

## CHAPTER XVIII

# THE FAMILY AND REVOLUTION

It is a common misconception industriously spread by our enemies that the Communists are opposed to the family, and propose to destroy it as a social institution. This slander was recently given typical expression by a certain John Warren Hill, presiding justice of the Domestic Relations Court in New York. Speaking before the Catholic Social Workers Guild, Mr. Hill said:

“Communism is nothing but Marxian socialism, and Marx hated the family because it is the root of capitalism.”

This is a complete misrepresentation of the Communist position toward the family. It is an attempt to rally support to capitalism by making it appear that to defend the family requires a defense of capitalism. But it was Marx, and his close collaborator, Engels, who pointed out as one of the chief indictments of capitalism that it injures the family, distorts and corrupts it, and finally leads to its destruction. Marx and Engels never tired of emphasizing that the only hope of saving the family from destruction was the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of socialism.

Today, as never before, there is a world of evidence to prove that Marx and Engels were right, and that Mr. Hill and his kind are wrong. Look at what is happening in the United States today! The richest country in the world is witnessing the break-up and scattering of literally millions of families,

as the result of the crisis, unemployment, social degeneration, the starvation dole system, and the movement to abolish even the present miserable standards of relief in order to "balance the budget".

What a bitter commentary upon the above-quoted words of Mr. Hill is the fact, currently reported in the newspapers, that millions of young people, homeless and without jobs, are wandering over the country, descending step by step to degeneration and death. What irony to compare those words with the details of family misery and break-up in the daily newspapers, and in the appeals for the "Hundred Neediest Cases" for Christmas charity funds. Here in the United States, where capitalism is at its strongest, the family is being destroyed the quickest.

Compare this destruction of millions of families by capitalism in America with what is happening to the family in the land of socialism, the Soviet Union, where the Communists lead the nation. Over there the destruction of the family has been almost entirely stopped; the family is undergoing a new strengthening, a blossoming never seen before in history.

The cause of the destruction of the family in America is the system of capitalism, of the private ownership of the industries by a small group of wealthy families, which forces the great majority of families into poverty and a growing number to complete destruction. The cause of the blossoming of the family in the Soviet Union is the system of socialism, built on the lines of the teachings of Marx, which abolishes "wealthy families", it is true, but which thereby makes the great majority of families well-to-do, gives them security, and guarantees them a permanent position in society.

All this was foreseen by the founders of Communism, of scientific socialism. Thus, that grand old man, Friedrich

Engels, in his famous book *Origin of the Family*, pointed out that the monogamous family, "far from disappearing" as a result of the socialist revolution, "will then on the contrary be fully realized for the first time... Prostitution disappears, monogamy, instead of collapsing, at last becomes a reality—even for men." This was published in 1884.

Many honest people have been confused on this question, because they have seen that a period of revolutionary upheavals and changes is accompanied by great disturbances in family relations. They therefore accept the conclusion that the revolution caused the damage to the family, and that if the revolution could be avoided the family would be preserved from this damage. But this faulty logic overlooks the small but important point that the break-down of the family comes at this time, not from the revolutionary efforts to go forward to a new society, but on the contrary because the old society has broken down. The disturbance of family relations is caused by the same forces which make a revolutionary change of the whole economic and social system necessary.

Our polemic against the arguments of the reactionary enemies of Communism, who picture the Communists as the enemy of the family, must also be supplemented by an equally energetic repulse of those who say they are our "friends", because they think we attack the family and approve of this attack. There are such people. With regard to them, we Communists must repeat that old saying: "Save us from our friends; we can take care of the enemies."

There is in the United States, as in all capitalist countries, a growing circle of middle-class people among whom the degeneration and dissolution of family relations has proceeded quite far. A considerable number of these people accept this degeneration as "progress", and make a theory out of it. When they become real progressives on political and economic issues

of the day, they try to graft upon the genuinely progressive movement their own particular theories about the family and sexual relations in general. They thus help to give "evidence" to Mr. Hill and his fellow thinkers that progressive, radical, and revolutionary movements really are enemies of the family. This is especially true of self-styled "radical" circles of petty-bourgeois bohemians in the big cities. An illuminating glimpse of such circles, with their suffocating atmosphere of degeneration and sterility, decorated by delusions of "revolutionary" grandeur, was given in the novel *The Unpossessed*, by Tess Schlesinger.

Communists are most emphatic in rejecting all this bohemian pseudo-radicalism in relation to sex and the family. We point to it as only another example of the decay of capitalist society. We fight against its penetration into the ranks of the revolutionary movement. We explain that it has nothing in common with the healthy instincts of the masses composing the main body of the revolutionary movement. The workers and the largest part of the middle class love their families, they fight to protect and preserve them. It is one of the strongest motives in the fight for socialism that only its victory will finally save the family from destruction by the crisis of capitalism.

Within the revolutionary movement we often face this problem in a different form. We often receive complaints from the wives and families of men who are active in the revolutionary labor movement, that the demands made by the movement upon their time take them away from their families so much as to endanger the family's stability. This is a serious practical problem, with which the movement is struggling to find a practical solution. We cannot pretend to have entirely solved it as yet. Our policy is directed toward finding a solution along two lines: first, that the movement should so organize its ac-

tivities as to draw in the wives and children, the entire family, thus to re-consolidate it upon the basis of more common interests and activities; secondly, that the movement should so rationally organize its demands upon the time of its members that it should never monopolize that time so completely as to deny them the opportunity for family life. Everything that demoralizes the personal life of members of the Communist Party and the revolutionary movement in general, is a damaging thing for the Party and the movement. Our Party needs and strives for the solidity and permanence and strength that come from strong and permanent family ties among its members and followers.

We must declare with full emphasis that the Communist support for the family does not mean that we agree with the unequal status of women in the family, which characterizes capitalist society. Socialism, as the first stage leading toward communism, places among the first items of its program the complete liberation of women from all inequality. Not only does it give women unconditional equality with men, but it provides guarantees for maintaining that equality, by means of special protection for motherhood by the state, and by special regulations of the conditions of women's work.

Equality for women is being realized for the first time in history in the Soviet Union, the land of socialism. This is substantiated, not merely by the word of Communists, but by every honest bourgeois authority who has examined the situation of women in the Soviet Union at first hand. We will cite, from a multitude of authoritative books, one only, *Women in Soviet Russia* by Fannina Hall, an Austrian writer whose large book was the fruit of more than a year of study in various parts of the Soviet Union. I quote her conclusion:

"In the land of the Soviets—in sharp contrast, it is true, to the one-sided masculine civilization of the West—something new in

history has arisen, a society based upon the absolutely equal rights of the sexes . . . an experiment of world-wide significance: the experiment tried for the first time in human history, of according to both sexes the same right to mold our life."

When those who attack the Communist position on the family really have in mind our program for equality for women; when they declare that the oppression of women, their half-slave status under capitalism, is the necessary foundation for the family, the abolishment of which means the destruction of the family—then we answer without hesitation: We have nothing in common with those who desire the enslavement of women, and if that is what you mean by "the family", then the sooner it is destroyed the better for all concerned. But that is not our understanding. We see the subjection of women as the distortion and corruption of the family. We see the family of the future based upon the complete equality of men and women. We see in such a family, the family of a socialist society, the necessary condition for the progress of the human race.