik" usurpation of the "people's" authority. For, it surely cannot be contended that since we are an enlightened and democratic people we cannot control our own social organization. Especially when human control is everywhere evident.

Yet, nevertheless, the "will" of God is the cause—albeit it is neither the "God of Bethel," nor any other human abstraction, but the omnipotent "god of the machine." We cast a ballot, it is true, and change the name of the government. Which signifies nothing. Because we were not informed enough to elect and vote for our own nominees.

One or other section of the capitalist class always nominates the members-elect. They are selected either directly from the ruling class itself, or from its pendant following of capitalist ideation. Individually they have, therefore, the same class viewpoint—and interest—private property. The "class" provides its nominees with a "platform" and a "watchword," with propaganda and campaign necessities. The former is the transient economic interest, and the key and motive of its monetary "philanthropies" and hurrying activities; the latter is the veil and orange blossom with which that interest is bedecked and jewelled, so that we may be enticed into matrimony with the painted conscript. For by that union is the privilege of property guaranteed. The ruling class, through personal initiative, private influence, and publicity wailing, puts forth every effort to get its representative elected. For this suddenly important individual is, in reality, their class representative—the political expression

of their economic interest, the embodiment of their sovereignty of power.

The ruling class—as a whole—possess all the means of education, all avenues of information and knowledge, all channels of publicity and research, and to the fullest of its ability—which, in this direction is of a high order—it uses those means to distort the fact, to suppress the truth, to veil the issues

course, that their greedy quarreling over the spoil draws unwelcome attention to their methods, and its fruits, but it is the fatal necessity of capital to educate its support, both theoretically and practically, and for it (capital) education becomes the "snare of the fowler."

On the other hand, through the blindness and apathy of the slave class itself—a product, of course, of capitalist evolution—through the general conditions of adversity and the constant necessities of livelihood, the labor press is so circumscribed and narrow orbited, its influence (because of its poverty) so negligible, and local and working class ideation and effort so awry and disjointed, that no efficient organization can be put against its opposing propagandist to clothe and dignify the new ethic of the rising social power with visible authority. Or, to put it better, to gather the disjointed efforts and vague aspirations of social production into the coordinated invincibility of Socialist society. For, the power of the capitalist class lies in its control of the forces of the state, i.e., its authority is the state itself. A fact which proclaims the futility of all reform within the sphere of capitalist activity, and which, in due time, under the increasing pressure of economic circumstances must compel us for our emancipation, to the assumption of State authority. Our changeful times are hastening on that necessity to the ripest maturity, and the forward pressing social forces cannot be much longer restrained in the seething abyss of effete capitalism.

Hence it comes that our minds take on the hue of our capitalist environment. So we are confused with the shifty, kaleidoscope of capitalist property right. So we eagerly run after the fleeting rushlights of transient self-interest. So the social traditions of a vanished past, bind as to the individualist present. So the partial equality of a rising era veils our social evolution, and sacrifices us on the developed antagonisms of class law and to the harried slaves of today presents, as a Utopian dream-world, the kindling aspirations, the fore-glimpsed grandeur, the achieved fraternity that "trails a cloud of glory" on the certainty of the Socialist humanity of tomorrow.

The working class of today has no identity of interest with any other section of society. It possesses neither "right" nor "equality," and on its economic inequality its political subservience hinges, and its social disadvantages automatically follow. The wage slave is allowed to vote. Yes. But he cannot vote in his own interest. Because he does not possess the data necessary to form a true judgment. Because the knowledge necessary to sift the issue—the one issue—at stake is suppressed. Because the trained powers to detect and expose the subtlety of treachery around him is denied to him. And (because of those things in turn) he lacks the principle of public interest wherewith to determine public freedom. That is why all of us burn "strange fire" on the altars of ancient gods.

For those reasons the "popular" will is an illusion. In political democracy, the representation of all interests is an impossibility, because constitutional government signifies the law of the ruling class, symbolizes the dominance of the modern capitalist class and its exploitation of wage-labor. The government is the council board of that class, and it is almost entirely composed of class members with

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"IT IS TIME, POSTUMUS---!"

A POINTER FOR PRE-ELECTION AUDIENCES

A correspondent sends along this item to illustrate the condition of affairs here, now that we are being massaged with words concerning our welfare—our future welfare of course. If windy utterances contained food values, the working class would be well fed at election times. When are we to hear the dinner bell ring?

Dear Mac,—I send along a biting epigram of the ancient Roman cynic Martial, being the reply of a peasant to a windy lawyer, which I find quoted in the last number to hand of the "Freeman." Working class readers who understand the false-faced politics of the old line parties will appreciate the Roman's satire. Substitute for the Roman peasant, Canada's working masses, whose ever-present problem is one of livelihood, for, "the common man has won the war and lost his livelihood"; and for the windy lawyer, substitute Messrs. Meighen and Mackenzie King, spokesmen in politics for "the hard-faced interests who did well out of the war"—and their respective camp followers, the subsidiary and auxiliary parasites and mercenary riff-raff of ward politics. Those who read the windy speeches of the above-named gentlemen, having not the least bearing on working class problems, and the accounts of the tom-tom beating in the nomination caucuses, will appreciate the neatness with which the old Roman's epigram caps the pre-election futilities in Canada today:

"My suit has nothing to do with assault, or battery, or poisoning, but it is about three goats, which I complain have been stolen by my neighbor. This the judge desires to have proved to him; but you, with swelling words and extravagant gestures dilated on the Battle of Cannae, the Mithridatic war, and the perjuries of the insensate Carthaginians, the Syllae, the Marii, and the Mucii. It is time, Postumus, to say something about my three goats."

of reality, in order to preserve intact its sacred right of property. To be sure, between the capitalist factions there is considerable "muckraking" continually going on (which becomes very marked during elections, for the savor of plunder is in their nostrils) but they contrive that nothing inimical to their common capitalist property even sees the light of day. Not if any means can obliterate it. They see, of