

VANISHED CAMPFIRES

by

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Transcribed by David Morin

INTRODUCTION

This journal is rooted in the belief that mankind is living through a period of major social transformation marking a decisive qualitative change (sic) in history. I believe Socialism will effect greater and more benefic (sic) changes than any other great turning point. I started this journal with a definite viewpoint. No human being is completely free from prejudice or bias. I want to explain how a Metis living in modern times arrives at the view point of Socialism. Such an illustration can be made either abstractly or concretely.

One may examine the general movement of ideas or recount personal experiences. This involves images of self – how (sic) formed and changed – the history of roles and their inner and external conflicts: the various situations, the significant others who and what they were and did. How they affected me. And again the larger framework (sic) of institutions like community, race, class, economy, religion and kinship. How the great events and historical changes of my time appeared to me and how they related to me.

I began life in a culture that retained vestiges of primitive group communism that left many imprints on my daily experience. I had to adjust myself to the dominant society with its emphasis on private profit and the ideal of bourgeois democracy. To live with the prevailing order you have to adjust yourself at every point of your existence. Whether you studied at school, wandered in search of work or wore the country's uniform, you were caught in the conflict between the old world and the new and you had to choose between them. This journal therefore deals not with politics but with culture in a broad sense.

Many of us have seen that the dominant race barbarously suppressed all that was living and sublime in the Indian culture. In recording certain personal experiences it may indicate how one starting from a mutilated culture may

receive other social and moral values a metamorphosis from the romanticism of the past to the present day reality of the H Bomb

It deals with a period closed by anti colonial struggle forever It is a record of confused and painful years What was obscure in my youth is obvious today My generation of Metis were the grand sons and grand daughters of those militant fighters of "La Nouvelle Nation" whose dreams of independence were crushed in military defeat years ago on the banks of the Saskatchewan We were the inheritors of a Lost Cause What others could take for granted we had to examine question test relying here on logic there on emotion and again on accidentally dim understood experience We had all the limitations and humiliations of a culturally suppressed minority and few advantages of the superior culture This journal deals with an immediate past whose meanings have been profoundlt (sic) altered by present day impacts Many of these opinions are definitely not Marxist but they were ideas and experiences encountered on the road to Marxism This is equally true of ideas and viewpoints ascribed to other people in this journal They too may have changed considerably during these years All I mean to say is this: such and such a person living at that time in such and such a place held such ideas and for certain reasons it seemed to me acted in such and such a way I do not seek approval but without such probity the flavor of an experience is lost

This journal inadequately indicates which ideas in my case were discarded and which retained: (sic) and in a number of instances how further changes took place in those restive years I have tried to confine this journal to those aspects of personal which seem relevant to the central theme I have deliberately repeated certain details but the journal should be regarded not as a segment of the history of our times but as a personal narrative I do not pretend that what is written is exactly so It simply appeared to be so The events appeared to have reality and served to mold (sic) me ideas I have relied on memory alone

This journal ends at a period when I became pschologically (sic) mature to begin to grasp the tenets of Marxism What I have tried to do is to depict certain disconnected kinds of experience which show how a person brought up in a "backward" culture can move toward and absorb an "alien" culture

In attempting to correlate the development of events and individuals I encountered special problems Every character in this journal is a real person

Nowhere is there recourse to fiction. I hope the spirit in which this journal is written will be understood and any unintentional errors I have committed be pardoned in regard to them.

Some of people described have altered considerable (sic) during the years. At least my impression of them has altered. My father a fervent bourgeois (sic) Liberal lived to be sympathetic to the social views of his children. His anti-fascism was undoubted and he lived long enough to champion fervently the cause of the colonial peoples and the camp of Socialism. He was a far more heroic character in his quiet unobtrusive (sic) way than I realized a decade ago. Again some of the political figures have lost the magic which entranced me in former years; some have sunk to the darkest depths of corruption and betrayal. There are others I knew whose unusual gifts of leadership had no scope of expression and they passed through the byways of life, unknown and unremembered. Others who were responsible for placing my early faltering steps on the path to knowledge and a rational world outlook are today impotently hostile or disgruntledly (sic) silent. Others are occupied with opportunistic fantasies of right-wing Social Democracy (the Neo Right).

Yet in writing this journal I have described how things appeared to me at the time. There are incidents where I have over-rated certain ephemeral (sic) aspects of the Indian and Metis movements and the colleagues with whom I worked and shared common experiences in those eventful years. The continuing (sic) years bring living testament to the nobility and self-sacrifice (sic) of these men. They were fighters in their humble way for the spirit of Man. Men and women of the dominant culture are often blinded by prejudice when they come in contact with "inferior" peoples and they see certain aspects out of all proportion to reality. I wanted to describe how one man arrived at his final viewpoint through experience and recognition of our common enemy
IGNORANCE